

# DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker: Net Zero and Climate Change Spring 2024, UK

03 July 2024

Official Statistics

The DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker is a nationally representative annual survey of adults (aged 16+) in the UK that tracks public awareness, attitudes and behaviours relating to the policies of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), such as energy and climate change.

This report provides a summary of the headline findings relating to Net Zero and climate change from the Spring 2024 wave of the Tracker, which ran from 18 March to 22 April 2024.

Differences between groups are only reported where they are statistically significant at the 95% confidence interval level.

Two summary self-reported measures are used in this report:

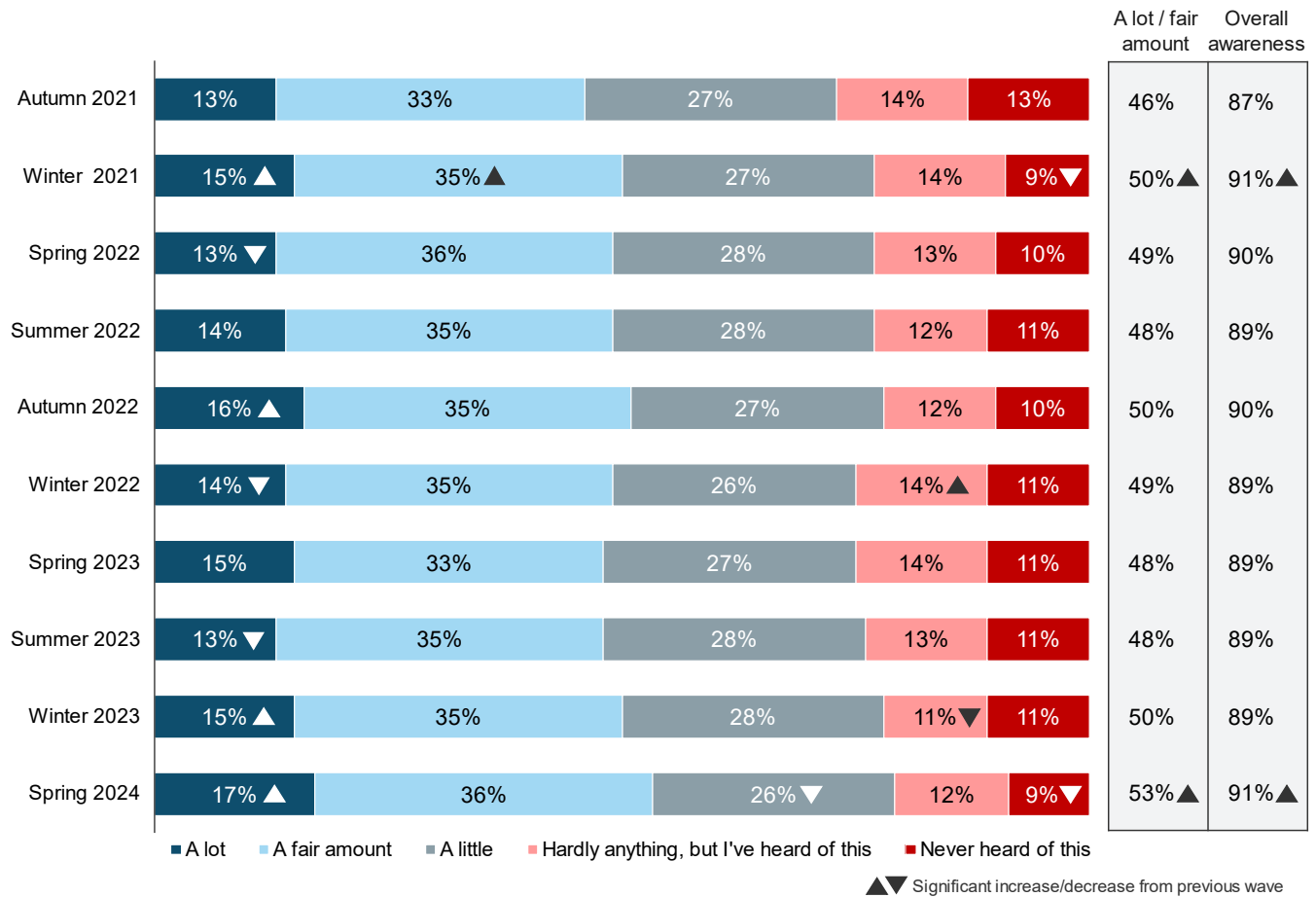
- **'Awareness'** encompasses all respondents who said they had heard of a particular concept or technology, including those who said 'hardly anything but I've heard of this', 'a little', 'a fair amount' or 'a lot'.
- **'Knowledge'** encompasses those who said that they know 'a fair amount' or 'a lot'.

