



Wave 2: What do citizens want from government?



What do citizens want from government? Key findings from wave 2

1.

Diarists are calling for a unified, state-wide approach to Net Zero that political parties all get behind, replicating the urgency and collaboration seen during the response to Covid-19.

2.

They want to see a step change in the way government communicates about the climate in order to build public confidence. This should address the lack of a clear narrative to date which has left diarists unsure of how Net Zero will be achieved in reality.

3.

Ultimately, climate change feels like an overly-politicised, contentious and divisive issue. While diarists feel there is an appropriate reliance on central government to tackle this, they have low trust in politicians' propensity and motivations to follow through within the necessary timeframe.

4.

Above all, diarists want to see a positive and clear vision for the transition to Net Zero. This should include strong accountability for how we will get there which is backed up by concrete incentives, consistent tracking, and interventions or penalties where appropriate.

5.

Despite the importance of fairness for diarists within the Net Zero transition in principle, this is not a concept that many have actively considered before in relation to climate change, and there focus is primarily on inequalities in the UK.

01 Introducing 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 is why over 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 (n=8):** who have taken part in a process like a Climate Assembly or Jury.
- **Engaged consumers (n=18):** 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 (n=17):** a representative sample of the UK public, with a mix of views on climate change.

The project is running for four months, from the first session in September to December 2021 – covering party conferences, COP26, the Net Zero strategy and more. This report covers wave 2, which focused on politics.

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.

The second edition of the Diaries dives into the role of government on the road to Net Zero

1

The path to Net Zero: how our Diarists think politics needs to change

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Net Zero in the UK: the strategies our Diarists support

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A just Net Zero: how to balance the interests of all

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What's changed for our Diarists so far

02 The path to Net Zero: how our Diarists think politics needs to change

While COP26 represents an exciting opportunity for the UK to work collaboratively with other nations, there are concerns that the conference will not lead to any real change at a domestic level.



A new stepchange is needed, and our diarists call for a collective approach and accountability. They ask government to learn from another recent global crisis – the Covid-19 pandemic.



Diarists feel uninspired by the government's track record so far on climate, and point to the absence of a clear, unified narrative. Few diarists have a clear picture of *how* Net Zero will be reached in practice.



With just days to go until COP26, we dug into what diarists think about and expect from this year's conference

- Diarists see COP26 as a big opportunity for the UK government to work together with the rest of the world to tackle climate change.
- There is a general understanding that global leaders will be gathering to discuss what each of their nations can do to help reach Net Zero.
- Diarists from engaged cohorts are acutely aware that the conference is coming up and understand its importance, whereas our general public sample start with some awareness that the conference is happening but understand very little about its aims.

For diarists, the idea of the UK leveraging COP26 to become a 'global leader' generated mixed views on what this should involve:

Some argued the UK *should* be a global leader because:

The UK contributed a large proportion to historic emissions, and it therefore has a responsibility to lead the way to a greener economy globally. Some diarists also questioned why the UK hasn't already been doing this.

Whereas others argued the UK *shouldn't* be a global leader because:

The UK government should be focussing its' attention on getting its own house in order and reducing our emissions rather than dedicating time and resource to leading other countries.

Diarists have low expectations for COP26 and don't trust that the government will act in the best interests of the planet

- There is strong concern among all diarists that the UK government will be unable to move past party interests and effect real change over the coming years. They describe:
 - A sense that climate change has been overly-politicized and is generally used as a vote winner rather than a true government priority.
 - A perception that efforts so far to tackle climate change have been unmonitored.
 - A lack of confidence in the government's ability to achieve large-scale change in the required timeframe.
- Diarists are also sceptical about the volume of emissions that the conference itself will produce. Many feel there is an irony in gathering leaders from different corners of the world, particularly following the widespread adaptations of Covid-19 where important conferences were successfully held online.

What do diarists want to see come out of COP26?

International working relationships built between the UK and other nations

Domestic relationships built between the government, private/public companies and individuals

"Debating and making pledges is one thing, are they going to Act?" (Engaged Citizen)

"It isn't a political battle but something that needs to be a joint political decision. If it's joint we will have better outcomes."
(General Public)

This lack of belief in government to take appropriate action comes after years of politicians seeming to deprioritise the climate crisis

Across all cohorts, we heard consistent themes emerge:

No government has **made climate action a priority** yet.

This means they haven't taken action and **targets have been missed.**

Nobody has **taken responsibility** for those missed targets.

And there's **no clear narrative** for how things will need to change for Net Zero.

“The people with their hands on the levers of power are not bothered doing anything about climate change.” (General Public)

Although the details, for example which targets have been missed, aren't always clear to people.

Diarists strongly believe that the government needs to step up and approach the climate crisis in a different way

Diarists believe that in order to enable real progress towards Net Zero, a **unified state-wide approach** will need to be implemented. Diarists call for:

Prioritising 'a collective approach'

Ultimately, diarists feel that it is the duty of the UK government to lead, by **enabling lasting Net Zero changes** to take place.

Central to this is the **facilitation of strong, collaborative working relationships** between individuals, communities, public and private sectors which aim to share the distribution of costs and responsibility in a fair and practical way.



