ACCESS

Advancing Capacity for Climate and Environment Social Science

UK Public Opinion on Net Zero and Climate Policy

Citizens' Survey Report

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Further information: Please see https://accessnetwork.uk/, https://accessnetwork.uk/making-a-net-zero-society-follow-the-social-science/

ACCESS Network. 2025.

Report Highlights

Concern about the climate is widespread among the UK public and a slim majority are supportive of net zero targets. The public recognise the scale of challenges surrounding net zero and there is some scepticism about the likelihood of achieving targets. There is also division about the timing of climate action in relation to economic conditions.

Knowledge, research and expertise have a key role to play in creating effective climate policy. The public particularly value the involvement of independent and governmental experts, alongside national and local political leaders, and representatives of affected communities. They support the use of diverse research evidence from natural, engineering and social sciences to build understanding of how the UK can reduce emissions.

Public engagement and building on public momentum are essential. At the individual level, members of the public do not feel they have a lot of say in developing climate policy. Yet, many are making changes to their own daily lives, helping reduce demand for high carbon activities, products and services. A public engagement campaign and supportive policies are essential to sustain and increase this momentum, and to address public concerns and impediments to change.

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Key Findings

Section 1: Views on Climate Change and Net Zero Targets

1. **Climate worry:** A majority of respondents were worried about climate change, with 75% expressing some degree of worry. While respondents from all parts of the UK expressed worry, those from Scotland and Wales were most likely to be concerned.

2. **Support for net zero targets:** The UK national and devolved net zero targets attracted support from half (51%) of respondents. A quarter were opposed (including 12% strongly opposed), and the rest neutral or unsure. Support for targets was highest in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

3. **Likelihood of meeting net zero targets:** Almost half of respondents (46%) thought it unlikely or very unlikely that targets would be met, compared to just over a quarter (27%) who thought it was likely or very likely. Scepticism about meeting targets was highest in Scotland and England. Those from Northern Ireland were most optimistic.

4. **Speed of action on climate change in relation to the economy:** Views diverged on whether climate action needs to be taken immediately (42%) or should be delayed until economic conditions are better (34%). Respondents from Scotland were most likely to believe action is needed sooner, rather than waiting for economic conditions to improve.

5. **'Co-benefits' of climate action:** A majority - around two thirds - of respondents agreed that climate action is likely to reduce pollution, improve health and increase wildlife. The idea that climate action will create a fairer society (37%) or deliver economic benefits (42%) was less commonly believed.

6. **Challenges to meeting net zero targets:** Economic challenges were regarded as most problematic for meeting net zero targets. Four out of five respondents cited the following as obstacles: individual finances, a lack of resources in local authorities, overall costs of net zero to the UK economy, a lack of infrastructure investment, and business interests in oil and gas.

7. **Individual actions regarding climate change:** Respondents said they are taking some climate actions themselves. The most common were lifestyle actions to reduce waste (67%) and change travel habits (48%). Other respondents were planning to, or willing to consider, making changes in the future. Economic and political actions, such as searching out a greener job or joining a green group or protest, were least likely.

Key Findings

Section 2: Views on Climate Policy and the Role of Different Actors

1. **Views on groups that should influence climate policy:** Respondents felt a variety of groups should influence climate policy. Over two thirds endorsed influence for independent and government scientists, elected local, and national politicians, and representatives from affected communities. More than a third opposed the influence of faith groups, youth groups and Members of the House of Lords.

2. **Sense of personal influence on climate policy:** Three out of five respondents (59%) felt they did not have much influence over climate policy. Respondents from Northern Ireland were more positive about their influence than those from other parts of the UK.

3. **Views on citizens' assemblies:** There was moderate support for the idea of permanent Climate Citizens' Assemblies (though many gave neutral responses). Local assemblies received slightly higher support (45%) than national assemblies (42%), and respondents from Scotland and Northern Ireland were somewhat more likely to support local assemblies than those from England and Wales.

4. **Support for types of research for reducing emissions:** More than three quarters of respondents believed that natural, engineering and social sciences all play an important role in helping the UK understand how to reduce emissions. Research on technologies and climate science were viewed as most important, just ahead of research on the economy and public policy.

5. **Perceptions about the fairness of climate change policies:** Respondents from England felt bias and lack of fairness in climate policy more keenly than those from other parts of the UK, with 43% viewing climate policies as biased toward particular groups. Across the UK, views on the fairness of climate policy were fairly mixed, with more than two fifths taking a neutral position on these questions.

6. **Views on carbon reduction policies and policy mixes:** Respondents were more amenable to taxes and charges on high carbon activities, when these were combined with incentives like tax reductions on, or free, low carbon options. There was less support for, and more opposition to, policies aiming to reduce carbon emissions in the food sector (specifically related to red meat) than in the transport and energy sectors.

Introduction

Background and Survey Aims

The Net Zero Citizens' Survey was undertaken by academics in the ACCESS Network at the Universities of Exeter and Bath, with data collected in July 2024, just before the UK general election. The survey is part of a larger project addressing how best to facilitate a transition to a 'net zero society': Making a Net Zero Society: Follow the Social Science.[1] Using insights and evidence from across the social sciences, a task force of UK social scientists recommended that government take a series of actions to help reach net zero (Box 1).

The survey complements the work of the ACCESS task force by exploring key aspects of the transition to a net zero society from the perspective of the UK's general public. It aimed to understand public views about climate change, net zero targets and climate action, as well as views about how policy should be made, and support for different types of policy (as summarised in Table 1.1).

These topics are reflected in Sections One and Two of the report. Section One reports the level of support for targets, the perceived likelihood of meeting these, the degree of climate worry and views about the speed of action required on climate change. This section also includes views about the potential co-benefits of climate action along with challenges of meeting targets, and actions individuals are taking on climate change. Section Two reports findings on the range of actors that survey respondents feel should be involved in shaping policy, views about individual influence on climate policy, options for citizen engagement, and forms of research evidence seen as most relevant for addressing net zero. It also addresses views about the fairness of climate policies and support for different types of policies and policy mixes.

Overall, the survey complements other recent surveys and reports on public attitudes[2] but is distinctive in focusing more directly on net zero policy itself and the social, economic, individual and political challenges entailed in reaching net zero goals.

The backdrop for this work is a policy context where the UK Government and its devolved administrations have set targets for attaining net zero emissions (first announced in 2019),[3] along with many other countries globally.[4] Legally binding targets have been set for reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2045 (Scottish Government) and 2050 (for the rest of the UK).[5] Since the survey was carried out, the UK Government has revised the UK's interim target, committing to an 81% reduction in emissions by 2035. This is in line with the UK's commitments under the Paris Agreement of 2015 and responds to advice from the UK's Climate Change Committee (CCC) for how best to limit global warming to 1.5°C compared to levels in 1990. If met, this revised commitment is broadly in line with achieving net zero by 2050. Survey participants were not asked about interim targets.

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[1] Bickerstaff K, Abram S, Christie I, Devine-Wright P, Guilbert S, Hinchliffe S, Moseley A, Pitchforth E, Walker G and Whitmarsh L. (2024) Making a Net Zero Society: Follow the Social Science – Full Report. ACCESS Project, University of Exeter, UK.
[2] IPSOS/CAST (2024). Net Zero Living 2024; UK Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (2025). Public Attitudes Tracker; Climate Barometer. See also: HM Government (2021) Climate Change and Net Zero: Public Awareness and Perceptions, Research Paper No. 2021/034.
[3] Burnett, Hinson & Stewart (2024). The UK's plans and progress to reach net zero by 2050. House of Commons Library Research Briefing.
[4] Net Zero Tracker. Data Explorer.
[5] Burnett, Hinson & Stewart (ibid).

In order to meet these targets, experts have concluded that widespread social and behavioural change is likely to be needed in areas such as travel and diet, as well as household energy use, with a need to reduce demand for high-carbon activities, encourage uptake of low carbon choices, and improve efficiencies (Hampton & Whitmarsh 2023,[6] CCC 2025.[7])

Experts are also in agreement that in order to support these changes, the necessary conditions need to be in place, including both appropriate and effective policy levers, and relevant infrastructures (e.g. upgrades to the electricity grid and carbon storage/removal), along with community and societal level acceptance of these. This will require strong public engagement, and the CCC and several other respected bodies (IfG 2021,[8] Climate Outreach 2023[9]) have called for the implementation of a national UK public engagement strategy. This would provide clear, trusted information to households and businesses about climate change, including advice about which actions are most impactful in reducing emissions, and about the benefits (and co-benefits, or co-impacts) of low-carbon choices.

Work on public engagement is already well-developed in Scotland and in Wales, where public engagement strategies are already in place,[10] and the current UK Government has committed to publishing a Public Participation strategy in 2025.[11] The survey results presented here have direct relevance to these issues, providing a timely snapshot of public opinion on issues related to public engagement, individual behaviours, perceived co-benefits, as well as perceived obstacles to achieving net zero and views about policy levers.

[6] Hampton, S. & Whitmarsh, L. (2023) 'Choices for Climate Action: A Review of the Multiple Roles Individuals Play', One Earth 6, Sept 15, 2023, 1157-1172.
[7] Climate Change Committee (2025) The 7th Carbon Budget Report: Advice for the UK Government
[8] Sasse, T., Allan, S. 7 Rutter, J. (2021). T., Allan, S. 7 Rutter, J. (2021). Public engagement and net zero: How government should involve citizens in climate policy making .
[9] Orr, R. and Powell, D. (2023) Towards a UK public engagement strategy on climate change. Oxford: Climate Outreach
[10] Scottish Government (2021). Climate Change – Net Zero Nation: Public Engagement Strategy. Energy and Climate Change Directorate. Welsh Government (2023). Climate Action Wales: Public engagement strategy 2023 to 2026 .
[11] HM Government (2024) Accelerating to Net Zero: Responding to the CCC Progress Report and Delivering the Clean Energy Superpower Mission (p48); also see UK Parliament. (2025) Inquiry and Call for Evidence on Building Public Support for the Energy Transition . Energy Security and Net Zero Committee.

Box 1.1 ACCESS Project and task force recommendations

About ACCESS

ACCESS (Advancing Capacity for Climate and Environment Social Science) aims to champion and coordinate social science to address key environmental challenges (e.g. climate change, loss of biodiversity). It is a climate and environment social science project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and led by the Universities of Exeter and Surrey. More information and resources for environmental social science researchers, policymakers and practitioners are available here: https://accessnetwork.uk.

Making a Net Zero Society ACCESS Social Science Task Force recommendations

- Re-centre net zero policy attention on the role of society, in recognition that the net zero transition is as much a social issue as it is a technological one.
- Prioritise interventions that reduce demand for energy, acknowledging the risks of pursuing supply-side options alone and the additional benefits of demand-side reductions.
- Empower and engage actors from across society, notably mid-level actors (e.g. local government, civil society, businesses, schools), to deliver place-sensitive, locally appropriate, net zero interventions.
- Engage diverse groups of citizens in meaningful debate about change, through the creation of appropriate structures and processes, focusing discussions on both the benefits of net zero measures and the challenges they can raise.
- Build and communicate positive and collective visions of a net zero future to galvanise widespread support for net zero changes and recognise the many benefits of action beyond reducing emissions, e.g. jobs, better health, technological innovation, a fairer society.
- Embed the critical, reflective and analytical skills of the social sciences in net zero institutions and policy.
- Ensure concerted and coordinated investment in social science expertise across all aspects of the next UK Net Zero Research and Innovation Framework Delivery Plan.
- Include more social science expertise in science advisory committees addressing net zero and establish a Net Zero Social Science Advisory Committee in the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero.

Methods and Sample

In the Summer of 2024, in the weeks leading up to the UK General Election, nearly 3000 UK adults were surveyed to understand more about their perspectives on net zero. The timing and political context are important to bear in mind when interpreting the survey results. The survey was purposefully conducted at the end of an electoral cycle so that views are likely to reflect citizens' experiences up until that point.

Following engagement and co-design with government officials across the UK, we asked respondents about their views on climate change and net zero, and about how UK action on climate change can be enabled by policymaking processes and the involvement of different actors (Table 1.1). Ethical approval was received before undertaking the survey from the University of Exeter's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. All responses were anonymous and were collected by the Survey Company *Survation*. The results for quantitatively analysed questions are reported in Sections 1 and 2. An open text question asking respondents to indicate what three words or phrases come to mind when they hear the term 'net zero' was analysed qualitatively (see Section 3).

Table 1.1 - Survey topics

1. Views on Climate Change & Net Zero Targets	2. Views on Climate Policies & Policy Making
1.1 Support for net zero targets	2.1 Groups that should influence climate policy
1.2 Likelihood of meeting net zero targets	2.2 Personal influence on climate policy
1.3 Climate worry	2.3 Options for citizen engagement in policy
1.4 Speed of action on climate change	2.4 Research & knowledge for informing policy
1.5 Co-benefits of climate action	2.5 Perceived fairness of policies
1.6 Challenges to achieving net zero targets	2.6 Support for different policy options & mixes
1.7 Individual actions on climate change	

Respondents were spread across the four nations of the UK (Tables 1.2, and 1.3, and Appendix 1), including:

- One main UK-wide sample of 2,013 people (from England, Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland), representative of the UK population for age, gender, region, qualification, income, and political variables (2020 General Election voting and EU Referendum voting patterns).
- Three devolved 'booster' samples (952 in total) providing additional respondents for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, with these broadly representative of each individual devolved nation for age, gender and region (Scotland and Wales), and age and gender (Northern Ireland). The booster samples aimed to facilitate a more meaningful and statistically powerful analysis for all parts of the UK.

Table 1.2 - Summary of the survey sample, by country

Nation	Main sample	Booster samples	Combined samples
England	1681	0	1681
Northern Ireland	54	323	377
Scotland	178	322	500
Wales	100	307	407
Total	2013	952	2965

Table 1.3 – Summary of sample characteristics: Entire sample (n=2965)

Variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Female	1522	51.3
	Male	1420	47.9
	Trans-gender	8	0.3
	Non-binary	7	0.2
	Other	3	0.1
	Prefer not to say	5	0.2
Ethnicity	White	2628	88.6
	Asian/Asian British	155	5.2
	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	99	3.3
	Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	54	1.8
	Other ethnic group	15	0.5
	Prefer not to say	14	0.5
Education	No qualifications	327	11.0
	Standard secondary (e.g. GCSEs, NVQ L1-2, school cert)	958	32.3
	Advanced secondary (e.g. A-Levels, NVQ L3, higher school cert)	409	13.8
	Higher education (e.g. degree, higher degree, NVQ L4-5)	1181	39.8
	Other (e.g. apprenticeship)	90	3.0
Income	£0 - £19,999	901	30.4
	£20,000 - £39,999	1050	35.4
	£40,000+	1014	34.2

Quantitative data were analysed descriptively using 'R' to compare data from the UK with data from each of the four nations. Survey weighting was used to adjust for any minor imbalances. In this report, unless otherwise stated, the main and booster samples are combined for analysis, with relevant weightings applied, and booster samples down weighted to ensure that regional representation across the UK is maintained. Where percentages are reported, the totals may add up to slightly more or less than 100% due to rounding.

Qualitative data were coded thematically using NVivo 14. The unit of coding was the full response of each survey participant. Coded data were used to create a codebook containing frequencies, descriptive notes and examples for each of the codes. The fifteen resultant codes were then organized into six groups: four substantive themes respondents associated with net zero; lack of knowledge; and sentiment. NVivo tools, such as coding matrices, hierarchy charts and word clouds, were used to understand more about the data and inter-relationships and overlaps between codes.

