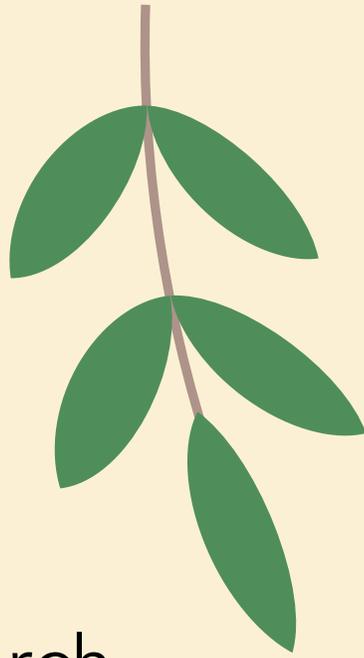




# Insight Climate Collective.

How does the research  
and insight sector feel  
about climate change?

# Presentation flow



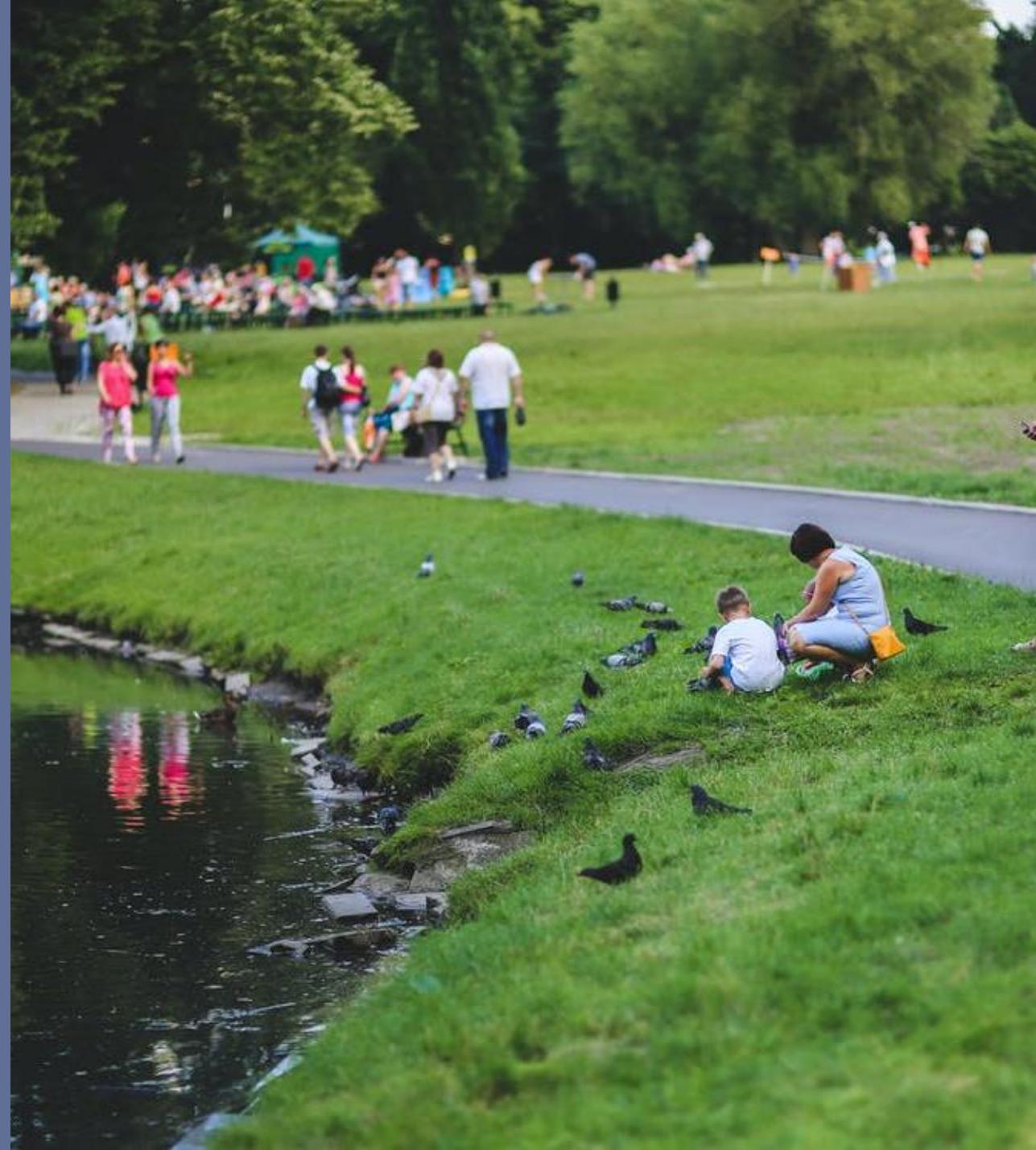
1. Background to the research
2. Headlines
3. Our attitudes towards climate change on a personal level
4. Our attitudes in a work context
5. What is the opportunity?



# In May 2021 we ran a survey of 529 UK-based research and insight professionals

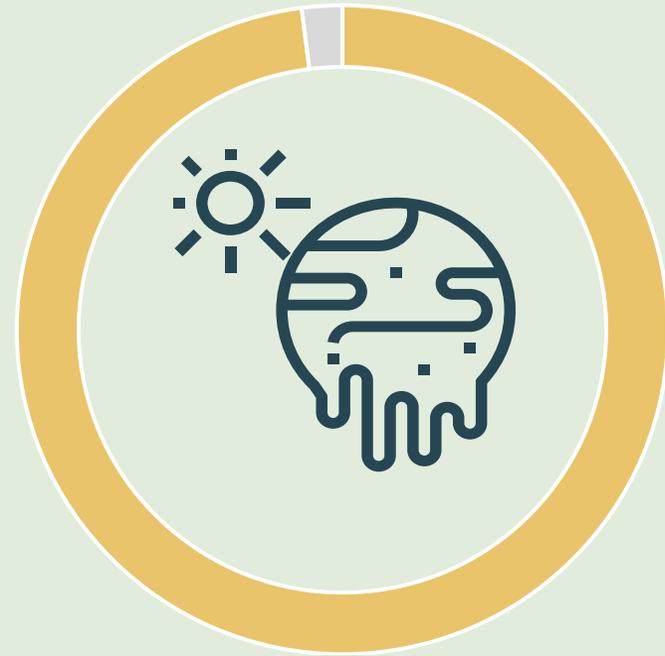
The objective was to understand how people feel about climate change in their personal and work contexts, to understand what actions they are reporting that they are taking in work (and their companies are taking).

And to learn what action they would like to take, and to see the sector taking.



