

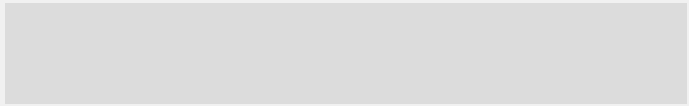


UNDERSTANDING SCOTLAND

A NEW SURVEY FOR SCOTLAND

ENVIRONMENT

July 2022



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UNDERSTANDING SCOTLAND

Understanding Scotland is a new quarterly survey tool measuring the most important facets of our lives and decision-making in Scotland: our society, economy, and environment.

This high-quality, large-scale survey tool is brought to you by Diffley Partnership and Charlotte Street Partners.

We are extremely grateful for this inaugural wave's sponsors who have made this exciting new endeavour possible.



INTRODUCTION

ENVIRONMENT - JULY 2022

Our new polling on environmental attitudes and objectives points to widespread pessimism at the prospects of meeting our shared environmental targets, whether at a Scottish, British or global level. People are split on the adequacy of Scotland's net zero targets, and a plurality judge the UK's 2050 target to be inadequate.

Despite this, most people are still doubtful of achieving these targets. A majority of people have little or no confidence in the Scotland meeting its environmental targets, rising to three quarters saying the same of the UK. A third of the population overall simultaneously judge Britain's targets to be insufficient, while still doubting that they will be met.

Young people are at odds with other demographic groups, much more likely to judge targets to be inadequate. Of those expressing an opinion, young people were almost twice as likely as those aged over 65 to say that Scotland's targets were insufficient. Those with a greater knowledge of climate change and net zero were also more likely to deem existing targets inadequate.



UNDERSTANDING SCOTLAND

ENVIRONMENT

IN 5 POINTS

Our Understanding Scotland polling on environmental targets and attitudes brings you insights from over 2,000 members of the adult (16+) Scottish public on some of the most pressing questions of the day.



01

THERE IS WIDESPREAD PESSIMISM AND SCEPTICISM TOWARDS EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL TARGETS

We find widespread scepticism towards the UK's and Scotland's net zero targets, both in terms of their appropriateness/adequacy and their likelihood of being achieved.

02

MOST PEOPLE ARE DISSATISFIED WITH CURRENT TARGETS

Only 2 in 5 people judge Scotland's targets to be 'about right', falling to a quarter saying the same of the UK's objectives. The remaining proportions are broadly split on Scotland's targets, with a third deeming them overly ambitious, and 3 in 10 considering them insufficient, while a plurality across all demographic groups consider UK targets insufficient.

03

THERE IS LOW AWARENESS OF SCOTLAND AND THE UK'S EXISTING TARGETS

While people are confident that they understand terms like climate change and net zero, more than 7 in 10 people know little or nothing about Scotland and the UK's environmental targets.

04

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE AT ODDS WITH THE REST OF THE POPULATION

Younger people were markedly more likely to deem existing targets insufficient, with over a third and half of those giving a view saying so of Scotland and the UK's objectives, respectively.

05

EVEN WHEN TARGETS ARE SEEN AS INSUFFICIENT, PEOPLE ARE STILL NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT MEETING THESE

A third of people overall simultaneously deem current UK targets insufficient, while also doubting that even these inadequate targets will be achieved.

UNDERSTANDING OF ENVIRONMENTAL TERMS & TARGETS

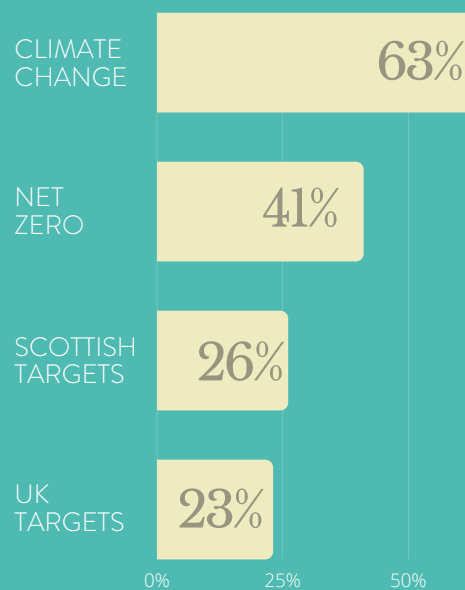
The Scottish public is broadly *au fait* with the concept of 'climate change', with two in three (63%) reporting that they know a lot or a fair amount about what this means. A further 35% said they knew 'a little' about this, with only 2% saying they knew nothing.