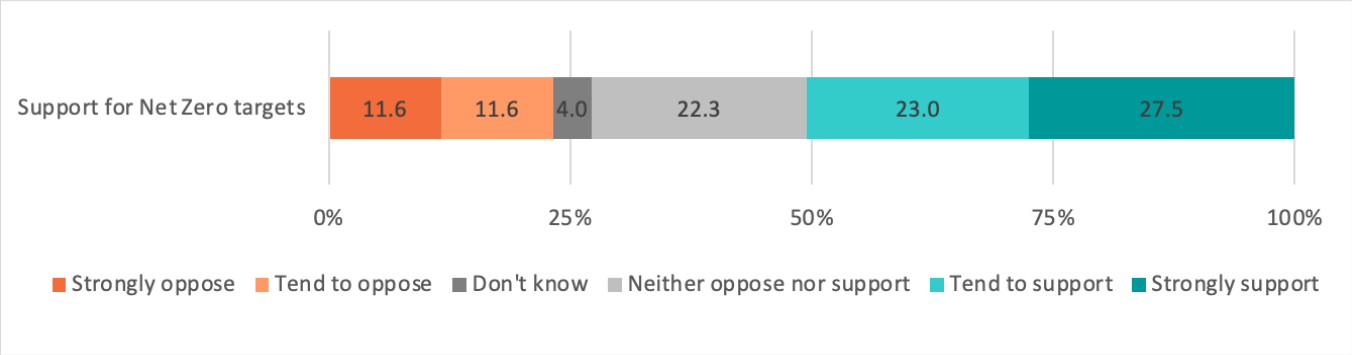
Results

Section 1: Views on Climate Change and Net Zero Targets

Support for Net Zero Targets

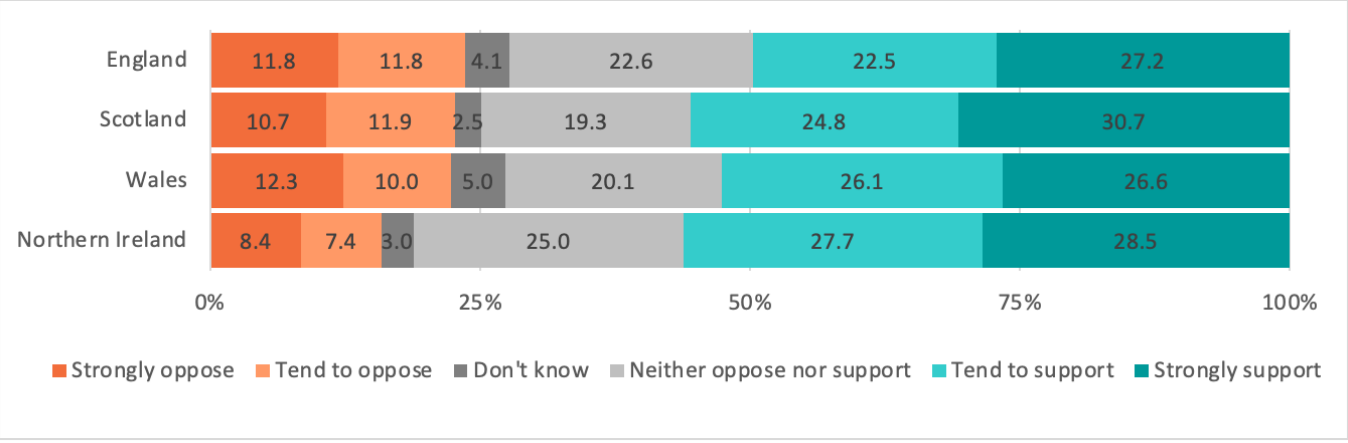
To assess support for net zero targets, respondents were first provided with a definition of 'net zero' and information about the target for their respective part of the UK.[12] They were then asked about the extent of their support for the relevant target. As shown in Fig 1.1, just over half of respondents either tended to support or strongly supported their government's net zero target (51%), shown in blue, with 28% strongly supportive. Nearly a quarter either tended to or were strongly opposed (23%), shown in orange. A further quarter gave a neutral response (22%) or didn't know (4%).

Fig 1.1 To what extent do you support or oppose your Government's net zero target? (UK-wide)



Comparing figures across parts of the UK (Fig 1.2), Scottish and Northern Irish respondents were most supportive of their respective administrations' net zero targets (56% in both parts of the UK either tended to or strongly supported them and those from Scotland were most likely to be strongly supportive). English and Welsh respondents were also supportive but slightly less so (50% and 53% respectively).

Fig 1.2 To what extent do you support or oppose the Government's net zero target? (by part of UK)

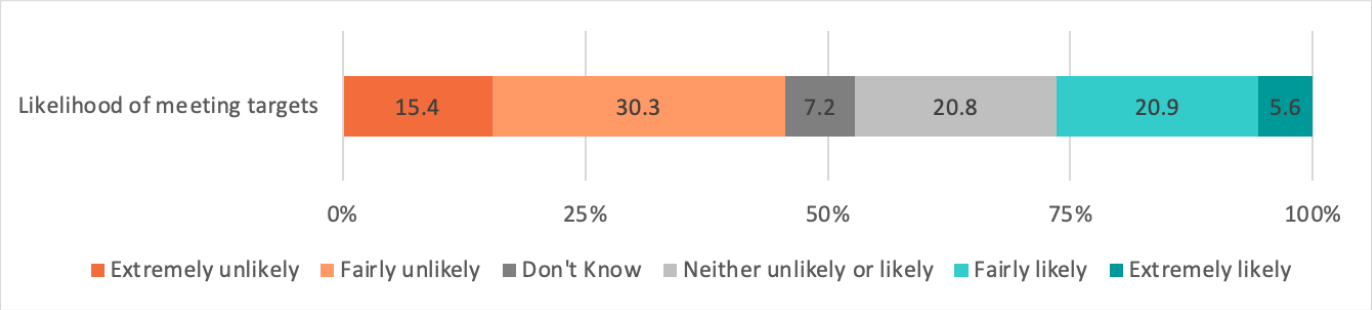


[12] This question varied according to the respondents' permanent place of residence: England, Northern Ireland, Wales – 2050; Scotland – 2045. The UK data combines these responses.

Likelihood That Net Zero Targets Will Be met

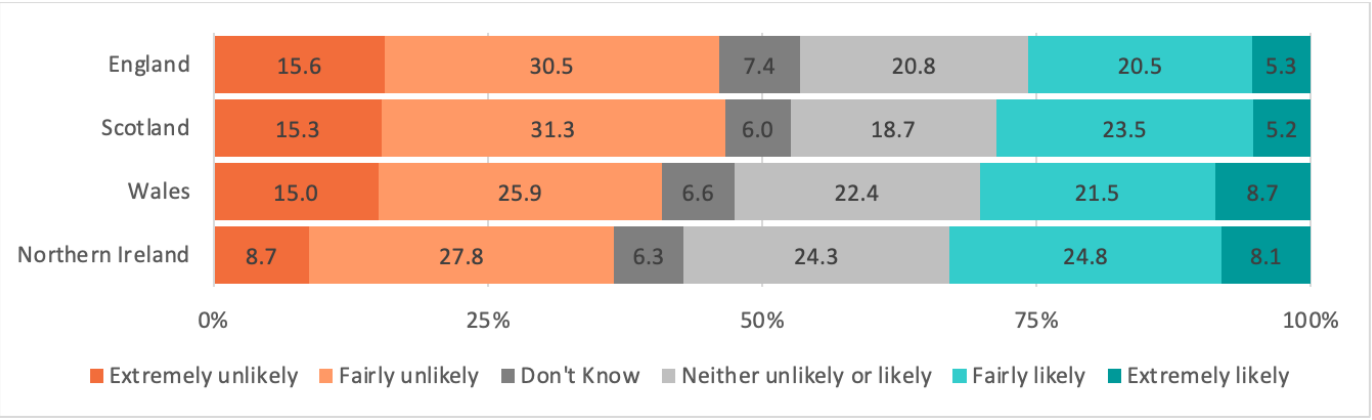
Respondents were next asked about the likelihood of governments meeting their net zero targets (Fig 1.3).[13] Nearly half of respondents thought meeting net zero targets was unlikely (46%), with 15% of these feeling it was extremely unlikely. Just over a quarter of respondents thought it was likely (27%), with 6% of these believing it to be 'extremely likely'. Over a quarter gave either neutral (21%) or don't know answers (7%).

Fig 1.3 How likely do you think it is that the Government will achieve its target to reduce carbon emissions to net zero? (UK-wide)



Breaking this down for the different parts of the UK (Fig 1.4), those in Northern Ireland were least pessimistic and most optimistic about the chances of their government meeting their net zero target: 33% felt it was fairly or extremely likely, followed by those in Wales (30%), Scotland (29%) and lastly England (26%).

Fig 1.4 How likely do you think it is that the Government will achieve its target to reduce carbon emissions to net zero? (by part of UK)

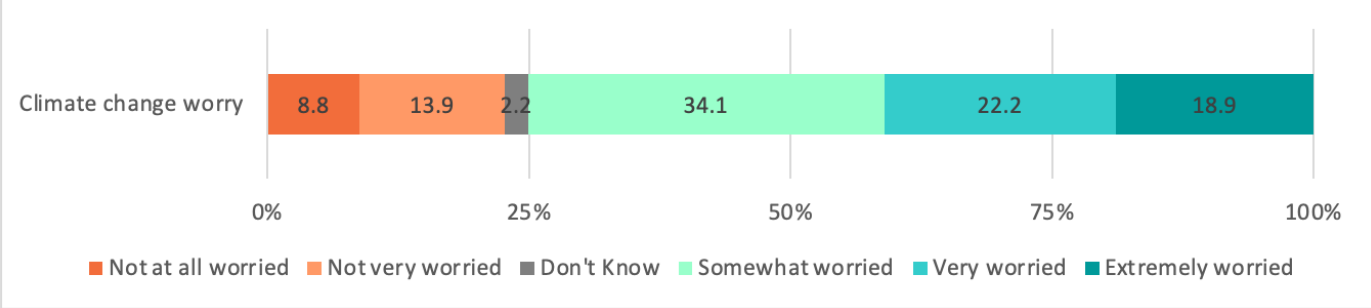


[13] Respondents were asked about this in relation to the part of the UK they resided in (with English respondents asked about the UK Government target as a whole and each devolved nation asked about their own targets).

Climate Worry

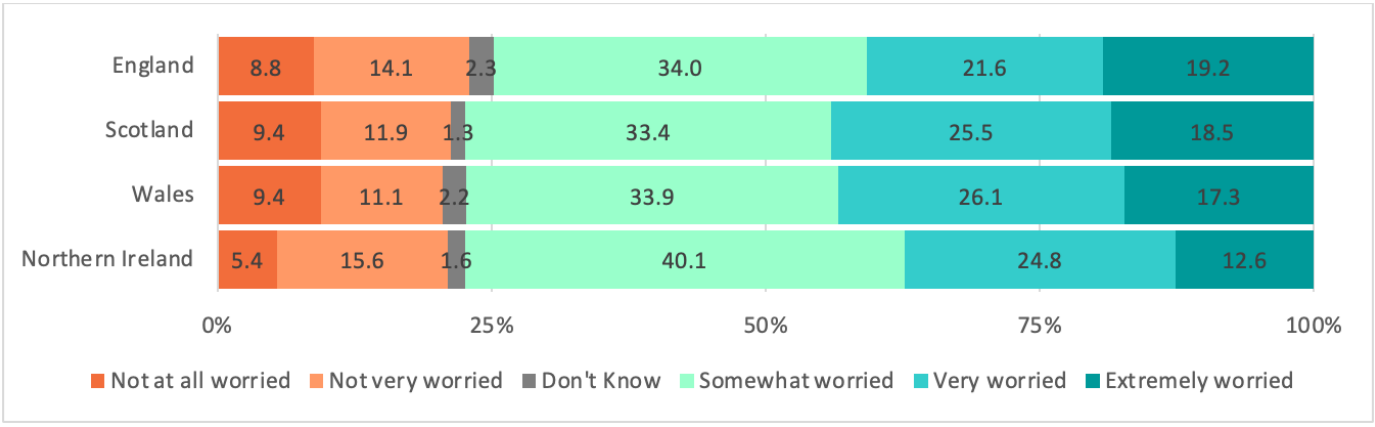
Climate change worry was common among respondents (Fig 1.5). When asked about this, three quarters were somewhat, very or extremely worried about climate change (75%), with 41% either very or extremely worried. Less than one in ten were not at all worried (9%). The group who responded 'I don't know' to this question was comparatively smaller (2%) than for questions about net zero targets.

Fig 1.5 How worried are you about climate change? (UK-wide)



Breaking this down by part of the UK (Fig 1.6), respondents from Scotland and Wales were more likely to be very or extremely worried (44% and 43% respectively for Scotland and Wales) than those from England (41%) or Northern Ireland (37%).

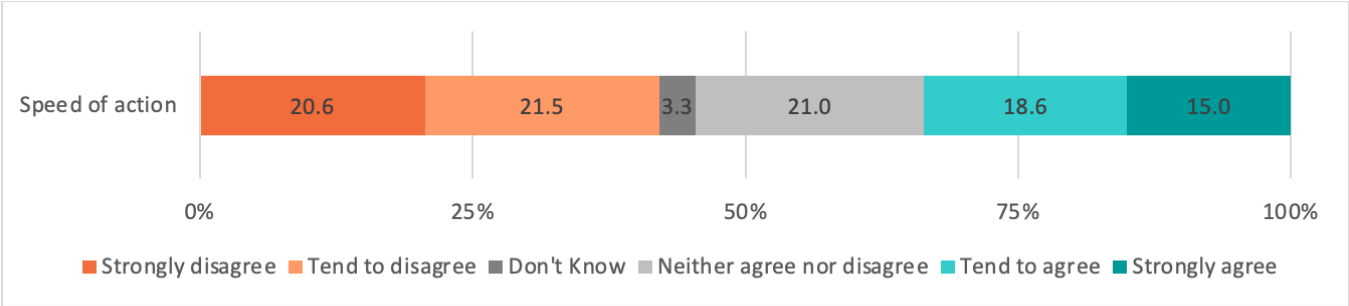
Fig 1.6 How worried are you about climate change? (by part of UK)



Speed of Action on Climate Change in Relation to Economic conditions

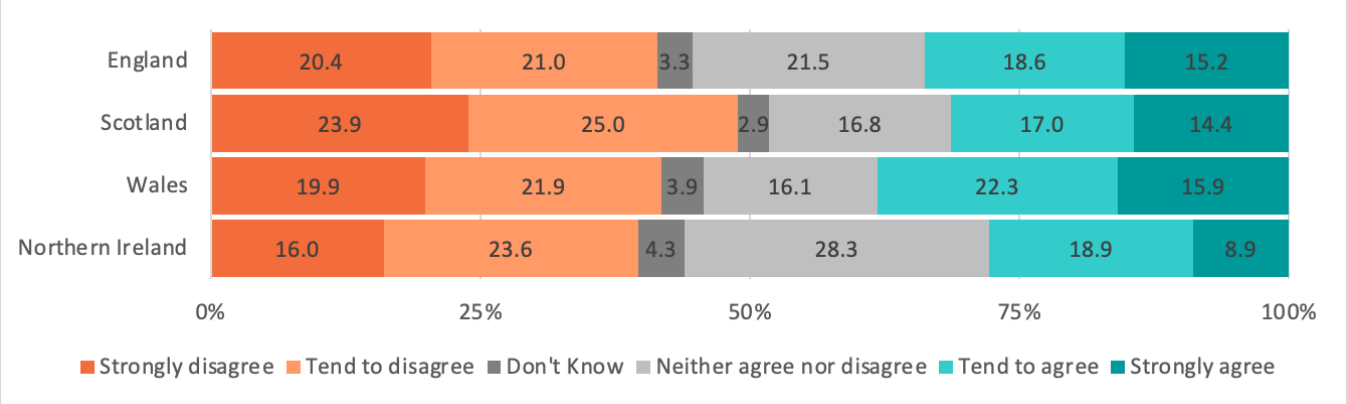
Respondents were divided about the timing of climate action in relation to economic conditions (Fig 1.7). Just over a third (34%) tended to agree or strongly agreed with the idea that we should wait to act on climate change until the economy is stronger (shown in blue). A larger group, just over two fifths of respondents (42%) disagreed, or tended to disagree, that we should wait to act (shown in orange), indicating that they believed more immediate action is necessary. Around a quarter (24%) selected either 'don't know' or gave a neutral response.