Learning from the Covid-19 pandemic

Whilst some diarists feel that achieving collective action is unrealistic, many point to the response to the pandemic as **proof that politicians can work across the political, economic and individual spectrum** to force uncomfortable changes when needed.

However, for this argument to carry weight, our diarists feel that the government **must raise the response to climate change to the same level of urgency** as the early response to Covid-19.

"When the govt wanted to be proactive with getting covid deaths down...they took a proactive and committed processes, who paid for it? The government. If you applied the same principle to this..." (General public)



***"Covid showed us how quickly we can adapt if we have to - we can do this- and we have to!"
(General public)***

Given the complexity of the issues, participants responded positively to a framework for *how* a ‘just’ transition could work

Six experts attended the workshop to debate with diarists how a ‘just’ Net Zero transition could be achieved.

One expert from the NEF (New Economics Foundation) introduced a framework that set out clear guidelines for how to reach Net Zero. For those diarists that heard it, this framework stood out and helped to crystallise ‘fairness’ by **highlighting three areas that are particularly important** to them on the road to Net Zero:

	Framework element	Context	What stood out to diarists?
1	Distributional	The costs - as well as the benefits - of the transition are fairly distributed.	Does not unfairly impact those on lower incomes
2	Procedural	The right people are present at the table when decisions are being made	Changes are made with those they will impact most in the front seat
3	Recognition	We recognise that we will all experience the transition differently.	Being considerate and respectful of everyone’s varying journeys

“We need to think about the poor and change our system to something which actually accepts that we are living in a global community.” (Engaged Consumer)

“A lot of people who are on low incomes are living in council accommodation... The first thing they could do is make their own properties more eco-efficient.” (General Public)

Diarists also want to see government track the nation's progress towards Net Zero and be accountable when targets are missed



Helping to move individuals away from unhelpful associations with environmental action could also help to engage more of the public

As cited in other climate-related literature, there is work to be done in reframing how the public think about climate change.*

A better story to tell

For less engaged diarists, views and opinions of the climate crisis are currently fuelled predominantly by the media. This means that spontaneous associations with tackling climate change are:

Current media narratives

Taking extreme action

Standing out from the crowd

Leading a lifestyle without any modern day luxuries

Disrupting this mindset and helping to reframe climate change will be crucial in getting larger proportions of the public on board. Climate change needs to be viewed as:

An urgent and current issue

An issue we will all make changes for

An issue within which everyone's voice is powerful and needed

**Bulletin of the World Health Organization "Reframing climate change as a health issue"*
Oxford Handbooks "Climate Change and Society: Approaches and Responses; Chapter 3; The Public Realm, and its Problems"

Protesting is considered one of the more powerful civic actions, diarists are divided on how to go about it

Diarists widely associate protesting in the arena of climate change with large-scale protest groups such as Extinction Rebellion or Insulate Britain. They are seen to take **extreme forms** of action that draw attention to the cause.

While protesting is considered one of the more powerful civic actions, there are mixed opinions about the form this should take. Diarists tend to be divided on this and fall into two distinct groups:

The first group of diarists think that raising awareness and the salience of climate change by any means possible is a positive thing to do – even if this means using extreme measures to do so. For these diarists, **the more people that are now talking about climate change as a result of such protests, the better.**

"The goal of these groups is to raise awareness of the issue, and you can't really argue about whether they've achieved that." (Engaged Consumer)

The second group of diarists feel that using extreme measures as part of protests (as well as the media coverage which comes with this) leads to an alienation of people away from joining the cause. Given the broad agreement amongst diarists that only a minority of the population that are fully on board with the climate change cause, protesting in the right way is incredibly important. **While protesting itself is not seen as a bad thing by this group, they believe it should be done in a positive and more peaceful way in order to have the most impact.**

"We need to get the most people we can on board, and I don't think causing hold-ups on the motorway really encourages people to take this seriously." (General Public)

03 Net Zero in the UK: the strategies our Diarists support



"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 – Wave 1)

Diarists feel disempowered by the current political system on a domestic level, and are often sceptical about the power their vote has in creating positive change for the environment.



Above all else, they are looking for a level of accountability that they feel is missing from UK politics.



They strongly feel that Net Zero should be an issue that political parties unify behind, but have low confidence that this will actually happen.



There is a widely held opinion that the climate is a politicised issue, which may hold back any transition towards Net Zero



"The truth is that we can't affect change unless we win the votes, so politicians have to lie first to get the power and then try to make real change later." (Engaged Consumer)

Diarists' scepticism and fears over hypocrisy is also evident in response to recent climate announcements

- Boris Johnson's September 2021 speech to the UN proved polarizing for our diarists; whilst some felt reassured and hopeful (particularly in the general public group), many others were **highly sceptical**.
- Sceptical diarists described the speech as **'hot air'** and vote-seeking, feeling the article took a 'pro-Boris' stance.
- Diarists also expressed concern about the **hypocrisy** of telling other countries what to do when we have not taken substantive action ourselves.
- Finally, they felt it is important to communicate both the **urgency of the situation and specific actions** that individuals and companies should be taking to reduce their carbon emissions; in doing so, political engagement would feel actionable and proactive, as opposed to a profile-raising exercise.

