The Sustainable Consumer

Understanding consumer attitudes to sustainability and sustainable behaviours

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Foreword

Earlier this year, as Deloitte hosted its biggest sustainability event in the UK to date, we heard from Mark Carney – the former governor of the Bank of England and current UN envoy on climate change. He had a stark warning for businesses that the global economy was being "re-wired to avoid carbon leakage or carbon dumping". "Soon", he said, "companies who do not reduce their emissions will either be unable, or will be impaired in their ability, to trade in two of the world's largest markets – the US and the EU." Against that backdrop, and with the implementation of new regulations such as Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanisms (CBAM) and reporting frameworks, like the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), the change will be played out under the glare of public scrutiny. Businesses are being pushed – through increasingly stringent policy and regulatory frameworks – to develop more sustainable operating models, products and services. A recent report by Deloitte found that many global executives were seeing a more direct environmental and business impact because of their sustainability efforts. We may be entering a new phase in corporate climate action, one where sustainability goes beyond just a compliance or brand building exercise and is increasingly serving as an engine for new value creation, a competitive differentiator, and a driver of innovation.

Research carried out for Deloitte's annual State of the State 2024 report found that environmental concerns are increasingly shaping the opinions of the public, who want the government to accelerate action on climate change. The health of our planet is not the sole responsibility of governing institutions and corporations: individuals share the responsibility. As consumers, individuals can be more discerning in how – and where – they choose to spend their money, but they need businesses and policymakers to make sustainable products and services more available and affordable. In particular, consumer facing businesses are under pressure to act, and a better understanding of consumer preferences for sustainable lifestyles has never been more important.

This is the fifth year Deloitte has conducted a survey into consumer attitudes to sustainability and sustainable behaviours. Our latest research shows a continuing consumer willingness to make decisions with sustainability and the environment in mind, driven by a growing awareness of the climate emergency. However, with household budgets remaining under pressure, consumers also have to make difficult trade-offs between managing prices and making sustainable lifestyle choices. For many adopting a sustainable lifestyle is about being thriftier, for example using the second-hand market and repair services. Our findings also highlight the challenges ahead in reducing emissions through the adoption on heat pumps or solar panels. There is also growing consumer fatigue and scepticism: our findings show a higher proportion of consumers this year mentioning lacking interest in sustainability and who believe adopting a more sustainable lifestyle makes no difference.

Overall, our findings illustrate the opportunity for businesses to support a change in consumer behaviours towards a tipping point where sustainable options become the preferred choice. Government policy to drive change and help address cost constraints will be critical.

We hope you find the insights from this research useful and welcome your feedback.

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What we cover in our research

This is the fifth year Deloitte has conducted a survey into consumer attitudes to sustainability and sustainable behaviours.

What consumers are doing	Overall consumers' attitudes to sustainability **[NEW]**	What consumers are doing/intending to do **[NEW]** to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle	Which sustainable behaviours are consumers adopting - by product and service category	What consumers attitudes and behaviours are towards 'circularity'	Whether consumers have changed their attitude to transportation for work or for their personal life **[NEW]**	How consumers are adopting a more sustainable lifestyle when it comes to energy consumption and what they plan to do in the year ahead
What consumers care about	What makes a product sustainable and whether it plays a role when considering a purchase	What are the most important environmentally sustainable or ethical values and practices for consumers	What are the most important environmentally sustainable or ethical values and practices for consumers - by product and service category	Whether consumers are prepared to pay more to ensure brands commit to sustainability practices		
What consumers need	What are the main barriers to people adopting a more sustainable lifestyle	What support do consumers need to lead a more sustainable lifestyle	Whether organisations' commitments to climate change and sustainability influence consumers' trust			

For the last five years, Deloitte has been exploring consumer attitudes to sustainability and sustainable behaviours.

Key insights from the Deloitte Sustainable Consumer over recent years:

2024 – **Our research suggests a plateau has been reached in key areas for reducing emissions**, such as fewer individuals taking sustainability into consideration when making purchases. There is also growing consumer fatigue and scepticism, with a higher proportion of consumers lacking interest in sustainability and believing that adopting a more sustainable lifestyle makes no difference.

2023 – **There was a big increase in actions that supported spending less, compared to previous years.** For example, 55% of consumers repaired an item instead of buying a new equivalent item, 46% bought second-hand items and 42% paid more for longer-lasting products as the cost-of-living crisis continued to have a substantial influence behaviours.

2022 – **Faced with fewer choices due to the impact of inflation and supply chain disruptions, consumers found 'innovative' ways to spend less, some of which inadvertently led to more sustainable behaviours** such as purchasing refurbished, second-hand or more durable items.

2021 – **The COVID pandemic saw both an acceleration and a decline in the adoption of more sustainable lifestyles.** Over a third of consumers had reduced the number of new products they bought, especially less affluent consumers who were more likely to have suffered a reduction in their income because of the COVID lockdowns. At the same time, consumers locked down at home focussed more on seasonal goods (49%) and buying more local goods (45%). There was a drop in interest in environmentally sustainable or ethical brands, possibly because consumers became more concerned with health-related priorities.

2020 – T**he main commitment to sustainability, as stated by 68% of those surveyed, was to reduce their use of single-use plastics**. Less than a quarter of consumers were actively seeking out brands with a 'purpose' although the proportion among Millennial/GenZ consumers was over a third, highlighting the difference in attitudes and behaviour of younger consumers. Consumers expressed the need for help from businesses to lead a more sustainable lifestyle. Affluent consumers were the most likely to make sustainable choices, given the associated higher price.

Key findings (1/2)

Consumer ambitions to live more sustainable lives are being stifled by cost constraints and sustainability ‘fatigue’. This must be overcome if the UK is to deliver on its legally binding commitments under the Paris Agreement.

1 **Most consumers (59%) say they are more committed to reducing waste or being more energy efficient (51%) compared with the same time last year**. Our research also shows increasing levels of awareness of the climate emergency with one in three consumers (35%) saying they are anxious about climate change with the number rising to one in two (50%) among the 18-to-34-year-olds.

2 With budgets remaining under pressure, consumers have to make a trade-off between managing higher prices and making sustainable lifestyle choices. Despite an increasing awareness of and appetite for sustainability among UK consumers, and a notable uptick in action across some areas in recent years, **people continue to prioritise low-cost and low-impact actions**. Behaviours like recycling are favoured over those that require substantial behavioural change such as transforming the energy efficiency of the home which is more likely to contribute towards the systemic change needed for the UK to meet its sustainability objectives.

3 Given the impact of surging inflation on consumer budgets in recent years, **for many individuals, adopting a more sustainable lifestyle is about being thriftier, with more consumers using repair services and the second-hand market to save money.** There is also a continuing commitment to the circular economy with two-thirds of consumers taking a product’s reparability or durability into consideration when making a purchase. Three-quarters of consumers would consider using a repair service, but a similar proportion want warranties and authentication before purchasing refurbished goods.

4 **While most consumers have tried to reduce their energy consumption, fewer have done so this year compared with 2023.** The data suggests that consumer action on energy efficiency has plateaued. But it also suggests that among consumers who are taking action, the majority remain focused on low-cost solutions. Given that energy prices have remained high over the past year, it is perhaps not surprising that consumers have prioritised actions that reduce energy use and save money. Improving UK homes’ energy efficiency through the installation of solar panels and heat pumps remains a big opportunity.

5 In addition to reducing energy consumption, **consumers have their transport-related greenhouse gas emissions by making different transport choices**. In the past year, one in four consumers claimed to have reduced how much they drive for either work or personal needs, and the same proportion have reduced how much they fly for leisure travel.

6 **There has been little change over the past 12 months in the sustainable and ethical practices consumers value most**, though greater emphasis is now being placed on reducing carbon emissions.

Key findings (2/2)

Our research suggests a plateau has been reached in key areas for reducing emissions.

7 While consumers have differing views about what makes a product or service sustainable, there is consensus around the key contributing factors. However, with consumers caring about different things, helping them lead a more sustainable lifestyle can be difficult. **Despite consumers becoming increasingly aware of what makes a product or service sustainable, fewer are factoring it into their purchasing decisions.**

8 **While 1 in 3 consumers say they are willing to pay more to purchase sustainable products and services, around half said they would not.** This indicates a need for businesses to make sustainable options accessible by finding ways to reduce the cost. Our data also suggests few consumers are prepared to pay a higher-cost to make the choices that would have a bigger impact on the UK's sustainability objectives, such as replacing their gas boiler with a heat pump.

9 Affordability remains the number one barrier to the adoption of a more sustainable lifestyle. **The proportion of consumers stating that they have not taken one or more sustainable actions because 'it is too expensive' has risen significantly in the past two years.** This finding is a clear message to government and industry of the need to drive systemic change to make sustainable actions more accessible and affordable.

10 There is also growing consumer fatigue and scepticism, as **our research this year shows that a higher proportion of consumers lack interest in the issues of sustainability and believe that adopting a more sustainable lifestyle makes no difference**.

11 Consumers want businesses and institutions to take a lead in supporting them in their adoption of more environmentally sustainable behaviours. Close to one-half of consumers rely on businesses to offer sustainable products or services as standard, rather than on them having to change their consumption habits to make more sustainable choices. However, **the overall proportion of consumers demanding action has declined**.

12 **Consumers are generally receptive to actions that businesses take to demonstrate their climate credentials.** Over half say that their trust in brands and the commitment of businesses to climate change and sustainability can be influenced by at least one of eight 'trust builders'.

The role of consumers in climate change

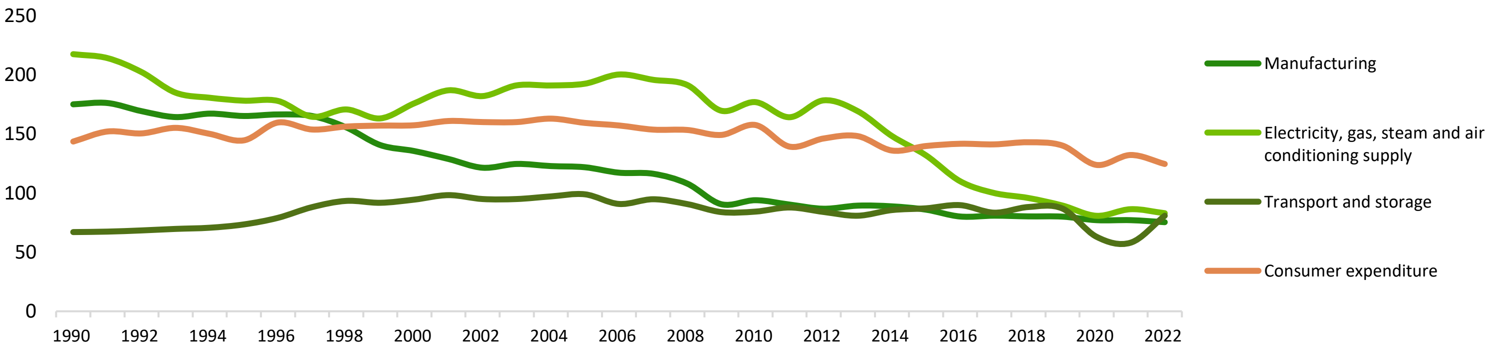
Consumer expenditure has been the single largest emitter of UK greenhouse gases since 2015

Emissions from households as a result of consumer expenditure have continued to be the largest single contributor to UK greenhouse gas emissions (24.6%). These emissions are primarily from heating homes and travelling.* Many of the actions needed to reduce emissions involve societal and individual behavioural change, including changes to how people shop, heat their homes, and travel.

To understand whether consumers are willing to play a role in bringing about the necessary changes, we asked them about their attitudes to climate change. Overall, there is a growing consumer commitment to act as more people experience severe climate change events and become aware of the emergency. However, with their purchasing power having been under significant pressure over the past two years consumers continue to make trade-offs and if they adopt a more sustainable lifestyle, it is more about saving money than saving the planet.

- **Growing commitment:** 1 in 2 consumers (59%) say they are more committed to reducing their own waste this year. A similar proportion (51%) claim to be more committed to energy efficiency this year and 41% are more likely to take the environmental impact of a product or service into consideration when making a purchase.
- **Climate change anxiety:** Two fifths of consumers (41%) say they are anxious about climate change. As a sign of their greater interest in the issue, the proportion is higher among the 18-to-34 year-olds with two thirds (56%) saying the same.
- **Are consumers prepared to pay the price?** 1 in 3 consumers (36%) would pay more for consumer brands that commit to environmentally sustainable or ethical practices.
- **But who is responsible for making change?** Almost one in two survey respondents (45%) rely on businesses to offer sustainable products or services as standard, rather than on them having to change their consumption habits.