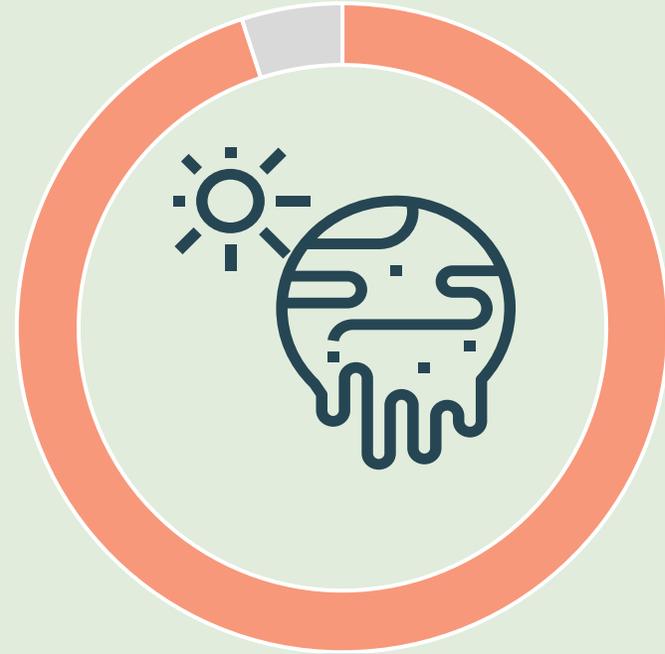
It's clear we  
overwhelmingly  
care about  
climate change as  
a sector

**98%** care somewhat or a lot) about  
what is happening to the environment on a  
global scale

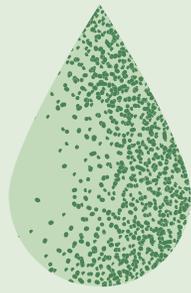


**We believe that  
the planet is  
facing an  
environmental  
crisis**

**94%** agree / agree strongly that the  
planet is facing an environmental crisis  
(74% strongly)



# And unsurprisingly climate anxiety is widespread amongst research and insight professionals



- **95%** agree/agree strongly that climate change is an urgent issue\*
- **92%** agree / strongly agree that they worry about the effects we're having on the planet\*\*
- **88%** agree/agree strongly that we're headed for environmental disaster unless we change our habits quickly\*



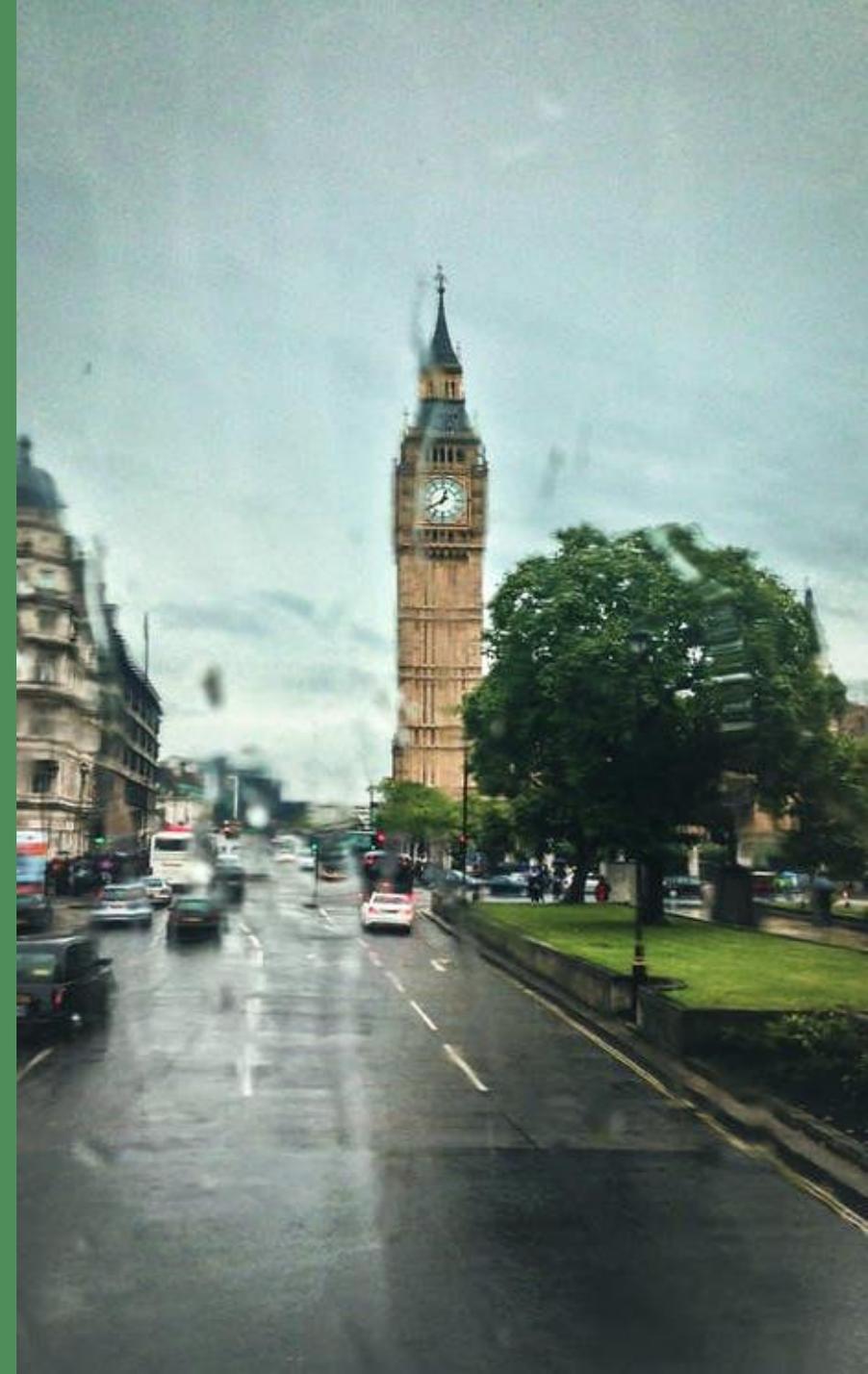
\* B2. To what extent do you agree with the following statements. N=528

\*\* B6. Here are some statements others have made about climate change. For each statement, please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree. N=527

# We want to see more action at a political level

88% agree/agree strongly that politicians talk a lot about climate change but not enough is actually being done

B3. To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements others have made about climate change and its relationship with Covid-19? N=528



# We are concerned we're not moving fast enough

77% agree/agree strongly that they are concerned we're not decarbonising quickly enough in this country

B2. To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements others have made about climate change and its relationship with Covid-19? N=528



# But we see an opportunity now

88% agree/agree strongly that in the economic recovery after Covid-19, it's important that our government's actions prioritise climate change