Reported knowledge of climate change was consistently high across all age groups but for those aged 35-44, less than half of whom reported knowing a lot or a fair amount about this.

More technical terms like 'Net zero' were somewhat less understood, though 41% report knowing a lot or a fair amount about this.

Large sections of the population, however, report knowing nothing about the UK's and Scotland's environmental targets, especially among younger respondents.

Male respondents and more affluent individuals were more likely to report a good understanding of these.

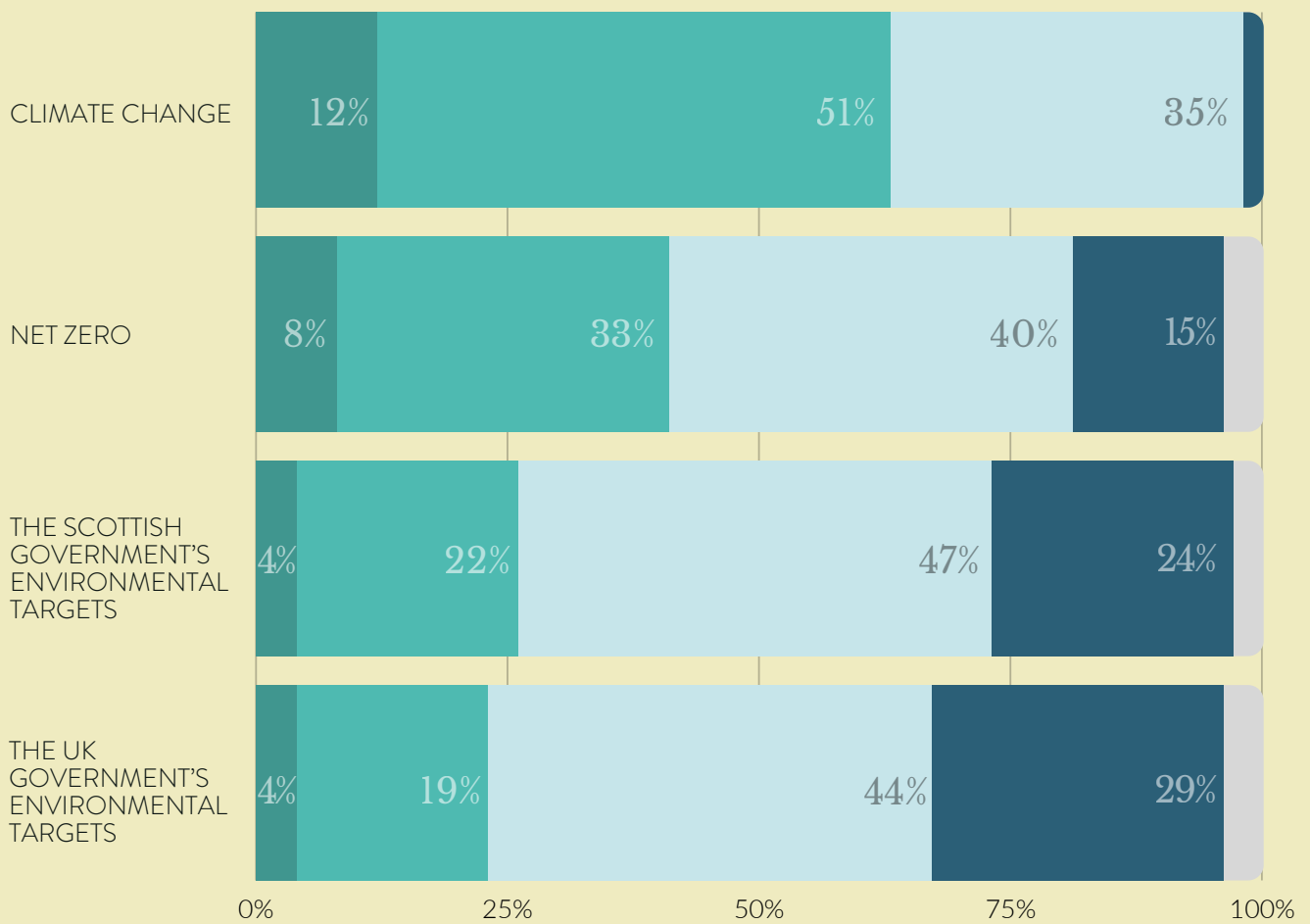


Proportions saying they know 'a lot' or 'a fair amount' about each item

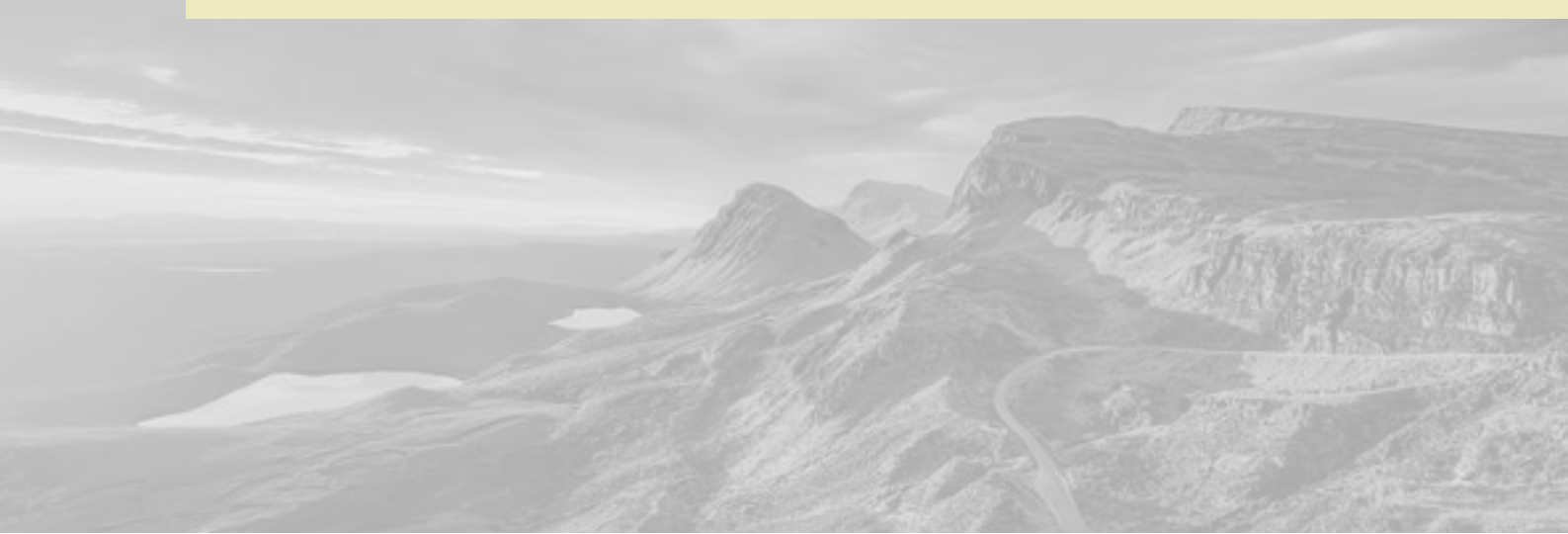
KNOWLEDGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL TERMS & TARGETS

Respondents' reported knowledge of climate terms and targets

■ A lot
 ■ A fair amount
 ■ A little
 ■ Nothing
 ■ Don't know



How much would you say you know about the following?



ARE CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL TARGETS SUFFICIENT AND REALISTIC?

The population is split on Scotland's environmental targets: while a plurality (38%) of those expressing an opinion deem the existing targets to be 'about right', a similar proportion (35%) consider these too ambitious, while 3 in 10 believe they are insufficient.

Younger respondents are more sceptical and sharply at odds with all other age groups, half as likely as those over 65 to say that Scotland's targets are too ambitious, and almost twice as likely to say they are insufficient. Older respondents are more hostile, with 44% of those aged over 65 saying the goals are too ambitious.

