

Attitudes to climate change and the impact of transport (2006 and 2007)

Executive Summary

Questions were asked in the August 2006 National Statistics Omnibus Survey to assess public attitudes towards climate change and the impact of transport. These questions were repeated in April and August 2007. The key findings are as follows:

Levels of concern and knowledge about climate change

Levels of concern and knowledge about climate change have remained reasonably stable across all three surveys, though climate change appears to have moved up the list of public policy priorities.

- In all three surveys around 80% of adults said that they were very or fairly concerned about climate change, with a quarter being very concerned.
- Although levels of concern have remained stable, climate change has increasingly become an issue that the public rank in the top three public policy issues facing Britain (23% felt this in August 2006; 32% in August 2007).
- In each survey about 10% of adults said that they knew a lot about climate change; a further 40% said they knew a fair amount. Just over one in ten said that they knew hardly anything, nothing or had not heard of climate change.
- The vast majority of adults believed that the global and UK climate was being affected. Around one in ten adults indicated that they were sceptical or unsure whether the global/UK climate was being affected.
- Groups who were less concerned and had relatively low levels of knowledge included: young people aged between 16 and 24; people in semi-routine and routine manual occupations, those with no educational qualifications, those with relatively low levels of income or those living in the most deprived areas.
- Although the majority (about 60%) of adults felt that climate change would have little or no affect on them personally, around nine in ten thought the affect on future generations would be a great deal or quite a lot.
- The majority of the public believe that transport emissions contribute to climate change, with around 70% spontaneously selecting emissions from road transport as a cause of climate change.
- When asked which modes of transport contribute most the public are increasingly focusing on air travel. In August 2007 40% selected aeroplanes, 51% some form of road transport (compared with 35% and 60% in August 2006).
- The public were most likely to trust independent scientists to provide accurate information about climate change, though trust in this group was lower in August 2007 than earlier surveys (58% compared with 68% in August 2006).

- Overall, 33% of the public said they trusted the government or government scientists in August 2007 (higher than the 29% in August 2006).

Potential for behaviour change

- In each survey around eight in ten adults felt that they themselves could have at least some influence on limiting climate change, with around three-quarters saying that they would be prepared to change their behaviour in some way to help limit climate change.
- Around two-thirds of adults believed that *'Individuals should try to limit their car use for the sake of the environment'*.
- Three-quarters of adults said that they themselves were likely to undertake some form of activity to reduce car journeys due to concerns about climate change, most often cutting down on non-essential journeys. However, only around 5% of car users said that they had reduced their car use in the preceding year due to environmental concerns.
- Support was far higher for 'soft' measures to encourage alternative modes, such as improved public transport, rather than measures that would increase the cost of car travel. The main exception to this was higher taxes on the most environmentally damaging vehicles, which around four in ten adults supported.
- Around 45% of adults in each survey believed *'Air travel should be limited for the sake of the environment'*, though this was lower, at around a third, among those travelling by plane more than twice a year.
- Around one in ten of those who had flown in the last year said that they were likely to reduce the number of flights they made in the following year due to concerns about climate change.
- Around a quarter of adults supported increasing the cost of air travel to help reduce transport emissions.

Introduction

- 1.1 This report summarises people's attitudes towards climate change in relation to transport, and to what extent attitudes have changed over time. It also examines how attitudes towards climate change vary across different socio-demographic groups and according to travel behaviour.
- 1.2 The report is primarily based on a survey module included in the Office for National Statistics' Omnibus Survey in August 2006¹, April 2007 and August 2007.² It covers the following issues:
 - levels of concern about the environment and climate change;
 - knowledge about the causes of climate change, including the contribution of transport;
 - knowledge about the consequences of climate change and views on the potential for behavioural change to reduce the impacts;
 - levels of support for a range of policy options to reduce transport emissions and the extent to which concern about climate change has the potential to influence travel behaviour.
- 1.3 It should be noted that the Omnibus Survey provides a snapshot of attitudes at the time when the interviews are conducted. The results may be influenced by specific circumstantial factors at that time, including, for example, weather conditions in the UK or global weather events. Media coverage of scientific or political debates related to climate change may also influence public attitudes.
- 1.4 Differences between results from surveys conducted at two different points in time may not, therefore, reflect underlying and sustainable attitudinal change. Only by repeating the survey over time will help us to identify underlying changes in attitudes. Findings from the British Social Attitudes Surveys (BSAS), which is conducted over a 4-5 month period each year, are also presented.
- 1.5 The NS Omnibus Survey and BSAS are based on representative random probability samples of adults in the private household population in Great Britain. This means that the results are subject to sampling error. That is the results obtained may differ from those that would be obtained if the entire population had been interviewed, or another sample selected. Statistical theory enables us to calculate the degree of sampling error for any estimate. Differences over time or between groups which are referred to in the text are statistically significant at the 5% level (i.e. it is 95 per cent certain that the difference exists in the population).
- 1.6 More detailed tables are available in [Annex A and Annex B](#).

¹ The baseline report from the August 2006 survey was published in March 2007. The report is available at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/trsnstatsatt/>

² A module of questions on climate change was first included in the Office for National Statistics' Omnibus Survey in May 2005 on behalf of the Department for Transport. This earlier module is not directly comparable to those from August 2006 onwards. Results from the earlier module are available at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/trsnstatsatt/>

Box 1 Survey design details

The **NS Omnibus Survey** is a random probability survey of adults aged 16 and over living in private households in Great Britain. The August 2006 Omnibus Survey interviewed 1,238 adults face-to-face in their own homes. The response rate was 67%. The April 2007 survey covered 1,083 adults (response rate = 62%), while the August 2007 survey covered 1,170 adults (response rate =64%). The number of respondents answering the questions on climate change is slightly lower due to item non-response. The socio-demographic and travel patterns of respondents are similar in each survey (see Table AA.1).The questions asked can be found at [Annex C](#).

The **British Social Attitudes Survey** is an annual survey of around 3,300 adults aged 18 and over living in private households in Great Britain. The survey collects information on public attitudes to a range of issues through a combination of face-to-face interviews and self-completion questionnaires. A range of Government Departments and other organisations provide funding towards the survey to ensure questions relevant to their interests are asked. The Department for Transport has sponsored questions in BSAS since 1996. The BSAS results presented in this report are drawn from the latest BSAS report - *Stradling, S., Anable, J., Anderson, T. and Cronberg, A. (2008) "Car use and climate change: do we practise what we preach?" in Park, A., Curtice, J., Thomson, K., Phillips, M., Johnson, M. and Clery, E. (eds.) (2008), British Social Attitudes: the 24th Report, London: Sage.*

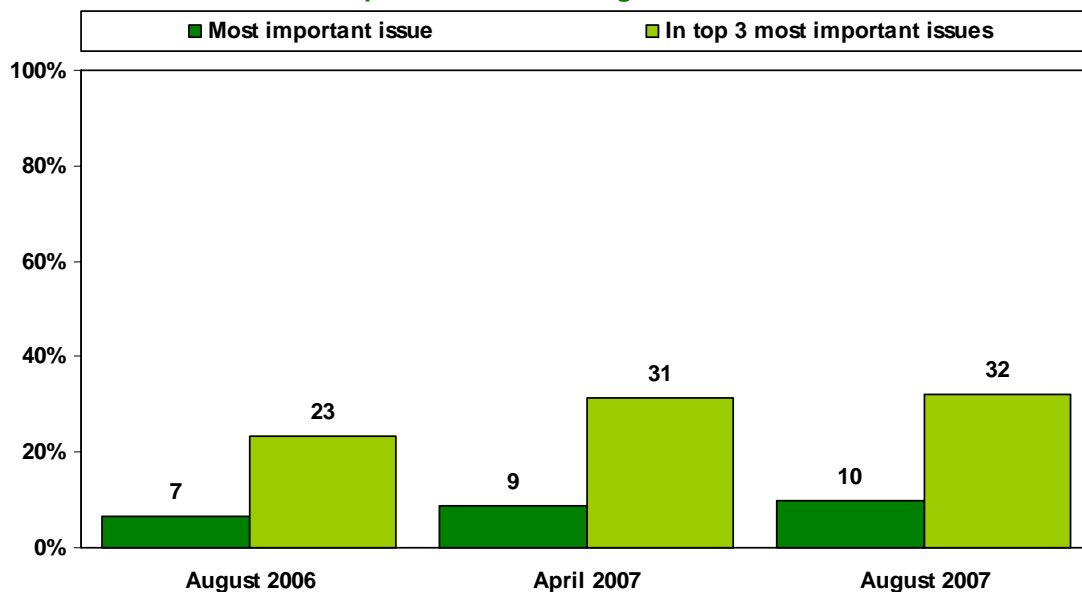
This report was prepared by Tracey Budd (Statistics Travel).

