

Scotland's People

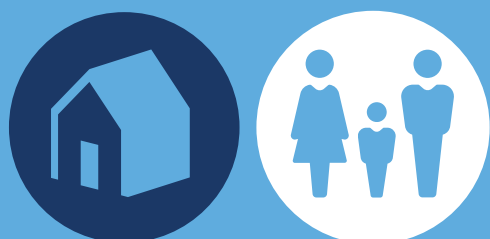
Climate change | 2017

A National Statistics publication for Scotland














Acknowledgements

The survey is voluntary and so we would like to acknowledge and thank the 10,680 people across Scotland who gave their time to take part in the Scottish Household Survey 2017, as well as a number of analysts in the Scottish Government who contribute to this project every year.



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Introduction to the survey



What is the Scottish Household Survey

The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) is a continuous survey based on a random sample of the general population in private residences in Scotland. It is important in helping us make representative estimates both at Scotland, as well as at local-authority level. The survey started in 1999 and covers a wide range of topics to allow links to be made between different policy areas.



What does SHS provide?

The survey provides robust evidence on the composition, characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of private households and individuals as well as evidence on the physical condition of Scotland's homes.

The large scale of the SHS enables everyone using the survey findings to obtain a robust deeper understanding of issues by being able to analyse across key demographic household characteristics such as deprivation, age, income, gender, rurality, ethnicity and other equalities. This is crucial to informing the Fairer Scotland agenda, National Performance Framework and feeds in to the Scottish Surveys Core Questions (SSCQ) sample.

Confidentiality

The Scottish Household Survey report is produced under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. National Statistics are produced free of political interference, to agreed standards, and undergo regular quality assurance reviews.

For more information, visit

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/code-of-practice/>



Where can I find out more about SHS?

Whilst this publication focuses on a number of key results on Climate Change, the SHS collects and publishes a wide array of information. A list of key resources can be found on page 16, this includes:

- [The main annual report](#)
- [The technical report](#)
- [The full questionnaire](#)

Context



Action to tackle climate change is a high priority for the Scottish Government. [The Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) set a target of reducing Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions by 42 per cent by 2020 and 80 per cent by 2050, compared with the 1990 baseline. The Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan ([Third Report on Policies and Proposals, RPP3](#)) sets out how Scotland will continue to reduce emissions over the period 2018–2032 in order to deliver those targets. A [Bill for an Act](#) of the Scottish Parliament to amend that Act is currently before Parliament. It increases the level of ambition in the climate change targets in response to [the Paris Agreement](#) on climate change.

The Scottish Government recognises that public understanding, engagement and action will be critical to achieving the social and economic transformations required to achieve a low carbon society and to meet its climate change targets. Its [Low Carbon Behaviours Framework](#) sets out a strategic approach to encourage low carbon lifestyles amongst individuals, households, communities and businesses in Scotland.

For the last five years the SHS has included a question about **perceptions of climate change as a problem**, which was first asked in the [Scottish Environmental Attitudes and Behaviours Survey \(SEABS\)](#) in 2008.

In 2015, the SHS added four new questions to explore people's **attitudes relevant to taking action to tackle climate change**, three of which were also asked in SEABS. **People are invited to agree or disagree with the following four statements:**

- **Climate change will only have an impact on other countries, there is no need for me to worry**
- **It's not worth me doing things to help the environment if others don't do the same**
- **I don't believe my behaviour and everyday lifestyle contribute to climate change**
- **I understand what actions people like myself should take to help tackle climate change**

The SHS results are discussed in relation to the SEABS results where available, although it is worth noting that there were some differences between the surveys. In the SEABS survey, respondents were asked a more detailed set of questions about the environment compared with the SHS, in which climate change is one of a wide range of topics on which respondents answer questions.

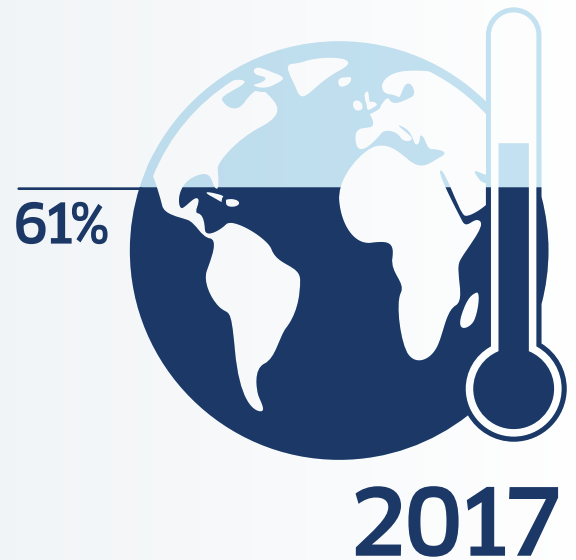
Attitudes to climate change as a problem over time



More and more adults in Scotland believe that climate change is an immediate and urgent problem.