'I would communicate how important it is that we act now to stop any further damage caused by humans! If everyone makes little changes, eventually it would become a new way of living.' (General Public)



'He wants other countries to do more but he should start with our own country doing what we can to reduce climate change asap!' (Engaged Consumer)

'The consequences are important to show, e.g. how it would affect people now and their family. We need to shock people into action.' (Engaged Consumer)

Diarists were shown this news article and asked for their views: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-58657887>

When given anonymised party manifestos* on climate to review, diarists preferred those with a stronger positive vision for a Net Zero society

	Party 1	Party 2	Party 3	Party 4
Ranking	2 nd	Joint 4 th	1 st	Joint 4 th
Rationale	Seen as the most ambitious and positive plan, but some felt it wasn't realistic. Sounded like somewhere people would want to live.	Less standout policies, didn't feel visionary. Support from some for steelmaking, others felt focus on keeping benefits in the UK was short sighted.	Diarists supported national transport and energy companies to accelerate change, Green Jobs fund, and seen as setting clear targets (e.g. reduction in car use).	Felt less clear and visionary, support for specific heat pumps target. Some participants cautious about nuclear and CCS.

Although this doesn't mean they wouldn't prioritise other elements of each parties policies in deciding how to vote...

Diarists preferred strategies that prioritised home energy and transport use whilst still stressing the aim to collaborate internationally

Party 3: SNP (45% of total vote)		Party 1: Greens (29% of total vote)	
What worked? • ‘National’ companies give strong sense of control • Community, as well as national, focus • Promises and time frames seem reasonable/achievable	What didn’t work? • Nationalisation may be prohibited by cost • Limited mention of international collaboration	What worked? • Investment in 100% renewable energy • Improve insulation of every UK home • Focus on cooperation on global scale	What didn’t work? • Overly ambitious; good in principle, but too many sweeping changes to be realistic
Party 4: Conservatives (13% of total vote)		Party 2: Labour (13% of total vote)	
What worked? • Heat pump roll out is popular • Investment in offshore and floating wind farms • Investment in decarbonising industry	What didn’t work? • Inclusion of nuclear energy • Feels isolated and doesn’t reflect UK’s global role • More platitudes than others (e.g. planting trees)	What worked? • Strong focus on carbon emissions from industry (particularly green steel) • Scale of job creation • Focus on cost of public transport (too far for some)	What didn’t work? • Felt vague and non-committal • Benefits of going green staying in the UK feels tone deaf • Sense of UK-wide division

It is important to note that transport pledges were well received across all manifestos, and any policies that actively encourage and simplify the use of public transport are appreciated

The manifestos also raised some significant areas of concern with how prepared the UK is to track and implement Net Zero goals

Numbers over 'substance'	General infrastructure	Hydrogen & nuclear
• Diarists (particularly general public) felt a reliance on large numbers created cognitive overload and would be difficult to track • However they also called for the creation of a transparent approach to Net Zero that included regular progress updates from the Government • Considering this conflict, Net Zero progress needs to be tracked in ways that are simple, easy to digest and tangible • This will ensure the public feel that there is clear accountability for government, industry and communities, and reassure them that changes they are making or experiencing on a personal level are having impact	• Some diarists questioned whether enough consideration is given to infrastructure upgrades to match the level of investment promised in renewable energy • Specifically, they highlighted concerns with the capabilities of the electricity grid to store/utilise wind energy and manage increased demand from electric vehicles • Diarists are seeking more clarity in this space to reassure them that policy decisions are built on considered planning and foresight	• Both proved to be contentious issues with relatively high salience but low understanding amongst diarists • Hydrogen: diarists recognise its potential for diversifying renewable energy sources, but some cast doubt that it can be implemented in time due to technological and infrastructure limitations • Nuclear is highly polarising: some diarists believe it should be viewed pragmatically now waste can be better managed, whereas others feel residue concerns can never be completely resolved
<i>"I see the government as being accountable to us, the electorate, setting targets that we all agree on and report annually on where we are at against that target. If they're not met, we get explanations, and that would then be a democratic issue." (General Public)</i>	<i>"When governments promise that they'll do this that and the other, what they don't do is then look at the infrastructure, the finances, how corporations will interpret the rules." (Engaged Consumer)</i>	<i>"I think nuclear is best set aside if we can, but that would involve addressing the intermittent nature of renewable sources." (Engaged Consumer)</i>

Diarists think there is much that the government could do to change energy and transport

Energy sector

Transport sector

Food sector

Responsibility for the required changes in both of these sectors is felt to lie in the hands of **private companies**. The **government** is seen as the only institution that has the power to force the necessary changes on private companies.

However, diarists don't trust that there are the mechanisms (or determination) by which government can compel these companies to transition to Net Zero fast enough in the face of competing motivations to maximise profits. Therefore, a significant minority of the sample spontaneously support (re)**nationalisation of energy companies** and **transport companies** as they feel this is the only solution to alter profit incentives and accelerate decarbonisation.