Fig 1.7 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? We should wait to act on climate change until the UK economy is stronger than it is now. (UK-wide)



Across all parts of the UK, respondents were more likely to feel that we should act sooner rather than later (i.e. disagreeing that we should wait until the economy is stronger), as shown in orange in Fig 1.8. However, those from Scotland were more likely to express this view (49%) followed by those from Wales (42%), England (41%) or Northern Ireland (40%). These figures are consistent with the slightly higher climate worry in Scotland and Wales than in England and Northern Ireland.

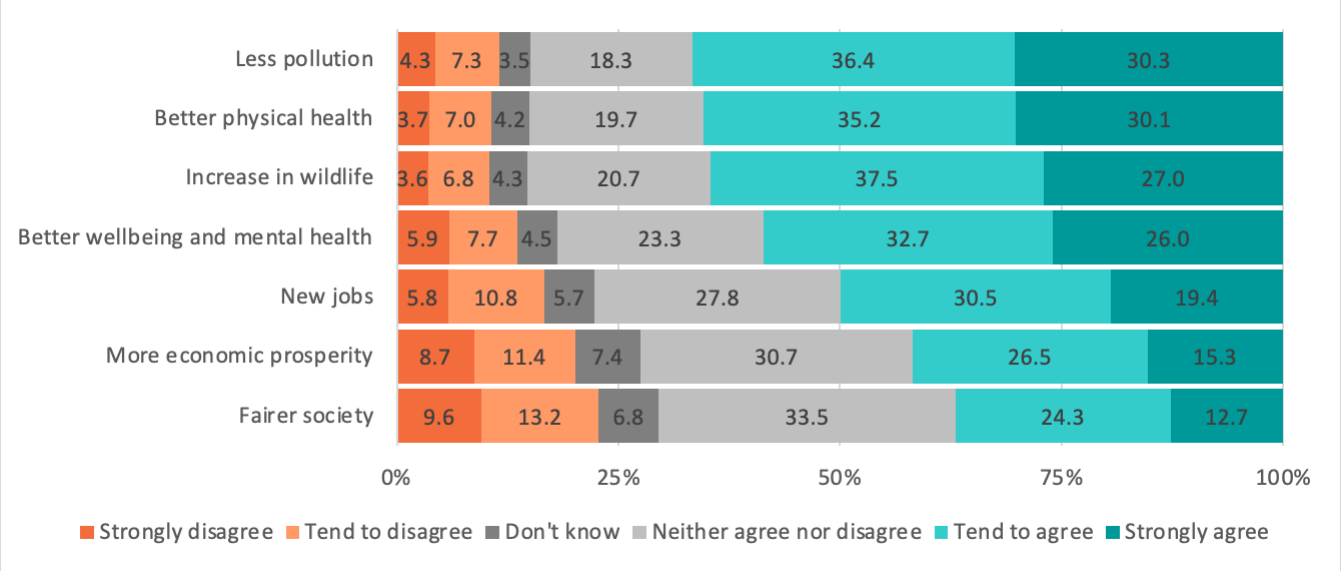
Fig 1.8 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? We should wait to act on climate change until the UK economy is stronger than it is now (by part of UK)



Co-benefits of Climate Action

A majority of respondents agreed that action on climate change would contribute to other positive outcomes in addition to reducing emissions (Fig 1.9). Often labelled 'co-benefits', nature and health-related benefits were perceived to be more likely than economic and societal benefits. Approximately two out of three respondents agreed that action on climate change would contribute to reduced pollution (67%), better physical health (65%), and increased wildlife (65%). Close to two thirds agreed that it would engender better wellbeing and mental health (59%), and half thought it would create new jobs (50%). Two fifths felt action on climate change would improve economic prosperity (42%), and more than a third felt it would lead to a fairer society (37%). For each of the potential co-benefits specified, respondents were more likely to select 'neither agree not disagree' or 'don't know' than to reject the co-benefits.

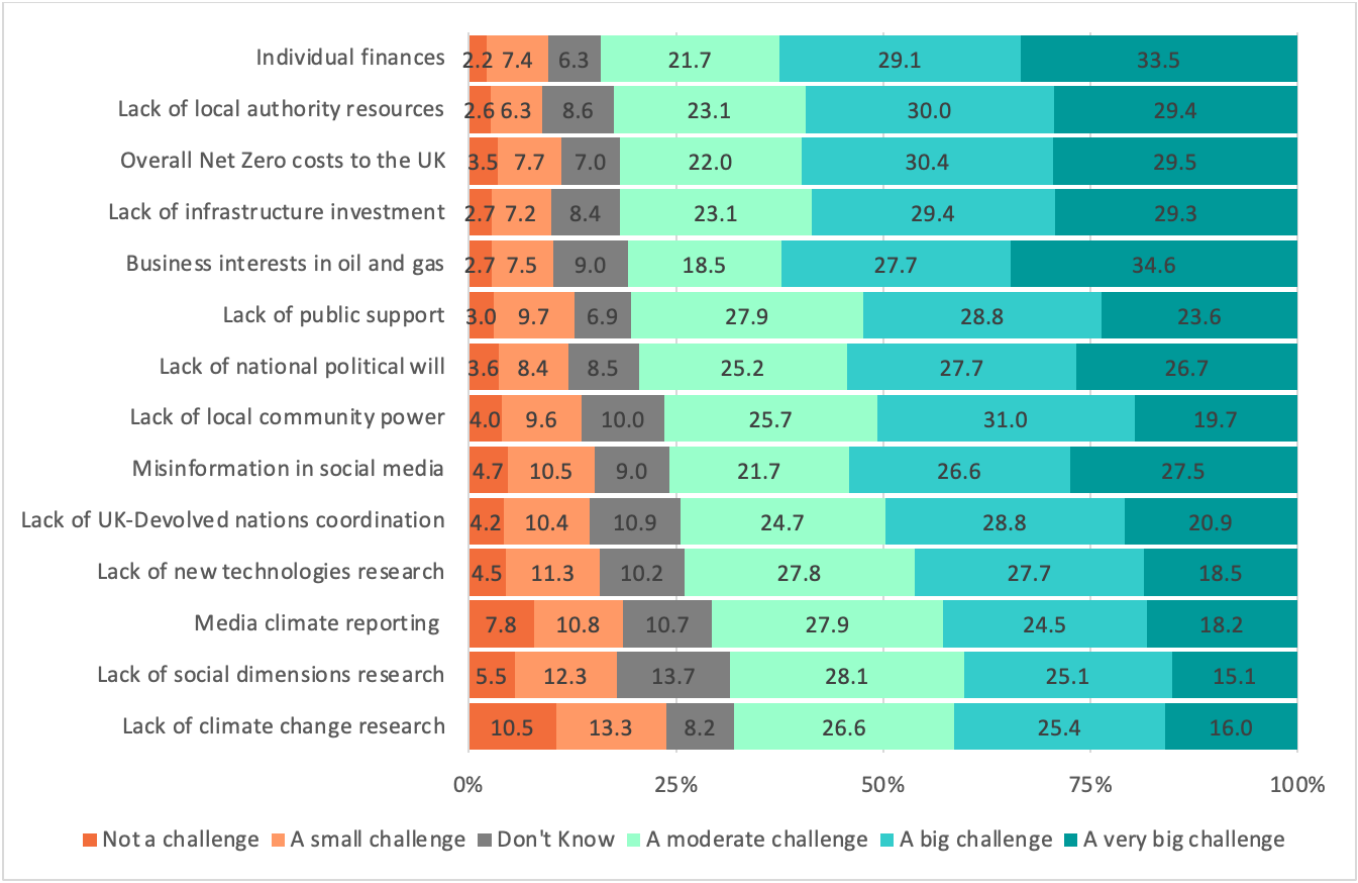
Fig 1.9. To what extent do you agree or disagree that action on climate change will create any of the following benefits in addition to reducing emissions? (UK-wide)



Challenges to Achieving Net Zero Targets

Respondents were asked to consider the extent of challenges to achieving net zero targets (Fig 1.10). Fourteen issues were listed, related to economics, politics, the media, the public and communities, and research. For all the issues listed, a majority of two thirds or more of respondents considered them to be moderate, big or very big challenges. The most cited factors were economic in nature, although political issues and public support also featured. The most common challenges were viewed to be individual finances (84%), lack of resources in local authorities (83%), overall costs to the UK of achieving net zero (82%), a lack of investment in infrastructure (82%), and business interests in oil and gas (81%). Lack of public support (80%) and a lack of national political will (80%) were perceived to be challenges of a similar magnitude. 'Don't know' responses were relatively high for this question (6-14%) compared with other questions in Section 1.

Fig 1.10. To what extent would you consider each of the following to be challenges to achieving the net zero target? (UK-wide)



*For national political will, respondents answered in relation to their own country's government, with all responses amalgamated

Individual Actions on Climate Change

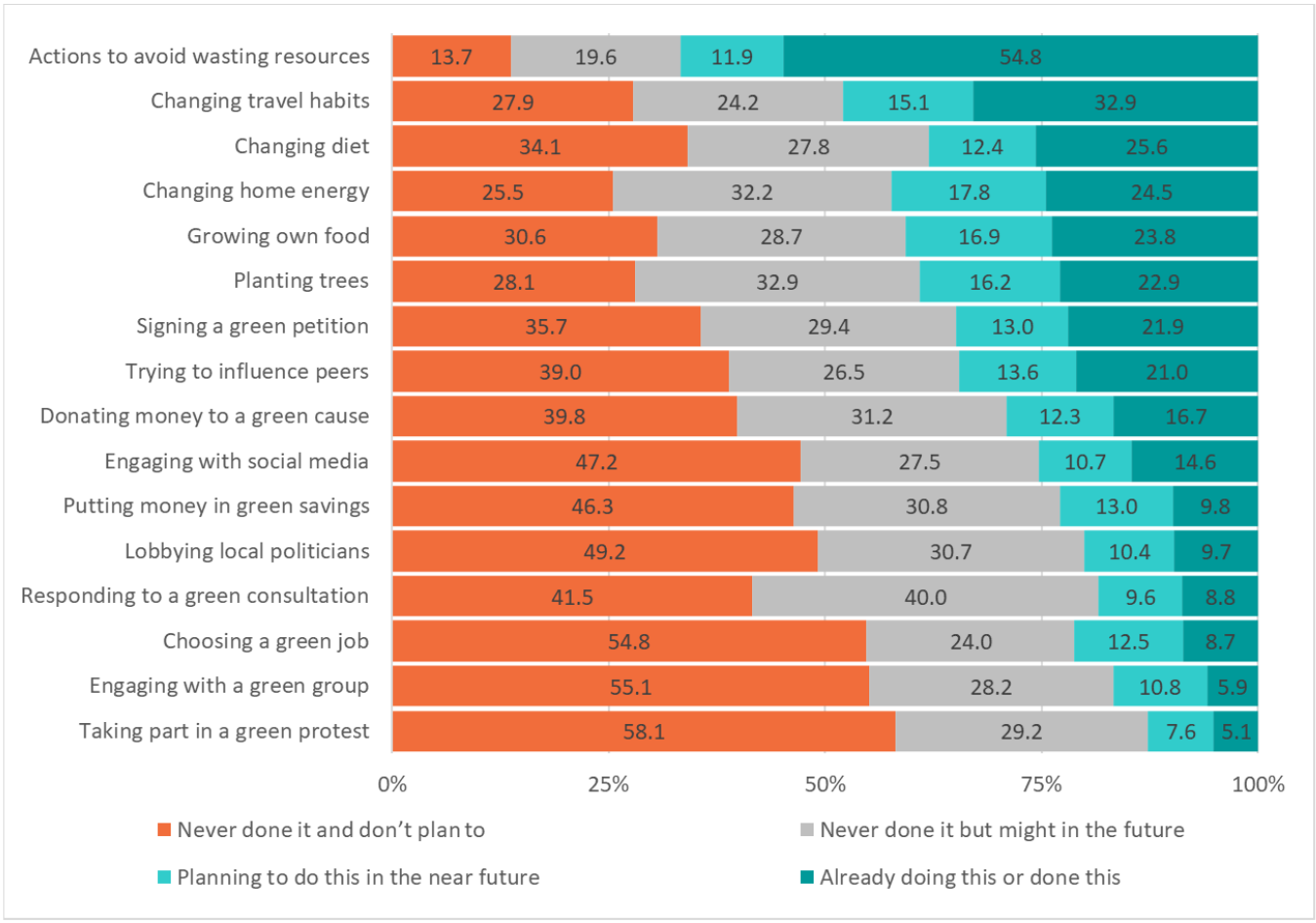
Respondents were asked whether they themselves would undertake, or had undertaken, actions to try and make an impact on climate change, or not (Fig 1.11). The actions included behavioural or lifestyle-related actions (e.g. changes to diet, travel habits, home energy use, avoidance of waste); political or civic actions (e.g., protesting, signing petitions, lobbying politicians, trying to influence peers); economic actions (donating to, or investing in, 'green' causes, choice of job); and nature-based actions (growing own food, planting trees).

Respondents were most likely to have already engaged in behavioural or lifestyle-related actions (mean of 35% across items in this category), followed by nature-based actions (mean = 23%), and were least likely to have engaged in political or civic actions (mean = 12%) or economic actions (mean = 12%). The most common action already undertaken was avoiding waste (55% already doing this). Taking part in a green protest and joining an environmental group were the least common (only 5% and 6%, respectively, already doing this).

While overall, people were less rather than more likely to have engaged in the actions listed, it is noteworthy that many people would either consider doing, or were planning on doing, most of the actions listed (an average of 42% of people across all the actions stated they might or planned to do these in future, ranging from 32-50%). The top four such actions were making changes to home energy consumption (50%); taking part in a green consultation (50%), planting trees (49%) and growing food (46%).

There were, however, a small number of actions where a majority (over 50%) stated that had never done it and did not plan to do so. These were taking part in a green protest (58%), engaging with a green group (55%), or choosing a green job (55%).

