



### Background

This bulletin describes the main findings from the *Perceptions of Climate Change* section in the 2016-2017 National Survey for Wales. Full results and an interactive Results Viewer can be found at <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/national-survey/?lang=en>.

A subset of National Survey respondents were asked the following questions;

- Do you think the world's climate is changing?
- How concerned are you about climate change?
- What do you think are the main causes of climate change?
- What action(s) have you taken to help protect the environment or address climate change?

The National Survey for Wales also includes a wide range of questions about demographics, socio-economic factors such as deprivation, and about where people live (such as rural or urban areas). The responses have been weighted to make them representative of the characteristics of the adult population of Wales.

### Key Findings

- A very large majority of respondents (84%) think that the world's climate is changing; 9% don't know, whilst 7% disagreed.
- Most (67%) are 'very' or 'fairly' concerned about climate change, however 20% are 'not very concerned', and an additional 13% said they were 'not at all concerned'.
- Just over half (51%) of the population in Wales think that climate change is caused by a combination of natural processes and human activity. A further 37% of people think that it is mainly due to human activity, whilst 9% think it is caused by only natural processes.
- Almost all respondents (97%) had recycled their household waste to protect the environment. Almost half (47%) reported using less energy in their homes to help protect the environment and address climate change.

## Perceptions about global climate change

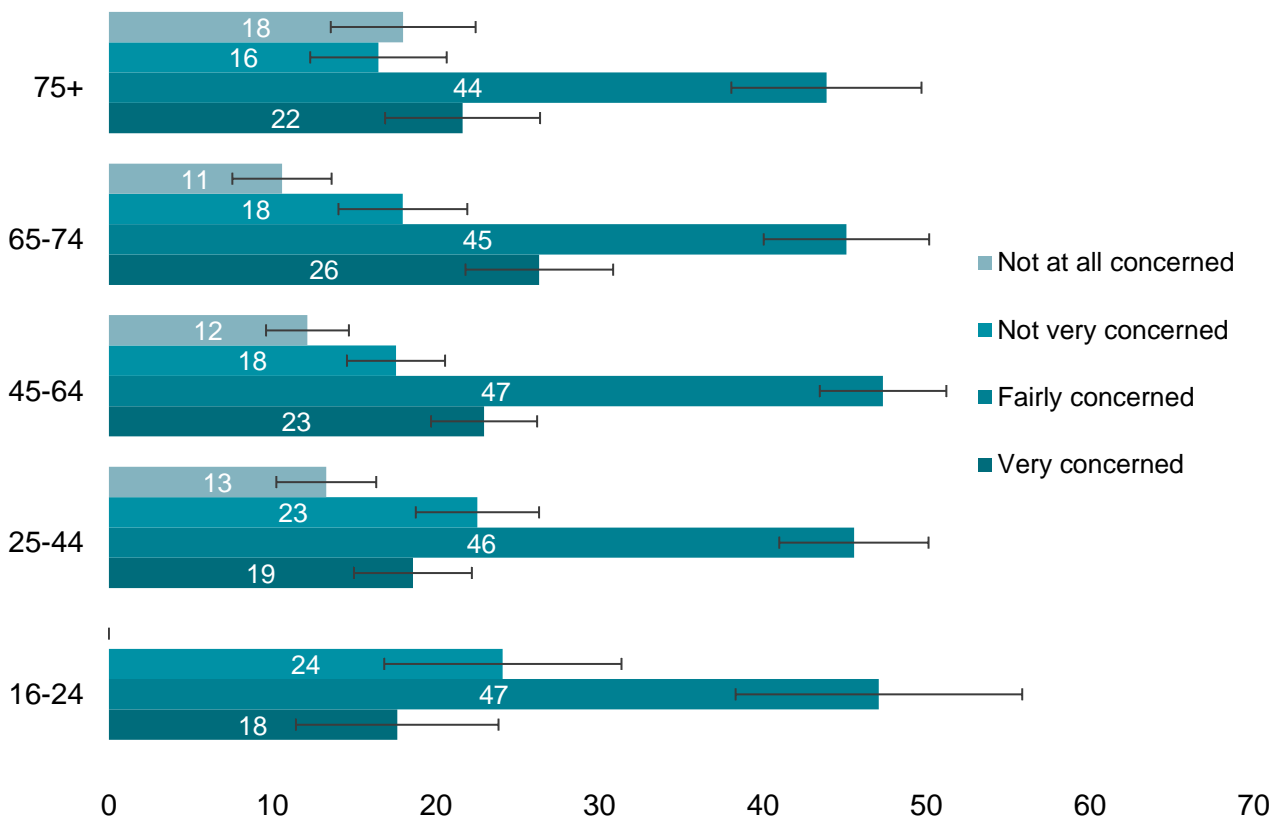
Respondents were asked if they thought the world’s climate was changing, or not. The majority of people (84%) agreed that it is, 9% didn’t know, and 7% disagreed. There were no significant differences by age group, gender, or living in an urban or rural area; however, adults in material deprivation were significantly less likely to agree. Most of the difference was attributable to a higher proportion of people who answered “don’t know”. Respondents with a higher educational qualification (e.g. an NVQ, HNC, HND, or a degree) were significantly more likely to believe that the climate is changing.

