

**PRCA / Opinium**

# **Climate Misinformation Partnership 2022: Consumer Report**



## Key findings

1 June 2022

## Project details

PROJECT NUMBER	OP19431
PROJECT NAME	Climate Misinformation Partnership 2022: Consumer Report
PROJECT MANAGER NAME	Izzy Colledge
PROJECT MANAGER EMAIL	isobelcolledge@opinium.com
SAMPLE	2000 nationally representative UK adults
FIELDWORK DATES	24 <sup>th</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup> May 2022

## Concern about the climate crisis

### The climate crisis has risen as a priority for UK adults, now seen as second most pressing issue

Adults in the UK feel that the climate crisis is the second most important societal issue to tackle, rising from third place last year, and coming behind poverty (which was 2<sup>nd</sup> last year). A quarter (26%) of UK adults think the climate crisis is the most important societal issue to tackle, rising from 15% last year.

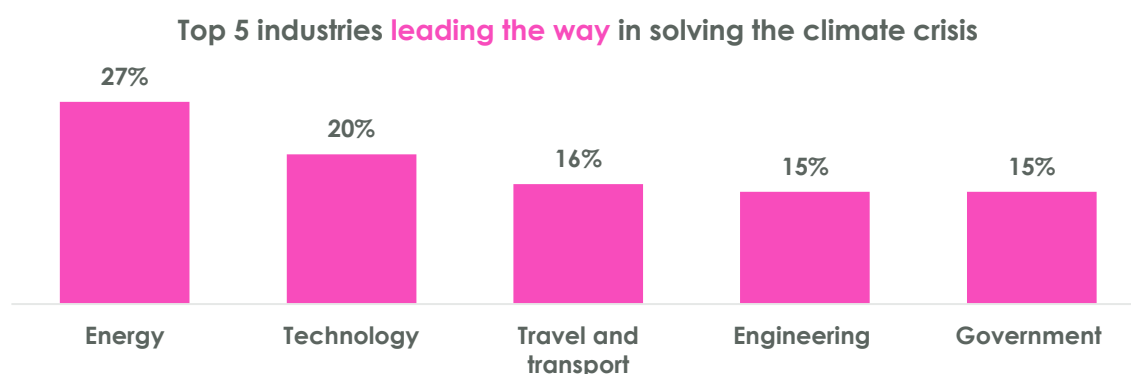
Indeed, two in five (42%) say that the climate crisis is a higher priority for them now, compared to two years ago, with a similar proportion (43%) saying it is the same level of priority for them now.

Almost half (45%) are highly concerned about the climate crisis, defined as selecting 8-10 on a 10-point scale about climate crisis concern. And a similar proportion (50%) have high levels of belief (ratings of 8-10 on a 10-point scale) that the planet faces an existential threat due to the man-made climate crisis. Though 7% of the population have low levels of belief in the man-made climate crisis (ratings of 0-3 on a 10-point scale). All of these results are in line with last year.

Almost two thirds (65%) of UK adults think that we are not making progress on the climate crisis quickly enough. And three quarters (74%) feel that businesses need to take action in tackling the climate crisis.

### Energy, government, and transport are seen as critical to solving the climate crisis, but only one in six think government is leading the way

UK adults think that the industry **leading the way** in solving the climate crisis is energy, the top 5 are shown below:



The energy industry still comes out top, though this has reduced from 35% last year to 27% this year. Government has fallen in the ranks this year, rising from 3<sup>rd</sup> place (17%) last year, to 5<sup>th</sup> place (15%) this year. Meanwhile travel and transport has risen from 6<sup>th</sup> place (13%) last year, to 3<sup>rd</sup> place (16%) this year.

Though it's worth noting that 38% said they didn't know which industry is leading the way in solving the climate crisis, in line with the results last year.

On the flip side, the industries that UK adults think **do the least** to help solve the climate crisis are:

- **Fashion (22%)** – remains in 1<sup>st</sup> place (24%)
- **Energy (19%)** – up from 7<sup>th</sup> place (12%)
- **Government (19%)** – up from 4<sup>th</sup> place (16%)
- **Travel and transport (19%)** – down from 2<sup>nd</sup> place (20%)
- **Building / construction (17%)** – down from 3<sup>rd</sup> place (18%)

Again, a large proportion (34%) are unsure of which industries are doing the least to help solve the climate crisis, in line with last year's results.

There are three key sectors that UK adults feel are **critical in helping solve** the climate crisis: energy (48%), government (40%) and travel and transport (31%). These positions are in line with last year.

## Information on the climate crisis

### Two fifths of UK adults rarely check information they receive about the climate crisis

The most common places to hear information about the climate crisis are TV news (69%), TV documentaries (52%), websites (37%), and newspapers (36%). TV documentaries (82%) and TV News (77%) are the most trusted sources of information when it comes to the climate crisis specifically.

Three in ten (30%) hear information about the climate crisis through social media. However, social media is the least trusted source of information about the climate crisis, with 58% saying they wouldn't trust information they saw on social media about the climate crisis.

Over two fifths (41%) of people rarely or never double check that the information they are seeing about the climate crisis is correct, up from 35% last year.

When it comes to influential figures in discussions about the climate crisis, scientists come out as the most influential (57%), followed by government figures (46%) and climate activists (29%).

## Social media and the climate crisis

### Almost half of social media users regularly come across climate misinformation

Looking specifically at information shared on social media about the climate crisis, we found that almost half (46%) of social media users often/ sometimes come across news on social media about

the climate crisis that they feel is not fully accurate. This rises to 63% amongst Snapchat users, 60% among TikTok and Google+ users, and 55% amongst Twitter and Instagram users.

Exploring misinformation and disinformation specifically about the climate crisis, we found that 46% of social media users have come across a news story on social media about the climate crisis that was exaggerated or made up entirely in the past month. A quarter (26%) have seen a news story about the climate crisis on social media in the past month that they thought was made up at the time.

Of those who encountered exaggerated / made up news about the climate crisis in the past month on social media, 40% said it came from someone else on social media, 21% have seen this from political interest groups / activist organisations and 21% have seen it from journalists and news organisations.

The public's knowledge of the terms misinformation, disinformation and even fake news remains poor. When asked to match up definitions many got these wrong:

- Only 44% correctly identified that Misinformation means:
  - False information that is spread, regardless of intent to mislead
- Only 49% correctly identified that Disinformation means:
  - Deliberately misleading or biased information; manipulated narrative or facts; propaganda
- Only 55% correctly identified that fake news means:
  - False stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke

## Brands and the climate crisis

### One in five UK adults are aware of brands attempting to greenwash their reputation

One in five (19%) UK adults say that they are aware of any brands being accused of greenwashing in the last twelve months, rising to three in ten (29%) of 18-34s. Among those aware of greenwashing, brands associated with the fossil fuel industry, fast fashion/retail, and multi-national food and drinks brands were the most commonly cited.

Seven in ten (71%) of UK adults say they would be likely to stop buying from a brand if they knew it had misled its customers about having a positive environmental impact.

## Looking back at COP26

### Three in five don't know the outcome of COP26

Almost three in five (57%) admit that they don't know what the outcome of COP26 was. Three in ten also admit that they didn't know what COP26 was meant to do, and a third (33%) don't think that the agreements made at the conference really affect them.

Over half (55%) don't think that the UK has done anything differently since the conference, and a similar proportion (56%) think the same of other countries.

# About Opinium

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[www.opinium.com](http://www.opinium.com) | [research@opinium.com](mailto:research@opinium.com) | 0207 566 3190

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