

DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker: Energy Bills and Tariffs Summer 2024, UK

29 October 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 energy bills and tariffs from the Summer 2024 wave of the Tracker, which ran from 11 July and 15 August 2024.

Notes for interpretation of findings

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

The annual personal income referred to in the report is a self-reported measure.

The age-related findings are reported using six age groups (16 to 24 years, 25 to 34 years, 35 to 44 years, 45 to 54 years, 55 to 64 years and those age 65 years and over). In some cases, findings across age groups have been combined to describe a general trend. In these situations, a range of the percentages for these combined age groups is provided for reference. For example, 'Between 78% and 88% of people aged 45 and above' refers to the range of percentages for the three age groups 45-54, 55-64 and 65+.

The findings within this report cover the period between Spring 2022 and Summer 2024. The findings should be viewed in the light of volatile energy prices over this period. When these questions were first asked in Spring 2022, this was in the context of a further increase of the energy price cap, which increased by 54% in April 2022. Energy prices were at their peak in Spring 2023, but by Summer 2023 decreases in the energy price cap had reduced household bills for most people, with prices remaining relatively stable (although above pre 'energy crisis' price) in the period up until the Summer 2024 survey¹.

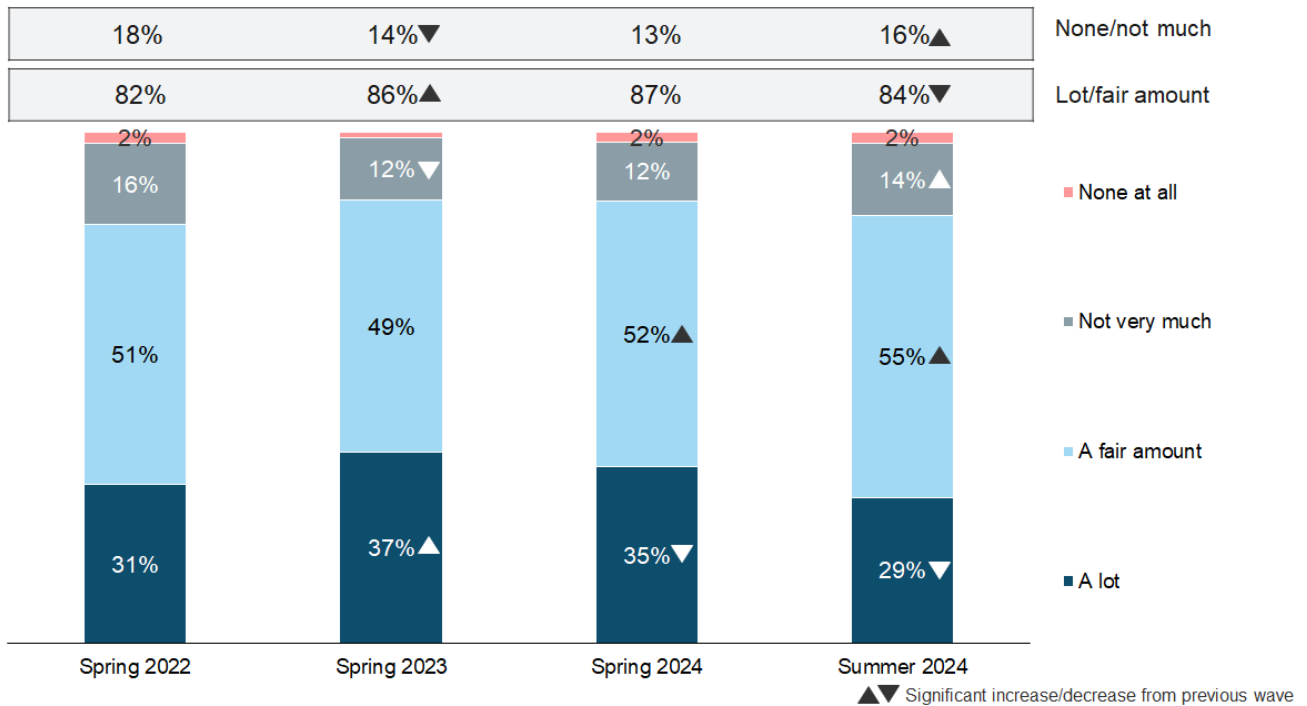
Energy saving and wasting behaviours

In Summer 2024, 84% of people said they gave a lot or a fair amount of thought to saving energy in the home (Figure 5.1). While this had declined from 87% in Spring 2023, this may be, at least in part, a seasonal effect, with heating use lower in Summer than in Spring (previously this question has only been asked in Spring waves).

There was a decline in those saying they had given a lot of thought to saving energy in the home (29%, down from 35% in Spring 2024), balanced by an increase in those saying they had given it a fair amount of thought (55%, up from 52%). Again, this apparent shift may be, at least in part, a seasonal effect and future waves of research will give a better indication of any longer-term change.

¹ An overview of domestic energy price changes can be found here:
<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9491/>

Figure 5.1: Amount of thought given to saving energy in the home (based on all people), Spring 2022, Spring 2023, Spring 2024, Summer 2024



ENERGSAVE. How much thought, if any, would you say you give to saving energy in your home?