## Level of concern about climate change

Most people stated that they were ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ concerned about climate change (21% and 46% respectively). One in five respondents (20%) said that they were ‘not very concerned’, whilst a further 13% said they were ‘not at all concerned’ about climate change.

- There were apparent differences between age groups, although these results had quite a high level of uncertainty and should be treated with caution. The youngest people (16-24) were the least likely to say they were ‘very concerned’ (18%) compared to 26% of older people aged 65-74.

Fig. 1- Level of concern about climate change by age band



Error bars denote 95% confidence intervals for the population means, included in this case due to the high degree of uncertainty for some subgroups. The subgroup of 16 to 24-year-olds who were not at all concerned about climate change is not shown as it was fewer than 30 individuals.

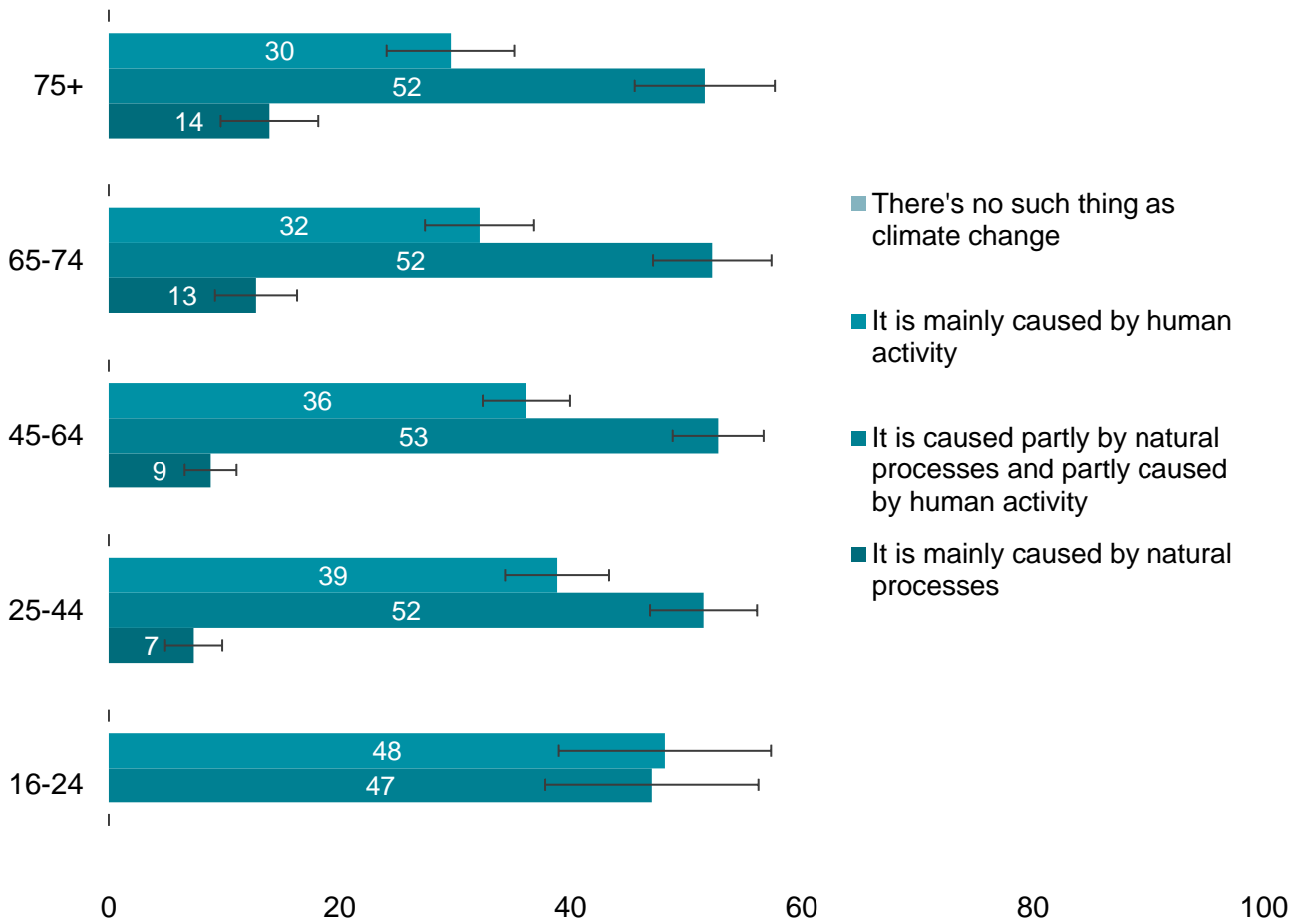
- Gender also made a difference to levels of concern about climate change, with 70% of women being 'very' or 'fairly' concerned, compared to 64% of men. In contrast, men were more likely than women to be 'not at all concerned' (16% compared to 10%)
- Education level highlighted some significant differences: 23% of respondents with no qualifications said they were 'not at all concerned' about climate change, compared to only 8% of those who had a higher education qualification. Similarly, those with the highest levels of education were more likely to state they were 'very' concerned (26%) compared to only 17% with no qualifications.
- Where people live is also related to different levels of concern, with those in rural areas more likely to be 'very' concerned (25%) compared to only 19% of those living in urban areas.

