

# Public Polling on Climate Change and Health

Conducted by Ipsos MORI  
for The Health Foundation

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# Executive Summary

# 01

Summary of work and key findings

# Levels of concern and response to climate change

## Climate change is a major concern for UK adults, with a clear majority in all demographic groups expressing concern over climate change

More than four in five (82%) say they are concerned about climate change with only three per cent having no concerns at all. It is of particular concern to people in **Scotland** (88%), those **educated to at least degree level** and **full-time students\*** (90% and 93% respectively), those working in **managerial, administrative and professional** occupations (85%), **Labour** (90%) and **Green Party** voters (98%) and those who **work in the NHS** (87%) or **social care** (89%).

**There is little doubt in the mind of the British public that climate change is happening (90%) and that the UK is already feeling its effects (82%).** Similarly, around four in five think that climate change is a global emergency (80%) and that it is caused by human activity (81%). There is strength of feeling on climate change and its impact: the majority *strongly* agree the climate is changing (57%) and that it is an emergency facing the planet (51%).

Given people's concern over climate change, it is natural that they express a desire to help alleviate the problem. Over three-quarters (77%) agree that they have a responsibility to help tackle climate change and a similar proportion (75%) say they are prepared to make changes to their lifestyle to help tackle the issue. Indeed, **two-thirds say that they have already made changes to their lifestyle to tackle climate change.** The general acceptance that people have a responsibility to tackle climate change is underlined by the fact that fewer than a quarter of UK adults (22%) agree that tackling climate change is far down on their list of personal priorities right now.

There is strong acceptance of personal responsibility across all demographic groups, with a clear majority accepting personal responsibility and claiming to have taken steps to address climate change. Particularly high levels of environmental consciousness are claimed among **women**, **those educated to at least degree level**, those who are **working full-time** and those who are working in **managerial, administrative and professional occupations.**

\* Please treat results with caution as they are based on a small number of participants (64)

# Link between climate change and health

The public recognise the link between climate change and health, thinking that climate change poses a threat to health – although it was considered a ‘mid-tier’ threat (alongside mental health), and one that is more significant for people globally or in the UK than to themselves personally

Climate change is perceived to be less threatening to health than chronic diseases, COVID-19 and individual lifestyles, though **one-quarter (25%) see it as one of the biggest threats to their health** and it is equally significant as accidents/injuries and mental health problems.

In particular, of the impacts that the public link to climate change, the threat to health posed by climate change derives from increases in **flooding** (87%), more frequent, longer and hotter **heatwaves** (82%) and increases in **extreme weather events** (81%). **Air pollution** is also viewed as a threat to health (84%) though it is less strongly linked by the public to climate change.

There is **widespread acceptance that climate change represents a degree of threat to the people of the UK (73%) and globally (86%)**. While it is seen as **less of a threat to individuals’ own and their families’ health** (55% and 61% respectively) and a large minority (43%) think it does not pose much, or any, threat to their personal health, **few believe it poses no threat at all to their own health** (five per cent).

Regarding the immediacy of the threat to health from climate change, **almost half (48%) think that ‘right now’ climate change threatens UK citizens’ health** a great deal or a fair amount. Within five years this rises to 64% percent, to 83% in 20 years and 88% for a 50-year perspective.

**There is a sense that the actions being taken to address climate change will improve the health of people in the UK**. Three in five (60%) think it will improve health a great deal or a fair amount. However, more than one-third (37%) think it will not improve UK people’s health very much or not at all.

# Views on the role of the NHS and social care in responding to climate change

There is currently only modest agreement that the NHS and social care has responsibility for and should be making efforts to address climate change, and it is not considered to be a top priority, though the public is supportive of the NHS's aim to be net zero

**Opinions on the impact of the NHS on climate change are not strong:** around half (46%) neither agree or disagree that the NHS contributes to climate change and a further nine per cent say they do not know. Overall, only 13 per cent of the public are aware of the NHS's ambition to be net zero. **However, although awareness of net zero is low there is generally strong support for the NHS's policy**, with seven in ten (70%) saying they support it and only six per cent opposing it. This is observed across all demographic groups. Just over half (54%) think that **the NHS should aim to reach net zero at about the same speed as other sectors** such as transport and education.

Despite this support for the NHS to become net zero, the public do not identify this as a priority. **Fewer than half (44%) think the NHS has a responsibility to reduce its impact on climate change**, although only around one in five (18%) disagree – more are neutral (35%). Reflecting this muted strength of feeling, **barely one in five (19%) think reducing its impact should be among the NHS's top priorities** while more than two in five (43%) think it should not. Similarly, in the Max Diff exercise in which participants prioritised among 15 different considerations for the NHS as it delivers services over the next 10 years, **the NHS minimising its impact on climate change and the environment is ranked 14<sup>th</sup> of the 15 priorities**. Waiting times, staff numbers and staff morale are regarded as the top priorities.

Views about social care are similar. **The public is fairly neutral on whether or not social care is contributing to climate change**, with around (49%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing that it is and 10% not knowing. A slightly higher proportion than for the NHS, though still only around half (49%), agree think that **social care has a responsibility to reduce its impact on climate change** – again, the public are more likely to be neutral towards this (33%) than to disagree (14%). As for the NHS, **reducing its impact on climate change is not seen as a top priority for social care**, with only one-quarter (25%) agreeing it should be a top priority and 32% disagreeing. In terms of reaching net zero, in general the view is that social care should proceed **at the same pace** as other sectors (55%).

# Views on measures to respond to climate change

**Although minimising environmental impact is ranked low in comparison with other NHS priorities, there is broad support for specific environmental initiatives which do not impinge on personal treatments**

One way in which the NHS could reduce its impact on the environment is to **improve the health of UK citizens through preventative measures and therefore avoid the need for more intensive care**. Just over half (52%) agree with this policy, though it may mean less funding for treating illness in hospitals, but more funding to keep people healthy. Around one in five (17%) disagree.

**The public are supportive of a range of other measures the NHS could take to reduce its impact on the NHS**. For example, around two-thirds are in favour of the NHS providing more environmentally friendly food (65%) or of the NHS switching its fleet of vehicles (such as ambulances) to electric and hydrogen-power, even if taxes have to increase to pay for this (63%).

**It is only when environmental initiatives are thought to impinge on individual patient treatment that public support diminishes**. For example, more people oppose (35%) than support (30%) the environmental impact being considered when deciding which treatments the NHS offers, while views on the NHS encouraging patients to manage their conditions at home with online contact and support are more divided (39% support and 36% oppose).

Regarding the actions that people could take to help the NHS reduce emissions and be more environmentally friendly, the public are generally willing to consider adopting a range of initiatives. However, **that willingness is fairly 'soft' and diminishes as the initiative impinges on personal treatment** (for example, choosing an environmentally friendly medicine, which 17% are very willing to support) **rather than addressing general 'recycling' behaviours** (for example, returning unused medicine, which 64% are very willing to support).

# Background to the research

# 02

# Overview of the project

## Background to the research

The Health Foundation's Shaping Health Futures programme aims to support health and social care policymakers to prepare better for the future by incorporating thinking on long-term issues more effectively into today's decisions. As part of the programme, The Health Foundation aims to provide research and analysis in areas where major changes are happening that will have long-term implications for health and social care in the UK. Climate change is one of these areas.

The Health Foundation therefore commissioned Ipsos MORI to undertake a survey of the general public in the UK. The aim of this polling is to provide an up-to-date understanding of public attitudes around climate change, health, and the NHS and social care, with three particular topic areas:

- Attitudes on the link between health and climate change.
- Views on the role of the NHS and social care in reducing their impact on climate change.
- Understanding support for measures for responding to climate change in the NHS.

The survey was undertaken in order to:

- Support policy development and policy analysis in the area of sustainable health care.
- Inform potential new research, engagement, or analysis by identifying issues or questions to be explored through the Shaping Health Futures programme.

# Background to the project

## The NHS and climate change

In January 2020, NHS England launched the campaign ‘For a Greener NHS’, accompanied by the creation of a Net Zero NHS panel, challenged with exploring how the NHS can chart a path to net-zero carbon emissions.

In October 2020, The Greener NHS programme published their [strategy](#) to tackle climate change, outlining an ambitious target for the NHS to become the world’s first net zero healthcare system. Two net zero targets were set:

- 2040 for the emissions directly controlled by the NHS (the NHS Carbon Footprint).
- 2045 for the emissions the NHS influences but does not directly control (the NHS Carbon Footprint Plus).

NHS Wales also has a [plan](#) to deliver net zero. NHS Scotland has a net zero [plan](#) in development.

While the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery continues to dominate health policy, an urgent focus is now also needed on rapidly decarbonising the NHS in response to the climate crisis. As the NHS develops and implements its programme for reaching net zero emissions, public opinion towards sustainable health care will be one factor to consider.

# Context for the project

## Public engagement with climate change & willingness to act

The launch of the Greener NHS campaign and net zero commitment comes at a time when the **public are increasingly likely to engage with initiatives to tackle climate change**. While the Covid-19 pandemic is viewed as the [top issue](#) currently facing the UK, 2 in 3 (66%) see climate change as being [as serious a crisis as Covid-19](#) in the long-term, and [climate concern](#) remains at the highest level since Ipsos MORI began tracking it in 2005, with 85% 'concerned' as of August 2021. The fact that climate concern has remained at a very high level even after a year and a half of a global pandemic is likely linked to increasing belief that we are already experiencing the effects of climate change.

Successful delivery of the NHS net zero goal will require behaviour change from the public as well as organisational changes, and research shows that in general, **people in Britain are willing to play their part in tackling climate change**. There is an acceptance that the way we live our [lives will have to change substantially](#) to address climate change (84% agree), coupled with a sense of personal responsibility, with 73% agreeing that if individuals do not act now to combat climate change they will be failing future generations. Following this, there is a willingness from the public to make lifestyle changes now; for example, [42% of Britons](#) say they are likely to walk, cycle or use public transport instead of driving a car or motorbike, and 32% say they are likely to eat less meat to limit their contribution to climate change.

In addition to personal responsibility, the public are clear that there is a **responsibility on institutions** as well, with 84% saying that the government and authorities have a responsibility to tackle climate change.

# Methodology

# 03

# Overview of the methodology

## Methodology and fieldwork

This survey was conducted via the UK KnowledgePanel. The KnowledgePanel is Ipsos MORI's random probability online panel. It has over 15,000 panellists who are recruited using off-line random probability unclustered address-based sampling, the gold-standard in UK survey research, meaning that every household in the UK has a known chance of being selected to join the panel. Further details about the KnowledgePanel are included in the appendices.

The survey was conducted between **22nd July and 28th July 2021**. A total number of **1,858** responses were achieved amongst residents across the United Kingdom aged 16+.

To provide context for the survey, the following events linked to climate change received significant media coverage during the fieldwork period:

- Flash flooding in London
- Heatwaves in Canada
- Wildfires in the US
- Flooding in Germany
- Wildfires across Greece and Turkey

# Sampling and weighting

## Sampling

The KnowledgePanel is a random probability survey panel. Therefore, the KnowledgePanel does not use a quota approach when conducting surveys. Instead invited samples are stratified when conducting waves to account for any profile skews within the panel.

The sample was stratified by country and education. A total of 3,000 respondents were selected and invited to take part in the survey. The selected sample was then reviewed on key demographics to ensure a balanced sample was selected for the survey. A total of 1858 respondents completed the survey, delivering a response rate of 62%.

## Weighting

In order to ensure the survey results are as representative of the population of the United Kingdom as possible, the below weighting spec was applied to the data in line with the target sample profile. Further detail is provided in the appendix.

Two members per household are allowed to register on the KnowledgePanel. Therefore, a design weight was employed to correct for unequal probabilities of selection of household members.

Calibration weights have also been applied using the latest population statistics relevant to the surveyed population. Two sets of calibration weights are applied:

- Calibration weighting was applied using the following variables: Region and an interlocked variable of Gender by Age. Both use ONS 2020 mid-year population estimates as the weighting target.
- Demographic weights were then applied to correct for imbalances in the achieved sample; the data was weighted on: Education, Ethnicity, Index of Multiple Deprivation (quintiles), and number of adults in the household. Estimates from the ONS 2020 mid-year population estimates and Annual Population Survey were used as the weighting target.

# Interpretation of the findings

## Interpretation of quantitative findings

Throughout the report findings will highlight, and make reference to, different sub-groups based on responses to certain questions. When interpreting the survey findings, it is important to remember that the results are based on a sample of the population, not the entire population. Consequently, results are subject to margins of error.

This report comments on differences in the data between different sub-groups within the total sample surveyed. A difference has to be of a certain size in order to be statistically significant and only differences which are statistically significant at the 95% confidence interval are commented on in this report. In addition to being statistically significant, only sub-group differences which are interesting and relevant to the question being analysed are commented on in the report.