Fig 1.11. Which of the following actions have you undertaken, or might undertake in future, to try and make an impact on climate change? (UK-wide)



Section 2: Views on Climate Policies and Policy Making

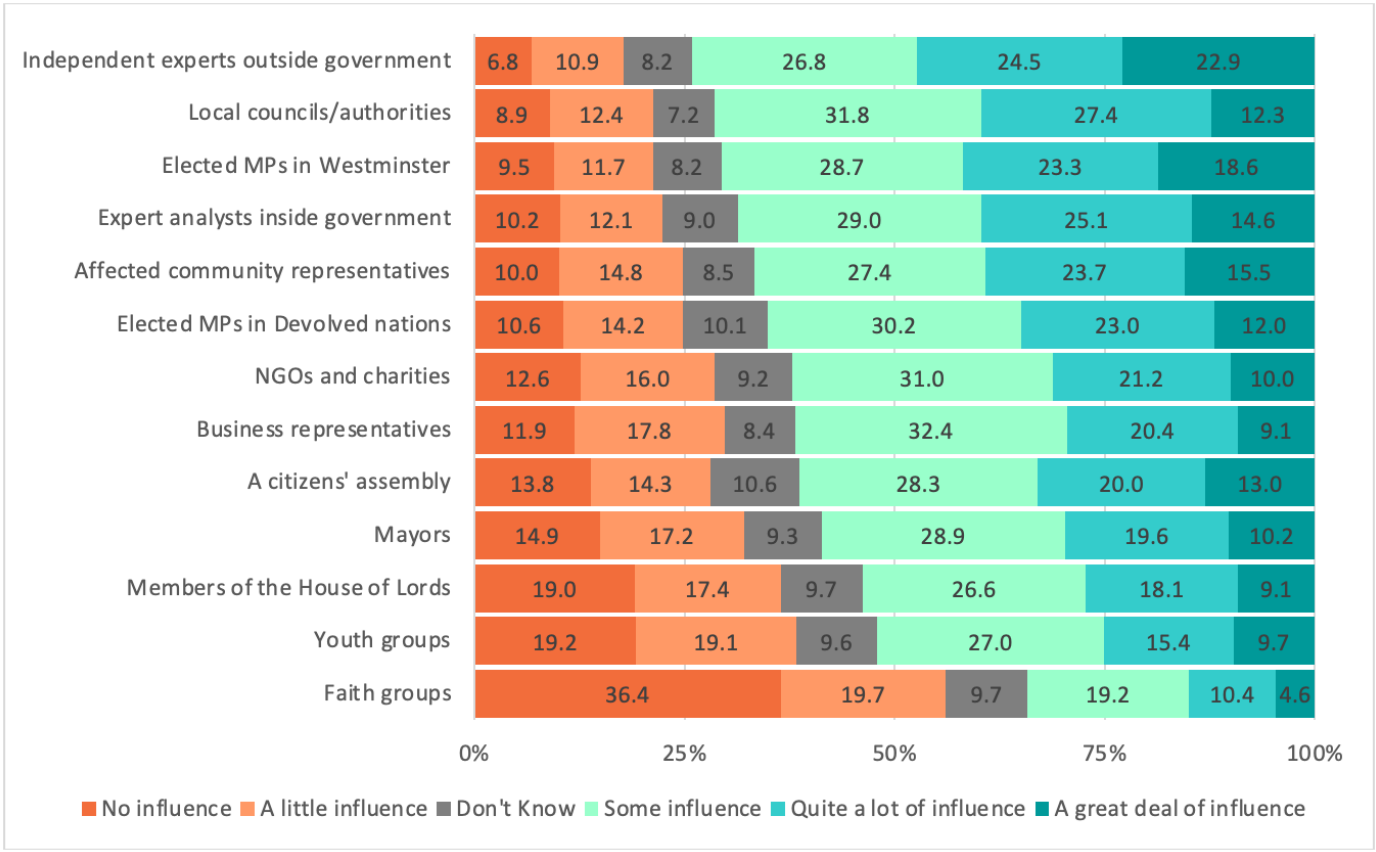
The second set of questions addressed issues surrounding the creation of policy itself – who should be involved, how much individuals feel involved, their views about specific forms of citizen engagement in policy, and what forms of research should inform policy. This section also examined views about policy fairness, and support for different policies and policy mixes.

Groups That Should Influence Climate Policy

Respondents were asked which groups should be able to influence new climate policies (Fig 2.1). Groups included national political actors, experts, local authorities, and sectoral representatives. Of those listed, independent experts outside government were regarded as being the most legitimate group to influence new climate policies. Nearly three quarters of respondents maintained they should have some, quite a lot or a great deal of influence (74%). Less than a fifth asserted they should have little or no influence (18%). Alongside them, in the top five most legitimate influences were local authorities (72%), elected MPs in Westminster (71%), experts inside government (69%) and representatives of communities affected by climate change (67%).

Faith groups were regarded as being the least legitimate influencers. Over half of respondents indicated they should have little or no influence (56%). More than a third of respondents were sceptical of youth groups (38%) or Members of the House of Lords (36%). Don't know responses ranged from 7-11% for all of the groups.

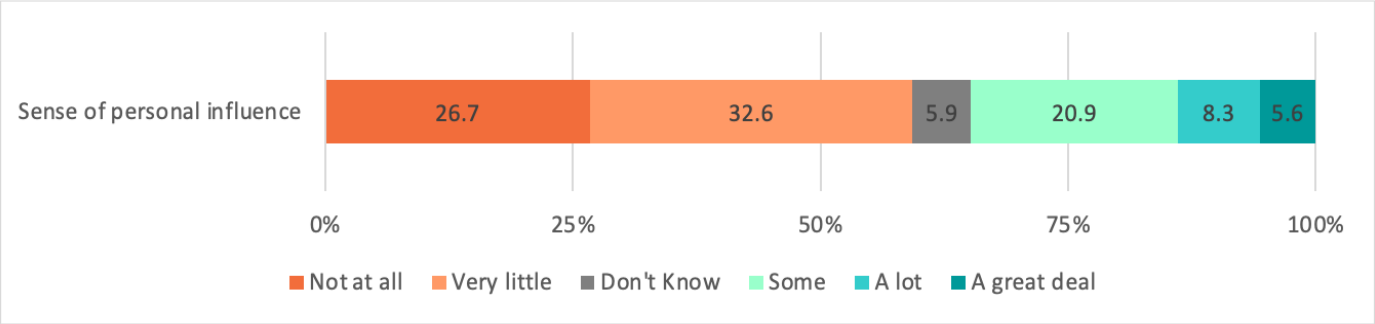
Fig 2.1: To meet climate change targets (e.g. those associated with net zero), we will need new climate policies. Policy making is often shaped by different groups in society. How much do you think each of the following should have an influence on new climate policies? (UK-wide)



Sense of Personal Influence on Climate Policy

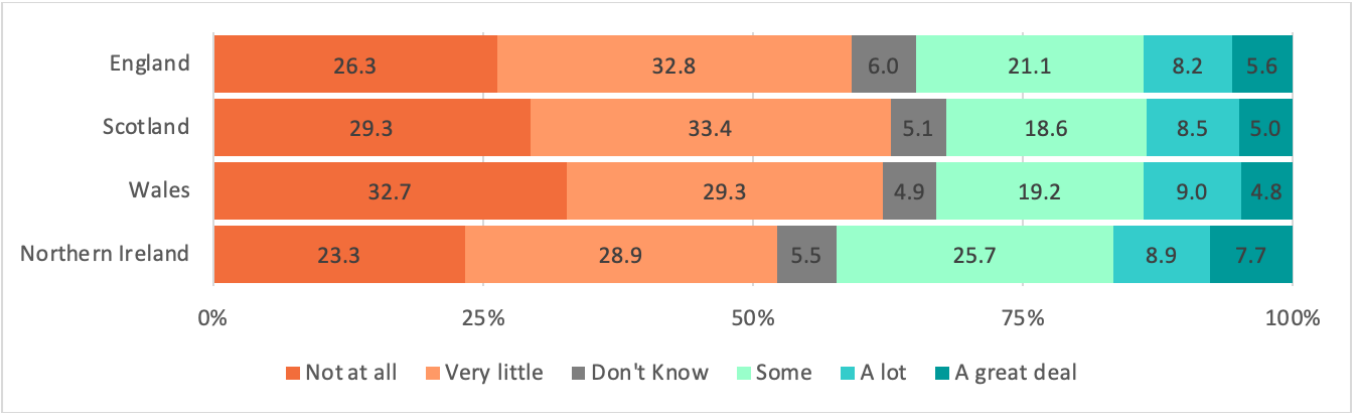
Whilst many groups have the potential to shape public policy, we were also interested in the extent to which individuals themselves felt they had opportunities to influence climate policies. This is an important issue in the context of the recent discussions about the development of public engagement strategies in different parts of the UK.[14] Three out of five respondents felt they had no or very little opportunity to influence climate policies (59%). One in five felt they had some influence (21%) and only one in seven felt they had a lot or a great deal of influence (14%). 6% selected the 'don't know' response (Fig 2.2).

Fig 2.2: To what extent do you feel like you have opportunities to have a say in the development of climate policies for the UK? (UK-wide)



There was relatively little difference between England, Scotland and Wales (Fig 2.3). 35%, 32% and 33%, respectively, felt they had some, a lot or a great deal of influence. However, those from Northern Ireland were more inclined to feel they have a say (42%).

Fig 2.3: To what extent do you feel like you have opportunities to have a say in the development of climate policies for the UK? (by part of UK)



[14] UKERC Public Engagement Observatory & UK Department of Energy Security & Net Zero. Experiments; Demski, C. (2021) Net zero public engagement and participation: a research note, UK Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy; Scottish Government (2021) Climate Change - Net Zero Nation: Public Engagement Strategy for Climate Change.

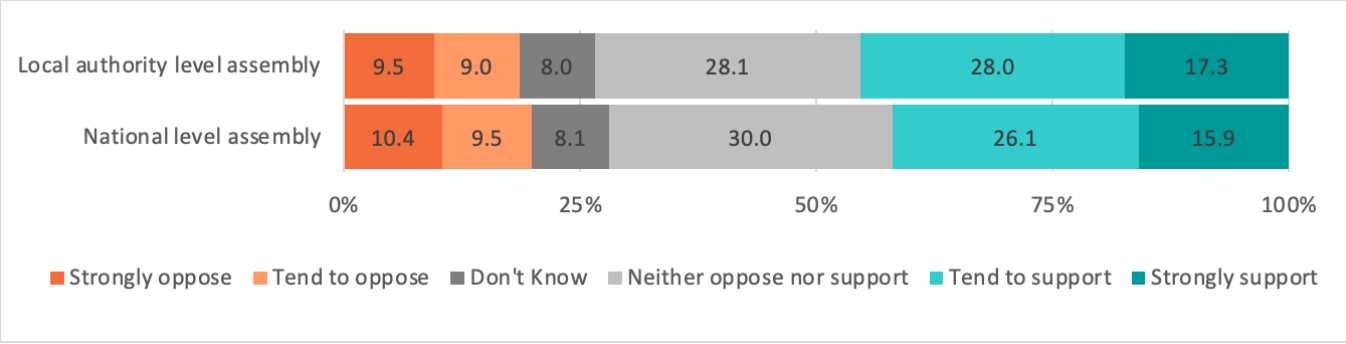
Options for Citizen Engagement: Support For Climate Citizens' Assemblies

Building on the issue of public engagement, we explored respondents' support for the idea of permanent climate citizens' assemblies. These democratic innovations involve a random, representative sample of citizens from a wider population spending time over weeks or months learning about climate change and associated policies, debating issues, policy options and priorities, and generating recommendations that can be employed by policy makers. They have been trialled fairly extensively in the UK on an ad hoc basis at local authority level,[15] as well as at national and devolved levels (with UK-wide and Scottish climate assemblies having taken place in 2020[16] and 2020-21[17]).

After being provided with a description of a climate assembly, survey respondents were asked to what extent they would support or oppose the creation of a permanent climate assembly for the UK as a whole and within their local authority area (Fig 2.4). Two out of five respondents expressed support for climate assemblies at the national level (42%) and local (45%) levels. The substantial proportion of neutral and don't know responses (over a third for both a local and a national assembly) may be reflective of a lack of familiarity with this type of institution. A minority of around one in five were opposed to both.

These findings may relate to Fig 1.11, where respondents expressed intentions to take political actions. They also correspond to Fig 2.2, where survey respondents did not feel they had opportunities to influence climate policy.

Fig 2.4: To what extent would you support or oppose the creation of a permanent Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change for (a) Your local authority area; (b) the UK as a whole (UK-wide)



[15] 23 UK-based local citizens' assemblies or juries, predominantly on climate related issues, were reported to have taken place between 2019 and 2021, with several more since then; Brown, L. (2022) Local citizens' assemblies in the UK: a second report card. The Constitution Unit Blog.
[16] Climate Assembly UK. (2020) The path to net zero. House of Commons.
[17] Scotland's Climate Assembly (2021) Recommendations for action.

Breaking this down for the UK, there were similar levels of support for a national UK climate assembly across all parts of the UK; opposition was lowest in Northern Ireland and Wales (Table 2.1). Respondents from Scotland and Northern Ireland were somewhat more likely to support a local climate assembly than those in England and Wales; opposition was lowest in Northern Ireland.

Table 2.1 - Support for and opposition to climate citizens' assemblies (part of the UK)

Assembly scale	Public view	England (1681)	N. Ireland (377)	Scotland (500)	Wales (407)
National	Support	42%	45%	44%	45%
	Opposition	21%	14%	19%	14%
Local	Support	45%	51%	50%	45%
	Opposition	19%	13%	19%	17%

Support for Different Types of Research for Reducing Emissions

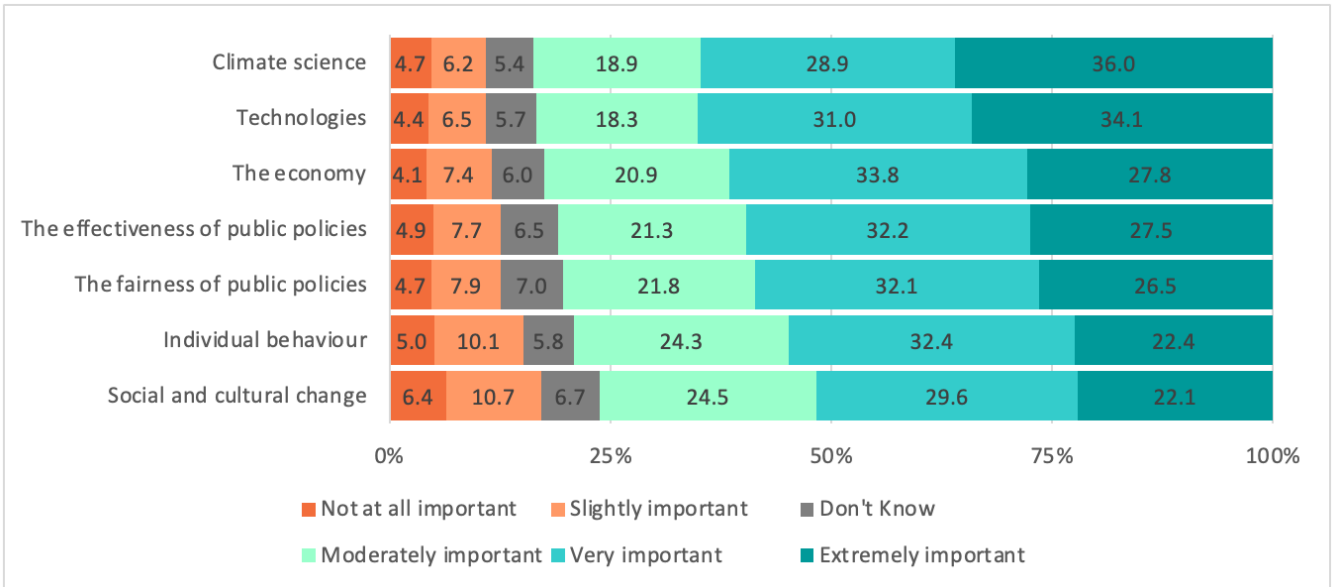
Reflecting the Net Zero Task Force's interest in the role of social sciences in addressing the transition to net zero, we explored how members of the public perceived the contribution of different forms of research knowledge in facilitating this. To address this, we asked respondents how important they regarded different types of research for helping understand how to reduce emissions.