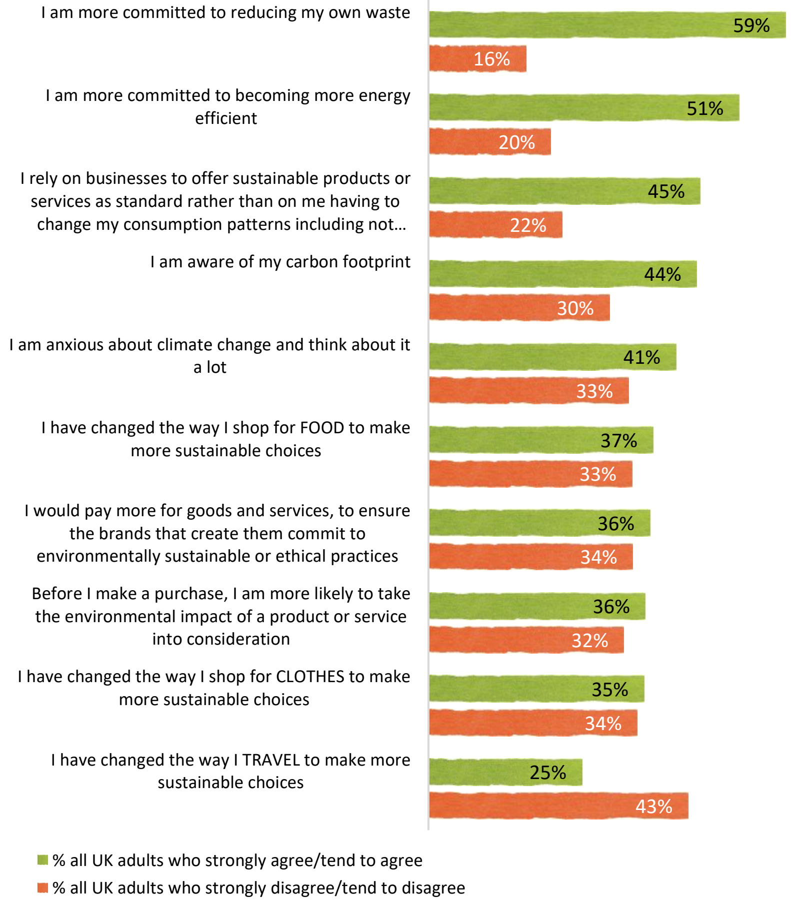
Figure 1. Residence-based greenhouse gas emissions for the three highest-emitting industries and households, 1990 to 2022, UK



*Source: [UK Environmental Accounts from Ricardo Energy and Environment, and the Office for National Statistics]

Figure 2. Attitudes to adopting a more sustainable lifestyle

To what extend do you agree or disagree with each of the following statement?



Source: The Sustainable Consumer

What consumers do

Sustainability starts at home

Most consumers continue to prioritise free or low-cost actions, such as recycling, over those requiring substantial behavioural change which would make a more significant contribution towards the UK's sustainability objectives, such as transforming the energy efficiency of their home.

Consumer action on sustainability appears to be stalling

There are signs that the momentum we have seen in previous surveys for consumers to become more sustainable is stalling. Compared with 2023, there has been a drop in the proportion of consumers who have adopted a more sustainable lifestyle across 13 out of 23 sustainable behaviours we track in our research.

In contrast there was an increase in only seven metrics compared to the same period last year, indicating that on balance fewer consumers have been adopting a more sustainable lifestyle.

Although there has been a slight drop year on year, a significant number of consumers continue with the top sustainable behaviours observed last year. When asked about the actions they have taken in the past 12 months to pursue a more sustainable lifestyle, the majority of consumers reported recycling household waste (73%), reducing food waste (68%), limiting the use of single use plastics (61%) and reducing the number of new products they buy (58%). Similar proportions of consumers also claimed to have bought more locally produced goods (51%) and more seasonal produce (56%). Another 56% had fixed or repaired a product rather than replacing it.

These results suggest that, for most people, adopting a more sustainable lifestyle starts at home. The majority of these actions can also be viewed as 'money saving', which suggests that the cost-of-living crisis continues to play a role in the choices consumers make. For example, reducing food waste can be seen as being more conscious about over-consumption, but also as an effort to save money by making ingredients go further in the kitchen. In addition, almost half of those surveyed had purchased second-hand or refurbished items in the past year in order to live a more sustainable lifestyle. This was made possible, perhaps, by the increasing number of online platforms for selling unwanted items.

There are often apparent contradictions in the way that consumers behave. For example, some of the behaviours that have seen a drop in adoption this year are those that are more likely to require real behavioural change, such as what people eat and the way they travel. However, behaviours for which there was an increase in levels of adoption have the potential to deliver a greater impact in the short term and can be catalysts for further change, for example more consumers changing to renewable energy providers or re-directing their personal investments into sustainable businesses.

Young consumers are more invested in bringing change

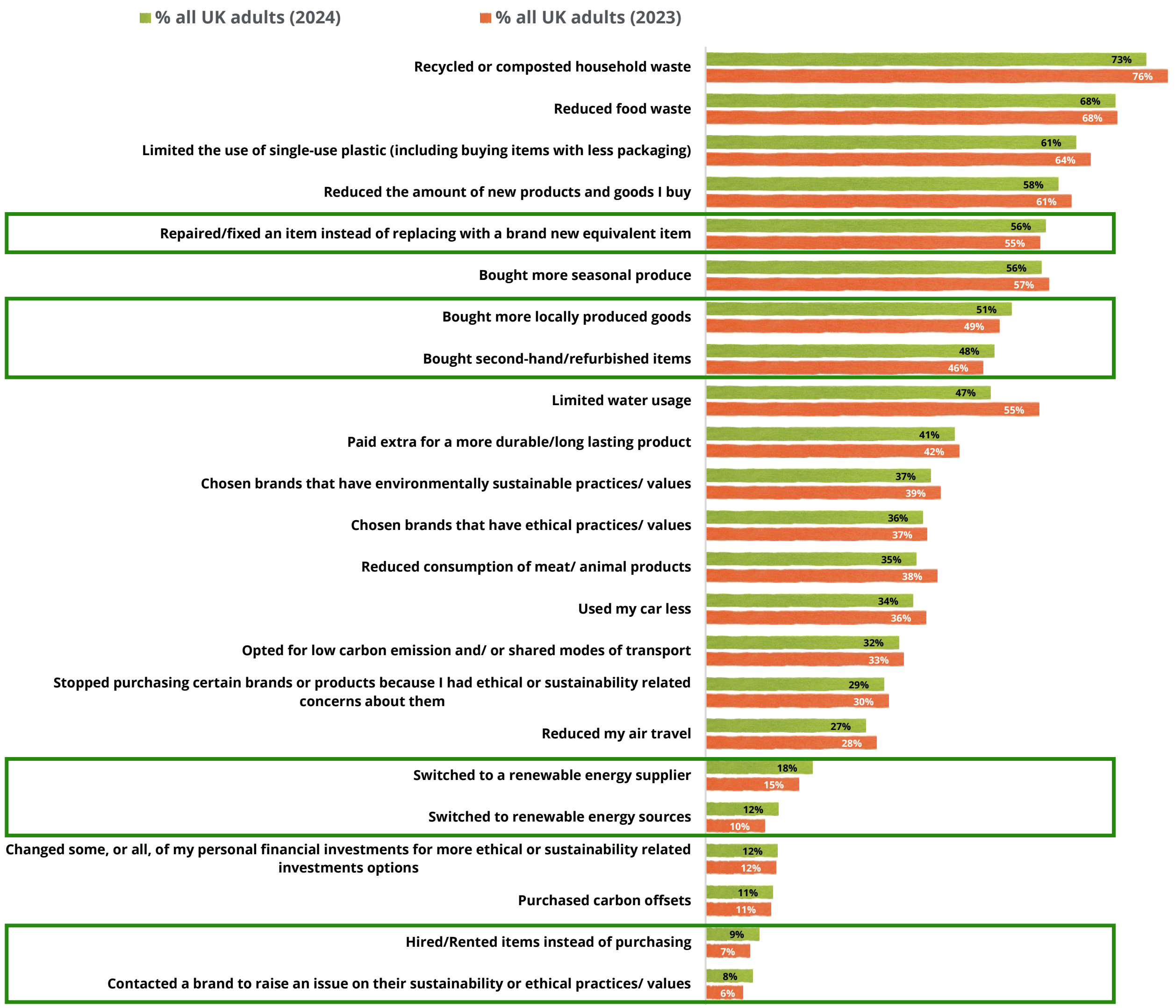
Our findings also suggest that the future power of consumer brands will lie in demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainability. It is particularly important to engage with younger consumers, as their buying power will grow substantially as the economy progresses towards net zero.

While there was a marginal increase, from 6% to 8%, in the number of consumers who had contacted a brand to raise issues about sustainability or ethical practices, the figure was double among 18-24 year-olds (15%) and 25-34 year-olds (14%). At the same time, more than half of 18-24 year-olds (52%) choose brands that have environmentally sustainable practices, but less than a third (30%) of 45-54 year-olds are as discerning about where they spend their money. Similarly, nearly half (45%) of 18-24 year-olds have stopped buying certain brands or products on the basis of ethical or sustainability-related concerns, but less than a third (28%) of 45-54 year-olds have done so. These results reflect a broader trend, where the youngest consumers are more concerned than the older consumers about adopting a more sustainable lifestyle.

At a time when sustainability reporting frameworks are mandating greater transparency, there is an opportunity for businesses to demonstrate shared values to an increasingly climate-conscious consumer base.

Figure 3. What actions consumers are taking to have a more sustainable lifestyle

Thinking about the last 12 months, which, if any, of the following have you done, specifically to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle?



Source: The Sustainable Consumer

Are emerging business models and regulations driving progress?

Over the years, we have seen an increase in sustainable activities that are supported by businesses more than before. For example, 56% of consumers reported having repaired an item instead of replacing it – an increase on each of the past two years. While some consumers may be carrying out these repairs themselves, it is becoming increasingly common to see fashion retailers offer in-store tailoring, and the 'right to repair' law, introduced in 2021, has also had an impact on people's ability to fix technology products (e.g., phones and personal computers). This is a great example of how emerging regulation helps consumers adopt more sustainable practices and of the role played by businesses in enabling change by offering new services.

Consumers intend to continue being committed to sustainability

We also asked consumers about the actions they intend to take in the future. In contrast to the slight slowdown in sustainable behaviours seen in the past year, over the next 12 months consumers plan to do more across 17 of 21 'sustainable behaviours'. With the majority of consumers already adopting some sustainable behaviours, the question about the future becomes one of what else can be done. What is stopping the 73% who recycle from doing more in other areas – and if there is nothing more that can be done, how do we shift the dial?

How do behaviours change for different product or service category?

Consumers are most likely to make sustainable or ethical choices in the categories of goods or services they buy most frequently and deem essential. It is in the more frequently purchased categories, for example groceries, that consumers adopt sustainable behaviours such as recycling or composting household waste, reducing food waste, limiting the use of single-use plastic, buying more seasonal or locally produced goods, or reducing their consumption of meat.

Compared with 2023, consumers have increased their sustainable actions for electrical equipment and household appliances. More consumers claim to have bought second-hand or refurbished electrical items compared with last year and there was a significant increase in the proportion of consumer hiring major household appliances.

This year a higher proportion of consumers claim to have stopped purchasing certain brands or products in hospitality categories because of ethical or sustainability-related concerns. In contrast there was a drop in the proportion of consumers doing so in the grocery sector.

In a sign of consumers not wanting to compromise on their travel plans, there was a lower proportion in the number of consumers saying they have reduced air travel for holidays.

Figure 4. Behaviours breakdown by category

(% of those who undertook the stated action in the given category)

What actions consumers are taking to have a more sustainable lifestyle

Thinking about the last 12 months, which, if any, of the following have you done, specifically to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle?

