Ipsos & Sense about Science

Attitudes towards evidence among the GB public

June 2023
The public think politicians pay too little attention to public opinion and evidence when making decisions.

When politicians are making decisions, do you think they pay too much, too little, or about the right amount of attention to each of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Public opinion</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>The views of experts</th>
<th>What they think is right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2023</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too little</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the right amount</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 1,078 Online British adults 18-75, 9th – 12th June 2023
The large majority think it is important that the Government shows the public all the evidence used to make important policy decisions

The following questions are all about how you think the UK Government should use evidence to make important policy decisions. Please read each pair of statements and decide which comes closest to your own opinion?

It is important that the government shows the public all the evidence used to make important policy decisions

The government does not need to show the public all the evidence used to make important policy decisions

Agree with both equally

Don’t know

Neither

2023

66%

13%

13%

5%

4%

2022

61%

10%

16%

8%

5%

Base: 1,078 Online British adults 18-75, 9th – 12th June 2023
The public tend to think governments are poor at explaining the disadvantages of their policies to the public

As you know, any policy choices a government has to make will have advantages and disadvantages. How good or poor, if at all, do you think governments are at explaining to the public each of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The advantages of their policies</th>
<th>Very/ fairly good</th>
<th>Neither good nor poor</th>
<th>Very/ fairly poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Both the advantages and disadvantages of their policies in the round</th>
<th>Very/ fairly good</th>
<th>Neither good nor poor</th>
<th>Very/ fairly poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The disadvantages of their policies</th>
<th>Very/ fairly good</th>
<th>Neither good nor poor</th>
<th>Very/ fairly poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 1,078 Online British adults 18-75, 9th – 12th June 2023
The public think that findings damaging national security is the most valid reason for not publishing research and analysis on the impact of policies.

As you may know, Government regularly commissions independent research and analysis to provide evidence about the impact of existing and future policies on society.

Which of the following, if any, do you think are valid reasons for the government to not publish the findings publicly?

- If the findings would damage national security: 37%
- If the research is no longer relevant because the policy is no longer being considered: 25%
- If the findings are very likely to be used by others to give an incomplete view without explaining the full context: 21%
- If the findings are very likely to be misunderstood: 19%
- Government needs to be able to explore sensitive or controversial questions privately: 19%
- If it’s too soon to judge the policy’s impact: 17%
- If the findings show the policy isn’t working: 16%
- If the findings are embarrassing for the government: 16%
- None of these are valid reasons: 18%
- Don’t know: 12%

Base: 1,078 Online British adults 18-75, 9th – 12th June 2023