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Climate change:
What do Jews in the UK think?

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JPR's UK Jewish population panel is designed to gather data on Jewish people's attitudes on a wide range of social and political issues, as well as aspects of their beliefs, behaviours and preferences, to help feed into planning across the community. In this paper, we draw on data from our summer 2021 panel survey, alongside other sources, to assess where Jews in the UK currently stand on climate change, and the extent to which their Jewishness informs their views.

/ Introduction

Despite climate change being one the most pressing challenges of our time, very little research has been conducted into Jewish people's views on the issue. JPR did undertake some research on Jewish people's attitudes and behaviours regarding environmentalism in the mid-1990s and found that Jews were more likely than the general population at that time "to act in an environmentally-friendly manner," although the authors noted that "more observant Jews were less likely to exhibit environmentally friendly behaviour than Progressive or Secular Jews."[1] However, in terms of attitudes to the environment, the authors noted that, in general, Jewish people's "values in this area closely resemble those of the general population." The more specific topic of climate change was not explored, suggesting it was not considered a priority area for study at the time.

Some scholarly research has indicated that stronger religious commitment among people in general tends to depress concern about the environment, although there is considerable variation.[2] However, in its work on this topic, the Pew Research Center has found that "few [US] adults described religion's influence as most important in shaping their thinking on environmental protection," and have pointed instead to factors such as education, the media, and personal experience having the biggest influence on people's views.[3] Moreover, Pew has found that the 'religiously affiliated' do not differ from the 'religiously unaffiliated' in their views about climate change, irrespective of which of the main religious groups they belong to. Rather, political party identification, 'race' and ethnicity are stronger predictors of views about climate change than religious identity or observance. This has also been noted in other

[1] Miller, S., Schmool, M. and Lerman, A. (1996). *Social and political attitudes of British Jews: some key findings of the JPR survey*, Chapter 4. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.
[2] Arbuckle, M.B. and Konisky, D.M. (2015). 'The Role of Religion in Environmental Attitudes,' *Social Science Quarterly*, Volume 96, Number 5, November 2015.
[3] Pew Research Center, October 2015, "Religion and Science" p.32.

research, with factors such as political stance, level of education and age found to be the main drivers of attitudes on this topic.[4]

This paper details where Jewish people in the UK currently stand on climate change, and explores the link between their attitudes on this topic and other factors, including their age, sex, education, political leaning and religiosity. In so doing, it takes a first step in addressing the data gap on climate change, as part of a longer-term plan to monitor British Jewish attitudes as this issue becomes ever more acute.

1 / The attitudes of Jews in the UK towards climate change

JPR's respondents were asked four questions about climate change: (i) whether or not they accepted the climate was changing; (ii) what they thought were the main causes of climate change; (iii) the extent to which they felt a personal responsibility for reducing climate change; and (iv) whether or not they were worried about climate change. In this section we present the basic frequencies; in subsequent sections we attempt to contextualise them.

The 2021 findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) show that "The scale of recent changes across the climate system as a whole and the present state of many aspects of the climate system are unprecedented over many centuries to many thousands of years."[5] Jews in the UK broadly accept this; virtually all respondents (92%) agree that the world's climate is 'definitely' or 'probably' changing, with almost seven out of 10 (69%) Jewish people saying it is definitely changing. Only a tiny minority (4%) said it was not changing (Table 1).

Table 1. Extent to which Jewish people think that the world's climate is changing, UK, 2021 (n=4,152)*

	Full sample	Excluding non-response*
Definitely changing	69%	72%
Probably changing	23%	24%
Probably not changing	2%	2%
Definitely not changing	2%	2%
Don't know	3%	-
Prefer not to say	1%	-
Total	**100%**	**100%**

Question*: "There is much discussion today about the idea that the world's climate is changing due to increases in temperature over the past 100 years. What is your personal opinion on this? Do you think the world's climate is changing?"* Response options as per table.

* This column presents the same data with percentages calculated without the categories 'Don't know' and 'Prefer not to say'. This is included for ease of comparison with data presented later in this report, which, for ease of interpretation, also exclude this non-response data.

[4] Luo Y., Zhao J., and Todd R.M. (2019). 'Climate explained: Why are climate change sceptics often right-wing conservatives?' *The Conversation*, 19 September 2019.

[5] IPCC, 2021: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S. L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M. I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J.B.R. Matthews, T. K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu and B. Zhou (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. In Press. p.9.

Respondents were then asked their views on the extent to which they believe the main causes of climate change are natural or the result of human activity. As shown in Table 2, half (50%) believe that climate change is 'mainly' caused by human activity, with a further 13% saying it is 'entirely' caused by human activity. In other words, almost two-thirds of Jews in the UK acknowledge humanity's role in climate change, which again, aligns with the established scientific view that "Human influence on the climate system is clear, and recent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are the highest in history. Recent climate changes have had widespread impacts on human and natural systems."[6] That said, about one in ten thinks that climate change is caused mainly or entirely by natural processes, or is not happening at all.

Table 2. Jewish people's views on the main causes of climate change, UK, 2021 (n=4,152)

	Full sample	Excluding non-response*
Entirely by natural processes	2%	2%
Mainly by natural processes	5%	6%
About equally by natural processes and human activity	23%	24%
Mainly by human activity	50%	53%
Entirely by human activity	13%	13%
I don't think climate change is happening	2%	3%
Don't know	4%	-
Prefer not to say	<1%	-
Total	**100%**	**100%**

Question*: "Do you think that climate change is caused by natural processes, human activity, or both?"* Response categories as per the chart.

* This column presents the same data with percentages calculated without the categories 'Don't know' and 'Prefer not to say'. This is included for ease of comparison with data presented later in this report which for ease of interpretation also exclude this non-response data.

