

espc

AUDIENCE MARKET RESEARCH REPORT



Independent market research conducted by leading Scottish property portal ESPC has revealed that homeowners in Scotland are not aware of the full extent of the Scottish Government's expectations when it comes to the proposed net-zero targets for owner-occupied properties.

The data comes from independent market research conducted by Progressive in March and April 2024, where over 500 homeowners were spoken to in on-street surveys in towns and city centres across Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife and the Borders, and a further 272 homeowners from the same regions completed an online version of the survey.

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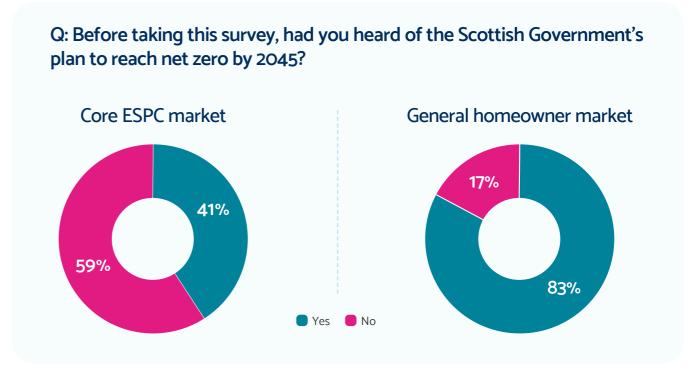


Whether heard of net zero targets

- There was a marked difference between both audiences in relation to recognition of the Scottish Government's plan to reach net zero – around four in five of the general homeowner market (83%) had heard of the plan, whereas around two in five (41%) of the core ESPC market had heard of the plan.
- The following groups were more likely to have heard of the Scottish Government's plans:
- Older people (49% vs. 26% of younger people),
- Homeowners (47% vs. 26% of first-time buyers),

- Men (46% vs. 36% of women), and
- Those living in a house (44% vs. 32% of those living in a flat).
- Given the difference in recognition by age noted above, the overall differences between the core ESPC and general homeowner markets are likely, in part, explained by the different profiles of each audience, as the general homeowner market contains significantly more older people, it is likely that recognition of net zero plans would be higher overall.

More of ESPC's core market had not heard of the Scottish Government's plan than had - but the majority of the general homeowner market had heard of the plan.



Base (all): Core ESPC market (517) | General homeowner market (272)

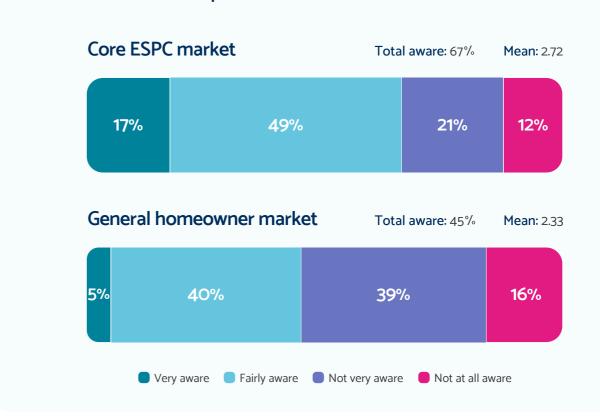


Awareness of net zero impact on homeowners

- Those who had heard of the Government's net zero plan were asked if they were aware of what this might mean for them as a homeowner.
- As shown adjacent, among the core ESPC market, most of those who had heard of the net zero plans were aware (either very or fairly – 67%) of what it meant for them as a homeowner (in terms of making sure their home was compliant with these plans).*
 Fewer (45%) of the general homeowner market were aware of this.
- There were few differences by demographics, but homeowners and first-time buyers that were aware of different sustainability policies and energy efficiency standards were more likely to be aware of what the Government's net zero plan might mean for them, including:
- Those who had heard of EPCs (70% vs. 48% who hadn't), and
- Those who had heard of the Government's plan to phase out fossil fuel gas boilers (77% vs. 46% who hadn't heard of these plans).

Most of ESPC's core market that had heard of the Government's net zero plan were aware of what it would mean for them as homeowners.

Q: How aware are you of what this might mean for you as a homeowner/ future homeowner in terms of ensuring your home supports the Scottish Government's net-zero plan?



Core ESPC market (220)

Base (all heard of net zero plans): General homeowner market (225)

^{*}As a proportion of all homeowners, however, this was considerably fewer – 28% of all homeowners/first-time buyers in the core ESPC market were aware of what the net zero plan might mean for them.



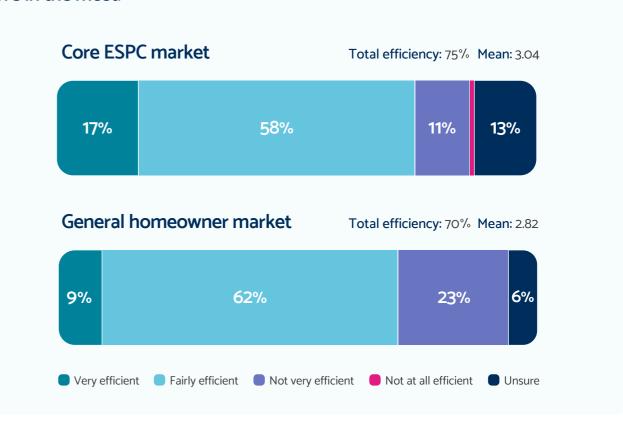
Perceived energy efficiency of home

- All people who live in a home they own (i.e., excluding prospective first-time buyers) were asked how energy efficient they think their property is.
- In the main, those who own their home tend to think their property is energy efficient (75% of people in the core ESPC market and 70% in the general homeowner market) – although relatively few believe it to be very efficient.
- It is also noteworthy how few are unsure of their property's energy efficiency (13% of people in the core ESPC market and 6% in the general homeowner market).
- The following groups were more likely than average to think their property was energy efficient:
- Those who live in a modern home (88%), and
- Those in the AB socioeconomic group (81%).



Homeowners tend to believe their property is energy efficient – and only a minority are unsure of their property's energy efficiency.

Q: To the best of your knowledge, how energy efficient is your current home? If you have more than one home, please think about the one you live in the most.



