

How green is your house? Recycling favorite activity among Brits says new survey

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Seventy percent of households always separate their rubbish for recycling, but only 2 percent buy their energy on a green tariff, according to the early findings of a major new annual household survey, called "Understanding Society," funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

Preliminary results from 1500 respondents show that those who own their own home are more likely to separate their rubbish (83 per cent) than those in rented accommodation (59 per cent), whilst less than one in a hundred households have solar water heating (0.5 per cent) or [solar energy](#) panels (0.5 per cent). Initial findings also show that switching off the lights in unused rooms (82 per cent) and not leaving the television on standby (67 per cent) are significantly more popular than taking fewer flights (16 per cent), car sharing (15 per cent) and not buying items because they have too much packaging (8 per cent).

Green behaviours costing the least money and effort are currently the most popular with the British public, despite the fact that 59 per cent of people think that if things continue on their current course we will soon experience a major environmental disaster.

A fuller picture of environmental and other behaviours and attitudes based on the first annual survey of 100,000 individuals from 40,000 [households](#) for Understanding Society will be published at a later date.

With Copenhagen Climate Change Conference just a couple of weeks

away, the environment is likely to remain a hot topic amongst the British public, says Professor Nick Buck of the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Essex, which is leading the new research: "One of the unique features of Understanding Society is that we speak to the same people each year, which means we can see how people's behaviours and attitudes change over time. The information we collect about how "green" people are will play a key role in informing the ongoing debate about environmental issues."

The UK's favourite green behaviours:

- Switching off lights in unused room 82%
- Use public transport rather than car 29%
- Not leaving TV on standby 67%
- Buying recycled paper products 28%
- Take own bag when shopping 55%
- Taking fewer flights where possible 16%
- Don't keep tap on when brushing teeth 55%
- Car sharing 15%
- Putting more clothes on when cold 45%
- Not buying items due to too much packaging 8%
- Walk or cycle on short journeys 40%

Source: Economic & Social Research Council ([news](#) : [web](#))

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