While the government and private companies are seen to have substantial power in bringing about change within the food industry, diarists see **individuals** as holding a significant amount of power when thinking about their **decision-making**. Adapting individual choices, e.g. reducing meat consumption, is seen as something that individuals will need to take the lead on.

Diarists do not think the private sector can be trusted to resolve climate change alone, but ways to enforce change are difficult to grasp

When presented with different perspectives on how Net Zero can be achieved domestically, diarists contested the argument that private sector innovation and market forces can be trusted to lead the transition and instead favoured heavier government involvement. However, they found more theoretical conversations on specific mechanisms to achieve this (e.g. monetary policy) hard to engage with.

Innovation & market forces

Diarists engaged with the perspective that private sector companies could be **left alone to innovate and create a free market for decarbonisation**. However, they **roundly disagreed** with this in principle. Whilst they accepted this would encourage innovation, they strongly felt companies would **always prioritise maximising profits** over the Net Zero transition if left unchecked.

Instead, they feel the government should be **firmer in regulating industry**; providing support where decarbonising is difficult, and imposing sanctions where companies are unwilling to comply.

Policies & funding

However, diarists found conversation around **funding required to increase government spending** much more difficult to engage with. For instance, growing public debt, carbon markets and debt swaps were all discussed by experts but **added confusion, rather than clarity**, to the overall discussion.

Diarists felt much more comfortable **discussing tangible concepts**, drawing conversation back towards **interventions** and defaulting towards a belief that **industry should bear the brunt** of higher taxation.

Diarists regularly came back to the idea of coordinated national action, and saw nationalised bodies as the simplest way to achieve this

When reviewing the anonymised party manifestos, there was support from many participants for nationalisation of energy and transport, seen as the most credible way to effect change.

“There were a couple of mentions about creating national companies, and I like the idea of that personally, even though I know there were lots of problems with the nationalised companies we had in the old days.” (Engaged consumer)

When discussing responsibility for reaching Net Zero businesses were felt by many to lack a motivation to act if it would impact profits. National bodies were seen as more motivated to act in the interests of citizens.

“If they nationalised it there wouldn’t be any room for profits.” (General public)

When hearing about market based and technology solutions there was scepticism about how quickly these could effect change and a feeling that direct government control over key industries would be needed.

However, some participants raised the potential high costs of renationalisation, and few had a concrete sense of what a transition might look like in practice.

And when asked what they would include in their own manifestos for Net Zero they called for collective approaches, incentives and penalties

Collective approach

Many groups emphasised policy that encourages collective vs individual action; inspiring change through better communication & collaboration across the board (politics, communities, industry & internationally)

“Anyone who considers themselves an ‘Earthian’ – if you’ve got a pulse you got a role to play.”

Incentivisation & penalties

Others focused on supporting greener choices through grants and discounts (e.g. subsidies for public transport, or tax rebates for those choosing green heating). Financial and legal penalties were seen as the last resort for those who refuse to make changes.

“This manifesto is for all; it’s fair and will give people opportunities.”

They had a wide range of specific suggestions, from community energy to regulation on transport

A role for industry

Consistent with their scepticism about motivating business to act, several manifestos set tough regulation for industry to meet green standards. But Diarists also wanted to see support for companies that are more vulnerable to the impacts of the transition.



Local solutions

Several diarists emphasised the role of local action to reach Net Zero and proposed community measures like shared electric vehicles, hyper-local community energy generation or subsidised discounts on locally produced goods.



Cheap and reliable transport

Diarists are looking for incentives to switch away from their cars. And for those who already rely on public transport, they are hoping that a just transition will give them a better deal given their lower emissions.



But above all they wanted to see a positive vision for the future, and strong accountability for getting there

Positive visions for the future

Some groups emphasised the positive future that could be created with a community powered outlook that addressed inequality and had benefits over and above climate mitigation

“Happier, healthier, hopeful future for all: Starting to bring people together, winning the future of our generations”

Strong accountability

Others focused on the importance of pledges that could be verified and measured, rebuilding trust between government and citizens.

“If you care about our children, the buck stops with you, NOW: It’s believable, it’s trackable, it’s achievable”

