

Engaging environments

Stage 1: Capacity and consortium building projects Announcement of Opportunity

Wednesday 24 May 2017:	call opens
Monday 1 June 2017:	Je-S portal opens for proposals
Tuesday 25 July 2017, 16:00 (GMT):	closing date for full proposals via Je-S

1. Summary

The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) is inviting proposals for consortium and capacity building projects costing between **£50k and £100k** (at 80% full economic cost (FEC), with exceptions) to be delivered between October 2017 and October 2018. We intend to fund between 3 and 6 projects. The closing date for proposals is **16:00 (GMT), Tuesday 25 July 2017**. This consortium and capacity building stage aims to build a long-term, effective and innovative public engagement community, and support the formation of collaborative teams who will go on, in a second stage, to make bids to lead one, ambitious, large-scale project to achieve national impact and recognition for engaging the UK public with contemporary issues of environmental science.

This opportunity is part of NERC's long-term plan in public engagement through which we are seeking to build strong engagement between members of the UK public and environmental science research and researchers, to support leadership in public engagement with contemporary issues. Throughout this programme, innovative projects will challenge the current status quo, both in terms of adopting best practice in public engagement and building proficiency and confidence in environmental science leadership around the debate of current, contemporary issues that matter to the UK public. NERC recognises that these outcomes are likely to require collaboration on a national scale, across academic disciplines, including those outside of NERC's remit, and partnerships with organisations and publics.

2. Background

2.1 The context

Understanding our changing planet is fundamental to our future wellbeing and prosperity. NERC is the driving force of investment in environmental science. We advance the frontier of environmental science by commissioning new research, infrastructure and training that delivers valuable scientific breakthroughs and have a remit to promote public engagement and debate about the science we fund.

[Public engagement has the power to make environmental science research more relevant to society](#). This is particularly prescient in a time when environmental science has such potential to inform debates around issues facing our society. Engagement with members of the public is essential in considering solutions to these challenges. There is an opportunity to capitalise on the recent finding (RCUK commissioned insight on public audiences: see [Annex](#)) that academics and researchers are the most trusted by the public to provide accurate and reliable information to achieve this engagement.

Public engagement can bring benefits to both research and researchers, and members of the public; NERC is keen to encourage both through this initiative. There are significant opportunities to develop and build



public engagement capacity in the environmental science researcher community and NERC is seeking to fund activity that will build capacity and encourage development and adoption of new, innovative approaches to bring input of members of the public into research practice. We recognise that this will require new, interdisciplinary collaborations, partnerships and capacity building. Developing the necessary, long-term, meaningful relationships takes time, in order to develop ideas and become familiar with concerns, issues and expertise of all parties, and to reframe and develop common agendas ([Connected Communities Creating Living Knowledge Report](#)).

In August 2016, we published our [public engagement with research strategy](#), through which we aim to:

- Convene informed public debate about contemporary issues of environmental science, including the ethical and social implications,
- Inform, interest and inspire members of the public and future researchers in environmental science and the processes of research, in a way that is accessible and relevant,
- Carry out [public dialogue](#) on complex and controversial issues. Actively listening to members of the public allows NERC to make decisions that are relevant to society.

The programme of activity, of which this call forms part, focusses on the first of the three aims of our strategy, building on learning from:

- The first call under the 2016 public engagement strategy and their project reports,
- The outputs from a [Community Consultation event](#),
- Outcomes of the 2017 RCUK commissioned insight on public audiences (see [Annex](#)), which includes the finding that “researchers are by and large trusted to provide accurate and believable information about most aspects of natural and environmental research”.

At our [community consultation event](#), we identified that in order to meet our long-term aim of commissioning a single, large-scale project we need to provide opportunities for collaborations and capacity building before calling for our second-stage project in a closed call, open only to those who have participated in the first stage.

3. Scope

3.1 Desired outcomes of this consortium and capacity building (stage 1)

The projects being called for in this announcement of opportunity will have the dual purpose of: 1) Building the right partnerships and capacities to inform, shape and realise NERC’s long-term vision in preparation to bid for the second-stage, large-scale project and; 2) laying the important foundations for long-term, effective and innovative public engagement with contemporary issues of environmental science, both in terms of identifying and beginning to build the capacities that are required and bringing together the people and institutions that will lead in future. We are looking to those involved at this stage to be innovative and push boundaries to explore the broadest range of possibilities in order to achieve new outcomes.

NERC’s desired outcomes for this stage:

1. Capacity to lead and deliver effective, national-scale public engagement with contemporary issues of environmental science through collaborations and partnerships that drive forward the debate and deliver innovative public engagement.

The consortium and capacity building awards will bring together the right people from across research disciplines and public-facing groups to define a vision, specify outcomes and drive the area forward, challenging the status quo and institutional configurations, overcoming barriers and setting a new benchmark for future projects.

The projects will draw together best practice and practitioners from a broad range of communities and disciplines, learning from previous experience and leveraging and building



on existing expertise, capacity and resources. They will be led by (and work throughout their one-year duration to develop) teams with impressive, relevant track records from a broad range of backgrounds. These teams may explore a variety of models of delivery to achieve NERC’s desired long-term outcomes. The projects may use a variety of mechanisms to bring teams together, valuing the cost of doing so in terms of time, people and resources, including carrying out pilot public engagement activities to test issues, partnerships and processes in preparation for the [second stage of the programme](#).

Teams will require broad access to the environmental science research base and cutting edge public engagement practice to deliver the desired outcomes, and will incorporate collaboration and [co-production](#) among their delivery models. The team will value diverse contributions from a broad range of disciplines and areas of expertise. This should include relevant partner organisations who may be involved in the project at all levels including governance and the leadership team.

2. Strengthened capacity within the environmental science research community and beyond in order to foster excellence in the quality of future public engagement activity.

The projects will seek to raise the profile and embed the practice of public engagement in the environmental science research community. They will identify the broad range of capacities that need to be brought in and built upon, in terms of skills, abilities and approaches, and identify ways in which innovations and learnings can be shared and scaled to build a legacy of a practitioner community.

Projects will work to design agile, flexible, questioning approaches to allow the ecosystem of public engagement in environmental science to evolve as new learning emerges and in response to the interest and engagement of identified UK public groups with specific contemporary issue topics.

Building capacities looks to increase the ability to do a broad range of activities (for example networking, collaborative approaches, clear communication across partners, audience segmentation, high quality evaluation and a broad range of capacities between and beyond). An essential capacity that will need to be incorporated is the ability to synthesise relevant environmental science evidence, recognising different scientific opinions, in order to take an objective, balanced view on which to base engagement.

3.2 Long-term outcomes for the programme (stage 2)

The consortium and capacity building projects funded in stage 1 will be invited to bid in stage 2 to lead one longer-term project to deliver a much larger scale of public engagement than NERC has supported previously, achieving demonstrable impact across the UK and national recognition. We are currently planning to fund one 3-year project worth up to £1.3m (at 80% FEC, with exceptions) to achieve recognised, national-scale public engagement with the contemporary issues of environmental science. The outcomes of this longer-term activity will leverage the leadership and capacities that are built in stage 1 with the following outcomes:

1. Innovative public engagement delivered through collaborations and partnerships building on best practice and aim to set a new benchmark for future projects:

The successful stage 2 project may employ a variety of delivery models to achieve the desired outcomes. It will be led by a team with impressive, relevant track records from a broad range of disciplines. The team may include, or collaborate with, relevant partner organisations in order to reach public audiences.

2. Excellence in the quality of public engagement activity is fostered through stronger capacity within the environmental science research community:



The project will raise the profile and embed the practice of public engagement in the environmental science research community, supporting the skills, training, mentoring, recognition and support required. Proposals for the stage 2 project may identify ways in which approaches, innovations and learnings can be shared to begin to build legacy of a practitioner community.

3. Responsible debate, informed by a balanced view (or views), on contemporary issues of environmental science:

The project will bring leadership to the debate, delivering engagements that are based on syntheses of the relevant environmental science evidence recognising different scientific opinions and taking an objective view. Bidders should be aware that it is an inappropriate use of NERC funding to provide support to activities that pursue direct policy change.

4. Engagements are relevant, accessible and useful to identified UK public audiences and to research/researchers:

Engagements should focus on the UK public only. The project will adopt a robust approach to identifying audiences and tailoring engagements to them. Relevant and engaging contemporary issues of today may not be the same as those relevant in 3 or 4 years' time, so the project will have horizon scanning capability and the ability to be agile in seizing new opportunities.

The group leading this second stage project will have participated in the first stage, but NERC is not wedded to retaining original team configurations and would be open to collaborations of expertise from across capacity and consortium building project teams bidding in the second stage.

3.3 Types of engagement throughout

NERC's focus for this programme is on types of engagement, rather than any specific contemporary issue. Research Councils UK has adopted the following definition for public engagement:

"Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit."

As such, NERC expects work funded through this initiative to value the contribution and expertise of researchers, practitioners and members of the public, providing opportunities for multi-way engagement and learning. There are many successful and established communications projects, where information is broadcast to the public; whilst a percentage of the engagement delivered throughout this initiative may employ this model for targeted aims, for example, to assist profile building, the project should retain two-way public engagement at its core.

4. Proposal requirements

4.1 Eligibility

Successful projects must start, as a condition of funding, no later than 31 October 2017 and be completed by 30 September 2018. Activities must be free at the point of access for public audiences.

Project leadership team

The leadership team may include (in no particular order):

- Environmental science researchers,
- Public engagement specialists, including university public engagement departments,
- Other researchers across academic disciplines beyond NERC remit, or fields outside academia,



- Publics and/or public-facing groups (for example, charities, NGOs, community groups, local authorities, commercial companies providing a public service).

When submitting proposals using the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system (see full details in the [Application Process section](#)):

- The main applicant ('Principal Investigator' (PI) in Je-S) to this call must meet NERC eligibility rules as set out in the [NERC Research Grants Handbook](#). Proposals should be prepared and submitted by the Principal Investigator at the lead [research organisation](#), but should be co-created with input from all of the leadership team, and should represent the proposed work of the entire consortia.
- When research council funding is requested for members of the leadership team, they must be entered into Je-S as 'Co-Investigators'. This includes both those that meet NERC eligibility rules as set out in the [NERC Research Grants Handbook](#) who would be funded at 80% FEC, and those from business, third sector or government bodies that cannot fund their own participation and would be funded at 100% for direct costs (salaries, travel and subsistence).
- Those on the leadership team who will not receive funding directly from the award, but will have an integral role in the proposed project must be entered into Je-S as 'Project Partners'. Minor Directly Incurred costs may be requested to facilitate collaboration (funded at 100%). An organisation should only be named as a Project Partner if it is providing specific contributions (either in cash or in-kind) to the project. There is no limit to the number of Project Partners.
- The Principal Investigator must ensure that all costs associated with the leadership team are fully justified within the 'Justification of Resources' attachment.
- Costs for business, third sector or government body' Co-Investigators (regardless of the number) must not exceed 30 per cent of the full 100 per cent FEC cost of the grant.

4.2 Evaluation and Legacy

Proposals should:

- Set out plans to deliver robust evaluation of the consortium and capacity building methodologies employed and any pilot public engagements carried out as part of the project, incorporating its costs into those of the project.
- Build capacity to carry out high quality evaluation and reflective practice on future public engagement activity.
- Demonstrate how sustainable outcomes and impact will be generated (including beyond applications to the stage 2 call).

5. Application Process

5.1 How to apply

Proposals must be submitted using the Research Councils' Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S). The call for proposals will open in Je-S on Thursday 1 June 2017 and closes on **Tuesday 25 July 2017, 16:00 (GMT)**. Late proposals will not be accepted.

NERC reserves the right to reject proposals judged not to fit within the scope of the call, prior to the assessment panel. No associated studentships can be requested under this call.

Applicants must ensure that their proposal is received by NERC by 16:00 (GMT) on the closing date. Applicants should leave enough time for their proposal to pass through their organisation's Je-S submission route before this date. Any proposal that is incomplete, or does not meet NERC's eligibility criteria or follow NERC's submission rules (see [NERC Grants Handbook](#)), will be rejected and will not be considered. Applicants to this call may submit only one proposal as the Principal Investigator.

Proposals should largely be completed in the normal way, following the guidance in the [NERC Research Grants Handbook](#) and the [Je-S Handbook](#), with the following exception, specific to this call. Costs should be requested at 80% FEC in the normal way for eligible applicants. However, members of the [leadership](#)



[team](#) from business, third sector or government bodies that cannot fund their own participation can be costed for at 100% FEC (for full details, please see information about [‘Applying for funding for leadership team’](#)).

Requests for extensions to awards

Due to the requirement to submit a larger proposal for the next phase of funding, grant extensions will only be considered under exceptional circumstances (in line with the Equality Act 2010) and will require NERC agreement on a case-by-case basis. The research organisation (RO) remains responsible for compliance with the terms of the Equality Act 2010 including any subsequent amendments introduced while work is in progress; and for ensuring that the expectations set out in the RCUK statement of expectations for equality and diversity are met.

Je-S application

Log in with your Je-S account, click on Documents and create a new Document. Complete Add a Document: select Council (NERC); select Document Type (Standard Proposal); select Scheme (NC&C); and select Call/Type (NERC - NERC Public Engagement 2017).

