



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

BEIS PUBLIC ATTITUDES TRACKER

Technical note (issued with wave 29)



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Introduction

Background

The Public Attitudes Tracker (PAT) survey covers public attitudes towards BEIS policies such as energy, climate change and workers' rights. The survey began in March 2012 and runs four times a year. Questions on issues where we think attitudes might shift quickly or be affected by seasonal changes are repeated quarterly; other questions are asked annually. The tracker is regularly reviewed to ensure that the data set continues to offer valuable insight.

This technical report is issued following wave 29 of the PAT (conducted in March 2019). The report provides background information about the survey and notes changes that have been made to the design over the last year (covering waves 26-29):

Survey and policy changes

Ahead of July 2018 (wave 26) fieldwork, BEIS undertook a review of the survey, to understand how it could meet BEIS's priorities and reflect the broader areas covered under the department's remit. The review covered:

- The survey topic areas
- The frequency of the survey
- The sample size
- Surveys outputs

Changes were made from July 2018 (wave 26) fieldwork onwards following this review. The sample size increased from c. 2,000 to c. 4,000 per wave to allow greater scope for more sub group and regional analysis. Previously, the PAT consisted of one annual survey every March and three shorter surveys, in June, September and December. The survey now consists of quarterly waves of similar length, and new topics have been introduced to begin to reflect BEIS's full remit. Changes have also been made to the following survey deliverables:

- The Excel summary tables now include more information on trends.
- PDF tables, and Excel tables from Wave 29, containing demographic and sub-group comparisons for all questions, are now published.
- The summary report, published after each wave of fieldwork, has been updated to include additional detail on the survey results.

Methodology and sampling

The PAT is conducted on the Kantar UK face-to-face omnibus, which uses a random location design, a high-quality form of quota sampling. This vehicle has been used for all 29 waves of the PAT completed to date, dating back to March 2012.

The omnibus survey runs on a weekly basis. In each week, a representative sample of 2,000 adults in Great Britain aged 16+ is achieved. An additional sample of interviews in Northern Ireland (c. 60) is added for surveys that require UK-wide coverage (as the PAT does). Waves 26 to 29 of the PAT have each been conducted over two consecutive omnibus waves, giving a sample size of approximately 4,200 per survey wave.

The omnibus uses a sophisticated sampling system, which integrates the Postcode Address File (PAF) with 2011 UK Census area statistics. This enables multiple samples of output areas (OAs) to be drawn, stratified by region and Acorn¹, each with similar geodemographic characteristics.

The sampling approach is designed to provide high-quality, replicable cross sections of adults, reflecting the geographic and socio-economic profile of the UK population. Within each sampled OA, addresses are issued to interviewers to achieve between 10 and 16 interviews. To ensure a balanced sample of adults within contacted addresses, interlocking quotas are set based on gender, presence of children and working status. Results are weighted at the analysis stage to correct for any imbalances in the achieved sample profile and to ensure findings are representative of the UK population aged 16+.

Interviews are conducted in each OA over two days of fieldwork. Only one interview is undertaken per household and a minimum of three households is left between each successful interview. This ensures that interviewing is not restricted to a small geographic area with respondents of similar demographic and lifestyle characteristics, thereby minimising the effect of clustering within the sample.

Interviews are conducted in respondents' homes using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) technology by fully trained interviewers from Kantar's national field-force.

¹ Acorn is a segmentation tool which categorises the UK population into different demographic types: <https://acorn.caci.co.uk/>

Questionnaire

Questionnaire review

A review of the questionnaire content was undertaken prior to wave 26 (July 2018). This resulted in the addition of several new topics to the survey to reflect BEIS's priorities. Changes to the frequency with which some existing topics were included in the survey were also agreed as part of this review.

Questionnaire design and cognitive testing

The original PAT questionnaire was designed by Kantar and BEIS. Many of the current survey questions have been asked since the early waves of the survey conducted in 2012. Where new topics are added to the survey, questions are jointly developed between Kantar and BEIS and refined through cognitive testing.