Box 2.1 Research areas put to respondents that may inform the transition to net zero:

- Technologies (e.g. technological solutions to climate change or climate impacts)
- Individual behaviour (e.g. understanding individual needs and decision-making, behavioural change)
- Social and cultural change (e.g. what kinds of societal or cultural issues do we need to understand more about to tackle climate change and climate impacts)
- Climate science (e.g. understanding more about the physical causes and effects of climate change)
- Effectiveness of public policies (i.e. how well do climate policies work, do they meet their goals?)
- Fairness of public policies (i.e. are the effects of policies fair on different part of society?)
- The economy (e.g. how climate issues impact on the economy, economic costs or benefits of actions to tackle or respond to climate change)

Each of the seven types of research was perceived to be moderately, very or extremely important by more than three quarters of respondents (Fig 2.5). However, there were differing degrees of importance assigned to them. Almost two thirds (65%) thought technologies and climate science research to be very or extremely important. Approximately three out of five respondents assigned the same level of importance (very or extremely important) to research on the economy (62%) and the effectiveness (60%) and fairness of public policies (59%). Just over half thought research on individual behaviour (55%) and social and cultural change (52%) was very or extremely important. Between 5% and 7% of people responded 'don't know' to the options listed. The 'not important' group was small at 4-6% across the options. When seen alongside Fig 2.1, there is alignment between the acceptance of experts' influence on policy and the importance of a variety of types of research.

Fig 2.5: How important do you think research on each of the following topics is in helping us to understand how to reduce emissions? (UK-wide)



Perceived Fairness of Climate Policies

There has been much emphasis on the importance of ensuring a 'just transition' toward net zero and climate change mitigation, with the UK and devolved governments having made various commitments to this,[18] [19] [20] and international bodies and treaties also recognising its importance.[21] [22] Two central aspects of a just transition are procedural and distributional justice.[23] Procedural justice centres on process issues, for example how policies have been formed and decisions made, whether people perceive that they have had a fair say, had their concerns addressed, and been listened to on issues associated with this transition. Distributional or 'substantive' justice relates to the degree to which the benefits and burdens of the transition are shared fairly across society, and whether particular societal groups, communities, regions, workers or businesses have been unfairly or disproportionately affected.[24]

To explore perceptions about justice or fairness, we asked respondents to rate their agreement or disagreement with three statements related to this, i.e. whether policies take into account the views of everyone affected (reflecting procedural justice); whether people felt policies give fair outcomes to everyone affected; and whether they felt policies are biased towards particular groups (both of these reflecting distributional justice). Each respondent was asked about the policies in their own part of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland), so we report each part of the UK here separately.

Overall, across the UK, views about fairness seem to be fairly divided between those with negative, neutral and positive views, with those in England having the most negative views in terms of fairness perceptions (Fig 2.6). Respondents from England were least likely (26%) to agree that climate change policies take into account the views of everyone affected (26%, Fig 2.6a) or that climate policies provide a fair outcome for those affected by climate change (27%, Fig 2.6b). Respondents from England were also most likely to agree that climate policies are biased towards particular groups (43%, Fig 2.6c). Respondents from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were aligned in being somewhat less sceptical of the fairness of climate change policies. For each of the three statements, more than a third of respondents from all parts of the UK selected either 'don't know' or 'neither agree nor disagree', indicating fairly high uncertainty about these issues.

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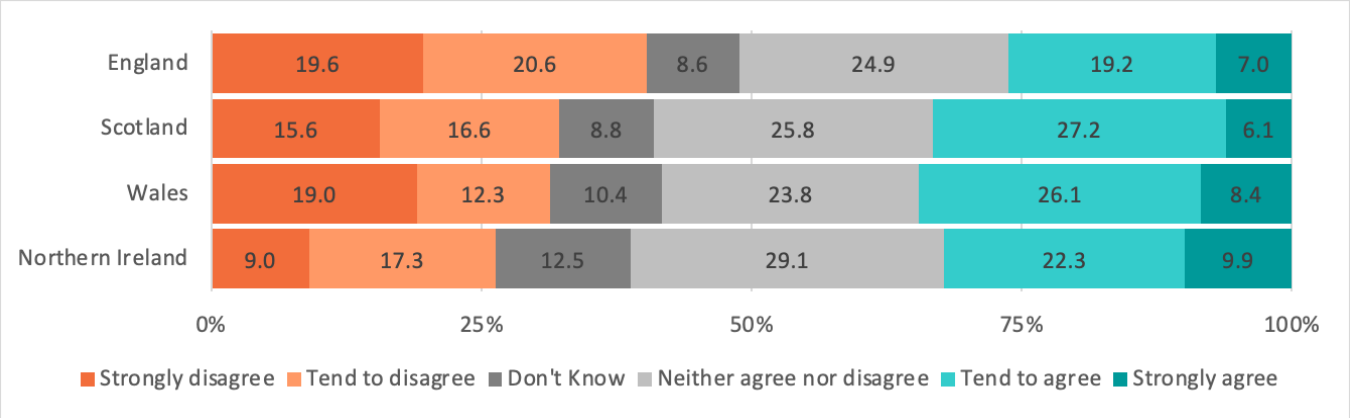
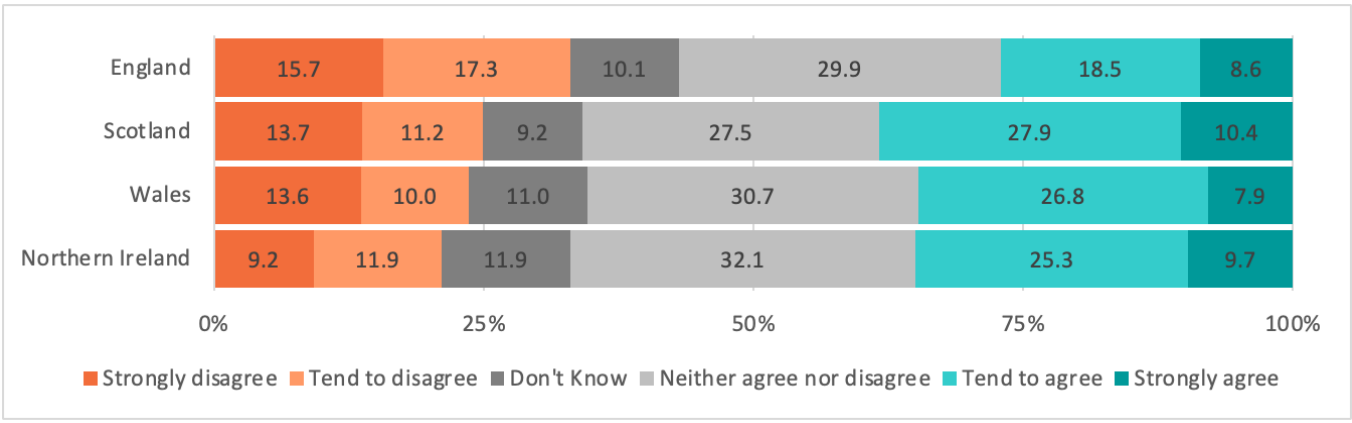
[18] Scottish Government (2021) Just Transition – A fairer, greener, Scotland: Scottish Government response to the report of the Just Transition Commission. Energy and Climate Change Directorate.
[19] Alma Economics (2024) Just Transition Framework: Summary of consultation. Produced for the Welsh Government, Climate Change and Fuel Poverty Division.
[20] Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. (2024) Consultation on the establishment of a Just Transition Commission. Northern Ireland.
[21] United Nation (2015) Paris Agreement.
[22] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2022) Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of climate change technical summary. Working Group III contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report.
[23] Grub, H., & Wentworth, J. (2023) What is a just transition for environmental targets? POSTnote 706. UK Parliament.
[24] Curran B., Robins N., Muller S., Subramoni A. and Tickell S. (2022) Making transition plans just: How to embed the just transition into financial sector net zero transition plans. London: Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, London School of Economics and Political Science.

Fig 2.6: Thinking about government or devolved policies to address climate change, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with these statements about bias fairness and representation[25] (by part of UK)

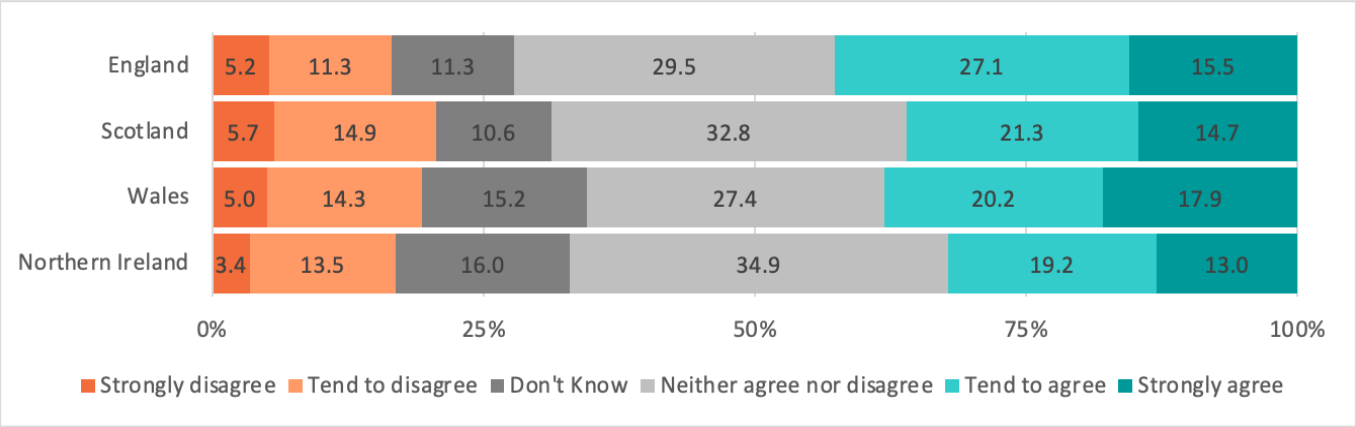
a. Climate change policies take into account the views of everyone affected



b. Climate change policies give a fair outcome to everyone affected



c. Climate change policies are biased towards particular groups



[25] Respondents were asked about fairness of policies in their respective country of residence, e.g. Northern Ireland's climate change policies for those living in Northern Ireland, Scottish polities for those in Scotland, Welsh policies for those in Wales, and UK Government policies for those in England.

Support for Policy Options on Road Transport, Energy & Food

We were next interested in public responsiveness to policies and policy mixes aimed at supporting net zero goals across three different sectors: transport (car/bus use), energy (fossil fuels/renewables) and dietary change (red meat/plant-based foods), with an interest in fairness of impacts across society.

Previous research suggests that when asked about different types of policy instruments used in climate policy, members of the public tend to be less supportive of punitive, 'stick'-based policies targeted at individuals, such as taxes, bans or restrictions.[26] Similarly, people's support for climate and net zero policies tends to be impacted by their views about how fair these policies are.[27] Our survey explored these issues further using an experimental question, which examined whether combining 'sticks' (charges or taxes) with different forms of 'carrot' or incentive-based policy instrument would increase support for the 'sticks'.

To help us explore attitudes to equity, two different types of 'carrot' were examined: those bringing benefits to the whole of society; and those benefiting those on lower incomes. These two options have implications for whether the public prefers policy benefits and burdens distributed across the whole of society or targeted toward specific, more vulnerable, groups.

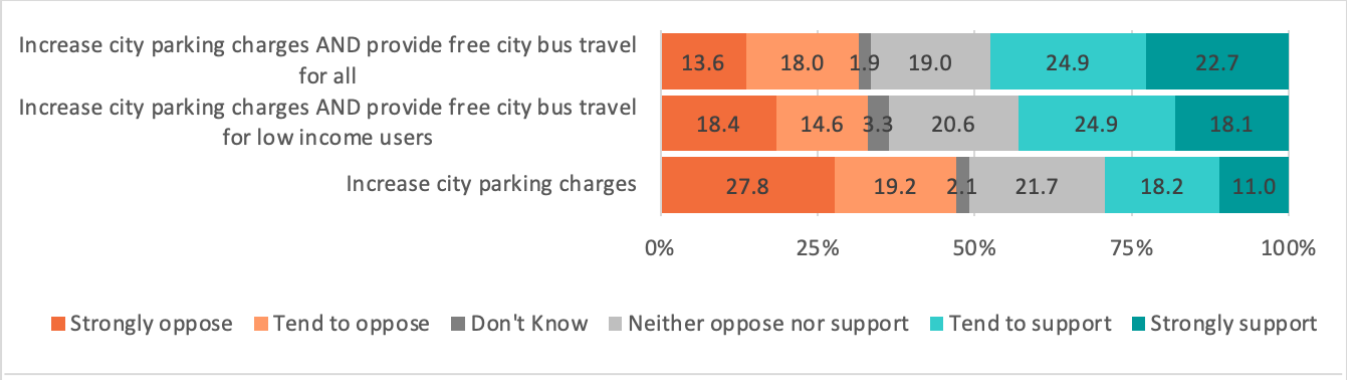
For each of the three sectors, respondents were asked about their degree of support for one policy option. Each respondent was randomly allocated to one of three options:

(i) 'Sticks alone' (increased taxes and charges on higher emission travel modes, energy or food);
(ii) 'Sticks with carrots for all' (universal incentives such as free services or reduced taxes for lower emission travel modes, energy or food); or
(iii) 'Sticks with carrots for those on low incomes' (targeted incentives).

Overall, policy instruments combining 'sticks' with 'carrots' were preferred to 'sticks alone'. However, there were no clear preferences across all sectors between universal and targeted 'carrots'.

For *transport* (Fig 2.7a), the policy mix of increased parking charges and universal free bus travel received most support ('Sticks with carrots for all'). Almost half of those asked supported this (48%), compared to 43% supporting increased parking charges and targeted free bus travel ('Sticks with carrots for those on low incomes') and 29% increased parking charges ('Sticks alone').