### Perceptions of the causes of climate change

Just over half (51%) of the population in Wales think that climate change is caused by a combination of natural processes and human activity. A further 37% of people think that it is mainly due to human activity, whilst 9% think it is caused by only natural processes.

- Age is a significant factor in different perceptions regarding the causes of climate change. Older people are far more likely to consider that it is caused mainly by natural processes. Correspondingly, younger people (especially those aged 16-24) are much more likely to think that climate change is due to mainly human activity.
- There was a mix of responses from people with different levels of education: those with higher levels of qualifications were more likely to think climate change was caused by either a mix of natural and human processes, or by mainly human activity. Those with no qualifications were more likely than average to state that they thought it was caused by mainly natural processes.

Fig. 2- Perceptions of the causes of climate change by age group

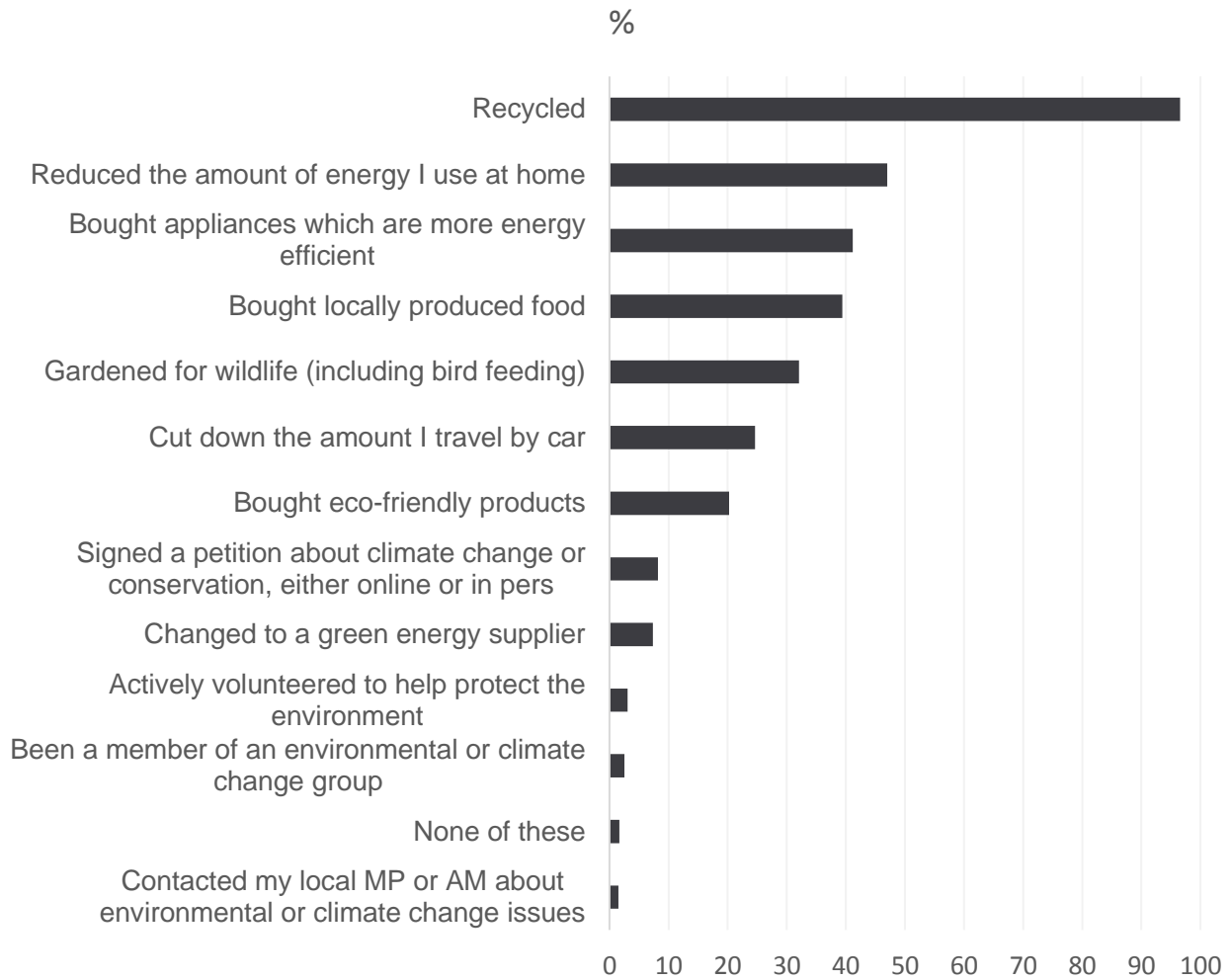


For each age group, the proportion who responded ‘There’s no such thing as climate change’ represented less than 30 individuals and so is not represented. The same is true for the subgroup of 16-24-year-old respondents who believe that climate change is mainly caused by natural processes.

### Actions to protect the environment or address climate change

The survey asked people if they had done any activities over the last 12 months to help protect the environment or address climate change. These ranged from ‘everyday’ behaviours such as recycling, to household energy efficiency measures, ‘green’ consumerism, and environmental volunteering. Unsurprisingly, recycling was by far the most commonly undertaken activity. Interestingly, nearly half of respondents had reduced their home energy use (47%), or bought energy efficient appliances (41%), although only 7% had changed to a green energy supplier. One in four people said that they had cut down on car travel, but only 3% of respondents had been an active volunteer or member of an environmental group.

Fig. 3- Actions taken to protect the environment or address climate change



