

# GREEN POWER to the people

2024





# Green Power to the People: Building a better future

Environmental concerns are widespread. In 7 to 8 out of 10 cases, people agree to a high or very high degree that climate change, pollution, throwing food, waste in general, and our overall environmental impact are major issues. Only a very small minority still think there are very few, if any, reasons for worrying.

This doesn't lead to most of the UK population becoming passionate environmental activists; far from it. It means people acknowledge that we cannot ignore these issues anymore and something has to be done.

How can someone act, while minimizing the effort and lifestyle disturbance? The easiest way is to switch to environmentally friendly products and brands. So, many people are now interested in such products and brands and are voting with their wallets.

Many brands ride these feelings and are going environmentally friendly, at least in their marketing. 'Green' claims are increasingly common. They help brands gain notoriety and increase profits. People have a lot of goodwill for brands. They want to believe what brands say; in many cases, they actually do believe.

Unfortunately, many brands abuse this trust and wave fake 'green', repairability, or durability credentials. This widespread dishonesty benefits

only dishonest brands, at least in the short term. If exposed, cheating brands can suffer severe consequences. When consumers discover they've been deceived, the backlash is quite strong.

In the meantime, everybody else loses. People don't get what they pay for. Honest brands lose sales to disingenuous ones. The environment health does not improve as much as we are led to believe, or even gets worse. You can say that in the end, everybody loses; we all live on the same planet. This vicious circle must be broken.

The European Union plans to act against Greenwashing, misleading product information, and planned obsolescence. There's a new law aiming to protect consumers from such questionable practices and help them make properly informed decisions. This will fit right in the wider EU plans to protect its citizens' rights, on the one hand, and the environment, on the other.

Any UK Business that deals with the EU and uses green, repairability, or durability claims for the products crossing the border, should Mind the Regulatory Gap. They will be impacted, one way or another, so they better start to prepare.

### **Liviu Micu**

Senior Researcher at DataDiggers



# METHODOLOGY



**TARGET** 



DATA
COLLECTION
METHOD



SAMPLE SIZE AND STRUCTURE



QUESTIONNAIRE LENGTH



FIELDWORK PERIOD

UK population, 18-64 years

Online interviews

955 respondents, nationally representative by age and gender

11 minutes

March-April 2024





# Environmental and Climate Change concerns are rising

There's a broad agreement: The Planet's Status Demands Attention.

That's not to say that most people have turned overnight into staunch environmental activists. Those really passionate about acting on these issues are a minority.

But, somehow, we all have to act.

# Attitudes about the relationship with our planet

The majority acknowledges that we cannot ignore the consequences of our actions anymore. Climate change, in particular, is less controversial now, after several hot years with erratic changes and extreme weather events. There are still many people not fully convinced of the gravity of these issues, but very few who think that we have nothing to worry about. That's a good thing: the growing acceptance of the reality of climate change is crucial to tackling it and ensuring a healthier planet for us and future generations.

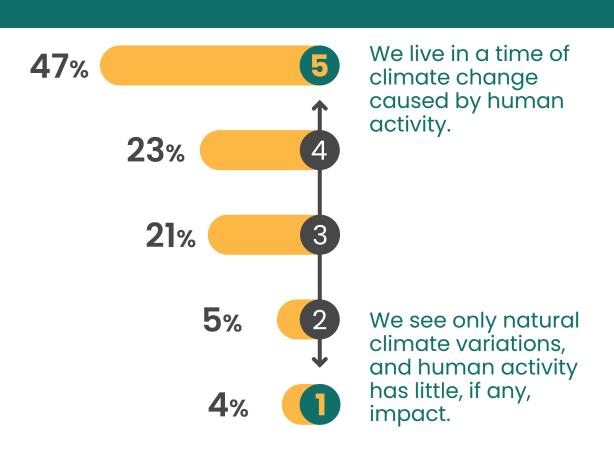


# Humanity and the Environment: Friends or Foes?



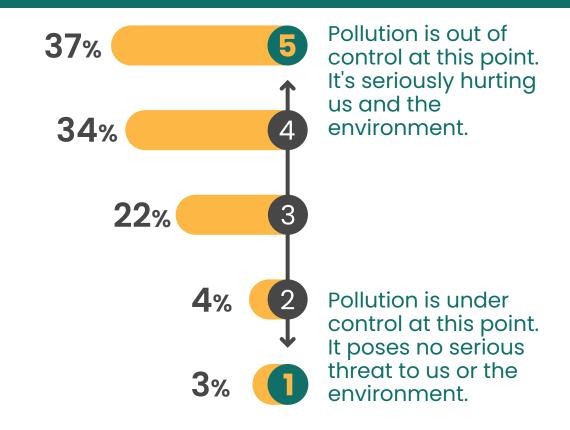


Climate Change: Myth or Reality?





# Pollution: A Growing Threat or Manageable Challenge?





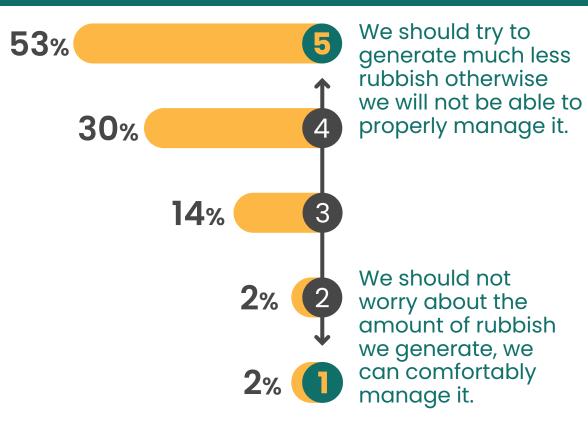
Most Britons think we are too wasteful, and they couldn't be more right. The UN Environment Programme estimates the world now produces at least 2.1 billion tonnes of solid municipal waste per year; roughly half of this is discarded food. The impact is more severe than you might think; here's a quote from UNEP's **Food Waste Index Report 2024**: 'Just as urgently, food waste is failing people: even as food is being thrown away at scale, up to 783 million people are affected by hunger each year, and 150 million children under the age of ≥ve suffer stunted growth and development due to a chronic lack of essential nutrients in their diets.,

On top of that, there are enormous amounts of Construction and Demolition, Industrial, Agricultural, and Healthcare waste, which we don't even know how much of it there is. This rubbish legacy is nothing to be proud of.

Recycling is a ray of hope, and people seem to expect much from it. However, UNEP data indicate that we currently recycle only 19% of the municipal waste. We have to do more, not just to recycle more, but also to reduce rubbish generation and improve management, otherwise, we will pay a dear price.

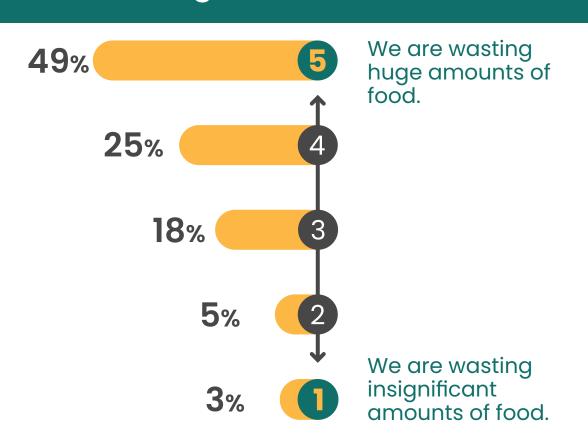


# Rubbish: A Mountain Too High or Manageable Challenge?



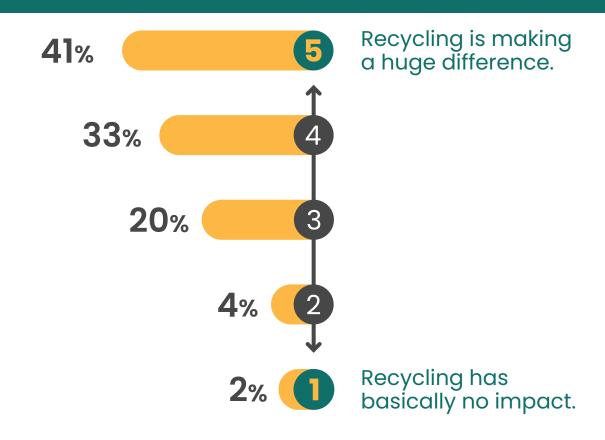


# Food for Thought: Are the rubbish bins eating too much?





# Trash to Treasure: Does recycling really matter?



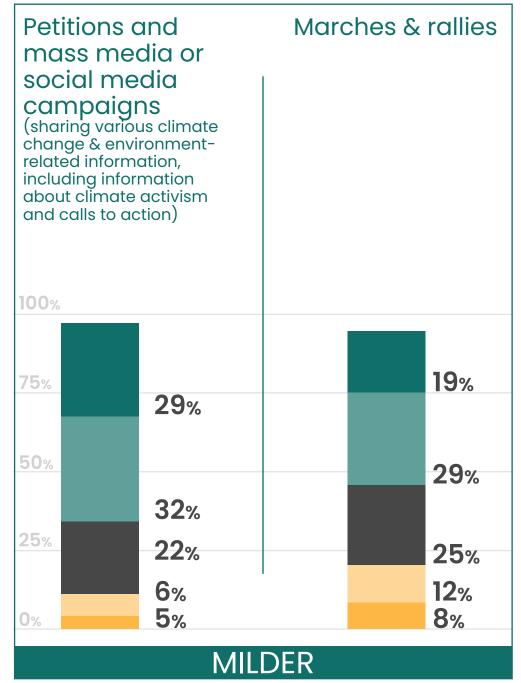


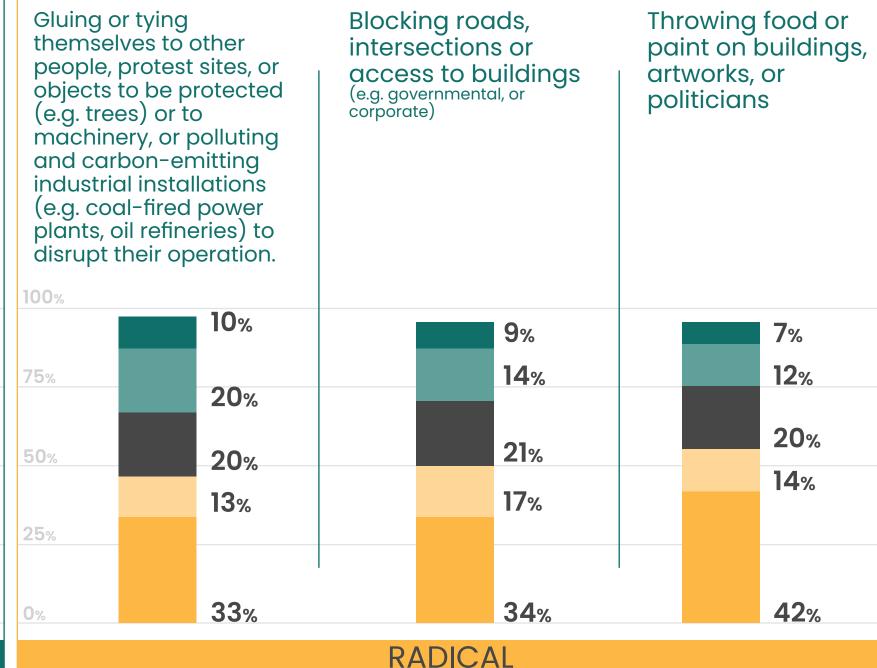


# Support for climate or environmental actions

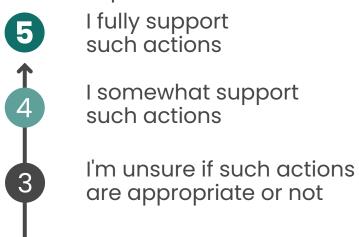
What do you think of the following climate or environmental activists' actions?