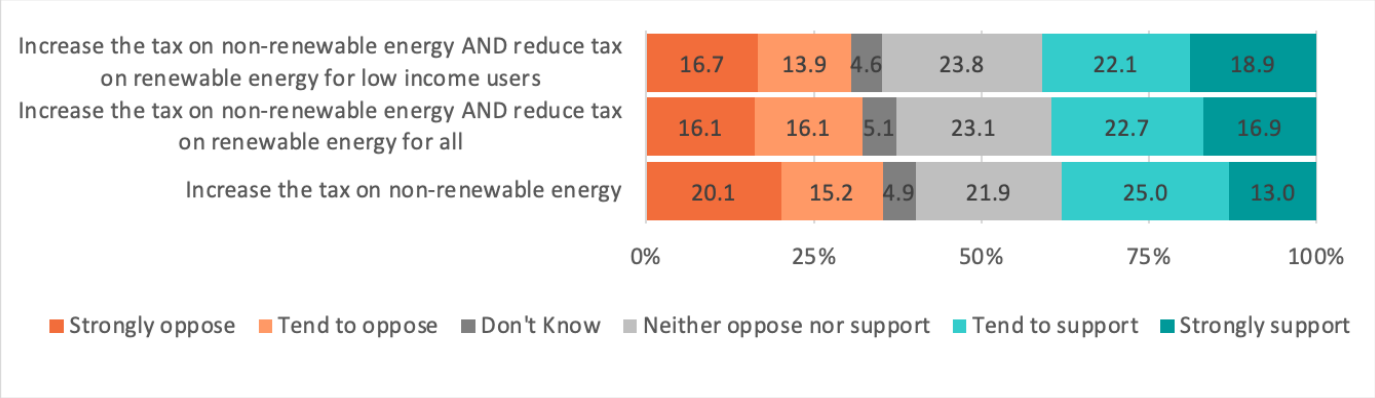
Fig 2.7a: How much would you support or oppose these policies to reduce carbon emissions? (Transport, UK-wide)



[26] Poortinga, W. Whitmarsh, L, Steentjes, K., Gray, E., Thompson, S., Brisley, R. (2023) Factors and framing effects in support for net zero policies in the United Kingdom, Frontiers in Psychology.
[27] Poortinga et al. (ibid)

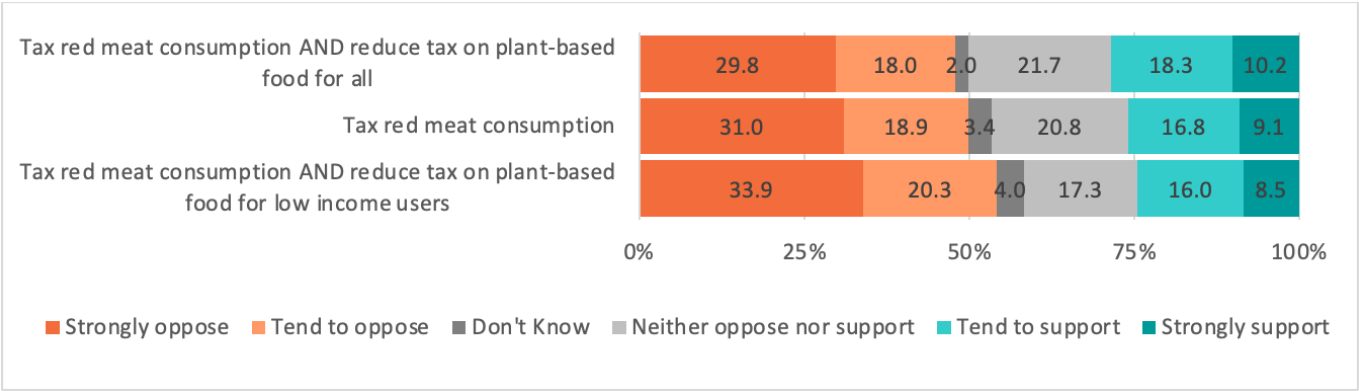
For *energy* (Fig 2.7b), respondents preferred carrots and sticks more than sticks alone, with two in five supporting higher taxes on fossil fuels if they are combined with universal (40%) or targeted (41%) reduced taxes on renewable energy sources, compared to 38% supporting higher taxes with no incentives.

Fig 2.7b: How much would you support or oppose these policies to reduce carbon emissions? (Energy, UK-wide)



However, for *food* (Fig 2.7c), support for a meat tax was consistently low and opposition was high. 29% supported combining a meat tax with a universal reduction in tax on plant-based food. 26% supported a standalone meat tax. 25% supported a meat tax combined with a targeted reduction in tax for those on low incomes.

Fig 2.7c: How much would you support or oppose these policies to reduce carbon emissions? (Food, UK-wide)



Section 3: In Their Own Words

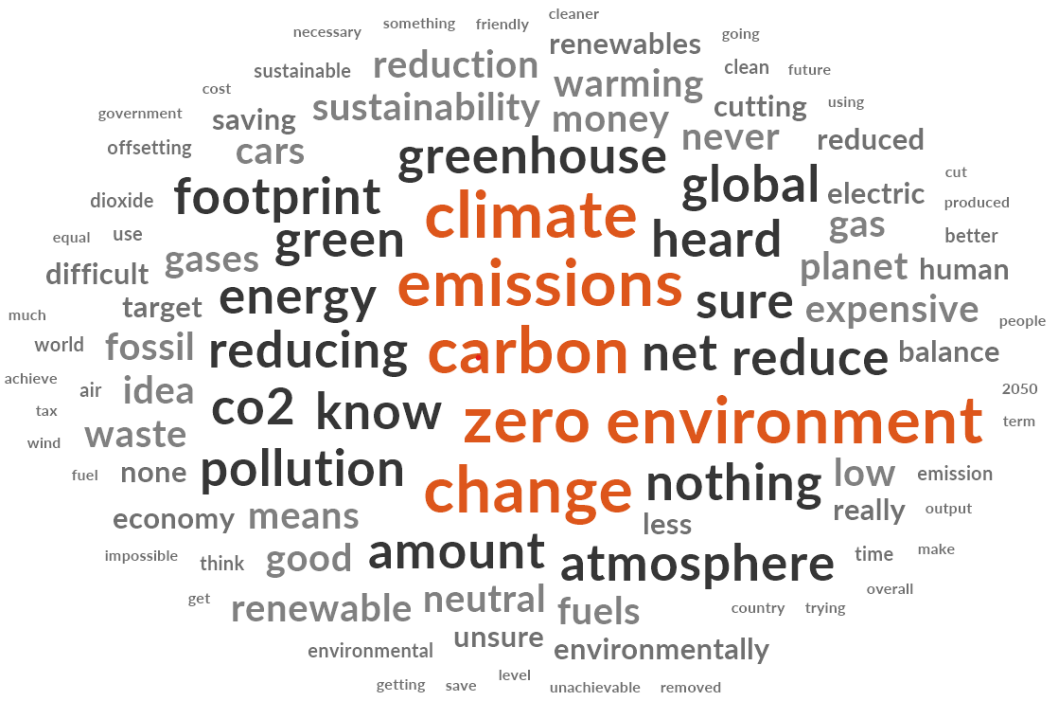
At the survey outset, before any other substantive questions were asked, respondents were invited to record up to three words or phrases in response to the question: 'What are the first things that come to mind for you when you think about 'net zero'?' This survey question enabled us to contextualise the subsequent responses, providing information about how respondents understand the term and what they associate it with. This question was asked before a definition of net zero was provided to respondents. Of the 2,965 included in the survey, 2,706 respondents (91%) gave substantive answers, 259 did not (9%).

Key Words Associated with Net Zero

The hundred most frequently used words in participants' substantive responses are presented in a word cloud in Figure 3.1. Familiar keywords relating to climate, evident in orange, were high in frequency (>150 instances), with 'carbon' (634 instances) and 'emissions' (499 instances) the highest frequency words in the dataset.

The words 'know', 'sure' and 'heard' are among the most common in the dataset (100-150 instances), typically appearing in responses such as 'Not heard of it', 'I don't know', and 'I'm not sure'. This suggests there may be a sizeable group who are uncertain about the term. The substantial proportion of 'don't know' or 'neutral' responses in other parts of the survey seem to corroborate this.

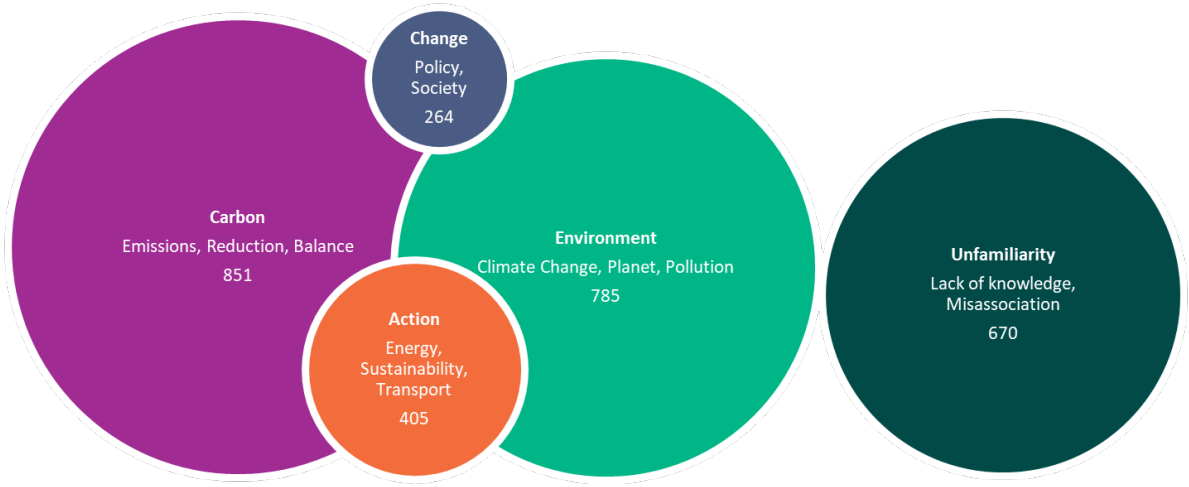
Fig 3.1 Word Cloud depicting the one hundred most common words used in response to the question 'What are the first things that come to mind for you when you think about 'net zero'?'



Public Understandings of Net Zero

A detailed qualitative thematic analysis of the data reveals more about public understandings of net zero. Overarching themes, in order of frequency, were: (i) carbon, (ii) environment, (iii) unfamiliarity (iv) action, and (v) change. Figure 3.2 summarises these themes as well as subthemes and illustrates both the frequency of these themes and the inter-relationships between them. Frequencies shown are counts of responses displaying each theme. Responses were coded for more than one theme, where relevant, and the diagram presents illustrative overlaps between themes where more than 20 respondents used the themes in combination. Box 3.1 reports some examples of responses for each theme.

Fig 3.2 Bubble diagram demonstrating theme frequency in survey responses and overlaps between themes (>20 responses) in the data



More than a quarter of respondents perceived net zero to be about **managing carbon** (29%, n=851). The majority in this group associated net zero with the need to reduce carbon emissions significantly (n=477). Some mentioned 1990 levels; others envisaged bringing carbon emissions down to absolute zero. A smaller group gave a more technical answer, understanding net zero to mean achieving a balance of atmospheric carbon emissions and carbon removal, sequestration or capture, so that no additional carbon is added to the atmosphere. A minority connected net zero to the idea of 'emissions' but expressed no call to action.

More than a quarter perceived net zero to be associated with **benefits to the environment** (27%, n=785). Their responses connected net zero, variously, with climate change, crisis and emergency, and with ideas about saving or protecting the planet from carbon emissions or from pollution. These responses frequently envisaged global environmental improvement taking place as a result of meeting net zero targets, although this was framed by many as a difficult challenge. Some conceived that reducing carbon emissions to net zero will 'control', 'cancel' out', or 'combat' climate change. They indicated the seriousness of this problem, using terms such as 'catastrophe and 'urgent' and highlighting extreme weather events, causing famine, flooding and heat death. However, responses only very occasionally referred to specific effects of climate change on environmental features such as rising sea levels and reduced biodiversity. Others envisaged a 'cleaner', 'better' world, with, for example, improved air quality and reduced pollution arising from emissions reductions and greener transport. In other cases, net zero was connected with pro-environmental behaviours couched as 'being green', 'eco-friendly', 'living environmentally friendly lives'.

One in seven responses connected net zero to **specific sectors where action is needed** (14%, n=405). Most common among these was an association between net zero and decarbonisation of energy production, with an emphasis on renewable sources of energy such as solar and wind and reduced reliance on fossil fuels (n=218). Renewables were also framed by some respondents as being a more secure source of energy for the future. Domestic settings and actions (heating, vehicles, insulation) were more frequently mentioned than industrial and business settings. However, a smaller group of respondents connected net zero with sustainability of production, consumption and particularly, waste management and recycling. These responses referenced sustainable food, energy, transport and manufacturing. A smaller group still linked net zero to green transport, with a fairly singular focus on the replacement of petrol and diesel cars with electric vehicles (EVs) by 2030, conceived by some as a use-ban, rather than a production ban. For some, this was perceived to be expensive, with negative implications for car manufacturers. For others, a shift to EVs was perceived positively as a means of reducing traffic and pollution in cities. Few mentions were made of air travel. Walking and public transport (rail, buses, trams) were not mentioned at all, although some did connect net zero with Low Emission Zone policies.

Nearly one in ten responses connected net zero with **policy, political and/or societal change** (9%, n=264). Respondents frequently conceived net zero as a policy issue being tackled via government targets and strategies, and via international commitments. Targets were understood to be urgent but challenging and there was an expectation that they would take some time to reach. For some, there was scepticism about the degree of political will to achieve net zero and the likelihood of achieving targets. Other respondents framed net zero as addressing a broader societal challenge caused by the activities of individuals, organisations, sectors and nations. For them, achieving net zero would require large-scale change to human behaviour, predicated on combining reduced demand for energy and resources and reliance on technological innovations, and potentially featuring climate protests. Both domestic (heating, insulation, transport and veganism) and economic (green growth, circularity, green jobs) changes were variously mentioned. A few respondents mentioned the importance of this 'transition' for future generations and it was occasionally associated with ideas of fairness or justice, via, for example, references to the cost of living.

These four themes that respondents associated with net zero give an indication of the range of understandings net zero provoked for members of the public consulted in this survey. However, nearly a quarter of substantive answers to this question demonstrated that a discrete group of respondents were **unfamiliar** with net zero (23%, n=670). These respondents either did not know about net zero, were unsure what it meant or misunderstood the term, sometimes confusing it, for example, with personal finance issues, indicating a need for effective public engagement on net zero.

Box 3.1: Example responses from each theme associated with net zero in the data

Carbon: 'Global Carbon Gases', 'Carbon Footprint Zeroed', 'Reducing Harmful Emissions', 'Becoming Carbon Neutral', 'Absorbing Carbon Dioxide', '0% Carbon Emissions'

Environment: 'Climate Change Crisis', 'Climate Change Action', 'Being Eco Friendly', 'Save The Planet', 'Planet's On Fire', 'Better Greener World', '0 Percent Pollution', 'Restore Pollution Balance

Action: 'Clean Renewable Energy', 'Going Mostly Electric', 'Lower Energy Prices', 'Striving for Sustainability', 'Having Zero Waste', 'Scrap Petrol Cars', 'Low Emissions Zones'

Change: '2050 Greenhouse Gases', 'Clean Air 2030', 'Build Back Greener', 'Climate Carbon COP', 'Essential Fair Transition', 'Climate Emergency Sacrifices', 'Finance, Economy Emissions'

Unfamiliarity: 'Absolutely Don't Know', 'Not Too Sure', 'I've No Idea', 'Not Quite Familiar', 'Net Worth Money', 'Money Low Overall'

Public Feelings Towards Net Zero

When asked about the first things that came to mind when respondents thought about net zero, a significant minority of nearly a fifth expressed feelings of support or opposition, giving a variety of reasons. This provides insights into the motivations of the 51% of respondents who supported net zero targets in our survey and the 23% who opposed it (cf. Fig 1.1).

Respondents who made supportive comments, described net zero using terms such as 'good', 'beneficial' and 'right' (7%, n=204). It was described variously as 'attainable', perceived to be an economic 'opportunity' and there was a sense of urgency about action. About a third of these framed their responses within the theme of the environment, anticipating that net zero would engender 'better' environmental and human conditions for now and for future generations.

Respondents who were dismissive of net zero used terms such as 'expensive', 'pointless' and 'unnecessary' (11%, 332). They dismissed net zero on three main grounds. First, that it is unfounded, based on 'unevidenced', 'fake' or 'selective' science. Second, that reaching net zero's 'ridiculous target' poses unacceptable costs to the economy ('is going to cost billions') and individuals ('costly changes for us to make'). Some respondents also perceived the policy to be financially duplicitous: a way for governments to extract more taxes from the public or for private energy companies to profit. This reveals possible reasons why some respondents preferred to wait for climate action until the economy becomes stronger (cf. Fig 1.7.) Third, that targets will not be met, and the policy will not achieve its environmental aims, as it is 'difficult', 'deluded' in the sense that technological solutions are unlikely to be successful, 'is too easy to cheat on', and governments do not really 'believe in it'. This provides some possible explanation for why there was relatively low confidence that net zero goals are likely to be met (cf. Fig 1.3). Further, from a global perspective some argued that any action will be negated by emissions from non-UK economies. Around one in ten respondents who were dismissive of net zero connected it with policy and political obstacles. Objections invoking ideas about 'wokeness' were rare in the dataset.

