MOTIVATING LOW CARBON BEHAVIOURS
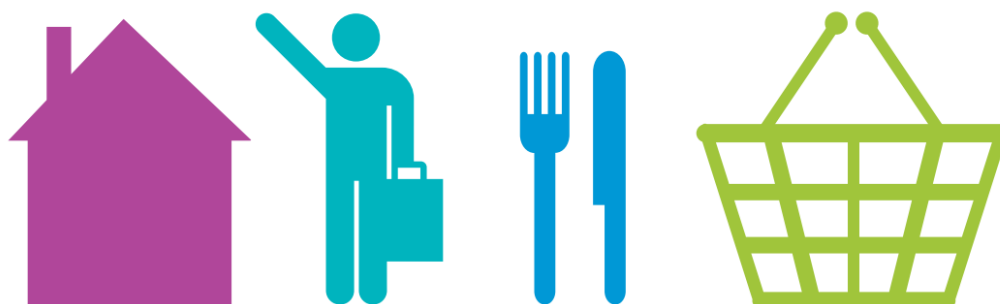
Insights from Scottish Government

Contents

Executive Summary

As part of its public engagement on climate change, Scottish Government has been running social marketing campaigns to inform people about the low carbon behaviours they can adopt and motivate them to take up these actions. Research into behaviour change and communication has been carried out to inform these campaigns and make them as effective as possible. This document summarises insights from this research, and presents some results from the attitude and behaviour tracking work carried out alongside each campaign. The key findings include:

1. **Climate change is not the main motivator behind the adoption of low carbon behaviours.** People often perceive climate change to be a distant, global problem, not relevant enough to their everyday lives to warrant continued attention and effort.
2. **To influence people, you have to appeal to their immediate concerns.** Health, financial gains, and improvements to the local environment should be emphasised alongside, or instead of, carbon savings.
3. **A wide range of influences govern each behaviour.** The fewer the external influences on a particular behaviour, such as the availability of seasonal food or bus routes, the easier that behaviour will be to adopt. Campaigns focused on behaviours with comparatively few external influences, such as saving energy or walking instead of driving for short journeys, are likely to be more successful.
4. **Framing behaviours within a wider picture of collective action and shared responsibility can inspire individuals to act.** People are more likely to buy into green communications if the focus is on creating change together, as a community or nation. It makes individual actions seem more effective and more meaningful.

This document focuses on research commissioned in Scotland to inform the Scottish Government's social marketing and communications campaigns. However we are aware that, where similar research has been undertaken for other geographies, such as the UK as a whole, the findings tend to be consistent with these Scottish findings.
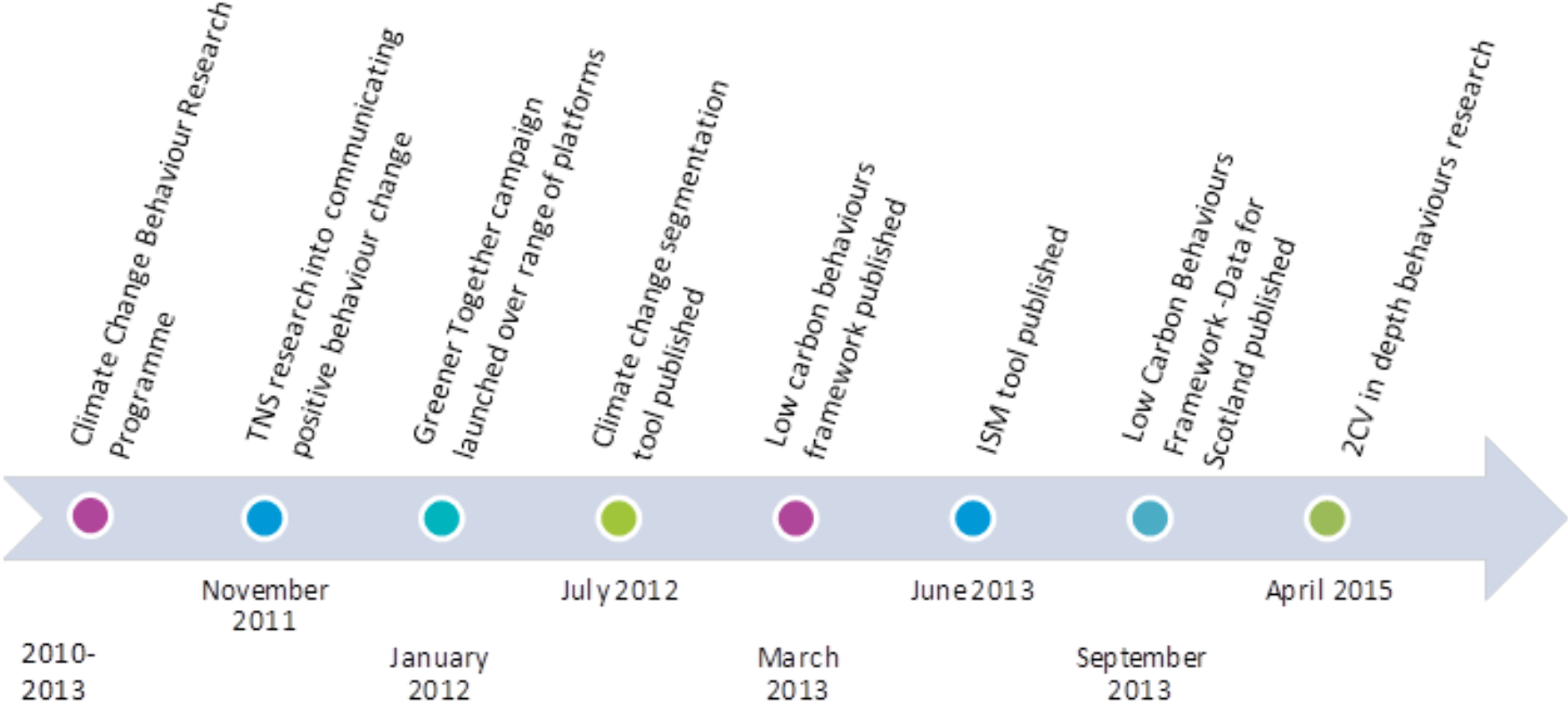
Introduction

The Scottish Government has set ambitious CO2 emission reduction targets to help tackle climate change and make Scotland a greener place to live. In order to meet these goals, everyone needs to work together, including government, businesses and the public. It is therefore essential that we understand what actions people are already taking, what is stopping people adopting climate friendly behaviours and how we can help these behaviours to become the norm.

