

DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker: Technical Overview Spring 2023, UK

22 June 2023

Official Statistics

This report covers general information about the Public Attitudes Tracker (PAT) survey completed in Spring 2023. More detailed technical information on the survey series, including details of the new data collection methodology adopted in Autumn 2021 and previous methodologies, is available in the annual [Technical Report](#).

Introduction

In February 2023, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) was created, focusing on the energy and net zero portfolio from the former Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). At the same time, the BEIS Public Attitudes Tracker (PAT) was renamed the DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker, focusing on measuring public awareness, attitudes and behaviours relating to the policies of the new Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), such as energy and climate change. Some questions on consumer issues were retained in the Spring 2023 survey. Results from questions on other topics previously within the remit of BEIS, such as artificial intelligence and workers' rights, are still available in the relevant topic reports published with earlier waves of the BEIS PAT.

This report presents summary headline findings from the Spring 2023 survey wave, conducted by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). This report is based on a representative sample of 4,410 adults aged 16 or over in the UK. Data collection ran from 9 March 2023 to 6 April 2023.

This is the seventh wave in a series of surveys, which began in Autumn 2021. Earlier waves have been conducted as follows:

- Autumn 2021 (15 September to 17 October 2021)
- Winter 2021 (24 November to 22 December 2021)
- Spring 2022 (24 February to 24 March 2022)
- Summer 2022 (9 June to 7 July 2022)
- Autumn 2022 (1 September to 3 October 2022)
- Winter 2022 (17 November to 19 December 2022)

Before Autumn 2021, previous tracker surveys had been conducted covering many of the same topics. In Autumn 2021 the BEIS PAT moved to a 'push-to-web' survey method referred to as Address Based Online Surveying (ABOS). The Spring 2023 wave of the PAT, which was issued under the new department, DESNZ, represents the seventh wave of the new time series following this change in methodology. Significant changes affecting both survey sample and mode mean that the results from this wave are not directly comparable with results collected via surveys conducted using the previous methodology. However, where questions have been included in more than one wave under the new methodology, comparisons between waves are made.

A summary of the methodology is provided below. Full details of the methodology are provided in the annual Technical Report. The most recent version was published alongside the Summer 2022 results.

Spring 2023 survey

The Spring 2023 questionnaire covered the following topics:

- Net Zero
- Climate change
- Renewables
- Wind and solar farms
- Fusion energy
- Carbon capture and storage
- Hydrogen
- Solar panels in the home
- Energy bills and energy suppliers
- Energy saving and wasting behaviours
- Consumer problems

Interpretation of findings and further resources

In this publication, differences between groups are only reported where they are statistically significant at the 95% confidence interval level.

Alongside this Technical Overview report, we have also provided: individual topic reports covering results from the survey grouped by theme, a set of tables showing the time series for questions asked on multiple occasions since Autumn 2021, a set of tables containing crosstabulations for headline questions by gender, age, highest qualification and region and the online and paper versions of the questionnaire.

Introduction to the Address Based Online Surveying (ABOS) data collection model

ABOS is a type of 'push-to-web' survey method.

The basic ABOS design is simple: a **stratified random sample of addresses** is drawn from the Royal Mail's postcode address file and an invitation letter is sent to each one, containing username(s) and password(s) plus the URL of the survey website. Sampled individuals can log on using this information and complete the survey as they might any other web survey. Once the questionnaire is complete, the specific username and password cannot be used again, ensuring data confidentiality from others with access to this information.

It is usual for at least one reminder to be sent to each sampled address and it is also usual for an **alternative mode** (usually a paper questionnaire) to be offered to those who need it or would prefer it. It is typical for this alternative mode to be available only 'on request' at first.

However, after nonresponse to one or more web survey reminders, this alternative mode may be given more prominence.

Paper questionnaires ensure coverage of the offline population and are especially effective with sub-populations that respond to online surveys at lower-than-average levels. However, paper questionnaires have measurement limitations that constrain the design of the online questionnaire and also add considerably to overall cost. For the DESNZ PAT, **paper questionnaires are used in a limited and targeted way**, to optimise rather than maximise response.

Spring 2023 sample design

The sampling was designed to yield a respondent sample that was representative with respect to geography, neighbourhood deprivation level, and age group.

Figure 1 shows the (initially issued) sample structure with respect to the major strata. Higher sampling fractions were applied to the two least populous International Territorial Level (ITL)¹ (NE England and Wales²) so that the expected number of completed questionnaires was at least 220 in each one.

Figure 1: Addresses issued by area deprivation and household age structure: Spring 2023

Expected household age structure	Most deprived	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	Least deprived
All <=35	1525	1148	749	558	408
Other	4733	3260	2659	2423	1798
All >=65	771	717	652	561	515

Spring 2023 Fieldwork

The data collection took place from 09 March 2023 to 06 April 2023.