For the third question, respondents were asked how much responsibility they personally felt for reducing climate change. They were presented with a scale ranging from zero – meaning they felt no responsibility – to 10 – meaning they felt a great deal of responsibility. A majority of respondents (73%) gave a score above the halfway point (i.e. 6 or above), with the average (mean) score being 6.6.[7]

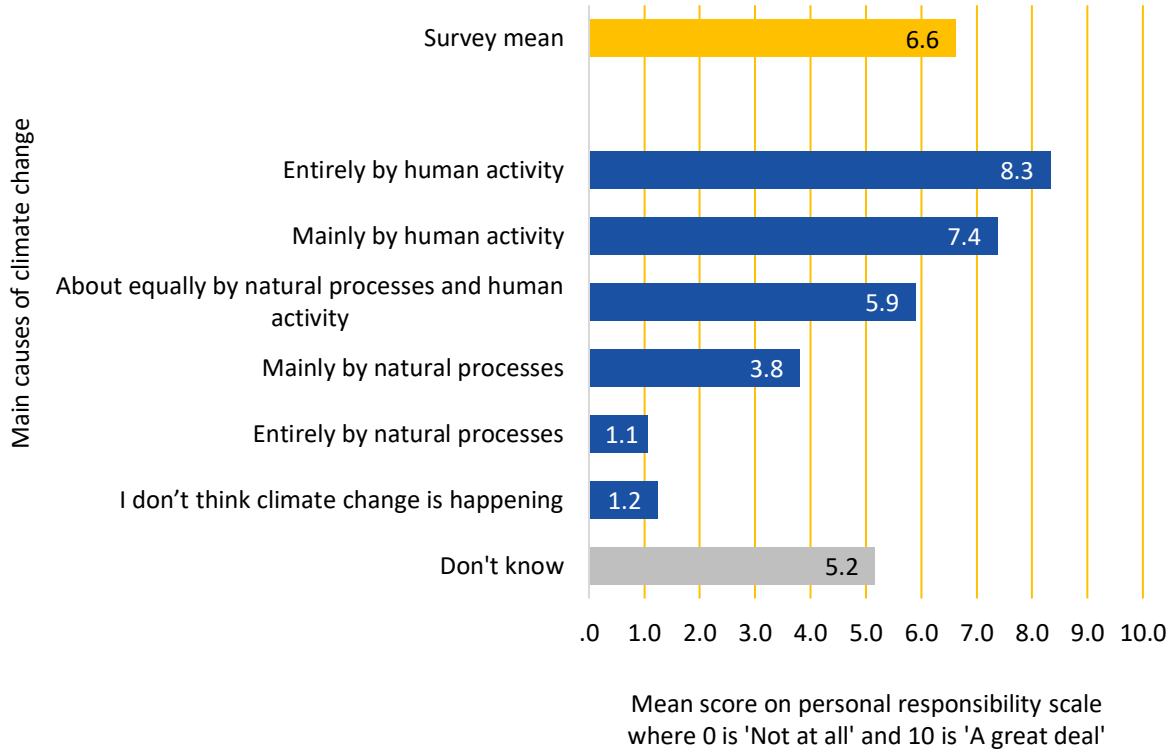
Further analysis shows that the extent to which respondents feel responsible for reducing climate change is, unsurprisingly, related to how they believe it is caused. Thus, those who believe climate change is entirely driven by human activity are far more likely to say they feel high levels of responsibility (mean score of 8.3 on the responsibility scale), compared with those who, for example, think climate change is entirely natural, who have a mean score of 1.1 (Figure 1). This correlation is also found among the general population of the UK.[8]

[6] Pachauri, R.K, Meyer, L. et. al. (2015). 'Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report.' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Geneva, p.2.

[7] N=4,152 This is excluding those who reported 'Don't know' (2%) and 'Prefer not to say' (<1%) of the full sample. Question: "*To what extent do you feel a personal responsibility to try to reduce climate change? Please choose a number from 0 to 10, where 0 is 'Not at all' and 10 is 'A great deal'?"*

[8] British Social Attitudes (BSA) 35, Climate change (based on ESS8 data) Table 6, p.11.

Figure 1. Jewish people's belief about the main causes of climate change by the level of responsibility they feel for reducing climate change (based on mean score), UK, 2021 (N=4,152)



Question: "*To what extent do you feel a personal responsibility to try to reduce climate change? Please choose a number from 0 to 10, where 0 is 'Not at all' and 10 is 'A great deal'?"*
Question: "*Do you think that climate change is caused by natural processes, human activity, or both?"*
Response categories as per the chart.

Finally, JPR respondents were asked how worried they were about climate change. Two out of five (40%) said they were either 'very' or 'extremely' worried about it, and a further 37% said they were 'somewhat' worried (Table 3). In total, over three quarters (78%) of UK Jewish adults expressed some level of worry about the issue.