Cognitive testing was conducted prior to wave 26 (July 2018), wave 27 (September 2018) and wave 29 (March 2019) to test new topics and questions prior to adding them to the survey and existing questions for possible refinement. Cognitive interviewing helps to identify any ambiguities on question or response wording and any words or phrases that are open to misunderstanding or misinterpretation. It does this through assessing the thought processes that respondents go through when trying to answer a question.

Each wave of cognitive testing consisted of two rounds, so that questions could be revised in response to any issues to emerge and re-tested. Approximately 15 interviews were conducted by members of Kantar for each wave of cognitive testing. Cognitive testing was used to test questions on the following topics:

- Shopping around
- Switching products and services
- Consumer rights
- Consumer dispute resolution services
- Trust in consumer organisations
- Small modular reactors
- Decommissioning oil and gas
- Insulation
- Energy performance certificates
- Energy standards for rental properties
- Workers' rights
- Climate change
- Corporate trust and responsibility
- Office for Product Safety and Standards

Questionnaire structure

Where possible, the structure of the questionnaire follows previous waves. New topics are generally added to the end of the questionnaire, and new questions on existing topics to the end of the existing section.

A list of survey topics, the waves that they were included, whether the topic was existing or new (from wave 26 onwards), and a summary of the questions asked in each topic, is included in Table 1.

Table 1: Survey topics and wave

Survey topic	Waves included	Existing or new survey topic (from July 2018)	Summary of questions asked
Clean growth	Wave 26 (Jul 2018), Wave 27 (Sep 2018), Wave 28 (Dec 2018), Wave 29 (Mar 2019)	New	Awareness/ knowledge of “clean growth”.
Renewables	Wave 26 (Jul 2018), Wave 27 (Sep 2018), Wave 28 (Dec 2018), Wave 29 (Mar 2019)	Existing	Support/ opposition to renewables energy overall and for five different renewable sources. Three attitudinal questions asked in relation to renewables.
Shale gas	Wave 26 (Jul 2018), Wave 27 (Sep 2018), Wave 28 (Dec 2018), Wave 29 (Mar 2019)	Existing	Awareness/knowledge and support/ opposition to shale gas. Follow-up questions asked of those who support, oppose and are neutral on shale gas to ask reasons for this.
Shopping around for products and services	Wave 26 (Jul 2018)	New	Experience of shopping around in different sectors in the last 12 months.
Switching products and services	Wave 26 (Jul 2018)	New	Experience of switching suppliers in

			different sectors in the last 12 months.
Consumer rights	Wave 26 (Jul 2018)	New	Understanding of terms and conditions and privacy notices when buying products or services online and perception of consumer rights protection for different channels.
Consumer dispute resolution services	Wave 26 (Jul 2018)	New	Awareness of and attitudes towards consumer dispute resolution services.
Consumer problems	Wave 26 (Jul 2018)	New	Whether experienced a problem with providers in a range of different sectors and experience of trying to resolve problems.
Trust in consumer organisations	Wave 26 (Jul 2018)	New	Trust in a range of different consumer organisations.
Energy sources	Wave 27 (Sep 2018), Wave 29 (Mar 2019)	Existing	Which energy sources are used in home.
Insulation	Wave 27 (Sep 2018)	Existing (new questions added)	Whether different types of insulation installed in home. Reasons for not installing insulation (where this applies) – first asked at wave 27.
Energy performance certificates (EPCs)	Wave 27 (Sep 2018)	Existing (new questions added)	Awareness/knowledge of EPCs. New questions asked on role of EPCs on making changes to homes to make them

			more energy efficient asked for first time at wave 27.
Energy standards for rental properties	Wave 27 (Sep 2018)	New	Knowledge about minimum energy standards for rental properties.
Workers' rights	Wave 27 (Sep 2018)	New	Background questions on employment status. Knowledge about employment rights at work, information sources, and experience of problems to do with employment rights at work.
Radioactive waste	Wave 27 (Sep 2018)	Existing	Knowledge about how the UK currently manages radioactive waste and about geological disposal facilities.
Small modular reactors	Wave 27 (Sep 2018)	New	Awareness/ knowledge about small modular reactors.
Decommissioning oil and gas	Wave 27 (Sep 2018)	New	Awareness/ knowledge about decommissioning offshore oil and gas.
Condensing boilers	Wave 28 (Dec 2018)	Existing	Whether have a condensing gas boiler.
Heat networks	Wave 28 (Dec 2018)	Existing	Awareness of heat networks, likelihood to join one and whether positive or negative about heat networks.

