

Minority of Britons think UK government has clear plan to tackle climate change

May 3 2021, by Andy Dunne



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Just three in 10 Britons (28%) agree the government has a clear plan for how it can work with business and the people to tackle climate change, according to a new survey.

The poll of 1,000 adults was carried out by Ipsos MORI to mark Earth Day 2021 today in partnership with the [Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations](#) (CAST), which is led by Professor Lorraine Whitmarsh of the University of Bath.

The survey asked to what extent people agreed with the statement that the UK government has a clear plan for how government, businesses and people are going to work together to tackle [climate change](#); 28% agreed, while a third disagreed (33%).

Seven in 10 (69%) said the government would be failing the people of Britain if it does not act now to combat [climate](#) change, with only one in 10 (11%) disagreeing.

The research was carried out in February and March of this year. This week the government announced its intention to speed up reductions in carbon emissions by 78% by 2035.

Other key findings included:

- Three-quarters (74%) of respondents said businesses must act now to avoid failing their customers and employees;
- 73% said they thought individuals would be failing future generations if they do not act now to combat climate change;
- On [economic recovery](#) from COVID-19, opinion was split; around a third (35%) agreed the government should not prioritize tackling climate change, while a similar proportion disagreed (38%).

Professor Lorraine Whitmarsh, Director of CAST and an environmental psychologist at Bath, said: "These new survey findings highlight that the COVID-19 pandemic has not dented [public concern](#) about climate change, and that there is a strong belief that responsibility for tackling

climate change is shared by everyone in society."

The survey included other findings which suggest Britons want to keep certain behaviors adopted during the pandemic. It found Britons were most likely to do what they can to avoid throwing away food more often than before the pandemic (36%) and only buy things they really need rather than shopping for things for fun (32%).

Three in ten (30%) said they would do more errands by foot or bike rather than by car while a quarter expected to work from home more often (26%) or buy things they needed second-hand (24%). One in five (21%) said they would go on holidays that do not require a flight more often than before once restrictions are lifted.

"It is encouraging that many people are keen that the [lifestyle changes](#) they have made during COVID-19 restrictions—like reducing travel, consumption and [food waste](#)—endure or increase after restrictions are lifted," said Professor Whitmarsh.

"We now need policies to support and lock in these positive habits, as well as clearer messaging about which behaviors are most effective and what the UK's plans are for tackling climate change."

Kelly Beaver, Managing Director of Ipsos MORI Public Affairs, said: "Although many Britons say they understand what actions they need to take to tackle climate change, they tend to focus on lower impact actions rather than more significant lifestyle changes.

"Nevertheless, there is a willingness to change certain behaviors that will make a difference, and the strong sense of responsibility individuals feel they have—along with business—to combat climate change suggests they will be receptive to [government](#) steps to reduce the UK's greenhouse emissions."

More information: Earth Day 2021: Only 3 in 10 Britons think the Government has a clear plan to tackle climate change:

[www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk ... ackle-climate-change](http://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk...ackle-climate-change)

Provided by University of Bath

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