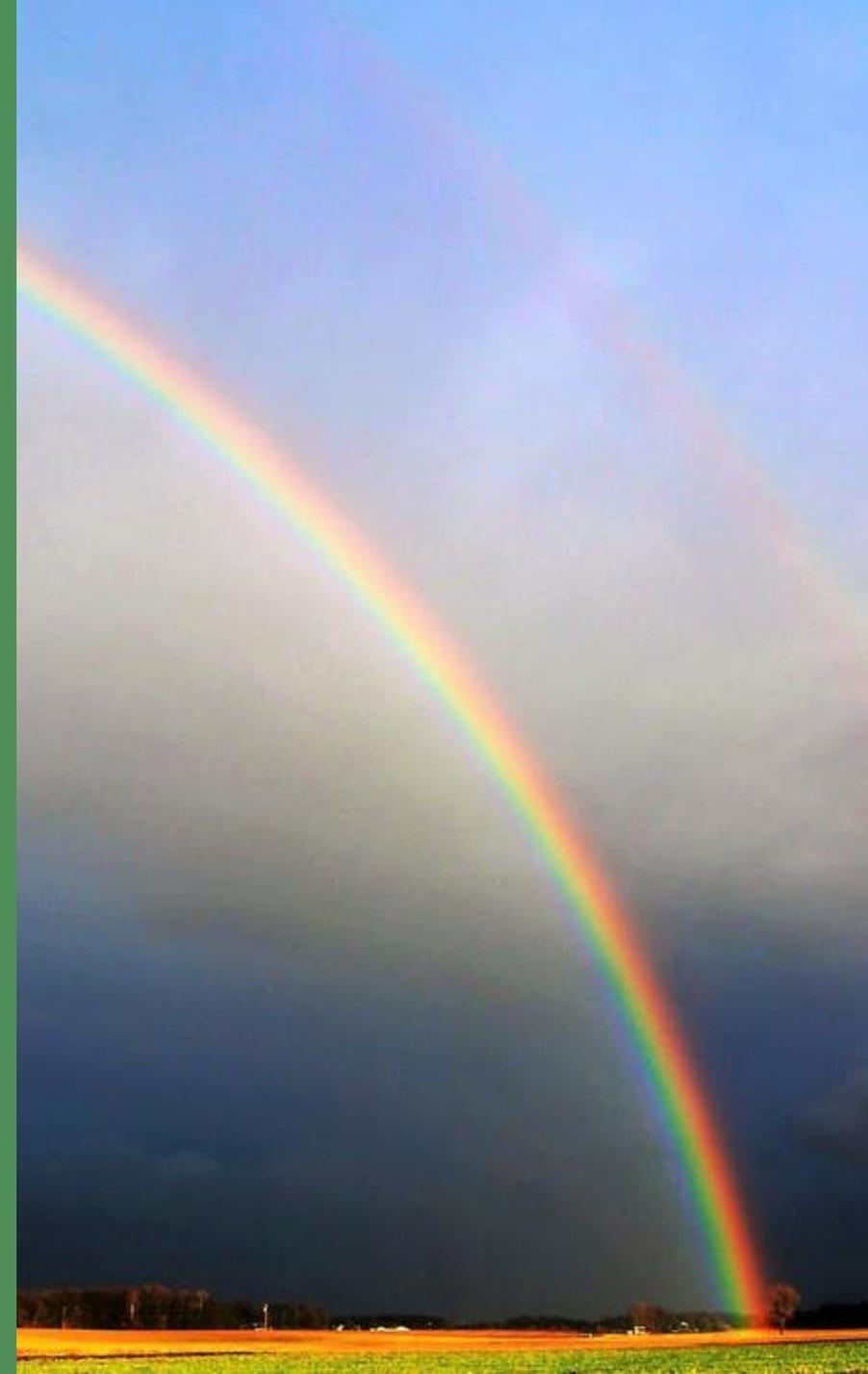
B3. To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements others have made about climate change and its relationship with Covid-19? N=528

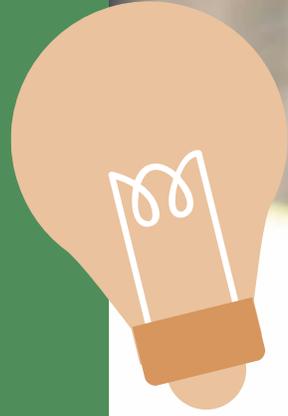


# And we still have hope

60% agree /agree strongly: "I believe we still have time to make a difference to the climate outlook for the planet"

B2. To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements others have made about climate change and its relationship with Covid-19? N=528





So clearly we  
care... A  
lot...

So what?



# We're in a position of responsibility, as we see it

76%

think the research industry has the same level of responsibility to address climate change as other service sectors such as banking, consulting or law (6% think more or much more responsibility)



# We believe we should exercise that responsibility

**76%** agree / agree strongly 'I believe that the research sector should use its power of influence more effectively to address climate change'

E3. Now we have some statements that people working in research could say about climate change with regard to their working lives. Again, for each statement please tell us whether this is true or not true for you. N=528



# And we believe we can have influence too

## 72%

Agree or agree strongly that the sector could lessen its impact on the environment by influencing client-side organisations to consider climate change more actively in their work (e.g. In product development and communications)



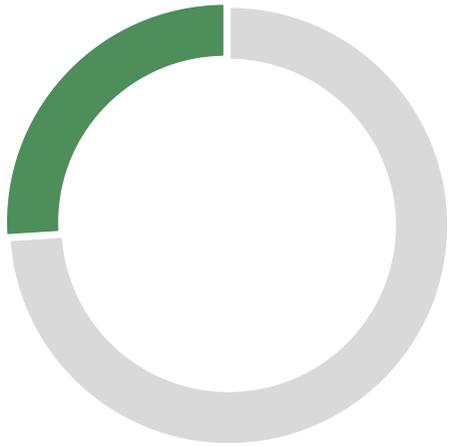


# But we're consumers too...

And just as we struggle with eco-anxiety, we struggle to make more sustainable choices in our personal lives. If we find it hard, how will 'consumers' not also?

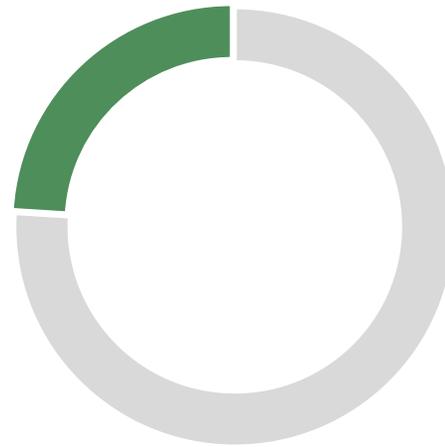


# We believe we could do more in our personal lives



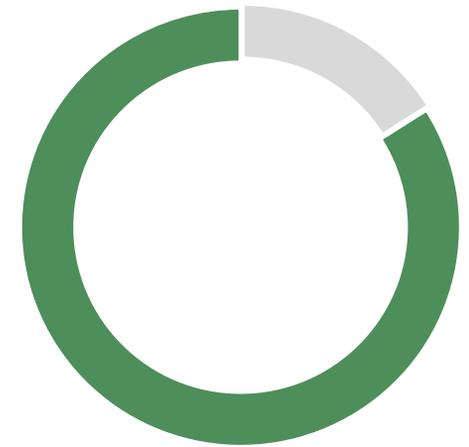
Only **26%** agree / agree strongly that they are doing all they can to address climate change in their personal lives

C1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that you are doing everything you would like to, in order to address climate change in your personal life?  
N=526



Only **23%** agree/agree strongly that the way they currently live is sustainable for the planet

B6. Here are some statements others have made about climate change. For each statement, please tell us whether this is true for you  
N=526



**83%** feel guilty at least some of the time about their environmental footprint (29% feel guilty often or 'all of the time')

C2 Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the impact of your own environmental footprint?  
N=526

