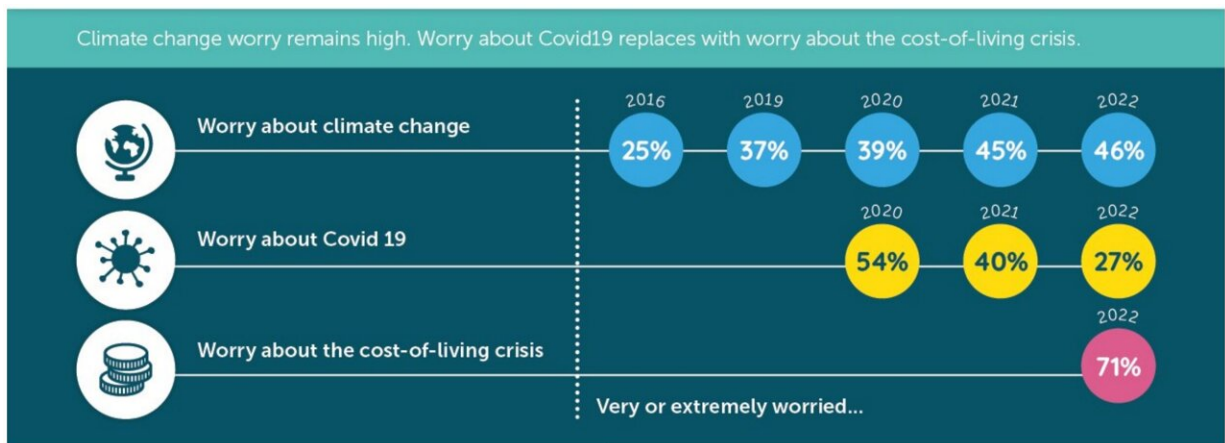


In the UK, concern about climate change grows

November 23 2022



Credit: *Public worry about climate change and energy security in the cost-of-living crisis* (2022).

Nearly half of the UK population (46%) are 'very' or 'extremely worried' about climate change, according to a new briefing released by the Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST) at the University of Bath and Cardiff University.

Its annual survey of public attitudes—which is based on the responses of a representative sample of over 1000 people—reports that public concern about [climate change](#) has grown substantially since 2016, when just a quarter of the population (25%) reported that climate change was a

priority issue.

In their latest briefing, CAST researchers highlight that public concern about COVID-19 has declined since 2021 and been replaced by high levels of concern about the cost of living. However, climate change has remained a key concern which has grown in public consciousness.

The briefing suggests that the public do not see the [energy crisis](#) as taking away from the urgency of climate change. People who are worried about the cost-of-living crisis show some of the highest levels of support for policies that can also reduce emissions and lower bills—such as phasing out the sale of gas boilers for heating systems using [renewable energy](#).

It recommends that the UK's net zero target should be used as a catalyst to address both the climate and cost-of-living crises in tandem and argues that communications and engagement can play a pivotal role in highlighting co-benefits of action.

Equally important will be targeted policy support to help people improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

Lead author, Dr. Christina Demski, Deputy Director of the Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations at the University of Bath explained, "Clearly, people's concerns about [energy security](#) and the cost-of-living crisis have sharply increased over the past year. However, this hasn't pushed climate worry off the table."

"Instead, [public concern](#) about rising costs has increased alongside fears about the climate: more and more people now see these two issues as inter-related. The government's commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 is an opportunity to address both the climate crisis and soaring energy prices collectively."

Co-author, Dr. Katharine Steentjes from the Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations at Cardiff University added, "People do not worry any less about climate change because of the additional worry about the cost-of-living crisis according to our results and most remarkably it turns out that people who feel financially vulnerable do not support climate action any less."

"From our data we see that those who worry most about the cost-of-living crisis also worry more about climate change and want to see urgent climate action. The results provide no excuse to stop efforts to address [climate](#) change because of the additional [crisis](#)."

Survey data was collected between 5th September to 26th October 2022 and the sample of 1087 adults was representative of the UK population with regards to gender, age, region and socio-economic status.

More information: Report: [cast.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/ ... CAST-Briefing-17.pdf](https://cast.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/.../CAST-Briefing-17.pdf)

Provided by Cardiff University

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