Base: All wave respondents – Spring 2022 (4,367), Spring 2023 (4,399), Spring 2024 (4,082), Summer 2024 (3,641)

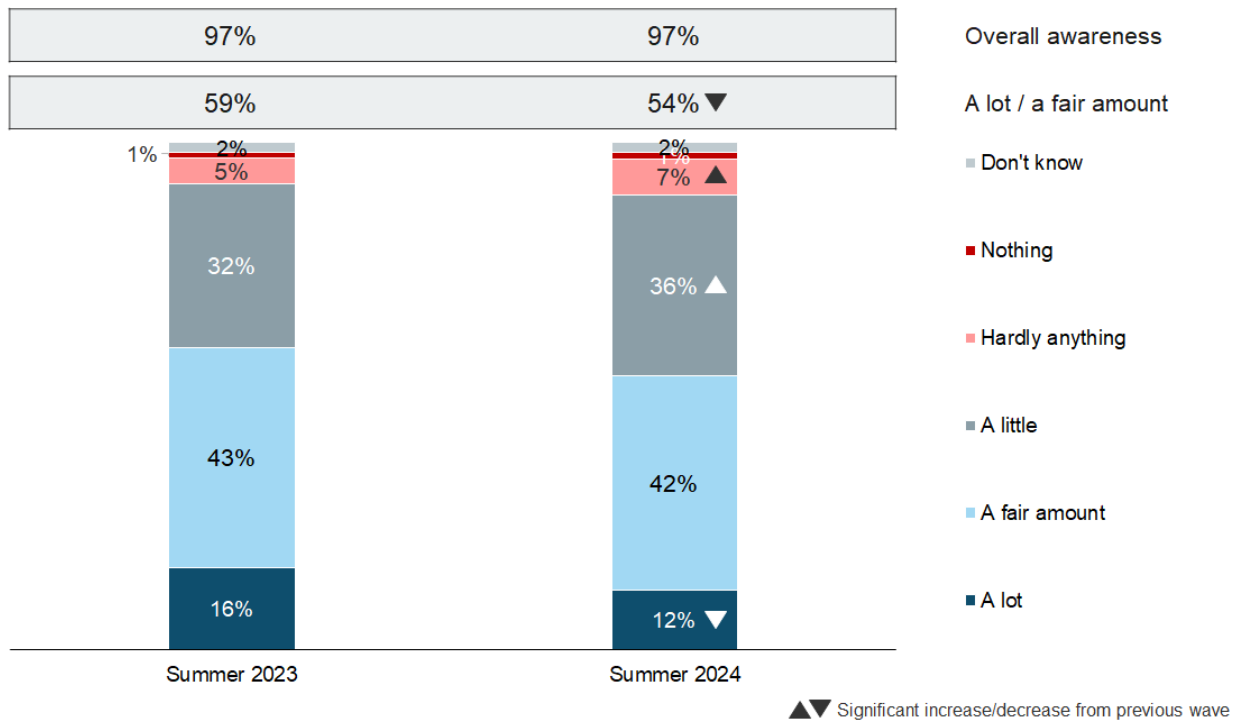
Giving a lot of thought to saving energy at home was higher for people in age bands 55 and over (from 33% to 34%) and 25 to 54 (25% to 31%), compared with those aged 16-24 (15%).

People finding it difficult to get by financially were more likely to have given this a lot of thought (39%), compared with those just about getting by (29%) and those who were doing alright or living comfortably (25%).

Knowledge about reducing energy use

In Summer 2024, almost all people said they were aware of the most effective ways to reduce energy use in the home (97%), unchanged since Summer 2023 (Figure 5.2). There had been a small decline in self-reported knowledge, with 54% saying they knew a lot or a fair amount about this, down from 59% in Summer 2023. In particular, the proportion saying that they knew a lot had decreased in this time period (12%, down from 16%).

Figure 5.2: Knowledge about most effective ways to reduce energy use in the home (based on all people), Summer 2023, Summer 2024



ENEFFKNOW. How much would you say you know about the most effective ways to reduce energy use in your home?

Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2023 (3,990), Summer 2024 (3,635)

People aged 55 and over were more likely to say they knew at least a fair amount about the most effective ways to save energy in the home (from 63% to 64%) compared with those aged 16-24 (39%).

People living in owner-occupied households were more likely to report knowing at least a fair amount (59%) compared with those in private rented (48%) and social rented households (40%).

Those who were doing alright or living comfortably were also more likely to report knowing at least a fair amount (60%) compared with those just about getting by (51%) and those finding it difficult (44%).

People who said they give at least a fair amount of thought to energy saving in the home were more likely to report knowing at least a fair amount about the most effective ways to save energy (59%) compared with those who had given it no thought (37%).

A further question² asked respondents whether or not they were interested in finding out more about the most effective ways to reduce energy use in their home. In Summer 2024, 51% said they would like to know more, while 37% said they were not interested, up from 35% in Summer 2023.

Interest in finding out more was higher for those in age groups under 55 (from 52% to 57%) than for those in age groups 55 and over (45% to 47%). It was also higher among those who

² ENEFFMORE. And do you feel you know enough about the most effective ways to reduce energy use in your home, or would you like to know more?

said they gave at least a fair amount of thought to energy saving in the home (53%) compared with those who had given it no thought (8%).

