



# **Wave 18 The Environment and Climate Change**

Fieldwork 28 March – 30 April 2007

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## 1 Executive Summary

This wave of the Life in Lancashire panel dealt with the environment and climate change. All 1670 members of the panel were sent two mailings of the survey. In total 1231 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 73%.

### 1.1 The Environment

- **Traffic congestion and pollution from exhaust fumes**, and **fly tipping** are the most serious concerns (63% and 61% somewhat concerned respectively). **The amount of waste produced and its disposal** (55%) and **the wasting of energy** (54%) both have more than half of panel members somewhat concerned.
- For their own actions to help the environment, almost all respondents answer that they **recycle** regularly (95%).
- About two in three panel members regularly **cut down on the amount of water** they use and **encourage wildlife** in their garden (both 66%). Almost as many regularly **cut down the amount of electricity and gas** they use (63%).
- Compared with the same questions asked in 2003, significantly less people answer they are somewhat concerned with **the wasting of water, lack of recycled waste, derelict buildings** and **bathing and river quality**.
- Significantly more respondents now answer that they **recycle, cut down on electricity or gas**, and have **bought environmentally friendly goods** regularly than in 2003.

### 1.2 Climate change

- Four in five respondents are either very or fairly convinced climate change is happening (80%), though one in five remains unconvinced (19%).
- Three in five respondents agree that this change is due to human activities (60%).
- The main cause of climate change is seen as **destruction of forests** (76%). Only one person in ten considers they personally contribute to it though (10%).

- **Manufacturing and industry** (67%), **carbon dioxide emissions** (64%), emissions from **planes** (61%) and **road transport** (60%) are also seen as main causes of climate change.
- The factors most people feel they contribute to are energy use in homes (80%) and vehicle emissions (77%). A majority of respondents do not see themselves as contributing to the other factors.
- When asked at what point the world will be affected by climate change, about a third of respondents agree that the world is already affected (36%). About a quarter say they are personally affected already (26%).
- Panel members aged less than 45 years are significantly more likely to agree the world is already affected (56%) than those who are 45 years and over (35%). Similarly by social grouping, those in the highest social groups, AB and C1 are much more likely to agree the world is already affected (51%) as those in the skilled manual C2 and semi-skilled DE groups (32%)

### 1.3 Recommendations

Consider communicating different environmental messages to different groups of the public where that group has a lower take-up of that activity. This could mean encouraging cutting down on electricity, gas and transport in media used by more affluent members of the public (eg the internet). Another option might be encouraging environmentally friendly products in media used more by people from manual C2 DE social groups, such as free newspapers.

It may well also be important to target information on climate change differently to those aged 45 years and over and from social groups C2 DE, to those aged less than 45 and from groups AB C1. This is because there is a difference in how convinced these groups are about climate change. Again free newspapers and the internet would be examples of different media that might be most appropriate to each group.

## 2 Introduction

Lancashire County Council has used Life in Lancashire regularly since August 2001. A panel of willing participants is recruited and is approached on a regular basis to seek their views on a range of topics and themes. Panel members are voluntary participants in the research they complete and no incentives are given for completion.

The panel has been designed to be a representative cross-section of the county's population. The results for each survey are weighted in order to reflect the demographic profile of the county's population.

The panel provides access to a sufficiently large sample of the population so that reliable results can be reported at a county wide level. It also provides data at a number of sub-area and sub-group levels.

Each Life in Lancashire wave is themed. Firstly, it enables sufficient coverage on a particular topic to be able to provide insight into that topic. And secondly, it comes across better to the residents completing the questionnaires if there is a clear theme (or 2-3 clear themes) within each survey.

The panel is refreshed periodically. New members are recruited to the panel and some current members are retired on a random basis. This means that the panel remains fresh and is not subject to conditioning, ie the views of panel members become too informed with county council services to be unrepresentative of the population as a whole. The current panel was recruited in 2004 and 2005, so this effect should be small.

### **3 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this wave of the Life in Lancashire panel are:

- to measure perceptions of people's local area and the quality of local services;
- to ascertain panel members views on the environment and climate change; and
- to investigate uptake of recycling and composting.

## 4 Methodology

This wave of Life in Lancashire was sent to 1670 members of the panel on 28 March 2007. A reminder was sent on 18 April 2007. The fieldwork ended on 30 April 2007.

