

UK survey reveals increasing concern over climate change

5 March 2013



According to results of a major new national survey, belief in climate change and levels of concern in Wales are now at their highest level for a number of years. The survey also highlights the impacts of last year's flooding in Wales on beliefs.

A new survey conducted by a team from Cardiff and Aberystwyth Universities shows that a clear majority (88%) of the Welsh public believe that the world's climate is changing. People are also more concerned about climate change and more likely to see their [local area](#) as vulnerable to its effects as compared to the last time these questions were asked in 2010

The research is the first independent nationwide survey of [public perceptions](#) of climate change to be conducted in Wales for some years, and while the public back continued efforts to limit the causes of climate change there is also a widespread recognition that action is needed to deal with its consequences. With [extreme weather events](#) taking place in the UK and around the world last year, the flooding which hit many parts of Wales during 2012 appears to have played a part in making climate change a more pressing local concern for people across Wales. In particular, people who report being affected by flooding are more likely to see climate change as an immediate and important issue for them.

The study reveals:

Beliefs about climate change:

- A large majority of [respondents](#) (88%) consider that the world's climate is changing. This represents a significant increase from the last time the Welsh public were surveyed in 2010, when only 77% were of this view.
- Over a third of respondents (36%) say they are 'very concerned' about climate change, and a further 48% say they are 'fairly concerned'.

Links between flooding experience and beliefs about climate change:

- 60% of those surveyed across Wales agree that the recent floods were due in part to climate change, while concern about climate change also increases for people who report some direct [personal experience](#) of flooding.
- 74% of a sub-sample of respondents surveyed in the area around Llandre, Ceredigion, which experienced severe flooding last year, consider that Wales is already feeling the effects of climate change, versus only 65% who believe this in the national sample.

Beliefs about responding to the impacts of climate change:

- Over half of the respondents (61%) support taking action now to respond to the existing and future effects of climate change. A further fifth (22%) would like to see Wales at least beginning to prepare for the future effects of climate change.

- Although respondents emphasise the importance of responding to the [consequences](#) of climate change, a majority (71%) also say that such measures should only be taken alongside continued efforts to address the causes of climate change.

Attitudes to Welsh Government policy and personal behaviour change:

- Around three-quarters (76%) of respondents support the Welsh Government's target of a three percent annual reduction in carbon emissions nationally – while only 8% opposed this aspiration.
- Most respondents (82%) feel a personal responsibility to help address climate change. However, over half (58%) say that it is hard to take action on climate change, and over three-quarters (79%) were of the opinion that most people don't do much in their own lives to help tackle climate change.

Professor Nick Pidgeon, from the University's School of Psychology, who lead the team which carried out the research, explained that:

"Last year was a difficult time for many people in Wales, with serious flooding occurring in several areas of the country. While is not possible to pin the blame for any single event directly on climate change, we do know that in the future we can expect more of exactly this sort of disruption. It is encouraging to see that people in the survey are concerned about how [climate change](#) will affect both Wales and the wider world, and express support for a range of actions to address the challenges that this brings."

Provided by Cardiff University

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