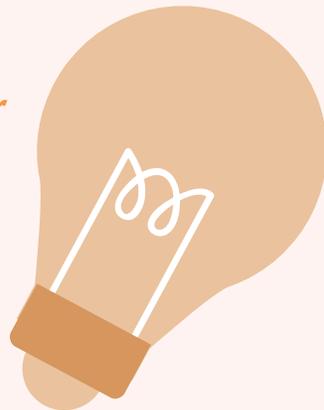


“It is very complex and comes down to a mixture of factors: we definitely need more laws and incentives to foster sustainable behaviour by companies (corporate sustainability is easier to look at), it is still very pricy to be sustainable, peer pressure, unreliable information, lack of information on what would make the most impact, lack of a structured plan (and help to develop it)”

“Getting hold of information you can trust about a product or company’s sustainability takes time and effort. There is not enough time to do this for every decision you have to make day to day”

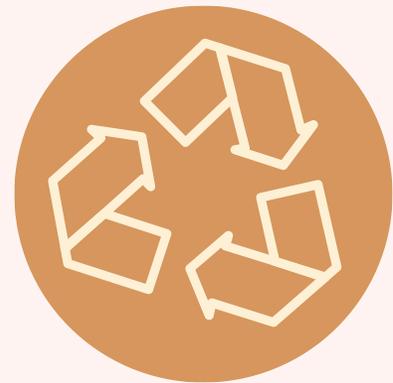
# But we struggle to make ‘sustainable’ choices for a range of reasons

**24%** list this as a barrier to making more sustainable choices in their personal lives: *I don't trust the information companies tell me about the sustainability of their products*



## Other barriers include:

- It is difficult to make changes (32%)
- I often forget about more sustainable options (23%)
- It's a lot of effort to change my behaviour (19%)
- I'm not sure where to start (19%)
- I can't afford to live a more sustainable lifestyle (17%)



‘There is not enough information, and frequently what is good for one environmental objective (e.g. GHG emissions) is bad for another one (e.g. biodiversity)’.

‘It’s not clear what is most important. All food has an impact, it is hard to understand which is worst. Big environmental groups often focus on relatively meaningless issues that don’t offend their big corporate backers (e.g. plastic straws) rather than big issues like implementing processes for truly responsible fishing, and doing less of it’

‘The climate impact of simple-seeming things can be incredibly complex and unknowable e.g. origin of parts, methods of shipping etc’

# Just consider....

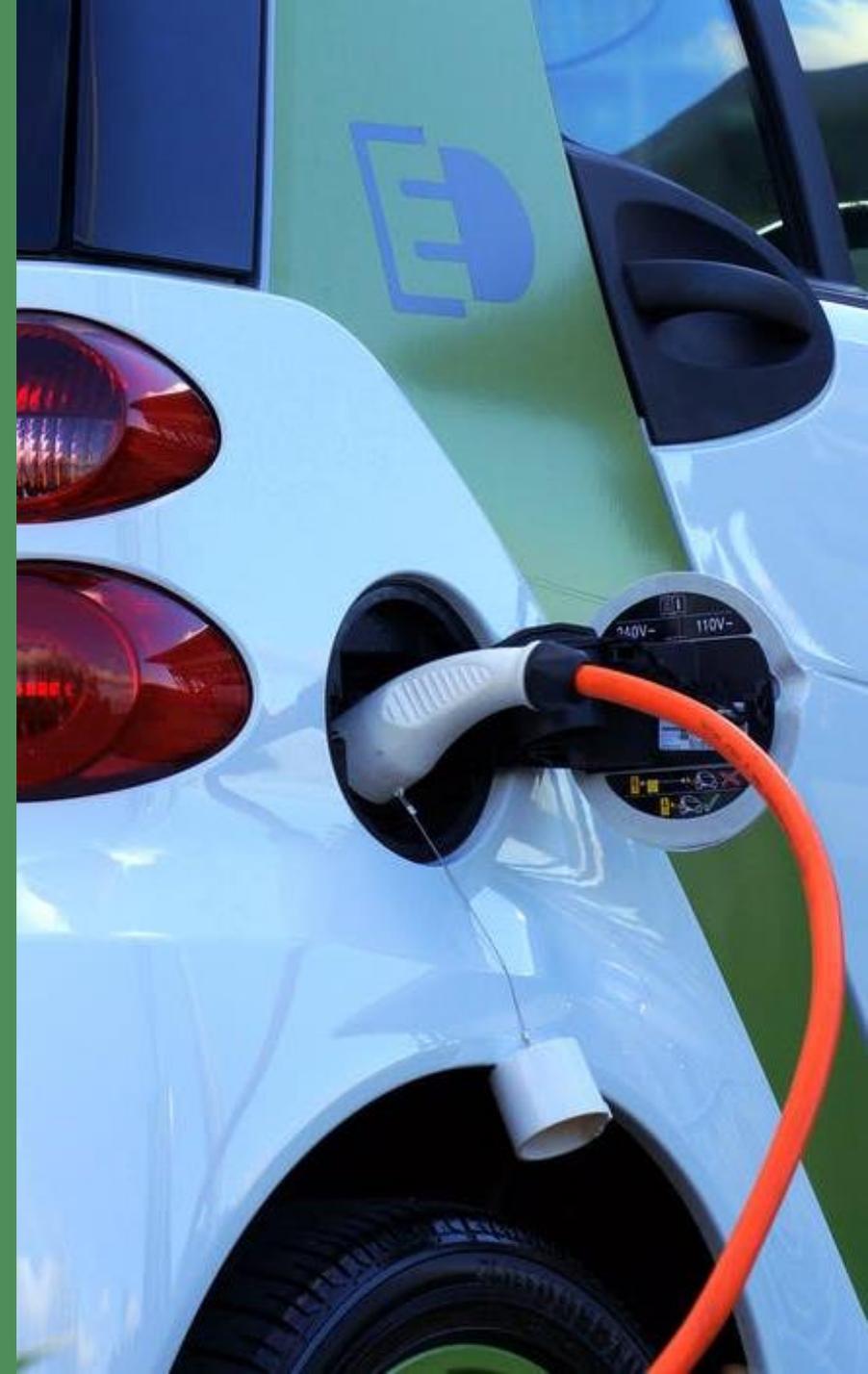
If we struggle to make sustainable choices in our personal lives....

We can empathise with the challenges 'consumers' face. We face them too. And as research and insight professionals we can tap into this.



# We see that more is needed than us as individuals making small changes in our personal lives

“We as individuals can make a difference; however, the action of companies and governments completely blows the small changes we make out the water. The narrative that individuals are to blame takes focus from the worst polluters. I connect my efforts to those lobbying for change at the top”



# We do believe we can do more at work

- **46%\*** agree /agree strongly that they are in a position to make a difference on climate change in their work life
- **36%\*\*** agree /agree strongly that they are doing all they can to tackle climate change in their work life

\* D4. To what extent do you agree that you are in a position to make a difference on climate change in your work life? N=514

\*\* D3. To what extent do you agree that you personally are doing everything you would like to address climate change in your work life? N=513



