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01 What are the Net Zero Diaries?

Autumn 2021 is a critical time for climate action, which makes it a critical time to ask UK citizens about Net Zero

“Today’s IPCC Working Group 1 report is a code red for humanity. The alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable...” UN Secretary General, August 2021

The UK Government’s commitment to achieving Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 will mean changes to the way that we travel, how we heat our homes, and the food we eat. These changes are urgently needed, but not easily achieved. Decisions made in the next few months, at COP26 and beyond, will have far reaching effects on lives in the UK. Failure to act may affect many more.

Government, business and civil society all have their roles to play in achieving Net Zero, but without the support and involvement of citizens even the best designed policy is doomed to fail. Climate Assembly UK, the Citizens' Assembly on climate change commissioned by Parliament, has set a clear precedent: citizens can and should be part of the debate, and have access to the same time, expertise and information as other actors.

That’s why over the next four months the Net Zero Diaries will bring together a diverse group of UK citizens with very different perspectives to debate climate policy as it’s made. Insight reports like this one will be made freely available, providing a window into the public perspective.

When it comes to climate policy, polling alone is a blunt instrument - we need nuanced, diverse and informed views

The Net Zero Diaries brings together 40 people from across the UK, with three distinct starting points on climate change:

- **Engaged citizens:** who have taken part in a process like a Climate Assembly or Jury.
- **Engaged consumers:** who have already taken action on climate change in their own lives, including those that have installed or are installing low carbon home tech.
- **General public:** a representative sample of the UK public, with a mix of views on climate change.

The project will run for four months, from our first session in September (reported here) to December 2021 – covering party conferences, COP26, the Net Zero plan and more.

In each wave we'll have a mix of:

- **Diary tasks:** a week before we meet Diarists will do daily tasks, documenting how climate change affects their lives.
- **Dialogue sessions:** full panel meetings with experts and guest speakers to inform the discussion, stimulus based on real time policy, and plenty of time to share views.

This first edition of the Diaries introduces our panel, and their starting points in the Net Zero conversation

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What does Net Zero mean to our Diarists?

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What action do our Diarists expect from others?

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How are our Diarists' views changing?

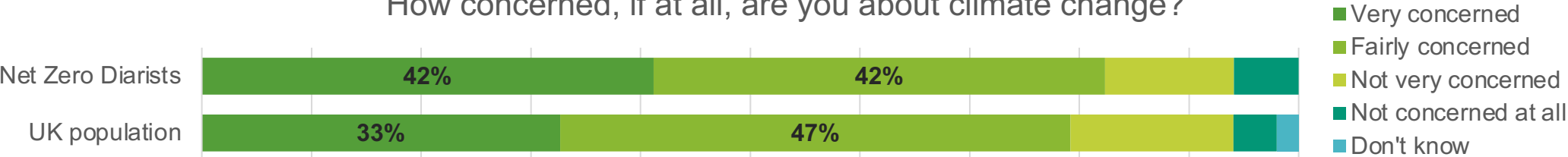
02 Who are the Net Zero Diarists?

www.who.int

Like the UK population our diarists have a range of experience and knowledge of climate change, from novice to expert

	 Engaged citizens (n=8)	 Engaged consumers (n=18)	 General public (n=17)
Who?	People that been involved with past Citizens' Assemblies on climate change across the UK.	People who have already made significant changes to their lifestyle in order to reduce their carbon emissions.	People who have no previous experience discussing climate policy, and haven't made significant changes to their lives.
Why?	These diarists bring knowledge of climate change policy, and experience of dialogue.	These diarists bring practical experience of taking action to adapt their lives to Net Zero.	These diarists have a range of views on climate change, just like the population as a whole.

How concerned, if at all, are you about climate change?



Net Zero Diaries. I am about to read out some statements. Please could you tell me which statement comes closest to your own viewpoint? Base: All respondents (n=43)

BEIS Public Attitudes Tracker. Q21. How concerned, if at all, are you about current climate change, sometimes referred to as 'global warming'? Base: All wave respondents – March 2021 (4,029).

From the outset we found that these groups have distinct views on climate change, including who is responsible for tackling it



Engaged citizens

- Prioritise wider structural change and emphasise the responsibility of government and private companies in tackling climate change.
- See the necessary changes as urgent or overdue, and acknowledge the scale and severity of the issue.



Engaged consumers

- Emphasise the responsibility of private companies for tackling the problem.
- Consider the whole supply chain when thinking about proposed solutions to the issue.
- Prioritise fair change that will benefit all groups within society.
- Consider collective solutions and community initiatives.



General public

- Focus on changes that individuals can make ('everyone doing their bit') and government policy which can encourage these.
- Consider the impact on future generations.
- Prefer gradual changes that don't greatly impact lifestyle.

When we asked people what climate change means to them



Engaged citizens

See tackling climate change as an **urgent** priority.

Realise the need for personal lifestyle changes as well as wider structural changes to reach Net Zero.

"We all have a responsibility in trying to get as close to Zero as possible, but the government has a big responsibility."



Engaged consumers

See tackling climate change as a priority.

Realise the need for personal lifestyle changes to reach Net Zero but less aware of structural changes required.

"I think they need to provide more info on how people can be environmentally friendly."



General public

Concerned about climate change as one of many priorities.

Little real awareness and knowledge of the changes – lifestyle or structural – needed to reach Net Zero.

"I'm not exactly sure what Net Zero means, I guess it's for everyone to do their bit by 2050, that's how I see it."

Engaged citizen – Pen portrait – Pearl

Pearl attended the Leeds Climate Assembly which took place in September 2020

Pearl is 62 years old and lives in Leeds with her husband, daughter and two cats. She owns her home and is retired, and now spends her time cooking, reading and watching TV.

Pearl feels very concerned about climate change and regularly discusses her opinions on the topic with family and friends. In order to reduce her own emissions, she has paid to have solar panels installed, which she initially found expensive but feels has helped reduce her bills. She also looks for energy efficient appliances when things need replacing and eats vegetarian meals multiple times a week for both health and environmental reasons.

