



AQUIND Limited

AQUIND INTERCONNECTOR

Applicant's Response to the Let's Stop AQUIND
submission dated 10 July 2024

The Planning Act 2008

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DOCUMENT

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Applicant's Response to the Let's Stop AQUIND submission dated 10 July 2024

1. Response to Let's Stop AQUIND comments regarding Savanta Study

- 1.1. AQUIND Limited wishes to address recent statements made by Let's Stop AQUIND in its submission to the SoS dated 10 July 2024 regarding a survey of Portsmouth residents conducted by Savanta, which have been published on the Planning Inspectorates website as a representation in relation to AQUIND's application for development consent for AQUIND Interconnector.
- 1.2. Savanta is an independent, reputable market research firm, and a member of the British Polling Council – widely known and respected for its insights and research on public opinion across a range of policy areas.
- 1.3. Savanta employed its usual methodologies, which are compliant with the rules of the British Polling Council, in conducting both online surveys and face-to-face interviews over a two-week period.
- 1.4. The survey engaged a total of 478 respondents among Portsmouth residents, with 268 participating online and 210 in-person. Savanta considers this level of response a robust sample across Portsmouth communities, age and gender. Further information on that can be found on page 12 of the Savanta survey report.
- 1.5. AQUIND was not involved whatsoever in selecting the survey respondents and is not aware of their identities. AQUIND did not contact any of the respondents in advance, unless such respondents might have received statutory communications during the DCO preparation or examination processes. However, AQUIND has no means of cross referencing that as AQUIND does not have access to any personal details of the respondents.
- 1.6. Rather than deriding the findings or denying the views of Portsmouth residents expressed through the survey – as LSA has sought to – we feel the attitude the survey reveals amongst Portsmouth residents is a positive indication of a majority of persons who recognise the need to combat climate change and who support the delivery of energy transition infrastructure, including with international partners, to achieve this.**
- 1.7. The survey results also suggest clear support for both the overriding objectives and practical application of a new interconnector between Portsmouth and Normandy, from local people who based on the survey results are willing to accept a necessary level of disruption required to tackle the major issues of the UK's energy security, rising energy costs and the country's transition to net zero.
- 1.8. We stand by the integrity of the survey conducted by Savanta, including its methodology which ensures objective and robust results, and we also look forward to continuing our engagement with all stakeholders to deliver a project that supports the UK's energy future while respecting and benefiting the local environment and economy.

2. Responses to Specific Criticisms

2.1. The survey findings are not valid because the survey does not mention AQUIND

2.1.1. In order to maintain objectivity and ensure unbiased responses regarding the concept of an energy transmission link locally, AQUIND was deliberately not mentioned in the survey. The survey sought to understand the public's attitude towards a new transmission link and related issues. This is standard procedure for rigorous and methodologically serious surveys, as biased responses can unfairly skew otherwise independent and objective results.

2.1.2. LSA claims that AQUIND's brand has been tarnished, and indeed has spent many years attempting to undermine AQUIND's reputation with unsubstantiated claims in respect of the project's environmental impacts as well as resorting to pure conjecture and conspiracy theories. Savanta's survey represents a genuine attempt to gauge unbiased public views on a wide scope of energy-related issues, including the concept of an interconnector project.

2.2. The survey implies that the link would terminate in Portsmouth

2.2.1. AQUIND is a new transmission link between Great Britain and France and its landfall locations are Portsmouth and Normandy respectively. All residents surveyed are currently residents of Portsmouth, and Portsmouth was stated in the survey as one of the project locations.

2.2.2. Residents of Portsmouth responding to the survey were also asked if they would be willing to put up with some temporary or disruption or significant disruption to local roads to help achieve the UK's transition to net zero. Just one in five Portsmouth residents responding said they would not be happy to do so.

2.3. The General Election and Local Elections returned candidates that oppose AQUIND interconnector – and therefore are a verdict on the project

2.3.1. It is not AQUIND's place, or that of other organisations, to comment on the reasons local people may have voted for particular candidates.

2.3.2. Voting behaviour is determined by a myriad of factors and the General Election was not a single-issue election fought on AQUIND interconnector.

2.3.3. It is also notable that some MPs who publicly opposed the project lost their seats whilst some won. This calls into question the idea that any candidates won (or lost) on the basis of their opposition or support for the project.

2.4. Investors

2.4.1. AQUIND advised the Secretary of State on 22 November 2023¹ of its progress in securing investments in the construction stage of the Project from a range of UK, European and global leading infrastructure investors and of the fact that the lack of a decision in the re-determination of the AQUIND Interconnector DCO is holding back that investment in the British economy and energy transition.

¹ Letter to the SoS dated 22 November 2023 - <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-005129-016%2022%20Nov%2023%20Richard%20Glasspool%20AQUIND%20Ltd%20Letter%20to%20Secretary%20of%20State.pdf>

APPENDIX 1

Savanta Portsmouth Study Analysis Report dated 09 July 2024

The report is also available at the Savanta's website - <https://savanta.com/knowledge-centre/press-and-polls/portsmouth-poll-luminate-consulting-9-july-2024/>

Savanta:

Luminate: Portsmouth Study

Analysis Report

Make Better Decisions

Conclusions

01

Energy Costs are a Concern

Respondents recognise the financial impact the energy crisis is having on a personal level. 94% feel energy costs have risen in recent years, leaving 82% of respondents unhappy with the price they are currently paying. Younger respondents show slightly less awareness of this.

02

Demand for Climate Action

Three quarters are concerned with the impact climate change has on their local environment. 94% feel that the Government should be doing more to combat climate/ energy issues.

03

Understanding of Climate Solutions

People are aware of the benefits of renewable energy, interconnectors and nuclear power, being highly supportive of it.

98% feel the Government can combat the energy crisis through building more energy transition infrastructure and/or subsidising energy costs for consumers.

04

Preference for Clean, Low Cost Energy

Renewables are the top choice for respondents, indicating that price and provenance of energy is a key issue for them.

Solar power is the most popular clean energy resource, with around 3 quarters supporting this.

05

Willingness to Endure Disruption

Just over a half would put up with temporary disruption in order to achieve Net Zero, however, this drops to a quarter for more significant disruption.