# But we lack confidence to do all we know we could on climate change at work

**41%** agree / agree strongly that “I don't feel confident that I have the necessary knowledge to make a difference”

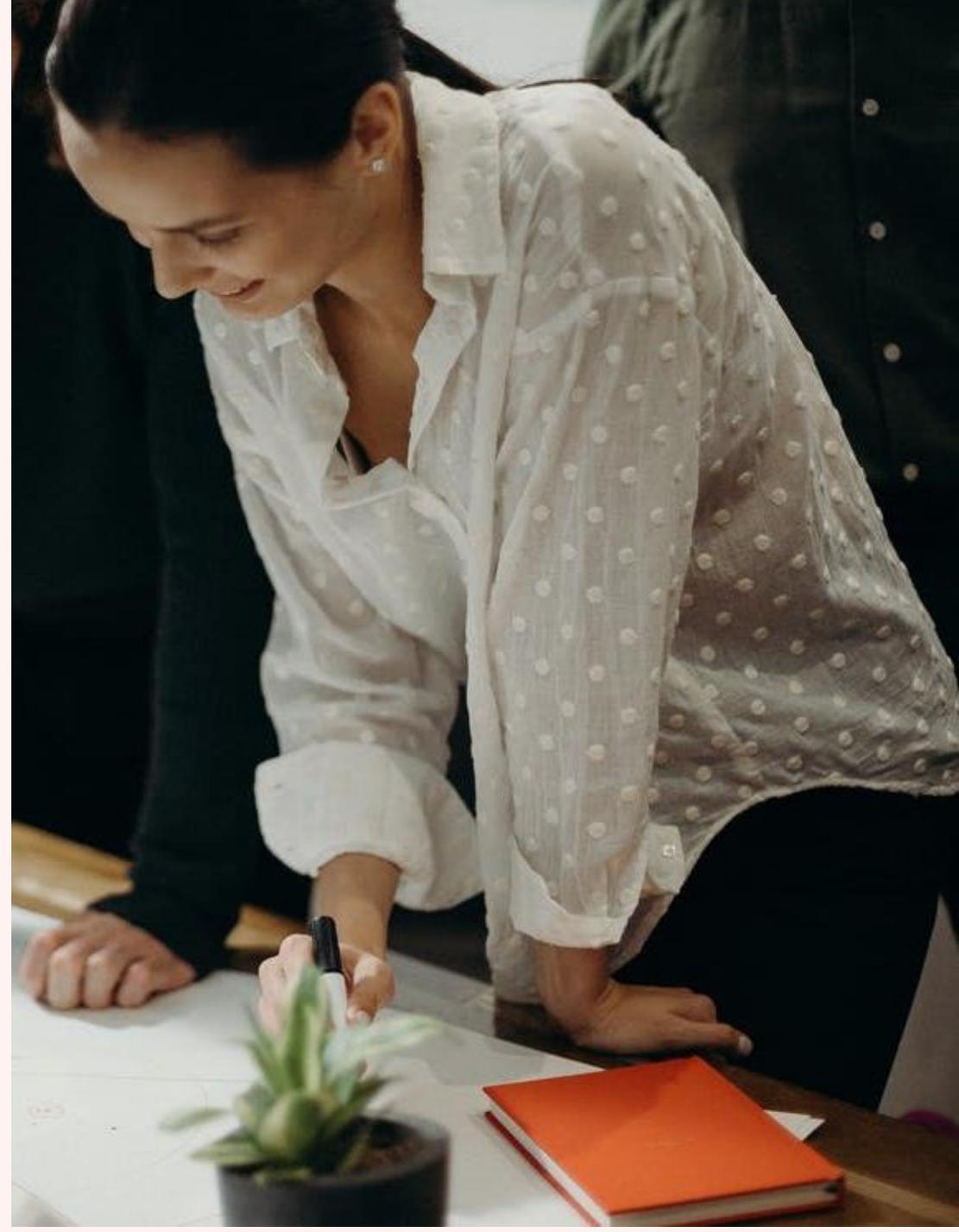
D5. To what extent are each of the following factors, if any, that prevent you from doing everything you would like to in order to address climate change in your work life? N=512



# And we just don't know where to start

**44%** agree / agree strongly that "I just don't know where to begin"

D5. To what extent are each of the following factors, if any, that prevent you from doing everything you would like to in order to address climate change in your work life? N=512



**For some, there is a lack of assuredness they can make a difference through their work**

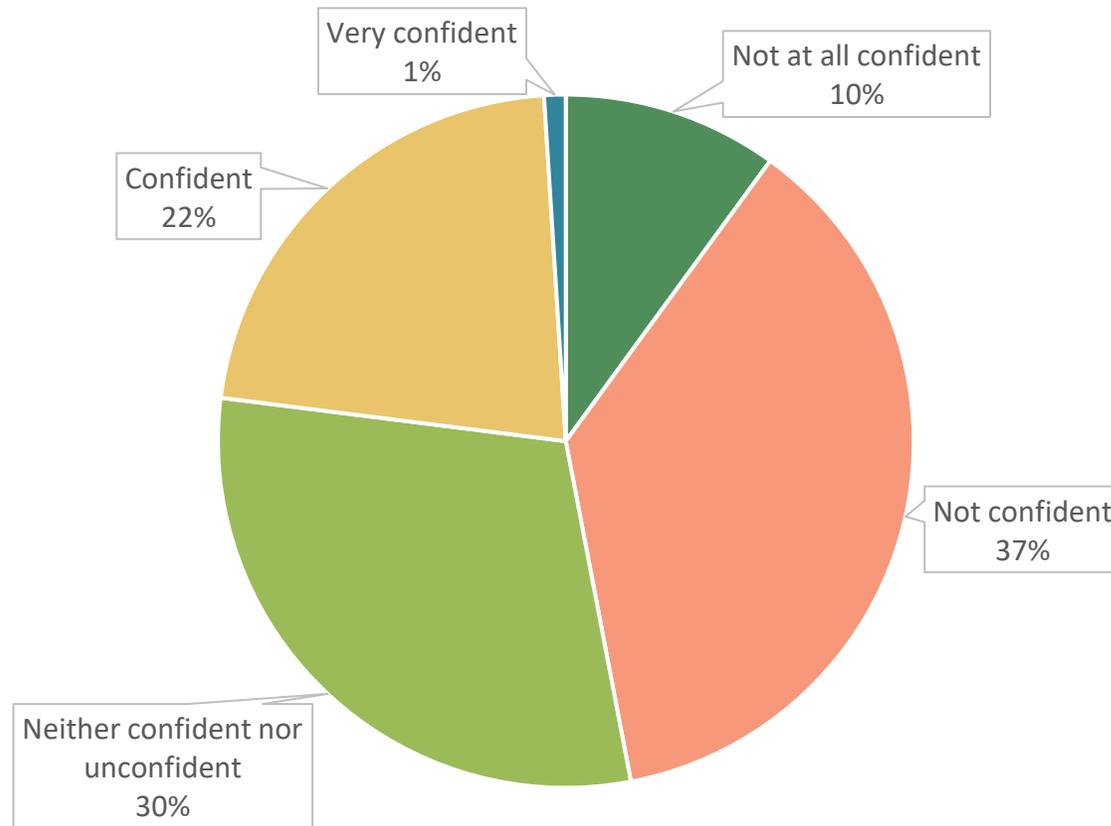
**36%** agree / agree strongly that “I do not believe I can have much impact in the work I do”

D5. To what extent are each of the following factors, if any, that prevent you from doing everything you would like to in order to address climate change in your work life? N=513