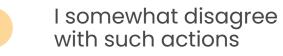
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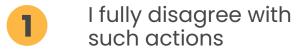




Most people are not staunch environmental activists. Many are supporting or at least tolerating moderate actions, especially petitions and media campaigns. These are easy to follow and to get involved in if they wish to. However, approval for more disruptive measures is much lower. Most people are understandably hesitant about actions that could inconvenience them, even if the goal is to protect the planet.







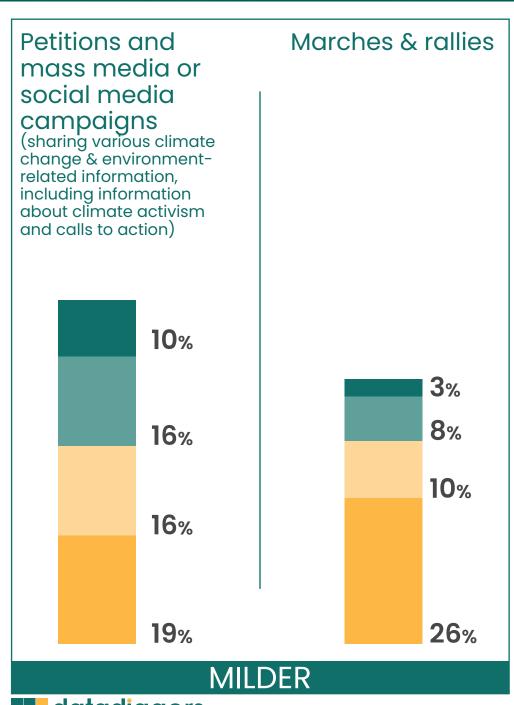


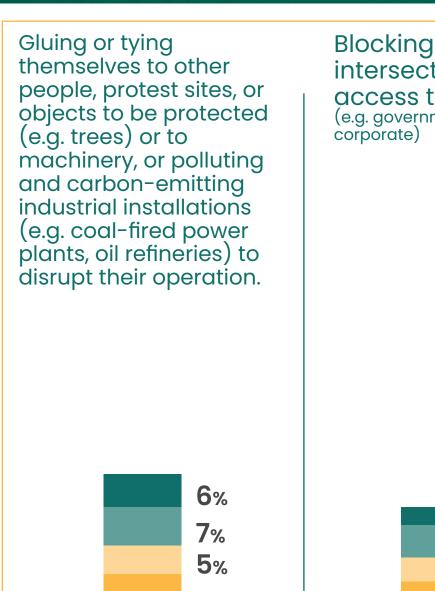


# Direct involvement in climate or environmental actions among people who are at least partially supporting such actions

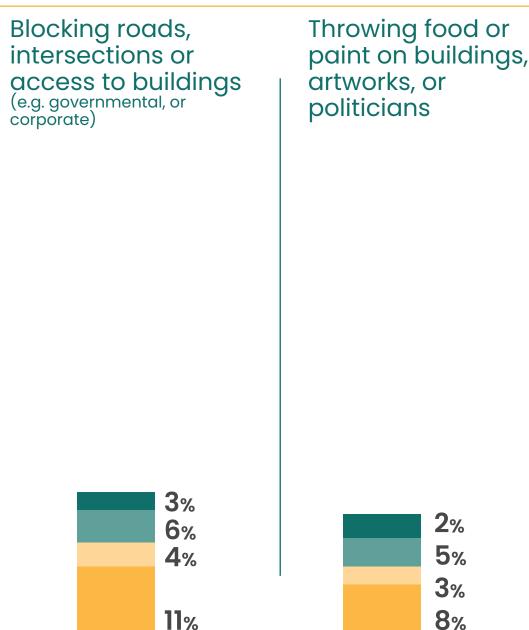
Do you ever participate in such actions?

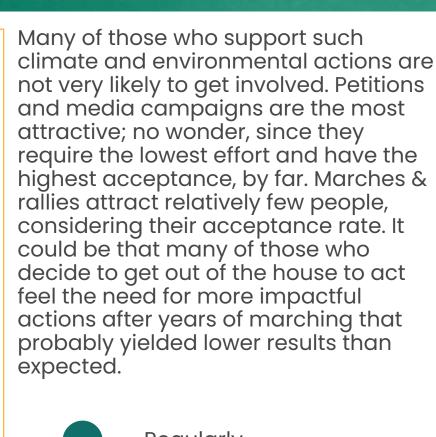
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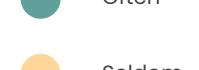


13%













Never

**RADICAL** 



# Lifestyle & Shopping Habits

The environmental concerns are not associated with a particular lifestyle.

No matter how active they are, how high or low their degree of interest in their health or appearance is, they feel the same about the planet's status.

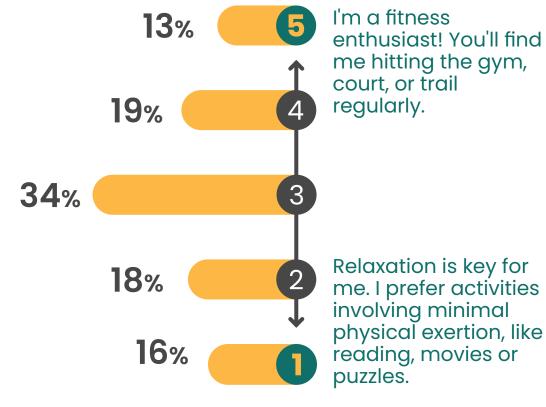
Also, it's apparent that the circular economy, based on products' repairability and reusability, has plenty of room to grow.

# Lifestyle - Health & Fitness

All people are unique, with varied lifestyles. This holds for the physical activity levels, both self-imposed and required by their jobs. The same goes for taking care of their health in a formal way, although there are more who go to a physician only when the issues are aggravated. Whether this is due to a lack of interest or some objective barriers (e.g. long waiting times, or high cost), we don't know. Our objective was to check that people aren't concerned about the environment's status just because it happens that most are a bunch of health "fanatics". Indeed, people seem more aware of the planet's rather dire state than worried about their health & fitness.

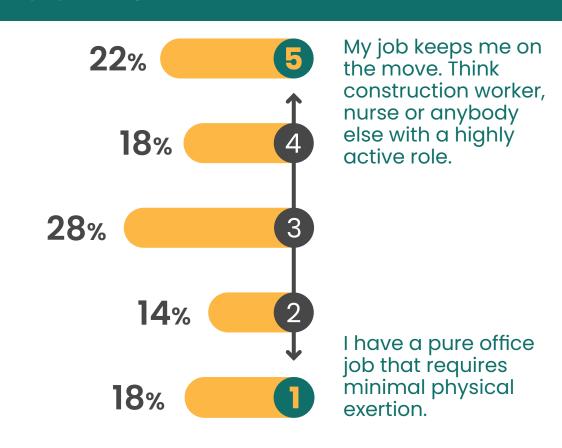


Fitness or Physical activity level



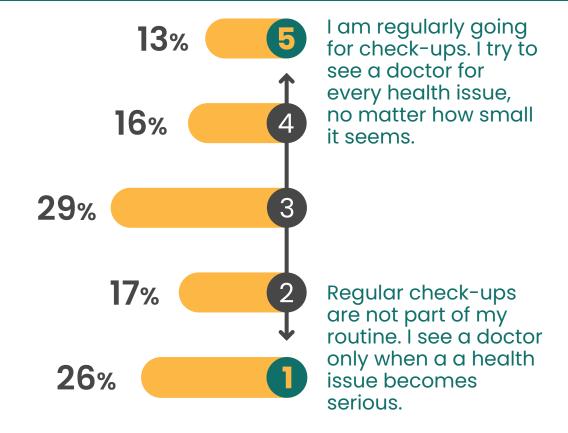


Level of physical activity required by your job





Seeing the doctor



# Lifestyle - Appearance

Besides health and fitness, some of us want to look our best, more often than not. Some are much less concerned with this. A lot of lifestyle diversity in this respect. Clothing and shoes buying frequency is closely linked to interest in fashion trends, as one would expect, and unrelated to any environmental concern.

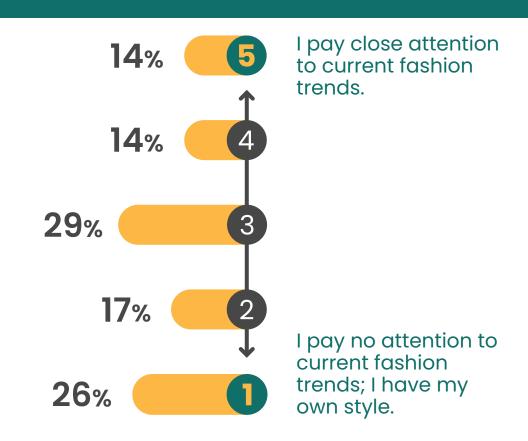


Clothing & Shoes shopping



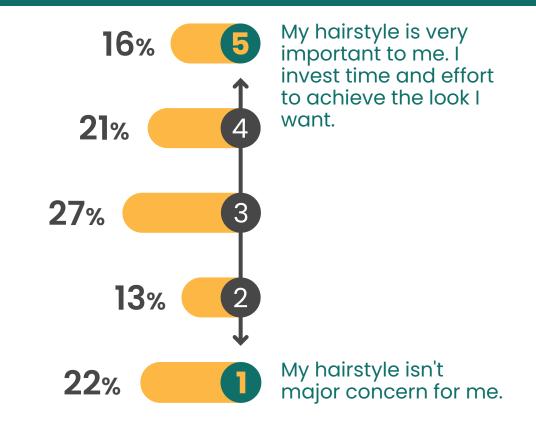


Fashion trends interest





Hairstyle preferences



# Longer-lasting products - Live Twice via Reuse

N = 955

Buying used/refurbished products is a pillar of a circular economy, with reduced environmental impact. Clothes are a good example. On one hand, there's an established second-hand clothing market and many people are, if not fully embracing the idea, at least open to it. On the other, the fast-fashion market is generating huge amounts of waste. Despite the thriving second-hand market for clothes, discarded garments still pose a significant challenge. According to McKinsey, the EU and Switzerland generated a staggering 7 million tonnes of garment waste in 2020, with roughly 70% ending up directly in landfills or incinerators.

The good thing is that there are similar degrees of willingness to consider second-hand or refurbished consumer electronics or appliances. But there's room for a wider acceptance of the reusability idea; these products, when thrown out, generate waste much harder to recycle or dispose of than clothes.



**Clothes** 

37%

40%

17%

5%

# Do you prefer to buy new or second-hand or refurbished items when shopping for these product types?



Smartphone, laptop, tablet or smartwatch

48%

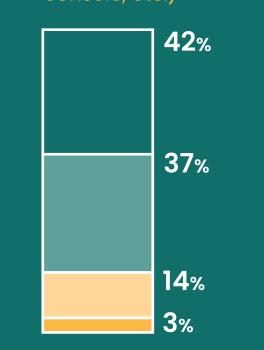
35%

14%

3%



Other consumer electronics (e.g. TV, CD/DVD/ Blu-ray player, soundbar or sound system, game console, etc.)



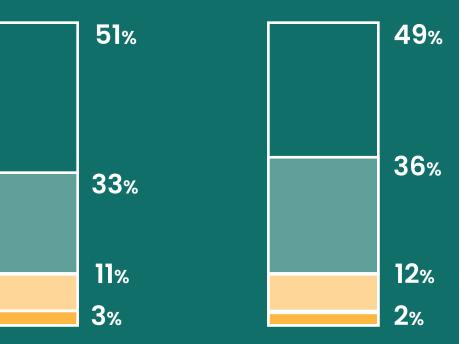


Large home appliances (e.g. refrigerator, washing machine, dishwasher, air conditioner)



**Small home** 

appliances (e.g. vacuum cleaner, microwave, blender, coffee maker)



Repairability is another pillar of a circular economy.

