



The seven population segments

Source: DEFRA [Attitude & Behaviours Study 2007]

Segment 1: 'Positive greens' 18% of the population (7.6 million)



"I think we need to do some things differently to tackle climate change. I do what I can and I feel bad about the rest"

This group assess themselves as acting in more environmentally friendly ways than any other segment does.

Additionally, they are the most likely group to want to live a more environmentally friendly life than they currently do.

Members of this group consistently hold the most positive pro-environmental attitudes and beliefs; they believe that we are reaching the planet's natural limits, and that the ecological crisis is pressing. They believe that humans are largely responsible for the environmental damage and it is up to individuals to adapt their behaviour to address this.

While they are likely to be doing most to reduce their impact on the environment, there is scope for them to do more, particularly with their travel behaviours. They are most likely to have undertaken behaviours in the home including saving energy and water, and they are the heaviest recyclers. They are also most likely to buy ethical and local products including local food and fair trade. They have pro-environmental attitudes to travel yet, for example, their dependency on cars is only just below average.

They are the least motivated by saving money (and by far the most willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products), keen to avoid waste, and the most likely to feel guilty about harming the environment.

They are the least likely to cite generic barriers to being more environmentally friendly (whether effort, the difficulty of changing habits or the level of others' action).

They have the highest levels of self-reported knowledge about environmental terms, although still around a half know little or nothing about carbon footprints and offsetting. They are also most likely to want more information on what they can do.

They are most likely to seek to influence friends, family and the workplace to be more environmentally friendly. They are most likely to be involved in environmental and community organisations, although still at low levels (e.g.. fewer than one in ten are members of Greenpeace or Friends of the Earth).

They are the most likely by far to be in AS socioeconomic groups (SEGs) and have the highest levels with household incomes of £40k and over per annum. They are the most likely to have a degree, and to read The Guardian, Independent or Times. Their profile is biased towards middle age (41-64), and owner-occupancy.

Segment 2: 'Waste watchers' 12% of the population (5.1 million)



"Waste not, want not' that's important, you should live life thinking about what you're doing and using"

This group is doing more than any other (except group 1) to help the environment. However this behaviour is driven by an urge to avoid waste rather than seeking to reduce their environmental impact.

Members of this group are as likely as group 1 to rate their behaviour as environmentally friendly. Nearly three quarters are content with what they are currently doing to help the environment – whereas three quarters of group 1 would like to do more.

Their ecological worldview tends to be slightly more pro-environmental than the average, but they are also more likely than average to be sceptical about the scale and urgency of environmental problems.

They are very concerned about changes to the UK countryside and loss of biodiversity (second only to group 1).

They say that the environment is a high priority for them, yet they are the second least likely group (after group 7) to feel guilty about their environmental impacts and they do not share group 1's pro-environmental attitudes to travel.

Their current behaviours focus on those in the home (including saving energy and water), using a more fuel efficient car and purchasing ethical and local/national products. They are very committed recyclers, indeed they are most likely to volunteer that they cannot recycle any more as they already recycle as much as they can.

There is a middle age and older age bias. One third are aged 65 and over (nearly twice as likely as average), while less than a quarter are 40 and under (half as likely as average). One third are retired, and many are on low incomes (two fifths on £20k per annum or less). Over half own their homes outright and they are the most likely to read the Daily Mail or Telegraph.

Segment 3: 'Concerned consumers' 14% of the population (5.7 million)



"I think climate change is a big problem for us. I suppose I don't think much about how much water or electricity I use, and I forget to turn things off ... I'd like to do a bit more"

This group hold broadly pro-environmental beliefs, although with less conviction than groups 1 and 2. Members of this group are particularly sympathetic to the concept of 'climate change', acknowledging their personal impact and seeing taking action as important. Conversely, they show the strongest rejection of any group of the idea that we are reaching our limits to growth and they also doubt that an ecological crisis is imminent.

They rate themselves as environmentally friendly in their behaviours and two thirds of the group claim they would like to do more.

Their current behaviours focus on environmental behaviours in the home including saving energy and water (these behaviours are similar to group 5), and some purchasing behaviours; both of which they undertake at above average levels. In terms of travel, this group have greener attitudes to travel than most. However, their levels of dependence on the car remain average, while they take the most flights per year of any segment.

There is little stopping them being more environmentally friendly, as they are less likely than average to cite general barriers to pro-environmental behaviour, such as money-saving, inconvenience, and others not taking action. There is also some guilt about harming the environment and pro-environmental behaviours seem to fit with their self identity. They may like to think that they are doing more than they are.

