

Headline Findings Summer 2024, UK

29 October 2024

Official Statistics

The DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker (PAT) 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 from the Summer 2024 wave of the Tracker, which ran from 11 July to 15 August 2024.

The Summer 2024 wave is the eleventh wave in a series of surveys which began in Autumn 2021. Between Autumn 2021 and Summer 2023, surveys were conducted every quarter, although there was no wave in Autumn 2023. From Spring 2024, the survey moved to a triannual design with waves conducted every Spring, Summer and Winter.

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' about a topic.

Headline findings for Summer 2024

Net zero and climate change

- 91% of people said they were aware of the 2050 Net Zero target, unchanged from Spring 2024.
- 80% of people said they were very or fairly concerned about climate change, with 37% very concerned (unchanged since Winter 2023). However, there has been a decline in levels of concern over time from Autumn 2021 when 85% were concerned.
- People were more negative (37%) than positive (23% up from 21% in Summer 2023) about the short-term (1-2 years) impact of Net Zero on the UK economy. However, people were more positive (54%) than negative (20%, up from 18%) about the longer term (10 years or more) impact.
- The majority of respondents (65%) expected the Net Zero transition to increase living expenses in the short term, slightly down from 69% in Summer 2023. Looking at the long term, optimism was higher, with 27% expecting a decrease in living expenses (up from 25% in Summer 2023). However, 48% still believed the Net Zero transition would result in higher living costs.
- Confidence in the UK's ability to meet the Net Zero target has improved between Summer 2023 and 2024, with 20% saying they were fairly confident or very confident (up from 17% in Summer 2023).

DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker (Summer 2024, UK)

- 72% agreed that they can personally make changes to help reduce climate change. However, this has declined over time from 74% in Summer 2023 and 76% in Summer 2022.
- Over a third (35%) agreed that it's not worth making changes if others do not do the same, up from 32% in Summer 2023 and 28% in Summer 2022.
- In terms of actions people personally do to mitigate climate change, at least eight in ten said they recycled household waste (86%), minimised food waste (78%) and minimised energy use at home (79%).
- Fewer people reported choosing to walk or cycle (51%) or using public transport (41%) instead of using a car, although there has been increase over time in the latter measure which is up from 34% in Summer 2022.
- The top three actions thought to have the biggest impact on tackling climate change if done by most people in the UK were: installing low carbon heating (42%), choosing to walk or cycle instead of using the car (40%), and minimising energy use at home (37%).
- Scientists (85%) and scientific organisations (83%) remained the two most trusted sources of accurate information on climate change, however there was a decline in trust for scientific organisations (87% in Summer 2023).
- There was an increase in overall trust in providing accurate information on climate change for the UK Government (57%, up from 50% in Summer 2023), newspapers and their websites (43%, up from 40%) and social media (18%, up from 15%).

Renewable energy

- In Summer 2024, 84% of people said they supported the use of renewable energy such as wind, solar and biomass to provide electricity, fuel and heat (no change since Spring 2024). This remains below the peak of 88% in Autumn 2022 (when this time series began).
- By geography, strong support for renewable energy was highest in the South East (57%) and London (56%) and lowest in the West Midlands (41%) and the East Midlands (40%).

Energy infrastructure & energy security

- 79% of people were aware of the need to build more electricity network infrastructure, up from 75% in Summer 2023. However, only 7% of respondents reported knowing a lot about the issue (unchanged from Summer 2023).
- People were more likely to be unhappy (30%) than happy (23%) about new electricity infrastructure being built in their local area, with the majority giving either a neutral (34%) or don't know/not applicable response (13%). The main concerns associated with this included the potential impacts on the view (61%), local plant and animal life (58%), and health (45%).
- At least eight in ten were concerned about various issues related to energy security including 'steep rises in energy prices' (90% concerned), the 'UK not investing quickly enough in alternative energy sources' (83%), the 'UK being too dependent on energy from other countries' (80%), and 'power cuts becoming more frequent' (81%).
- Over half of people (56%) disagreed overall that the UK should produce less of its own oil and gas, even if it meant buying more fuel from other countries, with 37% strongly

disagreeing. Only 13% agreed with reducing domestic production under these circumstances.

- A new question was included asking respondents how important various aspects of energy policy were to them personally on a scale of 0-10 (10 being the most important):
 - Aspects affecting day-to-day life were regarded as the most important to respondents, with 92% giving a high (7-8) or very high (9-10) rating for 'having a reliable, uninterrupted supply of energy available' and 87% giving this rating for the 'cost of energy'.
 - For aspects relating to broader issues, 75% gave at least a high or very high rating for the 'UK becoming self-sufficient and not buying fuel from other countries', and 71% gave a high or very high rating to 'energy generated from cleaner, low-carbon sources'.

Heat and energy use in the home

- 88% of people said they were aware of the need to change the way homes and buildings are heated in order to reach the Net Zero target, up from 86% in Spring 2024. Knowledge levels have remained broadly stable over time, with 39% saying they knew a lot or a fair amount.
- 88% of people said they were aware of low-carbon heating systems, which has remained stable over the last five waves. The proportion saying they knew a lot or a fair amount about this also remained stable (32%).

Energy bills and tariffs

- 84% of people said they gave a lot or a fair amount of thought to saving energy in the home, down from 87% in Spring 2023 (this decline could in part be a seasonal effect). People finding it difficult to get by financially were more likely to have given this a lot of thought (39%) than those who felt they were doing alright or living comfortably (25%).
- Concern about paying energy bills decreased from 58% in Spring 2024 to 48% in Summer 2024, continuing a downward trend in concern since Spring 2023.
- 70% of people said they had made either a large or small change to their home within the last two years to reduce energy use (unchanged from Summer 2023). Among those who had made changes, 67% said that this was mainly or partly because of energy prices, up from 64% in Summer 2023. While 32% said they would have made the changes anyway, down from 35% in Summer 2023.
- Most people (97%) said they were aware of the most effective ways to reduce energy, while 54% (down from 59% in Summer 2023) thought they knew a lot or a fair amount about this.
- Almost all (95%) said that they were aware of smart appliances, with 40% saying that they knew either a lot (9%) or a fair amount (31%).
- Around half (52%) said that they would be very or fairly comfortable with their energy supplier collecting data such as frequency and time of use of a smart appliance or controlling the times of use to make use of cheaper periods of electricity if consent is given (47%).
- A substantial proportion said they would be not very comfortable or not at all comfortable with either their supplier collecting data (40%) or controlling times of use (45%).

Notes

The survey is run by Verian on behalf of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

The PAT is a household self-completion survey that uses a 'push to web' methodology. Respondents can choose to complete the survey online or use a paper questionnaire.

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

For further information about the technical details of the survey please refer to the [Technical Report](#).



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