DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker: Net Zero and Climate Change Summer 2023, UK

21 September 2023 **Official Statistics**

This report covers results from the quarterly questions on awareness of Net Zero and concern about climate change which have been asked in each wave of the DESNZ (formerly BEIS) Public Attitudes Tracker since Autumn 2021.

The report also includes results from Summer 2022 and 2023 on behaviours related to, and attitudes towards, climate change.

What you need to know about these statistics: These results from the DESNZ (formerly BEIS) Public Attitudes Tracker (PAT) were collected using the Address Based Online Surveying (ABOS) methodology introduced in Autumn 2021, which uses random probability sampling. The results should not be compared with previous PAT surveys, which used different data collection methods. For details, see the Technical Report.

The table below shows the topics covered in this report and when these questions were included in the Public Attitudes Tracker. Links are included to the findings for each topic within this report.

Topic	When included	Link to findings
Awareness of Net Zero	Quarterly	Link
Attitudes towards Net Zero	Summer 2023	Link
Concern about climate change	Quarterly	Link
Behaviours to tackle climate change	Summer 2022, Summer 2023	Link
Trust in information sources	Summer 2022, Summer 2023	Link
Attitudes towards climate change	Summer 2022, Summer 2023	Link

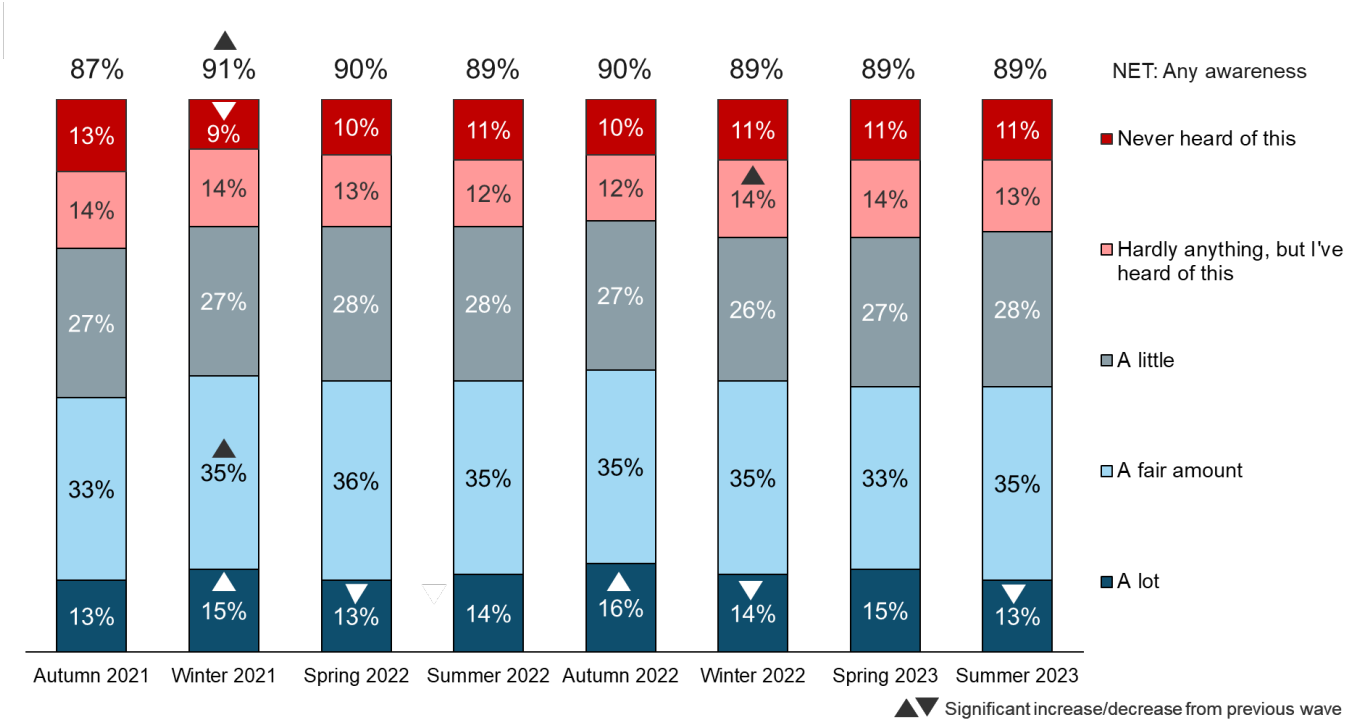
Awareness of Net Zero

In June 2019, the government announced a new target which will require the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to Net Zero by 2050. Before asking level of awareness, respondents were provided with a brief description as follows: '*The UK government is aiming to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions to 'net zero' by 2050. This will involve significantly reducing emissions produced by our industries, transport, food, and homes. Any remaining emissions will be balanced by actions that reduce greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere, such as planting trees'.*

In Summer 2023, total awareness of the concept of Net Zero remained stable (89%), with no change since Spring 2023 (89%). The level of perceived knowledge also remained stable overall, with almost half of people (48%) saying they knew at least a fair amount about Net Zero, but the proportion saying they knew a lot returned to 13%, from the higher level of 15% in Spring 2023.

Over the longer term, awareness of and perceived knowledge about Net Zero has remained broadly stable since Spring 2022, albeit with some quarterly fluctuation in the proportion saying they know a lot. This measure peaked at 16% in Autumn 2022 but has now fallen back to the lowest level seen (13%).

Figure 1.1: Awareness of the concept of 'Net Zero' (based on all people), Autumn 2021 to Summer 2023



NZKNOW. The UK government is aiming to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions to 'net zero' by 2050. This will involve significantly reducing emissions produced by our industries, transport, food, and homes. Any remaining emissions will be balanced by actions that reduce greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere, such as planting trees. Before today, how much, if anything, did you know about the concept of 'Net Zero'?

Base: All wave respondents – Autumn 2021 (5,558), Winter 2021 (3,705), Spring 2022 (4,374), Summer 2022 (4,489), Autumn 2022 (4,158), Winter 2022 (3,572), Spring 2023 (4,405), Summer 2023 (3,998) (Asked Quarterly)

Overall awareness of Net Zero was high among most subgroups. However, it was relatively higher among certain subgroups including men (93%, compared with 85% of women). Overall

awareness of Net Zero was also higher among people aged 35 or over compared with those aged under 35: 91% of those aged 35 to 44, 90% of those aged 45 to 54, 94% of those aged 55 to 64 and 93% of those aged 65 and over had heard of Net Zero compared with 79% of those aged 16 to 24 and 85% of those aged 25 to 34. Overall awareness of Net Zero was also higher among those educated to degree level (95%, compared with 90% of those with other qualifications and 80% of people with no qualifications). Patterns of difference in levels of perceived knowledge reflected those seen for overall awareness.