06

Firm Support for Transmission Link

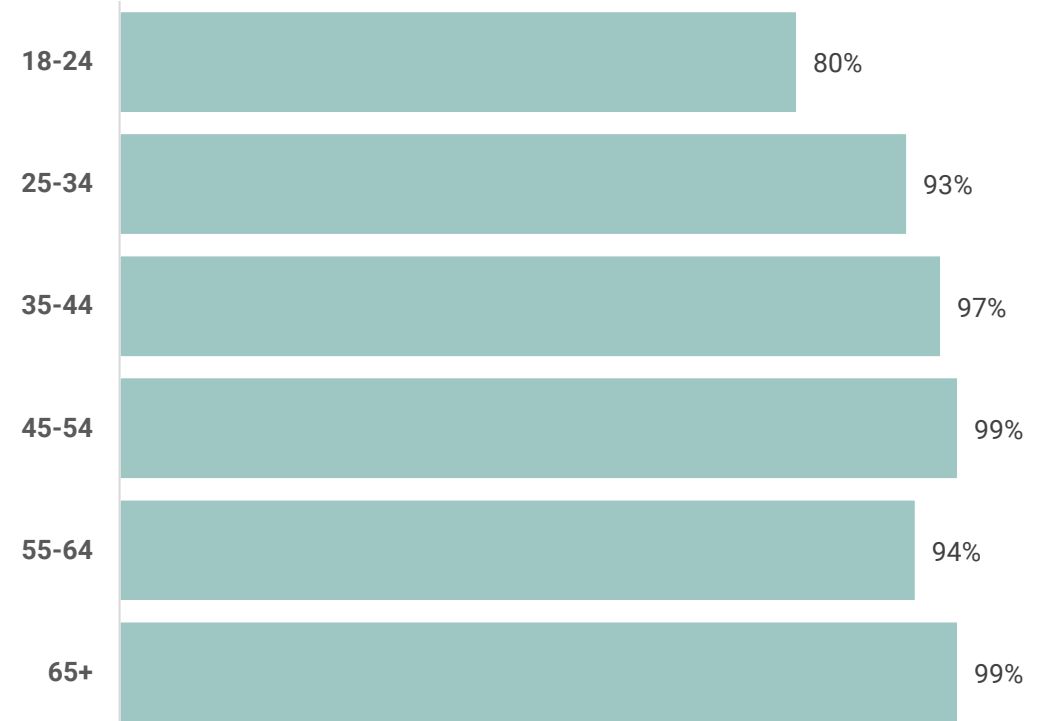
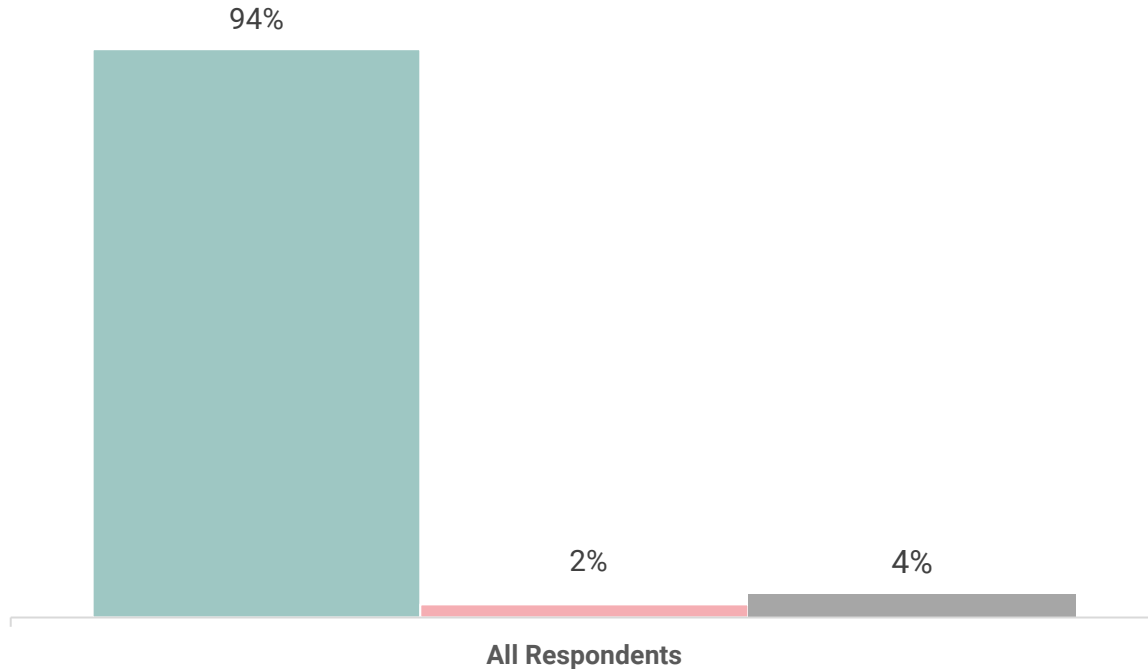
69% support the new transmission link between Portsmouth and Normandy. Support among younger age groups ranges from 73% to 85%. Only 46% of the 55-64s support the idea, which grows to 52% among 65+, with a third and a quarter responding "No", respectively. This is consistent with their lower-than-average support for energy infrastructure except for nuclear, less concern about climate efforts and less willingness to put up with disruption.

A very high proportion of respondents agree that energy bills have risen

Awareness is slightly lower amongst those aged 18-24, 14ppts below the total respondent average