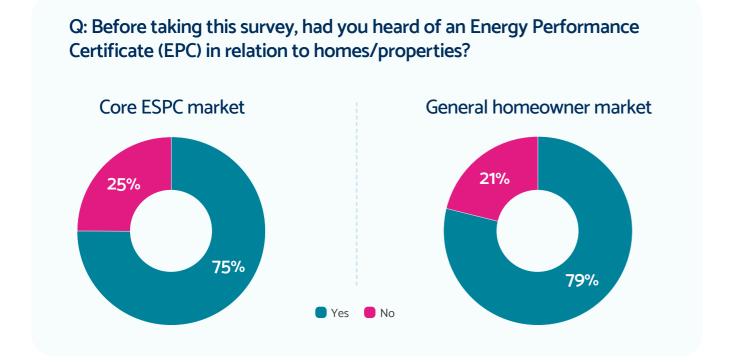
Mean score is out of 4, where 4 is very efficient

Base (all who own the home they live in): Core ESPC market (446) | General homeowner market (253)

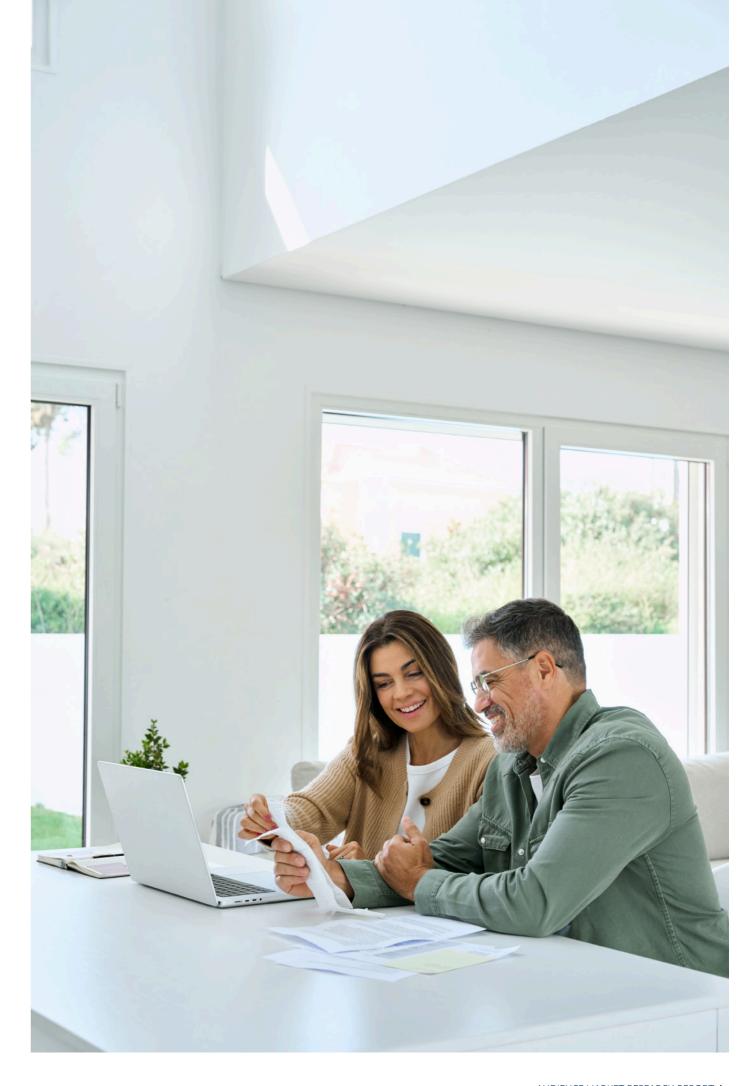
Whether heard of an EPC

- Homeowners and first-time buyers were also asked if they had heard of an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) in relation to homes/properties.
- Unlike for recognition of the Government's net zero plan, results among both markets indicates similar levels of recognition – around three quarters of the core ESPC market (75%) and general homeowner market (79%) had heard of an EPC.
- There were some key differences between subgroups of homeowners and first-time buyers here, with the following all more likely to have heard of an EPC:
- Older people (74% vs. 59% of younger people),
- Those with children under the age of 18 in the household (87% vs. 69%), and
- Homeowners (80% vs. 61% of first-time buyers).

Recognition of EPCs was generally high - three quarters of the core ESPC market had heard of this.



Base (all): Core ESPC market (517) | General homeowner market (272)



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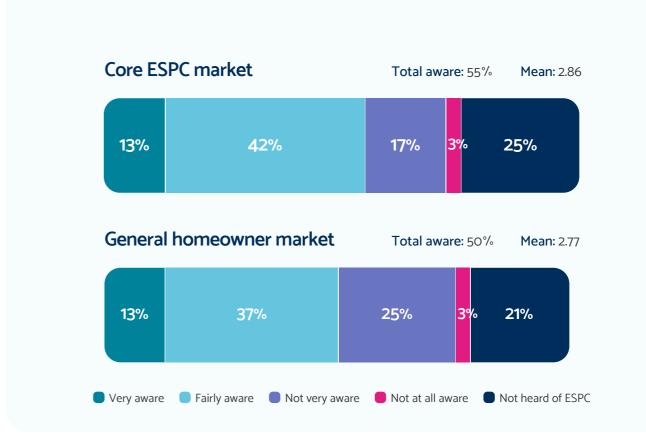


Awareness of details of what an EPC rating is

- All homeowners/first-time buyers who had heard of an EPC were asked about how aware they were of what an EPC rating consists of.
- Most of those who had heard of EPC felt they were aware of the details of what an EPC rating is (73% of the core ESPC market and 64% of the general homeowner market). However, as a proportion of the total market, this falls to around half (55% of all those in the core ESPC market and 50% of all those in the general homeowner market). This indicates that around half of homeowners and first-time buyers are either not aware of the details of an EPC rating, or they have never heard of an EPC.
- The following groups were more likely to be aware of the details of an EPC rating:
- Men (62% vs. 47% of women),
- Older people (55% vs. 39% of younger people), and
- People with children living in their household (64% vs. 50% of those without children).

Around half of all homeowners/first-time buyers are aware of the details of what an EPC rating is, indicating an education piece is required.