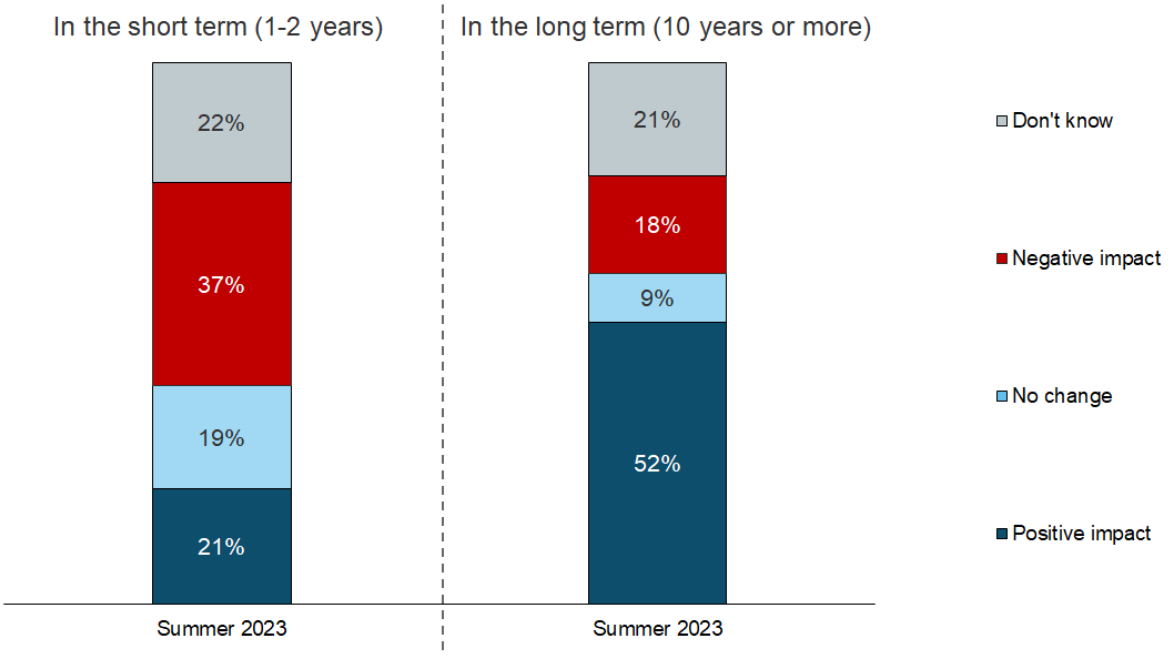
The proportion who said they had least a fair amount of knowledge about Net Zero was higher in rural areas (55%) compared with urban areas (46%). By geography, the proportion who said they knew at least a fair amount was highest in the South West (56%), the South East (52%), and London (52%), and lowest in the North West (43%), Wales (43%), North East (41%) and Northern Ireland (40%).

Attitudes towards Net Zero

In Summer 2023 a new set of questions was added to the survey to assess attitudes towards Net Zero in terms of both anticipated impact and perceived level of progress so far. The questions were preceded by the following explanation: *'And now thinking again about the UK government's aim to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions to Net Zero by 2050 to tackle climate change. This will involve large changes to the way we produce and use energy in homes, businesses and transport.'*

In Summer 2023 there was a greater expectation that the short term impact (in the next 1 to 2 years) on the UK economy from the UK's transition to Net Zero would be negative (37%) rather than positive (21%), with 19% not anticipating any change. In contrast, in the long term (in 10 years or more) the expected impact was much more likely to be positive (52%) with far fewer thinking it would be negative (18%) (Figure 2.1). There was a relatively high degree of uncertainty, with around two in ten saying they did not know what the impact would be in each of the short term (22%) and long term (21%).

Figure 2.1: Expected impact of UK's transition to Net Zero on UK economy (based on all people), Summer 2023



NZTRANSITA-B. What impact do you think the UK's transition to Net Zero might have on the UK economy?
Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2023: Short term (3,969), Long term (3,975)

Men were more likely to anticipate a negative impact in both the short term (43%, compared with 30% of women) and the long term (22%, compared with 13% of women). There was no difference by gender in expecting a positive outcome, but women were more likely to say that they did not know what the impact would be in both the short term (29%, compared with 16% of men) and the long term (27%, compared with 15% of men).

While there was little difference by age group in short term expectations, in the long term those aged 25 to 44 were more likely to expect a positive impact of the UK's transition to Net Zero (63% of those aged 25 to 34 and 57% of those aged 35 to 44) compared with those aged under 25 (52%) and those aged 45 and over (50% of those aged 45 to 54, 48% of those aged 55 to 64 and 47% of those aged 65 and over). An inverse pattern was seen for negative

expectations, with those aged 25 to 44 relatively less likely to expect a negative impact in the long term.

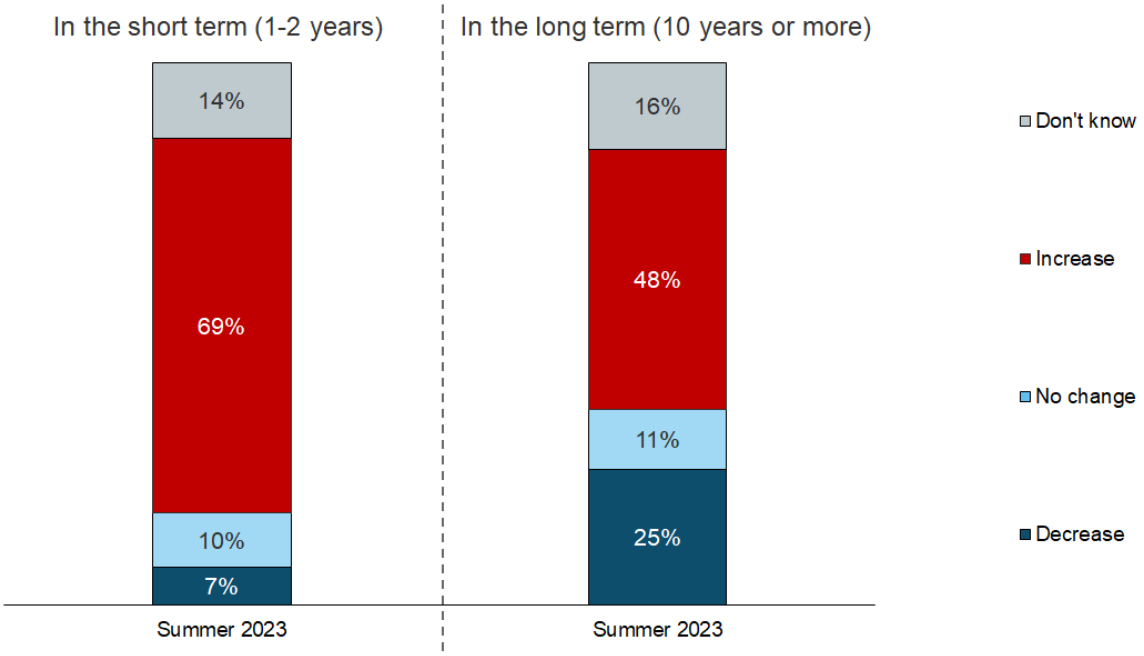
In terms of education, those educated to degree level were more likely to expect a negative impact in the short term, (41%, compared with 37% of those with other qualifications and 33% of people without qualifications). However, in the long term, an inverse pattern was found as those educated to degree level were more likely to expect a positive impact (63% compared with 49% of those with other qualifications and 37% of people with no qualifications). Those with no qualifications were more likely to expect a negative impact in the longer term (22%, compared with 16% of those educated to degree level) or no change (13%, compared with 9% of those with other qualifications and 7% of those educated to degree level).

Those living in rural areas were more likely, compared with those living in urban areas, to expect a negative impact both in the short term (45%, compared with 35%) and the long term (24%, compared with 16%). By geography, in the short term those living in London (29%) and the North East (26%) were more likely to expect a positive impact compared with those in the North West (17%), South East (17%) and East of England (16%). In the long term there was a fairly similar pattern and those living in London (61%) and in Scotland (58%) more likely to expect a positive impact compared with those in the North West (47%) and East of England (45%).

Awareness and perceived knowledge about Net Zero also related to expectations. Those who were not aware of Net Zero were relatively more likely to say ‘don’t know’ both in the short term (41%) and long term (39%). In terms of knowledge, those who said they knew at least a fair amount of Net Zero were more likely to expect a negative impact in the short term (44% compared with 33% of those who knew at most a little) but they were more likely to expect a positive outcome in the long term (59% compared with 48% of those who knew at most a little).

In Summer 2023 the expected impact of the UK’s transition to Net Zero on regular living expenses was considerably more negative than the expected impact on the UK economy. However, as for the economy, expectations were relatively more positive in the long term. In the short term (the next 1 to 2 years), 69% of people thought that the transition to Net Zero would increase their regular living expenses, with very few thinking their expenses would decrease (7%). In the long term (in 10 years or more), 48% thought their expenses would increase, and 25% that they would decrease (Figure 2.2). There was slightly greater certainty in the impact of the UK’s transition to Net Zero in relation to living expenses than was seen for the economy, but the proportion saying they didn’t know was still relatively high (14% in the short term, 16% in the long term).