Agreement that energy bills have risen

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

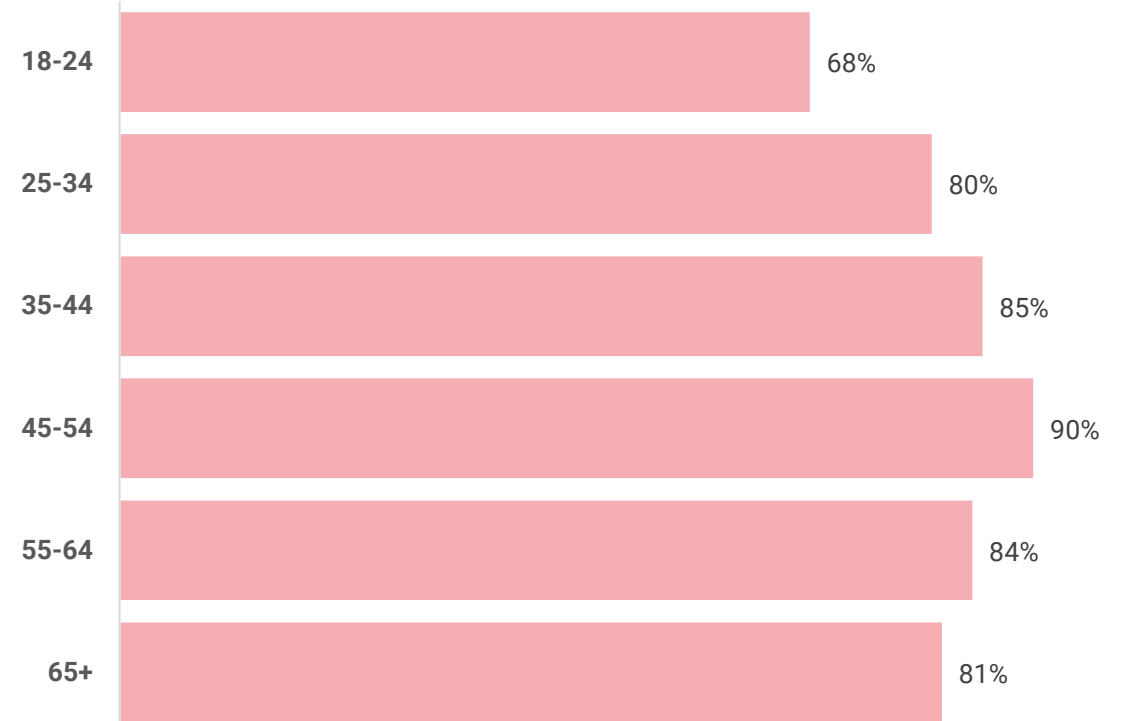
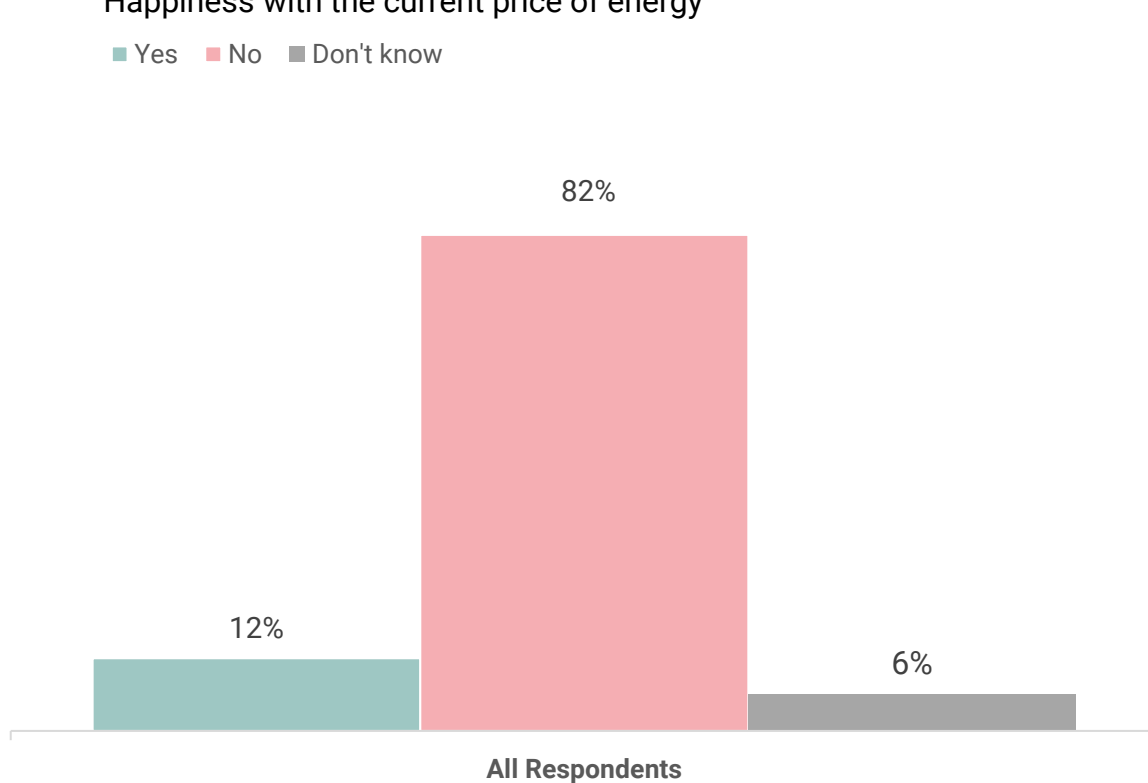


82% of respondents are not happy with the current price of energy

This figure is lower amongst the lower age bracket (18-24s), potentially due to lack of awareness of energy price increases

Happiness with the current price of energy

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

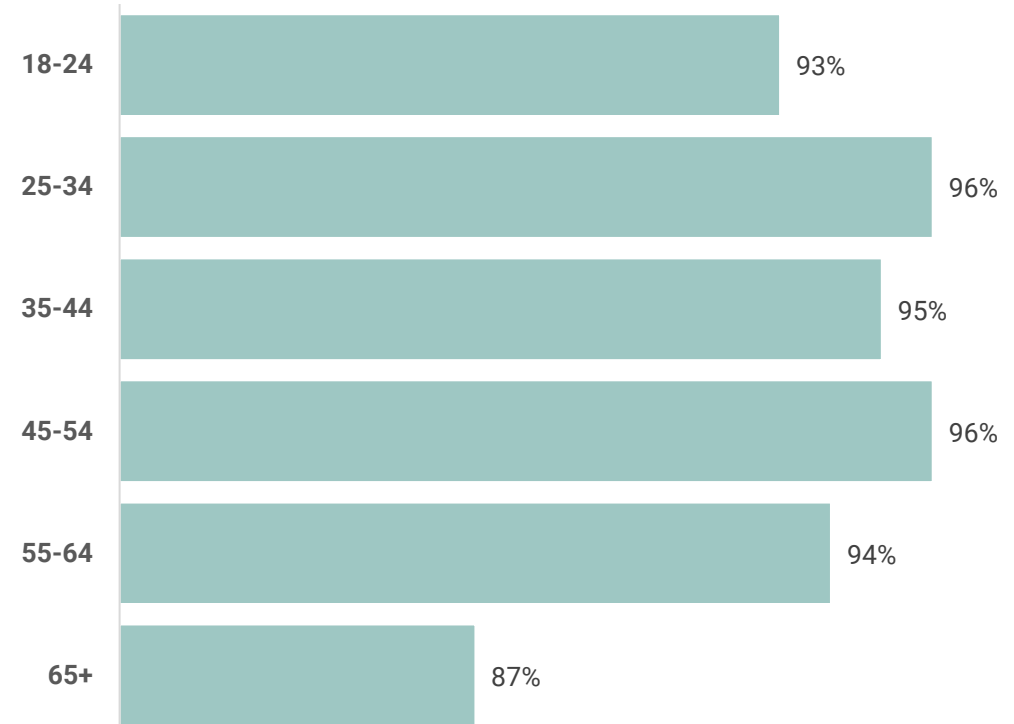
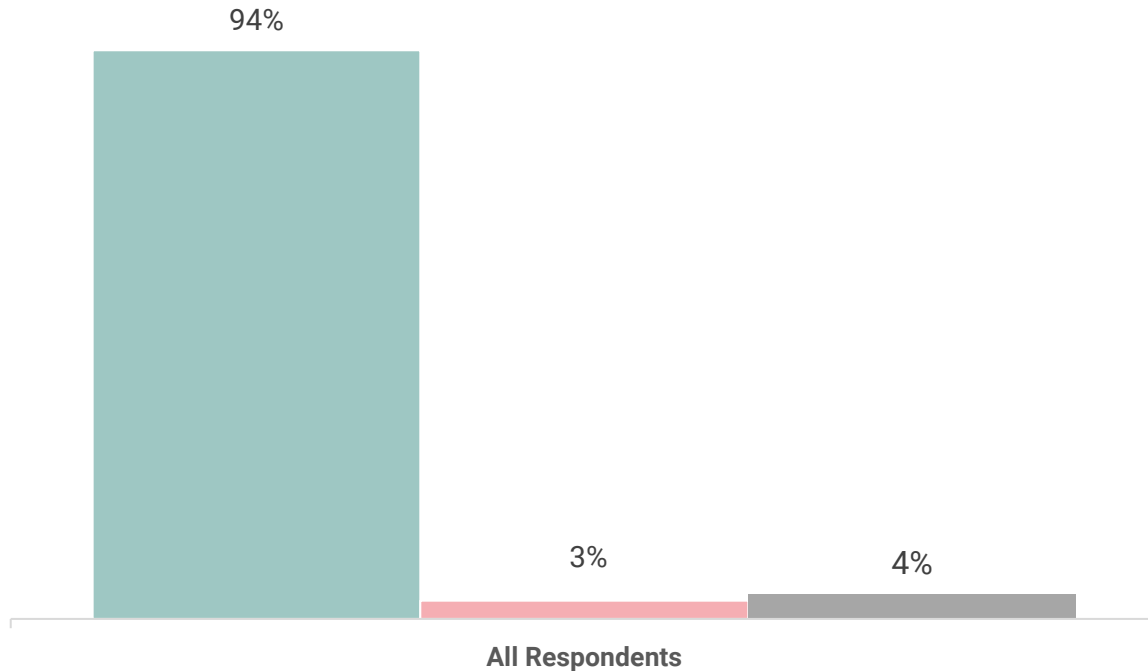