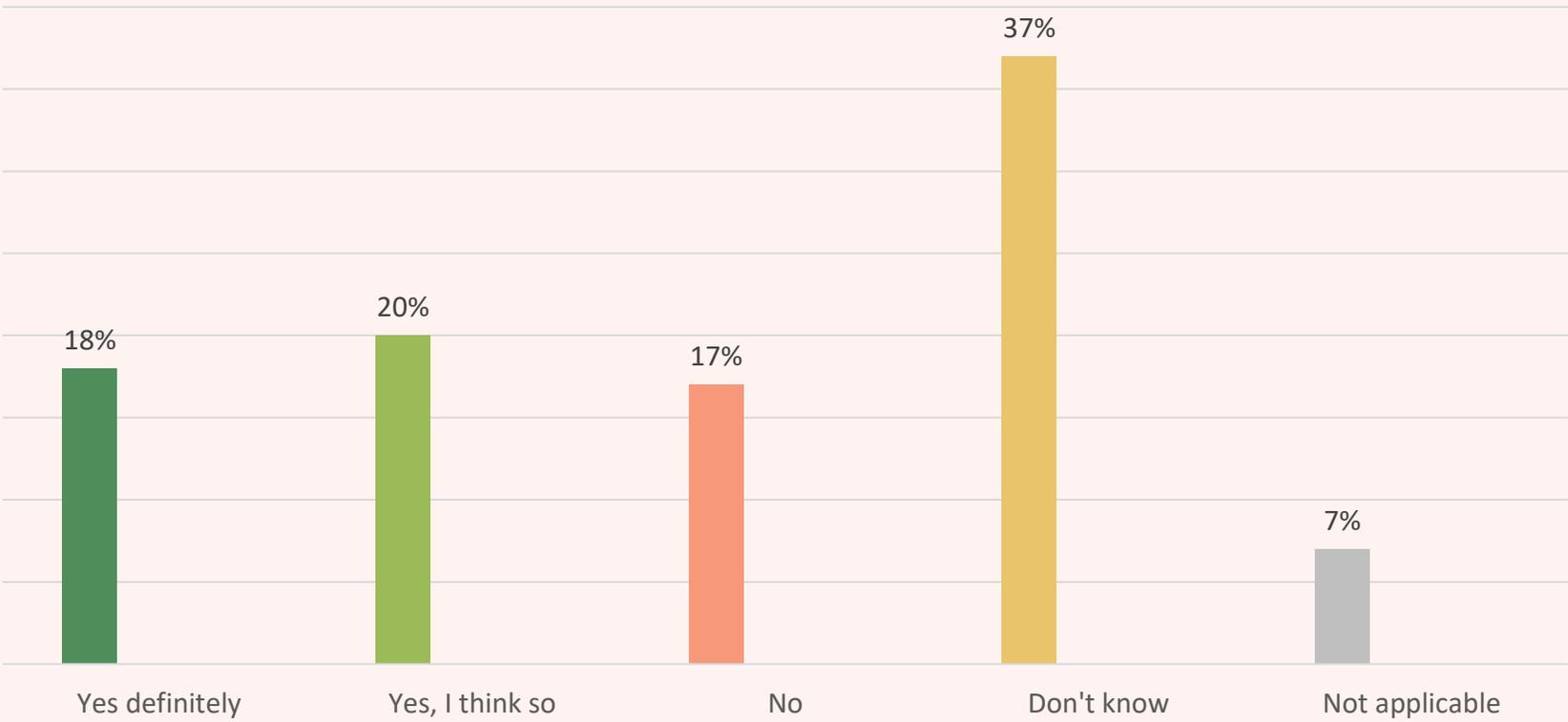


# There is limited confidence we are doing enough as a sector

Based on what you know, how confident are you that the UK research sector as a whole is taking a serious stance on talking climate change?



# Some uncertainty as to whether companies have people meaningfully ‘in charge’ of sustainability and environmental matters



D4. Do any of your board members or management team have formal oversight of environmental or sustainability-related matters at your company, as far as you are aware (such as energy, climate change, emission targets, water management, waste, supplier environmental management) N=516

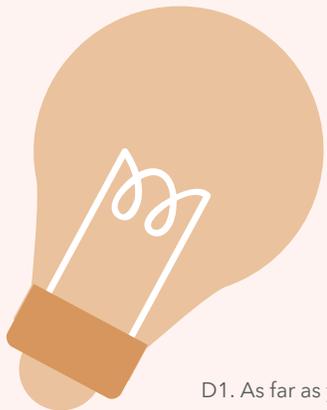
# People are generally positive that their companies do care, but there's a gap to action

## *I believe....*

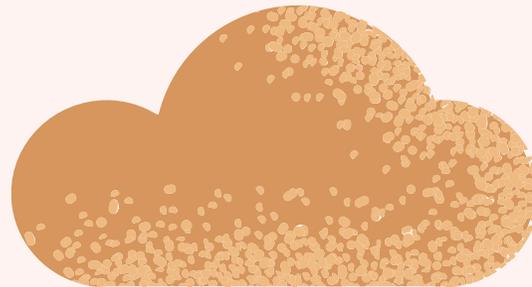
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
that the leadership of my company really care about the impact we are having on climate change	6%	15%	26%	<b>32%</b>	<b>21%</b>
my company is taking the steps it is taking because of employee pressure	9%	29%	39%	21%	2%
my company is taking the steps it is taking because of client / customer pressure	12%	37%	31%	17%	3%
my company does not consider the environmental impact in the decisions it makes	<b>15%</b>	<b>37%</b>	23%	18%	8%
my company actively looks to limit its negative environmental impact	7%	15%	25%	<b>40%</b>	<b>14%</b>

# Steps are being taken (but note the percentage that don't have an environmental / sustainability policy) at work

**47%** indicate that their company has a sustainability or environmental policy



**63%** say their businesses discourage printing unless needed

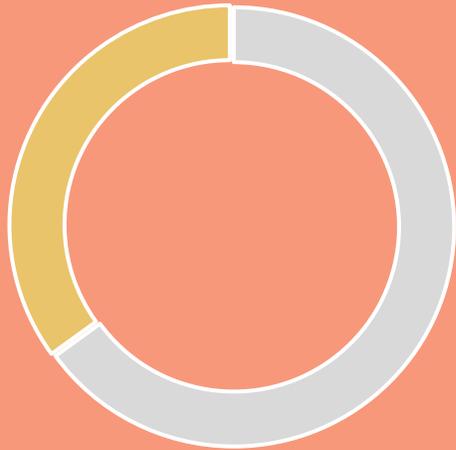


**45%** say their company encourages travel through more sustainable methods where possible (e.g. train, public transport)

# Potential for more active dialogue

Report that their company encourages discussion about the impact the company can have in addressing climate change

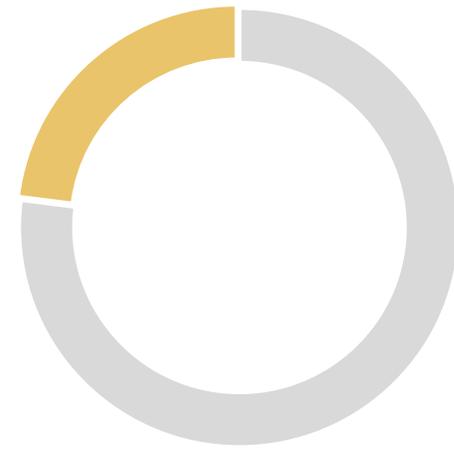
34%  
select



# ... And education

Report that their company supports staff education related to climate change and protection of the environment

