



More in
Common

Climate Action Week webinar

Is Britain's climate consensus under threat?

June 24 2025

Five driving forces behind changing climate attitudes

There are five broad and interconnected forces that drive Britons' views on climate change. These factors underpin Britons' high level of concern about climate - and their desire for action from government on climate, but also their concerns about what transition will mean for them.

- **Trust:** The decline in trust in Government's ability to deliver includes its ability to tackling the climate crisis, and there is widespread scepticism toward both oil and gas companies, and the renewable energy sector.
- **Threat:** Britons are deeply concerned about our dependence on oil and gas - and worried about the impact of international events in Ukraine and Iran.
- **Tiredness:** The cost of living is most Britons' overriding concern, and the salience of climate has dropped as a result. Concerns about energy bills drive support for renewables - but people want to know that climate policies are a solution not something that exacerbates cost of living pressures.
- **Temperature:** Britons are feeling the heat, and this increases the salience of climate issues - people link heat waves to net-zero.
- **Tangibility:** public perceptions of the climate crisis are driven by tangible and visible impacts. And they want to see tangible progress made - neither government nor the climate or energy sectors have told a positive story of what has been achieved so far. Only focusing on what is still to be done risks inducing fatalism.

Across the country, Britons are worried about climate change

How worried are you about climate change?

Total proportion saying they are somewhat or very worried

50% 80%

In every British constituency, there is a majority of people who are worried about climate change, from 52 per cent concern in Dundee Central to 80 per cent in Islington North.

*There's no point in us having everything else if we haven't got a future to look forward to. I think the environment is really, really important and what we do with it now is going to have an impact on future generations. **So I do think it's really important, renewable energy sources and everything and hopefully that in hand will help with our energy, gas bills and things like that as well.***

Gemma, Bridgend, primary school teacher

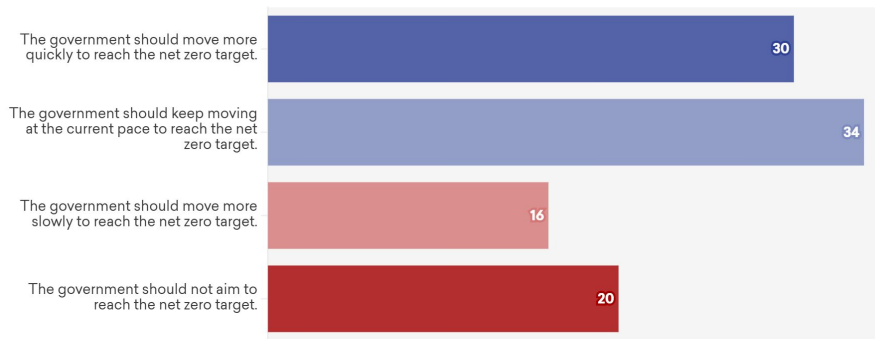
*"Not so much worried for me, worried for my grandchildren. I think it was on the news a couple of weeks ago, the ice caps are melting and you just see the polar bears just floating on these lumps of ice and you're thinking, **what are we doing to the world? So I think something needs to be done.**"*

Karen, admin officer, Billericay

The public want the government to keep moving toward Net Zero

Britons more likely to say the government should go faster rather than slower

Thinking about the government's target to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050, which comes closest to your view?



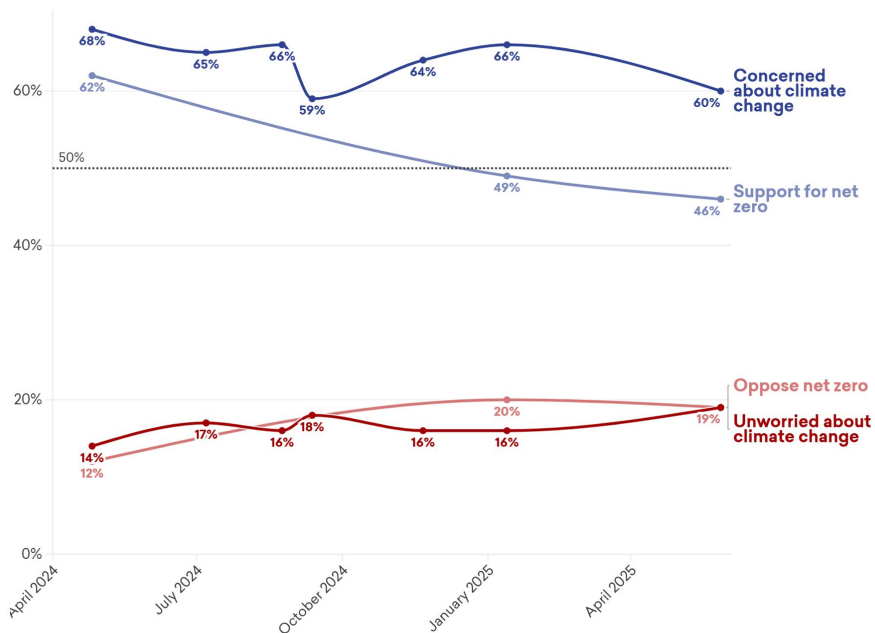
At the top level there is still strong support for net-zero and a sense that transition is the right thing to do for the country and something that 'future proofs' the UK.

The public is more likely to say the government should move faster (30 per cent) than more slowly (16 per cent) to reach the net zero target.

Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) think the government should keep its current pace or move more quickly, compared to 36 per cent who think it should slow down or abandon the net-zero target altogether.

Net zero support decoupling from climate concern

Concern about climate change remains stable, but support for Net Zero has dropped



Britons remain concerned about climate change, but that concern has decoupled a little more for support for 2050 net-zero target.

Since April last year, the proportion of people who say they are worried about climate change has fallen by eight percentage points, though a clear majority - around three in five - remain concerned. Over the same period, support for the 2050 target has dropped more sharply, falling by 16 points from 62 per cent to 46 per cent with particular growth in those who are neutral/unsure on the policy more than outright opposition.

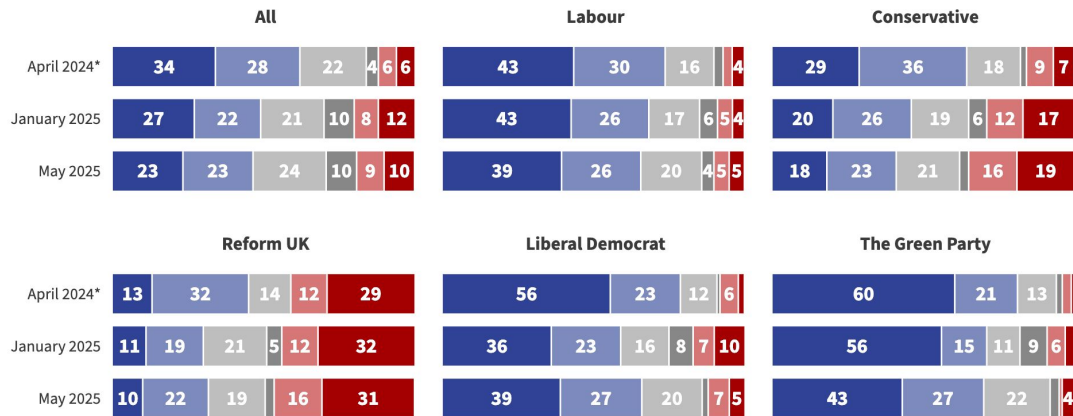
There are also signs that concern about climate change is decoupling from support for net zero. In April 2024, 83 per cent of those worried about climate change supported the net-zero target. Today, that figure has fallen to 65 per cent.