As part of its efforts to meet these targets, the Scottish Government has been investigating how best to engage with people to motivate the up-take of low carbon behaviours. This document brings together and summarises this work, including findings from the Climate Change Behaviour Research Programme and research carried out alongside Greener Marketing Campaigns, including attitude and behaviour tracking data. It aims to give both an overview of what the Scottish Government has been doing in this area, and provide useful insights into how best to encourage positive behaviour change.

- **Section 1** Explores the key low carbon behaviours and the influences governing their uptake, and provides some insight into how to motivate behaviour change.
- **Section 2** presents data describing the attitudes and behaviours of the Scottish population, tracked from 2010 – 2016.

Included in annex at the end of this document is some information and links to useful behaviour change tools and resources developed by the Scottish Government.

Timeline of Behaviours Work Since 2010

Climate Change Behaviour Research Programme

TNS research into communicating positive behaviour change

Greener Together campaign launched over range of platforms

Climate change segmentation tool published

Low carbon behaviours framework published

ISM tool published

Low Carbon Behaviours Framework -Data for Scotland published

2CV in depth behaviours research

2010-2013

November 2011

January 2012

July 2012

March 2013

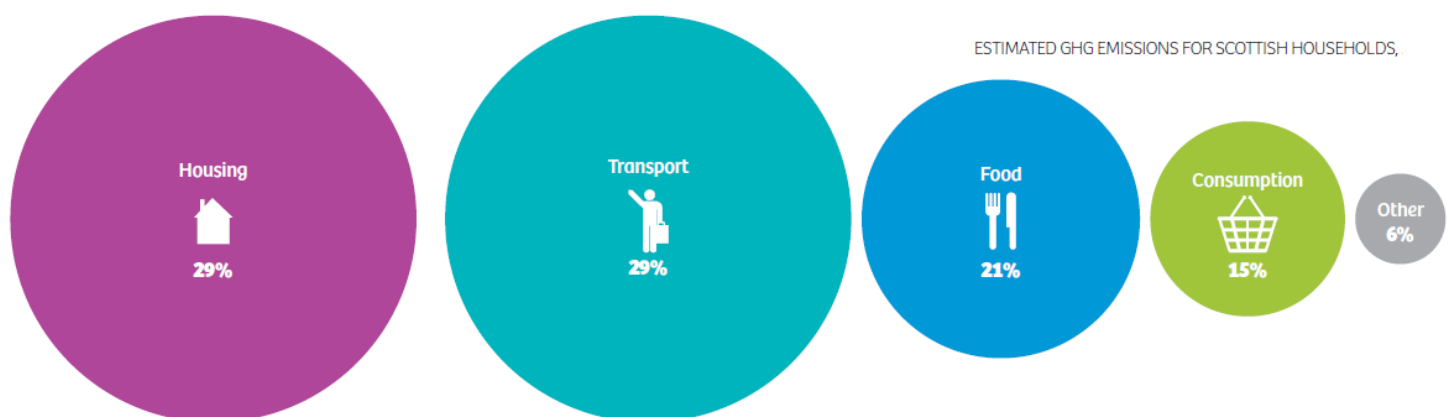June 2013

September 2013

April 2015

Section 1: What Drives Low Carbon Behaviours?

Our everyday actions and choices, such as the food we buy and the methods we use to travel, are governed by a whole range of internal and external influences such as habits, personality, time constraints, costs and social pressures. To understand how best to encourage the uptake of low carbon behaviours it's important to look at what factors influence these behaviours, as well as attitudes and feelings around the environment and climate. This section introduces the Ten Key Behaviour Areas, which have been the focus of Scottish Government's engagement on low carbon behaviour change, and goes on to explore the influences governing these behaviours and provide insights into how to motivate uptake of low carbon behaviours. This section draws on research conducted by Leith/2CV and TNS on behalf of the Scottish Government, which involved detailed surveys of the population as well as in-depth discussions carried out in people's homes.

The Ten Key Behaviour Areas

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act (2009) included a requirement to 'identify actions which persons in Scotland may take to contribute to the achievement' of Scotland's emission reduction targets[1]. Scottish Government carried out a Climate Change Behaviours Research Programme[2] to fulfil this requirement, identifying the behaviour areas with the greatest associated emissions, and investigating what relevant actions households could take to reduce their impact.

ESTIMATED GHG EMISSIONS FOR SCOTTISH HOUSEHOLDS,

Housing 29%

Transport 29%

Food 21%

Consumption 15%

Other 6%

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[1] Climate Change (Scotland) Act (2009) **91 (2)**
[2] Information on the Climate Change Behaviours Research Programme available here http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Research/by-topic/environment/social-research/Behaviour-Change-Research

It was found that household consumption emissions fall into four main categories of housing, transport, food and consumption. Within these four main themes, Ten Key Behaviour Areas were chosen to be the focus of engagement with households and individuals on low carbon behaviours. They were chosen to be as easy to understand and adopt as possible, while providing significant emissions reduction potential. They are not intended as a 'to do list' for every member of the public to complete, but as a framework to guide and inform initiatives and engagement in the context of all the influences and barriers that affect behaviours. Trends in these Behaviour Areas are monitored as part of the regular tracking research presented in section 2, and inform social marketing campaigns and behaviour related interventions and policies.