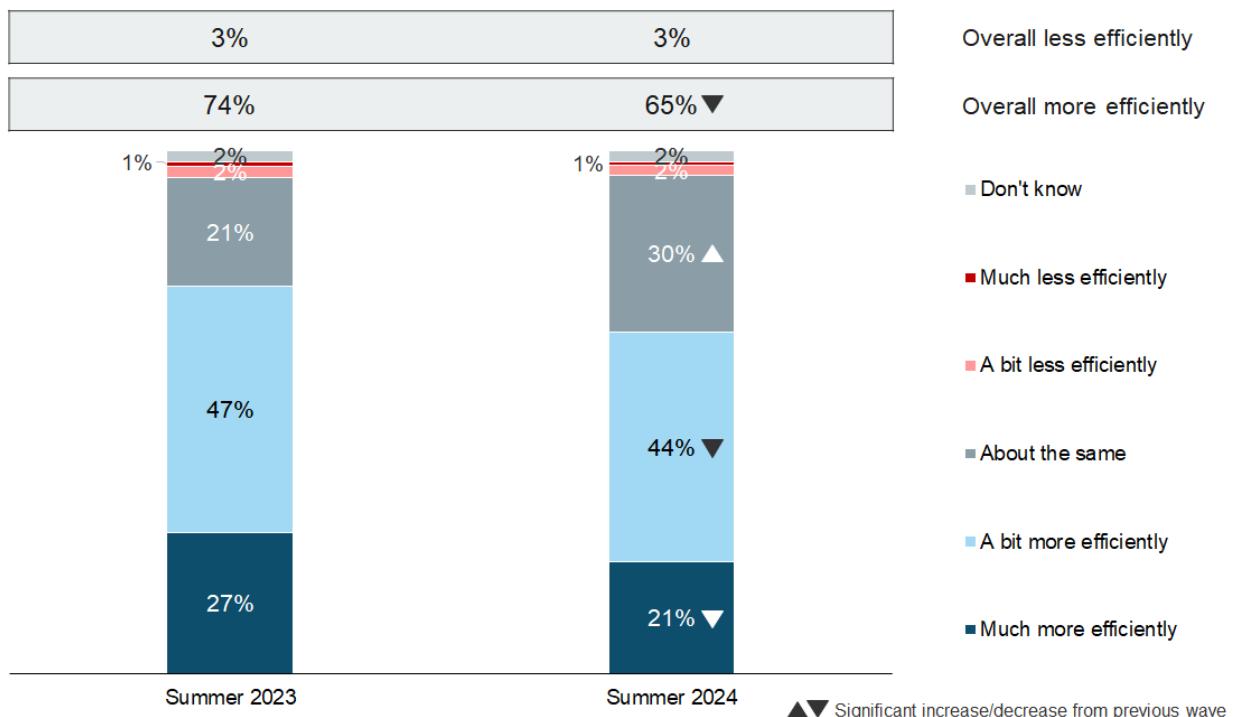
Changes in energy use made in the last two years

Two annual questions were first included in Summer 2023 to further explore efficiency of energy use in the home, focusing specifically on changes made in the last two years.

In Summer 2024, 65% of people reported using energy much more or a bit more efficiently compared to two years ago. This represents a substantial decline from 74% in Summer 2023 (Figure 5.3) which may be related to higher levels of media attention given to energy bills leading up to the Summer 2023 wave (see [start of this report](#) for further information on external context).

Between Summer 2023 and Summer 2024, there was a decrease both in the proportion saying they used energy much more efficiently (21%, down from 27%) and a bit more efficiently (44%, down from 47%). People were, instead, more likely in Summer 2024 to say that their energy efficiency was about the same (30%, up from 21%). There was no change in the very small proportion saying they were using it less efficiently (3%).

Figure 5.3: Whether use energy more or less efficiently compared to two years ago (based on all people), Summer 2023, Summer 2024



ENSUFFIC2Y. Which of these statements comes closest to your view? Compared to two years ago, I use energy...

Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2023 (3,997), Summer 2024 (3,638)

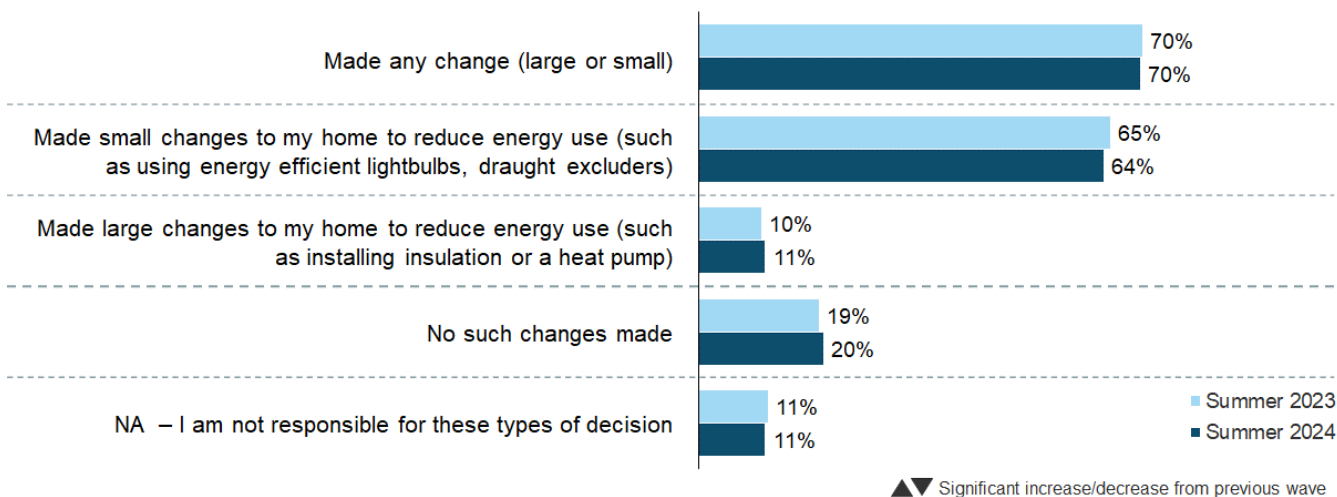
People aged 55 and over were more likely to say they were using energy much more or a bit more efficiently (73%) compared with those in age groups under 25 (55%). There was a similar pattern of difference by age in terms of the proportion saying they were now much more energy efficient.

People living in owner-occupied households were more likely to report using energy much more or a bit more efficiently (69%) compared with those in both private and social rented households (58%).

Those saying they found it difficult to manage financially were more likely to say they were using energy much more efficiently (25%) compared with those who were doing alright or living comfortably (19%).

In Summer 2024, 70% of people said they had made a change (large or small) to reduce energy use within the last two years, unchanged from Summer 2023 (Figure 5.4). Most people (64%) made small changes such as using energy efficient lightbulbs or draught excluders. Unchanged from Summer 2023, 11% reported making a larger change, such as installing insulation or a heat pump.

Figure 5.4: Which, if any, changes made to reduce energy use at home within last two years (based on all people), Summer 2023, Summer 2024



ENCHANGE2Y. And within the last two years, have you made any of the following changes to your home to reduce your energy use at home?

Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2023 (3,993), Summer 2024 (3,636)

People in age groups 45 and over (69% to 75%) were more likely than those aged 16-24 (44%) to report making small changes to reduce energy use. Larger changes to reduce energy use were also reported more often by those in age groups 45 and over (12%) compared with those aged 16-24 (7%).

People living in owner-occupied households were more likely to report making small changes (67%) compared with those in social rented (61%) and private rented (56%) households. There was a similar pattern for large changes: 13% in owner-occupied households compared with 6% in both private and social rented households.

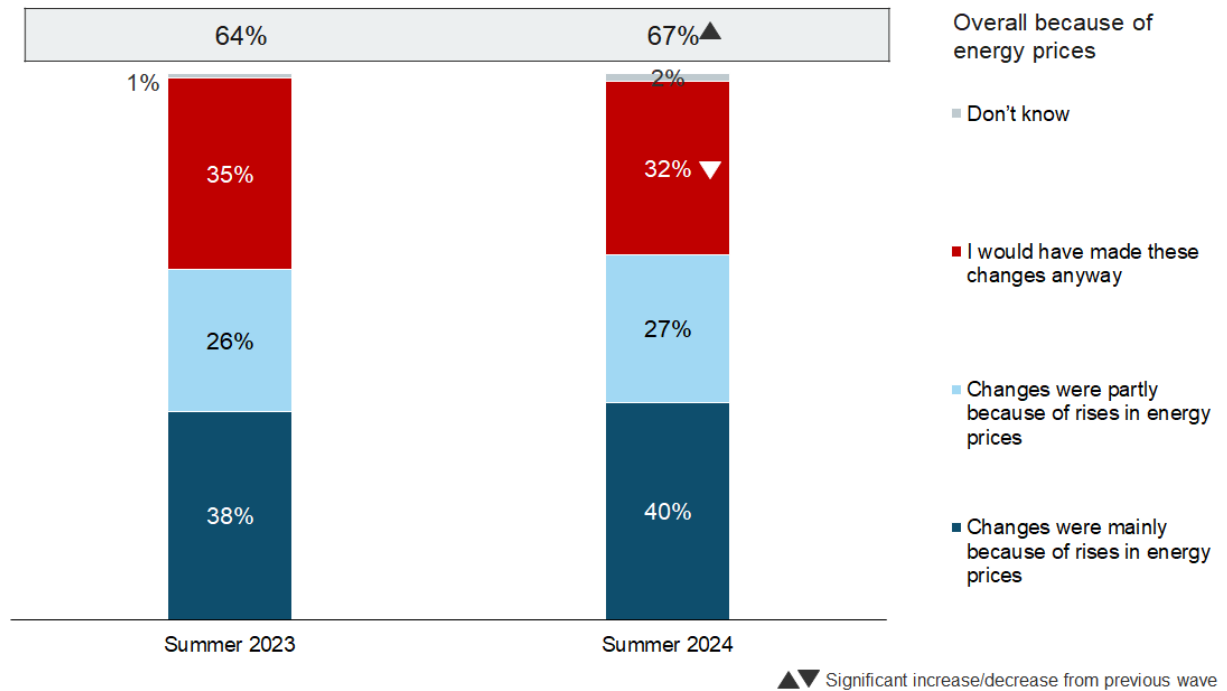
People who said they give at least a fair amount of thought to energy saving in the home were more likely to report making both small changes (68%) and large changes (12%) compared with those who had given it no thought (9% and 4% respectively).

Those saying they were very worried or fairly worried about energy bills were more likely to report having made small changes (69%) compared with those not very worried or not at all worried about their bills (63%). There were no differences by level of concern in reporting large changes.

Those who reported making any changes to reduce energy use in the home (70% overall) were then asked if this was because of rising energy prices.

In Summer 2024, 67% of those who had made changes to reduce energy said that this was mainly (40%) or partly (27%) because of energy prices, up from 64% in Summer 2023 (Figure 5.5). On the other hand, 32% said they would have made the changes anyway, down from 35% in Summer 2023.

Figure 5.5: Whether changes to reduce energy use at home were a result of energy prices (based on all making change to reduce energy use in the last two years), Summer 2023, Summer 2024



ENCHREASON. And did you make these changes as a result of a rise in energy prices?

Base: All wave respondents who made changes in the last two years – Summer 2023: (2,932), Summer 2024 (2,658)