The polarisation of Net Zero

Support for net zero has dropped by 16 points since April of last year

In general, do you support or oppose the government's target to reach net zero by 2050?

● Strongly support ● Slightly support ● Neither support nor oppose ● Don't know ● Slightly oppose ● Strongly oppose



Source: More in Common • June 2025

* April 2024 cross-breaks by voting intention, all others by recalled 2024 vote

Driving the decline in support for the net-zero target is increasing partisan polarisation.

Support has fallen across voter groups, but the drop is steepest among Conservative voters. Since April last year, support among Conservatives has fallen by 24 points—from 65 per cent to 41 per cent. Though Conservative voters are still more likely to back the target than not.

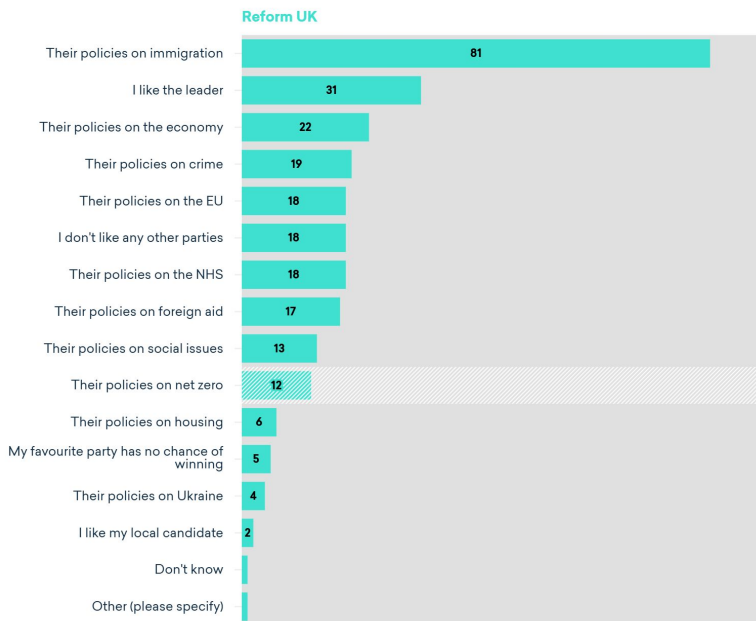
This means the gap between Conservative and Labour voters has tripled, from an 8-point gap in support in April last year, to a 24-point gap today.

"I don't really understand this Net Zero thing (...) I don't think it's achievable. I think it's a bit fake to be honest with you. Because didn't they inherit - well, they kept harping on about the 22 billion black hole. And then they created a 22 billion carbon capture, and I think we've already got trees which do that job."
Abel, NHS receptionist, Scuntorpe

Climate is not driving support for Reform

Reform's policies on net zero are not driving their support

You said you would vote for Reform UK. Why would you vote for this party?
Select up to three.



While Reform voters are far more likely to oppose Net Zero, this is not driving their support for the party.

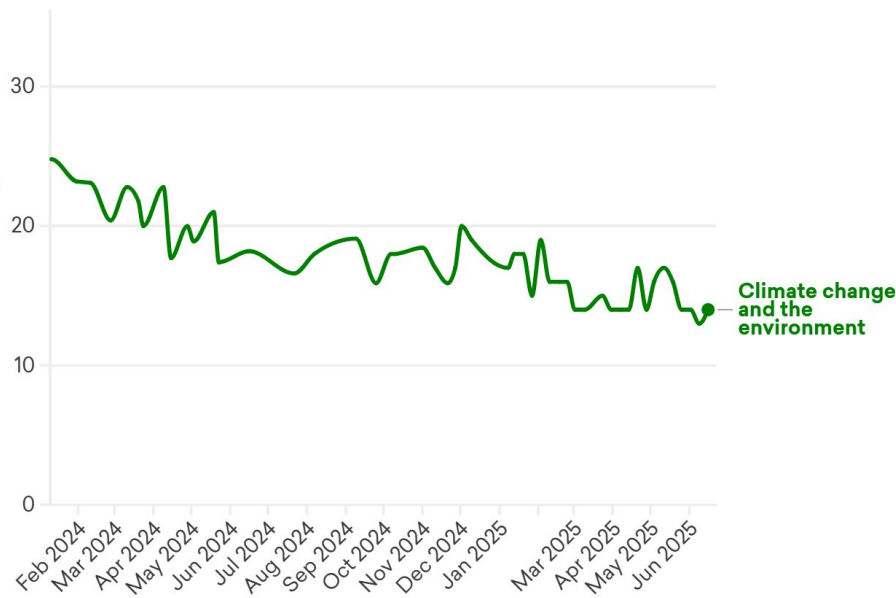
Only 7 per cent of Reform voters select 'climate change and the environment' as one of the top three issues facing the country, compared to 78 per cent who select either 'levels of immigration' or channel crossings.

Similarly, four in five Reform supporters are driven by the party's policies on immigration, compared to only 12 per cent who are driven by their policies on Net Zero.

The salience of climate change has halved

The declining salience of climate change

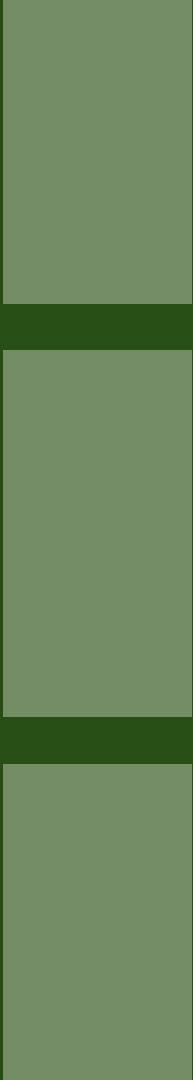
In your opinion, which are the most IMPORTANT issues facing the country today? Please select up to three



In More in Common's top issue tracker polling, the salience of climate has fallen from being a top three issue in 2023, to the fourth top issue in 2024, and in our most recent tracker, 'climate change and the environment' has fallen to sixth place on 14 per cent - halving in under 3 years.

Meanwhile, the salience of the cost of living has remained at 60 per cent or higher.

"I think people are fed up of hearing about net zero now."
Brad, sweeper driver, Wolverhampton



Trust

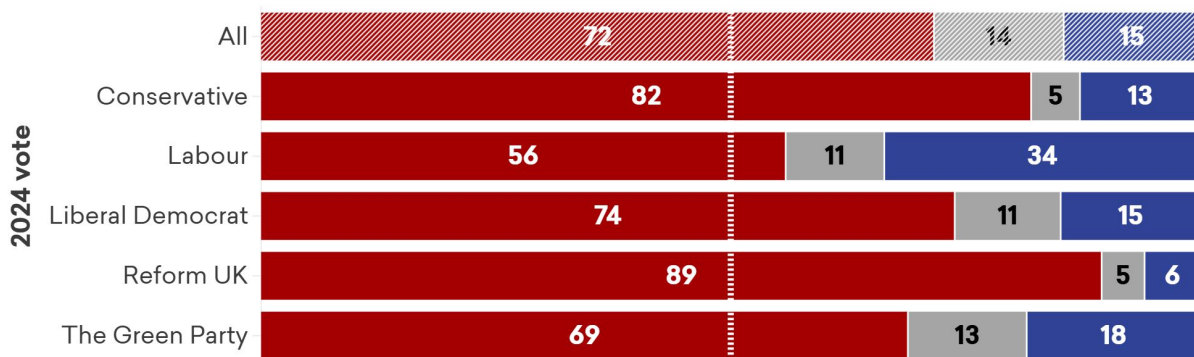
**Britons lack confidence in the government
and are deeply sceptical of energy
companies**

Britons worry that the government is not in control

Few think the government has things under control

Which of the following comes closer to your view?