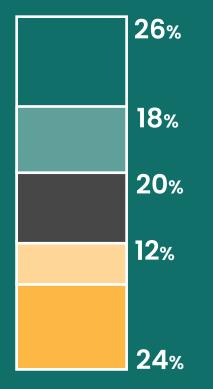
Repair behaviours show surprising consistency across product types. In over 40% of cases, people are very likely to try to repair the broken item. Large appliances seem to have a slightly higher repair likelihood, likely due to their high cost and the significant hassle of replacement. After all, moving such large objects is no easy feat.

40% - 50% is not bad, but maybe the environmental concerns will move the needle further, in the future.

### What do you usually do if such an item, not under warranty any more, breaks?



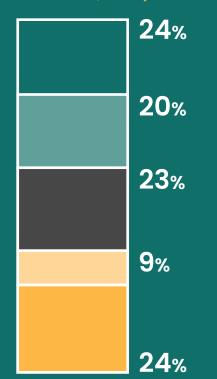
### Smartphone, laptop, tablet or smartwatch





### Other consumer electronics

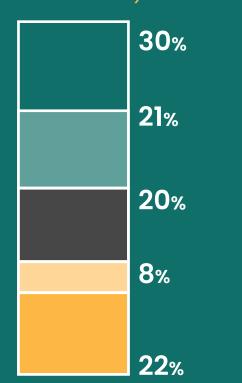
(e.g. TV, CD/DVD/ Blu-ray player, soundbar or sound system, game console, etc.)





### Large home appliances

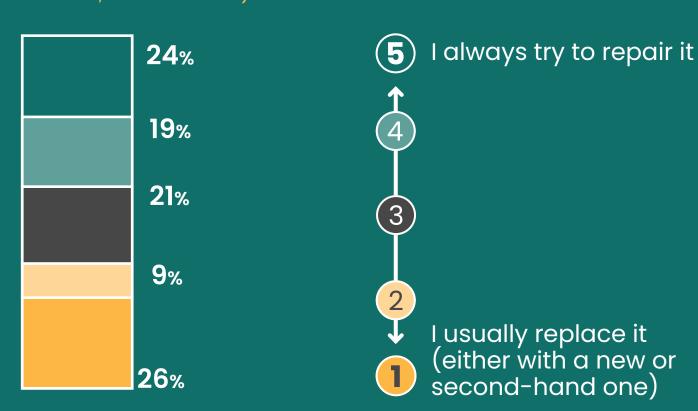
(e.g. refrigerator, washing machine, dishwasher, air conditioner)





### Small home appliances

(e.g. vacuum cleaner, microwave, blender, coffee maker)



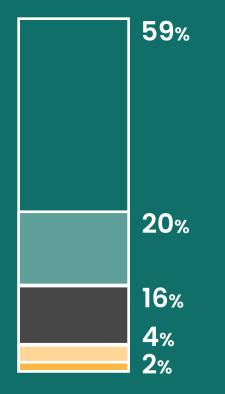
# Longer-lasting products - Usage

People have different styles of using products that last a long time (e.g., appliances, electronics). Where would you say you fall on the usage spectrum for these kinds of products?

In general, personal computing devices (smartphones, laptops, tablets, or smartwatches) have the shortest upgrade cycle among the longer-lasting hardware, partly because of frequent feature updates in new models. Large appliances tend to last for many years and people are accustomed to using them accordingly. It's hard to make significant changes from one generation of refrigerators to another; also, there's usually a very weak, if any, personal connection with an appliance. After all, you carry the smartphone with you, not the washing machine. Regardless of the category, very few people want and can afford to regularly update to the latest generation. Our data confirms these patterns. So, there's an intrinsic appetite for durable products – that benefit us and the environment too, by reducing waste and using fewer resources in the long term.



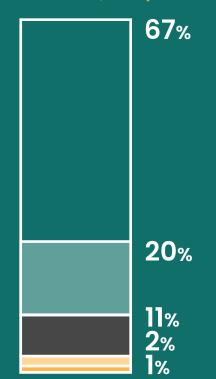
### Smartphone, laptop, tablet or smartwatch





### Other consumer electronics

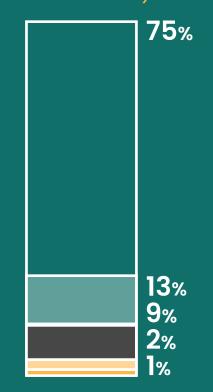
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### Large home appliances

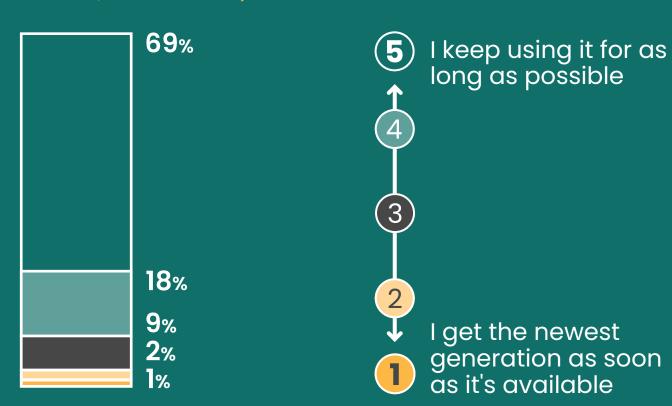
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### **Small home appliances**

(e.g. vacuum cleaner, microwave, blender, coffee maker)

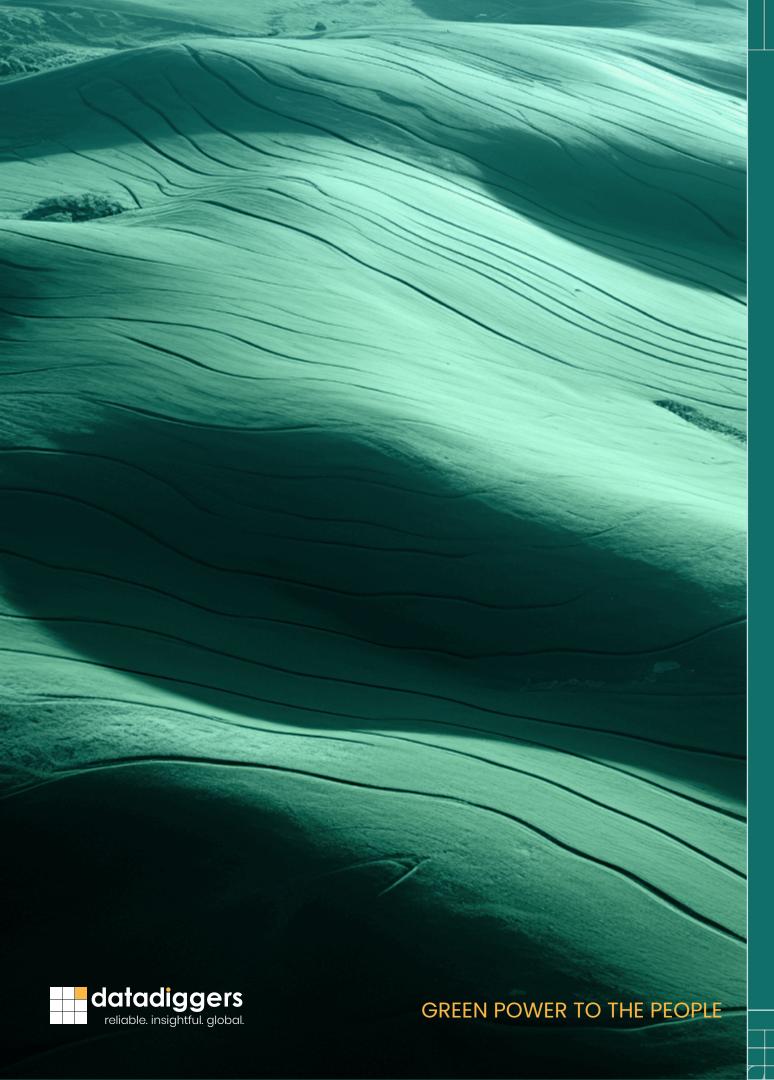




# A dive into the Sea of Green Claims

- Many brands are going environmentally friendly, at least in their marketing. They use a staggering variety of claims; we focused on 5 categories.
- Environmental concerns are shaping the shopping behavior, after all. 'Green' claims have a visible influence on at least half of the people.
- People place a lot of trust in brands. If not outright trust, at least goodwill. Information provided directly by brands and sellers is heavily influencing the acceptance of the green claims.
- On top of being more attractive, 'Green' brands are often also able to command a premium price.





# The Sea of Green Claims

There are plenty of more or less direct environmentally friendly claims. We grouped these claims into 5 categories:

Sustainable / Responsible / Conscious – the most general and vague attributes. Without any context, they could imply a lot of things while actually telling us nothing. "Sustainable"? In what way? "Responsible"? "Conscious"? About what? Almost always associated with care for the environment, even when not clearly specified.

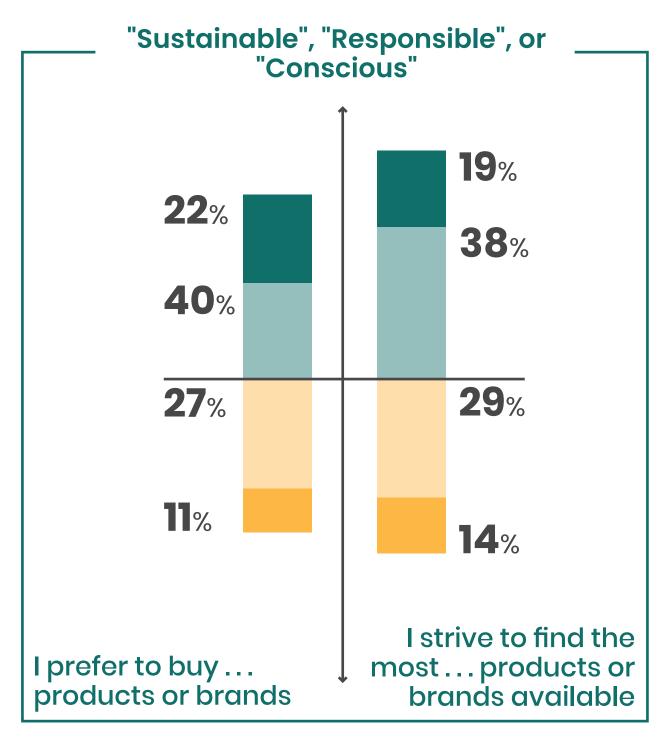
**Environmentally / Eco / Climate friendly or neutral** – almost as vague without any context, but at least they suggest a direct connection with the environment, in general, or the climate, in particular.