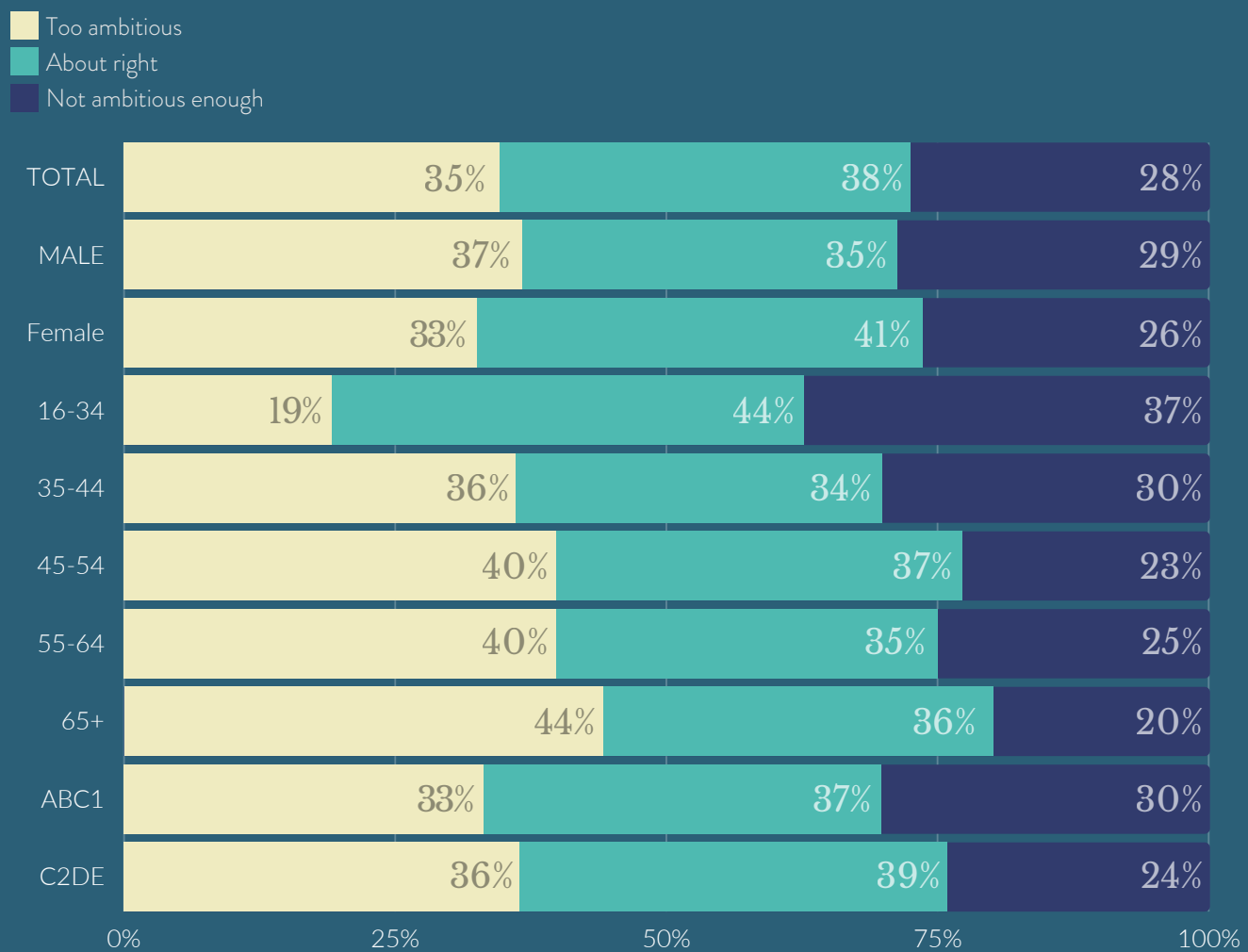
Despite a difference of only 5 years between the Scottish and UK Governments' net-zero targets, almost half (45%) of those expressing an opinion deem the UK's objective of 2050 to be insufficiently ambitious, 17 percentage points higher than the equivalent figure for Scotland. A plurality of all demographic groups, and an outright majority of young people, consider the 2050 target to not be ambitious enough.

Those with a greater understanding/knowledge of climate change and 'net zero' are also markedly more likely to judge that existing targets are insufficient.



ADEQUACY OF SCOTLAND'S CLIMATE TARGETS

Proportion of respondents saying that Scotland's 2045 net-zero target is...