- There was an interesting, and complex, relationship between actions and age. The youngest respondents (16-24) were less likely to undertake a number of behaviours, such as reducing car use, environmental consumerism, gardening for wildlife, or volunteering. This may not reflect attitudes; the youngest respondents are less likely to have a car, their own garden, or to have choices about household buying. Participation in actions to protect the environment or address climate change is highest amongst in the 25 – 44 and 45 – 64 age groups.
- Respondents living in material deprivation were less likely to undertake any of the possible actions, with the exception of signing a petition.
- There is a relationship between levels of concern about climate change and behaviour. Those who were 'very' or 'fairly' concerned were more likely to have undertaken any of the actions to protect the environment or address climate change.

Table 1- Pro-environmental actions by level of concern about climate change

Things done to help protect the environment or address climate change	Level of concern about climate change			
	Very concerned	Fairly concerned	Not very concerned	Not at all concerned
	%	%	%	%
Recycled	98	97	96	91
Cut down the amount I travel by car	38	26	18	12
Changed to a green energy supplier	12	8	-	-
Bought appliances which are more energy efficient	49	48	39	30
Reduced the amount of energy I use at home	60	51	39	34
Bought locally produced food	51	42	32	25
Bought eco-friendly products	33	21	13	-
Gardened for wildlife (including bird feeding)	44	31	21	22
Contacted my local MP or AM about environmental or climate change issues	-	-	-	-
Signed a petition about climate change or conservation, either online or in person	19	7	-	-
Actively volunteered to help protect the environment	6	3	-	-
Been a member of an environmental or climate change group	8	-	-	-

Figures representing very small groups of people (<30) have been replaced with a dash (-) to protect confidentiality. More than one response is allowed so columns do not sum to 100%.

### Metadata

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is a partner in the new National Survey for Wales; this is NRW's second publication from the new Survey.

Technical information on the Survey, including confidence intervals for all survey items, is available from Welsh Government at the main survey page and at <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/national-survey/design-methodology/technical-information/?lang=en>.

The information within this report is categorised as Official Statistics, and has been produced and published according to arrangements approved by the UK Statistics Authority.

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