Renewable heating systems	Wave 28 (Dec 2018)	Existing	<p>Awareness/knowledge about renewable heating systems overall and different types of renewable heating system.</p> <p>Attitudes towards renewable heating systems.</p>
Heat usage in the home	Wave 28 (Dec 2018)	Existing	<p>Attention paid to heat used at home and reason for paying attention/not paying attention.</p>
Installing or replacing heating systems	Wave 28 (Dec 2018)	Existing	<p>Circumstances in which people would replace a boiler and motivation for replacing boiler.</p> <p>Sources trusted to provide advice about which heating system to install in home.</p>
Climate Change	Wave 29 (Mar 2019)	Existing (new questions added)	<p>Level of concern about climate change and opinion on main cause of climate change.</p> <p>New questions added on impact of climate change, changing behaviour, tackling climate change, trust in information sources and attitudes in relation to climate change at wave 29.</p>
Energy security	Wave 29 (Mar 2019)	Existing	<p>Level of concern over different aspects of future energy security in the UK.</p>

Nuclear energy	Wave 29 (Mar 2019)	Existing	Whether support or oppose nuclear energy and attitudes in relation to nuclear energy.
Carbon capture and storage	Wave 29 (Mar 2019)	Existing	Awareness/knowledge and support/opposition to carbon capture and storage.
Energy saving and wasting	Wave 29 (Mar 2019)	Existing	Level of thought given to saving energy at home and frequency of engaging in a range of energy saving or wasting behaviours.
Smart meters	Wave 29 (Mar 2019)	Existing	Awareness and ownership of a smart meter.
Energy bills	Wave 29 (Mar 2019)	Existing	Level of worry over paying for energy bills and other household bills.
Energy suppliers and switching	Wave 29 (Mar 2019)	Existing	Whether switched energy supplier in last year. Trust in energy suppliers on different metrics.
Corporate trust and responsibility	Wave 29 (Mar 2019)	New	Trust in large financial and legal business on different aspects.
Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS)	Wave 29 (Mar 2019)	New	Awareness of OPSS (alongside other organisations), where heard about OPSS and trust in OPSS.

Question changes

A number of questions have been changed or removed from the PAT in waves 26 to 29. The frequency with which some other questions are asked has also been changed. A list of changes can be found in the Tables 2, 3 and 4 below.

Table 2: Question changes

Question	Change
Q24a (EPCs)	The word 'property' was changed to 'home' at wave 27.
Q5 (Insulation)	The first codes in the previous response list ("Already done/have this") was split into two new codes at wave 27: "Already done/have this in the last 12 months" and "Already done/have this over a year ago".

Table 3: Questions no longer asked

Question	Change
Q1a/b/c (Challenges facing Britain)	These questions, which asked people to select the biggest, second biggest, and third biggest challenge facing Britain today, are no longer asked in the survey. They were last asked at wave 25 (March 2018)
Q7_13 (Renewable Heat Incentive)	This question, which asked about awareness of the Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive, is no longer asked in the survey (last asked at wave 22, July 2017).
Q10 (Electric vehicles)	This question, which asked people about their ownership and likelihood to purchase an electric vehicle, is no longer asked in the survey (last asked at wave 25, March 2018).
Q17b (Energy suppliers and switching)	This question, which asked people whether they planned to switch their energy supplier in the next year, is no longer asked in the survey (last asked at wave 25, March 2018).
Q20a/b (Home energy use)	These two questions asked people which types of appliances in their home they thought used the most and second most energy. They are no longer asked in the survey (last asked at wave 25, March 2018).