For the most part, only sub-groups with 100 or more participants are commented on in this report. It should be noted, however, that the smaller the size of the sub-group, the less we can rely on the survey estimates to be true representatives of the population as a whole. In some cases, sub-groups comprising fewer than 100 participants may be commented on in the report and these should be treated with particular caution.

Survey participants are permitted to give a 'don't know' answer to most of the questions and these responses are not excluded from the analysis. These responses are referred to in the report where they form a substantial proportion.

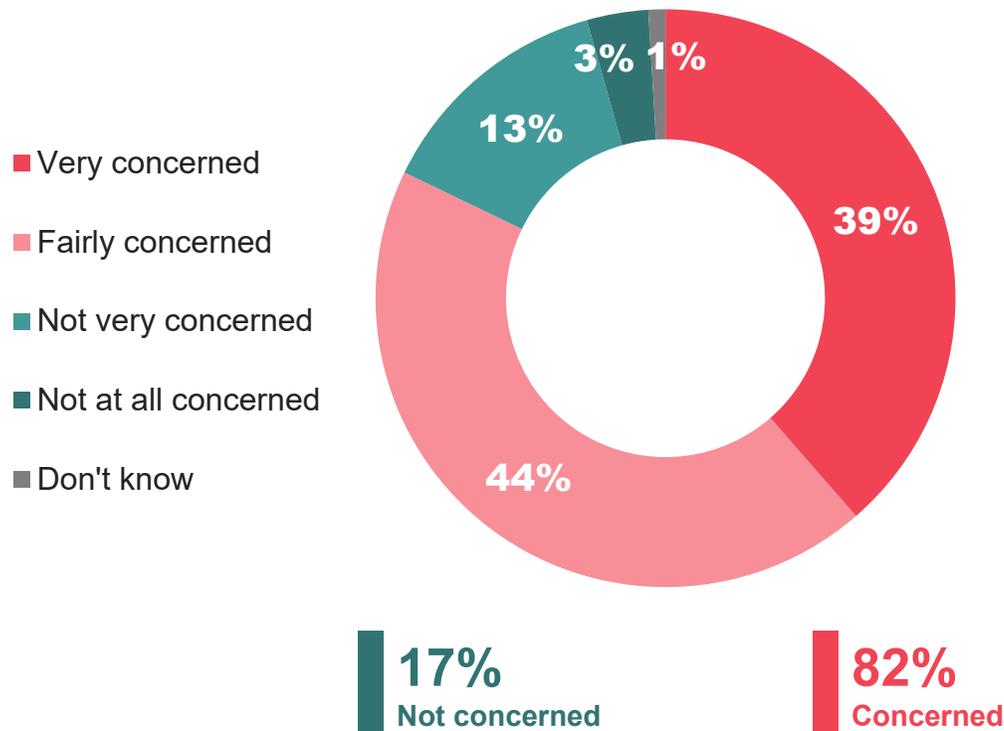
Where percentages do not sum to 100, this is due to computer rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' categories, or participants being able to give multiple answers to the same question. Throughout the report an asterisk (\*) denotes any value of less than half of one per cent but greater than 0%.

# Attitudes towards climate change

# 04

# Levels of concern in the UK about climate change are high, with many saying they are very or fairly concerned

Q. Generally speaking, how concerned are you, if at all, about climate change?



Over four in five people (82%) in the UK say they are **very or fairly concerned about climate change**. Only approaching one in five (17%) say they are not very or not at all concerned.

The following groups tend to be particularly concerned (very or fairly concerned) about climate change:

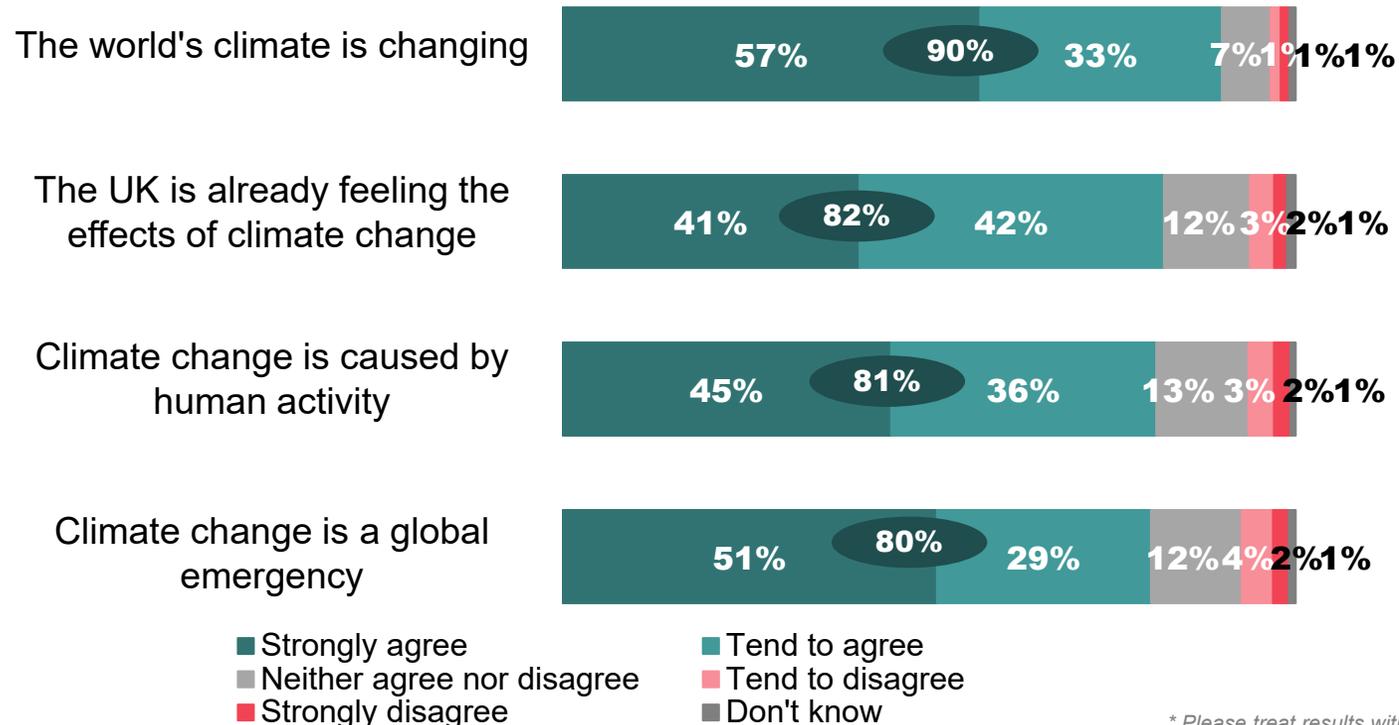
- Those **educated to at least degree level** and **full-time students\*** (90% and 93% respectively, compared with 82% overall)
- Those working in **managerial, administrative and professional** occupations (85%, compared with 82% overall)
- Those **working in the NHS** (87%) or **social care** (89%), in comparison with those not working in the NHS or social care (80% and 82% respectively)
- Those living in **Scotland** (88%) and **England** (82%) are more concerned than those living in Wales (72%)
- Politically, supporters of the **Green Party** (98%) and **Labour** (90%) are significantly more concerned than Conservative supporters (76%)

\* Please treat results with caution as they are based on a small number of participants (64)

# Most of the public think that the world's climate is changing, with many recognising that climate change is a global emergency and is caused by human activity

There are **high levels of acceptance that climate change is happening** and presents a global emergency, and that human activity is causing it. Nine in ten of the public (90%) agree that the world's climate is changing, while 82% think the UK is already feeling its effects. Similarly, around four in five think that climate change is a global emergency (80%) and that it is caused by human activity (81%).

## Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:



The following groups are significantly more likely to agree on all statements:

- **Green party** supporters vs Conservative supporters
- People **educated to at least degree level**, while those with no formal qualifications\* are more likely to disagree
- **Full-time students\*\*** and those in managerial, administrative and professional occupations vs other employment subgroups
- People who are most inclined to **perceive climate change as a threat to health** vs those who are not

**Women** are more likely than men to agree that climate change is caused by human activity (83% vs 78%) and that it is a global emergency (83% vs 78%).

**People from ethnic minority backgrounds** are significantly less likely to agree that the world's climate is changing (84% vs 91% from a white ethnic background).

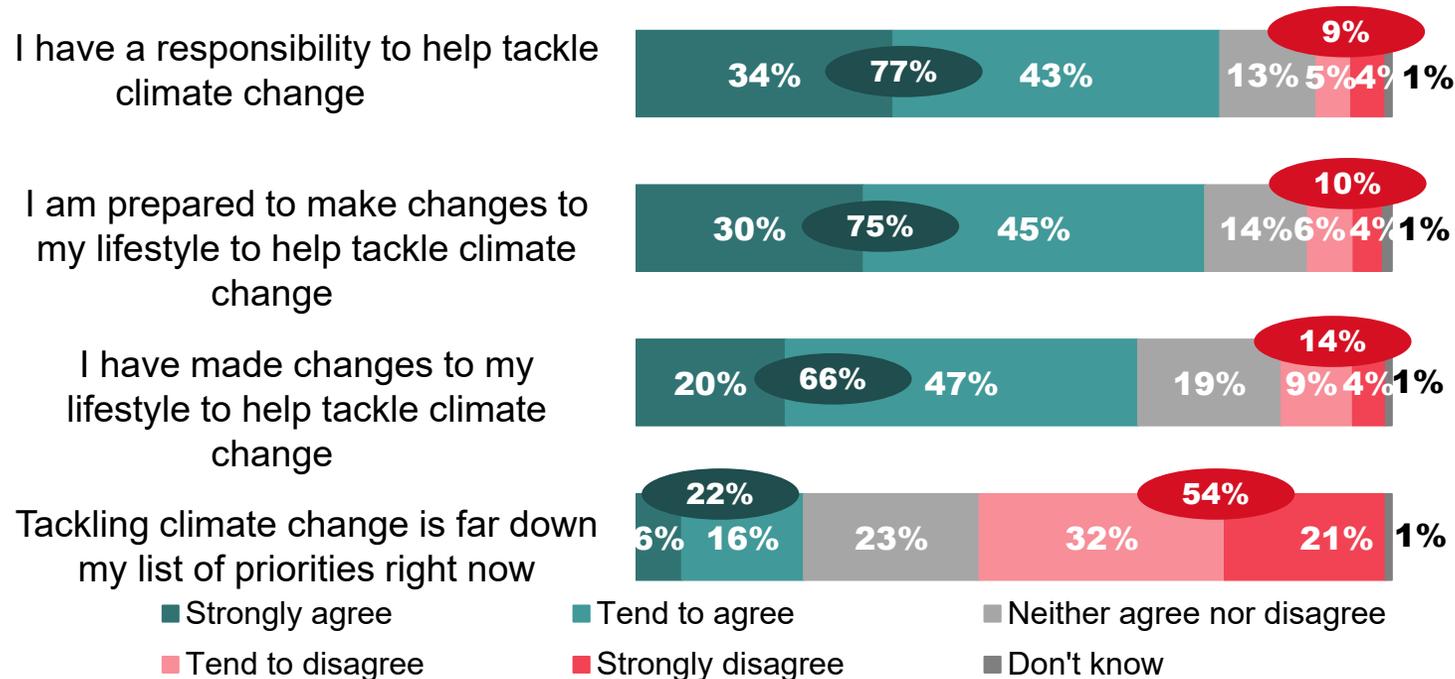
\* Please treat results with caution as they are based on a small number of participants (90)

\*\* Please treat results with caution as they are based on a small number of participants (64)

# Environmental consciousness is also high in the UK. Many people agree that they have some responsibility to help tackle climate change and say they have made, or are prepared to make, changes to their lifestyle

People **feel a personal responsibility** to do something about climate change, with three-quarters agreeing that they have a responsibility to help tackle climate change (77%). Around two-thirds say they have **already made changes to their lifestyle** to help tackle climate change (66%), while 75% say they **are prepared to make such changes**. Only around one in five (22%) agree that tackling climate change is far down their list of priorities right now.

## Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:



Levels of environmental consciousness tend to be **higher** among:

- **Women** (for example, 71% say they have made changes, compared with 62% of men)
- Those **educated to at least degree level** (for example, 79% say they have made changes, compared with 66% overall)
- Those who are **working full-time** (for example, 71% say they have made changes, compared with 64% of those not working full-time)
- Those who are working in **managerial, administrative and professional occupations** (for example, 72% say they have made changes, compared with 66% overall)

Base: All participants n=1858. Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

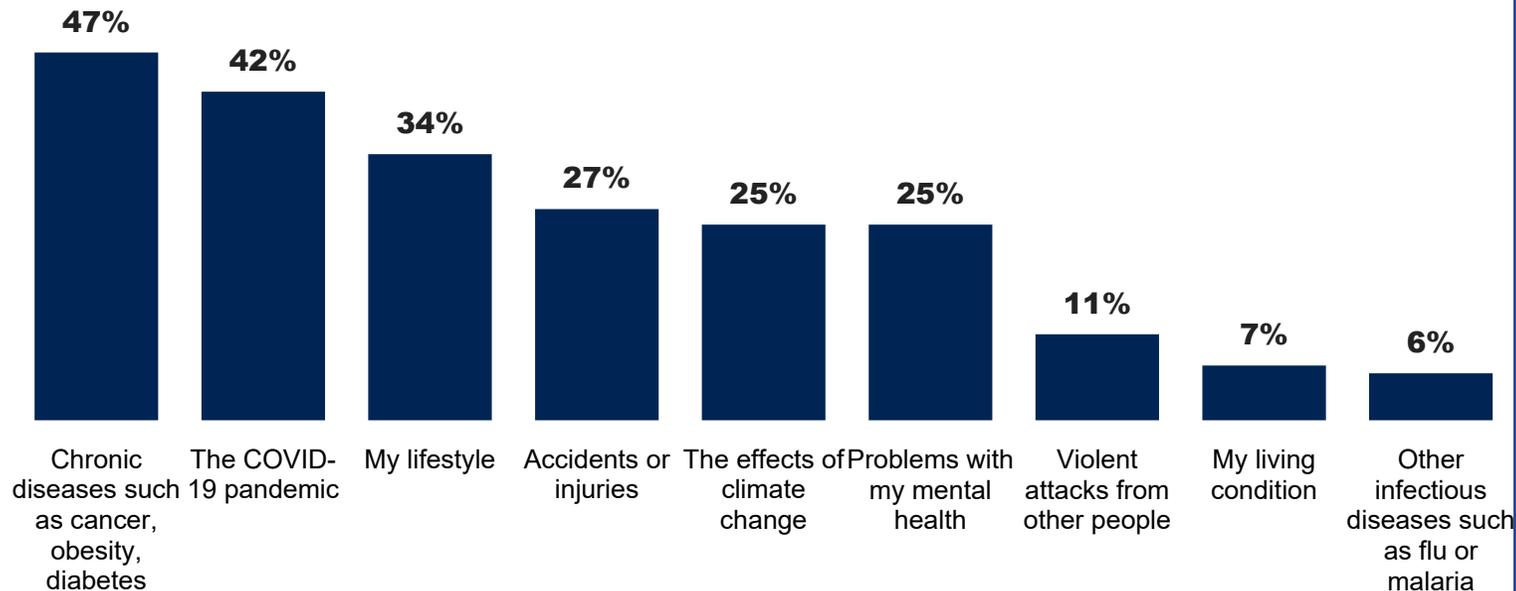
# Views on the link between climate change and health

# 05

# Chronic diseases such as cancer and the COVID-19 pandemic are considered the major threats to personal health – climate change is a ‘mid-tier’ threat

One-quarter (25%) of the public think climate change represents one of the biggest threats to their health. It is **perceived as being as big a threat as accidents/injuries (27%) and mental health problems (25%)**. Climate change is one of three ‘mid-tier’ threats, with chronic diseases such as cancer (47%), the COVID-19 pandemic (42%) and participants’ own lifestyles (34%) perceived as the three biggest health risks.

Q. Which two or three of the following, if any, do you believe is the biggest threat to your health personally?



**Ethnicity:** People from an ethnic minority background are significantly less likely to consider climate change to be a threat to their health (12%, compared with 27% of people from a white ethnic background).

**Nations:** Those in Scotland (32%) are twice as likely as respondents in Wales or Northern Ireland (both 16%) to view climate change as a threat to their health.

**Age:** Those aged 35 to 44 are less likely to consider climate change as a threat to their health (17%, compared with 25% overall).

**Education:** People who are educated to at least degree level are particularly likely to think climate change poses a health risk (32%, compared with 25% overall), although it remains a mid-tier risk. Full-time students\* are also more likely to think this (37%).

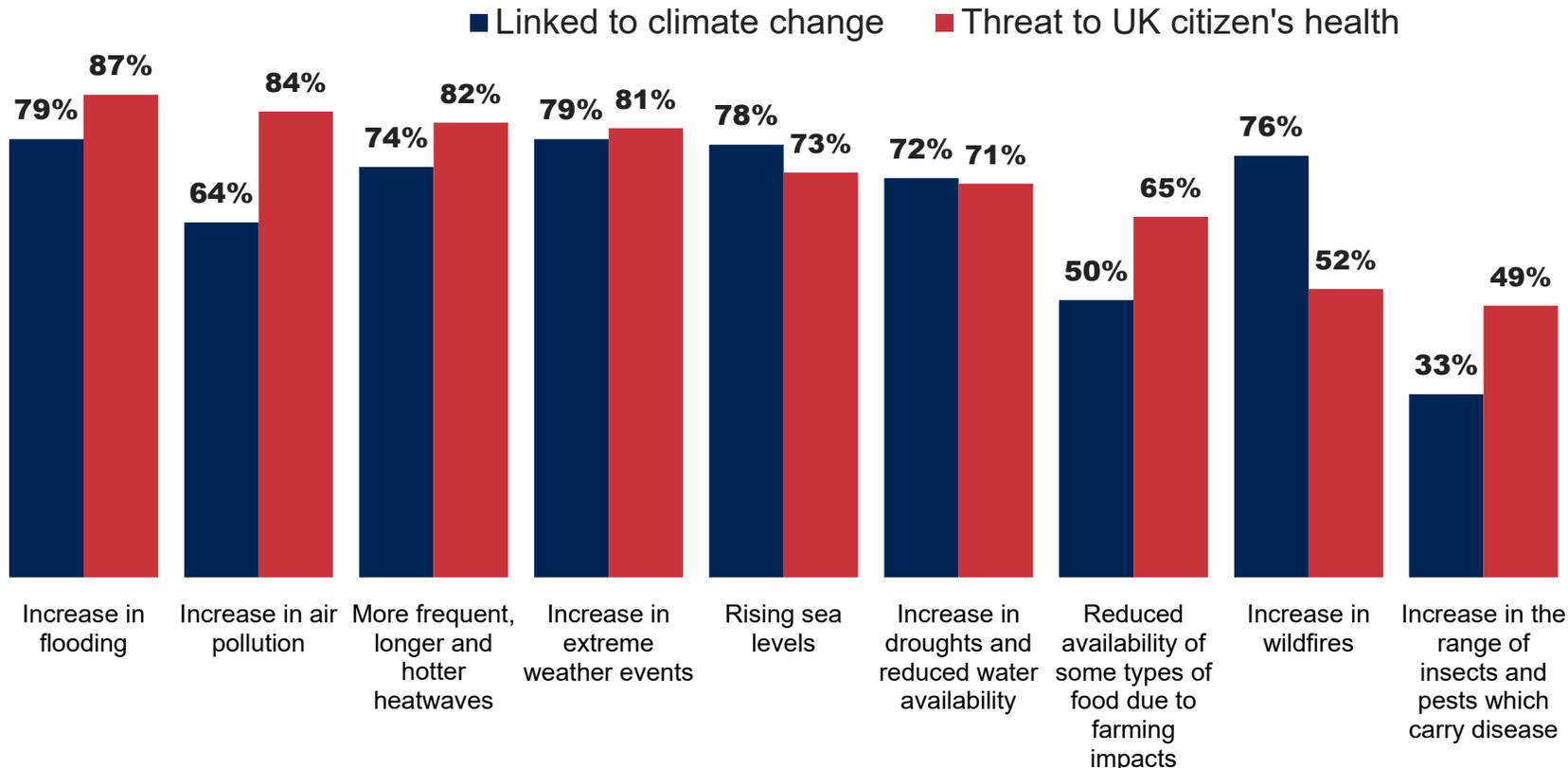
Base: All participants n=1858. Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

\* Please treat results with caution as they are based on a small number of participants (64)

# Flooding, heatwaves and extreme weather events are perceived as the biggest health threats to people in the UK, that are linked more strongly to climate change

Q. Which, if any, of the following do you think are caused or made worse by climate change?

Q. How much of a threat, if at all, do you think each of the following poses to the health of people in the UK? (% a great deal / fair amount)



The **biggest perceived threats** to the health of people in the UK, of impacts that the public link to climate change, are increases in **flooding** (87%), more frequent, longer and hotter **heatwaves** (82%) and increases in **extreme weather events** (81%).

An **increase in air pollution** is also seen as a key health threat (84%), though the public link it a little less strongly to climate change (64% say it is caused or made worse by climate change, compared with 79% for increased flooding for example).

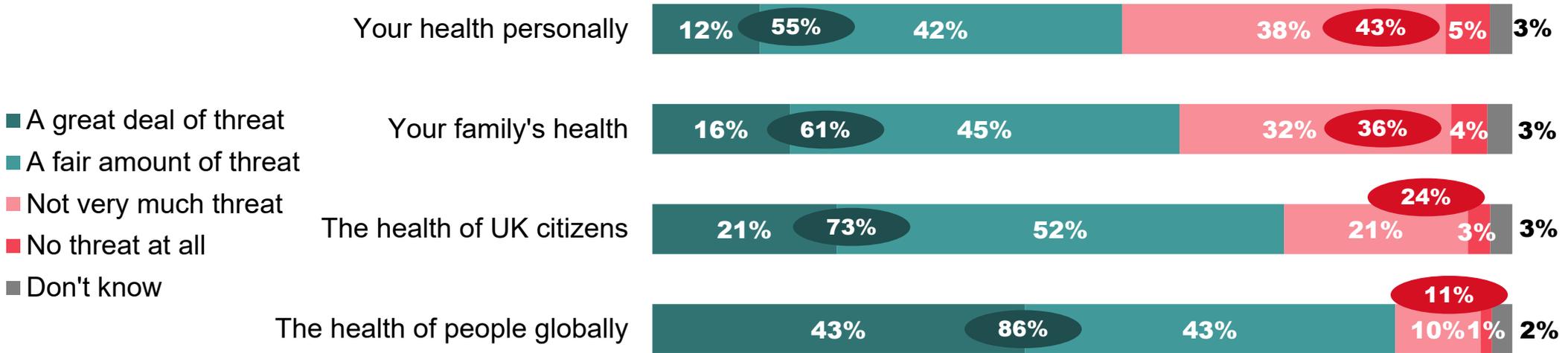
**Rising sea levels** and an **increase in droughts** are also linked by the public to climate change and seen as health threats (73% and 71% respectively see them as a threat to UK citizens' health).

Base: All participants n=1858. Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

# There is widespread acceptance that climate change represents a threat to the health of UK citizens and the world beyond, though it is considered less of a threat to individuals and their families

Approaching nine in ten (86%) think that climate change poses at least a fair amount of threat to **the health of people globally**, while around three-quarters think it is a **risk to the health of UK citizens** (73%). Climate change is seen as less of a threat to people’s own health or their family’s health, though still more than half perceive it to be a threat (55% and 61% respectively). **A large minority of 43% think that climate change does not pose much threat – or any threat at all – to their personal health.** However, only one in twenty (five per cent) believe climate change poses no threat at all to their own health.

Q. How much of a threat, if at all, do you think climate change poses to each of the following...?



Base: All participants n=1858. Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

# Views of the impact of climate change on health differ by age, ethnicity, levels of deprivation, voting intention and level of education

Q. How much of a threat, if at all, do you think climate change poses to each of the following (you personally, your family, UK citizens, people globally)?

**Age:** Those aged 25 – 34 are significantly more likely than older age groups to believe climate change poses a threat to themselves (70% vs 55% overall) and their family (73% vs 61% overall). In contrast, those aged 55 and over are all more likely to say climate change does not pose much threat, or any threat at all, to the health of themselves, their family or UK citizens.

**Ethnicity:** People from an ethnic minority background perceive that both themselves (72% compared with 55% overall) and their families (74% compared with 61%) are more threatened by the health impact of climate change than do those from white ethnic backgrounds. Significant differences by ethnicity disappear when people in the UK and globally are considered.

**Levels of deprivation:** Perhaps reflecting the distribution of ethnic groups across the UK, those in the most deprived areas also feel more threatened by the health impacts of climate change (for example, 68% feel personally threatened compared with 55% overall). Only for 'people globally' is the influence of deprivation levels absent.

