



The new parliament's climate story

July 2024



About Climate Outreach

At Climate Outreach, we help people and organisations tell a different climate story: from one of a lost cause to a story of people, progress and potential.

With 20 years of research and insight, we know how to make climate stories as powerful and impactful as possible.

We work with environmental groups, government and communities, helping them to understand their audiences and communicate powerfully with them. Armed with our insights, organisations and leaders can effectively engage and involve people at scale.



Acknowledgements

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Insights are taken from focus groups, Britain Talks Climate and our wider research base. The original Britain Talks Climate research was undertaken by More in Common, the European Climate Foundation and YouGov, in partnership with Climate Outreach.

People want climate leadership.

Here's how to talk about it.

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PART ONE

What we know about the climate story right now



“ I think every political party now has signed up to save the planet basically. And to do that, they have to think about climate change (...) and it's up to them [the government] to sort it out. And we can do it, we can help, but it's up to them to implement the changes and then we could do our bit.”

**Focus group participant
in Tees Valley, June 2024**



What we know right now...

01

Climate leadership is a vote-winner . People expect the new government to crack on and invest.

02

Caring about climate and nature is normal. Most people do.

03

Seeing is believing . Climate action is happening everywhere and it's great news. Make it feel real to people.

04

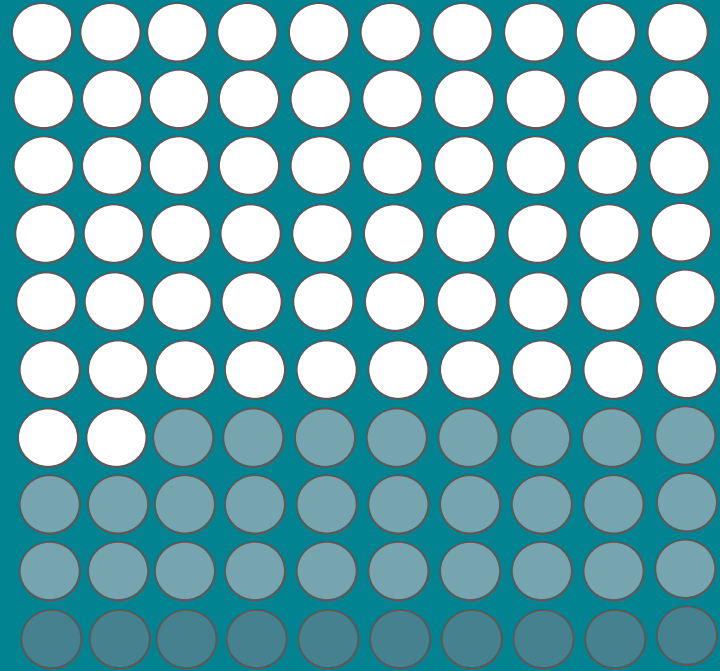
Empathise. Times are tough and some people are worried about potential costs. It's the government's job to make the transition fair and exciting.

62%

think 'net zero' is good news
for the UK

Only 10% think it's bad news

Source: [Britain Talks Climate 2024](#)



How people voted

“ I don't think that it [climate change] should be ignored at all. No, I think any politician that said that, which let's face it, they wouldn't. But if they did, I think that no, that they should be booed off the stage”

Focus group participant in Clacton, June 2024

“ Well, I wouldn't vote for a politician that said that [we] shouldn't bother about climate change, just forget about it. We can't ignore it. Definitely. Because although maybe we don't see much of it, the world will just eventually die if nothing's done.”

Focus group participant in Clacton, June 2024



The election gave the government a mandate: **crack on with ambitious climate action.**

Polling from our partners More in Common shows:



Climate change was one of the top three reasons that Labour and Lib Dem voters gave for their votes, behind the NHS and crime.



The Conservatives' attacks on climate and net zero policy only cost them votes. There's no evidence people voted Reform because of that party's climate policies.



More than 70% of people polled after the election support Labour's flagship Great British Energy policy.



But a warning: 7/10 voters think that Labour has a mandate to change the country, but they're evenly split on whether this will be good news for people like them.

Sources

[1] <https://www.moreincommon.org.uk/general-election-2024/climate-and-energy-at-the-general-election/>

[2] <https://www.moreincommon.org.uk/our-work/research/change-pending/>

Focus groups

We ran focus groups in five constituencies before and after the election.