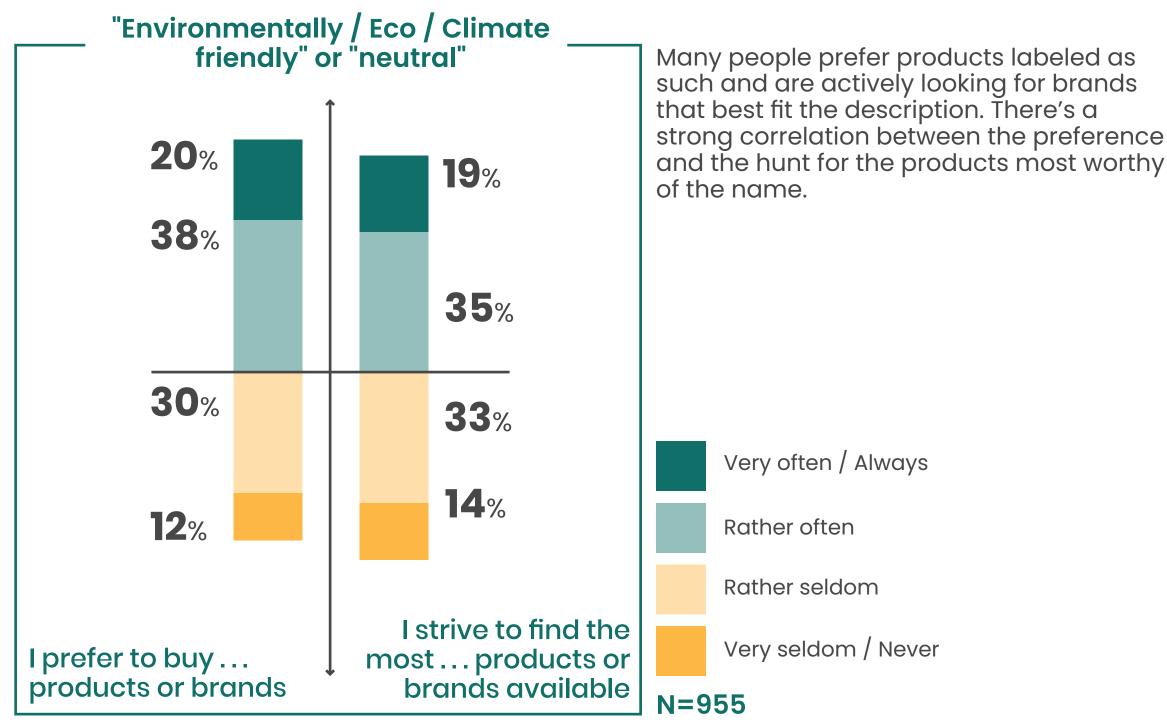
Natural / Eco / Green / Organic (or 'Made with Natural / Eco / Green / Organic' ingredients) – a bit more specific. All terms included here are about the inherent qualities of some products. You can say about a product that is Natural, Eco, Green, or Organic, or made with, or from such ingredients. Can't say the same about a company. Usually manages to imply both high-quality and some positive connection with the environment.

**Durable / Long-lasting** – equal longer products' lifetime, thus less waste is generated. Usually associated with high-quality; brings peace of mind (no stress that I have to replace the product soon). Can save money in the long term. Win-win for people and environment.

Repairable / Easy to repair – a way to prolong products' lifetime, thus reducing waste. The ability to repair a broken product can also save money in the long term. Another win-win for people and environment. Yay!

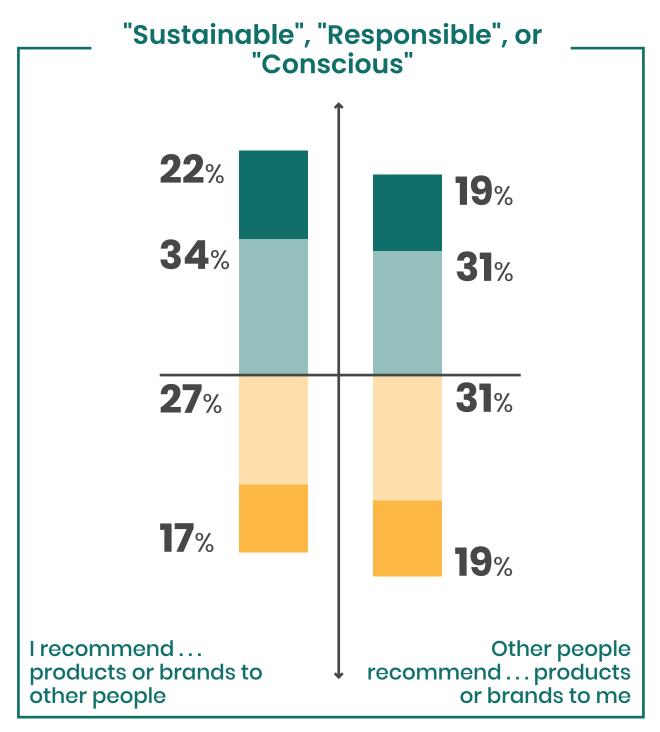
# Interest in "Sustainable", "Responsible", or "Conscious" and "Environmentally / Eco / Climate friendly" or "neutral" products

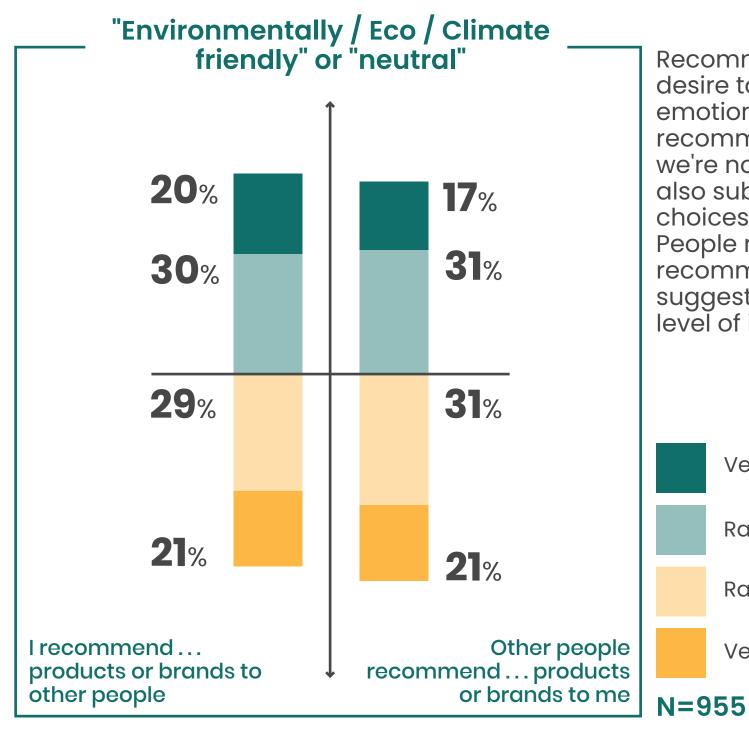






# Conversations around "Sustainable", "Responsible", or "Conscious" and "Environmentally / Eco / Climate friendly" or "neutral" products





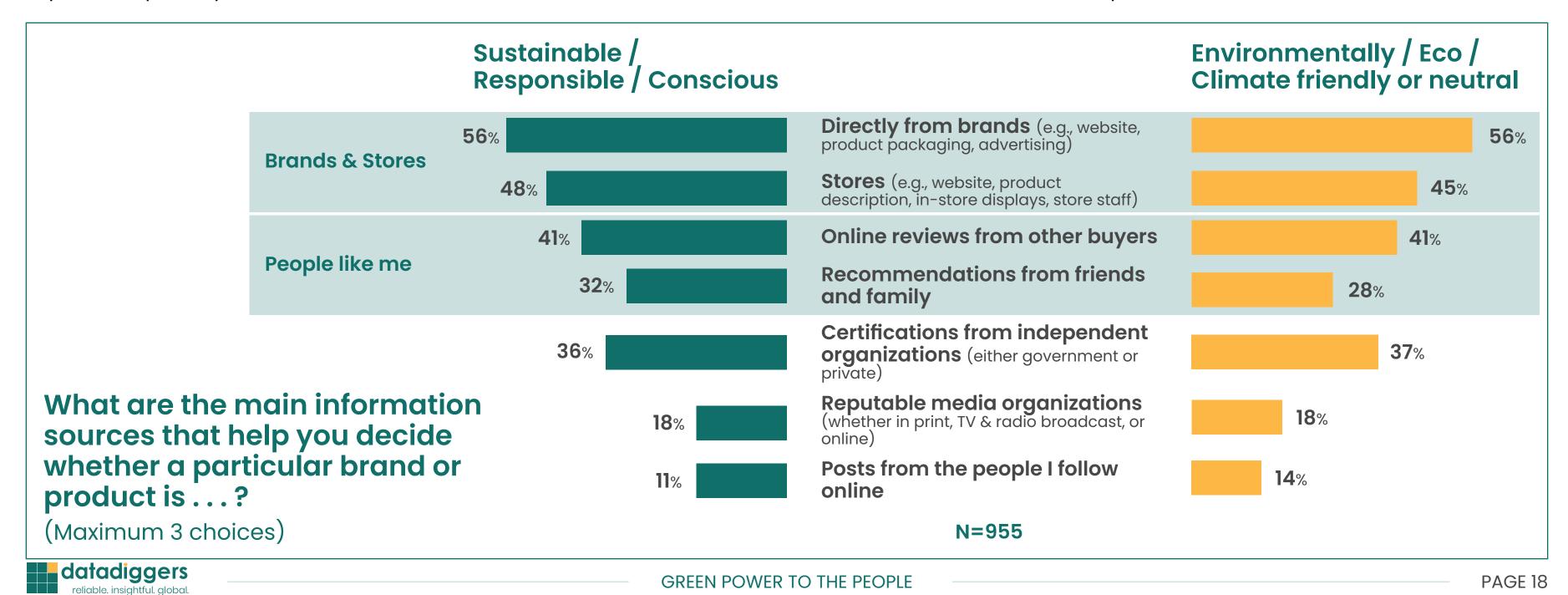
Recommendations signal more than just a desire to be helpful. They often reveal an emotional investment in a topic. When we recommend a brand or product we like, we're not just trying to help others – we're also subconsciously validating our own choices. This exchange goes both ways. People readily give and receive recommendations on these topics, suggesting a genuine and relatively high level of interest.





# Information channels about "Sustainable", "Responsible", or "Conscious" and "Environmentally / Eco / Climate friendly" or "neutral" products

People can get from their peers – by word-of-mouth, or from reviews by others like them – the information that helps them decide if a product is the real deal. Brands try to take advantage of this, and many use online influencers to persuade people. It certainly helps, but not as much as some might expect. The primary sources – brands and sellers themselves – are the main information channels in this respect.



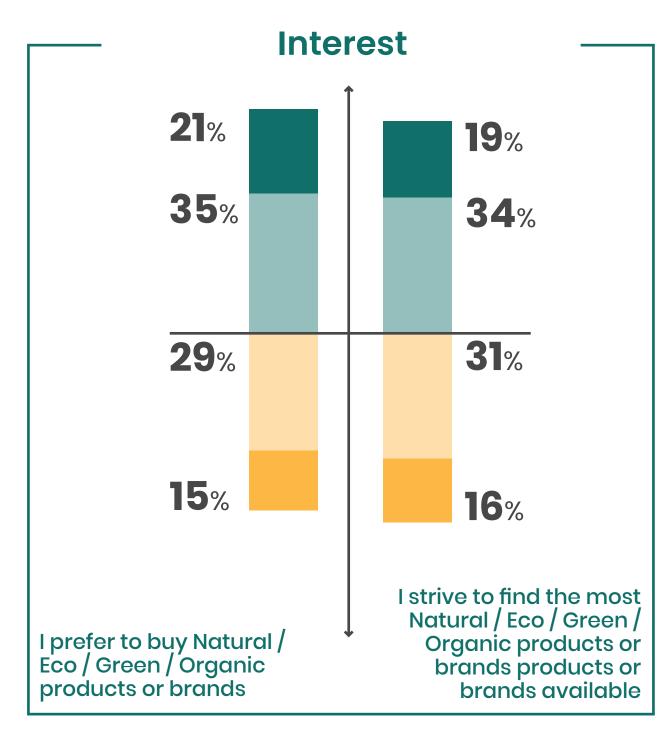
# Speaking of sustainability, how would you explain it to someone else?

