Climate change and political priorities
What the British public think

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December 2023
Most Britons see climate change as an important problem facing the UK

Compared to all the other problems facing the UK, would you say that climate change is:

- The single most important problem: 7%
- One of the most important problems: 39%
- Important, but not the most urgent problem: 39%
- Not very important: 7%
- Not at all important: 5%

Base: 1,083 GB adults aged 18-75, surveyed 7-9 Dec 2023
The youngest age group surveyed are most inclined to see climate change as one of the biggest problems facing the UK.

Compared to all the other problems facing the UK, would you say that climate change is...%

- **Overall**: 46%
- **18-34 years**: 52%
- **35-54 years**: 43%
- **55-75 years**: 43%

Base: 1,083 GB adults aged 18-75, surveyed 7-9 Dec 2023.
Of the top 20 issues Britons say will be very important in deciding their vote at the next election, climate change ranks joint 11th, while protecting the natural environment comes 17th.

As you may know the current general election is expected to take place by January 2025. Which, if any, issues do you think will be very important to you in helping you decide which party to vote for?

- Healthcare/NHS/ hospitals: 57%
- Inflation/rising cost of living: 55%
- Managing the economy/economic situation: 36%
- Asylum and immigration: 33%
- Crime and anti-social behaviour/ law and order: 30%
- Taxation: 28%
- Poverty/Inequality: 26%
- Oil/energy/gas policy: 25%
- Housing: 24%
- Public services generally: 24%
- Care for older and disabled people: 23%
- Lack of faith in politicians/system of government: 23%
- Climate change/reaching net zero: 23%
- Education/ schools: 22%
- Pensions: 22%
- Europe/EU/Brexit: 21%
- Protecting the natural environment: 20%
- Benefits: 18%
- Public transport/roads: 18%
- Terrorism: 14%

Base: 1,083 GB adults aged 18-75, surveyed 7-9 Dec 2023
There are no statistically significant differences by age on the question of whether climate change will be key in determining people’s vote, but there are large differences in attitudes by how people voted at the last general election.

As you may know the current general election is expected to take place by January 2025. Which, if any, issues do you think will be very important to you in helping you decide which party to vote for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% who say climate change / reaching net zero</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2019 Lib Dem voters</strong></td>
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<td><strong>2019 Labour voters</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2019 Conservative voters</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>18-34 years</strong></td>
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Base: 1,083 GB adults aged 18-75, surveyed 7-9 Dec 2023. Note small base size for Lib Dems (82).
By 41% to 33%, the public say they'd be more likely to vote for a party that took strong action on climate change than one that took a slower approach.

Below are two different aims a political party could have. For these statements, please choose which would make you more likely to vote for a political party, or if it would make no difference.

**Statement A:** We will take strong action against things that cause climate change, even if this increases costs of oil and gas production and requires increased investment in renewable energy supplies.

**Statement B:** We will slow down actions against things that cause climate change, because it is not necessary or we can’t afford the additional costs right now while there are other priorities.

- **Strongly prefer a party saying Statement A:** 19%
- **Tend to prefer a party saying Statement A:** 22%
- **Neither A nor B would make a difference to my choice of party:** 20%
- **Tend to prefer a party saying Statement B:** 19%
- **Strongly prefer a party saying Statement B:** 14%

Base: 1,083 GB adults aged 18-75, surveyed 7-9 Dec 2023
Among those who prefer a party advocating either a strong or slow approach to tackling climate change, there are big differences in views by 2019 general election vote and Brexit vote.

Below are two different aims a political party could have. For these statements, please choose which would make you more likely to vote for a political party, or if it would make no difference. % who say they strongly or tend to prefer a party saying either statement.

**Statement A:** We will take strong action against things that cause climate change, even if this even if this increases costs of oil and gas production and requires increased investment in renewable energy supplies.

**Statement B:** We will slow down actions against things that cause climate change, because it is not necessary or we can’t afford the additional costs right now while there are other priorities.

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<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Labour</th>
<th>Leave</th>
<th>Remain</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement A</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement B</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>28%</td>
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Base: 1,083 GB adults aged 18-75, surveyed 7-9 Dec 2023.
46% see the Prime Minister’s decision to delay or cancel some net zero policies as right, compared with 35% who see it as wrong.

In September 2023, the UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced that the government was going to make some changes to delay or cancel some net zero policies. Based on what you know or have heard, if anything, about these announcements, do you think the government is right or wrong to delay or cancel some of its policies aimed at reducing emissions?

- **Definitely right**: 17%
- **Probably right**: 29%
- **I hadn’t heard about this before now**: 12%
- **Probably wrong**: 17%
- **Definitely wrong**: 18%

Base: 1,083 GB adults aged 18-75, surveyed 7-9 Dec 2023
2019 Conservative voters are around twice as likely as Labour voters to say the Prime Minister’s decision was right – but one in five Conservatives still feel it was wrong

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<td><strong>Conservative</strong></td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Labour</strong></td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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Base: 1,083 GB adults aged 18-75, surveyed 7-9 Dec 2023
Those who voted Conservative in 2019 but have now switched party or are undecided are more likely than other Conservative loyalists to say the Prime Minister’s decision was wrong

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<tr>
<td>Conservative loyalist</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 Conservative now switched or undecided</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour loyalist</td>
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<td>24%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<td>32%</td>
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<td>Labour gains</td>
<td>11%</td>
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Base: 1,083 GB adults aged 18-75, surveyed 7-9 Dec 2023
While a greater share of the public see the Prime Minister’s decision as right than wrong, four in 10 think it has worsened Britain’s reputation abroad

And based on what you know or have heard about these announcements, how do you think these may have impacted Britain’s reputation around the world, if at all?

- Significantly improved Britain’s reputation
- Slightly improved Britain’s reputation
- They have had no impact on Britain’s reputation
- I hadn’t heard about this before now
- Slightly worsened Britain’s reputation
- Significantly worsened Britain’s reputation

4% 9% 29% 7% 24% 16%

Base: 1,083 GB adults aged 18-75, surveyed 7-9 Dec 2023
Survey details

Ipsos interviewed a representative sample of 1,083 GB adults aged 18-75. Interviews were conducted online from 7-9 December 2023. Data are weighted to match the profile of the population. All polls are subject to a wide range of potential sources of error.

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