

Scottish Public Attitudes to Clean Heat and Energy Costs

New polling shows that Scots remain strongly supportive of climate action and commitment to clean heat, but affordability is a determining factor. The public expects the Government to act on energy prices and believes that lower electricity costs would make clean heating both achievable and a popular choice.

Key Findings

Public priorities and support for action

- **70%** of Scots cite the cost of living as their top concern ahead of the next election, ahead of NHS wait times and immigration.
- **58%** support a Scottish Government commitment to clean heat, ensuring all new heating systems have zero-carbon emissions from 2035.
- **55%** support Scotland's 2045 net zero target.

Motivations for switching to clean heat

When asked why they would replace a fossil fuel boiler:

- **66%** said to help tackle climate change.
- **56%** said to lower carbon footprint.

What drives consumer decisions

People want clean heat but need confidence it will be affordable and effective:

- **59%** would choose a heat pump if running costs were guaranteed to be lower than their current system.
- **52%** would do so if there were guarantees on performance.
- **50%** would do so if grants or subsidies reduced upfront costs.

Energy bills and affordability

- **95%** of respondents are concerned about their energy bills over the next 12 months.
- **83%** believe that if the Scottish Government wants more people to install heat pumps, it must make electricity cheaper.
- **74%** say they would look more favourably on the Scottish Government if it reduced energy bills.
- **85%** agree the Scottish and UK governments should work together to lower energy prices for Scottish residents.

The polling results show that cost-of-living pressures are the dominant concern for Scottish households, while support for climate action remains strong. A majority of respondents support a government commitment to clean heat and the 2045 net-zero target, but affordability is a key condition for uptake. Most people would consider installing a heat pump if running costs were lower than their current system and if the performance could be guaranteed.

Concern about energy bills is almost universal, and there is a clear expectation that the government should act to reduce electricity prices. The data shows that lower energy costs would improve public perceptions of the Scottish Government and encourage greater participation in the clean heat transition.

Policy Recommendations

UK Government

- **Commit to clean heat** – by ensuring all new heating systems have zero-carbon emissions from 2035.
- **Reduce the price of electricity** by moving all social and environmental levies into general taxation.
- **Work collaboratively with devolved governments** to ensure that pricing reforms and affordability measures benefit Scottish households.

Scottish Government

- **Deliver the Heat in Buildings Bill** – including a clear commitment to clean heat, phasing out fossil fuel boilers by 2035.
- **Maintain current levels of grant support** for households installing heat pumps, recognising that upfront costs remain a key barrier to adoption.
- **Invest in improved communication and promotion** of available grants and incentives to raise public awareness. Current polling shows that while cost remains a concern, many households are not aware of existing financial support
- **Champion affordability** by pressing for lower electricity cost reduction to maximise the use of Scotland's abundance of renewable energy.

Further Information

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