Figure 2.2: Expected impact of UK's transition to Net Zero on regular living expenses (based on all people), Summer 2023

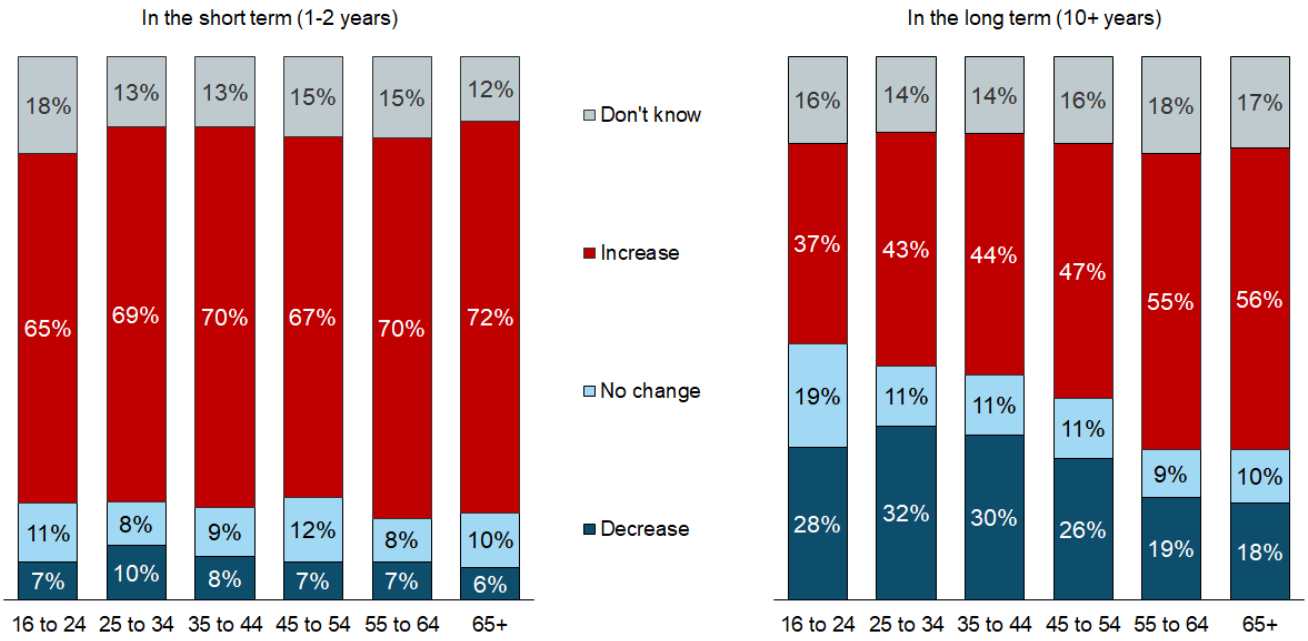


NZFINANCEA-B . And what impact do you think that the UK's transition to Net Zero might have on your regular living expenses (for example energy, food, travel)?
Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2023: Short term (3,979), Long term (3,974)

As seen in relation to impact on the UK economy, men were more negative about the impact on regular living expenses than women, although the scale of difference was smaller: 72% of men expected an increase in living expenses in the short term compared with 66% of women, and 51% expected an increase in the long term compared with 46% of women.

By age group, as for the economy, there was little difference in expectations in the short term. In the long term those aged 55 and over were more likely to expect an increase in living expenses (55% of those aged 55 to 64 and 56% of those aged 65 and over), compared with those in all other age groups, particularly those aged under 25 (37%). Those aged under 25 were relatively more likely to expect no change in living expenses (19%), compared to other age groups which were in line with the total for the UK (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: Expected impact of UK transition to Net Zero on regular living expenses by age group (based on all people), Summer 2023



NZFINANCEA-B . And what impact do you think that the UK's transition to Net Zero might have on your regular living expenses (for example energy, food, travel)?
Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2023: Short term: 16-24 (239), 25-34 (493), 35-44 (552), 45-54 (604), 55-64 (729), 65+ (1,299); Long term: 16-24 (239), 25-34 (493), 35-44 (552), 45-54 (604), 55-64 (729), 65+ (1,295)

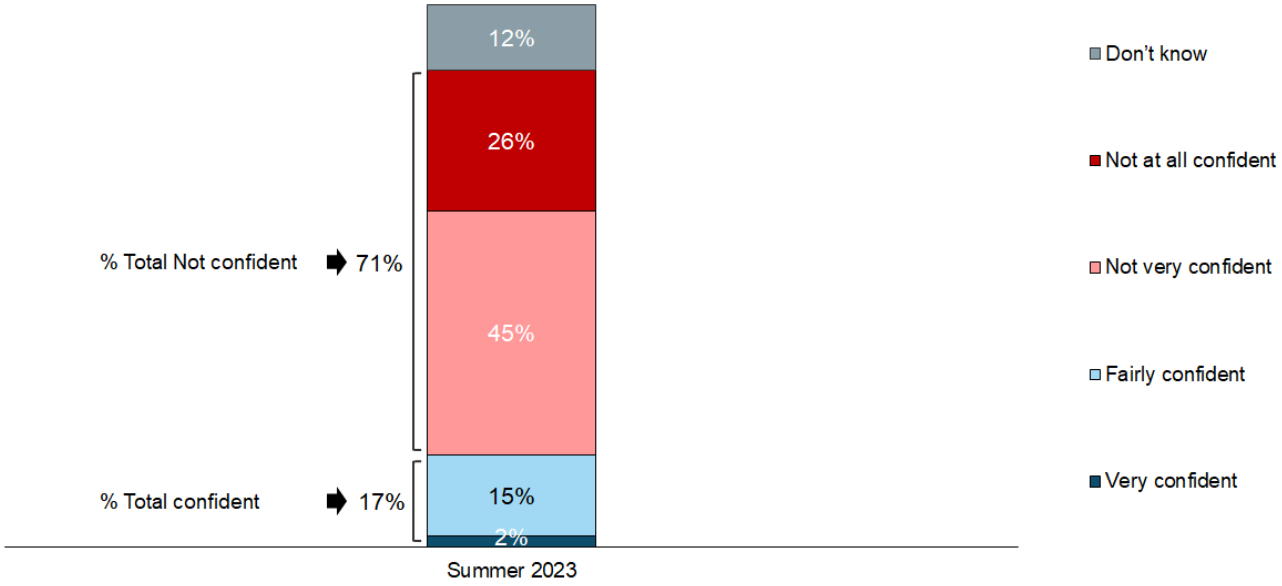
By education there was no difference in expectations in the short term, but in the long term those educated to degree level were more likely to expect a decrease in living expenses (31% compared with 23% of those with other qualifications and 18% of people with no qualifications).

As for the economy, those living in rural areas were more negative about living expenses associated with the UK transition to Net Zero They were more likely to expect an increase in living expenses in both the short term (75% compared with 68% of those in urban areas) and in the long term (53% compared with 47% of those in urban areas). By geography, in the short term those in the North East were less likely to expect an increase in living expenses (60%) compared with those in the East Midlands (74%), Northern Ireland (73%), Yorkshire and the Humber (72%), the South East (72%) and the South West (71%) . The pattern was slightly different, however, in the long term: those living in London were less likely to expect an increase (37%) than those in most other geographies and were more likely to expect a decrease (31%) compared with those in the South East (21%), the North West (19%) and Wales (19%).

As for the economy, those unaware of Net Zero were more likely to say they did not know what the impact of the UK's transition would be on their living expenses (30% for both the short and long term). Among those aware of Net Zero, those who said they knew at least a fair amount about Net Zero were more likely to expect an increase in living expenses in the short term (76%, compared with 66% of those knowing at most a little). There was no difference in the expected impact on living expenses by level of knowledge among those aware of Net Zero.

In Summer 2023, 71% of people said that they were not very (45%) or not at all confident (26%) that the UK is on track to meet its Net Zero target by 2050. Far fewer (17%) said they were at least fairly confident (15%), including just 2% who were very confident about the UK reaching Net Zero by 2050 (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4: Confidence that UK is on track to meet Net Zero target by 2050 (based on all people), Summer 2023



NZCONF. How confident are you that the UK is on track to meet its Net zero target by 2050?
Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2023: (3,999)

Men were more likely to say they were not at all confident that the UK is on track to meet its Net Zero target (31%), compared with 21% of women.