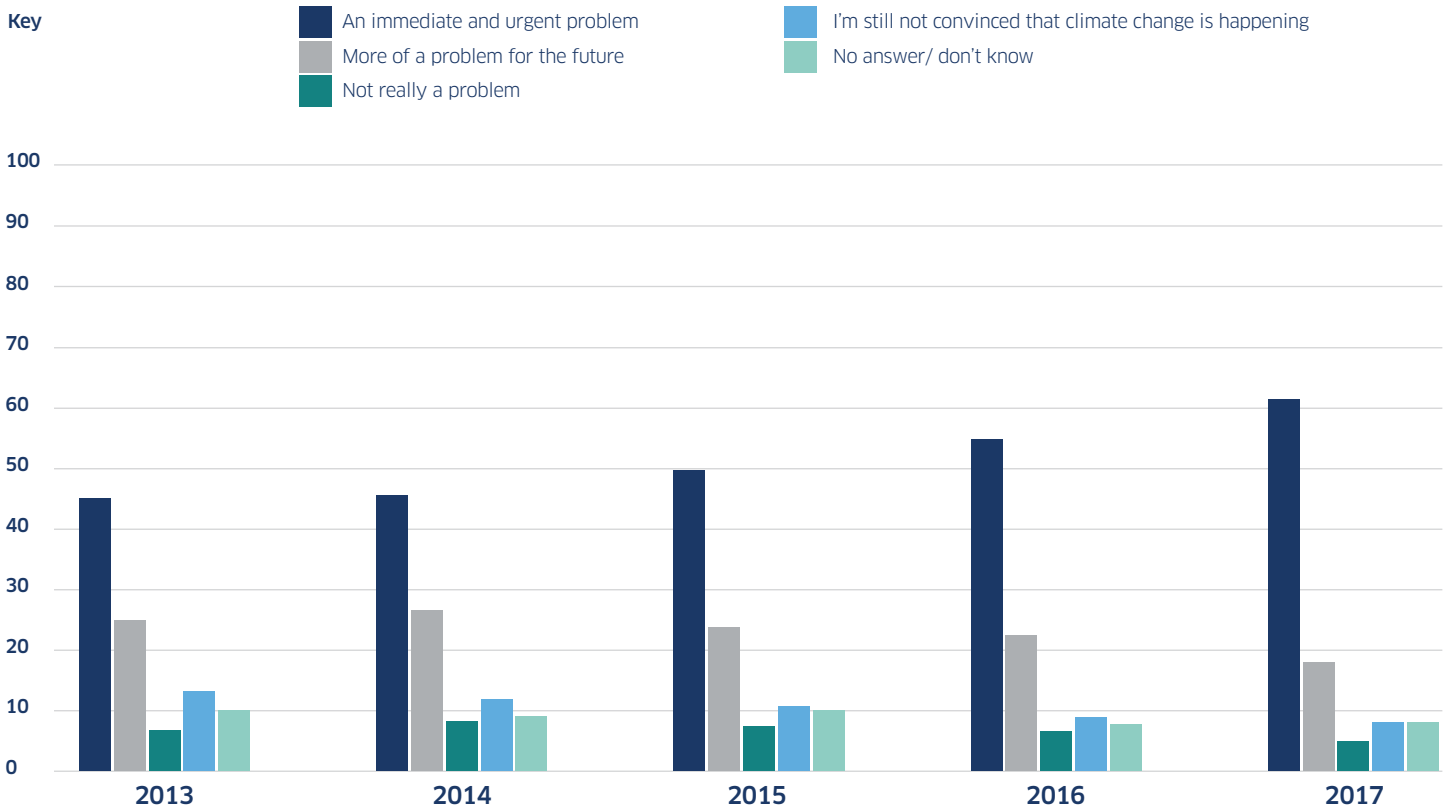
The proportion of adults who view **climate change** as an **immediate and urgent problem** has **increased by one third between 2013 and 2017, from 46 per cent to 61 per cent.** The 2017 figure also exceeds the comparable SEABS (2008) figure of 57 per cent, for the first time since this question was included in the SHS.

There have been corresponding decreases over time in the proportions of people who believe climate change is more of a problem for the future; or who are not convinced that climate change is happening.



Attitudes to climate change

Base (minimum): 3,100



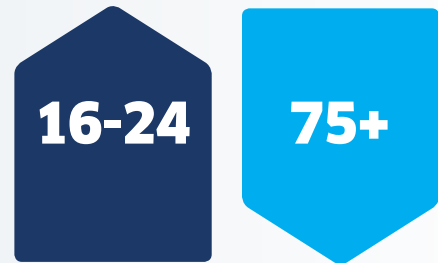
Attitudes to climate change as a problem by age



The greatest increase in concern about climate change is among adults aged 16-24.