The majority of respondents feel the Government are not doing enough

However, agreement with this drops slightly amongst those 65+

Concern that the Government should do more to address the energy crisis

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

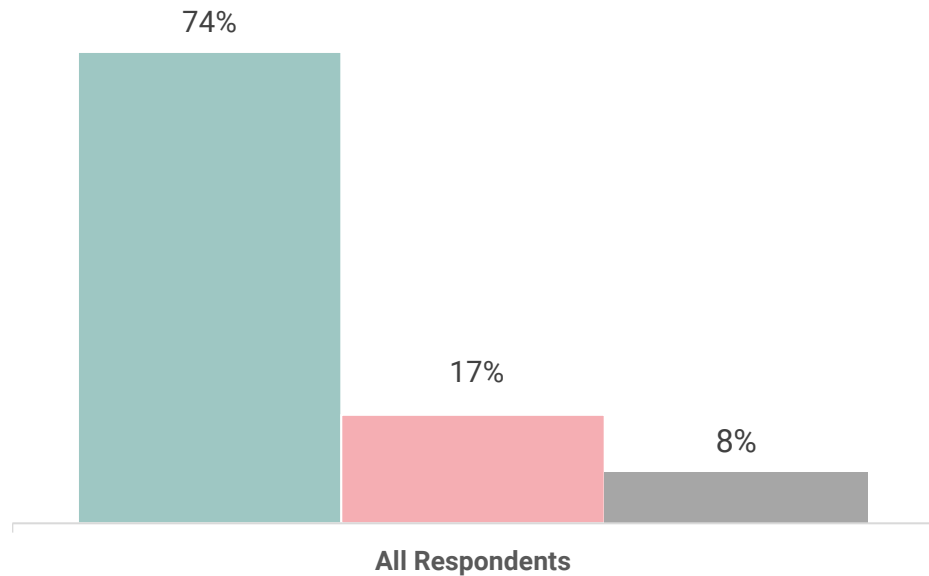


Three quarters of respondents express concern over the impact of climate change on their local environment

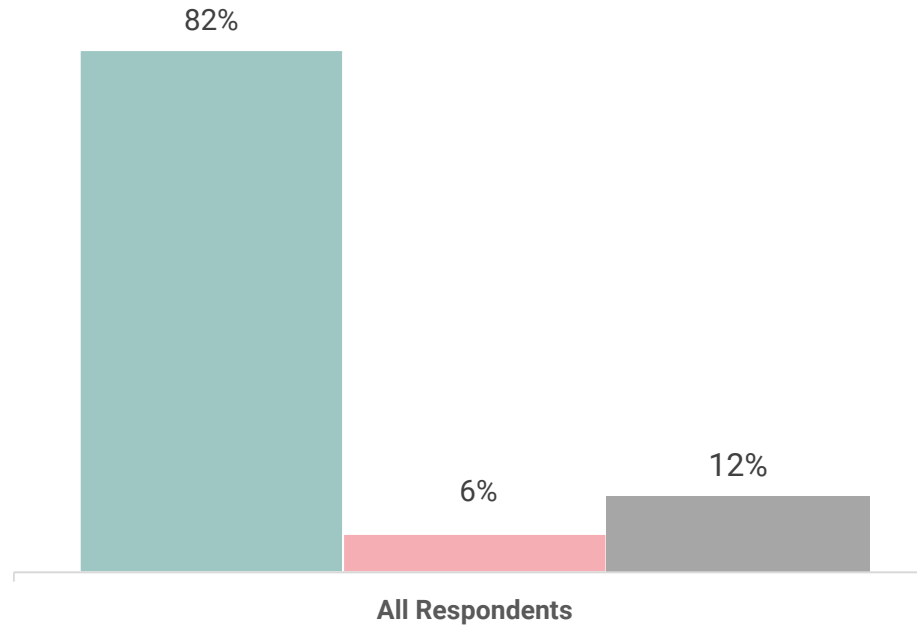
82% of people feel that there is a need to reduce these carbon emissions

