

# Britain Talks Climate

A toolkit for engaging the British  
public on climate change



The findings described in this toolkit come from a collaboration between Climate Outreach, the European Climate Foundation (ECF), More in Common and YouGov. Climate Outreach led the Britain Talks Climate project with the support of ECF, integrating their issue expertise with More in Common's model of understanding people's core beliefs. All project partners collaborated in the analysis of the field research undertaken by YouGov. Britain Talks Climate follows on from More in Common's Britain's Choice<sup>1</sup> report published in October 2020.

## Climate Outreach

Climate Outreach is a team of social scientists and communication specialists working to widen and deepen public engagement with climate change. Through our research, practical guides and consultancy services, our charity helps organisations communicate about climate change in ways that resonate with the values of their audiences and builds the social mandate for climate action. We have more than 15 years' experience working with a wide range of international partners including central, regional and local governments, international bodies, academic institutions, charities, businesses, faith organisations and youth groups.

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### Contact us

We hope you find this toolkit useful for the work that you and your colleagues do on climate change. Please let us know how you're using it, and what we can do to improve the resource, by contacting [britaintalksclimate@climateoutreach.org](mailto:britaintalksclimate@climateoutreach.org).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.britainschoice.uk/>

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# Summary

Britain Talks Climate is an evidence-based toolkit designed to support any organisation that wants to engage the British public on climate change. Building narratives that resonate with a diverse range of values and everyday concerns is critical for the long-term goal of deepening public engagement (and keeping it there). The research reported here makes clear (in contrast to many other contemporary social issues) that there is currently no 'culture war' on climate change. Britain Talks Climate offers a shared, strategic understanding of the British public, and – against a backdrop of growing concern about polarisation – identifies effective ways to engage across the whole of society.

- Britons know that climate change is real and that humans are causing it. None of the seven segments are defined by strong, ideological scepticism towards climate change. All segments agree that we are already feeling its effects across Britain, and they share the understanding that the threat requires a global (rather than purely national) response.
- Climate change is consistently seen as a concern for 'everybody', not just rich, white, middle class or left-wing people (pointing to little evidence of a 'culture war' – i.e. an entrenched opposition between groups with different ideals and values). And there is widespread recognition that the UK should be one of the most ambitious countries in the world in tackling climate change, and that doing so could unlock new economic opportunities and jobs.
- Certain values and ideas – protecting future generations, creating a healthier society and preserving the countryside in ways that end our throwaway culture – have almost universal resonance across Britain.
- All segments acknowledge some (unintended) positive aspects of the Covid-19 lockdown – for example, fewer vehicles on the roads leading to cleaner air and louder birdsong – and have become more aware of the need to protect ourselves against future climate impacts, as well as the need to protect our healthcare system against 'double' catastrophes (such as a heatwave during a pandemic). Other messages have become more salient during this time, with every segment agreeing that our recovery from Covid-19 offers opportunities to create new green jobs, bolster British manufacturing and hold businesses to higher sustainability standards.
- Strikingly, no-one wants to go back to 'normal' after the worst of the crisis is over. Social systems usually resist radical change, but people don't want to come out of this crisis the wrong way, and recognise that a window of opportunity for fundamental change has opened up.

Britain Talks Climate also points to noticeable differences between different groups of the British population.

Grounded in research led by More in Common (including a survey of more than 10,000 British adults), Britain Talks Climate builds on the seven 'segments' of the British population identified through More in Common's Core Beliefs model.<sup>2</sup> This uses a range of psychological and ideological factors, including threat perceptions, social identity and belief in meritocracy, to go beyond analyses that position public opinion along a single dimension, such as 'left/right' or 'leave/remain'.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.britainschoice.uk/>

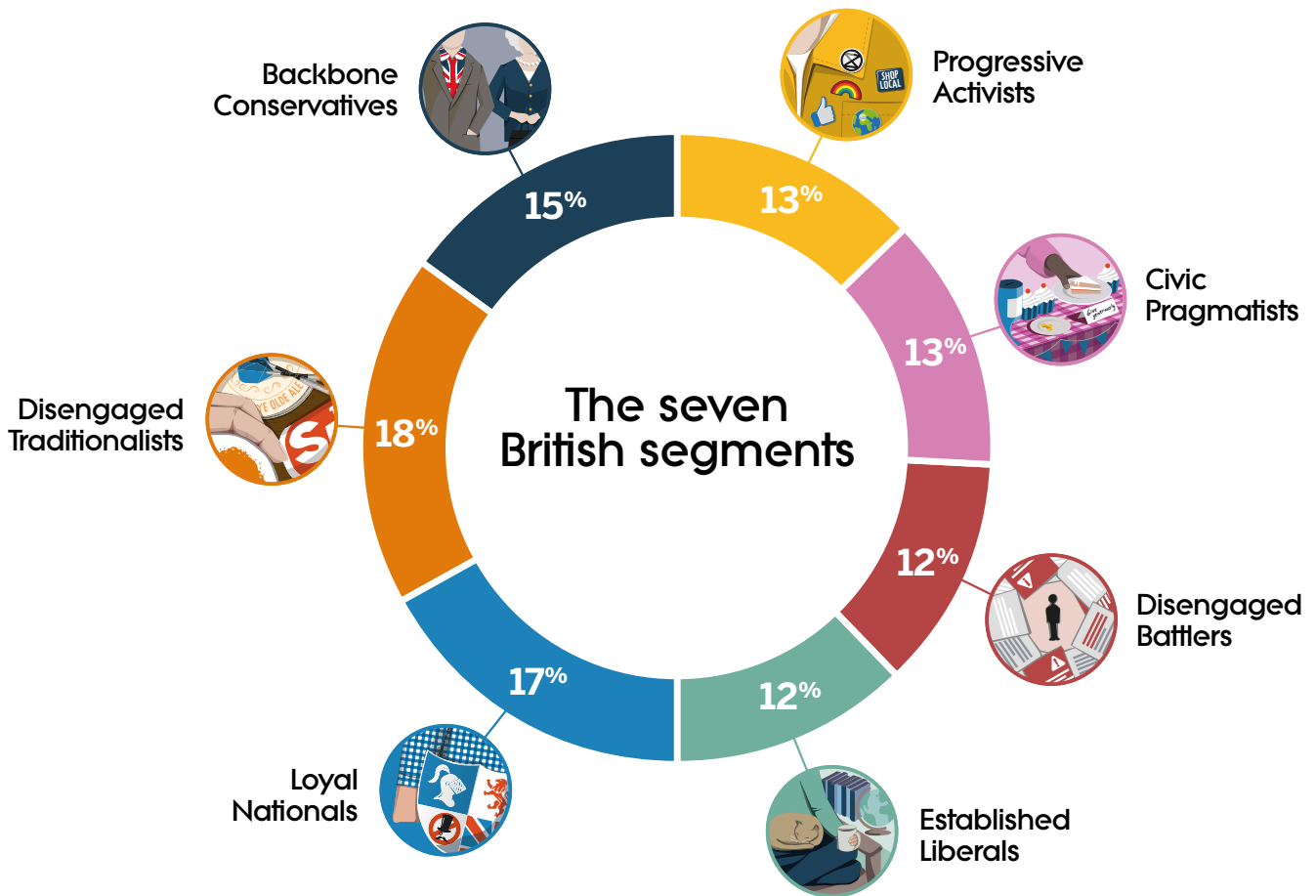


Figure 1. The seven British segments.



### **Progressive Activists**

Vocal and passionate, politically active but pessimistic about the direction society has taken, climate change is central to Progressive Activists' identity and politics. They are despairing about governments' moral failings on the issue, which they believe will make all other challenges and inequalities worse.



### **Backbone Conservatives**

Conservative, patriotic and optimistic, Backbone Conservatives take pride in tangible success stories about British environmental achievements and care deeply about food, farming and the rural economy. But they are more sceptical about grand claims of global leadership, or the 'virtue signalling' of (what they sometimes see as) symbolic lifestyle changes.



### **Civic Pragmatists**

Moderate and tolerant, Civic Pragmatists are anxious about the future, with climate change contributing to that fear. They try to follow a low-carbon lifestyle, but feel demotivated by a lack of political ambition on climate change and other social issues. Reflecting their pragmatic nature, they are likely to look past their opinion of the government of the day and support progressive climate policies when they see them.



### **Established Liberals**

Confident and comfortable, Established Liberals have a global outlook driven more by their professional networks than a sense of solidarity with communities around the world. They don't necessarily view climate change as something that will affect them personally, but they do want to hear how low-carbon solutions will drive economic resilience and growth.



### **Disengaged Battlers**

Feeling unheard and unrepresented, Disengaged Battlers are nevertheless broadly convinced of the need to take action on climate change. However, they do not yet believe the transition will benefit them, and are too busy surviving from day to day to give it more of their attention.



### **Disengaged Traditionalists**

Disillusioned and sceptical, Disengaged Traditionalists recognise tangible environmental risks like air pollution, but are far from 'sold' on the need for action on climate. They are more likely to see it as a problem for foreign governments to deal with.



### **Loyal Nationals**

Traditional and proud to be British, Loyal Nationals feel threatened and are galvanised by issues such as crime, immigration and terrorism. They believe the UK is already living with the reality of climate change, but they understand it as an issue linked to localised (rather than global) inequality and environmental degradation. Their relatively high political participation is driven by moral outrage about a system that supports corporate greed over everyday working people.

## Understanding commonality and difference on climate

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The better we understand the British public – the tensions among different segments, and the beliefs and values that unite us – the better equipped campaigners and communicators will be to engage people in a way that ensures the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Drawing on a shared, strategic understanding of the British public's views on climate change will enable advocates to campaign sensitively and in 'surround sound', responding to different segments' hopes and needs as we enter a critical decade for climate action.

The segmentation underpinning Britain Talks Climate reveals a public that is fractured but not deeply polarised, with climate change emerging as an issue that has the potential to unite us.

There are of course certain issues where the segments are not at all compatible: Loyal Nationals and Progressive Activists are in stark opposition on immigration. But these same two segments share a high concern about climate change and the need to hold businesses to account for their carbon footprints.

All are concerned about climate change (a situation that is unchanged by the Covid-19 pandemic), but the two 'Disengaged' segments and Backbone Conservatives are consistently the least worried about climate change and other environmental issues. The two 'Disengaged' segments are the least likely to engage in low-carbon behaviours, although they are also likely to have among the lowest carbon footprints.

Every segment blames the big polluters for causing climate change, and chiefly holds them and the UK government responsible for leading our way out of it, but there is significant variation across the segments in terms of an international framing of responsibility. Backbone Conservatives are sceptical of international institutions and multilateralism, while Disengaged Traditionalists lay the responsibility for leadership on climate action at the feet of foreign governments.

When it comes to active engagement, Progressive Activists are alone in voting for a political party because of its climate change policy and in regularly talking about the issue with friends and family (a critical component of public engagement).

Certain policies are divisive – like preventing airport expansion, taxing meat and dairy products, replacing gas boilers, banning the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030, and changing farming practices and rural landscapes to cut emissions.

Despite an almost even split between those who feel fearful and those who feel hopeful about the future, this masks some big differences between the segments, and perceptions of Covid-19 and lockdown policies vary substantially. The more financially secure, left-leaning segments tend to agree that climate change should be 'prioritised' in the recovery from the pandemic, even if it costs more in the short term, whereas the disengaged and right-leaning segments show less support for this approach.

## Building cross-societal engagement

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In the wake of the changes forced into existence by Covid-19, and with the critical UN climate summit (COP26) still ahead of us, now is the time to take stock, to question our assumptions and to design communications to start from 'where people are' rather than 'where we want them to be'.

Britain Talks Climate is designed to help light the way towards a low-carbon vision of society that is genuinely inclusive. All segments are 'persuadable' on climate if campaigns are designed carefully, and it is possible to work with, not against, their differences by building on messages that have a common currency. Few campaigns are likely to engage every single segment at once, but being aware of how different segments think and feel – even if they are not the target audience – is valuable strategic knowledge.

Mapping these segments onto politically important groups and constituencies will be an obvious next step for many campaigners. However, part of the motivation for this project was that voters do not sit neatly along party political or other demographic lines. Although some segments exhibit clear-cut positions, most represent more complex groupings of values.

In terms of demographics, Progressive Activists and Disengaged Battlers trend the youngest, but – with an average age of 41 and 42, respectively, and with large variation in every segment – these are not the only segments where young voters are found. Similarly, a higher percentage of Loyal Nationals and Disengaged Traditionalists live in the midlands and the north of England, the so-called 'Red Wall', but these biases are very small. In this way, the segmentation resists stereotypes of the young as automatically 'progressive' and of northern voters as mostly older or Leave-voting, for example.

Looking for majority Conservative-voting or Labour-voting groups is easier but, again, far from straightforward. It is clear from the segments that the Conservatives have a broad-based values coalition across Established Liberals, Disengaged Traditionalists, Loyal Nationals and Backbone Conservatives. Meanwhile, Labour still wins the liberal-left (Progressive Activists and many Civic Pragmatists), but this is quite a small part of the electorate.

Although strongly rooted in class, race and gender divides, we believe this values-based approach is more powerful than looking at any single socio-demographic divide alone. It offers a stable campaign tool that is robust to fast-moving changes in public opinion and behaviour and that has lasting strategic value. It challenges us to build coalitions of support among diverse groups, while also helping us to understand where engaging the values of one segment may lead to losses elsewhere.

What seems clear is that the frontier of public engagement on climate change is moving in a positive direction, despite a backdrop of societal polarisation and the chaos unleashed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The challenge is now to maintain the non-partisan nature of climate change, avoid the culture war dynamics that bedevil so many other social issues, and transform public concern into action and commitment.

1

# Introducing Britain Talks Climate

## Why 'Britain Talks Climate'?

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By creating a shared, strategic understanding of the British public, Britain Talks Climate aims to equip campaigners and communicators with the tools they need to strengthen the whole of society consensus for climate action and avoid a culture war on climate change.

Early engagement with the sector (a webinar with around 100 representatives of different organisations held on 30 June 2020) suggested that advocates are consistently reaching some segments of the British population but not reaching others. As the findings show, there are widely held stereotypes about environmental campaigners that – beyond the 'usual suspects' – can pose a barrier to wider engagement. Like any sector, without a commitment to checking assumptions and instincts against an evolving evidence base, there is a risk of confirmation bias driving decision-making.

Based on a stakeholder consultation<sup>3</sup> and research – a 10,385-person survey plus focus groups and in-depth interviews – Britain Talks Climate is grounded in More in Common's Core Beliefs model and builds on the extensive research base on climate communication. It goes beyond simple, uni-dimensional accounts of public opinion (e.g. left versus right, leave versus remain, north versus south) to uncover seven more nuanced and complex segments in Britain.

These are based on an understanding of people's deep-seated beliefs about what is right and wrong, important and unimportant, and how these internalised beliefs reflect their vision of what a good society looks like, directing and justifying their attitudes and behaviours towards climate change. Messages about the benefits of a low-carbon transition, for example, are heard very differently by audiences who feel more or less represented by society. The richness of this data, in both quantity and quality, allows the differences as well as the commonalities between segments to emerge.

We took this approach for two reasons. Firstly, knowing that climate drivers, social issues and health impacts intersect and overlap, and that inequalities are often mutually reinforcing, requires us to take a deeper and more holistic view. If anything reveals this interaction and interdependence, it's Covid-19. Secondly, although the left/right divide continues to define electoral choice in Britain, this divide is evolving as old distinctions and certainties start to blur. The left does not have a monopoly on liberal cultural views, conservatism can underpin climate concern, and disaffection links segments together that otherwise have little in common (demographically or in terms of voting behaviour).

<sup>3</sup> We are grateful to the following organisations for their input: Ariadne, Asthma UK and British Lung Foundation Partnership, Aviation Environment Federation, Bright Blue, CAFOD, Carbon Brief, Centre for Towns, Chatham House, Citizens' Advice, Confederation of British Industry, Conservative Environment Network, NEON, the Environmental Funders' Network, Possible, Feedback Global, Friends of the Earth, Glimpse, Global Action Plan, Grantham Institute, Green Alliance, Greenpeace, GSCC, Hope Not Hate, Islamic Relief, John Lewis, National Lottery Community Fund, New Economics Foundation, RSPB, Social Enterprise UK, The Climate Coalition, UKHACC and the Women's Environment Network.

## What does Britain Talks Climate provide?

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Britain Talks Climate provides an **evidence-based, shared resource** that can be used to anchor climate campaigning and communications in a deeper understanding of the British public's core values and beliefs. It offers:

### **Something shared**

Individual organisations rarely campaign under a single banner or overarching strategy. They have distinct theories of change and target diverse public constituencies. Many different roles come into play in any transition towards change, and this diversity is a strength. But the better we understand the British public – the tensions among different segments, and the communal beliefs and values that unite us – the better equipped advocates will be to design work in a way that ensures the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

### **Something that deepens understanding**

By checking assumptions against an expanded and rigorous evidence base, we aim to help improve the effectiveness of engagement on climate. One-off polls can be useful and influential – but they only ever capture a moment in time. By focusing on core beliefs, which underlie many habitual behaviours, thoughts and feelings, and which are less likely to change over an individual's lifetime, we can get much closer to the real drivers behind public opinion.

### **Something challenging**

New insights invite challenges and sometimes force us to re-evaluate the answers we thought we already had. They raise questions about not only the content of climate messages, but also the credibility of climate messengers for different segments.

### **Something necessary**

As a critical decade gets underway for curbing carbon emissions, the momentum on public engagement that was felt in 2018 and 2019 may stall or even be reversed by the direct and indirect impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. It's not hard to imagine how this crisis could send us down an even darker path. The promise of 'building back better' will only be realised if a broad social mandate is established for a green future. To do this, advocates must campaign sensitively and in 'surround sound', with different organisations creating coherent, compatible content for their audiences.

The next section of the toolkit outlines the seven segments in Britain, and provides a brief analysis of the key themes that divide and unite them on climate change. The survey that was drawn on to identify the seven segments was conducted before the Covid-19 outbreak, but the detailed qualitative work (discussion groups and individual interviews) was conducted in the wake of the pandemic. Two waves of additional Covid-19 polling were integrated into these analyses to ensure a complete picture of public opinion across the segments.

The subsequent section provides a more detailed understanding of each segment on climate change, including recommendations on how to engage them. This is followed by practical advice on identifying and reaching different audiences, with a guide on segmenting an existing database or research panel, and another on targeting segments online.

We also share a summary of our methodology.

2

## Seven British segments: The big picture

# 2.1

## An introduction to the seven segments

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The segmentation research underpinning Britain Talks Climate reveals a public that is **fractured but not deeply polarised**, with **climate change emerging as an issue that has the potential to unite us**. The seven segments that emerge are distinct but – in some surprising ways – also share common ground, and the segments at the ‘extremes’ on any given issue are not always the same.

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Although the political spectrum continues to be important, more than a third in every segment say the labels of left and right in politics feel irrelevant to me. Following More in Common’s Core Beliefs model,<sup>4</sup> the distinctions and commonalities between the segments are better captured by looking at three dimensions together: left versus right ideology; feeling engaged versus disengaged; and a preference for ‘order’ (authoritarian) versus ‘freedom’ (liberal). Together, these account for more variation than voting behaviour or any other demographic factor does on its own.

- Progressive Activists and Backbone Conservatives are highly ideological. They share firmly held, confident political beliefs and are vocal and visible about them, but are at opposite ends of the political spectrum.
- Civic Pragmatists and Established Liberals are less ideological. Their politics are present, but softer. They share high levels of trust in institutions and civic engagement but feel very differently about the state of the world and their position within it.
- Disengaged Battlers and Disengaged Traditionalists share lower levels of participation and interest in politics, alongside lower levels of trust, but are sharply differentiated by their attitudes towards immigration and progress.
- Loyal Nationals feel threatened, and this fear drives their relatively high political engagement. This segment is focused on issues such as crime, terrorism and immigration.

<sup>4</sup> <https://hiddentribes.us/>

## Geography

While all segments are present to some extent across Britain, there are a few (small) geographical differences. Progressive Activists are more highly represented in London than average, Disengaged Battlers are less represented in the south, and Loyal Nationals and Disengaged Traditionalists are slightly more likely to be found in the 'Red Wall' constituencies of the midlands and the north. Backbone Conservatives and Established Liberals are more likely to live in the south and in rural areas.

### Geographic representation by segment

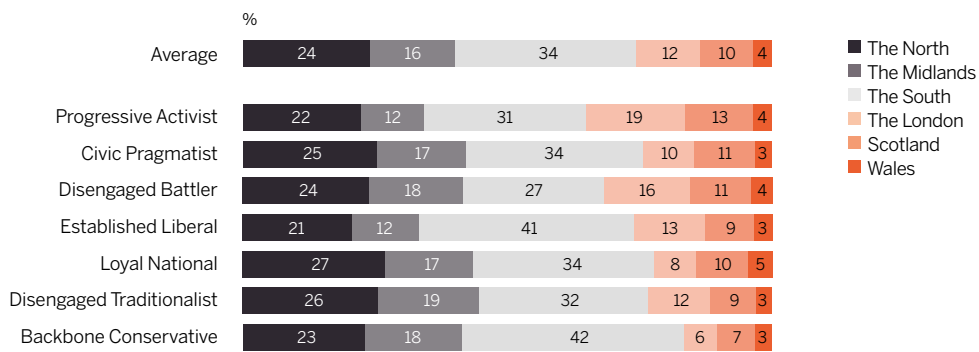


Figure 2. Representation of each segment across regions in Britain

### Rural-urban spread by segment

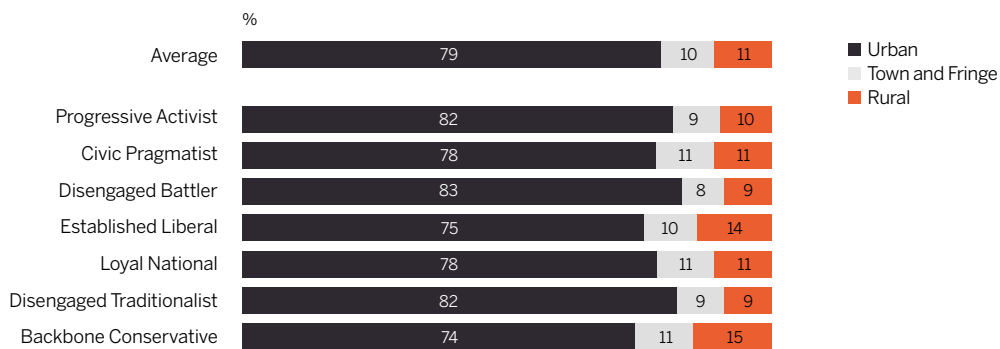


Figure 3. Representation of each segment across urban, rural and fringe areas

## Ethnicity

People from ethnic minority backgrounds are most represented among Disengaged Battlers (8%), and have the lowest representation among Loyal Nationals and Backbone Conservatives (3.7% and 2.1%). Ethnic minorities are under-represented in the survey sample (5%, compared to a 13% population average in Britain),<sup>5</sup> but follow-up work has helped build a more representative picture of how ethnicity and cultural background interacts with views on climate change across the seven segments.

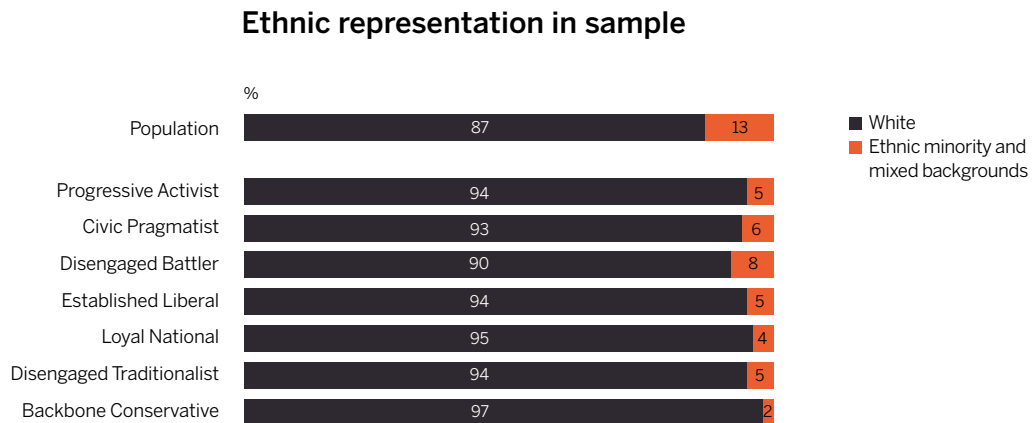


Figure 4. Ethnic representation in each segment compared to the population

We conducted focus groups with respondents who identified as Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) or as being from mixed ethnic backgrounds. The findings largely confirm that the segmentation applies just as well to respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds as it does to the wider sample, and they have been integrated into the toolkit where relevant.

Key differences between those from BAME or mixed backgrounds centred around issues of race and immigration (outlined in Section 2.2 Important themes in the analysis). We also gained insights into how respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds relate to their British identity, in particular Loyal Nationals. This example demonstrates that the segmentation model allows researchers to interrogate a subset of the wider population to find additional nuance.

<sup>5</sup> This is a methodological (and by extension ethical) concern that is problematically reflected in many other 'nationally representative' surveys conducted on a variety of social issues. The Britain Talks Climate team has initiated a discussion with the Market Research Society (MRS) to better understand how widespread this concern is and what steps can be taken by market research companies to address it.

## 2.2

# Important themes in the analysis

### Politics and the media: A crisis of trust

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Across the seven segments, political optimism is generally low, reaching a peak of 46% among Backbone Conservatives and falling to 4% among Progressive Activists. This is accompanied by low trust in parliament – from 36% among Backbone Conservatives to 9% among Progressive Activists and Civic Pragmatists – and in local MPs – from 38% among Backbone Conservatives down to 15% among Established Liberals.

““ They [the government] need the will to [act on climate] it. And I don't think they're ever going to have that. Because it's not politically expedient to do so. So, they're not going to.”  
Disengaged Battler

““ In the last election there was little choice ... I would like there to be another choice.”  
Disengaged Traditionalist

Two young boys watch Prime Minister Boris Johnson address the nation [Jeff Gilbert / Alamy](#)



**“ In answer to your question about who you trust, basically nobody because everybody’s got their own agenda. Everybody’s going to be working in their interests. So you just listen to what they say and vote for whoever you think is going to do the best for you.”**

Backbone Conservative

Low levels of political optimism and trust are correlated with low levels of political engagement. Although a majority in every segment voted in the last general election, turnout is much lower at local elections, and only a very small number have attended a political meeting or surgery. A majority of Progressive Activists (78%), Civic Pragmatists (59%) and Loyal Nationals (50%) have signed a petition in the past year, but only Progressive Activists consistently follow what’s going on in politics on a regular basis (50%) and share political content online (51%).

**“ I think worrying about the political nuances or whatnot is a short-term thing when, if we destroy the world that we live in, all of the other issues are going to become secondary and meaningless.”**

Progressive Activist

There are a number of potential reasons for this. A majority in every segment are exhausted by the division in politics (60%) and political parties are listed as the top or second-to-the-top cause of the deepest divisions in the UK by all but Backbone Conservatives. Every segment tends to feel politicians don’t care about people like me (77%), and all, except Established Liberals and Backbone Conservatives, tend to believe the system is rigged to serve the rich and influential (67%).

A decline in political trust could undermine support for political engagement and the capacity of government to act, ultimately leading to policy inertia or failure. The challenge is to prevent pessimism from generating a feeling of helplessness that could reinforce the idea that we, as a society, are too weak to change “the system” and deal with an issue as systemic as climate change.

**“ People will talk big, make it a big political issue, talk big and do stuff. But there is no actual physical action taking place saying, ‘okay, we are doing this’ or ‘we are supposed to do this’. It doesn’t happen. It won’t happen.”**

Loyal National

There is also a pervasive lack of faith in other democratic channels.

People tend to feel more confident (60%) than anxious (40%) about technological change, and their behaviour supports this. Every segment except Established Liberals and Backbone Conservatives is more likely to use social media (61%) than watch TV news (54%) or read a newspaper in print or online (38%) on a daily basis. And these channels are – to some extent – competing with more traditional sources of information about government and politics.

**Which of the following news sources (in any format) have you used regularly for the past month for news about government and politics?**

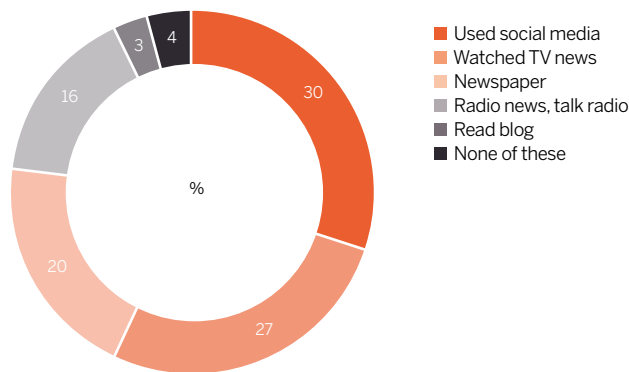


Figure 5. Regular media consumption habits across all segments

However, social media and traditional media are ranked as the second and fourth biggest causes of division in the UK, higher than the class system, the economy and regional tensions. All segments blame the media for making our country feel more divided than it really is (73%) and feel that social media over-represent the most extreme voices (71%). Overall, this is driving high levels of concern about the aggressive tone of public debate in the UK (66%) and the questioning of everything that I see online and in the media (57%).

- “ The way the media spins things ... it makes it harder to have constructive conversations.”**  
Backbone Conservative
- “ You don't know what false news is and what's real. At the moment I don't trust the media for what they're reporting.”**  
Disengaged Traditionalist
- “ I think the tabloid newspapers are sometimes just so sensationalist, so biased. Their job is to report the truth. They're journalists.”**  
Established Liberal
- “ It seems to be so difficult to tell what's real news and what's fake news these days ... I think you have to question everything that you read.”**  
Loyal National

In this ebbing of trust, which affects people's views about whether democratic processes designed to empower citizens are working, we see a desire for interventions to strengthen positive outcomes for society. Nearly three-quarters (74%) think governments need to better regulate social media companies, with more than 65% support in every segment.