Ten Key Behaviour Areas

1. Keeping the heat in (insulation, draught proofing, double glazing)

2. Better heating management (turning down heating thermostat to between 18° and 21°, reducing the hours the heating is on, and turning down hot water thermostat to a maximum of 60°)

3. Saving electricity (buying energy efficient appliances, lightbulbs, TVs and other products when they need to be replaced, washing clothes at low temperatures)

4. Installing a more energy-efficient heating system or generating your own heat by replacing inefficient boilers with condensing boilers and/or microgeneration (e.g. solar water heating, biomass boiler, heat pump)

5. Becoming less reliant on the car (walking, cycling, using public transport and/or car-sharing instead of driving)

6. Driving more efficiently (using a low carbon vehicle (fuel efficient, hybrid, alternative fuel or electric), and/or following fuel-efficient driving principles)

7. Using alternatives to flying where practical (e.g. train or teleconferencing for business)

8. Avoiding food waste

9. Eating a healthy diet high in fruit and vegetables, in season where we live

10. Reducing and reusing in addition to the efforts we already make on recycling
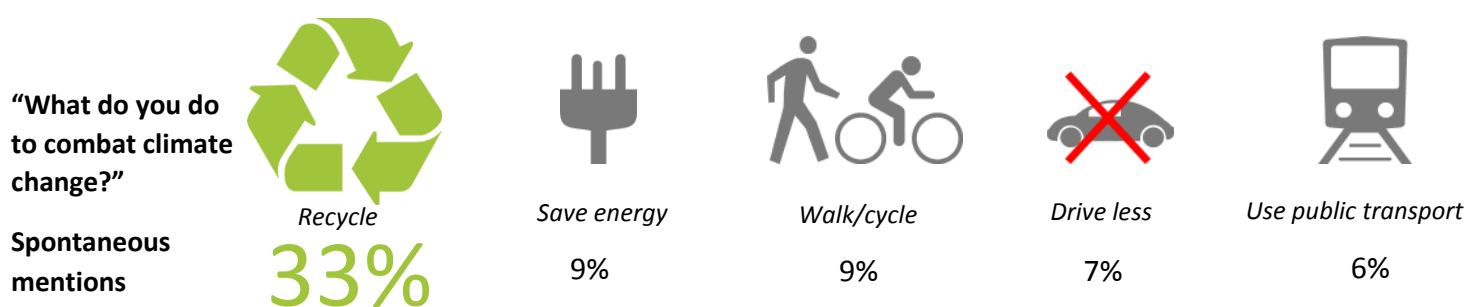
Attitudes to 'Green' Behaviours

The research carried out for Scottish Government found that conversations around environmental or green behaviours can be hindered by the difficult nature of the issue, and off-putting associations with acting green.

- The environment is a complex issue – people care about it, but struggle to link caring to concrete action.
- It is common to believe in an all or nothing approach to environmental behaviours – Some people think the 'green lifestyle' must be bought into wholesale, which they might not consider to be practical or realistic.
- Some may consider being green to be outside of the mainstream, and being described as 'green' is not aspirational.

The recycling cul-de-sac

The main association with 'acting green' is recycling – it is the behaviour spontaneously mentioned by far the most when discussing combatting climate change.

"What do you do to combat climate change?"

Spontaneous mentions

Recycle	Save energy	Walk/cycle	Drive less	Use public transport
33%	9%	9%	7%	6%

The majority (over 2/3 of people surveyed) always recycle their household waste, but the research found that this does not necessarily lead onto other low carbon behaviours. The perceived strong association between combatting climate change and recycling can in fact inhibit the uptake of the other key behaviours, as people feel they are already 'doing their bit'.

Motivations for Low Carbon Behaviours

Although each of the Key Behaviour Areas has its own specific influences, common themes emerged in the research which highlight the need to appeal to more personal, practical aspirations when attempting to encourage uptake of climate friendly behaviours.

Carbon emissions and climate change:

For a range of reasons, carbon and climate change rarely motivate people to change their behaviour.

- **They aren't major concerns for most people, and are very rarely spontaneously discussed.**
- **Carbon emissions are often associated with industry and energy companies, with many feeling there is little that can be done about carbon as individuals**

- **The link between personal actions and carbon is often unclear, with a risk of only associating personal carbon with vehicle emissions.**
- **Climate change is seen as a distant issue, and the responsibility of governments and energy companies.**
- **Personal actions are not seen as having an impact.**

Recent external research[3] shows that that 21% of Scottish adults view climate change as the most important issue facing <u>the world</u> in 10 years time, second only to defence/foreign affairs/terrorism/war (32%). However only 3% consider it the most important issue facing <u>Scotland</u> in 10 years time. This reinforces the findings that climate change is not a pressing issue for most people compared with other more prominent current issues.

Personal motivators:

Other influences, more personal and closer to home, are likely to motivate people more than reducing carbon emissions or what is perceived as the distant threat of climate change. These include financial savings, aversion to waste and the benefits of improving the local environment.

- **Saving money is commonly cited as a key reason for improving home energy efficiency, driving efficiently, and reducing and reusing.**
- **Improving quality of life and the local environment are particularly motivating.**
- **Older people are often naturally inclined to thriftiness and the 'make do and mend' mentality.**
- **Anything easy and straightforward to incorporate in daily life is welcomed.**
- **Yet many behaviours are considered to be a hassle, even if they are relatively easy to adopt.**

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[3] Ipsos MORI (2015)

