

IET Green Preferences 2020 Survey

Understanding public attitudes to green technology

Key facts, themes and recommendations

The 2020 IET Green Preferences Survey is based on research that was conducted by the independent market research agency, Opinium, in 2020. The survey reveals the public's perception regarding the need to make changes and trade-offs to reduce emissions, where responsibilities for direct action are perceived to lie, and what our greatest barriers to change are. The survey achieved 3,337 responses in the UK from those aged 18+. Additional surveying was undertaken in Australia, China, Germany, India, the UAE and USA — sample sizes of between 400–1,000 were achieved for these markets.

Is climate change an issue?



Active and passive actions impacting lifestyle changes



Can we prevent climate change?



Who is responsible for addressing climate change and making changes to prevent it from getting worse?



Our recommendations

If the UK is to meet its net-zero ambitions, action will have to be taken across government, industry, and all sections of society. Ensuring that the public is an engaged part of the process will be vital to developing workable solutions to address some of the most difficult challenges, such as decarbonising heat and transport.

Based on the results of this survey, we have highlighted several key action areas:

1. Practical guidance regarding the UK's climate change ambitions

While the understanding of climate change is high, the knowledge of the UK's climate change ambitions to 2050 and intervening policy decisions are not. More needs to be done to give practical guidance on these targets.

2. Improve installation support and advice for the uptake of green solutions

Many of the emission-reducing improvements required for the existing housing stock in the UK have seen the responsibility pushed onto the consumer. Greater support and advice must be available for consumers to understand the home as a whole entity.

3. Ensure excellent standards of professionalism to build and maintain public trust

The UK cannot afford for the public to lose trust in technological solutions that combat climate change, so it is essential that an excellent standard of installation, maintenance and safety for green technology is demonstrated at all times. Green technology must be reliable, timely and prove its value in both the short and long term.

4. Support innovation and drive down costs

The UK Government, industry and academia must continue to support innovation in the field of science and engineering to ensure that technology can continue to provide improvements in efficiency and cost. Additionally, innovation in pragmatic, low-carbon solutions for consumers such as electric vehicles and solar panels must continue unhindered.

5. Think in the long term

Most people surveyed thought their children or grandchildren would be most affected by climate change. Addressing climate change is an issue that far exceeds the term of a single government. The public must be confident that they can make decisions that affect their lives on longer timescales. It is vital that the UK Government works with opposition parties to create ambitious long-term and sustainable goals.

6. Actively identify opportunities for incentivised behaviour change

The UK Government should learn from the relative success of standard household recycling and the plastic bag tax to identify further opportunities that will enable consumers to transition to greener lifestyle choices.

7. Promote a green post-COVID-19 recovery

It is essential that the economic recovery from COVID-19 is a green recovery. As people spend a greater time at home and consider the amount they travel, industry and leaders should encourage the public to adopt more green technology solutions.



For further information and to read the full report, visit theiet.org/Green-Preferences-Survey

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