04 A just Net Zero: how to balance the interests of all

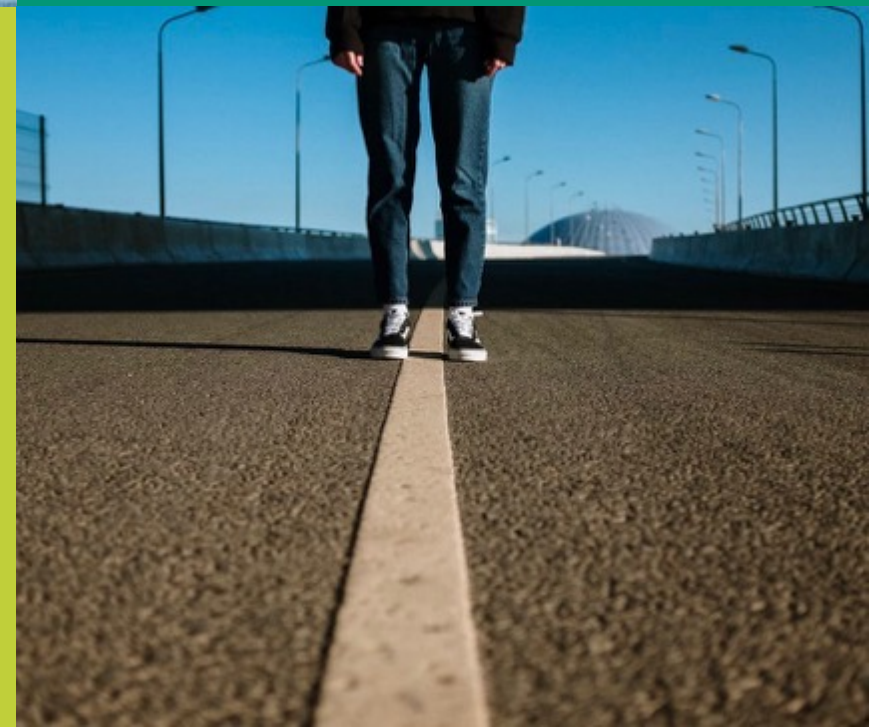
Fairness and justice are seen as key pillars of how a transition to Net Zero *should* happen.



And there are clear boundaries to overcome between how people view their, personal, role in Net Zero and what they think is fair.



However, it is a difficult topic to engage with for those less familiar with climate issues due to the wide range of complexities inherent to the topic.



In wave 1, diarists told us that they wanted urgent action on Net Zero, but were concerned about people being left behind

In wave 2 we introduced them to a range of perspectives on the transition and how it could be more or less 'just'. We introduced the following angles:

Net Zero and fairness **between nations**

Reaching Net Zero fairly **within the UK**

Thinking about Net Zero and fairness **between generations**

To inform diarists on these topics, we presented them with a range of opinions:*

- A Greenpeace video discussing the relation between **climate and race**
- **Suzanne Dhaliwal**, a Climate Justice Creative & Campaigner, Writer & Lecturer
- **Professor Raphael Heffron**, an expert from the UNECE Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems

- A Turn2Us video discussing the reality of living in **fuel poverty**
- **Chaitanya Kumar** who leads the New Economic Foundation's work on the Green New Deal
- **Eamonn Ives**, Head of Energy and Environment at the Centre for Policy Studies

- A Carbon Brief video visualising the **historical contributions to emissions** since 1750
- **Alexander Luke**, a Net Zero Researcher at the think tank Onward
- **Dr Aurelie Charles**, a Lecturer at the Dept. of Social & Policy Sciences and Centre for Development Studies at CASP

* Links to all resources and speakers in appendix

Despite the importance of fairness to diarists in principle, it is not a concept they have actively engaged with before in relation to Net Zero

Whilst the **purpose** of building fairness into Net Zero is abundantly clear, the solutions aren't.

Impacts of unabated climate change

Diarists typically have low exposure to the experience of environmental issues / impacts around the world apart from some high profile media coverage of extreme weather events. This psychological distance from the consequences of climate change is well known.

If fairness is about trade-offs our diarists don't feel they know what's at stake on either side.

Impacts and benefits of transition

Diarists find it difficult to judge the trade-offs involved in a fair transition. They feel that potential downsides are glossed over by politicians, and benefits aren't trusted. This creates a second type of psychological distance, this time from the impacts of the transition.

So for many diarists, **climate change continues to feel like a 'future problem'** that they have little concrete engagement with on a day-to-day basis.

When it comes to the concept of ‘fairness’, diarists’ top of mind concern is rich vs. poor – whether in a domestic or an international perspective

Our diarists want to believe that ‘everyone will be winners’ in a truly fair transition, however they are also heavily influenced by the narrative that the transition to Net Zero is going to require sacrifices and be costly. Diarists assume that people will be unwilling – or unable – to do this off their own back, and therefore need policy to mandate it.

Internationally, our diarists acknowledge that countries are coming from very differing starting points, and that this needs to be taken into consideration

“It's quite a complex issue. A lot of developing countries are looking at us telling them, you're telling us that we need to cut down on our use of fossil fuels but you've had a couple of hundred years of development using fossil fuels and you're telling us we can't do that. And you come over, send your industry over here so we have to burn fossil fuels to make stuff for you cheaply.”
(Engaged Citizen)

Domestically, a recognition that those less well off – or those in jobs that will be superfluous in the green economy – will need support to ensure the transition is fair

“Unless there is a good retraining to send these people into green jobs, then they are heading for permanent unemployment ... a generation of people not working, the poverty.” (Engaged Consumer)

“People don't start from the same place ... Someone like me could deal with a flood versus someone in poorer conditions, who might be tipped right off a scale of coping.”
(General Public)

Intergenerationally, our diarists are primarily focused on the impact of what's happening now on future generations

“It falls upon us, I would hate to see this to be on my children. It needs to start somewhere; it is now that we have to take responsibility.” (General Public)

There are clear boundaries for participants when it comes to their own role in a just transition