## Race, gender and wealth: Framing justice and inequality

It is clear that there is substantial variation in attitudes towards race, racism and immigration. While there is agreement across the segments that a person can be British regardless of their colour, ethnic background or accent (61% 'strongly agree', 31% 'somewhat agree'), the majority tend to feel that British identity is disappearing nowadays (57%), at least among white Britons. A majority of Britons from BAME or mixed race backgrounds tend to agree that British identity is being strengthened through diversity. Across the segments, only a majority of Progressive Activists agree with this statement (70%).

### British identity is...

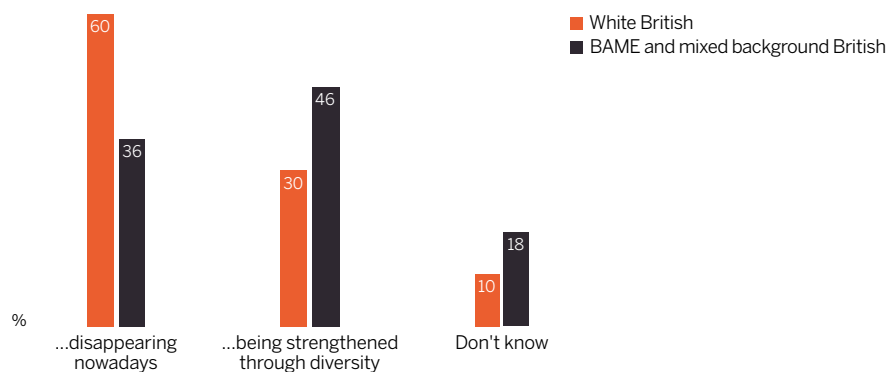


Figure 6. View on British identity by British participants from white and BAME/mixed backgrounds

Although every segment agrees that racism (33% 'very serious', 44% 'somewhat serious') and anti-semitism (25% 'very serious', 37% 'somewhat serious') are problems facing the UK today, they diverge in their opinions about how to deal with them, and who or what is to blame. Again, there are differences between Britons from BAME and mixed race backgrounds and white Britons: the majority of the latter believe that people are too sensitive about race, whereas the former believe it is not being taken seriously enough.

### Many people nowadays...

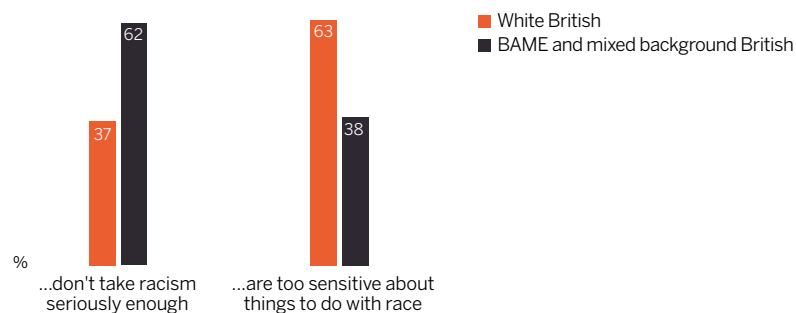


Figure 7. View on racism by White and British participants from BAME/mixed backgrounds



Protesters respond to the the death of George Floyd at a day of action against discrimination in London [Guy Bell / Alamy](#)

Only Progressive Activists, Civic Pragmatists and Disengaged Battlers tend to feel that we should acknowledge the mistakes made during the period of the British Empire, with the rest believing that there is no point going over the rights and wrongs of our history.

In terms of present-day privilege and advantage, Progressive Activists, Civic Pragmatists, Disengaged Battlers and Established Liberals tend to feel that white people still have advantages over people from ethnic minorities; whereas Loyal Nationals, Disengaged Traditionalists and Backbone Conservatives tend to believe that white people and people from ethnic minorities are treated the same and have the same opportunities.

The latter three segments see immigration as a threat, with all agreeing that immigration has a more negative than positive effect on the UK, and that we seem to care more about immigrants than about British citizens. They all say I worry about becoming a minority in my own country.

## I worry about becoming a minority in my own country

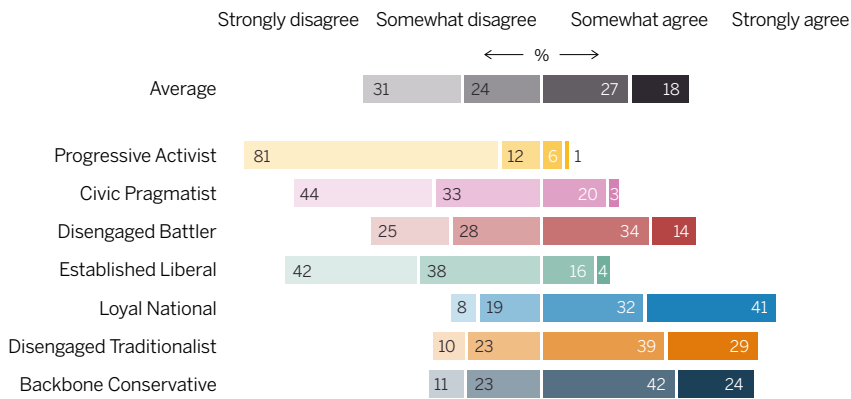


Figure 8. Worry about becoming a minority, by segment

These views are often at odds with the values of environmental activists, and reveal a clear tension. On the one hand, climate change is beginning to drive patterns of migration and displacement around the world, so immigration and climate change are becoming inextricably linked (in a way some segments would view as a growing risk or threat). On the other hand, and reflecting a surge in awareness around the Black Lives Matter movement, the climate crisis is increasingly seen (by other segments) as a problem grounded in racism. The challenge for campaigners is to provide consistent messages about how inequality and migration are linked to the climate crisis in a way that helps mitigate rather than exacerbate a culture war.

NHS workers in London demand pay rises following their contribution during the Covid-19 pandemic [Bridget Catterall / Alamy](#)



There is greater consensus on issues of gender: all segments are proud of the advancements we have made in equality between men and women (23% 'strongly agree', 53% 'somewhat agree'), although more Backbone Conservatives feel that we give an advantage to women over men than the other way round.

Established Liberals and Backbone Conservatives are alone in their perception that economic growth has benefited them. Similarly, majorities in all segments except Established Liberals and Backbone Conservatives believe that the system is rigged to serve the rich and influential.

### The UK's economic growth hasn't benefited most people I know

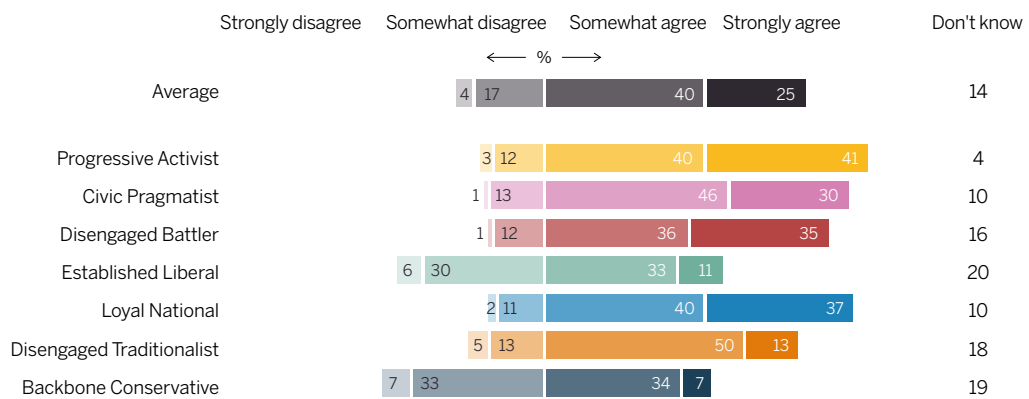


Figure 9. Perceptions of wealth inequality across segments

### Which statement better reflects your views?

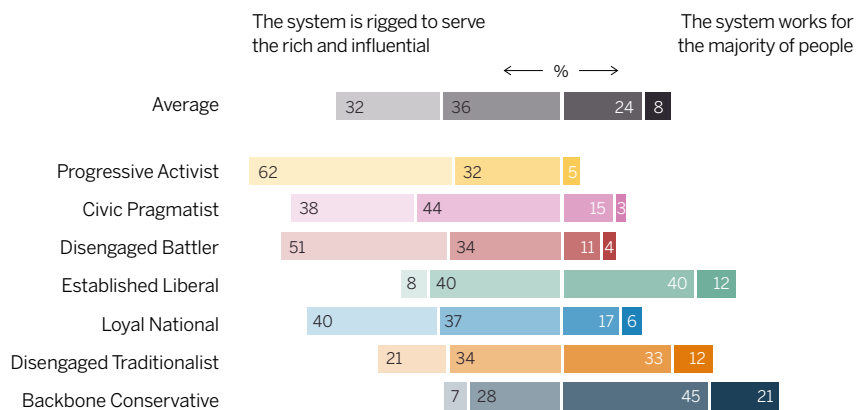


Figure 10. Views on whether the system is rigged, by segment

# 2.3

## The seven segments on climate change

### Common ground

Every segment is worried about climate change, to a greater or lesser extent.

#### How worried, if at all, are you about climate change?

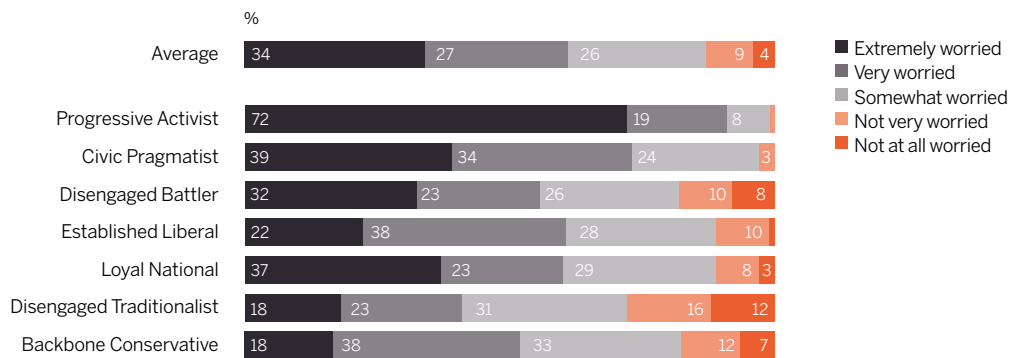


Figure 11. Worry about climate change across segments

A majority in all of the seven segments agree that climate change is caused by human activity (although the majority is slimmer for Disengaged Traditionalists).

#### Which do you agree with more?

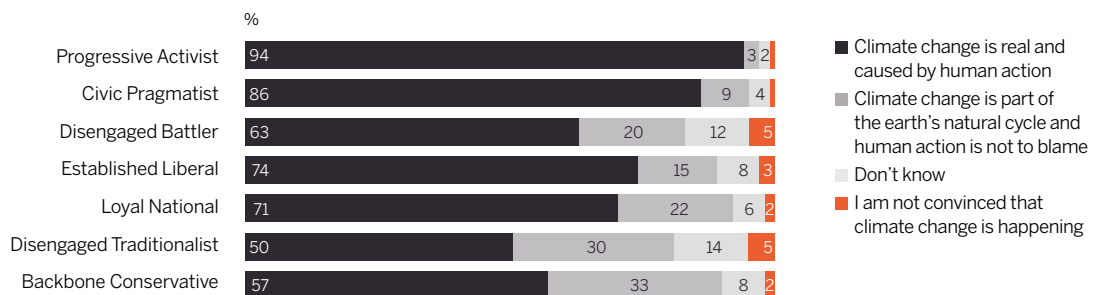


Figure 12. Understanding of causes of climate change

There is relatively high recognition that the UK is already feeling the effects of climate change (just below 60% overall, which is supported by wider recent UK polling on perceptions of climate impacts),<sup>6</sup> although the two 'Disengaged' segments remain somewhat unconvinced.

<sup>6</sup> <https://climateoutreach.org/resources/engaging-public-on-climate-risks-and-adaptation/>

## When, if at all, do you think the UK will feel the effects of climate change?

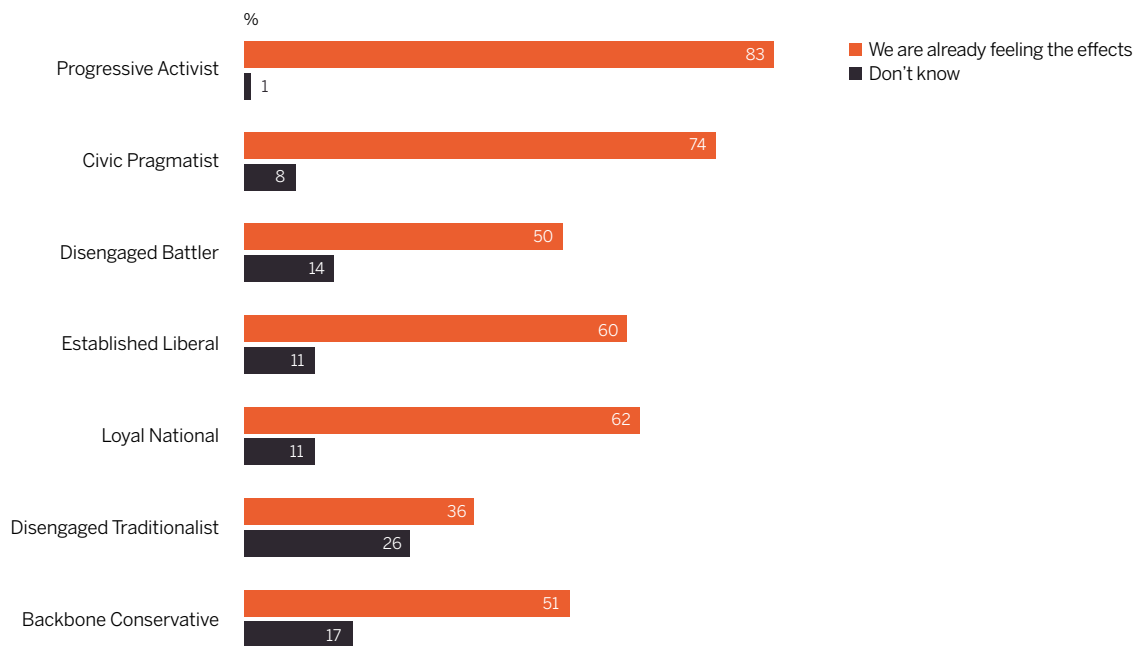


Figure 13. The percentage of people agreeing that we are already feeling the effects of climate change

The majority understands that **the threat demands a global, not only a local, response**, with at least 60% support for this view in every segment. And most people (average 64%) agree that the **UK should be one of the most ambitious countries in the world** when it comes to tackling climate change, with at least 50% support for this view across every segment.

## Which of the following statements best reflects your view?

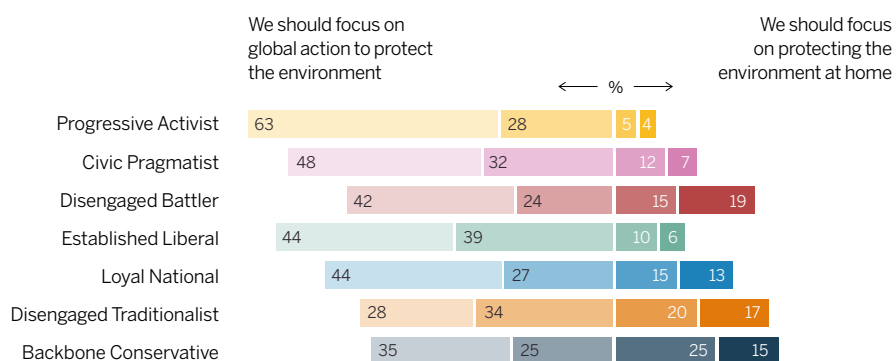


Figure 14. Views on whether the UK should focus on global or local action to protect the environment

Across the segments, there is broad recognition that **climate change concerns all of us, regardless of income, background or politics**. This points to the fact that there is currently **no evidence of a culture war on climate change**. A crucial goal for climate advocates across the political spectrum is ensuring that this situation doesn't change, with disagreement with this view from 26% of Disengaged Traditionalists and 19% of Disengaged Battlers warning us against complacency.

## Which of the following statements best reflects your view?

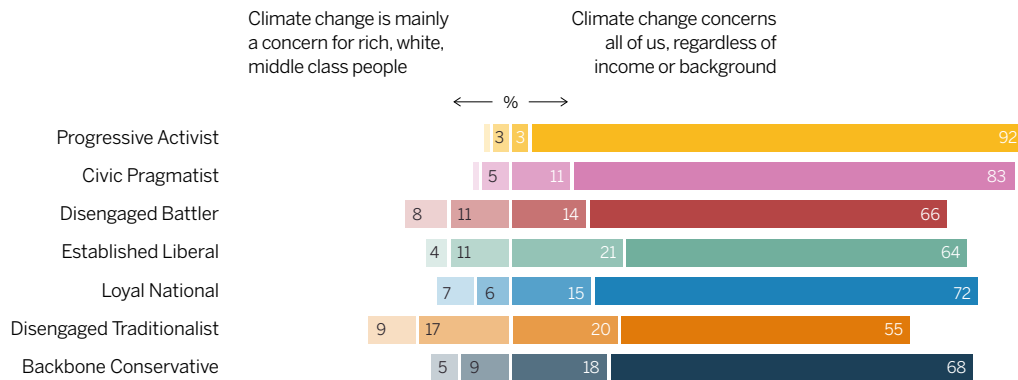


Figure 15. The percentage of people who believe climate change is an issue for rich, white, middle class people, or for everyone

## Which of the following statements best reflects your view?

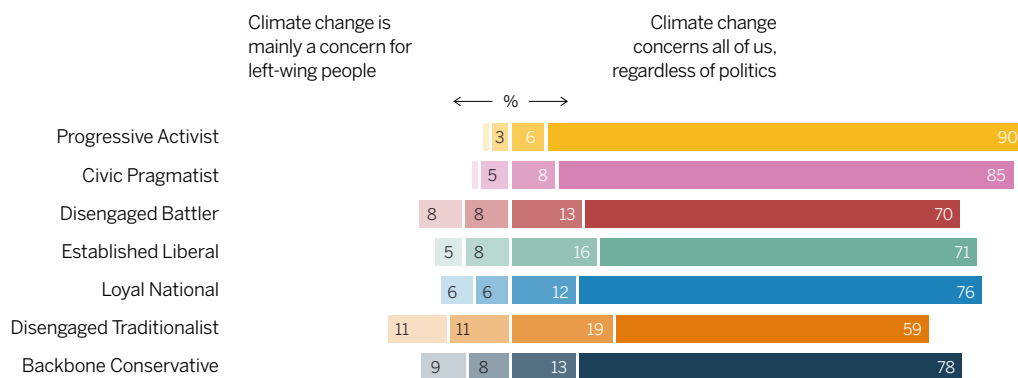


Figure 16. The percentage of people who believe climate change is an issue for left-wing people, or for everyone

Although public discourse is increasingly raising issues of intersectional environmentalism (that climate change disproportionately affects marginalised groups, particularly Black, indigenous and other ethnic minority people) in the UK and around the world, there is **very low understanding among the British public of the relationship between climate change and race**. The majority of all segments except Progressive Activists say that the effects of climate change are **the same for everyone, regardless of race**.

## The effects of climate change are...

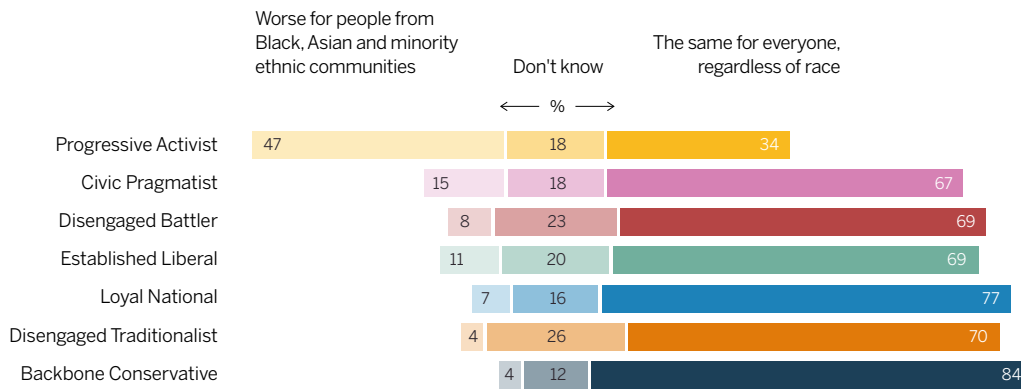


Figure 17. The percentage of people who believe climate change disproportionately affects BAME communities, or for everyone equally

The most agreed-upon benefits of climate action are to **protect future generations, create a healthier society** and **preserve the countryside**. Values like fairness (applying stricter environmental rules to everyone), avoiding waste (ending our throwaway culture), unity (coming together in our efforts to protect the environment) and pride (in 'doing your bit') are visible across the segments.

## Potential benefits

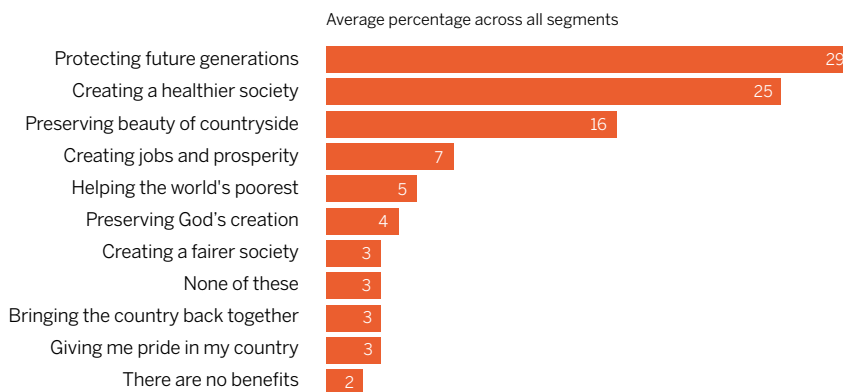


Figure 18. Potential benefits of addressing climate change, average percentage from each segment (Protecting future generations, creating a healthier society, and preserving the beauty of the countryside were the most frequently selected.)

## Differences

When it comes to active engagement, Progressive Activists are alone in saying they regularly talk about climate change. They are also the only segment where a majority agrees with both the aims and the tactics of environmental activists, and the only segment that consistently votes on the basis of a party's climate change policies.

### How often, if at all, do you discuss issues related to climate change, pollution, or the environment with your family and friends?

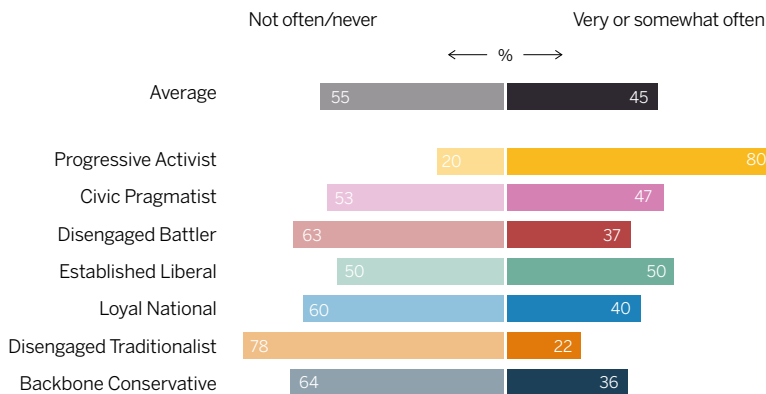


Figure 19. Percentage discussing climate change with friends or family

Although all segments say they are concerned about climate change to some extent, the two 'Disengaged' segments and Backbone Conservatives are consistently the least worried about any environmental issues. The two 'Disengaged' segments are the least likely to engage in low-carbon behaviours. They also tend to feel less pride in 'doing their bit' environmentally, feel far fewer emotions of any kind about climate change, and are more likely to say they are busy enough surviving from day to day without having to worry about climate change.

Certain policies – like preventing airport expansion, taxing meat and dairy products, banning the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030, replacing gas boilers and changing UK farming practices – are divisive, with bigger differences, explored in more detail below, emerging between segments. **Using the Britain Talks Climate toolkit, a culture war around these divisive but not yet toxic issues can be avoided.**

## Trusted messengers

There are three consistently trusted sources of information on climate change across the segments: climate scientists, David Attenborough and environmental charities. The power of relatable, everyday testimony is reinforced by the consistently high trust assigned to ordinary people who have been impacted by floods or fires (i.e. the victims of climate impacts). Farmers appear to be a powerful source of information and trust for Disengaged Traditionalists, also appealing somewhat to other segments.

But overall trust levels are generally low across the segments, suggesting that many of the most visible existing messengers are not connecting well with large parts of the population. The vote of confidence in environmental charities, for example, does not extend to environmental activists, with a clear gap in levels of trust in Extinction Rebellion (XR) and school strikers between Progressive Activists and the rest of the population.

### How much do you trust the following groups or people to talk about climate change?

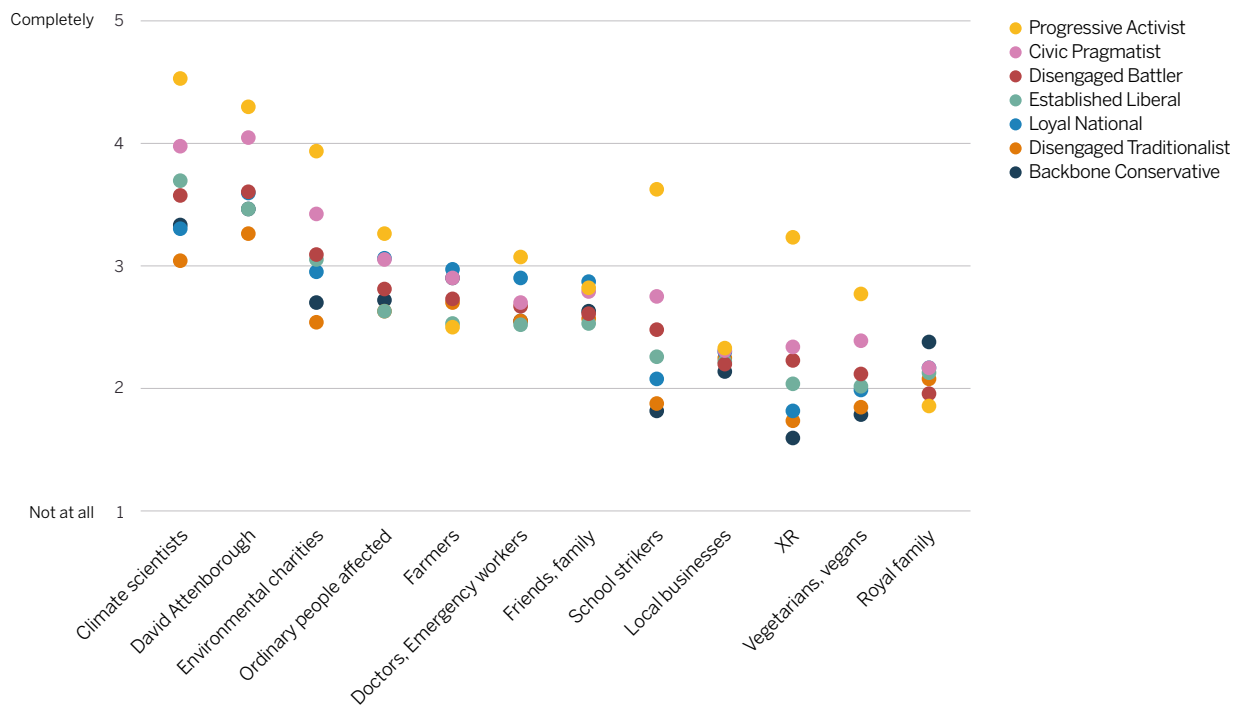


Figure 20. Trust ratings assigned to top 12 different sources of information on climate change, from 1 = "not at all" to 5 "completely", measured in September 2020 (Climate scientists and David Attenborough are the most trusted across all segments.)



Mural of David Attenborough - seen as a trusted messenger across all seven segments - in Sheffield [Cofiant Images / Alamy](#)

In focus groups, the majority of participants across almost all segments were critical of the tactics of groups such as Extinction Rebellion, including segments who might be considered 'allies' of activists (if not activists themselves):

“ ... they definitely need to be aware that there could be irritating people sometimes, maybe stopping them doing their daily job. Yeah, they need to just be careful about not upsetting the general public, rather than taking them along with them.”

*Civic Pragmatist*

“ ... when you hear it is just a lot of, to be slightly disparaging, kids who just make a lot of noise and are being very weird. It puts off a lot of people who might otherwise be paying more attention. Unfortunately, they can be a bit counter to the cause in some ways.”

*Established Liberal*

There is also a lack of confidence, across most of the segments, in friends and family as trustworthy sources of information – but people tend to underestimate the effect of social influence on their behaviour. Given how important peer-to-peer communication is for persuading and engaging on a wide range of issues,<sup>7</sup> this represents an important area for campaigners to focus on (supporting people to talk about climate with their friends and social networks),<sup>8</sup> to help protect against a culture war.

<sup>7</sup> <https://climateoutreach.org/research-library/social-norms-an-underestimated-and-underemployed-lever-for-managing-climate-change/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://climateoutreach.org/resources/how-to-have-a-climate-change-conversation-talking-climate/>

# 2.4

## The seven segments on Covid-19

In a fast-moving landscape, keeping tabs on how the seven segments are feeling during the Covid-19 pandemic is critical. In a striking comparison between pre-pandemic public opinion (February) and views in May after the outbreak of Covid-19, there was a major shift in the balance of people agreeing that we look after each other, when thinking about life in the UK in 2020, with every segment showing positive movement.