When thinking about the UK's chances of cutting its carbon emissions by 2050, Pearl feels pessimistic as she does not think the government, or the UK population are currently doing enough to reach Net Zero. For this to change, Pearl would like to see a reduction in the use of cars and a bigger emphasis on walking, cycling and public transport.

“The government and the people of this country are not doing enough, and I would include myself and a lot of people I know in this category.”



Engaged consumer – Pen portrait – Jack

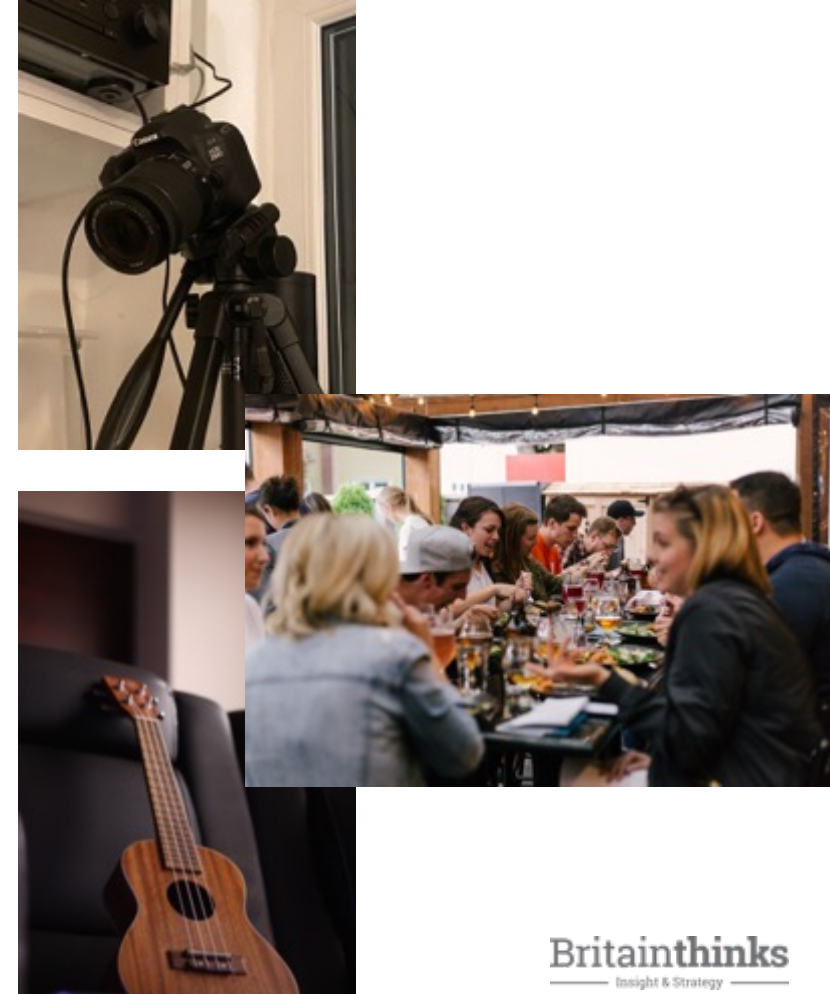
Jack was placed within our engaged consumer group as he has made a variety of changes to his lifestyle in order to be more environmentally conscious. These changes include choosing to walk or cycle instead of taking the car or using public transport for short journeys, checking product labels for sustainability markers and using these to inform his purchasing decisions, paying more for products or services which are more environmentally friendly, and consciously reducing the amount of air travel taken each year for environmental reasons (prior to the pandemic).

Jack is 19 years old and is a student in Leeds. He lives in a rented house with other housemates, and likes to read, write, play his ukulele and socialise in cafes and bars in his spare time.

Jack currently feels very concerned about climate change and believes that although it is important individuals to cut down on plastic usage and increase recycling rates, ultimately it is down to big corporations and the government to help solve the problem.

Jack reports feeling pessimistic about the UK's chance of cutting its carbon emissions to become 'Net Zero' by 2050 and doesn't think enough is being done to reach this goal. For his opinions to change, Jack would like to see more awareness raised around climate change, and for the government to introduce regulations which would limit the amount of pollution created by individual corporations.

"I believe that beyond making sure to cut down on plastic usage, recycling and other small day-to-day choices, the onus is really on big corporations and governments to solve this problem. Overall, the average person is powerless."



General public – Pen portrait – Sharon

Sharon is someone that isn't particularly concerned about climate change.

Sharon is 47 years old, and lives in Glasgow with her three children. She owns her home and enjoys baking for her children and relatives in her spare time.

Even though Sharon acknowledges that changes need to be made in order to tackle climate change, she does not feel concerned about the topic. She rarely finds herself discussing climate change with others as she doesn't feel she knows enough about the subject. Sharon recycles plastic in her home and thinks she will need to get an electric car in the future due to petrol cars eventually being phased out.

Overall, Sharon feels optimistic that the UK will be able to cut down carbon emissions by 2050, and she believes the council is doing what it can to promote the use of trains and buses and introduce cycle lanes throughout the city.

“The councils are doing their best to make more cycle lanes throughout the city, and it's what you see mostly being advertised and promoted. You are encouraged not to use your car in town, and to either take the train or a bus.”



03 What does Net Zero mean to our Diarists?

The majority of diarists think that 2050 is a sensible and realistic deadline for the UK to achieve Net Zero.



Ultimately, diarists believe that large-scale cultural and economic shift is required in order to meet this target.



However, some more knowledgeable diarists believe that 2050 is too late to avert crisis, believing the damage has already been done and significant action is required with greater urgency.



Climate change is a more familiar term than Net Zero, but diarists tend to see it through the lens of impact rather than mitigation

77%
Agree

Nat rep polling: 56%

Climate change impacts my life as an individual

Changing weather patterns are the first thing most people think of when we mention climate change. But for most people this is simply an observation, with little *real* impact on their day-to-day lives.

