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Environmental Statistics

The Baroness Parminter
Chair, Environment and Climate Change Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

2 December 2022

Dear Lady Parminter,

I write in response to the Committee's report, *'In our hands: behaviour change for climate and environmental goals'*. We welcome the report and its positive comments about the UK Climate Change Statistics Portal, and would be happy to contribute to fulfilling the Committee's recommendation, that:

"The BEIS Public Attitudes Tracker or the Office for National Statistics (ONS) UK Climate Change Statistics Portal should regularly monitor whether people would like to or are making changes in how they travel, use energy at home and what they eat and buy, and the reasons behind people's willingness to change. (Paragraph 63)"

Having launched a prototype in October 2021 ahead of the UN COP26 climate conference, we successfully launched a new version of the UK Climate Change Statistics Portal¹ on 27 October, ahead of COP27 in November 2022.

A cross-government project led by the ONS, the Portal provides a valuable resource for policymakers and the public. As the Committee suggests, it also offers a useful place to bring existing and new behavioural change statistics and data together, an enable monitoring of changes.

Since our December 2021 evidence submission,² the ONS now collects and publishes statistics on individuals' climate change concern and actions on a regular basis through our Opinions & Lifestyle Survey (OPN). This complements and supplements the larger quarterly BEIS Public Attitudes Tracker, and we regularly engage with BEIS on topics and questions for OPN.

On 28 October 2022, we published a synthesis of individuals' climate change worries and actions³, drawing on the several waves of OPN data that we have now built up and also Public Attitudes Tracker. Some of the key findings are:

- 74% of adults in Great Britain reported feeling (very or somewhat) worried about climate change, a similar figure to around a year ago (75%), with women more likely to report such worries (77%) than men (71%);

¹ climate-change.data.gov.uk

² <https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/submission/office-for-national-statistics-written-evidence-behaviour-change-in-the-context-of-climate-change-and-the-environment/>

³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/worriesaboutclimatechange/greatbritain/septembertoctober2022>

- 75% expected rising UK temperatures to affect them by 2030, up from 62% six months previously; and
- 75% reported making lifestyle changes to help tackle climate change, lower than the level found around a year ago (81%).

We are also using OPN statistics, including on behaviour change, in our new quarterly Climate Change Insights, which brings together a range of climate change-related official statistics. For example, the latest edition was published on 11 November 2022 and explains that 34% of adults in Great Britain reported reducing their meat and dairy consumption to help tackle climate change in the last 12 months⁴. Additionally, August 2022's Insights has a focus on homes and families⁵.

The Committee's report also looks at businesses. The ONS is now regularly gathering similar data as above for businesses, using our Business Insights & Conditions Survey (BICS).

The Climate Change Insights published on 6 October reports on respondents' concerns about the impact of climate change on their business.⁶ The accompanying dataset contains several waves of data on business actions taken to protect the environment, including whether they have net zero or other emissions targets, climate change strategies and/or monitor climate risks, and whether they have sustainability reports⁷. In December 2022, we are also planning to publish a similar output for businesses to that above for individuals, drawing on multiple waves of BICS data⁸.

We already use the Portal's "*related links*" section to refer to the individuals synthesis article and Climate Change Insights publications, and we will look to add the business synthesis article once published. We have also added some of the detailed OPN data to the Portal's data store. As we further develop the Portal, we will seek to add further relevant OPN and BICS data in the future, as a way to improve access and use of these data.

We would be happy to consider further use of OPN, BICS and other ONS surveys and tools, such as potential innovative data sources⁹ to further inform policymakers and the public about behaviour change in the key areas which the Committee's report identifies, including what people purchase and consume.

We would be happy to keep the Committee regularly updated on our work in this area.

Yours sincerely,



Grant Fitzner

⁴ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/climatechangeinsightsuk/november2022#moving-towards-net-zero-actions-and-behaviours>, based on OPN survey, 20 October to 6 November 2022

⁵ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/climatechangeinsightsuk/august2022>

⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/businessservices/bulletins/businessinsightsandimpactontheukeconomy/6october2022#environmental-impacts>

⁷ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/economicoutputandproductivity/output/datasets/businessinsightsandimpactontheukeconomy>

⁸ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/businessviewsandactionsonenvironmentclimateandnature>

⁹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/news/statementsandletters/statementondatasources>