No incentive was given for respondents to complete the questionnaire. In total 1231 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 73%.

All data are weighted by gender, age, ethnicity and district to reflect the Lancashire overall population, and figures are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated. The weighted responses have been scaled down to match the effective response of 986, which is the equivalent size of the data if it had not been weighted and was a perfect random sample.

### 4.1 Limitations

The table below shows the sample tolerances that apply to the results in this survey. Sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample as well as the percentage results.

Number of respondents	50/50 + / -	30/70 + / -	10/90 + / -
50	14%	13%	8%
100	10%	9%	6%
200	7%	6%	4%
500	4%	4%	3%
1000	3%	3%	2%
2000	2%	2%	1%

On a question where 50% of the people in a sample of 1000 respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 out of 100 that the answer would be between 47% and 53% (ie +/- 3%), versus a complete coverage of the entire Lancashire population using the same procedure.

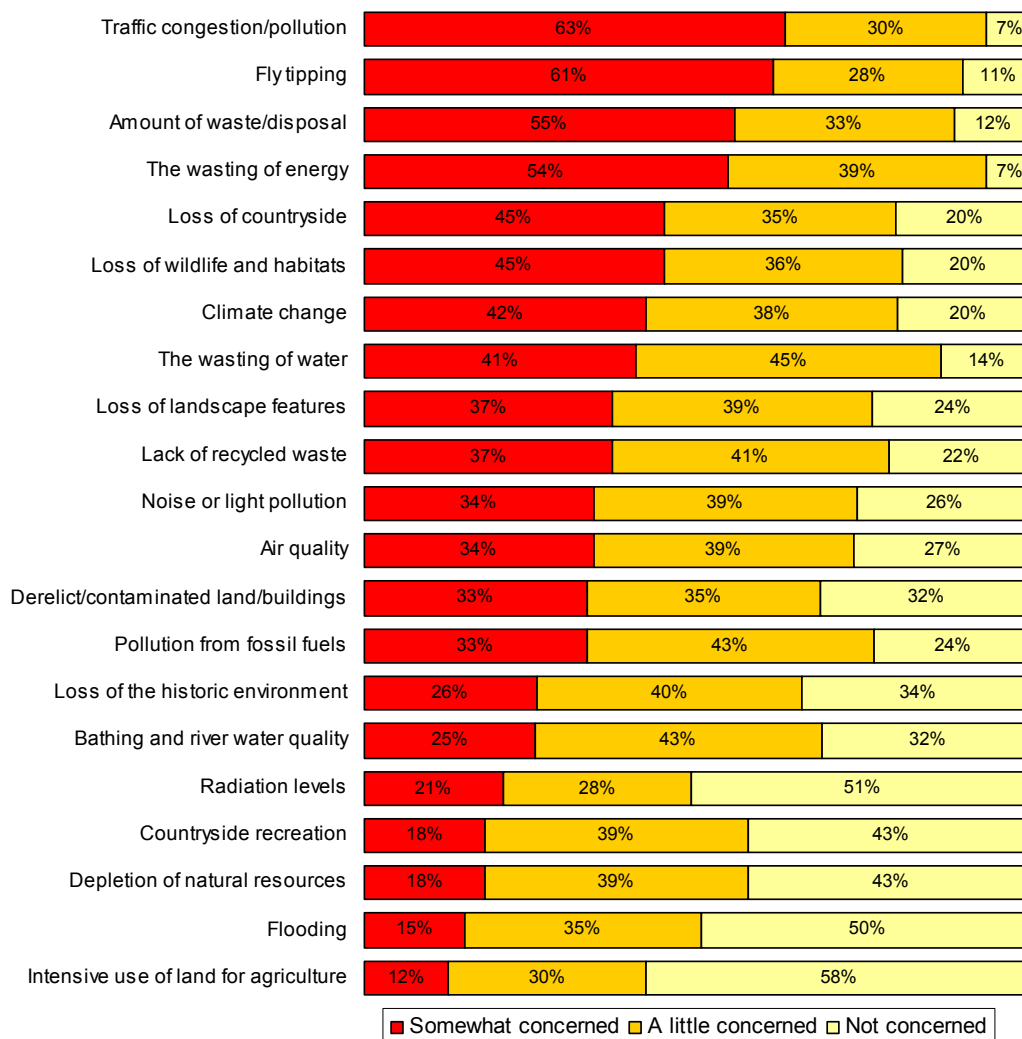
In charts or tables where responses do not add up to 100%, this is due to multiple responses or computer rounding.

