

Methodology

1,192 households were interviewed during February 2007. Interviews were in the home and conducted face to face. The sample is representative of the UK population. The survey is a quarterly national tracker of behaviour and opinion run by the Energy Saving Trust.



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green barometer
Measuring environmental attitude April 2007



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“Green Barometer is an independent authoritative assessment of attitudes towards the environment”



Philip Sellwood,
Chief Executive,
Energy Saving Trust

Introduction

Nearly every day you will find a variety of stories in the newspapers and on television about the environment, ranging from saving energy, to recycling, or reducing water waste – but most rarely reference the individual.

Yet we know from our 30 Green Ambassadors that being ‘green’ is now becoming the norm with many more people wanting to adapt their lifestyle to be more environmental.

Having advised around six million people on energy saving, we already have a good understanding of consumer behaviour and attitudes on climate change. However, we want to take this understanding to the next level and get inside the mind of the public on all ‘green’ issues.

The Green Barometer will serve as an index of consumer attitudes on environmental issues. In effect, it will act as our ‘ear to the ground’ enabling us to get closer to the issues facing all of us. It will explore what motivates and influences us – and how perceptions differ from the facts. This knowledge will enable us to improve our communications with people ensuring we help address their concerns, challenge their misconceptions and encourage them to take action.

The Green Barometer will be published quarterly, meaning that changes in consumer attitudes and behaviours can be looked at over time. It will:

- Examine attitudes to green issues and behaviours.
- Help us to understand what positive steps people are already taking to be more environmental.
- Identify gaps and opportunities.
- Provide an understanding of awareness and prioritisation of ‘green’ issues.
- Give an insight into what people are prepared to sacrifice in order to be greener.

The Energy Saving Trust is an independent, non-profit making organisation and acts as a bridge from government to consumers, trade, businesses, local authorities and the energy market. It provides impartial information and advice and has a network of advice centres throughout the UK specifically designed to help consumers take action to save energy.

Our work has been successful. Since we first formed we have made lifetime savings of 20 million tonnes of carbon. In 2006 we launched the Commit campaign, encouraging people to sign up and commit to taking simple steps to reduce their energy use – with around 30,000 people signed up so far.

Being an independent not for profit organisation means we are uniquely placed to provide people with impartial advice.

What’s missing in this debate is the real person. Until now we have been only able to make assumptions on consumer views. The Green Barometer will change all of this by tracking over 1,000 people’s views and opinions from across the United Kingdom.

“ Around
80% of Britons
believe climate change
will affect them and
their family”



Green Britain? So where are we now? Knowing and caring about environmental issues is one thing. Making concrete movement towards addressing them is something altogether different. What emerges clearly from this first Green Barometer is that nearly three quarters of the population now feel a growing pressure to change the way they live to reduce the impact of climate change.

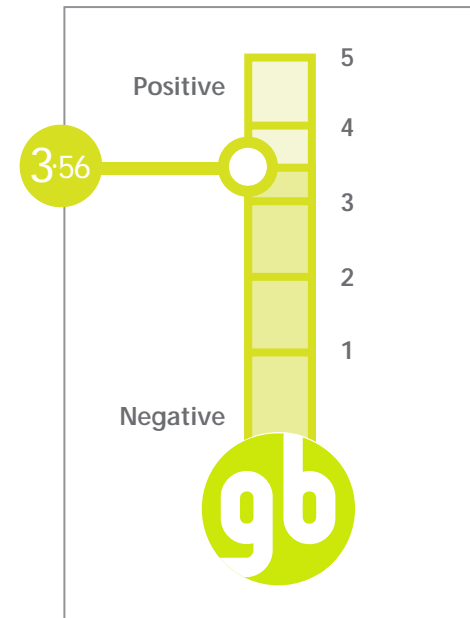
Four out of every five believe that this will affect them and their families and the same number believe climate change is having an effect on the UK right now. Over half of the UK population now

recognises a real link between the energy they use at home and climate change. The biggest concern is how children and grandchildren will be affected by climate change. A strong message to government

emerged with eight out of ten agreeing that if the government wishes us to do more it needs to let us know what we can do to save energy.