2. General concerns about the environment and climate change

2.1 Omnibus respondents were first asked which issue (from a list) they felt was the most important facing Britain today. They were then asked to select the second and third most important issue. Views on the importance of climate change are, of course, highly dependent on how the question is framed and the other issues that are listed alongside climate change. (Figure 1; Tables A.1 and A.2).

- In each survey crime, immigration and health were the issues that the public were most likely to consider to be the most important facing the country. Around 10% of adults said that climate change was the most important issue facing Britain (a similar proportion selected education).
- However, the proportion of adults considering climate change to be one of the top three most important issues was higher in August 2007 (32%) than in August 2006 (23%).

Figure 1 Percentage considering climate change to be most important/in top three most important issues facing Britain



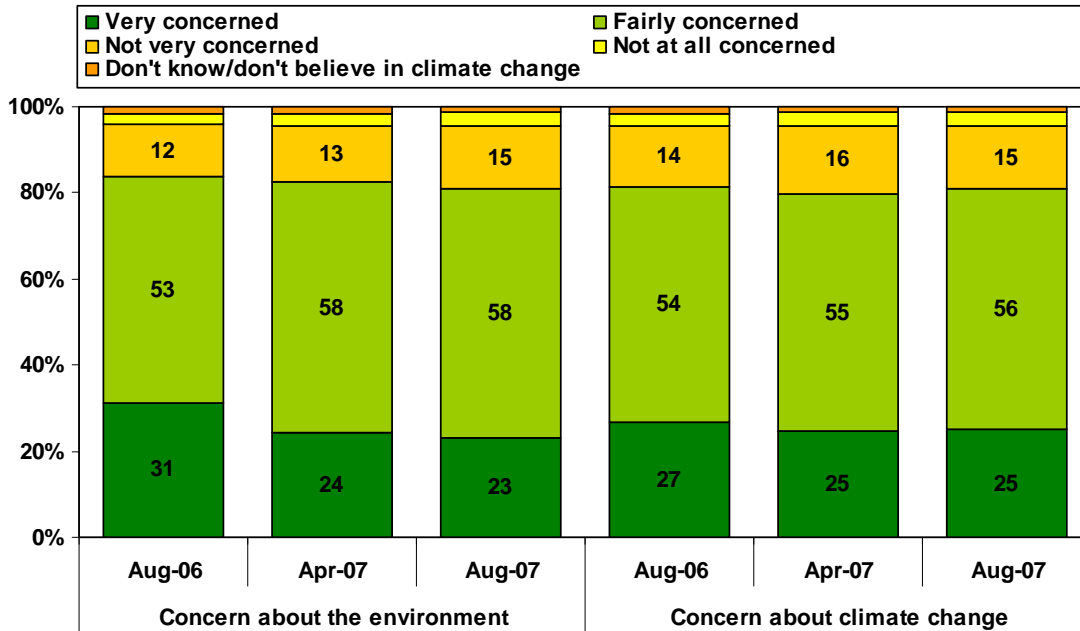
Source: NS Omnibus - August 2006, April 2007 and August 2007. Base number = 1,238; 1,078; 1,167.

2.2 Respondents were also asked how concerned they were about environmental issues in general and climate change specifically. Levels of concern about climate change have remained stable, while general environmental concerns appear to have weakened slightly over time. (Tables A.3 and A.4).

- In all three surveys around 80% of adults said that they were very or fairly concerned about climate change, with a quarter being very concerned. Less than 5% of respondents either said that they were not at all concerned or did not believe climate change was happening.
- Similarly, just over 80% of adults said that they were very or fairly concerned about environmental issues, although the proportion saying that they were

very concerned fell slightly over time (from 31% in August 2006 to 23% in August 2007).

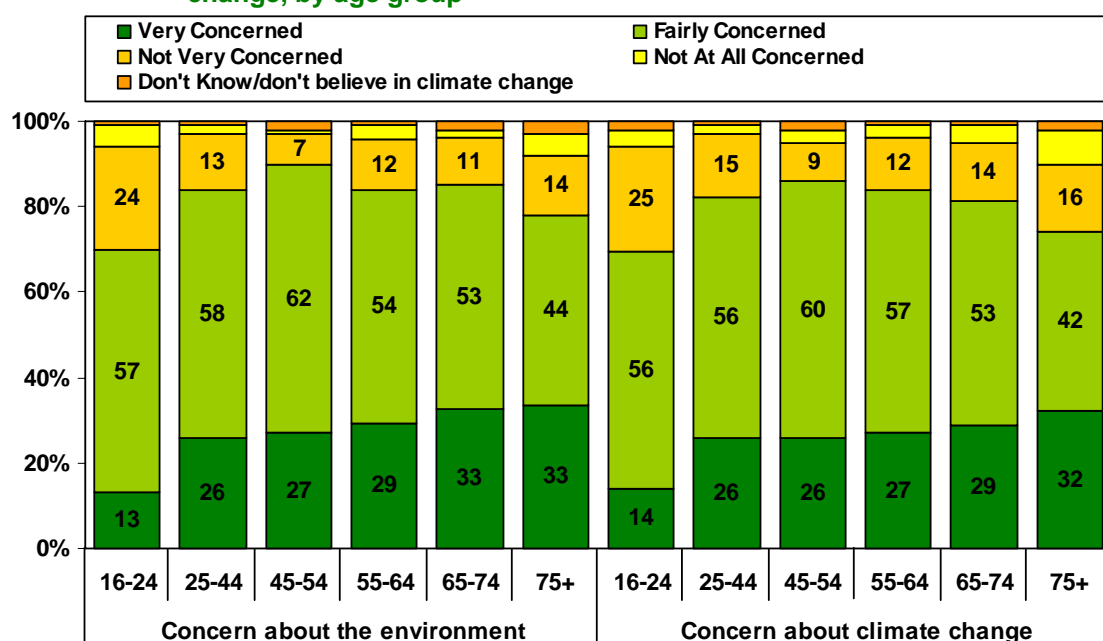
Figure 2 How concerned are you about environmental issues in general/climate change



Source: NS Omnibus - August 2006, April 2007, August 2007. Base number = 1,237; 1,078; 1,167.

- 2.3 In each Omnibus survey young people aged 16 to 24 have expressed lower levels of concern than older people. Figure 3 shows levels of concern by age group. This is based on all three surveys to give more robust results.
- 2.4 There were also some differences in levels of concern across various socio-demographic groups. Table 2.1 lists some of the groups who were most and least concerned about environmental issues and climate change. Further details are give in Tables B.1 and B.2.

Figure 3 Levels of concern about environmental issues in general/climate change, by age group



Source: NS Omnibus - August 2006, April 2007 and August 2007 (combined). Base number: 16-24= 311; 25-44=1,202; 45-54=490; 55-64=597; 65-74=485; 75 or older = 396.

Table 2.1 - Groups with relatively high and low percentages concerned about the environmental issues/climate change