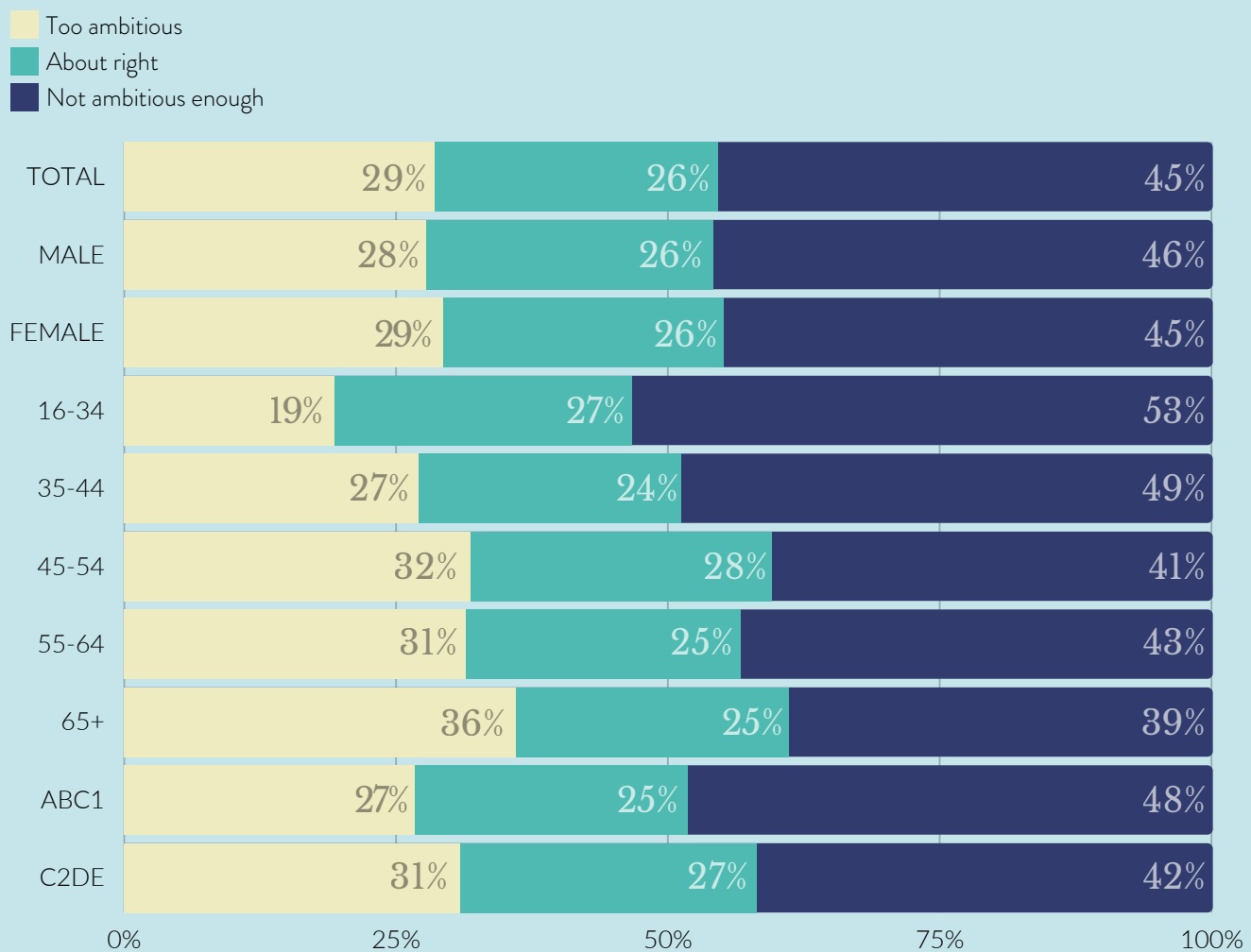


At present, Scotland has a target of reaching net-zero by 2045. Thinking about the Scottish Government's environmental targets, do you believe these are too ambitious, not ambitious enough, or about right?



ADEQUACY OF THE UK'S CLIMATE TARGETS

Proportion of respondents saying that the UK's 2050 net-zero target is...



At present, the UK has a target of reaching net-zero by 2050. Thinking about the UK Government's environmental targets, do you believe these are too ambitious, not ambitious enough, or about right?

WILL TARGETS BE MET?

We find widespread pessimism at the likelihood of meeting said objectives, with a majority of people reporting little or no confidence in Scotland, the UK or the world meeting their respective targets.