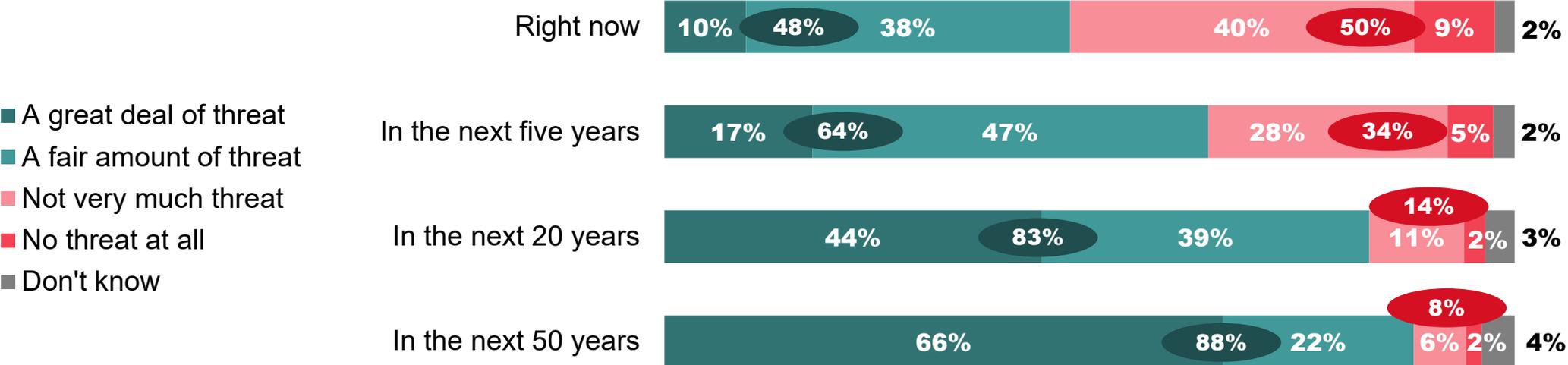
**Voting intentions:** Those who intend to vote Labour or Green tend to feel more threatened compared with those intending to vote for other parties. For example, 80% of Green-intentioned voters feel personally threatened compared with 55% overall. This holds true across all groups of people considered.

**Level of education:** Those with some form of qualifications tend to feel more threatened across all groups compared with those without formal qualifications. Graduates are particularly likely to believe that climate change poses a threat to their family (66% vs 61%), UK citizens (78% vs 73%), and people globally (94% vs 86%).

# The public think that climate change will represent a tangible threat to the health of people in the UK within the next five years

The public is **divided on the level of threat that climate change poses to UK citizens' health right now**, with 48% thinking it poses a great deal or a fair amount of threat and 50% thinking it does not pose very much threat or no threat at all. Within five years, approaching two-thirds (64%) think climate change will pose a great deal or a fair amount of threat to people in the UK, rising to 83% in 20 years and 88% for a 50 year perspective. Fully two-thirds (66%) believe that climate change will pose a great deal of risk to the health of UK citizens in the next 50 years.

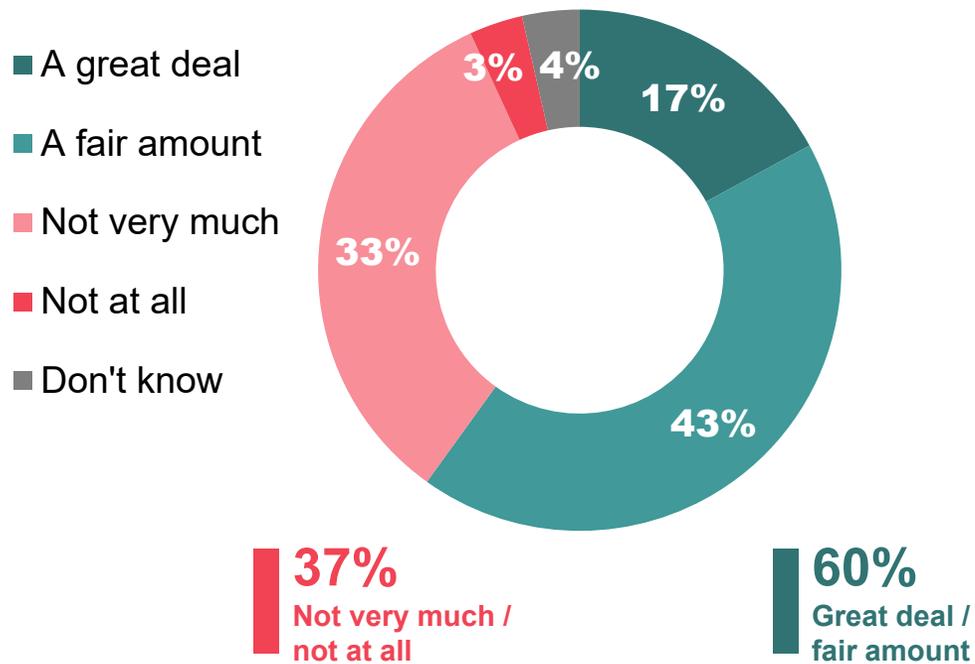
## Q. How much of a threat, if at all, do you think climate change is to the health of people in the UK...



Base: All participants n=1858. Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

# There is general optimism that the actions taken to address climate change will improve the health of people in the UK

Q. To what extent, if at all, do you think that actions taken to address climate change will improve the health of people in the UK?



There is a sense that the actions being taken to address climate change will improve the health of people in the UK. Three in five (60%) think it will improve health a great deal or a fair amount. However, more than one-third (37%) think it will not improve UK people's health very much or not at all.

**Women** (64% saying a great deal or fair amount) and **younger people aged 16-24** (68%) are the most 'optimistic' that actions to address climate change will improve people's health. That said the figure for all other gender and age groups is above 50 per cent. Those **educated to at least degree level** are also more optimistic than non-graduates (64% vs 58%).

Politically, supporters of the **Green Party (70%)** and **Labour (66%)** are most **optimistic**; although a majority of Conservative voters (55%) also believe actions taken to address climate change will improve the health of people in the UK.

Those with **higher levels of environmental consciousness (74%)**, or who are **most inclined to perceive climate change as a threat to health (76%)**, are among the most optimistic that actions taken to address climate change will improve the health of people in the UK.

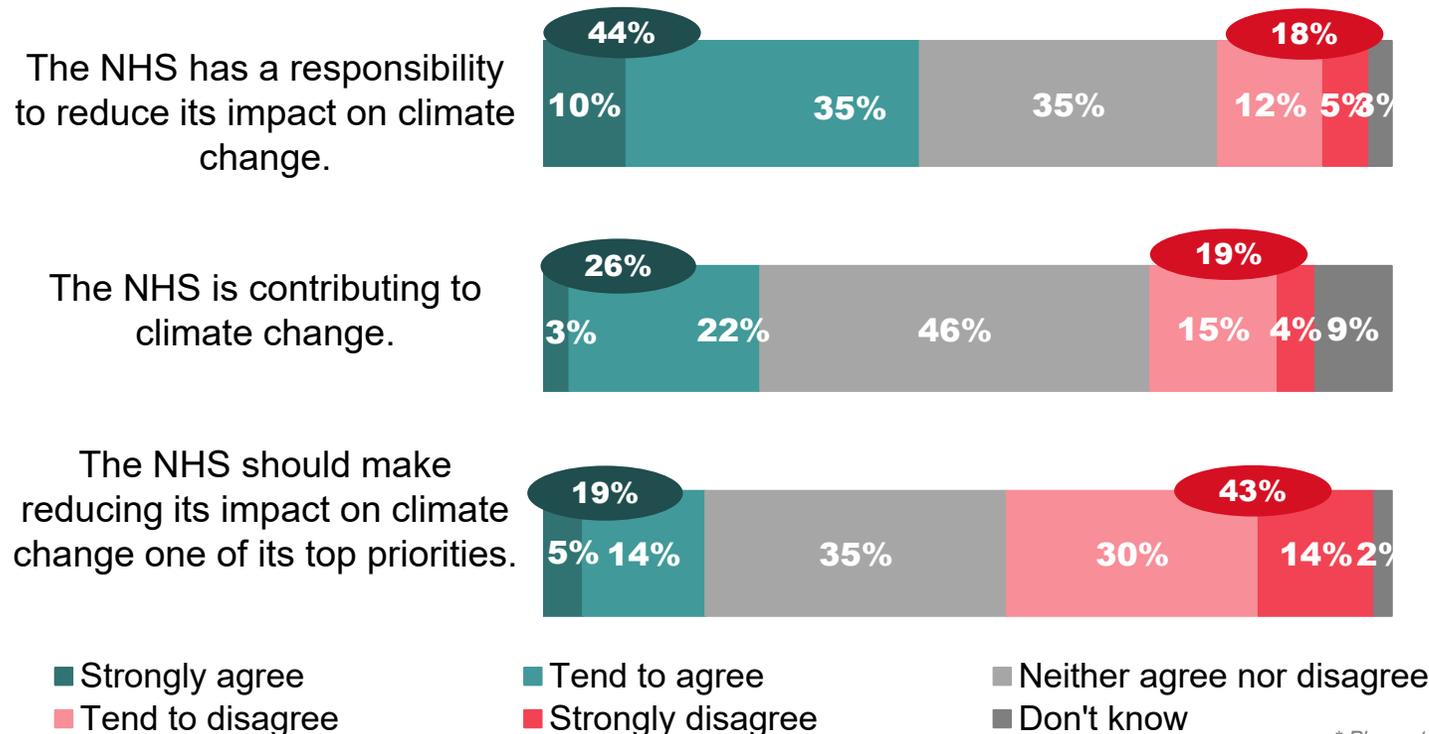
# Views on the role of the NHS and social care in responding to climate change

# 06

# Although the NHS is seen as having a responsibility to reduce its impact on climate change, this is not something most people think should be a top priority

Over two in five (44%) agree that **the NHS has a responsibility to reduce its impact on climate change**, though only around one in five (18%) disagree – more are neutral (35%). However, only around one in five (19%) agree that **the NHS reducing its impact on climate change should be one of its top priorities** and around two in five (43%) disagree. The public does not have strong opinions of **the impact of the NHS on climate change**: around half (46%) neither agree or disagree that it contributes to climate change and a further nine per cent do not know.

## Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:



The following groups are **more likely** to think that the NHS has a responsibility to reduce its impact on climate change:

- **Women** vs men (47% vs 41%)
- **Graduates** vs non-graduates (52% vs 40%)
- Those from the **least deprived** socioeconomic groups vs most deprived (53% vs 37%)
- **Green** supporters (62%) and **Labour** supporters (48%) vs Conservative supporters (37%)

**Young people aged 16 to 24** (33%), and **full-time students\*** (36%) are more likely than other age groups/professions to agree that the NHS should make reducing its impact on climate change one of its top priorities. People from **ethnic minority backgrounds** are also significantly more likely to agree (40% vs 16% from a white ethnic background).

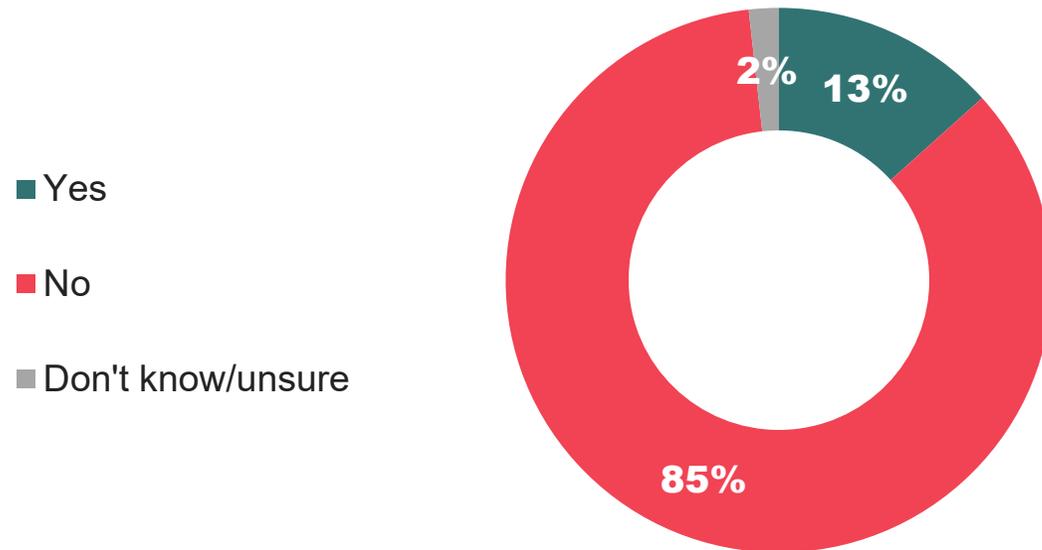
\* Please treat results with caution as they are based on a small number of participants (64)

Base: All participants n=1858. Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

# Most people in the UK are not aware of the NHS's net zero aims

*Note: The net zero aims outlined in this question relate to NHS England 2040 targets; NHS Wales aims to achieve net zero by 2030, NHS Scotland by 2045, and NHS Northern Ireland currently has no targets set.*

Q. Before today, were you aware that the NHS aims to be net zero?



Over four in five people (85%) are not aware of the NHS's net zero aims. Only 13% say they are aware of the net zero policy.