### Which statement best represents your view?

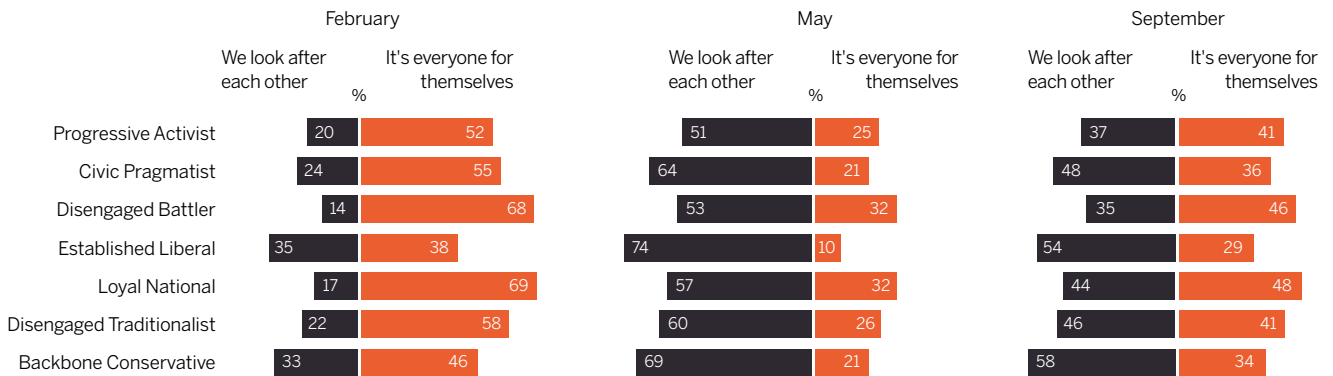


Figure 21. Percentage of people agreeing that “we look after each other” in February (left), May (centre), and September (right)

Although this positive shift had softened by the time the question was asked again in September – representing, perhaps, fatigue and frustration with the continuing constraints of Covid-19 policies – **levels remain higher than they were before the pandemic for all segments, and significantly so for the least politically engaged, Disengaged Battlers and Disengaged Traditionalists.** In a comparison with other European countries, this feeling of social solidarity appears to be more enduring in the UK.<sup>9</sup>

Another clear and consistent finding across the segments is that **people don't want to go ‘back to normal’!** In May, a clear majority in all segments agreed that they hoped for things to change, rather than going back to how they were before the Covid-19 crisis. In September, there was a slight decline but a large majority still hopes for change. Some segments show a marked drop in agreement, however – Disengaged Traditionalists (-21%), Backbone Conservatives (-18%) and Loyal Nationals (-16%) – suggesting perhaps a longing for the (relative) comforts of a time before lengthy lockdown restrictions and economic instability.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.moreincommon.com/media/y2clqzwx/more-in-common-the-new-normal-comparative-7-country-en.pdf>

## I hope we will have learned from this crisis as a country...

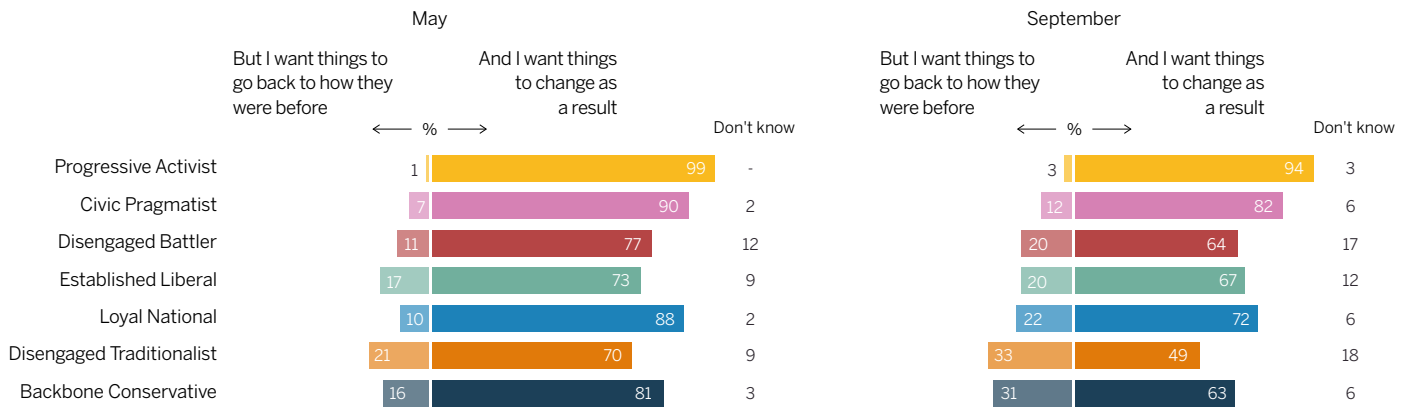


Figure 22. Percentage of people who want things to change vs. go back to how things were before in May (top) and September (bottom) (All segments show decreases in wanting to change, with the largest difference being for the right-leaning segments and 'Disengaged' groups.)

Across the seven segments, lockdown policies drove concerns about the future, with a focus on **health, being able to see friends and family, and government decision-making**. Progressive Activists and Civic Pragmatists were particularly worried about the government not using this moment to change the way we think about and plan for the future. There is a clear difference between Established Liberals and the two 'Disengaged' segments in how secure they feel about future employment, creating a risk that the segments could shift further apart as the financial impacts of Covid-19 play out.

Across the segments, there is a recognition of the (unintended) positive aspects of lockdown policies – cleaner air and louder birdsong – leading to an understanding that we need to reduce the number of vehicles on the road and protect our green spaces.

Some behaviours have predictably decreased, such as taking fewer trips abroad for work or pleasure (54%), driving less (51%), and buying fewer things (40%). Other notable changes include a **universal increase in the appreciation of nature, shopping from local businesses, buying local and seasonal food, and reducing waste**.

## Behavioural changes since the start of the pandemic

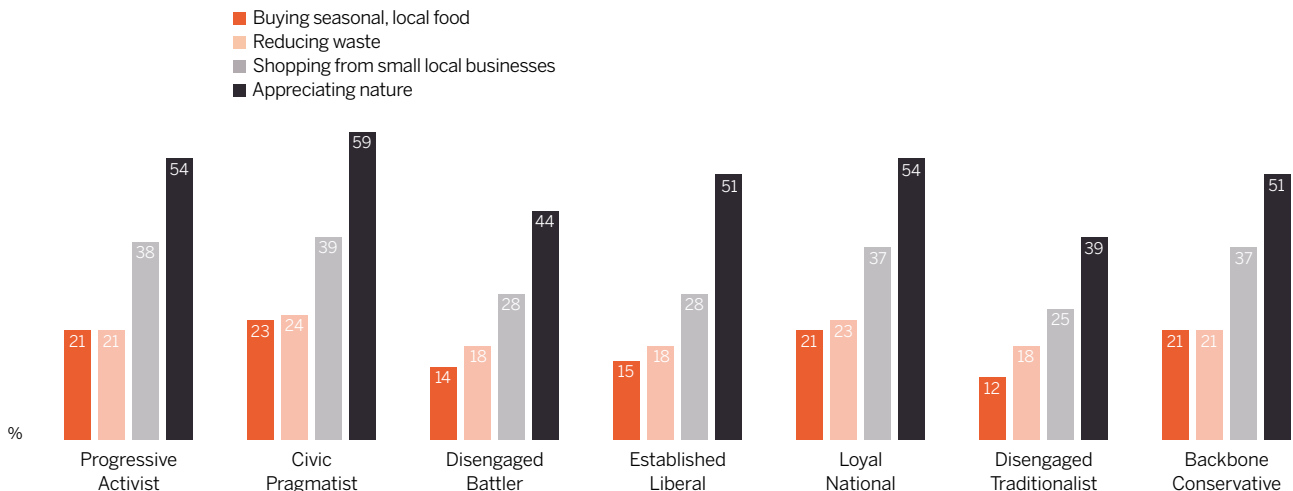


Figure 23 . Behaviours that have increased since the onset of the pandemic

But it is harder to judge whether fear is dominating hope in the life of individuals. In May, the most optimistic segments (Established Liberals and Backbone Conservatives) were more hopeful about a post-Covid-19 future, whereas the most pessimistic segments (Progressive Activists and Disengaged Battlers) were the most fearful. In September, this picture shifted slightly, with decline in hope among the more optimistic segments, but also a decline in fear, alongside much greater uncertainty (“don’t know” responses), particularly among the two ‘Disengaged’ segments. Interestingly, there has been a shift towards greater hope only among Disengaged Battlers, with Established Liberals showing the largest decline in hope, related to a substantial increase in uncertainty.

### Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

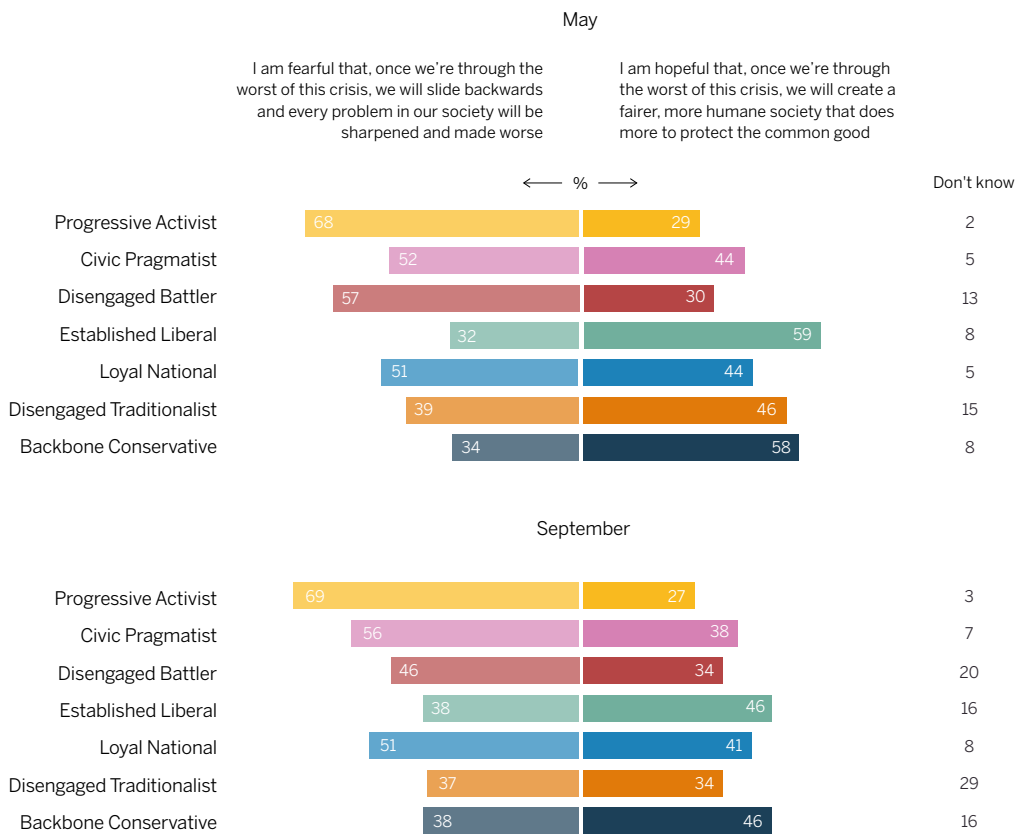


Figure 24. Percentage per segment that is hopeful or fearful about the future, in May and September

Tellingly, only Progressive Activists recognise any direct link between environmental damage and the spread of infectious disease, so campaigns that explicitly make this link are unlikely to resonate with most. In fact, the more conservative-leaning segments were slightly less convinced of the link in September than they were in May.

## Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

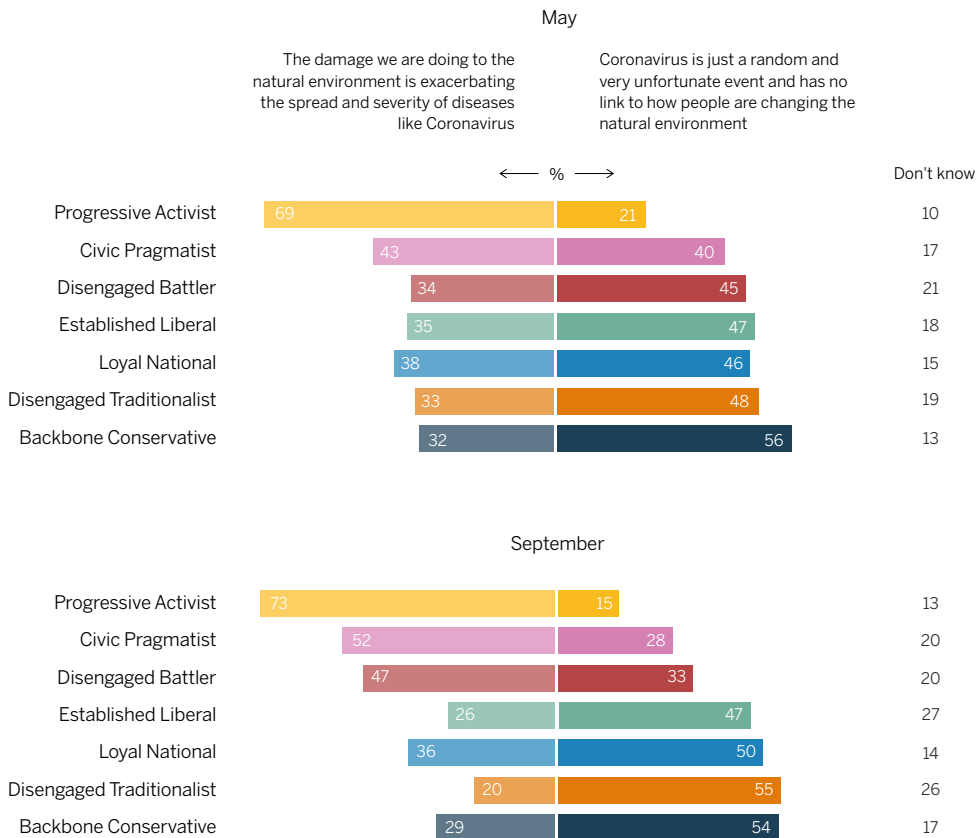


Figure 25. Percentage of each segment that sees a connection between Covid-19 and the natural environment, in May and September

The Covid-19 crisis has increased concern about the economy and jobs, causing the environment and climate change to drop slightly in the priority list for Civic Pragmatists, Disengaged Battlers, Established Liberals and Loyal Nationals.

## FEBRUARY Top five issues

	Progressive Activist	Civic Pragmatist	Disengaged Battler	Established Liberal	Loyal National	Disengaged Traditionalist	Backbone Conservative	Average
Healthcare and the NHS	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Britain leaving the EU	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
The environment and climate change	1	3	3	3	4	5	5	3
The economy	4	4	4	4	5	3	3	4
Crime	5	5	5	5	3	4	4	5

## SEPTEMBER Top five issues

	Progressive Activist	Civic Pragmatist	Disengaged Battler	Established Liberal	Loyal National	Disengaged Traditionalist	Backbone Conservative	Average
Healthcare and the NHS	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
Britain leaving the EU	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2
The economy	4	3	2	1	2	2	2	3
The environment and climate change	1	4	4	4	5	5	5	4
Jobs and unemployment	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	5

Despite this, a majority in every segment, except the Disengaged Traditionalists, who mostly want things to remain the same, would like to see more climate action from the political party they voted for in 2019. Across the board, there is also extremely low support for less action from political parties, indicating that policymaking needs to catch up with public desire.

### I would like [the political party I voted for] to do...

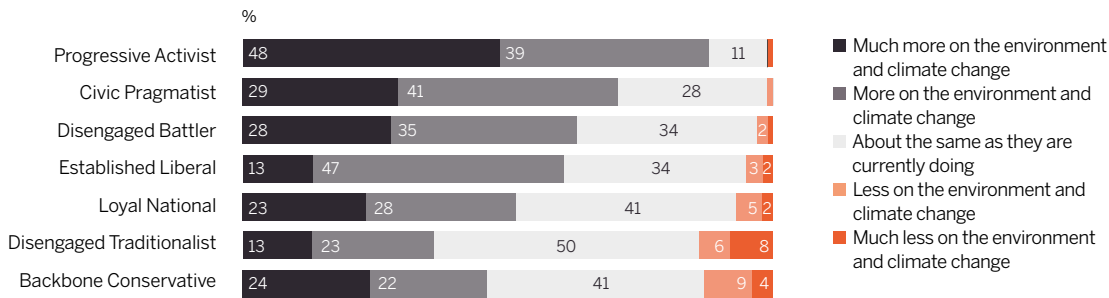


Figure 26. Desire for greater political action on the environment and climate change

Brexit remains the second most important issue overall, and it appears that the country's response to Covid-19 has not convinced the majority of segments that political division is lessening (most believe it is getting worse).

### Coronavirus has made me worry that political division is getting worse

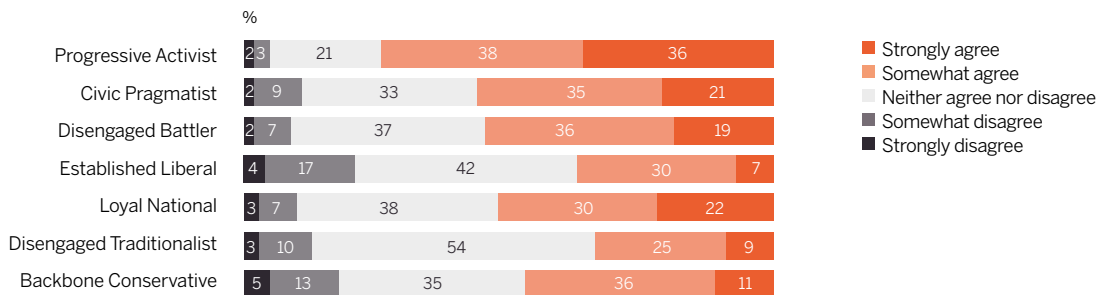


Figure 27. Concern about greater political division due to Covid-19



Women wearing face masks in London during the Covid-19 pandemic [PirNews / Alamy](#)

Despite climate falling slightly in overall priorities, there are some positive shifts, including segments' responses to the notion of a 'green recovery'. In May, Progressive Activists were the only segment to indicate strong support for the idea of using public money to support low-carbon industries as part of the Covid-19 recovery. In September, we saw increased support for this among Civic Pragmatists (+25%), Backbone Conservatives (+14%) and Loyal Nationals (+12%).

A broad-based belief in the potential for climate policies to create jobs already exists, and the changes noted above are a reason for cautious optimism about the direction of travel. However, there is work to be done to persuade groups across the whole of society of the value of a green recovery for them. Support remains low among the two 'Disengaged' segments, who are the least likely to believe that they will benefit from low-carbon employment opportunities.

**In our recovery from this crisis, we should use public money to support low-carbon industries and technologies. We must invest in the future, not in companies that won't be around in a few decades' time. It's a good investment for the taxpayer**

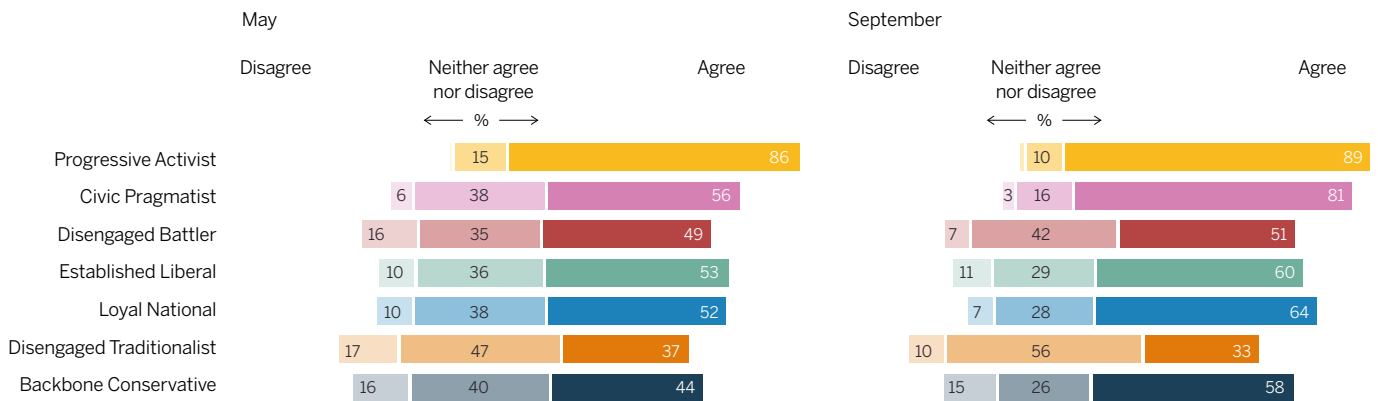


Figure 28. Percentage of people endorsing a green recovery in May and September

All segments, except the Backbone Conservatives, disagree that the actions of the UK government during the pandemic have shown they can be trusted to look after the people of this country. In addition, a majority of Progressive Activists and Civic Pragmatists say that the government response showed that they don't care about people like me.

**The actions of the UK government during the pandemic have shown that...**

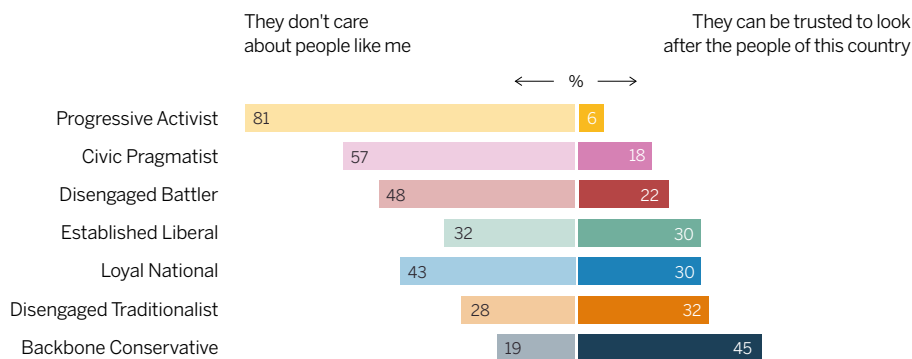


Figure 29. Trust in UK government's handling of pandemic

Majorities across most segments indicated that they **wish they had more say** in the direction the country takes. The exceptions are Established Liberals and Backbone Conservatives, who are the most politically empowered already, and Disengaged Traditionalists, who tend to have higher levels of authoritarianism and belief that the country is going in the right direction.

3

The seven segments  
in depth



## 3.1 Progressive Activists

### Who are Progressive Activists? (13% of the British public)

**Opinionated, confident, outward looking and restless for change**, this segment is probably the most familiar to climate campaigners. Progressive Activists are very engaged across a wide range of issues, with climate change central among them. From voting, to protesting and signing petitions, members of this segment are boldly **progressive** in their politics (with the most left-wing views on social and economic issues) and consistently **active** in their own lives (politically and personally) on climate change.

But the Progressive Activists are also exhausted by the division in politics, and the most likely to feel that the **country is divided**. They are the **most likely** to believe the system is rigged to serve the rich and influential, and share a **disaffection/fatalism about society** with **Disengaged Battlers** and **Loyal Nationals**, despite having very different demographic profiles. Progressive Activists are **united in their belief that inequality is a major problem** – sexism, racism, and economic injustice.

Demographically, this segment trends the **youngest**, has the highest proportion who are **university educated**, and a large number of **high-earners**. This segment overwhelmingly **supports Labour** and voted to **remain in the European Union (EU)**.

Global  
Young Tolerant Supports Labour  
Fair Compassionate Affluent Educated  
Voted Remain Creative



Mothers at Extinction Rebellion's Mothers March in London [Joe Kuis / Alamy News](#)

	Ideal UK	Most important issues (Feb)	Most important issues (Sept)	Trusted messengers	Most read news sources
1	Environmentally - friendly	The environment and climate change	The environment and climate change	Climate scientists	BBC
2	Compassionate	Healthcare and the NHS	Healthcare and the NHS	David Attenborough	The Guardian
3	Tolerant	Britain leaving the EU	Britain leaving the EU	Environmental charities	Twitter

While they are the most likely segment to believe that people should **stick to their beliefs and fight** (35%), the majority (51%) would **still opt for compromise to get things done** – so although they're ideological and passionate about what they believe, they recognise they **can't drive change on their own**.

This segment is the least proud of being British, and of their class. They largely reject nation-based identities in favour of a 'human', 'global' or 'European' identity. This segment tends to feel that British identity is being strengthened through diversity (72%).

“ Why do you have to demonstrate your nationality or the lack of it? If you live somewhere and you're a part of the community, isn't that the most important thing?”

“ ... the term 'British' is a much broader statement and it leaves room for a lot more – it's a bit more inclusive because you can say, 'I'm British' and then 'British-Caribbean' for example, 'British-African', 'British-Indian'. Whereas 'English' sounds very small, closed off, and as if you're just English and you don't want to be anything else.”

“ Going to a very predominantly white school, living in a predominantly white area, it becomes very apparent when people are not just ignorant but uneducated on issues – not just Black issues but issues representing many marginalised groups in this country. I think it's embarrassing because without the diversity and the groups that make up this country, the UK would not be what it is today.”

There is very little trust in the current Conservative government (92% indicated they were 'not at all' trusting in Boris Johnson before Covid-19) and a large majority disagree that 'austerity cuts' in public spending are justified or necessary. **The ideal UK for Progressive Activists** is one that is environmentally-friendly, compassionate, tolerant, fair and 'global' in its outlook.

## Progressive Activists on climate change

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With the **highest levels of concern** about climate change, and the **highest level of understanding** that climate change is human-caused, Progressive Activists are the familiar, 'usual suspects' for many (but not all) campaigners on climate change. Of all the important issues facing the UK, the environment and climate change are top of their list. They are also the most likely to **see climate change as a dominant issue that drives or underpins other social problems**, with more than half (57%) voting for a political party because of its climate change policy, and they are the segment with the highest agreement with the view that tackling climate change requires **radical, urgent change** (83%).

“ The more that we destroy the environment around us – society will collapse if the environment continues to degrade. So, I think worrying about the political nuances or whatnot is a short-term thing when if we destroy the world that we live in, all of the other issues are going to become secondary and meaningless.”

Progressive Activists feel a variety of negative emotions about climate change – they are **angry, scared and anxious, and they feel guilty**.

Only Progressive Activists and Civic Pragmatists say they are as worried about climate change as they are about other environmental issues, like **plastics, deforestation** and **air pollution**. Against all other environmental issues, **concern for the livelihoods of farmers is the lowest among this segment**.

In common with other segments, they trust climate scientists and David Attenborough to tell the truth on climate change, as well as environmental charities. Unlike other segments, they have higher levels of trust in the school strikers and even – uniquely among the segments – Extinction Rebellion.

### Environmental campaigners are mostly hypocrites who fly on holiday while lecturing the rest of us about how to live

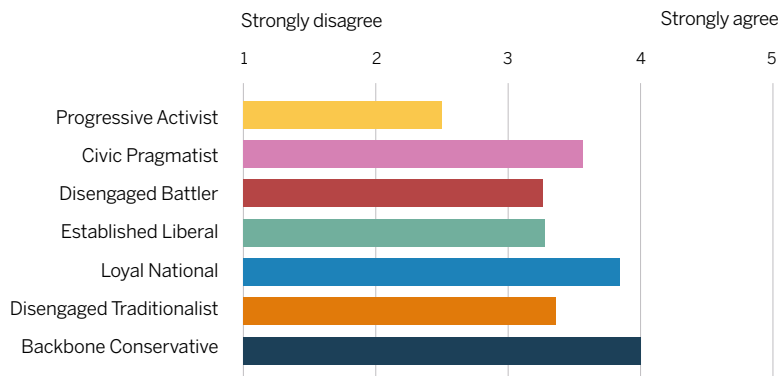


Figure 30. Average level of agreement per segment that environmental campaigners are hypocrites

Progressive Activists' views about the credibility of environmental campaigners **distinguish them from other segments, who tend to agree with their aims but disapprove of their tactics.**

### Environmental Activists

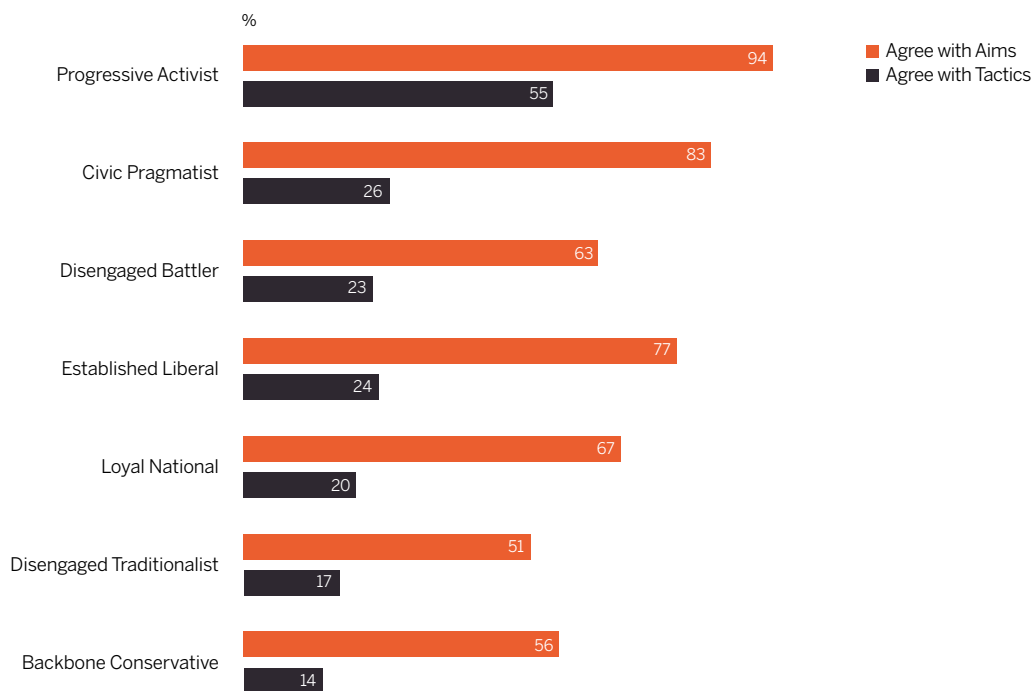


Figure 31. Percentage per segment who agree with the aims and tactics of environmental activists

Progressive Activists are split on this (55% agree with the aims and the tactics), but are still 30 points ahead of the second most supportive segment, Civic Pragmatists. Even so, there is some recognition among Progressive Activists that they may be unique in their worldview, and that climate action needs support across the political spectrum.

