



Attitudes to the Energy Transition Summary Report



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[consumer council.org.uk](https://www.consumer council.org.uk)



Introduction

The energy transition will mean significant changes to how people live, eat, travel, and heat their homes. We need to achieve a just and fair transition by ensuring affordability, security of energy supply and protection for all consumers, particularly for vulnerable citizens.

Empowering individuals, and mobilising communities, to actively embrace Northern Ireland's energy transition is critical.

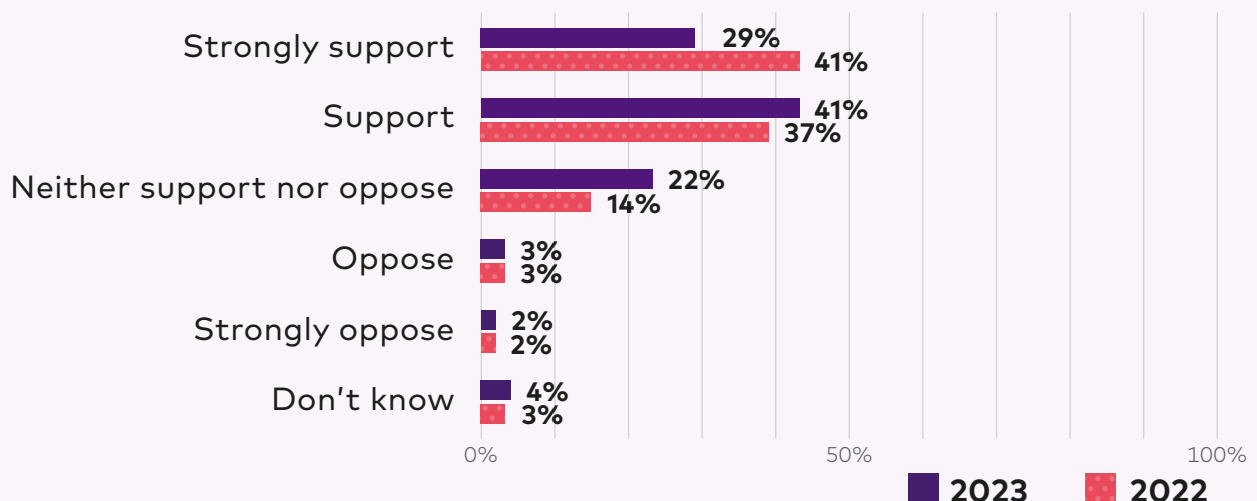
This is the second annual survey in a series potentially running until 2050. This allows us to analyse two years' worth of data specifically from consumers in Northern Ireland. As experts in the field of consumer research, the Consumer Council is perfectly placed to undertake this work.

Regularly consulting with consumers on their attitudes to the energy transition is key in understanding the impacts of the wider contexts. Both sets of results show that the ongoing effects of the cost of living crisis and costs of new energy saving technologies remain a barrier for many.

Key findings

Seven in ten consumers indicate they support the use of renewable energy. Such support will be invaluable in driving forward with the energy transition. However, consumer support must not be taken for granted. The survey, completed in 2023, indicates a decrease (down to 70% from 78%) in the number of consumers who support the use of renewable energy for providing our power, heat, and transport.

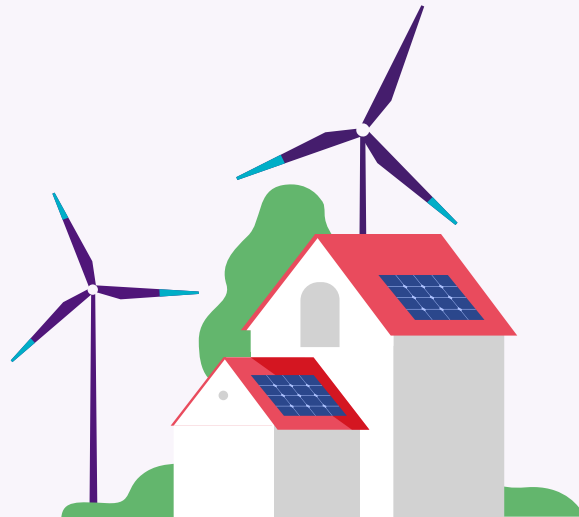
Support for the use of renewable energy for providing our power, heat and transport



However, when it comes to making upgrades or installations in the home that would contribute to decarbonisation, cost remains the main barrier for many of the respondents in both 2022 and 2023. Consumers also stated that they are unlikely to take actions like replacing petrol or diesel vehicles with electric or plug-in hybrid alternatives without financial support or incentives.

Headline figures

Consumers with some understanding of terms: greenhouse gas emissions (**up to 89% from 84%**); net zero (**up to 74% from 70%**); decarbonisation (**up to 71% from 62%**).



60%

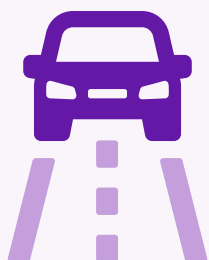
Awareness that government aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 increased (**up to 60% from 54%**); however, there was a decrease (**down to 52% from 56%**) in the number aware that a switch from fossil fuels to zero carbon alternatives for home heating will be necessary to achieve decarbonisation targets.

Consumers concerned about how much energy is used in their home decreased (down to 49% from 62%).

49%

The number of consumers who had already made changes/definitely will make changes increased: saving energy at home by improving energy performance (**up to 67% from 56%**); installing new home heating systems (**up to 28% from 22%**).

67%



Consumers who support government grants to make electric vehicles more affordable decreased to **69%** from **78%**, and consumers who opposed higher taxes on cars that use petrol or diesel increased to **56%** from **51%**.

Consumers who would support the building of new infrastructure in their local area to aid the increased use of renewable energy decreased **(down to 50% from 58%)**.



Scientists and **family** and **friends** were the sources most likely to be trusted regarding information about climate change; political leaders were least likely to be trusted.



There was a decrease **(down to 50% from 54%)** in the number of consumers likely to upgrade or improve the energy efficiency of their property and a decrease in the number likely to install solar panels, turbines, etc. **(down to 31% from 37%)**.

What next?

Education

Further public education is needed on:

- The terminologies relating to decarbonisation and targets.
- Government schemes that are in place to support domestic consumers to decarbonise.
- The positive impact that household changes can make.
- Products and technologies that are available.



Affordability

- Cost remains a barrier for many to make changes.
- Incentives and grants will play a crucial role.
- A 'one-stop shop' for energy advice and education could also serve an important function, with almost half (49%) of respondents having suggested that they would be likely to use such a resource.





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