As well as the Je-S proforma, a number of attachments, containing information to support your proposal and further demonstrate how the proposal meets the call [assessment criteria](#), must also be uploaded and submitted. All proposals *must* contain the following attachments:

1. *Case for support*, which can be up to 4 sides of A4, should comprise:
 - A description of the proposed work comprising:
 - Vision and mission.
 - Aims and objectives.
 - A list of the full leadership team and contributions from those not listed as ‘Co-Investigators’ or ‘Project Partners’: please state full name, job title and organisation (acknowledging that this is likely to evolve over the course of the project). Assessment panels consider the strength of the relationship between the ‘Principal Investigator’ and the [leadership team](#), and therefore the potential for the proposal to achieve NERC’s intended outcomes. A previous track record should also be included, where a description is provided of the relevant knowledge and experience of the leadership team and how this can be applied to deliver the objectives of the call.
 - Activities, including a work programme and milestones. The inclusion of a Gantt chart is an optional attachment type.
 - Outputs: a description of anticipated outputs likely to result directly from the activities in the short term.
 - Outcomes: a description of the beneficiaries and impacts, explaining how the short-term outputs become longer-term outcomes.
 - How your project will be monitored and evaluated, including success indicators.
2. *Justification of resources*: full justification of resources requested including those for involving all members of the [leadership team](#), which should include an itemised budget breakdown (up to 2 sides A4). Members of the [leadership team](#) do not need to be listed as a co-investigator if they have secured their own source of funding. They should be included in the Project Partners section of the proposal, where details of their funding source should be provided.
3. *Letters of support* from ‘Project Partners’ will be taken into account in the assessment process (letters of support from other members of the leadership team will not be required). Low quality and/or clearly last minute letters of support will adversely affect a proposal’s assessment. The validated letter of support must also contain the following information:
 - A benefit statement from the organisation of the ‘Project Partner’ describing how the proposed activity will positively impact the organisation and its work. This could include and explanation of the organisational drivers underpinning the ‘Project Partner’s’ involvement in the proposal, the ‘Project Partner’s’ objectives which the proposed activity will help meet, and the likely outcomes and impacts of the activity.
 - The nature of the collaboration i.e. how the ‘Project Partner’ will be involved and add value.



- The contributions, for example, cash, project support, the 'Project Partner' will make and an assurance that the 'Project Partner' is committed to the project for its duration and that those contributions will be made.

Proposals *may* contain the following optional attachments, where relevant:

- *Data management plan* (up to 1 side A4): any data of long-term value produced by the proposed activities will be subject to the [NERC Data Policy](#), and all proposals must include an [outline data management plan](#) to indicate what data, if any, of long-term value will be produced. As data sets may include information from engagement activities with members of the public, NERC will make arrangements for these to be managed in an appropriate data centre (which may be more relevant to ESRC). NERC will cover the data centre costs directly on behalf of the programme for archival and curation services, but applicants should ensure they request sufficient resource to cover preparation of data for archiving by the research team.
- *Technical Assessment* for applicants wishing to use a NERC service or facility. Prior to submitting a proposal, applicants wishing to use a NERC service or facility must contact the facility to seek agreement that they could provide the service required. Applicants wishing to use a NERC facility will need to submit a mandatory '[technical assessment](#)' attachment with their proposal (including aircraft but excluding ships and HPC). For NERC, this means a quote for work the facility will provide. A [full list of the facilities](#) requiring this quote can be found on the NERC website. The costs for the service or facility (including National Marine Facilities (NMF) costs) must be included within the 'Directly Incurred Other Costs' section of the Je-S form and also within the facilities section of the Je-S form. Further information on [NERC services and facilities](#) can be found on the NERC website and in the [NERC handbook](#).

With the exception of letters of support and services/facilities/equipment quotes, all attachments submitted through the Je-S system must be completed in single-spaced typescript of minimum font size 11 point (Arial or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size to Arial 11), with margins of at least 2cm. Please note that Arial narrow, Calibri and Times New Roman are not allowable font types and any proposal which has used either of these font types within their submission will be rejected. References and footnotes should also be at least 11 point font and should be in the same font type as the rest of the document. Headers and footers should not be used for references or information relating to the scientific case. Applicants referring to websites should note that referees may choose not to use them.

Applicants should ensure that their proposal conforms to all eligibility and submission rules; otherwise their proposal may be rejected without peer review. More details on NERC's submission rules can be found in the [NERC research grant and fellowships handbook](#) and in the [submission rules](#) on the NERC website. Please note that on submission to council ALL non PDF documents are converted to PDF, the use of non-standard fonts may result in errors or font conversion, which could affect the overall length of the document. Additionally, where non-standard fonts are present, and even if the converted PDF document may look unaffected in the Je-S System, when it is imported into the Research Councils Grants System some information may be removed. We therefore recommend that where a document contains any non-standard fonts (scientific notation, diagrams etc.), it should be converted to PDF before attaching it to the proposal.

Je-S Helpdesk

If you have forgotten your account log in details or are unsure whether you already have an account, please contact the Je-S helpdesk who will advise you. Email: JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk or phone: +44 (0) 1793 44 4164.

5.2 Applying for funding for [leadership team](#)

An exception has been made for this call allowing for organisations who are businesses, third sector or government bodies to be eligible to receive NERC funding. Individuals based in these organisations may be named as a 'Co-Investigator' in Je-S (if a collaborator on the project, as part of the [leadership team](#) and receiving funding through the grant), or a 'Project Partner' in Je-S (if providing significant cash or in-kind contributions to the project), or a sub-contractor (if purely providing a service, with no intellectual property,



author or other rights) and receive funds through the lead organisation (associated with the 'Principal Investigator').

All costs associated with the project must be itemised in the Je-S proforma and justified in the 'Justification of Resources' document. Costs for business, third sector or government body' Co-Investigators (regardless of the number) must not exceed 30 per cent of the full 100 per cent FEC cost of the grant.

Eligible UK Organisation Budgets

Eligible UK organisations, that meet NERC eligibility rules as set out in the [NERC Research Grants Handbook](#), will receive 80% of the full economic cost of the project, as per standard Research Council funding rules. UK universities are required to calculate the FEC using the "TRAC" (Transparent Approach to Costing) methodology. Other eligible UK organisations use an equivalent methodology, which has been validated by the Research Councils. Travel and expenses costs incurred by members of UK institutions will be paid at 80% and must be included as costs related to that UK institution.

Exceptional Organisations (Business, third sector and Government body) Budgets

Business, third sector or government bodies that cannot fund their own participation are expected to be able to comply with full and transparent costing for budget elements. These organisations will be supported at 100% FEC for the direct costs of the research/activity (from example, staff, travel, consumables). All costs related to these organisations should be listed separately and the exception box ticked, which will result in the cost being paid at 100%. Indirect costs (including estates costs) may not be charged on staff salary and other staff-related costs (i.e. statutory contributions analogous to UK National Insurance or Superannuation contributions). Indirect costs (overheads) may not be charged on non-staff related direct costs, for example, equipment, travel and subsistence, consultancies, conferences, etc. These organisations should not enter any costs in the 'Estates' or "Indirect Costs" section of Je-S. NERC will fund 100 per cent of justified costs for Co-Investigators from a business, third sector or government body that cannot fund their own participation.

How do I show costs on the Je-S proforma?

When applying for funding for members of the leadership team that cannot fund their own participation, including those from business, third sector or government bodies, the 'Principal Investigator' will be unable to add costed members of the project team to a proposal unless they have first registered with Je-S. To do this, the Co-Investigator (Co-I) will need to go to the [Je-S website](#), select 'Create an Account', and complete their details. Applicants should ensure that the Co-Investigator applies for registration with Je-S as soon as possible, and no later than seven working days prior to the date of submission.

If, when they reach the organisation screen, their Organisation details are not listed, the Co-Investigator will need to contact the Je-S helpdesk (email jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk or telephone 01793 444164) and provide details of the project with which they wish to be associated. Once the details are complete the Je-S Helpdesk will register the Co-Investigator, allowing the Principal Investigator to add them to the proposal. Eligibility of business, third sector or government body will not normally need to be checked if it is reasonably clear that they are appropriate to conduct the work. Where there is doubt checks will be carried out before proposal assessment panel.

When completing the Je-S proforma, the Principal Investigator must clearly show which costs will be incurred by UK research organisations and which will be incurred by partners in business, third sector or government body.

NERC will fund 100 per cent of justified costs relating to the [leadership team](#), however, the Je-S form automatically calculates the 80 per cent 'NERC Contribution'. Therefore details of the business, third sector or government body co-investigator should be entered as usual via the co-investigator screen on Je-S, but all associated costs must be entered in Je-S under 'Other Directly Incurred' and marked as an 'Exception' using the tick box, to identify that these should be paid at 100 per cent.



How will funds be disbursed to the [leadership team](#)?

Funds will be transferred to the successful PI's research organisation in the first instance. It is then the responsibility of that institution to disburse funds to the costed members of the [leadership team](#). The UK Research Organisation awarded the grant is responsible for the conduct and administration of the grant. It is accountable for the effective use of public funds, and must therefore ensure that all grant monies are subject to proper financial management processes. It is the Research Organisation's responsibility to ensure that expenditure on collaborations is subject to robust controls to ensure value for money and propriety and that all costs should be fully vouched and maintained for possible inspection and checks by, or on behalf of, NERC.

6. Assessment process

6.1 Assessment panel

There is a one-stage assessment process for this call. Proposals will be reviewed by an Assessment Panel comprising members with relevant expertise including public engagement, environmental science, and other relevant fields. Each proposal is assigned to at least two Introducers at the panel meeting, chosen to ensure that their combined expertise provides good coverage of the scope of the proposal. The panel will assess and rank proposals based on the [assessment criteria](#) below. During the panel meeting, in cases where there is a conflict of interest (for example, where a panel member has pre-existing links to an applicant), the individual(s) in question will leave the room while the proposal is discussed. NERC will use the recommendations of the assessment panel along with the overall call requirements and the available budget in making the final funding decisions.

Prior to the assessment panel, proposals will be checked by NERC and if they do not meet (or if very large numbers of proposals are received do not best meet) the requirements of the call or the submission guidelines, they will not be sent for review by the panel.'

Panel feedback will be provided by NERC to both successful and unsuccessful applicants.

NERC reserves the right not to fund up to the limit allocated to the call and to make changes to the budgetary limits of the grants.

6.2 Assessment Criteria

Proposals will be assessed based on their potential to deliver NERC's desired [outcomes](#) for this stage. In relation to delivery of these outcomes, the panel will consider:

1. Articulation of vision and a compelling case for achieving the outcomes,
2. Composition of the leadership team as to whether they have impressive, relevant track records, and whether governance structures are robust,
3. Quality of plans for how:
 - a. strong consortia, collaborations and partnerships will be built;
 - b. capacities will be identified and built;
 - c. innovations and learnings will be scaled and;
 - d. the profile of public engagement will be raised and embedded in the environmental science research community,
4. Where appropriate, quality of plans to deliver pilot public engagement activities to test issues, partnerships and processes,
5. Excellence and feasibility of the proposed work,
6. Value for money.



7. Timeline

Date	Event
Wednesday 24 May 2017	Call launched
Thursday 1 June 2017	Je-S portal opens for proposals
Tuesday 25 July 2017, 16:00 (GMT)	Call closes for full proposals (via Je-S)
September 2017	Proposal assessment panel
By Friday 29 September 2017	Successful applicants informed
Tuesday 31 October 2017	Latest start date for projects
Sunday 30 September 2018	Projects must be complete

8. Intellectual Property and Publicity

NERC will make awards on the understanding that the project partner will commit the resources to the project as described in their 'Letter of Support'. Where such commitment cannot be fulfilled NERC expects that equivalent support and resources will be found.

Collaborative agreements can be put in place to enable all parties to better understand their roles on the grant and to clarify the intellectual property rights (IPR) position. NERC does not need to see these but applicants are advised to put this in place where necessary to protect their best interests.

[Creative Commons](#) licences can be used wherever appropriate.

Recipients of funding will be required to acknowledge the role of the NERC in any materials and in any written or spoken public presentations about the project, and to comply with all reasonable [branding guidelines](#).

9. Reporting

Recipients of funding will be required at the end of the grant to report on the progress made against the project's objectives and to provide evidence of outcomes and impacts in [ResearchFish](#). Guidance on this and details of the reporting required in addition will be provided in due course. Evaluation outputs are expected to be made open access where appropriate and shared with NERC.

NERC will be convening up to two collaboration sessions during stage 1 (October 2017 until October 2018), at which, each consortium and capacity building award will be expected to be represented.

NERC reserves the right to approach project partners on funded grants to understand their benefits from the grant.

10. Ethics

The research organisation is responsible for ensuring that ethical issues relating to any funded projects are identified and brought to the attention of the relevant approval or regulatory body. Ethical issues should be interpreted broadly and may encompass, among other things, relevant codes of practice, the involvement of human participants, tissue or data in research, the use of animals, research that may result in damage to the environment and the use of sensitive economic, social or personal data. For full guidance please refer to [NERC's Ethics Policy](#). Applicants are required to follow their institution's ethical review process, health and safety, and child protection policies.

11. Contacts

We are available to support you during the application process. Please contact Hannah King, Public Engagement Officer, via email (publicengagement@nerc.ac.uk) or phone: 01793 411572.