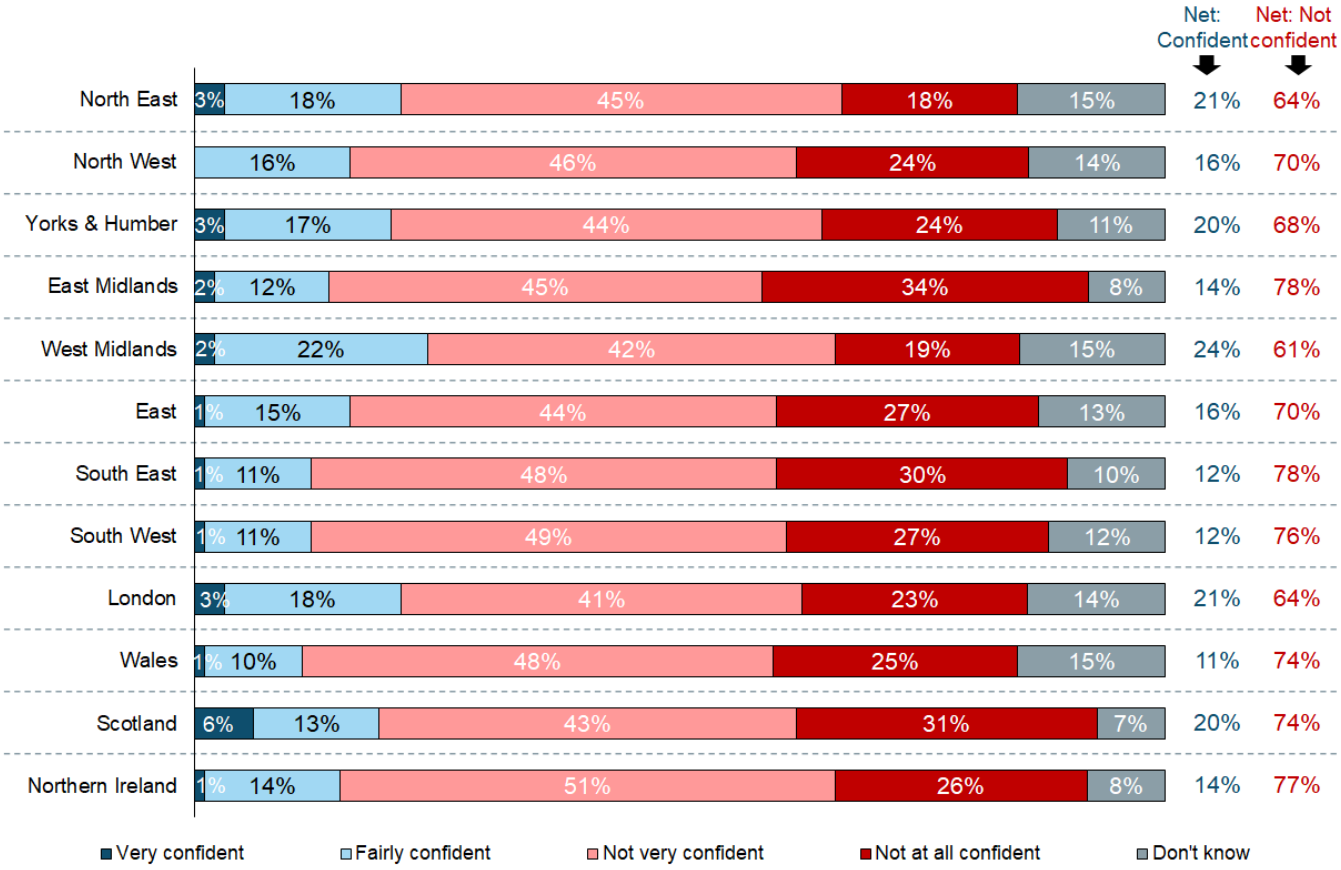
Those aged 55 and over were more likely to be not very or not at all confident (76% of those aged 55 to 64 and 75% of those aged 65 and over) and this proportion decreased through the age bands to 62% of those aged under 25. Those educated to degree level were also less confident (78% not very or not at all confident, compared with 72% of those with other qualifications and 62% of people with no qualifications).

Confidence was also weaker among those living in rural areas, with 81% saying they were not very or not at all confident compared with 69% of those in urban areas.

By geography (Figure 2.5), the proportion saying they were not at all confident was higher in the East Midlands (34%), Scotland (31%) and the South East (30%), compared with those in the West Midlands (19%) and North East (18%). The proportion saying they were either very or fairly confident was higher in the West Midlands (24%), London (21%), the North East (21%), Yorkshire and the Humber (20%) and Scotland (20%), compared with those in the South East (12%), South West (12%) and Wales (11%).

In Scotland a relatively high proportion said they are not at all confident (31%) but also a relatively high proportion said they were very or fairly confident (20%), including more saying they are very confident (6%) than in all other geographies.

Figure 2.5: Confidence that UK is on track to meet Net Zero target by 2050 by geography (based on all people), Summer 2023



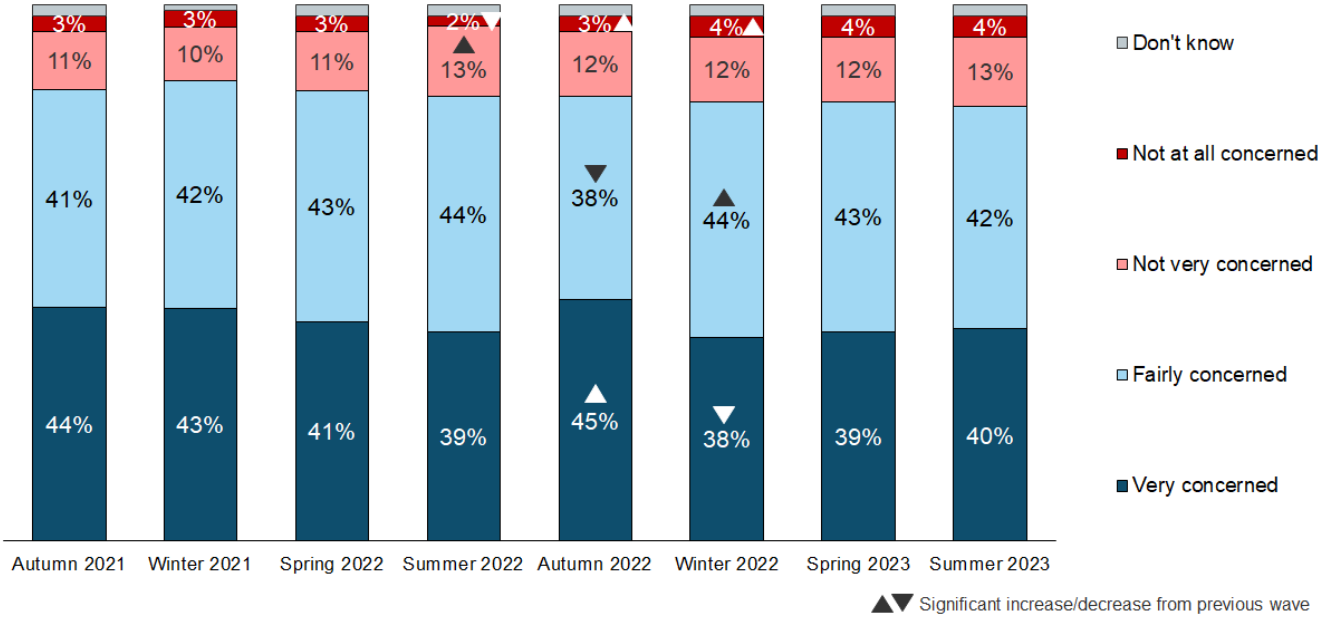
NZCONF. How confident are you that the UK is on track to meet its Net Zero target by 2050?
Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2023: North East (195), North West (397), Yorkshire & Humber (319), East Midlands (266), West Midlands (308), East of England (410), South East (554), South West (292), London (398), Wales (281), Scotland (298), Northern Ireland (281)

Concern about climate change

In Summer 2023, the majority of people (81%) said they were at least fairly concerned about climate change, with no significant change since Winter 2022 and Spring 2023 (82%). However, since this time series started there has been a slow but steady decline in overall concern about climate change from Autumn 2021 (85%) to Summer 2023 (81%), with a similar steady increase in the proportion saying they were not very or not at all concerned (14% to 17%).