% all UK adults (2024)

Action	% all UK adults (2024)	Grocery shopping for food and non-alcoholic beverages	Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	Beauty and personal care products	Everyday household items	Clothing and footwear	Furniture and homeware	Electrical equipment (e.g. PCs/ laptop, television, mobile phone device, etc.)	Major household appliances (e.g. washing machine, fridge, cooker, vacuum cleaner, etc.)	Holidays and hotels	Restaurants/takeaways	Going out (e.g., cinema, theatre, concerts, etc.)	Buying or leasing a car	Travelling for work	Travelling on holiday	Banking or/ and insurance services
Recycled or composted household waste	73%	83%									25%					
Reduced food waste	68%	84%									35%					
Limited the use of single-use plastic (including buying items with less packaging)	61%	70%	12%	25%	42%	23%	9%	9%	9%		21%					
Reduced the amount of new products and goods I buy	58%	45%	19%	33%	45%	58%	35%	33%	27%	19%	30%	27%	11%			
Repaired/fixed an item instead of replacing with a brand new equivalent item	56%				43%	49%	39%	42%	35%							
Bought more seasonal produce	56%	89%									18%					
Bought more locally produced goods	51%	74%	10%	9%	21%	16%	8%	6%	7%	7%	28%	13%	3%			
Bought second-hand/refurbished items	48%				32%	60%	42%	36%	17%							
Limited water usage	47%								73%							
Paid extra for a more durable/long lasting product	41%	21%	5%	15%	32%	49%	30%	40%	39%				9%			
Chosen brands that have environmentally sustainable practices/ values	37%	51%	10%	31%	37%	48%	15%	18%	19%	11%	18%	11%	5%			11%
Chosen brands that have ethical practices/ values	36%	43%	10%	31%	28%	55%	14%	16%	15%	11%	17%	10%	6%			11%
Reduced consumption of meat/ animal products	35%	86%									45%					
Used my car less	34%	23%	6%	7%	10%	9%	6%	7%	8%	15%	14%	34%		35%	25%	
Opted for low carbon emission and/ or shared modes of transport	32%	30%								17%	16%	39%	11%	41%	28%	
Stopped purchasing certain brands because of ethical or sustainability related concerns	29%	42%	12%	33%	26%	42%	11%	16%	14%	10%	20%	12%	5%			14%
Reduced my air travel	27%									36%				18%	63%	
Switched to a renewable energy supplier	18%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Switched to renewable energy sources	12%				30%			39%	46%				15%			
Purchased carbon offsets	11%	18%	6%	13%	14%	17%	11%	15%	9%	15%	10%	12%	6%	11%	22%	7%
Hired/Rented items instead of purchasing	9%				24%	32%	23%	33%	32%							
Contacted a brand to raise an issue on their sustainability or ethical practices/ values	8%	27%	14%	22%	17%	26%	11%	17%	17%	15%	20%	13%	6%			18%

Source: The Sustainable Consumer

A view on sustainability in food

Future-proofing our food system is one of the biggest systemic challenges related to climate change. The food industry is responsible for roughly a quarter of total emissions from all sectors including CO_2, methane, and nitrogen emissions and largely contributes to deforestation. About two-thirds of all food-related greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) are accounted for in the agriculture, forestry and land use sector, while the remaining third comes from processing, transport and packaging. Livestock production emits 45% of all methane emissions in the world, and fertilizers and crop protection products are responsible for 80% of all nitrous oxide emissions. Meeting the COP26 net zero targets will be highly dependent on transforming the food sector. These sustainability concerns add to challenges like price volatility, rising costs and changing consumer preferences. It is imperative to create a reliable food value chain for the long-term one that is sustainable, regenerative, and resilient.

The transformation of the food industry requires not only better collaboration across the value chain but also a coordinated response to new and changing consumer preferences to enable profitable and sustainable growth while also navigating the regulatory landscape.

Decarbonising the food system requires:

- **Moving agriculture from a carbon source to a carbon sink**, a system by which the soil absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. This more sustainable system, focuses on increasing and restoring soil health, soil resilience and biodiversity by applying various regenerative practices, such as diversifying crop rotations, applying permanent groundcover, minimizing tillage, reducing artificial fertilizers, improving water and irrigation management and using livestock and grazing integrated systems.
- **Supplying future food demand without expansion of agricultural land.** The demand from a growing population need to be met by other means than by expanding agricultural land through deforestation.
- **Developing food products within a 'carbon budget'.** Food consumption should be limited within an agreed amount of carbon footprint. However, a sustainable food offering has to be attractive and affordable for the average consumer, rather than cater to high-end consumers as is often the case. The cost of sustainable food can be shared across the value chain not to pass on the costs to the end consumer.
- **Enabling vertical integration and collaboration in the supply chain.** Decarbonisation of the food industry requires wide collaboration across the supply chain and a fair distribution of benefits and burdens among all players. There will be increasing levels of vertical integration in the food value chain, specifically driven by sustainability. Vertical integration could take many different forms and does not only have to be about retailers and food brands taking more control of the upstream value chain. It could also be about farmers organising to move further down the supply chain by bringing their own brands and sustainable food concepts to market.
- **Changing consumer food choices, reducing usage and waste:** New research has shown that the greenhouse gas emissions associated with global food supply chains could be reduced by 17% if consumers in affluent countries changed the way they shop for food and what they eat. Diet adjustments such as organic food consumption, buying domestically produced food and eating seasonal produce can help a reduce carbon footprint from food consumption. A shift in behaviour can be encouraged by introducing carbon pricing, eco-labelling and expanding vegetarian and plant-based products. Consumers also have the ability to increase reuse and to reduce waste. Overall to improve the sustainability of food, there is a need for a greater acceptance by both businesses and their consumers of the required systemic change to food production and consumption.

To find out more: Future of Food | Deloitte Global

The impact of rising energy costs on consumer behaviour (last 12 months)

Due to rising energy costs, consumers have been forced to reduce their energy consumption at home, but fewer have done so this year compared to 2023. However, there is still a big opportunity to improve the UK homes' energy efficiency through the installation of solar panels and heat pumps.

Consumers can do more to reduce their energy consumption

The most effective action that consumers can take to support the UK government's legally binding net zero commitment is to reduce energy consumption.

Our research shows that more than 80% of UK emissions come from burning fossil fuels for energy use, with the two highest-emitting sectors being transport and producing electricity and heating for industry and buildings.

That being the case – and if sustainable behaviours truly 'start at home' – then the actions by consumers to reduce domestic energy consumption is a signal of their commitment to sustainability.

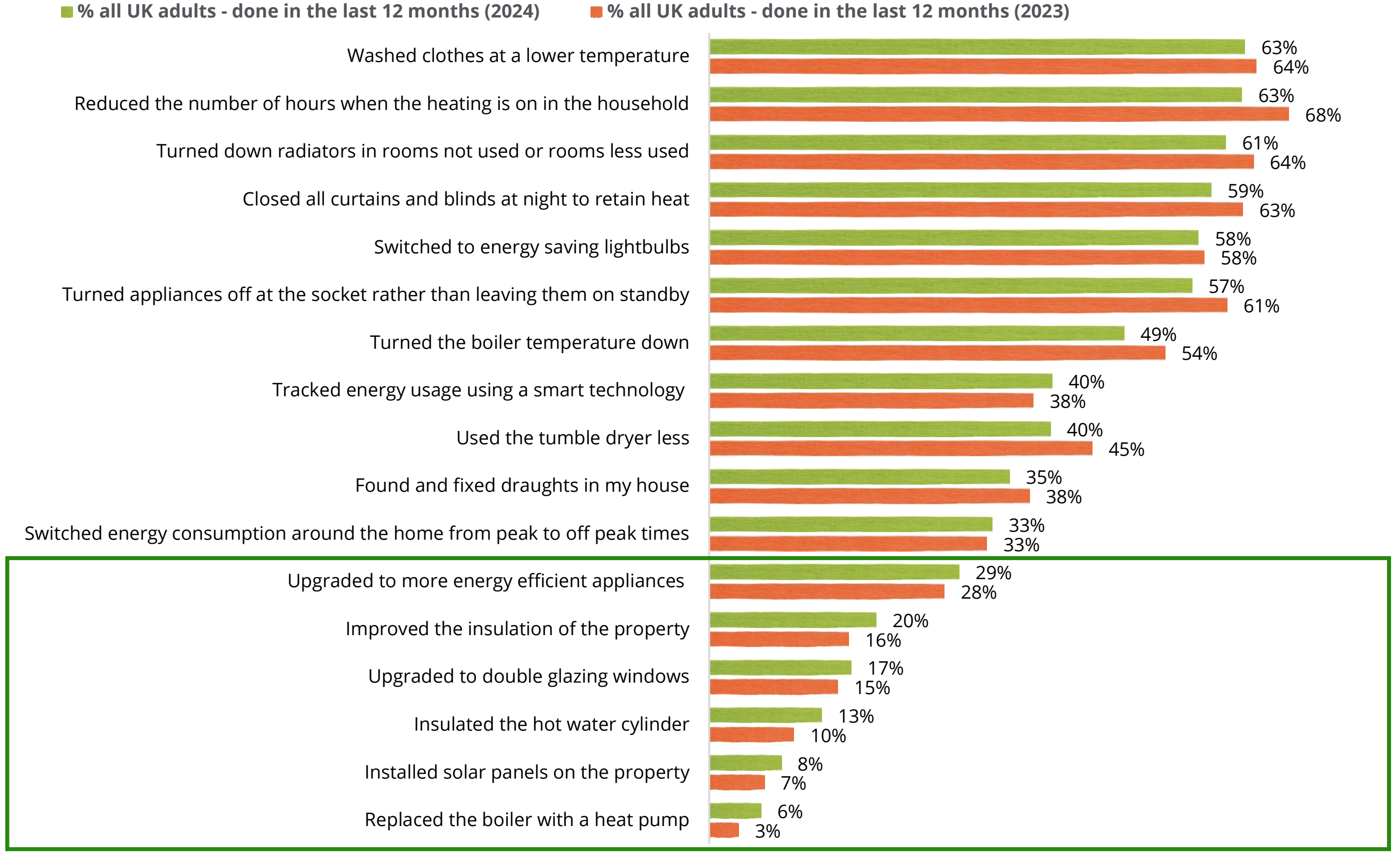
While most consumers have tried to reduce their energy consumption, fewer have done so this year compared to 2023. Despite a slight decline in sustainable energy behaviours compared to last year, the majority of consumers are still reducing the number of hours when their heating is on (63%), washing clothes at lower temperatures (63%), turning off appliances from standby (57%) or switching to energy-saving lighting (58%).

The data suggests that consumer action on energy efficiency has plateaued, but that among consumers who are taking action, the majority remain focused on low-cost solutions. Given that energy prices have remained high over the past year, it is perhaps not surprising that consumers have prioritised actions that can reduce energy use and save money.

However, actions that can have a greater long-term impact – on both energy consumption and cost –but require a larger upfront investment are still restricted to a small but growing proportion of consumers. The installation of solar panels and heat pumps in the UK's housing stock has increased marginally (by +1 percentage point and +3 percentage points respectively). This has been an emerging trend in recent years, but these actions continue to lag behind the targets set by the UK government.

Figure 5. Energy consumption at home in the last 12 months

Thinking now specifically about your energy consumption at home in the last 12 months, which, if any, of the following have you done?



Source: The Sustainable Consumer

The impact of energy prices on consumer intentions (next 12 months)

Consumers are committed to reducing their energy consumption further in the year ahead, with a small but growing number willing to make investments in their homes and appliances to improve efficiency and save money.

Consumers looking for available options to reduce energy consumption

With the prospect of rising energy costs following Ofgem's announcement that the price cap will increase, many consumers intend to continue reducing their energy consumption wherever possible.

Given ambitious targets set by the UK government to decarbonise the grid and domestic energy use through objectives such as its plan to install 600,000 heat pumps a day by 2028, this will be welcome news to policymakers and industry alike.