Concern about the impact of climate change on local environment

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



Agreement that we need to reduce carbon emissions

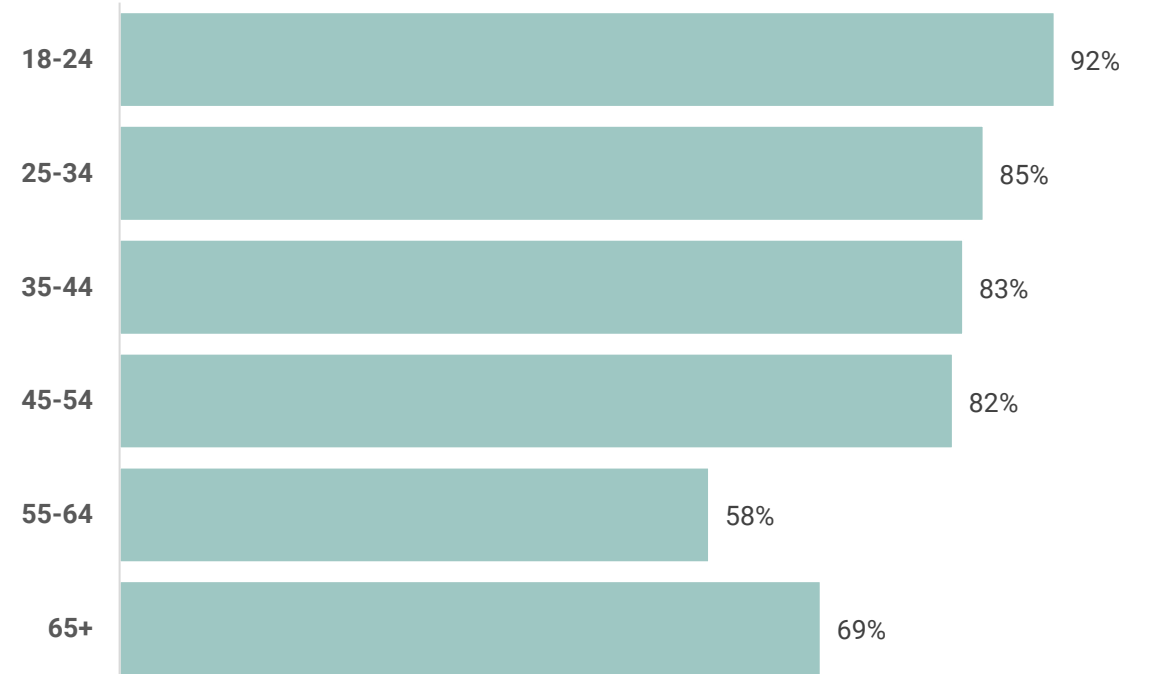
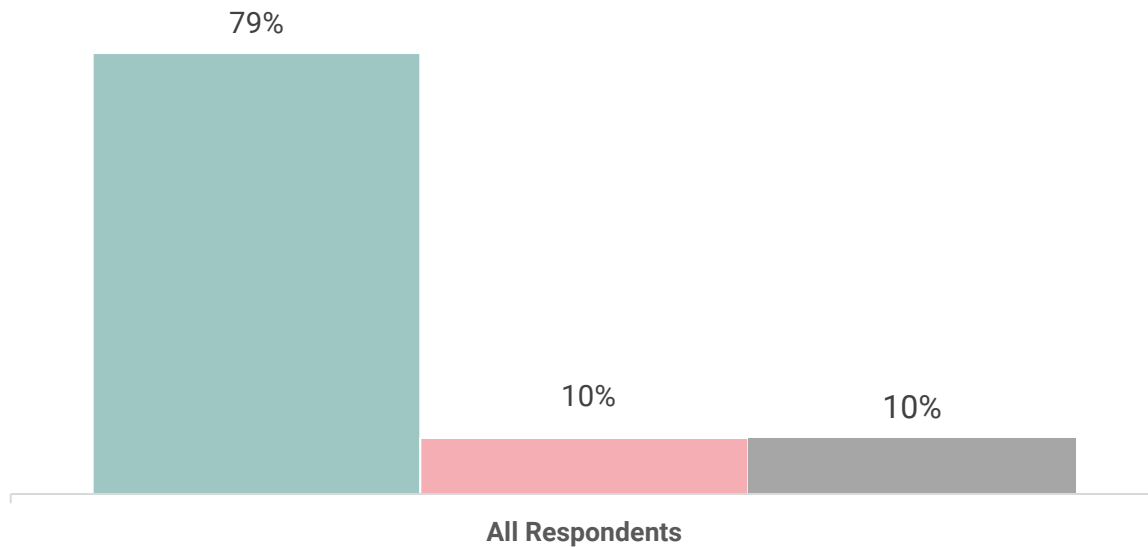


79% feel that the Government should do more internationally in response to climate change

This opinion is strongest amongst 18-24s, and weaker for those 55-64, with just under 60% agreeing

Agreement that the Government should do more to cooperate internationally to fight climate change

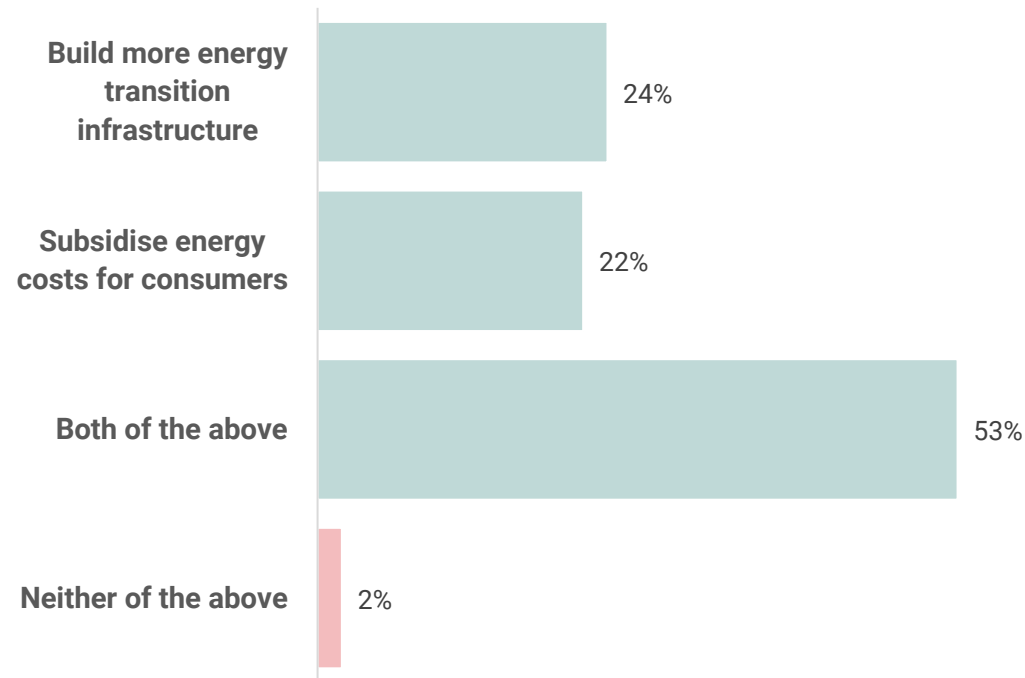
■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



