

Summary Data – Membership Survey

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A membership survey was sent out to everyone on the XR UK mailing list in December 2024. Reminders were sent out by email and Broadcast, and the survey was open for one month. The survey consisted of 2 parts: a repeat of a previous Pathways survey that asked a couple of questions about respondent's current and future XR activity, with a link to a longer anonymous survey¹. It is the latter that is described here. While the short survey had around 7000 responses, for the more in-depth one there were 1663 responses, of which 1375 were considered 'valid' and are included in this report². The full set of descriptive statistics in graph format can be found [here](#). Throughout the report, XR is used to refer to XR UK.

Demographics

The majority (63%) of people have been on the mailing list for three or more years meaning that the people who responded were, in general, long-term XR members. The mean average age was 60 years old (median age 63 years old). 55% of respondents were female, 41% male, 2% non-binary and 1% preferred to self-describe. Almost all the respondents (95%) described themselves as white, 77% had a Bachelor's degree or higher level of education, and 44% were retired and 46% were in some kind of employment.

In terms of the geographical split, Figure 1 shows that although XR is represented across the UK, the main centres are the South West, the South East and Greater London. Northern Ireland is the least well represented region of the UK.

¹ <https://rebeltoolkit.extinctionrebellion.uk/books/feedback-and-learning/page/movement-survey-2024>

² Not all respondents completed all the questions. Invalid responses have been omitted from this report. This means that the number of respondents in the graphics is not necessarily equal to 1375. For ease of reading, the number of valid responses has not been indicated, but for all questions attrition was low.

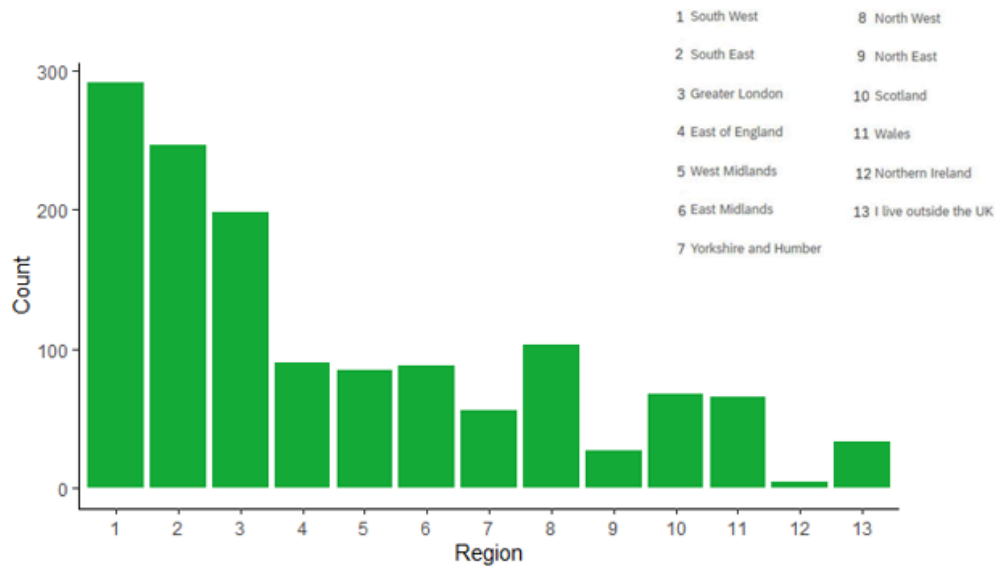


Figure 1 Number of respondents by region of the UK.

Past engagement in XR

Figure 2 shows the respondents' frequency of past participation in XR. By far the most common response for all the types of activity included in the survey was 'Never'. When considering this data, it also is important to remember that the members who responded to this survey are likely to be the most engaged.