The people **most aware** that the NHS aims to be net zero are:

- 16-24 year olds (23%)
- Full-time students\* (21%)

Those **least aware** of the NHS's net zero policy are:

- 75+ year olds (eight per cent)
- Those in intermediate occupations (eight per cent)
- Those in lower supervisory and technical occupations (seven per cent)
- Those with no formal qualifications\*\* (five per cent)

**Men** are significantly more aware of the NHS's net zero aim than women (16% vs 11%).

Base: All participants n=1858. Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

\* Please treat results with caution as they are based on a small number of participants (64)

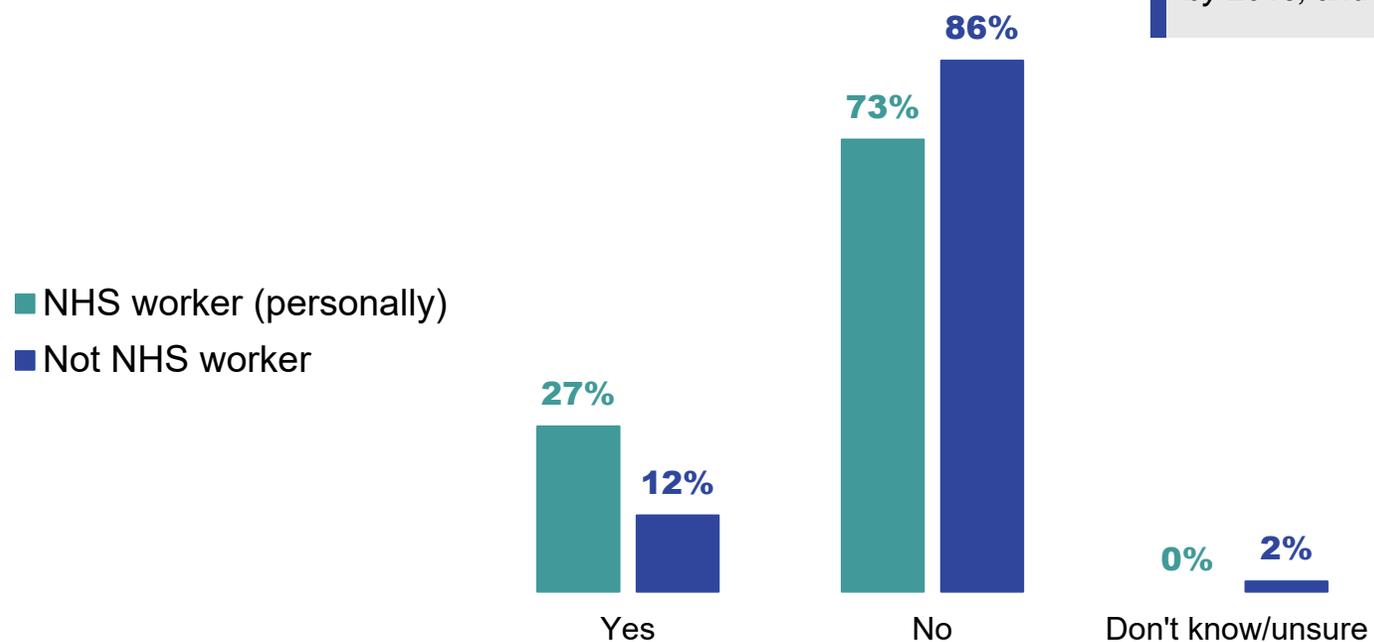
\*\* Please treat results with caution as they are based on a small number of participants (90)

# A minority of NHS workers are aware of the NHS's net zero aims – however, they are significantly more aware than those who do not work for the NHS

Of the people who personally work within the NHS, approaching three in ten (27%) say they are **aware of the NHS's net zero aims**. They are significantly more aware than those who are not working for the NHS (27% vs 12%).

Q. Before today, were you aware that the NHS aims to be net zero?

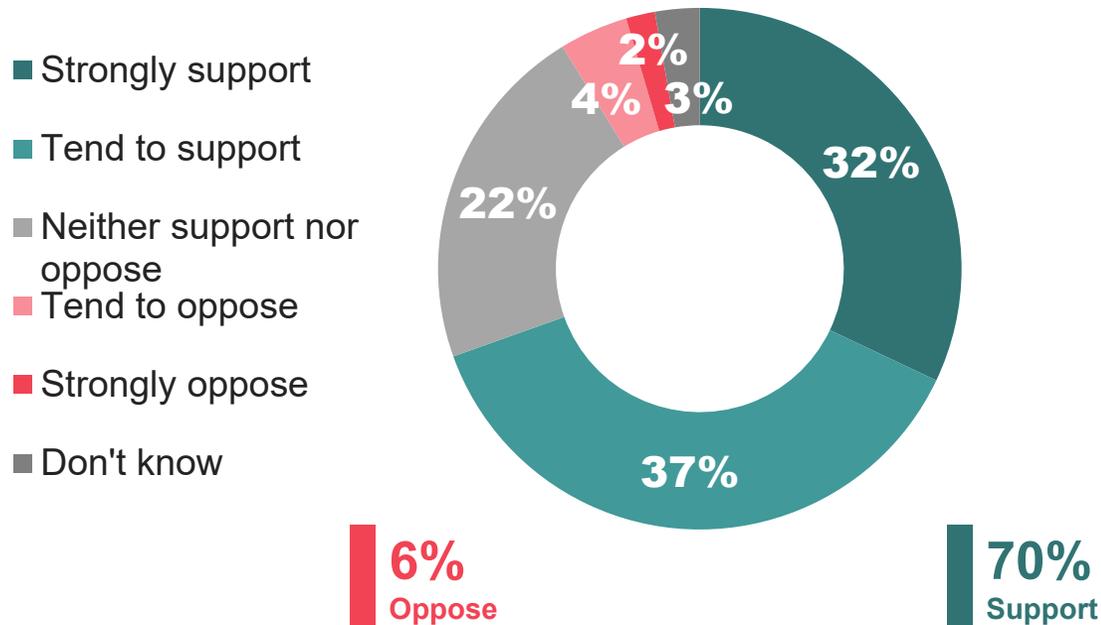
Note: The net zero aims outlined in this question relate to NHS England 2040 targets; NHS Wales aims to achieve net zero by 2030, NHS Scotland by 2045, and NHS Northern Ireland currently has no targets set.



Base: NHS Workers (personally) n=121. Not NHS workers n=1049 Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

# Despite low awareness of the NHS's net zero aims, most people support the net zero policy and very few oppose it

Q. Do you support or oppose the NHS's policy to become net zero?



Note: The net zero aims outlined in this question relate to NHS England 2040 targets; NHS Wales aims to achieve net zero by 2030, NHS Scotland by 2045, and NHS Northern Ireland currently has no targets set.

The public are broadly supportive of the NHS's net zero policy. Seven in ten of the public (70%) support it, while around one-fifth (22%) are neutral, neither supporting nor opposing the policy. Only six per cent oppose the policy.

The following groups are significantly **more likely to support** the net zero policy:

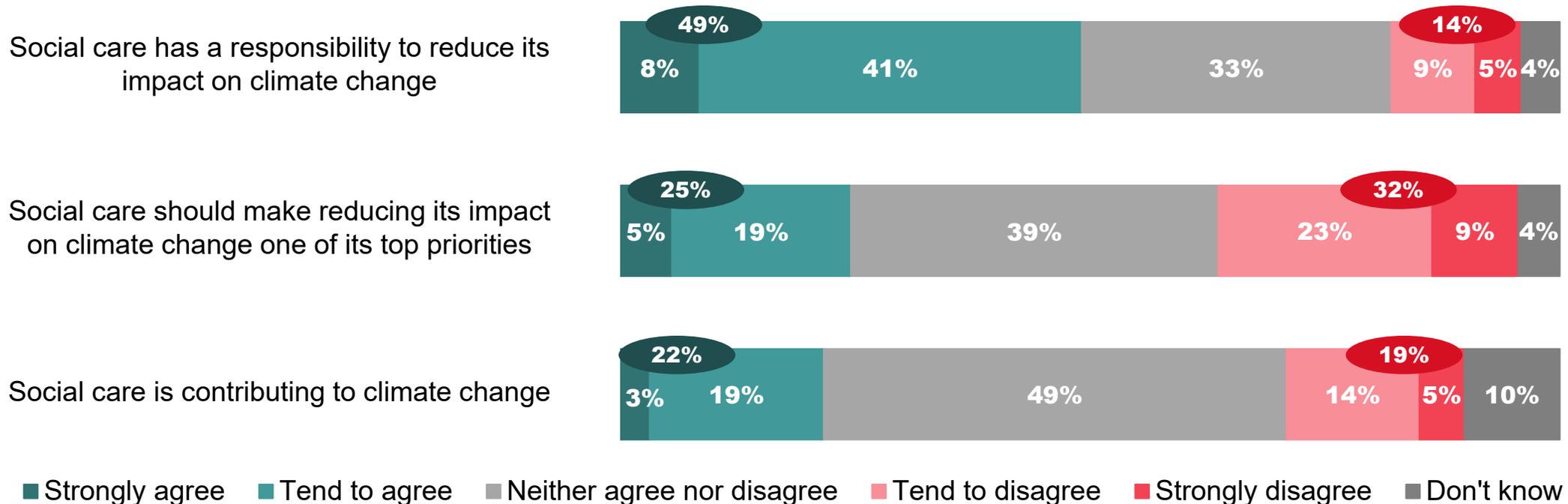
- Those who are **most concerned about climate change** vs those who are not (78% vs 31%)
- Those who **perceive climate change to be a big threat** vs those who do not (80% vs 45%)
- Those who agree that **'The NHS has a responsibility to reduce its impact on climate change'** vs those who disagree (89% vs 50%)
- People **educated to at least degree level** (79% vs 70% overall – and only 49% of those with no formal qualifications\*)
- Those working in **managerial, administrative and professional occupations** (74% vs 70% overall)
- **Green** party supporters (93%) and **Labour** supporters (78%) vs Conservative supporters (64%)
- **Those who work for the NHS** (77% vs 66% of those who are not NHS workers)

Base: All participants n=1858. Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

# Views on the role of social care in responding to climate change are similar to those of the NHS: while people agree that social care has a responsibility to reduce its impact on climate change, few think this should be a top priority

While around half of the public (49%) agree that **social care has a responsibility to reduce its impact on climate change**, only one-quarter (25%) agree this should be a top priority. In fact, almost one-third (32%) disagree that it should be a top priority. The public is undecided on whether or not social care is contributing to climate change, with around (49%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing that it is and 10% not knowing.

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:



Base: All participants n=1858. Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

# Perceptions of social care's role in responding to climate change vary by social care interaction, education, age, ethnicity and environmental attitudes

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? : Social care has a responsibility to reduce its impact on climate change / Social care should make reducing its impact on climate change one of its top priorities / Social care is contributing to climate change

**People interacting more with social care** are more likely to agree that social care should make reducing its impact on climate change one of its top priorities and that it is contributing to climate change:

- For example, 32% of those who **work in social care or someone close to them does** think climate change should be one of its top priorities (vs 23% of those who do not).
- For example, 49% of those who **have used a social care service in the past 12 months** think it should be a priority (vs 23% of those who have not).

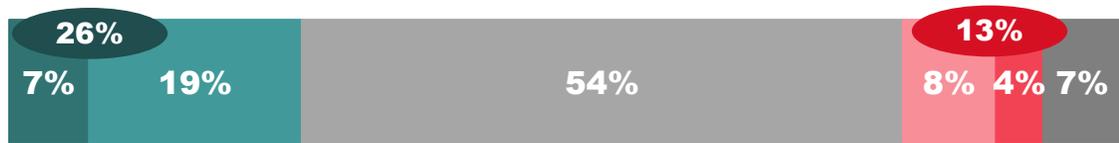
**Education: Graduates** are significantly more likely than nongraduates to agree that social care is contributing to climate change (27% vs 18%) and that it has a responsibility to reduce its impact on climate change (56% vs 46%).

**Age and Ethnicity:** People from **ethnic minority backgrounds** are also more likely to think reducing its impact on climate change should be one of social care's top priorities (37% vs 23% of those from a white ethnic background), while **younger people** are more likely than older to agree that social care is contributing to climate change (31%, compared with 22% overall).

**Climate change attitudes:** Those who are **most concerned about climate change**, those who **perceive climate change to be a big threat** and those who are the most **environmentally engaged** are significantly more likely than counterparts to agree with all statements.

# Most people think the NHS and social care should both aim to reach net zero at the same pace as other sectors. There is slightly more pressure on the NHS to go more quickly than other sectors than on social care

Q. Compared with other sectors such as transport and education, do you think the NHS should aim to reach net zero more quickly, more slowly, or at about the same pace?