## 5 Main Research Findings

### 5.1 The Environment

The first section of the survey on the environment asked how concerned respondents were by various environmental factors and what measures they have taken to reduce their environmental impact.

**Chart 1 - In your local area how concerned are you about each of the following?**



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1231, Weighted 986)

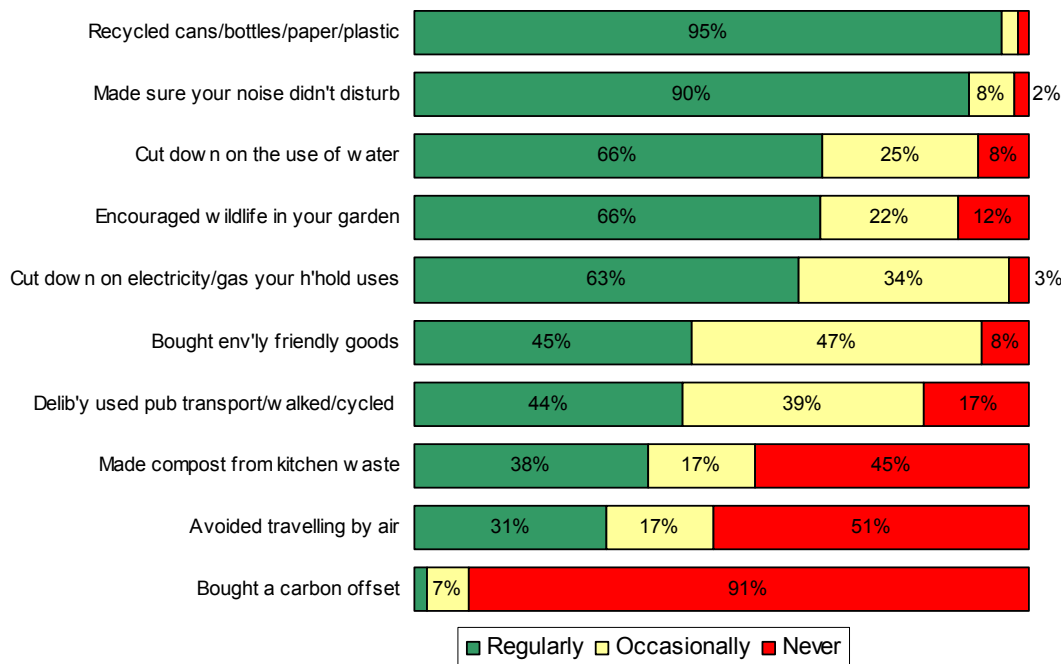
**Traffic congestion and pollution from exhaust fumes, and fly tipping** are the most serious concerns (63% and 61% somewhat concerned respectively). **The amount of waste produced and its disposal (55%) and the wasting of energy (54%)** both have more than half of panel members somewhat concerned. Only a few of the factors have more respondents not concerned than concerned.



Looking demographically, **traffic congestion** is seen as a similarly concerning problem across the county, whereas **fly tipping** is seen as a significantly greater problem by panel members in Burnley (81%) and urban respondents (67%). **Derelict land and buildings** were also significantly more concerning to Burnley respondents (55% somewhat concerned), as well as black and ethnic minority panel members (49%) and those from Pendle (45%). **Air quality** was rated as significantly more concerning by urban respondents (40%) as might be expected, as well as those living in council or housing association accommodation (43%). Residents of Wyre are twice as likely to be concerned about **flooding** as the rest of the panel (31% somewhat concerned against 15% overall).

The next question asked about the frequency that respondents undertook a range of environmentally friendly activities.