- Diarists are supportive of forced change in principle, however, hesitancy grows when thinking about what the impact would be on their own quality of life
 - Especially less engaged diarists find it easy to revert to a more individualistic viewpoint when talking current trade-offs
 - This viewpoint is consistent with recent Ipsos MORI polling stating that 'Public support majority of net zero policies ... unless there is a personal cost'
- Selfishness and greed (even though this is generally seen as that of 'others') are perceived as barriers to achieving fairness in the Net Zero transition
- Government action is perceived as what is needed as a 'leveller' to overcome these barriers

"We need to do something about transport, though people love their cars..." (Engaged Citizen)

"I object strongly to be told what/ how I should be eating and making out that cows, sheep etc. are almost satanic! Yes, by all means provide information but do not treat meat eaters like lepers." (General Public)

"Is this government prepared to implement what would very likely be unpopular regulation, in order to achieve Net Zero?" (Engaged Consumer)

Whilst our diarists believe that 'everyone will be winners' in a just transition, they are also heavily influenced by the narrative that the transition to Net Zero is going to require sacrifices and be costly, which people will be unwilling – or unable – to do off their own back, hence the need for policy to mandate it.

Diarists respond strongly and positively to the need to protect indigenous and other marginalised communities around the world

The impact that climate change will have on less developed countries resonates very strongly, as do historical factors, and diarists feel this presents a firm call-to-action for western countries. However, there is nuance in the way that diarists felt this should be approached.

Whilst diarists are **sympathetic** to the idea that the impacts of climate change will be disproportionately felt by countries in the global south, many disagreed with framing the issue as 'racist'. They want to focus on unifying language, and argue that the physical process of climate change is neutral.

Historical emissions trends **bring home the role of the UK** in the climate crisis and demonstrate why **developed western countries should be responsible** for leading the Net Zero process. This created some dissonance for our diarists, who felt this should translate in real terms to **active, financial support and protection** for marginalised communities, whilst still instinctively thinking sacrifices should be **proportionally shared by all**.

Most diarists concluded that it is **hypocritical** for western countries to direct criticism towards countries that have **substantially lower historical emissions**, and feel the UK should **get its own house in order** first. For our diarists, climate change must be considered a **global priority**, but with a strong focus on **resolving domestic issues** so the UK can lead credibly.

*"Why should China and India give a damn about reducing their carbon emissions when they've only been as productive [as the western world] in the last few decades compared to the 200 years the UK has."
(Engaged Consumer)*



Inequality in the UK strikes a chord and is familiar to many of our Diarists, they want to see a Net Zero plan that helps the poorest

Examples of inequality experienced closer to home, such as fuel poverty, are tangible and resonate particularly strongly. The disparity between rich and poor stands out as a major concern to be addressed to achieve fairness in any progression towards a Net Zero society.

Perspectives that highlight the **consideration that should be given to mitigations** for people that could be **displaced** or **lose out** due to the transition are particularly motivating. This is often based in **historical narratives of industrial decline**, which are lived experiences for some participants.

Overall, diarists felt a just transition should involve **green benefits for all**, however the private sector is not trusted to deliver this alone. Instead, diarists believe it is the **responsibility of government** and support policies that **share costs proportionately**.

"It's shocking that there are people in our society who have to sit there in the cold. We're the fourth richest economy in the world and we've got people living like that." (General public)

"There's so many people in my city that need houses, and things like that. So how are you going to explain to people that they need to pay extra to get this boiler, when there's people that don't even have houses? You know, we call ourselves a rich country. But how?" (General Public)



Making sacrifices for future generations is motivating to a degree, but placing too much emphasis on this can narrow the scale of Net Zero

Protecting children and future generations is a **strong, motivating narrative** that is common within climate rhetoric, and which resonates with our diarists.

"At the end of the day, all the goals are in 2050 or whatever, quite far down the line, but I've got young kids I want them to know that I've done what I can."
(General Public)

However, it was difficult for diarists to apply this idea to the wider economic picture and **contemplate high costs and negative impacts now for benefits later down the line.**



Some default to suggesting that **investment in education** for future generations should be prioritised over **embracing change now.**

This narrative also has the potential to drive associations with **individual, rather than collective, responsibility.** Diarists sometimes internalised the idea as specifically 'what I can do for my own children'. Arguments that sought to broaden this scale by highlighting the **wider societal imbalance caused by an intergenerational divide** had stronger resonance.

However, some diarists felt hamstrung from building a better future by a high proportion of the current generation **not caring about the impact of their actions.** They sought to rectify this in their manifestos by **emphasising collectivism** and trying to **balance incentives with penalisation.**

05 How are our diarists changing?

www.diarists.org

Most change since Wave 1 in September has been low-commitment actions or changes to diarists' attitudes

More significant	Some changes have taken place to diarists' food purchasing decisions:	- Many diarists across cohorts report taking steps to: - Reduce their food waste - Purchase foods which have less packaging - Source food more locally where possible
	Most diarists have made changes to their energy consumption:	- Diarists in the general public report performing small actions such as switching off sockets, using smart meters or turning down the thermostat. - Engaged citizens and consumers have taken or plan to take more significant action, such as installing solar panels and buying energy-efficient appliances.
Less significant	Diarists' attitudes towards transport are changing:	- Many diarists across the different cohorts report being more conscious of their car usage, with the fuel crisis reinforcing appetite for electric cars for some. - Several diarists claim to be trying to use public transport, walk, or cycle more often where possible.