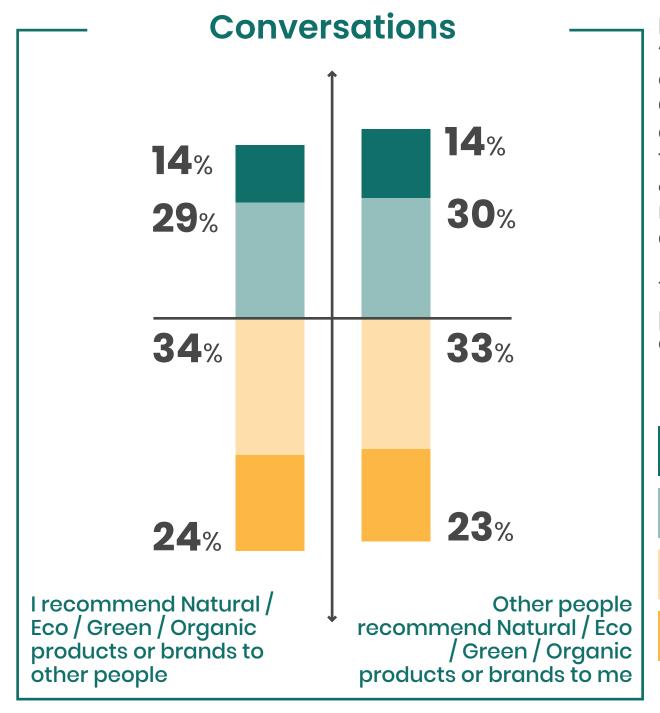
<u>Sustainability</u> is a widely used term. People get accustomed to it and start to get some grasp of it. Still, many struggle to clearly define it, because it has a deeper meaning. Sustainability also has social and economic implications, and covers our whole interaction with and the impact we have on the environment.





# Interest in "Natural / Eco / Green / Organic" products





Many products or brands are described as 'Natural / Eco / Green / Organic' products or 'Made with Natural / Eco / Green / Organic' ingredients or materials. Such descriptions are mostly used for food and food ingredients, beverages, personal care & cosmetics (e.g. soap, toothpaste, makeup, fragrances), and for some clothing and footwear products.

These Natural / Eco / Green / Organic products also generate a rather high level of interest and conversation.



N=955

# Information channels about "Natural / Eco / Green / Organic" products

Information channels' importance is basically the same as for Sustainable / Responsible / Conscious, or Environmentally / Eco / Climate friendly or neutral branded products. People want to believe what the producers say.

What are the main information sources that help you decide whether a particular brand or product is Natural / Eco / Green / Organic?

(Maximum 3 choices)

N = 955





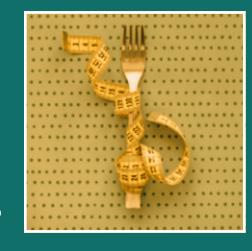
# Where does "Natural / Eco / Green / Organic" products' appeal come from?

N = 955

Our body is a Temple, and we pay close attention to what we feed it with. The vast majority keep an eye on their diet and at least try to steer it closer to, if not outright on the healthy side. While dietary discipline is sometimes half-hearted, there's basically no doubt about healthy food. Almost everybody agrees that what you eat matters. A lot. Believing in healthy food do not equate to the rejection of conventional medicines; most people are aware that both play a part in keeping us healthy. "Natural / Eco / Green / Organic' are usually associated with 'healthy' when applied to food & beverage. For dietary supplements, such claims are a basic requirement; how many supplements brands are branding themselves as 'artificial'? ... Exactly.



Healthy Food: Fact or Fiction?



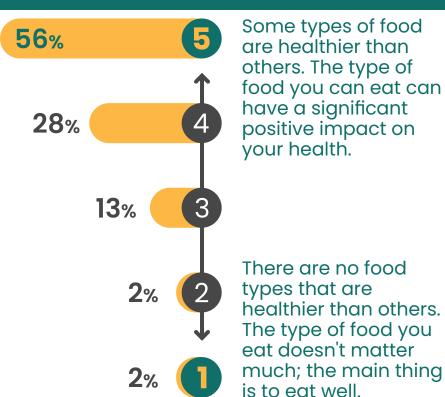
Diet

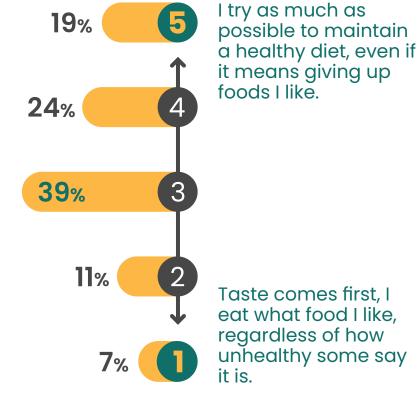


Dietary Supplements Usage

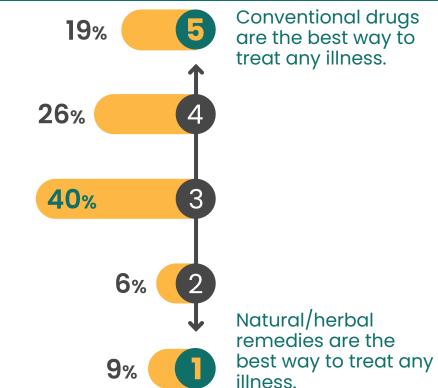


Pharma Industry or Nature: Who is having the Cure?



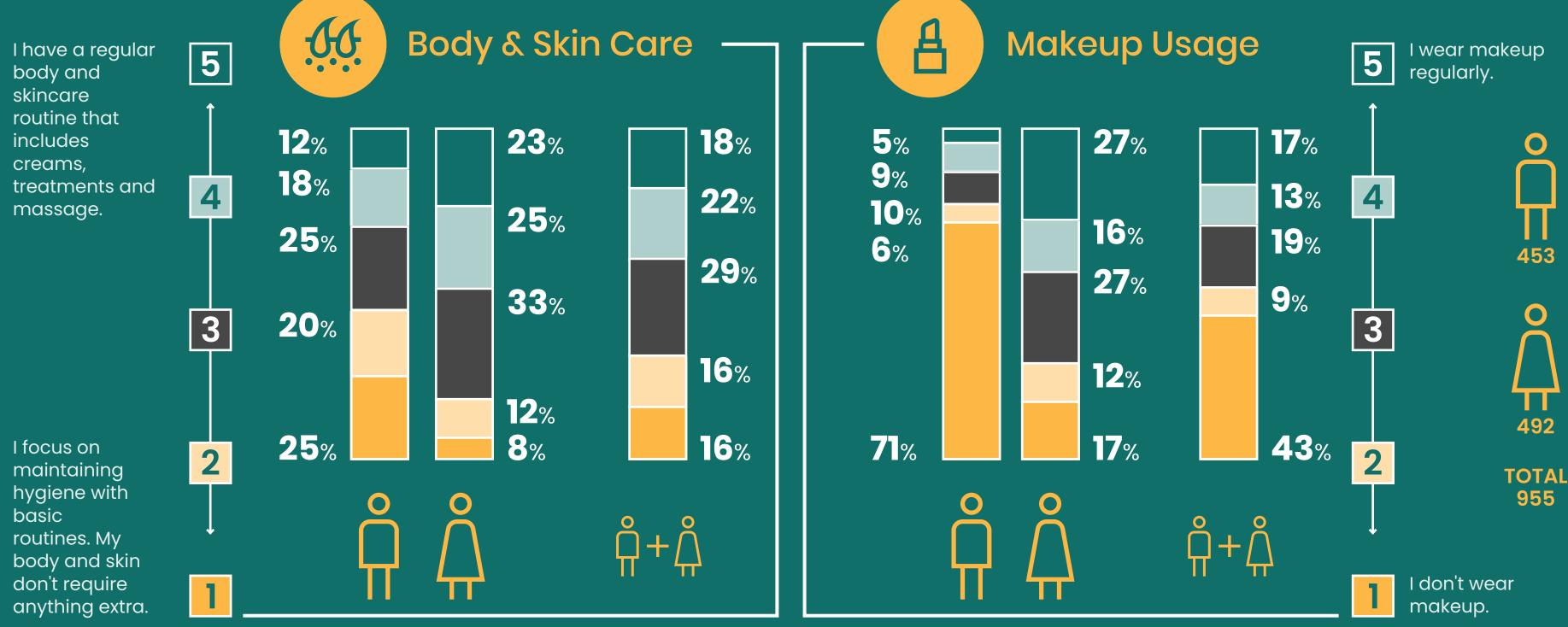




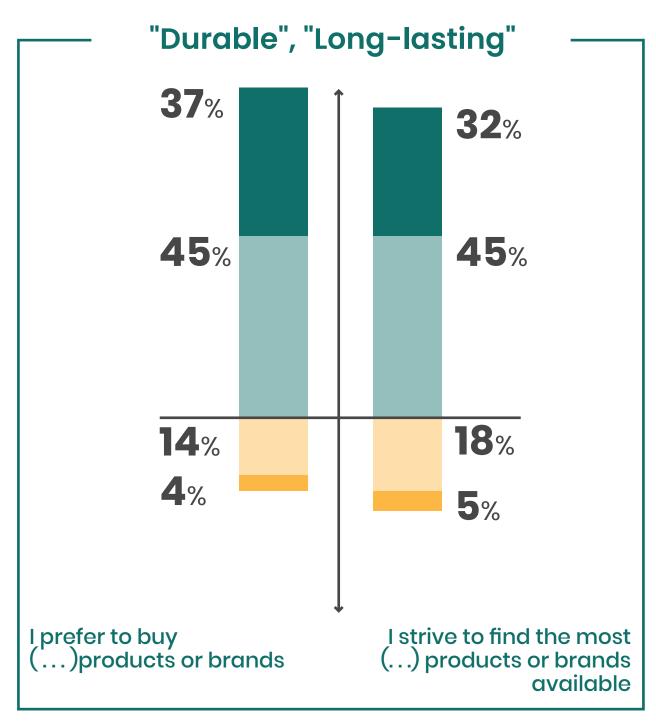


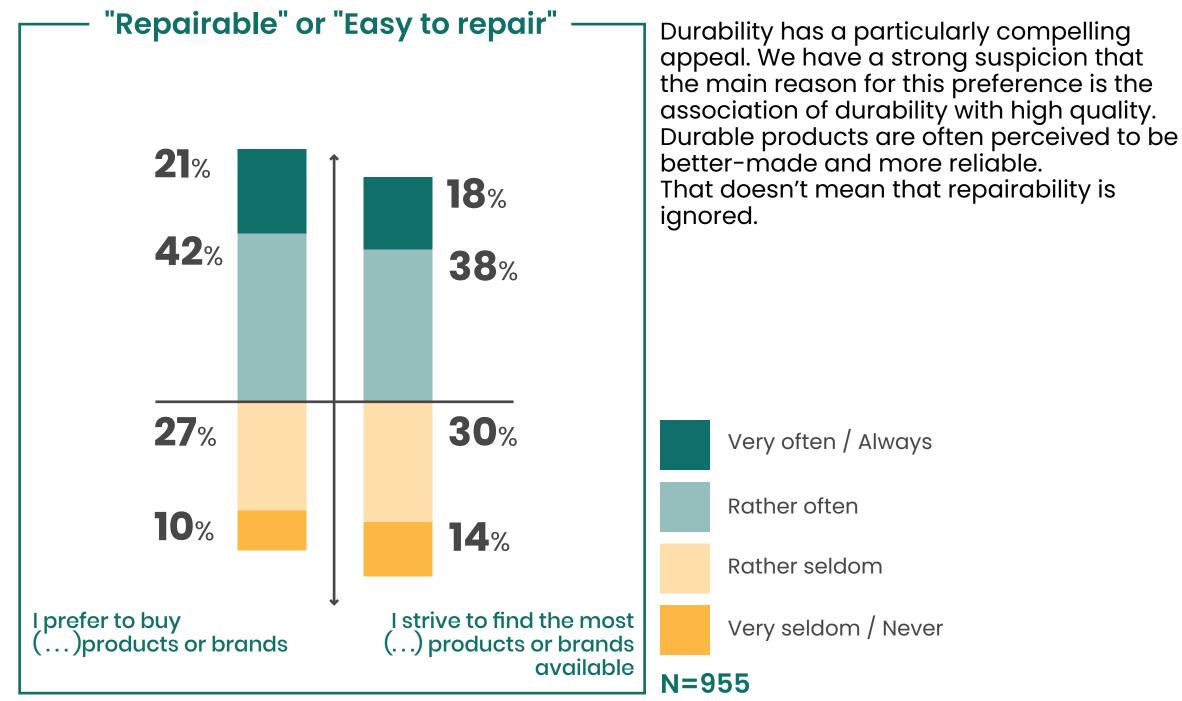
# Where does "Natural / Eco / Green / Organic" products' appeal come from?

