

UK Public Perceptions and Readiness for a Just Transition to Net Zero

Achieving Net Zero requires fundamental changes in all aspects of daily life over an immediate and yet ambiguous time period. Yet there isn't a single route to 'transition'; people face different intersections of advantages and disadvantages in rising to the challenge and different consequences from the transition arising.

To investigate how this might inform policymaking in the UK, a nationally representative survey of 2,100 adults was conducted by the Institute for Community Studies and Ipsos in November 2021. The survey sought to understand the UK public's perceptions of and confidence in achieving 'Net Zero' targets by 2050, asking participants for their views on:

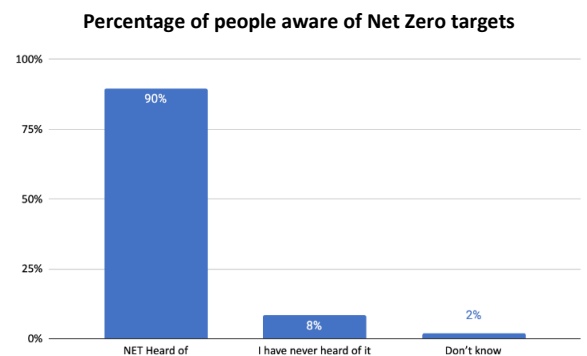
- **Awareness:** Knowledge of Net Zero targets and how they would be affected by the transition, as well as confidence in achieving targets on a personal and national scale.
- **Readiness:** Whether participants felt able to make changes in their home and modes of travel, and what barriers they faced in reducing their carbon emissions.
- **Just Transition:** Can Net Zero be achieved without "leaving behind" parts of the country or communities, who should be more involved in decision making, and impacts on job security.

Key Findings

Awareness

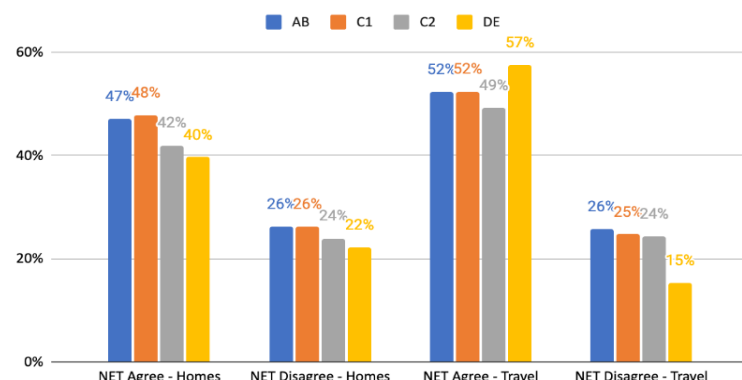
Responses to the survey showed widespread awareness of Net Zero and willingness to act, with only 3% of people uninterested in lowering their carbon footprint.

People show more confidence in personally achieving Net Zero, compared to scepticism that the UK will achieve its targets. This could reflect concerns that some areas or communities in the UK face barriers to adaptation or are unwilling to make the necessary changes to reduce emissions.



Awareness	Although 90% of respondents had heard about Net Zero, only 12% responded that they felt fully aware of how it would affect them. Awareness generally decreased with age, level of education, and social grade.
	People were generally more confident in their personal ability to make changes to help achieve Net Zero (53% confident) than in the ability of the wider UK (33% confident).
	Confidence at both the personal and national level decreased with age , with 46% of 55–75-year-olds not confident they could make personal changes.

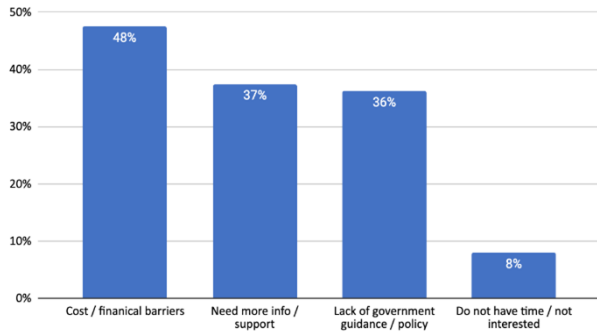
Percentage of people who feel able to make changes to their a) homes, b) mode of travel, by social grade.



Readiness

Levels of readiness, barriers to the transition, and confidence in the transition varied across age, region and social grade. The greatest concern for personally achieving Net Zero targets was the cost of transition and financial barriers to meeting that cost.