Barriers to Low Carbon Behaviours

The most common reported barriers to behaviour change included cost, inconvenience, hassle and perceived effort. There was also some gaps in knowledge and understanding, such as the benefits of recycling food and the effectiveness of washing at low temperatures.
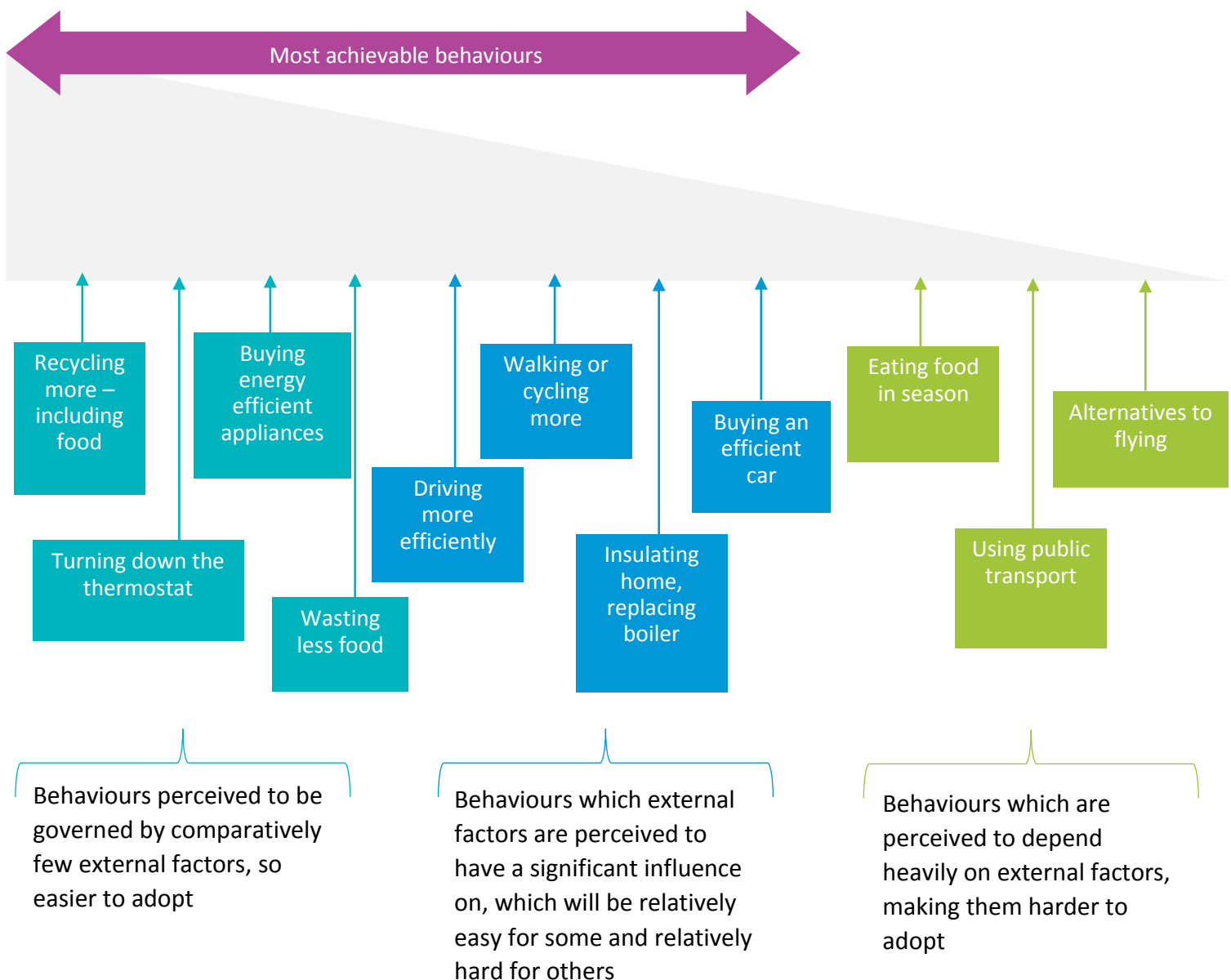
Saving energy in the home	"I only turn the heating on when I need to" "I don't think a wash at 30 degrees is effective"
Home improvements	"Too expensive" "Too much trouble"
Reducing fuel consumption	"Don't need a new car" "I forget to drive efficiently"
Alternatives to flying	"Alternatives are too expensive and less convenient"
Driving less	"Too far to walk or cycle" "Public transport not convenient"
Avoiding food waste	"Fruit and veg go off"
Buying local and seasonal food	"Local and seasonal food is too expensive"
Reducing waste	"I like buying new things" "Shopping is fun"

Targeting Low Carbon Behaviours

Asking people to take action in all of the Ten Key Behaviour Areas risks significant opt-out, as the task will appear too daunting to consider. A more effective approach suggested by the research is to highlight a few behaviours which are considered doable by most people as a starting point.

Behaviours with fewer external influences will likely be easier to adopt than behaviours that are effected by many external factors. The decision to turn down the thermostat, for example, is governed by fewer external factors than using public transport, which depends quite heavily, among other things, on the available infrastructure.

Organising key behaviours by their dependence on external factors gives a good guide to which are the most doable, and therefore which behaviours it makes sense to focus on for social marketing campaigns.

Most achievable behaviours

Recycling more – including food

Turning down the thermostat

Buying energy efficient appliances

Wasting less food

Driving more efficiently

Walking or cycling more

Insulating home, replacing boiler

Buying an efficient car

Eating food in season

Using public transport

Alternatives to flying

Behaviours perceived to be governed by comparatively few external factors, so easier to adopt

Behaviours which external factors are perceived to have a significant influence on, which will be relatively easy for some and relatively hard for others