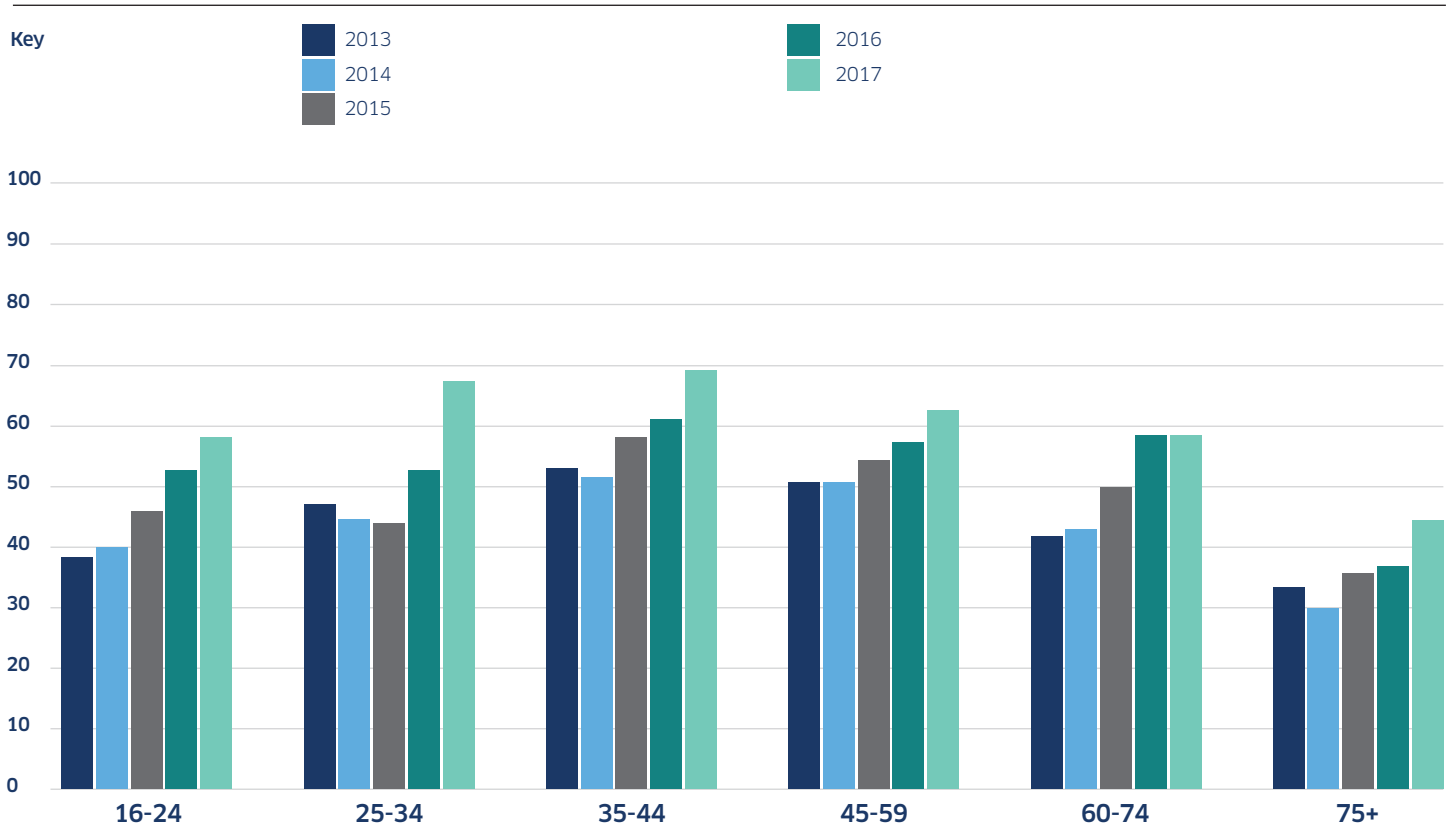
The perception of climate change as an immediate and urgent problem continues to vary by age. It is highest among age groups 25-34 and 35-44, and has been consistently lowest among the oldest age group, 75+. While this perception increased among all age groups over time, the largest increase occurred among the youngest age group. The proportion of 16-24 year olds who view climate change as an immediate problem increased by over half between 2013 and 2017, from 38 per cent to 58 per cent.

Since 2013, the greatest increase in concern has been among the youngest age group, aged 16-24. The lowest level of concern is amongst adults aged 75+.



Climate change is an immediate and urgent problem by age

Base (minimum): 210



Attitudes to climate change by highest level of qualifications



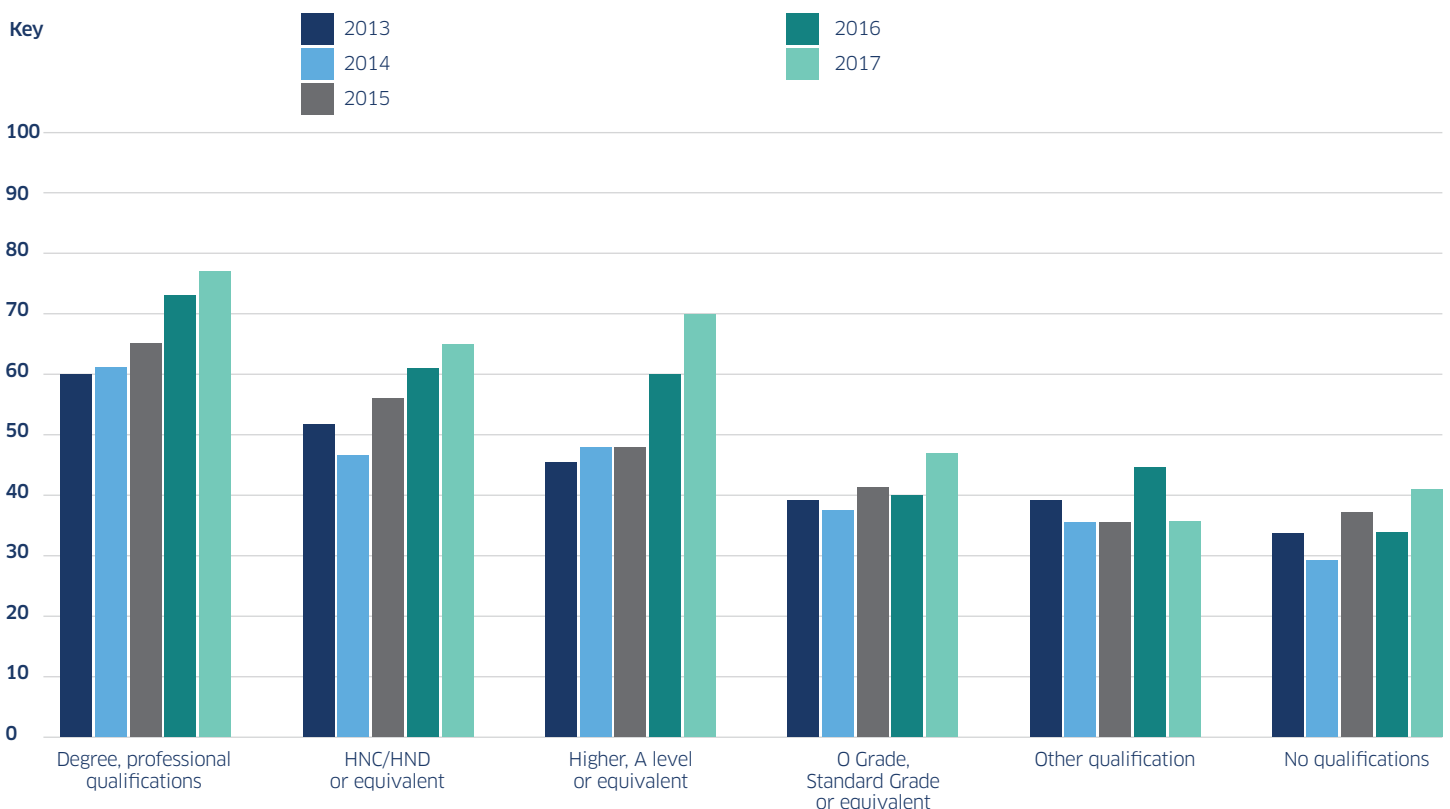
Perceptions of climate change as a problem have consistently been closely related to educational attainment. In 2017 there is still a large gap between adults with a degree or professional qualification (nearly eight out of ten), and adults with no qualifications (around four out of ten) who perceive it as an immediate problem.