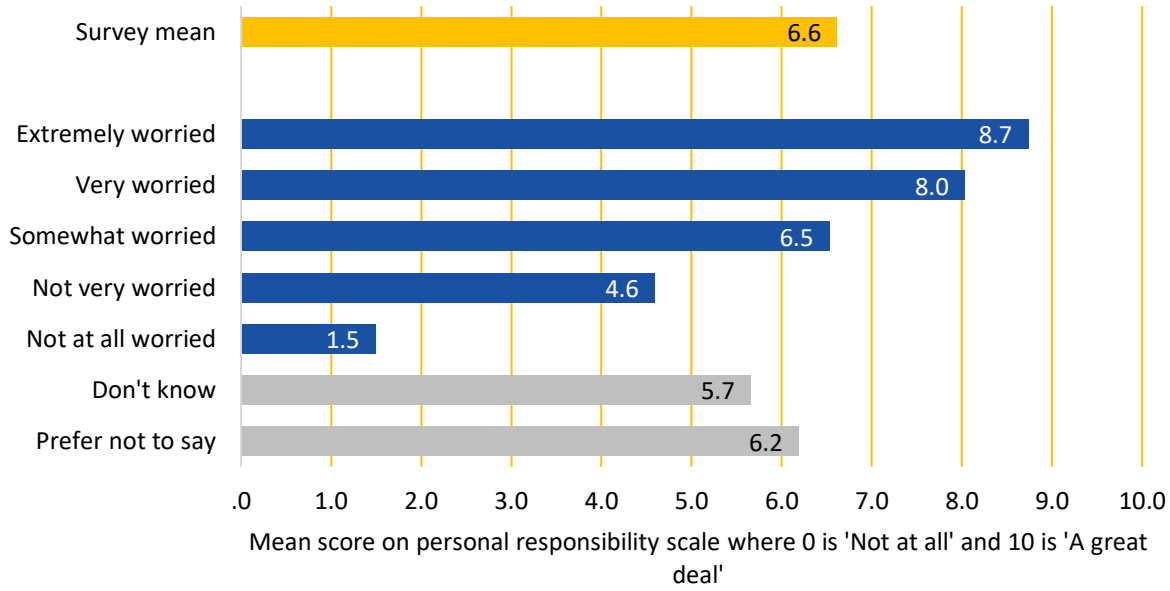
Table 3. Extent to which Jewish people are worried about climate change, UK, 2021* (N=4,152)

	Full sample	Excluding non-response*
Not at all worried	8%	8%
Not very worried	14%	14%
Somewhat worried	37%	37%
Very worried	23%	24%
Extremely worried	17%	17%
Don't know	1%	-
Prefer not to say	0%	-
Total	**100%**	**100%**

Question: "*How worried are you about climate change?"* Response options as per the table.
* This column presents the same data with percentages calculated without the categories 'Don't know' and 'Prefer not to say'. This is included for ease of comparison with data presented later in this report which also exclude this non-response data.

It is also the case that the extent to which respondents feel responsible for reducing climate change is closely related to how worried they are about it. In Figure 2 we see that those who are most worried exhibit the highest mean score on the responsibility scale (8.7) and those who are least worried exhibit the lowest mean score (1.5).

Figure 2. Extent to which Jewish people are worried about climate change by the level of responsibility they feel for reducing climate change (based on mean score), UK, 2021* (n=4,152)



Question: "*To what extent do you feel a personal responsibility to try to reduce climate change? Please choose a number from 0 to 10, where 0 is 'Not at all' and 10 is 'A great deal'?"*
Question: "*How worried are you about climate change? Not at all worried, Not very worried, Somewhat worried, Very worried, Extremely worried, Prefer not to say, Don't know."*

2 / Attitudes towards climate change among the general population of the UK and the Jewish population of Israel

The lack of data on Jewish attitudes towards climate change in the UK makes it challenging to place these findings in context. However, a 2016 study from the European Social Survey (ESS)[9] provides some insights. It asked the same questions as JPR asked of UK Jews, but among the general populations of the UK and Israel, as well as numerous other European countries. Importantly, the ESS also asked respondents whether they associated with a particular religious group. The numbers of Jews in the UK sample were small as Jews comprise less than 0.5% of the country's population, so they were amalgamated into a more general 'Other' category and cannot be separately analysed. However, the Jewish population of Israel is large, so can be isolated in the Israeli sample and compared with general British attitudes at that time. Note that we include these data in this paper mainly because they are of interest in and of themselves; they are only superficially valuable as a comparative baseline for JPR's 2021 data both since Israel's Jewish population differs in many important ways from the UK's Jewish population and because, as we demonstrate below, data from 2016 are unlikely to be representative of attitudes today.

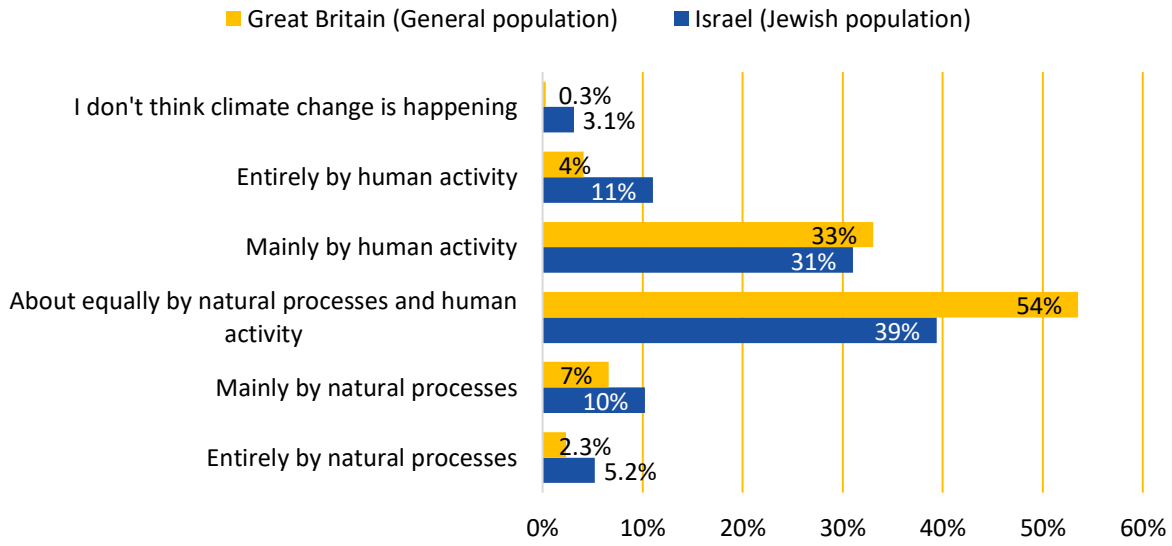
[9] European Attitudes to Climate Change and Energy: Topline Results from Round 8 of the European Social Survey, September 2018, p.5.