One third are aged 30-40, and there are the lowest levels aged 65 and over. There is a slight bias towards ABC1 SEG. One third have household incomes of £40k and above per annum and, notably, this includes the highest level of all groups with household incomes of £60k and above (nearly one fifth of the group). They are the most likely to be owner-occupiers with a mortgage, and the most likely to have dependent children (along with group 5). They are the second most likely to have a degree.

Segment 4: 'Sideline supporters' 14% of the population (5.6 million)



"I do a couple of things to help the environment. I'd really like to do more ... well as long as I saw others were"

This group has a generally pro-environmental worldview, although these beliefs are held relatively weakly across the board. Members of this group are second only to group 1 in anticipating an imminent crisis; however they are more likely to think that humans (possibly other people) will find the solution.

Their green beliefs have not translated to their behaviours – this is the group where the attitude action gap is most evident. They are much more likely than the first three groups to say they have not thought about doing particular behaviours. However, low knowledge is also a barrier (for example, roughly two thirds say they know nothing about carbon footprints or offsetting).

Their current behaviours are less 'green' than all except groups 6 and 7 on a range of pro-environmental behaviours including habitual behaviours in the home, though there are lower levels saying that they 'don't want to do' specific behaviours than groups 6 and 7. They have the second highest level of car ownership and at the same time, they show the strongest dislike of any group for getting on the bus.

Most say they are doing one or two things to help the environment and would like to do more.

They acknowledge a range of barriers more readily than group 3, such as the need to fit with their current lifestyle and the difficulty in changing habits; they are more likely to feel guilty about harming the environment (with group 5).

They recognise the environmental issues, are willing to learn and do more – they appear receptive though are unlikely to be proactive in acquiring information or adapting their behaviours.

Members of this group span all ages, although under 30s are over-represented. They have average levels of household income, but with a bias towards C2DE SEGs. They are more likely than average to read the Daily Mail or the Sun, and fewer than average are educated to degree level.

Segment 5: 'Cautious participants' 14% of the population (5.6 million)



"I think I do more than a lot of people. Still, going away is important, I'd find that hard to give up ... well I wouldn't, so carbon offsetting would make me feel better"

This group's environmental worldview is close to the average for the population: members of this group tend to agree there is a pressing crisis, and that there are limits to growth. They are pessimistic about our ability to tackle climate change, but recognise their impacts.

Their current behaviours focus on those in the home, including habitual behaviours saving energy and water.

This group are quicker to say that our efforts can be negated by other individuals and countries (than groups 1, 3 and 4); others' levels of action are key to this group's potential to act and so a sense of popular momentum may be required.

They report more barriers to pro-environmental behaviour than groups 1 and 3, including the need to fit with current lifestyle and difficulty in changing their habits and they are more likely to feel guilty about harming the environment (with group 4).

They tend to have green travel attitudes, and are particularly keen on travellers paying for the environmental damage they cause (second to group 1 in this area).

Environmentally friendly behaviours are not a natural fit with their self-identity – with levels feeling they would be embarrassed to be green higher than groups 1–4. Half this group report doing only a few things or nothing pro-environmental, but three quarters say they would like to do more – the second highest proportion after group 1.

This group has a younger than average age profile, with one quarter 30 and under, and nearly as few aged 65 and over as group 3. Equal with group 3, members of this group are the most likely to have dependent children, however they are slightly more likely to be renting than group 3. They are the third most likely to have a degree, after groups 1 and 3.

Segment 6: 'Stalled starters' 10% of the population (4.1 million)



"Maybe there'll be an environmental disaster, maybe not. Makes no difference to me, I'm just living my life the way I want to."

This group present somewhat confused environmental views. Mostly the views are strongly negative: members of this group have the highest level saying climate change is too far in the future to worry about and, with group 7, the highest levels believing that the environmental crisis has been exaggerated (about half). However they are also the most likely (with group 1) to agree that there are limits to growth and that humans are damaging nature; if the group genuinely holds these views, they appear not to want to act on them.

They have the lowest levels of knowledge about environmental terms: only just over a third knows more than a little about climate change, and nearly three quarters know nothing about carbon footprints. They are most likely to say that their behaviour does not contribute to climate change, and that the environment is a low priority for them personally.

Their life may have a relatively low impact on the environment for other reasons, such as financial constraints; though they are less likely to focus on thinking about the levels of energy and water they use in the home or generally undertake the smaller positive habitual behaviours. They currently choose not to do many pro-environmental behaviours beyond recycling (and have the lowest levels doing this with group 7). In keeping with their likely low impacts, they are the least frequent flying of all groups, and the least likely to own a car. Nonetheless in both cases a higher proportion of this group does not want to reduce their use of cars and planes than the proportion that has already done so.