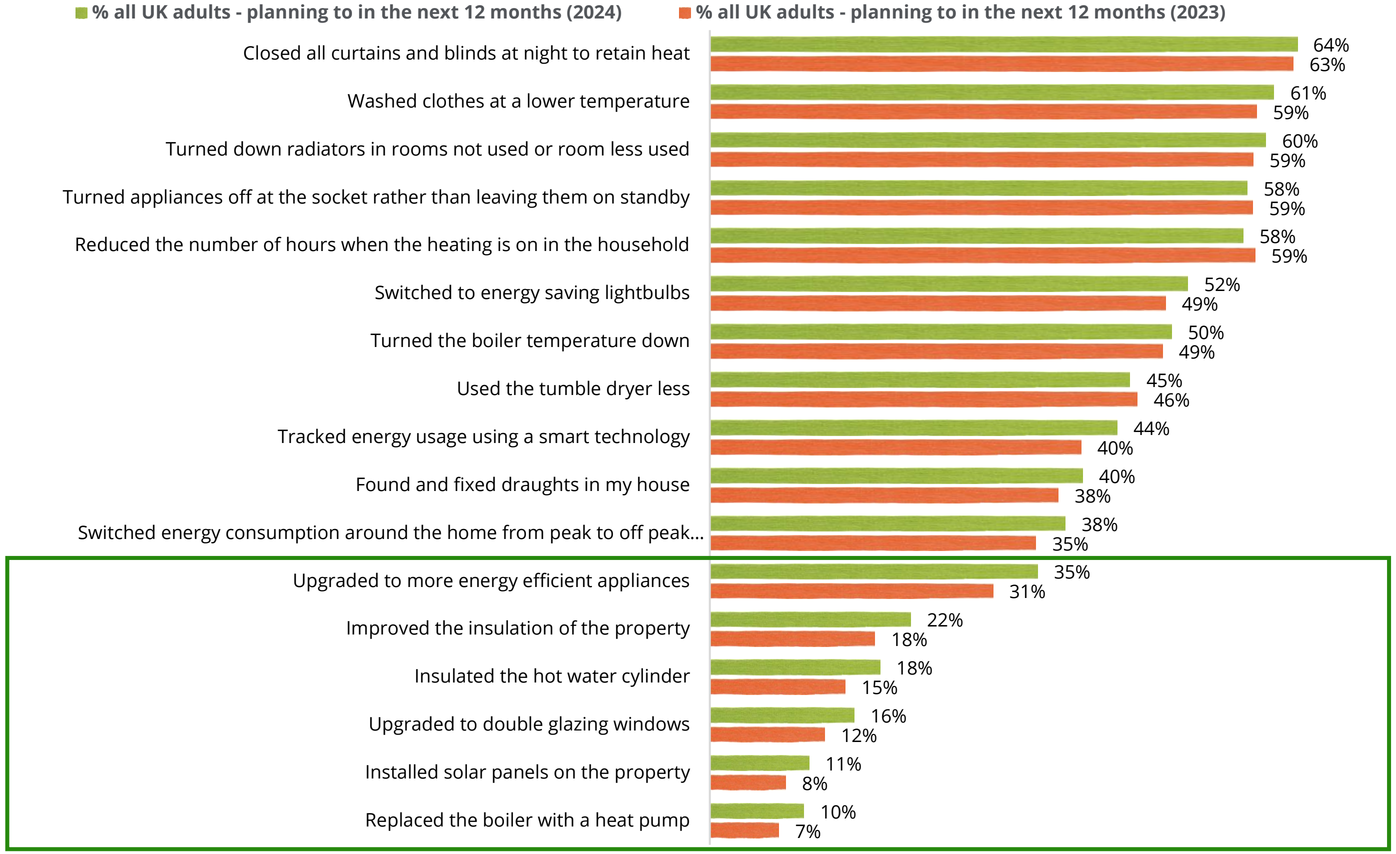
With 10% of our survey respondents planning to replace their boiler with a heat pump within the next year, and as many as 15 million homeowners in the UK, the country could be on the cusp of a significant increase in demand for low carbon heating systems.

Given that just 30,000 heat pumps were installed in the UK in the first six months of 2024, industry, government and finance providers need to work together to ensure that there are adequate supply chains and volumes of skilled workers to enable the realisation of a potential market of 1.5 million new customers.

With solar panels and heat pumps forming such a critical part of the UK government's strategy for achieving net zero by 2050, interventions from policymakers and industry may help stimulate further action by consumers.

Figure 6. Energy consumption at home intentions in the next 12 months

Thinking now specifically about your energy consumption at homes. which, if any, of the following are you planning to do in the next 12 months?



Source: The Sustainable Consumer

Changing attitudes to travel

In addition to reducing energy consumption, consumers have made an effort to reduce transport-related emissions by making different transportation choices. In the past year, one in four consumers claimed to have reduced the amount they drive for either work or personal needs, and the same proportion have reduced the amount they fly for leisure travel.

Consumers travel habits continue to evolve

A significant proportion of respondents to our survey claimed to have reduced the amount they fly for both work (15%) and personal reasons (25%), and one in ten have opted to travel by train instead of flying or driving.

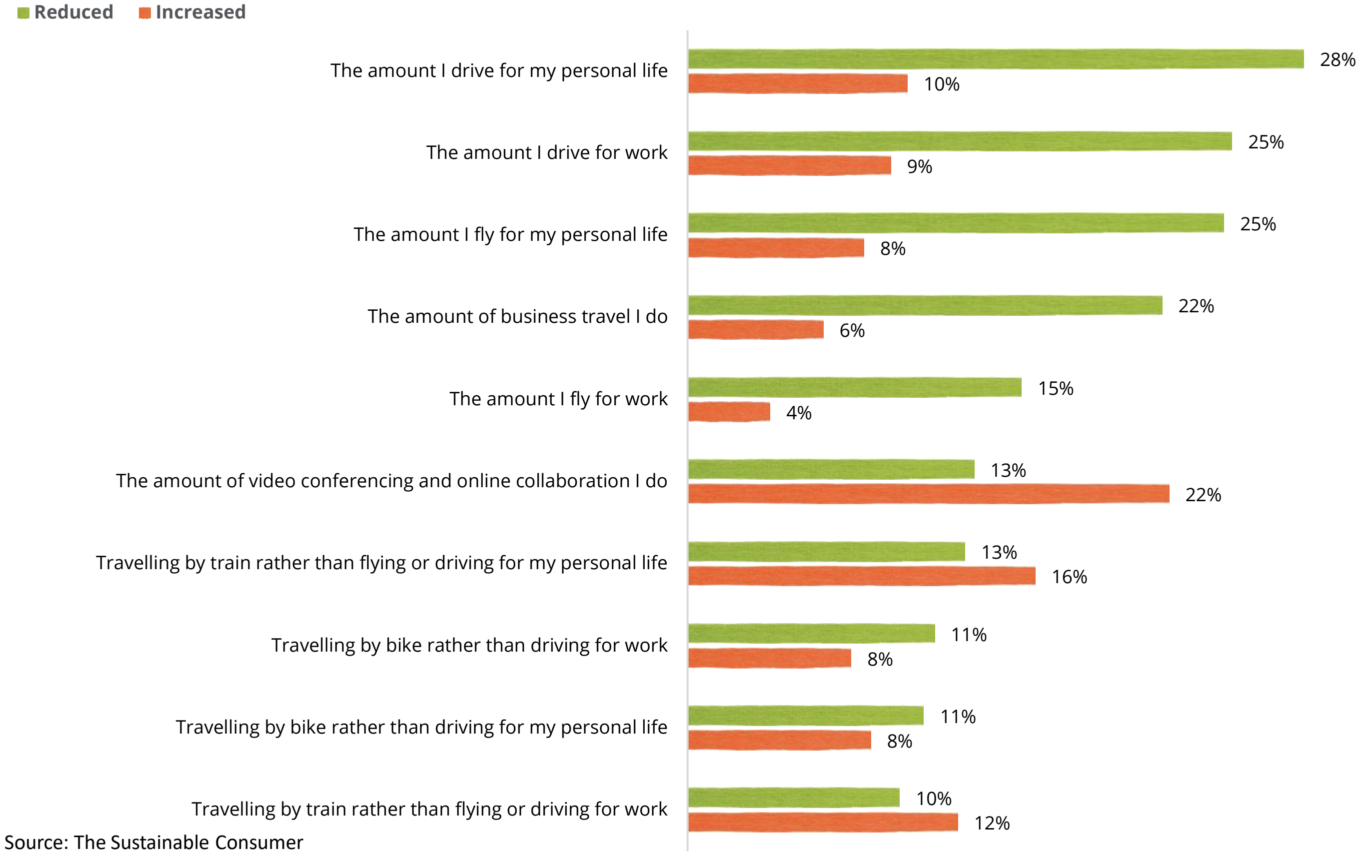
This apparent trend in reducing the number of flights coincides with a marked rise in video conferencing and online collaboration (22%) as an alternative to travel. Enabling remote working is something that can be encouraged by employers to increase their sustainability credentials.

The transport sector remains the largest contributor to the UK's carbon emissions and a major effort is being made to phase out the sale of vehicles with internal combustion engines (ICEs) and also to drive driving down emissions across the rail sector through work to electrify the network.

Airlines are showing an interest in using Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) – an action which could reduce emissions by up to 80%. With some airlines having already announced significant increases in ticket prices to cover the additional cost, some consumers might reconsider flying altogether and further reductions in air travel may follow. Our research shows that younger consumers (18-24) were almost twice as likely to opt for low carbon emission or shared modes of transport to live more sustainable lives than those aged 55 and above (48% compared to 25%) (See Figure 3.).

Figure 7. Usage of various modes of transport in the past 12 months

Thinking about how much you use various modes of transport for work or for your personal life (by road, by rail or by air) in the last 12 months compared to a year ago, have you increased,



Source: The Sustainable Consumer

A view on sustainability in travel

The global pandemic was the biggest disruption to the travel industry of modern times. The unexpected tourism standstill gave the industry a chance to reflect on its impact on the planet and on how to do things differently. International travel restrictions during the pandemic led many travellers to turn to domestic travel. Domestic tourism boosted local economies and even helped travellers to better appreciate the allure of their own regions. While travel has returned to level seen before the pandemic, it might be that there is like with all areas of consumption a realisation that things can be and must be done differently.

Stakeholders whether investors or consumers, especially the younger ones, are putting increasing pressure on the travel industry to become more transparent about the impact it has on climate and nature, and to take action to prevent further damage to the environment. The future viability of the industry is at stake given the importance of nature to the industry. Addressing both climate and nature-related risks is critical for the travel industry to remain resilient and competitive.

Climate concerns will likely have a growing impact on the travel industry in the following ways:

- **Environmental impact increasingly factors into travel decisions.** As more people experience extreme weather events, their sense of urgency about climate is growing. As a result, a significant number of travellers seek ways to mitigate their environmental impact. As Gen Z and millennial share of travel spend grows, so should demand for greener ways to travel. Along with young generations, corporate travellers are a growing source of demand for more sustainable travel. While facilitating greener travel may be challenging, the industry should increase its role in empowering consumers and corporate buyers to make more climate-friendly choices.
- **Climate regulation increasingly targets travel.** As more extreme weather draws attention to the impacts of climate change, governments and regulators will likely feel greater pressure from the public to address it. Aviation is a likely target. France's 2023 law banning certain short-haul domestic flights offers a possible preview of a more highly regulated future.
- **Climate change affects the viability of destinations.** Climate change is already altering travellers' experiences and the desirability and seasonality of destinations. Rising temperatures are affecting locations around the globe, and scientists see increasing linkage between global warming and the frequency and intensity of extreme weather. Warm-weather destinations may become prohibitively hot for long stretches. Ski seasons are shortening, and increasingly volatile hurricane activity threatens some beach destinations. More frequent wildfires may cause travellers to reconsider trips to the American West, parts of Australia, and other vulnerable areas.

Travel-related emissions are especially difficult to mitigate. Upgrading to newer airplanes can improve fuel efficiency but presents financial and logistical challenges. Sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) represents less than 1% of global jet fuel demand*, and planned production capacity will provide only a small fraction of demand for jet fuel by 2027. Hotel companies weigh the financial and environmental cost of new construction and renovation against the environmental benefits. And while tools like photovoltaic panels, battery energy storage, heat pumps, and virtual power purchase agreements can help reduce reliance on greenhouse gas-emitting power sources, the hospitality industry has a long path to a post-carbon future. Travel faces a future significantly impacted by increases in traveller and regulator interest in emissions reduction, and by threats to the appeal of some destinations.

The industry should address climate change proactively by considering the following strategic priorities:

1. **Commit to transparent traveller metrics** - Industry players must work toward frameworks that enable travellers to make more informed booking decisions.
2. **Participate in the regulatory process** - Travel providers will be on the receiving end of stricter regulation. Securing a seat at the table will position them to help shape it.
3. **Invest with foresight -** Continually review long-term plans in light of potential weather-related shifts in demand and the implications those changes have for where and how to invest.
4. **Pursue truly sustainable aviation -** Research into low- or no-carbon is progressing, but meaningful advances require major players to commit to innovations that show potential to accelerate the industry toward truly sustainable flight.
5. **Build greener foundations -** From site selection to material efficiency to energy sources, the most impactful steps toward climate-friendly hotels must be taken long before the first guest checks in.
6. **Develop new offset mechanisms -** These tools may include contributions to research, tree planting, carbon offsets, and participation in local environmental funds.

A more sustainable future for the travel industry is possible, and it will be those businesses committed to decisive action that will not only survive but thrive in the long term.

To find out more: Travel Weekly Annual Report 2023-24 | Deloitte UK.