“ ... in so far as I can make out, Extinction Rebellion seems to be a more middle class activity. But I think airlines, motorways – the real destructive stuff that happens day in, day out can be tackled and I think there’s a real place for activism there ... I do agree though with their very direct and aggressive activism. I think that’s exactly the kind of thing that is needed.”

“ It can’t just be us radical lefties ... It’s like how people saw Occupy Wall Street as being a bit nuts. It’s that same sort of thinking for the Extinction groups. But I think unless the general public are going to get involved, it’s not going to change.”

For Progressive Activists, climate action is **not primarily the responsibility of individuals, but rather of governments and big businesses**. Ordinary people’s responsibility is to vote and be angry.

“ ... if the corporations would only be regulated in such a way that they would not produce so much pollution, they would not put things in so much plastic, they would not do so much damage to the environment – the blame needs to be shifted from the individual to the corporations and the government.”

“ I think our individual responsibility with the environment is holding governments to their responsibility. The trouble with governments is that they’re short-term and are really only interested in what happens today, over the next four years and whether they can maintain power or not ... our individual responsibility I think should be getting more angry about the lack of action that is taken.”

## 'Yes' and 'no' policies

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The majority of Progressive Activists **support taxing frequent flyers** and are **opposed to airport expansion**. They believe in the importance of individual action, even if big companies and other countries keep polluting (and even though companies and governments should bear the greatest responsibility), but they are very distrusting of corporations doing the right thing. All segments endorse recycling, and to a lesser extent reducing food waste, but Progressive Activists are the only segment to show majority support for **reducing their meat and dairy intake** as a personal step on climate change. That said, even Progressive Activists are dubious about veganism as a lifestyle response to climate change.

“ We should all do as much as we can but, obviously, the limits are going to be different for everyone depending on how much time, energy and health you have.”

“ I wouldn't have an issue with extra taxes on flights in the same way as extra taxes on smoking, taxes on fuel or diesel cars etc. Again, I think there's a balance of public choice and the government saying, that's fine, if you want to do that, it's all good, but there's a payment that needs to be made for the choices that you have out there.”

Protestors at the Extinction Rebellion demonstration on Waterloo Bridge, London [Harry Harrison / Alamy](#)



## Progressive Activists on Covid-19

“ The people who are most affected by the coronavirus are the disadvantaged, the immigrant community, and people who are working class. Because it comes back to what I said before. They are forming the majority of the vital services that we are now totally and utterly relying on. So, yes, our divisions are becoming more and more exposed.”



79%

support taxing flights



72%

oppose airport expansions



80%

support banning petrol cars



56%

vote based on climate issues

During the first lockdown, there was **strongest agreement (78%)** among this segment that, although Covid-19 is a national emergency, it is critical to tackle **climate change at the same time**, even if it costs more in the short term. In September, this sentiment **increased to 92%**.

They are most strongly in support of using public money to support low-carbon industries and technologies as we recover from the Covid-19 crisis. Sentiments about using Covid-19 as an opportunity for change are prevalent across this segment.

“ This is being treated as an existential crisis and we've gladly shut down our economy for the sake of saving – I mean, the number of lives being lost by the potential of an environmental calamity will be exponentially higher than what we're going to experience this year from this pandemic. The reactions we've had from governments across the world in addressing that does hopefully give a bit of hope that they could have a similar response and enact certain policies and we would have that collective awareness of the impact of what we're doing, that it might be inspirational to alleviate some of the environmental issues that we're having come forth.”

Despite being exhausted by the division in politics, Progressive Activists retain some hope that Covid-19 could be a stepping stone towards building back better, not only for the environment, but in terms of a better society.

“ I think the hope is that we learn from what we're going through at the moment and we produce something better. I would make an analogy that our parents and grandparents went through two world wars and we built a welfare state and a dream for a better life out of that.”

“ The absolute best case scenario would be ... that having gone through various difficulties, people said, 'right, no more of that' and built a better society. We have learnt in the past month or so just what is possible. People sleeping rough have been housed. That was impossible until it was possible.”

“ I think that this is an opportunity to maybe set the standard for the world and say, 'we're a diverse country, this is how to do things', and maybe get a bit of respect.”



A group in Hampshire start a new allotment to grow their own food [Anita Gellatly / Alamy](#)

## Engaging the Progressive Activists

Channel their desire for radical action and their antagonism towards government by mobilising them to open up new fronts for change. Persuade them that bringing the rest of the British population along with them will speed up rather than slow down the transformation they desperately want to see. Help them build bridges with segments who share many of their values (e.g. Civic Pragmatists) but who are intimidated by their level of political commitment and activism.

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### Key takeaways

#### **Emphasise climate justice**

Progressive Activists have an understanding that the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable groups reflects and is largely driven by structural inequalities. Give voice to their belief that those who are poor or marginalised should be given special importance, wherever in the world they are.

**Acknowledge their pessimism, but avoid fatalism**

It is important to validate active negative emotions, including anxiety, anger and helplessness, while avoiding messages that are overly optimistic or positive. However, too much despair could lead to burnout and defeat. Build efficacy<sup>10</sup> and avoid fatalism<sup>11</sup> by balancing messages about the scale and urgency of the problem with bold measures that could genuinely shift the dial. Consider supporting this group with resources that help to alleviate climate anxiety.

**Channel their antagonism in a constructive way**

Recognise their strongly held antagonism towards the government, but help them see that participation in protest movements, for example, is not a substitute for other forms of political activity. Channel their energy – and likely eloquence on the subject of climate change – towards meaningful engagement with their local MPs and with people in their community who could be encouraged to do the same.

**Challenge them to create and hold new spaces**

Arguments about incremental improvements do not hold sway with this segment. They want urgent, radical change from government and big business. Use this ambition to mobilise them in new areas (e.g. making natural gas the new coal) and against key targets (e.g. banks financing fossil fuel companies).

**Manage tensions surrounding COP26**

Progressive Activists are likely to feel conflicted about COP26, as, while they will want it to succeed, they will find it challenging to support government policies. Help them find a voice on COP26 that navigates this tension.

**Be careful when linking Covid-19 to the climate crisis**

This is the only segment where making a direct link between Covid-19 and environmental degradation is likely to land consistently well. Talk about the relationship, but don't overplay the opportunities as we respond to the pandemic. This group must hear loud and clear that not everyone feels the same.

**Encourage them to help build the societal mandate**

Progressive Activists stand apart from the other segments in many ways. This toolkit can equip<sup>12</sup> them with the insights they need to widen the consensus. It's not about diluting their beliefs or finding the lowest common denominator: it's about helping them to begin the conversation from where the other person is. This is critical for avoiding a culture war on climate change.

**Craft climate messages that identify common cause with other groups**

This segment see the most division and conflict in society and they are the least likely to agree with the view that we look after each other in 2020, so it is important to consider similarities with other segments, where possible. In fact, this segment shares concerns with the two 'Disengaged' groups around wealth inequality, and identify some of the same people as being to blame (e.g. unaccountable corporations). This may help to improve Progressive Activists' sense of collective efficacy and their ability to find common cause with other segments.



## 3.2 Backbone Conservatives

Who are Backbone Conservatives?  
(15% of British public)

**Firmly conservative** in their social and cultural views, **strong supporters of Brexit** and the historic achievements and reputation of Britain in the world, and the **most authoritarian** of the segments, Backbone Conservatives, as their name would suggest, are **core Conservative voters**. They mirror the Labour-voting Progressive Activists on the left of the political spectrum in terms of their ideological focus and drive.

**Older, relatively well off**, and **relatively well educated**, Backbone Conservatives are the **most likely to say they are proud to be British**.

“ I’m incredibly proud to be British, English, whatever. You could say I was being racist by saying English. But I think we are leaders in the way of having good education or trying to have good education. Of having fairness in society, equal rights ... We are the leaders of trying to have a better world, a better place for our children. A better place for us. To live more environmentally friendly. So we’re doing all the right things, and I think that’s something to be really proud of.”

Traditional British pride Practical Trusting  
Well-off Hard-working Respectful  
Older Conservative



Gardeners having a cup of tea at the Golden Hill Community Garden in Bristol [Adrian Sherratt / Alamy](#)

	<b>Ideal UK</b>	<b>Most important issues (Feb)</b>	<b>Most important issues (Sept)</b>	<b>Trusted messengers</b>	<b>Most read news sources</b>
<b>1</b>	Hard-working	Healthcare and the NHS	Healthcare and the NHS	David Attenborough	BBC
<b>2</b>	Honest	Britain leaving the EU	Britain leaving the EU	Climate scientists	ITV
<b>3</b>	Environmentally friendly	The economy	The economy	Farmers	Daily Mail

## Pride in being British

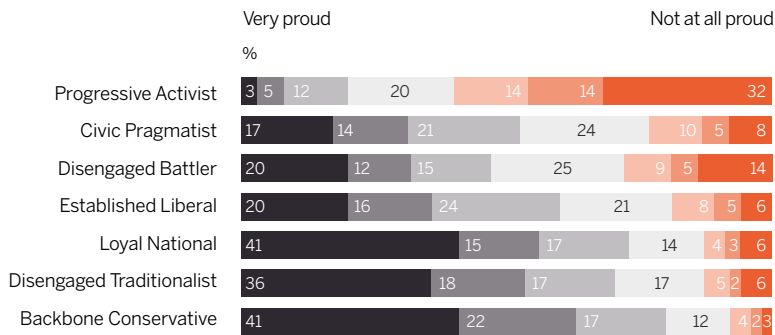


Figure 32. Pride in being British across segments

Backbone Conservatives are the **most likely** to say that these days we seem to give an advantage to women over men (35%), are the **most likely** to agree that there is no point in going over the rights and wrongs of our history (81%) and that inequality is not a serious problem in the UK (46%).

## Which do you agree with more?

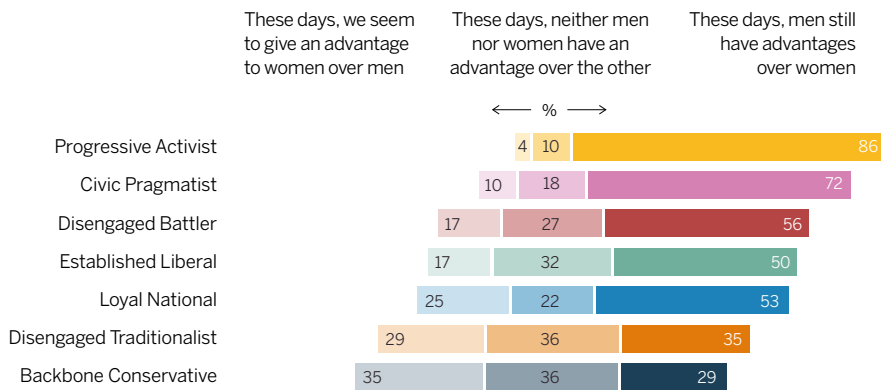


Figure 33. Views on gender equality across segments

## Backbone Conservative attitudes

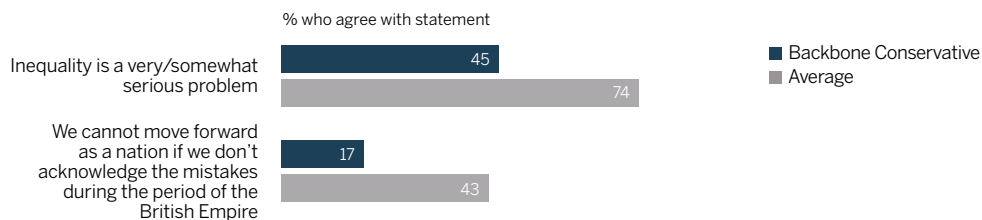


Figure 34. Backbone Conservative attitudes towards inequality and the British Empire

Although they recognise the divisions in society, they are the **most likely** to think we've been through divided times like this before (33%, compared to 27% average) or that we've been through more divided times before (10%, compared to 6% average). Linked to their secure financial and social position, they are the second most likely – after the similarly optimistic Established Liberals – to **feel part of a community**. However, they feel less safe than Established Liberals, with the majority agreeing that the world is becoming a more dangerous place (90%, compared to 60% of Established Liberals).

**Confident, comfortable and proud of the country's history, cultural heritage and the monarchy**, Backbone Conservatives have relatively **high trust in people** (despite believing certain segments, such as immigrants, have a negative influence on society), and they are the **most likely** to say people in the UK are generally kind (79%, compared to 71% average) and people in my local area are generally kind (83%, compared to 75% average).

**90% of Backbone Conservatives give to charity** (the second highest after Civic Pragmatists). They are **most likely** to say that Britain's response to Covid-19 has revealed the best of human nature, **sharing this optimistic take with Established Liberals**, with more than two-thirds of Backbone Conservatives believing we look after each other.

In terms of their self-identity, this segment see themselves as **respectful and hardworking**, and believe **people are responsible for their own choices and status in life**.

“ Life divides between drivers and passengers. It doesn't matter what you're doing. You can either make it happen and do it or you can sit there and be carried along by everybody else.”

“ ... a good stable job and then you're able to get on the property ladder and you have savings, or I can take my family on holiday every now and then ... so, comfortable living. Then we can also give back a little bit to society in terms of doing some charity work or some voluntary work.”

With a pride and confidence in who they are and what the country has achieved throughout its history, they are optimistic about what the future holds, with 55% agreeing that the UK is headed in a positive direction (this is the **only segment with majority support on this measure**).

Their ideal UK is **hard working, honest and environmentally friendly**, suggesting the **potential to engage Backbone Conservatives constructively on climate change if the right approaches are taken**.



Torrential rain caused flash flooding in North Yorkshire, damaging farm buildings and sweeping animals away [David Forster / Alamy](#)

## Backbone Conservatives on climate change

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In keeping with every other segment, Backbone Conservatives recognise that human activity causes climate change, and agree that cutting carbon emissions is an opportunity to create jobs in the UK. They are not 'climate sceptics', and show some enthusiasm for and openness to the broad goal of living more lightly on the land, and in a more pro-environmental way. They are the **most likely to agree that preserving the beauty of the countryside is a positive benefit of climate action.**

“ I think environmental issues and climate issues I think are really key ... I just think there's so much to worry about and so much to think about, it's difficult to pinpoint something in particular. But just in general, I think we all need to be working more towards living in a more environmentally friendly way. And we certainly do by every little thing that we can. Recycling things, not buying things that are not needed, careful of what packaging we buy.”

However, a significant minority (34%) believe that climate change is part of the earth's natural cycle and that human action is not to blame. This segment are **sceptical of what they consider to be 'environmentalist' approaches**, alongside a perception that environmental campaigners are 'worthy' or judgmental in tone.

“ The environmental enthusiasts, the fanatics, will be rubbing their hands looking at what’s going on at the moment saying, ‘fantastic. Isn’t the world a cleaner, better place?’ Yes, that’s fine, if you’ve got a job and you can feed your family and you’re not waiting for a cancer operation maybe because you can’t get into the hospital. That’s all well and good. So, people are going to be refocused after this on getting back to at least where we were. And that’s not going to happen overnight. This is going to take five years.”

Backbone Conservatives are **much more likely to hold foreign governments responsible for causing climate change**, with 50% choosing this option in their top three, compared to 33% overall.

“ Us recycling a bit more and not using plastic straws, whilst it will do a little bit, it’s not nearly going to do enough to change the world in general. That comes from your major oil companies and governments. And as you say, with China, the amount that they put out. So, me deciding to have a steak for dinner doesn’t really make all the difference.”

“ It’s relevant to each and every one of us, but I still feel unless there’s bigger action on a global scale. If you take China and India, the population of the two combined are almost half of the world’s population. If nothing is going to happen over there for whatever reason, I feel a little bit helpless in the small things that we do and change our lives, obviously will help, but we will never achieve the aims and goals that we need to.”

## ‘Yes’ and ‘no’ policies

“ God forbid a few months ago if you were to pull out a plastic straw in public or take it to the checkout, for god’s sake.”



As the quote above suggests, this segment are likely to bristle if lobbied to make personal changes that they consider to be more symbolic than substantive (a suspicion of ‘virtue signalling’ is likely to be high among Backbone Conservatives). There is limited interest in reducing their own meat and dairy intake (perhaps linked to their support for British farmers), very little enthusiasm for vegetarianism, and none at all for veganism. Coupled with the fact that this segment expresses the highest level of agreement that environmentalists are hypocrites who fly on holiday while lecturing the rest of us about how to live (63%, compared to 51% average), Backbone Conservatives are unlikely to be receptive to messages that emphasise an ‘environmental lifestyle’.

They are more in favour of airport expansion (47%) than not (34%), and are the segment most likely to agree that it is important to protect UK farming practice and rural landscapes even if that means taking longer to cut carbon emissions (71%, compared to 49% average). They don't support policies to ban or tax diesel or petrol cars by 2030 (41%), eliminate gas boilers (22%) or tax meat and dairy products (19%). Despite their relatively secure financial position, their economically right-wing views make taxation a difficult sell on any issue.

However, they are positive towards aspects of ethical consumption that focus on **buying local, reducing food waste and supporting British farmers** through eating seasonally as a route to sustainability, and their willingness to undertake common sense, practical individual actions, such as recycling and reducing electricity consumption, is higher than average.

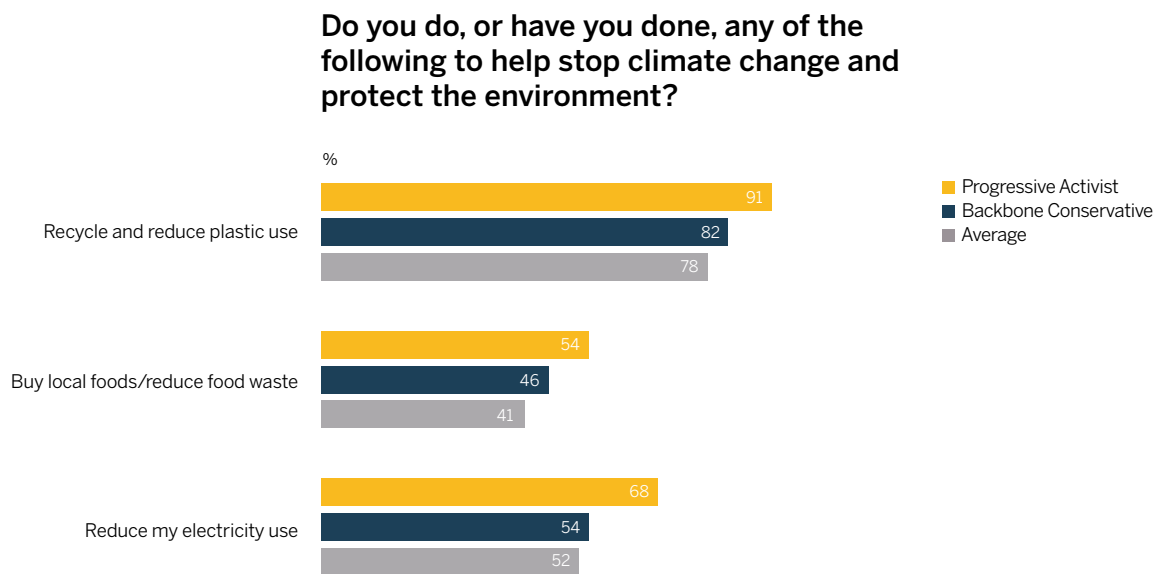


Figure 35. Personal actions to stop climate change: Progressive Activists and Backbone Conservatives

## Backbone Conservatives on Covid-19

Backbone Conservatives are unlikely to be persuaded by messages that position climate change as an emergency. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, they were, after Disengaged Traditionalists, second least likely to agree that climate change requires urgent (38%) over gradual (48%) societal action.

**“ I just think a lot of the other issues are far more important at the moment. Particularly with things like Covid-19 at the moment, the environment has very faded into the background. It was something that was very high on people’s agendas previously but actually now isn’t even being discussed at the moment.”**

They are the segment most likely to agree that if climate change was as bad as some people claim, governments would already be doing much more about it (71%), perhaps reflecting their high levels of trust in political institutions.

In May, they were the second most likely segment, just behind the apathetic Disengaged Traditionalists, to agree with **deprioritising climate change in the recovery from Covid-19**: Coronavirus is a national emergency and we must put all other issues on the backburner to deal with it, including climate change (52%). That said, 44% felt differently – that Coronavirus is a national emergency but we must not forget about other emergencies and make sure we’re tackling climate change at the same time.

Perhaps due to changing perceptions of the urgency of the Covid-19 crisis, by September this had flipped for Backbone Conservatives and other segments, who are now more likely to agree that we must not forget about other emergencies, such as climate change (53%), instead of putting all other issues on the backburner to deal with Covid-19 (39%).

Backbone Conservatives are persuadable on climate change, but are only likely to respond well to carefully crafted approaches that emphasise pragmatism and the preservation of the countryside, avoid environmentalist rhetoric, and offer positive, constructive narratives that foreground the need for people to take responsibility for themselves, without assuming everyone else will want to make identical decisions.

“ I’ll tell you the truth, I don’t really talk about it with people much. I mean I just tend to do my thing and they do their thing really. I wouldn’t try and preach to anybody about it because I don’t really think that’s my right to do that really. I let them live their own life.”

They are **less likely to agree with policies that curb industries**. For instance, Backbone Conservatives show the second lowest agreement with the government only giving bailout support to polluting companies like airlines and car makers if they make major changes to become more environmentally-friendly (46%). Messages about growing the UK’s green industries to avoid reliance on countries like China, on the other hand, receive almost universal support (94%), higher even than Progressive Activists or Civic Pragmatists.

**We must not become over-reliant on countries like China and instead make sure we’re better braced for economic shocks by producing more in the UK. The government should invest in growing industries like renewable energy, battery manufacturing and electric cars**

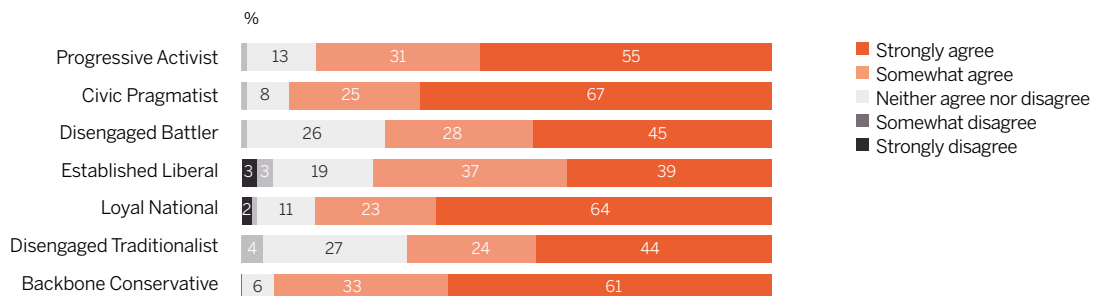


Figure 36. Agreement and disagreement with investing in green industries to reduce over-reliance on foreign countries



Ramblers in the English countryside near Gargrave, North Yorkshire [Ian Lamond / Alamy](#)

## Engaging Backbone Conservatives

Build on well-established research<sup>13</sup> on engaging audiences with firmly held conservative values, and animate them over battleground issues to do with rural life: for example, food standards that protect farmers' livelihoods and climate change-related weather effects. Remove the signifiers of left-wing environmentalism without undermining the substance of the message. Find and amplify genuine success stories around British leadership on the environment.

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### Key takeaways

#### **Use their political power**

This segment is essential for shifting the Conservative Party's centre of gravity towards genuinely Paris-compatible climate ambition and policies. When they flex their muscles, they can be very powerful indeed. Persuade them to be advocates – on their own terms, and in their own language – within their key networks. This means supporting Backbone Conservatives to be vocal within constituency meetings or at social events about their passion for a form of environmentalism that grows out of conservative values rather than left-wing ones.

<sup>13</sup> <https://climateoutreach.org/resource-type/centre-right/>

### **Use the robust evidence on engaging centre-right audiences on climate change**

In keeping with previous research<sup>14</sup> on engaging conservative audiences on climate change, this segment values moderation over radical change. Avoiding wastefulness – food, energy or even money (in high-carbon industries that no longer represent an efficient investment) – is a safe and motivating starting point for Backbone Conservatives. Being pragmatic rather than idealistic, seeking balance and continuity with the status quo (continuing with progress already made) and invoking the power of intergenerational duty are all established ways of connecting effectively with Backbone Conservatives.

### **Double-down on issues they already care about**

Messages around protecting and upholding rural ways of life, farming as a vocation, and British agriculture as an industry and symbol of national pride will land best with this segment. Leading on the negative environmental impacts of meat and dairy farming will be less effective than encouraging a low-waste, high-quality approach to food and diet across the board<sup>15</sup> – pointing to the virtues and benefits of local, trusted suppliers rather than demonising farmers and the farming industry.

### **Avoid red flags (like a 'meat tax') to avoid culture war dynamics**

Some topics are simply off-limits for Backbone Conservatives: being clear what not to prioritise with this segment (e.g. around state-imposed taxes on dietary choices) is crucial for navigating around the risks of a culture war. Over time, their perspective on this kind of policy may change, but this means campaigners taking Backbone Conservatives (and other less-engaged segments) on a journey that they are genuinely supportive of.

### **Change the messenger**

Backbone Conservatives are not sceptical about climate change or other risks to the natural environment, but they are very sceptical of typical 'environmentalists' and what they perceive as a 'worthy', paternalistic and largely hypocritical worldview. Scientists, farmers and representatives of rural life, and people who have been impacted by climate change in the UK and have a credible, authentic story to tell, are likely to be more trusted communicators for this constituency. In many ways, it is the messenger rather than the message that Backbone Conservatives are likely to object to.

### **Take pride in what Britain has done well on the environment**

Backbone Conservatives are likely to look to the government for evidence of how serious climate change is. Point to practical, tangible achievements – improvements in energy efficiency and high standards in farming/welfare – rather than grand claims about global leadership. They want to hear about the things we are doing well at, in so far as they maintain a way of life that is in keeping with their values.

<sup>14</sup> <https://climateoutreach.org/reports/election-guide/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.eating-better.org/>



## 3.3 Civic Pragmatists

### Who are Civic Pragmatists? (13% of the British public)

Solidly left but not activists, this **progressive, practical and moderate** segment are anxious about the future – and are one of the segments **most concerned that the world is becoming a more dangerous place**. Civic Pragmatists are **community-oriented**, being the most likely to donate to charity (94%), and share **socially left beliefs** with Progressive Activists. They are equally convinced that inequality and racism are serious problems in the country, and are almost as proud of embracing diversity and of advancements in gender equality. During a focus group, one participant described their segment as “**liberal, creative, kind, caring, calm and realistic**”. This is also a **majority ‘Remainer’** segment.

“ There is a very visible divide between how many possessions people have and what access they have to possessions and what their outlook on life is and what their beliefs are and I think it boils down to money.”

Liberal ——— Compromising ——— Fair  
 Global Environmental Compassionate  
 Moderate Tolerant Educated  
 Voted Remain



Two young women having a conversation on a sunny day in Liverpool [Ken Biggs / Alamy](#)

	<b>Ideal UK</b>	<b>Most important issues (Feb)</b>	<b>Most important issues (Sept)</b>	<b>Trusted messengers</b>	<b>Most read news sources</b>
<b>1</b>	Environmentally friendly	Healthcare and the NHS	Healthcare and the NHS	David Attenborough	BBC
<b>2</b>	Compassionate	Britain leaving the EU	The economy	Climate scientists	ITV
<b>3</b>	Tolerant	The environment and climate change	Britain leaving the EU	Environmental charities	Facebook

Civic Pragmatists also have a **relatively high level of education** but, compared to Progressive Activists, they tend to be **older, with a higher proportion of women** (12% above the mean). A majority are **proud to be British**, but there is a rejection of simplistic national identity (i.e the stereotypes associated with 'Brits abroad' or anti-European activism around Brexit).

“ I completely don't identify with any political party.”

“ Yeah, there's something about claiming you're English, it's all St George's flag and topless to the waist, drinking lager somewhere, that there's negative connotations to it and so British is something else. I mean, I feel a bit more European than anything else to be honest.”

In a clear distinction from Progressive Activists, Civic Pragmatists are **evenly split on whether British identity is disappearing or being strengthened through diversity**, and a majority agree – perhaps reflecting the older demographic – that there is pressure to speak a certain way about subjects like immigration and immigrants (75%).

### Which statement better reflects your views?

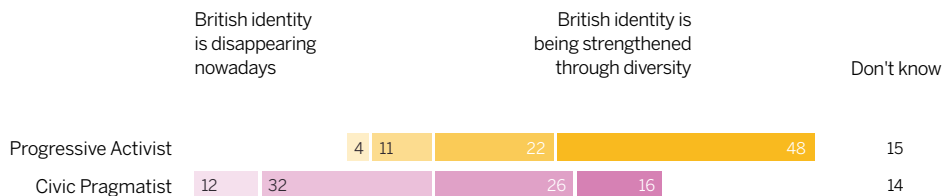


Figure 37. Agreement and disagreement about British identity and diversity

Civic Pragmatists are not exclusively Labour voters, with a significant minority leaning towards the Conservatives. Generally, they are **less defined by their political views than Progressive Activists**.

They have **higher levels of trust in institutions** overall, so are less instinctively distrusting of government or industry-led climate initiatives (relative to Progressive Activists), but they are just as likely to say that politicians don't care about people like me (84%). It is a challenge to **persuade them that their efforts make a difference** (i.e. a sense of efficacy) and that they can help bring about political change.

## Civic Pragmatists on climate change

Civic Pragmatists are **highly concerned**, and are the **second most engaged on climate change**. However, unlike Progressive Activists, climate change is **not central to their politics**, and they don't see it as exacerbating other social challenges. As the shift in their 'top three priorities' between February and September 2020 in the table above shows, they are equally, if not more, concerned about other issues, such as the NHS, the economy, Brexit, racism and race relations, and preserving our cultural heritage. So, while their concern about climate change is prominent, it is arguably underpinned by a **fairly passive sense of conviction** and relatively **low levels of commitment**.