All resident adults aged 16+ were invited to complete the survey, although for practical reasons the number of logins was limited to up to four adults per household, with more available on request. The number of logins was based on the estimated number of adults living in the household, based on external data. In Spring 2023, the mean number of logins per address was 2.8.

To ensure the survey was accessible to the offline population, some mailings included paper questionnaire alternatives (based on addresses where external data indicated that all residents were aged 65 or over). Paper questionnaires were also available on request.

¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/whatwedo/programmesandprojects/europeancitystatistics>

² The boost to the proportion in Northern Ireland was excluded in error from the Spring Wave

DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker (Spring 2023, UK)

- 22,477 invites were sent out initially and 19,711 reminders were sent in the second week of fieldwork.
- 312 cases were identified as invalid based on quality assurance checks and were removed from the dataset, representing 6.6% of cases.
- The achieved sample size (after data cleaning) was 4,410 individuals, of which 3,702 were completed online and 708 (16%) on paper.
- The household response rate was 15.2% and the estimated individual response rate was 11.2%.
- The average (median) time to complete the survey online was 16 minutes and 49 seconds.

Weighting was used to compensate for differences in both sampling probability and response probability.

Changes to the survey in Spring 2023

A list of changes to the Spring 2023 questionnaire, in comparison to previous versions of these questions, is provided below:

- A new question was added to the 'Energy Bills' module: COSTACTIONS, 'Which, if any, of the following actions have you taken in recent months because of the increase in the cost of your energy bills?'
- Two questions asked in Spring 2022 were removed from the 'Energy Bills' module: ENERGSWITCH, 'Thinking about your gas and electricity supplier, when, if at all, did your household last switch supplier? Please include switches which you were forced to make if your energy supplier closed down' and ENERGBUST, 'And when your household last switched supplier, was this by choice or were you forced to switch as your supplier closed down?'
- An additional code was included at WHYOPPCCS: 'I don't think it would be a long-term solution'.
- An additional code was included at WINDWHYNO: 'I'm concerned about safety'
- An additional code was included at WINWHYHAPP: 'I think it would benefit the local community'
- RENTALSTAND and SMARTMET were asked in different waves (Winter 2022 and Summer 2022 respectively) and were therefore removed from Spring 2023.

Further information

Future updates to these statistics

Results from the Public Attitudes Tracker are published quarterly. The next release is scheduled to be published in September 2023. Note that not all tracker questions are included in each wave.

Revisions policy

The [Department's statistical revisions policy](#) sets out the revisions policy for these statistics, which has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

Related Statistics

There are various other surveys which seek the general public's opinion on topics related to those covered by the DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker. These include:

[Public Attitudes to Science](#)

A collection of studies looking at the UK public's attitudes to science, scientists and science policy.

[National Travel Attitudes Study \(NTAS\)](#)

The Department for Transport publishes a wide range of reports on the public's attitude to various modes of transport.

[Transport and Transport Technology: Public Attitudes Tracker](#)

The Department for Transport also publishes an attitudes tracker to monitor trends in public attitudes to and awareness of transport technologies in England.

[Public Attitudes to Trade Tracker](#)

The Department for Business and Trade (formerly Department for International Trade) runs a survey twice a year to collect data on public attitudes towards trade and government trade policy.

[The English Housing Survey](#)

The English Housing Survey is a continuous national survey commissioned by the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (formerly Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government). It collects information about people's housing circumstances and the condition and energy efficiency of housing in England.

A wealth of energy statistics, which provide context for the attitude data collected by the PAT are available on the [Statistics at DESNZ](#) website.

Uses of these statistics

These statistics were commissioned by DESNZ to guide departmental policy, and are also used by other government departments, academics, ministers and the general public. Some examples on the uses of previous waves of the PAT include:

- Monitoring attitudes towards energy sources such as fracking and nuclear by policy makers, the media and local groups to understand how this is changing over time and the reasons why people support or oppose it.
- Understanding public awareness of key DESNZ policies such as the concept of Net Zero.
- Monitoring public attitudes to climate change and government policies associated with this and understanding how concern varies between demographic groups.
- Understanding public acceptability of different renewable energy sources which contribute to the Government's aim to reduce the dependence on fossil fuels.

User engagement

Users are encouraged to provide comments and feedback on how these statistics are used and how well they meet user needs. Comments on any issues relating to this statistical release are welcomed and should be sent to: BEISPAT@beis.gov.uk.

The Department's statement on [statistical public engagement and data standards](#) sets out the department's commitments on public engagement and data standards as outlined by the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

Pre-release access to statistics

Some ministers and officials receive access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release. Details of the arrangements for doing this and a list of the ministers and officials that receive pre-release access to these statistics can be found in the Department's [statement of compliance](#) with the Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics Order 2008.

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