"Change in the weather for example getting hotter earlier in the year" (General public)

Others, however, have already been impacted by extreme weather in the UK, e.g., extensive flooding.

"I'm seeing the level of the ground that new housing is being built on, and I think oh we're going to flood even more. That worries me a lot. I'm of an age where I've seen the climate changing." (Engaged consumer)

The mitigating behaviours individuals can take to combat climate change and contribute to Net Zero are less top of mind in terms of how climate change is currently impacting diarists' day-to-day lives.

When we asked what Net Zero means we heard everything from confusion to scepticism, but few textbook answers

"I'm not exactly sure what Net Zero means, it's really for everyone to do their bit by 2050, that's how I see it."
(Sharon)

"For me, Net Zero would be, let's say for anything, in finance Net Zero would be that your outgoing is balanced with your income so your energy used is offput by energy produced by energy produced." (Peter)

"The message has changed over the years. People are telling us that we can use the building back better of things to work towards a Net Zero carbon environment."
(Geoff)

General positive vibes – Some detail but not the whole picture – Suspicion and mistrust

"For me, I'm in my mid 40s and interested in these kinds of things. In school it wasn't something that was talked about really. Net Zero's something very recent. I personally wouldn't be able to talk about Net Zero." (Mizel)

"Reducing the packaging, electric cars, things like that, that impacts our daily lives. We are heading the right direction I think." (Neil)

"It's a sneaky way of promising to do something, calling it Net Zero is a clever way for corporations to seem that they care at all about the environment." (Jawad)

Despite the lack of consensus on what it means, 4 in 5 diarists feel reaching Net Zero by 2050 or sooner is reasonable for the UK

Please indicate which statement comes closest to your view
showing % selecting

The UK's target to become Net Zero by 2050 sounds reasonable, and we should aim to achieve this goal either by 2050 or sooner where possible.

86%

The UK's target to become Net Zero by 2050 sounds too close, and we need to move more gradually to meet this goal over a longer period of time.

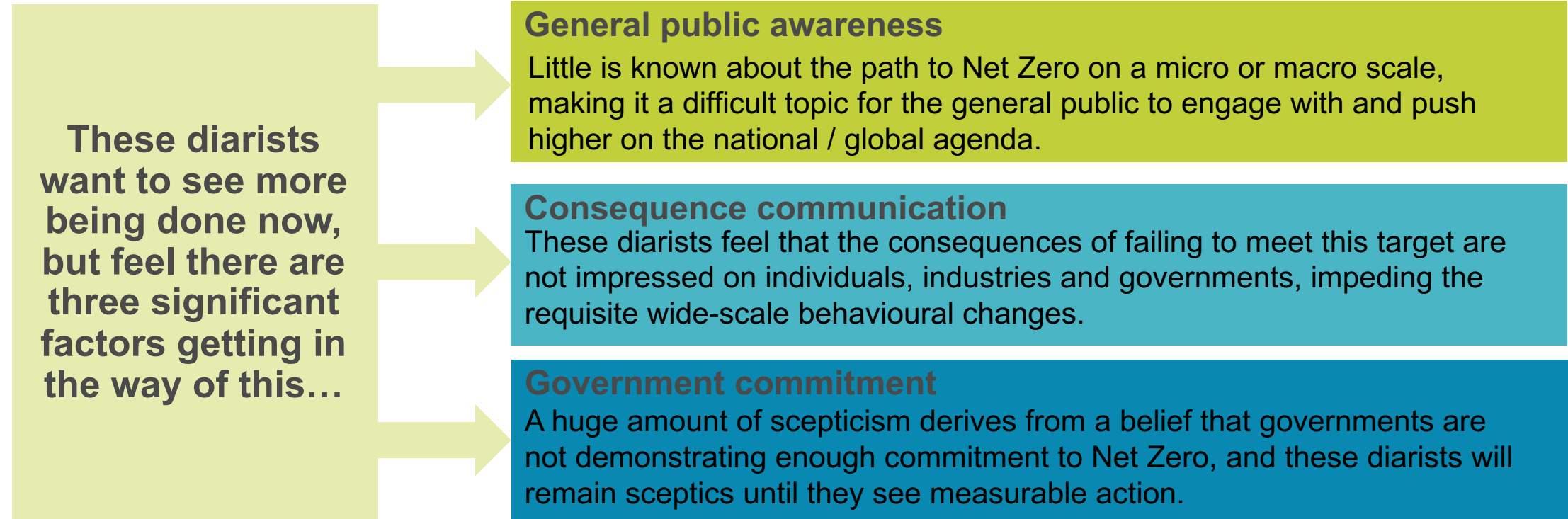
14%

Having targets is seen as important as it gives society a concrete goal to work towards and creates concrete proof points to help people understand if measures are working.

- Most diarists say the **current Net Zero target feels appropriate** and **appreciate the sense of urgency** it gives to the need for foundational changes.
- However, they believe that responsibility for this target (and failure if it can't be met) shouldn't fall squarely on them; this was particularly emphasised by low carbon home diarists.
- Less optimistic diarists worry that the **necessary energy production, transport, and building infrastructure** is not in place to make carbon neutrality a realistic goal.

"If we carry along what we are doing in the next 20-30 years, realistically we will have made progress. Targets written down are really important to see." (General public)

