



London Councils' Annual Climate Change Polling Results 2021

London Councils first polled Londoners on the topic of Climate Change in 2020. The results of the second poll are now available. They show more Londoners say that they are very concerned about climate change, more say that they have been more concerned about climate change in the past 12 months, and more say that their lives have been greatly affected by climate change.

Background

To most effectively drive local action on climate change, local authorities need to understand public opinion, and how that is shifting as climate change continues to rise as a public policy priority and action is taken. To support this, we are pleased to present the findings of London Councils' second annual opinion polling of Londoners on the topic of climate change.

This study was conducted in London by Kantar via LondonBus, an Internet omnibus survey. A sample of 1011 London adults aged 16+ were interviewed, and interviewing was conducted by online self-completion from 2nd - 7th September 2021. The sample has been weighted to represent the adult population of London 16+. Where unweighted base figures are less than 100, data should be treated cautiously, as large margins of error are possible.

We surveyed Londoners across six areas: concern, impact from, and motivation to act; their understanding of climate change; sources of information on climate change; responsibility for solving climate change; how climate change impacts decision-making; and their current and potential behaviour. By repeating questions from our 2020 survey, we can begin drawing trends.

Analysis

Londoners' awareness and concern around climate change

Awareness of climate change is very high among Londoners, with 94 per cent of Londoners saying they are somewhat or very aware of climate change. Significantly more Londoners than last year say they are very aware of climate change (49 per cent in 2020, 53 per cent in 2021). Those people aged 35-34 and 25-34 are significantly more very aware than other age groups, at 60 per cent and 59 per cent respectively, against 48 per cent of those 16-24, 53 per cent of those 45-54, 42 per cent of those 55-64 and 49 per cent of those 65 and over. Awareness of climate change is very high across all the sub regions of London¹, with no significant differences between them.

1. Sub-regions: North Central: Barnet, Camden, Haringey, Enfield, Hackney, Islington. Central: City of London, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Westminster. North West: Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow. South West: Kingston, Merton, Richmond, Wandsworth, Sutton. South East: Bexley, Bromley, Croydon, Greenwich, Lewisham. North East: Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, Waltham Forest.

Not only are Londoners aware of climate change, they also are concerned about it: 82 per cent of Londoners say they are concerned about climate change, and concern is high in all age groups. Those aged 35-44 are significantly more concerned about climate change than any other age group.

Londoners reject climate denial: only 2 per cent of Londoners responded that they do not believe in climate change when asked 'How concerned are you about climate change?'. This matches last year's result.

People are becoming more worried about climate change: 66 per cent of Londoners say their level of concern has changed slightly/a lot, a significant increase from 57 per cent in 2020. In this year's data, 28 per cent of Londoners say their level of concern has increased a lot, a big increase from 20 per cent in 2020.

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Londoners are motivated to tackle climate change

High levels of concern around climate change mean that Londoners are strongly motivated to act: 89 per cent of Londoners are very or somewhat motivated to help prevent climate change, and there is a high motivation to help across all age groups. Those aged 35-44 and 25-34 are significantly more motivated to help, with 93 per cent and 92 per cent respectively somewhat or very motivated. While those in other ages groups are less motivated to help, there is still a high motivation to help across all age groups.

92 per cent of those in work say they are motivated to help prevent climate change, against 83 per cent of those not working, this is driven by a difference between the groups of those who say they are very motivated (35 per cent vs 23 per cent). 35 per cent of those in inner London say they are very motivated to help prevent tackle climate change, significantly more than outer London residents, of whom 28 per cent say they are very motivated. 44 per cent of parents say they are very motivated to help prevent climate change, significantly more than 25 per cent of non-parents.

Londoners' day-to-day decisions affected by climate change

61 per cent of Londoners say that their day-to-day decisions are influenced by consideration of climate change. Only 11 per cent of Londoners say climate change doesn't affect their decision-making at all.

Londoners have already been impacted by climate change

55 per cent of Londoners say their day-to-day life in London has been impacted by the changing climate, and significantly more people than last year say their life has been greatly affected (20 per cent in 2020, 15 per cent in 2021). 50 per cent of Londoners think COVID-19 has made it financially more difficult for them to take action to help prevent climate, compared to 40 per cent who think it hasn't.

Some Londoners are happy to change their behaviours

In order to prevent climate change, scientists have said that the general public will need to change their behaviour alongside government and private sector action. We asked people whether they would consider changing their behaviour in four key areas: transport, housing, food, and consumer goods and services. In line with the previous year's polling, and results already presented in this report, the data finds that Londoners are undertaking a number of actions that can help reduce their carbon footprint.

Across most actions, the levels of people willing to act compared to last year are very stable. However, in the transport section more people have said that they are buying hybrid cars, ride sharing, or joining a car club. More people also said they are taking staycations rather than foreign holidays, although this may have been driven more by COVID-19 restrictions than climate change.

When it comes to heating their homes, more people said they are installing solar panels. In regard to consumer goods, more people this year said they are hiring clothes for special occasions, and more would consider recycling old clothes and electrical goods.

Commentary

The polling data clearly show that Londoners are well informed about climate change and concerned about its effects. And that concern is increasing. But this isn't leading to climate despair – Londoners want to see action and they want to be part of that change. The public clearly support ambitious action, which will require decision makers to lead the changes needed, including enabling greater action by individuals.

We know that local government will be a key player in delivering that transition to Net Zero, thanks to its unique understanding of local context and strong local relationships. National government must support local government in its delivery of climate action and a just transition that creates good jobs.

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Links:

The full report and London Councils press release can be downloaded [here](#).

A set of slides containing some key statistics and graphs can be found [here](#) on google drive.

This member briefing has been circulated to:

Portfolio holders and those members who requested policy briefings in the following categories: Environment