This gap has widened by 9 percentage points compared with 2013. While concern about climate change has increased among all age groups, the increase has been smaller amongst those with no educational qualifications.



77% of those with a degree or professional qualification saw climate change as an immediate and urgent problem, while only 41% with no qualifications thought the same.

Adults who perceive climate change is an immediate and urgent problem by level of qualifications
Base (minimum): 160



Attitudes to climate change by deprivation

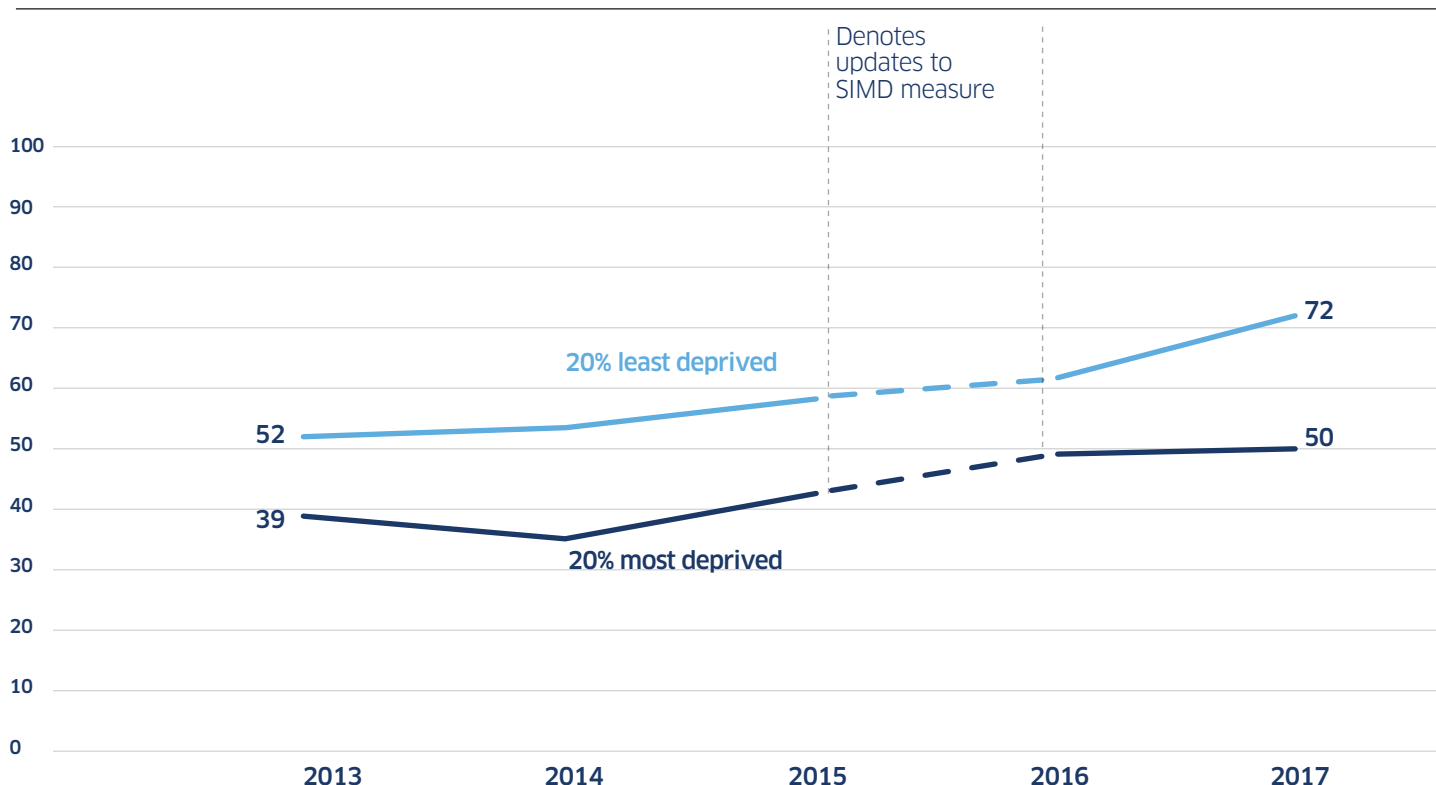


Perceptions of climate change as a problem have consistently been closely related to area deprivation. Since 2013, there has been a gap between adults in the 20% most and 20% least deprived areas who perceived climate change as an immediate and urgent problem. This gap has fluctuated since then but widened in 2017, compared with 2013. While concern about climate change has increased over time in each deprivation quintile, the increase has been smaller in the 20% most deprived areas quintile.

In 2017 **only 50% of those living in the most deprived areas saw climate change as an immediate and urgent problem**, compared to **72% of those living in the least deprived areas**.