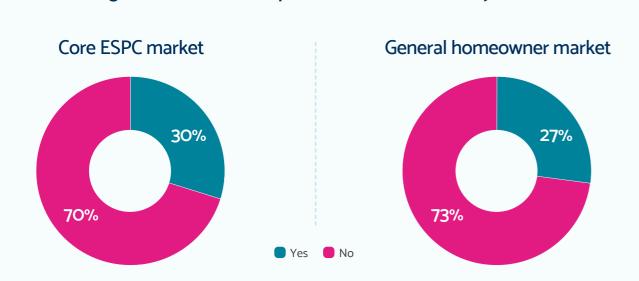
Mean score is out of 4, where 4 is very aware

Whether heard of plans for EPC standards

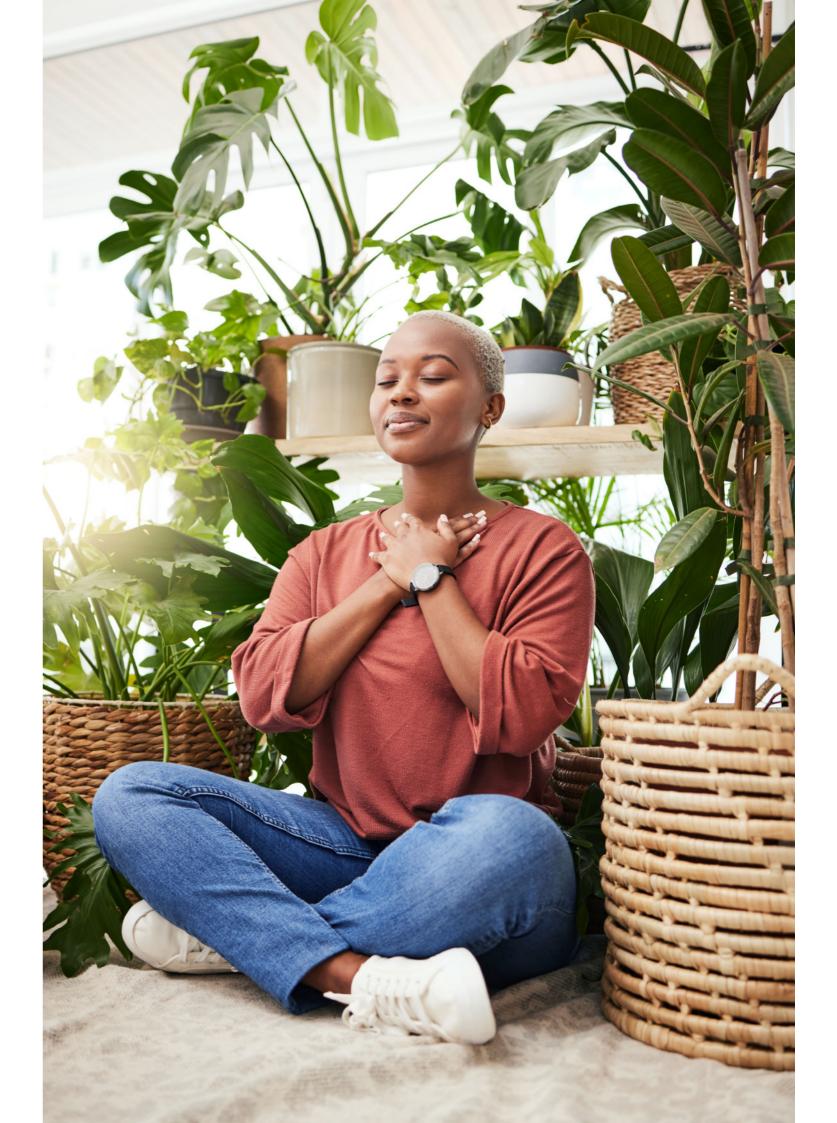
- Recognition of the Scottish Government's plans to introduce mandatory minimum standards of energy efficiency (i.e., EPC ratings) for owner-occupied homes was generally limited – lower than recognition of the Government's net zero plans. Recognition was comparable among the core ESPC (30%) and general homeowner (27%) markets.
- The following groups were more likely to have heard of the plans:
- Men (37% vs. 23% of women),
- Older people (34% vs. 16% of younger people), and
- Homeowners (36% vs. 14% of first-time buyers).

There was generally low recognition of the Scottish Government's plans to introduce mandatory minimum standards of energy efficiency for owner-occupied homes.

Q: Before today, had you heard of the Scottish Government's plans to introduce mandatory minimum standards of energy efficiency (EPC rating) for all owner-occupied homes in Scotland by 2033?



Base (all): Core ESPC market (517) | General homeowner market (272)



Proposed minimum EPC Energy Efficiency Rating

- Only a minority (9% of the core ESPC market, 7% of the general homeowner market) correctly identified the minimum EPC Energy Efficiency Rating the Scottish Government has proposed.
- A greater proportion (21% of the core ESPC market, 20% of the general homeowner market) were incorrect (i.e., either they were unsure or believed the minimum rating was something other than EPC C).
- The following groups were more likely to correctly identify the minimum EPC Energy Efficiency Rating the Scottish Government has proposed:
- Men (12% vs. 6% of women), and
- Homeowners (11% vs. 3% of first-time buyers).

As a proportion of all homeowners/ first-time buyers in the market, very few correctly identified the minimum EPC Rating proposed by the Scottish Government.





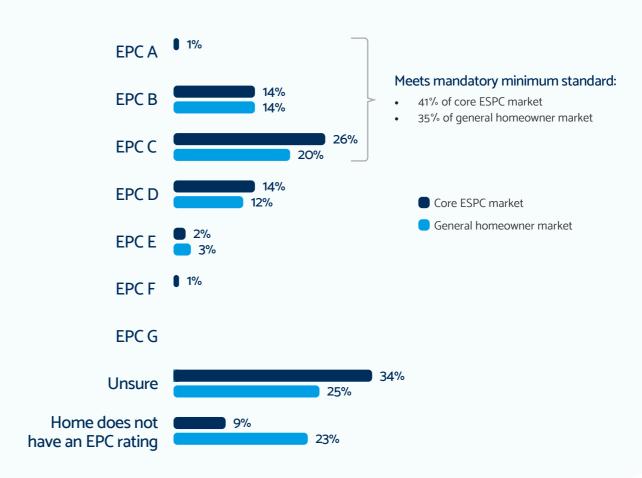
EPC Energy Efficiency Rating of current home

- Reflecting the relatively low proportion of homeowners/first-time buyers that say they are aware of the detail of what an EPC rating is, a significant minority of those who own the home they live in and have heard of an EPC are unsure what the EPC Energy Efficiency Rating of their home is (34% of the core ESPC market and 25% of the general homeowner market).
- Those who are aware of the Energy Efficiency Rating rating of their home tend to report is has a rating that meets the Government's proposed mandatory minimum standard (i.e., EPC C) – 41% of the core ESPC market and 35% of the general homeowner market.