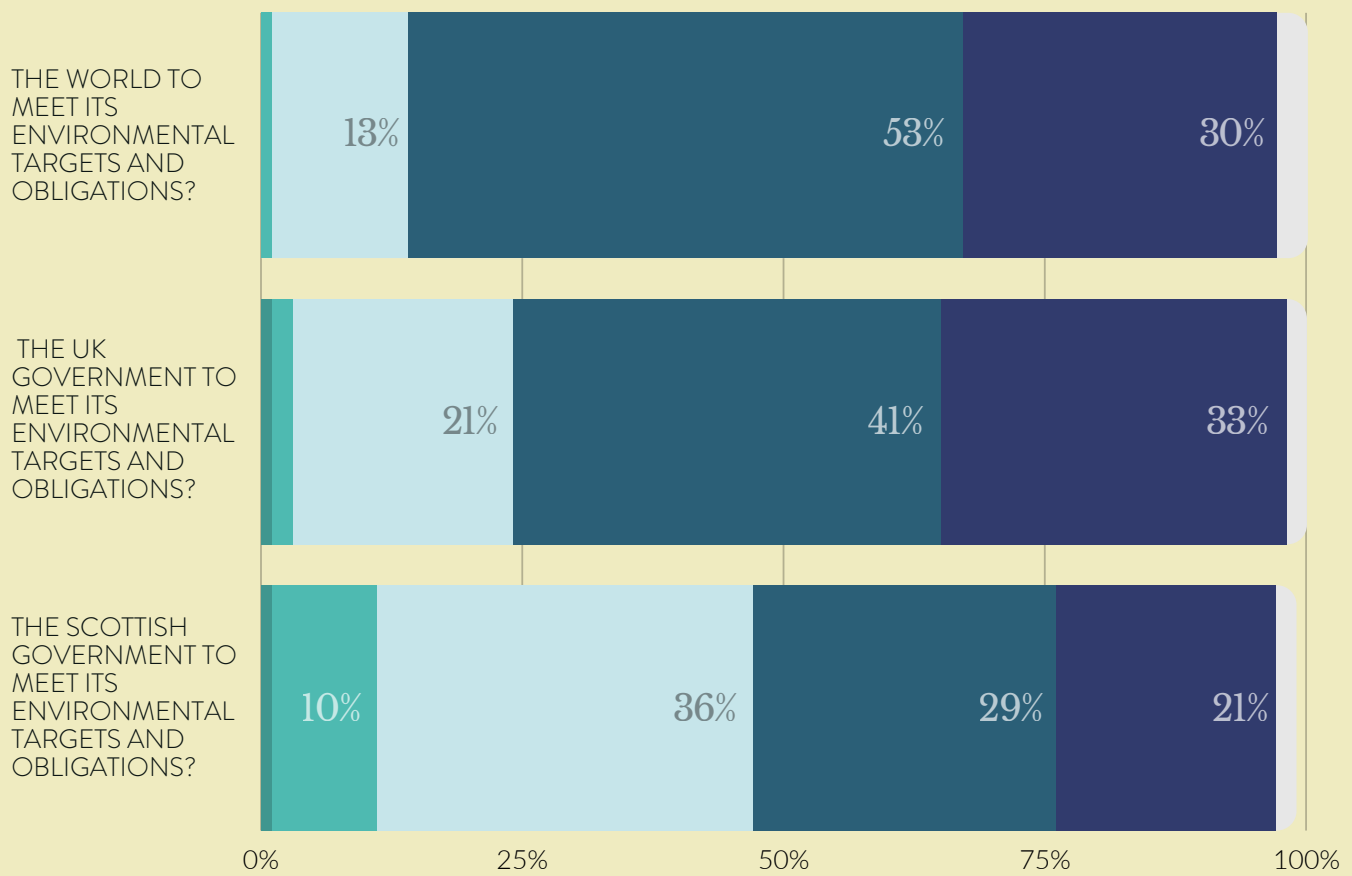
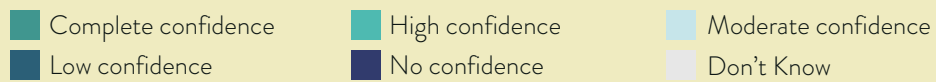
Only 2% of people have high or complete confidence that the UK will meet its environmental obligations, and only 1% that the world will do so. Faith in Scotland is somewhat higher, with 11% reporting a high degree of confidence that the Scottish Government will meet its targets, though a mere 0.2% have complete confidence in this. Despite this relative lead, a majority still have little or no confidence in Scotland achieving these aims.

The UK and the world fare even worse in this regard, however: a third of people say that they have 'no confidence' in the UK Government meeting its environmental targets, with a further 41% reporting low confidence in this happening, and a staggering 83% have little or no confidence that the world will achieve its targets.

People reporting a greater knowledge of Scotland and the UK's respective targets were more likely to say they had confidence in them meeting them, though a plurality in both cases reported low or no confidence. Both those saying that targets were too ambitious and not ambitious enough were united in reporting low confidence in attaining them, and we find a widespread dual-scepticism, with a third of all people simultaneously deeming the UK's targets inadequate and doubting that they will be achieved.

CONFIDENCE IN MEETING ENVIRONMENTAL TARGETS

Proportion of respondents reporting their confidence in...