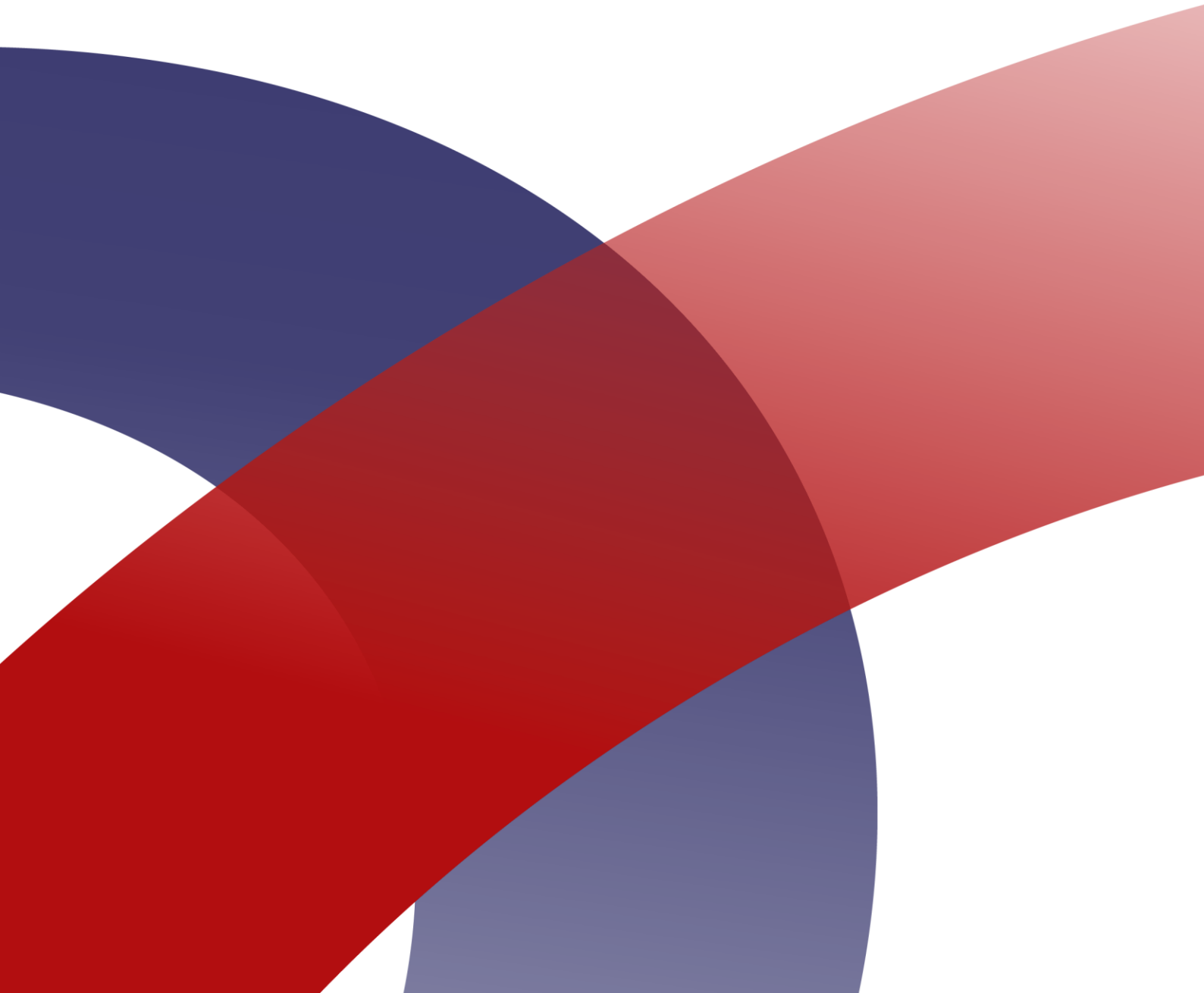
Annex: RCUK commissioned insight on public audiences

More information can be found on the [RCUK webpages](#).



NERC – PUBLIC INSIGHT RESEARCH

MARCH 2017



METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

In December 2016, ComRes was commissioned by Research Councils UK and the Natural Environmental Research Council to conduct a public insight project. ComRes partnered with Hopkins Van Mil: Creating Connections (HVM), public dialogue specialists, to deliver this project. This report focuses on the NERC-specific section and should not be taken as indicative of the findings as a whole.

ComRes' methodology consisted of three phases – the first was a short 'immersion' period which consisted of seven in-depth interviews with Heads of Communications at the Research Councils, as well as a literature review, culminating in a short summary report informing the design of the next two phases.

The second phase (conducted between 20th and 31st January 2017) was a nationally representative quantitative survey of 3000 UK adults aged 16+. Fieldwork was conducted online among 16–64 year olds. Due to lower internet penetration levels among adults aged 65+, fieldwork was conducted by telephone among this audience. The survey consisted of 22 questions, inclusive of 6 questions that were specific to NERC. Using this data, a segmentation analysis was conducted, in which UK adults were clustered into groups based on shared characteristics, opinions and behaviours. The segmentation analysis will allow RCUK and NERC to better understand who 'the public' are, as well as what they think, making it easier to tailor communications effectively.

The final, qualitative, stage of the project consisted of five workshops in locations across the UK, with members of two different segments at each. The workshops (conducted between 21st February and 1st March 2017) lasted three hours each, and provided insights into the drivers of engagement with research, what would make people more engaged, and what drives people's opinions and beliefs about research. The workshops included provision of NERC-specific written, visual and audio-visual stimuli to provoke debate and discussion among the participants, as well as delving more deeply into specific areas of environmental research.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

ENGAGEMENT AND INTEREST /

Overall, a significant minority of UK adults report having seen, read or heard about research into the various aspects of environmental research, with **engagement highest with climate change and television the most common source of information.**

There is **generally demand for more information about most areas of environmental research**, with approaching three quarters of the public saying they would be interested in hearing more information about endangered species (73%), natural hazards (72%), energy (71%), climate change (71%) and air/water quality (71%).

TRUST AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Researchers are by and large trusted to provide accurate and believable information about most aspects of natural and environmental research, with the majority of UK adults saying they would trust at least a fair amount of what a researcher was saying if they were to see them on the television without knowing anything about them. Trust in researchers is, however, slightly more reserved when it comes to talking about fracking and shale gas, with **lower levels of trust slightly more pronounced**

groups who tend to be less enthusiastic towards research generally (those who are older, less affluent, non-university educated).

University researchers are the most trusted source to provide accurate information about controversial environmental research issues like fracking – with three quarters of the public trusting them (76%).

Around 60% trust the BBC, although next most trusted source of information on fracking is campaigning organisations such as Oxfam or 38 Degrees (54%), suggesting there is some evidence for lobbying efforts to influence the debate. This is also supported by the proportion of people having engaged with environmental research because they saw someone campaigning about it being slightly higher for more controversial topics such as fracking (9%) and the effect of pesticides on bees (8%) than perhaps less topical issues other issues (e.g. natural hazards – 4%). **This suggests there may be a small section of the public which does have its views influenced by lobbying organisations**, although academic scientists are by and large far more widely trusted.

The trust placed in environmental researchers and their research can also be seen in attitudes towards climate change, with **large majorities thinking that it is important to fund environmental research (70%)** and saying that they understand how changes to their own lifestyle can impact climate change (68%). **This suggests that the public both understand the research and place enough importance to it in order to apply it to their day-to-day lives.**

ATTITUDINAL SEGMENTATION

As well as breaking down people’s engagement with research by their demographic characteristics, it is also possible to group people together based on their attitudes and behaviours. A segmentation was conducted using advanced statistical techniques based on the data gathered in the quantitative survey. Looking at their attitudes towards all types of research, there are five distinct groups across the public with contrasting views, but they can also be used to analyse and understand attitudes towards environmental and natural research in particular. The qualitative phase was designed to complement the quantitative findings providing further insight into engagement, interest and trust, as well as explaining the drivers of attitudes and behaviours.

Segment	
Establishment Advocates	Establishment Advocates have high engagement and interest in environmental research. What distinguishes this segment is that they support research for its own sake, and are very supportive of public funding of research. They are particularly likely to be broadsheet readers and have high levels of trust both in research and researchers. They are particularly likely to be interested in research into energy.
Idealistic Advocates	Idealistic Advocates also have high engagement and interest in environmental research. This group are particularly idealistic when it comes to climate change, and are the segment most likely to say that the Government should continue to fund climate change research, and to say that they would like to hear more about this topic. This group is slightly younger than average, more likely to be university educated, and to have high Twitter usage.
Pragmatic Neutrals	Pragmatic Neutrals have lower engagement and interest in environmental

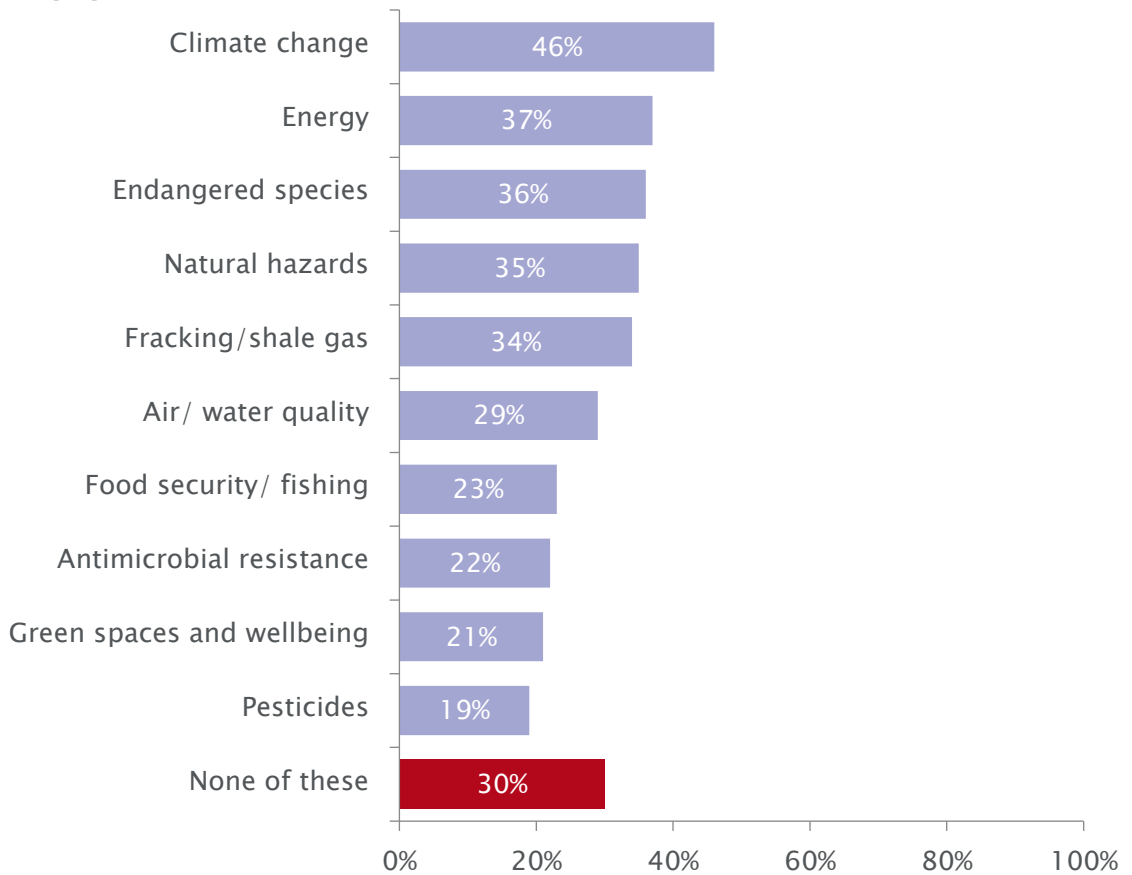
	<p>research than advocates. The topics that they have increased engagement with centre around issues that are more likely to directly affect them such as natural hazards. This group is more likely to be female than male, and more likely than average to have young children. They are not very frequent newspaper readers.</p>
<p>Traditionalist Sceptics</p>	<p>Traditionalist Sceptics have lower engagement and interest in environmental research, and are less trusting than other segments of academic researchers. The research topics that they are interested in tend to focus on fracking / shale gas. This group is slightly older than average, and less likely to be university educated. Their most common form of news is the Daily Mail or the Sun.</p>
<p>Disengaged and Disinterested</p>	<p>This segment has the lowest level of engagement and interest in each of the environmental research areas tested. When it comes to climate change, the Disengaged and Disinterested segment are most likely to answer that they don't know. This group is slightly younger than average and a large minority do not read a newspaper regularly – they are the group most likely to be Snapchat users, however, reflecting their younger profile.</p>

DETAILED FINDINGS

ENGAGEMENT WITH ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH TOPICS

UK adults are most likely to say that they have actively seen, read or heard about research on climate change (46%) in the last month, with pesticides (19%) being the option they are least likely to say they have engaged with, of the topics tested. Three in ten UK adults (30%) say they have not actively seen, read or heard about any of the core environmental and natural research areas, highlighting that a significant portion of people report being completely disengaged from environmental research.