Despite being a relatively economically secure segment, they are the most likely to report feeling **helpless** about climate change. In common with most other segments, they experience other **negative, passive emotions** towards climate change, such as **anxiety** and **sadness** (only Progressive Activists experience more active, energised emotions, such as anger).

“The world is in quite dire straits when it comes to the planet and it's kind of like the planet's getting back at us.”

“You can't deny the effects of what's happening. You can't deny it. It's happening right in front of you.”

“ That’s all I ever hear from my daughter. ‘Mum, the climate’s going to pot. What’s the point? Nobody’s going to listen to us.’”

Alongside Progressive Activists, Civic Pragmatists show the **highest level of trust in environmental charities** as sources of information on climate change, as well as high levels of trust in climate scientists, David Attenborough, farmers, and people affected by floods or fires. While **generally positive towards groups such as Extinction Rebellion**, believing that protests boost awareness of climate change, Civic Pragmatists are **concerned that these groups are perceived negatively in wider society**.

“ I think if they just get people’s backs up, then it doesn’t show them in such a good light but for what they’re doing, I think they’re a really good group.”

“ ... they definitely need to be aware that they could be irritating people sometimes, maybe stopping them doing their daily job. Yeah, they need to just be careful about not upsetting the general public, rather than taking them along with them.”

“ I think the general media are putting them in this kind of box of a type of people and that I think could be damaging for them, if they’re considered to be vegans ... and activists with dreadlocks and that kind of thing.”

For Civic Pragmatists, **climate action is the responsibility of everyone** – individuals have their role to play, but so do governments in regulating industries.

“ I think that change starts at home, so I start to do my little bit, rather than thinking it’s the big factories that will make a massive impact. I do little things. So maybe it makes a change and it makes a difference because if everybody did a tiny little bit, it makes a massive impact, rather than just thinking, oh I can’t do anything, it’s just the bigger guys that are responsible.”

“ ... industry, commercial companies want to appeal to the man and the woman on the street. If environmental consciousness is important to them, then it will eventually be important to the industries, won’t it?”

“ Without government support and them pushing it to the forefront, then us, as individuals, can only do so much.”

Climate change is part of what Civic Pragmatists talk about with their friends and family, with a focus on being **responsible for their own actions and those of their families**, rather than having a strong urge to advocate:

“ I talk about it with my husband when we do a food shop, we’ll talk about getting the loose apples, instead of a bag of apples, covered in plastic or the biodegradable caddy bags instead of a plastic one. I wouldn’t say I talk about it massively with anyone else out of that context, I don’t think.

“ It does annoy me every single time when I open something, a salad bag or whatever and I can’t recycle that plastic, but there’s no other choices for me.”

However, Civic Pragmatists experience mixed feelings about their own actions, with a degree of tension between feeling **good and validated about their behaviours**, and feeling **guilty and judged by others**.

“ I still drive to go shopping, to get my shopping. I do try to walk but it takes me about an hour ... I don't think I could give up my car. So, yeah, that makes me feel a little bit guilty.”

### Do you do, or have you done, any of the following to help stop climate change and protect the environment?

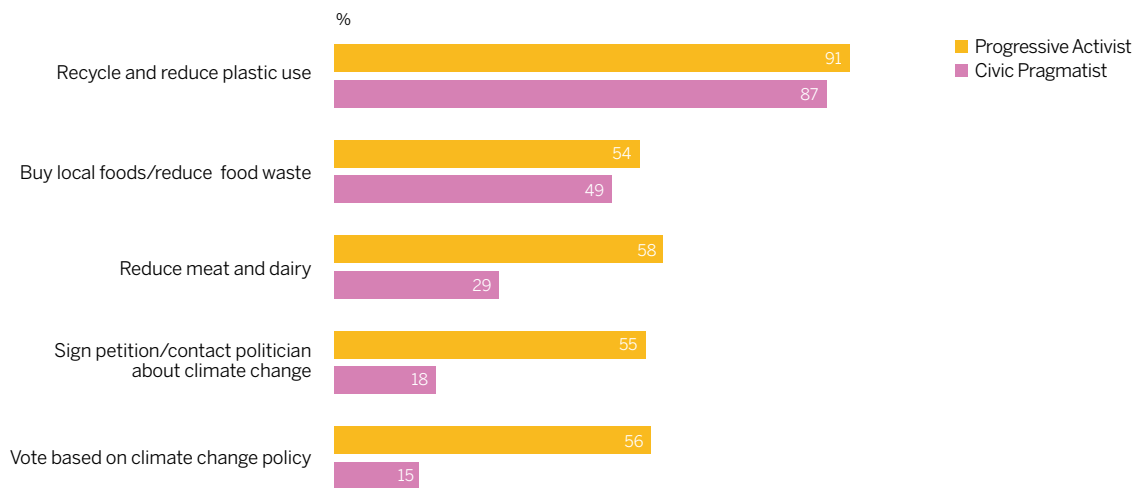


Figure 38. Personal actions to stop climate change: Progressive Activists and Civic Pragmatists

As a relatively well-off segment, they have the means and the motivation to take a range of personal actions. On reducing their electricity use and switching to a renewable energy supplier, they are second only to Progressive Activists, and they show fairly high levels of engagement with recycling, reducing waste and buying local. However, they are far less likely to reduce their meat consumption and, when it comes to political activity, the two segments are a long way apart. Just 15% vote based on a political party's climate change policy, and less than 20% say they have signed a petition or contacted their MP on climate change.

## 'Yes' and 'no' policies

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On potential government policies, Civic Pragmatists are much more against airport expansion (46%) than for it (23%), and are the closest to Progressive Activists on a number of more radical policy proposals like banning new petrol and diesel cars by 2030 (53%) and taxing people who fly the most (60%).



**65%**

support taxing flights



**51%**

oppose airport expansions



**54%**

support banning petrol cars



**15%**

vote based on climate issues

Children play by a pond with their mothers at the Golden Hill Community Garden in Bristol [Adrian Sherratt / Alamy](#)



## Civic Pragmatists on Covid-19

Alongside many other segments, Civic Pragmatists recognise that lockdown policies have inadvertently 'improved' the environment in some ways:

“**At the current state of things, seeing air pollution drop, the number of cars on the road drop, the birds singing louder than they did before, has just kind of shown the effect that humans have on the environment, just on very shallow scale really and so the environment is something that I am concerned about, I guess.”**

“**I feel it's been great to actually hear the birds singing in the morning rather than hearing the cars and the pollution. It has given me an appreciation of the environment which I did not have before. And actually, to finally get out of my car and use my two legs more than I have ever done. It has changed my outlook and my focus that we should have more green spaces ... that green space has become so much more important to me and my family than it has ever before.”**

Civic Pragmatists recognise that the outbreak of Covid-19 is related to damage to the natural environment, but only by a small margin (39% in May, 52% in September). Similarly, although they agree that climate change should be prioritised (rather than put on the 'backburner') in our response to the pandemic, they are not persuaded of this to the same extent as Progressive Activists (reflecting their milder level of commitment to the climate cause overall).

### Coronavirus is a national emergency

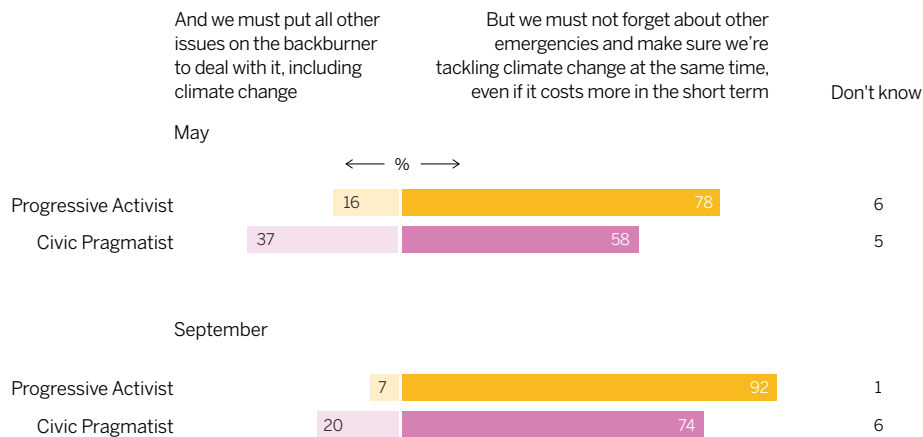


Figure 39. Prioritisation of climate change vs. Covid-19: Progressive Activists and Civic Pragmatists between May and September

The two segments are united in the belief that – once the pandemic is over – they do not want things to go 'back to normal'. Relating this view back to their feelings of anxiety about the increasingly dangerous state of the world, this segment sees an opportunity to 'reset' the polarisation that has defined the past five years. There is strong agreement among Civic Pragmatists (87%) that "Coronavirus reveals that we have taken far too many things for granted. Let's not make the same mistake with climate change and spend money on prevention measures that plan for the future now".



A mother and son visit the Golden Hill Community Garden in Bristol [Adrian Sherratt / Alamy](#)

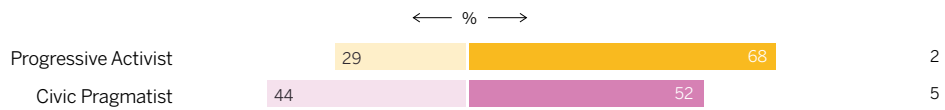
### Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

I am hopeful that, once we're through the worst of this crisis, we will create a fairer, more humane society that does more to protect the common good

I am fearful that, once we're through the worst of this crisis, we will slide backwards and every problem in our society will be sharpened and made worse

Don't know

May



September



Figure 40. Percentage of people who are hopeful vs. fearful: Progressive Activists and Civic Pragmatists in May and September

## Engaging the Civic Pragmatists

Build on their existing civic engagement and high levels of trust in institutions by making it easier for them to participate in change. Convince them of the need for their voice of 'radical pragmatism' in climate politics. Build their confidence and conviction, and shift their concern to a deeper commitment on climate change.

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### Key takeaways

#### **Convince them their voice is needed in climate politics**

Civic Pragmatists are likely to be able to 'see past' their opinion of the government of the day and to support genuinely progressive climate policies when they see them – but they are not as active in climate politics as they could be. In many ways they are a core audience for environmental NGOs, given their high levels of trust in these charities, as well as establishment institutions, so convince them that their voice of 'radical pragmatism' is a necessary part of climate change politics. Doing so will require a different kind of emphasis compared to the Progressive Activists: one that foregrounds a constructive, as opposed to accusatory, approach to government.

#### **Hold their attention**

This segment wants to go with, and to be seen to go with, the grain of progress, but environmentalism isn't a core part of their identity. They're busy and also interested in/worried about other issues, so climate moves up and down their priority list. Bring these issues together in a way that emphasises the positive social and economic effects of tackling climate change – reducing pressure on the NHS, ensuring a more resilient economy, and creating a post-Brexit society in which marginalised communities can play a fuller part – so they don't always have to choose where to turn their attention, and so they begin to place climate action at the heart of a progressive government agenda.

#### **Build their confidence as advocates for their community**

Civic Pragmatists regularly give to charity, are highly involved in their local community and engage in a range of 'personal' low-carbon behaviours. Build their confidence in being an important part of the effort by showing them that they are already activists in their own lives. Be sympathetic about the difficulties of trying to follow a sustainable lifestyle and explain that commitment to a cause doesn't mean passing some kind of green 'purity' test. Make it easier for them to engage through activities in their local area, where they can use their soft power to open the space up to others.

#### **Use 'restoring balance' and a 'sense of unity' as key narratives**

Previous research suggests that 'restoring balance' (because we are out of synch with nature) is a good way of engaging across the political spectrum on climate change. It is likely to strike a particular chord with this segment, alongside stories of unity and 'pulling together', given their eagerness to move past the polarisation that has characterised political discussion over the past five years and to reset after the disruption of Covid-19.



## 3.4 Established Liberals

### Who are Established Liberals? (12% of the British public)

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A mostly **Conservative Party-voting** segment with **right-leaning views about the economy** (a majority support austerity measures), Established Liberals nonetheless **skew towards the left on social/cultural issues** (expressing pride in the diversity of the country) and are characterised by their **comfortable, trusting and untroubled perspective**, linked to their **financial security**.

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Of all the segments, they feel the **least threatened or vulnerable**, are **firmly meritocratic** (believing people tend to get what they deserve in life) and are among the **least likely to agree that the country is getting worse**.

Found predominantly in **rural areas and the south-east**, they are **high earning** with a **global outlook that is likely to be driven more by professional networks** than a sense of solidarity with disparate communities around the world. They are **firmly pro-European**, with a strong lean towards **voting Remain** in the EU referendum. They are the **least likely to be worried about their economic status and job security during the Covid-19 pandemic**.

High-earning  
Content Optimistic Trusting  
Comfortable Right-leaning  
Compromising  
Global Moderate



Night shift rail workers cutting and laying new tracks in Forres, Scotland [Peter Devlin / Alamy](#)

	<b>Ideal UK</b>	<b>Most important issues (Feb)</b>	<b>Most important issues (Sept)</b>	<b>Trusted messengers</b>	<b>Most read news sources</b>
<b>1</b>	Tolerant	Healthcare and the NHS	The economy	Climate scientists	BBC
<b>2</b>	Hard-working	Britain leaving the EU	Healthcare and the NHS	David Attenborough	BBC Radio 4
<b>3</b>	Environmentally friendly	The environment and climate change	Britain leaving the EU	Environmental charities	ITV

## Taking all things together, are things better, about the same, or worse than three years ago for British society?

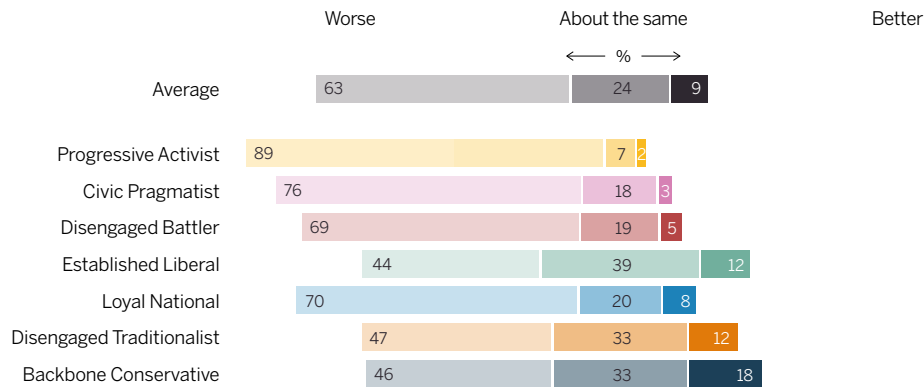


Figure 41. Views on whether British society is better or worse than three years ago, across segments

## Ordinary working people get their fair share of the nation's wealth

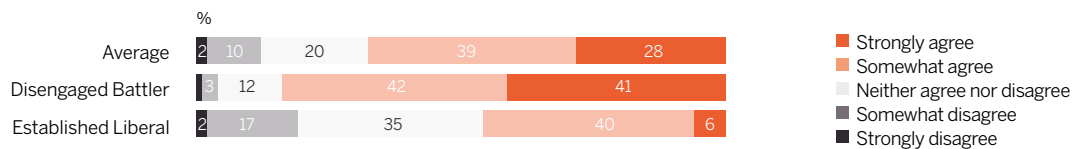


Figure 42. Views on wealth inequality: Disengaged Battlers and Established Liberals

This segment is **proud of cultural diversity, freedom and equality**, and 60% say that immigration has had a positive impact on the country.

“ I am Black; I wake up that way every day. I say I am British and I think one of the great things that Britain offers is because of the variety of people that live here, and actually the way we mix is just very different from other countries.”

“ ... learning more about different people and how different people live, there's a lot of that in the UK, which is an interesting mix of cultures and people and everything else. One of the things I do like is meeting different people and understanding different people.”

“ I put on my Western hat and I think differently, and I put on my Eastern hat and think again. I compare the two views and then I take an appropriate action.”

With an **aversion to the negative stereotypes of national identity**, this segment is more likely to view themselves as internationalist, and the most likely to think left/right labels are irrelevant.

“ It's a strange one because saying I'm proud to be British sometimes has negative connotations, doesn't it? You don't want to come across as 'keep Britain British' kind of thing. I don't think I would say to someone, 'I'm British' when first introducing myself ... for me, a massive part of my identity is being a mum. I don't think that makes anything else I do less.”

Established Liberals feel the **most politically empowered** of all the segments, with 43% feeling that they **have a say politically** (25% average). They are also the most likely to **feel part of a community** and to agree that **people can be trusted**, and are the least likely to say that the world is becoming a more dangerous place.

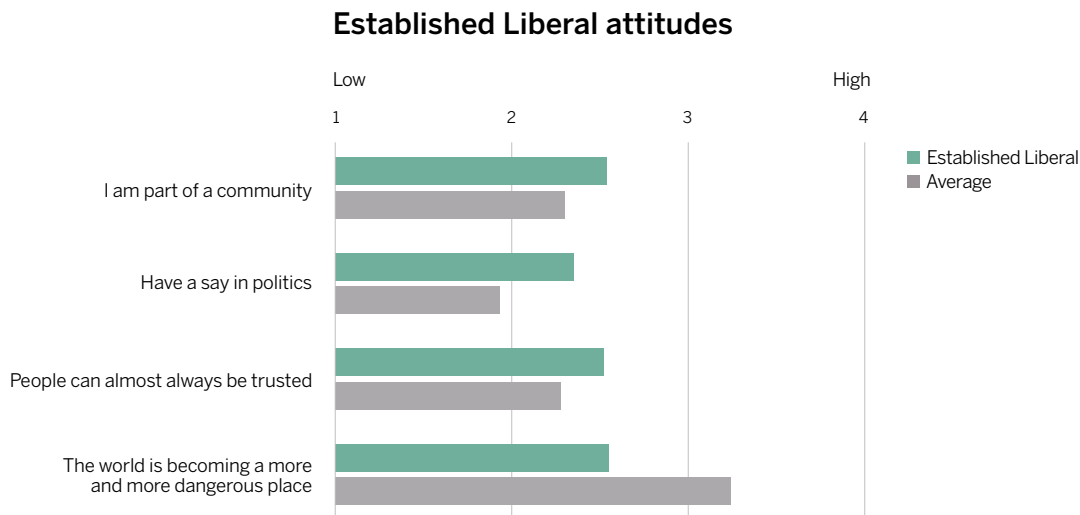


Figure 43. Established Liberal views about society, 1 = low level of agreement, 4 = high level of agreement

A strikingly optimistic segment, when asked about how they feel about the UK during the Covid-19 crisis, this segment (fairly uniquely) was generally positive. They are by far the most likely to agree that we look after each other (74%, compared to 61% average), as opposed to it's everyone for themselves (10% compared to 25% average), and are in strong agreement with Backbone Conservatives that our response to Covid-19 has revealed the best of human nature (64%, compared to 53% average).

“ I’m going to say hopeful. I’m quite an optimistic person and I think it won’t be too long until things are better. I know a lot of people have died and they’re ill and that is awful but I think we’re crossing the peak and I think brighter skies are in front of us.”

“ I don’t feel apprehensive. I feel that I don’t know what tomorrow may bring, but in real life we never know what tomorrow may bring, it’s just that we think we do. So I think what I have noticed are people coming together for the greater good, we’ve got a lot of people volunteering, doing things that we never expected. So I think that there is a feeling of we’re all in this together, but I think most people are trying to do their best to make it as good a situation as possible.”

Established Liberals value **compassion** and **compromise** (the most of any segment), and are **highly civically engaged** (on a par with the Civic Pragmatists), regularly volunteering and giving money to charity. Seeking a country that is **tolerant, empathetic and environmentally friendly**, they are the most likely by a long way to believe that the differences between people in the UK are not so big that we cannot come together (80%, compared to 57% average), although their positive (arguably even rose-tinted) view of the world has its roots in their significant privilege relative to many other segments.

“ I think it’s important to hold on to traditional values, but it’s also equally important to be open to changes that might actually improve the whole of society and yourself.”

## Established Liberals on climate change

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Their comfortable economic position, left-leaning views on social and cultural issues, strong institutional trust and sense of personal/collective efficacy make **this segment a critical audience for climate change narratives**. Established Liberals fall in the **middle of the segments in terms of worry about climate change** (22% are 'extremely worried', 38% 'very worried'). Although some organisations' conservation and wildlife protection messages are well-tuned to this segment, there are arguably missed opportunities in using those to mobilise them, and their economic weight and social standing, behind climate action.

“ Many of us are in respectable jobs and we can influence a lot of people. Usually a change only happens with social habits, because you tend to be a member of a group – for example, a church, a sporting group – and if people tend to have the same objectives, then they will start making a change in that group, but then they will also be part of other groups and so on. So it's a domino effect as one thing leads to another and soon could become a mass movement. All the big events that have happened through history have happened because one small thing has triggered it, but then the rest of the people have embraced it. That's what we need, a small change, but exponential change, with each of us trying to take our own responsibility.”

“ You've got an individual power to make consumer choices, you've got the power to lobby those who you consume from, that you can lobby companies, and if you get enough people band together they will make changes ... you've got the power as an individual to vote for parties that you think will achieve a change that you're looking for.”

Despite their strong civic engagement, only 16% of Established Liberals would vote based on a party's climate policy, and even fewer say they sign climate change petitions (13%). Climate change and the environment dropped out of this segment's top three priorities between February and September 2020, as concerns about Covid-19 and the economy took centre stage. In common with all segments, apart from Progressive Activists, **there is no sign of this segment taking part in a climate protest/march** (0%). This is in contrast with an issue like Brexit, where marchers at the very large demonstrations against leaving the EU were stereotyped as being predominantly from this kind of social/political grouping. In this case, it appears **climate change is not an issue that incites activism**. This could be because Established Liberals are **not yet persuaded that it will affect them personally, and soon**.

“ When you have your life to manage and you're busy and you don't have that much free time, it's hard to sacrifice that to do any sort of activism. So, what I concentrate on is what I can do from home, trying to lessen my carbon footprint. Carbon footprint was a big topic in the last few years. And now, obviously, the big thing is about single-use plastics. And that's something that I try to concentrate on doing in our household, reusing things that we can, buying recyclable products, making sure that we recycle everything that we use when we can. I think that making small changes like that can go a long way if you don't have the time or inclination to do any activism, go on any campaigns or strikes.”

“ I think with the whole Greta Thunberg thing, I was talking to an older person recently and they said, ‘would you have gone on strike? Would you have missed school for that?’ And I wouldn’t. Not because I don’t think it’s important but, I don’t know, I just would rather be at school. That kind of thing. I don’t know if that’s bad but, obviously, I definitely think things need to be done but I don’t know if a lot of people would sacrifice even a day of their lives to go out and strike for that.”

Established Liberals share some common ground with Loyal Nationals, who have a very different demographic and economic profile, and Backbone Conservatives, who are much further to the right politically but share a similar income bracket. On these three statements relating to ‘pulling together’ and ‘taking responsibility’ – critical for understanding the different segments’ starting points on climate change – these very different segments are in close agreement.

A farm vehicle passes wind turbines above Ardrossan, North Ayrshire, Scotland [Jim McDowall / Alamy](#)



## Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

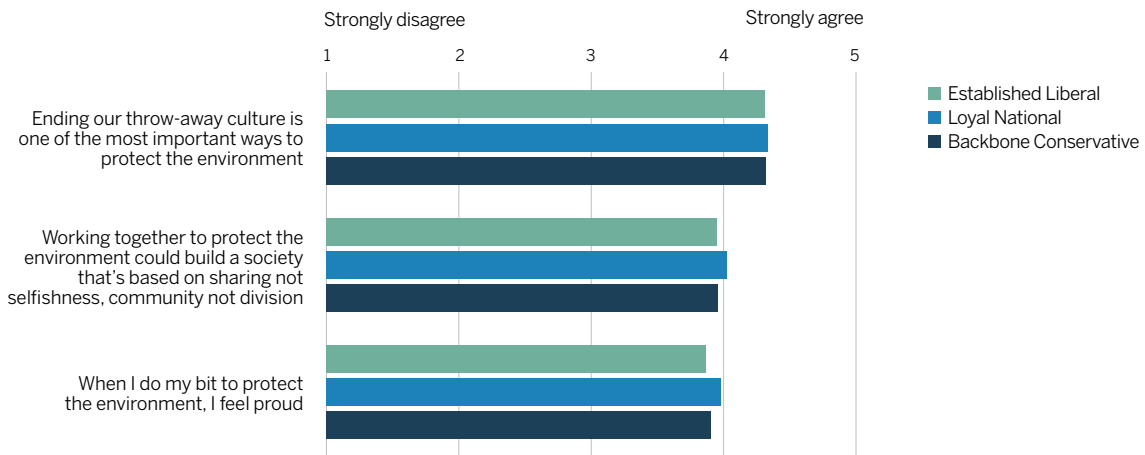


Figure 44. Established Liberals share common ground with other right-leaning groups

## 'Yes' and 'no' policies

On airport expansion, Established Liberals are evenly split, perhaps reflecting a degree of willingness to reduce their carbon footprint but also their global identity, which is likely to include a relatively international professional and social network. One of only three segments with a (reasonably) positive view towards reducing meat and dairy consumption, Established Liberals are the second most likely to consider **going vegan** an attractive option for cutting their personal carbon footprint (although still only registering around 5% support).



“ I think we need to be accountable; individuals need to be accountable.”

“ I do think it has to start from the government but I think part of that is just changing the way people think about it ... Especially with the young people that I know, the attitude now is smoking is negative. There are so many negative connotations of it that you just don't think about it as an option really ... But I think it's really just getting people in the right headspace to think this is wrong, this is right.”

## Established Liberals on Covid-19

Perhaps linked to their financial position, rather than overall prioritisation of climate change, Established Liberals are slightly more comfortable than the average with the idea of prioritising climate change in the recovery from Covid-19 (68%, compared to 61% average). This increased by 13% between May and September.

### Coronavirus is a national emergency

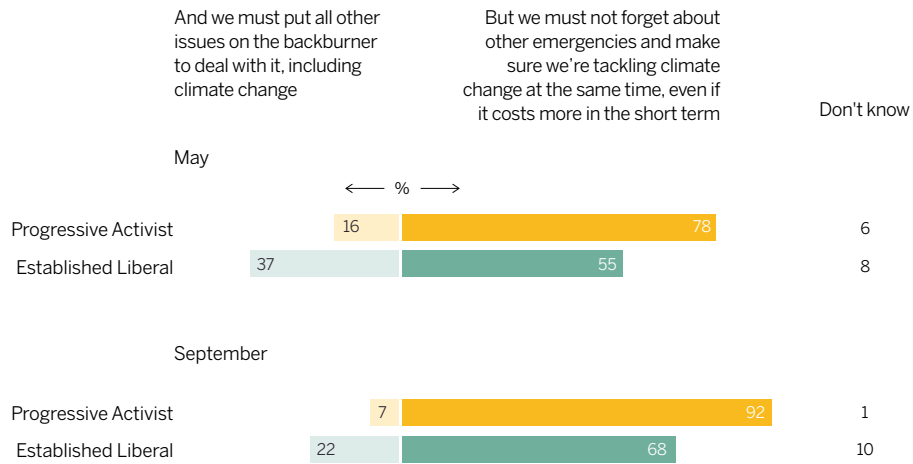


Figure 45. Established Liberals show some support for prioritising climate in the Covid-19 recovery

“ Covid taught us that as a planet we can pivot and we can pivot fast, and we can pivot effectively, and we can pivot with 80% of people following whatever that pivot is. It just needs some good global leadership, and the problem right now is in my view we don't have the global leadership to enable us to take advantage of the opportunities that are out there to protect the environment.”

When asked about supporting a green recovery using public money, Established Liberals show a similar pattern of support. This has increased from 53% in May.

**In our recovery from this crisis, we should use public money to support low-carbon industries and technologies. We must invest in the future, not in companies that won't be around in a few decades' time. It's a good investment for the taxpayer**

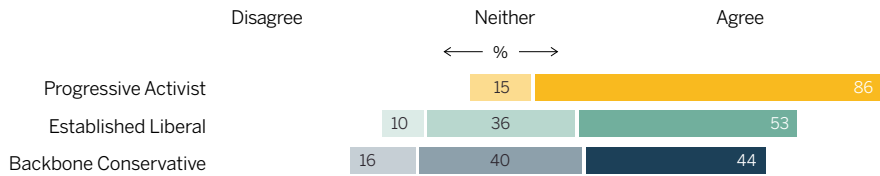


Figure 46. Established Liberals show some support for a green recovery using public money

A mother cycling with her children, one in the co-pilot seat and the other two in a chariot [David Gee / Alamy](#)



## Engaging Established Liberals

Motivated by arguments about economic and societal progress and opportunity, use their comfortable and influential position in society to bolster the case for commonsense, low-carbon solutions that build on positive steps already taken.

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### Key takeaways

#### **Tell an authentically positive and forward-looking story**

As the most optimistic segment, stories about how terrible climate impacts will be or how badly the UK is doing on its climate policies are unlikely to be the best starting point for Established Liberals. Instead, as a financially comfortable segment with confidence in technological progress, emphasise how a low-carbon future will build on the successes we have already achieved as a country.

#### **Emphasise the 'rational economics' of climate policies**

To Established Liberals, political decisions can seem like a failure of logic: for example, why would I vote to leave the European Union, which is an exemplar of political and economic liberalism? In the same way, they undertake some personal low-carbon actions not for idealistic reasons but because they understand the benefits. Talk about the economic logic of climate policies to engage this group's sense of rational analysis, which they are proud of.

#### **Frame the green recovery as a sensible return on investment**

Don't assume their financial security means they will automatically support government spending on climate policies if they cost more in the short-term. Support for a green recovery has increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, but this needs to be framed as an approach that generates a better return on our investment, connected to green global growth. Use their cultural capital, appealing to their progressive values, civic-mindedness and internationalism, to ramp up and make visible support for high-impact green policies.

#### **Build the coalition around food/farming**

Established Liberals are already reducing their meat and dairy intake, but are likely to be doing so with a view to eating better and supporting local producers. Their desire to protect farmers' livelihoods and conserve the natural landscape suggests a useful coalition with Backbone Conservatives.