Q. Compared with other sectors such as transport and education, do you think social care should aim to reach net zero more quickly, more slowly, or at about the same pace?



■ A lot more quickly ■ A little more quickly ■ At the same pace  
 ■ A little more slowly ■ A lot more slowly ■ Don't know

Over half of people (54% and 55% respectively) think the **NHS and social care should aim to reach net zero at the same pace as other sectors**. There are slightly higher expectations for the NHS to go more quickly than other sectors (26%) than social care (18%).

The following groups are significantly more likely to say **the NHS should aim to reach net zero more quickly**:

- People from **ethnic minority backgrounds** vs white (39% vs 25%)
- People who are **most concerned** about climate change vs those who are not (30% vs nine per cent)
- People who perceive climate change to be a **big threat** vs those who don't (36% vs nine per cent)
- People who agree that the **NHS has responsibility to reduce its impact on climate change** vs those who disagree (38% vs nine per cent)
- Supporters of the NHS **net zero** policy vs opposers (34% vs four per cent)

**Social care workers/those close to someone who works in social care** and those who have **used a social care service in the past 12 months** are more likely to say that social care should aim to reach net zero more quickly (24% and 39% respectively, compared to 18% overall).

*Note: The net zero aims outlined in this question relate to NHS England 2040 targets; NHS Wales aims to achieve net zero by 2030, NHS Scotland by 2045, and NHS Northern Ireland currently has no targets set.*

Base: All participants n=1858. Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

# An Introduction to Max Diff (Trade Off analysis)

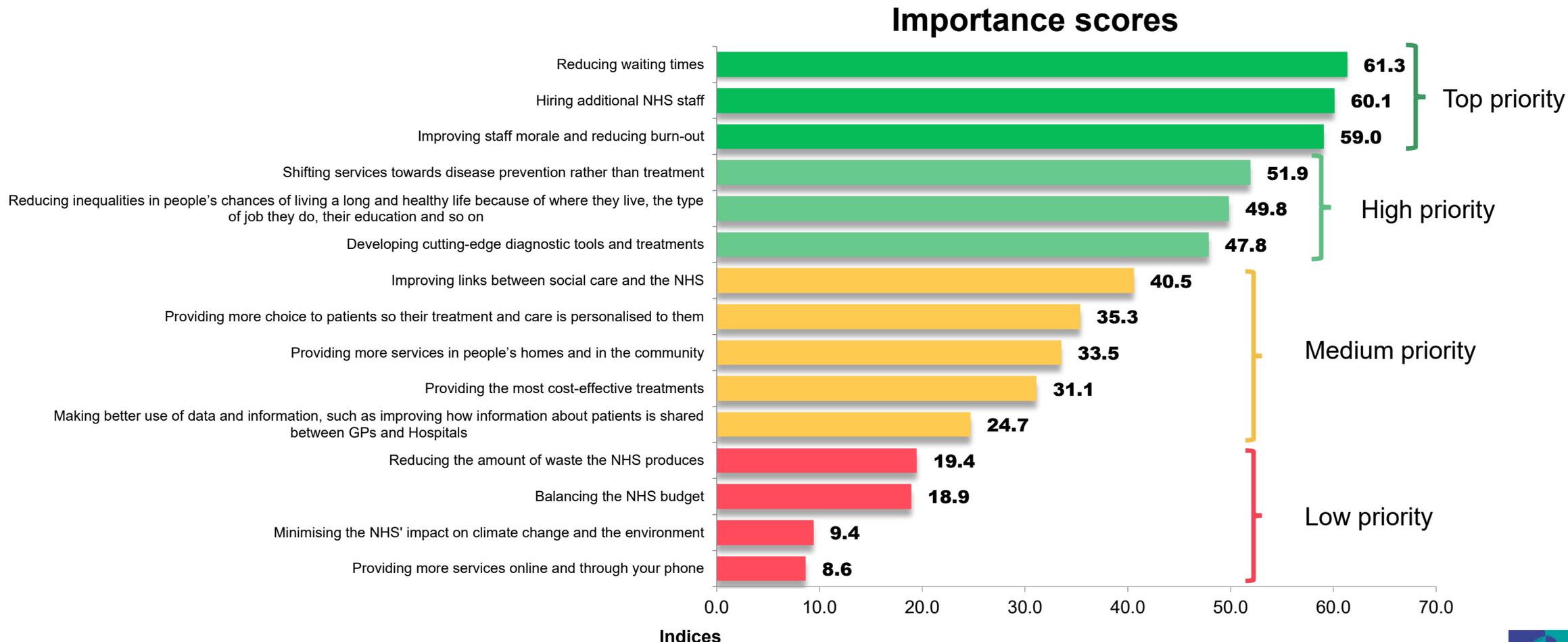
- Max Diff is a prioritisation exercise that is highly effective at sorting through a wide number of different options in order to establish what citizens see as important.
- The main advantage of Max Diff is that it offers greater differentiation of results than can be obtained through more standard rating or importance scale questions because participants are required to choose between different options, all of which could potentially be quite important.
- This exercise has allowed the rating in importance of **15 different considerations for the NHS when delivering services over the next 10 years.**
- Max Diff was included in the survey in order to understand how important the NHS minimising its impact on climate change is among other priorities, by forcing participants to trade-off the different considerations. It can also establish how this differs among different groups within the population, though in the event there was a very uniform pattern of response.
- Participants were shown four considerations on their screen and asked to rate what is most important and what is least important when they are thinking of how the NHS delivers services over the next ten years. This was repeated 12 times with different combinations.
- The results are then combined across all 15 considerations and each factor is scored depending on how favourably it is seen by participants, allowing a clear order of prioritisation to be established.

## How to read MaxDiff charts:

The importance scores on the 'Importance Chart' show the importance on a scale of 0-100: the higher the score, the more important an item. The scores are relative to each other so this can be used to draw conclusions about how important items are in relation to each other. For example, on the chart in the next slide, 'Reduce waiting times' (61.3) is 7.1 times more important than 'Providing more services online and through your phone' (8.6).

# The NHS minimising its impact on climate change and the environment is ranked 14<sup>th</sup> of the 15 considerations – waiting times, staff numbers and staff morale are the public’s top priorities as the NHS delivers services over the next 10 years

Q. Of these, which do you think is the most/least important for the NHS to prioritise when delivering services over the next ten years?



Base: All participants n=1858. Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

# The NHS minimising its impact on climate change and the environment is less important than many of the considerations asked about

	IS	Priority
Reducing waiting times	<b>61.3</b>	Top priority
Hiring additional staff	<b>60.1</b>	
Improving staff morale / reducing burnout	<b>59.0</b>	
Shifting services to disease prevention	<b>51.9</b>	High priority
Reducing inequalities	<b>49.8</b>	
Developing cutting-edge tools and treatments	<b>47.8</b>	
Improving links between social care and NHS	<b>40.5</b>	Medium priority
Providing more, personalized choice to patients	<b>35.3</b>	
Providing more services in homes and community	<b>33.5</b>	
Providing the most cost-effective treatments	<b>31.1</b>	
Making better use of data and information	<b>24.7</b>	
Reducing the amount of waste the NHS produces	<b>19.4</b>	Low priority
Balancing the NHS budget	<b>18.9</b>	
Minimising the NHS's impact on climate change	<b>9.4</b>	
Providing more services online / through phone	<b>8.6</b>	

The public **support the NHS's aim to be net zero (70%)** and over two in five (44%) agree that the **NHS has a responsibility to reduce its impact on climate change and the environment**. However, among a range of other considerations for the NHS when delivering services over the next 10 years, **minimising its impact on climate change is the 14th most important out of 15 considerations asked about**.

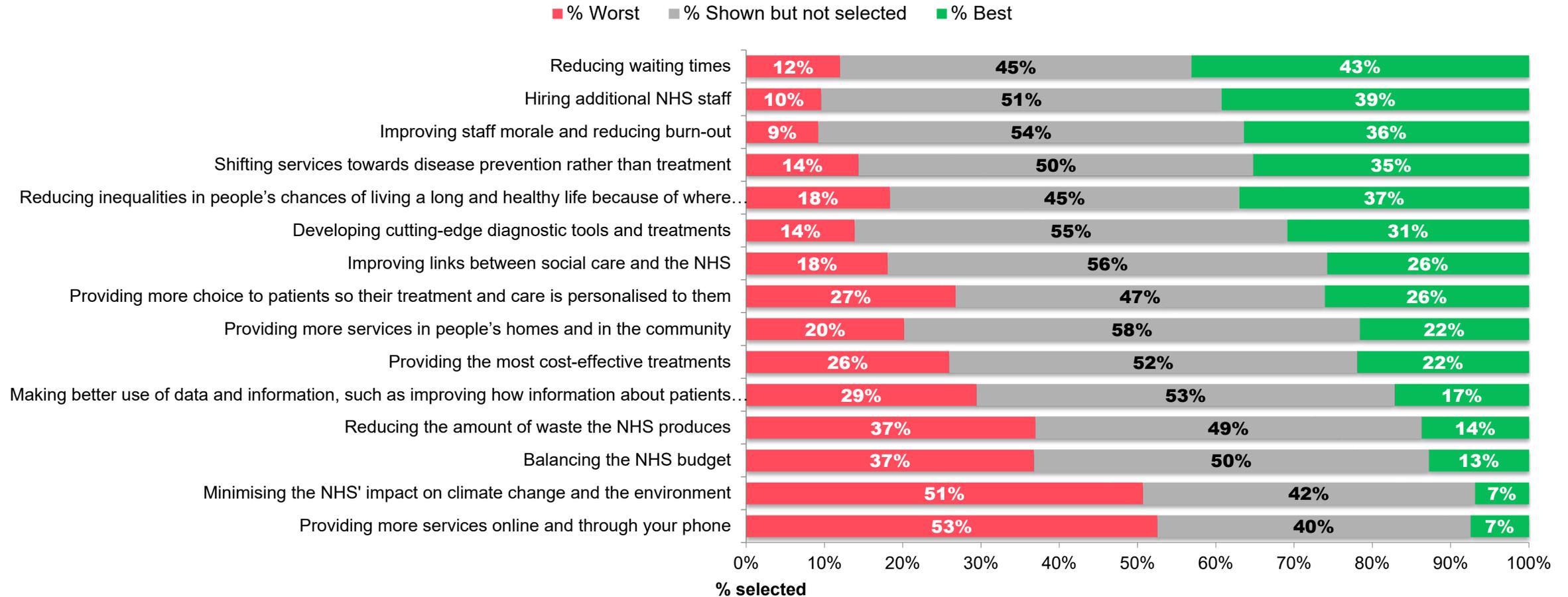
The general public regards **reducing waiting times, hiring additional staff and improving staff morale as the top NHS priorities**. Reducing waiting times is 6.5 times more important than is minimising the NHS's environmental impact.

The only consideration less important than the NHS minimising its impact on climate change and the environment is providing more services online or via phone.

Base: All participants n=1858. Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

# Corroborating this ranking, the NHS minimising its impact on climate change and the environment is rarely selected as the most important consideration

On around half (51%) of the occasions that minimising the NHS's impact on climate change and the environment was shown, it was selected as the **least important consideration** – it was only selected as the most important consideration on seven per cent of the occasions it was shown.



Base: All participants n=1858. Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

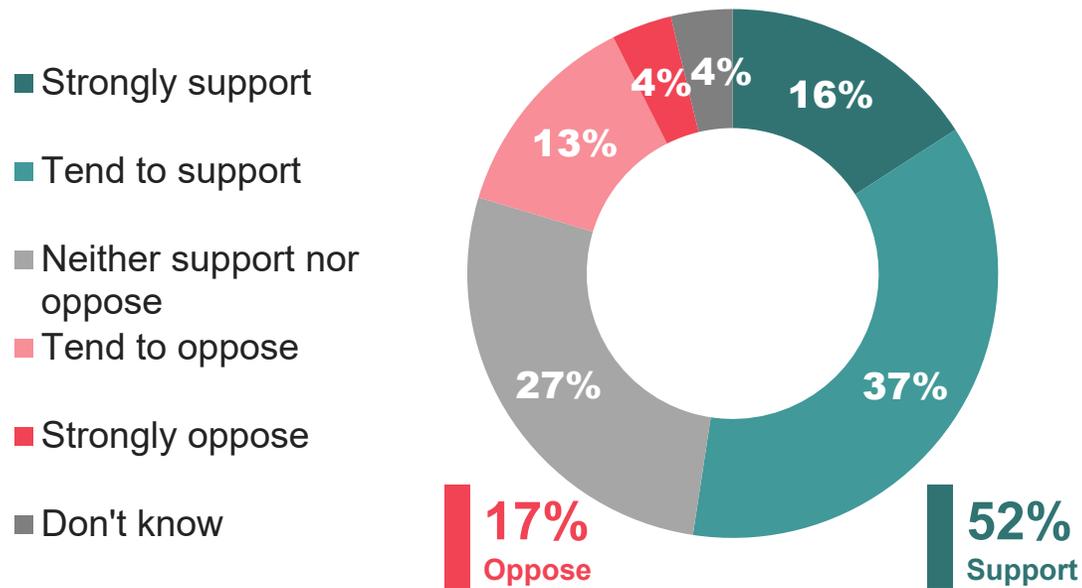
# Views on NHS measures to respond to climate change

# 07

# Just over half support the NHS focusing more on preventing illnesses in order to be net zero, though a significant minority are neutral towards this

Q. In order to get to net zero, the NHS may focus more on *preventing* illnesses to reduce the need for more involved care. This may mean less funding for treating illness in hospitals, but more funding to keep people healthy.