But most are reluctant to change their diet, and report practical barriers to changing their transport habits

Diet

- Diarists overall report being **unwilling to reduce their meat consumption**. This suggestion is seen as widely unpopular, with diarists mentioning **human nature** and **habit** as the more significant barriers to overcome.

"We are naturally meat eaters and changing that is not practical." (Engaged Consumer)

"I don't know what we could do as I'm quite sure the UK is not going to stop eating meat."
(Engaged Consumer)

Transport

- Despite most appreciating the need for changes in transport, **convenience and cost** seem to be preventing action.
 - Electric cars continue to be seen as **unaffordable** options for most diarists.
 - Although somewhat dependent on location, public transport remains **inconvenient, expensive, and unreliable**.

"I keep wanting to trade in our diesel Kia Sportage for an e-vehicle but the costs are astonishingly high and it would be £40,000+ to change. Who can afford that?"
(Engaged Consumer)

*"I need to drive to work as its **not very accessible** by public transport."* (General Public)

Energy use is seen as easy to ‘tweak’, but hard to change at a larger scale

Energy

- Many continue to feel unable to make substantial changes to the way they consume energy in their homes due to the **cost** of making these changes.
- Others feel they have little control over the source of their electricity, either because they are not the bill-payer or because there are no renewable suppliers in their area.

“If I had the money, I would retrofit my current house, but the costs are just so unrealistic.”(Engaged citizen)

- Most continue to call out for government financial assistance on this transition by offering grants or incentives for installing heat pumps, solar panels, and insulation.
- Also, a desire for legislation around new builds to ensure that they are as energy-efficient as possible

*“Why is it not **law** that all new builds use ground source heat pumps, solar panels and more eco-friendly insulation when building?”(General Public)*

*“I would love to see solar panels and energy efficient boilers be installed **free of charge** by the government if they are serious about becoming more energy efficient.” (General Public)*

06 Appendix

We gave our diarists four anonymised party manifestos to review

	Party 1	Party 2	Party 3	Party 4
Energy	Move to 100% renewables Green hydrogen for HGVs and shipping Opposed to nuclear	Net Zero energy system by 2030's, support green hydrogen	National energy company, 50% renewable by 2030, leading hydrogen nation not nuclear	100% low carbon energy by 2035 with a mix of renewables inc. floating windfarms, hydrogen, nuclear and gas with carbon capture
Heating	Tackle fuel poverty, insulation of every home to 90% less energy than average	50% of heat delivered from renewable sources by 2030	Decarbonise heating of 1 million homes by 2030, all new buildings zero carbon	£9billion in energy efficiency and 600,000 heat pumps a year by 2028
Transport	More reliable and cheaper trains, electric buses and trams, and increase spending on walking and cycling from £8.50 per person to £30	Councils to take ownership of bus networks, free travel for under 25s, new rural routes	Cut car use by 20%, make trains and buses greener, establish a National Transport company for EV charging and rural transport – free bikes for children who can't afford them	Invest in manufacture of EVs in the UK and national charging network. 4,000 new clean buses and invest in cycle and walking
Jobs	Build a circular economy with less waste and pollution	Create 1 million low carbon jobs and invest £3billion in steelmaking	Green jobs fund worth £100million, with £25million to retrain people	Invest in hard to decarbonise industries, research zero-emission planes and ships, build carbon capture and storage
Nature	Everyone should live within 5 minutes of a public space, new environment court to enforce targets	All government spending has to be consistent with environment policy	Protect 30% of our land, invest in preserving forests and peat land	International projects to stop deforestation, £500million fund to protect oceans
Bonus policy	Want the UK to be a leading force for good internationally by focusing on cooperation to solve climate problems for fair and peaceful global resolutions	Benefits of going green e.g. wind farm jobs stay in the UK	Support development of vertical, low carbon farms, to produce more of our own food and double land used for organic farming	'Rewild' parts of the country, introducing plants and animals forced out by development. 30% of land dedicated to nature

Group 1 – ‘A manifesto for all’

- Focus on making climate change the number one global priority
- Just transition from fossil fuels by 2030 and focus on public transport
- Clearly defined and policed targets for Net Zero
- Regulations and accountability for industries to be more environmentally conscious
- Reduce divide between the way rich and poor experience climate change

Group 4 – ‘Greener together’

- Complete overhaul of public transport to make it more affordable and reliable
- More ‘green’ jobs and opportunities
- Grants to help improve homes & support those in need with greener heating costs
- Tougher penalties for companies that breach environmental laws and rewards for meeting green targets
- Higher tax rates for foreign travel
- Emphasis on protecting nature and planting trees where possible
- Proactive international support for indigenous communities that may lose out

Group 2 – ‘Survive & Thrive’