***** "IATA expects SAF production to rise to 0.5% of airlines' fuel consumption in 2024, adding $2.4bn to costs", GreenAir News, December 8, 2023

Consumer attitudes to circularity

The global Circularity Gap Report 2024, a collaboration between Deloitte and Circle Economy Foundation, found that despite circularity becoming a more mainstream topic in the last five years, this has not resulted in a decline in the use of virgin raw materials. However, the circular economy is projected to help reduce emissions by 40%, generate nearly two million jobs, and become a US$2-3 billion market in the coming years.

Consumers appetite for refurb or resale markets continues to grow

The concept of a circular economy—one that aims to help reduce consumption of virgin raw materials and re-use materials already in circulation— is growing in popularity, including among consumers.

Three-quarters of consumers (75%) are open to considering using a repair service, but a similar proportion (69%) would want a warranty or authentication to consider purchasing refurbished goods. Two-thirds of consumers take a product's reparability or durability into consideration before making a purchase.

There is growing awareness of circularity and about one-half of consumers (54%) say they are more likely to trust refurbished goods from leading brands. Some brands have already recognised that opportunity combining their digital online shopping capabilities with customers appetite for their products, by creating a peer-to-peer marketplace for customers to sell the brand's products to each other, with a seller receiving the price paid by the buyer plus a bonus in the form of a voucher.*

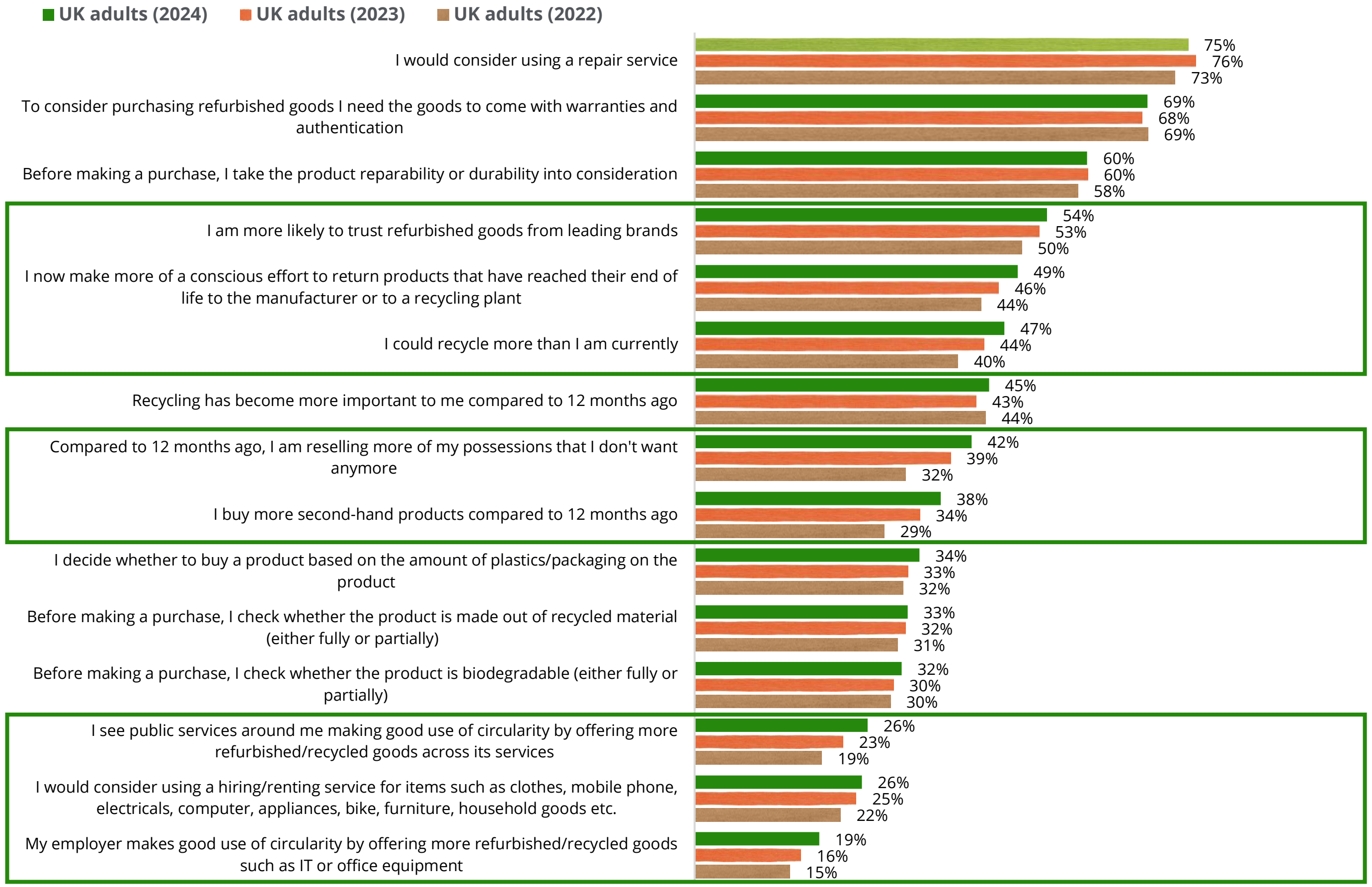
Overall, driven by thriftier behaviours as they look for ways to save money, more consumers are using the second-hand market to buy or sell products. Compared with two years ago there has been a ten percentage point increase in people claiming they have been reselling or buying second-hand products in the previous 12 months.

For businesses, prioritising circularity can help them retain a competitive advantage while accelerating progress towards their net zero targets.

Figure 8. Attitudes to circularity

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

% who agree



Source: The Sustainable Consumer

*Ikea launches second-hand marketplace to compete with eBay (ft.com)

A view on sustainability in fashion

Circularity has become a beacon of hope for a more sustainable future for the fashion industry, but it needs to overcome several hurdles first.

Supply chain complexities: Fashion’s traditional linear supply chains optimised for speed, volume, and cost efficiency, pose a significant obstacle to the adoption of circular models. Transforming these complex systems requires a fundamental re-evaluation of operating processes, rethinking product design, and the integration of sustainability-centric recycling and waste management prices. The lack of visibility and traceability in global supply chains has stalled circular progress, making it imperative for the industry to address these issues. Furthermore, the industry has been faced with the complexity of navigating how to construct a viable and scalable clothing and textiles recycling infrastructure, establish quality control standards, and develop initiatives to drive consumer engagement with circular fashion systems.

Consumer awareness, behaviour and demand: While there is growing support for sustainability and circular initiatives, there remains a significant knowledge gap among consumers regarding circularity in the fashion industry. Bridging this gap is essential to shift consumer mindsets towards issues such as wastefulness, unethical labour practices, and resource depletion. Deceptive greenwashing marketing can make companies appear more sustainable which can potentially diminish consumer confidence and hinder overall progress towards circularity. Shifting consumer behaviour will require collective efforts to make sustainable choices more convenient and accessible to consumers.

Lack of standardised regulatory and policy frameworks: As the fashion industry braces for regulatory changes such as Digital Product Passports (DPPs) and the Green Claims Directive , the lack of standardised regulatory and policy frameworks becomes a significant challenge. The industry needs to get ready to adapt to these impending regulations. Fashion companies and consumers alike would benefit from clear, consistent, and supportive policies that encourage sustainability. Governments can play a pivotal role in facilitating this transition by developing a comprehensive framework that considers the environmental, ethical, and economic aspects of the fashion industry.

Closing the circularity gap: To close the circularity gap, fashion companies must innovate, integrate and educate.

- Innovation serves as the cornerstone for simplifying and optimising the circular fashion supply chain. Using advanced technologies and processes can help streamline the collection, sorting, and processing of used clothing and materials. Incorporating blockchain, RFID, biomarkers and other smart technology can enable supply chain tracking systems and enhance transparency and traceability, making it easier to manage the life cycle of garments. Product design innovations, incorporating repair-friendly features, multi-wear options, and next-generation textiles, can influence consumer behaviour and drive interest in more sustainable choices. Innovation can pave the way for the development of new business models that engage with consumers on a more granular level such as rental or ‘pre-loved’ models, diversifying revenue streams. From a regulatory perspective, governing bodies can incentivise innovation by offering grants, tax benefits, or subsidies for research and development in sustainable fashion. This encourages the fashion industry to explore and adopt innovative solutions that align with sustainability goals.
- The integration of circular practices into fashion companies' supply chain strategies is paramount for achieving a truly circular economy. This involves rethinking supply chains to accommodate practices like efficient collection, sorting, and processing of used clothing and materials to develop a digital thread connecting the end-to-end supply chain. By integrating circularity, companies can create efficient loops within their supply chains, simplifying the complexities of collecting and recycling materials. Companies can also integrate circularity into product designs, offering durable, versatile, and easily repairable or up-cyclable clothing to meet the changing consumer preferences. Circularity can also extend to collaborations with resale platforms and second-hand retailers, making circular fashion options more accessible and appealing to consumers to participate in the circular economy, thus aligning with consumer demand for ethical and eco-friendly choices. Integration can also play a role in overcoming regulatory challenges. Companies could incorporate ‘circular thinking’ into business operations to ensure they remain in compliance with evolving regulatory requirements. The fashion industry should strive to work collaboratively with regulators to set clear standards for environmental impact, ethical labour practices, and supply chain transparency.
- In addition, raising public awareness can support the development of a culture of conscious consumption, helping consumers make informed choices. Brands can contribute by promoting the value of long-lasting, responsibly produced fashion and encouraging participation in circular processes such as repair, recycling, and second-hand shopping. Reinforcing the industry's commitment to sustainability through supporting regulations will be key. Brands, collaborating with regulatory bodies, can introduce and enforce new standards and incentives that promote circular practices, setting clear expectations and actively monitoring compliance with environmental, ethical, and transparency regulations.

The evolution of the fashion industry will depend on shifting strategic goals in the short and medium term to achieve the ultimate long-term objective.

To find out more: The Institute of Positive Fashion Report 2024

What consumers care about

Ethical and sustainable practices that resonate most with consumers

There has been little change over the past 12 months in the sustainable and ethical practices that consumers value most, though more emphasis is now being placed on reducing carbon emissions than in 2023.

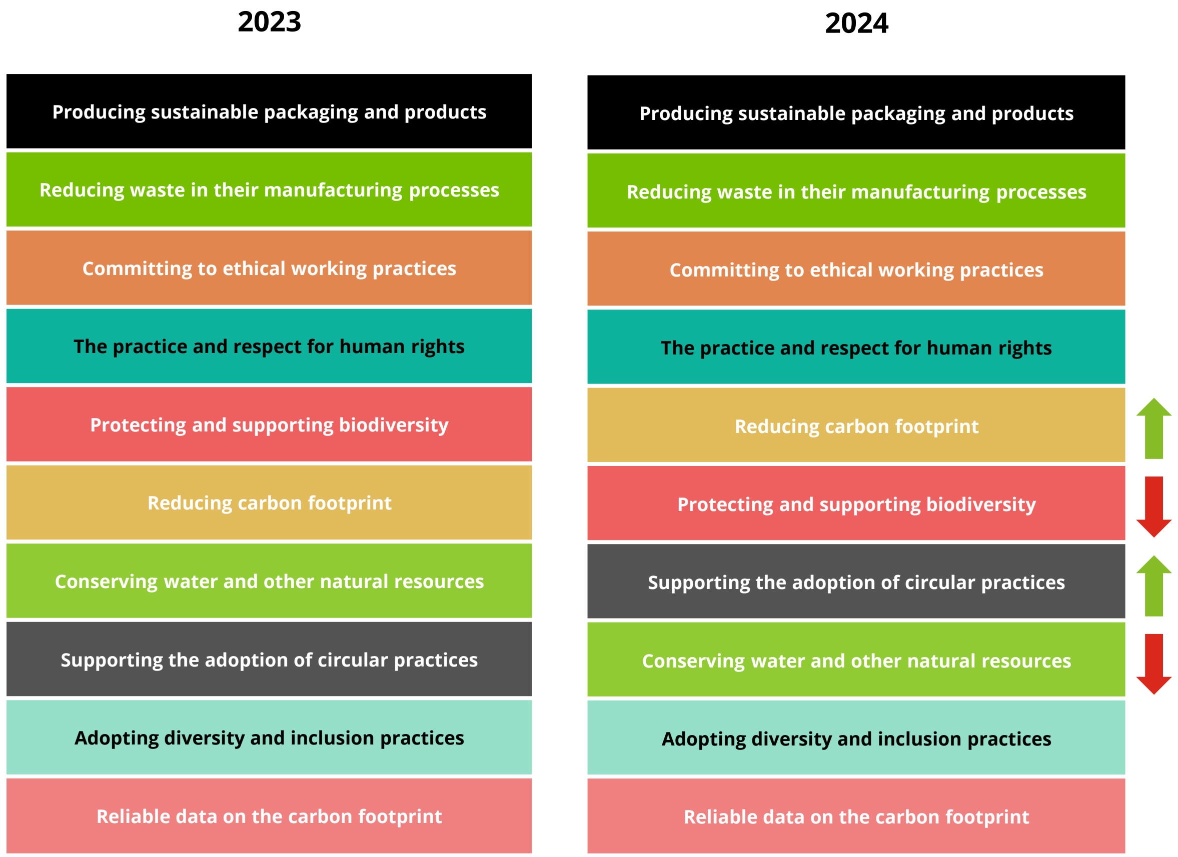
Consumers' top five most valued sustainable or ethical practices:

1. Producing sustainable packaging and products
2. Reducing waste in manufacturing processes
3. Committing to ethical working practices
4. Respect for human rights
5. Reducing carbon footprint (from 6th position in 2023)

Frequently purchased and essential goods, such as groceries and household items, stimulate consumer interest in sustainable and ethical values the most. Discretionary purchases, such as alcohol and tobacco, hospitality and entertainment, and major purchases like cars, generate less interest. Financial services are also less likely to attract interest in sustainable or ethical values. However, a wider interest in sustainability is a sign of growing consumer realisation they can impact change across all categories of products and services.