Nevertheless, the ESS data show that in 2016, Jews in Israel were rather more sceptical than the UK's general population about whether the world's climate is changing. 51% of Jewish Israelis said it was 'definitely' changing, compared with 62% of the general British population. [10]

However, when asked whether they thought the main drivers of climate change were anthropogenic (i.e. a result of human activity), the differences between the countries were mixed. On the one hand, Israel's Jewish population was more likely than the general UK population to believe climate change was 'mainly' or 'entirely' caused by natural processes (15% Israel v 9% UK), in line with their relative scepticism about whether climate change was even happening (Figure 3). Yet on the other hand, they were also more likely to believe climate change was mainly or entirely human-induced (47% Israel v 32% UK). This seems to suggest that Jews in Israel were more polarised on the causes of climate change than the UK's general population when these data were collected in 2016.

Further analysis of the Israeli data suggests religious feeling may play a role here. The ESS measured religiosity on a scale of 0 (Not at all religious) to 10 (Very religious), with a population mean for Jewish Israelis right in the middle of the scale at 5.0. However, those who said they believed that climate change was human-induced were, on average, notably less religious (mean=4.1) than those who believed it was caused 'entirely by natural processes' (mean=6.4). For those who held the most sceptical position ('I don't think climate change is happening'), the average level of religiosity was marginally higher still (mean=6.5). This suggests that Israel's large religious population may have contributed to the average level of scepticism among Israelis seen in 2016.

Figure 3. Ways in which respondents believe climate change is happening, UK (total population) (N=1,940) and Israel (Jewish population) (N=2,256), 2016



Source: ESS Round 8 data file.[11]

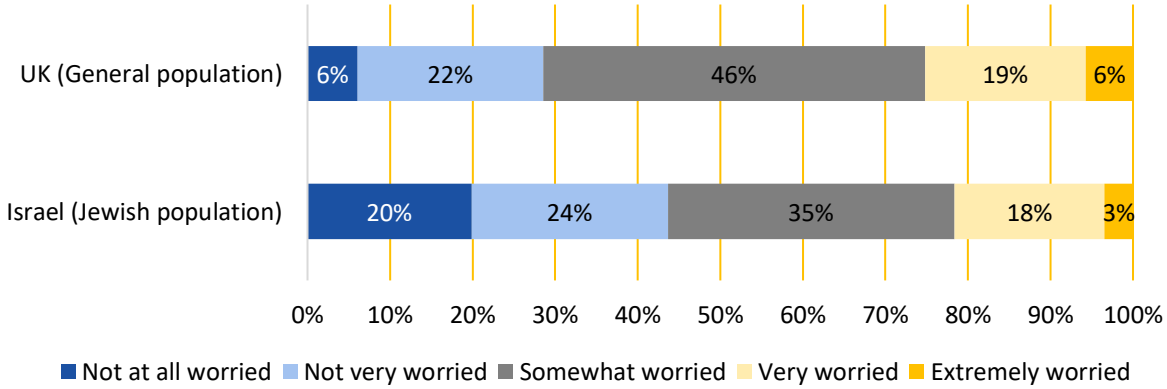
We also see a more sceptical position among Israel's Jewish population when we explore how personally responsible they said they felt for reducing climate change.[12] The average (mean) score for the UK general population was 6.0 on this scale, compared to 4.8 for Israel's Jewish population, where

[10] Question: *You may have heard the idea that the world's climate is changing due to increases in temperature over the past 100 years. What is your personal opinion on this? Do you think the world's climate is changing?*
[11] See: https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/file/download?f=ESS8e02_2.spss.zip&c=&y=2016.
[12] Question: To what extent do you feel a personal responsibility to try to reduce climate change? Please choose a number from 0 to 10, where 0 is 'Not at all' and 10 is 'A great deal'?

a lower score indicates feeling less responsibility. Yet the mean for Israel is heavily influenced by the large proportion of people who said they felt no personal responsibility at all (17%); the equivalent group in the UK was much smaller (4%). Thus the evidence we have to hand would suggest that the relatively higher levels of scepticism among more religious people in Israel is a contributing factor here; certainly there are clear differences in attitude between the most and the least religious.

As might be expected from a population that was, on average, more sceptical about climate change, the level of anxiety about it among Israelis was found to be somewhat lower as well. Whereas 25% of the general UK population said they were either 'very' or 'extremely' worried about climate change, the equivalent proportion for Israeli Jews was 22%. Moreover, as can be seen in Figure 4, Jews in Israel were more than three times as likely to say they were not at all worried about the issue (18%) than the UK's general population (6%).

Figure 4. Extent to which people are worried about climate change, UK (total population) (N=1,940) and Israel (Jewish population) (N=2,256), 2016



Source: ESS Round 8 (see footnote 11).

Overall, these data show that, in 2016, attitudes towards climate change among Israeli Jews were rather more sceptical than those found among the UK's general population. It also seems that attitudes in Israel may have been more polarised than in the UK at that time, and that levels of religiosity may be a contributing factor, with the more religious being less inclined to believe climate change is caused by human activity, or indeed, is happening at all.