Adults who perceive climate change as an immediate and urgent problem by area deprivation
Base (2017, minimum): 580



Taking action to tackle climate change



People's attitudes towards taking action to address climate change will be influenced by, among other things, their views about whether climate change will affect Scotland; whether their everyday behaviours and lifestyles contribute to climate change; whether any actions they take would have an impact on climate change; and whether they know what actions to take personally.

Respondents' views were explored by inviting them to agree or disagree with four statements about their attitudes and behaviours. The statements vary in terms of whether agreement or disagreement represents a favourable attitude towards taking action to tackle climate change.

“Climate change will only have an impact on other countries, there is no need for me to worry”.

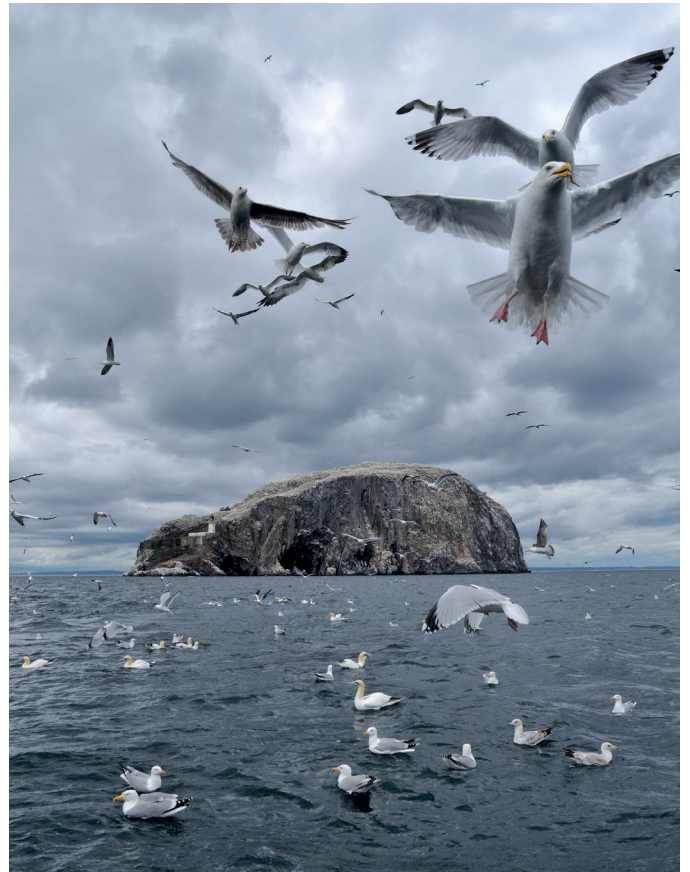
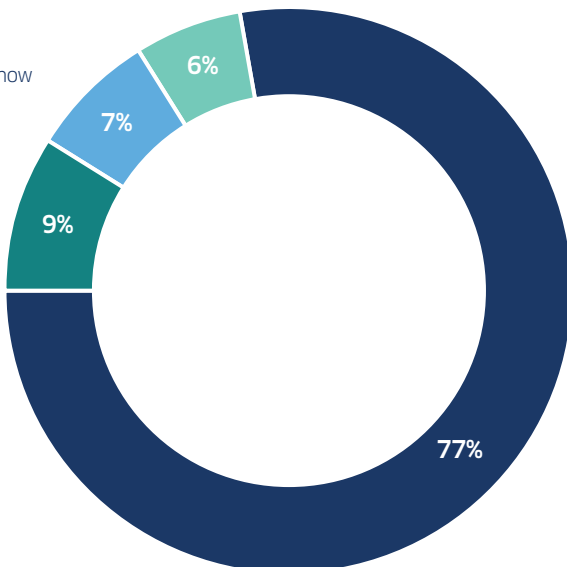
In 2017, there was strong disagreement with this statement: 77 per cent of adults disagreed, of whom 48 per cent strongly disagreed. This has stayed the same since 2015. This suggests that the majority of people believe that climate change will have an impact on Scotland, as well as on other countries.