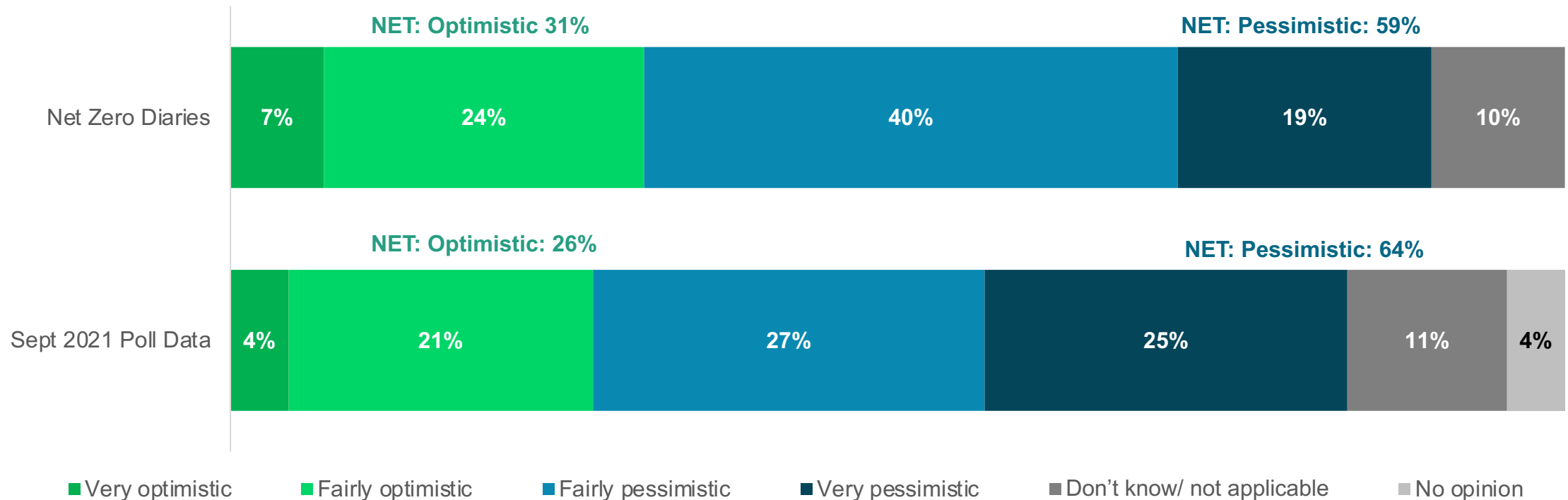
However some of the more engaged diarists feel that reaching Net Zero by 2050 is too late to avert a climate crisis



"If your house is on fire, you must put out the fire in the whole building, not just in one room. You can't cherry pick which room to tackle. Much more must be done. 2050 is too late, change needs to be radical." (Engaged citizen)

Our diarists were more likely to be pessimistic about reaching Net Zero than optimistic, consistent with the national picture

Views on the UK's chances of cutting its carbon emissions to become 'Net Zero' by 2050

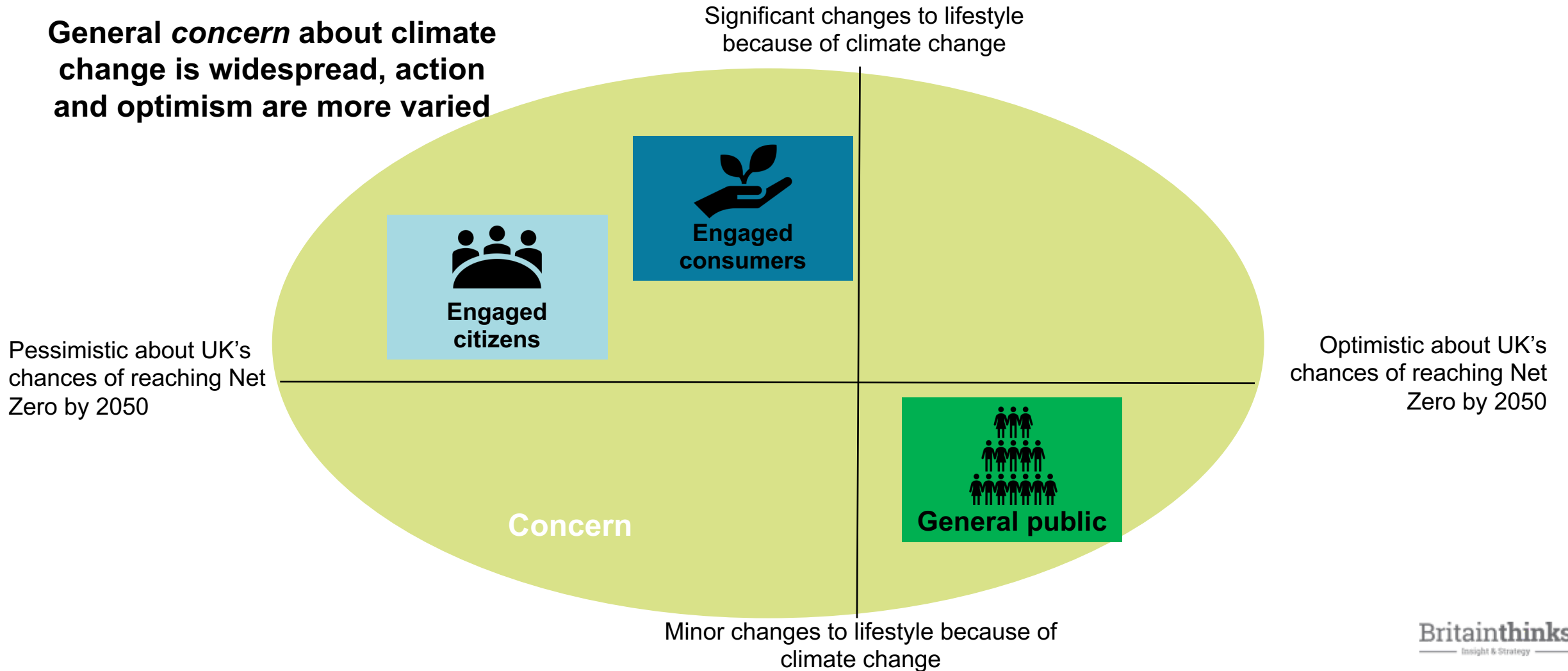


Net Zero Diarists. Q. Thinking about the next few years, how optimistic or pessimistic do you feel about each of the UK's chances of cutting its carbon emissions to become 'net zero' by 2050? (n=42)

BritainThinks Mood of the Nation. Q3. Thinking about the next few years, how optimistic or pessimistic do you feel about each of the following? The UK's chances of cutting its carbon emissions to become 'net zero' by 2050. Base: All respondents (n=2,071)