- The government does not have things under control ● Don't know ● The government has things under control



"I've actually given up on the system, if I'm being totally open and honest with you. Yeah, nothing really changes ever. (...) There's no proper leadership by anybody.."

Gary, sales manager, Bourne

Attitudes toward climate policy do not exist in isolation. Underpinning opposition to the net-zero target is a wider lack of faith in the government's ability to deliver.

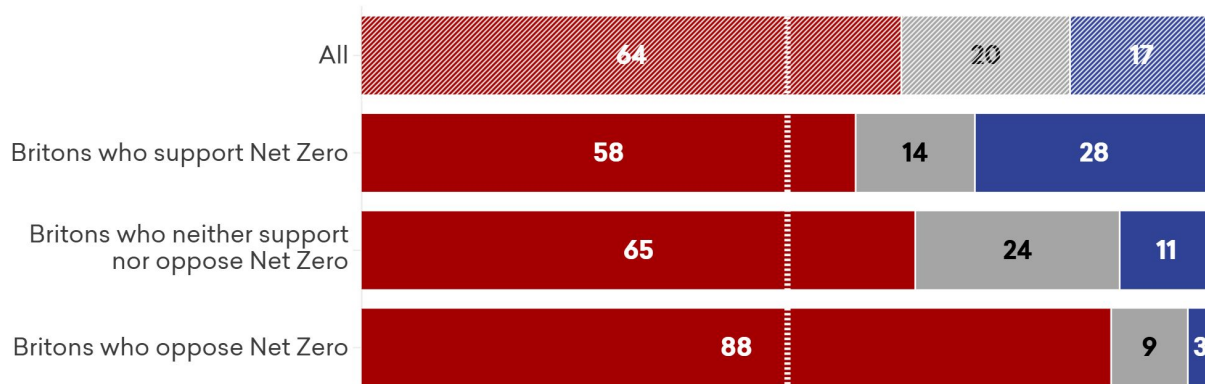
More than 7 in 10 (72 per cent) Britons believe that the government does not have things under control - rising to 89 per cent of Reform voters.

Most doubt that the government will meet the net-zero target

Nearly two-thirds think the UK will miss the 2050 Net Zero target

Thinking about the Government's target of reaching net-zero by 2050. What do you think is more likely?

● The UK will not hit this target ● Don't know ● The UK will hit this target



This lack of confidence extends to net-zero. Despite worrying about climate change only 17 per cent of Britons think it is likely that the UK government will achieve its target of reaching Net Zero by 2050, while nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) think it is unlikely.

While supporters of the target are slightly less pessimistic, a majority - nearly three in five (58 per cent) believe it is unlikely that the government will reach its goal.

"If you think about it, about it, thousands and thousands and thousands around the world of aeroplanes flying every second, polluting the atmosphere. Is it realistic that we're going to get to net zero? No, it just ain't going to happen"

(...) I don't think we'll ever reach net zero."

Jeff, car park attendant, Cornwall

Low trust in energy companies

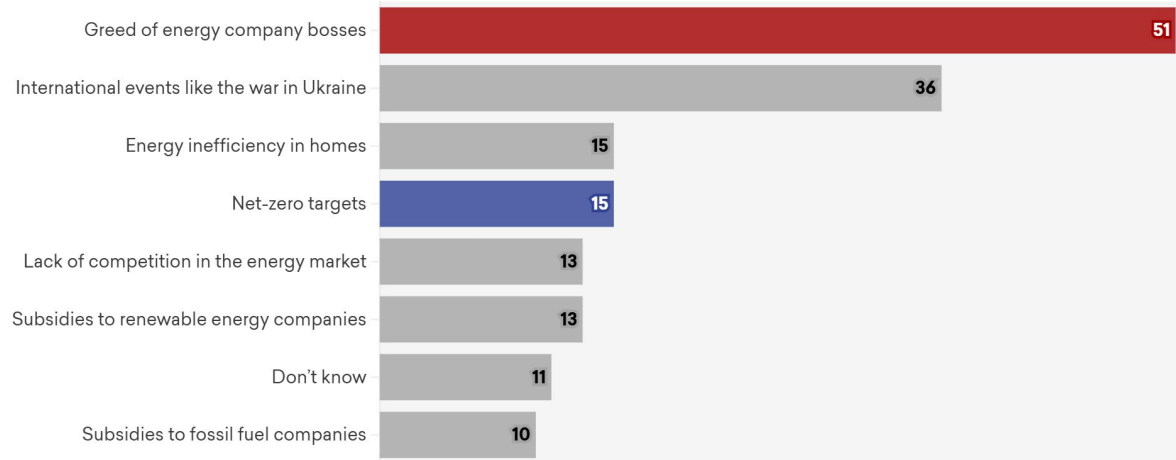
With the cost of living having consistently registered as the top issue of public concern since the pandemic - the public are clear where they place the blame for rising bills.

By a significant margin, 'greed of energy company bosses' is seen as the top reason for high energy bills in the UK (selected by half of Britons - 51 per cent), followed by international events like the war in Ukraine (selected by 36 per cent). Only 15 per cent blame net-zero targets.

Both Reform, Liberal Democrat and Labour voters name 'greed of energy company bosses' as the number one reason for high energy bills in the UK.

Britons blame corporate greed for high energy bills

What do you think is most responsible for high energy bills in the UK? (Select up to two)



Source: More in Common. • Data collected February 2025

"Obviously the cost is all we're hearing about at the moment, the cost of living. But I think especially with what Nick had just said of profits that energy companies make and especially in the past where prices have skyrocketed."

Molly, account manager, Braintree

Britons suspect profit is driving energy policy

Britons are increasingly convinced that energy company bosses are influencing the direction of energy companies to push their own profits.

53 per cent say it is possible that big oil companies are secretly funding climate denial to protect their profits, 10 per cent say that is definitely true. The windfall tax remains one of the most popular taxes.

But this scepticism isn't limited to fossil fuel companies:

62 per cent say it is at least possible renewable energy companies are pushing the climate agenda because they stand to make huge profits. 16 per cent say this is definitely true.

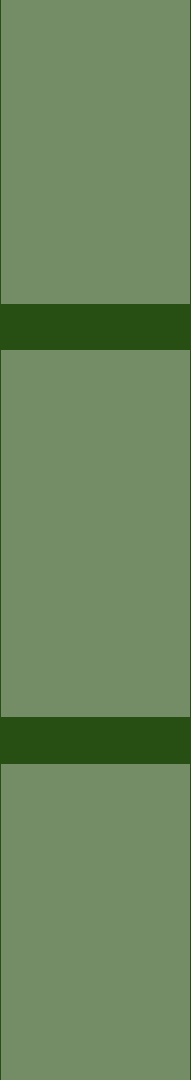
These theories are more likely to be believed by those who are financially insecure, and younger Britons (particularly millennials).