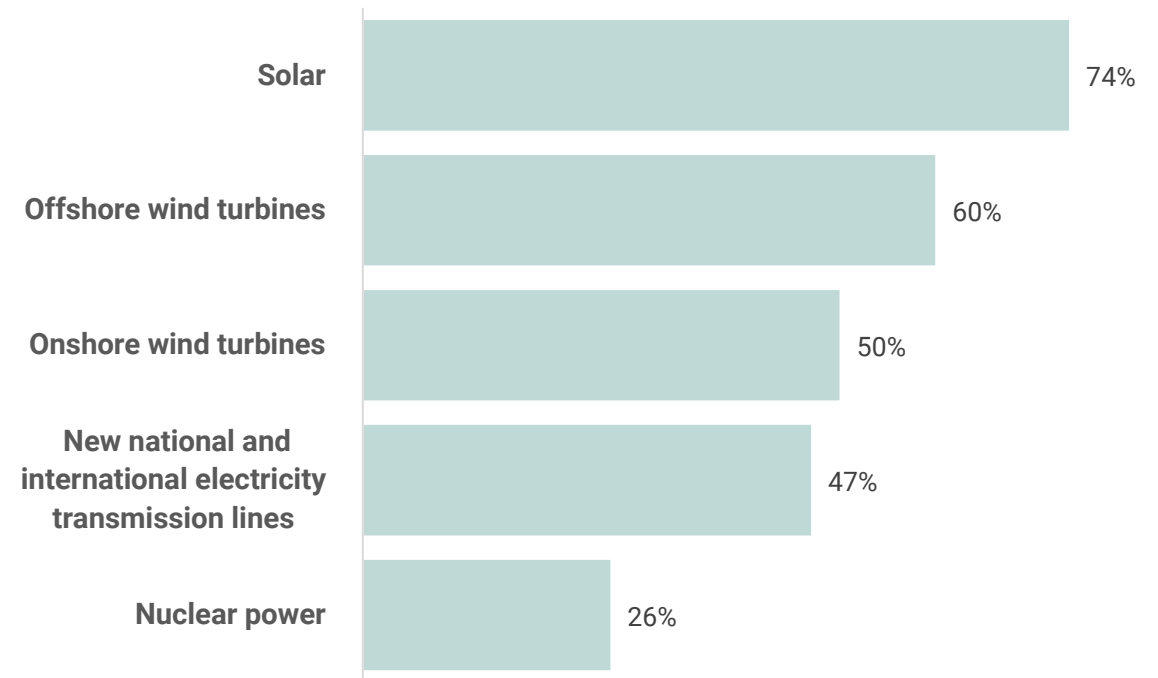
There is strong support for the Government implementing both energy transition infrastructure and subsidising costs

The strongest support is for solar power, with three quarters of people supporting this

Government responses to address the energy/ climate crises



Support for types of clean energy infrastructure

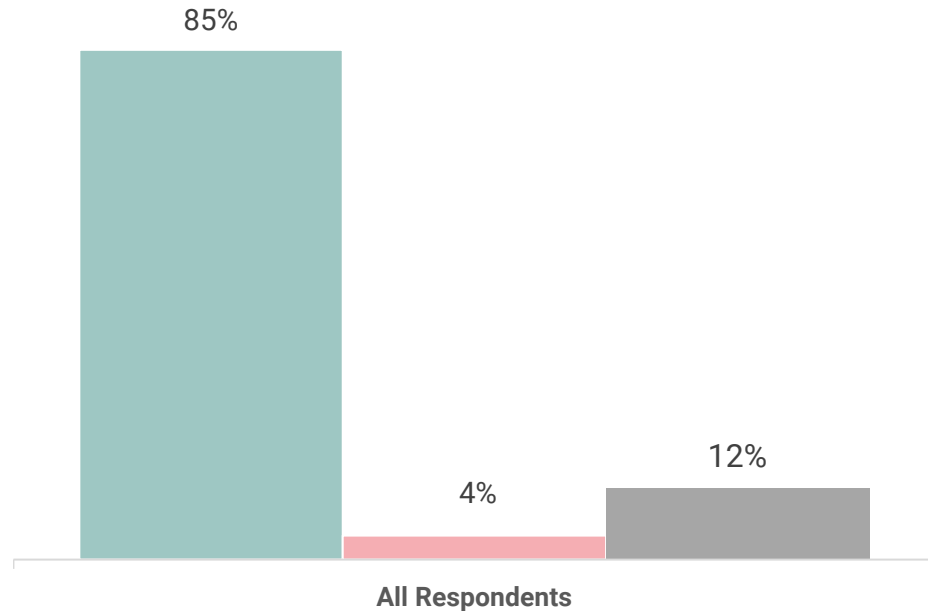


The vast majority support energy transition infrastructure for the purpose of affordable clean energy and creating more jobs

In addition, there is overwhelming support for this when creating more local jobs

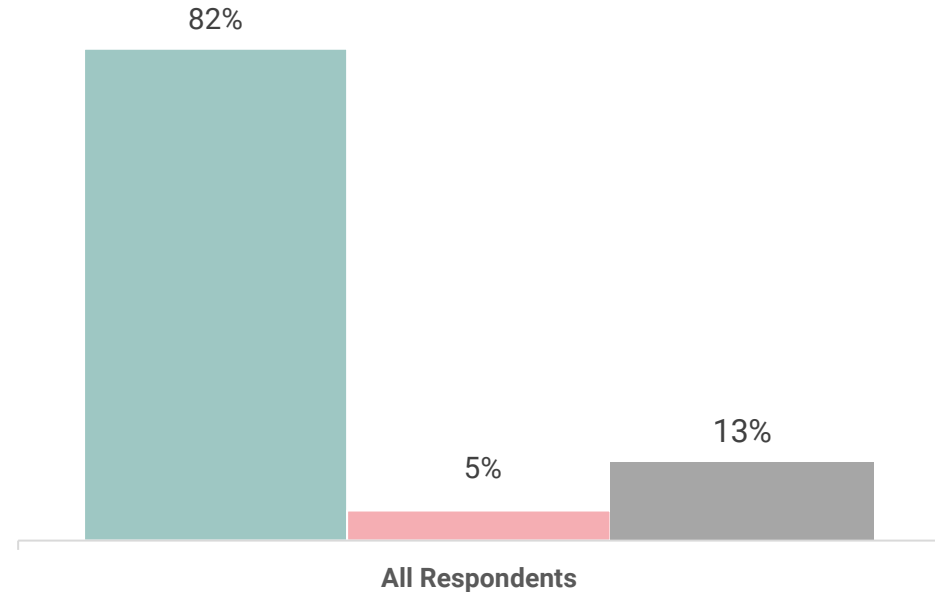
Support for the UK building more energy transition infrastructure for affordable clean energy