They have a lot of serious life priorities to address before they consider the environment. They mention lots of barriers – they are the most likely to cite convenience, difficulty, cost issues, others' level of action, and the need for behaviours to fit with their lifestyle. They are the most likely to see being green as embarrassing, while the majority of the group see being 'green' as an alternative lifestyle.

One sixth of this group (the highest of any) say they are doing nothing to help the environment; yet despite their low levels of pro-environmental behaviour, two thirds say they are happy with what they are doing and they do not want to do more.

They have the lowest social profile of any group (nearly half are DE SEGs), and the lowest levels of income (nearly half are on less than £20k). They tend to be younger or older, with middle aged people under-represented, and the group includes more BMEs than average. They have the lowest levels of qualifications of any group (half have none), and are the most likely not to be working. They are the most likely group to lead the Sun, Mirror and News of the World.

Segment 7: 'Honestly disengaged' 18% of the population (7.4 million)



"I don't know much about climate change. I can't afford a car so I use public transport ... I'd like a car though"

This group's ecological worldview is predominantly shaped by a lack of interest and concern.

However members of this group are also sceptical about the current environmental threat (half think it has been exaggerated). They are nearly as likely as group 6 to deny that their behaviour contributes to climate change and more likely than most to think the problem will be solved without people needing to make changes to their lifestyles.

They do not see themselves as 'green' in any way, although they would not particularly care if others saw them as such (albeit that this is unlikely). It is not their scepticism or sense of indifference about environmental issues which sets them apart from others. On each of the main environmental issues, roughly a third of this group (far more than any other) does not express an opinion one way or the other. It seems that debates about the environment and climate change do not touch their lives.

This group rate themselves as having the lowest levels of pro-environmental activity: more than half do little or nothing. This seems an honest assessment, as they report doing very little to help the environment beyond recycling (and have the lowest levels doing this with group 6). Less than a fifth have tried reducing their car use or the number of flights they take.

Of all groups, they have the highest level saying they are happy with what they are doing, and they do not want to do more to help the environment (three quarters say so). In stark contrast to group 6, they are the least likely to want more information about what they could do (group 6 are the most likely to say they do).

They do not seek excuses for their lifestyles; they are only slightly more likely than average to say that it is too much effort or too hard to find the time. They are more likely to say that they find it difficult to change their habits or that it needs to fit with their lifestyle (though this is similar to groups such as 4 and 5 and nowhere near the same level as cluster 6). They are more likely to think it is not worth acting if others do not, though they are less likely to say they would do more if government did more. Notably they are the least likely to feel guilty about harming the environment.

While the group spans all ages, under 30s are over-represented (comprising more than a quarter). In terms of social grade members of this group are slightly more C12DE SEGs, with ASs underrepresented; income levels are also slightly below average. Similarly, slightly fewer

than average of this group have degrees. They are more likely than average to be working full-time, to be renting, and to read the Sun, News of the World and the Star.

Figure 1 shows the relative rating of the segments on their ability and willingness to act. For this purpose, ability and willingness have the same definitions as when used in chapter 4 (original material) to assess population level ability and willingness to adopt specific headline behaviours. The assessment of a segment's ability to act considers the prevalence of mainly external constraints which enable or limit their ability to be more environmentally friendly in their life, such as their income level. A segment's willingness to act is based on a combination of whether people said they would like to do more, in the recent Defra attitudes and behaviours survey, as well as their internal barriers and motivations to act in a more environmentally friendly way, such as whether it fits with their self-identity or there is a need for others to act first.

Figure 1

This is our summary of Defra's findings about each segment's:

- Willingness to act
- Ability to act

No	Segment name	% of population*	Ability to act ** 1 - 4	Willingness to act ** 1-4
1	Positive Greens	18%	4	4
2	Waste Watchers	12%	4	2
3	Concerned Consumers	14%	3	3
4	Sideline Supporters	14%	1	3
5	Cautious Participants	14%	2	2
6	Stalled Starters	10%	1	1
7	Honestly Disengaged	18%	3	1

** Where 1 is lowest and 4 is highest (our ratings)

However, there are different ratings for different behaviours (which Defra calls Headline Behaviour Goals) so if this is of interest to you, it will be worth going back to the source material.

Further reading

EAUC have a summary of the "What Works in Behaviour Change?" Scottish Government Conference Papers June 2010 - Key findings that they will circulate to you after the course.