Widespread distrust in companies and governments involved in the energy transition

For each of the following, please indicate whether you think they are true or false.

● Definitely true ● Probably true ● Possibly true ● Don't know ● Possibly false ● Probably false ● Definitely false





Threat

Britons are concerned about our dependence on oil and gas in what most consider to be an increasingly dangerous world

The link between threat perception and climate attitudes

One factor that feeds into climate attitudes is threat perception - the wider belief that the world is becoming a more dangerous place.

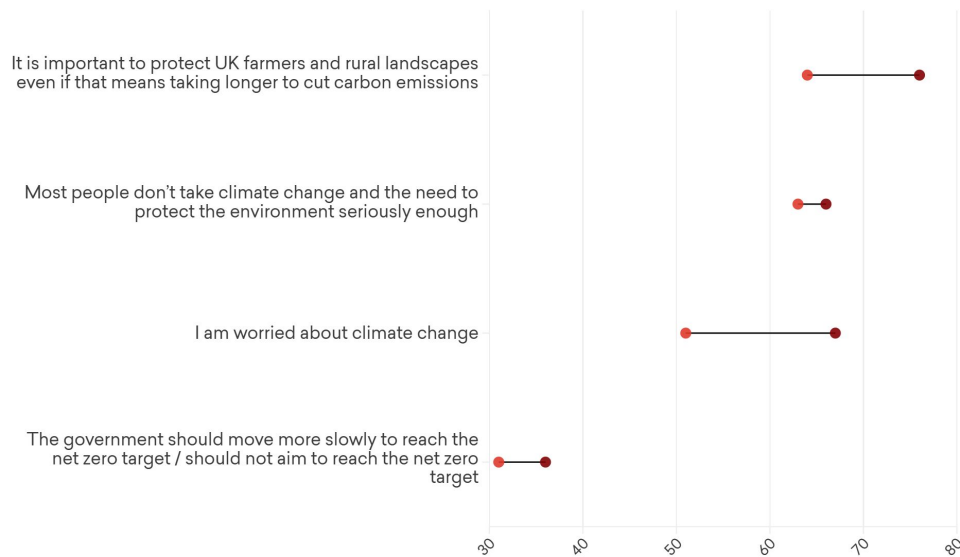
People who believe the world is becoming more dangerous are significantly more likely to be concerned about climate change: 67 per cent say they are worried, compared to just 51 per cent among those who do not share this view.

However, this threat perception does not always translate into stronger support for climate action. In fact, those who feel the world is becoming more dangerous are also more likely to say that we should take a slower approach to cutting emissions - in case we go too quickly with unintended consequences.

Threat perception affects how people think about climate change

Percentage who agree with the following statements, split by their response to whether the world is becoming more dangerous.

- People who disagree that the world is becoming more dangerous
- People who agree that the world is becoming more dangerous



The public wants greater energy security and independence

Linked to this sense of threat is a feeling that the UK lacks agency, and that we rely on 'mad men like Putin' who can use oil and gas to hold the UK to ransom.

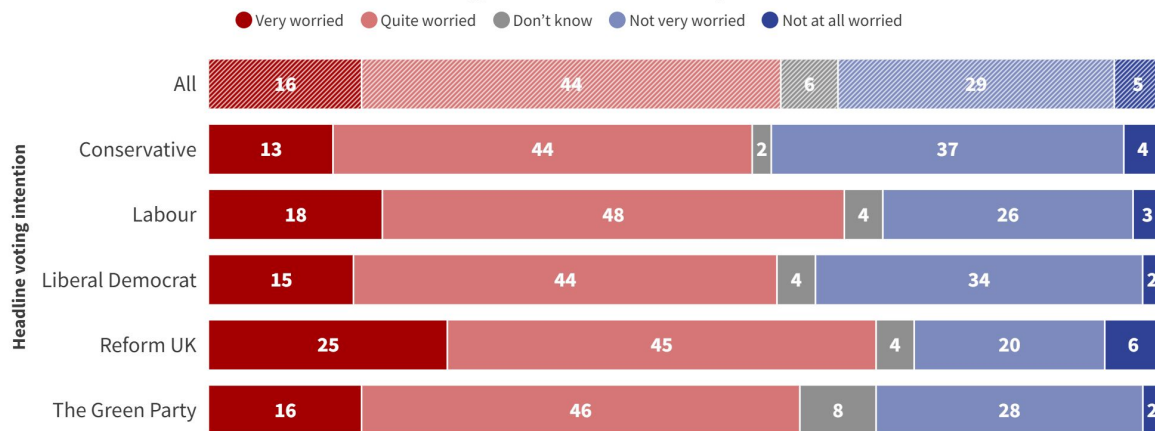
Three in five Britons are worried about threats to our energy security, with Reform supporters being the most concerned.

In February 2025, nearly nine in ten Britons (88 per cent) said they were concerned about the impact of the war in Ukraine on the cost of living in the UK, and 82 per cent were concerned about the impact on Britain's energy security.

This concern about energy security has boosted support for renewables and 'home grown' clean energy.

Three in five Britons are worried about threats to our energy security

How worried are you, if at all, about threats to Britain's energy security (the ability to reliably provide energy to the whole country)?



Source: More in Common • April 2024

"Because we got caught out, obviously, during the Ukraine. We don't want a situation where we're beholden to foreign countries - particularly if not particularly friendly like Russia - where they can just switch the pipe off or whatever they want. So yeah, there are advantages with the wind, the solar."

Graham, civil servant, Doncaster

"If it's a case of being self-sufficient with our energy production, that wouldn't be a bad thing because obviously look at the situation where you've got political situations with getting gas from Russia and likewise."

Lawrence, retail manager, Peterborough

Conflict in the Middle East has tapped into Britons' energy fears

The public sees a clear the link between global conflict, energy bills and petrol costs.

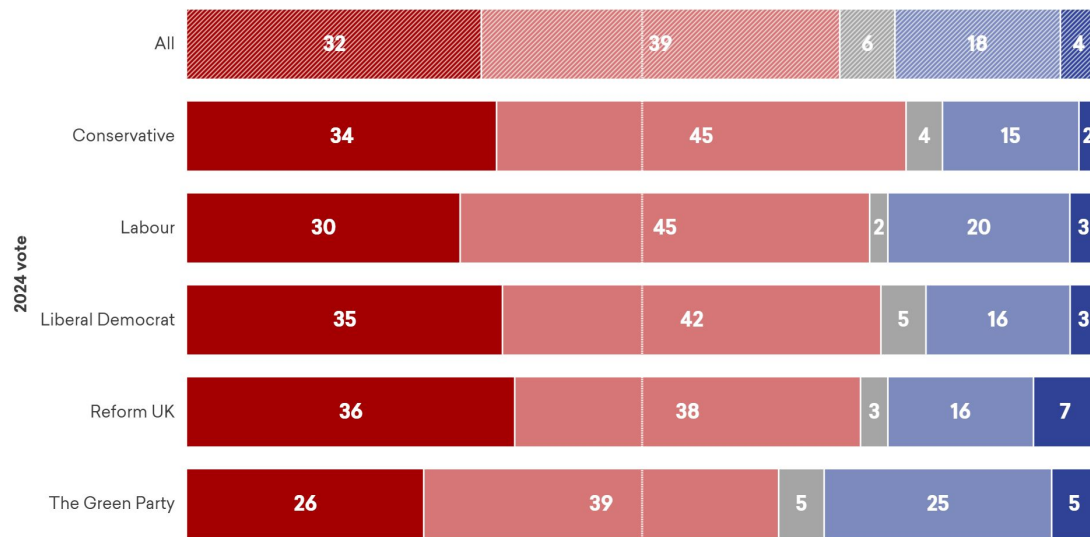
79 per cent say they are worried about the impact of the conflict in Iran on energy prices in the UK.