- Around one in six (16% of the core ESPC market and 17% of the general homeowner market) report their home has a rating lower than EPC C.
- These findings (i.e., the high proportion of people who are unsure of their home's EPC rating coupled with the significant minority that report their home is below EPC Rating C) are notable given the high proportion that feel their home is energy efficient (75% of the core ESPC market). It suggests that there are many homeowners/first-time buyers that assume their home is energy efficient even though they have not had confirmation of this.

Most of those that own the home they live in and have heard of an EPC are either unsure of their home's rating, have not had their home assessed, or have a rating below EPC C

Q: To the best of your knowledge, what is the EPC Energy Efficiency Rating of your current home? If you have more than one home, please think about the one you live in the most.



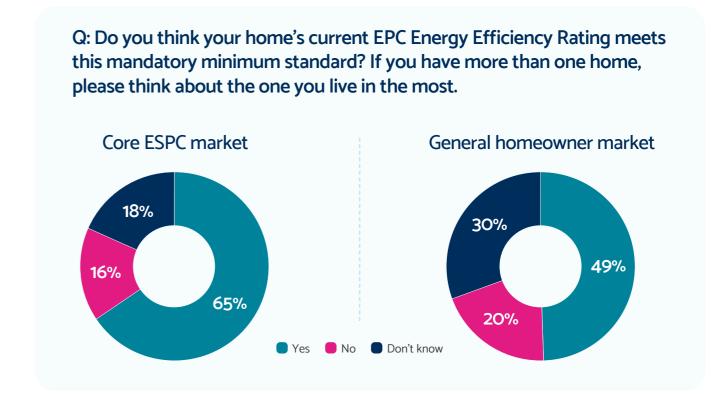
Base (all who own the home they live in and have heard of an EPC):

Core ESPC market (362) | General homeowner market (201)

Whether home meets proposed EPC standard

- Most (65%) of the core ESPC market (who own their home and have heard of the Government's plan for a mandatory minimum standard of energy efficiency) believe their home meets this standard. Fewer (49%) of the general homeowner market believe their home meets this standard. This makes sense, as it is likely that more of the general homeowner market have lived in their property for a number of years, haven't acquired an EPC Rating, and therefore aren't sure if meets the minimum standards of energy efficiency.
- Notably, of the core ESPC market of homeowners/ first-time buyers who believe their home meets this standard, two thirds (67%) live in a home that meets this standard, but one third (33%) either live in a home that doesn't meet this standard or aren't sure of their home's EPC rating (but assume it meets this standard). This suggests that a significant minority of homeowners/first-time buyers are either overestimating the energy efficiency of their current home or are underestimating how stringent the proposed mandatory minimum standard is.

Many believe their home meets the proposed EPC standard, but some of these either incorrectly believe it does or are unsure of their home's EPC rating (but assume it does).



Base (all who own a home and have heard of the standard): Core ESPC market (150) | General homeowner market (69)



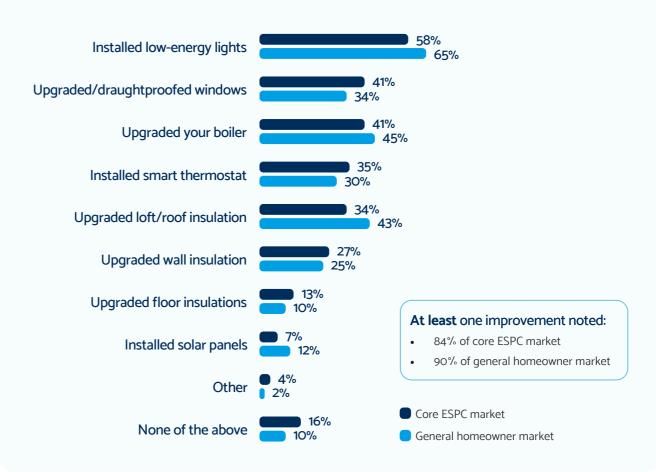


Improvements people have made to their home

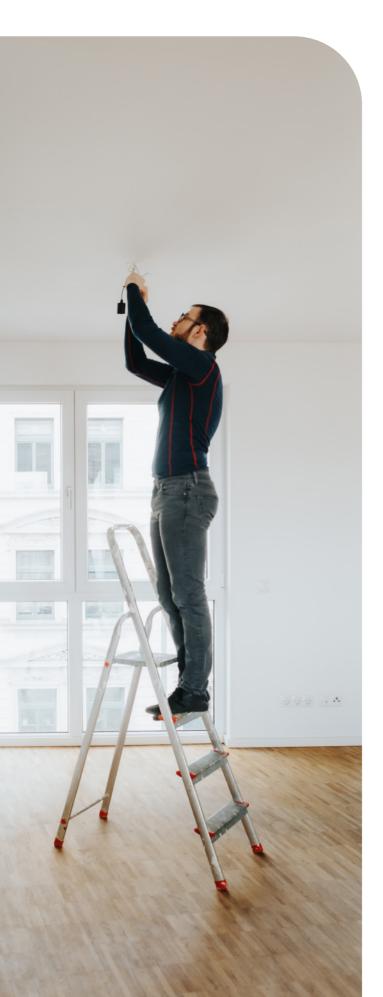
- The majority of people that own their home have made at least one change to improve its energy efficiency - 84% of the core ESPC market and 90% of the general homeowner market.
- The most common improvement people had made was installing low-energy lights, but significant proportions had also upgraded windows, boilers, loft/ roof insulation and installed a smart thermostat. In all, around half (45% of the core ESPC market and 51% of the general homeowner market) had upgraded some aspect of their home's insulation.
- The groups more likely to have not taken any action to improve the energy efficiency of their home were:
- People based outside Edinburgh (21% vs. 12% in Edinburgh),
- Younger people (35% vs. 14% of older people), and
- First-time buyers (39% vs. 11% of homeowners).
- These differences might indicate that younger people, those living outside Edinburgh, and first-time buyers have less disposable income to make these changes.

People have made various changes to improve the energy efficiency of their home, most commonly installing low-energy lights, and upgrading their windows and/or boiler.

Q: Which, if any, of these have you done to improve the energy efficiency of your current home? If you have more than one home, please think about the one you live in the most.