## 3.5 Disengaged Battlers

### Who are Disengaged Battlers? (12% of the British public)

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Britain Talks Climate reveals two 'Disengaged' segments that at first glance seem to fall on each side of the political spectrum: Disengaged Battlers on the left, and Disengaged Traditionalists on the right. But a closer look – using a wider range of measures – reveals a more complex picture, and a clear sense that an **absence of political engagement underpins both of these segments in different ways.**

A relatively **young segment**, Disengaged Battlers are typically **urban and, although educated to a medium level, they tend to be financially insecure.**

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“ I feel like if you do the right thing, go to work and everything and pay your taxes, we don't really get anything back for it. I don't know, the prescriptions go up every single year and you don't necessarily get a pay rise with inflation to cover these extra costs.”

Unheard  
Frustrated Disillusioned Isolated  
Disempowered Fatalistic  
Young Financially-insecure  
Urban Environmental



A construction worker guides an access platform as it is lifted onto the roof of a new building in London [Simon Turner / Alamy](#)

They see **inequality as a big problem**, and are the **most likely to be working class**, according to national socio-economic grades. Traditionally viewed as part of the core Labour base, this segment can no longer be relied on to vote Labour, or indeed to vote at all.

	<b>Ideal UK</b>	<b>Most important issues (Feb)</b>	<b>Most important issues (Sept)</b>	<b>Trusted messengers</b>	<b>Most read news sources</b>
<b>1</b>	Compassionate	Healthcare and the NHS	Healthcare and the NHS	David Attenborough	BBC
<b>2</b>	Environmentally friendly	Britain leaving the EU	The economy	Climate scientists	None of the above
<b>3</b>	Honest	The environment and climate change	Britain leaving the EU	Environmental charities	ITV

Disengaged Battlers have left-leaning views on the economy (**supporting broadly redistributive policies**) and meritocracy (**doubting that people ‘get what they deserve’ from life**). But this segment may hold more centrist/right-leaning views on some cultural issues, with a majority (54%) agreeing that people nowadays have become too sensitive about things to do with race. While they are more likely to see the **positive effects of immigration** (46%), a sizeable proportion disagrees (25%).

**Disengaged Battlers do not feel represented or heard**, with 87% believing that politicians don’t care about people like me (the highest of any segment), and 83% agreeing that the system is rigged to serve the rich and influential. Compared to Disengaged Traditionalists, this segment is twice as likely to think that there’s one law for the rich and one for the poor.

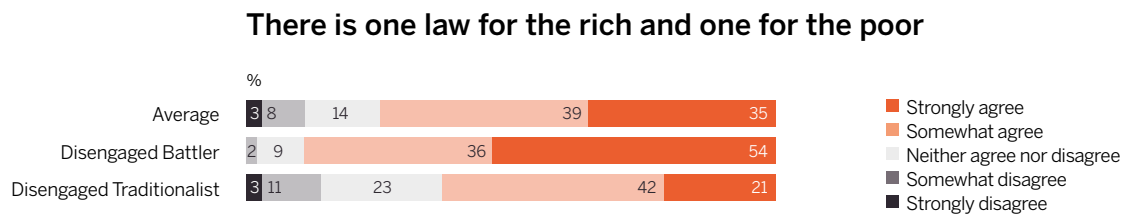


Figure 47. The majority of Disengaged Battlers say there’s one law for the rich and one for the poor

Feeling left out of society and disillusioned, this segment is the least likely to say that people in the UK are kind, and they have low trust in people generally. They are the **most likely to feel lonely** and to say they are facing life’s high points and low points alone, and are the **least likely to feel part of a community**.

“ I prefer my own space. I prefer being on my own.”

“ For me, I just want to feel safe in my community. I don’t need to chat with all my neighbours and be friends with them. As long as I feel safe, that’s enough for me.”

But, although they are pessimistic and disinclined to trust institutions, they are nevertheless **resilient** and **cannot be described as fatalistic**, believing that the ideal UK should be **fair, honest** and **environmentally-friendly**.

Only a **minority of this segment** are proud to be British, with some embarrassment or hesitation around the negative stereotypes and connotations this brings. The defining feature of this segment is arguably their **low engagement with politics and political parties**, with the highest rate of non-voting in local and general elections, and on Brexit.

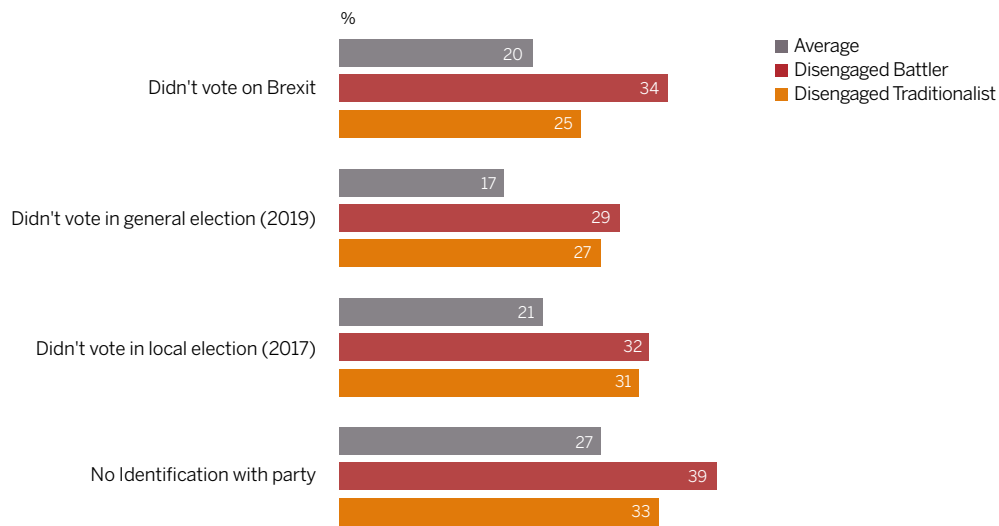


Figure 48. The two 'Disengaged' groups are the least politically engaged

They are fed up with political infighting and the feeling that they have to choose sides, and are frustrated about their powerlessness.

“ Personally, I don't define myself as left or right, but I have political ideals that I'll stick to. But that's not something I'd bring up. I don't see myself as either way and I don't think I would ever describe myself as such.”

“ Everything is so partisan at the moment. People are either on one side or the other and you've got to pick a side. You can't drift between the two. You either pick a side or you just stand on the edges and don't get involved.”

Shovelling soil into a lorry as part of a construction project [John Birdsall / Alamy](#)



## Disengaged Battlers on climate change

Compared to Progressive Activists and Civic Pragmatists, Disengaged Battlers are **less worried about climate change** (and other environmental issues, including air pollution, plastics and deforestation). Most closely resembling Backbone Conservatives in their concern about environmental issues across the board, they are nonetheless always more engaged – often by a considerable margin – than Disengaged Traditionalists, with around 55% of this segment saying they are ‘extremely worried’ or ‘very worried’ about climate change, and an additional 26% who are ‘somewhat worried’.

### How worried, if at all, are you about the following issues?

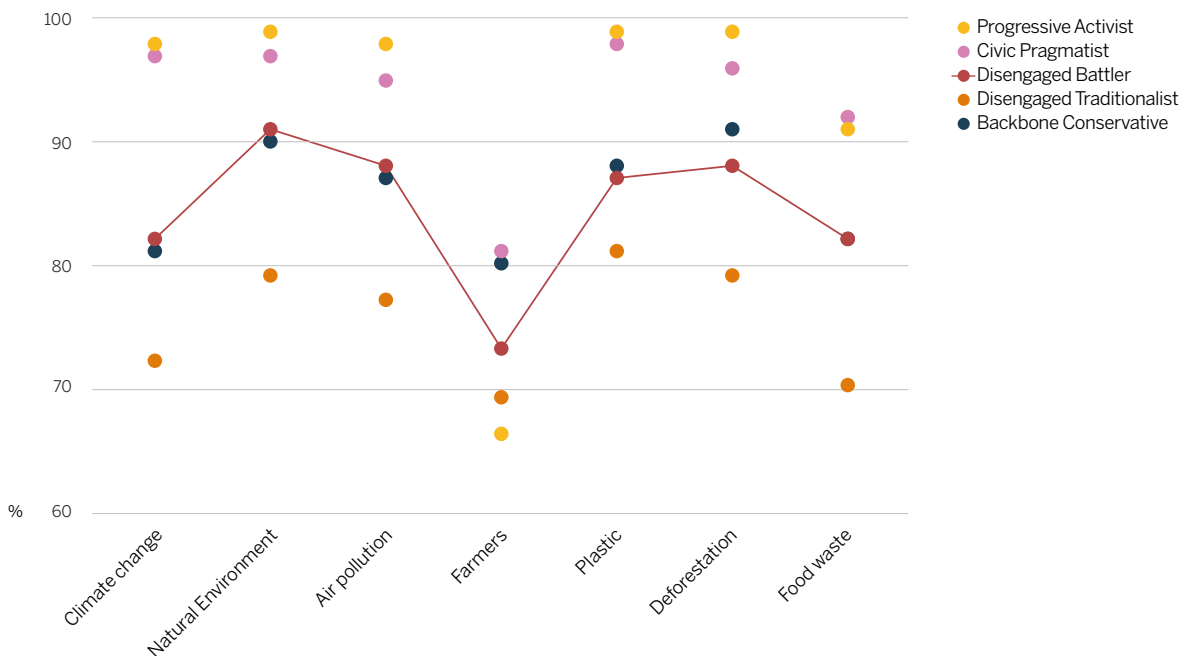


Figure 49. Disengaged Battlers are closer to right-leaning groups on ‘worry’ about environmental issues

However, Disengaged Battlers come closer to Progressive Activists and Civic Pragmatists in their understanding of the scale and urgency of the problem. They are the third most likely to believe that climate change is real and is caused by human action (72%, compared to 69% average) and that climate change requires urgent, radical action (59%, compared to 49% average).

“ We just had a record-breaking heatwave in the UK. That’s not normal. So, I think the longer that we ignore that, it’s just going to get hotter, it’s going to get weirder, there’s going to be flooding.”

Perceived political indifference to their needs and interests colours most other findings, placing them alongside Disengaged Traditionalists in their **lack of 'pride' in protecting the environment** and **lower concern about our 'throwaway culture'**. They are also **less likely to agree that community spirit can be built through working together to protect the environment** and are the **most likely to report feeling 'no emotions' about climate change**. In short, they are unpersuaded by rhetoric suggesting they should 'do their bit', because this would imply a social contract with institutions and other segments in society that they feel hasn't been honoured.

It follows that Disengaged Battlers report the **second lowest engagement in personal actions** to address climate change (after Disengaged Traditionalists), as well as being the segment **most likely to agree (53%)** that there's no point trying to protect the environment because big companies and other countries will keep polluting. **Only 8% would sign a climate change petition or vote based on climate considerations.**

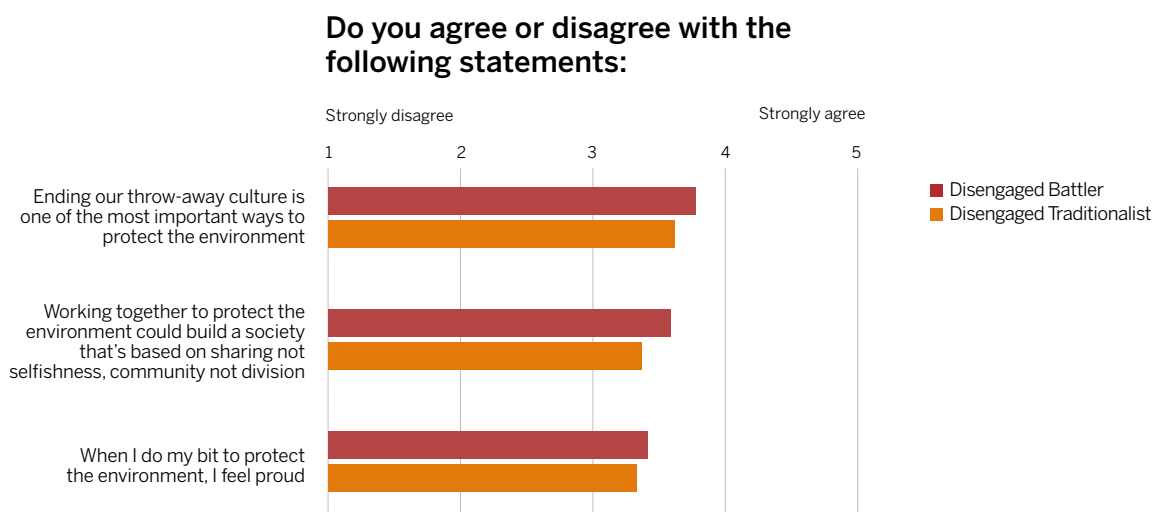


Figure 50. The two 'Disengaged' groups show lowest agreement with statements about pride, working together to protect the environment, and reducing waste

**Trust – or rather a lack of it –** is a defining characteristic of this segment. From a list of potentially trustworthy sources on climate, they are the most likely segment to select 'none of these' as a response. They have generally low levels of trust (regardless of source) when it comes to climate change, lower than Progressive Activists and Civic Pragmatists. But, of all sources, as a non-partisan, non-judgemental spokesperson, **David Attenborough** is the most trusted, followed by climate scientists and environmental charities. Clearly, there is still a great deal of work to be done to bring Disengaged Battlers into the climate conversation.

The changes forced into focus by Covid-19 offer a window of opportunity to better engage this segment, and there is an appetite for it, but sensitive and considerate messaging will be the key to success as the peer-to-peer norms and social signals among this group are likely to be pulling in the wrong direction.

“ I remember having a conversation with my mum a few weeks ago and I was trying to say to her about why I wasn't doing something or why I was trying to recycle something. She was just like, 'for god's sake, it doesn't matter'. And it's like, no, it really does. It really does. I know that this is just one thing and that one thing doesn't matter in the grand scheme of things. But if a million people are doing that one thing then we've got a big f\*\*king problem.”

For Disengaged Battlers, climate action needs to be fair and equitable. The most likely to be unemployed or in unstable, low-paid work, they are the most likely to say that a benefit of cutting carbon emissions would be to create jobs and prosperity. They are likely to be receptive to credible messaging around the concept of a 'just transition', as long as it doesn't place an unfair burden on those largely without the means or the agency to effect change themselves.

“ All of climate change is a Catch-22 situation. The people who have power to change, either big conglomerates or big companies, it's not in their financial interests to do so. And the little people like you and me, we haven't got the power to do anything other than our own little bit. So, it really is very, very frustrating.”

“ ... the reality is, to buy things without plastic on is something that's really reserved for middle class people. Because if you go to the supermarket, everything's wrapped in plastic that you can't recycle. And it's lovely to have this idea that we're going out with our cotton eco tote bags and picking up our fresh veg that's laid out still with the mud on it, but that's something that really is only applicable to people with the money to buy those kind of products ... I don't see how it can ever change unless it's changed on some higher level.”

“ I agree about the whole class thing because it does come down to money ... I don't have a lot of money but I'd rather pay more and make sure that our planet isn't destroyed.”

“ About putting a bigger tax on flying, people who can afford it, it's not going to affect them. They're just going to be spending more money but they don't give a s\*\*t.”

## 'Yes' and 'no' policies

In general, Disengaged Battlers are less supportive of climate policies than Civic Pragmatists and Progressive Activists. Perhaps due to their financial insecurity and opposition to burdening the least well-off, they are particularly **opposed to taxes on meat and dairy** products (19% support, 54% oppose).

However, they show strong support for **penalising brands that use excessive or difficult to recycle plastic packaging** (76%), and **setting targets for supermarkets to reduce food waste** (80%). They also have the second highest agreement (76%), after Loyal Nationals, with the view that management will always try to get the better of employees if it gets the chance.

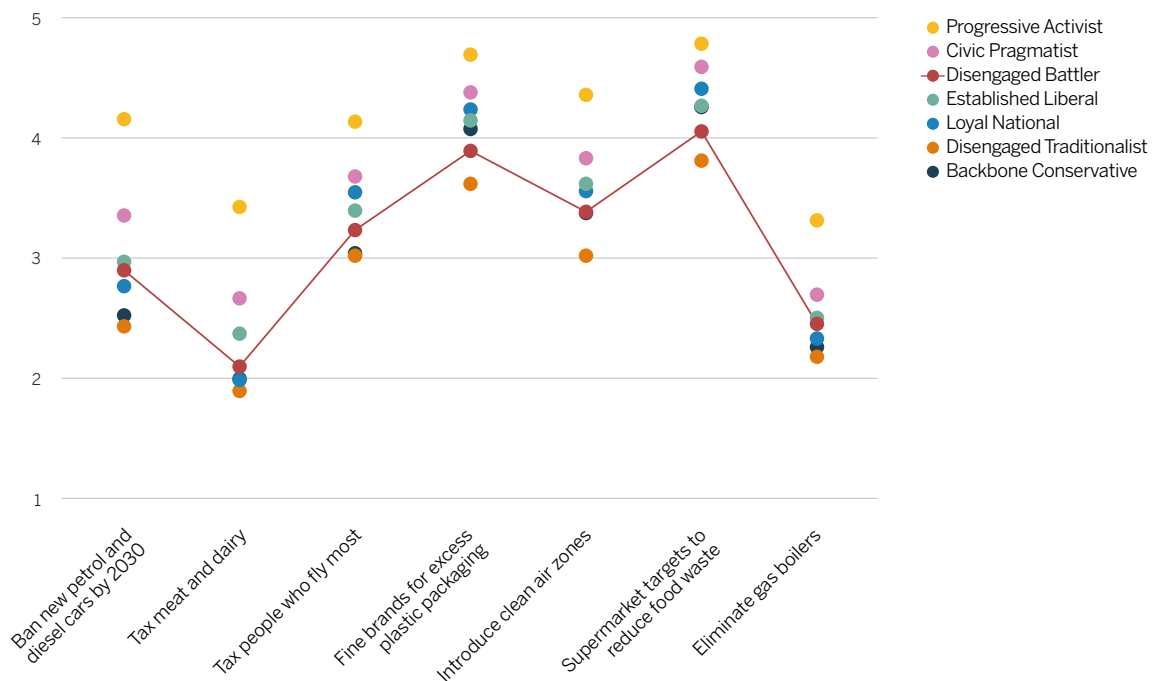


Figure 51. Disengaged Battlers are less supportive of green policies than other left-leaning groups, 1 = low support, and 5 = high support.

## Disengaged Battlers on Covid-19

“ I think all COVID-19 has done is maybe highlight everything that was broken already in our systems and now it's just a rush to really address those.”

Although Disengaged Battlers – in common with all other segments – showed a major bump during the UK's Covid-19 lockdown in feeling that people are more likely to 'look after each other', as opposed to acting in their own self-interest, this seems to have softened as restrictions have continued and economic instability has come to the fore, falling by 18% since May. They are similar to Progressive Activists in expressing the **second lowest level of agreement with the idea that** coronavirus has revealed the best of human nature and the **second highest level of agreement that** it has revealed the worst of human nature. The Disengaged Battlers have not necessarily noticed the 'unexpected benefits' of lockdown and are the segment **most worried about not having a job to return to** after lockdown ends.

“ When the coronavirus is all done, it's just going to go back to normal and immediately we're going to start damaging it all over again.”

Despite this, a slim majority (51%) agrees that **climate change must be prioritised (rather than put on the 'backburner') in our recovery from Covid-19**, even if it costs more in the short term – a striking finding given the economic insecurity and political disengagement among this segment.

There also appears to be a shift in understanding of anthropogenic climate change among Disengaged Battlers. Between February and May, Disengaged Battlers were more likely to agree that climate change is real and caused by human action (+12%), and less likely to attribute climate change to natural causes.

### Disengaged Battlers: Which do you agree with more...

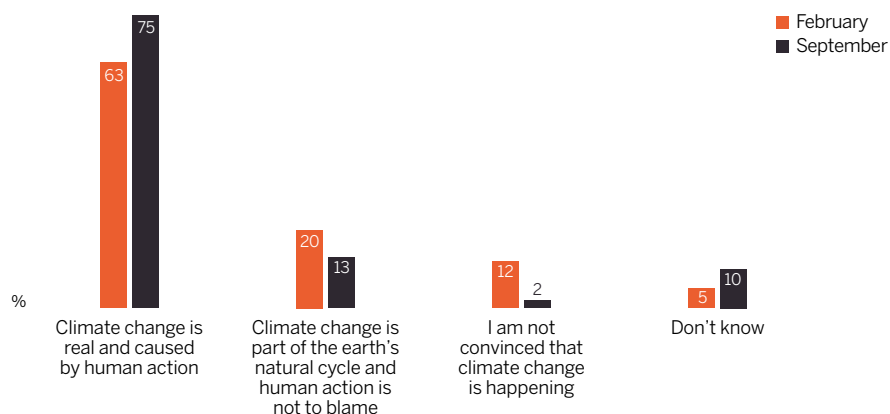


Figure 52. Disengaged Battlers' understanding of causes of climate change, in February and September

Half of this segment (the second lowest, at 51%) agree with the idea that public money should be used to support low-carbon industries and technologies in the recovery from the pandemic, which emphasises that transition messages need to be about **relatable people, real jobs, and human stories**, rather than policy-oriented statements about investments in an industry this segment may not trust or feel a part of. They are not yet convinced that a green recovery is the way to create jobs.

## The government should choose to tackle pollution and climate change in the UK's recovery from Covid-19 because it's one of the best ways to create new jobs and boost the economy

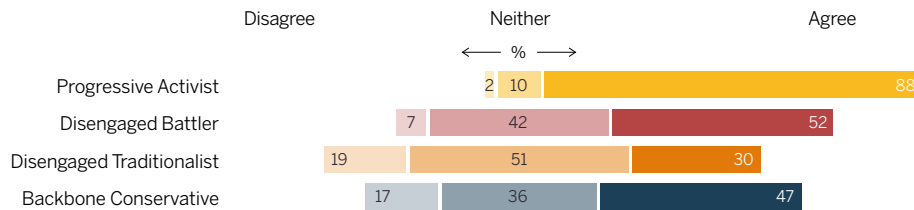


Figure 53. Agreement and disagreement with green recovery as a means to create green jobs

### Engaging Disengaged Battlers

Build trust with this segment by really listening to them and showing how the benefits of climate action will genuinely benefit 'people like them'. Show relatable people in diverse green jobs and avoid pushing a middle class environmentalist lifestyle, which is not aspirational for this segment.

#### Key takeaways

##### Avoid 'middle class' narratives around lifestyle changes

Although Disengaged Battlers share a left-leaning economic worldview with Progressive Activists and Civic Pragmatists, they are a very different segment. Differentiating them from middle class environmentalism is critical: they don't regularly do many of the things that campaigners often tell them not to do (e.g. flying). They rightly recognise that lifestyle changes are more possible (and more impactful) among high-earning, high-consuming segments like Established Liberals and Backbone Conservatives.

##### Show relatable people in diverse green jobs

Job security and worries about unemployment are central to Disengaged Battlers. They are an ally for progress on climate but they have yet to see proof that the transition will include them, and their support hangs somewhat in the balance. Focus on tangible, everyday concerns and actual job opportunities – not just in 'industry' but in other sectors, too (e.g. retail, hospitality). Messengers and imagery are critical components: show this segment that the benefits are for 'people like them' by making sure every aspect of your content is familiar, relatable and local.

##### Talk about fairness not justice

The need for a 'fair' transition is clear for this segment. In previous Climate Outreach testing,<sup>16</sup> the imagery and language of 'justice' has not resonated well across the political spectrum (only Progressive Activists and Civic Pragmatists are likely to gravitate towards this kind of phrase). The framing of 'fairness' may work better for Disengaged Battlers: fairness is about doing right by everyone involved; justice, by contrast, may imply wrongdoing in the past that must be atoned for.

<sup>16</sup> <https://climateoutreach.org/resources/broadening-engagement-with-just-transition/>

**Be clear on corporate responsibility – but avoid simplistic ‘blame’ messages**

Grounded in a belief that everyone should play by the rules – including the wealthy and powerful – messages that clearly point to corporate responsibility and accountability in climate actions will resonate well. But Disengaged Battlers don't necessarily want to hear who they should 'hate' or be angry at. Research<sup>17</sup> carried out in Alberta, Canada, which brought the voices of the oil and gas industry to the fore of conversations about energy transition, found that, among a comparable 'working class' group in Canada, simplistic 'blame' narratives were less engaging than focusing on practical pathways around employment and development.

**Don't overplay the 'silver linings' of lockdown**

Invoking a sense of positivity around (temporary) environmental changes like lower air pollution or more time in green space is unlikely to resonate very well with Disengaged Battlers, who have reverted to a lower sense of social solidarity. Ongoing restrictions and increasing economic instability as the furlough scheme comes to an end are a source of real personal stress and anxiety for Disengaged Battlers.

<sup>17</sup> <https://climateoutreach.org/lessons-talking-climate-with-albertan-oil-workers/>

Engineers working on a turbine on the Gwynt y Mor offshore wind farm in North Wales [Rob Arnold / Alamy](#)





## 3.6 Disengaged Traditionalists

### Who are Disengaged Traditionalists? (18% of the British public)

Disengaged Traditionalists are **alienated, disillusioned and sceptical** – about progress, about society in general, and to an extent about **climate change**. Like Disengaged Battlers, they feel excluded and frustrated, and unrepresented politically, and they feel that other segments have been prioritised over them.

This segment is more likely to be **male** (10% above mean). The largest age groups within Disengaged Traditionalists are **millennials and baby boomers**. They tend to describe themselves as **working class**, to be of **lower social grades** and to have **low to medium levels of education**.

While demographically similar to Disengaged Battlers, this segment **skew right on both social and economic issues**, and express authoritarian tendencies, showing the second highest level of support, after Loyal Nationals, for a leader who is willing to break the rules (47%, compared to 38% average). Despite their perceived disconnection from the mainstream of society, they are, after Backbone Conservatives, the most likely to say that **things in this country are going in the right direction**. In this sense, they have a tenacity and **'survival' instinct that represents a form of optimism** (but a very different one to the comfortable internationalism of Established Liberals).





Two young engineers help operate the mechanical grabber in a steel foundry in Birmingham [Monty Rakusen / Cultura Creative RF / Alamy](#)

	<b>Ideal UK</b>	<b>Most important issues (Feb)</b>	<b>Most important issues (Sept)</b>	<b>Trusted messengers</b>	<b>Most read news sources</b>
<b>1</b>	Hard-working	Healthcare and the NHS	Healthcare and the NHS	Climate scientists	BBC
<b>2</b>	Honest	Britain leaving the EU	The economy	David Attenborough	ITV
<b>3</b>	Educated	The economy	Britain leaving the EU	Farmers	Daily Mail

## Would you say that things in this country are heading in...

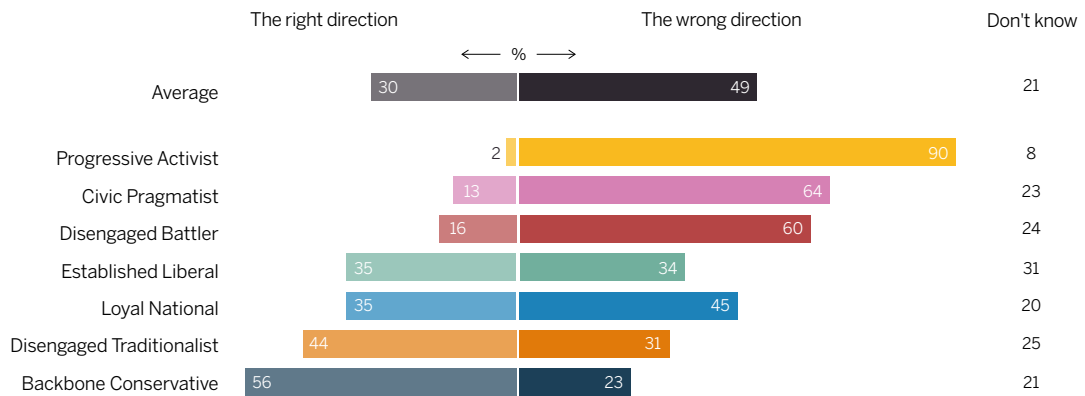


Figure 54. Disengaged Traditionalists are more likely than other segments to say that the country is heading in the right direction

Unlike Loyal Nationals, **patriotism is not a defining feature of this segment**, but there is a prominent pride in the history of the UK (and its armed forces). They **support austerity measures (66%, compared to 48% average)**, although these measures would likely have affected this segment in a negative way through cuts to council services, and there is **fairly low support** for the government redistributing income from those who are better off to those who are worse off (35%, compared to 47% average). Their antipathy towards certain groups such as immigrants and benefits claimants reflects the fact that they feel unfairly deprioritised.

“**The benefits system ... I just think there's some people that can be better off that are not working, than somebody on minimum wage and I think that's completely wrong and I think there's not an incentive ... I do feel that the taxpayers pay for people to stay off work and I just don't think that's right, to some extent. I think it's taking advantage of, a little bit.**”

Although they are nowhere near as politically or civically active as the relatively mobilised Loyal Nationals, they share their concerns about immigration, with 62% agreeing that we seem to care more about immigrants than about British citizens, and 73% agreeing that people nowadays are too sensitive about things to do with race. Few agree that immigration has had a positive impact on the country, and their ideal UK would be **hard-working, honest, educated** and highly **structured**. This segment also singles out **politeness, tradition** and **order** as aspirational values for the country.

Although most Disengaged Traditionalists vote **Conservative**, a significant chunk of this segment are **non-voting**. While the low political participation of Disengaged Battlers is due to deep scepticism about the system, this segment tends to be less suspicious of the government, with 60% (compared to 43% average) agreeing that once the government has been voted in, they should have much more power to make decisions with less constraints. But people in this segment do not have a clear political 'home'.

“**When I was younger, I'd vote for Labour and obviously over the years, as I've got older, I'm, oh no, it's the Conservative and now I'm like, oh God, they're all just as bad as each other.**”

## Disengaged Traditionalists on climate change

It would not be accurate to describe Disengaged Traditionalists as 'climate sceptics' (outright denial and scepticism do not characterise any of the seven segments), but they are the **least likely to agree that climate change is real and caused by human activity**.