UK attitudes towards doing something to help the environment:



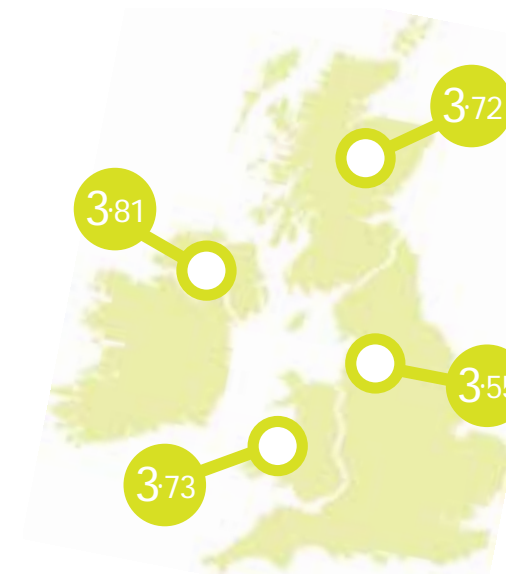
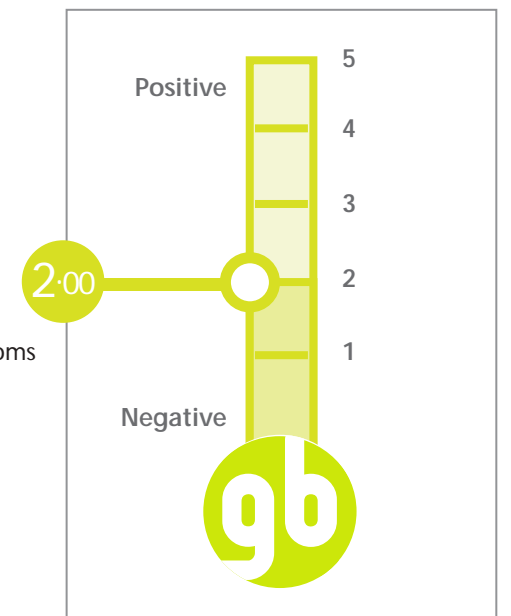
The attitudinal basket is made up of seven views, on which people were asked for their level of agreement. These are:

- Climate change will affect me and my family
- If the government wants me to do more to conserve energy, it needs to start letting me know what I can do
- The government isn't doing enough to tackle climate change - so why should I?
- I can feel a growing pressure to change the way I live to reduce the impact of climate change
- There is a real link between the energy I use at home and climate change
- The UK should do more to lead the world in fighting climate change
- I feel so strongly about the environment that I've stopped buying from the organisations that I think damage it

UK actions taken to help the environment

The behavioural basket is made up of seven measures which people could take to save energy. These are:

- Installations of cavity wall insulation
- Installations of loft insulation
- Installations of condensing boilers
- The number of people claiming to turn off lights when leaving empty rooms
- The average number of energy saving lightbulbs per household
- The number of people claiming to turn their TVs off standby
- The number of people claiming to consciously walk rather than take the car for at least one journey in the past week.



UK attitudes - nation by nation



So far so good - but is it enough?

Along with an increasing recognition that climate change is now an issue that each of us is responsible for comes a readiness to act. It seems that many of us do a few small things, but there are still 40% doing nothing at all.

For example, only a tiny number have deliberately chosen not to fly somewhere in order to reduce carbon emissions or travel by rail or sea instead. Slightly more, 14%,

buy food that's locally produced. Nearly one in five regularly compost household food and garden waste, with the same number washing at 30 degrees celsius.

How do we measure up?