There was a small overlap of responses across both supportive and dismissive groups, perceiving net zero to be necessary or overdue but pessimistic about potential outcomes due to barriers to implementation.

Box 3.2 Example responses showing public feelings towards net zero in the data

Supportive: 'Necessary Overdue Stymied', 'Important Essential Unselfish', 'Cool Interesting Future', 'Not Doing Enough', 'Needs Fixing Quick', 'Aspirational, Necessary, Apocalypse-averting', 'Planet Need Saving'

Dismissive: 'Expensive Unaffordable Unnecessary', 'Grandstanding Pointless Exercise', 'Money Making Scam', 'Expensive Daunting Difficult', 'Green Energy Costs', 'Crippling for us', 'We Need Gas', 'Not thought through', 'Implausible Unevidenced Science', 'An Impossible Target'

Both Camps: 'Expensive Important Disruptive', 'Difficult Survival Possible', 'Desirable Controversial Costly'

Conclusion

The Net Zero Citizens' Survey provides a snapshot of public opinion on net zero and climate targets, policy and action shortly before the 2024 UK General Election. Drawing on a representative sample of almost 3000 members of the public across the UK, clear themes emerged related to three main topics: (i) level of support for targets, views on the likelihood of achieving them and the obstacles entailed; (ii) The role of knowledge, research and expertise; (iii) the importance of public engagement and building on the momentum of public actions underway. We summarise each of these and reflect on the implications, suggesting corresponding policy recommendations.

I. Views on Targets, Timing, and the Obstacles to Meeting Targets

There is widespread concern among the UK public about climate change and a slim majority are supportive of net zero targets.

The main rationale expressed in our qualitative data for supporting net zero was a sense that it would lead to an improvement of environmental and human conditions. For the minority who were opposed to net zero targets, the qualitative responses suggest opposition was centred around ideas about the unworkability of net zero, underpinned by views about insufficient science, political obstacles and economic costs. It is understandable, then, that our survey reveals some scepticism, amongst supporters and opponents, about the likelihood of achieving net zero targets.

Respondents considered the challenges entailed to be significant. The biggest of these, cited by 80% or more of respondents, in order of importance were: individual financial circumstances, a lack of resources in local authorities, overall costs to the UK of achieving net zero, lack of infrastructure investment, business interests in oil and gas, and a perceived lack of wider public support and national political will.

Survey respondents were divided about whether climate action should wait until economic conditions were better, although more thought we should act sooner rather than later. This question tapped into debates about trade-offs between the economy and climate action. Some media coverage in recent times has pitched economic and climate goals as being in conflict. However, experts have countered this narrative, demonstrating that decarbonising can also create savings for individuals and lead to improvements for the economy as a whole, for example, through reduced bills generated by energy efficiency improvements and new 'green' jobs.[28]

[28] CCC (2025). (ibid)

Implications and Policy Recommendations:

- Individual financial circumstances need to be taken seriously as the biggest impediments to people making changes to reach net zero and taking action on climate change. Policies need to provide sufficient incentive and be generous enough to enable change, especially for people with lower incomes.

- Since a lack of wider public support is considered by respondents to be a significant obstacle to achieving net zero targets, policymakers may wish to place more emphasis on addressing this perception. Our data suggests that people are broadly supportive of action, even though respondents perceive that others may not be. A public engagement campaign could tackle perceptions in this area and build understanding. Communications should be informed by evidence about effective climate communication, to avoid unanticipated consequences such as backfire effects or consolidation of pre-existing perceptions or misperceptions.[29] [30]

- The public recognise that there are challenging structural obstacles to change, notably the interests of fossil fuel companies, economic conditions, and a lack of political will. This points to the need for greater transparency in policy making and more ambitious policy making that may lead to deep, systemic or 'transformational' change, something that some experts have suggested may be required for successfully meeting climate challenges (IPCC, 2022).[31] This could include: new models of energy production including support for community owned initiatives; place-based and partnership-oriented solutions; and more rapid fossil fuel divestment by government and other institutions.

II. The Role of Knowledge, Research & Expertise

The UK public believe that creating effective climate policy requires the involvement of relevant experts and the use of research evidence from the physical and social sciences.

People recognise the legitimate role of elected politicians in making climate policy. However independent and government experts are also very highly rated for the role they should play. Local authorities and representatives of communities particularly affected by climate change and the net zero transition are valued as policy influencers, suggesting local decision-making is important to the public. This is reflective of the task force's recommendation for more support for 'mid-level' actors to support the delivery of net zero as well as its emphasis on place-sensitive approaches.

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[29] Garrett, R.K. (2017). Strategies for Countering False Information and Beliefs about Climate Change. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Climate Science.
[30] Nyhan, B., Reifler, J. (2010). When corrections fail: The persistence of political misperceptions. Political Behavior, 32(2), 303–330.
[31] IPCC (ibid.)

Reflecting the importance of experts, the UK public also recognises the importance of research for helping decision-makers understand how to reduce emissions. Research on technologies and climate science is particularly valued, alongside social science research addressing the fairness and effectiveness of public policy. These findings mirror the recommendations of the Net Zero Task Force which stressed the need for more coordinated investment in the social sciences and specialist social scientific input into policy advice. Support for research on fairness echoes respondents' perceptions of a lack of fairness and bias associated with climate policies, particularly in England. This reflects the task force's emphasis on the centrality of fairness and justice in delivering change and seems central for building public support for net zero policies.

Implications and Recommendations:

- The public recognise that experts are needed to tackle climate change, a finding which runs counter to common narratives about a lack of trust in experts; this includes not only specialists working both outside and inside of government but also representatives of affected communities, i.e. 'experts by experience'.
- The public is likely to be supportive of investment in research to tackle climate change, including research from a variety of disciplines. Public priorities include research on the effectiveness and fairness of public policies, reflecting concerns about potential costs and equitable impacts of net zero policies.

III. The Importance of Public Engagement and Building on Existing Momentum

Members of the public do not feel they have a lot of say in developing climate policy, but nevertheless many recognise potential co-benefits of climate action and are already taking actions themselves.

The shared sense of exclusion, uncertainty about policy fairness and lack of understanding among a significant minority regarding what net zero is all about may explain support in the survey for efforts to engage the public in conversations about climate policy, through mechanisms such as citizens' assemblies. There was also support for involving communities directly affected by climate change. This reflects the ACCESS Net Zero Task Force's call for the creation of structures and processes that engage diverse publics in conversations about the changes required to deliver net zero. These include conversations about concerns and challenges, and an emphasis on place-sensitive approaches.

The shared recognition of the co-benefits of climate action, particularly for pollution, health and wildlife, emphasise the need for building positive visions of change. These co-benefits might also represent what are referred to in the task force report as 'galvanising issues' – issues that different actors and publics can coalesce around and draw on to spur policy change and social change. Framing climate action in terms of social justice concerns, improved health, or reduced pollution may help broaden public and political support.

People reported they are already taking action in various ways in their daily lives, particularly on domestic issues such as avoiding waste, changing travel habits, and making changes to energy use and diet. Many of those who are not already undertaking measures expressed a willingness to do so. This suggests the public are willing to engage in 'demand reduction', a strategy regarded as essential for the attainment of net zero goals.[32] Actions which are perceived as likely to cost people money, such as putting money into green savings and donating to green causes, however, are less common. Taken together, these findings may indicate that people will be more likely to undertake environmental actions which also generate personal economic savings, reflecting the current high cost of living. Measures to incentivise and support sustainable behaviours and reduce demand for fossil fuel-based energy will help citizens make small changes which, over time, can play an important part in reducing carbon emissions.

Implications and Recommendations:

- Opportunities should be created to enable members of the public to have a greater say in climate policy both nationally and locally. There are many ways to achieve this, with the citizens' assembly one possible vehicle that received fairly strong support from the public, especially at local level. Procedures to engage directly affected communities in conversations about tackling climate change should also be further developed. Mechanisms like Climate Commissions[33] provide one possible model for this at a local authority scale, while participatory structures, like citizens' juries, panels and assemblies are appropriate for addressing specific issues, particularly where they may be contentious (e.g. siting of renewable energy infrastructure; plans for low traffic neighbourhoods or congestion zones).

- These approaches should form part of a broader public engagement campaign. Such a campaign would aim to: raise awareness of widespread public concern about climate change; build support for, and understanding of, the changes required to tackle it, including individual and collective actions that can make most difference and likely wider benefits; engage the public in discussions about concerns and challenges; and help tackle concerns about fairness and bias. The campaign may also involve tackling misinformation and the nature of some media reporting, regarded by many respondents as barriers to achieving net zero goals. It should also aim to help tackle the low levels of confidence across society that net zero targets are likely to be achieved. These conversations should not shy away from contested issues, and it should be recognised that all major social change on the scale of the net zero transition involves disruption and the emergence of diverse views.

- Public authorities, communities and other stakeholders seeking to encourage climate action amongst the general public should emphasise the possibility of financial and other co-benefits of climate action and build ways of helping people to take actions that can help save money, improve health and wellbeing, as well as generating benefits to the climate and nature.

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[32] Hampton & Whitmarsh (ibid); Access Net Zero Task Force (ibid); the Climate Change Committee (ibid)
[33] Place-based Climate Action Network, Climate Commissions

Appendix 1: Respondent Characteristics

	Country (sample size)	England (N=1,681)		N. Ireland (N=377)		Scotland (N=500)		Wales (N=407)		UK (N=2,965)	
Variable	Category	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender	Female	858	51.0	205	54.4	241	48.2	218	53.6	1522	51.3
	Male	805	47.9	171	45.4	258	51.6	186	45.7	1420	47.9
	Trans-gender	7	0.4	1	0.3	0	0	0	0	8	0.3
	Non-binary	5	0.3	0	0	0	0	2	0.5	7	0.2
	Other	3	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0.1
	Prefer not to say	3	0.2	0	0	1	0.2	1	0.2	5	0.2
Current Residence	Centre of a large town or city	318	18.9	77	20.4	106	21.2	64	15.7	565	19.1
	Suburbs of a large town or city	556	33.1	123	32.6	145	29.0	84	20.6	908	30.6
	Large village or small town	542	32.2	91	24.1	159	31.8	142	34.9	934	31.5
	Countryside or small village	265	15.8	86	22.8	90	18.0	117	28.7	558	18.8
Ethnicity	White	1445	86.0	349	92.6	464	92.8	370	90.9	2628	88.6
	Asian/Asian British	116	6.9	17	4.5	10	2.0	12	2.9	155	5.2
	Black/African/ Caribbean/ Black British	66	3.9	5	1.3	18	3.6	10	2.5	99	3.3
	Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	32	1.9	5	1.3	5	1.0	12	2.9	54	1.8
	Other ethnic group	11	0.7	1	0.3	2	0.4	1	0.2	15	0.5
	Prefer not to say	11	0.7	0	0	1	0.2	2	0.5	14	0.5
Education	Level 4+	539	32.1	199	52.8	282	56.4	161	39.6	1181	39.8
	Level 3	254	15.1	67	17.8	24	4.8	64	15.7	409	13.8
	Level 2	303	18.0	56	14.9	68	13.6	71	17.4	498	16.8
	Level 1	271	16.1	26	6.9	54	10.8	51	12.5	402	13.6
	No Qualifications	226	13.4	16	4.2	45	9.0	40	9.8	327	11
	Apprenticeship	44	2.6	7	1.9	20	4.0	7	1.7	78	2.6
	Entry Level	36	2.1	6	1.6	4	0.8	12	2.9	58	2
	Other	8	0.5	0	0	3	0.6	1	0.2	12	0.4
Income Bands	£0 - £19,999	544	32.4	99	26.3	125	25.0	133	32.7	901	30.4
	£20,000 - £39,999	572	34.0	156	41.4	173	34.6	149	36.6	1050	35.4
	£40,000+	565	33.6	122	32.4	202	40.4	125	30.7	1014	34.2
Children <18	No	1153	68.6	218	57.8	376	75.2	291	71.5	2038	68.7
	Yes	528	31.4	159	42.2	124	24.8	116	28.5	927	31.3

Appendix 2: Qualitative Theme Descriptions

Theme 1: Carbon *Net zero is concerned with managing carbon emissions*	Carbon emissions: Net zero relates to carbon emissions, also described as greenhouse gas emissions. Emissions are infrequently connected with climate change, the environment or renewable energy, but there is no call to action specified.
	Carbon reduction: Net zero is about reducing carbon emissions and what is referred to as our 'carbon footprint'. For some respondents this is interpreted as 'absolute zero' carbon emissions, 'eliminating' or 'doing away with' them. For others, the objective is to achieve an 'acceptable' or 'residual' level of carbon emissions by 'cutting' or 'decreasing' them. Methods include banning petrol and diesel vehicles and reducing fossil fuel use. The intended outcome is to reduce harm, help the environment and tackle global warming, and the emphasis is on human responsibility at the global scale.
	Carbon balance: Net zero is understood to be about achieving an equal balance of atmospheric carbon emissions and carbon removal. Carbon emissions arise particularly from human energy use and production, or 'making things'. Carbon emissions can be reduced by relying more heavily on renewable energy sources. Carbon removal is also referred to as 'carbon capture' and 'sequestration'. Methods mentioned include tree planting and new technologies. The objective of net zero is to use these to 'offset', 'mitigate' or 'negate' carbon emissions and become carbon neutral societies and economies, thereby reducing planetary damage.
Theme 2: Environment *Net zero is about tackling climate change and saving the world*	Climate Change: Net zero is concerned with tackling climate change, which is also referred to as global warming, the climate crisis and the climate emergency. Climate change is understood to arise from negative effects of human activities that release carbon into the atmosphere. It is regarded as a very challenging and costly problem to solve, but it is hoped that actions to reduce carbon to net zero will 'control', 'cancel out', 'combat' or 'halt' climate change, or just 'get to a good place'. Climate change itself is acknowledged as a very serious problem and threat, described as 'a catastrophe' and 'urgent', evidenced by serious weather-related events, such as flooding, famine and heat death. However, climate change is also rejected by some as 'a fabrication'.
	Environment: Net zero relates to the environment, and related concepts such as 'green issues' and 'eco-friendly'. For the most part, it is framed in a global way, including frequent references to 'saving' and 'protecting' the environment or planet, or being 'better' for us and future generations. Responses only occasionally refer to specific environmental features – rising sea levels, the ozone layer, biodiversity, animals, trees. References to the environment are also couched as human behaviours. For example, 'being more environmentally friendly', 'being green without harming the environment', and 'living environmentally-friendly lives.' In other responses, environment is connected to climate change policy and politics, including targets. Specific areas for action flagged by responses which include the environment theme are emissions reduction, waste management and transport. References to the environment also sometimes highlight the difficulty of the challenge.
Theme 3: Action *Net zero intersects with key policy areas*	Energy: Net zero relates to energy. Decarbonization of energy production in the UK is perceived to be a way to reduce carbon emissions and tackle climate change. It entails reduced reliance on domestic and imported fossil fuels (oil and gas) and towards renewable, and more secure, sources of energy (wind and solar) as well as nuclear power. There's an understanding from some that this change will take time, rather than a switch between the two. However, phrases such as 'transition' and 'phasing out' are not common in the dataset. References to 'stopping' oil and fossil fuel drilling are also infrequent. Renewable energy is framed by some as 'cheaper' and 'cleaner'. Efficiency of infrastructure and energy use is mentioned. Examples are mainly from domestic settings (heating, vehicles, insulation) and occasionally industrial or business settings.
	Pollution: Net zero is associated with resolving the rate and harms of pollution and contributing to a 'cleaner' environment. Mainly concerned with 'air quality' and 'clean air', individual respondents reference 'water pollution', 'clean rivers', 'chemicals', 'nature' and 'plastics'. There are references to individual, regional and national scales. However, similar to the environment theme, net zero is here more frequently associated with 'global', 'planetary' and 'world' pollution. There are occasional references to benefits for future generations.
	Sustainability: Net zero is about sustainable production, consumption and waste management. It relates to sustainable food, energy, transport and manufacturing. It represents an aim of 'maximizing' or 'striving for' sustainability. It is associated with actions such as recycling and reuse, for example of shopping bags.
	Transport: Net zero is concerned with replacement of petrol and diesel vehicles with electric vehicles. For some this is understood to be a ban on use, rather than production, and is seen to be expensive and likely to negatively impact on car manufacturers. For others, the aim of phasing out petrol and diesel vehicles is to reduce carbon emissions and pollution, reduce traffic in cities and improve air quality. Alternative forms of transport mentioned once are 'green transport' and 'active travel'. Few mentions are made of air travel and walking and public transport (rail, buses, trams) are not mentioned at all.

