



Headline Findings

Public Opinion on UK Nuclear Energy

10th November 2014

Methodology Note

ComRes interviewed 2,047 GB adults online between the 7th and 9th November 2014. Data were weighted to be representative of all GB adults aged 18+.

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- The client commissioning the survey
- Dates of interviewing
- Method of obtaining the interviews (e.g. in-person, post, telephone, internet)
- The universe effectively represented (all adults, voters etc.)
- The percentages upon which conclusions are based
- Size of the sample and geographic coverage.

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HEADLINE FINDINGS

Executive summary

- More than half (58%) of British adults support the use of nuclear power to provide energy in the UK, while less than a quarter (22%) oppose it. Men (72%) are significantly more likely to support its use than women (45%).
- Seven in ten (69%) British adults are prepared to accept nuclear power if it helps to provide reliable and affordable energy in the future. Respondents are also willing to accept nuclear power if it helps to tackle climate change (62%).
- Nuclear power is the most commonly chosen (23%) single energy source that British adults would like the UK and Europe to invest in. Solar power (18%) was the second most popular source selected.
- 82% of Britons say that knowing technology is tested and known to be safe is an important factor when thinking about supporting or opposing a new nuclear power station close to their home.
- The most trusted single sources to tell the truth about nuclear energy are independent scientists (39%) and scientists in the energy industry (23%).
- 68% of British adults believe that it should be mandatory for non-EU companies to have a track record of safe commercial use before being permitted to build in Europe.

Results in detail

- More than half (58%) of British adults support the use of nuclear power to provide energy in the UK.

Q1: To what extent do you support or oppose the use of nuclear power to provide energy in the UK?

Options	% selecting
Strongly Support	21%
Tend to support	37%
Tend to oppose	15%
Strongly oppose	7%
Don't know	20%
NET: Support	58%
NET: Oppose	22%

Base: All respondents (n=2,047)

- Less than a quarter (22%) say they oppose the use of nuclear power, with a further fifth (20%) saying that they do not know.
- Men are much more likely to support the use of nuclear power than women. Nearly three quarters (72%) of men support its use, compared to less than half (45%) of women. Within this, a third (34%) of men say they 'strongly support' its use, compared to less than one in ten (9%) women.
- Older people are more likely to support nuclear power, as three quarters (75%) of those aged 65+ support its use, compared to four in ten (43%) of 18 – 24 year olds.

- Seven in ten (69%) British adults are prepared to accept nuclear power if helps to provide affordable and reliable energy in the future.

Q2. The Government has recently given the go-ahead to build the UK's first new nuclear power station for a generation, Hinkley Point C. The total cost of the power station is estimated to be £24.5billion and according to the Government Hinkley 'will generate a stable source of clean power to nearly 6 million homes once it is up and running, and will provide 25,000 jobs during construction.'

Bearing that announcement in mind, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Options	NET: Agree	NET: Disagree	Don't know
I'm prepared to accept building new nuclear power stations in Britain if it would help to provide affordable and reliable energy for the future	69%	17%	14%
Britain should build more nuclear power plants in order to improve energy security – by making Britain less reliant on importing energy from overseas	63%	20%	17%
I'm prepared to accept building new nuclear power stations in Britain if it would help to tackle climate change	62%	20%	18%
Britain should build more nuclear power plants in order to make electricity cheaper	59%	24%	18%
The benefits of nuclear power outweigh the risks	56%	21%	23%
Britain should build more nuclear power plants in order to tackle climate change	49%	28%	23%
I'm prepared to pay more for electricity if the UK were to stop generating electricity through nuclear power	19%	64%	17%

Base: All respondents (n=2,047)

- The majority of British adults are also prepared to accept nuclear power if it helps to tackle climate change (62%), and 49% believe that Britain should build more nuclear power plants in order to tackle climate change.
- More than three in five (63%) believe that Britain should build more nuclear power plants to improve energy security, and 59% believe more should be built in order to make electricity cheaper.
- More than half (56%) of British adults believe that the benefits of nuclear power outweigh the risks.
- Less than a fifth (19%) would be prepared to pay more for electricity to prevent nuclear power. A higher proportion say they don't know (23%) whether the benefits of nuclear power outweigh the risks than disagree with the statement (21%).

- More Britons (23%) prefer investment in nuclear than any other single energy source.

Q3. Which of the following would you like the UK and Europe to invest the most in order to meet our future energy needs?

Options	All would Invest in (multiple)	Invest in the most (single)
Nuclear power	53%	23%
Solar power	66%	18%
Wind power	60%	15%
Tidal/wave power	57%	13%
Shale gas/oil (“fracking”)	28%	7%
Hydroelectric Power	54%	7%
Natural gas	46%	7%
Coal	24%	3%
Other	9%	3%
Thermal power	39%	2%
Biomass	31%	2%

Base: All respondents (n=2,047)

- Despite being the single most popular choice to invest (23%), just over half (53%) of British adults select nuclear as a source to invest in at all.
- Solar power (66%) and wind power (60%) are the energy sources which the highest proportion of British adults would like to see the UK and Europe invest in, though at 18% and 15% respectively, they fall behind nuclear as the single source in which respondents would most like to see investment in.



- Support for nuclear is not mutually exclusive with solar or wind power, as two-thirds (65%) of those who support nuclear power say they would like to see investment in solar, and three in five (57%) say the same for wind power.