Behaviours which are perceived to depend heavily on external factors, making them harder to adopt
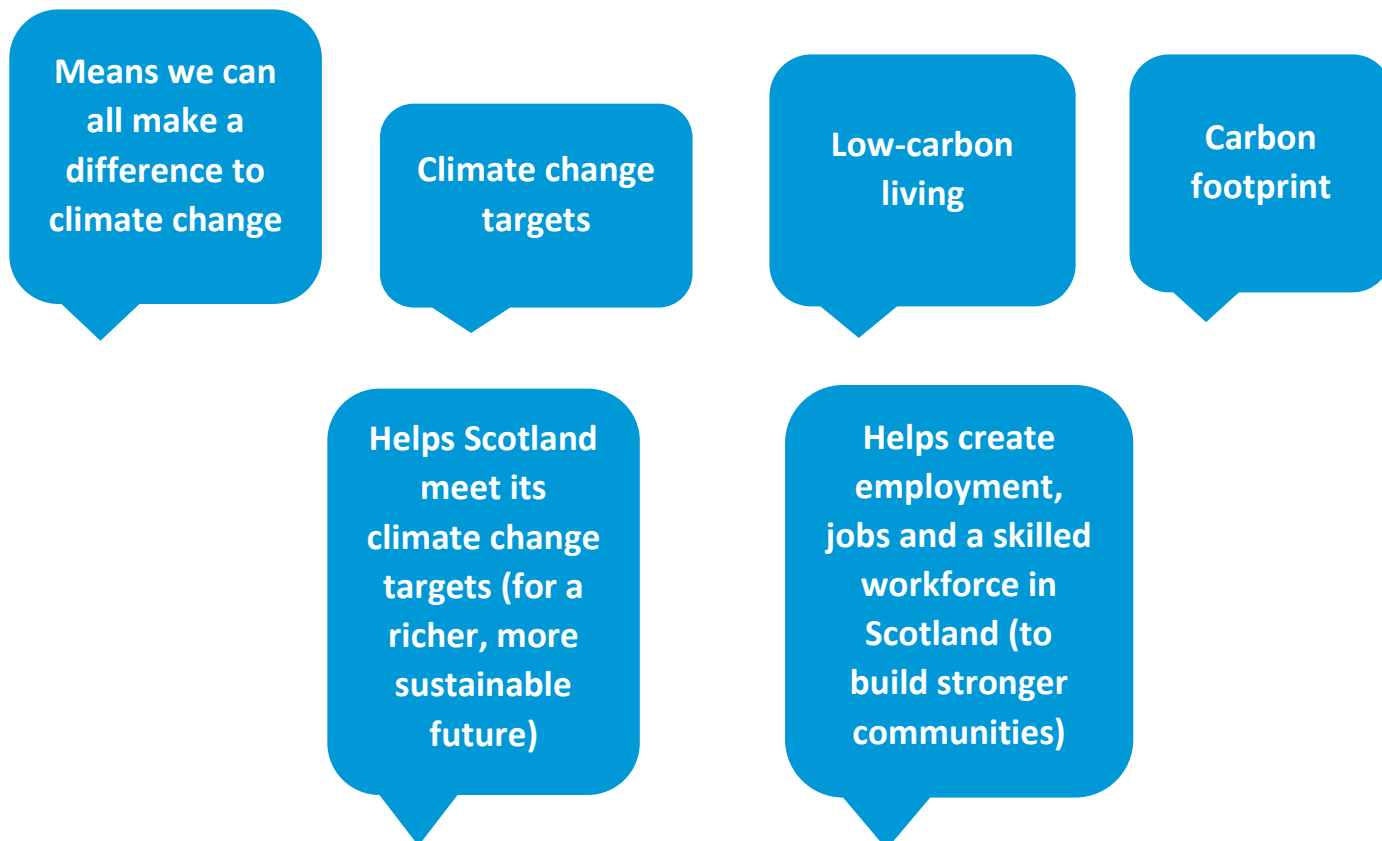
Communicating Effectively

Although each of the key behaviours has specific influences, the overarching narrative that frames these behaviours can still have a big impact on whether people are disengaged or motivated to act.

Research was conducted for Scottish Government into which phrases and calls to action put people off, and which inspire behaviour change[4].

Unhelpful, off-putting language:

> **Means we can all make a difference to climate change**

> **Climate change targets**

> **Low-carbon living**

> **Carbon footprint**

> **Helps Scotland meet its climate change targets (for a richer, more sustainable future)**

> **Helps create employment, jobs and a skilled workforce in Scotland (to build stronger communities)**

In general the research found that the more removed from a person's everyday experience a climate-related expression was, the more negative their response was.

Paradoxically, direct mention of climate can actually put people off acting to stop climate change, as it can be an intangible, distant issue, often thought of as only affecting future generations and people in other countries.

Similarly, language that was technical or associated with global or government level action was seen to be uninspiring, as it removes responsibility and control from the individual.

The term "carbon footprint", although widely used, was unhelpful in terms of inspiring a range of actions as it is mostly associated with travel emissions.

[4] Research conducted by TNS (2011) and Leith/2CV (2015)

Helpful, inspiring language:

Scotland's leading the way and every contribution you make has an impact

Helps protect Scotland's natural environment

Let's go greener together

Making your community a nicer place to live now and in the future

Greener living

Being greener makes you healthier and happier

Helps create a cleaner, healthier place to live

The most effective messages were those grounded in everyday experiences and aspirations, such as living a healthy lifestyle, that drew a clear link between an individual's actions and tangible benefits.

The research also found that drawing on ideas of collective action, shared goals and common gains made people feel their contribution was useful and worthwhile.

Section 2: Attitude and Behaviour Tracking

Since 2010 quantitative data has been collected on the Scottish public's attitudes to climate change, as well as some of their relevant behaviours[5]. This tracking research was conducted alongside the Scottish Government's Greener Marketing campaigns, providing an overview of the populations attitudes over time. More information on current greener campaigns can be found at www.greenerscotland.org .
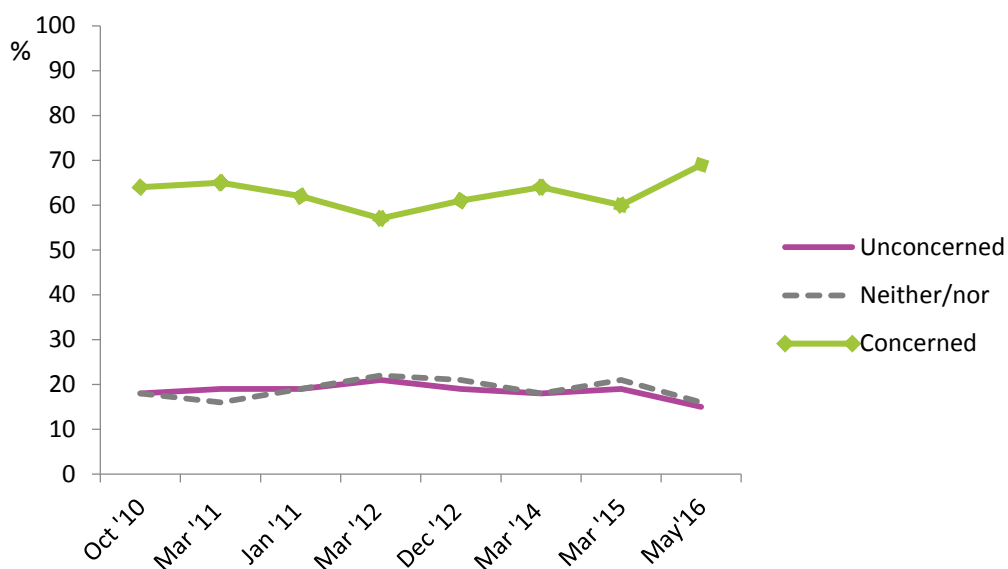
The research consisted of around 1000 interviews for each wave of data collection, during which respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a broad range of statements.