Q47-50 (Renewable heating systems)	These questions asked those who rented their properties and said they would be likely to install different renewable heating systems whether their landlord would be likely to do this in the next few years. They are no longer asked in the survey (last asked at wave 24, December 2017).
Q53 (Condensing boilers)	This question, which asked people how likely they were to install a condensing boiler, is no longer asked in the survey (last asked at wave 24, December 2017).
Q69-72 (Energy suppliers and switching)	These questions, which asked about awareness of different energy-related organisations, experience of problems with energy suppliers and complaints to the Energy Ombudsman, are no longer asked in the survey (last asked at wave 24, December 2017).

Table 4: Question frequency changes

Question	Change
Q2 (Energy saving and wasting)	This question, on thought given to saving energy at home, has switched from being asked quarterly to annually.
Q8 (Smart meters)	This question, on awareness and ownership of smart meters, has switched from being asked biannually to annually.
Q14a (Nuclear energy)	This question, on support/opposition to nuclear energy, has switched from being asked quarterly to annually.
Q15a-e (Shale gas)	These questions, on shale gas, were asked quarterly until wave 25 (March 2019). After wave 25, it was decided to switch to asking them biannually. However, this was reversed after wave 26 and the questions are now included quarterly.
Q16 (Energy bills)	These questions, on worry over energy bills and other household bills, have switched from being asked quarterly to annually.

Q18 (Energy suppliers and switching)	These questions, on trust in energy suppliers, have switched from being asked quarterly to annually.
Q23a/b/c (Energy security)	These attitudinal questions on energy security are now asked annually. Previously, some of these were asked at more regular intervals.
Q26a/b (Radioactive waste)	These questions, on awareness of radioactive waste and geological disposal facilities, have switched from being asked quarterly to annually.

The final questionnaires used for each wave of the survey are published on <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/public-attitudes-tracking-survey>

Fieldwork

Table 5: Fieldwork dates and sample sizes for each wave

Wave	Fieldwork dates	Sample sizes
Wave 1 (Mar 2012)	21 to 25 March 2012	2,121
Wave 2 (Jun 2012)	27 June to 1 July 2012	2,100
Wave 3 (Sep 2012)	26 to 30 September 2012	2,118
Wave 4 (Dec 2012)	12 December 2012 to 2 January 2013	2,107
Wave 5 (Mar 2013)	27 to 31 March 2013	2,051
Wave 6 (Jul 2013)	3 to 7 July 2013	2,124
Wave 7 (Sep 2013)	25 to 29 September 2013	2,103
Wave 8 (Dec 2013)	11 to 15 December 2013	2,110
Wave 9 (Mar 2014)	26 to 30 March 2014	2,040
Wave 10 (Jun 2014)	25 to 29 June 2014	2,087
Wave 11 (Sep 2014)	24 to 28 September 2014	2,103

Wave 12 (Dec 2014)	10 December 2014 to 8 January 2015	2,119
Wave 13 (Mar 2015)	18 to 29 March 2015	1,981
Wave 14 (Jun 2015)	24 to 28 June 2015	2,118
Wave 15 (Sep 2015)	23 to 27 September 2015	2,121
Wave 16 (Dec 2015)	9 to 13 December 2015	2,121
Wave 17 (Mar 2016)	23 to 27 March 2016	2,105
Wave 18 (Jun 2016)	29 June to 3 July 2016	2,114
Wave 19 (Sep 2016)	28 September to 2 October 2016	2,080
Wave 20 (Dec 2016)	14 to 18 December 2016	2,138
Wave 21 (Mar 2017)	29 March to 2 April 2017	2,180
Wave 22 (Jun 2017)	30 June to 4 July 2017	2,097
Wave 23 (Sep 2017)	27 September to 1 October 2017	2,105
Wave 24 (Dec 2017)	13 to 17 December 2017	2,078
Wave 25 (Mar 2018)	28 March to 6 April 2018	2,102
Wave 26 (Jul 2018)	11 to 17 July 2018	4,268
Wave 27 (Sep 2018)	19 to 30 September 2018	4,258
Wave 28 (Dec 2018)	5 to 16 December 2018	4,273
Wave 29 (Mar 2019)	13 to 24 March 2019	4,224

Data management, coding and weighting

Data management

The data set is checked and cleaned each quarter. This includes:

- Routing checks on questionnaire variables
- Checks on all demographic variables
- Cleaning of variable names, variable labels and value labels
- Sense checks on all variables

Derived variables were created for analytical purposes.