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



Support for the UK building more energy transition infrastructure to create more local jobs

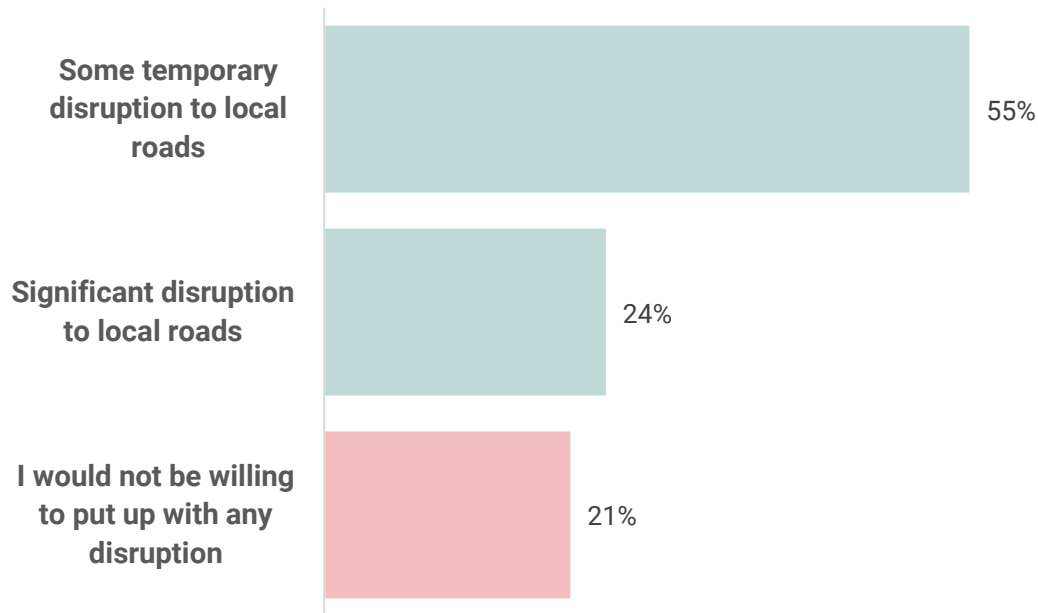
■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



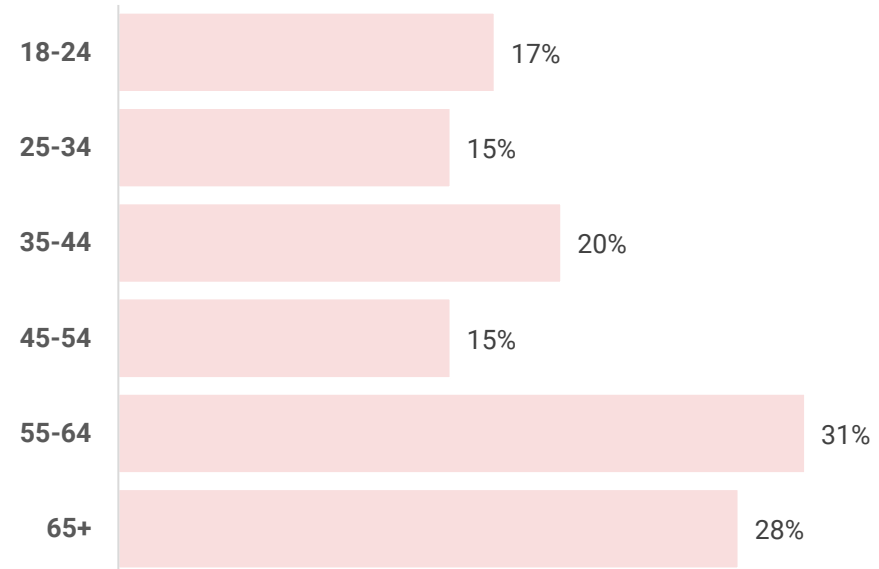
Over half are willing to put up with some temporary disruption to help achieve the transition to Net Zero, dropping to a quarter for more significant disruption