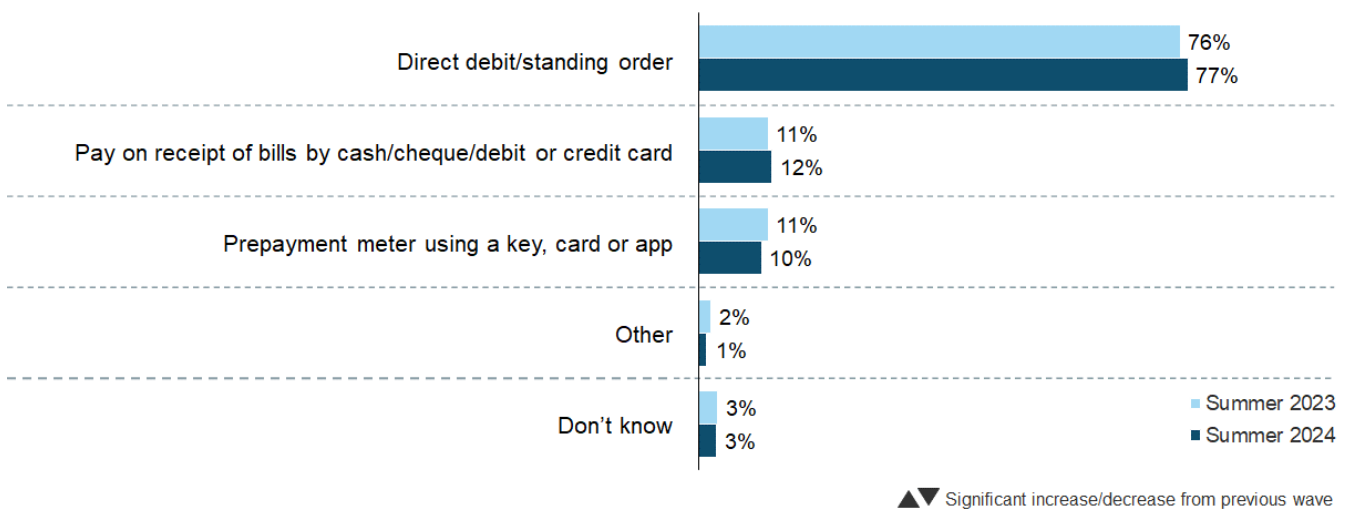
Cost of energy bills

Payment method

To provide further context for concerns about paying bills, people were asked in Summer 2023 and Summer 2024 about how they paid their energy bills.

In Summer 2024, most people paid by direct debit or standing order (77%) with around one in ten paying either on receipt of bills (12%) or via a prepayment meter (10%). These results were unchanged since Summer 2023 (Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6: How household usually pays energy bills (based on all households), Summer 2023, Summer 2024



BILLPAY. How does your household usually pay for the energy supplied to your home? If you pay using different methods for electricity and gas, please select both.

Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2023 (3,996), Summer 2024 (3,638)

Note: At this question, results are weighted to households (not individuals)

People aged under 25 were less likely to pay by direct debit (54%) than those in age groups 25 to 54 (75% to 79%) and those aged 55 and over (80% to 84%). People aged 65 and over were less likely to have a prepayment meter (6%) compared with those in age groups 35 to 64 (11% to 13%) and those aged 16-24 (16%).

Payment by direct debit was more likely for people living in owner-occupied households (87%) compared with those in private rented (71%) and particularly social rented households (51%). Those in social rented households were much more likely to have a prepayment meter (33%) than those in private rented (11%) and owner-occupied households (3%).

Those who were doing alright or living comfortably were more likely to pay by direct debit (85%) and less likely to have a prepayment meter (5%) compared with those just about getting by (76% and 11% respectively) and those finding it difficult to manage financially (60% and 20%).

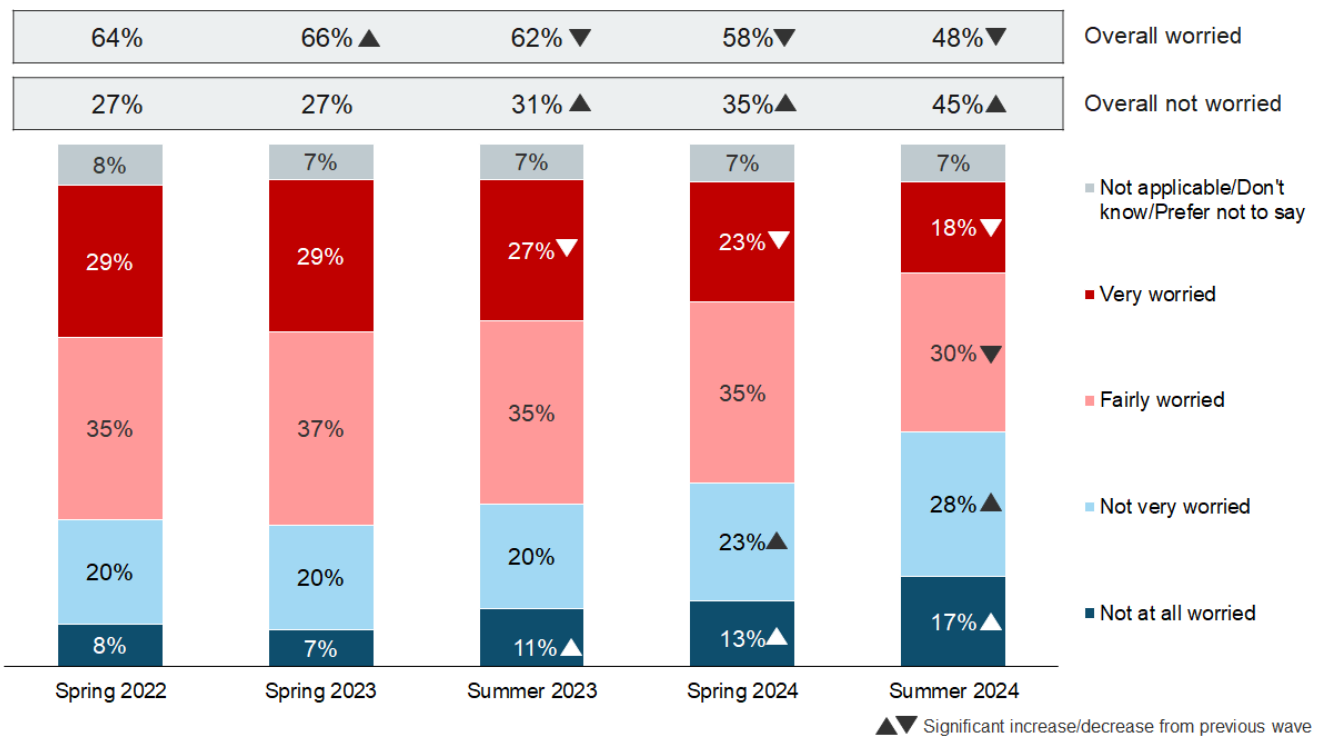
Concern about paying energy bills

As with energy saving behaviours, attitudes towards the cost of paying energy bills over time should also be viewed in the context of changing energy prices over the period of tracking, as discussed [in the introduction to this report](#).