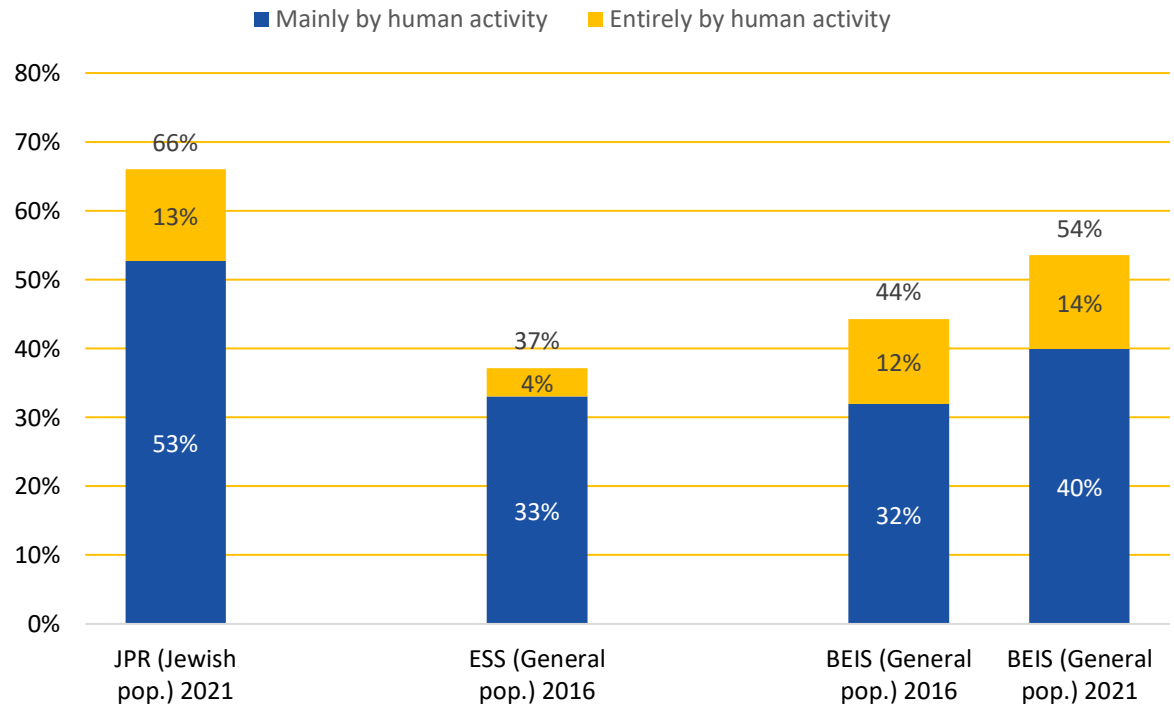
But the key question is to what extent, if at all, are any of the ESS data from 2016 of value when considering the attitudes of British Jews in 2021? While the JPR and the ESS data both use the same measures – deliberately so – there is an important reason why the ESS data may not provide a valid baseline for comparison on this occasion. There is evidence to show that, over the last five years, attitudes towards climate change, in the UK at least, have become increasingly more aligned with the scientific consensus. This is demonstrated empirically with data from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrialised Strategy (BEIS),[13] which show that the proportion of adults in the UK who were 'very concerned' about climate change rose from 24% in 2016 to 34% in 2021. Unfortunately, the question asked in the BEIS survey is too dissimilar to allow for comparison with the ESS or JPR data on worry about climate change.

However, one question in the BEIS surveys can be used to draw a more direct comparison: views on the principal causes of climate change. In Figure 5, UK data from JPR, ESS and BEIS are shown together.

[13] This survey is carried out regularly by ONS for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Data are available from https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/public-attitudes-tracking-survey.

On the face of it, in 2021, Jews in the UK appear to be more sympathetic and climate-aware than the UK population as a whole, with 66% of Jews saying that climate change is 'mainly' or 'entirely' human induced (left-hand column), compared with 54% of the general population (right-hand column). It is also apparent that attitudes within the general population of the UK have been changing quite rapidly. In 2016, BEIS found that 44% of the general population believed that climate change is 'mainly' or 'entirely' human-induced, ten percentage points lower than they found five years later in 2021. However, we can also see that the ESS data from 2016 found that 37% of the general population believed this – seven percentage points lower than BEIS found at the same time. This difference suggests that some caution should be advised in drawing direct comparisons between the two 2021 datapoints for Jews and the general UK population. Even so, given the data to hand, it does seem reasonable to conclude that the UK's Jewish population is probably more sympathetic overall to the arguments and science about climate change than the general UK population. Further research is needed to explore the reasons for this, although, as the remainder of this analysis will highlight, it is likely that they are related in part to compositional differences between the Jewish and general populations, for example, in terms of the educational profile of British Jews which is generally above average.

Figure 5. Extent to which respondents believe climate change is 'mainly' or 'entirely' caused by human activity, UK Jewish population compared with data on the UK general population from two sources*



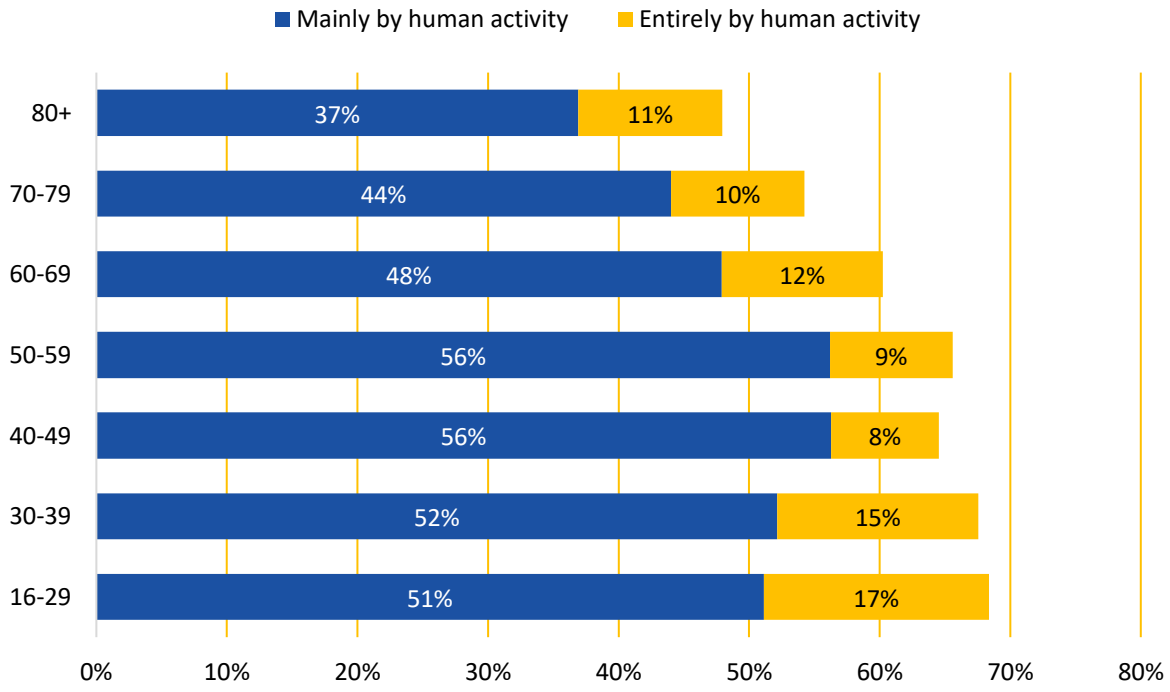
Source: BEIS: "*Thinking about the causes of climate change, which, if any, of the following best describes your opinion?"* [Response options: *Climate change is entirely caused by human activity; Climate change is mainly caused by human activity; Climate change is partly caused by natural processes and partly caused by human activity; Climate change is mainly caused by natural processes; Climate change is entirely caused by natural processes; I don't think there is such a thing as climate change; Don't know; No opinion*]. (UK general population n=4,029).
Source: ESS/JPR: *"Do you think that climate change is caused by natural processes, human activity, or both?"* [Response options: *Entirely by natural processes; Mainly by natural processes; About equally by natural processes and human activity; Mainly by human activity; Entirely by human activity; I don't think climate change is happening; Don't know; Prefer not to say*]. (ESS UK general population n=1,940; JPR n=4,152).