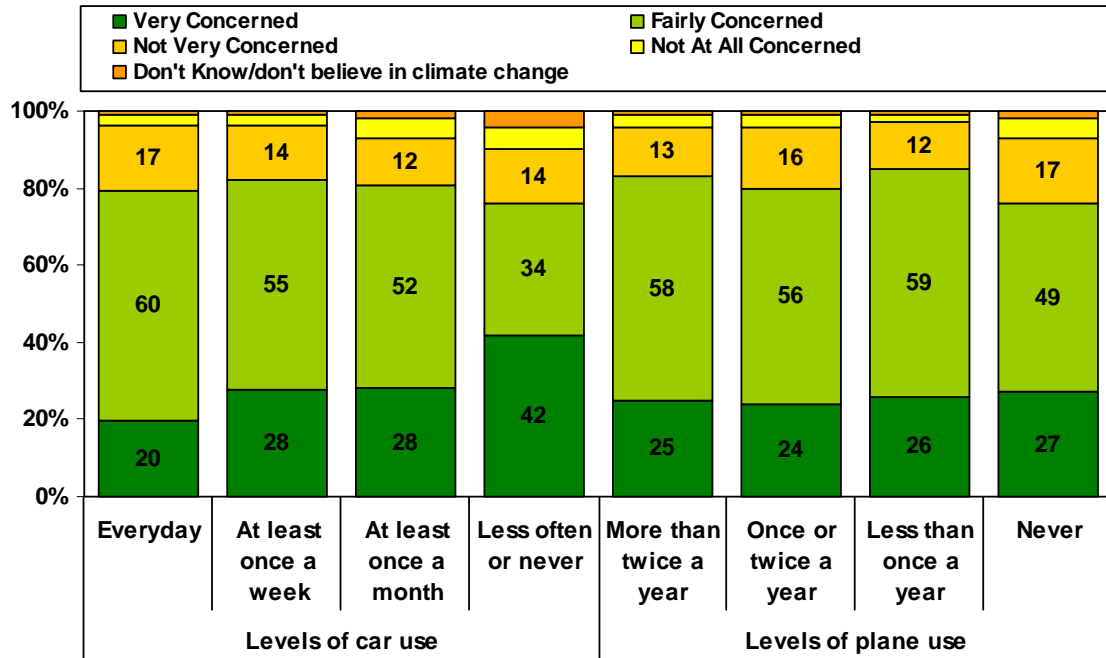
	% very or fairly concerned about the environmental issues	% very or fairly concerned about climate change
Groups with high percentages concerned about environment/climate change		
Aged 45-54	89%	86%
Those with at least degree level qualifications	90%	89%
Those with higher education qualifications (below degree level)	88%	86%
Those in managerial or professional occupations	89%	86%
Those living in the least deprived 20% of areas ³	88%	85%
Those living in London	87%	87%
Groups with low percentages concerned about environment/climate change		
Aged 16-24	70%	69%
Those with no educational qualifications	77%	76%
Those in semi-routine/routine occupations	76%	77%
Non drivers	78%	77%
Those who have never flown	78%	76%
Those living in the most deprived 20% of areas ³	78%	76%
Those living in the North East	74%	72%
National average figures		
All respondents	82%	81%

Source: NS Omnibus - August 2006, April 2007 and August 2007 (combined).

³ Based on the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation. IMD includes 7 deprivation domains: income; employment; education, skills and training; housing and services; living environment and crime. Further details available at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1128444#P18_329.

2.5 People who used a car every day (whether as driver or passenger) were significantly less likely to say they were *very* concerned about climate change than those who used a car less often. There was no consistent pattern according to frequency of flying (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Levels of concern about climate change, by levels of car and plane use



Source: NS Omnibus - August 2006, April 2007 and August 2007 (combined). Base number: Use car everyday= 1,360; at least once a week = 1,563; at least once a month = 222; less often/never=335; fly more than twice a year = 352; once or twice a year = 1,238; less than once a year = 943; never = 935.

3. Perceptions of the causes and consequences of climate change

- 3.1 The Omnibus survey included questions to assess levels of public awareness about the causes of climate change, including the role of transport, and to identify to what extent people believe climate change will impact upon themselves and others.

Levels of knowledge

- 3.2 In each survey around 10% of respondents said that they knew a lot about climate change, with a further 40% believing that they knew a fair amount. Just over a third said they knew a little, while just over one in ten said that they knew hardly anything or nothing.
- 3.3 Levels of knowledge have remained relatively stable over time, although there has been a fall in the proportion of adults saying that they know nothing about climate change (6% in August 2006; 4% in April 2007 and 3% in August 2007) (Table A.5).
- 3.4 There was variation in levels of knowledge across groups, which generally corresponded to the differences in levels of concern about climate change. For example, between a fifth and a quarter of people in the following groups said that they knew nothing or hardly anything at all: people aged 16 to 24; people aged 75 and over; those with no educational qualifications; those in semi-routine and routine occupations and those living in the North East (Table B.3).
- 3.5 Those who travelled by car infrequently or who never flew had relatively low levels of knowledge. This suggests that for most people in these groups, economic and circumstantial factors influence their travel patterns rather than any environmental considerations.

Perceived causes of climate change

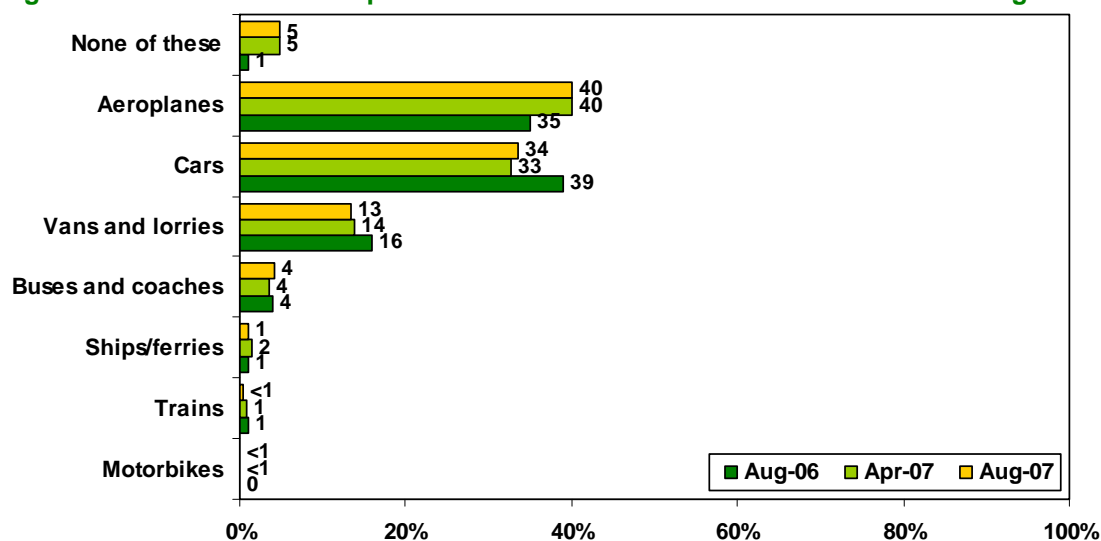
- 3.6 Respondents (with the exception of those who knew nothing about climate change) were then asked what factors they thought contributed to climate change.⁴ Full results are given in Tables A.6.
- The most commonly cited cause of climate change, by far, was road transport emissions, mentioned by around 70% in each survey. This was followed by air travel, mentioned by around four in ten. Emissions from power stations, the burning of fossil fuels for energy and 'other CO₂ emissions' were each selected by around three in ten respondents.
 - The high proportions selecting emissions from road transport and planes may be, in part, because respondents were aware that the questions were being asked on behalf of the Department for Transport or due to media focus on transport emissions. Interestingly, the proportion selecting road transport emissions has fallen slightly over time, while the proportion selecting plane emissions has increased slightly.

⁴ These questions were asked unprompted. Respondents were not given a card listing possible options.

3.7 Respondents were also asked which forms of transport (from a list) they considered to be major contributors to climate change and the one mode of transport that they felt contributed most (Figure 5, Tables A.21 and A.22).

- The public were most likely to choose a form of road transport, usually cars, as contributing most to climate change, but there has been a slight shift towards aviation over time. In August 2007 51% selected some form of road transport; 40% aeroplanes (compared with 60% and 35% in August 2006).
- The other significant pattern is the increase in the proportion considering that none of the transport modes contribute to climate change, though this remains a small minority at 5%.

Figure 5 Mode of transport considered to contribute most to climate change



Source: NS Omnibus - August 2006, April 2007 and August 2007. Base number: 1,213; 1,075; 1,161.

3.8 The British Social Attitudes Survey also indicates that the public generally accept that transport emissions impact on climate change.

- In 2006, 80% of adults interviewed said that they agreed that the current level of car use has a serious effect on climate change.
- A slightly lower percentage (74%) agreed that the current level of air travel has a serious effect on climate change, though this has increased since 2005 when 64% agreed.