Many personal care & cosmetics brands also employ 'Natural / Eco / Green / Organic' claims.
Women might be a bit more receptive to these claims, since they use advanced personal care & makeup products to a significantly higher degree than men.



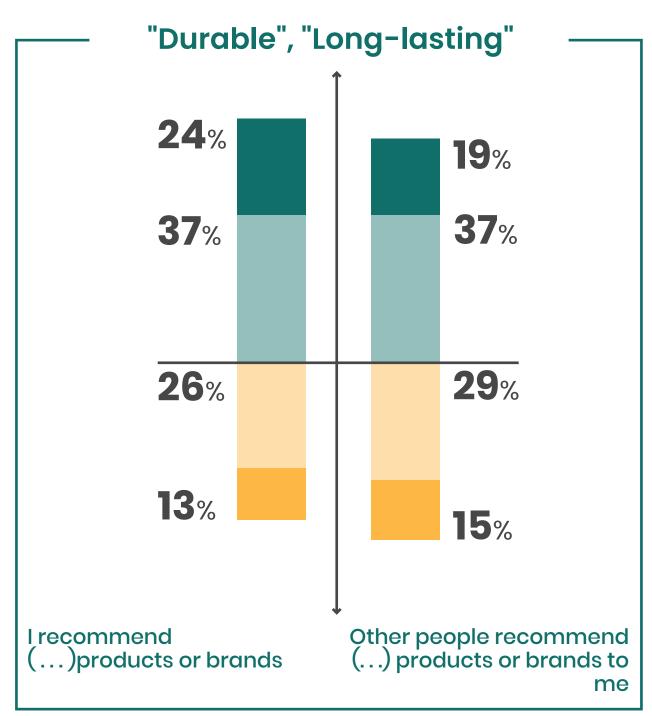
# Interest in "Durable", "Long-lasting" and "Repairable" or "Easy to repair" products

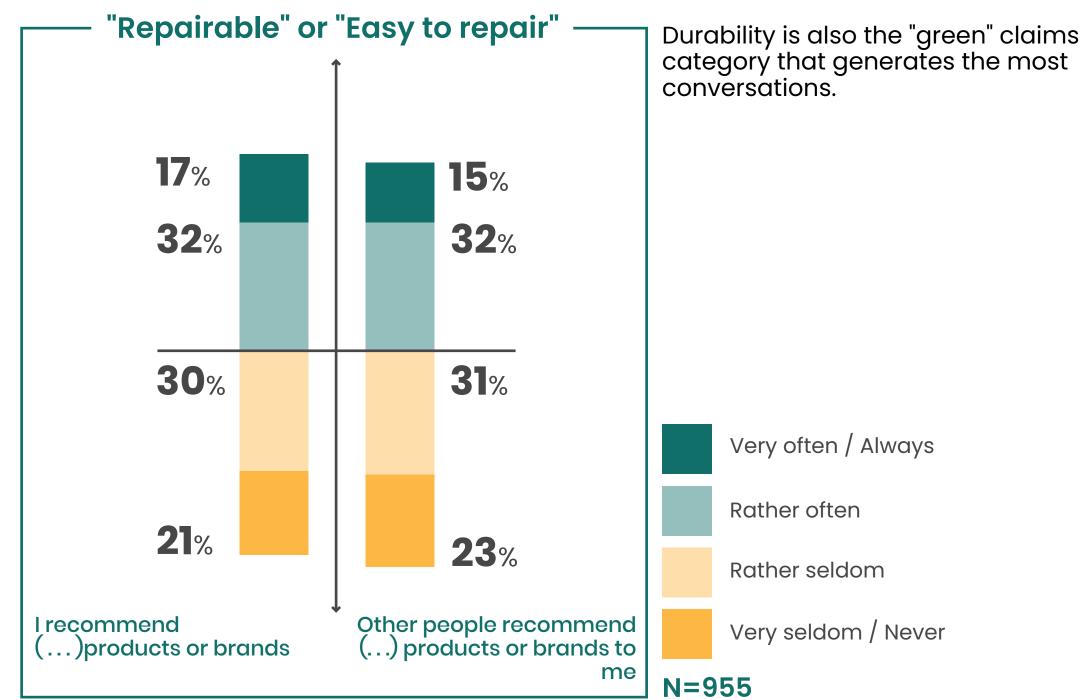






# Conversations around "Durable", "Long-lasting" and "Repairable" or "Easy to repair" products



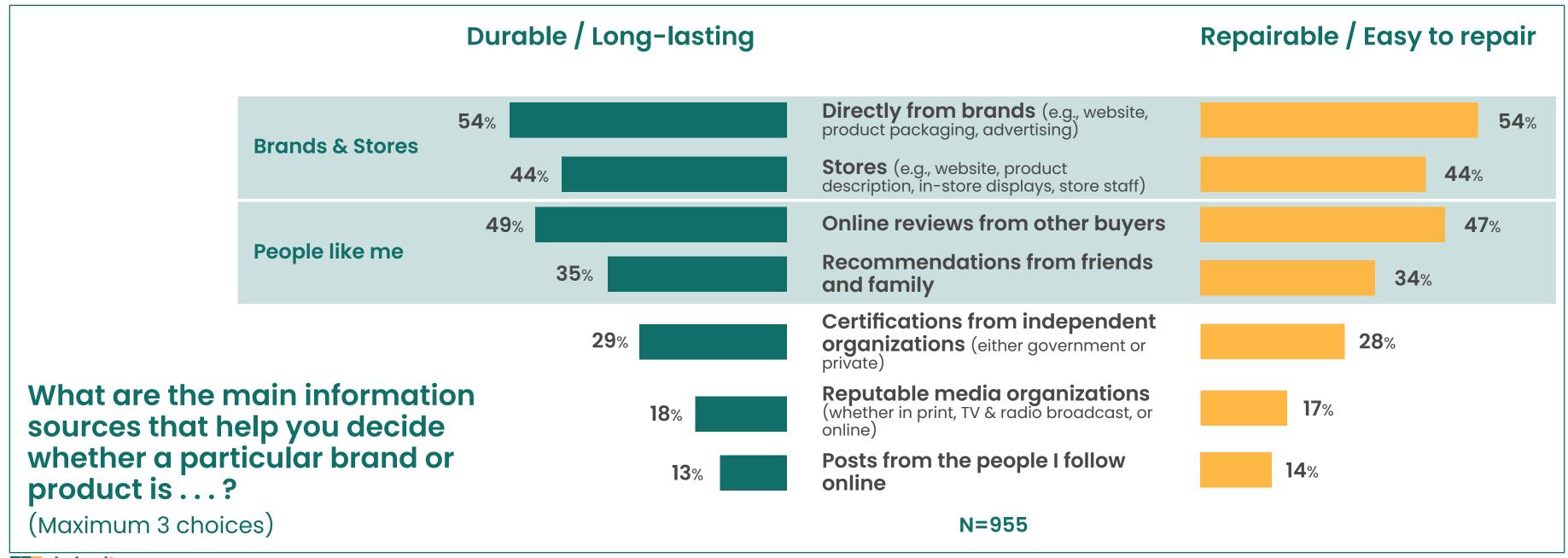




# Information channels about "Durable", "Long-lasting", and "Repairable" or "Easy to repair" products

Primary sources combined remain crucial information channels.

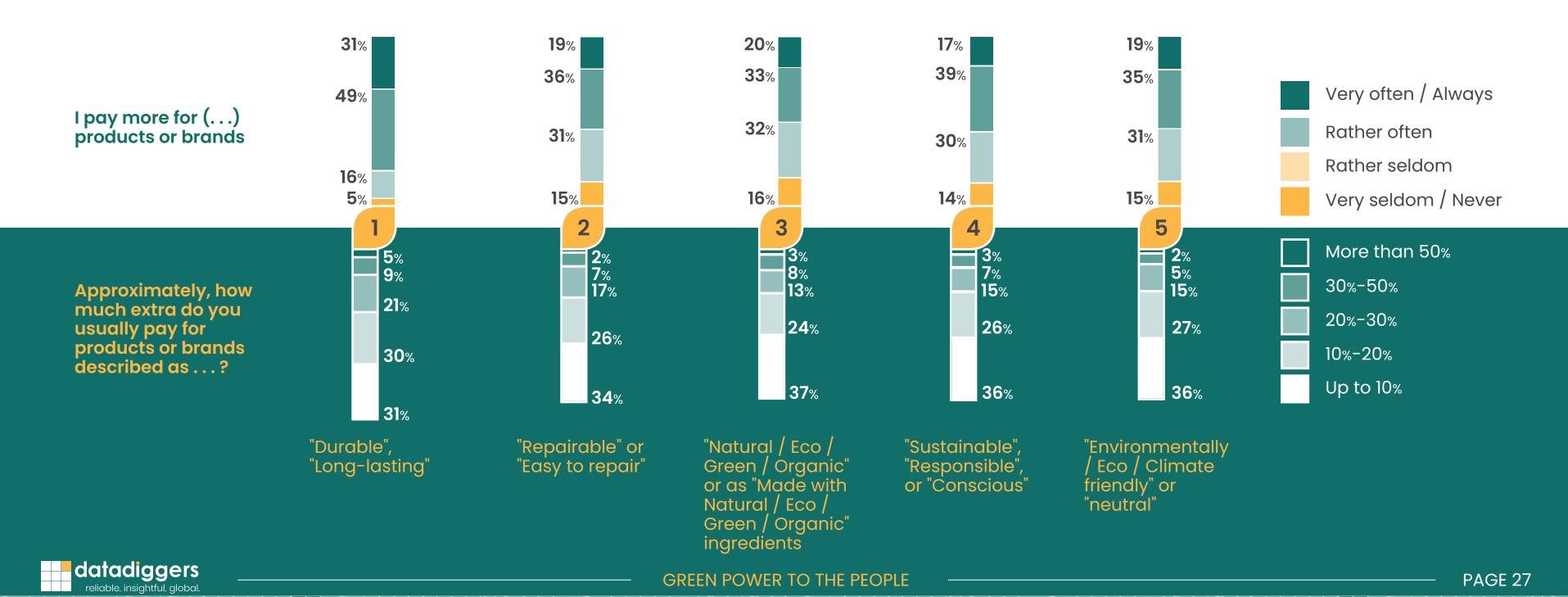
But people are relying more on other people's advice when establishing whether a product is durable or easy to repair. Most likely because durability and repairability are more practical concepts and can be directly tested and observed in everyday use. People can share specific experiences to inform each other's decisions.



