

Nearly 90% of UK voters think it's important to make homes more affordable to heat, finds survey

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About 87% of voters think that homes that are more affordable to heat are "important" or "very important" for the U.K., according to a study by The University of Bath, Imperial College London, London School of

Economics and Political Science and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

[The survey](#) investigated [public attitudes](#) on climate "co-benefits"—additional positive outcomes that come with efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as cleaner air, more affordable home heating and better energy security.

Making homes more affordable to heat was the most popular co-benefit among the respondents, perceived as important by the large majority of respondents across the political spectrum.

The co-benefit was perceived to be "important" or "very important" by 72% of Reform U.K. voters, 83% of Conservative voters, 88% of Labor voters, 90% of Liberal Democrats voters, 91% of Scottish National Party voters and 92% of Green Party voters. Homes in the U.K. are notorious for losing heat. However, measures like increased insulation can lower consumer energy bills and decrease carbon emissions.

The [online survey](#) of 1,021 people in the United Kingdom was carried out on February 12, capturing a nationally representative sample based on age, gender, and ethnicity.

According to the survey, there is a high level of concern about [climate change](#) in the U.K. and a large share of the public think the government is not taking sufficient action on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

When asked "Over the last year, do you think the UK government has done too much, too little or has done about the right amount to reduce [greenhouse gas emissions](#) to help prevent climate change?" 64% of respondents thought that the government has taken too little action, 15% thought it had taken about the right amount of action, only said 5% too much action was being taken, while 16% said they didn't know.

In response to the question "How worried are you personally about the following issues at present?" climate change ranked fifth—higher than levels of concern on housing, crime, immigration, and Brexit, terrorism, and unemployment. The issues respondents were most concerned about were the NHS, the cost of living, international conflict and the destruction of nature.

The study also highlighted [public support](#) for other co-benefits including improved energy security, reduced risk of flooding and [extreme heat](#), and job creation.

Professor Lorraine Whitmarsh, a co-author of the study, is the Center for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST) director and environmental psychologist at the University of Bath, said, "Our survey shows that the public are highly supportive of the co-benefits that climate action can bring.

"However, to meet the 2050 net zero target, the U.K. government needs to engage the public. More closely involving the public on the journey to net zero will ensure that climate policies strengthen public trust and deliver the co-benefits that can improve people's lives."

Dr. Neil Jennings, the lead author of the study and a researcher at the Grantham Institute—Climate Change and the Environment at Imperial College London, said, "Our survey shows that U.K. [voters](#) want more government action on climate change.

"Ahead of the election, our survey provides a strong indication that the public are in favor of action on climate change that can help to deliver for other societal challenges. A huge majority of the public think that it's important to make our homes more affordable to heat, enhance the U.K.'s energy security and improve the quality of the air we breathe. Good climate policy can reduce emissions and improve the day-to-day

lives of people across the U.K."

According to [a study by TADO](#), U.K. homes lose heat three times faster than homes in other parts of Western Europe. Poorly insulated homes require more energy to heat, meaning families spend a large share of their income on energy bills.

The National Energy Agency estimated that around 6.5 million homes in the U.K. experienced "fuel poverty" in January. In addition, due to dependence on fossil fuel gas, heating accounts for about 14% of the U.K.'s carbon emissions.

In 2023, the National Infrastructure Commission recommended the government to invest £1.5–4.5 billion a year to cover the full cost for lower income households to take-up environmentally friendly heat pump installations, to replace gas boilers and other home heating systems relying on fossil fuels, and to install energy efficiency measures such as insulation.

To help inform and empower people and communities to make lower-carbon choices, the authors support the [recommendation of the U.K. Climate Change Committee](#) to develop a public engagement program on climate change.

More information: [Survey](#)

Provided by University of Bath

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