Engagement with different areas of environmental research

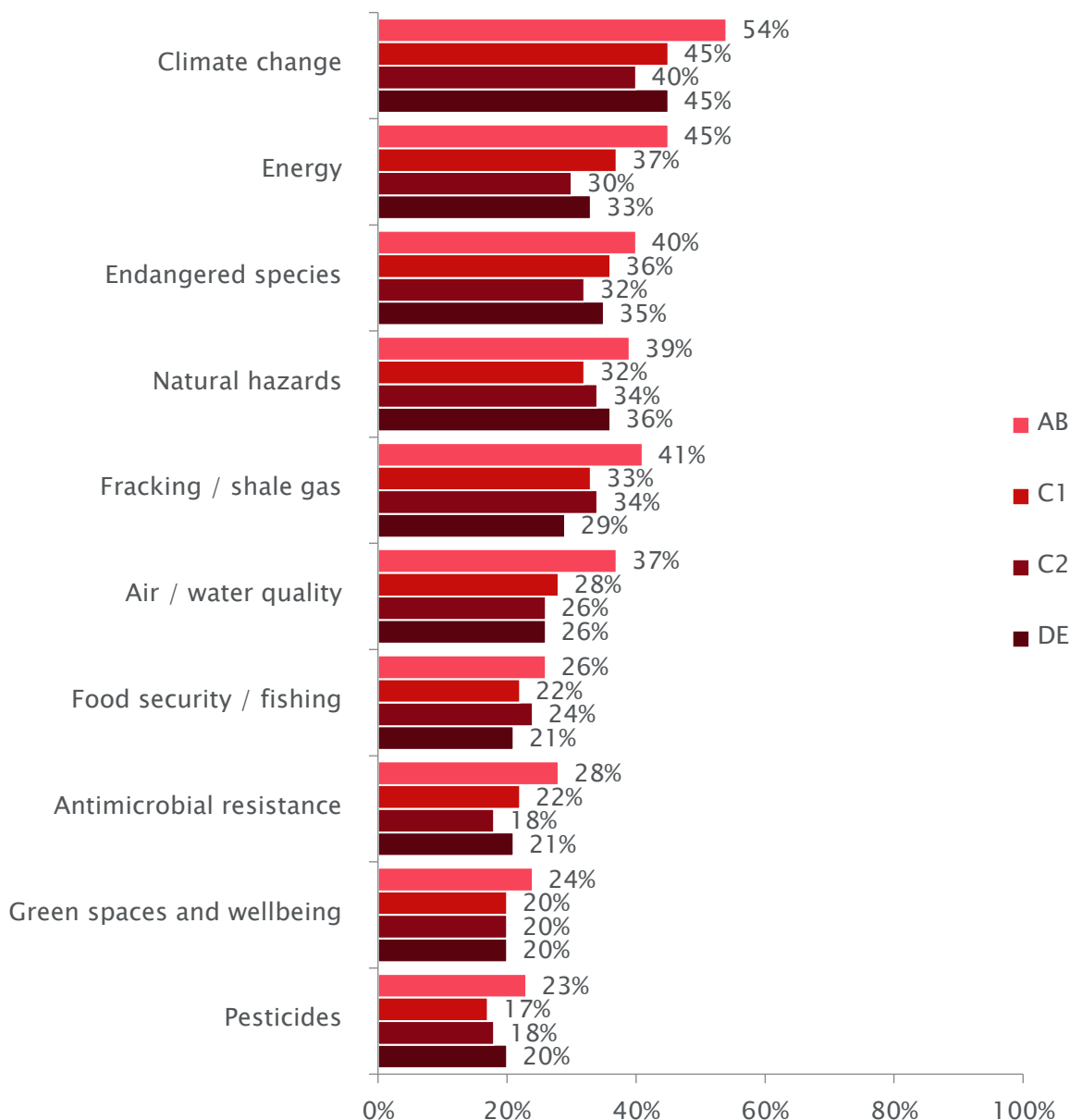


Q. Have you actively seen, read or heard about research into any of the following areas in the last month? By actively seeing, reading or hearing we mean reading an article or book, watching or listening to a TV or radio programme, or visiting a museum, gallery or conservation centre. Base: UK adults (n=3,000).

UK adults who live in rural areas are more likely than those who live in urban areas to say that they have actively seen, read or heard about a majority of the areas tested, likely linked to the greater impact issues relating to the environment may have on their day-to-day lives. For example, 44% of those in rural areas have actively engaged with research into natural hazards in the past month, compared to a third (33%) of those from urban areas. This is highlighted further by the fact that those from London are less likely to have seen, read or heard about this topic than those from all other parts of the UK (27% from London, 38% from the South, 34% from the Midlands, 35% from the North and 36% from devolved regions).

Generally, those from more affluent backgrounds are more likely to engage with environmental research, although the extent to which this is the case varies slightly by topic. For example, people from higher managerial AB social grades are most likely to have engaged with climate change (54%, vs 40% of skilled manual workers from C2 social grade) and fracking (41%, vs 34% of C2s and 29% of DEs). However, across topics with lower cut-through overall, much of this difference diminishes. For example, similar proportions of people from all social grades engage with research about pesticides and green spaces and wellbeing (see chart below).

Engagement with environmental research: by social grade

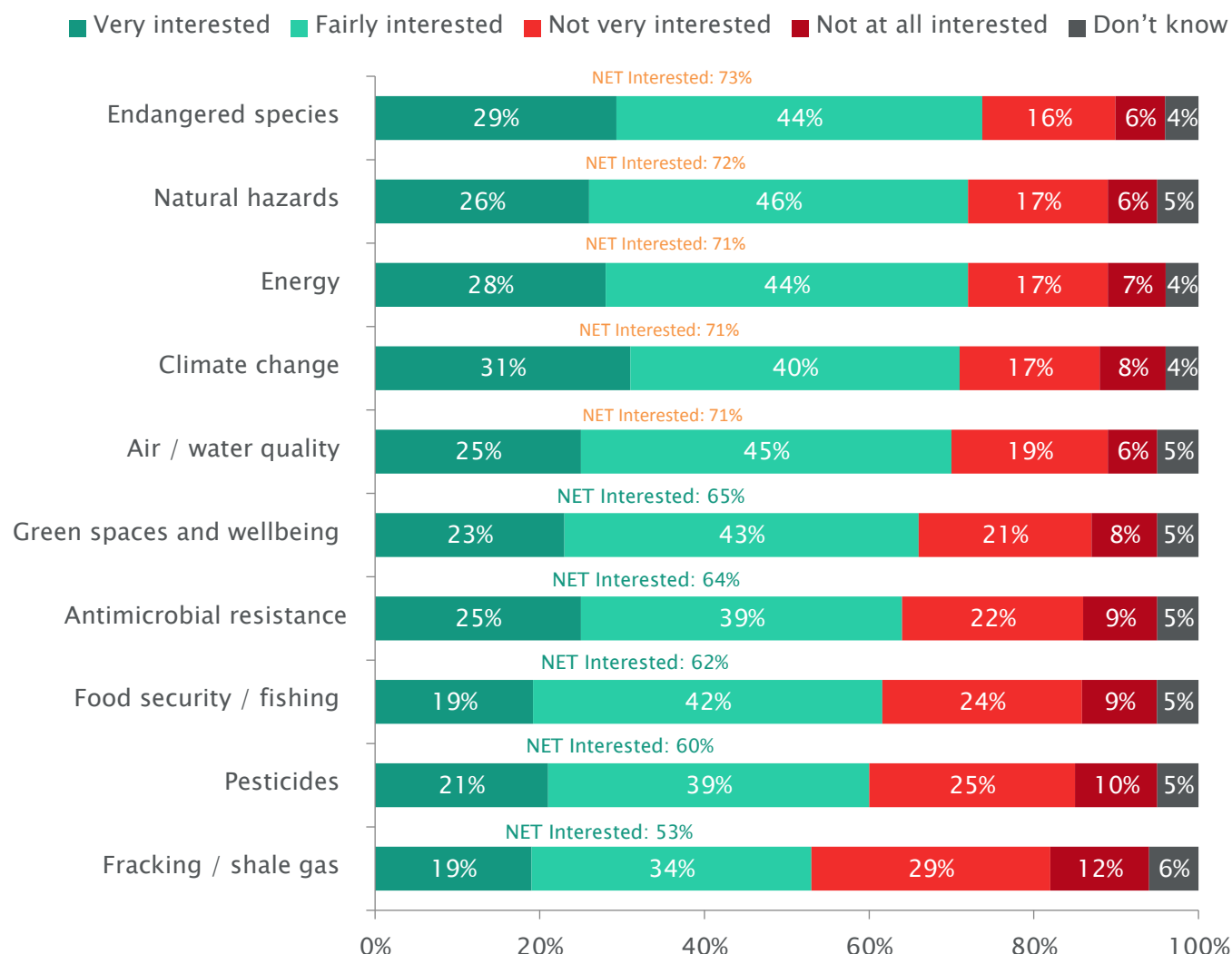


Q. Have you actively seen, read or heard about research into any of the following areas in the last month? By actively seeing, reading or hearing we mean reading an article or book, watching or listening to a TV or radio programme, or visiting a museum, gallery or conservation centre. Base: AB (n=923); C1 (n=894); C2 (n=574); DE (n=540)

It emerged from the qualitative workshops that **environmental research is one of the topics of research that people spontaneously bring up when they think about research, but it is less prominent in people’s mind than medical research or ‘lifestyle’ research** (e.g. into diet and wellbeing). Most people were broadly aware of research into climate change and global warming, but did not necessarily think about other areas of environmental research without being prompted.

Lifestyle also appears to have an impact on the topics that people engage with. Those with children under 18 are significantly less likely than those without children under 18 to say that they have actively seen, heard or read about research into each of the topics tested. **Those who are actively involved in community organisations are also more likely than those who are not to say they have engaged with all research topics tested,** in the last month. For example, more than half (55%) of those who are actively involved in community organisations say they have engaged with research into climate change in the past month, compared to 41% of those who are not involved.

Interest in different areas of environmental research



Q. How interested, if at all, would you be in hearing more about research into each of the following areas? Base: UK adults (n=3,000).

Despite less than half of the public saying they had seen or heard each of the research areas, a majority of UK adults say they would be interested in hearing more about each of them.

Older UK adults are more likely than their younger counterparts to say that they would be interested in hearing more about a majority of the research areas tested. For example, four in five (80%) adults aged 65+ say they would be interested in hearing more about research into air / water quality, compared to two thirds (66%) of 16–24 year olds.

Those from social grades AB and C1 are more likely than those from C2 and DE to say they would be interested in hearing more about research into each of the listed research areas. For example, 63% of UK adults from AB and 55% of those from C1 say that they would be interested in hearing more about research into fracking / shale gas, compared to 49% of UK adults from C2 and 44% from DE. This correlates to current engagement levels with UK adults from AB and C1 being more likely than those from C2 and DE to say they have engaged with a majority of the research areas tested in the last month.

As with engagement, lifestyle features also appear to affect interest in research areas. For all areas of research tested, those who are actively involved in community organisations are more likely than those who are not to say that they would be interested in hearing more about the research. For example, three in five (60%) who are actively involved in community organisations say they would be interested in hearing more about fracking / shale gas, compared to around half (49%) of those who are not actively involved in community organisations.

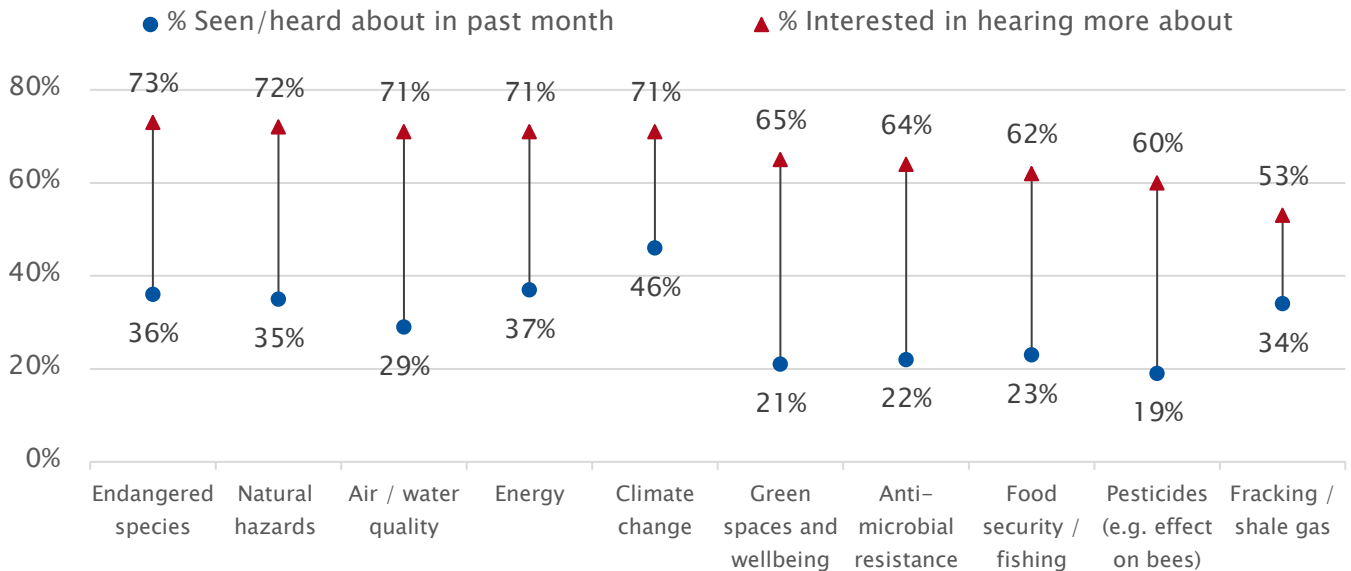
The qualitative workshops highlighted that broadly, people are interested in hearing more about environmental research, but for most this is not a spontaneous interest. While it scored highly in the quantitative findings on this metric (76% said that they would be interested in hearing more about environmental research, just one percentage point behind those who said the same of medical research), **the qualitative workshops indicated that people are more likely to refer to research into medicine, health or wellbeing when asked, unprompted, what research they would like to hear about.** However, reported interest in environmental research was higher than various other areas, including particle physics, engineering and arts and humanities, and when information and stimulus about environmental research were provided, interest was piqued. This indicates that there is enthusiasm and interest for environmental research, and that people would like to hear more about it. **The common thread regarding interest in environmental research is that it increases when it is perceived to affect people's lives (or their families') directly, for example by impacting severely on the climate in the UK.**

"The environment is probably more important for my children, because in the future it's not going to bother me at all, but it will bother them."