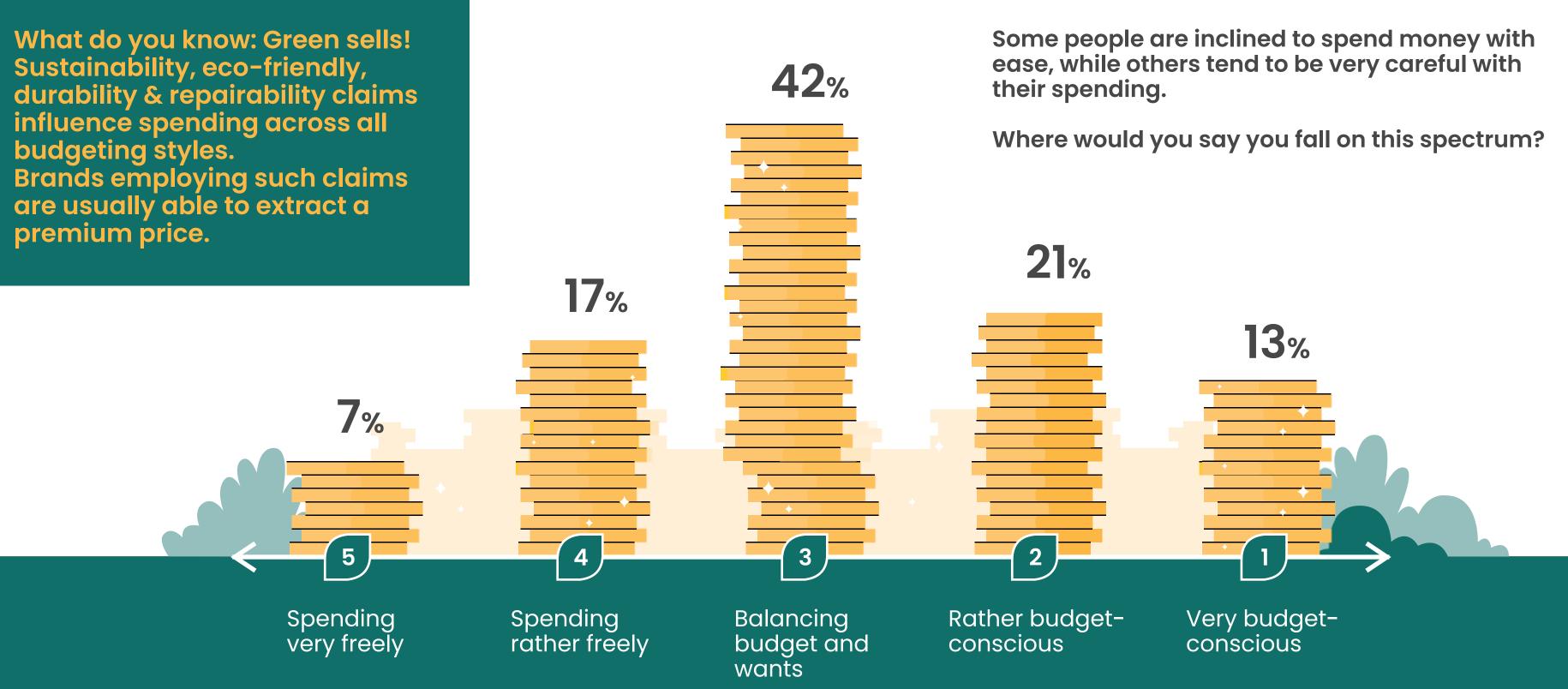
# The tangible impact of all these marketing claims

N = 955

Such 'green' claims can make products more attractive and often allow companies to ask for higher prices. 'Durable' products are, by far, the most attractive and the likeliest to command a premium price. A quick reminder about what makes them so compelling to many people: Are associated with high quality; Bring peace of mind (no stress that I have to replace such a product soon); and can save money in the long term. The environmental benefit is a bonus. What's not to like?



# **Spending Behavior**



# The Murky Depths of The Sea of Green Claims

- Understandably, people get upset when green, durability & repairability marketing claims they relied on are proven false.
- And they get upset when encountering product (durability / repairability / support) issues.
- Misleading claims discoveries, and product issues are quite common. The result?

  Many aggrieved Britons.
- Repairing an out-of-warranty product frequently proves more difficult than expected. Often, the hurdles are deliberate, as part of planned obsolescence strategies.
- Overstating green, durability, and repairability credentials might have undesirable consequences for brands. Greenwashing can backfire spectacularly, in more than one way.



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# Discovering misleading claims

Broken Trust, Upset Britons: Many felt betrayed by misleading marketing claims, sparking anger and frustration, among a range of negative emotions.

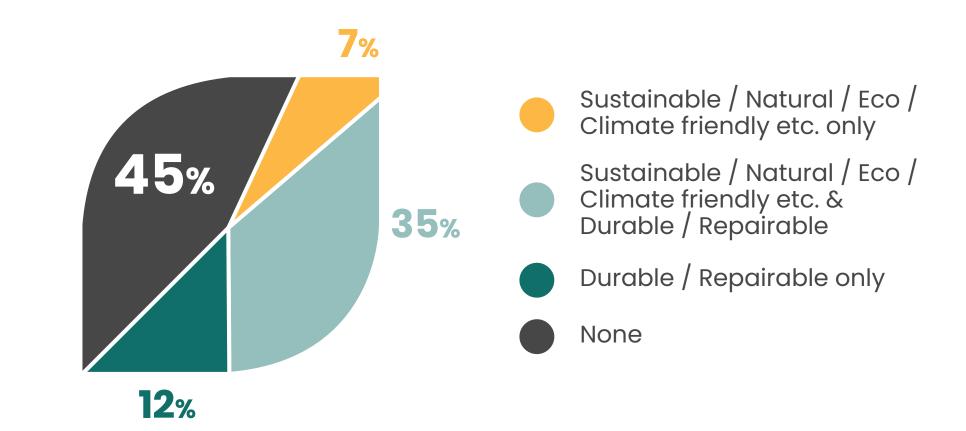
They clearly don't take brands' deception lightly.

Did you ever discover that a brand or product you used is not as Sustainable / Responsible / Conscious, or Natural / Eco / Green / Organic, or Environmentally / Eco / Climate friendly or neutral as it appeared to be before buying it?

Did you ever discover that a brand or product you used is not as **Durable / Long-lasting, or Repairable / Easy to repair** as it appeared to be before buying it?



N = 955



# How did these misleading claims make you feel?

30%

**26**%

**22**%

**22**%

17%

13%

Disappointed

Distrust in that brand

Cheated

**Frustrated** 

**Angry** 

Sad



# Durability, repairability and support issues

# Have you faced any durability, repairability or support issues for . . . ?

N=955

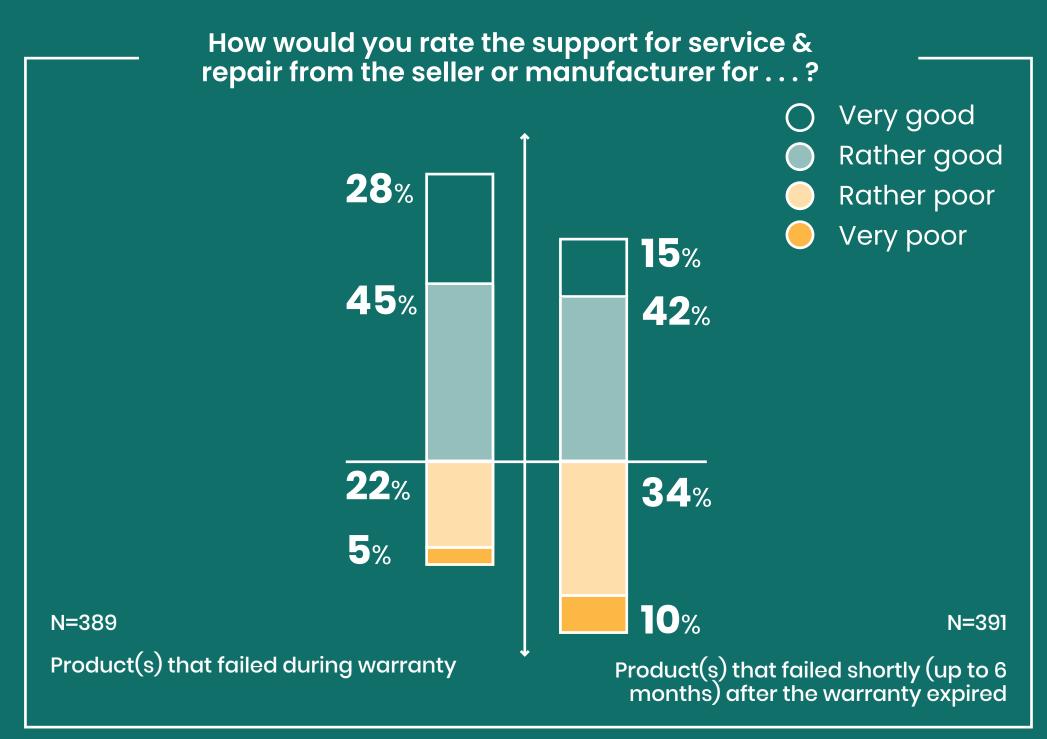
Two-thirds of the UK population had issues outside warranty with at least one product from these categories. Software support is increasingly important, as virtually all new consumer electronics and appliances are now 'smart', with plenty more or less useful additional features. This 'smartness' comes at the price of increased complexity and adds new points of failure. It also provides new attack opportunities to cyber crooks.	Smartphone, laptop, tablet or smartwatch	Other consumer electronics (e.g. TV, CD/DVD/ Bluray player, soundbar or sound system, game console, etc.)	Large home appliances (e.g. refrigerator, washing machine, dishwasher, air conditioner)	Small home appliances (e.g. vacuum cleaner, microwave, blender, coffee maker)
Failure of a product under warranty	16%	16%	20%	19%
Failure shortly after the warranty expired (up to 6 months)	18%	21%	19%	21%
Product failed in more than 6 months, but less than 8 years after the warranty expired	22%	20%	23%	23%
<b>Repairabilitiy</b> (e.g. difficulty finding parts, high repair cost, long fixing time)	22%	20%	23%	21%
<b>Sofware support</b> (e.g. poor problem fixing, sudden performance degradation due to updates)	19%	12%	11%	11%
None (Exclusive)	42%	48%	43%	42%
datadiagors				





# Service & support for short-term failures

People feel that the service quality for products just out of warranty leaves much to be desired. That's not to say that the support for all products under warranty is stellar.





# Repair & support channels

Where do these two-thirds go when facing issues with a product outside warranty? Brits tend to bypass certified repair shops for out-of-warranty issues. Unofficial support channels are way more popular.

# Who do you usually go to for troubleshooting broken or poor-performing products?



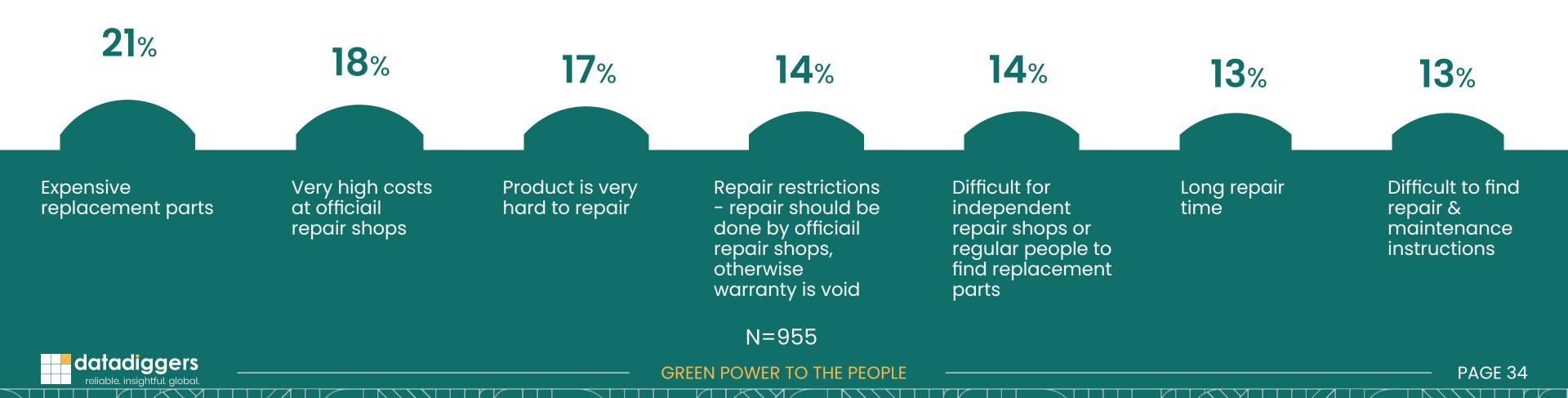


# Repairability issues

A significant proportion of the UK population (44%) has faced difficulty repairing products from the categories we touched upon (portable computing devices, consumer electronics, and appliances, large and small).