## 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 Spring 2024, there was a small increase in awareness of the concept of Net Zero as 91% of people said they had heard of the concept compared to 89% in Winter 2023 (Figure 1.1). The level of knowledge also increased, with 53% saying they knew 'a lot' or 'a fair amount' (up from 50% in Winter 2023), and 17% saying they knew 'a lot' (up from 15% in Winter 2023).

**Figure 1.1: Awareness of the concept of 'Net Zero' (based on all people), Autumn 2021 to Spring 2024**



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), Winter 2023 (3,741), Spring 2024 (4,085) (Asked each wave)

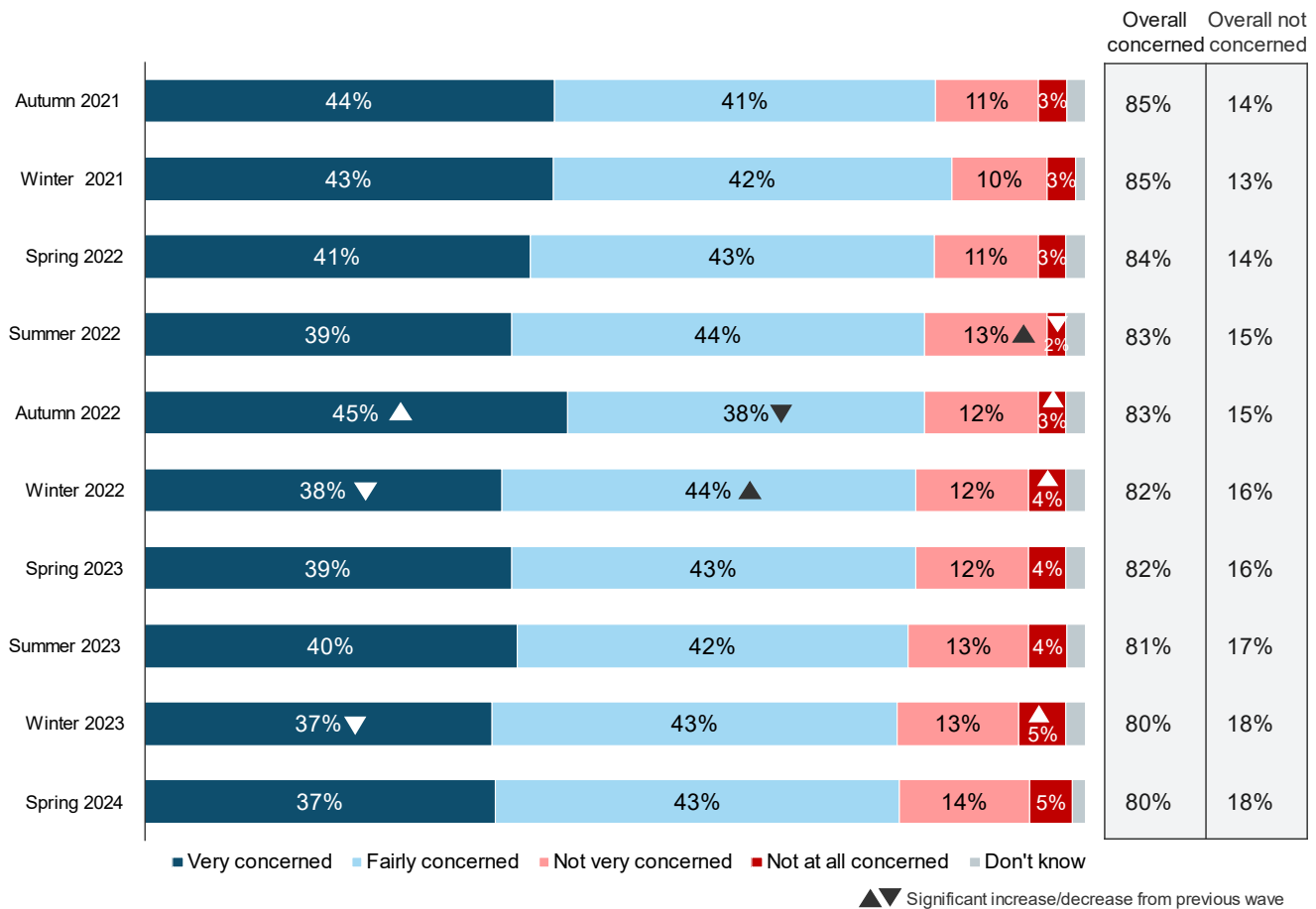
Overall awareness of Net Zero was higher for those aged 45 and over (between 93% and 95%) compared with those aged below 45 (between 87% and 89%). The proportion who said they knew 'a lot' or 'a fair amount' was highest by age among those aged 65 and over (61%), particularly compared with those under 45 (between 47% and 49%).