Older age groups (55+) are less willing to put up with disruption

Willingness to put up with disruption for Net Zero



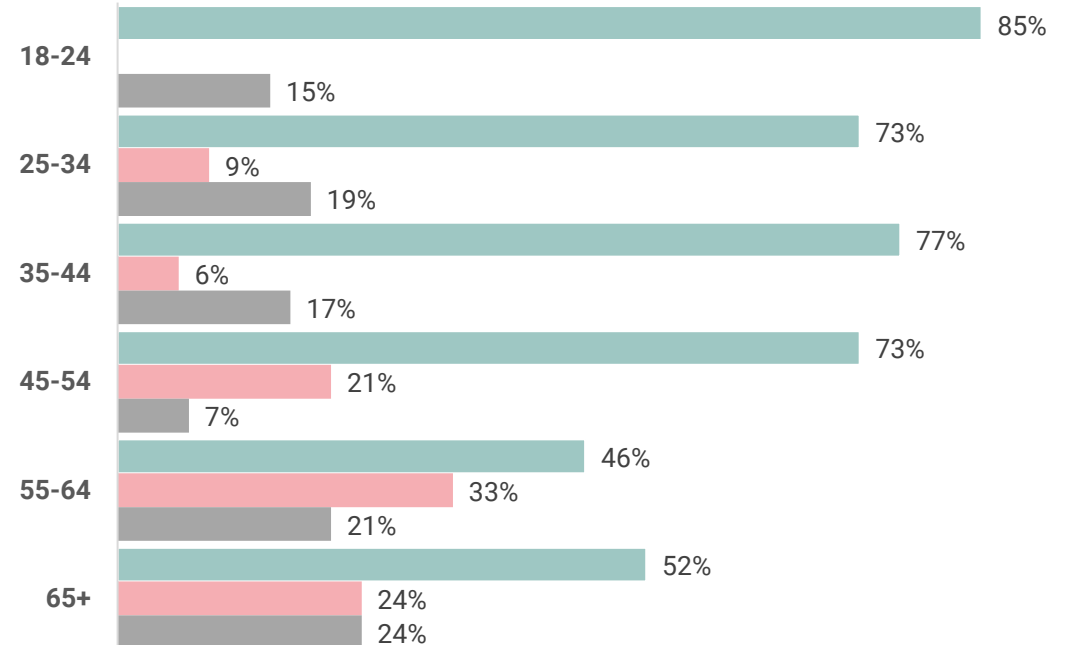
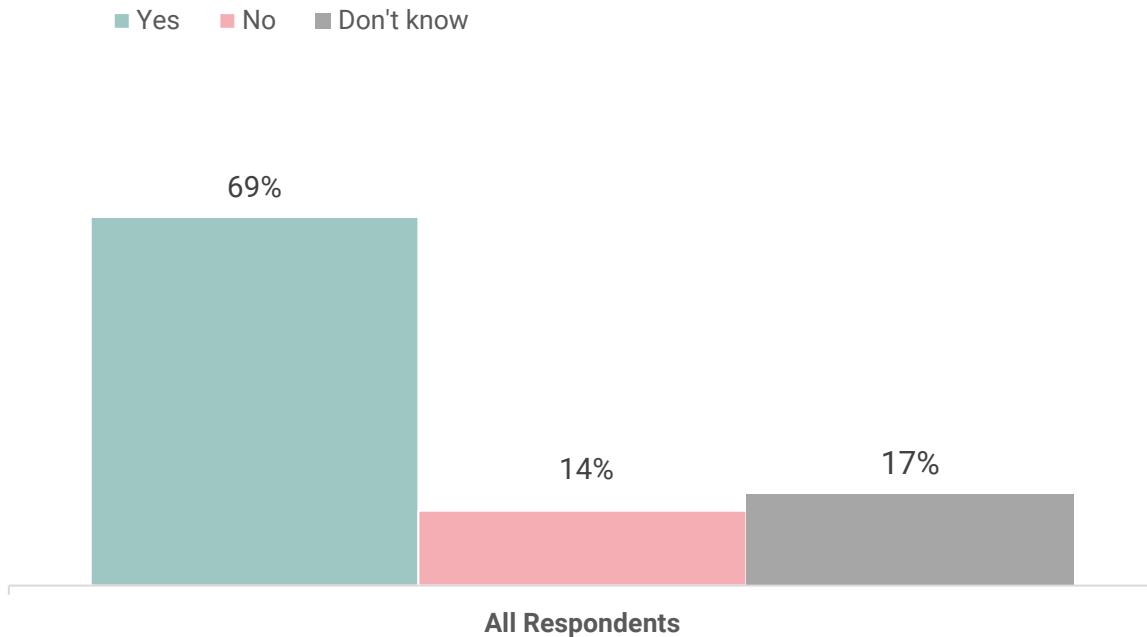
Not willing to put up with any disruption, by age



Promisingly, just over two thirds would support a new transmission link between Portsmouth and Normandy

Just over 15% stated 'don't know' whilst just under 15% said they did not support the project

Support for the new transmission link between Portsmouth and Normandy



Methodology and Sample

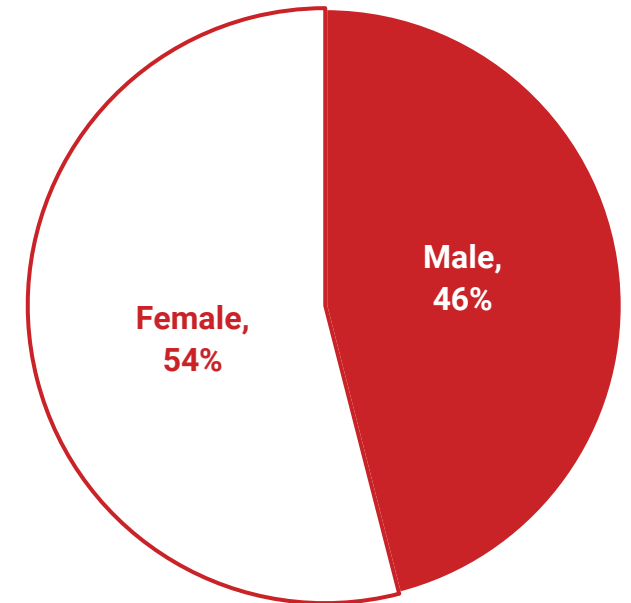
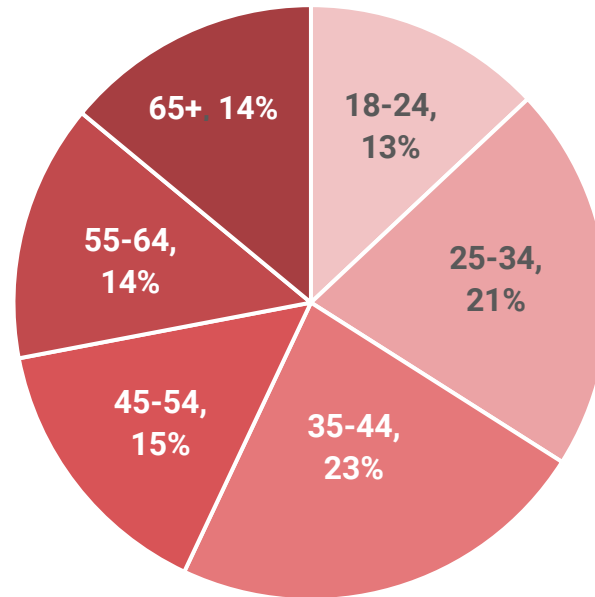
Methodology

A mixture of quantitative **online surveys** and qualitative **F2F interviews** across a **2-week** timespan. These interviews were conducted by an independent organisation, and respondents were not made aware of the company behind this survey in order to maintain objectivity.

The survey was completed by **478 respondents**

AGE: 18+

LOCATION: Living in Portsmouth



Savanta:

Savanta is one of the fastest-growing data, market research and advisory companies, born when eight best-in-class agencies, all specialists in their fields, joined forces to offer big agency benefits, while retaining a refreshingly boutique mindset.

The result? A full range of integrated intelligence services at global scale, married to deep sector, issue and methodological expertise, delivered with an entrepreneurial spirit and client-first mindset. We inform and inspire our clients through powerful data, empowering technology and high-impact consulting. All designed to help our clients make better decisions and achieve faster progress.

Appendix

Solar power is the most supported form of energy infrastructure

Support for types of clean energy infrastructure

■ All Respondents ■ 18-24 ■ 25-34 ■ 35-44 ■ 45-54 ■ 55-64 ■ 65+