Agreement with statement: “Climate change will only have an impact on other countries, there is no need for me to worry”

Base: 3,160

Key

- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Don't know



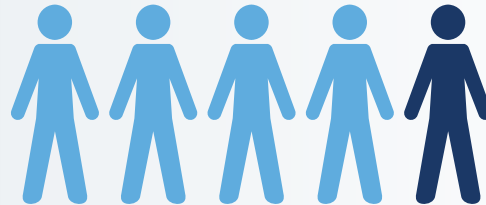
Taking action to tackle climate change



The pattern of responses to the four attitude and behaviour questions is very similar to the pattern in relation to perceptions about climate change as an immediate and urgent problem. The age groups more likely to perceive climate change as an immediate and urgent problem are also more likely to have favourable attitudes towards action to tackle climate change. The same pattern is evident according to respondents' educational qualifications and whether they live in less or more deprived areas.

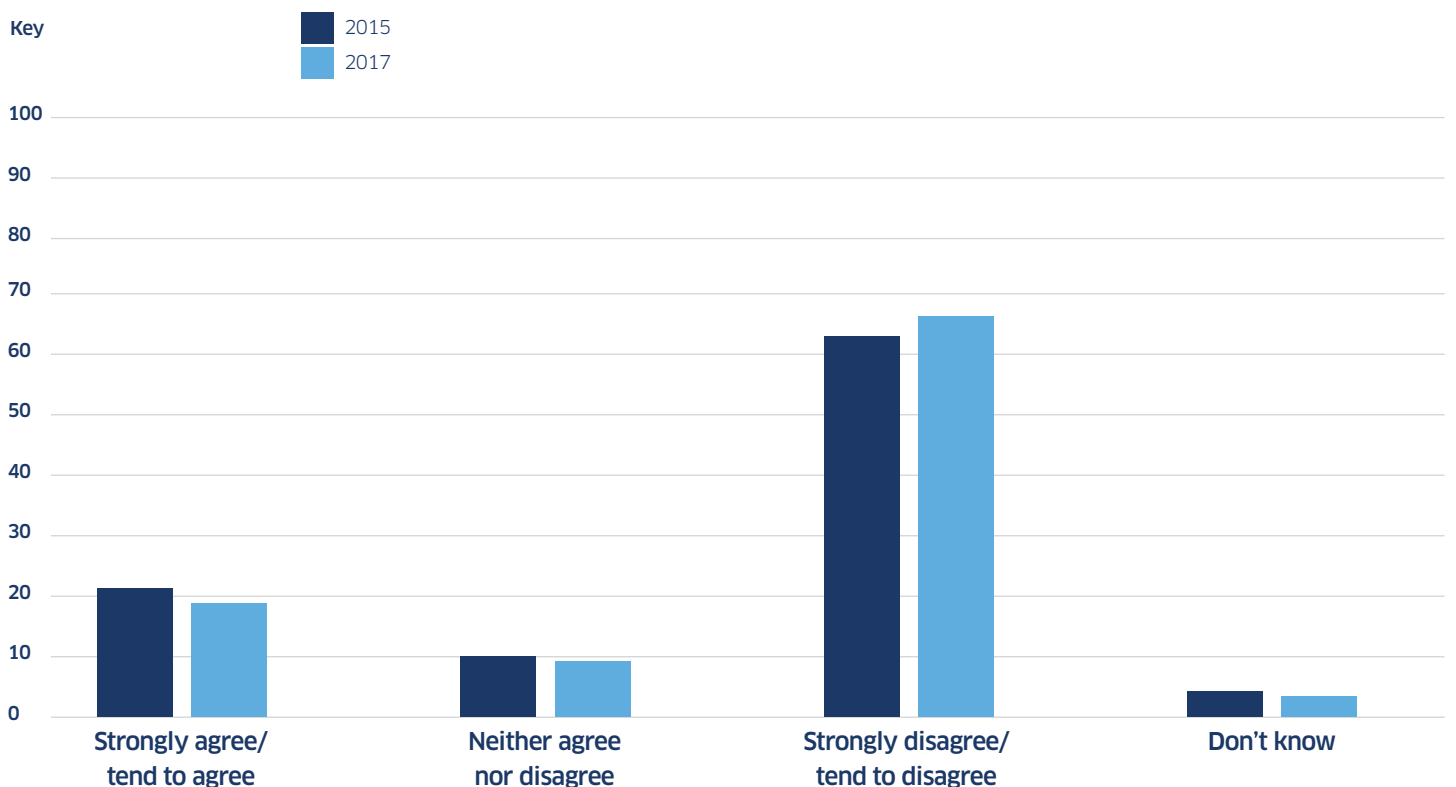
“It’s not worth me doing things to help the environment if others don’t do the same”.

Fewer than one in five adults agreed with this statement. This suggests that the majority of people believe that their individual actions can help the environment, regardless of the actions of others.



Agreement with statement:
“It’s not worth me doing things to help the environment if others don’t do the same”

Base: 3,160



Taking action to tackle climate change



“I don’t believe my behaviour and everyday lifestyle contribute to climate change”.

Nearly six out of ten disagreed with this statement. The proportion of adults who strongly disagreed increased between 2015 and 2017.

This suggests that a majority of people agree that there is a link between their own behaviours and everyday lifestyle and climate change.