Base (all who own a home): Core ESPC market (446) | General homeowner market (253)

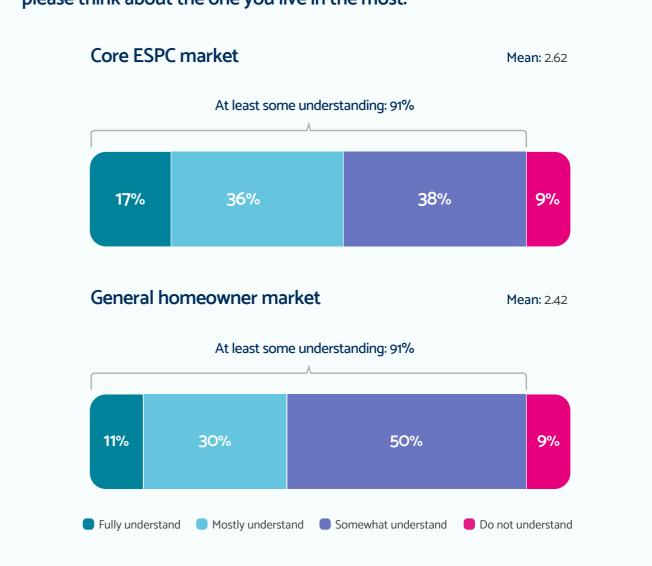


Further improving energy efficiency of home

- The vast majority 91% of both the core ESPC and general homeowner markets of people that own the home they live in have at least some understanding of how to improve the energy efficiency of their home. However, relatively few (17% of the core ESPC market and 11% of the general homeowner market) know everything that could be done. This indicates there is an opportunity to educate most homeowners about the range and scale of energy efficiency improvements they could make to their home.
- It is worth noting, however, that some of the people who say they understand what can be done to improve the energy of their home will include people who think they've done everything they can (because they have either made all the improvements or because of the age/listed status of their home which limits the improvements they can make).
- The following groups were more likely to fully understand how to improve the energy efficiency of their current home:
- Older people (20% vs. 7% of younger people),
- Homeowners (20% vs. 2% of first-time buyers), and
- People who have children under 18 in the household (23% vs. 14%).

Most people that own the home they live in have some understanding of how to improve their home's energy efficiency – but few fully understand.

Q: To what extent would you say you understand how to improve the energy efficiency of your current home? If you have more than one home, please think about the one you live in the most.



Mean score is out of 4, where 4 is fully understand

Base (all who own a home): Core ESPC market (446) | General homeowner market (253)



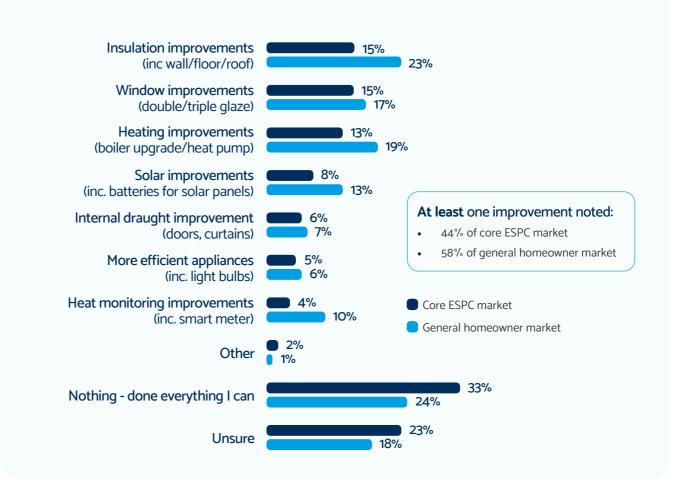
Improvements people could make to their home

- Despite high proportions reporting they somewhat understand how to improve the energy efficiency of their home, when asked what they think could be done to improve it, the results were mixed: 46% of the core ESPC market and 58% of the general homeowner market noted an improvement. The remainder were either unsure what could be done or felt they had done everything they can to improve the energy efficiency of their home.
- The most common things people who own their home felt could be done to improve its energy efficiency were:
- Improving insulation (e.g., walls/floor/roof).
- Improving windows (e.g., draughtproofing/upgrading).
- Improving heating (e.g., upgrading boiler/ moving to heat pump).

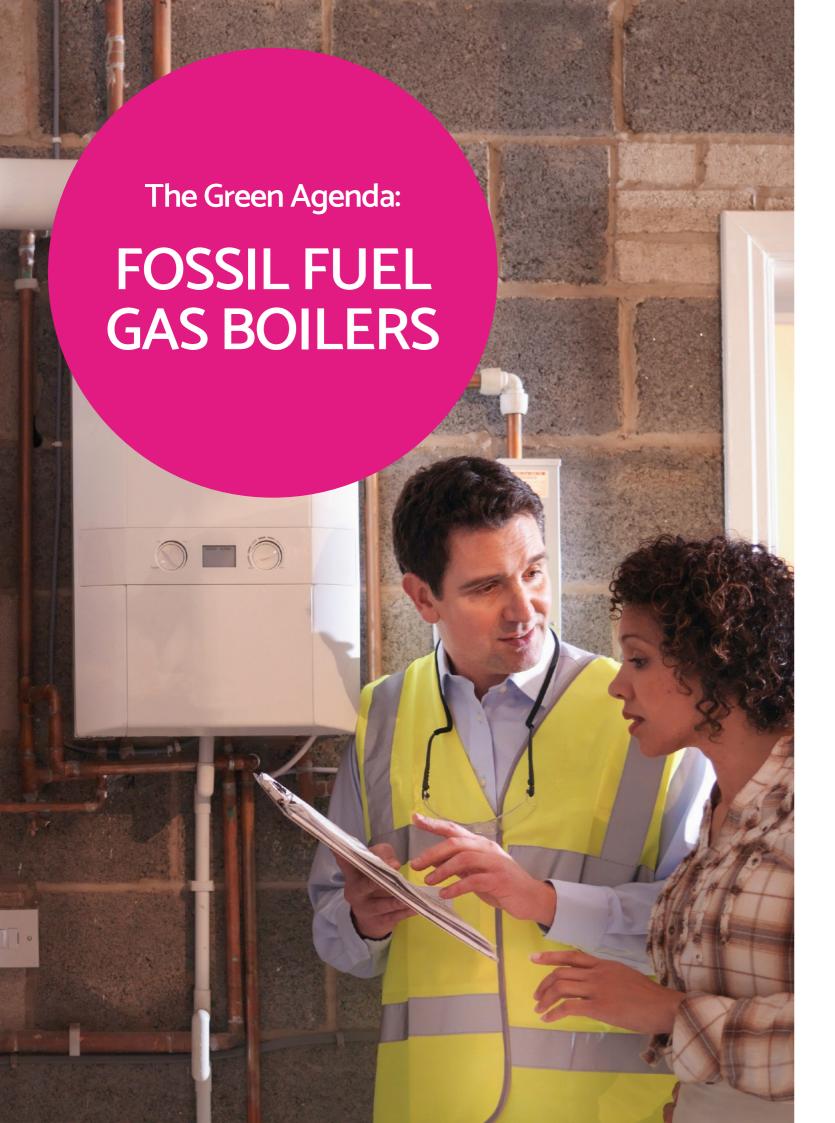
The most common energy efficiency improvements people noted they could make to their home were around insulation, windows and heating.