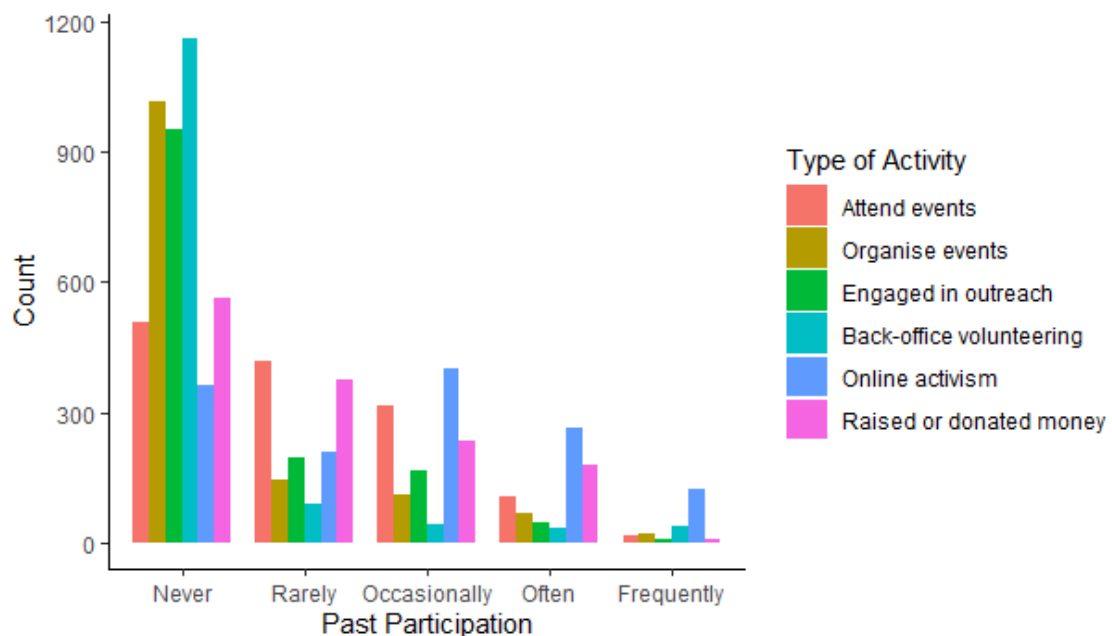


Figure 2 Regularity of past participation in XR in a range of activities.

There are (at least) two ways of interpreting this data. If only the percentage of people who have 'Often' or 'Frequently' participated in XR over the last year are considered, the number of respondents is very low for all types of action except online activism

(28%) and raising or donating money (13%). However, if the respondents who have taken part at any time are summed, well over half of respondents (63%) have at some point attended events (e.g. attended a protest), 74% of respondents have engaged in online activism and 59% have raised or donated money; Organising events (26%), Outreach (31%) and Back-office volunteering (26%) are logically much lower.

Willingness to engage in the future

Conversely, the data suggest that there is a real willingness for engagement in all types of action going forward. Figure 3 shows that most respondents reported that for all actions - except Workplace strike which would be irrelevant to half the respondents - they were either likely or extremely likely to take part. Well over half of respondents said they were either likely or extremely likely to take part in a public demonstration (79%), a company boycott (88%), signing a petition (90%), a digital action (70%), and a protest outside parliament (65%).

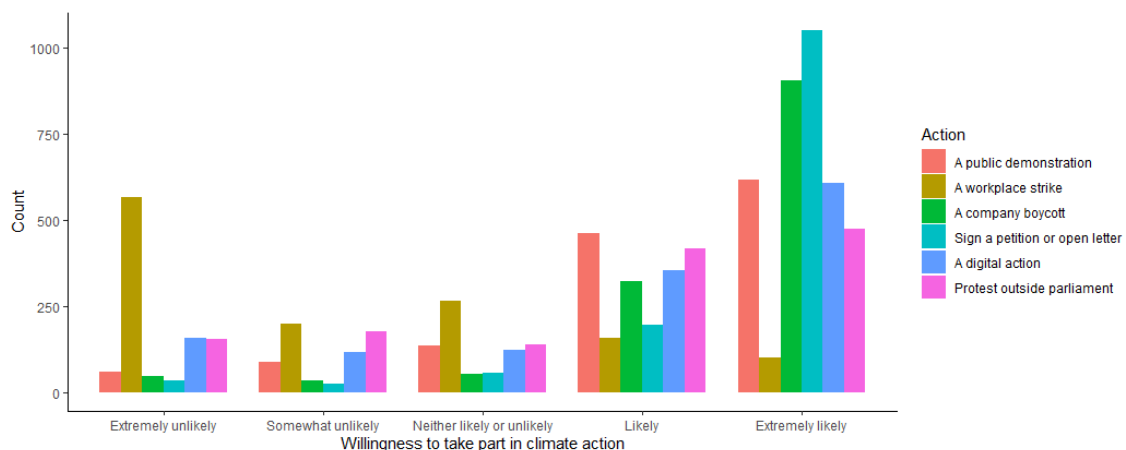


Figure 3 Respondents' willingness to take part in a range of climate action. N.B. not all surveyed actions are included, as the more extreme actions have been omitted.

Respondents were also asked about their willingness to engage in a range of other 'spicier' activities. This is potentially sensitive information for both the individual and the organisation and therefore has not been included here³. In summary, though, the more extreme the action and the more likely the risk of consequence, the less likely people were to say they would participate.

Please note: willingness to engage in future activity is one of the areas in which DAIC are conducting more in-depth analysis and a link will be added here to that research when it is completed.

³ If you need access to this information, please contact DAIC. We have a reception channel on Mattermost - <https://organise.earth/uk/channels/feedback-and-learning-culture-reception> - or you can reach out to Neil (External Coordinator) on Mattermost (@neilcambridge) or Signal (@NeilXRC.27)

Feelings towards XR and the wider movement

The survey asked five questions on respondents' feelings towards XR and the wider climate protest movement, the results of which can be seen in Figure 4.