Research covered levels of concern, personal responsibility, and the perceived benefits of action.

Tracking has seen slow positive progress, with stalling in some areas.
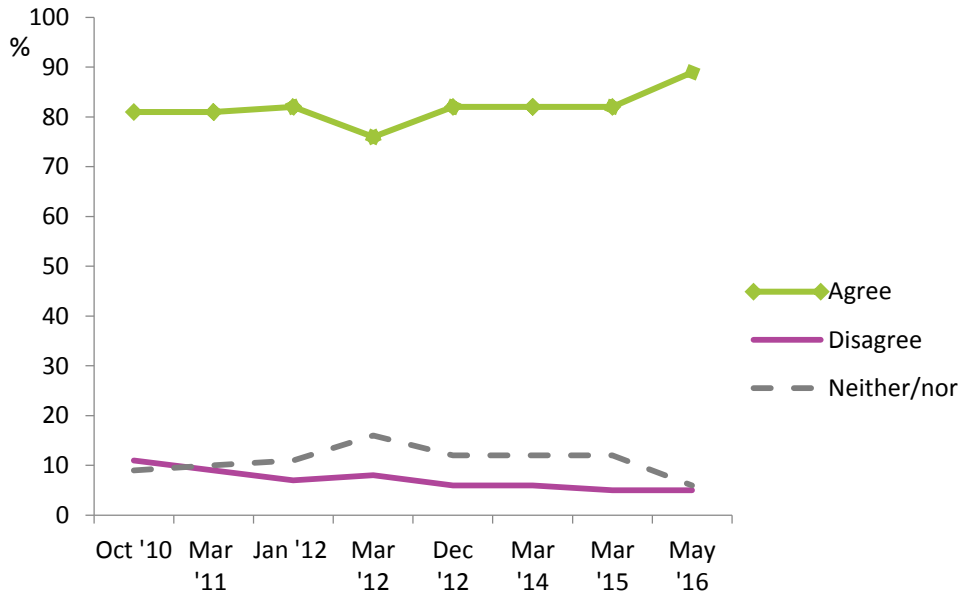
Attitudes

How concerned are you personally about climate change?

Few say they are unconcerned about climate change. The proportions have not significantly changed over the last six years, though there has been some variation between survey waves, which could be linked to external factors such as flooding and extreme weather.
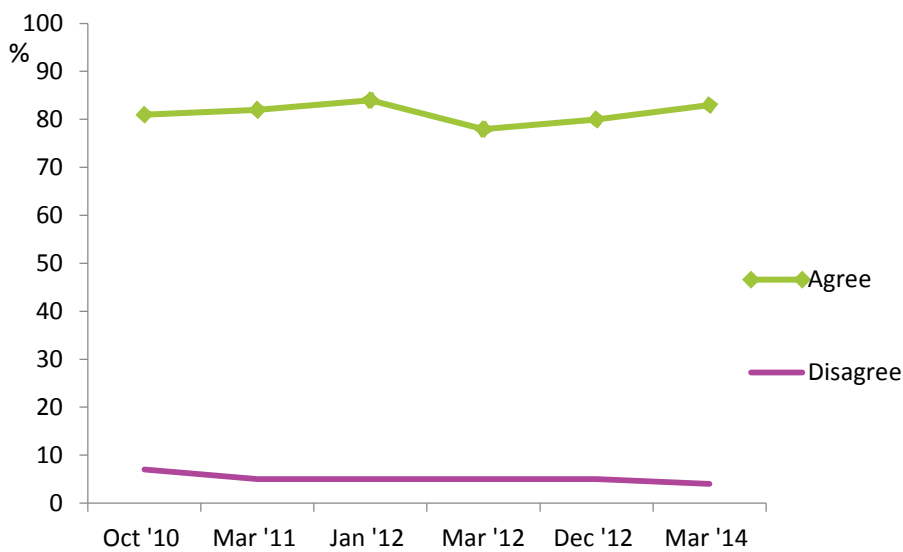
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[5] Research conducted by TNS (2011-2015), except final chart by Leith/ 2CV (2015)

I feel that I have some personal responsibility to do what I can to help reduce climate change

The majority of people feel they have some responsibility to take action. Since 2010 the percentage of people disagreeing with the statement has decreased slightly.
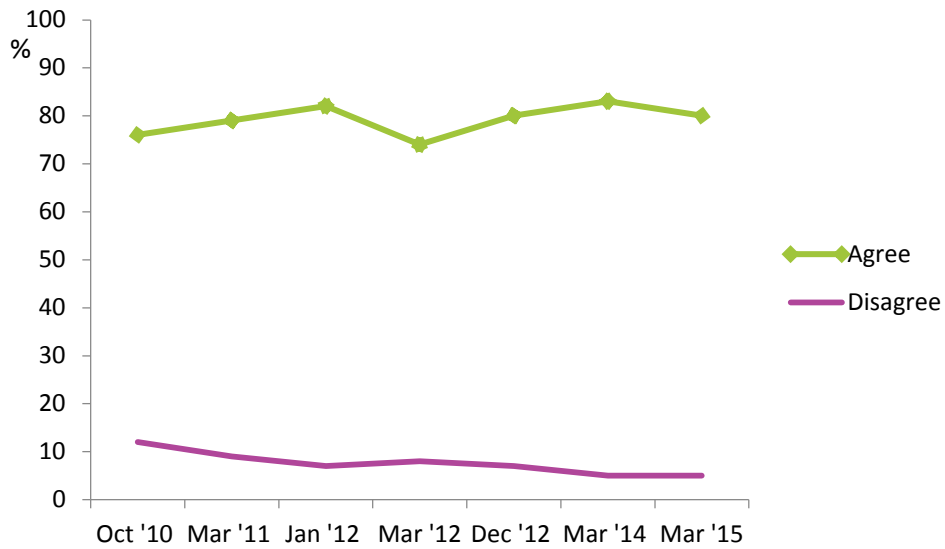
People in Scotland have a lot to gain from the country being more environmentally friendly