In Summer 2024, 48% of people said they were worried about paying energy bills, lower than Spring 2024 (58%) and continuing a downward trend in concern since Spring 2023 when UK energy prices were at their peak (Figure 5.7). Although the reduced level of worry might be partly explained by seasonal effects (due to less energy use in Summer than Spring), it is clear that this finding is part of a longer-term trend since Spring 2023.

There was also a steady decline in the proportion saying they were very worried from 27% in Summer 2023 to 18% in Summer 2024. The proportion of people that said they were not at all worried increased to 17%, up from 11% in Summer 2023.

Figure 5.7: Level of worry about paying for energy bills (based on all people), Spring 2022, Spring 2023, Summer 2023, Spring 2024, Summer 2024



PAYBILLEN. Over the last three months, how worried, if at all, have you been about paying for energy bills (gas/electricity)?

Base: All wave respondents – Spring 2022 (4,369), Spring 2023 (4,408), Summer 2023 (4,003), Spring 2024 (4,081), Summer 2024 (3,640)

Those in all age groups 25 to 54 (52% to 54%) were more likely to be worried about paying energy bills compared with those aged 16-24 (37%) and 65 and over (44%).

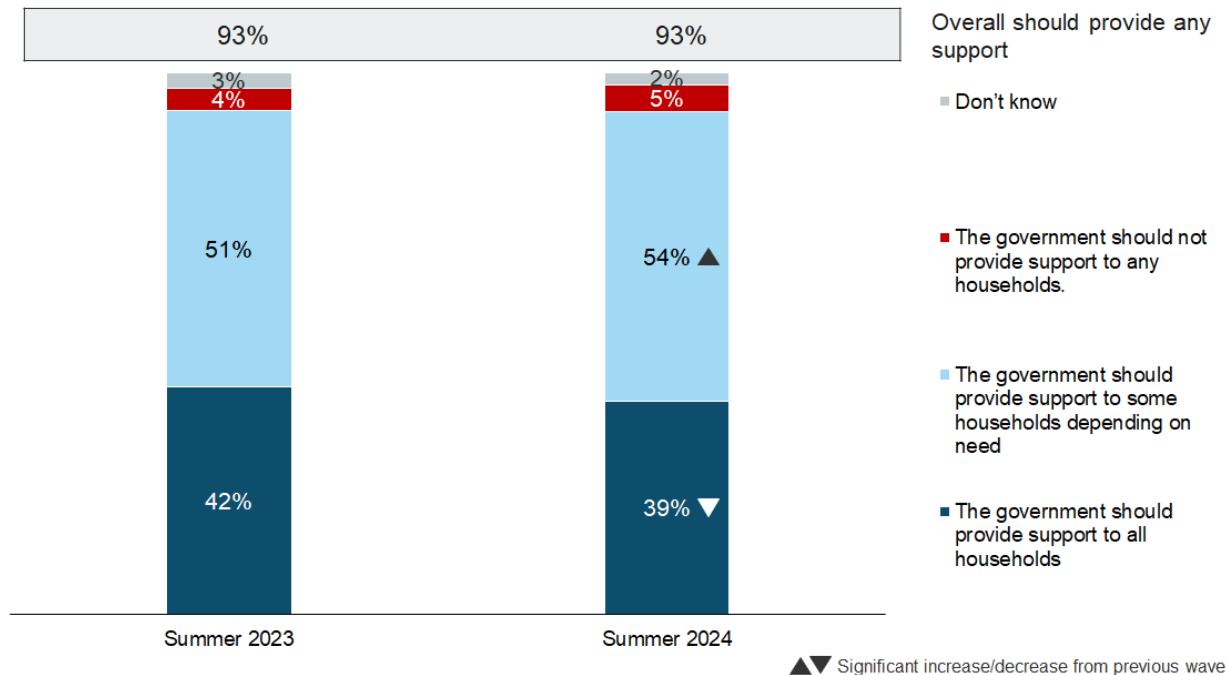
People living in social rented households (66%) were more likely to be worried than those living in private rented households (55%) and owner-occupied households (43%). People who reported they were finding it difficult to manage financially were also more likely to be worried (82%) than those just about getting by (67%) or living comfortably or doing alright (27%).

Attitudes towards Government financial support with energy costs

In Summer 2023 an annual question was introduced to assess attitudes towards government financial support to households to help with energy bills. In Summer 2024 the focus was changed from ‘in the last year’ to ‘in the last few years’ to reflect the longer time period since the start of volatile energy prices as discussed [in the introduction to this report](#).

In Summer 2024, 93% of people felt the government should provide support to at least some households, unchanged since Summer 2023 (Figure 5.8). While this overall measure was unchanged, there was a decline in the proportion saying ‘the government should provide support to all households’ (39%, down from 42%) and an increase in those saying this support should go ‘to some households depending on need’ (54%, up from 51%).

Figure 5.8: How government should provide support for energy bills (based on all people), Summer 2023, Summer 2024



GOVSUPPORTEN. In the last few years*, many households have experienced increased energy bills. The government has provided financial support to households to help with the rise in energy bills. Which of the following statements comes closest to your viewpoint?

*Note wording change since Summer 2023, previously phrased as ‘In the last year’

Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2023 (3,995), Summer 2024 (3,637)

People aged 55 and over (60% to 70%) were more likely to say that support should go only to ‘to some households depending on need’ compared with those in age groups under 35 (43% to 45%).

Those living in owner-occupied households were more likely to say support should be given ‘to some households depending on need’ (57%) and less likely to say it should go ‘to all households’ (35%) compared with those in rented households (47% and 48% respectively).

The proportion saying that support should be given ‘to some households depending on need’ was higher for those who were financially doing alright or living comfortably (62%) compared with those just about getting by (49%) and those finding it difficult (40%).

Smart appliances

A new series of questions about smart appliances was added in Summer 2024³.