3 / Attitudes towards climate change among different subgroups of the UK Jewish population

JPR data on UK Jews allow for further analysis of attitudes about climate change in terms of demography, socioeconomics, political attitudes and Jewish identity. Starting with analysis by sex, we find that Jewish men are slightly more sceptical than Jewish women about whether climate change is happening, and men are also less worried about it and less likely to believe they have a responsibility to reduce it. For example, 67% of Jewish men believe the world's climate is changing, compared with 75% of Jewish women. However, statistical modelling (see methodology) shows that after controlling for other factors, sex is not an important predictor of Jewish attitudes.

Regarding age, on the whole, the younger people are, the more likely they are to say that climate change is caused by human activity, and to feel a greater level of responsibility for addressing it. For example, in Figure 6, we see that 68% of Jews aged 16 to 29 years old accept that climate change is 'mainly' or 'entirely' caused by human activity, compared with 48% of those aged 80 and above. This relationship has also been observed in the general population.[14] Age is a more important predictor of attitudes to climate change among Jews than sex, but statistical modelling shows it is not as important as other factors such as political leaning, education religiosity and Jewish denomination.

Figure 6. Attitudes towards the causes of climate change by age, UK Jewish population, 2021 (N=4,152)



Question: *"Do you think that climate change is caused by natural processes, human activity, or both?"* Response categories as per the chart.

That stated, it is worth noting that there appears to be a countervailing trend within the Jewish population based on age. Although the proportion of Jewish people who are climate sceptical is small overall (just 2.5% of Jews say they do not think climate change is happening), younger Jews are actually *more* likely to think this than older Jews. For example, 5.5% of those aged 16 to 29 say this, compared

[14] BSA35 Climate change (based on ESS8 data) Table 2, p.6.

with 0.3% of those aged 80 years and above. Indeed, the direction of travel shown in Figure 6, with the slope tapering off at younger ages, may be related to this trend.

In terms of socioeconomics, people's level of education is closely associated with their attitudes towards climate change. Overall, Jews with higher levels of education are more aware, less sceptical and more worried about climate change than those with lower levels (Table 4). They also feel a greater sense of responsibility for reducing it. Again, these patterns are observed in the general population.[15] Moreover, our modelling indicates that holding a degree or equivalent qualification is a key predictor of attitudes towards climate change, independent of other factors measured.

Table 4. Attitudes towards climate change by highest level of qualification, UK Jewish population, 2021 (n=4,152)

	Degree or equivalent	Less than degree or equivalent
% who agrees the world's climate is 'definitely changing'	76%	44%
% who agrees climate change is 'entirely' or 'mainly' caused by human activity	71%	32%
Mean score for feeling a 'personal responsibility to try to reduce climate change', where 0=Not at all and 10=A great deal	7.0	5.2
% saying they are 'extremely worried' about climate change	19%	7%

Similarly, how Jews self-assess their financial situation – a good indication of their socioeconomic position – appears to be related to their attitudes to climate change. For example, 76% of those who say they are 'living comfortably' agree that the climate is definitely changing, compared with 51% of those who say they are finding life to be 'quite' or 'very' difficult financially. However, after accounting for other variables, such as their level of education, statistical modelling shows that people's self-perceived financial situation is a relatively weak predictor of their attitudes. The most likely reason for this is that socioeconomic position is strongly related to educational level, so does not add explanatory power.

Table 5 shows climate attitudes by political party preference. Jewish Conservative Party[16] supporters are seen to be especially sceptical about climate change compared with others, a relationship also seen in the general population.[17] By comparison, Liberal Democrat Party supporters are far more sympathetic to these issues, albeit not as much as Labour Party supporters.[18] Unsurprisingly, Green Party supporters are the most sympathetic of all. Less than half (46%) of Jewish Conservative Party supporters believe the world's climate is 'definitely changing,' compared to almost all (93%) Jewish Labour Party supporters. Conservative Party supporters are also least likely to believe climate change is caused by human activity (36%), least likely to feel they have a personal responsibility to reduce it, and least likely to be worried about its impacts. In statistical modelling, support for the Conservative Party is one of the major predictors of more sceptical attitudes towards climate change among Jewish people, and while support for the Labour Party is also statistically significant (in the opposite direction), it is not as strongly predictive.