Establishment Advocate, Bristol

In terms of interest between the different areas, broadly speaking the public are most interested in the areas they are most likely to be already engaging with. This is shown by the fact that the same four topics (endangered species, natural hazards, energy and climate change) are in the top four for both interest and engagement among UK adults. However, this is not to say there is not demand for information about other areas of researchers. The gap between potential interest and existing engagement is smallest when it comes to fracking, which is largely driven by low overall interest (53%) but relatively high levels of existing cut-through (34%) – a difference between the two of 19 points.

Engagement vs interest in environmental research topics



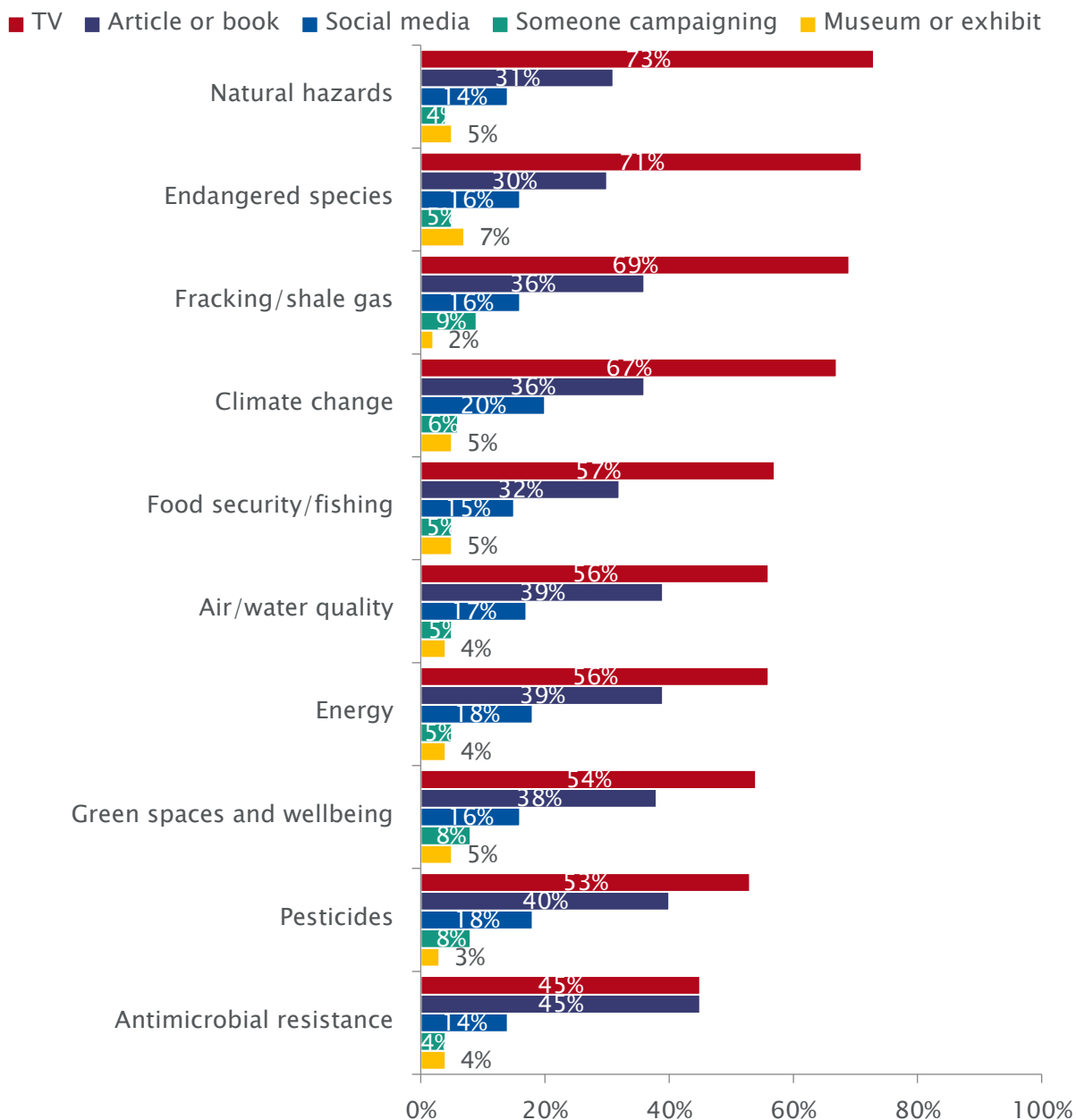
Q: Have you actively seen, read or heard about research into any of the following areas in the last month? / How interested, if at all, would you be in hearing more about research into each of the following areas? Base: UK adults (n=3,000).

The interest ‘gap’ (the difference between potential interest and current engagement) is greatest when it comes to research about green spaces (44 points), antimicrobial resistance (42 points), air or water quality (42 points) and the effect of pesticides on bees (41 points). This may suggest it is these areas where there is greatest unmet demand for information – although it is **worth bearing in mind all the research areas have considerably greater rates of potential interest than current engagement.**

CHANNELS OF ENGAGEMENT

By far the most common way that UK adults engage with environmental research is through television – between half and three quarters of those who have seen, read or heard about each area of research did so via TV. Research into natural hazards (73%), followed by endangered species (71%), fracking (69%) and climate change (67%) are the areas of research that UK adults are most likely to have seen on TV. **After seeing it on TV, reading about it in an article or book is the next most common way in which people engage with research** – particularly about antimicrobial resistance (45%).

Channels of engagement with environmental research



Q. And where did you see, read or hear about each of the following? Base: all UK adults who have read, seen or heard about each of the research areas tested (n=585-1,388).

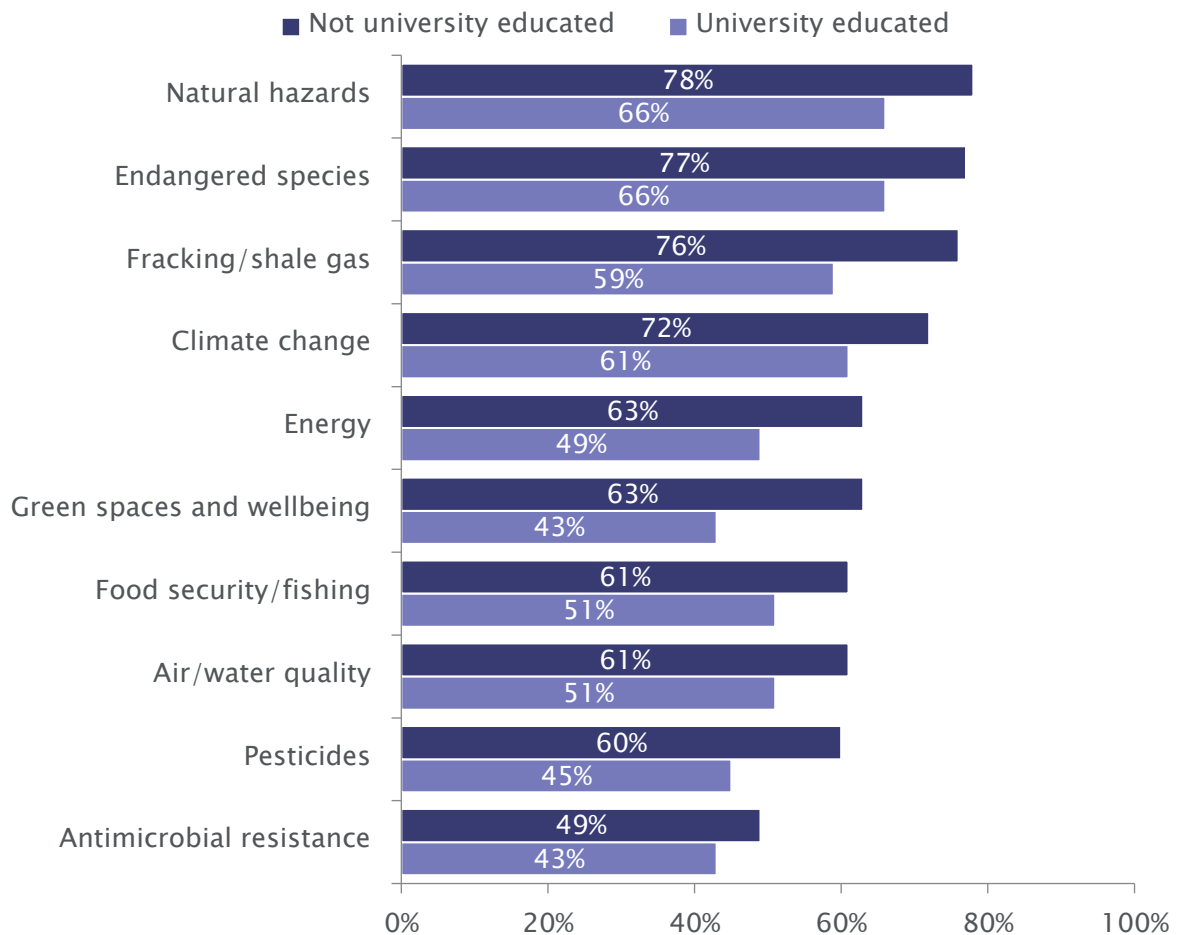
Between 14% and 20% of UK adults report having seen each area of environmental research on social media – no one topic particularly stands out as being prominent on social media. This trend is also similar for seeing someone campaigning about research – around 5% of UK adults say they have seen someone campaigning about each area of research. However, this proportion is slightly higher for fracking/shale gas (9%), likely reflecting the controversy that surrounds it.

For every type of research tested, UK adults aged 55–64 are the age group most likely to have read, seen or heard about it from TV, and this is particularly true for natural hazards (87%) and fracking/shale gas (80%). Younger UK adults (those aged 16–24) are also slightly more likely than their older counterparts to have come across environmental research as part of a museum or exhibit,

although interestingly, they are not the age group most likely to have visited a museum in the past year. This suggests that younger people may be more aware than older people that when they go to a museum, they are engaging with research.

The youngest age group (16–24 year olds) are most likely to report having come across research by seeing someone who was campaigning about it. Around one in five 16–24 year olds report this regarding research into fracking or shale gas and pesticides (18% for both). Unsurprisingly, younger people are significantly more likely than older UK adults to have seen each research area on social media – particularly climate change and pesticides (both 36%).

Engaging with research on TV, by education level



Q. And where did you see, read or hear about each of the following? Base: all university educated UK adults who have seen research into each of the areas tested on TV (n=256–674), all non-university educated UK adults who have seen research into each of the areas tested on TV (n=279–627).

There are clear differences between adults with different levels of education in terms of where they have come across environmental research – those who are not university educated are significantly more likely than those who have been to university to say that they saw research on TV, while the opposite is true for reading about research in an article or book. There are also a number of other demographic differences:

Engagement with environmental research differs by newspaper readership – regular broadsheet readers are more likely than those who regularly read tabloids to have read about environmental research in

an article or book, while those who do not read any newspaper regularly are particularly likely to have come across research by seeing it on TV.

Socio-economic grade is also a delineator of behaviour: those in the AB and C1 grades are generally less likely than their C2 and DE counterparts to have engaged with environmental research by seeing it on TV – this is particularly the case for research into natural hazards (around four in five C2s and DEs report having seen this on TV, compared to three in five and seven in ten ABs and C1s).

Idealistic Advocates and Establishment Advocates are much more likely than any other segment to report having come across research by reading about it in an article or book. Interestingly, while both Idealistic and Establishment Advocates are the most likely segments to report having visited a museum recently, they are no more likely to report having engaged with environmental research by seeing it in a museum or exhibit.

