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# The communication of climate change

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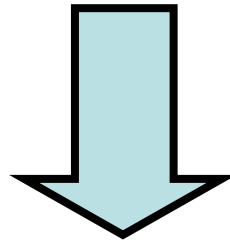


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# Climate change communication context

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- Huge levels of sustained media coverage about climate change
  - High levels of awareness and concern
- But disparate and conflicting messages
  - High levels of confusion



Fear, apathy, denial  
rather than positive action

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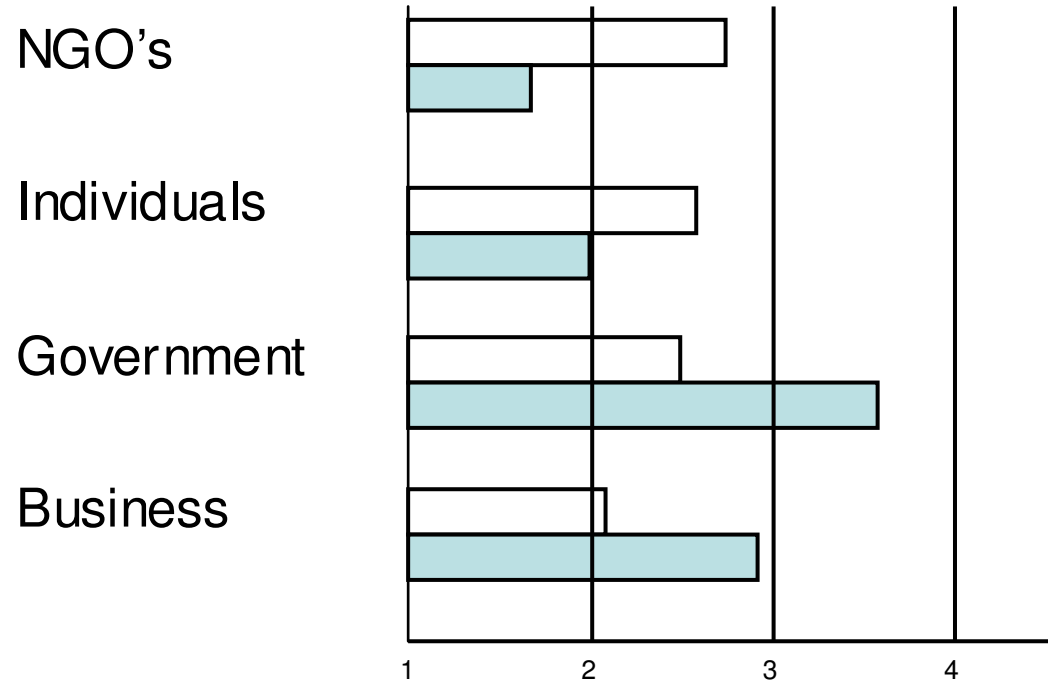
# Who's responsibility is it to act?

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Who is doing most currently?



Who should be doing most?



Mean score: 1<sup>st</sup> = 4pts, 2<sup>nd</sup> = 3pts, 3<sup>rd</sup> = 2 pts, 4<sup>th</sup> = 1pt, n=928

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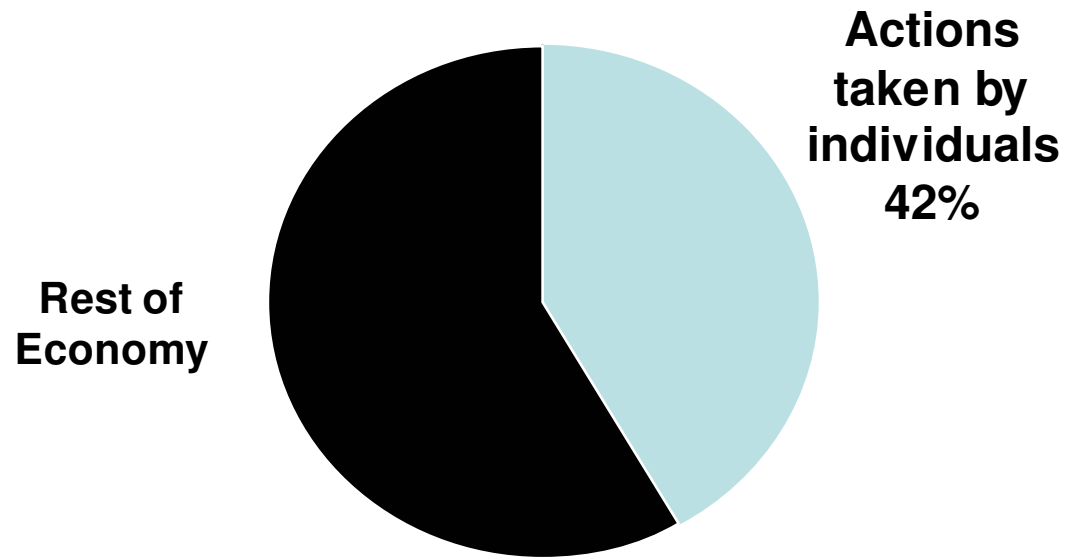
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# The individual's role

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42% of UK emissions are the responsibility of individuals/households



Carbon dioxide emissions from the UK economy  
(NETCEN 2004, includes international  
aviation and shipping)