**Chart 2 - How often, if at all, have you done the following in the last 12 months?**



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1231, Weighted 986)

Almost all respondents answer that they **recycle** regularly<sup>1</sup> (95%) and nine in ten made sure their **noise didn't disturb others** (90%, but only 70% of those aged less than 25). About two in three panel members regularly **cut down on the amount of water** they use and **encourage wildlife** in their garden (both 66%). Almost as many regularly **cut down the amount of electricity and gas** they use (63%). Owner occupiers are significantly more likely to regularly encourage wildlife in their gardens (69%) than council or housing association residents (46%), which may well be because more

<sup>1</sup> Though this does not take into account how much they recycle, or whether they could do more.

owner occupiers have gardens. The opposite is true for cutting down on gas and electricity, with council or housing association residents more likely to cut down regularly than owner occupiers (78% against 62%).

For the other activities by demographics, respondents from an ethnic minority were less likely to have **bought environmentally friendly goods** regularly (34% against 46% of white panel members). Panel members from social group<sup>2</sup> AB (47%) are also more likely to buy them than members of manual groups C2 (38%) and DE (42%).

Council and housing association tenants and those from the lowest social groups DE are the most likely to have **deliberately used alternatives to car transport** (61% and 57% regularly respectively). This compares with only 42% of owner occupiers, 44% of the highest social group AB and 35% of those from a rural area. Members of social groups DE are significantly more likely to have **avoided air travel** (41% compared with 31% overall).

Nine per cent of respondents say they have either regularly or occasionally **bought a carbon offset**.

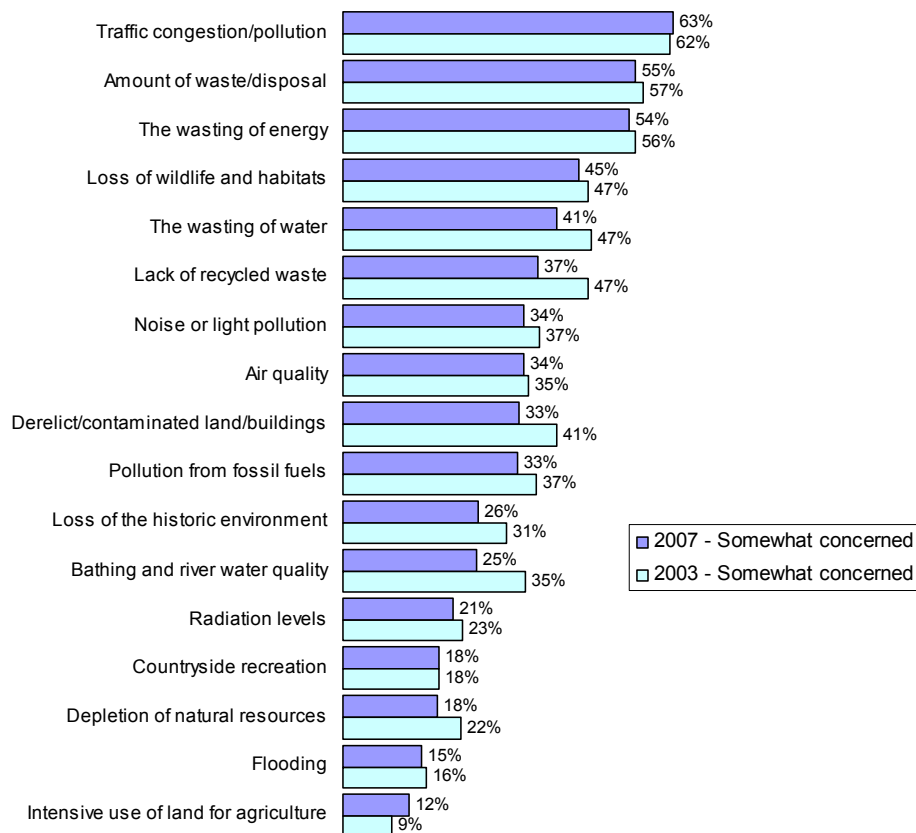
These results imply the possibility of different groups taking part in different environmental activities. The implication is that people from council or housing association housing and social groups C2, DE are more likely to cut down on activities, (such as utilities, car and air travel). On the other hand, home owners and those from the top social grades (and therefore with higher incomes) are less likely to cut down, but more likely to buy environmentally friendly goods and encourage wildlife in their garden. These are implications of the data rather than a full segmentation of the respondents, but it may well be useful to consider this when communicating to the public. This could mean encouraging the benefits of cutting down on electricity and gas in media used by more affluent members of the public and encouraging environmentally friendly products in media used more by people from C2 DE social groups. It might also be worth concentrating on other areas rather than recycling since almost all respondents already say they do so, (though the question doesn't consider whether they could do more). In highlighting other ways for the public to help the environment it will be important to make an emotional or rational reason for people to do the activity.