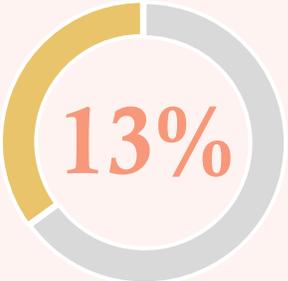
22%  
select



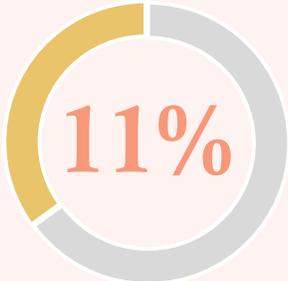
# And beyond this, there is still more to consider across a range of areas of operation



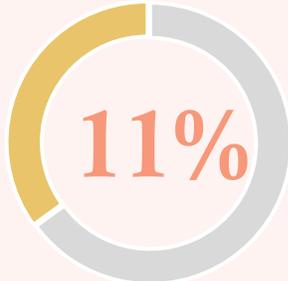
Has done / does pro-bono or reduced-charge work for environmental or sustainability charities



Uses renewable energy sources to power its offices



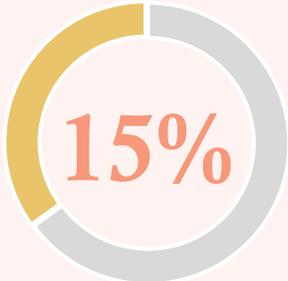
Achieved or is working towards B-Corp certification



Achieved or is working towards ISO 14000 certification



Has set clear boundaries around clients or sectors the company will and will not work with for environmental or sustainable reasons



None of these

D1. As far as you are aware, which of the following does your company do, as applicable to its business? N=529

# A range of barriers to taking further action is reported

<b>It's not an organisational priority</b>	<b>44%</b>
Lack of demand for action from employees	27%
<b>It's expensive</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>It's time-consuming</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>It's difficult</b>	<b>38%</b>
There aren't enough existing success stories	14%
Lack of demand for action from wider industry	29%
Lack of demand for action from partner organisations	23%
Lack of demand from the public	16%
Lack of guidelines and information	33%
Other - please specify	11%

# But there's generally positive sentiment that various undertakings would make a difference to the sector's impact

	No impact at all	No real impact	Neither an impact nor no impact	Some impact	Significant impact
Offset carbon emissions from its operations (e.g. Running its office, staff travel)	3%	6%	5%	<b>58%</b>	<b>28%</b>
Choose to avoid working in sectors that have a significant impact on carbon emissions	8%	18%	13%	<b>39%</b>	<b>22%</b>
Influence client-side organisations to consider climate change more actively in their work (e.g. In product development and communications) :	4%	9%	11%	<b>48%</b>	<b>27%</b>
Minimise its travel for fieldwork and meeting purposes post-Covid (ie favour virtual working where possible)	1%	4%	3%	<b>51%</b>	<b>40%</b>
Champion for the inclusion of a 'green question(s)' in qualitative and quantitative RfQs to ensure sustainability is considered by clients when appropriate in briefing new projects	6%	10%	10%	<b>55%</b>	<b>19%</b>

# Crucially here, we see an opportunity to influence

Yes we may see that we need to get our 'houses in order' to do what we can to lessen the carbon footprints of our own operations and to have legitimacy in talking about climate change...

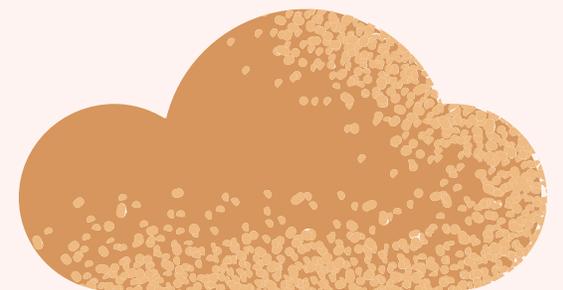
But the real opportunity to drive change is through leveraging our influence on business.

Research and insight professionals can play a crucial role.

“Given the relationship we have with such major actors in different sectors, if we were to really convey these strong ideas and recommendations in ways that resonate with our clients (in a similar way to the work we do on diversity and inclusion), we could lead change not just us as a company, but on a wider scale”

# The majority would feel better about their work if we felt confident they were doing more

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Knowing my company is implementing measures to reduce its carbon footprint would make me feel better about my work	2%	4%	13%	43%	37%
Knowing my company is taking steps to play an active role in addressing climate change would make me feel better about my work	1%	4%	12%	44%	38%



# A watch-out for employers

52% agree / agree strongly 'I would consider a company's stance and actions on climate change prior to joining it'

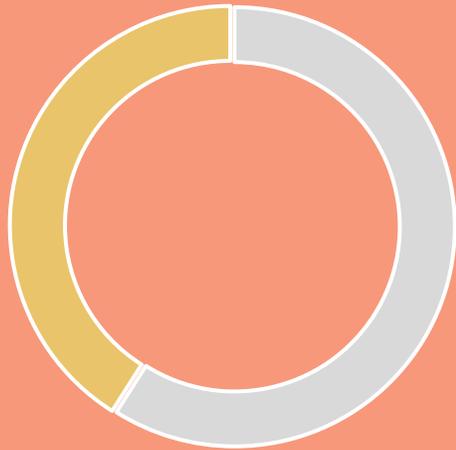
E3. Now we have some statements that people working in-research could say about climate change *with regard to their working lives*. Again, for each statement please tell us whether this is true or not true for you. N=526



# And a watch-out for all of us

I am confident that the market research  
sector can and will change to protect the  
planet

**41% agree**  
**/ agree**  
**strongly**  
(only 7% strongly)



E3. Now we have some statements that people working in research could say about climate change *with regard to their working lives*. Again, for each statement please tell us whether this is true or not true for you.