The qualitative workshops highlighted differences by segment in terms of engagement with research through campaigning organisations and charities. Campaigning organisations (specifically change.org) were mentioned by some Idealistic and Establishment Advocates as being sources of where they had come across research, while other segments (notably the Pragmatic Neutrals and Traditionalist Sceptics) had not come across research in this way. Indeed, some expressed scepticism about their motives (for example Greenpeace), while others had a more positive view. Many Traditionalist Sceptics and Pragmatic Neutrals had not heard of either change.org or 38 Degrees. This indicates that campaigning organisations are influential for a small proportion of people (Idealistic and Establishment Advocates particularly) in terms of where they hear about environmental research, but it they are not a common source of information.

In order to understand how people react to and engage with different types of environmental research, the qualitative workshops tested various NERC-specific materials including tweets¹, articles² and a video³ with the participants. They were shown the video first, followed by the written materials, and asked in to discuss in small groups how effective they thought they were, as well as whether or not they found them interesting.

The tweets tended to divide opinion – those who used Twitter tended to be slightly more positive about them, while those who did not were fairly dismissive, citing the fact that they would be unlikely to ever come across this content. However, a number of people's interest was sparked by the picture in the tweet about climate change in the Arctic Ocean, and **they liked the fact that Twitter is a good place to find short, 'bitesize' pieces of information about research**, with the option to find out more if desired (for example by clicking on links provided in the tweets). The figure of £10m (from NERC's tweet about awarding funding to investigate the impact of climate change on the Arctic Ocean) was also cited by some as **being eye-catching both negatively and positively** – some felt this was too high and would be better spent on medical research, while others were happy with the fact that this important area of research was being funded.

¹ [NERC's tweet about awarding funding to investigate the impact of climate change on the Arctic Ocean](#) and [NERC's tweet about science is paving the way for clean growth](#)

² [Planet Earth article about Who's to blame for bad air?](#) and [Liverpool Echo article about "Boaty McBoatface"](#)

³ [ITV news report about decline of wild bee populations](#)

"Twitter feeds don't tell you very much but they direct you in the right direction to find more information."

Traditionalist Sceptic, Glasgow

The newspaper article (from the Liverpool Echo), about a boat docked in Liverpool being mistaken for Boaty McBoatface, also divided opinion – while **some were attracted by the headline as they had heard of Boaty McBoatface, others felt that the article did not provide enough information**. Most also noted that the headline was very prominent and served to draw people in rather than being particularly relevant to the article's content. Neither Idealistic nor Establishment Advocates were particularly impressed by the article, with several perceiving it as patronising and not providing any useful information about research. However, those who did like the article (particularly Pragmatic Neutrals and Traditionalist Sceptics) liked it because it drew on something they had heard of before, meaning their interest was sparked. The Boaty McBoatface reference (and the fact the article was relatively short) did mean that people were more likely to read this in full than the other pieces of stimulus tested.

"I read it [the Boaty McBoatface article] because I'd heard about it, it'd been on the news"

Disengaged and Disinterested, Glasgow

"It [the Boaty McBoatface article] uses certain words to entice you in but the article is nothing to do with the headline"

Establishment Advocate, Sutton Coldfield

The video (a short ITV news clip about the effects of pesticides on bees) sparked a great deal of discussion. As it featured both a farmer whose livelihood was at stake, and a researcher talking about research he had conducted into these pesticides, much of the conversation focused around the idea of agendas – i.e. the motives the researcher and the farmer had for saying what they did. This links to a broader theme seen throughout this research – **who funds a piece of research is crucial to how people view that piece of research**. For example, while some people sympathised with the farmer as they felt he was simply trying to make a living and could not 'stand up' to expert researchers, others felt that the farmer had financial motivations so could not necessarily be trusted. This highlights the importance of being transparent about the funders of a piece of research when using it to engage the public.

The article 'Who's to blame for bad air?', published on NERC's website, was **generally seen to be too long and full of confusing 'jargon' to hold much appeal**. While its title was praised for being arresting and catching people's eye, most felt that it could not keep their attention due to its length and complex language. A minority (Establishment Advocates in particular) did feel it was interesting, and provided a lot of information if you were interested in the topic, but overall the sentiment was that it was **simply too lengthy and complex for most people to understand easily**.

"The bad air article – I might read that if I wanted to go to sleep. It's a load of reading, it doesn't really interest me."

Traditionalist Sceptic, Sutton Coldfield

Participants in the qualitative workshops were also asked to design a campaign to engage the public in a particular area of environmental research (they were free to choose the topic). In response to this, most people (across all segments) designed a campaign that **would highlight the impact of the research area on ordinary people's day to day lives**. For example, Pragmatic Neutrals in Belfast noted that it might be

interesting and useful to demonstrate how climate change is affecting people who live in Belfast and Northern Ireland, rather than the UK as a whole or even the world, which was seen as simply too large a concept for people to grasp. Connected to this, **the use of ‘shock’ tactics was also thought of by several different segments as a way in which to demonstrate to the public how research affects their daily lives.** One example of this was an idea of a campaign entitled ‘A World Without Bees’, in which images or videos could be shown to people to help them understand the importance of bees to the natural environment. Others noted that they would be put off by what they perceived as ‘scaremongering’, however, indicating that there is a fine line between highlighting risks and dangers and putting people off by being too negative.

“We would want them to understand what the loss of bees would mean, and its affects – some people might think that it’s no different to ladybirds dying off.”

Traditionalist Sceptic, Sutton Coldfield

“I’m thinking about Joe Public – what it means for Joe Public.”

Establishment Advocate, Bristol

Many people said that their campaign would use television as the main channel as a way of drawing people’s attention, noting that they themselves were most likely to notice something on the TV news or an advert than any other channel. Using social media (particularly Facebook) was also cited as a good way in which to engage young people. Other themes from this exercise included the use of **striking visual materials (both pictures and videos) in order to draw people’s attention, as well as providing short pieces of information to the public using bullet points, in as simple, short and engaging a format as possible.** This view was particularly prevalent among Pragmatic Neutrals, who felt they were simply too busy to be able to read long articles about environmental research. Idealistic Advocates tended to think of a campaign heavily featuring social media and media outlets such as BuzzFeed.

“If you want to get a point across, it needs to be short and snappy.”

Idealistic Advocate, Belfast

Overall, **academic researchers were viewed as being the best people to deliver messages** and talk about research, as they are seen to have expertise in their field, and crucially, are not viewed as having an ‘agenda’ for the results of their research. Similarly, well-known and respected figures such as David Attenborough or Brian Cox were given as examples of people who would be listened to and trusted when discussing research.

“We would have a good question at the beginning, and use information from a scientist, rather than the Government.”

Pragmatic Neutral, Newport

Several people from across the different segments had the idea of providing a ‘call to action’, specifically regarding climate change, acknowledging that most people know climate change will have negative effects, but that they don’t know very much about what they can practically do to make a difference.

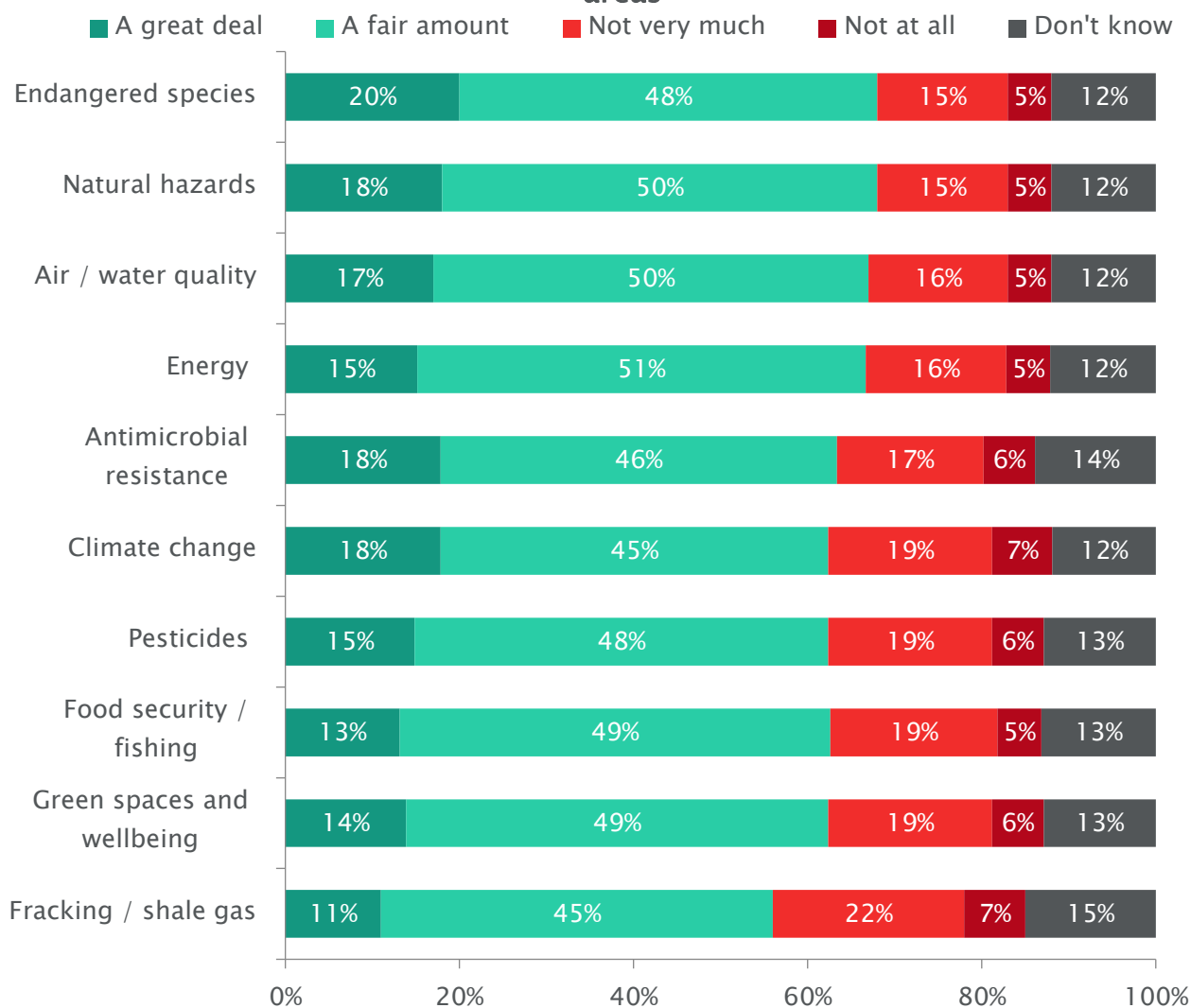
“There needs to be a message that there’s something individuals can do to make a change, if it’s a small change and isn’t going to cost or take up time.”

Disengaged and Disinterested, Glasgow

TRUST IN RESEARCHERS TO SPEAK ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

When researchers speak on television, around two thirds of the public will generally believe what they are saying, depending on the exact topic being discussed. They are most likely to be believed talking about endangered species and natural hazards, (69% for both) – although nearly as many people would believe an environmental researcher or scientist talking about air/water quality (67%), renewable energy (66%) and climate change (63%) too.

Trust in researchers to speak about specific environmental research areas



Q. If you were to hear a researchers or scientist, who you did not know anything about, talking about each of the following issues on the news, to what extent, if at all, would you believe what they were saying? Base: UK adults (n=3,000).

Despite generally large numbers of people trusting researchers on most topics related to environmental science, the *level* of trust is perhaps not unconditional. On the whole, around half of UK adults say they would believe “a fair amount” of what an environmental scientist was saying if they saw them on the television, compared to less than one in five who would believe a great deal (e.g. antimicrobial resistance: 18%). This is broadly in line with attitudes towards researchers generally, with people being more likely to say they trust university academics and researchers to present accurate and truthful information “a fair amount” (48%) rather than “a great deal” (32%) – with the same trend also present for economists and scientists working for private companies (47% vs 23%).

With this in mind, people are therefore likely to be open to what researchers have to say, but they may not necessarily believe everything a researcher says word-for-word. **When speaking in the media, it may therefore be worth researchers explaining their evidence and its impact as much as possible**, rather than just describing what their conclusions are. The qualitative findings also supported this conclusion – when watching the ITV News clip about bees and pesticides, for example, people generally felt that the researcher was a trustworthy source of information as he was not perceived to have an ulterior motive for his findings, and was an expert in the subject.

“He knows what he is talking about and can back up what he is saying.”

Idealistic Advocate, Sutton Coldfield

Generally, **levels of trust in environmental researchers are relatively consistent across the population**. For example, similar proportions of each different age group say they would trust a scientist speaking about climate change (57%–65%), as is true between those who have and have not been to university themselves (67% vs 60%). Broadsheet newspaper readers (72%) and those who read web-based media, such as BuzzFeed and Huffington Post (72%), are slightly more likely than those who read tabloid papers (62%) to say they trust researchers on climate change. This suggests that **media consumption may have some impact on attitudes towards researchers**, although the effect of this would appear to be slight as twice as many tabloid readers say they would believe what a researcher says on climate change than would say they would not (62% vs 29%).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRUST AND ENGAGEMENT

As might be expected, **people who support publicly funded research are more likely than those who oppose it to believe scientists talking about environmental research**. For example, 67% of those who support public funding say they would believe a scientist talking about climate change, whereas opponents of public funding are split about whether they would believe them or not (48% vs 42%) – suggesting that negative opinions towards research generally are associated with lower levels of trust in the researchers themselves.