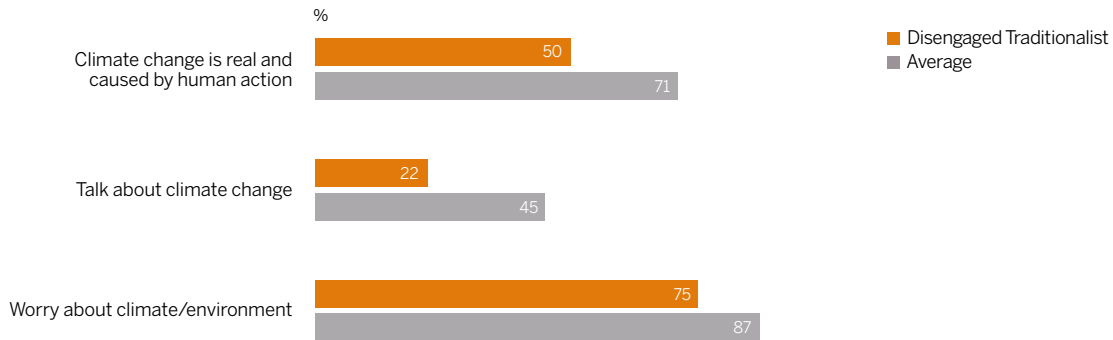


Figure 55. Disengaged Traditionalists are the least worried, engaged, or convinced about climate change

Disengaged Traditionalists are the **least likely to act on climate change personally**, the **least concerned about climate change and environmental issues**, and the **least likely to talk about climate change**. They are the **most likely to say they feel 'no emotions' about climate change**. Although they report a degree of sadness and anxiety, these responses are 'flat' compared to the other segments.

“ Yes, it is due to human action, which is why I believe that we all need to do our part to change the way things are going. But I think it needs to come from higher up. It needs to come from the government, it needs to come from businesses and the media ... a lot of people don't do anything because maybe it's not in front of them, they're not being told to do it.”

Even on the question of changes in the weather, only 36% of Disengaged Traditionalists think the effects of climate change are already apparent in the UK (this figure is closer to 50% or higher for other segments). Alongside Backbone Conservatives, they are the **least likely to perceive a link between environmental degradation and Covid-19**.

From food waste to climate change and air pollution, they are a full 10 percentage points behind the next segment, marking them out as the least engaged segment on all environmental issues. While they recognise tangible environmental risks like air pollution, Disengaged Traditionalists **are unlikely to respond well to messages that mark them out as a group that is more 'vulnerable' to such threats**. They are reluctant to see themselves in that way, in keeping with a tenacious type of optimism.

In fact, despite being one of the lowest income segments, Disengaged Traditionalists are the least supportive of fair taxation to protect vulnerable people. Their meritocratic beliefs (i.e. that people tend to get what they deserve in society), perhaps in combination with not self-identifying as vulnerable, make them closer to Backbone Conservatives on this question.

“**The government is doing what they can to help people get through this period of time, whether it’s businesses or individuals, with all of the grants and payment schemes, job retention and all that. My concern is how we will pay for this in the future. Is that going to be in rising taxes? How is the government going to cover this? Because while it’s okay for some people to be able to claim this to get through this period – and to touch on the point that someone else made, it’s not really been fair for everybody. Some people have missed out on this totally.”**

**Coronavirus will leave the majority of the population worse off, with vulnerable people the hardest hit. The same will be true as climate change becomes more severe. Taxation needs to be fair and those with the means should pay more to help those in need**

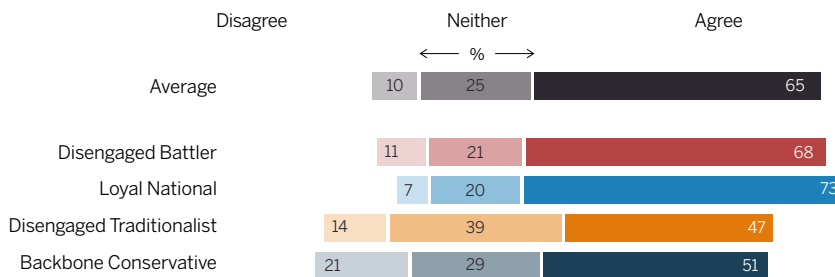


Figure 56. Disengaged Traditionalists are less likely to support ‘fair taxation’ to help the vulnerable

Disengaged Traditionalists are the **least likely** to have **signed a climate change petition** (5%) and to have **voted on the basis of a political party’s climate change policy** (4%). Just 1% have **attended a climate change protest**. They have the lowest levels of trust in environmental charities of any segment – although their faith in scientists and David Attenborough is closer to the norm – and they consistently see the fewest benefits of climate action.

“**I think the politicians need to lead. Businesses and politicians need to show the way. Individuals, it’s hard to police, and so many of them will only do something if they have to do it and they’re told to do it. So, I think it comes from the top. The politicians and businesses have to show the way.”**



Construction workers on the new roof at Kings Cross station in London [Justin Kase ztwoz / Alamy](#)

## ‘Yes’ and ‘no’ policies

Disengaged Traditionalists are closest to Backbone Conservatives – a much higher socio-economic status segment – on many aspects of climate policy. In supporting airport expansion, rejecting the reduction of cars in cities, and opposing the ban of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030, they line up together.

However, unlike the wealthier Backbone Conservatives, they are the **least likely to undertake a range of low-carbon actions in their own lives**, including choosing environmentally-friendly brands, reducing their dairy and meat intake, and using public transport more often – even recycling at a significantly lower rate than most of the other segments.



46%

support taxing flights



27%

oppose airport expansions



76%

support fines for excess packaging



11%

support taxing meat and dairy

## Disengaged Traditionalists on Covid-19

Disengaged Traditionalists may have **experienced fluctuations in their scepticism** about climate change **as a result of the Covid-19 crisis**. Polling in September suggests that since May, Disengaged Traditionalists have become less convinced that climate change is part of the earth's natural cycle (-6%) or that climate change is not happening (-8%). These percentages have switched to feeling unsure (+14%), suggesting a greater receptiveness than before.

### Disengaged Traditionalists: Which do you agree with more?

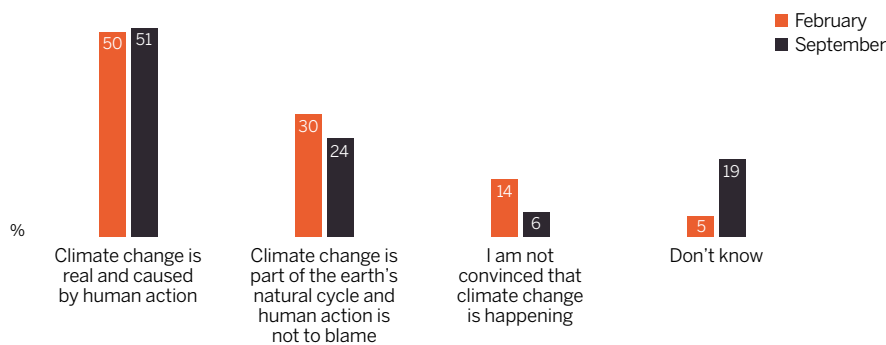


Figure 57. Disengaged Traditionalists' understanding of causes of climate change, in February and September

This shift may be partly due to witnessing the environmental benefits of lockdown, alongside an awareness of the impact of collective human behaviour.

“ I think it's the current crisis that's influenced my opinion. I'm fairly convinced that we are making a little bit of a mess of the planet now, given the current crisis. Whether this virus is manmade or it's escaped by accident from somewhere or it's as a result of this animal market, I don't know. It's just made me conscious of the impact that we're having. I used to be a bit sceptical about global warming because I heard some of the figures were fudged a bit. But I think it's probably good practice anyway to recycle, cut carbon emissions and use more sustainable energy sources. So I'm a bit more convinced now than I was and I don't think we're doing a particularly great job of looking after the planet.”

“ I'm a bit less cynical. I still partly believe that the earth every so often goes through a cycle of climate change, i.e. that's why we had the ice age etc., and this may be part and parcel of the cycle ... we can all see that the lack of carbon being put into the atmosphere at the moment seems to be making a bit of a difference.”

Although their understanding of the human impacts on the climate may be changing, Disengaged Traditionalists don't necessarily feel that climate change is a priority at the moment.

“ I think maybe the environment issues have been pushed to the background a little bit because of everyone’s focus on the pandemic and maybe other issues, but I think when people return to normal, they will maybe continue to do things that they’ve started doing now like walking or cycling to work.”

“ I think a lot of people just don’t care at the moment. I think maybe one way to make people take action would be to offer some kind of incentives. So, if they contribute somehow then they would get something back for that. I think that would make people take action.”

Messages about the **negative impacts of air pollution** and the opportunity offered by Covid-19 lockdown policies to address these landed well across the seven segments, with 70% overall agreeing that air pollution weakens our lungs and leaves us more susceptible to diseases like Coronavirus. It stunts children’s lung growth and makes it harder for them to breathe. We should use this chance to make the air cleaner and healthier for everyone. However, Disengaged Traditionalists **showed the lowest support** (53%), despite being likely one of the more at-risk segments, as air pollution tends to disproportionately affect low-income groups.

They are also the least likely to agree that this crisis shows we need to work more closely with other countries and international institutions to address major challenges like pandemics and climate change (40%, compared to 61% average), likely reflecting their view that other governments should show more leadership on climate change (over and above Britain’s responsibility):

“ I feel [climate change has] become more important with the virus going on. I feel I’ve become more aware of it now, especially when all the traffic went off the roads in the US, China etc., and they said about how the emissions had changed in the atmosphere. It was that really, I thought it does make a difference. It would be nice if all of the countries could come together like China and the US and do things as well, but I think we’re a long way from that at the moment.”

“ I know there is a lot of debate at an international level around what each country is doing. I think if we spend our time arguing at that level it could always be looking at blaming other people, but we’ve all got an individual contribution to make in the here and now and I think we all need to sign up to that, whatever that looks like.”

In common with Backbone Conservatives, Disengaged Traditionalists do not view Covid-19 and climate change primarily through a prism of social injustice, and are by far the least likely (33%, compared to 62% average) of any segment to support the ‘green recovery’ language in this statement: ‘In our recovery from this crisis, we should use public money to support low-carbon industries and technologies. We must invest in the future, not in companies that won’t be around in a few decades’ time. It’s a good investment for the taxpayer’.



Two men having a socially distanced conversation in Pinner, Greater London [Lois GoBe / Alamy](#)

While they tend to show the lowest support for climate change statements, some work better than others. A majority of Disengaged Traditionalists **agree that** we must not become over-reliant on countries like China, and produce more in the UK by investing in renewable energy, battery manufacturing and electric cars (68%, compared to 82% average). They are similarly positive towards statements that emphasise that the **outdoors has been a gift during this crisis**, and we should **celebrate the beauty of our countryside and show it respect** (69%). A majority (62%) of Disengaged Traditionalists also recognise that the double threat of Covid-19 and climate change is putting increasing pressure on the healthcare system.

## Engaging Disengaged Traditionalists

Messages about 'acting on climate change' are unlikely to land positively with this segment – although their scepticism seems to have softened during Covid-19. Instead, build on their pride as hard-working, honest people and emphasise business regulation and other highly structured government policies that don't pass responsibility on to the individual. Be conscious of their 'red flags' to avoid alienating them and playing into culture war dynamics.

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### Key takeaways

#### **Avoid climate-led messages, which are likely to backfire**

This is the segment that is closest to being sceptical about climate change (even with the softening of their views during Covid-19) and so messages positioned as being about 'acting on climate change' will not reach them successfully. Talk instead about manufacturing being fit for the 21st century, or building on our proud industrial past (e.g. British steel) to engage around green jobs and the low-carbon transition.

#### **Choose your messenger carefully**

With lower levels of trust in environmental charities than any other segment, the reality is that NGO or 'green' branded messages are likely to be ignored. Seek out trusted messengers – ordinary people whose jobs are changing for the better, and farmers who are wedded to the land and can speak from a position they respect and understand.

#### **Build trust, as this is only the beginning of the conversation**

Initial polling of the sector suggests very few campaigners are reaching – or trying to reach – this segment. This could therefore mark the beginning of a conversation with an unfamiliar part of the British population. Listening is critical: Disengaged Traditionalists feel unheard and unrepresented.

#### **Try out the tax the rich argument**

Defending green levies (on consumer goods or bills) is unlikely to resonate with this group and may even have a negative effect. Push the tax agenda more along 'Robin Hood' lines, with arguments that the big energy companies (and other corporates) should be paying their fair share instead of expecting the little people to pick up the tab.

#### **Disengaged Traditionalists don't view themselves as 'victims' of injustice**

This segment is unlikely to respond well to messages that position climate change, Covid-19, or the intersection between them, as a question of social justice – especially if the suggestion is that Disengaged Traditionalists belong to the segment on the receiving end of the injustice. They don't see themselves in this way.



## 3.7 Loyal Nationals

### Who are Loyal Nationals? (17% of the British public)

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The second largest grouping (along with Disengaged Traditionalists, at 18%), they make up 35% of the total population. They **feel angry and threatened**, and take broadly **'populist' political views** on a range of issues, leaning **left economically** (with anti-big business views, and favourability towards the redistribution of wealth), but **right on social issues** (having more **authoritarian perspectives on governance, crime and punishment**).

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This is **one of the oldest** segments (second to Backbone Conservatives). They have a **low or medium level of education**, are the **lowest earning**, are the **most likely to describe themselves as working class**, and are **second most likely to be of the lowest social grade** (after Disengaged Battlers).

Proud    Boomers    Populist    Traditional  
Patriotic    Working class    Voted Brexit  
Threatened    Authoritarian



Looking out at the sea on a balcony in Newquay, Cornwall [G Scammell / Alamy](#)

	<b>Ideal UK</b>	<b>Most important issues (Feb)</b>	<b>Most important issues (Sept)</b>	<b>Trusted messengers</b>	<b>Most read news sources</b>
<b>1</b>	Hard-working	Healthcare and the NHS	Healthcare and the NHS	David Attenborough	BBC
<b>2</b>	Honest	Britain leaving the EU	The economy	Climate scientists	ITV
<b>3</b>	Compassionate	Crime	Britain leaving the EU	Ordinary people affected	Facebook

## Once a government has been voted in, they should have much more power to make decisions with less constraints

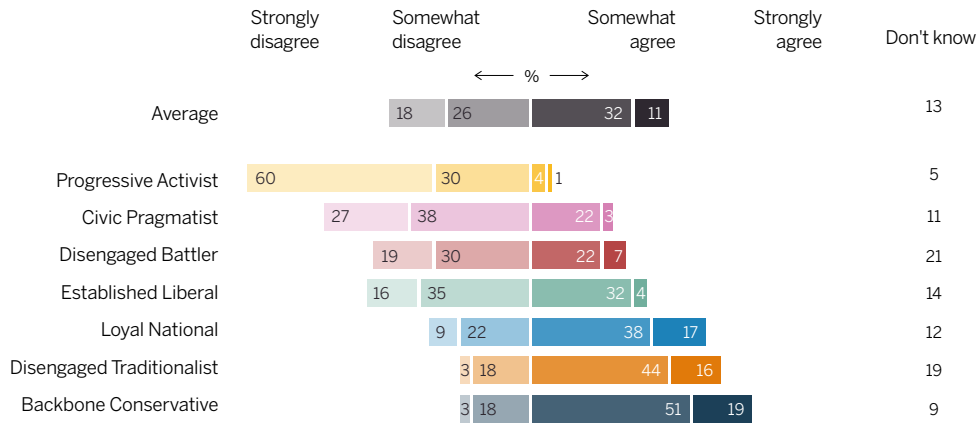


Figure 58. Loyal Nationals share an authoritarian stance on governance with other right-leaning segments

99% of Loyal Nationals agree that the world is becoming a **more dangerous place, and this fear drives their political engagement**. Loyal Nationals turn out to vote at general elections (85%, compared to 78% average) and local elections (69%, compared to 50% average). They tend to vote **Conservative**, although this rose significantly between the 2017 (43%) and 2019 general elections (51%), and a **significant minority still vote Labour** (28%).

They **strongly support Brexit** and, after Disengaged Traditionalists and Backbone Conservatives, tend to agree that once a government has been voted in, they should have much more power to make decisions with less constraints (54%). Loyal Nationals think the **country is divided** (67%), and are the most likely, just before Backbone Conservatives, to say that immigration is the cause of the deepest divisions in the UK (51%).

While they have a similar socio-economic profile to Disengaged Traditionalists, they are distinguished by the fact that **they feel galvanised or threatened by something** (rather than apathetic): namely, immigration. They are the most likely to say they feel like a stranger in my own country (62%) and to worry about becoming a minority in my own country (73%). They are the segment that is least likely to say that immigration has had a positive impact on the UK, at 38%, with 56% saying it's had a negative impact, and they are the most likely to say that there is pressure to speak a certain way about subjects like immigration (91%). People in this segment agree that these days people seem to care more about immigrants than about British citizens (79%).

## Which do you agree with more?

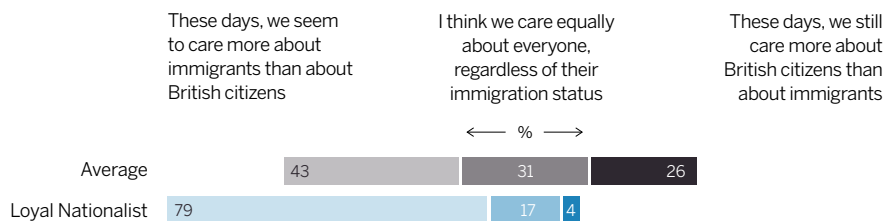


Figure 59. Loyal Nationals have a strong sense of victimhood relating to immigration

“ Racialism ... throwing the racist card. Everybody. You look at somebody wrong and it's, you know, is it my colour? Is it this? Is it that? Is it that? I think people walk around on eggshells. When they're at work I think people can walk around in eggshells. You're scared to even have the common joke ... I have to really think hard about what I'm going to say.”

### I worry about becoming a minority in my own country

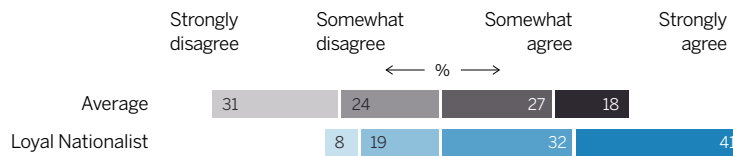


Figure 60. Loyal Nationals are worried about becoming a minority in Britain

“ I think there's a big difference in generations. I've worked with a lot of people and the older generation were always willing to do things for themselves. Whereas now, literally people won't even write their name on a form and expect you to fill it out for them. I think that's a big difference.”

They are in almost universal agreement that younger people feel too entitled to an easy life (the highest of any segment, at 94%), and they tend to feel that politicians don't care about people like me (79%). Almost all (96%) Loyal Nationals say that there is one law for the rich and one for the poor, with **inequality seen as a serious, priority problem** in the UK. They have the **lowest trust and faith in people** – 77% think we can't count on the people around as much as we used to.

Loyal Nationals are the **most fearful** of any segment, strongly agreeing that the world is becoming a more and more dangerous place (99%, compared to 86% average), and believing that the area where I live is becoming a more and more dangerous place (66%, compared to 45% average). As a result, they are also particularly concerned about topics such as crime and terrorism.

“ Gone are the days where if you had a problem, you'd sort it out between you. Nowadays they've got to get all their friends with guns and knives and sort it out that way.”

“ I think discipline's gone out the window.”

Despite the generally negative perspective on the state of the country, and a dominant, defining focus on the threat of immigration, this segment is **most likely to say they are 'very proud' to be British**, and Loyal Nationals generally see themselves in terms of their national identity.

“ What's British?' and it's like, 'British is all of us together as one, as far as I'm concerned'. So, I always say I'm British.”



Flood barriers alongside the flooded River Severn in Worcestershire [Mark Boulton / Alamy](#)

Loyal Nationals from a BAME or mixed ethnic background (4%) share wider concerns about society becoming more dangerous, and have a more traditional, authoritarian stance on crime, but they may clash with the majority on issues of race and immigration. Below is an exchange between two Loyal Nationals:

“ If I have to use the word British, I'd say Black-British because it doesn't feel right to call myself British full-stop or English ... Maybe because I'm old enough to remember the National Front and for some reason I just associate British with the National Front, so I've got to say Black-British. I've got nothing against it, and I think there's lots to be proud of, being British, but I can't call myself British. Again, even though I was born here, and I've got the passport.”

“ You're obviously entitled to define yourself in whichever way you choose. But having that mentality is like a German person not wanting to be called German because they don't want to be referred to as a Nazi ... I'm just interested as to why you consider it difficult ... the National Front rather than all of the other good things that Britain does.”

A high number (85%) have donated to charity in the past year. They see the **ideal UK as hard-working, honest and compassionate** – some communal values<sup>18</sup> in amongst attributes like loyalty, tradition, politeness and a sense of national unity.

“ I can get on a high horse sometimes when I'm debating things with people, and I do like to go right and wrong, standards and behaviours, and things like that ... I've got a strong sense of what's right and wrong and morality, I would say.”

<sup>18</sup> <https://climateoutreach.org/resources/communicating-climate-change-during-covid-19-crisis-evidence/>

## Loyal Nationals on climate change

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Loyal Nationals express the **third highest level of worry about climate change**, rather than the elevated levels of climate scepticism that might have been expected (polls and studies consistently show higher levels of climate scepticism on the right of the political spectrum).<sup>19</sup> Strikingly, 60% of Loyal Nationals are 'extremely worried' or 'very worried' about climate change. In fact, across a range of environmental issues – **plastics, deforestation, air pollution and food waste** – they are either the second or third most concerned segment.

This, along with the third highest agreement that we are already feeling the effects of climate change (69%) and the fourth highest (68%) belief that climate change is real and is caused by human action, places Loyal Nationals in a **more progressive position than Established Liberals and Disengaged Battlers** on some key measures. This underscores the value of the values-based segmentation approach taken in this project, which reveals differences between audiences that may not have been visible with a single-lens focus (e.g. left/right political spectrum).

However, despite being the **third most likely segment to say they would sign a petition about climate change** (17%), outranked only by Progressive Activists and Civic Pragmatists, they are very unlikely to vote based on climate policy (5%), and tend to agree that there's no point in me trying to protect the environment because big companies and other countries will keep polluting. Their feelings of victimhood and a sense of injustice are likely to be driving this perspective, and more reactionary perspectives on personal action among this segment are likely to be common.

“ I don't recycle or anything. I'm one of those people, I'm sorry. But I'm not really sorry. I don't recycle but I also acknowledge that the environment is changing because I know when I was little, summers were proper summers and winter was proper winter. We didn't have snow in March. It really was roasting in July. So, I know that the environment is changing. I think the reason I don't recycle actually is because I'm just sick of hearing the word 'recycle' ... And I think sometimes the more somebody will say to me, 'do this, do this, this is politically correct, blah, blah, blah'; I think you know what? No. No. I'm not going to wash out my milk carton. I'm just going to chuck it in the bin, you know?”

In common with every other segment, Loyal Nationals are concerned about the impact of climate change on **future generations**, but there is a slight preference for slow, gradual change (46%) over urgent, radical change (42%) to address it. In general, concern about the environment is **likely to be understood as a highly local issue** in urban and rural areas (e.g. fly tipping or air pollution from busy roads), and as such linked to localised rather than global inequality (e.g. those disproportionately impacted by climate change around the world). As such, it represents a **fundamentally different conceptualisation of the environment** to, say, Established Liberals or Progressive Activists.

<sup>19</sup> <https://climateoutreach.org/resource-type/centre-right/>

“ ... [the environment is] a really important thing for me. I want to make sure that the world is a nice place for my daughter growing up, like it was for me growing up. A nice, clean, tidy environment, reasonable weather to go out and do things, I'd like to go to see the glaciers at some point, so we want to make sure that the glaciers are still there, if we are going to go down to the coast, the coast hasn't been eroded because of high seas. I want to make sure that all of these things are available for her when she's older ... So I think there is a lot of things that do worry me, I'd like to make sure that my daughter can do these things and potentially my grandchildren can do these things. It would be nice to make sure that they have the same sort of world to live in and not take anything away from them.”

“ I take pride in the appearance of my house and how it looks to other people. I take pride in the fact that my local area is well-kept ... having a sense of enjoyment of your location and your surroundings, it's pretty important.”

“ I don't think I used to worry about it quite as much as I do now I've got a young child. My concerns are the amount of people around here; fly-tipping is terrible, people building on green spaces, parks and things are being ruined by people driving their cars across them or motorbikes. The council don't have money to look after play parks, there's no money to cut trees back so things are getting closed down, there's nowhere to go for a walk. Obviously, we have environmental issues as well caused by aeroplanes.”

“ Our generation is blamed for some of the environmental issues now, but as a grandmother I want the air to be clean enough for my grandchildren to be able to breathe, I want them to be safe and to be healthy and, yeah, I want them to be able to travel.”

Messages about the tangible, practical health benefits of more green space and fewer vehicles on the road (i.e. cleaner air) are likely to be well received by this segment. If **scepticism** is encountered among this segment, it is likely to be aimed at **more abstract notions of climatic change** (where knowledge is likely to be lower and confusion higher).

“ It's not an actual climate thing, to be honest with you. Even NASA has seen it. The sun isn't getting closer to the Earth as people think. The Earth is not getting closer to the sun ... The man-made stuff again is like the plastics, the coals. That's the greenhouse effect.”

“ I'm really confused. When the Industrial Revolution happened and when people were using coal and everything ... I want to know why it's so much different, why it's getting worse, when I think it was probably worse with regard to using coal and oil. So, I don't get how it's got worse.”

Unsurprisingly, there is significant **scepticism** among this group about the **motives of the government and big business** on climate change, and the seeming **double standards** on climate change and environmental issues.

“ I can’t stand the fact that the environment card is played to the interests of the economy. For one example, in London you can’t move about with your car because you can never park it anywhere. A car that is parked is not causing any pollution but it’s very difficult to find any parking. And at the same time, they are pushing the next runway for Heathrow when they know very well that the whole area around Heathrow has a high percentage of people with respiratory problems. Nevertheless, they want to do an extra runway. So, the fact that there will be extra pollution, the fact that it will be really bad for the environment, really bad for the area does not matter. The most important thing is the economic growth and the money that obviously some company is going to make out of that.”

On key statements relating to **pulling together and taking responsibility**, and enforcing rules that **apply to everyone**, Loyal Nationals are much closer to Established Liberals than the ‘Disengaged’ segments (perhaps counter-intuitively speaking to a shared sense of ‘buy-in’ and commitment to social cohesion across these two very different groups of people).

### Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

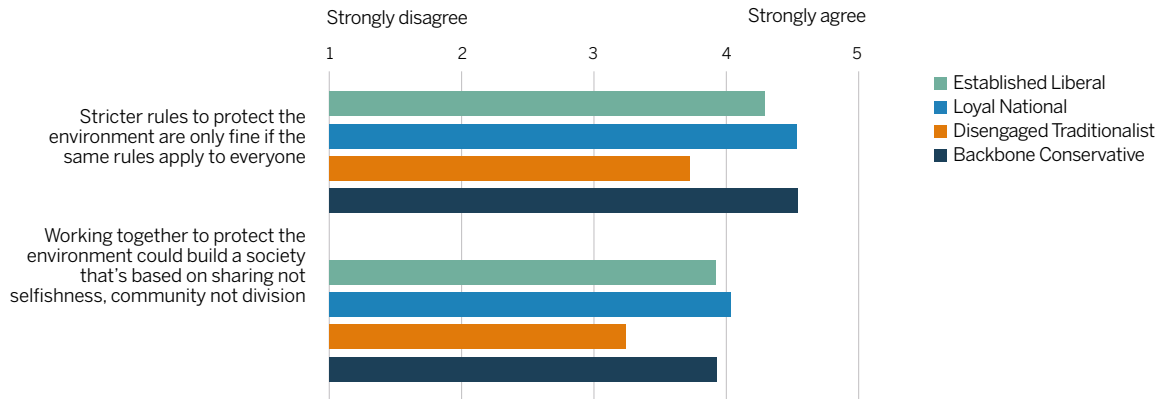


Figure 61. Loyal Nationals are closer to the higher income groups than Disengaged Traditionalists on complying with rules and working together for the environment

## 'Yes' and 'no' policies

Fairness – or more specifically **perceived unfairness** – is likely to be a big barrier for engaging with specific climate policies and actions: Loyal Nationals are the segment most likely to agree that a ban on petrol and diesel cars is unfair because it would add extra cost to daily life (70%, compared to 46% average).



“ I'm really annoyed about these green cars because I'm not necessarily poor, but I can't afford them. All these new green things that they want people to do are just too expensive for ordinary people.”

There is also **strong opposition to taxing meat and dairy products**. However, Loyal Nationals show **strong support** for policies such as implementing **food waste targets** in supermarkets, and fining brands that use **excess packaging**.

Perhaps driven by a sense of national pride, around 20% (the third highest) of Loyal Nationals say they would **holiday in the UK to avoid a flight, once a year**, and they are the most likely to say they have taken actions to **improve their home insulation**.