Theme 4: Change *Net zero is about changing policy and society*	Policy: Net zero is a 'plan' or 'strategy' involving targets for reducing carbon emissions, increasing renewable energy and increasing electric vehicles. These targets are understood to be important and sometimes urgent but are challenging and expected to take some time to reach. Dates mentioned in particular are 2030 and 2050. For the most part, targets are perceived to be national or governmental, rather than for individuals or businesses to meet. There is some scepticism about the degree of governmental commitment, political obstacles and the likelihood of achieving the targets. A minority connected net zero targets with international agreements and reports, and with governmental slogans.
	Society: Net zero is addressing human problems, caused by the activities of individuals, organisations, sectors and nations, which may have negative outcomes for all. As such, net zero requires large scale changes to human behaviour, predicated on both the rollout of technological innovation and reducing demand for energy and resources which exacerbate climate change and its effects. There are mentions of practical domestic changes – heating, insulation, electric vehicles, veganism. However, there is also a vision of societal change requiring a 'transition' to a sustainable future for generations to come and acknowledgement that achieving net zero will require political change and resolution. This idea is occasionally linked with fairness. For the economy, this may mean green jobs, circularity, opportunities for economic growth, but it will also requires consideration of the cost of living, and reduced production and purchase of unsustainable products. Net zero is also associated with the climate protest movement.
Theme 5: Unfamiliarity *Net zero is not fully understood by everyone*	Lack of knowledge: Net zero is not understood as a concept by a significant subgroup within the data. In these cases, respondents have never heard of net zero, or are not sure what it relates to, or do not understand it.
	Misassociation: Net zero is misunderstood by a small group within the dataset who connect it with tax, finance, wages, money or the internet, rather than with environmental or energy policy.
Theme 6: Feelings on net zero *Net zero provokes strong feelings for some respondents*	Supportive: Net zero is positively described using terms such as 'good', 'beneficial' and 'right'. It's regarded as 'necessary', 'essential', 'crucial' and 'urgent'. It's considered to be 'attainable'. Meeting net zero targets would engender 'better' environmental and human conditions, representing an 'opportunity' and 'hope' for change. Support is inferred in instructive phrases such as 'save the planet' and 'protect the environment'. For some who identify barriers, it's still regarded with some positivity as essential and overdue.
	Dismissive: Net zero is dismissed as a concept and a policy on three main grounds. The first that it is fundamentally a bad idea. Reasons given relate to costs to the economy, costs for individuals and impacts on lifestyles, financial gain by governments, through tax, and energy companies, through profits, lack of scientific evidence, and the view that it is unnecessary. Particular concerns are raised about the phasing out of diesel and electric vehicles. The second that it is unachievable. Reasons include the 'impossibility' of reaching 'unattainable' targets, the carbon footprint and trajectory of larger economies globally, such as India and China, and a lack of political will in the UK. The third that net zero is insufficient. Reasons given are that it is does not go far enough to tackle carbon emissions, the system is easy to cheat and doubt that the UK will genuinely take positive effective actions to offset climate emissions. There is an overlap between dismissive and supportive views, where it is recognised that net zero is necessary but difficult to implement.

Appendix 3: Survey Questions

Section A: Demographic & Background Information

The survey included a battery of demographic and background questions, on the themes listed below. Further details on question wording and response categories can be obtained from the contact author.

- Gender
- Age
- Ethnic background
- Geographical location
- Political Constituency
- Income
- Education
- Family (presence of children under 18 in household)
- Political views (left/right spectrum; voting at UK GE2019 and in EU Referendum 2016; voting intentions at UK GE 2024)
- Media consumption

Section B: Views on Climate Change and Net Zero

1. You may have heard of the term 'net zero'. What are the first things that come to mind for you when you think about 'net zero'? Please insert up to three words or phrases in the box below:

2. 'Net zero' has been described by scientists to mean bringing greenhouse gas emissions to a point where we are not adding any more to the atmosphere. This will involve significantly reducing emissions from many different activities, such as driving cars, the food we eat, and the electricity we use. Any remaining carbon emissions would be balanced out by technologies and actions that remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. The UK Government/ Welsh Government/ NI Executive/ Scottish Government has set a legally binding target for reducing emissions to net zero by 2050 (2045 for Scottish Govt).

To what extent do you support or oppose this net zero target?

1 Strongly oppose
2 Tend to oppose
3 Neither oppose nor support
4 Tend to support
5 Strongly support
Don't know

Please provide reasons for your answer, if you wish:_____

3. How likely do you think it is that the UK/ Northern Ireland / Wales/ Scotland will achieve its target to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2050? [2045 for Scotland)? (*option provided depends on country of residence, English residents asked about UK Govt*)

1 Extremely unlikely
2 Fairly unlikely
3 Neither unlikely or likely
4 Fairly likely
5 Extremely likely
Don't know

*Please provide further comments if you wish*_____

4. How worried are you about climate change?

1 Not at all worried
2 Not very worried
3 Somewhat worried
4 Very worried
5 Extremely worried
Don't know

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that action on climate change will create any of the following benefits in addition to reducing emissions:

- Less pollution
- Increase in wildlife
- Fairer society
- More economic prosperity
- New jobs
- Better physical health
- Better wellbeing and mental health

1 Strongly disagree
2 Tend to disagree
3 Neither agree nor disagree
4 Tend to agree
5 Strongly agree
Don't know

Please any other benefits you can think of_____

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
We should wait to act on climate change until the UK economy is stronger than it is now

1 Strongly disagree
2 Tend to disagree
3 Neither agree nor disagree
4 Tend to agree
5 Strongly agree
Don't know

Section C: Your views about ways to tackle climate change

1. To what extent would you consider each of the following to be challenges to achieving the net zero target?

(order randomised)
- Lack of support from the public
- Individual finances preventing people from making changes (e.g. solar panels, energy efficiency, electric cars)
- Overall costs to the UK of achieving net zero (too expensive for current national public finances)
- Lack of political will from political leaders in the UK Government (all respondents)
- Lack of political will from political leaders in Northern Ireland Executive (NI respondents only)
- Lack of political will from political leaders in the Scottish Government (Scottish respondents only)
- Lack of political will from political leaders in Welsh Government (Welsh respondents only)
- Lack of coordination between the UK and devolved governments
- Lack of investment in infrastructure (e.g. electric vehicle charging points, new power lines)
- Lack of research about new technologies to reduce emissions
- Lack of research about how our climate is changing
- Lack of research about social dimensions of climate change
- Business interests in oil and gas
- The reporting of climate by the media
- Misinformation in social media (e.g. incorrect information about climate change)
- Lack of resources in local authorities
- Lack of power in local communities to make change
- Other (please specify) _____

1 Not a challenge
2 A small challenge
3 A moderate challenge
4 A big challenge
5 A very big challenge
Don't know

2. Which of the following actions have you undertaken, or might undertake in future, to try and make an impact on climate change:

(order randomised)

- Taking part in a protest about climate or environmental issues
- Contacting a local elected representative about climate or environmental issues
- Signing a petition about climate or environmental issues
- Taking part in a consultation exercise about climate or environmental issues (e.g. led by a local authority, charity, business or a community group)
- Joining or contributing to setting up an environmental group
- Engaging with social media campaigns about climate or environmental issues (e.g. reposting, commenting)
- Donating money to an environmental cause
- Trying to influence friends, family or people at work
- Changing your diet to eat more sustainable foods (e.g. less meat, more local or organic produce)
- Changing your travel habits (e.g. less use of the car, flights, more use of public transport, walking, cycling etc)
- Changing something about your home energy (e.g. switched to renewable energy, installed solar panels, improved your home insulation)
- Choosing a job based on environmental impact
- Putting money in green pensions, savings
- Growing own food
- Planting trees
- Taking actions to avoid wasting resources (e.g. recycling, saving water)
- Other (please specify)

Please tick one answer for each box:

Never done it and don't plan to
Never done it but might consider doing at some point in the future
Planning to do this in the near future
Already doing this or done this

Please provide additional comments, if you wish: _____

3. How much would you support or oppose the following policy to reduce *road transport related emissions?*

(Respondents randomly allocated to either A, B or C)

Group A: Increase car parking charges in city centres

Group B: Increase car parking charges in city centres AND provide free bus travel in cities for all

Group C: Increase car parking charges in city centres AND provide free bus travel in cities for those on low incomes

1 Strongly oppose
2 Tend to oppose
3 Neither oppose nor support
4 Tend to support
5 Strongly support
Don't know

4. How much would you support or oppose the following policy to reduce *energy-related emissions?*

(Respondents randomly allocated to either A, B or C)

Group A: Increase the tax paid on using energy from non-renewable sources (oil, coal, gas)

Group B: Increase the tax paid on using energy from non-renewable sources (oil, coal, gas) AND provide a tax reduction for using renewable energy (e.g. wind, solar)

Group C: Increase the tax paid on using energy from non-renewable sources (oil, coal, gas) AND provide a tax reduction for using renewable energy (e.g. wind, solar) for those on low incomes

1 Strongly oppose
2 Tend to oppose
3 Neither oppose nor support
4 Tend to support
5 Strongly support
Don't know

5. How much would you support or oppose the following policy to reduce *emissions from food consumption?*

(Respondents randomly allocated to either A, B or C)

Group A: Introduce a tax on consumption of red meat (e.g. beef, lamb)

Group B: Introduce a tax on consumption of red meat (e.g. beef, lamb) AND a tax reduction for plant-based food (e.g. reduced VAT on vegetables)

Group C: Introduce a tax on consumption of red meat (e.g. beef, lamb) AND a tax reduction for plant-based food (e.g. reduced VAT on vegetables) for those on low incomes

1 Strongly oppose
2 Tend to oppose
3 Neither oppose nor support
4 Tend to support
5 Strongly support
Don't know

6. Thinking about the UK/ Northern Ireland/ Scottish/ Welsh Government's policies to address climate change, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following? (*option provided depends on country of residence, English residents asked about UK Govt*)

(Please answer in response to each statement)

- Climate change policies give a fair outcome to everyone affected
- Climate change policies are biased towards particular groups
- Climate change policies take into account the views of everyone affected

1 Strongly disagree
2 Tend to disagree
3 Neither agree nor disagree
4 Tend to agree
5 Strongly agree
Don't know

Section D: Your views on how to make new policies on climate change

1. To what extent would you support or oppose the creation of a permanent Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change for (a) the UK as a whole; (b) Your local authority area?
(see box below for a description)

A Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change: What might it look like?

The Citizens' Assembly's main purpose
To produce ideas and recommendations for consideration by the government/ local government about climate and more broadly environmental policies.

Who would be involved
Members would be ordinary people like you. There would be around 100 - randomly selected from, and broadly representative of, the wider population. Membership with rotate each year and participation would be voluntary.

What topics would it consider and how often would it meet?
Each year a different climate or environmental policy topic would be considered, and assembly members would meet over 4-6 weekends to discuss it. Meetings would be spread out over the year, including a mixture of online and in person meetings.

What would the format of the assembly be?
Participants would hear from independent experts and researchers and be able to question them and ask for further information, before debating the issues with fellow assembly members in small groups and making recommendations. The whole process would be led by trained, impartial facilitators.

What would its powers be?
The assembly's recommendations would be advisory and not binding (i.e. they would not have the power to make or change policies, only to recommend these). Their recommendations would be considered and discussed by elected politicians in parliament.

Would members be paid and how would it be funded?
Members would be paid reasonable expenses (e.g. to cover travel, where applicable) and provided with a small payment in compensation for their time (e.g. £100 per day). The running of the assembly would come from public funds.

		National level assembly (UK wide)	Local level assembly
1	Strongly oppose	_	_
2	Tend to oppose	_	_
3	Neither support nor oppose	_	_
4	Tend to support	_	_
5	Strongly support	_	_
Don't know		_	_

Please give reasons for your answer or any conditions, if you wish: _____

2. To what extent would you support or oppose the creation of such a permanent Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change for Northern Ireland/ Scotland/ Wales?
(*option provided depends on country of residence*)

1 Strongly oppose
2 Tend to oppose
3 Neither support nor oppose
4 Tend to support
5 Strongly support
Don't know

Please give reasons for your answer or any conditions, if you wish: _____

3. To meet climate change targets (e.g. those associated with net zero), we will need new climate policies. Policy making is often shaped by different groups in society. How much do you think each of the following ***should* have an influence on new climate policies?**

- Elected MPs in Westminster
- Members of the House of Lords
- Elected MPs in the Devolved Administrations (MSs in Wales, MLAs in Northern Ireland, MSPs in Scotland)
- Expert policy analysts inside government (e.g. civil servants, officials)
- Independent experts outside of government (e.g. academics, scientists from research institutes)
- Local councils/ local authorities
- Mayors (in towns and cities which have them)
- A citizens' assembly (such as that discussed in the previous question)
- Community representatives from areas that have been directly affected by climate change (e.g. flooding)
- Business representatives
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and charities
- Faith groups
- Youth groups
- Other (please suggest any other groups you feel should have an influence on the development of climate policies) _____

1 No influence
2 A little influence
3 Some influence
4 Quite a lot of influence
5 A great deal of influence
Don't know

4. To what extent do you feel like *you* have opportunities to have a say in the development of climate policies for the UK Govt / Northern Ireland Executive / Scottish Government / Welsh Government?

(*option provided depends on country of residence, English residents asked about UK Govt*)

1 Not at all
2 Very little
3 Some
4 A lot
5 A great deal
Don't know

5. How important do you think research on each of the following topics is in helping us to understand how to reduce emissions?

Research about:

- Technologies (e.g. technological solutions to climate change or climate impacts)
- Individual behaviour (e.g. understanding individual needs and decision-making, behavioural change)
- Social and cultural change (e.g. what kinds of societal or cultural issues do we need to understand more about to tackle climate change and climate impacts)
- Climate science (e.g. understanding more about the physical causes and effects of climate change)
- The effectiveness of public policies (i.e. how well do climate policies work, do they meet their goals?)
- The fairness of public policies (i.e. are the effects of policies fair on different part of society?)
- The economy (e.g. how climate issues impact on the economy, economic costs or benefits of actions to tackle or respond to climate change)

1 Not at all important
2 Slightly important
3 Moderately important
4 Very important
5 Extremely important
Don't know

End of Survey