

Scotland's Climate Assembly: Research

Weekend 7 – data briefing summary

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Introduction

This note provides a summary of selected results from research on the final weekend of Scotland's Climate Assembly. A fuller analysis will be included in the research report due to be published in November 2021, where member survey data will be analysed together with other data sources.

Assembly members were invited to participate in the research and 69 completed a post-assembly online survey, out of 83 members who had consented. The profile of respondents is included in Appendix A. During some of the weekends, members were split into three topic streams. These streams are represented by survey respondents as follows: Diet & Lifestyle (30%), Homes & Communities (36%) and Work & Travel (33%).

Where respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with particular statements, the results for 'tend to (dis)agree' and 'strongly (dis)agree' in most cases have been aggregated in this summary report.

All plenary sessions and some breakout group discussions were observed live by three members of the research team who made observational notes.

Members' satisfaction and experience of participating online

Almost all were satisfied or very satisfied with the support and assistance provided by the organisers, organisation of the weekend, and with communications about the arrangements. Around eight in ten were satisfied or very satisfied with using the online platform.

With regards to factors reducing members' ability to participate, seven respondents reported connection difficulties, and five respondents reported distractions in their home.

Engagement, small group dynamics and facilitation

Almost all reported feeling included and respected by their breakout room facilitator on both the Saturday and Sunday. However, a few respondents thought their facilitator had sometimes tried to influence the group with their own ideas – with five reporting this for the Saturday morning breakout sessions with one facilitator and six for the sessions on the rest of Saturday and Sunday where they had a different facilitator.

Around one in four respondents thought one or more people tended to dominate the discussions in their small group. Despite this, almost all agreed they had ample opportunity to express their views in the small group discussions (although ten respondents disagreed with this or were neutral).

Four respondents agreed that they did not always feel free to raise their views and ideas for fear of others' reactions, and four respondents disagreed that their fellow participants respected what they had to say. Eight respondents tended to agree that they had already formed their opinion and the discussion had little effect on them.

Around eight in ten respondents agreed that their contributions had been listened to by the other Assembly members.

Views about the final Assembly weekend

Almost all respondents reported the purpose of the weekend was well explained.

Just over half agreed that there was enough time to satisfactorily finalise the recommendations, with a similar proportion agreeing there was enough time to satisfactorily finalise the overarching statements.

Around six in ten agreed it was good to hear from members of political parties¹.

Views about the Assembly as a whole

All but six respondents agreed that they understood what they were expected to do over the Assembly weekends.

Around eight in ten respondents agreed that the Assembly was diverse enough to ensure that a broad range of perspectives are considered. However, eight respondents disagreed that the information they had received during the Assembly weekends had been fair and balanced between different viewpoints, and nine neither disagreed or agreed.

Eight out of ten respondents agreed that they were happy with the choice of speakers, with a similar proportion agreeing that they trusted the information that was presented by the speakers.

Around eight out of ten respondents also agreed that their views are reflected in the finalised goals and recommendations, and overarching statements. Similar

¹ Short pre-recorded video speeches by leaders of the main political parties were played to members on the Sunday afternoon

proportions agreed that the goals, recommendations and overarching statements have been developed in fair and effective ways.

Around two thirds of respondents felt they had the opportunity to influence decisions about the content of the information they were presented with over the course of the Assembly.

Whilst around nine in ten respondents agreed that they understood the recommendations proposed within their topic stream, and why they had been proposed, eight in ten said the same for the recommendations proposed in other streams.

Just over half of respondents support most or all of the overarching statements. However, almost nine in ten respondents supported most or all of the goals and a similar proportion supported most or all of the recommendations.

Knowledge and learning

Respondents were asked how they would now rate their knowledge of climate change in general, on a scale of 0 (nothing at all) to 10 (a great deal). Eight in ten gave a rating of 7 or above, of whom around half rated their knowledge at 8.

Ratings for the individual topic streams were more mixed. Six in ten rated their knowledge of Work & Travel at 7 or above. Around half the respondents rated their knowledge of Homes & Communities and Diet Lifestyle and Land use at 7 or above.

Respondents were asked to what extent they thought they had the information required to answer the Assembly question '*How should Scotland change to tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way?*' With regards to whether they could answer this questions themselves, just under a quarter thought they had the information 'very much' whilst around half thought 'quite a lot'.

In terms of having the information to answer this question by the Assembly as a whole, the results were broadly reversed with just over half reporting 'very much', and over a quarter 'quite a lot'.

Feelings about climate change

Around eight in ten respondents reported feeling excited/hopeful about what we can do to tackle climate change, with around six in ten feeling optimistic that things will work out fine. However, just over a quarter agreed that they felt worried/upset by what they were learning. Around a fifth felt overwhelmed by the information that was presented. Four respondents reported that their feelings about climate change were having a negative impact on their mental health.

Around three in ten respondents agreed that they pushed emotions away so they would not feel distressed about climate change, and around six in ten respondents agreed they were not aware of feeling any negative or distressing emotions about climate change.

Appendix A: Profile of Members completing Weekend 7 post-Assembly Survey

Characteristic	Category	Post-Assembly WE7 Survey	Scotland's Climate Assembly
		% of respondents *	% of all members pre-Assembly **
Gender	Man	42%	46.7%
	Woman	55.1%	51.4%
	In another way	2.9%	1.9%
	Unknown	0	
Age	16-18	0	4.8%
	19-24	5.8%	9.5%
	25-29	4.3%	5.7%
	30-44	31.9%	23.8%
	45-64	34.8%	32.4%
	65+	23.2%	23.8%
	Unknown		
Ethnicity	White Scottish/British	94.2%	92.4%
	White Other		
	Black, Asian, Ethnic Minority	5.8%	7.6%
	Unknown	0	
Which of these statements, if any, comes closest to your own view about climate change?	Climate change is an immediate and urgent problem	60.9%	67.6%
	Climate change is more of a problem for the future	13.0%	14.3%
	Climate change is not really a problem	1.4%	3.8%
	I'm still not convinced that climate change is happening	2.9%	6.7%
	None of these	4.3%	N/A
	Don't know	0%	7.6%
	Unknown	17.4%	

*Base n=69

**Base n=105 (Sortition Foundation recruitment report, selected confirmed %)