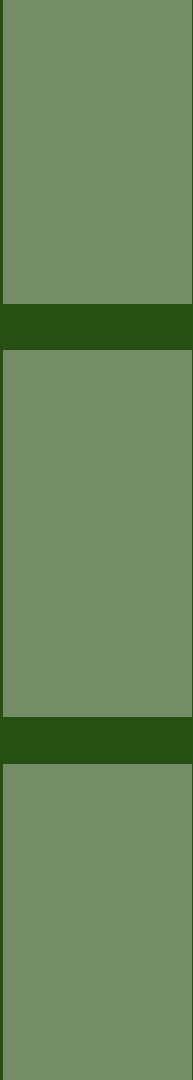
Four in five Britons are worried about the impact of the Iran conflict on energy prices

How much do you worry, if at all, about the following potential consequences of the war in Iran?

'The risk that energy prices rise in the UK'

● A great deal ● Quite a lot ● Don't know ● Not very much ● Not at all





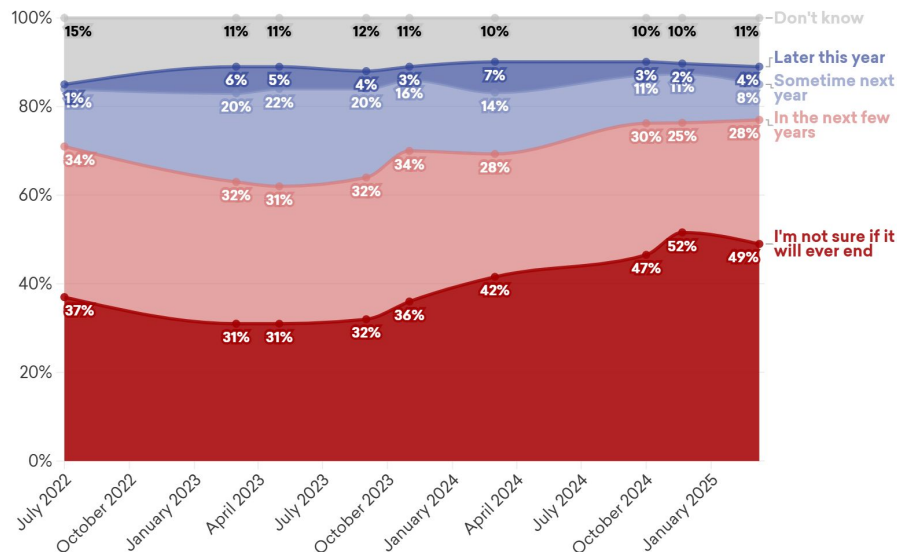
Tiredness

**Britons are exhausted and concerned about
the cost of living crisis**

The public is exhausted by the cost of living crisis

49 per cent now say they are not sure the cost of living crisis will ever end

While economic conditions are difficult to predict, when do you expect the cost of living crisis to end?



Consistently ranking as Britain's top issue, the cost of living crisis is a driving concern for most Britons, and drives public opinion on a range of issues - including climate change.

In focus groups, the cost of living crisis emerges in the first few minutes of every conversation, and it's clear that energy bills are a key source of stress for Britons.

Much of the battle for public support on net-zero will depend on whether net-zero and transition are ultimately seen as something that will lead to lower **and** more stable bills.

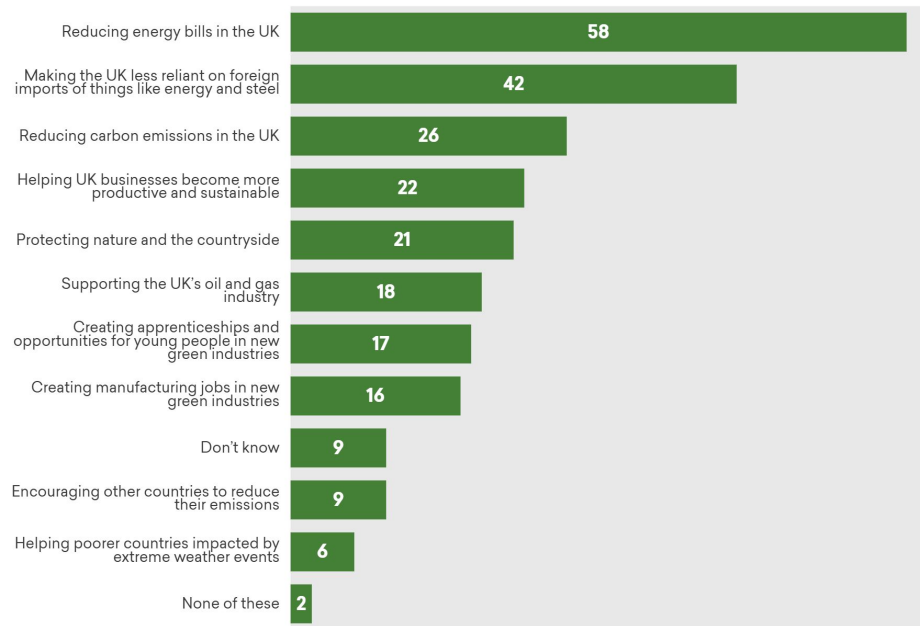
"The way we're living now, it's ridiculous. I'm getting up at my age still at half past four in the morning, going to work. I've got a mortgage and stuff on my own, but I don't live now. I just survive. That's how I feel. (...) So I think this is just not life anymore. So I think we do need a change."

Vicky, Supermarket Assistant

Energy bills are Britons' top concern

Reducing energy bills is Britons' top priority for DESNZ

Which of the following do you think should be the main job of the Minister for Energy Security and Net Zero? Select up to three.



Given the high salience of the cost of living, it's no surprise that the public's top priority for climate policy is to reduce energy bills.

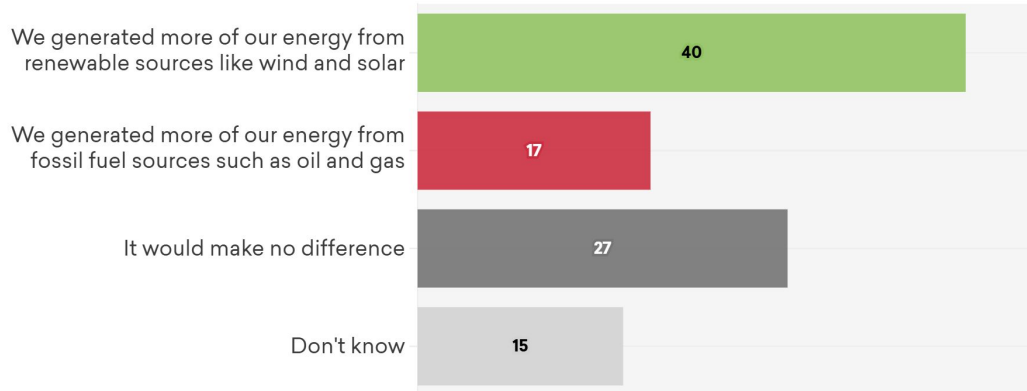
Asked what should be the main job of the Minister for Energy Security and Net Zero, the top answer (58 per cent) was 'reducing energy bills in the UK', followed by making the UK less reliant on foreign energy and steel (42 per cent) and - in third place - 'reducing carbon emissions'.