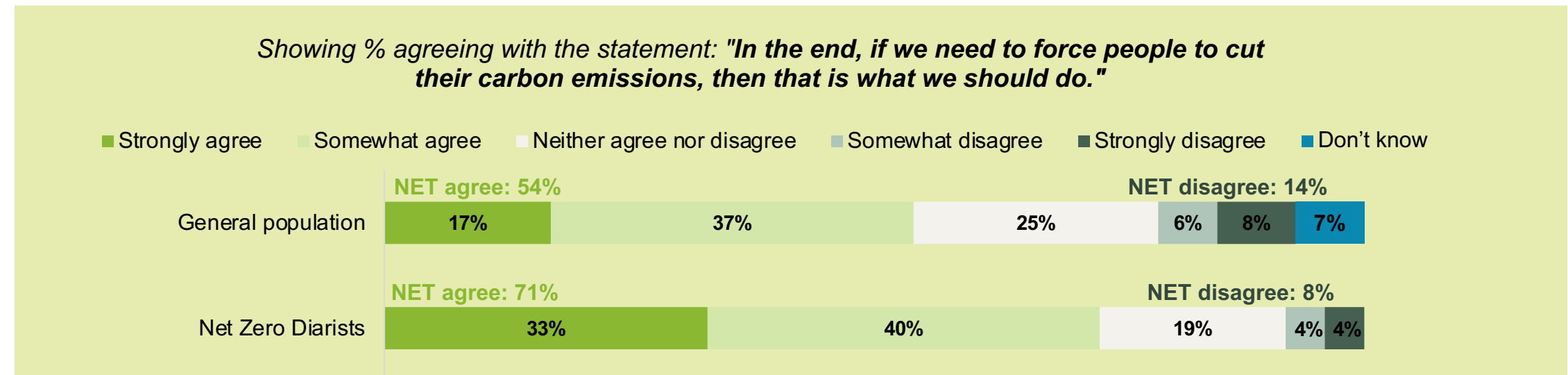
The more engaged diarists are typically even more pessimistic, reflecting their greater awareness of the scale of the challenge

General *concern* about climate change is widespread, action and optimism are more varied



Two thirds of our diarists say that individuals may need to be forced to cut their carbon emissions, and half of the general population agree

- A majority of the UK general public, and an even greater proportion of Net Zero diarists (over 2 in 3), are concerned about individuals' willingness to make changes to their own behaviour without being forced to do so, but when spontaneously considering mechanisms for this, many (e.g. taxes, bans and penalties) were highly unpopular. Diarists feel this calls for greater leadership from government to ensure deadlines are not missed, however some caution is required so as to not alienate citizens.



"The government needs to step up and get that information out there. At least offer a starting point of how can I lower my carbon emissions." (Engaged Consumer)

Net Zero Diaries. Q7. Using the below scale, to what extent do you agree with the following statement: In the end, if we need to force people to cut their carbon emissions, then that is what we should do. Base: All respondents (n=43)
Britainthinks Mood of the Nation. Q:6 Thinking about the UK as a whole, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? In the end, if we need to force people to cut their carbon emissions, then that is what we should do. Base: All respondents (n=2071)

04 What are our Diarists doing to reach Net Zero?

Our diarists all claim to make changes to their lives due to concerns about climate but they do so to very differing degrees*

↑ Example behaviours ↓	 Engaged citizens	 Engaged consumers	 General public
	Are making active changes to lifestyle, often inconvenient ones and often incurring costs in the process		Prioritise cost / convenience over sustainability
	Re-use and recycle		Recycle
	Reduced consumption & informed consumption choices (e.g., less packaging, less food miles, energy efficient appliances)		Try and buy local (when possible)
	Reduced travel and alternative means of travel		Being mindful of transport modes
	Changes to diet (i.e., less meat)		Being mindful of diet choices
	Changes to heating/ energy generation in the home		Monitor - and try to save on - utility usage
	<i>"I've invested in solar panels, use energy efficient white goods, recycle waste and buy from charity shops as well as donate. I have vegetarian meals throughout the week where possible." (Engaged citizen)</i>	<i>"We're getting a heat source pump so that we won't have to rely on our boiler. We recycle our rubbish and we try to buy from local shops that don't use plastic on their fruit and veg." (Engaged consumer)</i>	<i>"I have cut down on how much meat we eat during the week (as well as for health reasons). I also try to save on electricity etc by making sure things are turned off." (General public)</i>

*Whilst this finding broadly reflects our recruitment criteria, it is significant that the general public tended to have low awareness of some of the carbon reduction steps available to them that our more engaged diarists are already taking

Transport, heating, electricity use and diet are all seen as effective individual actions, with political action seen as least relevant

Changing the way you heat your home, and eating less meat were seen as more effective by the most engaged participants, while transport was prioritised most consistently.

Most effective

Choosing to take public transport, walk or cycle and using your car less

Changing the way you heat your home.

Finding ways to minimise energy use in your home.

Purchasing an electric or hybrid car.

Eating more fruit and vegetables, and less meat.

Consciously reducing the amount you fly, either for business or holidays.

Shopping regularly at refill stores where there is no plastic packaging waste.

Purchasing sustainably produced products.

Paying more for environmentally friendly services like renewable electricity.

Acting as an influential voice on climate change within your local community/friends/family.

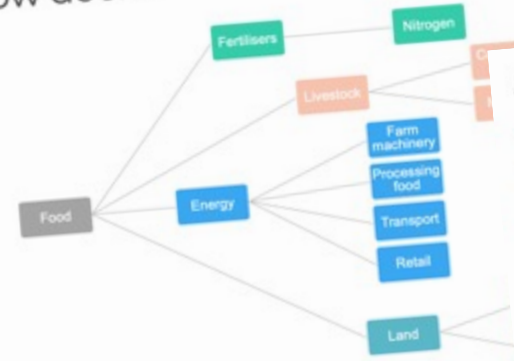
Being politically active around climate change issues e.g. taking part in a protest.