This also emerged in the segmentation analysis, with **the segments more positive towards research generally expressing higher than average trust in environmental researchers** (75% of Establishment Advocates and Idealistic Advocates trust them on climate change). Those who are less trusting towards environmental researchers on the other hand are split between those who express more hostile opinions towards research and those who simply do not engage with it: two in five Traditionalist Sceptics (39%) say they would not believe a scientist talking about climate change – as do one in three (33%) of those from the Disengaged and Disinterested segment.

LOWER TRUST IN RESEARCHERS ON FRACKING

Across the population as a whole, the exception to the trend of generally high levels of trust in environmental researchers is in regards to fracking and shale gas. On this issue, the proportion of people who would believe a scientist talking about it drops from two thirds seen for other issues to just over half (56%). Correspondingly, distrust increases slightly from 20–25% to about three in ten (29%).

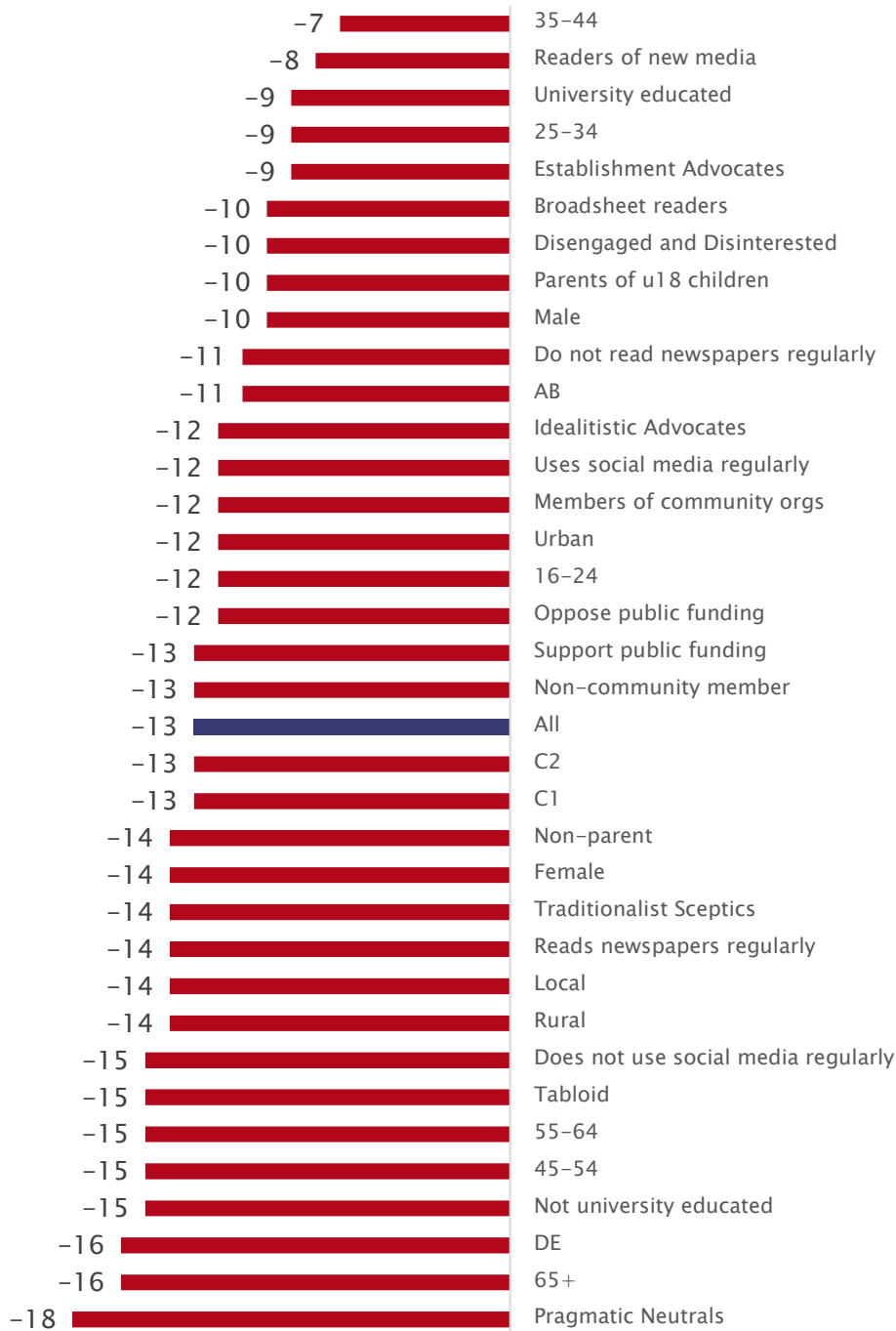
These lower levels of trust are fairly consistent across the population. This can be seen if a group-by-group comparison is made between:

- a) levels of trust in researchers talking about fracking (which they are least trusted on); and
- b) levels of trust in them talking about endangered species (which they are most trusted on).

As can be seen when visualised in the following graph, the decline for most demographic and attitudinal groups is broadly in line with the thirteen-point drop across the public as a whole. However, **those groups which do have slightly sharper declines than the average are on the whole those who are slightly less enthusiastic about research anyway** – those aged 65+, not university educated or from DE social grades. The comparatively small decline amongst the Disengaged and Disinterested group may also be due to a large proportion of this groups simply saying they “don’t know” whether they trust researchers on either issue, which would suggest they are not an exception to this rule.

It suggests that when there is a controversial research topic, it is the older or more affluent members or the public, or in case of Pragmatic Neutrals, the less engaged, **who are most likely to be hesitant to trust researchers.**

Percentage point difference between trust in researchers talking about endangered species (top performer) with talking about fracking (lowest performer)



Q. If you were to hear a researchers or scientist, who you did not know anything about, talking about each of the following issues on the news, to what extent, if at all, would you believe what they were saying? 'Endangered species'; 'Fracking/shale gas'. Base: As labelled (n=228-2,541).

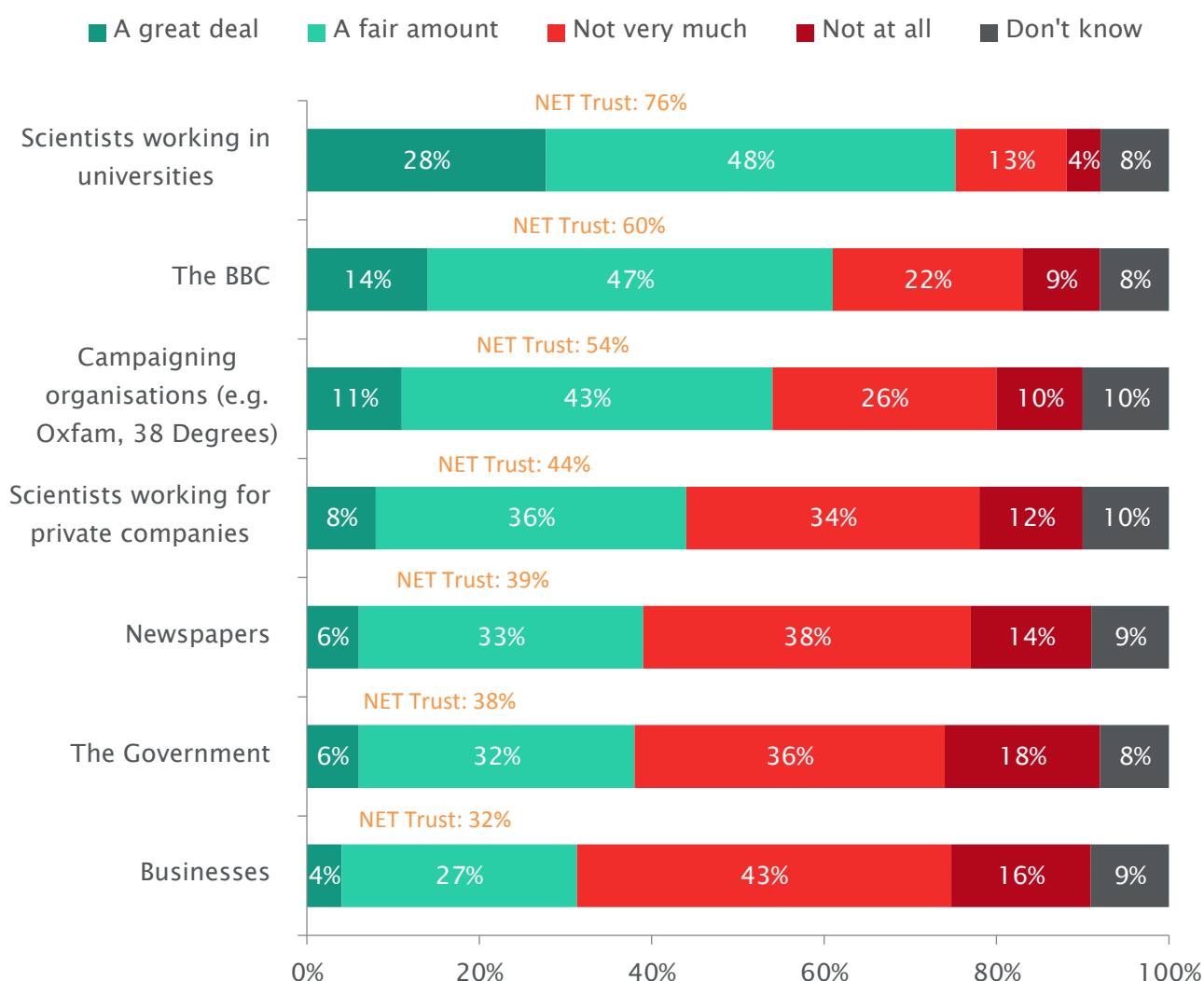
Additionally, despite being the most likely to engage in social activism and the most interested in climate change, Idealistic Advocates are also the least likely to distrust environmental researchers when it comes to fracking and shale gas. Just one in five (19%) say they would not believe what a researcher was saying it about it, compared to 38% of Traditionalist Sceptics and 37% of Disengaged and

Disinterested, suggesting whatever opinions Idealistic Advocates may have of the issue of fracking itself, they are still the most likely to trust expert opinion on it (or at least say they would).

TRUST IN SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT FRACKING

The extent to which people believe researchers about environmental science also depends on who the researcher is and what they are seen to represent. When it comes to fracking and shale gas (which was used also as a proxy for other controversial issues in environmental research), **scientists working in universities are overwhelmingly the most trusted source to provide accurate information**, with three quarters of the public saying they trust them to do so (76%). The BBC (60%) is the next most trusted source of information – including for people who not read newspapers regularly, 55% of whom trust the organisation. This suggests this channel of communications may be an effective way of engaging those whose consumption of written media is lower.

Trust to provide accurate information on fracking / shale gas



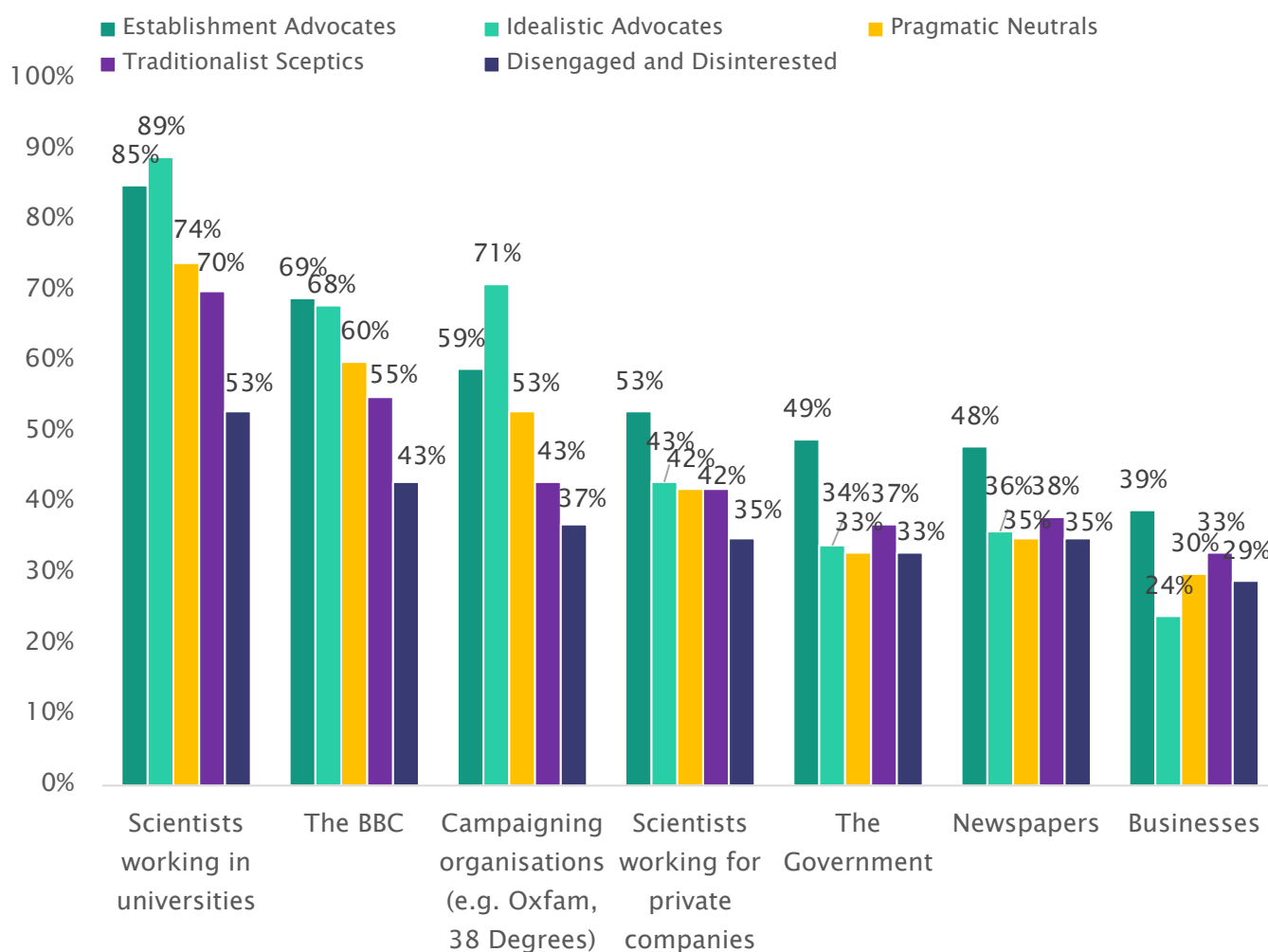
Q. To what extent, if at all, would you say that you trust each of the following to provide accurate information about the issue of shale gas and 'fracking'? Base: UK adults (n=3,000).