Support for transition then will depend heavily not just on people's desire to tackle climate change - but how much it meets those first two tests.

Britons believe renewables will reduce their bills

Britons much more likely to think their bills would be cheaper if we used more renewables

Do you think your energy bills would be lower if...



Source: More in Common, June 2024

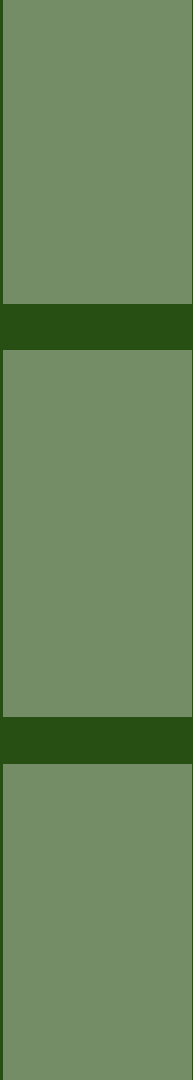
"I think we need to use more of our own wind turbines and stuff. The reason why the energy bills and stuff are going up is because we're resourcing a lot of it from abroad instead of using our own natural resources and that's why the prices are skyrocketing.

Whereas if they actually brought more in-house, using our own energy, the wind turbines, solar panels and using our own, then it wouldn't cost as much.

James, town ranger, Hitchin

Britons' concerns about energy bills remains a driving force behind public support for the energy transition. However, this depends on the belief that renewable energy can make bills cheaper and more stable.

Britons are nearly two and a half times more likely to think that generating more of our energy from renewables -rather than fossil fuels - will reduce their bills.



Temperature

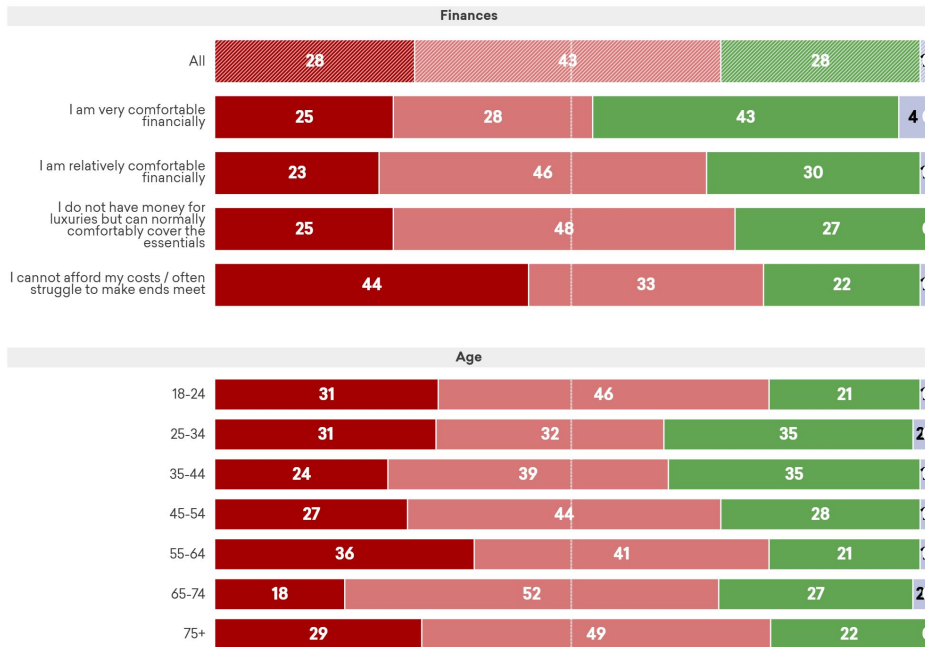
Britons feeling the heat

Britons think it's too hot

Most Britons think it's too hot

How would you describe the weather this week?

Far too hot Too hot Perfect temperature Too cold Far too cold



In the heatwave over the weekend, most Britons felt it was too hot - with three in ten saying it was far too hot.

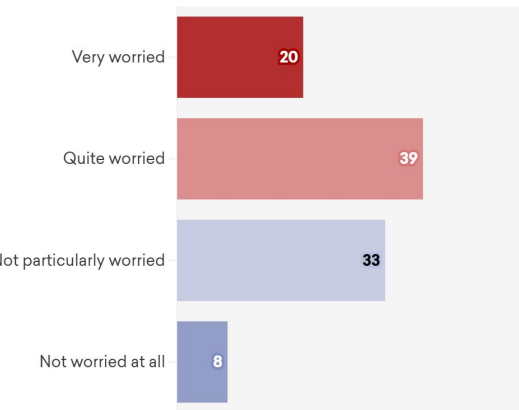
Those who are less comfortable financially were almost twice as likely to say that the weather was far too hot than those who are more comfortable.

Older generations were also more likely to say that the weather is too hot than younger ones.

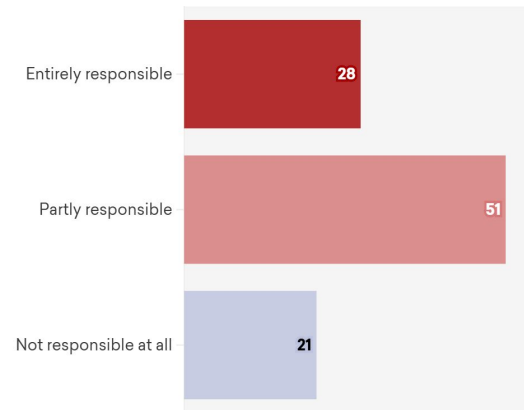
Four in five attribute this week's heatwave to climate change

Britons are worried about extreme heat, and most blame climate change

How worried or unworried are you that unbearably hot weather might become more frequent in the coming decades?



Thinking about the heatwave in the UK this week, to what extent would you say that climate change is responsible for that?



Source: More in Common • June 2025

"We all go, 'oh great, it's lovely, it's so nice this early in the year', but the climate is changing and obviously with young children it is a worry because we are ruining the world really, aren't we?"
Abbi, East Dulwich

Britons see the link between heatwaves and climate change.