In this first workshop we focused on three topics: transport, home energy use and food, with experts providing evidence on each

Examples of specialist stimulus shown to diarists



How does food relate to climate change?



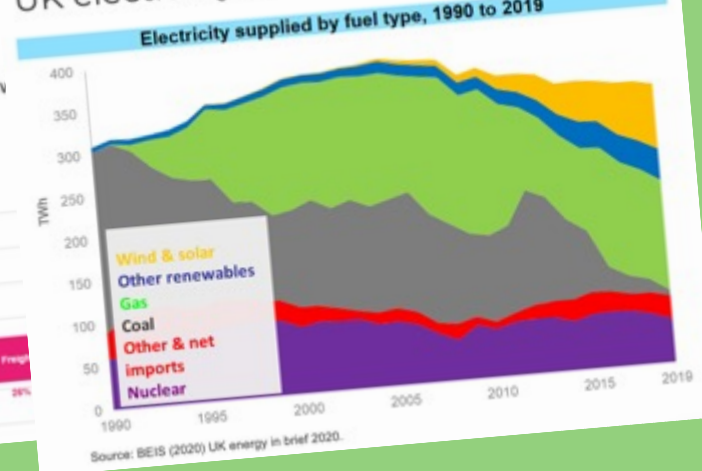
Tubiello et al (2021)

Avoid – Shift – Improve

- **Avoid** = try not to travel. Includes individual choices, too.
- **Shift** = move to more efficient modes.
- **Improve** = improve least efficient modes.



UK electricity generation – 1990 to 2019



This expert information paved the way for diarists to discuss what would and wouldn't be acceptable to them in their own lives when thinking about how emissions might be reduced in each area.

Diarists struggle to see how Net Zero will be reached unless lower-emission transport methods, their systems and prices are adjusted

There is broad acknowledgement that the UK population is overly reliant on cars as a means of transport. Diarists feel that if public transport networks across the country were improved in terms of their efficiency, accessibility and cost, individuals and families would feel more motivated to make use of them.

Rail network

High ticket costs and unreliable trains are connected to the rail system being privatised and unregulated. Many diarists are calling for the rail system to be renationalised so that journeys are more affordable and reliable.

Cycle lanes

Cycle lanes are widely perceived as unsafe and poorly connected. Many diarists believe there is low usage of cycle lanes in their local area and feel more needs to be done to make these usable along commuter routes.

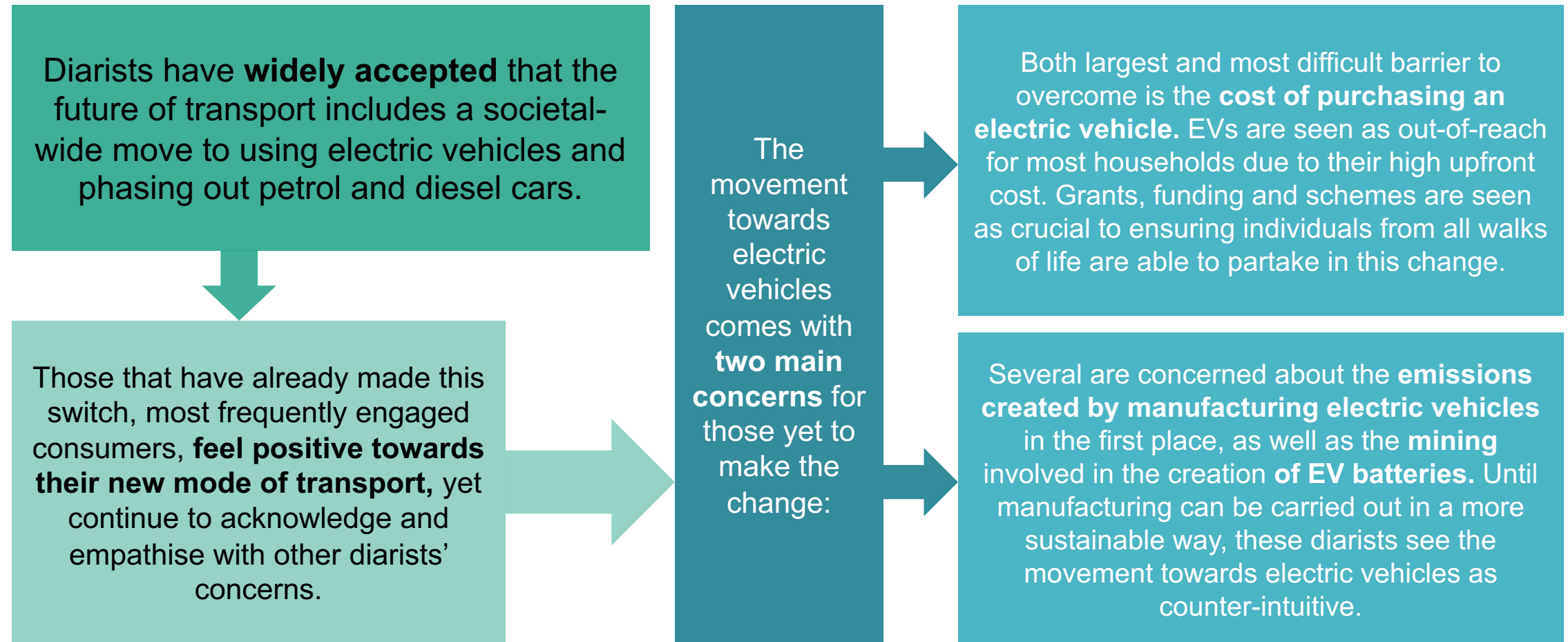
Air travel

Larger systems change is felt to be needed when it comes to air travel, with a strong belief from some that planes will continue to fly with or without passengers on board unless significant numbers change their holidaying habits.

Freight

Air and road freight is seen as a frequently ignored yet important area to address, though there is low awareness that some lorries are beginning to use more climate-friendly fuel sources, e.g. hydrogen.

