

# Support for fracking continues to drop

October 14 2015, by Charlotte Anscombe

---



A new survey shows that public support for the extraction and use of shale gas has dropped significantly over the last year with concerns about the potential impact on the environment beginning to outweigh the possible economic benefits.

The University of Nottingham Shale Gas Survey has been tracking the public perception of [shale gas extraction](#) in the UK since March 2012. The [survey](#) has tracked changes in awareness of shale gas, and what the public believe to be the environmental impact of its extraction and use, as well as its acceptability as an energy source.

The 11th survey, with over 6,700 respondents, was conducted between the 23 and 28 September 2015.

## **A significant drop in support**

This latest survey found that there had been a significant drop in the level of support for shale [gas extraction](#) in the UK over the last year. The difference between those who support extraction and those who don't now stands at just +10.4 per cent, compared with +21 per cent in September 2014 and +39.5 per cent in July 2013.

Some of the key concerns highlighted during the Balcombe protests, such as the risk of [water contamination](#), continue to be a major issue for the UK public. In September 2015, the survey found that the number of people who associated shale gas with water contamination had risen to 48 per cent – the highest level since the survey began.

However, it is still clear, 11 surveys on, that the UK public believes that shale gas will bring economic benefits to the country, and that a large number of people see shale gas as a 'cheap' form of energy. Least acceptable form of energy

Despite these findings, the support for shale gas extraction in the UK is dropping and is seen as the least acceptable form of energy source in the country's 2025 energy mix from a range of renewable, fossil and nuclear fuels.

These trends would suggest that the sense of unease with the environmental implications of fracking is a very live issue for members of the public. Professor Sarah O'Hara from the School of Geography at the University and co-director of the Shale Gas Survey said: "The drop in support for shale gas over the last 12 months suggests that concerns about the perceived environmental impacts of shale gas are beginning to outweigh the possible economic benefits.

## **Significant levels of opposition**

"This drop is driven largely by women firming up their view on this issue

and becoming increasingly opposed to shale gas. If the government pushes forward with its plans to fast track shale gas developments, it must be prepared for significant levels of opposition from grass roots activists.

"Professor Mathew Humphrey from the School of Politics and International Relations at the University, and co-director of the survey, says: "This survey continues the developments that we have seen since the protests at Balcombe in August 2013. At that point, trends in public opinion went into reverse, and the UK [public](#) appears to have become rather more sceptical about the potential costs and benefits of [shale gas](#)."

**More information:** The full report can be viewed here:  
[www.scribd.com/doc/131787519/p ... K-September-2015-pdf](http://www.scribd.com/doc/131787519/p...K-September-2015-pdf)

Provided by University of Nottingham

Citation: Support for fracking continues to drop (2015, October 14) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-10-fracking.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.