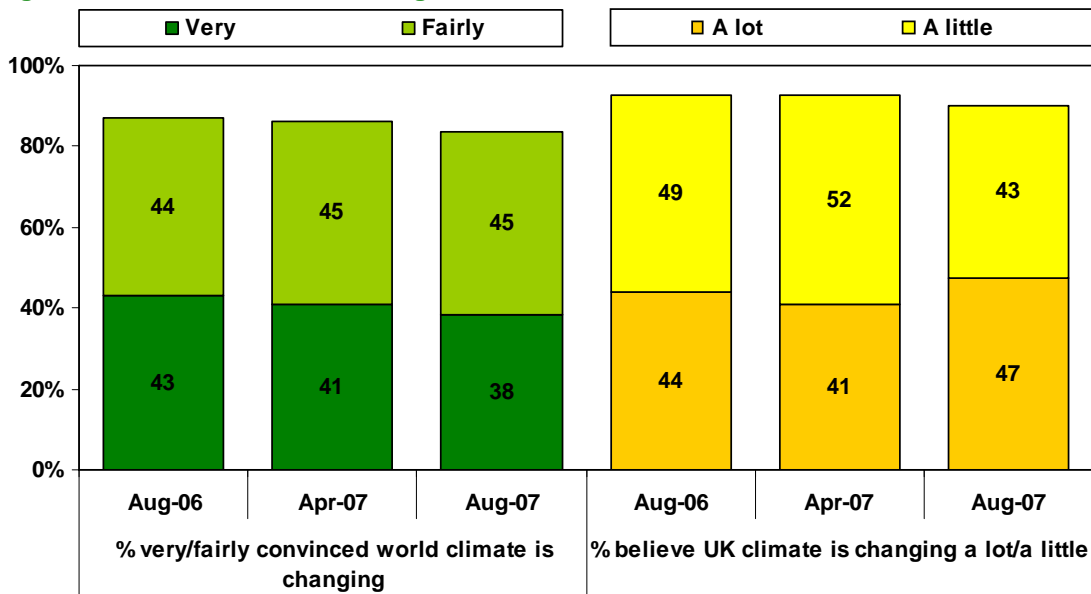
3.9 These results suggest that the public are not generally aware of the current data on the emissions generated by different modes of transport. Estimates of carbon dioxide emissions from various modes of transport in the United Kingdom for 2005 show passenger cars to contribute 69.9 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, while domestic and international aviation contribute 37.5 million tonnes⁵. The increasing concern about aviation is likely to be due, at least in part, to awareness of future projections suggesting that air travel will be responsible for a higher proportion of transport emissions over time.

⁵ Source: Transport Statistics Great Britain: 2007 Edition.

Perceived consequences of climate change

3.10 In each survey the vast majority of respondents were either very convinced or fairly convinced that the world's climate was changing, with a similar proportion believing that the UK climate was being affected a lot or a little. Around one in ten adults were sceptical or unsure whether the global/UK climate was being affected (Figure 6, Table A.8 and A.9).

Figure 6 Views about changes to the world and UK climate



Source: NS Omnibus - August 2006, April 2007 and August 2007. Base number: 1,219; 1,078; 1,167.

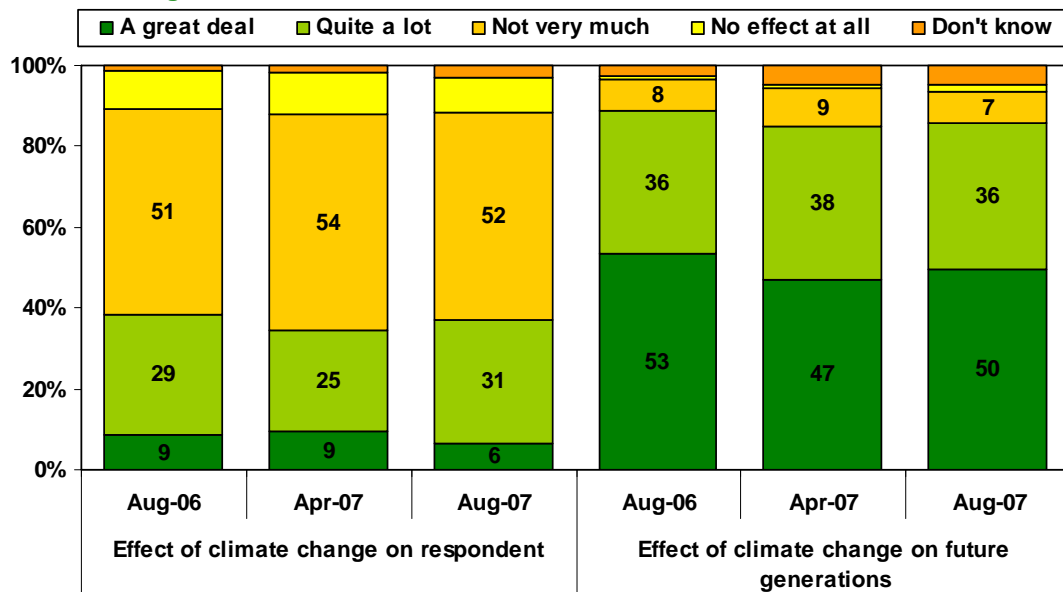
3.11 The results were reasonably similar across all socio-demographic groups examined (Table B.4 and B.5). Interestingly though, those with the highest level qualifications or in managerial and professional groups were more likely to be very convinced that the global climate was changing but less likely to consider the UK climate to be changing a lot, compared with those with lower level qualifications/in other socio-economic groups.

3.12 More specifically, respondents were asked what they thought the consequences of climate change would be. The most commonly cited consequences of climate change in each survey were changes relating to the global or local climate/weather conditions, mentioned by about 75%. Around a half mentioned melting ice caps or rising sea levels and flooding. (Table A.7).

3.13 In each survey around a third of adults said that they believed that climate change would have a great deal or quite a lot of impact on them personally. So although the majority of adults express concern about climate change and believe that there is already some impact on the UK's climate, a far lower proportion believe that this will have an impact on them personally (Table A.10).

3.14 Respondents were more likely to believe climate change would have an impact on future generations, with almost nine in ten believing it would impact on future generations a great deal or quite a lot. There has been little change across the three surveys (Figure 7 and Table A.11).

Figure 7 Perceived impact of climate change on respondent and future generations



Source: NS Omnibus - August 2006, April 2007 and August 2007 NS Omnibus. Base number = 1,219; 1,077; 1,167.

3.15 Not surprisingly, views as to whether climate change would have a personal impact were related to age, with those aged 65 and over being less likely to believe that climate change would have a personal impact than younger people. Age was, however, less clearly related to views about the impact on future generations (Tables B.6 and B.7).

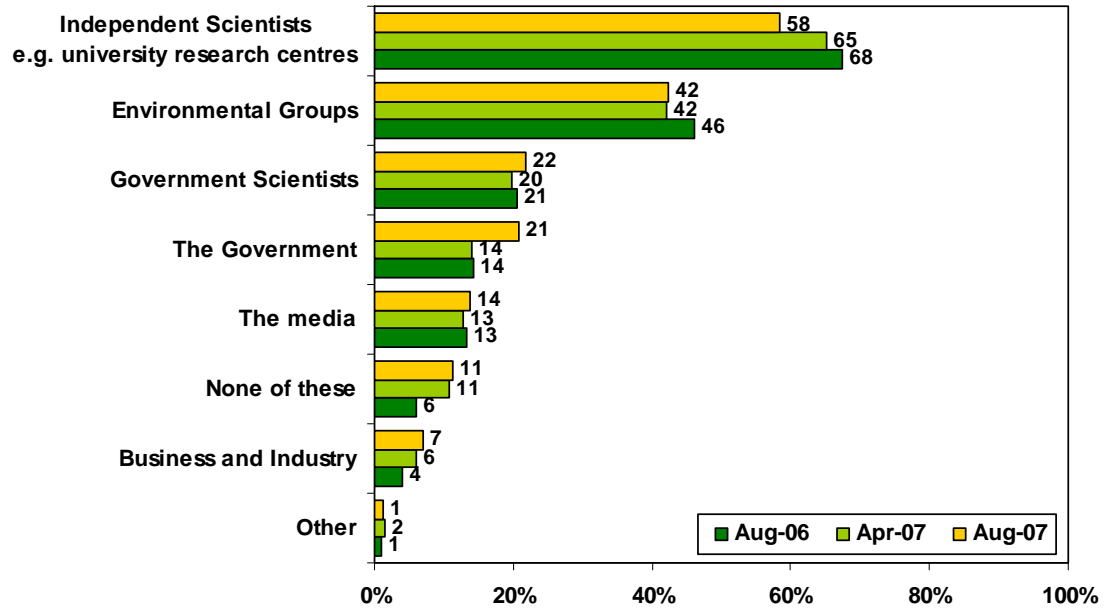
3.16 Consistent with earlier findings those with degree or higher qualifications and those in managerial or professional occupations were particularly concerned about personal and future impacts of climate change, while those with no qualifications or in semi-routine or routine occupations were less convinced.

Source of information

3.17 Questions were asked addressing public trust in sources of information about climate change.

- In each survey the public were most likely to say that they trusted independent scientists to provide correct information about climate change, though trust in this group was significantly lower in August 2007 (58%) than in August 2006 (68%).
- Environmental groups were trusted by just over four in ten adults.
- Although government scientists and the government more generally commanded lower levels of trust than either independent scientists or environmental groups, trust in the government was significantly higher in August 2007 than in August 2006 (33% compared with 29%).
- Interestingly, the proportion of respondents not trusting any of the sources also increased over time, from 6% to 11% (Figure 8, Table A.12).