There is some evidence to suggest that lobbying activity may be influencing some people's attitudes towards controversial research topics, with campaigning organisations most trusted after academic

scientists and the BBC to provide accurate information about fracking (54%). Campaigning organisations are slightly more trusted by women (57%) than men (50%), but their potential influence appears particularly great for Idealistic Advocates, 71% of whom trust them on the issue and nearly one in five of them who trust them a great deal (18%). On the opposite side, Idealistic Advocates are the least likely of any segment to trust businesses to provide accurate information (24%), distinguishing them from Establishment Advocates (39%) who, along with Traditionalist Sceptics (33%), are most likely to trust them.

Trust to provide information about fracking: by attitudinal segment

Showing NET: Trust



Q. To what extent, if at all, would you say that you trust each of the following to provide accurate information about the issue of shale gas and 'fracking'? Base: Establishment Advocates (n=758), Idealistic Advocates (n=596), Pragmatic Neutrals (n=661), Traditionalist Sceptics (n=513), Disengaged and Disinterested (n=472).

In terms of engaging those less positive about research, generally sources of information trusted by the public as a whole are still most likely to resonate with them – scientists working in universities (53%) and the BBC (43%) being most trusted by those in the Disengaged and Disinterested segment. The same is true for Traditionalist Sceptics, although amongst this group there is a significant proportion of them who hold quite negative opinions about campaigning organisations – half (49%) saying they would not trust them. This may also reflect the Traditionalist Sceptics older age profile, as older UK adults in

particular are also negative towards campaigning organisations, with half of those aged 65+ also saying they would not trust them (52%).

Broadly, the qualitative findings demonstrated that people are most likely to trust sources of research that they do not perceive to have an 'agenda', whether financial or otherwise, which they felt might bias the results. While a minority will never trust research that is funded by a private company or someone they believe to have an agenda, for most it would be beneficial to be transparent about who is funding a piece of research when discussing the findings, as this is likely to increase the public's trust in it.

"Everybody's got an agenda...it's whoever benefits from it [the research]. These experts, everybody's got a hidden agenda. Who makes money?"

Disengaged and Disinterested, Glasgow

"I'm aware sometimes research will be funded by a group that is interested in the outcome. As long as it is declared that is okay"

Establishment Advocate, Sutton Coldfield

The qualitative workshops also illustrated that **academic researchers enjoy a high level of trust among the general population**, especially when compared to private companies and politicians. The latter two groups were perceived to have an agenda which meant that, if they were the source of research funding into a particular area, the findings were perceived as being less likely to be trusted. **Academic researchers were also perceived as having expertise in their subjects due to their dedication and time spent researching.**

The BBC was also seen to be a reputable and trusted source of information about research, although a minority did not trust it (this was particularly prevalent in Glasgow where it was perceived to have provided biased information about the Scottish independence referendum). Broadcast and radio news were perceived to be more trustworthy than newspapers (particularly tabloids, which were dismissed as 'scaremongering' by some).

"They [academic researchers] are studying the facts, they're not picking it up from someone else, they're actually doing the research"

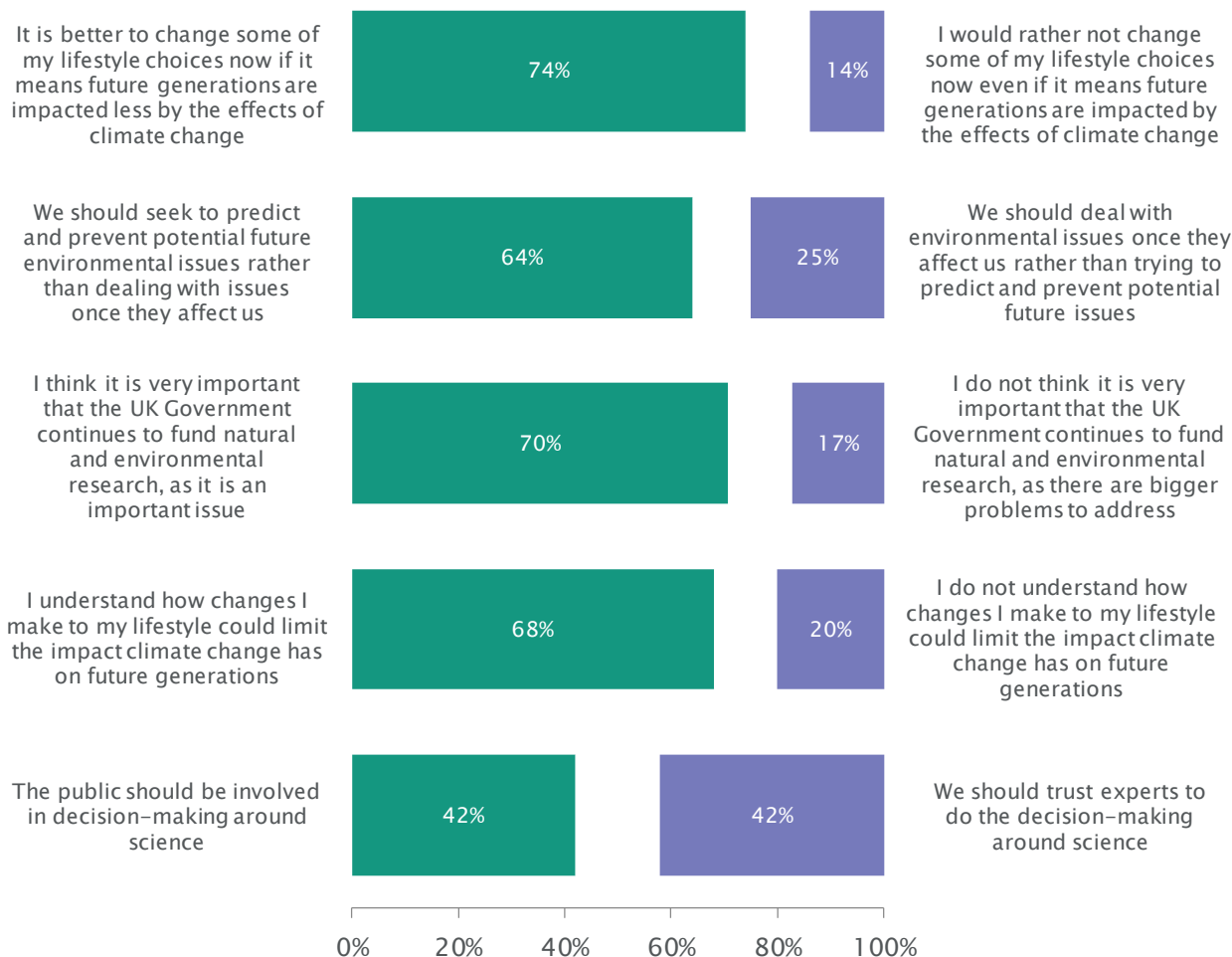
Traditionalist Sceptic, Glasgow

TRUSTING RESEARCHERS IN PRACTICE

Opinions towards environmental researchers and research are generally positive. This is perhaps best evidenced by the vote of confidence the public give to the public funding of research. Seven in ten (70%) say that is very important the UK Government continues to fund natural and environmental research, compared to just 17% who say that it is not very important to do so as there are bigger problems to address.

There are few demographic differences between UK adults on this metric. Where slightly differing levels of enthusiasm do occur, such as between adults who have and have not attended university, **large majorities are still in favour on public funding** (e.g. the 66% of those who are not university educated, vs 77% of those who are. High levels of support for taxpayers' money being spent on environmental research is further evidence of the trust the public have in researchers.

Attitudes towards climate change



Q: For the following pairs of statements, which would you say that you agree with most? Base: UK adults (n=3,000).

Another demonstration of trust the public have in researchers is seen in the cut-through climate change has had with the public and the influence it has on their attitudes. As noted previously, research relating to climate change is one of the topics that UK adults are most likely to have engaged with in the last month and are interested in hearing more about. Building on this, **two thirds of UK adults say that they understand how changes they make to their lifestyle could limit the impact climate change has on future generations** (68% say they understand vs. 20% who say they do not understand), suggesting that people feel they have been provided with the right information by researchers. **People also appear to understand the importance of taking positive actions to address climate change**; nearly two thirds of the public (64%) say that we should seek to predict and prevent potential future environmental issues rather than dealing with issues once they affect us (25%). This suggests that the public not only broadly know about climate change but also understand how it relates to them and their lives.

PUBLIC INFLUENCE ON SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Away from climate change in particular, UK adults are divided on whether the public should be involved in decision making around science (42%), or whether experts should be trusted to make decisions (42%). For respondents to decide on which side they fall of this issue, it requires them to make a trade-off between two positive sentiments about research: firstly, how much they have trust in researchers, and secondly how much enthusiasm they have to be involved themselves. Attitudes are therefore evenly split across both different demographic groups and the attitudinal segments. The only major difference relates to social media usage, with non-users slightly leaning towards trusting experts to make

decisions (49% vs 39%) whereas regular users are more divided (39%, vs 43% saying the public should be involved in decisions), possibly reflecting greater familiarity with technological mechanisms for influencing public decision making.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

1. Overall, UK adults express interest in environmental research and are willing to hear more about it, particularly about climate change, endangered species and natural hazards, and the impact those things may have on their lives.

While interest in environmental research is relatively high, the qualitative findings highlighted that it is **not always a spontaneous interest** in the same way as medical, health or wellbeing research. **However, this is not to say that there is not appetite to hear more about it, or that people do not find it interesting.** Similarly, when compared with other areas of research, UK adults are more interested to find out more about environmental research than, for example, research into particle physics or arts and humanities. When the UK public are interested in environmental research generally, the interest is strongest when they can see how it might affect their own lives (for example the impact of bees dying on crops, or climate change on UK weather).

Implications:

- Identify the research areas that are likely to have the biggest impact on people's day to day lives and communicate these to the public, including local and practical examples where possible.
- Provide simple and striking messages about environmental research, including visual materials where possible, to catch people's eye and provoke interest.

2. Scientists working in universities are the group most trusted by UK adults to provide accurate information on controversial environmental issues, followed by the BBC.

A clear majority of UK adults (76%) trust scientists working in universities to provide accurate information about controversial environmental issues, as they are viewed as impartial and free from financial motivation. Similarly, **the BBC is the media channel most trusted to provide information about environmental issues, due to its perceived impartiality and lack of bias.** On the other hand, the Government, politicians and businesses are least trusted to do this, due to the perception that they often have an agenda that could bias their research findings and how they present them. When it comes to specific environmental issues, researchers are most likely to be trusted talking about endangered species, while they are least trusted on the topic of fracking/shale gas.

Implications:

- Give academic researchers opportunities and platforms to discuss their research findings, focusing particularly on how they reached their conclusions and the evidence for them.
- Emphasise who has funded a piece of environmental research when trying to engage the public, making sure to be as transparent as possible. This is particularly true for more controversial topics such as fracking.

3. Accessing information about environmental research and engaging with it is mainly done through TV, although other channels and methods do vary by segment.

The majority of UK adults who engage with environmental research topics do this by watching TV, and this is consistent across segments. Members of the less engaged segments (Pragmatic Neutrals and Traditionalist Sceptics) are particularly likely to come across research in this way, while Idealistic and Establishment Advocates are slightly more likely to come across research by reading an article or book. Younger people are particularly likely to have seen research on social media, although the majority still come across it on TV. A small proportion of UK adults (particularly Idealistic Advocates) come across environmental research through campaigning organisations, although this is not widespread across the public. Preferred outcomes of research also differ across segments – Pragmatic Neutrals, for example, are particularly interested in research that is likely to have a positive practical outcome, while Establishment Advocates tend to value research as a good thing in itself.

Implications:

- Tailor communications and channels to match the interests and priorities of the different segments (for example using social media and online news for younger people).
- Emphasise different research outcomes depending on the segment people fall into – for example social outcomes for Idealistic Advocates, or economic outcomes for Traditionalist Sceptics.

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