For consumers, sustainable packaging scores high for grocery products, while reducing waste is valued more when buying major household appliances and electrical equipment. Consumers also pay attention to ethical working practices and human rights issues when they shop for clothes and footwear, or when eating out. Reducing carbon footprint is the most valued practice when considering buying or leasing a car.

Figure 9. Consumers' most valued sustainable or ethical practices



Source: The Sustainable Consumer

The importance of environmentally sustainable and ethical values, by products and services

Figure 10. Environmentally sustainable and ethical practices ranking - by category

More likely to value environmentally sustainable or ethical practices ⟷ Less likely to value environmentally sustainable or ethical practices

Across all categories	Grocery shopping for food and non-alcoholic beverages	Clothing and footwear	Everyday household products	Beauty and personal care products	Major household appliances	Electrical equipment	Furniture and homeware	Restaurants/ takeaways	Holidays and hotels	Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	Going out	Banking or/and insurance services	Buying or leasing a car
Producing sustainable packaging and products	Producing sustainable packaging and products	The practice and respect for human rights	Producing sustainable packaging and products	Producing sustainable packaging and products	Reducing waste in their manufacturing processes	Reducing waste in their manufacturing processes	Producing sustainable packaging and products	Committing to ethical working practices	Committing to ethical working practices	Producing sustainable packaging and products	Committing to ethical working practices	Committing to ethical working practices	Reducing carbon footprint
Reducing waste in their manufacturing processes	Reducing waste in their manufacturing processes	Committing to ethical working practices	Reducing waste in their manufacturing processes	Reducing waste in their manufacturing processes	Producing sustainable packaging and products	Producing sustainable packaging and products	Reducing waste in their manufacturing processes	Producing sustainable packaging and products	The practice and respect for human rights	Reducing waste in their manufacturing processes	The practice and respect for human rights	The practice and respect for human rights	Reducing waste in their manufacturing processes
Committing to ethical working practices	Protecting and supporting biodiversity	Reducing waste in their manufacturing processes	Protecting and supporting biodiversity	The practice and respect for human rights	Supporting the adoption of circular practices	Supporting the adoption of circular practices	Committing to ethical working practices	Reducing waste in their manufacturing processes	Reducing carbon footprint	Conserving water and other natural resources	Adopting diversity and inclusion practices	Adopting diversity and inclusion practices	Supporting the adoption of circular practices
The practice and respect for human rights	Committing to ethical working practices	Producing sustainable packaging and products	Conserving water and other natural resources	Protecting and supporting biodiversity	Reducing carbon footprint	Committing to ethical working practices	Supporting the adoption of circular practices	The practice and respect for human rights	Conserving water and other natural resources	Committing to ethical working practices	Reducing carbon footprint	Protecting and supporting biodiversity	Committing to ethical working practices
Reducing carbon footprint	The practice and respect for human rights	Supporting the adoption of circular practices	Reducing carbon footprint	Committing to ethical working practices	Conserving water and other natural resources	Reducing carbon footprint	The practice and respect for human rights	Conserving water and other natural resources	Protecting and supporting biodiversity	The practice and respect for human rights	Supporting the adoption of circular practices	Reducing carbon footprint	The practice and respect for human rights
Protecting and supporting biodiversity	Reducing carbon footprint	Protecting and supporting biodiversity	The practice and respect for human rights	Reducing carbon footprint	The practice and respect for human rights	The practice and respect for human rights	Protecting and supporting biodiversity	Reducing carbon footprint	Adopting diversity and inclusion practices	Protecting and supporting biodiversity	Producing sustainable packaging and products	Supporting the adoption of circular practices	Reliable data on the carbon footprint
Supporting the adoption of circular practices	Conserving water and other natural resources	Reducing carbon footprint	Committing to ethical working practices	Conserving water and other natural resources	Committing to ethical working practices	Protecting and supporting biodiversity	Reducing carbon footprint	Protecting and supporting biodiversity	Supporting the adoption of circular practices	Reducing carbon footprint	Protecting and supporting biodiversity	Reliable data on the carbon footprint	Protecting and supporting biodiversity
Conserving water and other natural resources	Supporting the adoption of circular practices	Conserving water and other natural resources	Supporting the adoption of circular practices	Supporting the adoption of circular practices	Protecting and supporting biodiversity	Conserving water and other natural resources	Conserving water and other natural resources	Adopting diversity and inclusion practices	Reducing waste in their manufacturing processes	Supporting the adoption of circular practices	Conserving water and other natural resources	Producing sustainable packaging and products	Adopting diversity and inclusion practices
Adopting diversity and inclusion practices	Adopting diversity and inclusion practices	Adopting diversity and inclusion practices	Adopting diversity and inclusion practices	Adopting diversity and inclusion practices	Adopting diversity and inclusion practices	Adopting diversity and inclusion practices	Adopting diversity and inclusion practices	Supporting the adoption of circular practices	Producing sustainable packaging and products	Adopting diversity and inclusion practices	Reducing waste in their manufacturing processes	Conserving water and other natural resources	Producing sustainable packaging and products
Reliable data on the carbon footprint	Reliable data on the carbon footprint	Reliable data on the carbon footprint	Reliable data on the carbon footprint	Reliable data on the carbon footprint	Reliable data on the carbon footprint	Reliable data on the carbon footprint	Reliable data on the carbon footprint	Reliable data on the carbon footprint	Reliable data on the carbon footprint	Reliable data on the carbon footprint	Reliable data on the carbon footprint	Reducing waste in their manufacturing processes	Conserving water and other natural resources

Source: The Sustainable Consumer

Consumer awareness of what makes a product or service sustainable

While consumers have broad views on what makes a product or service sustainable there is consensus around the key contributors. However, with different consumers caring about different things, helping them lead a more sustainable lifestyle can be difficult.

Consumers are increasingly anxious about climate change and are aware of the implications of their purchasing decisions on the environment. As a result, a growing number are becoming more ambitious about the actions they will take in future.

What do consumers believe makes a product sustainable?

When consumers are asked what makes a product sustainable, the most common answer is that it is made from recycled or natural material including biodegradable packaging, followed by its carbon neutrality and whether it supports biodiversity.

More than 60% of consumers view products/services made from natural or recycled materials as being sustainable. However, a higher proportion of older consumers (69%) than younger consumers (50%) hold this opinion.

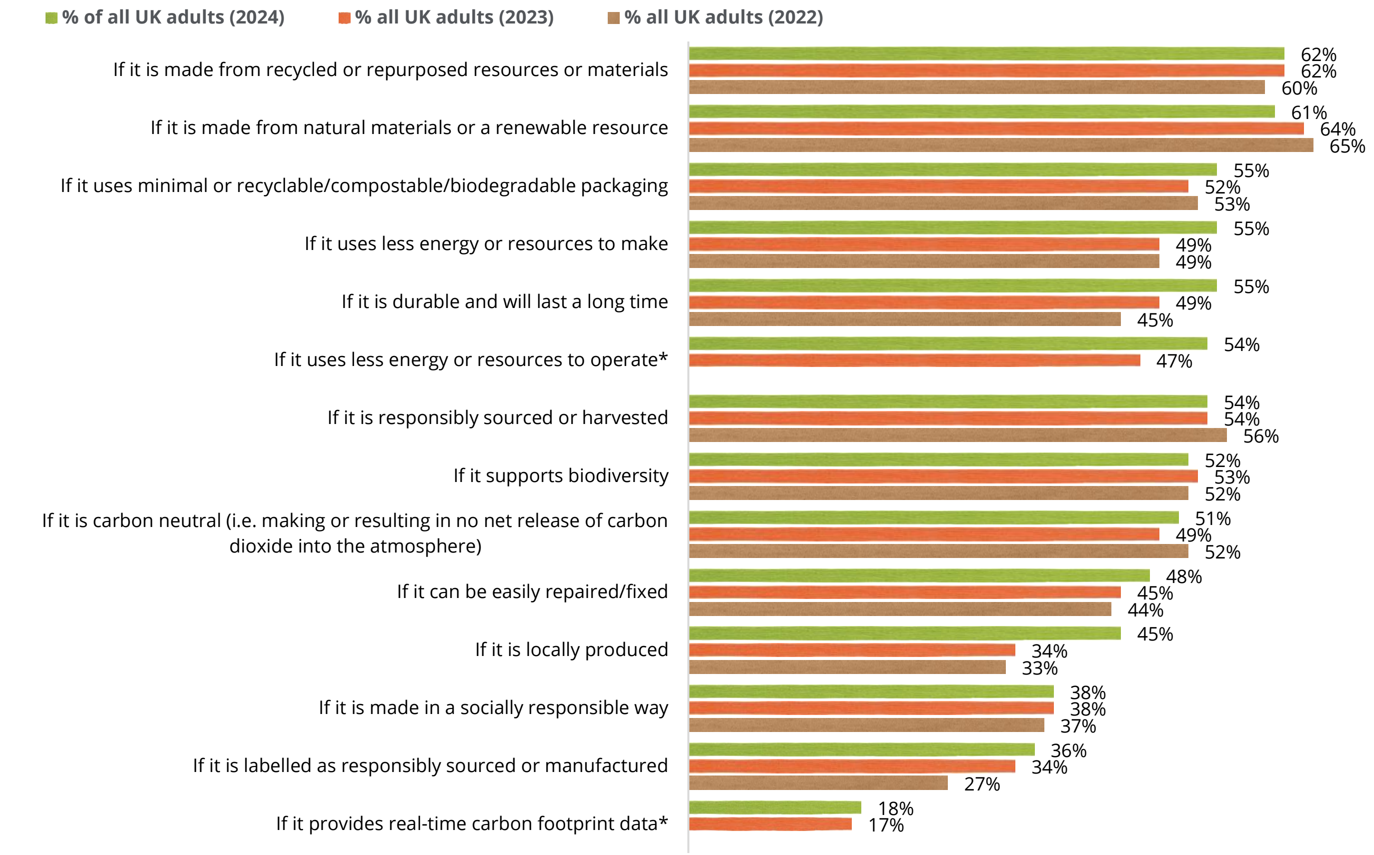
The biggest change this year is in the proportion of consumers believing that a product being locally sourced makes it sustainable (45% compared to 34% last year). More than half of older consumers view 'locally produced' items as more sustainable, while only a third of younger consumers think the same.

Businesses need to consider what consumers care about:

Understanding what people think makes a product sustainable should be important to consumer businesses, as it will influence where they make investments in sustainability. With consumers prioritising some sustainable credentials over others, businesses can alter their brand messaging and their requirements for new product development. Given that sustainability means different things to different people, it is clear that businesses need to adjust their sustainability credentials, depending on who their target market is.

Figure 11. What makes a product or a service sustainable

Which, if any, of the following do you think makes a product or service 'sustainable'?



Source: The Sustainable Consumer
*data not available for 2022

Key considerations for consumers when making a purchase

Despite consumers becoming increasingly aware of what makes a product or service sustainable, fewer are factoring this into their purchasing decisions.

Sustainability is becoming less of a consideration within the purchasing process

While there is evidence to suggest that consumers are increasingly concerned about the environment and want to make more sustainable choices, the majority do not yet consider sustainability when making purchase decisions.