617.1 MtCO<sub>2</sub>/yr

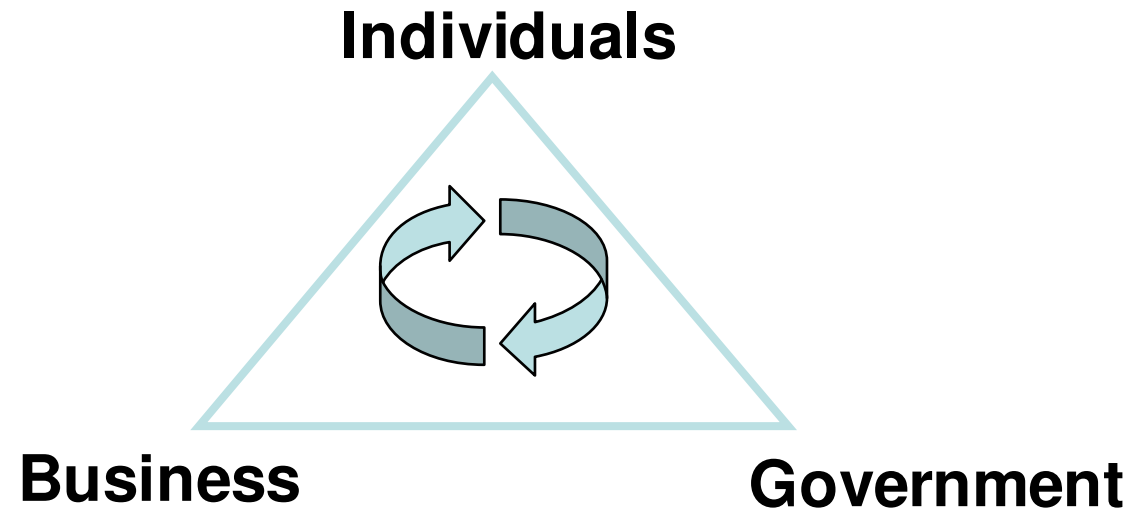
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# Social contract

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- Genuine need for reciprocation to engage the public: *“I will if you will”*
  - Credibility: *“If it was so serious they’d be doing more”*
  - Clarity: *“Just tell me what to do !”*
  - Reassurance: *“I can make a difference”*
  - *Potentially a virtuous circle with equal responsibility and participation*
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# Objectives for ACT ON CO<sub>2</sub>

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- Initially to raise awareness of the link between CO<sub>2</sub>, climate change and personal behaviours which wasn't understood at brand launch
  - Increase sense of personal responsibility within the context of the social contract
  - Normalise positive, CO<sub>2</sub> reducing behaviours both in and out of home
  - Encouraging sustained and increasing levels of behaviour change, through tools such as the ACT ON CO<sub>2</sub> calculator
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# Communication conventions to challenge

**Scaremongering**

**Assertion**

**Complex**

**DISTANT**

**Empowering**

**Explanation**

**Simple**

**PERSONAL**

The collage includes various elements such as:

- The Economist magazine cover: "The heat is on" - A special report on climate change.
- A poster: "CHANGE THE WORLD PLAN 9x5".
- A newspaper headline: "Arctic's summer ice may be gone in just 35 years" by Ashley Rogers.
- A website screenshot: "Help us reduce greenhouse gas emissions" with a target of one million.
- A document: "Managing greenhouse gas emissions" with text about energy efficiency and risk minimization.
- A poster: "TODAY'S CLIMATE CHALLENGE" featuring a person in a green shirt.
- A poster: "Thank you Argos cutting carbon emissions much energy efficiency".
- A poster: "Dividends up, greenhouse gas emissions down. The next quarter matters. So does the next quarter century." with a BP logo.
- A poster: "Decrease greenhouse just by ironing" with an image of an iron.
- A poster: "WORLD LAND TRUST™".
- A poster: "Tube" with a train icon.
- A poster: "Neutralise your CO2 emissions now" with a target icon.
- A poster: "beyond petroleum" with a BP logo.

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# Consumer focused at all times

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- Shared communications strategy for ACT ON CO<sub>2</sub> across all relevant Government Departments and partners ensuring clarity of messaging
  - Constant evolution of approach to fit with increased consumer understanding and changing motivations
  - Demonstrate integrity and authority of ACT ON CO<sub>2</sub> communication through Government knowledge, expertise and help
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# Campaign evolution

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At launch, research showed that people didn't understand their personal role in relation to climate change.

We used communication to dramatise the notion of a person carbon footprint, raise awareness of the behaviours that contribute to it and offer people help to reduce theirs.



2008 demanded a creative vehicle that had the flexibility to accommodate key messages for in home and transport-related behaviours which engaged a wide range of target audiences in an accessible way

Crucially, in addition, it also needed to reflect the growing concerns over money and inform people that money saving and CO<sub>2</sub> reduction behaviours can go hand in hand.

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# Where next?

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- Although people continue to be aware of climate change, they tend to feel like they are 'doing their bit'
  - We need to ensure people are open to further change, with support from the Government
  - To do this we need to create a renewed sense of **urgency** around the issue of Climate Change and dispel some myths that still exist
  - Therefore the next challenge for ACT ON CO<sub>2</sub> will be to increase consumer's 'carbon literacy'
  - We need to close the gap between a global problem and personal actions
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# Thank you

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