In Summer 2023 40% said they were very concerned and 4% said they were not at all concerned (Figure 3.1). There was no change in these measures since Spring 2023.

Figure 3.1: Concern about climate change (based on all people), Autumn 2021 to Summer 2023



CLIMCONCERN. How concerned, if at all, are you about climate change, sometimes referred to as 'global warming'?
Base: All wave respondents – Autumn 2021 (5,557), Winter 2021 (3,701), Spring 2022 (4,375), Summer 2022 (4,490), Autumn 2022 (4,158), Winter 2022 (3,571), Spring 2023 (4,405), Summer 2023 (3,998) (Asked Quarterly)

Overall concern about climate change was higher for women (85%, compared with 78% of men) and people educated to degree level (88%, compared with 82% of those with other qualifications and 70% of people with no qualifications). By age, the proportion of those 'very concerned' about climate change was relatively higher among those aged over 65 (46%) and lower among those aged 16 to 24 (34%) and those aged 35 to 44 (33%), while those in other age groups were in line with the total for the UK.

By geography, the proportion who said they were very concerned about climate change was relatively higher in the South West (47%), London (44%) and the West Midlands (44%) and lower in the North West (32%), the North East (31%) and Northern Ireland (29%).

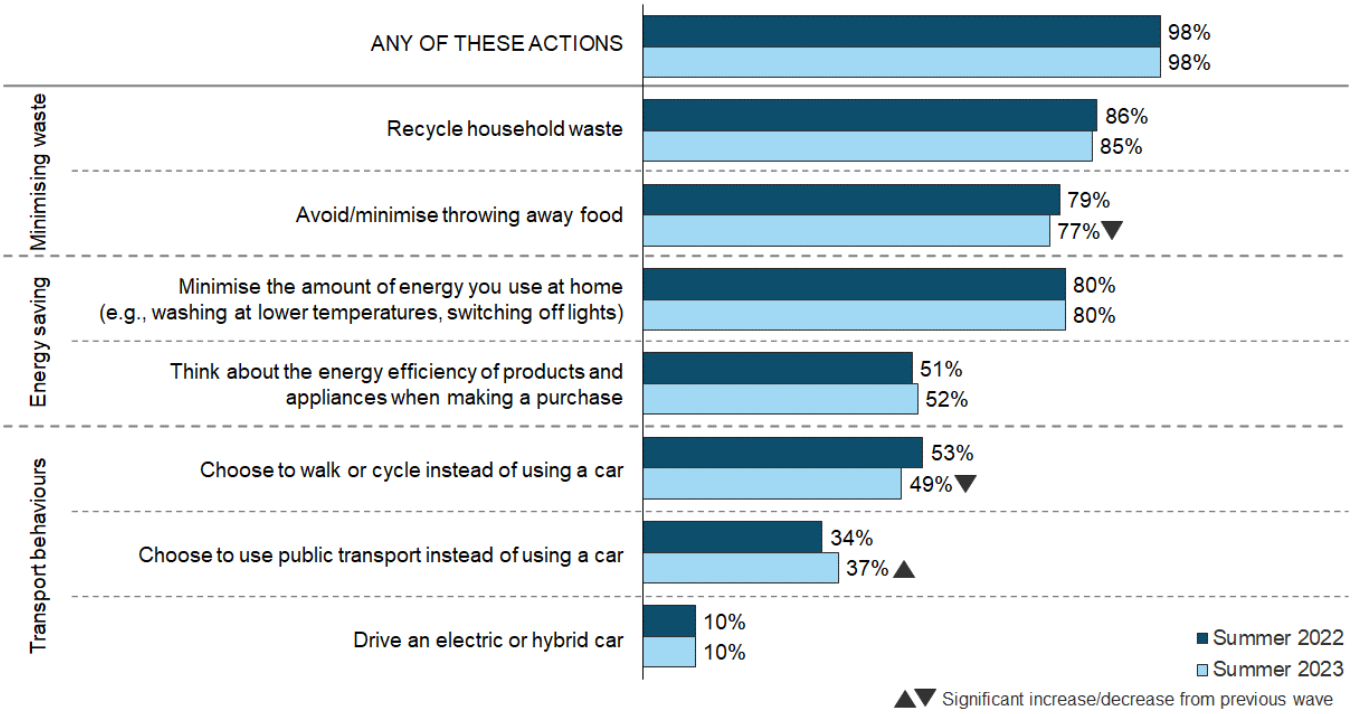
Behaviours to tackle climate change

Self-reported behaviours

In Summer 2023, people were shown a list of behaviours and asked whether they did any of them in their everyday life. Almost all people (98%) said they did one or more of the behaviours shown in Figure 4.1. As in Summer 2022, behaviours related to minimising waste were reported most often, including recycling household waste (85%) and minimising food waste (77%), although a slightly smaller proportion reported this second behaviour than in Summer 2022 (79%).

A similar proportion (80%), unchanged since Summer 2022, said they minimised energy use at home, while around half of respondents said they thought about energy efficiency when purchasing products or appliances (52%). In relation to transport, 49% chose to walk or cycle instead of using a car, lower than in Summer 2022 (53%), while 37% said they chose public transport instead of using a car (up from 34%) and 10% said they drove an electric or hybrid car.

Figure 4.1: Behaviours related to reducing climate change adopted in everyday life (based on all people), Summer 2022 and Summer 2023



CCBEHAVE. Thinking now about your everyday life, do you do any of these things? Please select all that apply.
Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2022 (4,488), Summer 2023 (3,999)

There were some differences by gender, with women more likely to report minimising energy use in the home (84%, compared with 77% of men), avoiding or minimising food waste (81%, compared with 73%) and recycling household waste (88%, compared with 83%).

Those educated to degree level were more likely than those with no qualifications to report doing each of the prompted behaviours.

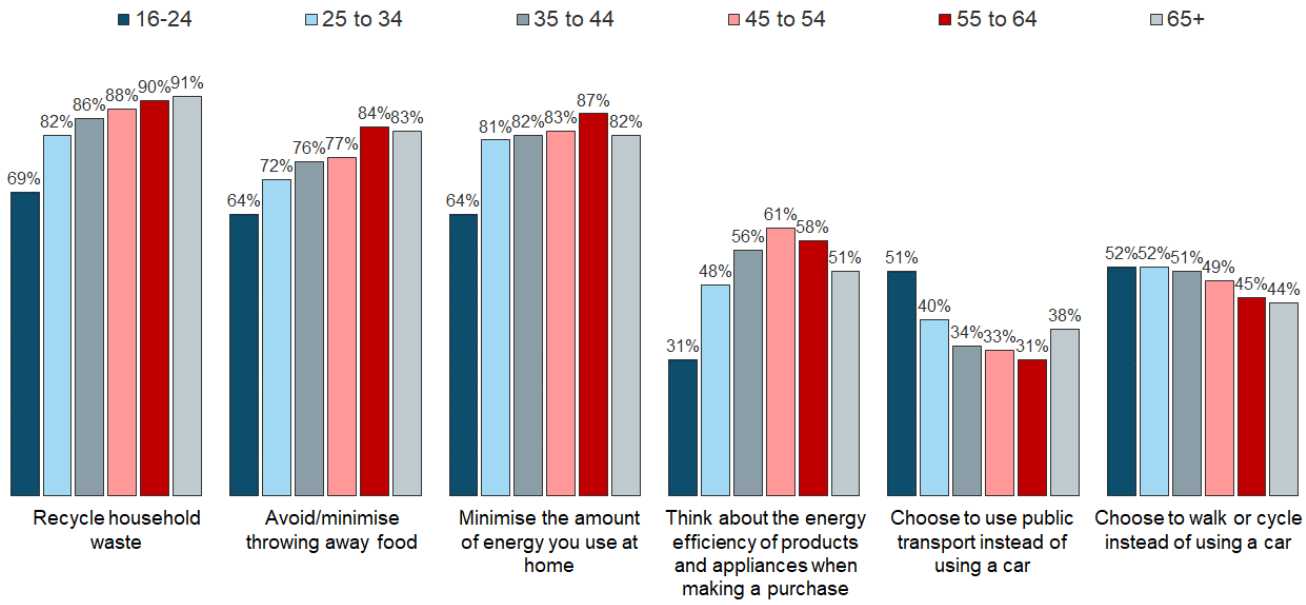
People living in owner-occupier households were more likely than renters to report most behaviours, with the exception of using public transport (43% of renters compared with 34% of owner-occupiers) and choosing to walk or cycle (for which there was no difference).