Figure 8 Sources of information on climate change that are trusted as accurate



Source: NS Omnibus - August 2006, April 2007 and August 2007. Respondents could choose more than one answer. Base number: 1,223; 1,055; 1,161.

4. Attitudes towards reducing the impacts of climate change

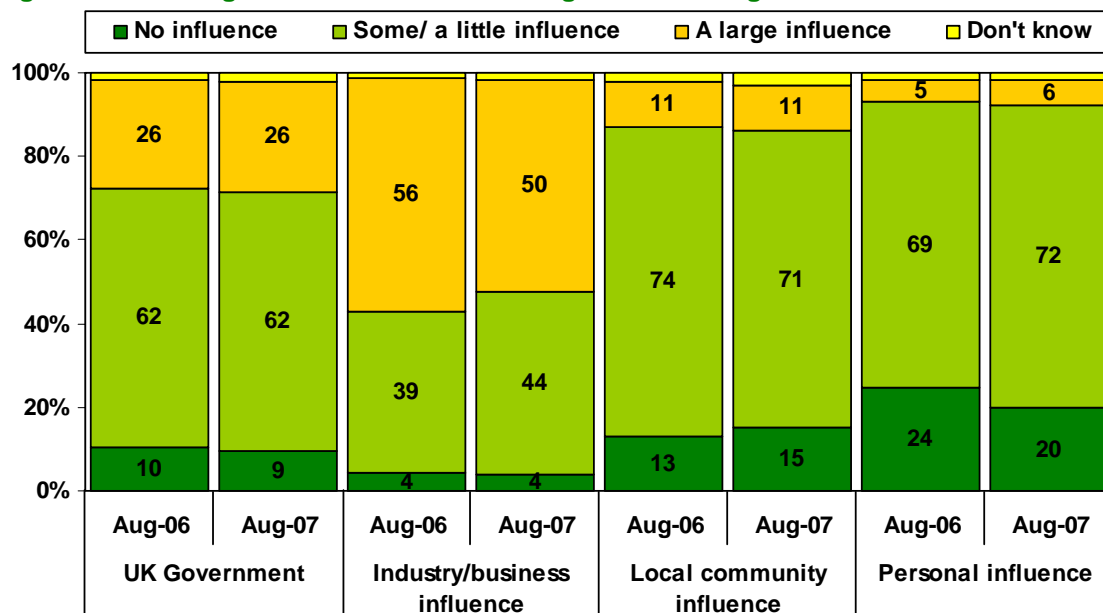
4.1 Respondents to the survey were asked about the impact that different groups could potentially have on reducing the impacts of climate change and their views on their own personal contributions.

Potential to limit climate change

4.2 Respondents were asked to what extent climate change could be limited by the UK Government, industry and business, local communities and themselves as individuals (Figure 9 and Tables A.13 to A.16).

- In each survey about twice as many respondents believed that industry and businesses could have a large influence in reducing climate change as believed that the UK Government could have a large influence. This was despite a small fall in the proportion of adults believing business/industry could have a large influence between August 2006 and August 2007 (50% from 56%).
- Only a small proportion of respondents felt that their local communities or they themselves could have a large influence, but around seven in ten believed that they could have some or a little influence on climate change.
- In August 2007 the proportion of adults believing that they themselves could have no influence on limiting climate change stood at 20%, slightly lower than the 24% in August 2006.

Figure 9 Degree of influence on limiting climate change



Source: NS Omnibus - August 2006 and August 2007. Base number = 1,215 and 1,161.

- 4.3 In general, all socio-demographic groups considered businesses to be most influential in limiting the impact of climate change, followed by government, the local community and the individual.
- 4.4 People aged 75 and over were more pessimistic than younger people about the influence all groups could have on limiting climate change. Those in semi-routine and routine occupations and those without qualifications were more pessimistic about the role of government and business/industry relative to other social groups. Women were more positive about the impact of local communities and individuals than men (Tables B.8 to B.11).

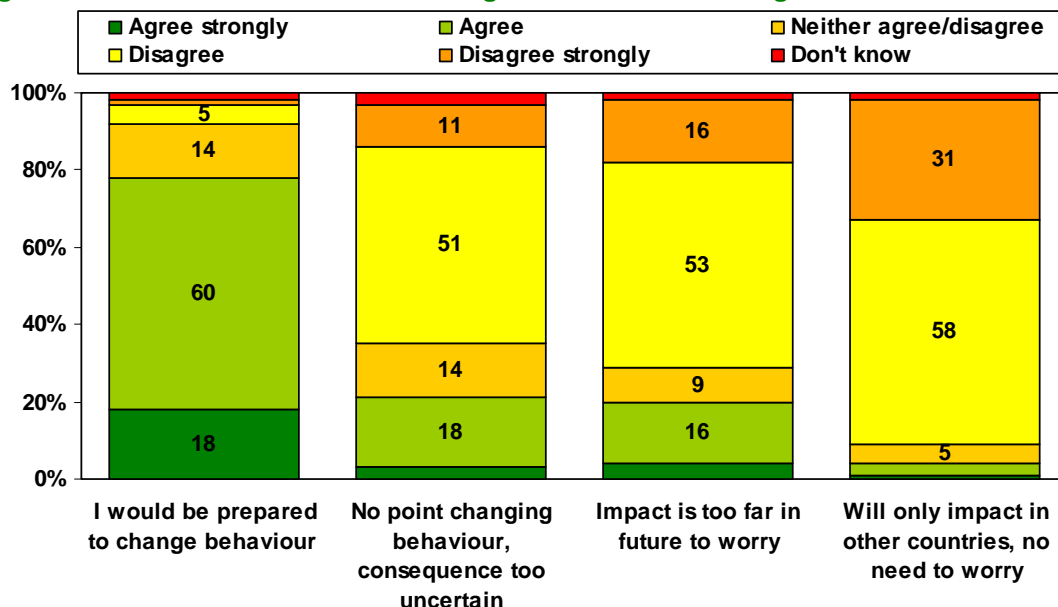
Potential for individual behavioural change

4.5 Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- (A) *I would be prepared to change my behaviour to help limit climate change*
- (B) *There is no point in individuals changing their behaviour because the consequences of climate change are too uncertain*
- (C) *The impact of climate change is too far in the future for me to worry*
- (D) *Climate change will only have an impact in other countries so there is no need for me to worry*

4.6 Figure 10 presents the latest results from August 2007. The results are generally similar in the earlier surveys (see Tables A.17 to A.20).

Figure 10 Attitudes to climate change and behaviour change



Source: NS Omnibus - August 2007. Base number = 1,161.

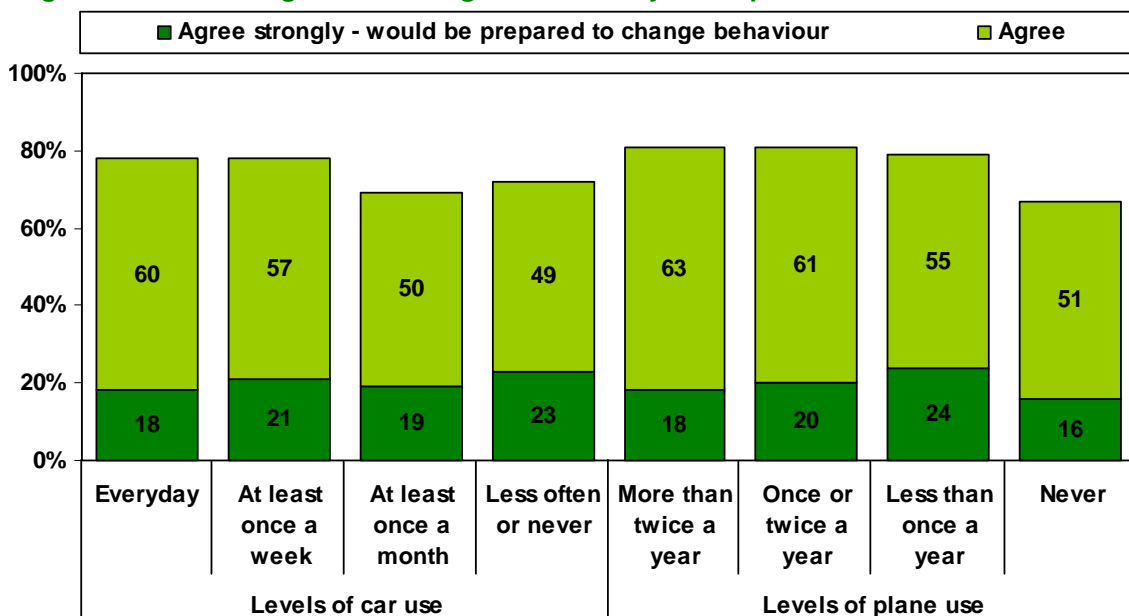
- Overall, three-quarters of respondents agreed that they would be prepared to change their behaviour to help limit climate change. 6% disagreed and a further 16% indicated that they were unsure whether they would change their behaviour.