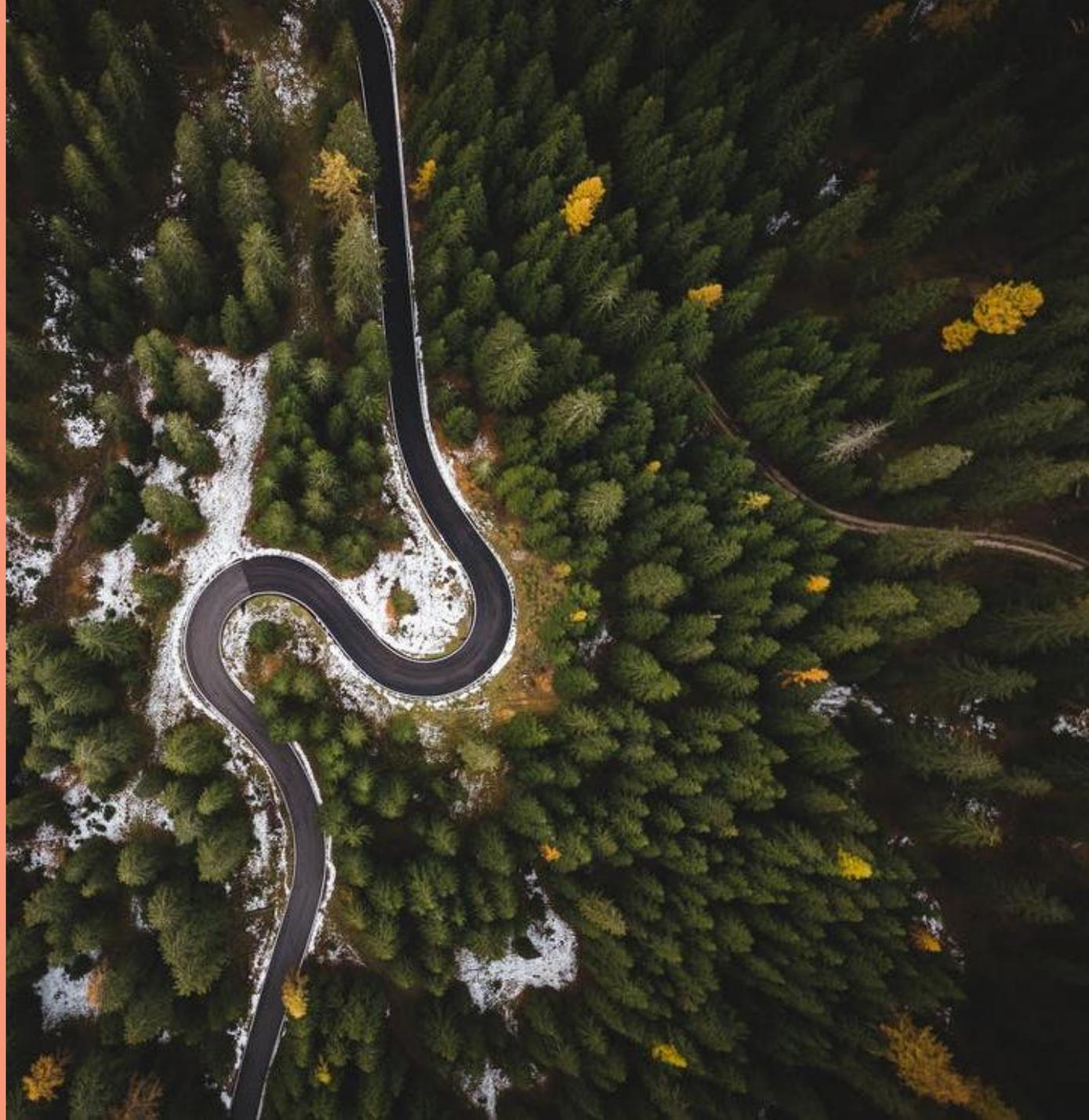
**So what next?**

**FUTURE?**



# So what is our role going forward?

The research sector is rich in behavioural and attitudinal insight and data; we help our client partners develop successful business strategies that impact the world both environmentally and culturally, and have historically been very successful at helping businesses 'sell more stuff'. We have an important role to play and arguably the resources to make a real difference.



# Let's work together on this

It's clear from our research that there is more that we can do together, to alleviate the anxiety of our fellow insight professionals, by helping them and their businesses respond responsibly and impactfully to the climate emergency.



# Invite open discussion

Whatever your level in the business, find a way you're comfortable to start (or progress) open discussion about what you can do as a business to address climate change.

If you are a leader, make sure it's clear to staff that the business's stance and actions on climate change are topics that you are open to having a dialogue on.



# Recognise what we don't yet know, but don't let that stop us from trying to make a difference

Climate change is an evolving issue. As research and insight professionals we are accustomed to working with a base of evidence, which gives us confidence in making our recommendations.

Clearly, confidence is holding us back when it comes to having a voice on climate change, though. We don't need to be experts, and most of the people we work with won't be either – we just need to know enough, and ultimately that's better than staying quiet for fear of exposing our lack of knowledge.



# Get our houses in order

Our real impact won't come through 'greening' our operations but from the substance of the work we do. However, we do need to recognise that at a certain point, showing we're making efforts in how we run our businesses and our projects will be a hygiene factor for legitimacy in pushing the climate agenda through our work.



# Consider how we can encourage greater focus on climate change through our work

How often do insight briefs consider sustainability?

But there is a climate impact to our work – developing new products, new services, communicating...

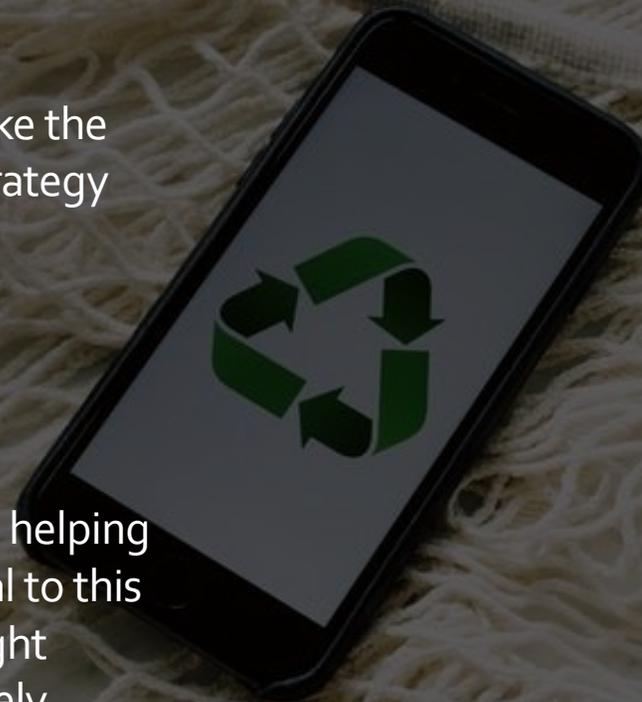
Think: how can we bring this into scope when we're writing and responding to briefs?



# Be the voice of the consumer on climate change

Many companies are working out how to make the hard shifts from having their sustainability strategy live at a corporate level to making it real for customers, living through products, services, communications and the brand.

This next decade will be about consumer engagement. Giving people better solutions, helping them to shift their behaviour. Insight is central to this and there is huge scope for research and insight professionals to push this journey on by actively bringing insight to the table.



## Sustainability in the Sector

- Sustainability Council established 2020 with representatives from sector
- Net Zero Pledge with 4 key commitments – June 2021
- 27 organisations signed up to date
- Carbon Calculator by Green Element

[www.mrs.org.uk/topic/sustainability-in-research](http://www.mrs.org.uk/topic/sustainability-in-research)



# Insight Climate Collective.

How does the research  
and insight sector feel  
about climate change?



**This is what the Insight Climate Collective is here for: to help the sector use its power of influence for good in the climate emergency.**



Please join our [LinkedIn group](#) - and follow for news on the publication of our report and further actions.



In the meantime, please sign up, or lobby your CEO to sign up, to the **MRS Climate Pledge**. Register interest [here](#)

References

Emissions Gap Report 2020. Authors: UNEP, UNEP DTU Partnership  
<https://www.unep.org/emissions-gap-report-2020>

SBTis  
<https://sciencebasedtargets.org>