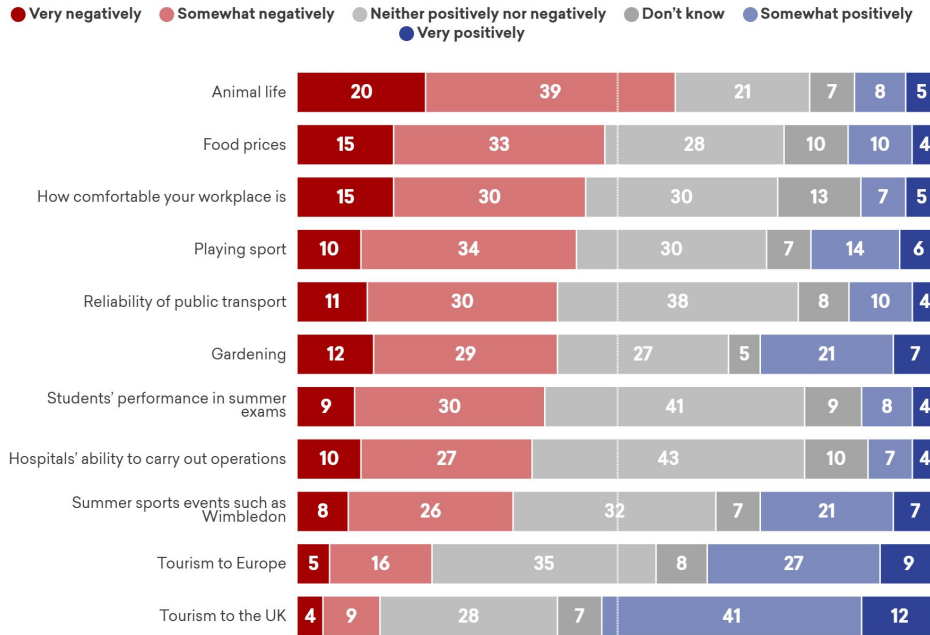
Three in five (59 per cent) say they are worried that unbearably hot weather might become more frequent in the coming decades, and four in five (79 per cent) blame this week's heatwave on climate change.

Unsurprisingly, views on heat waves are linked to climate concern: 68 per cent of those who described this week's weather as 'too hot' are worried about increasing temperatures.

Many think that food prices, sport and public transport will suffer from more heat

The public thinks rising temperatures will affect many aspects of life in Britain

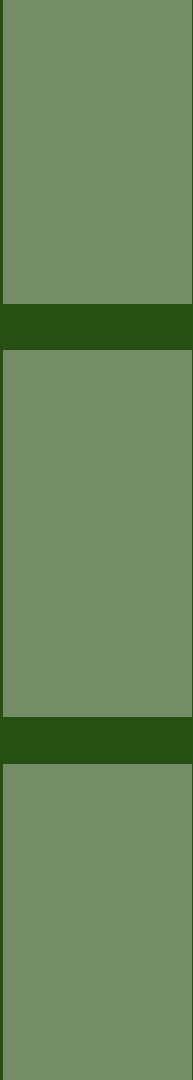
If yearly temperatures continue to rise do you think it will positively or negatively affect the following?



The public thinks rising temperatures will affect many aspects of life in Britain.

Animal life - a top concern for the British public, food prices and the comfort of workplaces are the areas that the public think will be most negatively affected by rising temperatures in the UK.

Brits are less worried about the impact on gardening or sports events - but do think rising temperatures could increase tourism to the UK.



Tangibility

**Britons want to see visible process on
climate change**

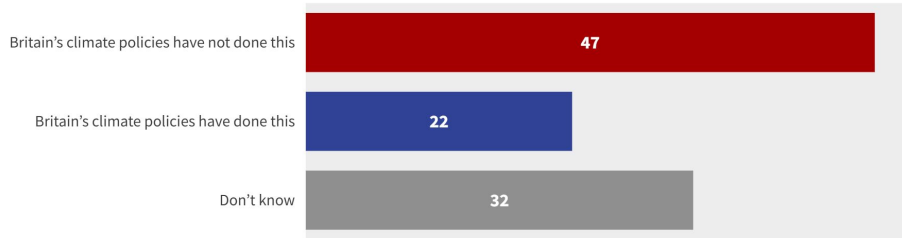
Britons aren't aware of Britain's climate successes to date

Few think that Britain's climate policies so far have made a difference to tackling climate change

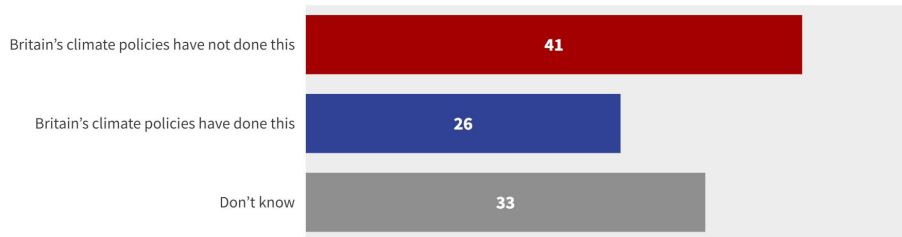
Thinking about Britain's policies to tackle climate change so far, to what extent would you say they have made a meaningful difference to...

● Britain's climate policies have not done this ● Britain's climate policies have done this ● Don't know

...tackling climate change



...reducing Britain's emissions



A further issue that's eroding Britons' faith in the energy transition: a failure to tell the story of Britons about the progress the UK has made so far.

Despite the UK having reduced emissions by 52 per cent since 1990, just 26 per cent think that Britain's climate policies have actually made a difference to reducing Britain's emissions and only 22 per cent think that Britain's climate policies have made a meaningful difference to tackling climate change.

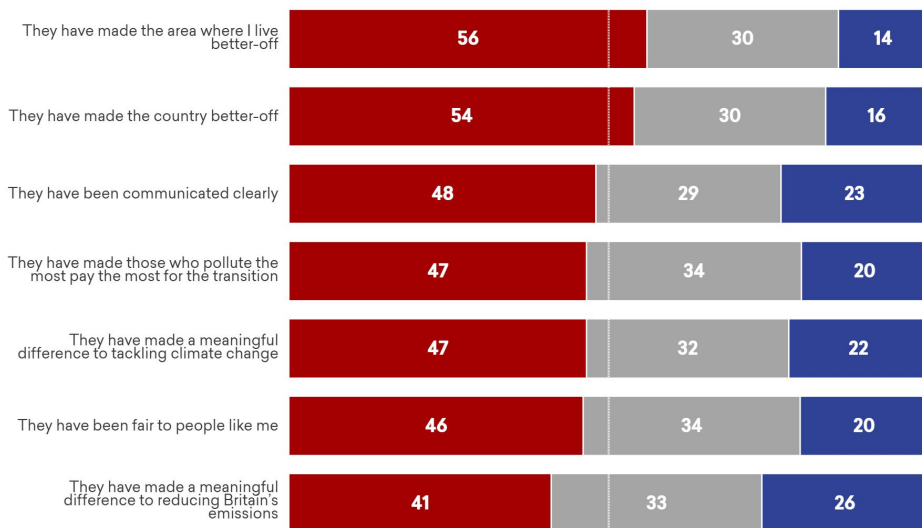
This perception that Britain has made no progress risks driving a sense of hopelessness about tackling climate change, itself undermining support for transition and furthering the public's belief that energy policy is designed around energy companies not the environment.

Britons want proof that climate policies will improve their lives

Most think climate policies have yet to improve their lives or communities

Thinking about Britain's policies to tackle climate change so far, to what extent would you say they have...

● Britain's climate policies have not done this ● Don't know ● Britain's climate policies have done this



Few Britons feel that climate policies have made tangible improvements to their lives - even if they still do think they will in the future.