- Around a fifth of respondents felt that there was no point in individuals changing their behaviour because of uncertainty about the consequences, while a similar proportion said that climate change was too far in the future to worry about. Very few respondents thought climate change would only impact on other countries.

4.7 The majority of adults across all socio-demographic groups said that they would be prepared to change their behaviour to limit climate change, although there was variation in levels of willingness across groups. Those with degree or higher level qualifications or in managerial/professional groups were particularly likely to agree that they would be willing to change behaviour, while those with no qualifications and those aged 75 and over were groups most resistant to change (Table B.12 to B.15).

4.8 Reflecting these socio-economic patterns, people who most frequently travelled by car or plane were slightly more likely to say they were willing to change behaviour than those who used these modes less often (Figure 11).

Figure 11 Willingness to change behaviour by travel patterns



Source: NS Omnibus - August 2006, April 2007 and August 2007 (combined). Base numbers: Levels of car use - everyday = 1,353; at least once a week = 1,551; at least once a month = 218; less often or never = 326. Levels of plane use - more than twice a year = 349; once or twice a year = 1,232; less than once a year = 935; never = 922.

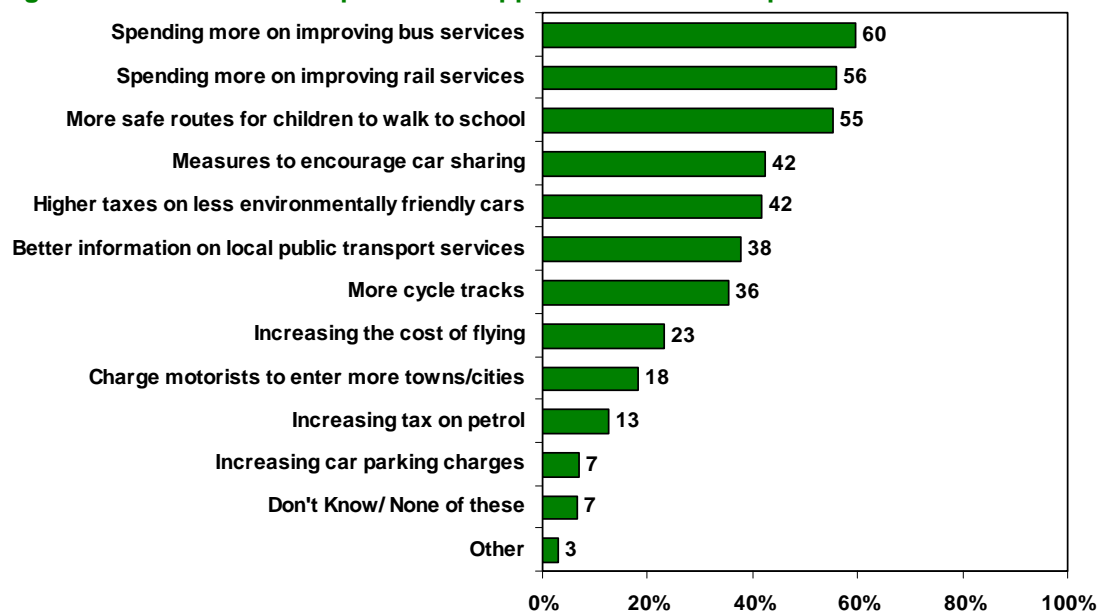
5. Support for policies to reduce transport emissions

5.1 Respondents were informed that the UK had signed an international agreement (Kyoto Protocol) committing the country to reduce emissions thought to cause climate change, including those from cars and domestic air travel. Respondents were then presented with a list of policies that could reduce car/plane emissions and asked which, if any, of these policies they would support.

5.2 Figure 12 presents the results from August 2007. The results are similar across all three surveys (Table A.23).

- In each survey almost six in ten adults supported each of the following: increased spending on bus and rail services and safer walking to school routes for children.
- Pricing measures aimed at reducing car and plane use were far less popular. Increasing the cost of flying received support from just under a quarter of respondents, while increasing tax on petrol was supported by just over one in ten. Increasing taxes on less environmentally friendly cars was the most popular pricing measure, supported by around four in ten.

Figure 12 Policies respondents support to reduce transport emissions



Source: NS Omnibus - August 2007. Respondents could choose more than one answer. Base number = 1,166.

5.3 Not surprisingly, those very concerned about climate change were far more likely to support the various policies than those who were not very or not at all concerned about climate change. However, even among the most concerned groups support for pricing measures was relatively low, with the exception of increasing taxes on the most environmentally damaging cars (Figure 13 and Figure 14).

Figure 13 Levels of support for pricing policies to reduce transport emissions

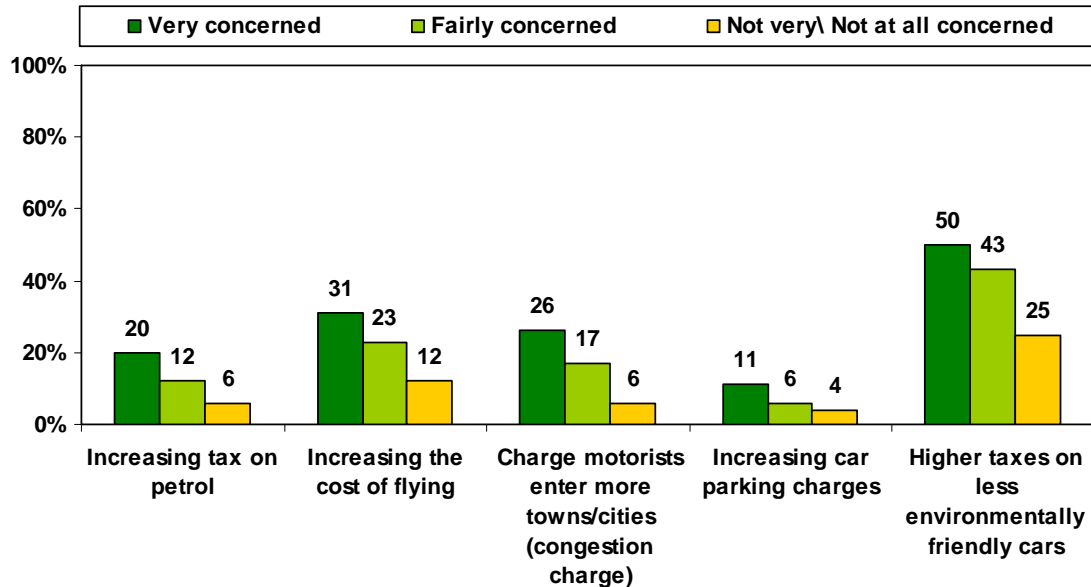
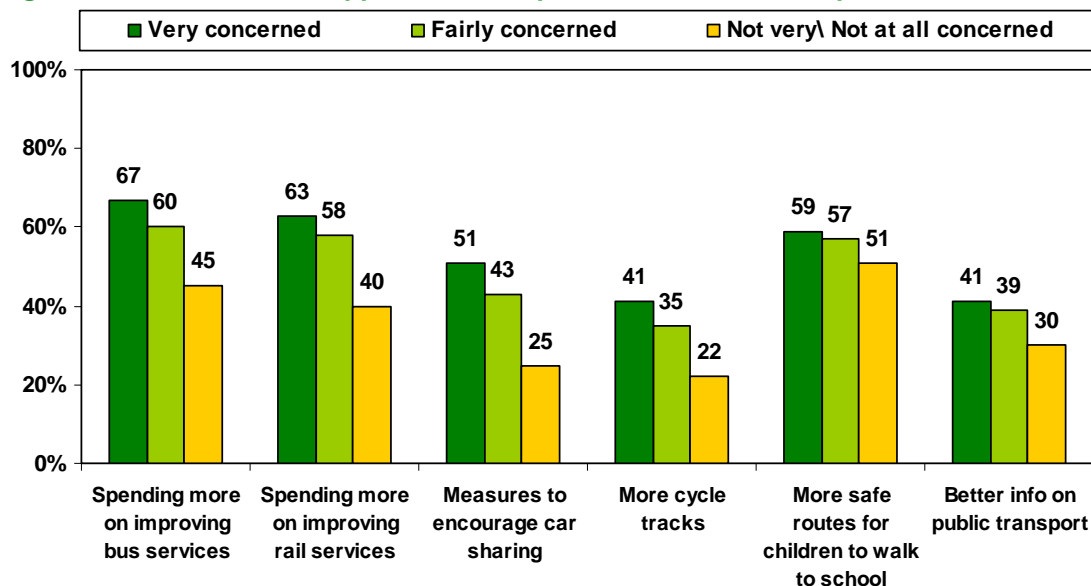