- A majority of British adults (42%) believe that the UK should store radioactive fuel in safe places for future reprocessing.

Q4. When nuclear is used for energy production, it produces nuclear waste. In some cases this can be re-used. Which of the following best reflects how you feel about the storage of spent nuclear fuel in the UK?

Options	% selecting
The UK should store spent nuclear fuel (radioactive waste) in safe places for future reprocessing and re-use to meet energy needs in the decades to come	42%
Spent nuclear fuel (radioactive waste) should not be stored in the UK	14%
Spent nuclear fuel can be stored in the UK but storage sites should not be located within 20 miles of populated areas	19%
Not sure	24%

Base: All respondents (n=2,047)

- 14% of adults are opposed to storing spent nuclear fuel in the UK. In particular, nearly a third (31%) of women say they are not sure, compared to just 18% of men.
- Just less than two in five (37%) of those opposed to the use of nuclear power believe it should not be stored in the UK.
- A quarter (24%) are not sure what to do with nuclear waste, and within this respondents opposed to the use of nuclear power are much more likely to be unsure (23%), than those in favour of nuclear as an energy source (11%).

- More than four in five (82%) British adults view knowing that the technology used in a power station had been tried as tested elsewhere as an important factor in deciding whether they would support or oppose a new power station.

Q5. When thinking about new nuclear power stations close to your home, how important or not important are the following for you in deciding whether you would support or oppose?

Options	NET: Important	NET: Not important	Don't know
Knowing that the technology used in the power station had been tried and tested elsewhere and was known to be safe	82%	8%	10%
Knowing that the project would create many new jobs	76%	14%	10%
Knowing that the power station would help reduce the UK's reliance on importing energy from outside the EU	76%	12%	11%
Knowing that it would have a significant impact on reducing carbon emissions	72%	17%	11%
Knowing that the machinery used on the site is manufactured in the UK	57%	31%	12%

Base: All respondents (n=2,047)

- Following safe technology, knowing a project would create jobs and knowing that the power station would reduce UK reliance on importing energy are both rated as important by 76% of the British public.
- In deciding whether to support or oppose a new power station close to their home, less than three in five (57%) view knowing that the machinery is manufactured in the UK as important, while nearly a third (31%) say that this is not important.

- Older people view machinery being UK manufactured of much more importance than younger adults, with three-quarters (74%) of those aged 65+ feeling this is important, compared to only 36% of 18 - 24 year olds.
- This generational trend is consistent with views on knowing a power station would reduce the UK's reliance on importing energy from outside the EU, rated as important 88% of those aged 65+, but only 57% of 18 - 24 year olds.

- Britons trust independent scientists (65%) to tell the truth about the advantages and disadvantages of nuclear energy, and 39% trust this source the most.

Q6. Who do you trust the most to tell the truth about the advantages of disadvantages of nuclear energy?

Options	All trusted sources (multiple)	Source trusted the most (single)
Independent scientists (e.g. academics/universities)	65%	39%
Scientists in the energy industry	60%	23%
Regulators	44%	11%
Friends/family/colleagues	22%	7%
Pressure groups (e.g. environmental groups)	26%	6%
Government	21%	5%
Businesses in the nuclear industry	21%	3%

Media (e.g. newspapers and television)	15%	2%
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Other	8%	4%
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Base: All respondents (n=2,047)

- Following independent scientists, scientists working in the energy industry (23%) and regulators (11%) are the next highest groups in which people place the most trust to tell the truth about nuclear energy.
- While trust in independent scientists is fairly consistent across ages, social grades and regions, there is a significant generation split in attitudes towards pressure groups, with a third (33%) of 25 – 34 year olds placing trust in them to tell the truth, compared with only 22% of those aged 65+.

- Nearly seven in ten (68%) British adults believe that it should be mandatory for non-EU companies to have a track record of safe commercial use before being permitted to build in Europe.

Q7. There are two different views on how we should decide whether or not companies from outside the EU can build nuclear power plants in Europe.

Some people think that non-European companies should be allowed to build nuclear sites in Europe provided that the national regulator has approved the project, even if their technology doesn't have a track record of safe commercial operations in the country of origin.

Some people think that non-European companies should be required to demonstrate that their technology has a track record of safe commercial use in the country of origin before building a site based on that technology in Europe.

Which of the following best describes your opinion on whether or not non-EU companies should show a safe track record of safe commercial use before being allowed to build in Europe?

Options	% Selecting
It should be mandatory to have a track record of safe commercial use in the country of origin in all cases	68%
It should be considered advantageous to have a track record of safe commercial use in the country of origin, but not mandatory if a national regulator's other requirements are met	11%
It should not make any difference whether or not a company has a track record of safe commercial use in the country of origin, so long as the national regulator's other requirements are met	3%
It should not be made mandatory to have a track record of safe commercial use in the country of origin	3%

Don't know

14%

Base: All respondents (n=2,047)

- Only one in ten (11%) believe a track record of safe commercial use in a non-EU company's country of origin should not be mandatory but is advantageous, though 14% say they do not know.
- 81% of those aged 65+ plus believe it should be mandatory to have a track record of safe commercial use, compared to less than half (48%) 18 - 24 year olds.
- British adults in London (63%) and the South East (60%) are less likely to insist on a mandatory track record for non-EU companies, compared to nearly three quarters of those in the North West (72%).

FURTHER INFORMATION

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