The two questions above were also put to the Life in Lancashire panel in 2003 (with a completely different set of members). The 2003 and 2007 results are given below, (though not all the factors asked on this survey were also asked in 2003).

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 6.1 for definitions

**Chart 3 - In your local area how concerned are you about each of the following?**

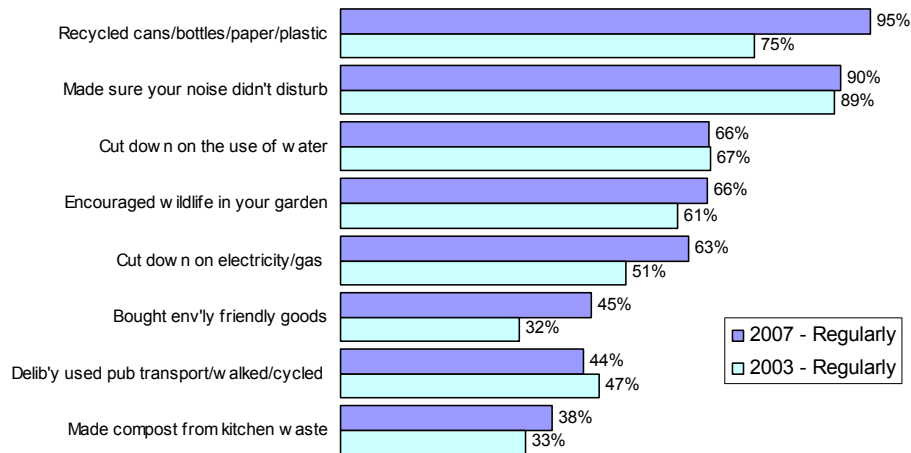


Base: All respondents (2007 (unweighted 1231), 2003 (unweighted 1608))

None of the factors are causing significantly more concern in Lancashire compared with the 2003 survey. There are significantly less people somewhat concerned with **the wasting of water** (-6%), **lack of recycled waste** (-10%), **derelict buildings** (-10%) and **bathing and river quality** (-10%). This shows that perceptions of some factors are getting better, though the proportion concerned is similar for most factors.

The chart below compares the habits that panel members undertake regularly between 2007 and 2003. Significantly more respondents now answer that they **recycle** (+20%), **cut down on electricity or gas** (+12%), and have **bought environmentally friendly goods** (+13%) regularly.

**Chart 4 - How often, if at all, have you done the following in the last 12 months?**



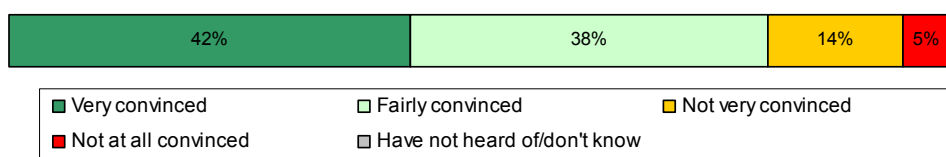
Base: All respondents (2007 (unweighted 1231), 2003 (unweighted 1608))

These results show a real change in perceptions of some environmental factors over the last four years. It is important to compare these perceptions with other measures, (eg actual weight of material recycled for 2003 and 2007), to see whether these perceptions match.

## 5.2 Climate change

The next section of the questionnaire asked panel members for their opinions on whether the earth’s climate and long-term weather patterns are changing. Four in five respondents are either very or fairly convinced climate change is happening (80%), though one in five remains unconvinced (19%). Women are more likely to be convinced than men (84% against 76%). Black and ethnic minority respondents (94% convinced), are more likely to be convinced than white respondents.