Figure 14 Levels of support for other policies to reduce transport emissions



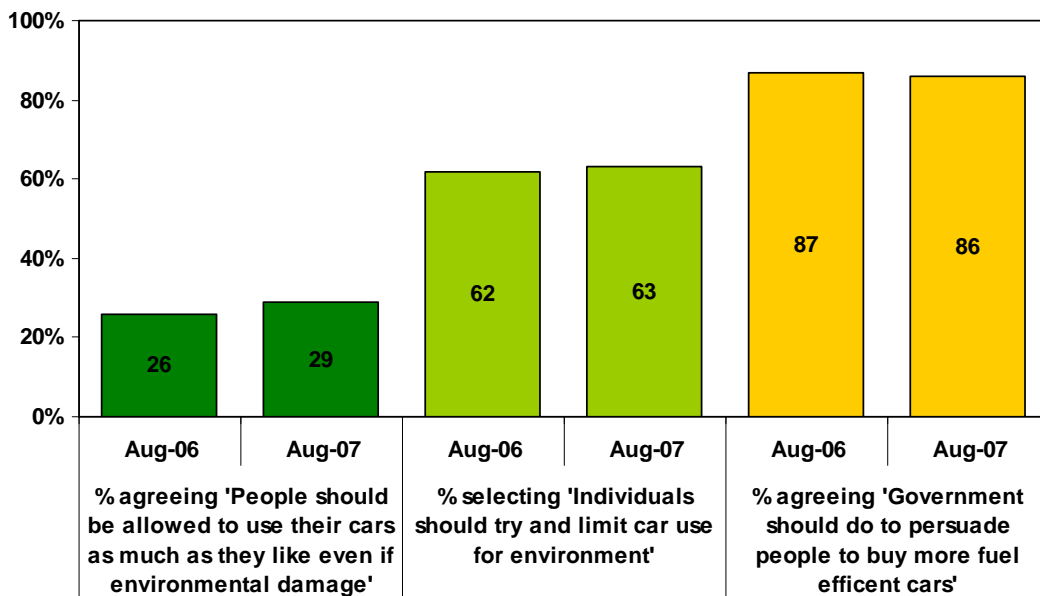
Source: NS Omnibus - August 2006, April 2007 and August 2007 (combined). Base numbers: Very concerned about climate change = 916; fairly concerned = 1,875; not very/not at all = 640.

Views on reducing car emissions

5.4 Respondents were asked a set of questions to assess their views on the role of individuals and the government in reducing car use. Respondents were shown the following two statements and asked to select the one closest to their own views: *Individuals should try to limit their car use for the sake of the environment* or *There is no point in individuals trying to limit their car use because not enough people will do it to make any difference*. They were also asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements: *People should be allowed to use their cars as much as they like, even if it causes damage to the environment* and *Government should do more to persuade people to buy more fuel efficient, environmentally friendly cars*.

- The vast majority of adults supported the government persuading people to purchase less environmentally damaging vehicles and around two-thirds favoured individuals trying to limit their car use⁶.
- Around three in ten agreed that *People should be allowed to use their cars as much as they like, even if it causes damage to the environment*, with just under a half disagreeing with this (the remainder were neutral)⁷.
- Views were generally similar in each survey, though the proportion of adults who disagreed with unlimited car use was lower in April/August 2007 than August 2006 (Tables A.24 to A.26). The British Social Attitudes Survey also indicates a fall in the proportion of adults disagreeing with unlimited car use (from 49% in 2004 to 39% in 2006).

Figure 15 Attitudes towards measures to reduce car emissions



Source: NS Omnibus - August 2006 and August 2007. Base numbers: Statement 1 = 1,235; 1,166; Statement 2 = 1,210; 1,152; Statement 3 = 1,236; 1,165.

5.5 Although levels of support for the government persuading people to purchase more environmentally friendly cars were consistently high across all socio-demographic groups, there was some variations in attitudes towards unrestricted car use across groups (Tables B.16 to B18).

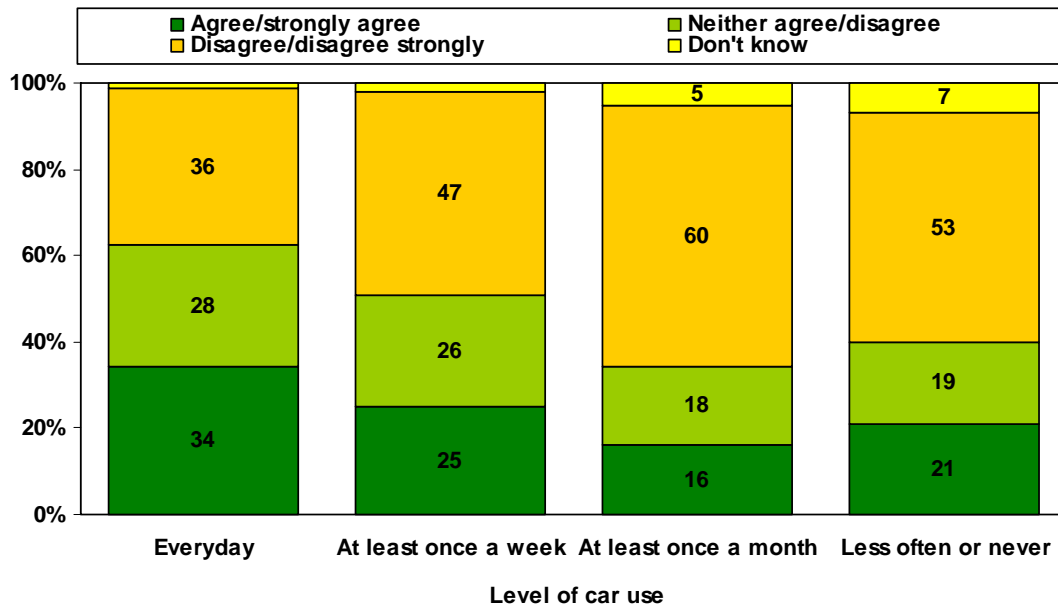
- Those in managerial or professional occupations, with degree or higher level qualifications or with higher incomes were particularly likely to support restrictions on car use, while those in semi-routine or routine occupations, with no qualifications or with low levels of income were most sceptical about the value of individuals reducing their car use.

⁶ The 2006 British Social Attitudes Survey reported that 66% of adults agreed 'People who drive cars that are better for the environment should pay less to use the roads than people whose cars are more harmful to the environment'; 66% agreed that 'For the sake of the environment everyone should reduce how much they use their cars'.

⁷ The 2006 British Social Attitudes Survey reported that 23% of adults agreed 'People should be allowed to use their cars as much as they like, even if it causes damage to the environment, 39% disagreed.

- Support for unrestricted car use was higher among the most frequent car users (Figure 16).