[15] BSA35 op. cit. p.11.

[16] Conservatives are centre-right and Labour is centre-left in the British system. Political preferences were ascertained by asking respondents which party they would vote for if a general election were held 'tomorrow.'

[17] BSA35 op. cit. 19-22.

[18] BSA35 op. cit. p19-20.

Table 5. Attitudes towards climate change by current voting intentions*, UK Jewish population, 2021 (N=4,152)

	Green	Labour	Liberal Democrats	Undecided	Conservative
% who agrees the world's climate is 'definitely changing'	99%	93%	84%	69%	46%
% who agrees climate change is 'entirely' or 'mainly' caused by human activity	98%	92%	82%	60%	36%
Mean score for feeling a 'personal responsibility to try to reduce climate change', where 0 = not at all and 10 = a great deal	8.6	7.8	7.3	6.3	5.6
'Extremely worried' about climate change	60%	29%	14%	15%	4%

Question: *"If a general election were held tomorrow, how would you vote?"* [*Conservative Party; Labour Party; Liberal Democrats; Green Party; Plaid Cymru; Scottish National Party; Other, please specify; Undecided; I would not vote; Prefer not to say*].

* Counts for other parties were too small to be of statistical value and have not been reported here.

Finally, when we examine people's attitudes alongside how they express their Jewish identities, we see that the more religious they report being, the more sceptical they tend to be about climate change, as was found in the Israeli data examined earlier. A clear gradient along these lines can be seen for three of the four questions examined; in the fourth – personal responsibility to reduce climate change – those with 'very strong' religiosity stand out from the three remaining groups with weaker religiosity, all of whom score similarly (Table 6). The same pattern is observed in terms of Jewish outlook (ranging from secular to religious – not shown).

Table 6. Attitudes towards climate change by self-assessed religiosity, UK Jewish population, 2021 (N=4,152)

	Very weak	Quite weak	Quite strong	Very strong
% who agrees the world's climate is 'definitely changing'	86%	73%	66%	35%
% who agrees climate change is 'entirely' or 'mainly' caused by human activity	81%	67%	59%	30%
Mean score for feeling a 'personal responsibility to try to reduce climate change', where 0=Not at all and 10=A great deal	7.1	6.8	6.9	4.6
'Extremely worried' about climate change	24%	19%	13%	8%

Question: "*How would you describe your current level of religiosity?"* Response categories as per table.

The pattern seen with regard to people's strength of religiosity is largely repeated when we examine the data in terms of the type of synagogue membership they hold (i.e. denomination), with those belonging to more Orthodox synagogues being more climate sceptical than those belonging to less Orthodox synagogues or none (the unaffiliated) (Table 7). This relationship was also observed by JPR

25 years ago in terms of environmentalist behaviour.[19] In the 2021 data, we can see that the unaffiliated are more sympathetic to climate change than Central[20] or Strictly Orthodox synagogue members, but *less* so than Liberal, Masorti and Reform synagogue members. We also see that Strictly Orthodox synagogue members are not only less climate conscious than Central Orthodox synagogue members, but they exhibit far lower levels of climate change awareness than the trend for the other denominations would suggest. For example, whereas 76-82% of Liberal, Masorti and Reform members and 58% of Central Orthodox synagogue members believe climate change is caused by human activity, just one in five (20%) of Strictly Orthodox members accept that this is the case.

Table 7. Attitudes towards climate change by denomination (based on selected synagogue membership types), UK Jewish population, 2021 (n=4,152)

	Liberal	Masorti	Reform	Non-members	Spanish & Portuguese	Central Orthodox	Strictly Orthodox
% saying the world's climate is 'definitely changing'	89%	88%	85%	80%	66%	67%	25%
% saying climate change is 'entirely' or 'mainly' caused by human activity	80%	82%	76%	75%	69%	58%	20%
Mean score for feeling a 'personal responsibility to try to reduce climate change' (0 = not at all; 10 = a great deal)	7.5	7.3	7.4	6.9	7.3	6.7	4.3
% 'extremely worried' about climate change	29%	21%	22%	23%	11%	11%	3%

Statistical modelling confirms that denominational affiliation is among the strongest predictors of attitudes about climate change. Compared with more progressive synagogue members, the unaffiliated and the Central Orthodox, the Strictly Orthodox are notably more sceptical about climate change, or alternatively, less engaged with the issues. As shown, religiosity is also a statistically significant predictor of attitudes for everyone,[21] but critically, it operates in different ways for different groups. Notably, for both the unaffiliated and the Strictly Orthodox, stronger religiosity correlates with greater scepticism about climate change, but for Liberal and Reform Jews, it works in the opposite direction: stronger religiosity correlates with greater climate change consciousness and concern. There is much to unpick about how best to interpret these nuances, but from a policy perspective, there are important questions to explore about how people's Jewishness interacts with their views about climate change, and how different types of community bodies might best engage their members in the issues.

[19] Miller et al. op. cit.

[20] 'Central Orthodox' in this context refers to members of synagogues affiliated to the United Synagogue, the Federation of Synagogues, and other independent modern Orthodox synagogues.

[21] As an aside, it is also worth noting that denominational differences *within* a religious group have been found among American Catholics. See: Pew Research Centre, 'Catholics Divided Over Global Warming: Partisan Differences Mirror Those Among General Public,' 16 June 2015.

4 / Summary and reflections on the findings

Climate change is one of the most important global issues of our time, perhaps even *the* most important. As such, Jewish community leaders ought to be aware of the attitudes of Jews on this topic, not least to consider how best to encourage Jews to play their part in addressing the enormous challenges that exist.