Coding

A small number of questions are included in the questionnaire with an 'other specify' code. Verbatim responses from the 'other' code are reviewed by Kantar during the data collection stage. Based on this a number of responses are back-coded to existing codes and a small number of new codes are added to capture additional common responses.

Data and reporting outputs

Following fieldwork at each wave, Kantar provides the following outputs:

- **A key findings report**, presenting summary headline findings from the current wave.
- **Summary tables (Excel)**, showing trends across all waves of the tracker.
- **An Excel data set containing questionnaire variables**, demographic variables and derived variables for further analysis. An SPSS version of the dataset is available upon request.
- **Excel label data (CSV)**, containing labels for all variables.
- **Excel numeric data (CSV)**, containing numeric values for all variables.
- **Cross tabulation tables (PDF and Excel²) for the current wave**, including demographic and key question sub-group comparisons for all questions.

Weighting

Results are weighted at the analysis stage to be representative of the UK adult population aged 16+. Data are weighted for the following characteristics: sex, age, social grade, region and tenure. The weight value is given in the final column of each database and any analysis of the data should be based on the weighted value for each individual. The source for each weighting variable is provided below.

² From wave 29 (March 2019) onwards.

Table 6: Weighting sources

Weighting variable	Source
Age	Office for National Statistics (ONS) Mid-year Population Estimates
Gender	Office for National Statistics (ONS) Mid-year Population Estimates
Social grade	The Publishers Audience Measurement Company Ltd (PAMCo)
Region	Office for National Statistics (ONS) Mid-year Population Estimates
Tenure	Annual Population Survey

Analysis notes

The following points should be noted regarding the survey outputs produced for waves 26 to 29:

- Use of different outputs:
 - The Excel summary tables should be used to view and compare responses to questions over all waves of the survey based on all people asked each question.
 - The PDF/Excel cross tabulation tables should be used for viewing question responses at an overall, demographic and sub-group level for the current wave of the survey.
 - The Excel data sets should be used for conducting further analysis of survey results for the current wave of the survey. This allows users to look at any question and derived variable breakdowns that are not included in the PDF/Excel cross tabulation tables.
- The following variables have been removed from the Excel data set due to potential risk of disclosure:
 - Wave 26: q121 (whether contacted anyone about problem with provider); q122 (whether resolved problem directly with provider); q123 (other actions in response to problem with provider); q124 (reason for not using ombudsman or other dispute resolution service in response to problem with provider); exactage (exact age variable³); and q28 (main way property is heated⁴).

³ All data sets include four banded age variables: cage2, cage3, cage7 and cage8.

⁴ An aggregated version of this variable is included in data sets for waves 27, 28 and 29 (q28_net).

- Wave 27: q32 (whether anyone in household has a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity); exactage.
- Wave 28: q42 (renewable heating systems installed in home); exactage.
- Wave 29: exactage.
- An additional income question was added from wave 27 for those who did not know their household income when presented with a detailed list of categories at q33. This new variable (q33_1) asks them to give their household income from a less detailed list of five bands. The data sets include household income at three levels: a 12-band version (q33); a 5-band version (q33_1); and a 2-band version (q34: less than £16,000 per year or £16,000 or more per year).
- All data sets include a number of derived variables where questionnaire response options have been combined or questions have been re-based. These derived variables are included at the end of each data set and the variable labels are prefixed with 'DV'.

Significance testing

Strictly speaking, significance tests can only be applied to probability samples and are not applicable to quota-based designs. However, it can be assumed that the variance of a random location sample is similar to that of an equally specified probability sample. Therefore, we use significance testing (based on a 95% confidence interval) in the following ways in the survey analysis and outputs:

- To flag significant changes between waves in the Excel summary tables.
- To flag significant differences between sub-groups at each wave in the PDF/Excel cross tabulation tables for each wave.
- To inform the analysis included in the summary report produced for each wave.

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