- Greener jobs for everyone
- Support for retraining staff
- A consultation on how to improve business green standards
- Discounts provided for locally produced food and energy
- Standardised, affordable transport costs to encourage movement away from using cars

Group 5 – ‘Keen on green’

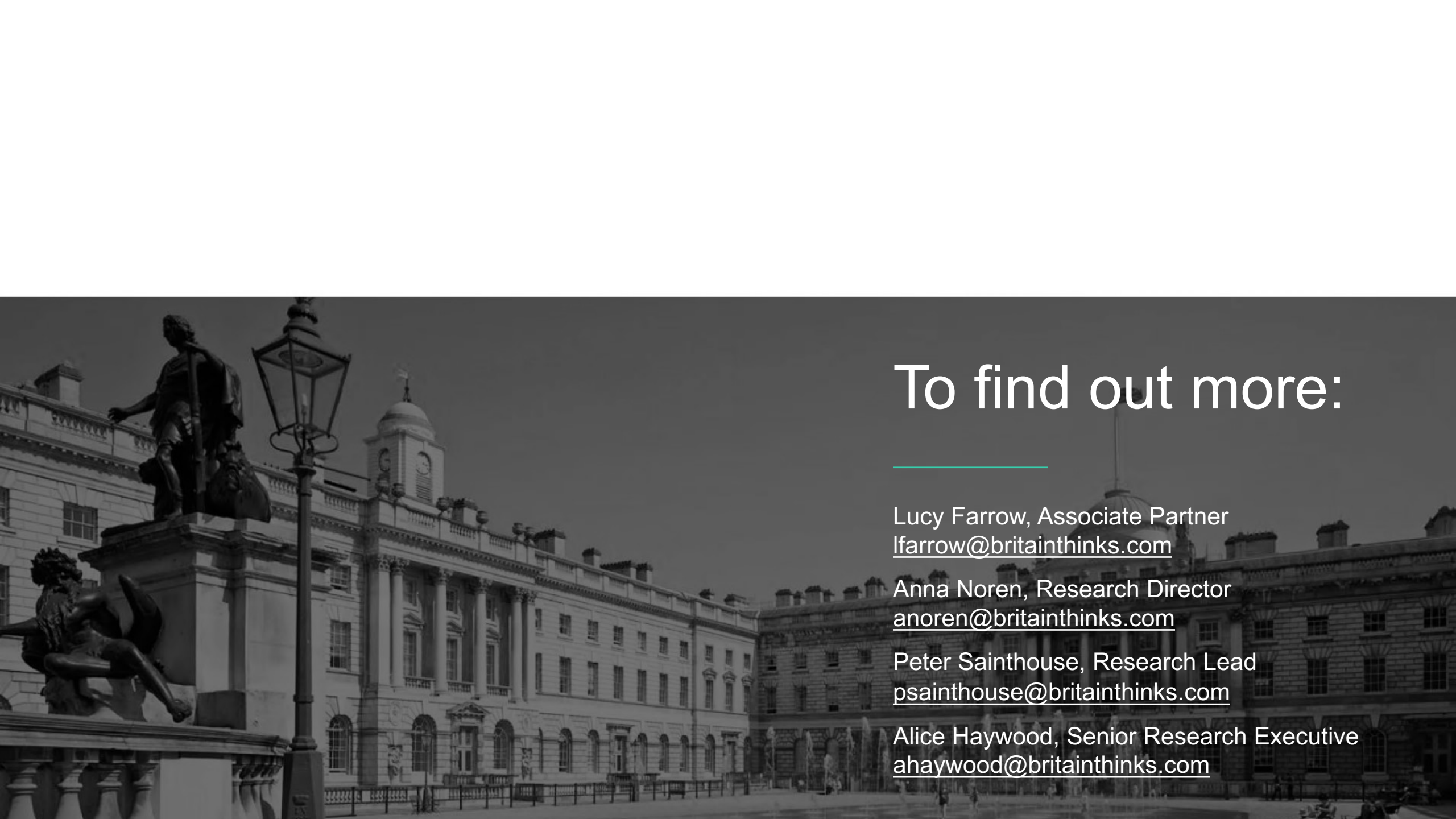
- A fairer future that ensures local communities don’t suffer
- Focus on incentives to change
- Creating a more diverse energy supply that leans heavily on renewable power sources
- Ensuring public transport is more affordable and cheaper for all
- Creating a culture of leaving cars at home when possible, starting with at least one day a week

Group 3 – ‘For Earthians’

- Green and clean energy, and removing subsidies for carbon-intensive energy
- Supporting people to make green choices via incentives (electric vehicle, cycling & public transport subsidies; lower tax rate for green heating)
- Encouraging farmers to grow eco-crops and free up land
- Funded by mandate for companies to release their carbon emission rates and corporate carbon tax (with allowances for more vulnerable industries)

Group 6 – ‘Future for all’

- Leading by example to protect the future for everyone
- Focus on better communication across all age groups (e.g. in the workplace, media, social media)
- Rebalancing taxation on products and services to convince people by virtue of their pockets
- Community-based energy solutions that factor in local environmental factors
- Fair sharing of the costs and responsibilities for change, including exemptions where people/industry may struggle



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