By education, the percentage of those that reported any awareness of the concept of Net Zero was highest for those with a degree (96%) compared to those with another kind of qualification (90%) and those with no qualifications (86%). A similar pattern was observed for those that claimed knowledge of Net Zero (knowing 'a fair amount' or 'a lot'), with 68% of those with a degree claiming knowledge compared to 48% with another qualification and 34% with no qualification.

# Concern about climate change

In Spring 2024, 80% of people said they were very or fairly concerned about climate change, with 37% very concerned (Figure 1.2). In total, 18% of people said they were not very or not at all concerned, although very few (5%) said they were not at all concerned.

**Figure 1.2: Concern about climate change (based on all people), Autumn 2021 to Spring 2024**



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), Winter 2023 (3,739), Spring 2024 (4,086) (Asked each wave)

By age, people aged 16 to 24 and 65 and over were most likely to say they were very or fairly concerned (83%) compared with those aged 25 to 54 (between 78% and 79% by age band).

By geography, the proportion reporting they were very concerned was highest in London (45%), and the South East and South West (42%). It was lowest in the North West (32%), North East (31%), Yorkshire and the Humber (30%) and the East Midlands (29%).

People with a degree were more likely to say that they were concerned about climate change (87%) compared with those with another kind of qualification (78%) or no qualifications (71%).

Those who said they knew at least 'a fair amount' about Net Zero were more likely to say they were very or fairly concerned (86%) compared with those who knew at most a little (76%) or who were not aware of Net Zero (66%).

# Further findings on Net Zero and climate change

In previous waves, questions were included on other topics relating to Net Zero and climate change. The latest findings relating to these topics can be found as follows:

- Attitudes towards Net Zero, see [Summer 2023 report on Net Zero and climate change](#) - section on 'Attitudes towards Net Zero'
- Attitudes towards climate change, see [Summer 2023 report on Net Zero and climate change](#) - section on 'Attitudes towards climate change'.
- Self-reported behaviours that could help to tackle climate change and which behaviours are thought to have the biggest impact on tackling climate change, see [Summer 2023 report on Net Zero and climate change](#) - section on 'Behaviours to tackle climate change'.
- Level of trust in information sources on climate change, see [Summer 2023 report on Net Zero and climate change](#) - section on 'Trust in information sources'.
- Sources of information about actions people can take to tackle climate change, and what further information is wanted, see [Summer 2023 report on Net Zero and climate change](#) - section on 'Information Sources'.



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