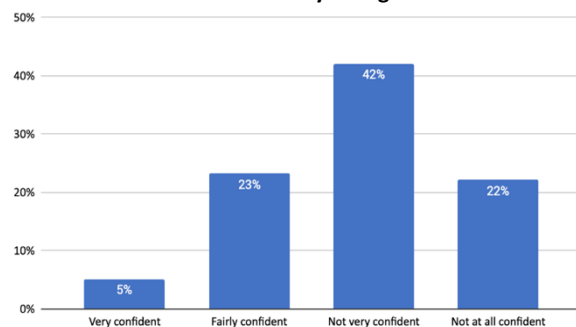
Percentage of people reporting barriers to personal Net Zero changes



Respondents felt more confident in cutting their emissions by adjusting modes of travel rather than making energy- saving changes at home (such as insulation or using green energy). A greater ability to make changes at home was reported for higher social grades, whereas those in lower social grades felt more able to adjust their modes of transport. This demonstrates how financial barriers may be constraining the types of Net Zero action available to people.

Readiness	In general, people felt more able to make changes in their modes of travel (53%) than to their home (44%) . Those in higher social grades were more likely to feel able to make changes to their home. 1 in 4 people felt unable to make changes in either their home or modes of travel.
	50% of people cited financial barriers to personal changes that would help achieve Net Zero with older people more worried about costs. 37% of people needed more information or support and 36% felt government guidance or policy was lacking.

Confidence that the UK Government can achieve Net Zero targets without leaving behind any parts of the country or particular communities who are reluctant to make/unable to afford to make the necessary changes

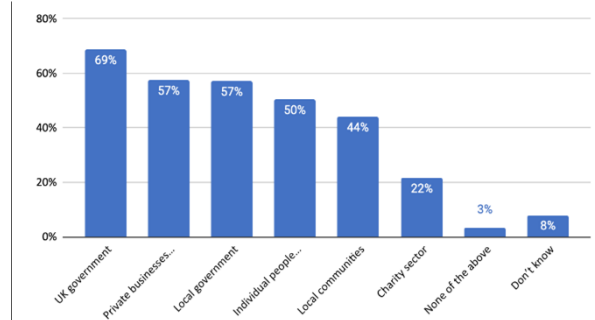


Just Transition

Though the public show a strong appetite to adapt for Net Zero, also widespread are concerns that the ‘justness’ of that transition could leave communities, places and individuals behind, and a desire for greater participation in decisions to reach net zero. Private businesses, Local Government and Individual People were each cited as parties which should be involved in decision making by 50% of more of respondents.

People in regions with major industrial clusters were generally less confident that the UK Government could achieve its 2050 target without leaving parts of the country or communities behind, except for the Northeast which was one of the most confident that a Just Transition would be achieved (37% of respondents). Those in higher social grades were also less confident that a just transition was possible.

Parties who should be involved or more involved in decisions on how the UK can reach Net Zero targets



Just Transition	64% of people are worried that some communities and certain parts of the country will be 'left behind' in the Net Zero transition. People in regions with more dependence on high carbon industries were more sceptical that a just transition will be achieved.
	There was broad support for wide participation in decisions to reach net zero , with 44% of people calling for local communities to be involved, 57% local government, 57% private business, and 50% individual people.
	Respondents were slightly more likely to feel that Net Zero would have a positive impact on their job security (25% overall) than a negative impact (13% overall), with those in higher social grades more pessimistic than those higher social grades.

Methodology

An eight question survey was included in Ipsos Mori's online omnibus over a period of two weeks (18.10.21 - 29.10.21). The survey was completed by a nationally representative sample consisting of 2100 adults aged 16 - 75 in the UK. Demographic data on gender, age, social grade, employment status, region, education, income, marital status and household size were collected. A summary of key demographic data can be found below:

Gender		Age		Social Grade		Location		Level of Education	
Male	50%	16-24	15%	AB	27%	North East	4%	GCSE/ O Level/ NVQ12	31%
Female	50%	25-34	18%	C1	29%	North West	11%	A Level or equivalent	23%
		35-44	17%	C2	21%	Yorkshire and Humberside	8%	Degree/ Masters/ PhD	39%
		45-54	18%	DE	23%	West Midlands	9%	No formal qualifications	7%
		55-75	31%			East Midlands	7%	Non Graduates	61%
						East of England	9%	Graduates	39%
						South West	8%		
						South East	14%		
						Greater London	14%		
						Wales	5%		
						Scotland	8%		
						Northern Ireland	3%		