Most diarists are open to using an electric car, but have concerns when making this switch about the impact on the environment and their wallet



Housing developers are seen to hold an important key in decarbonising new-build homes and helping to create 'a new normal'

Diarists believe the government has an important role to play in setting higher expectations for housing developers, manufacturers and suppliers to ensure they build with the UK's Net Zero target top-of-mind.

While retrofitting homes is not something that diarists are entirely against, it is seen as a cumbersome and expensive task and not one that all will be able to carry out. Many diarists therefore **feel anger towards housing developers** who waste opportunities to build more climate-friendly developments and in turn, set the tone for the development of future communities.

Diarists support the phasing out of fossil fuel boilers in new-build homes, and feel the **incorporation of cheap solutions** such as solar panels should be **delivered as standard** on new housing developments where these can be sourced in bulk.



Diarists with low-carbon energy systems in place generally have positive experiences, and those without are keen to learn more

Diarists with prior experience:

While *most* diarists with low-carbon energy systems have these in place in order to reduce their home's carbon emissions, a handful reported **other reasons** for this including living in an area without gas supply, having bought a house with the system already in place, or having received a government grant (particularly for Diarists living in Wales). It therefore **cannot be assumed that all individuals with low-carbon energy systems** in their home **are engaged consumers** who are concerned about the climate.

Diarists who had prior experience of the **Green Homes Grant** were particularly negative about the scheme, referencing slow processing, inadequate funding and poor communication. This left them feeling as though the onus was solely on them and they were not being met halfway by the grant provider, further reinforcing the view that the government are insufficiently committed to the Net Zero cause.

Diarists without prior experience:

Retrofitting current home energy systems is something many diarists from the general public **are interested in learning more about** from engaged consumers that have already been on these journeys.

Installing **solar panels** or **double-glazing** or improving **home insulation** are seen as more reasonable first-steps to make, however in order to do this, it will be crucial that grants are provided to offset the financial burden that most are unable to carry.

More substantial changes such as moving to heat pumps are **inconceivable** for most due to a lack of understanding and awareness of them, as well as their high cost and lack of funding.

Adapting one home is seen to contribute far less to the Net Zero goal than combining forces and working as a community to reduce emissions



Given the perceived procrastination of government bodies and large numbers of demotivated individuals, engaged consumers and engaged citizens voiced their enthusiasm for **more local and community-based approaches to energy supply**.



These approaches were felt to be particularly effective solutions for **more urban areas** where individuals are less likely to have the **funds** or the **space** to retrofit their homes in comparison to more rural-based homeowners. Example approaches included:



Thinking practically about the local landscape and **using abandoned areas** e.g. disused coal mines to install **district heat generators** that can power local housing developments.



Installing **solar panels** across terraced housing to power homes, which then feeds surplus energy back into the grid for even more homes to use.

Buying organic or more locally-sourced food is already a fairly well engrained concept in diarists' mindsets – even for the general public

Although diarists tend to have a **poor understanding of *why* purchasing locally-sourced food** may or may not be effective in reducing emissions, most are willing to or are already doing this.

Some diarists called for a **lowering of the nation's dietary expectations**, increasing consumption of seasonal or visually-imperfect produce rather than consuming out-of-season, perfect produce year round.

Some engaged diarists **highlight concerns over the link between diets and land**, in particular deforestation. However, the general public's main food issues **remain quite simple**, centring on plastics, waste and carbon footprint/miles.



Most diarists across groups are willing to **pay slightly more for organic** produce (with some conflating this with a reduction in carbon emissions), however the idea of **taxing** environmentally-unfriendly food items is not supported, as diarists feel that the sugar-levy or increased taxes on cigarettes did little to influence decision-making habits.

Brexit is seen to offer both an **opportunity** to improve and tighten food standards - particularly when it comes to meat - as well as an added **challenge** for UK farming. Farmers in the UK are perceived to be suffering to make ends meet financially which in turn raises concerns about the country's ability to eat more sustainably in coming years.

All diarists are willing - in principle - to decrease the amount of meat they consume, but more direction is needed around alternative diets

Diarists, including less-concerned individuals within the general public, state they would be **willing and happy to substitute** an amount of their meals containing meat for non-meat alternatives. While this is perceived to be a reasonable 'ask', removing meat entirely from meat-eaters diets is a non-negotiable.

That being said, vegan and vegetarian brands in supermarkets are currently perceived by meat-eaters to be **unwelcoming** in tone, branding and positioning, with a shift needed in order to attract and encourage others to adopt them into their diets in a non-exclusive way.

Directional guidance is seen as necessary by both adopters and non-adopters of non-traditional diets in order to **inform individuals about alternative protein sources** and **plant-based meals** that are still **cost-effective**. Even diarists who have been committed to vegan diets in the long-term feel very little is currently being done to entice or widen the pool of knowledge so that more individuals are inspired by the potential for tasty, flavourful and affordable climate-friendly meals.



Supermarkets are felt to have a key responsibility in rapidly reducing the amount of plastic associated with purchasing food

What is currently being done?

There is **little sympathy** for supermarkets who are perceived to be reducing the amount of plastic on goods at a lethargic rate.

This is a strong, top-of-mind concern that Diarists raised spontaneously. They feel that individuals could do more to put pressure on supermarkets to make these changes, but ultimately see the **companies** themselves as well as the **government** as the key players who have the power to bring about these changes, with the plastic bag ban seen as a successful example.

Implementation of **deadlines** is seen as a reasonable tool in order to speed up this process.

What else could be done?

A widely supported solution for decreasing plastic usage is **refill stations** which many diarists across all groups are keen to see more of. They believe refill stations should be offered on a more frequent basis around communities, including within online grocery shopping tools.

Some diarists question why large chain **supermarkets** are not also able to offer refill stations within their stores, rather than this responsibility falling solely on independent stores.

How could they do it?

Diarists across both urban and rural locations are also keen to see reassurance from supermarkets that their **home deliveries** are being completed in a **sustainable** way with electric or hydrogen vehicles.

Post-Covid-19 is seen as an opportunity for supermarket brands to **leverage** the public's increased **reliance on home deliveries**, and reduce the number of individual journeys being made as well as the stores' carbon footprint.