This study shows that, in 2021, the great majority (92%) of Jews in the UK agree that climate change is happening, but rather fewer (63%) accept that it is mainly caused by human activity, despite there being a clear scientific consensus on the issue. Nevertheless, 77% of Jews are at least somewhat worried about it, and, on the responsibility scale used here (where 0 = feeling no personal responsibility for addressing climate change and 10 = feeling a great deal of personal responsibility), 73% gave a score above the halfway point (i.e. 6 or above).

At this stage, we are not able to determine whether these results demonstrate a change in Jewish attitudes over time as this is the first occasion in which these questions have been posed to a nationally representative Jewish sample. Rather, they should be seen as an initial benchmark against which to track attitudes, a task JPR will be undertaking over the coming years.

Our assessment of other data allows us to tentatively conclude that overall, the UK Jewish population is more sympathetic towards, and has greater awareness of, the issues of climate change than is generally the case in the UK. While this is likely to be, at least in part, a result of higher-than-average levels of educational attainment among Jews – which is a key independent predictor of attitudes – it is also informative to consider the extent to which people's Jewish identities appear to play a part in their attitudes.

Other more general studies have shown that a relationship exists between religiosity and attitudes towards climate change – with *weaker* religiosity being associated with *greater* climate awareness and concern – although they have also found that relatively few people base their attitudes solely on their religious beliefs. We showed this relationship using data on Jewish attitudes towards climate change in Israel. In our UK work, we found much the same. Of course, Jewish people's religiosity often aligns with their denominational affiliation (e.g. the more Orthodox are more likely to report higher levels of religiosity than the more progressive or secular), but this is not always the case – some non-Orthodox Jews report having strong religiosity, while some Orthodox Jews report weak religiosity. This may help to explain why our statistical modelling shows that people's denominational affiliation is a stronger predictor than their religiosity of where they stand on climate change – for example, in general, Strictly Orthodox synagogue members are least conscious of, or concerned about, climate change, whereas members of more progressive synagogues are most conscious of, and most concerned about it.

Yet the results of our analysis on religiosity are somewhat more nuanced than that. Whilst we can see that level of religiosity is a key determinant of attitudes among the Strictly Orthodox, it is considerably less important in explaining variations among more progressive Jews, where factors such as political leaning and educational attainment offer better explanations.

In fact, political leaning and educational attainment are very important explanators in all cases, including among the Strictly Orthodox. For example, Conservative Party supporters are substantially more climate sceptical than supporters of other major parties, and those without university degrees more so than those with degrees. This is also the case in wider society. Of course, these are averages found across the population; there are also Conservative Party supporters and Strictly Orthodox Jews who are deeply concerned about climate change, and progressive Jews and university-educated Jews who are not.

Our intention in this report is to take an empirical look at where Jews stand on this increasingly important issue, and to encourage community leaders and members to reflect on the results. In so doing, they should bear in mind that there is much we do not know. Notably, we can see that attitudes among the general public in the UK have been shifting over time towards the scientific consensus, but with only one set of data points, we cannot ascertain whether the same shift in attitudes is also happening among UK Jews, or any subgroups within the Jewish population. Moreover, none of the questions posed in this study were behavioural, so we need to learn more about what Jewish people are doing to take action on climate change. Ongoing research is the only way to determine this, and the answers are likely to be shaped both by changes in attitude among individuals and the larger demographic shifts taking place across the Jewish community.[22] At the heart of the policy discussion is a key question which requires more empirical understanding: what role does Jewishness have in shaping Jewish people's views and behaviours on this issue, and what role can and should it have going forward?

There is little doubt that climate change will move further up the global political agenda in the years to come. Whether or not it similarly moves up the Jewish communal agenda remains to be seen. Although Jews make up a small proportion of the population, they can clearly play a part, both individually and collectively, in a variety of ways: as citizens, consumers, investors and role models, as well as through any organisational roles they hold. JPR will continue to monitor the trends, adding new dimensions to our work, such as environmental behaviours and the relationship between climate change attitudes and actions, and build up a picture of change over time.

[22] Staetsky, D. and Boyd, J. (2015). *Strictly Orthodox rising: What the demography of British Jews tells us about the future of the community*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

/ Methodological note

The data on the attitudes of Jews in the UK are drawn from JPR's Jewish research panel and were collected in summer 2021. The panel is designed to explore the attitudes and experiences of Jews in the UK on a variety of issues. The provisional sample size is 4,152, and all are UK residents aged 16 or above who self-identify as being Jewish 'in any way at all.' All respondents were members of the JPR panel, and either responded to emails requesting their participation sent out from JPR and a small number of support organisations aimed at encouraging participation among hard-to-reach subgroups, or to referrals from other survey participants. Five £100 shopping vouchers were offered as an incentive to complete the survey.

The questionnaire was developed by JPR, drawing on a range of existing surveys. It was programmed in-house using Confirmit software and formed part of a wider panel recruitment process. The survey was completed online, by computer, smartphone or tablet, from 23 July to 1 September 2021.

The survey data were cleaned and weighted to adjust for the age, sex and Jewish identity of the Jewish population of the UK based on 2011 Census data and other administrative data. Statistical analysis was carried out using IBM SPSS, and the text in this report focuses on findings that are statistically significant. In our statistical modelling, we ran four regression models, one for each of the climate change questions that form the focus of this report. For three of these we used binary logistic regression, and for the fourth, we used linear regression. Details of the methodology used in our previous round of this survey (summer 2020) can be found here; the approach used for the 2021 survey was similar, and further details, including details of the regression analysis, are available on request.

This paper also presents data analysis from the European Social Survey (ESS) Round 8 (which have been weighted using a post-stratification weight (pspwght)), as well as published data from surveys on this topic carried out by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

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/ About the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR)

The Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) is a London-based research organisation, consultancy and think-tank. It aims to advance the prospects of Jewish communities in the United Kingdom and across Europe by conducting research and informing policy development in dialogue with those best placed to positively influence Jewish life. Web: www.jpr.org.uk.

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