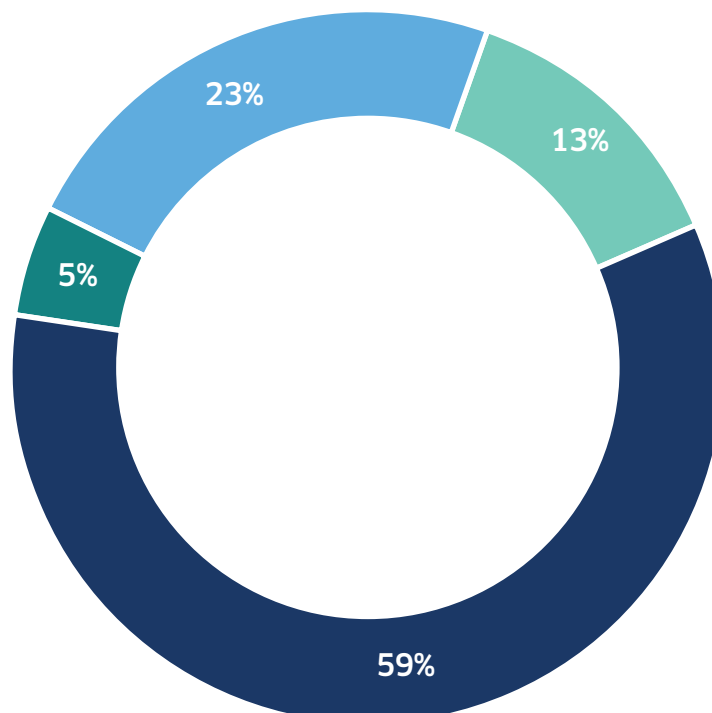
Agreement with statement:

“I don’t believe that my behaviour and everyday lifestyle contribute to climate change”

Base: 3,160

Key

- Disagree
- Don't know
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree



Taking action to tackle climate change

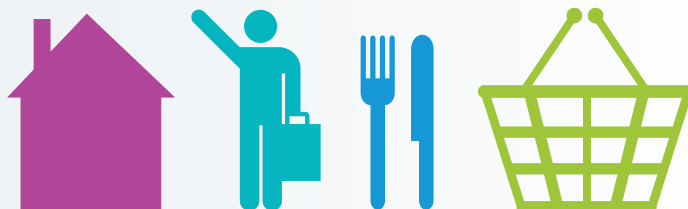


“I understand what actions people like myself should take to help tackle climate change”.

73% of adults agree with this statement, with an increase in strong agreement compared with 2015.

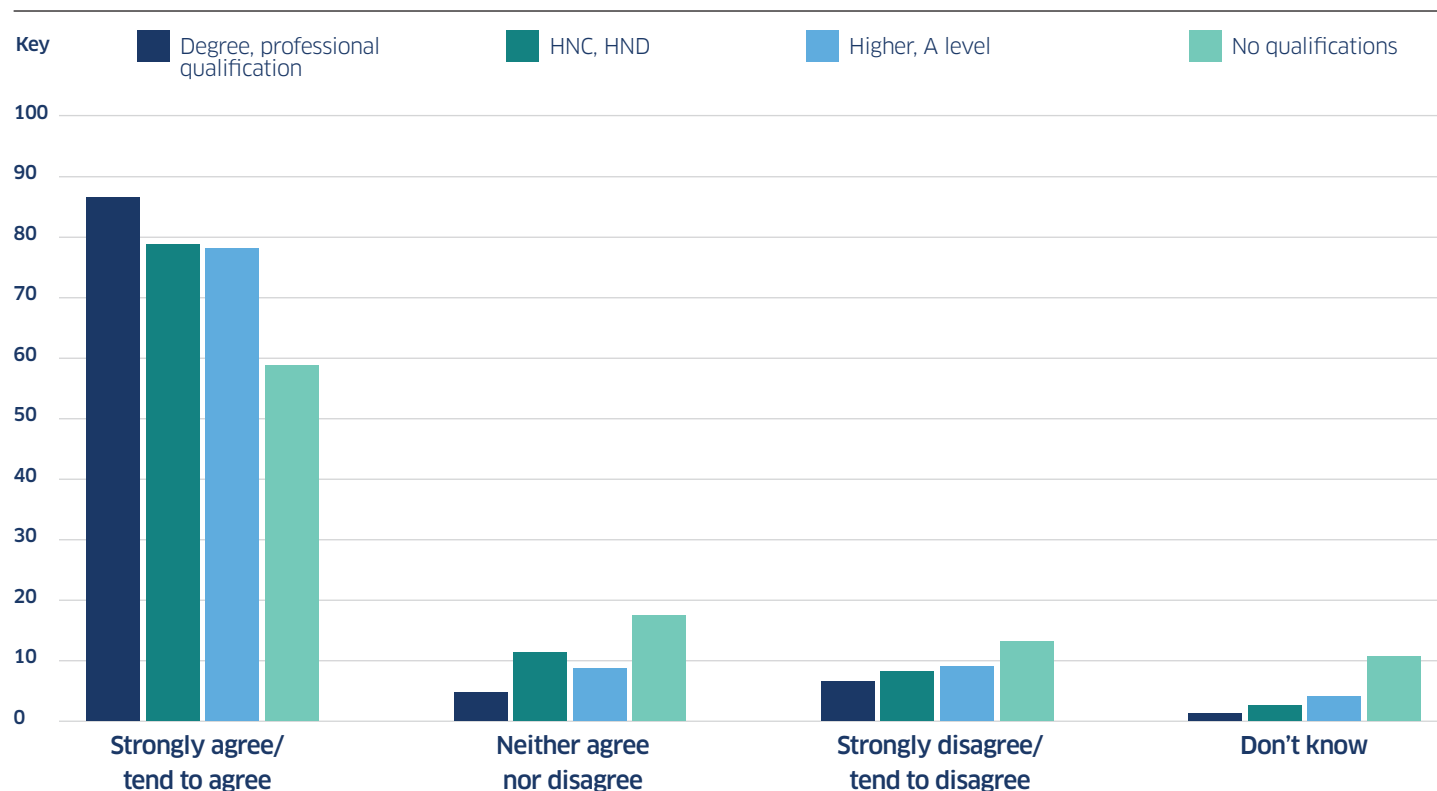
This suggests that a majority of people believe that they know what actions they could take personally. However it would not show whether they actually do know what they could do; or whether they are taking any action in practice.