People who said they were very concerned about climate change were more likely than people who were not concerned to report doing each behaviour listed in Figure 4.1. The differences were largest in relation to thinking about energy efficiency when making a purchase (64% of those who were very concerned about climate change compared with 28% of those not concerned) and choosing to use public transport instead of a car (46%, compared with 23% of those not concerned).

By age, those aged 16 to 24 were less likely than those in all other age groups to report all but two of the behaviours listed in Figure 4.2. Choosing to walk or cycle instead of using the car was reported more often by those aged under 45 (52% of those aged 16 to 24 and 25 to 34, and 51% of those aged 35 to 44) compared with those aged 55 and over (45% of those aged 55 to 64 and 44% of those aged 65 and over). Choosing to use public transport was highest for those aged 16 to 24 (51%) and those aged 25 to 34 (40%) and was also higher for those aged 65 and over (38%) than those aged 35 to 64 (ranging from 31% to 34%). There was a pattern by age for both recycling and minimising food waste, with the proportion adopting these behaviours lowest for those aged 16 to 24 and rising through the age bands to the highest level for those aged 55 and over. Minimising energy use in the home was lower for those aged 16 to 24 (64%) than for those in all other age bands, and highest for those aged 55 to 64 (87%) (Figure 4.2).

Compared with other age groups, young people aged 16 to 24 were particularly unlikely to consider energy efficiency when purchasing appliances (31%, compared with 52% overall) although this is likely to be related to a lower rate of purchasing appliances for this group.

Figure 4.2: Reported behaviours taken in everyday life by age (based on all people), Summer 2023



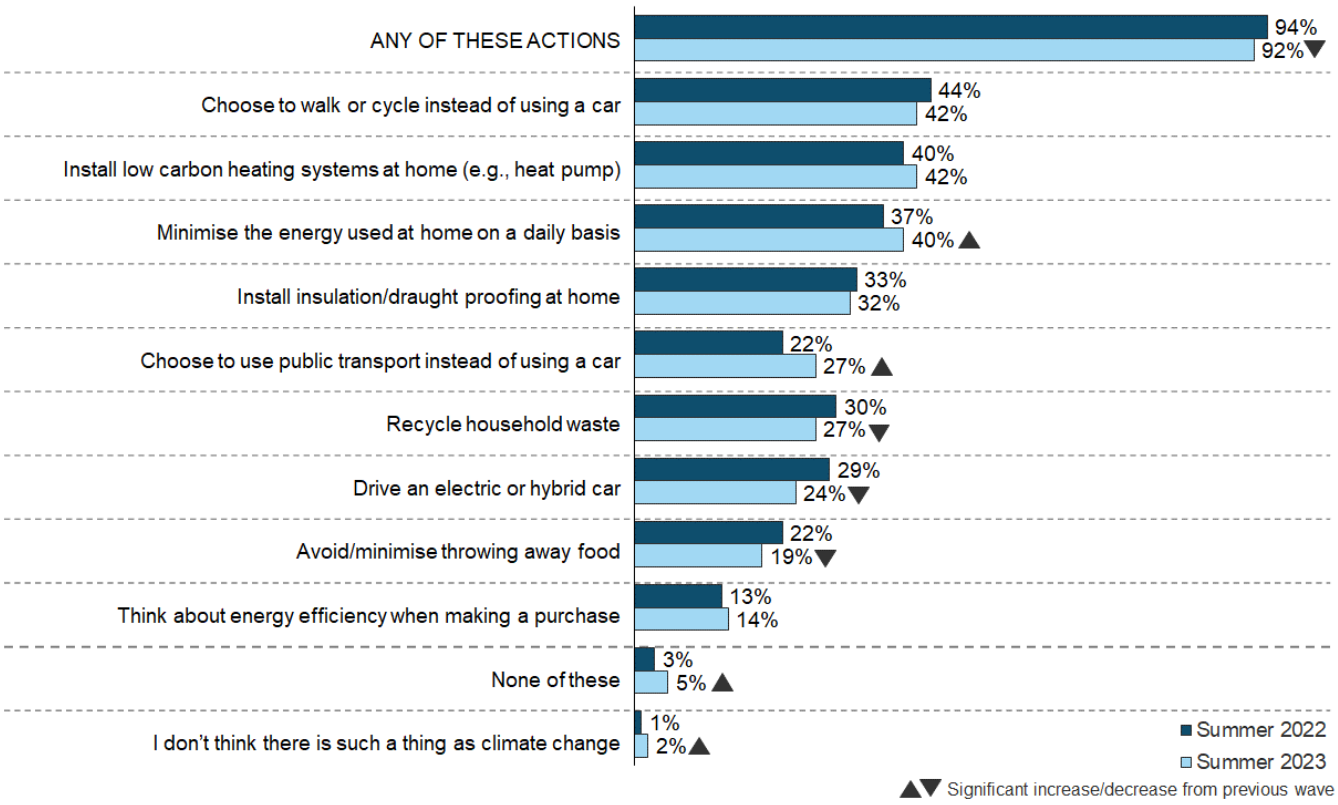
CCBEHAVE. Thinking now about your everyday life, do you do any of these things? Please select all that apply. Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2023: 16-24 (239), 25-34 (493), 35-44 (552), 45-54 (604), 55-64 (731), 65+ (1,317)

By geography, people living in London were more likely than the UK average to report choosing to walk or cycle (62%) and choosing to use public transport (67%). Reported use of public transport was particularly low in the East Midlands (26%), East of England (27%) and Wales (26%). Recycling was reported more in the South West (94%) than in all geographies other than the West Midlands (89%) and Wales (89%). It was reported least often in the North East (78%), London (78%) and Northern Ireland (79%).

Behaviours thought to have the biggest impact on tackling climate change

Respondents were then presented with a list similar to the one in the previous self-reported behaviours section and asked to identify **up to three** that they thought would have the biggest impact on tackling climate change in the UK (Figure 4.3). In Summer 2023, as in Summer 2022, the behaviour most likely to be associated with mitigation of climate change was choosing to walk or cycle rather than using a car (42%), followed by installing low carbon heating systems (42%), and minimising energy use in the home (40%, up from 37% in Summer 2022). Around a third included installing home insulation/draught proofing (32%) in their top three. Compared with Summer 2022, using public transport was more likely to be associated with mitigation of climate change (27%, up from 22%). Recycling household waste (27%, down from 30%), driving an electric or hybrid car (24%, down from 29%) and minimising food waste (19%, down from 22%) were each less likely to be placed in the top three perceived most impactful behaviours in Summer 2023.

Figure 4.3: Behaviours thought to have the biggest impact on tacking climate change in the UK - up to three responses were selected (based on all people), Summer 2022 and Summer 2023



CCIMPORT. If most people in the UK did the following, which three of these do you think would have the biggest impact on tackling climate change in the UK? Please select up to three responses.
Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2022 (4,491), Summer 2023 (3,958)

A small minority (7%) either did not believe in climate change at all (2%, up from 1%) or did not think any of the options would have an impact (5%, up from 3%). Those who said they were not concerned about climate change were far more likely than those who were fairly or very concerned to identify none of the prompted behaviours as having an impact on climate change.