This apparent contradiction could have a number of explanations. The most obvious is that – as a result of the cost-of-living crisis reducing spending power – cost remains the most important issue for consumers. Even so, the UK government's commitment to delivering a net zero economy by 2050 leaves little option for businesses and policymakers but to help consumers cross the bridge from ambition to action in the years ahead.

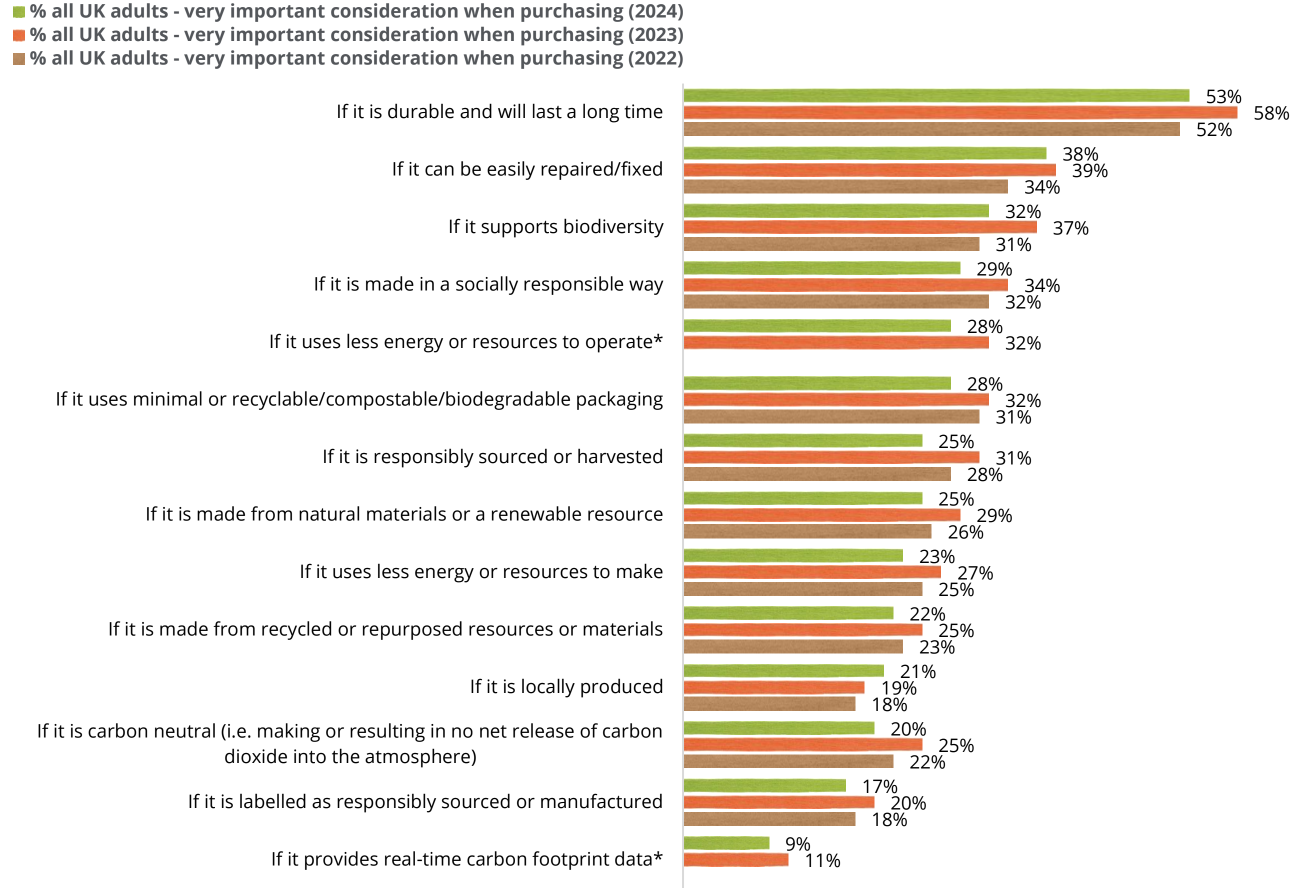
When considering a purchase, consumers are more likely to value durability and repairability over recyclability or biodegradability. In fact, over half of consumers consider whether a product is durable and long lasting before deciding to purchase it. Last year, we identified that this behaviour was a consequence of the cost-of-living crisis, with consumers becoming highly aware of the cost of goods and services and whether they represent good value. Although inflation rates have declined, prices are much higher than they were a year ago and it is likely that this trend, and the driving force behind it, has persisted. This is supported by the fact that 38% of consumers, before purchasing an item, take into account whether it would be easily repairable.

An interesting emerging trend is consumers' interest in real-time carbon footprint data. Our research has found that about one in six consumers (16% in 2023 and 18% in 2024) believe that measurable carbon footprint data is a core part of what makes a product or service sustainable, and 9% would make a purchase decision based on carbon footprint data availability.

More transparency around the carbon footprint of products and services is one way to address consumers' need for more information and could lead to a better understanding of the direct climate impact of consumption choices.

Figure 12. Whether sustainability is considered when making a purchase

How important, if at all, are each of the following when making a purchase?



Source: The Sustainable Consumer
*data not available for 2022

Covering the cost of sustainability

While a number of consumers are prepared to pay more for sustainable products and services, the majority remain either unable or unwilling to do so.

Will consumers pay more for sustainability?

One in four consumers are prepared to pay more for brands that commit to environmentally sustainable and ethical practices. This includes paying more to protect biodiversity, or for sustainable products and packaging, or for products or services that respect human rights or commit to ethical working practices.

However, 37% of consumers are not prepared to pay more and 14% do not know whether or not they would pay more for brands that commit to environmentally sustainable and ethical practices.

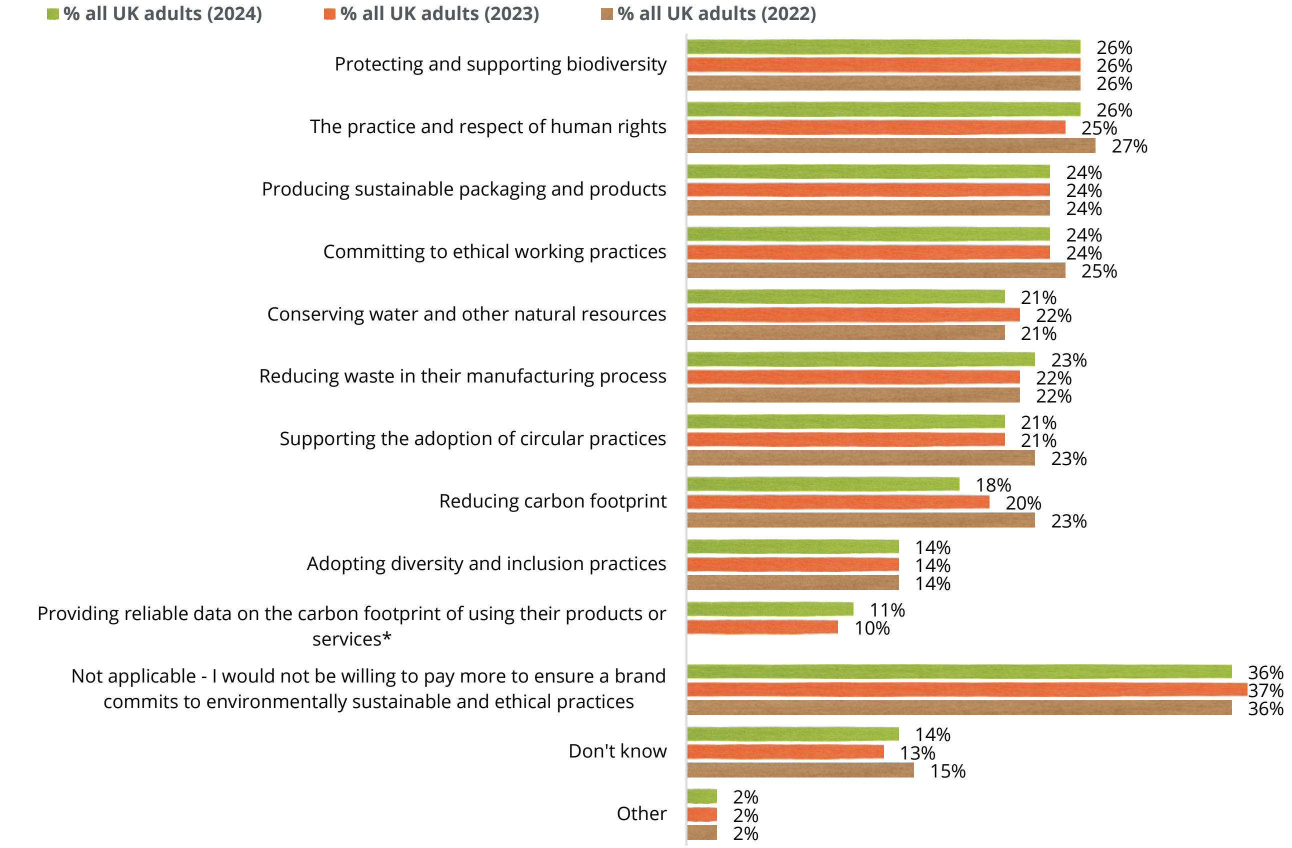
Clearly more needs to be done to make sustainable options accessible to a wider market, since there are still around 50% of consumers who are either not willing to pay more for sustainability or are unsure whether they would.

We found that 45% of survey respondents said that they rely on businesses to enable them to become more sustainable, rather than having to change their spending or consumption habits (see Figure 2.). It therefore appears that many hold the view that sustainability should be built in as standard and should not be offered as a choice.

Sharing better information around the impact that different consumption choices have on the environment will be needed to support a change in consumer behaviour, including encouraging more consumers to opt for more sustainable options even if they carry a premium.

Figure 13. Whether consumers are prepared to pay more for sustainable products or services

Would you be prepared to pay more for goods and services to ensure the brands that create them commit to any of the following environmentally sustainable or ethical



Source: The Sustainable Consumer
*data not available for 2022

What consumers need

Consumers cite costs as the biggest barrier

Affordability remains the number one barrier to the adoption of a more sustainable lifestyle. A higher proportion of consumers are also sceptical that sustainable choices make a difference and say such choices are too difficult to make. These findings send a clear message to government and industry to make sustainable options more affordable, provide more transparent and reliable information, and drive systemic change.

Consumers need cheaper products and more reliable information

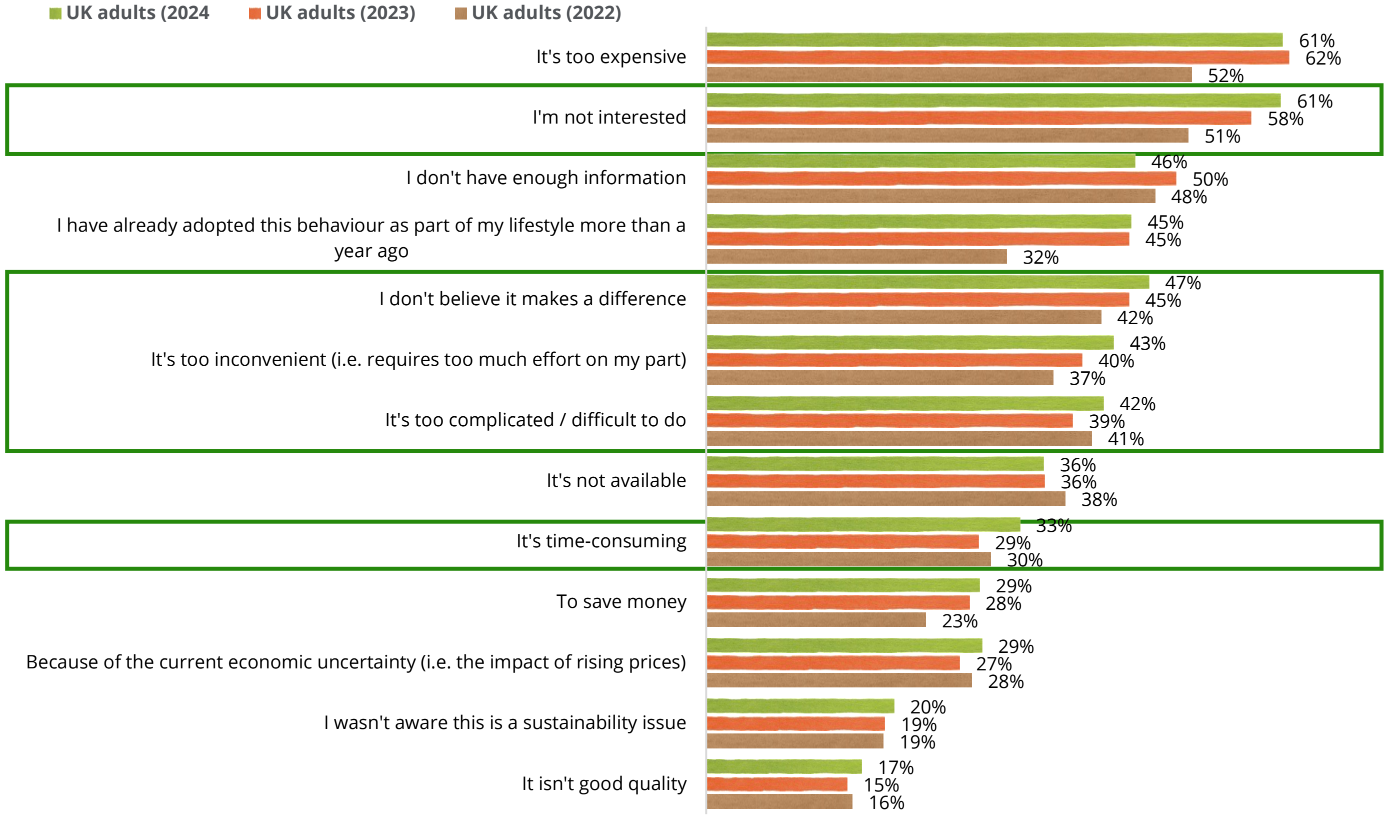
The main reasons for not adopting a more sustainable lifestyle remain unchanged this year and relate to cost (61%), a lack of interest in sustainability (61%), and not having enough information (50%). There is also growing scepticism and fatigue with a higher proportion of consumers for the second consecutive year either reporting that adopting a more sustainable lifestyle makes no difference, or that it is too difficult or time-consuming.