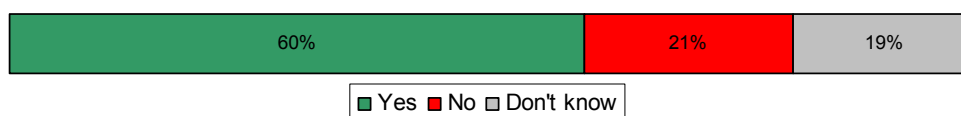
**Chart 5 - How convinced are you that the earth’s climate and long-term weather patterns are changing (climate change)?**



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1231, Weighted 986)

Three in five respondents agree that this change is due to human activities (60%), though this increases to two thirds of those who agree the change is happening. The highest agreement is again amongst black and minority panel members (78%). The lowest agreement is amongst the skilled manual socio-economic group C2 (49%, with 36% disagreeing).

**Chart 6 - Would you say that this change is mainly due to human activities?**



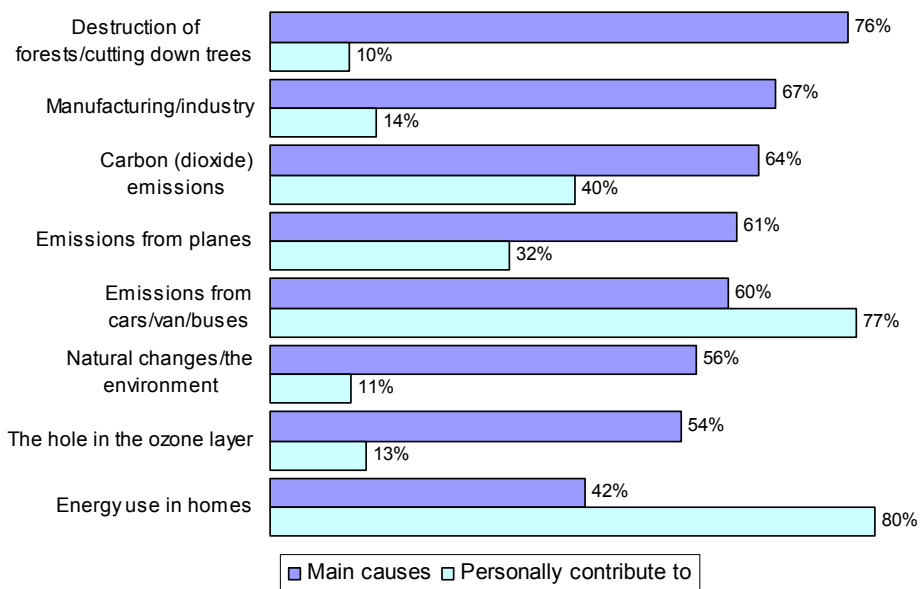
Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1231, Weighted 986)

Panel members’ opinions of the main causes of climate change are shown in the chart below, with the **destruction of forests** seen as a main cause by the most people (76%). Most respondents feel they personally contribute towards **energy use in homes** (80%) and **vehicle emissions** (77%). Only a small proportion feels they contribute towards deforestation (10%), and **the hole in the ozone layer** (13%). Respondents who are not convinced the earth’s climate is changing are perhaps unsurprisingly much less likely to name each factor than those that do, with the exception of **natural causes**, which is named by three-quarters of this group (76%).

When asked for their personal contributions however, there is no significant difference between those that are, and are not convinced by climate change. The exceptions are for **energy use in homes** (79% of those

convinced say they contribute against 68% of those not) and the **hole in the ozone layer** (14% against 4%).

**Chart 7 - a) Specifically what do you think are the main causes of climate change?  
b) Which of the following do you think you personally contribute to?**

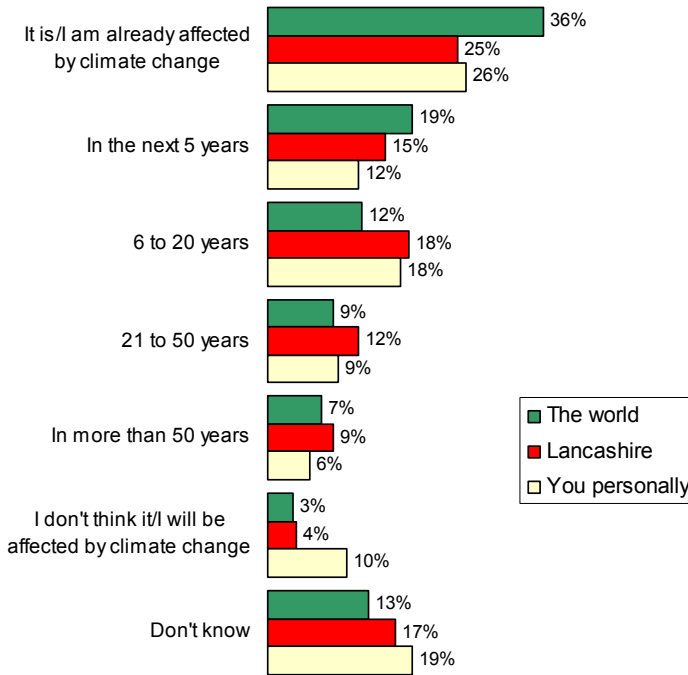


Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1231, Weighted 986)