Those who were very concerned about climate change were more likely than both those fairly concerned and those not concerned to say that using public transport (33%, compared with 26% of those fairly concerned and 19% of those not concerned) and installing low carbon heating systems (53%, compared with 41% of those fairly concerned and 20% of those not concerned) were key mitigation behaviours. In contrast, they were less likely to choose recycling (22%, compared with 30% of those fairly concerned and 29% of those not concerned).

Some behaviours were selected more frequently as the most impactful in tackling climate change by women than men, such as minimising energy use at home (44%, compared with 37%), recycling (30%, compared with 24%), minimising food waste (21%, compared with 17%) and choosing to walk or cycle (46%, compared with 39%), while men were more likely to select installing home insulation (36%, compared with 29%) and choosing public transport over the car (30%, compared with 25%).

People with degree level qualifications were more likely than those with no qualifications to select installing low carbon heating (48%, compared with 30%) and installing insulation (40%, compared with 26%), while people with no qualifications were more likely than those with a degree level qualification to select recycling (35%, compared with 20%) and minimising food waste (25%, compared with 17%) as impactful mitigating behaviours against climate change. Those with a non-degree qualification were less likely to select using public transport (24%) than both those educated to degree level (30%) and those with no qualifications (32%).

Owner-occupiers were more likely than renters to include installing insulation as a mitigating factor (36%, compared with 26%) and less likely to include choosing to walk or cycle (39%, compared with 49%).

By age group, those aged 65 and over were less likely than those in all other age groups to include choosing to walk or cycle as a main mitigating factor (30%) and those aged 25 to 34 were most likely to select this behaviour (55%). Compared with those aged 45 and over, those aged 16 to 24 were less likely to choose minimising energy use (34%, compared with 44% of those aged 45 to 54, 42% of those aged 55 to 64 and 43% of those aged 65 and over), and installing insulation (24%, compared with 35% of those aged 45 to 54 and 55 to 64 and 39% of those aged 65 and over).

Trust in information sources

Annually, in Summer, people are asked about a range of potential sources of information about climate change (Figure 5.1):

- Newspapers or newspaper websites
- TV news such as BBC, ITV, Sky
- Social media such as Facebook, Twitter
- TV and radio documentaries
- UK Government
- Scientists working at universities
- Scientific organisations such as Royal Society, Met Office
- Charities, Environmental or Campaign groups such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth

People are asked about their level of trust in these to provide accurate information about climate change (Figure 5.1).

As in Summer 2022, in Summer 2023, levels of trust about climate change information were highest for scientific organisations (87% trusted, with 42% trusting them a great deal) and scientists at universities (86% trusted, with 42% trusting them a great deal). The proportion saying they trusted each of these a great deal had increased since Summer 2022 (each up from 39%).

Half (50%) trusted the UK government to provide accurate information on this, with 10% trusting them a great deal, up from 8% in Summer 2022 but remaining well below trust in scientists.

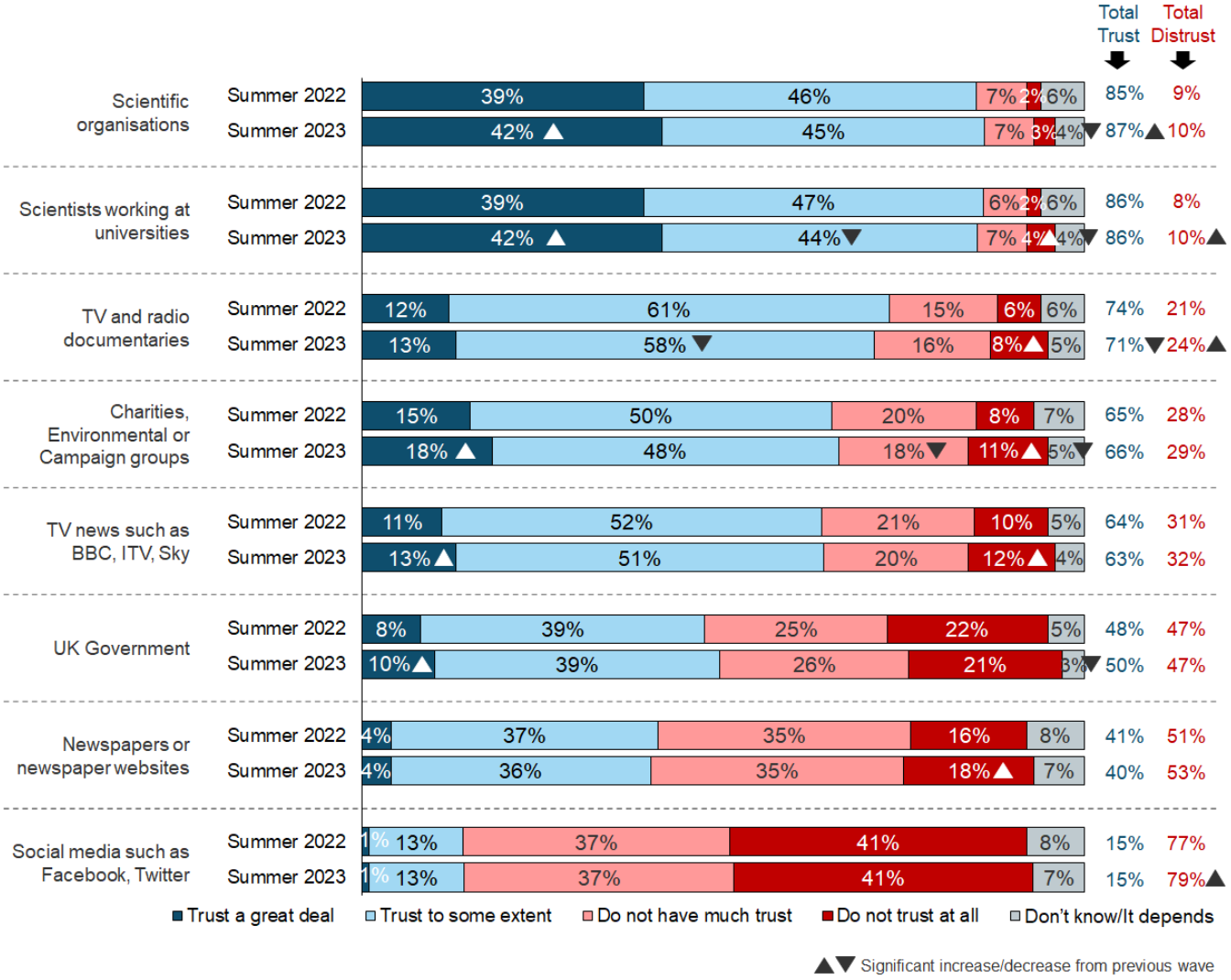
In terms of media, TV and radio documentaries (71%) and TV news (63%) were trusted more than newspapers (40%) to provide accurate information about climate change, although this has decreased for documentaries since Summer 2022 (down from 74%). How strongly people trusted them remained fairly weak for all three media sources, although the proportion saying they trusted TV news a great deal had increased to 13% from 11% in Summer 2022.

Two in three said they trusted charities, environmental or campaign groups as a source (66%) with an increasing proportion trusting these a great deal (18%, up from 15%).

Along with the increases in trust levels outlined above, there were also increases in the proportion of people saying they did not trust some of these sources at all, including scientists working at universities (4%, up from 2%), charities, environmental or campaign groups (11%, up from 8%) and TV news (12%, up from 10%); this suggests increasing polarisation of opinions.

The proportion saying they did not trust newspapers at all had also increased (18%, up from 16%). Trust in social media remained notably low, with 79% saying they did not trust it as an accurate information source about climate change, up from 77% in Summer 2022.