The majority of respondents agree that people in Scotland will gain from the country becoming more environmentally friendly, with little change since 2010.

Amongst the subset of respondents that say they are unconcerned about climate change, the belief that people in Scotland will gain from the country being more environmentally friendly has increased by 66 percentage points since 2010.
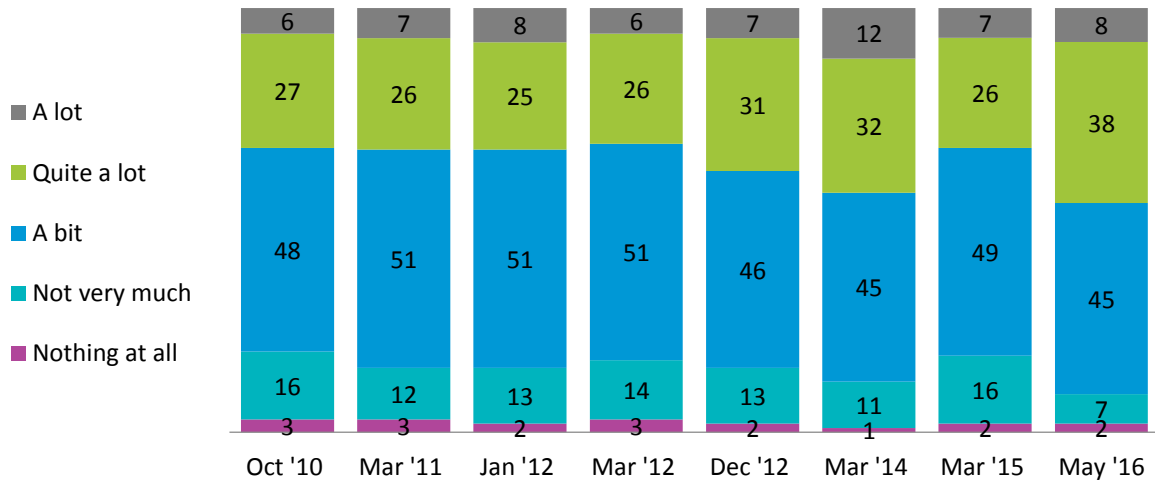
If people like me do what they can to lead a greener lifestyle, it will make a big difference in tackling climate change

There has been a steady decrease in the proportion of people who disagree that collective action can make a big difference to climate change, while total agreement remains over 80%.
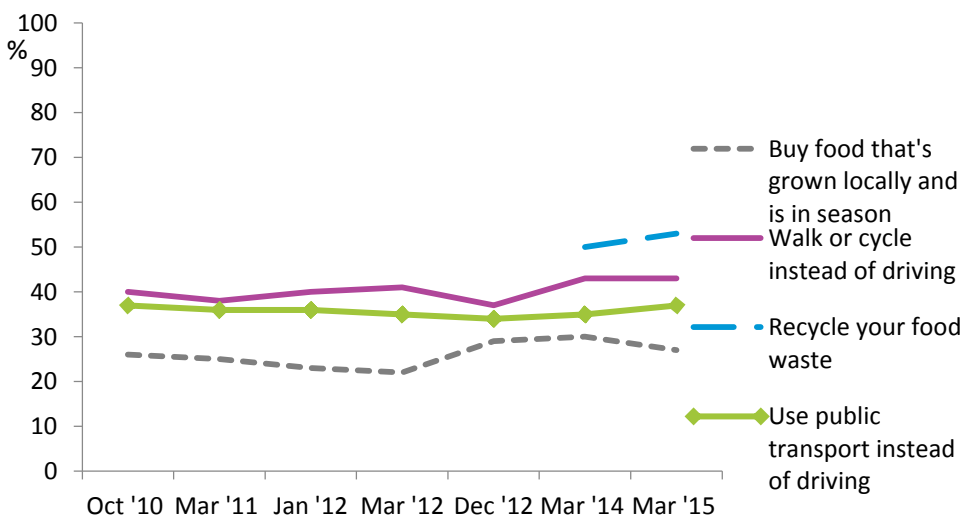
Behaviours

How much do you feel you currently do to help Scotland tackle climate change?

	A lot	Quite a lot	A bit	Not very much	Nothing at all

	Oct '10	Mar '11	Jan '12	Mar '12	Dec '12	Mar '14	Mar '15	May '16
A lot	6	7	8	6	7	12	7	8
Quite a lot	27	26	25	26	31	32	26	38
A bit	48	51	51	51	46	45	49	45
Not very much	16	12	13	14	13	11	16	7
Nothing at all	3	3	2	3	2	1	2	2