To what extent do you support or oppose this policy?



Just over half of the public (52%) support the NHS focusing more on preventing illnesses to reduce the need for more involved care, in order to get to net zero – in the knowledge that this may mean less funding for treating illness in hospital. However, around one-quarter (27%) remain neutral and neither support nor oppose this approach, while around one in five (17%) oppose it.

The following groups are **more likely to support** the policy:

- **People from ethnic minority backgrounds** (63% vs 51% of those from white ethnic backgrounds)
- People **educated to at least degree level** (61% vs 52% overall)
- Those who agree that **'The NHS is facing a funding problem'** vs those who disagree (55% vs 41%)
- People working in **managerial, administrative and professional occupations** (57% vs 52% overall)

The following groups are **more likely to oppose** the policy:

- Those **dissatisfied with how the NHS is run nowadays** vs those who are satisfied (24% vs 16%)
- **Social care workers** vs non-workers (23% vs 16%)

*Note: The net zero aims outlined in this question relate to NHS England 2040 targets; NHS Wales aims to achieve net zero by 2030, NHS Scotland by 2045, and NHS Northern Ireland currently has no targets set.*

Base: All participants n=1858. Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

# Public support for NHS environmental initiatives diminishes the more they impinge on individual patient treatment

Q. There are many things the NHS is considering doing to reduce its impact on the environment.

To what extent do you support or oppose each of the following measures?

Providing more environmentally friendly food in hospitals (for example, more vegetarian, vegan, and locally sourced and seasonal food), even if this means there are fewer options available (for example, less red meat).



The NHS switching its fleet of vehicles (such as ambulances) to electric and hydrogen-power now, even if taxes have to increase to pay for this.



Build all new hospitals to net zero standards, even if taxes have to increase to pay for this



Considering the environmental impact of treatments when offering them to patients, even if this means people are encouraged to take treatments or medicines that they are less familiar with. For example, people with asthma using powder inhalers, which are more environmentally friendly.



The NHS reducing waste, for example, by reusing medical equipment (such as blades used for throat surgeries, which are currently single-use) which has been sterilised, even if this means that you have to use equipment other people have used first.



GP practices and hospitals increasing the amount of space for public transport (for example, increasing the number of bus stops in front of hospitals) and bicycles, even if this means reducing the amount of available parking for private vehicles.



The NHS encouraging patients to manage their conditions at home with online contact and support even if this means less face-to-face interaction with healthcare workers such as GPs, hospital doctors, or nurses.



Environmental impact being considered when deciding which treatments the NHS should offer



■ Support ■ Neither support nor oppose ■ Oppose ■ Don't know

All but three of the initiatives proposed as ways in which the NHS can reduce its environmental impact receive majority support. People are **very much in favour of the NHS providing more environmentally friendly food (65%) or of the NHS switching its fleet of vehicles to electric and hydrogen power (63%)**. They also support initiatives connected to the building of new hospitals to net zero standards (60%), reducing waste via the reuse of medical equipment (58%) and considering the environmental impact of specific treatments offered to patients (58%).

However **the public is less keen on environmental initiatives that could impinge on the overall approach to patient treatment**. For example more oppose (35%) than support (30%) the environmental impact being considered when deciding which treatments the NHS offers and there is only minority support (39%) for encouraging patients to manage their conditions at home, potentially with less face-to-face interaction.

Base: All participants n=1858. Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

## Taking the two measures that the NHS could take to reduce its impact on the environment, but that the public most oppose, there are a number of demographic and attitudinal factors driving this opposition

### The NHS encouraging patients to manage their conditions at home with online contact and support even if this means less face-to-face interaction

Opposition to this measure is highest among:

- Those **aged 55 and over** (47%, compared with 36% overall)
- Linked to this, those **not working full-time** (42%, vs 27% of those who are)
- Those who **do not have degrees** (40%, compared with 29% of those who do)
- Those working in **intermediate occupations** (44%, compared with 36% overall)
- **Conservative supporters** (44%, compared with 36% overall)
- Those **working within social care or knowing someone who does** (47%, compared with 34% of those who do not)

### Environmental impact being considered when deciding which treatments the NHS should offer

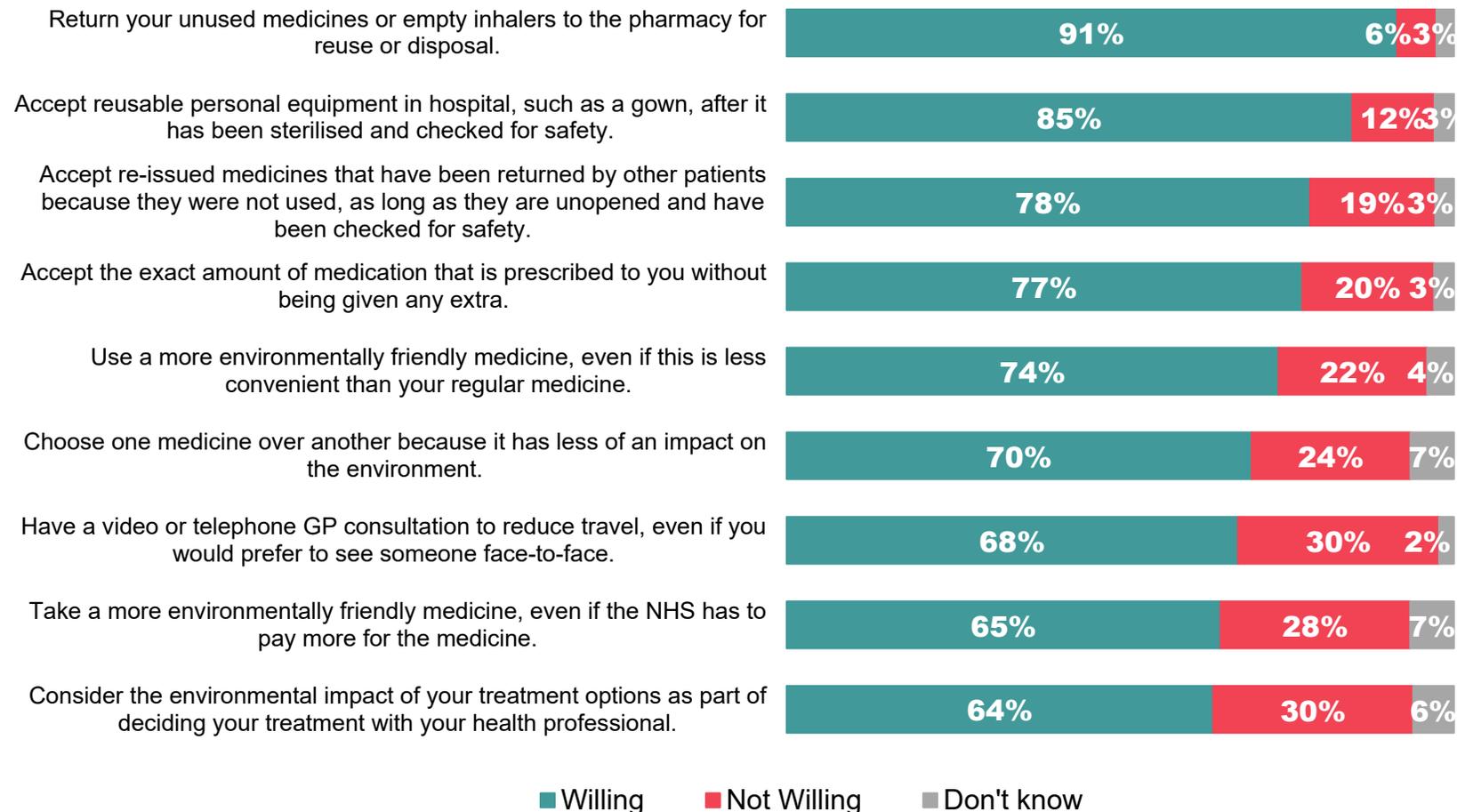
Opposition to this measure is highest among:

- Those aged **55 to 74** (39%, compared with 35% overall)
- **Men** (38% vs 32% of women)
- People working in **lower supervisory and technical occupations** (45%, compared with 35% overall)
- **Conservative supporters** (41%, compared with 35% overall)
- People who have not personally, or do not have close family or friends who have, used social care services in the last 12 months (36%, compared with 26% of those who have)

For both measures, **those with fewer environmental sympathies are more likely to be in opposition**. This includes those who are less concerned about climate change or its threat to health, are less environmentally conscious and accepting of climate change, and who do not think the NHS has a responsibility to minimise its impact on climate change and oppose the net zero policy.

# More than half of the public say they are willing to consider each of the initiatives put to them to help the NHS reduce emissions and be more environmentally friendly – though willingness diminishes as the initiative impinges on personal treatment

Q. How willing would you be, if at all, to personally do each of the following to help the NHS reduce its emissions and be more environmentally friendly?



The public generally claim that they are willing to help the NHS reduce emissions and be more environmentally friendly, with a minimum of 64% saying they are willing to take each action.

However, willingness falls as the action may impact on the individual's own treatment, with around three in ten saying they would **not be very willing, or not willing at all, to consider the environmental impact** of their treatment options when deciding treatment with a health professional (30%), to have a **virtual GP appointment** even if they would prefer face-to-face (30%), or to **take a more environmentally friendly medicine**, even if the NHS has to pay more (28%).

Base: All participants n=1858. Conducted online via KnowledgePanel UK between 22nd July and 28th July 2021

## Taking the three activities that people are most unwilling to take to help the NHS reduce its impact on the environment, there are a number of demographic and attitudinal factors driving this opposition

Have a video or telephone GP consultation to reduce travel, even if you would prefer to see someone face-to-face

Opposition to this is highest among:

- Those **aged 55 and over** (40% vs 30% overall)
- Linked to this, those **not working full-time** (35%, vs 23% of those who are)
- Those who **do not have degrees** (33%, compared with 24% of those who do)
- **Small employers and those self-employed** (43%) and those working in **lower supervisory and technical occupations** (41%, compared with 30% overall)
- **Conservative voters** (36% vs 30% overall)

Consider the environmental impact of your treatment options as part of deciding your treatment with your health professional

Opposition to this is highest among:

- Those **aged 65 and over** (34% vs 30% overall)
- Those working in **lower supervisory and technical occupations** (40%, compared with 30% overall)
- **Conservative voters** and those who say they **would not vote** (both 42%, vs 30% overall)
- People who **do not work in the NHS and do not have close family or friends who do** (33% compared with 26% of those who do)

Take a more environmentally friendly medicine, even if the NHS has to pay more for the medicine

Opposition to this is highest among:

- Those aged **65-74** (38% vs 28% overall)
- People from **white ethnic backgrounds** (29%, vs 24% of those from ethnic minority backgrounds)
- **Small employers and those self-employed** (43% vs 28% overall)
- **Conservative voters** (36%) and those who say they **would not vote** (40%, vs 28% overall)
- People who **do not work in the NHS and do not have close family or friends who do** (31% compared with 25% of those who do)

For both measures, **those with fewer environmental sympathies are more likely to be in opposition**. This includes those who are less concerned about climate change or its threat to health, are less environmentally conscious and accepting of climate change, and who do not think the NHS has a responsibility to minimise its impact on climate change and oppose the net zero policy.

# Appendix: Detailed Methodology

# A1

# Detailed methodology

## UK KnowledgePanel: Technical Notes

### Recruitment to the panel

Panellists are recruited via a random probability unclustered address-based sampling method. This means that every household in the UK has a known chance of being selected to join the panel. Letters are sent to selected addresses in the UK (using the Postcode Address File) inviting them to become members of the panel. Invited members are able to sign up to the panel by completing a short online questionnaire or by returning a paper form. Up to 2 members of the household are able to sign up to the panel. Members of the public who are digitally excluded are able to register to the KnowledgePanel either by post or by telephone, and are given a tablet, an email address, and basic internet access (see further information below) which allows them to complete surveys online.