In Summer 2024, respondents were provided with the following explanation about energy smart appliances before asking for their awareness and likelihood to purchase these:

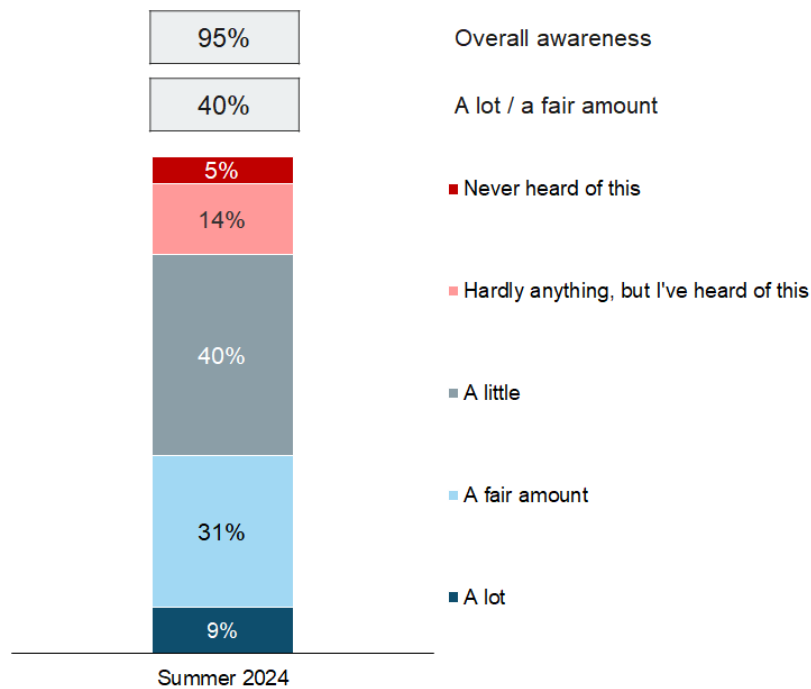
‘Smart appliances are normal household appliances that have built in features enabling them to connect to the internet. This allows them to be controlled and monitored remotely using a smart phone or tablet. Smart appliances can be scheduled to come on at certain times. They can also be linked to smart meters to come on during periods of low electricity prices. This can help to lower customer bills and also manage demand on the electricity grid. Examples of smart appliances include: smart kitchen appliances, smart thermostats to control heating, and other appliances such as smart electric vehicle chargers’.

Awareness of smart appliances

In Summer 2024, 95% of people said that they were aware of smart appliances (Figure 5.9). Self-reported knowledge was lower, with 40% saying that they knew either a lot (9%) or a fair amount (31%).

³ Although similar questions were asked in Summer 2022, the questions have changed and are therefore no longer comparable with this previous wave.

Figure 5.9: Awareness of smart appliances (based on all people), Summer 2024

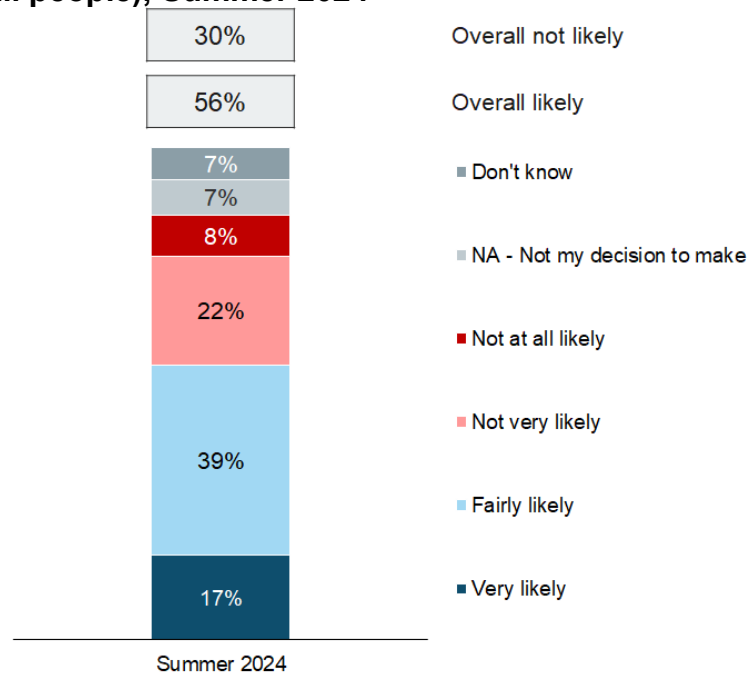


SMAPPKNOW. Before today, how much, if anything, did you know about smart appliances?
Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2024 (3,641)

Likelihood to replace an appliance with a smart appliance

In Summer 2024, 56% of people said that they would be either very likely (17%) or fairly likely (39%) to buy a smart appliance next time they needed to buy or replace a large household appliance such as a washing machine or dishwasher (Figure 5.10). Three in ten (30%) said they would be not very likely or not at all likely to do so.

Figure 5.10: Likelihood of purchasing smart appliance when next need to make a purchase (based on all people), Summer 2024



SMAPPLIKWHIT (2024). Thinking about when you next need to buy or replace a large household appliance (e.g. for example a washing machine, dishwasher), how likely would you be to purchase a smart appliance?
 Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2024 (3,639)

Overall likelihood (very likely or fairly likely) to buy a smart appliance next time was higher for people aged 25 to 54 (60% to 65%) compared with those in age groups 55 and over (53% to 56%) and in particular those in age groups 25 and under (38%).

Where the respondent was the main household decision maker, they were more likely to say they would be ‘very likely’ to buy an energy smart appliance next time (20%) compared with those who were joint decision makers (17%) or not a decision maker (14%).