These findings point to the importance of improving affordability and availability of sustainable options and giving consumers greater access to information about sustainability.

With governments across the world enacting more stringent regulatory and reporting frameworks, consumers will welcome increased transparency around the impact of business practices on the environment. Emerging regulations such as Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanisms (CBAM), coupled with reporting requirements like the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), will raise public scrutiny to unprecedented levels and could help improve consumers' trust.

Figure 14. Reasons why consumers have not adopted a more sustainable lifestyle in the past 12 months

Which, if any, of the following describe why you haven't done this?
% of UK adults



Source: The Sustainable Consumer

Action consumers want to see to enable them to buy more sustainable products and services

Consumers want businesses and institutions to take a lead in supporting them to adopt more environmentally sustainable habits. However, the proportion of consumers demanding action has declined.

Consumers asking for support from businesses and government

Given that the main barrier to becoming more sustainable is cost, it is not surprising that making sustainable alternatives more affordable is the issue cited by more than one in two consumers (53%) as the main area to address.

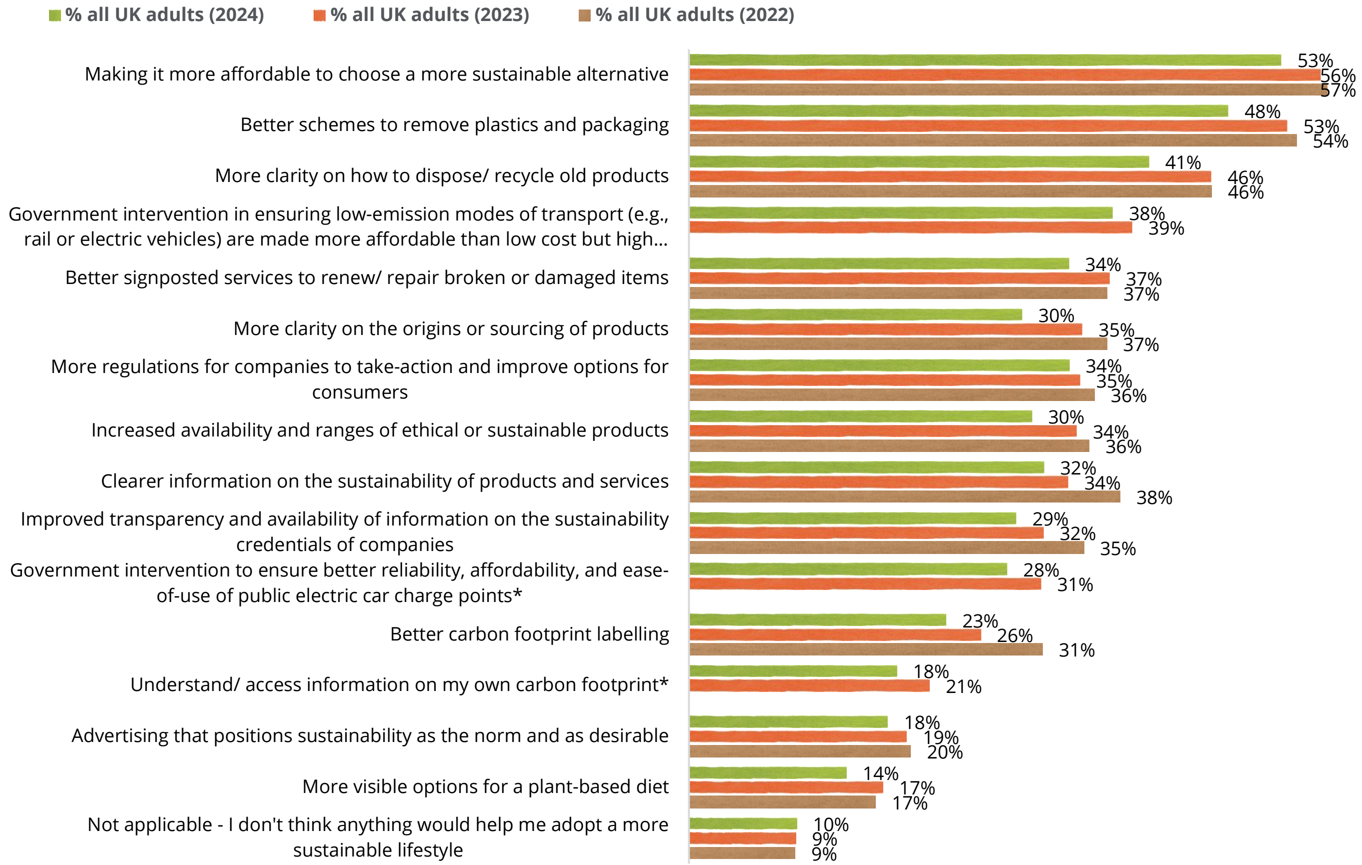
In addition, most consumers would welcome better schemes to remove plastic and packaging (48%) and clearer guidance on disposal and recycling (41%).

Consumers also expect the government to do more to support sustainability. For example, 34% of consumers want more regulations requiring companies to improve options for consumers. A third of consumers (38%) also expect more government intervention to make low-emission modes of transport more affordable, and to provide better access to public electric vehicle (EV) charging points.

In the run up to the election, the Labour Party pledged to reintroduce the 2030 ban on sales of new petrol and diesel cars. In order to support this transition to electric vehicles there needs to be a focus on public charging infrastructure. The lack of accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure continues to be the biggest barrier for many looking to make the switch. In fact, [Deloitte research shows]that consumers with access to off-street parking appropriate for a private charge point are twice as likely to buy an EV. While the amount of public charging points continues to grow, more needs to be done to accelerate this further and improve accessibility to the preexisting infrastructure.

Figure 15. What consumers need to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle

Which, if any, of the following do you think would help you to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle?



Source: The Sustainable Consumer

*data not available for 2022

Consumer trust in the sustainability efforts of the brands they buy from

Consumers in general are receptive to actions by businesses to substantiate their climate credentials, with over half (58%) stating that their trust in brands and the commitment of businesses to sustainability can be influenced by at least one of eight ‘trust builders’.

Brands can use authentic sustainable behaviours to connect with consumers

The key ‘trust builders’ that businesses should focus on are transparency across their supply chains, independent accreditation, and a strong record around sustainability and climate.

However, in a possible sign of the negative impact of the bad press some companies have received for cases of greenwashing, the following business commitments to improving sustainability have lost some of their ability to influence consumers’ trust

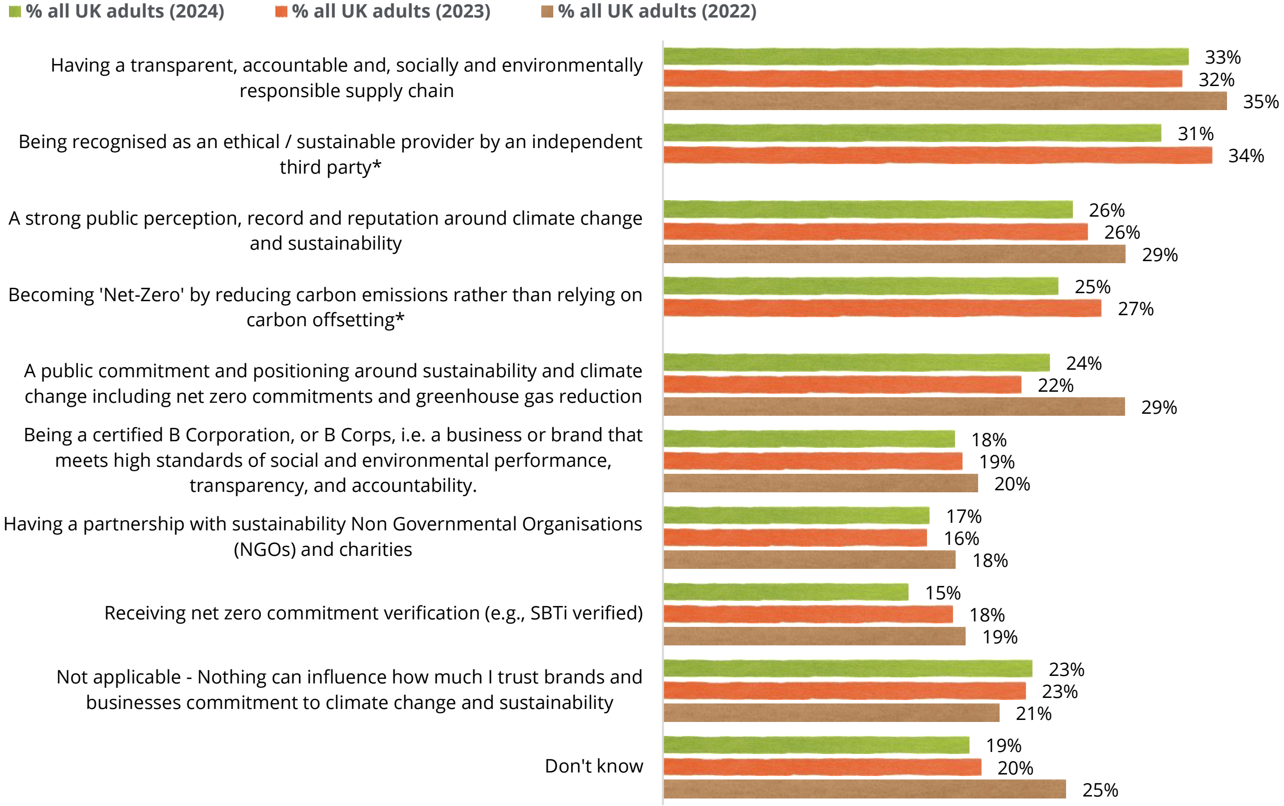
- Receiving net zero commitment verification
- Becoming 'net-zero' by reducing carbon emissions rather than relying on carbon offsetting
- Being recognised as an ethical / sustainable provider by an independent third party

For businesses one of the key takeaways from our research is the significant increase compared with this year in the number of consumers who intend to choose brands which have strong environmental or ethical values over the next year (+ 10 percentage points) (see Figure 3.).

Coming at a time when sustainability reporting frameworks are mandating greater transparency than ever before, there is an opportunity to demonstrate shared values to an increasingly climate-conscious consumer base.

Figure 16. Commitments by businesses to climate change and sustainability that influence consumers’ trust

Which, if any, of the following are more likely to influence how much you trust brands and the commitment of businesses to climate change and sustaina



Source: The Sustainable Consumer
*data not available for 2022

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A note on the methodology

These findings are based on a consumer survey carried out by independent market research agency YouGov, on behalf of Deloitte. This survey was conducted online with a nationally representative sample of more than 2,000 UK adults aged 18+, between 18th and 19th July 2024.