Q: What do you think could be done to improve the energy efficiency of your current home? If you have more than one home, please think about the one you live in the most. (open-ended) Labels <3% (exc. Other) not shown.



Base (all who own a home): Core ESPC market (446) | | General homeowner market (253)

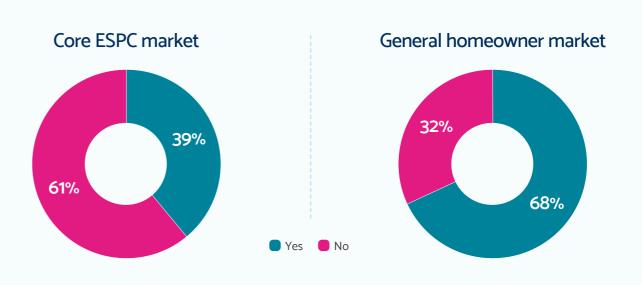


Whether heard of plans to replace gas boilers

- There was a marked difference between both audiences in relation to recognition of the Scottish Government's plans to phase out the installation and replacement of fossil fuel gas boilers around two thirds of the general homeowner market (68%) had heard of the plan, whereas around two in five (39%) of the core ESPC market had heard of the plan. Reflecting the subgroup analysis below, this is likely to, in part, reflect that the composition of the general homeowner market is weighted towards older people who are more likely to be aware of these plans.
- The following groups were more likely to have heard of the Scottish Government's plans:
- Older people (44% vs. 22% of younger people),
- Homeowners (46% vs. 21% of first-time buyers),
- Men (47% vs. 29% of women), and
- Those living outside Edinburgh (46% vs. 34% of those living in a flat).

Recognition of the Scottish Government's plans to phase out fossil fuel gas boilers was mixed – although higher among the general homeowner market.

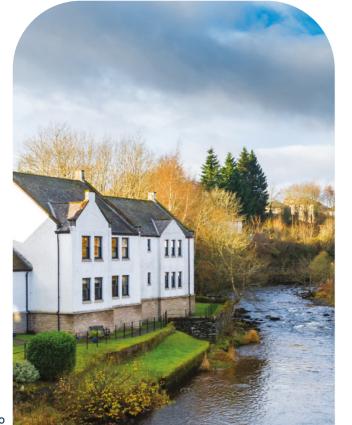
Q: Before taking the survey, had you heard of the Scottish Government's plans to phase out the installation and replacement of fossil fuel gas boilers from 2028?



Base (all): Core ESPC market (517) | General homeowner market (272)

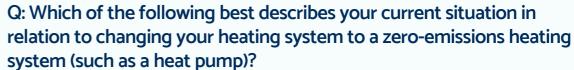
Changing to a zero-emissions heating system

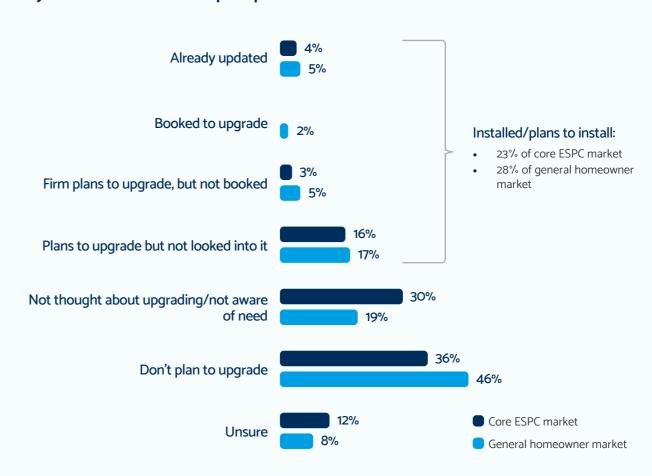
- People who own the home they live in are most commonly not planning to upgrade their current heating system to a zero-emissions one (36% of the core ESPC market, 46% of the general homeowner market). Only a small minority (4% of the core market, 5% of the general market) have already upgraded their heating system and, in all, around a quarter (23% of the core market, 28% of the general market) have either upgraded or have plans to upgrade their heating system.
- This suggests there is work to be done in relation to building the expectation that homeowners will need move away from gas boilers in the near future.
- The following groups were most likely to have either upgraded or have plans to upgrade their heating system:
- Men (29% vs. 16% of women), and
- People in the highest SEG (AB) (30% vs. 18% in C1).
- Additionally, those who are aware of various aspects of the green agenda (e.g., Scottish Government's net zero plans) were more likely to have either upgraded or have plans to upgrade their heating system.



Around one in four people who own their home have upgraded or are planning to upgrade to a zero-emissions heating system...







Base (all who own a home): Core ESPC market (446) | | General homeowner market (253)



Helping homeowners meet the costs of EPC C

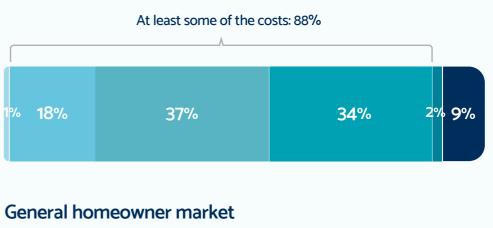
- The vast majority (88% of the core ESPC market, 90% of the general homeowner market) of homeowners and first-time buyers think that the Scottish Government should pay for at least some of the costs associated with helping homeowners meet EPC Rating C and around one in three (34% and 37%, respectively) feel the Government should pay for all
- There were few differences by demographics, but homeowners/first-time buyers that were less engaged with various aspects of the Green Agenda were more likely to say the Scottish Government should pay for all the costs associated with helping homeowners get to EPC Rating C. This included:

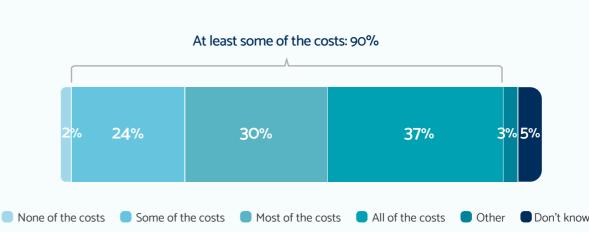
- Those who had not heard of an EPC (54% vs. 27% of those who had), and
- Those who had not heard of the Scottish
- Government's plans to phase out fossil fuel gas boilers (39% vs. 26% of those who had).
- This could indicate a few things, including that those
 with a greater understanding of the Green Agenda/
 EPCs are more likely to know how much it will cost
 homeowners to achieve EPC Rating C, or that they
 have already made investments (using their own
 money) to improve the EPC rating of their home.