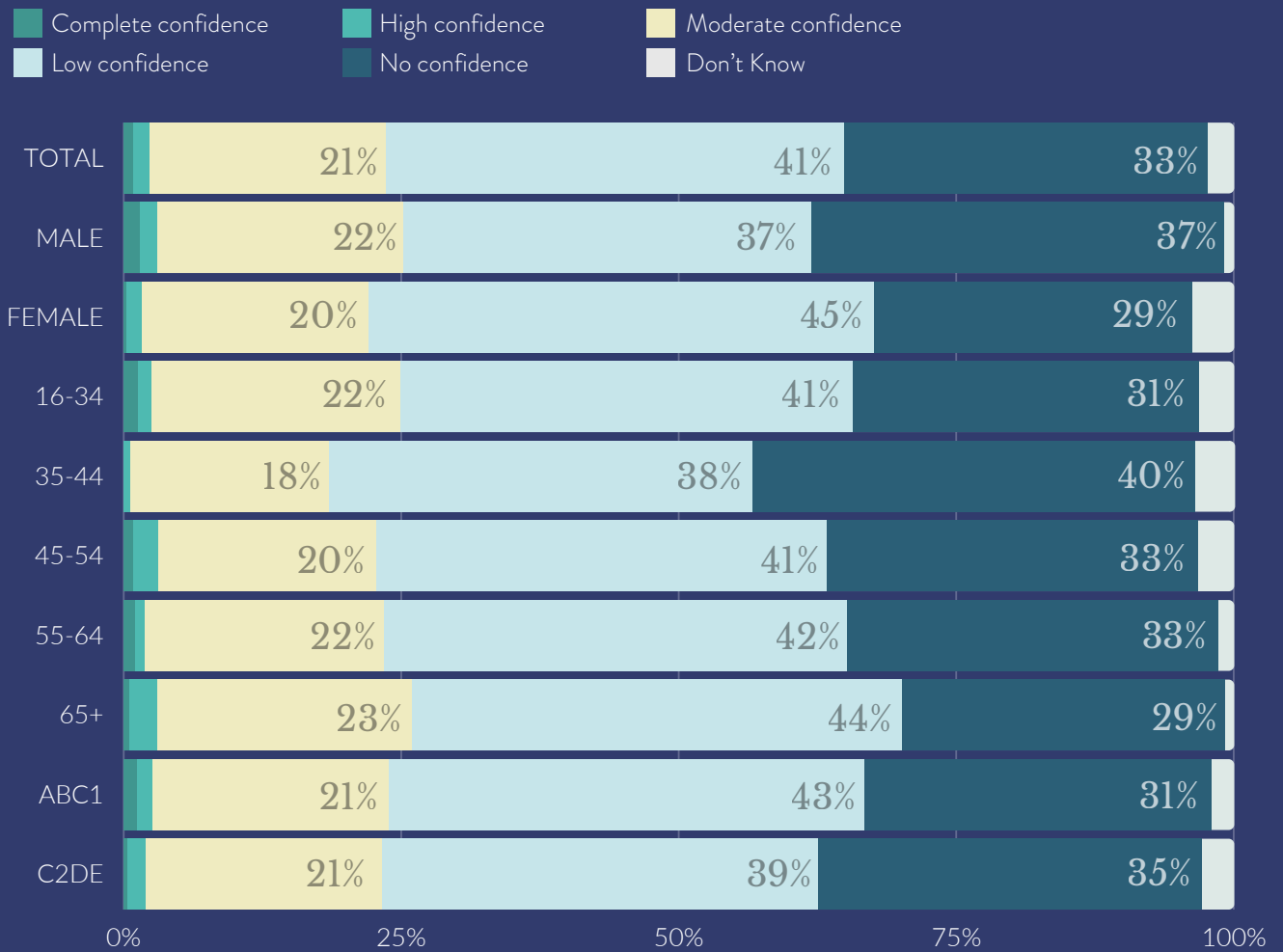


How much confidence do you have in...