The majority of people report making a contribution of some kind, although only a small percentage do 'a lot', and there has been no significant increase in this fraction since 2010. These responses will likely depend on many factors, however, including the perceived effort the respondents went to, normalisation over time of certain behaviours and levels of awareness of the range of actions that could be taken.
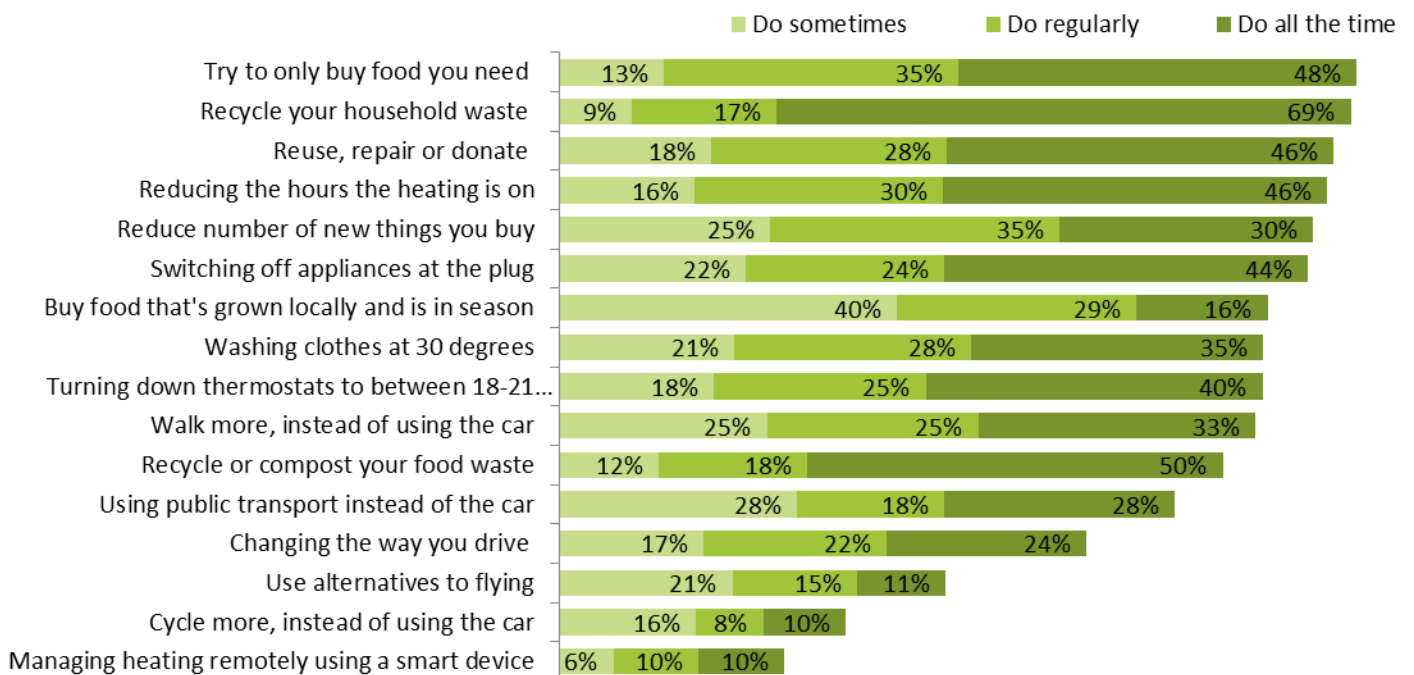
Variation of reported behaviours

- - - Buy food that's grown locally and is in season
— Walk or cycle instead of driving
- - - Recycle your food waste
—◆— Use public transport instead of driving

The prevalence of specific behaviours have varied slightly, but most have remained relatively steady or increased only slightly. The recycling of food waste, a relatively new concept, has increased since tracking began in 2014 by 3 percentage points.

Among those who are unconcerned about climate change, there has been an increase since 2010 in walking, cycling and careful purchasing. This could reflect other motivating factors, such as health and finances.

Reported behaviours – 2015*

Legend: ■ Do sometimes ■ Do regularly ■ Do all the time

Behaviour	Do sometimes	Do regularly	Do all the time
Try to only buy food you need	13%	35%	48%
Recycle your household waste	9%	17%	69%
Reuse, repair or donate	18%	28%	46%
Reducing the hours the heating is on	16%	30%	46%
Reduce number of new things you buy	25%	35%	30%
Switching off appliances at the plug	22%	24%	44%
Buy food that's grown locally and is in season	40%	29%	16%
Washing clothes at 30 degrees	21%	28%	35%
Turning down thermostats to between 18-21…	18%	25%	40%
Walk more, instead of using the car	25%	25%	33%
Recycle or compost your food waste	12%	18%	50%
Using public transport instead of the car	28%	18%	28%
Changing the way you drive	17%	22%	24%
Use alternatives to flying	21%	15%	11%
Cycle more, instead of using the car	16%	8%	10%
Managing heating remotely using a smart device	6%	10%	10%

The most embedded behaviours, done by the majority of the population all the time, are recycling of household waste and food waste.

Annex A: Other Resources

Greener Scotland

For helpful advice on going greener, visit the Greener Scotland website

Scottish Government climate change pages

Information on all the work the Scottish Government is carrying out to tackle climate change can be found on our website

Mapping the Influences – The ISM Tool

Our research has found that each Key Behaviour Area is governed by a varied range of internal and external influences. Although this document gives some insights into what these influences are likely to be, specific circumstances are likely to have a significant impact on a behaviour change project or intervention. Scottish Government has developed a tool which can be used to take an in depth look at all the factors influencing behaviours in a specific scenario, allowing policy makers, community groups or anyone who wants to facilitate behaviour change to tailor the most effective and appropriate response.

A practical, step by step guide to using ISM is available at http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/06/8511

A version of the tool aimed specifically at community groups is available here http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/07/5472/0

Understanding the Audience – The Segmentation Tool

The Scottish Government has developed a tool which can point the way to what behaviours to focus on and what strategies to use in a behaviour change initiative targeting a particular area or demographic. The climate change behaviours segmentation tool divides households in Scotland into nine segments, each assumed to have broadly similar characteristics and attitudes around the key climate change behaviours. The tool includes a pen portrait setting out for each segment:

- **the key demographics**
- **most effective media channels**
- **local authority mapping**
- **carbon footprint**
- **and climate change behaviours**

The climate change behaviours segmentation tool is available here http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/climatechange/resource-materials/segmentationtool/segmentationmodel