People most commonly think the Government should pay all or most of the costs associated with achieving EPC Rating C for homes that don't currently meet the standard.

Q: Which ONE, if any, of the following BEST describes the role you think Scottish Government should play in helping homeowners to meet the costs of EPC Rating C if they have not already done so?

Core ESPC market





Core ESPC market (517) | General homeowner market (272)

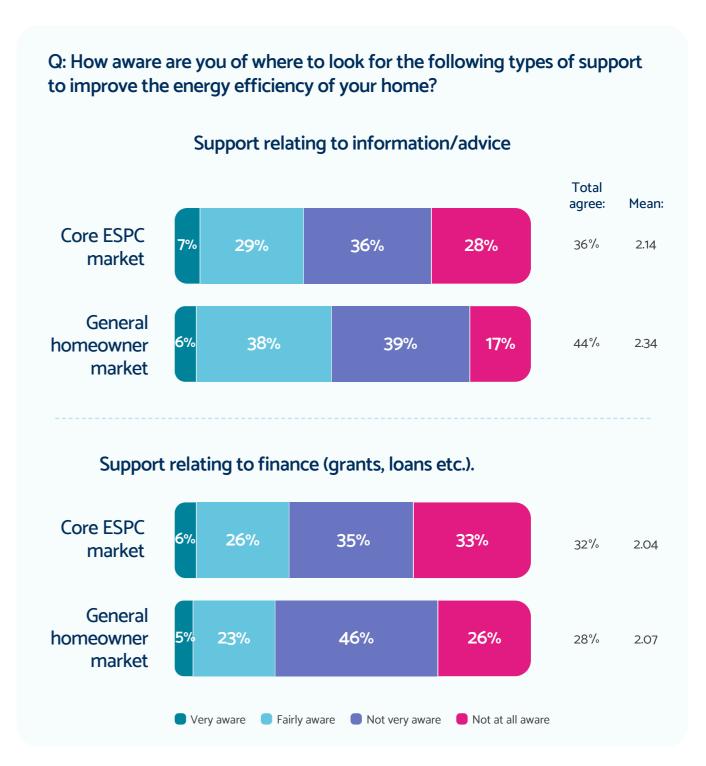
Awareness of support for improving home energy efficiency

- Awareness of the different types of support to improve home energy efficiency is relatively limited.
 Around one in three homeowners in the core ESPC market were aware of where to look for both types of support: support relating to information/advice (36%) and support relating to finances (32%). Similar proportions of the general homeowner market were aware of where to look for both types of support.
- This might indicate that advertising/promotion of support relating to home energy efficiency is limited, but it also might, in part, reflect that some homeowners/first-time buyers haven't engaged with

- or don't intend to engage with any form of support. Any support ESPC can provide to fill this gap will be beneficial.
- The following groups were more likely to be aware of where to look for both types of support:
- Older people (e.g., 37% were aware of where to look for support relating to information/advice vs. 21% of younger people), and
- Homeowners (e.g., 36% were aware of where to look for support relating to finances vs. 21% of first time buyers).



People generally lack awareness of where to look for support to improve their home's energy efficiency, so any support ESPC can provide will be beneficial.



Base (all): Core ESPC market (517) | | General homeowner market (272)



Reducing household emissions

- Homeowners and first-time buyers were presented with four statements about their views on homes and energy efficiency. They were asked the extent to which they agreed with each statement. This chart shows results for the two statements concerning making improvements to the home to reduce household emissions.
- Results were mixed: while many agreed (46% of the core ESPC market, and 39% of the general homeowner market) that they plan to make improvements to ensure their home meets energy efficiency standards, this was by no means the majority.
- The above may, in part, reflect the fact that many also agreed (45% of the core ESPC market, and 42% of the general homeowner market) that it's difficult to

- find information on how to make improvements to ensure their home meets energy efficiency standards.
- The key going forwards will be to understand why people might be reluctant to make energy efficiency improvements to their home.

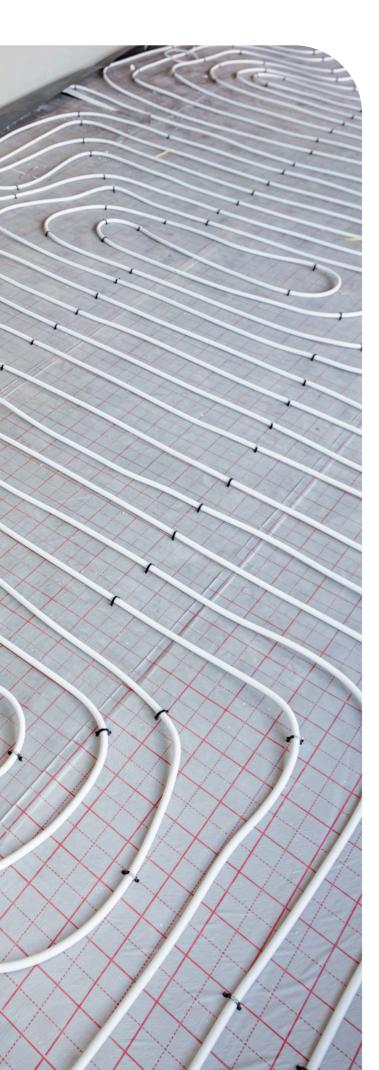
While many plan to make improvements to ensure their home meets energy efficiency standards, they tend to feel it's difficult to find information about how to do this.