Diarists across all cohorts told us they are happy to continue playing their part to help reach the nation's Net Zero target.



An immediate step change in responsibility by both the UK government and private corporations is felt to be crucial in order to see the necessary results.



However, there is a commonly held view that too much emphasis has been put on individual action in recent years, and too little has been required of government and private corporations.



Government is seen as having both the most responsibility for action on climate change and the highest potential to effect change

72%

Feel that government bodies have the most responsibility for impacting climate change on a global scale

Nat rep poll 54%

53%

Feel that government bodies have the *most* potential to impact climate change on a global scale

Nat rep poll 37%

However most diarists, in particular engaged consumers and citizens, have serious concerns about how realistic it is to expect the Government to step up in the necessary timeframe:

- There is scepticism from some, particularly the more engaged cohort, about whether Government will commit to action that may be unpopular.
- Others feel they haven't seen sufficient action taken to date to give them confidence that enough will be done going forward.

Despite their conviction about Government responsibility, few had clear ideas about what type of Government action they were looking for.

"I don't see a great deal of change at the moment. At the moment it is all talk, we need to see it in practice, and we need the government to set more and smaller goals." (General public)

Q3. From the following options, who do you think has the most potential to impact climate change on a global scale? Base: All respondents (n=43), Nat rep polling (n=2087)

Few participants think the private sector has the same responsibility as government, but they still expect to see sweeping changes

21%

Nat rep poll 13%

Feel that private sector companies have the **most responsibility for impacting climate change on a global scale**

5%

Nat rep poll 25%

Feel that private sector companies have the **most potential to impact climate change on a global scale**

Restructuring some of the country's largest industry sectors is seen as a necessary step towards net-zero:

- However very few diarists feel confident that private companies will willingly go against their profit-orientated goals to make these changes without being forced to by government.
- There is real scepticism from many about business commitments and greenwashing.
- As a result, diarists feel the government needs to put plans, deadlines and fines in place so that private companies will be sufficiently motivated to make these changes amongst themselves.

"I think the only way big companies will listen to the government is if they talk their language. Corporations talk in the language of profit, and so it's up to the government to incentivize these companies." (General public)

Q2. From the following options, who do you think is most responsible for tackling climate change on a global scale? Base: All respondents (n=43), Nat rep polling (n=2087)

While the need for individual action is acknowledged, diarists are wary of being scapegoated as a distraction from real change

23%

Nat rep poll 18%

Feel that individuals have the most responsibility for impacting climate change on a global scale

21%

Nat rep poll 21%

Feel that individuals have the *most* potential to impact climate change on a global scale

Diarists from both more- and less-informed cohorts acknowledge there are still many individuals in the UK who are yet to make changes to their lifestyles in order to reduce their emissions:

- Cost is widely perceived to be the biggest barrier to more individuals making lifestyle changes, with electric cars, solar panels and public transport all seen as highly impactful in helping to reduce emissions, yet financially out of reach for most.

"It's not always just direct costs. For example, to be able to put in solid wall insulation, we would lose a lot of floor space. You'd have to pay for new flooring and redecorating. You might find that the cost of insulation is 'x', but it's three times that when you look at the cost of putting everything in." (General public)

- The introduction of more cost-effective strategies such as grants, or more affordable payment options are seen as a necessary step to breaking down this initial adoption barrier.

"My local area gets a bad reputation for not caring about the environment, but it's unfair because lots of funds that go to other areas are taken away from us. The government needs to listen to the concerns of all the different people." (Engaged consumer)

Q2. From the following options, who do you think is most responsible for tackling climate change on a global scale? Base: All respondents (n=43), Nat rep polling (n=2087)

There is a strong sense amongst diarists that individual action alone, whilst playing a role, isn't going to be enough

Especially amongst the more engaged diarists there is an understanding that change needs to be made on a more systemic level, with the onus on Government(s) to lead the way. However, perceived lack of action is fueling pessimism as to the UK's chances of reaching Net Zero by 2050.

“There needs to be some clear guidance which everyone, including government and business, is directed to follow.” (Engaged citizen)

“I believe that beyond making sure to cut down on plastic usage, recycling and other small day to day choices the onus is on big corporations and governments to solve the problem. The average person is overall powerless.” (Engaged consumer)

“Governments need to actually show their commitment by doing rather than just putting ideas on a bit of paper and paying lip service to it!” (General public)

06 How are our Diarists' views changing?

Talking to each other, and listening to evidence, changes people's understandings and views

Those who had taken part in a previous Citizens' Assembly or Jury reported changes to their lives and outlooks as a result:

"We've become more expert from this experience, and it's give us much more of a broad view.... A more public view of all the aspects that need taking into account" (Engaged citizen)

"I feel more confidence talking to other people about climate change" (Engaged Citizen)

In their discussions, diarists tended to be sensitive of other people's situations and outlooks. As our community develops, we expect the diarists to learn from each others' lives:

"I said that we have these different energy saving tools in our house - I wouldn't want anyone walking away from this session feeling that I was 'better' because I had done those things.... I wouldn't judge anyone who wasn't doing that." (Engaged Consumer)

07 Coming up in the next issue

Reflecting our diarists belief that individual action alone isn't enough we'll be focusing on the political sphere in wave two

- We'll be digging into the political views of our Diarists, with a debate on climate justice and reactions to party conference speeches on climate.

"It becomes a cross-party politics issue. Unless they unite and decide on a vision and take the issue out of the political realm, I think it will just be a vote-winner where politicians say, 'We can do things without impacting people's lives', when, in reality, harder decisions need to be made."
(Engaged consumer)

- And in the diaries we'll follow up on Net Zero behaviours, with a focus on how energy price changes may influence both attitudes and behaviours.

A black and white photograph of a grand classical building, likely a government or institutional structure, featuring a large fountain in the foreground. The building has multiple stories with many windows and a central dome. In the foreground, there is a statue on a pedestal and a lamppost. The text "To find out more" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

To find out more

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