Cost often emerges as a major obstacle, rendering repairs impractical even when technically feasible. These high costs are often part of a deliberate strategy to encourage consumers to buy new products.

# Repairability issues





# The emotional impact of product issues

Product issues also trigger plenty of negative emotions. Any brand that wants as few disgruntled customers as possible should avoid setting unrealistic expectations of quality and after-sales support.

# How did these product (durability / repairability / support) issues make you feel?



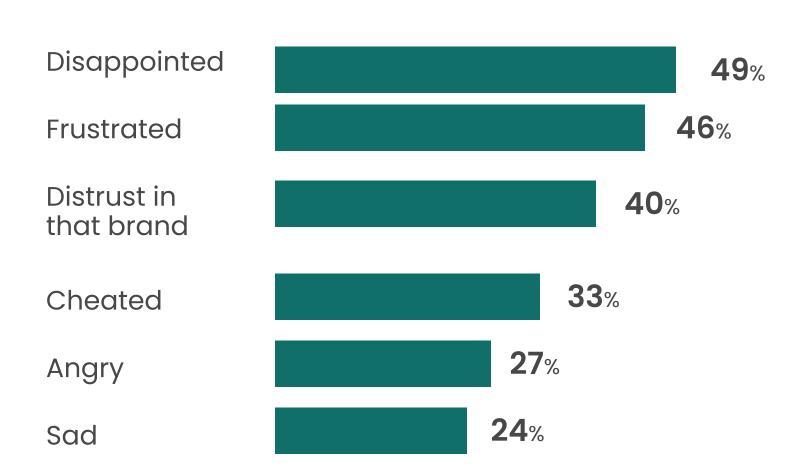


# The combined emotional impact of misleading claims and product issues

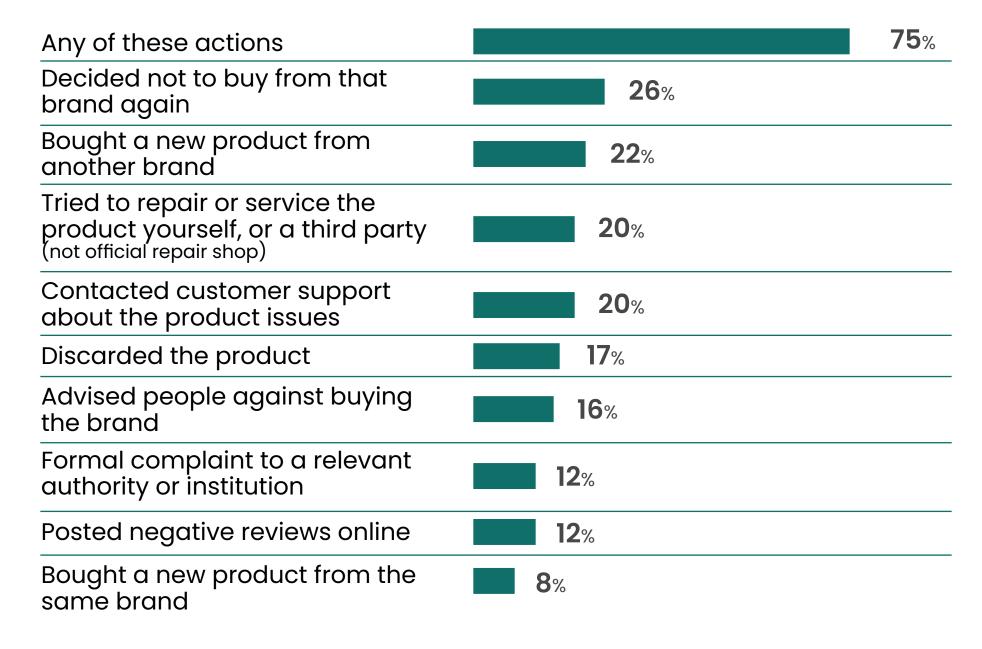
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Misleading marketing claims and product issues, combined, generate a large wave of negative emotions. People are not only getting upset, but they are also fighting back. And disgruntled customers can badly hurt a brand they feel has wronged them. Trust is a precious commodity, although it is not always cherished as it should be. There can be no brand loyalty without trust.





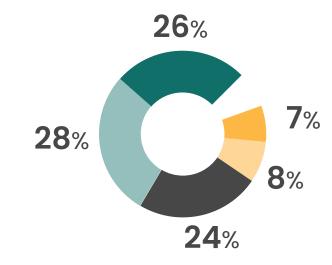
### And what actions did you take?



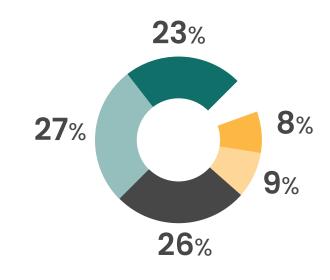


# What do you think of the following climate or environmental activists' actions?

Naming and shaming the companies that activists say are misleading the public about their efforts to address climate change and environmental issues



Calling for boycott and boycotting (divesting from, avoid products and services of) the companies that activists say are misleading the public about their efforts to address climate change and environmental issues



- I fully support such actions
- I somewhat support such actions
- I somewhat disagree with such actions
- I fully disagree with such actions
- at I'm unsure if such actions are appropriate or not
  - N = 955



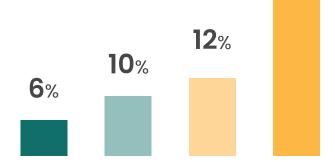


Companies that play with baseless green claims might unknowingly play with fire. Here are two types of popular climate / environmental actions that are focused on businesses' environmental-friendliness and can hurt the brand image and the bottom line.

GREEN POWER TO THE PEOPLE

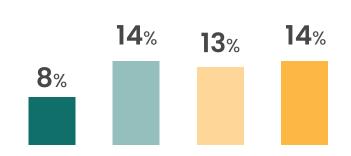
# Do you ever participate in such actions?

Naming and shaming the companies that activists say are misleading the public about their efforts to address climate change and environmental issues



26%

Boycotting (divesting from, avoid products and services of) the companies that activists say are misleading the public about their efforts to address climate change and environmental issues





Often

Seldom

Never

N = 955

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# **GREEN POWER TO THE PEOPLE**

# A New Hope in the Fight against Greenwashing

- In January 2024, the European Parliament adopted a new directive to protect consumers from misleading marketing practices and help them make properly informed choices. This law focuses on ensuring accurate and reliable commercial communication, such as advertising and product descriptions. The directive also looks at products' durability and repairability and aims to address planned obsolescence.
- The majority of Britons like the idea and believe that Britain should follow suit.

# An EU law against Greenwashing and misleading product information

In January 2024, the European Parliament adopted a new law/directive to protect consumers from misleading marketing practices and help them make properly informed purchasing choices. This law focuses on ensuring accurate and reliable commercial communication, such as advertising and product description. The directive also promotes product durability and repairability.

## Key areas addressed

# More accurate advertising, product description, and communication

- Bans general environmental claims like "environmentally or eco-friendly", "natural", "biodegradable", "climate neutral" or "eco" without proof.
- Regulates sustainability labels for clarity and consistency.
- Prohibits misleading claims about reducing environmental impact through offsetting schemes.

### **Durability in focus**

- Requires clearer information about product guarantees.
- Creates a label promoting products with extended guarantees.
- Bans unfounded durability claims.
- Bans practices associated with the early (or planned) obsolescence, such as:
  - Introducing features that intentionally shorten products' lifespan without informing consumers.
  - Withholding information that a software update will negatively impact product's performance.
  - Inducing users to replace or replenish a product's consumables earlier than would otherwise be necessary for technical reasons.

### Adequate repair information

- Prevents companies from falsely claiming products are repairable.
- Consumers will have the right to clear and accessible information about a product's repairability before purchase.
- Ensures consumers have access to proper information about repair services, spare parts, and repair manuals. This includes details on:
  - Availability of spare parts to keep the product functioning properly.
  - Repair manuals and any limitations on repairs.
- Clear information about the duration of free software updates (for products with digital elements), including security updates.
- Presenting software updates as necessary, when they only enhance features, not fix issues, is prohibited.

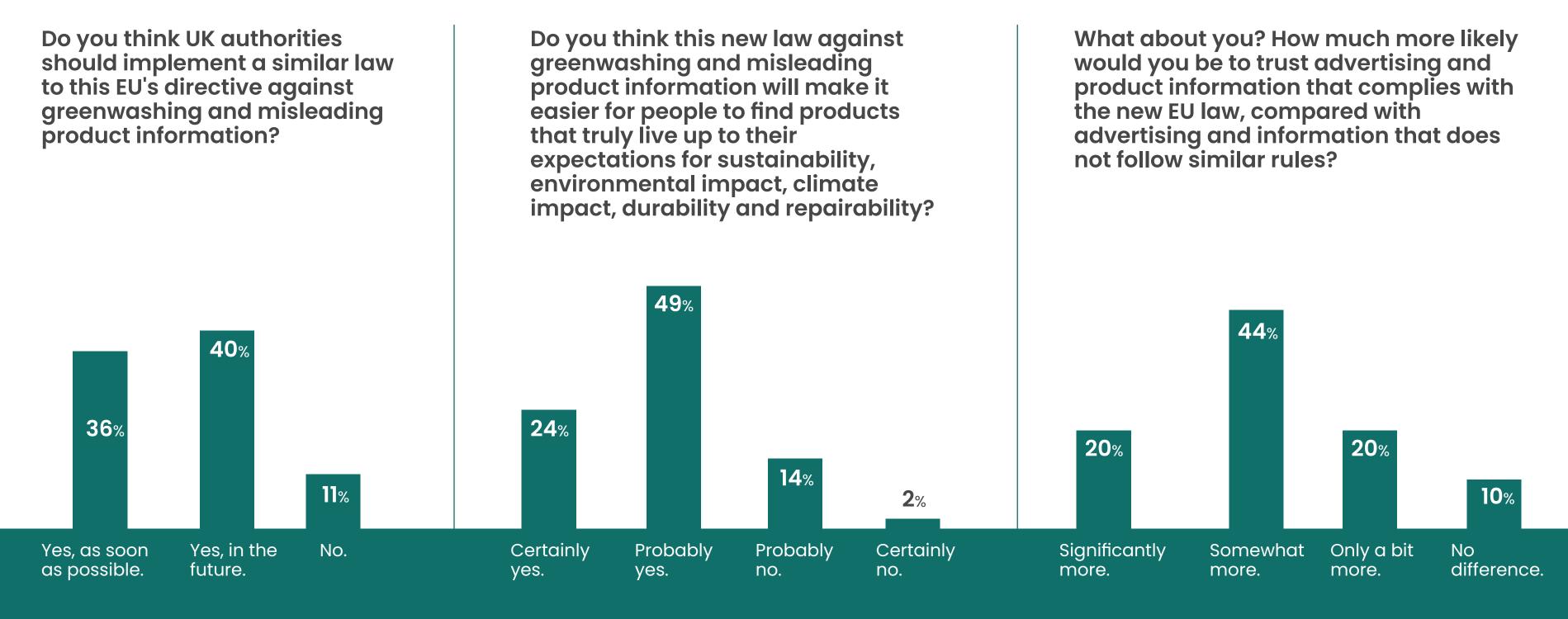
This law will be implemented across the European Economic Area (EU + Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) after final approval from the European Council and transposition to national law by member states.



# Perception of the EU Law against Greenwashing and misleading product information

Britons have a very favorable view of this EU directive. Hardly surprising, considering how common and annoying the issues the law is addressing are. The majority backs a UK version of the law, and many want action now.

N = 955





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