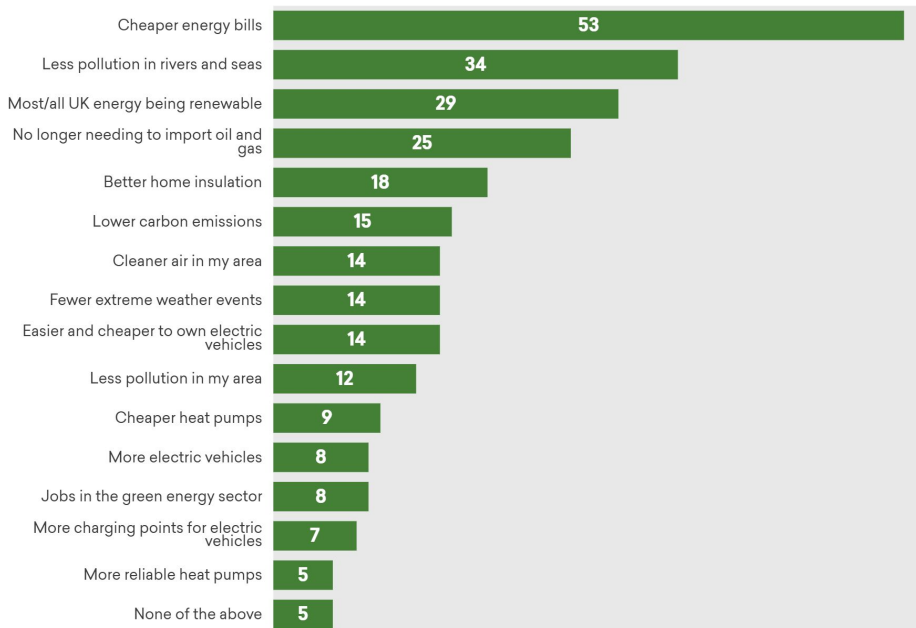
Only 16 per cent of Britons think that policies to target climate change have made their country better, and 14 per cent think they have made their local area better. Even among supporters of Net Zero, fewer than a quarter think that climate policies have already improved their country (24 per cent) or local area (21 per cent).

Britons are also more likely to be negative on how well climate policies have been communicated to the public - and most think they have not being fair so far, or made those who pollute the most pay their fair share.

Show not tell

What do Britons most want to see from climate policies?

Thinking about the government's climate and energy policy, which of the following results would you most like to see? Select up to three.



Britons will judge the success of climate policies in the impacts they can see and feel.

Asked what results they would most like to see from the government's climate and energy policies, 'cheaper energy bills' is the top answer - selected by 53 per cent, followed by less pollution in rivers and seas.

Water pollution is another key driver, along with energy security.

Linking climate policies to wider environmental benefits build public support more than focusing on climate alone.

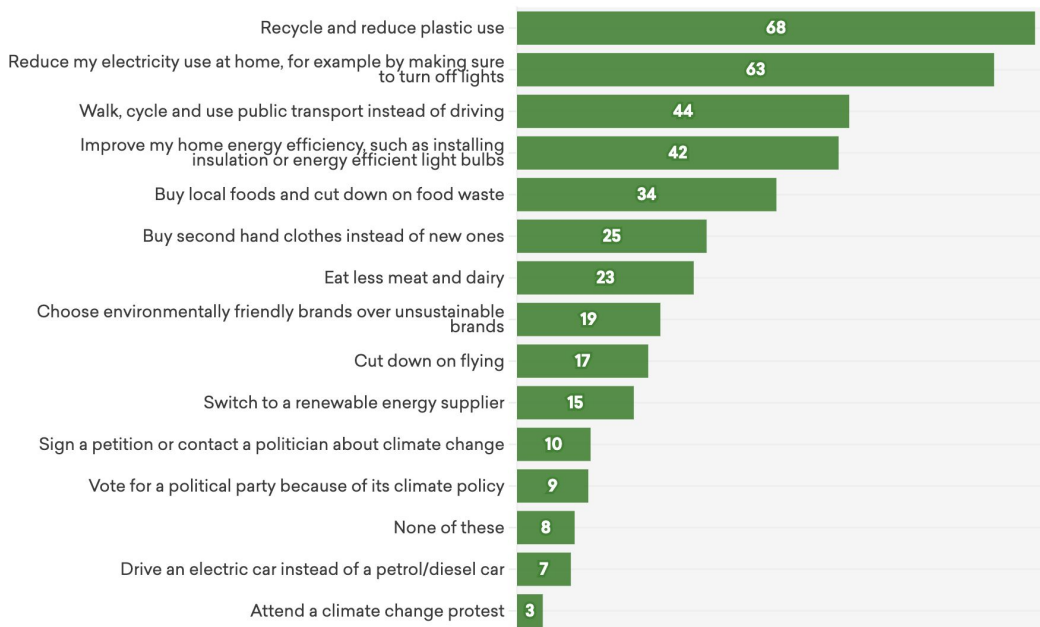
"He's been a bus driver for 40 odd years. And he was saying, what a difference getting up and going to work in the morning and there's no fumes. He's driving the bus, he doesn't feel sick. He doesn't feel any nausea, because of the fumes from driving the bus when it was diesel or whatever, and this new electric bus has made such a difference to his working day"

Rena, retired, Glasgow

Celebrate personal success stories - start with recycling

Most Britons have taken action to reduce their environmental impact

Which of the following actions have you personally taken to reduce your impact on the environment? Select all that apply.



Many Britons have already taken action to reduce their impact on the environment and are proud of things they do such as conserving energy or recycling.

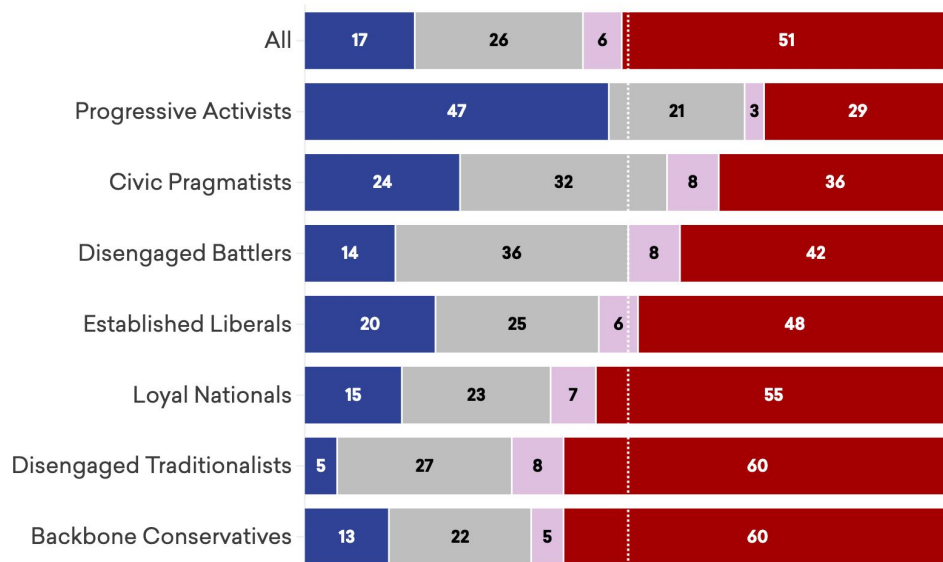
There is a danger that dismissing these every day acts as meaningless in tackling climate change leads to further disengagement when instead the public are more likely to see them as a building block towards doing more on climate or the environment in the future.

The risk of disruptive protestors

Most Britons think that Just Stop Oil are a force for bad

Do you think Just Stop Oil are a force for good or a force for bad?

● Force for good ● Don't know ● I have never heard of this group ● Force for bad



There is a risk that disruptive forms of protest risk engaging a highly-concerned base but polarise those Britons who softly support climate action towards opposition for climate policies.

Britons are most likely to describe Just Stop Oil as annoying than anything else.



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