Figure 5.1: Trust in sources of information to provide accurate information on climate change (based on all people), Summer 2022 and Summer 2023



CCTRUSTA-H. How much do you trust each of the following to provide accurate information about climate change?
Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2022/Summer 2023: Scientific organisations (4,463/3,967), Scientists at universities (4,464/3,973), TV & radio documentaries (4,464/3,965), Charities and environmental groups (4,458/3,965), TV news (4,468/3,973), UK Government (4,457/3,966), Newspapers (4,456/3,972), Social media (4,443/3,946)

Trust in charities, environmental or campaign groups for climate change information was lower among those aged 65 and over (57%) compared with those in all other age groups (ranging from 65% to 72%), but trust in newspapers was higher for those aged 65 and over (45%) particularly compared with those aged under 45 (37% of those aged 16 to 24 and 25 to 34 and 36% of those aged 35 to 44).

Trust in TV and radio documentaries was slightly higher for those aged 45 and over (74% of those aged 45 to 54, 75% of those aged 55 to 64 and 74% of those aged 65 and over) compared with those aged 16 to 24 (65%). On the other hand, trust in social media in relation to climate change information was much higher amongst those aged 16 to 24 (22%) than those in most other age groups, especially those aged 65 and over (8%).

With the exception of social media, those concerned about climate change were more likely to trust all sources of information to provide accurate climate change information than those who were not concerned about climate change. Similarly, people with degree level qualifications

were more likely than those with no qualifications to trust all sources in their reporting of climate change, with the exception of social media.

Women were more likely than men to trust charities, environmental or campaign groups (70%, compared with 62%), TV and radio documentaries (75%, compared with 68%) and TV news (67%, compared with 61%) to provide accurate climate change information.

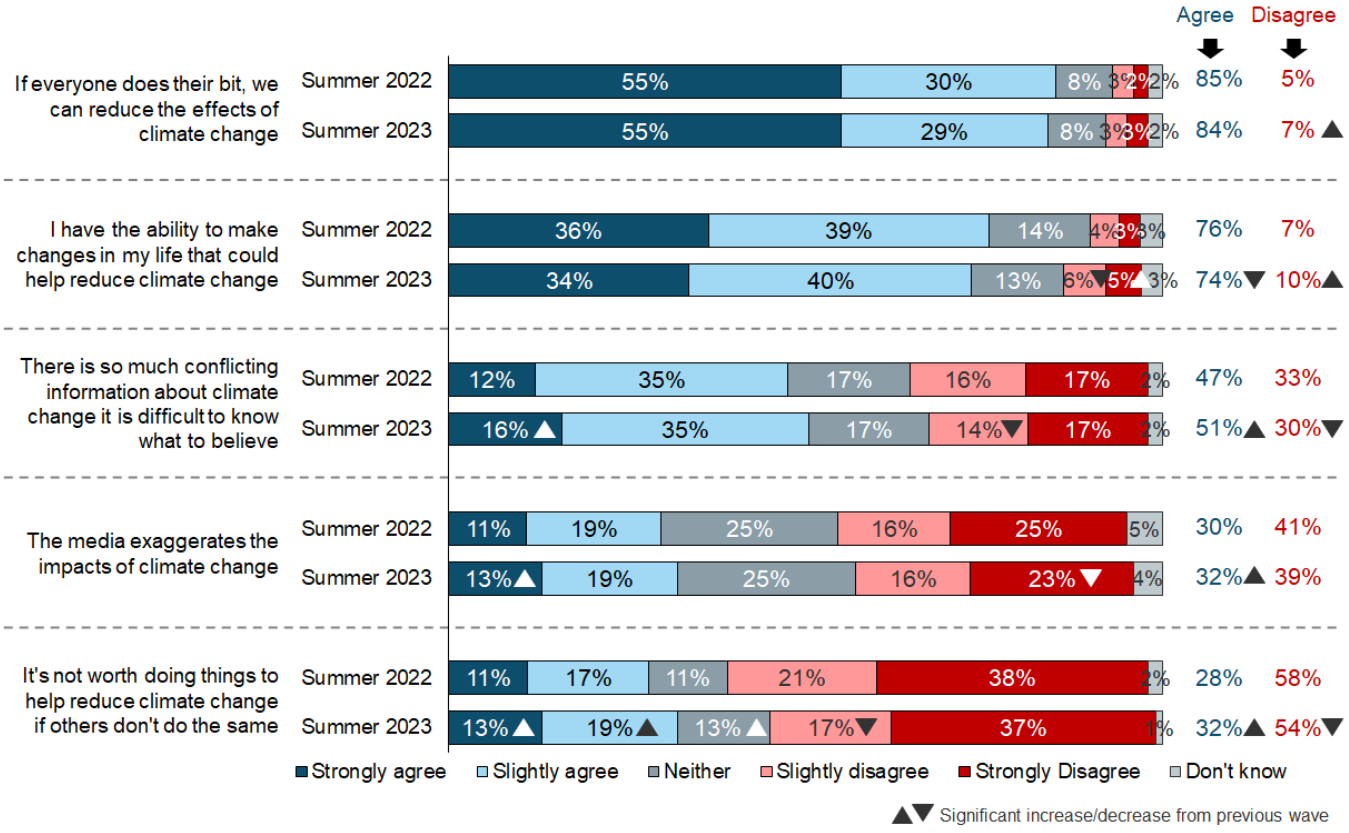
Attitudes towards climate change

Annually, in summer, people are asked how much they agree or disagree with the following statements about climate change:

- It's not worth doing things to help reduce climate change if others don't do the same.
- There is so much conflicting information about climate change it is difficult to know what to believe.
- If everyone does their bit, we can reduce the effects of climate change.
- I have the ability to make changes in my life that could help reduce climate change.
- The media exaggerates the impacts of climate change.

In Summer 2023 there have been a number of small negative changes in attitudes since Summer 2022. Nonetheless, as in Summer 2022, in Summer 2023 there was strong belief in in the potential for individual action to reduce climate change (Figure 6.1). A large majority (84%) agreed that if everyone does their bit, we can reduce the effects of climate change, with over half (55%) agreeing strongly, but there was a small increase in disagreement (7%, up from 5%). Three in four (74%, down from 76% in Summer 2022) agreed that they personally could make changes that would help reduce climate change and 34% agreed strongly, but there was, again, an increase in disagreement (10%, up from 7% in Summer 2022).

Figure 6.1: Attitudes towards climate change (based on all people), Summer 2022 and Summer 2023



CCATTA-E. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2022/Summer 2023: Everyone does their bit (4,484/3,984), I have ability (4,474/3,976), So much conflicting information (4,475/3,984), Media exaggerates (4,473/3,981), Not worth doing (4,470/3,979)

The potential lack of action by others was a disincentive for some, with 32% agreeing it is not worth doing things if others do not do the same, higher than in Summer 2022 (28%). Although far more still disagreed than agreed with this statement, the level of disagreement had decreased since Summer 2022 (54%, down from 58%).

Around half (51%) agreed that ‘there is so much conflicting information about climate change, it is difficult to know what to believe’, and this had increased since Summer 2022 (47%), with an associated decrease in disagreement (30%, down from 33%). Although more people still disagreed (39%) that ‘the media exaggerates the impacts of climate change’ than agreed (32%), the gap had narrowed since Summer 2022.

People aged 55 and over were more likely, compared with younger people and particularly those aged under 25 to 34, to agree with the following: ‘the media exaggerates the impact of climate change’ (38% of those aged 55 to 64 and 42% of those aged 65 and over, compared 25% of those aged 25 to 34); ‘there is so much conflicting information about climate change it is difficult to know what to believe’ (57% of each of those aged 55 to 64 and 65 and over, compared with 42% of those aged 25 to 34); and to agree that ‘it is not worth doing things to help reduce climate change if other people don’t do the same’ (36% of those aged 55 to 64 and 38% of those aged 65 and over, compared with 26% of those aged 25 to 34).

People educated to degree level were generally more positive, particularly compared with those with no qualifications. For example, they were more likely to agree that they themselves have the ability to help make a difference (80%, compared with 64% of those with no qualifications) and more likely to disagree that it is not worth doing things if others don’t (63%, compared with 41%).

Men tended to be more negative than women: for example, men (36%) were more likely than women (29%) to agree that the media exaggerates the impacts of climate change.

This publication is available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/public-attitudes-tracking-survey

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