- *Almost 20% more households have installed condensing boilers compared to the same time last year.*
- *Numbers of households installing cavity wall and loft insulation remain the same compared with the same time last year.*
- *Around 25% of people admit to regularly leaving lights on when leaving an empty room.*
- *The average UK household now claims to have 5-6 energy saving lightbulbs.*
- *Over a third (36%) of people admit to leaving TVs on standby*
- *Around a third of people (33%) admit they haven't walked rather than taking the car for a short journey in the past week.*



Getting our priorities right

Being seen to be green is popular among 70% of the UK population. It's a socially acceptable thing. Reducing the amount of energy in the home is seen to be as virtuous as donating to charity.

Measures introduced so far are not popular: a third (or less) think that measures such as 'green' taxes (34%), road pricing (tolls and congestion) (30%) and carbon rationing (28%) are socially acceptable – or even desirable. Such measures were thought to be less acceptable than same sex marriages and banning smoking in public places.

Top ten Good Deeds Index*

- 1 Helping an elderly neighbour
- = 2 Reducing amount of energy used in home
- = 2 Donating to charity
- 4 Supporting local community good works
- 5 Community clear ups/improving neighbourhood
- 6 Volunteering time to improve community
- 7 Reducing use of cars or planes
- 8 Neighbourhood Watch
- 9 Coaching the local kids' football team
- 10 On the school parents' committee

* What's considered a good/virtuous thing to do



Making sacrifices Daily lives mean daily choices and the Green Barometer indicates for many people a great willingness to reconsider those choices for the sake of the environment. Small changes like turning off the tap when brushing teeth (73%); walking instead of driving (56%) and cooking with local produce that doesn't need packaging (52%) were most popular.

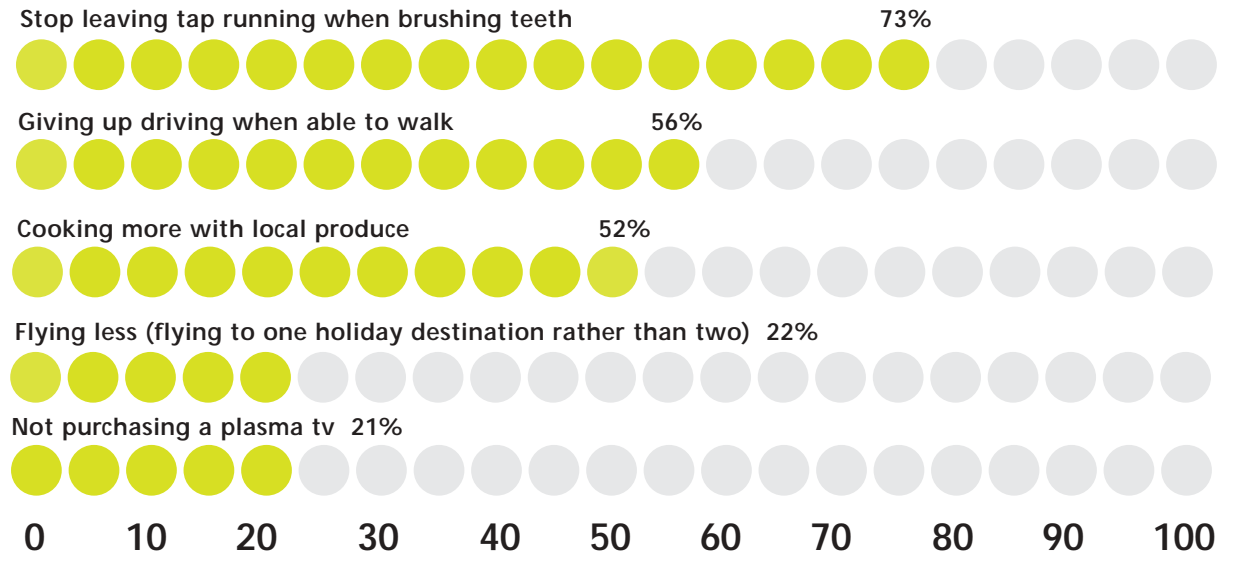
Bigger changes, such as cutting out one of two planned holidays involving air travel (22%), not buying a plasma TV (20%) and getting rid of their patio heater (8%) were less appealing.