### Conducting the survey

The survey was designed using a 'mobile-first' approach, which took into consideration the look, feel and usability of a questionnaire on a mobile device. This included: a thorough review of the questionnaire length to ensure it would not over burden respondents from focusing on a small screen for a lengthy period, avoiding the use of grid style questions (instead using question loops which are more mobile friendly, and making questions 'finger-friendly' to they're easy to respond to. The questionnaire was also compatible with screen reader software to help those requiring further accessibility.

# Detailed methodology

## UK KnowledgePanel: Technical Notes

### Sample and weighting information

This study was conducted on the KnowledgePanel between **22nd July - 28th July 2021**. In total 1858 interviews were achieved with residents across the United Kingdom aged 16+.

The KnowledgePanel is a random probability survey panel. Therefore, the KnowledgePanel does not use a quota approach when conducting surveys. Instead invited samples are stratified when conducting waves to account for any profile skews within the panel.

### Stratification

The sample was stratified by nation and education.

A total of 3,000 respondents were selected and invited to take part in the survey.

The selected sample was then reviewed on key demographics to ensure a balanced sample was selected for the survey.

A total of 1858 respondents completed the survey, for a response of 62%.

# Detailed methodology

## UK KnowledgePanel: Technical Notes

### Weighting

In order to ensure the survey results are as representative of the population the United Kingdom as possible, the below weighting spec was applied to the data in line with the target sample profile.

Two members per household are allowed to register on the KnowledgePanel. Therefore, we employed a design weight to correct for unequal probabilities of selection of household members.

Calibration weights have also been applied using the latest population statistics relevant to the surveyed population. England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are each weighted separately while an additional weight has been created for the United Kingdom to account for any over or undersampling within each of these countries.

Two sets of calibration weights are applied:

- Calibration weighting was applied using the following variables: Region and an interlocked variable of Gender by Age. Both use ONS 2020 mid-year population estimates as the weighting target.
- Demographic weights were then applied to correct for imbalances in the achieved sample; the data was weighted on: Education, Ethnicity, Index of Multiple Deprivation (quintiles), and number of adults in the household. Estimates from the ONS 2020 mid-year population estimates and Annual Population Survey were used as the weighting target.

# Detailed methodology

## UK KnowledgePanel: Technical Notes

The below tables present the weighting profile targets:

Age & Gender	Male	Female	In another way	Prefer not to say
16-24	6.7%	6.3%	0.08%	0.14%
25-34	8.4%	8.2%		0.11%
35-44	7.7%	7.8%		0.03%
45-54	8.2%	8.5%		0.06%
55-64	7.4%	7.7%		
65-74	5.9%	6.4%		
75+	4.5%	6.0%		

IMD quintiles	
1	20.0%
2	20.0%
3	20.0%
4	20.0%
5	20.0%

Region	
North East	4.1%
North West	11.0%
Yorkshire And The Humber	8.2%
East Midlands	7.3%
West Midlands	8.8%
East Of England	9.3%
London	13.2%
South East	13.7%
South West	8.6%
Wales	4.8%
Scotland	8.4%
Northern Ireland	2.8%

Education	
Degree level or above	29.6%
Below degree level	69.4%
Prefer not to say/Not Stated	1.0%

Ethnicity	
White	86.7%
Non-White	12.0%
Prefer not to say/Not Stated	1.4%

Number of adults in the household (16+Pop)	
One adult	18.5%
Two or more adults	81.6%

# Detailed methodology

## Statistical Reliability

The table below summarises the various figures based on a 95% confidence interval – that is they would apply 95 times out of 100 where results from a sample are being compared with entire coverage of the population or between subgroups.

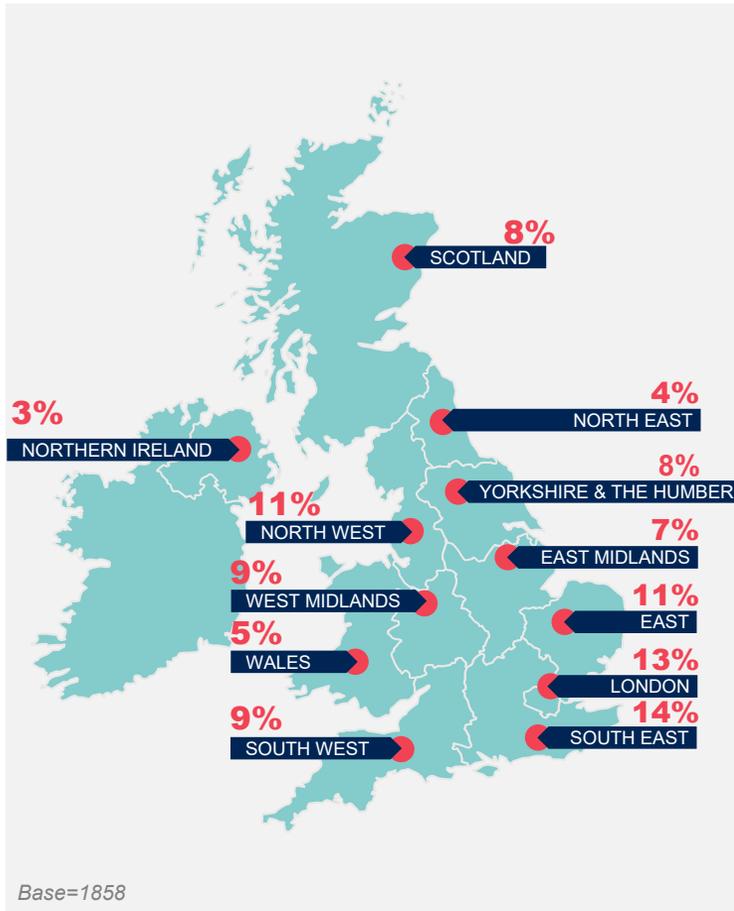
For example, if the sample shows that 30% of people nationally say they are ‘likely’ to use public transport when travelling to health services, we can be 95% confident that the result (had everyone been interviewed) would have been within around  $\pm 2.3$  percentage points of this figure – i.e. between 27.7% and 32.3% (based on a sample of 1,500).

	Result is at or near...		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
Sample size	$\pm\%$	$\pm\%$	$\pm\%$
1,858	1.4	2.1	2.3
1,500	1.5	2.3	2.5
1,000	1.9	2.8	3.1
500	2.6	4.0	4.4
300	3.4	5.2	5.7
100	4.1	9.0	9.8

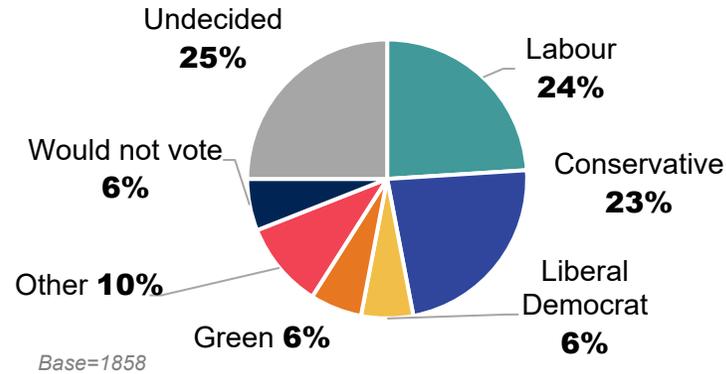
# Demographics



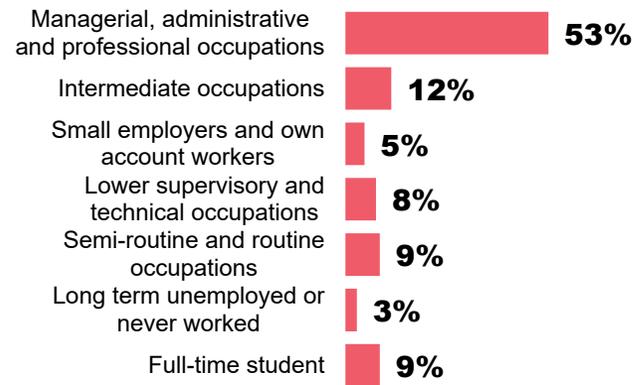
## Region



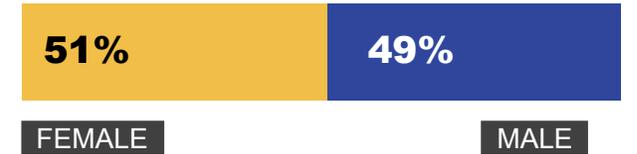
## Voting intention



## Social Economic Classification

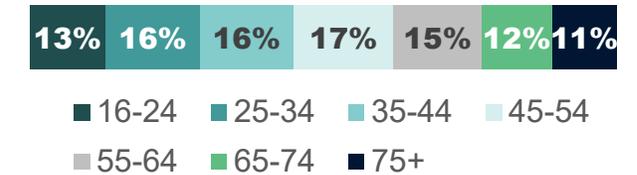


## Gender



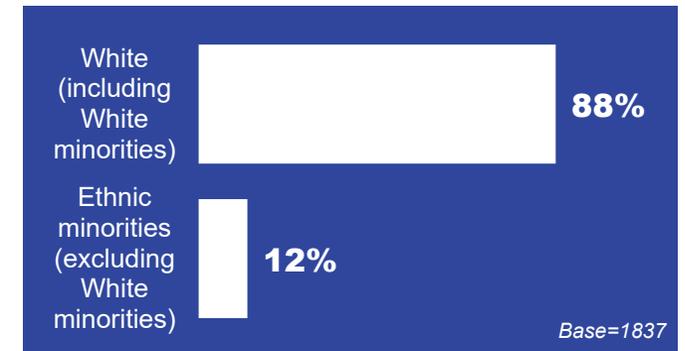
Base=1851

## Age



Base=1858

## Ethnicity



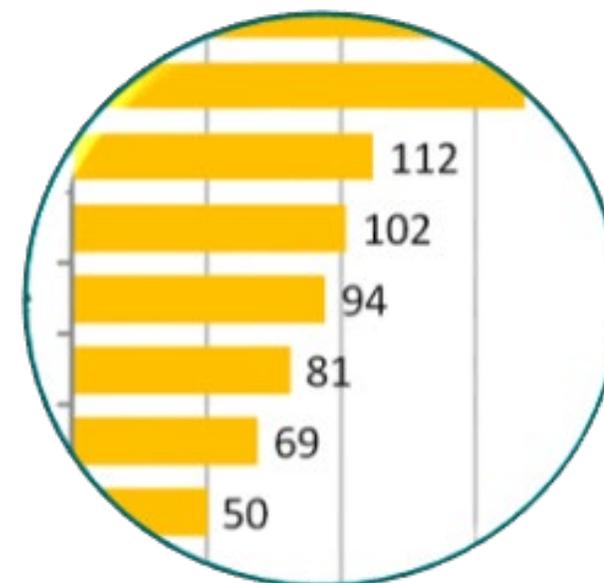
# Detailed methodology

## MaxDiff

Maximum Difference Scaling (MaxDiff) is **used to understand the relative ranking** of a number of items

Rather than directly asking for importance of items e.g. rating scales, ranking etc, MaxDiff uses an **indirect approach** by asking respondents to **trade-off items** against one another and **forcing a preference**

The process is **easy for respondents** to understand and responses involve choices of items rather than expressing strength of preference



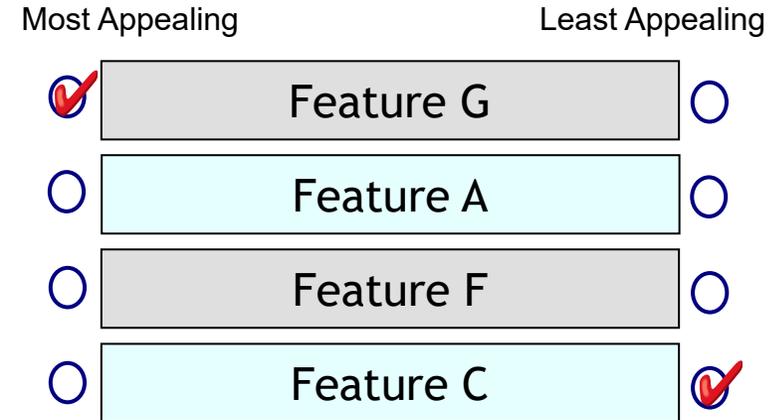
# How it works

Trade-off exercise which forces respondents to reveal their **underlying preference**

Respondents are presented with a number of screens, each screen typically **showing 4-5 items**, out of which they chose the:

- **Most important item**
- **Least important item**

From those choices we can **estimate the desirability** for each item, for each respondent, and aggregate the data up to get to the overall preference order



**The MaxDiff methodology is more efficient than paired comparison**

If G is most important and C is least important then we know that:

G is more important than A, F and C, and that A and F are more important than C

# Thank you.

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