### Do you do, or have you done, any of the following to help stop climate change and protect the environment?

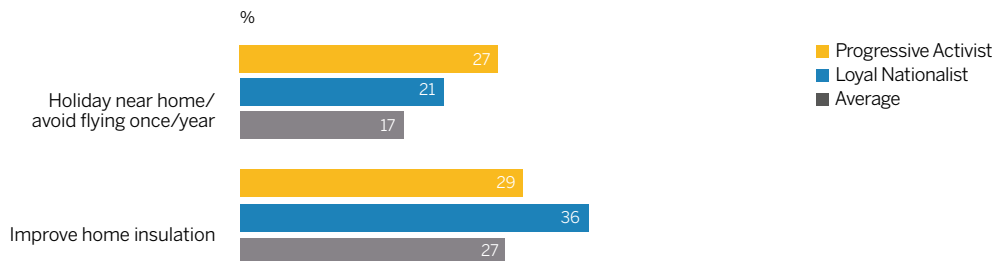


Figure 62. Loyal Nationals are more likely than average to holiday locally, and to improve home insulation

## Loyal Nationals on Covid-19

“ I’ve really been rethinking my lifestyle. I think I’ve driven three times since March and I’m beginning to think that I’ve really come to enjoy the outdoors ... So, I’m really worried about what’s going to happen when society gets back to normal. What’s going to happen to the planet? It’s never, ever been my concern, but the fact that there were more birds around, that the air was cleaner, I’m really worried about are we going to get back to just, what? There was such a tangible difference made from there being no cars on the streets. Just the birds, the fauna, the flora. That has never worried me before, but now, the difference is that I think we can make a difference. Whereas before I thought it was theoretical, now I know it’s a reality.”

Loyal Nationals are more likely than the average (31%) to say that they are reassessing their priorities during lockdown (41%), and their agreement is as high as **Progressive Activists and Civic Pragmatists** on this statement: “If a business receives government support to get through the worst of this crisis, it should return the favour by signing up to new standards of behaviour. This means complying with tax laws, treating staff better, supporting local communities, and becoming more sustainable.”

**If a business receives government support to get through the worst of this crisis, it should return the favour by signing up to new standards of behaviour. This means complying with tax laws, treating staff better, supporting local communities, and becoming more sustainable**

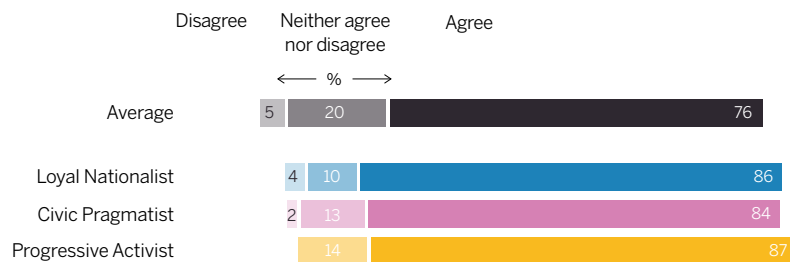


Figure 63. Loyal Nationals have higher than average agreement that businesses should 'return the favour' of government support by doing better

Loyal Nationals show less but still majority support for mandating that big businesses who receive bailouts must make changes to be more environmentally-friendly.

**The government should only give support to polluting companies like airlines and car makers to get through the worst of this crisis if they make major changes to become more environmentally-friendly**

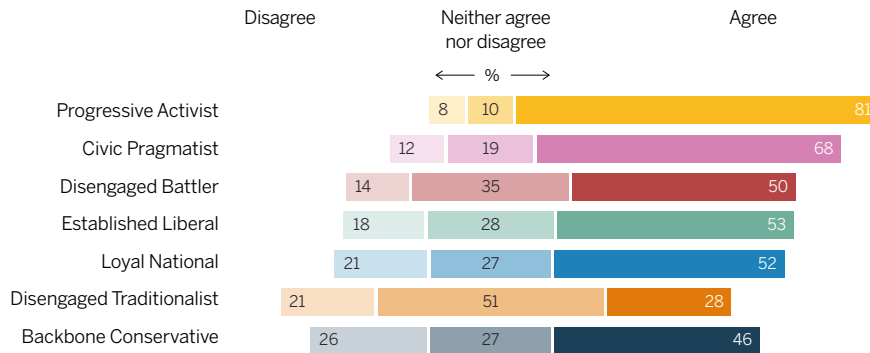


Figure 64. The majority of Loyal Nationals agree on conditional bailouts for big businesses

And, while their support for green recovery policies tends to be on par with more fiscally conservative groups such as Established Liberals and Backbone Conservatives, when the argument is made to **reduce reliance on countries like China**, Loyal Nationals show **among the strongest support for investing in green industries across all segments**.

A shop owner in the aftermath of Storm Dennis in the Rhondda and Taff valleys in South Wales [Haydn Denman / Alamy](#)



## Engaging Loyal Nationals

There is a clear case for building on the high level of climate concern among this segment, and their recognition of climate impacts already affecting the country – Loyal Nationals recognise climate change is ‘here and now’. Invoking national pride around British leadership on climate change, calling out heavy polluters, and emphasising the need for rules that apply to everyone are all powerful narratives for engaging this segment.

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### Key takeaways

#### **Don't feed fears of mass migration as a consequence of climate change**

Loyal Nationals are highly focused on the perceived threats posed by immigration to society. But there is no justification for stoking these fears by suggesting that climate change specifically will increase the flow of migration into Britain, as there is no factual basis for this claim. In situations where climate change does play a role in migration, it tends to create internal migration (within a country) and is almost always driven by a number of complex factors.<sup>20</sup>

#### **Bring climate impacts ‘closer to home’**

Loyal Nationals understand that climate change is linked to increasingly frequent and severe heat waves and flooding across Britain.<sup>21</sup> Highlighting lived experiences of extreme weather is a crucial starting point for engaging this group.

#### **Build on high levels of concern using trusted messengers**

Barriers to this segment engaging further on climate change are social/cultural. They relate to their perceived disadvantage and lack of inclusion. Finding the right intermediaries is critical. Farmers, friends and family, and ordinary people affected by floods and fires score well on trust with this segment.

#### **Make it local**

It is important to prioritise the local and tangible ‘environment’ with Loyal Nationals. More green space and cleaner air are welcomed but are seen through the lens of cleaning up ‘neglected’ areas and looking after what we have, rather than the more abstract notion of ‘sustainability’.

#### **Call out big polluters, who must play by the rules**

Loyal Nationals are sensitive to people and institutions they see as not ‘playing by the rules’ and this includes corporate greenwashing. With high feelings of victimhood and a sense that some groups get better treatment than others, ‘calling out’ heavy polluters to ‘pay up’ is a good narrative for this segment.

#### **Invoke national pride around British leadership**

Like the Backbone Conservatives, Loyal Nationals want to hear about genuine success stories that suggest a positive place in the world for the country they are proud of: as the UK’s position as a global leader on offshore wind becomes increasingly clear, for example, there are opportunities to frame this as a source of patriotic pride.

<sup>20</sup> <http://climatemigration.org.uk/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://climateoutreach.org/resources/engaging-public-on-climate-risks-and-adaptation/>

4

Putting it into practice

# 4.1

## How to use these insights

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Britain Talks Climate is designed to equip campaigners and communicators with the insights they need to shape the national debate in a way that draws on shared values and avoids division. It also provides rich concepts for creating a more emotional connection with different segments, using messages and messengers that start from where they are, while creating pressure for change that is much more reflective of today's society.

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Practically speaking, we hope these insights help you to:

- challenge assumptions about public engagement on climate
- craft new angles that engage an existing audience more deeply or lengthen the spectrum of people you reach
- formulate new values-based public policy
- carry out further research against the seven segments, using the 'golden questions' described in the next section
- identify and target mass segments online in a measurable way

### Downloadable questions for team discussion

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For the team:

- Do we know who we are currently targeting?
- Do we over- or under-estimate our potential reach?
- Do we think we could deepen / expand our base?
- Which segments should we focus on and why?
- Which segments should we not focus on and why?
- What are the main challenges / opportunities for our existing segments and the new ones we want to reach?
  - How can we best channel the ambition of the **Progressive Activists** and their role in pushing the boundaries of the debate? How do we engage them without alienating other groups, and vice versa?
  - What are the totemic issues that **Backbone Conservatives** can really own? How can we create a compelling story on climate, distinct from the left but which accommodates the same policy ambition?
  - How can we move climate change further up the list of issues that **Civic Pragmatists** care about? How can we push them beyond personal signalling towards greater political activism?

- How can we tell a more positive story to **Established Liberals**? How can we use their cultural reach to advance arguments about green growth and societal progress?
- How can we prove to the **Disengaged Battlers** that we're on their side? How can we demonstrate that the green jobs argument is more than just a political promise? What do we do if there aren't enough jobs?
- How can we build trust among **Disengaged Traditionalists**? How do we talk about climate without talking about climate?
- How can we avoid triggering anti-immigration sentiment among **Loyal Nationals**? How do we mobilise them in opposition to big polluters?
- How can we mobilise different segments in a way that still feels coherent?
- Are any of our messages divisive and how can we ensure they don't reach the wrong segment?

For communicators and campaigners when thinking about how to reach each segment:

- What are the real-world benefits of ambitious climate action for them?
- What does inclusion in the climate conversation look like for them?
- How will they hear information about a specific policy, such as electric boilers?
- How will they react to a particular narrative, such as climate justice?
- What are their divisive issues and why? Do we need to avoid them, or can we frame them in a way they won't reject and may even welcome?
- Who are the most effective messengers for this segment?
- What kind of presentation (setting, tone etc.) will turn them on/off the message?
- Where do they spend their time, online and offline?

For political strategists when thinking about how to use the insights for influence:

- How can we use the segmentation to influence the government?
- In what way can the insights help us in a power-dominated policy context?
- How can they be used to inform MPs about how they talk to their constituents?
- How else can they be applied in constituencies that carry the most political capital?
- What are the common threads between those on the left and right of politics? What about the centre-right and far-right?
- Do the insights provide any unexpected 'glue' that could be used to achieve cross-party consensus?

# 4.2

## How to identify segments

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In the original survey, 45 questions were used to 'segment' respondents. The so-called 'golden questions' are 16 questions within this larger set that most strongly predict segment membership. (A technical summary of the segmentation and golden questions is available in the Methodology appendix.) YouGov has created a 'calculator' that lets you classify people into segments based on their answers to the golden questions. There are two versions of the calculator in the same Excel document: a 'single response' version, and a 'bulk' version, [download both here](#).

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The golden questions can be used to segment an existing database, so you can discover which segments you're currently talking to. They can be included in a public survey if you want to understand more about how different segments see a particular issue. And they can be used to identify and target mass audiences online.

### Using the golden questions

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It is not possible to easily and accurately classify respondents into segments with fewer questions than this. In order for them to work, respondents must answer all 16 in exactly the order they are set out below. We recommend you design your survey in such a way that respondents have to answer all questions.

#### To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

**1 Young people today don't have enough respect for traditional British values.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree

**2 People who break the law should be given harsher/stiffer sentences.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree

**3 Ordinary working people get their fair share of the nation's wealth.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree

**4 There is one law for the rich and one for the poor.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree

Please read the following sentences and indicate your agreement or disagreement.

**5 Compassion for those who are suffering is the most important virtue in a person.**

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree

**6 I would call some acts wrong on the grounds that they are unnatural.**

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree

**7 Please say how well the following statements reflect your views using the scale below, where 1 means you agree completely with the first statement, and 4 means you agree completely with the second statement:**

1	2	3	4
People's outcomes in life are determined largely by forces outside of their control	_____		People are largely responsible for their own outcomes in life

**8 How much control do you feel most people have over the way their life turns out?**

1	2	3	4
Some people's situations are so challenging that no amount of work will allow them to find success	_____		People who work hard can find success no matter what situation they were born into

**9** For the following pair of traits, which one do you think is more important for a child to have using the scale below, where 1 means it is much more important for them to have the first trait, and 4 means it is much more important for them to have the second trait.

1                      2                      3                      4  
Independence ————— Respect for elders

**10** For the following pair of traits, which one do you think is more important for a child to have using the scale below, where 1 means it is much more important for them to have the first trait, and 4 means it is much more important for them to have the second trait.

1                      2                      3                      4  
Curiosity ————— Good manners

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

**11** The world is becoming a more and more dangerous place.

1                      2                      3                      4  
Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

**12** Muslims are often unfairly treated with suspicion due to prejudice.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

**13** Here is a list of activities that some people get a chance to participate in and others don't. Which of the following have you taken part in in the past year? (1=Yes, 2= No)

- a Attended a protest, rally, or march
- b Donated to charity
- c Volunteered in my local community
- d Shared political content on social media

## Using the Excel calculator

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### Single response

The single response version is intended to be used interactively – you input an answer to each of the 16 golden questions. In Excel, click on the small triangle to the right of each survey answer to select a response. At the bottom of the screen, you will see a 'segment name'. This tells you which segment you are in based on your answers to the questions.

### Bulk response

The bulk calculator uses the same maths, but lets you compute segments for up to 1,000 respondents at a time. Instead of having drop-down menus, it is intended to be used as a copy-and-paste tool. You can conduct your own survey, ask the golden questions of respondents, and then copy and paste survey answers from Excel or SPSS into the calculator. Paste answers into Column C through to Column R, and the predicted segment will appear in Column BC.

When you paste answers, be careful: they must match the calculator text exactly. For example, if you paste '4 -- Good manners' (with a double dash), this will not match with '4 – Good manners' (with a single dash), and there will be an error in the calculation. You can view the correct text in the single response calculator's drop-down menus. If your text does not match exactly, you can use 'find and replace' to correct it.

On the far-right-hand side of this sheet, there is a summary of the number of cases in each segment (Columns BE through to BH). This may be helpful in checking the representativity of your data. Data from non-nationally representative sources, such as surveys conducted on Facebook pages or mailing lists, may vary from the original sample.

The first column in the bulk calculator ('identity') is intended to be a respondent ID number, so that you can keep track of your respondents. You can leave it blank if you prefer.

# 4.3

## How to reach segments online

### Using a chatbot survey

To carry out message testing against the seven segments, or to target one or more of the segments, digitally, you'll need the golden questions and Excel calculator, plus a few more tools.

You can use a platform like Chatfuel, which is highly intuitive and doesn't require any knowledge of coding or web development, to turn the golden questions into a chatbot survey on Facebook Messenger. A chatbot is essentially automated messaging software that uses artificial intelligence to converse with people. In this case, it is able to ask a series of questions and store every output to a 'unique attribute field' and every respondent to a 'unique identifier', both automated via Chatfuel, which becomes important later on.

You must keep the questions in exactly the same order, and with the same wording, as above, but you may want to add a 'welcome' and 'thank you' message to the beginning and end. You may also like to add emojis throughout, to create a more informal and conversational tone.

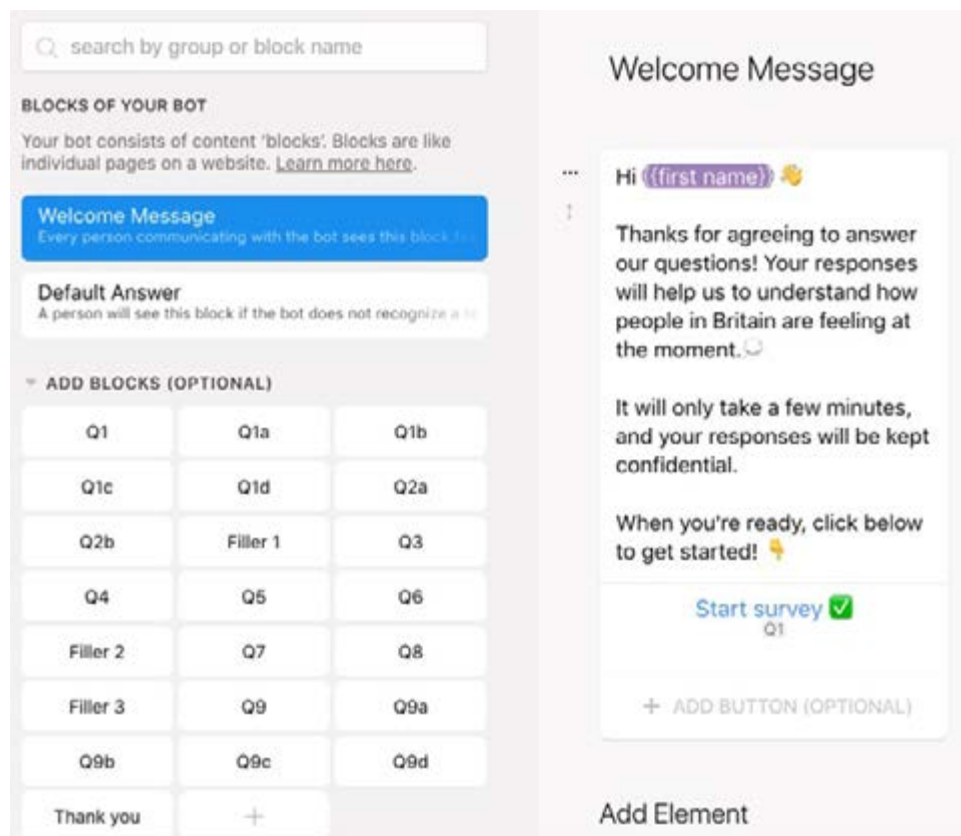


Figure 65. Set-up (left) and welcome message (right) for Chatfuel survey

You then deliver the chatbot survey through Facebook Messenger, which will present each question a little like this:

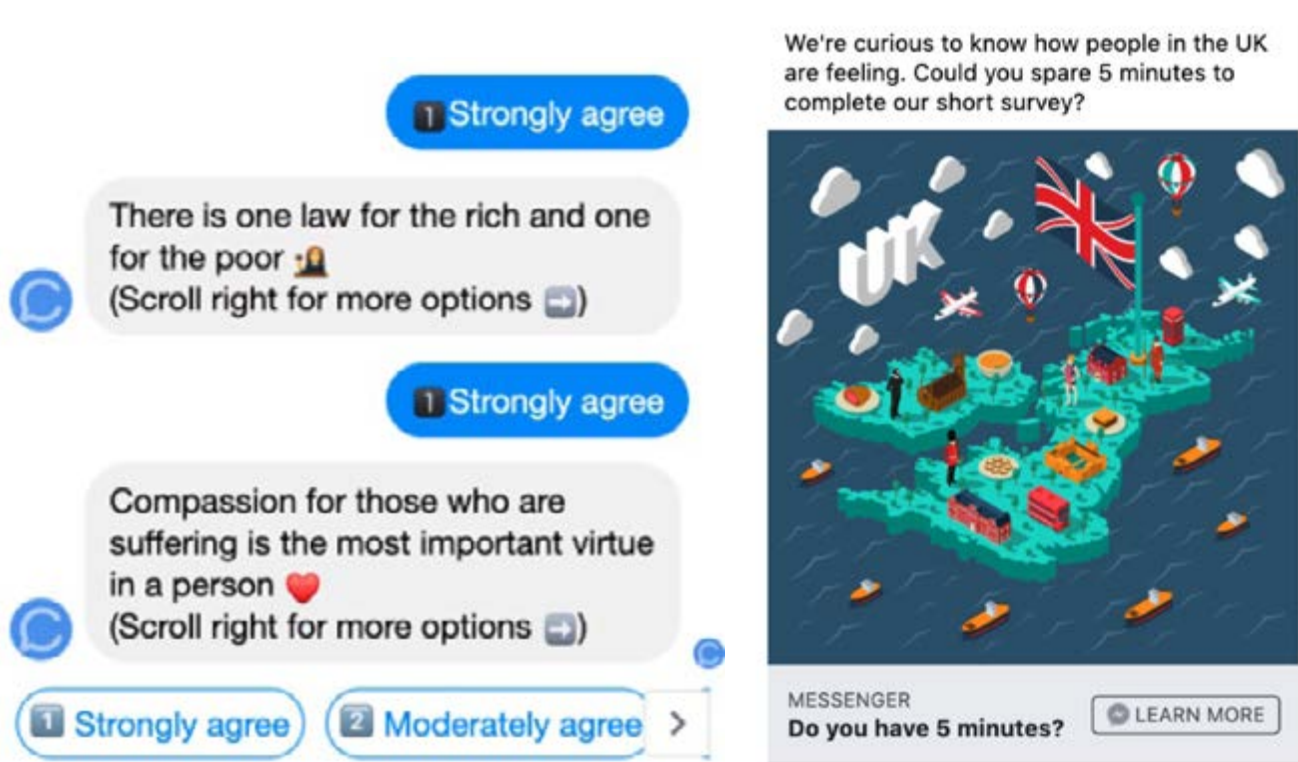
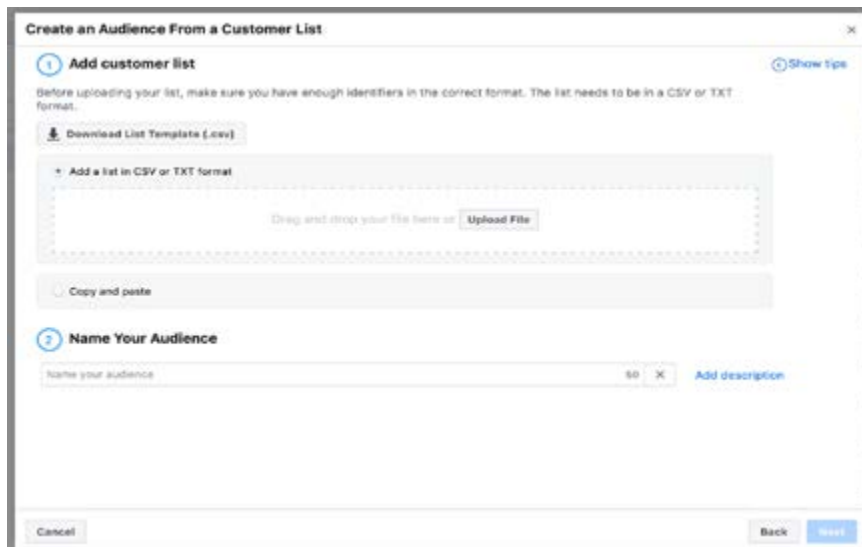
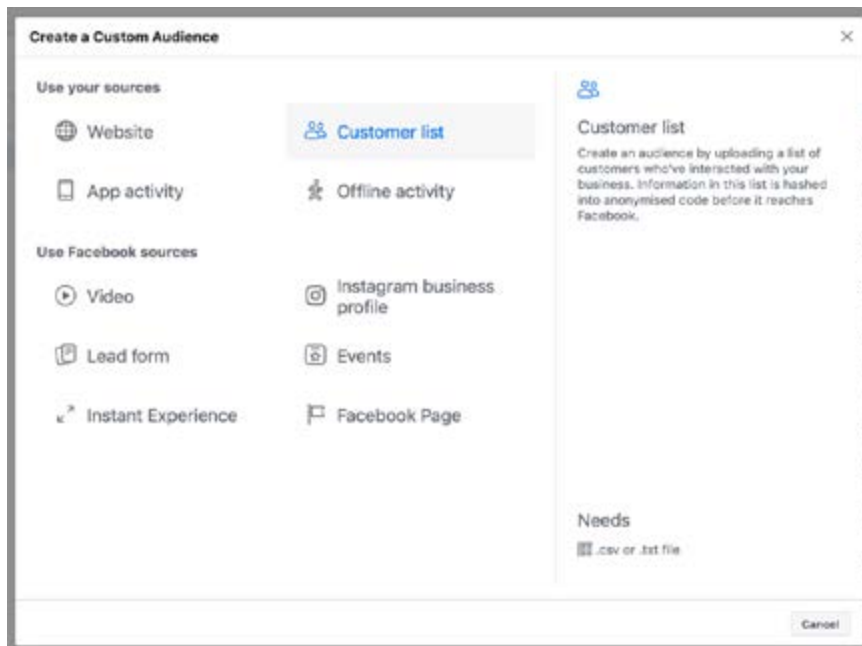


Figure 66. Questions shown on Facebook Messenger (left) and Facebook advertisements (right)

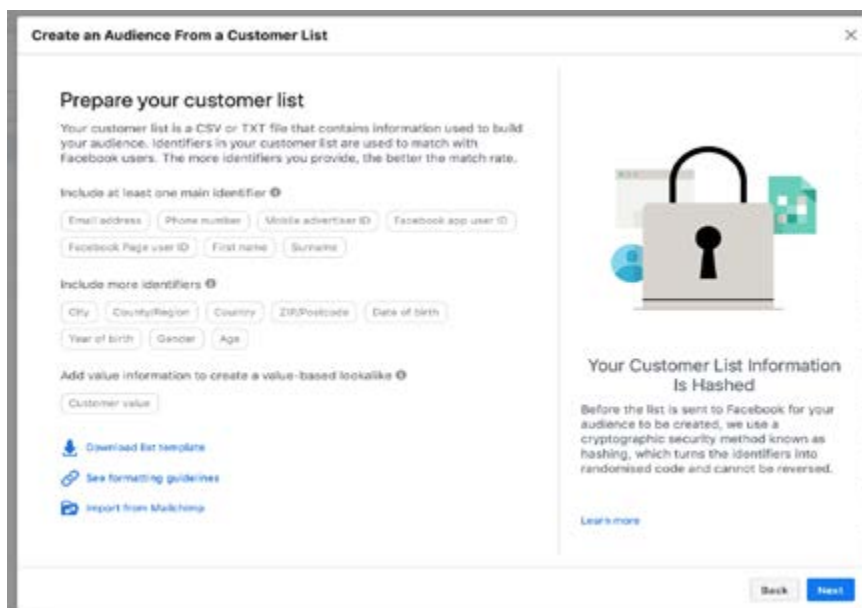
To drive a high enough number of responses, you may want to attract people to use the chatbot (and take the survey) using a range of Facebook ads with different imagery and messaging. This way you can see which ad is driving the most traffic at the lowest cost and turn all other variants off. You can also track which ads drive higher or lower responses from different segments.

Once you think a high enough number of people have taken the survey – you need a minimum of 100 per segment to be representative – you can download the responses, including the 'unique identifier' (Column B – identity), and run them through the bulk calculator as before. Individuals will be automatically assigned to a segment. You may need to continue running the ad if you're still short of responses in one or more segments.

Next, you can upload the list of unique identifiers for each segment in turn as a CSV file to 'Custom Audiences' on Facebook. Facebook will then match each identifier to their Facebook account, without giving out any personal information, so you can create 'lookalike' audiences for each segment, enabling you to reach thousands at a time.



Then select 'Facebook app user ID' from the list of identifiers.



By clicking on 'next', Facebook will then generate 'lookalike' audiences – this is a tool that finds users whose demographics and interests are similar to those of the provided sample, each containing upwards of 400,000 people. You can use this process to test various messages against the seven segments, or to target your campaign in different ways, depending on the audience.

### **Contact us**

We hope you find this toolkit useful for the work that you and your colleagues do on climate change. Please let us know how you're using it, and what we can do to improve the resource, by contacting [britaintalksclimate@climateoutreach.org](mailto:britaintalksclimate@climateoutreach.org).

5

# Methodology

# 5 Methodology

## Data collection and fieldwork

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The findings described in this toolkit come from a collaboration between Climate Outreach, the European Climate Foundation (ECF), More in Common and YouGov. A combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods were deployed through surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews. All project partners collaborated on the survey design and fieldwork. The data generated through the initial quantitative survey was then analysed to identify distinctive segments within the British population, based on More in Common's core belief model. More in Common published its report [Britain's Choice](#) in October 2020. Climate Outreach developed Britain Talks Climate with the support of ECF.

- Original survey: 10,385 British adults (February-March 2020)
- All subsequent surveys were conducted among recontacted subsets of this initial group:
  - 2,010 British adults (May 2020)
  - 2,060 British adults (September 2020)
- Qualitative research: 12 focus groups and 35 in-depth interviews (April-August 2020)

## Cluster analysis

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Cluster analyses allow us to identify patterns in people's core values, highlighting similarities and differences that would not be captured by looking only at demographic and political splits. The seven segments were created using the following steps:

### Step 1: Select input variables

YouGov and More in Common selected 'segmentation variables' during the questionnaire design stage, based on theoretical considerations, prior experience in other countries, and using scales derived from existing research in political science and psychology. These segmentation scales included the following:

- **Moral foundations:** The extent to which people endorse certain moral values, including fairness, care, purity, authority and loyalty.
- **Authoritarian personality:** People's approach to parenting, which it has been suggested has important predictive power in explaining attitudes towards more general public policies.
- **Agency/meritocracy:** The extent to which people view personal success as the product of individual factors such as hard work and discipline, compared to societal factors such as luck and circumstance.

- **Perceived threat:** The extent to which people see the world as a dangerous place.
- **Perceived victimhood:** The extent to which people feel that others are treated better than they are.
- **Politics:** including political participation measures, such as the Heath index of political ideology.

### **Step 2: Standardise the variable scales.**

YouGov identified latent factors using factor analyses (aggregating items that have a similar underlying concept) in the input variables. This method allows standardisation across different measurement scales (binary, ordinal data with varying scale points), and constructs factors using continuous numeric data. This also ensures that underlying themes in the data are given equal importance in the clustering (for instance, that topics measured with four questions are treated fairly next to topics measured with 10 questions), and that variables that have been theoretically identified as more important can be given additional weighting.

The final set of factors used in the cluster analysis included nine latent variables (three political participation factors, one moral foundation factor and five attitudinal factors). The political participation and moral foundations items were transformed to correct for skewed data.

### **Step 3: Cluster analysis.**

We tested three general techniques for clustering respondents (k-centroids, hierarchical, and finite mixture clustering), generating a large number of possible solutions, which were then assessed against three criteria: 1) subjective interpretability, 2) ability to predict various behavioural and attitudinal outcomes, and 3) reliability in resampling procedures. Constraints were set on cluster size and number of clusters, as extremely large and small clusters were unlikely to be practically useful; a solution with more than eight or fewer than four clusters was also unlikely to be useful.

The solutions were refined iteratively by YouGov, More in Common, ECF and Climate Outreach, in a process that aimed to identify the optimum solution (i.e., the most informative and meaningful segments). The final cluster solution was a seven-cluster k-means solution, using weighted data, Euclidean distance and the kmeans++ algorithm for cluster initialisation.

### **Step 5: Name the clusters.**

Names were assigned to each cluster after extensive reviews and consultation, based on their most relevant and distinctive characteristics.

### **Step 6: Identify golden questions.**

YouGov identified the original survey items that were the strongest predictors of cluster membership (the 'golden questions'). These were selected using an initial multinomial logistic regression with cluster membership as the dependent variable, where variables were eliminated using backwards stepwise selection (removing the items that had the highest p-values), followed by a more intensive machine-learning method (k-fold cross-validation), eliminating variables one at a time and ranking variables based on their contribution to prediction.

The final set of 16 questions have a 76% accuracy level, with a minimum class recall of 70%.



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