When asked if they would be willing to commit to a 'carbon credit card' scheme (with a set number of emissions to stick to, and that required trading with people that had more credit so as not to go into the red), 42% said definitely not, 28% said probably not, and only 5% said they definitely would.

“ **42%** said they would definitely not be willing to commit to a carbon credit scheme ”



Top green trade-offs *activities we're willing to take for the sake of the environment



What's your green profile?

Green atoners

Profile: Most likely to be affluent, perhaps offsetting consumerist guilt with green action.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, it is the most affluent parts of society who are doing the most with only 28% not doing anything at all. Again unsurprisingly, the most affluent find green taxes and carbon rationing more socially acceptable than those less affluent. A significant amount of purchasing power appears to be going green too with a third of the most affluent not buying from organisations that damage the environment.

Green goddesses

Profile: Women seem to be generally more aware and active than men, caring more and turning this into action.

More women (76%) than men (69%) feel growing pressure to change the way they live to reduce the impact of climate change.

Women also seem to be marginally more active than men in doing things – only 37% are not doing anything at all compared to the 43% of men who have not started to change their behaviour.

Green boomers

Profile: 55+ age group. Concerned about lifestyle and effect on children and grandchildren. Prepared to make real lifestyle changes.

It's the older members of society that are leading the green way. The 55+ age group not only care the most but are also doing the most. 77% like to be thought of as caring for the environment compared to only 59% of 18-34 year olds.

The older generation seems more prepared to make more significant changes to the way they live: the number of 55+ year olds doing a number of things to reduce their energy and carbon emissions is double that of 18-34 year olds. 43% of 55+ year olds are prepared to choose a holiday destination that doesn't involve flying, compared to only 32% of 18-34 year olds and only 27% of 35-54 year olds.

Green savers

Profile: Those who are more interested in saving money more than saving the environment.

Those in Northern Ireland are most likely to be more interested in saving money than saving the environment

(45%). The Scottish are less interested in the money they would save from using less energy than any other nation.

Green campaigners/leaders

Profile: Most likely to put their money where their mouth is. Want to see the UK leading the way.

The Welsh are almost twice as likely to stop buying from organisations that damage the environment than any other home nation. Around three quarters of those in Wales and Northern Ireland think the UK should do more to lead the world in fighting climate change.

Green speculators

Profile: Dipping their toes in the water. Only taking small actions, not committing to more substantive changes.

The English are the most likely to do a few small things to reduce their energy use and carbon emissions, whereas more people in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland claim to be taking more measures to reduce their energy use.



“77% of over 55 year olds like to think of themselves as caring for the environment”

Green pretenders

Profile: Saying they are concerned/doing things, but not following through.

The most affluent claim to be taking measures to reduce their energy use and carbon dioxide emissions, yet only around 30% are prepared to choose a holiday destination that doesn't require flying, compared to over 40% of the least affluent.

Green apprentices

Profile: Those that need to be told what to do/need more guidance.

In Northern Ireland, an overwhelming majority (98%) wants the government to let them know what they can do to save energy.

Conclusion

What emerges clearly from this initial Green Barometer is that climate change is recognised by the UK population. A clear imperative to do something about it exists. The mindset is there, but has yet to translate into significant behavioural change.

40% of the population are doing nothing and many have yet to step up to the mark to make sacrifices in their daily lives.

People want more guidance, information and, perhaps, financial incentive to change their daily behaviour. The Energy Saving Trust is committed to helping people by offering practical advice and support to help affect this desired change.

Whether the findings are surprising or expected, the Green Barometer provides useful insights. Without these, the shift in public understanding, and subsequent change in behaviour, will take much longer.