Since for many of the factors few people answer that they contribute to them, it may be that there is a need for more education amongst the public as to how they can contribute to climate change. It seems from the questions before that most people agree that climate change is happening, but more specific information may well be needed in communications.

The last question in the section asked about the timescale for the world, Lancashire and panel members themselves to be affected by climate change. The most likely answer for all three is that they are all affected by climate change already, though this is much less than the proportion that was convinced it is happening as earlier. This may be due to the perception of what a ‘change’ means. The youngest age groups (16 to 24) are the most likely group to answer that the world (48%) and themselves personally (39%) are already affected by climate change.

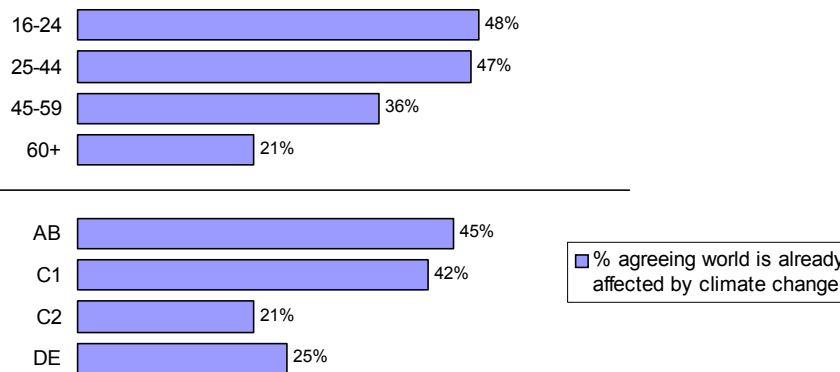
**Chart 8 - How soon, if at all do you think each of the following will be affected by climate change?**



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1231, Weighted 986)

There is a strong link between both the age of respondents and their social grouping, and whether they answer that the world is already affected by climate change. As in the chart below, people aged less than 45 years are significantly more likely to agree than those who are 45 years and over. By social grouping, those in the highest social groups, AB and C1 are almost twice as likely to agree as those in the skilled manual C2 and semi-skilled DE groups, (C2 was the group least convinced the climate is changing). This suggests that information on climate change may need to be especially targeted to these groups in future.

**Chart 9 - How soon, if at all do you think each of the following will be affected by climate change? By Age and Social Group**



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1231, Weighted 986)

## 6 Appendix

### 6.1 Socio-Economic-Group Definitions

These groups are based on Market Research Society definitions and on the respondent. They are graded as A, B, C1, C2, D and E.

#### Group A

- Professional people, very senior managers in business or commerce or top-level civil servants.
- Retired people, previously grade A, and their widows

#### Group B

- Middle management executives in large organisations, with appropriate qualifications
- Principal officers in local government and civil service
- Top management or owners of small business concerns, educational and service establishments
- Retired people previously grade B, and their widows

#### Group C1

- Junior management, owners of small establishments, and all others in non-manual positions
- Jobs in this group have very varied responsibilities and educational requirements
- Retired people, previously grade C1, and their widows

#### Group C2

- All skilled manual workers, and those manual workers for responsibility for other people
- Retired people, previously grade C2, with pensions from their job
- Widows, if receiving pensions from their late partner's job

#### Group D

- All semi skilled and unskilled manual workers, and apprentices and trainees to skilled workers
- Retired people, previously grade D, with pensions from their late job
- Widows, if receiving pensions from their late partner's job

#### Group E

- All those entirely dependant on the state long term, through sickness, unemployment, old age or other reasons
- Those unemployed for a period exceeding six months (otherwise classified on previous occupation)
- Casual workers and those without a regular income