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about making improvements to your home to reduce household emissions? I would be interested in making improvements to my home but it's difficult to find information on what to do Total Mean: agree: Core ESPC 8% 12% 33% 20% 16% 3.29 market General 12% 30% 34% 16% 3% homeowner 3.28 market I plan to make improvements to my home to make sure it meets the minimum standards of energy efficiency Core ESPC 38% 21% **10% 11% 12%** 3.24 market General homeowner 28% 36% 11% **13% 5%** 7% 39% 3.29 market Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know

Mean score is out of 5, where 5 is strongly agree

Base (all): Core ESPC market (517) | General homeowner market (272)

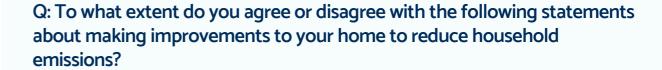
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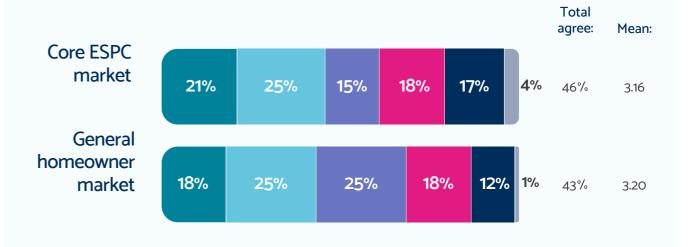
Reducing household emissions

- This chart shows results for the two statements concerning moving home.
- The key finding here is that more people agreed they would like to move to a more energy efficient home (46% of the core ESPC market, and 43% of the general homeowner market) than agreed energy efficiency was an important factor when they chose their current home (38% of the core ESPC market, and 25% of the general homeowner market). This gives some indication that a slight discrepancy exists between people's intentions (i.e., wanting to move to an energy efficient home) and their actions (i.e., choosing to live in an energy efficient home) this discrepancy is likely, in part, because other factors (location, price, size etc.) are more important than energy efficiency.
- There were few consistent differences by demographics, although people in higher SEGs were more likely to agree that energy efficiency was an important factor when they chose their home (46% vs. 32% of people in lower SEGs), and younger people were more likely to want to move to a more energy efficient home (55% vs. 42% of older people).

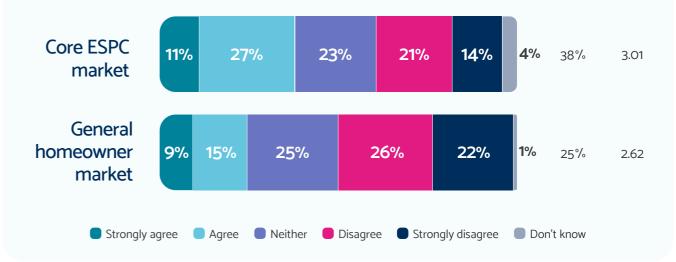
There is a slight discrepancy between people's intentions and actions when it comes to decision making about buying properties and moving homes.



I would like to move to a more energy efficient home



Energy efficiency was an important factor when I chose my current home



Mean score is out of 5, where 5 is strongly agree





Technical appendix Quantitative: method and sampling

The data was collected by face-to-face in-street interview (core sample) and online survey (boost).

The target group for the face-to-face research study was homeowners in Edinburgh, Lothians and the surrounding areas that had bought/ sold a home in the last five years or were intending to do so in the next five years, the target group for the online research study was any homeowner in Edinburgh, Lothians and the surrounding areas.

The sample type was non-probability.

For the in-street survey, respondents were selected using a stratified random sampling technique, where interviewers worked to specified quota controls on key sample criteria, and selected respondents randomly within these quotas. For the online survey, respondents are self-selecting, meaning only those who are motivated to respond to the survey take part, meaning we cannot strictly control sampling.

The target sample size for the in-street survey was 500 and the final achieved sample size was 517. The target sample size for the online survey was 270 and the final achieved sample size was 272.

Fieldwork was undertaken between 20th March – 16th April.

The target population is fluid, and the sample deliberately oversampled first-time buyers (and therefore younger people) to ensure their experiences could be compared with those of experienced buyers. The profile in this wave of the survey generally matched previous waves (apart from on age) suggesting the composition of the target population is generally stable.

In total, 14 interviewers worked on data collection.

Each interviewer's work is validated as per the requirements of the international standard ISO 20252. Face to face - Validation was achieved by re-contacting (by telephone or email) a minimum of 10% of the sample to check profiling details and to re-ask key questions from the survey. Where telephone details were not available recontact may have been made by post. All interviewers working on the study were subject to validation of their work.

Weighting was carried out to correct for the slight underrepresentation of younger people in 2024 compared with 2022 – data was weighted to match the age profile achieved in 2022 (and 2023). No weighting was carried out on the online data for the reasons stated in the report (principally because there is no profiling information available).

Quota controls were used to guide sample selection for this study. This means that we cannot provide statistically precise margins of error or significance testing as the sampling type is non-probability. The margins of error outlined below should therefore be treated as indicative, based on an equivalent probability sample.

The overall F2F sample size of 517 provides a dataset with an approximate margin of error of between $\pm 0.86\%$ and $\pm 4.31\%$ for buyers and between $\pm 1.17\%$ and $\pm 5.90\%$ for sellers, calculated at the 95% confidence level (market research industry standard). The overall online sample size of 272 provides a dataset with an approximate margin of error of between $\pm 1.18\%$ and $\pm 5.94\%$.

The following methods of statistical analysis were used: Z tests and t-tests.

Technical appendix Quantitative: quality procedures

Our data processing department undertakes a number of quality checks on the data to ensure its validity and integrity.

For CAPI Questionnaires these checks include:

- Responses are checked to ensure that interviewer and location are identifiable. Any errors or omissions detected at this stage are referred back to the field department, who are required to recontact interviewers to check.
- A computer edit of the data carried out prior to analysis involves both range and inter-field checks. Any further inconsistencies identified at this stage are investigated by reference back to the raw data on the questionnaire.
- Where "other" type questions are used, the responses to these are checked against the parent question for possible up-coding.
- Responses to open-ended questions will normally be spell and sense checked. Where required these responses may be grouped using a code-frame which can be used in analysis.
- A SNAP programme set up with the aim of providing the client with useable and comprehensive data. Cross breaks are discussed with the client in order to ensure that all information needs are met.

For CAWI Questionnaires these checks include:

- Responses are checked for duplicates where unidentified responses have been permitted.
- All responses are checked for completeness and sense.
- Specific quality checks to be conducted during fieldwork may include checking speed of completion, responses in patterns/flatlining, contradictory answers, quality of open-ended responses etc.
- All research projects undertaken by Progressive comply fully with the requirements of ISO 20252.

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