CONFIDENCE IN UK MEETING ITS TARGETS

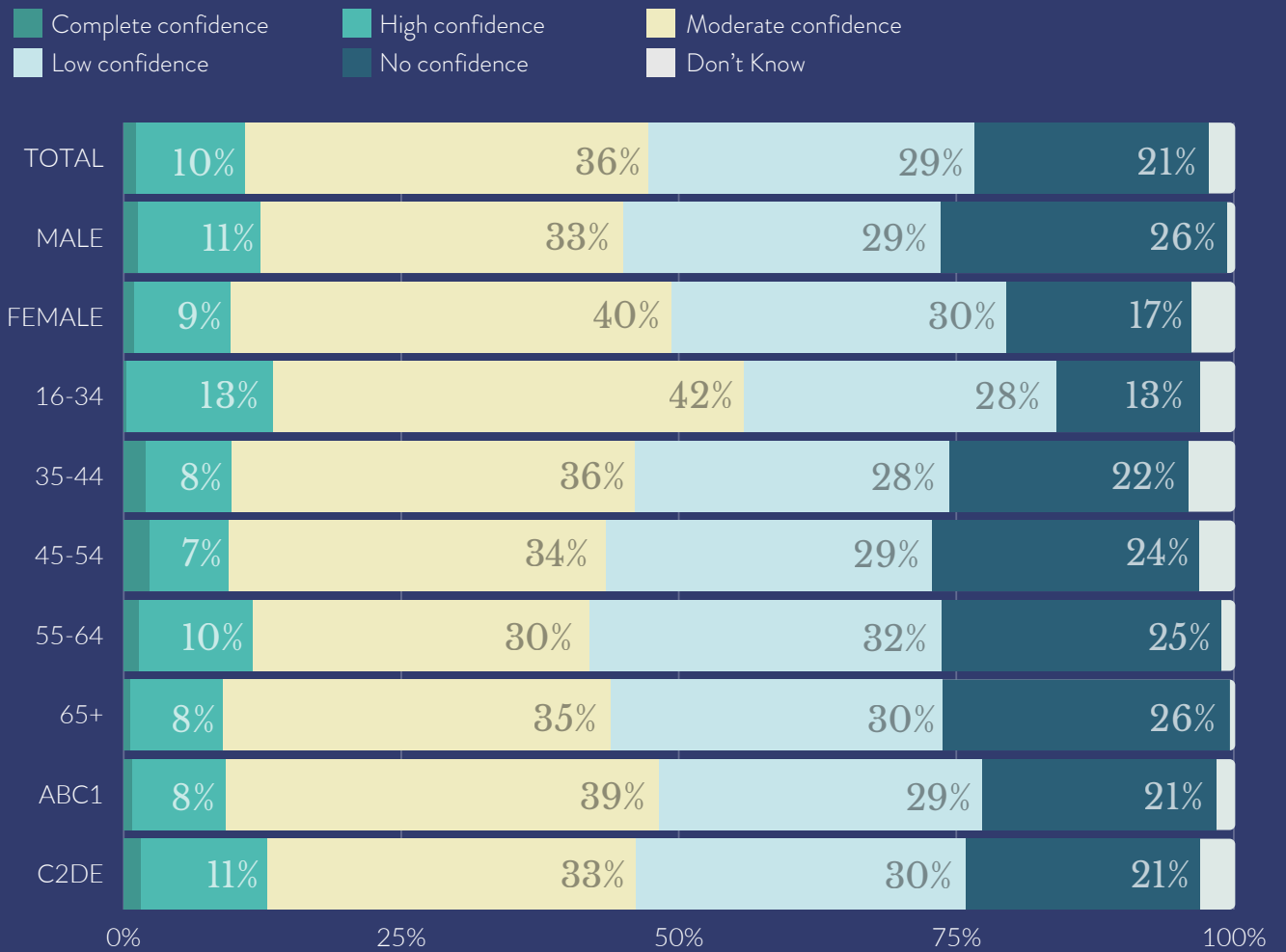
Degree of confidence reported by respondents in the UK meeting its environmental targets



How much confidence do you have in the UK Government to meet its environmental targets and obligations?

CONFIDENCE IN SCOTLAND MEETING ITS TARGETS

Degree of confidence reported by respondents in the UK meeting its environmental targets



How much confidence do you have in the UK Government to meet its environmental targets and obligations?





TECHNICAL DETAILS

The survey was designed by Diffley Partnership and invitations were issued online using the ScotPulse panel. Fieldwork was conducted between the 5th - 9th May, and received 2,170 responses from a sample of the adult population, aged 16+, across Scotland. Results are weighted to the Scottish population by age and gender.



FIND OUT MORE

To explore the results for yourself, visit our website [here](#), and register for exclusive updates and a quarterly bulletin [here](#).

If you are interested in having your own questions asked and answered in future waves of Understanding Scotland, email us at contact@understanding-scotland.co.uk



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