Energy supplier control of smart appliances and use of data

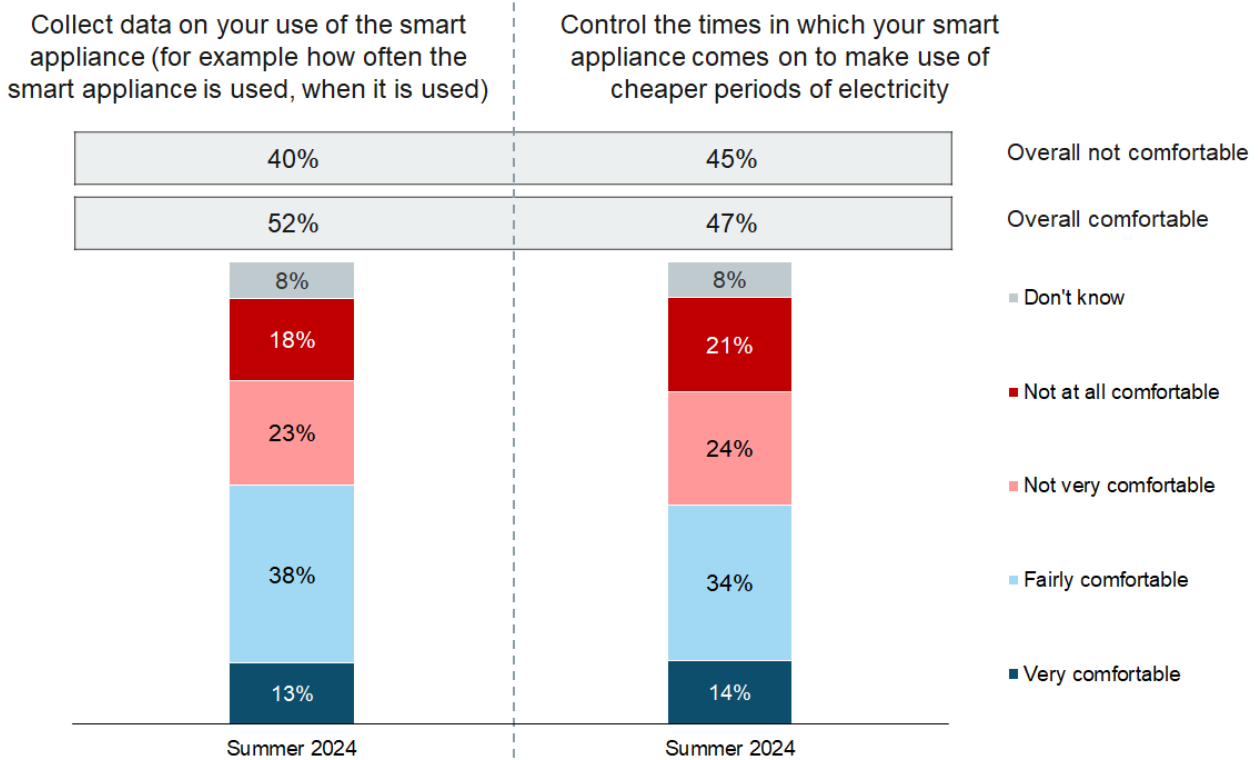
A further new question was included in Summer 2024 to assess the level of comfort with energy supplier involvement in the use of smart appliances in the home.

In Summer 2024, 52% of people said that they would be very comfortable or fairly comfortable with their energy supplier ‘collecting data on your use of the smart appliance’ (for example how often the smart appliance is used, when it is used)’ (Figure 5.11).

A similar proportion (47%) said they would be very comfortable or fairly comfortable with their supplier ‘controlling the times in which your smart appliance comes on to make use of cheaper periods of electricity (if you give consent)’. However, few said they would be very comfortable with either their supplier collecting data (13%) or controlling times of use (14%).

A substantial minority 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%).

Figure 5.11: How comfortable feel with energy supplier involvement in the use of smart appliances in the home to ... (based on all people), Summer 2024



SMAPPCONTROL2. How comfortable, if at all, do you feel about your energy supplier doing each of the following? If you don't currently own any smart appliances, please imagine how you would feel if you did. Base: All wave respondents – Summer 2024: collect data (3,632), control times (3,626)

A higher proportion of people aged 45 and over said they would not be very comfortable or not at all comfortable with their supplier collecting data (43% to 47%) compared with those in age groups under 45 (32% to 37%). There was a similar pattern in relation to suppliers controlling time of use: higher levels among those in age groups 45 to 64 (50% to 51%) compared with those in age groups under 45 (38% to 42%).

Those living in owner-occupied households were also more likely than those in rented households to say they would not be not very comfortable or not at all comfortable with their supplier collecting data (42% compared with 37%) or controlling time of use (47% compared with 41%).

Those saying they were very concerned about climate change were more likely to feel comfortable about energy suppliers accessing their data (59% compared with 39% who were not concerned about climate change) and controlling time of use of their appliances (57% compared with 31%).

Further findings on energy bills and tariffs

In previous waves, questions were included on other topics relating to energy bills and tariffs. The latest findings relating to these topics can be found as follows:

- Monitoring of energy use, see [Winter 2023 report on energy bills and tariffs](#) - section on 'Smart meters'
- Energy saving and wasting behaviours, see Spring 2024 report on energy bills and tariffs – section on '[Energy saving and wasting behaviours](#)'
- Worry about energy bills in the context of other household bills, and the impact of increased costs of energy, see Spring 2024 report on energy bills and tariffs – section on '[Cost of energy bills](#)'
- Attitudes towards the cost of renewable energy, see Spring 2024 report on energy bills and tariffs – section on '[Attitudes towards cost of renewable energy](#)'
- Satisfaction with service delivery from energy suppliers, see Spring 2024 report on energy bills and tariffs – section on 'Energy suppliers'
- Time of Use tariffs, see [Winter 2023 report on energy bills and tariffs](#) - section on 'Time of use electricity tariffs'
- Smart electric vehicle charging, see [Winter 2023 report on energy bills and tariffs](#) - section on 'Smart electric vehicle charging'



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