- Clacton, Tees Valley and East Worthing & Shoreham (pre-election - June 2024)
- Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Valley (post-election - July 2024)

These built on focus groups we did across the country as part of our Britain Talks Climate 2024 research.



What we heard...

People everywhere love clean energy

“ I think the wind turbines are brilliant because they bring a new source of energy... From my knowledge I think there should be more of them and I think they should be connected more to give them back to the community and help lower the prices of our bills and stuff and more going back to the electricity companies.”

Focus group participant in Tees Valley, June 2024

“ I'm all for them [wind farms]. I am all for renewable energy. I'm not totally clued up with it if I'm honest, but anything that can lower my gas and electric bill, I'm all for.”

Focus group participant in Suffolk Coastal, July 2024



What we heard...

People love and value their local nature

“ I find it a very beautiful place to live.
Very quiet, very in the countryside surrounded
by trees, fields, nature [...]”

Focus group participant in Waveney Valley, July
2024

“ I love going for walks and everything. [...] So just the fact
that I can walk to the beach, I absolutely love that. [...]
All the open spaces that we have, I feel lucky.”

Focus group participant in Tees Valley, June 2024



What we heard...

People want a say - and can handle nuance

“ [...] But I think it's important to let people have a platform to let their voices be heard. But maybe, you give people too much of an opportunity to say no and then they'll block everything. They don't want anything to happen in their towns, you know what I mean? So there's finding a balance [...]. Making sure voices are heard but [having] a limit to expectations [...]. We need to expand, we need to grow. So yeah, there's kind of two sides to it I think.”

Focus group participant in Waveney Valley, July 2024

“ Yeah, I'd like to see them [the Labour party] do it [take action on climate change and clean energy], but also I'd like 'em to explain to people so that people understand [...] They need to get the message out there and then people will be more accepting of what they're trying to do and then if they have difficulties, people would accept it. We're not stupid, but there seems to be a communication gap.”

Focus group participant in East Worthing & Shoreham, June 2024

What we heard...

There's a lot of distrust in politics

“ I just feel like the politicians are a lot of talk and little action. So whatever really they say in their manifesto, I just take it with a pinch of salt because how much of it actually comes to fruition when they get in power? I just think they're liars.”

Focus group participant in East Worthing & Shoreham, June 2024

“ I think we just get pushed aside. I think that normal people do. Nobody wants to listen to what we got to say. And like you said, we're people, when you're talking about knocking on doors, they only come knocking on your door when it's an election. They don't want to know the rest of the time. That's the only time they seem to want to make an effort.”

Focus group participant in Bridgend, December 2023



PART TWO

The new parliament's climate story



Elements of a new climate story



The government should set out a **brilliant vision** for its ambitious climate plans, so people are inspired and informed about what's coming.



The story should **reflect what people love**; show that **normal people care** ; and be **straight with people** .



The story should be grounded in things we can **touch and feel** .



It should help people feel that **they will get a say** over the details of what comes next.

What the story could look like



Reflect what people love.

For example:

“British people want clean air, clean rivers, and clean seas. We’re a nation of nature lovers and clean energy enthusiasts. People want the government to get on with leading and building a healthier and cleaner country, and we will.”



Reflect how much the vast majority of people care.

For example:

“For too long Brits’ quiet wisdom and love of the natural world has been silenced by those at the extremes. We know people want ambitious investment in clean, secure and affordable British energy. A new generation of jobs. And a safe future for our children and grandchildren.”



Be straight with people, and trust them.

For example:

“We’re serious about leading while listening to people about the details. We will involve people at every step, and be honest with you where there are choices that need to be made.”

PART THREE

Three things to remember

Three things to remember

1

Get on the front foot with powerful, clear communication

Be proud, not apologetic. People care and support action. They need a powerful big-picture story that excites and reassures. They also need detail, and opportunities to engage.

Now is the time for brilliant storytelling, tested, iterated, and told creatively through inspiring messengers. It's central to the transition and it's been neglected for too long.

2

Include everyone

Ideas can spread very quickly when we see the story as good news, and relevant to people 'like us'. Smart phones, air fryers, mental health awareness: a lot can change quickly.

Make communications work for everyone and bring everyone into the conversation.

3

Don't patronise people or write them off

We're grown-ups and we can handle nuance and conversation. People are hungry for more information about what change means for them.

People will have questions about major change, but that doesn't (usually) mean they're automatically 'climate sceptics' or 'NIMBYs.'



Thank you for reading.

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