Ten Key Behaviour Areas, where individuals can really make a difference at the present time are listed in the [Low Carbon Scotland: A Behaviours Framework](#), on p.6.



**Agreement with statement:
“I understand what actions people like myself should take to help tackle climate change”
by highest level of qualification**

Base (minimum): 3,100



Conclusion



Action to tackle climate change is a high priority for the Scottish Government, which recognises that without public understanding, engagement and action, it will not be able to meet its climate change targets.

The Scottish Household Survey results show that the majority of adults in Scotland believe that climate change is an immediate and urgent problem, and that the proportion with this view has been increasing for the past three years.

Most adults in Scotland believe that climate change will have an impact on Scotland, that individuals' behaviour and lifestyles do contribute to climate change, and that individual actions to help the environment are worthwhile.

Most adults also believe that they understand what actions they should take to help tackle climate change. However, the SHS data does not show whether the respondents actually do know what they could do, or whether they are taking any action in practice.

As part of the Scottish Government's commitment to tackling climate change, a new Bill has been introduced in Parliament which will write Scotland's obligations under the Paris Agreement into domestic law and make Scotland's existing climate legislation and targets even tougher.

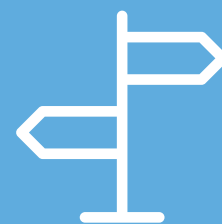
This transition to a low carbon Scotland will involve changes in how people get around; how homes and other buildings are insulated and heated; and how people purchase products and services to support the circular economy.

Individuals, families and communities, as well as public bodies, businesses and the third sector, will be essential partners in this effort. The Scottish Government will continue to encourage public discussion about climate change, and to support people to take low carbon actions in their everyday lives.

The Scottish Government's [Greener Scotland](#) website advises people on how they can help Scotland tackle climate change by changing their everyday behaviours.



How to use the information in this report



Statistical Significance

All results shown in this report are statistically significant at the 95 per cent level (see Annex 3 of the main annual report for a more detailed explanation).

Although the SHS sample is chosen at random, the people who take part in the survey will not necessarily be a representative cross-section of the population. Like all sample surveys, the results of the SHS are estimates for the whole population and these results might vary from the true values in the population. As a result, all survey estimates have an associated confidence interval (within which the 'true' proportion of the whole population is likely to lie), usually expressed as $\pm x$ per cent. As a general rule of thumb, the larger the sample size for a given question, the smaller the confidence interval around that result will be, thus making it easier to detect real change year-on-year and differences between sub-groups.

Conventionally, the confidence level is set at 95 per cent. This means if the survey were to be run multiple times on the same population in the same year, we would expect that the achieved result to lie within the confidence interval in 95 out of 100 surveys.

Where sample sizes are small or comparisons are made between sub-groups of the sample, the sampling error needs to be taken into account. There are formulae to calculate whether differences are statistically significant (i.e. they are unlikely to have occurred by chance). For guidance on this, please see Annex 3 of the main annual report which provides a simple way to calculate whether differences are significant, as well as explanation on statistical significance and on how confidence intervals can be interpreted.



Glossary and annexes

For definitions of the key terms, please see our Glossary. For further guidance on assessing confidence intervals and the statistical significance of the results please see the annexes to the main report published on our website.



How data is displayed in charts

All charts have a numerical base showing the population or population sub-group examined in it. While all results have been calculated using weighted data, the bases shown provide the un-weighted counts, which have been rounded to the nearest 10 to comply with statistical disclosure control principles and the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. It is therefore not possible to calculate how many respondents gave a certain answer based on the results and bases presented in the report.



Variations in Base Size

The SHS sample in 2017 was 10,680. However, some questions are asked of a reduced sample and the bases are correspondingly lower. While we try to keep non-responses to a minimum, bases do fluctuate slightly due to small amounts of missing information (for example income).

Key resources



Additional titles in the Scottish Household Survey Reporting series

Scottish Household Survey [Annual Report](#):

- Scotland's People series since 1999
- Annual local authority level results

(<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/16002/PublicationAnnual>)



Annual Scottish House Condition Survey Key Findings report

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SHCS/Downloads>



Annual Transport and Travel in Scotland report **Transport and Travel in Scotland (TATIS)**

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/transport-and-travel-in-scotland-2015-27-september-2016/>



The [Scottish Surveys Core Questions \(SSCQ\)](#) is an annual Official Statistics publication. SSCQ is a result of a harmonised design across the three major Scottish Government household surveys, envisaged in the [Long Term Survey Strategy](#).



Additionally some data is available through www.statistics.gov.scot - Open Data Platform

Contact details



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Mailing list

If you wish to be added to the e-mail mailing list to be kept informed of details of SHS developments, you should register your interest in 'Population and Household Surveys' and/or the 'Scottish Household Survey' sub-topic on the ScotStat Register.

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/scotstat/Intro>



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