Figure 16 Percentage agreeing/disagreeing with the statement 'People should be allowed to use their cars as much as they like, even if it damages the environment', by car use



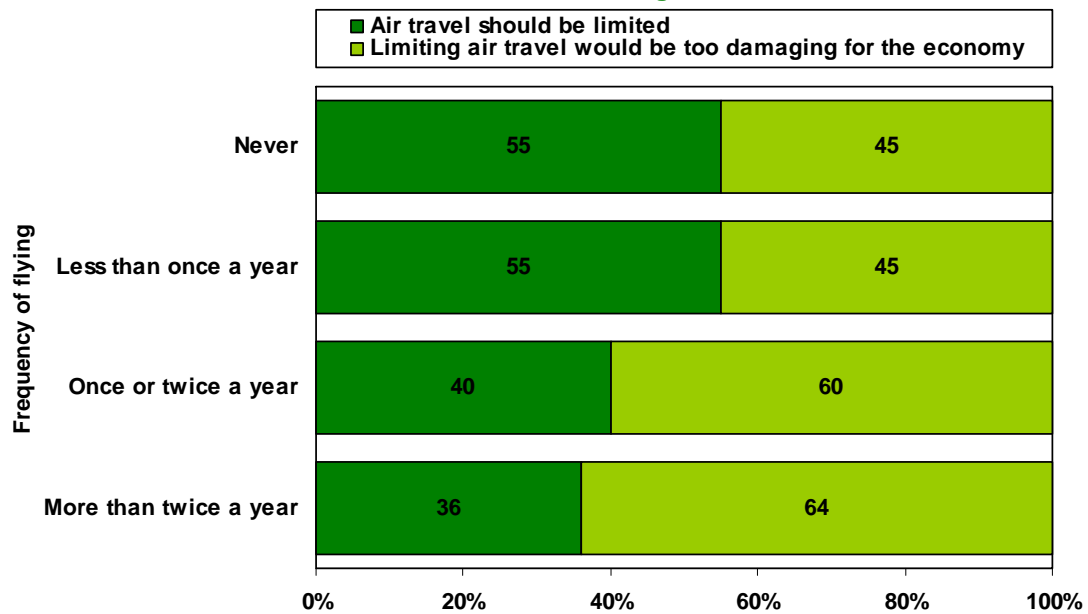
Source: NS Omnibus - August 2006, April 2007 and August 2007 (combined). Base numbers: use car everyday = 1360; at least once a week = 1563; at least once a month = 222; less often or never = 335.

Views on reducing emissions from air travel

5.6 Respondents were presented with two statements regarding air travel and asked to select the statement that came closest to their own views - *Air travel should be limited for the sake of the environment* or *Limiting air travel would be too damaging to the economy*.

- In each survey views were reasonably evenly split. For example, in August 2007 47% said that '*Air travel should be limited for the sake of the environment*', while 53% said that '*Limiting air travel would be too damaging to the economy*' (Table A.27).
- Those who travelled by plane more than twice a year were more likely to see limiting air travel as too damaging to the economy (64%) than those who travelled by plane less than once a year or never (45%). (Figure 17, Table B.19).

Figure 17 Whether air travel should be limited for the sake of the environment, by levels of concern about climate change



Source: NS Omnibus - August 2006, April 2007 and August 2007 (combined).

Base numbers: More than twice year = 339; once or twice a year = 1,199; less than once a year = 891; never = 865.

5.7 The British Social Attitudes Survey asks respondents to what extent they agree or disagree with the statement *'People should be able to travel by plane as much as they like, even if this harms the environment'*. In 2006 19% of respondents agreed with this; 46% disagreed. Responses to this question have remained stable since 2003.

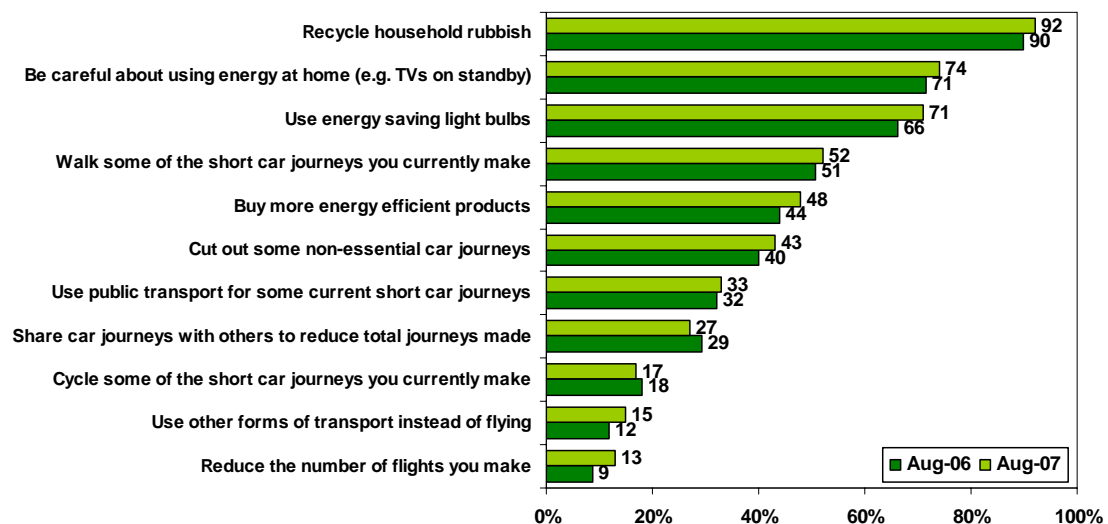
6. Potential for concerns about the environment to influence travel behaviour

6.1 The Omnibus Survey asked a range of questions to try and assess to what extent people were likely to change their travel behaviour due to concerns about climate change. The results are given below. It should be noted, however, that stated intentions may not necessarily translate into practice.

6.2 Respondents were asked what types of activities they were likely to undertake in the next 12 months due to concerns about climate change. The list of possible activities included transport-related activities and other types of activity. Figure 18 presents the results (see Table A.28).

- The activity that was most commonly mentioned was recycling, by around nine in ten.
- Around nine in ten also mentioned at least one measure to reduce household energy consumption.
- Three-quarters mentioned at least one activity related to reducing car journeys, most often walking some short journeys or reducing the number of non-essential journeys.
- Around a fifth mentioned reducing flights, including using other forms of transport instead of flying.
- There was no change in the proportion of adults anticipating changes to their travel behaviour between August 2006 and August 2007.

Figure 18 Activities likely to be undertaken in the next 12 months due to concerns about climate change



Source: August 2006 and August 2007 NS Omnibus. Respondents could choose more than one answer. Base number = 1,198 and 1,154.

- 6.3 Table B.20 shows how expressed willingness to undertake behaviours due to concerns about climate change varies across groups.
- The most frequent car users were more likely to say that they were likely to reduce their car use than less frequent car users. Almost eight in ten adults who used cars at least every week said that they would potentially reduce their car use in the next 12 months due to concerns about climate change. Among those who used a car less often but at least once a month 61% mentioned that they were likely to undertake a behaviour that would reduce car journeys. This is perhaps not surprising as the more car journeys someone makes the more scope they have to cut out or replace some of these journeys.
 - Among those who had flown, frequency of plane use was not related to the likelihood of reducing plane use.
 - Those with degree or higher level qualifications were far more likely to say that they were going to take measures to reduce car journeys or flights than those with no qualifications.
- 6.4 Respondents who mentioned that they were likely to reduce their car use or plane use due to concerns about climate change were asked to what extent they were likely to do so (Tables A.29 and A.30).
- Of those who mentioned reduced car use, around eight in ten said that they would travel by car a bit less, while just under a fifth said they would reduce their car use a lot.
 - Of those who mentioned reduced flying, just over a half said they would travel by plane a bit less and just under three in ten by a lot less.
- 6.5 Those who did not say that they would reduce their car/plane use were asked the reasons for this.
- Car users who were not intending to reduce their car use, often said a reason for this was the need to drive to work (21%) or inconvenience (15%). Many car users mentioned that they rarely used a car (15%) or did not own a car themselves (35%).
 - Among plane users who were not intending to reduce their plane use, the most common reason for not reducing usage was the desire to go on holiday abroad (46%).
- 6.6 Although around three-quarters of adults said that they would reduce car use in the next 12 months due to concerns about climate change, the proportion of who had actually reduced their car use in the preceding year was lower at around 30% (Table A.31). Moreover, in many cases reduced car use was unrelated to environmental concerns. Overall, around 5% of car users had reducing their use in the last year due to environmental concerns.
- 6.7 Analysis of the 2006 British Social Attitudes Survey indicates that 45% of drivers were willing to reduce their car journeys and able to substitute one or more sustainable modes for short car journeys under 2 miles.

- 6.8 Omnibus respondents were also asked whether they would be prepared to pay more for a car that was more environmentally friendly than for an otherwise identical model if they were to buy a new car. The results suggest that there is scope for encouraging new car buyers to select more environmentally friendly models as long as the costs of doing so are not too much higher.⁸
- In August 2007, 12% of adults said they would be prepared to pay a lot more for a less polluting car, with a further 58% saying they would be prepared to pay a little more. 22% said they would not be prepared to pay more, while 8% said they would not buy a new car.
 - The results are similar in earlier surveys, although a slightly higher proportion said they would be prepared to pay a lot more in August 2006 (16%). (Table A.32).
- 6.9 Overall, there are high levels of expressed willingness to change behaviour and many say that they intend to take measures to reduce car use due to environmental concerns. However, actual changes in behaviour are far less common and further work is required to understand how intentions can be translated into practice.

⁸ Questions did not address public perceptions of the availability of different fuel efficient cars on the market and whether such cars are perceived to offer attractive alternatives to standard models.