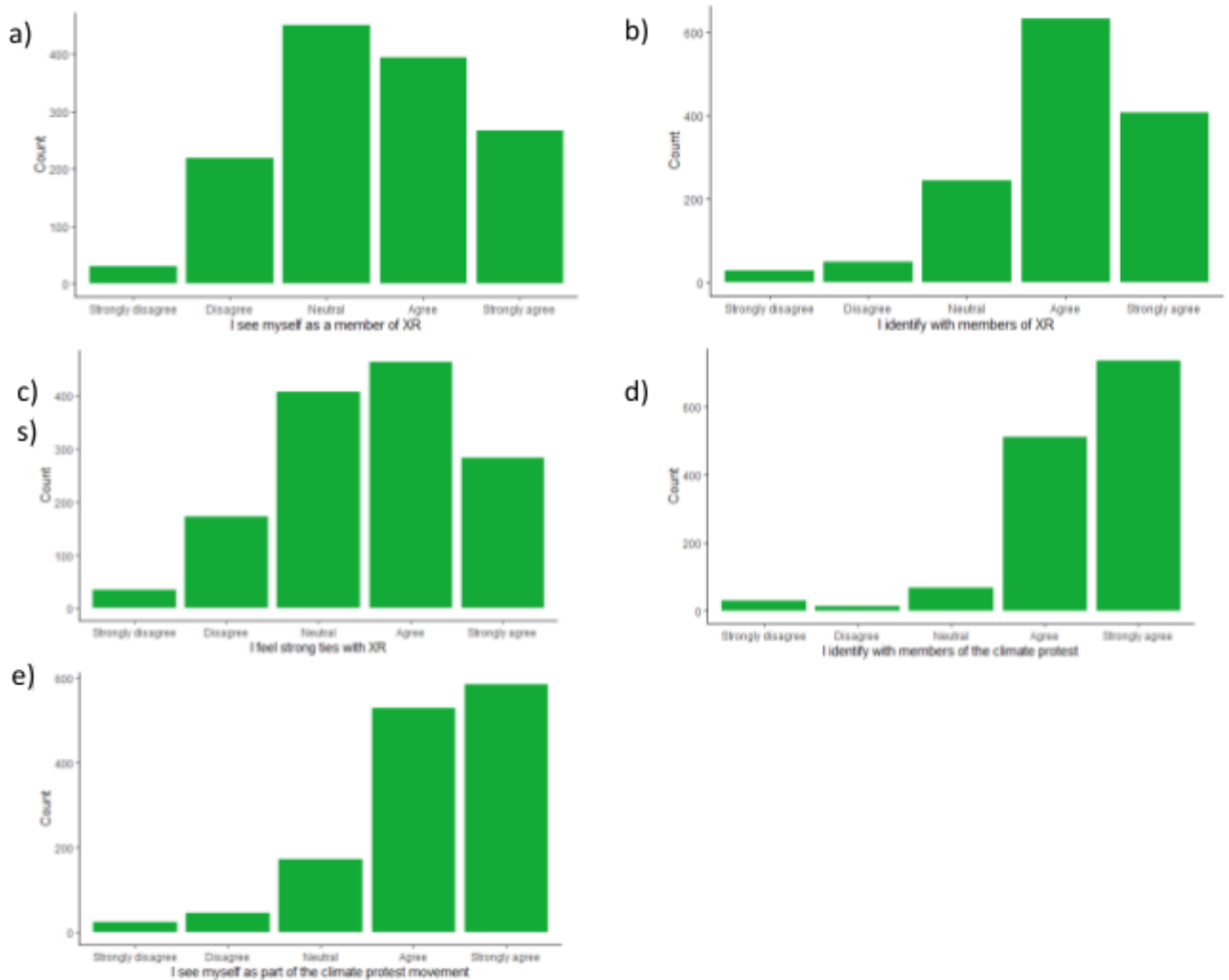


Figure 4 Attitudes towards XR and the wider climate movement. The survey asked respondents to say how much they agreed with five statements: a) I see myself as a member of XR, b) I identify with members of XR, c) I feel strong ties with XR, d) I identify with members of the climate movement, e) I see myself as part of the climate protest movement.

Only half (48%) of respondents agree or strongly agree that they see themselves as a member of XR. In general, social identification with the climate movement was higher than social identification with XR; the literature suggests that social identification is a key predictor of taking collective action.

Attitudes towards XR

Respondents experience a range of emotions when engaging with XR, as shown in Figure 5. Indifference was the emotion that most people least associated with their interactions with XR. Hope and Pride and Joy were the emotions that respondents were most likely to feel strongly.

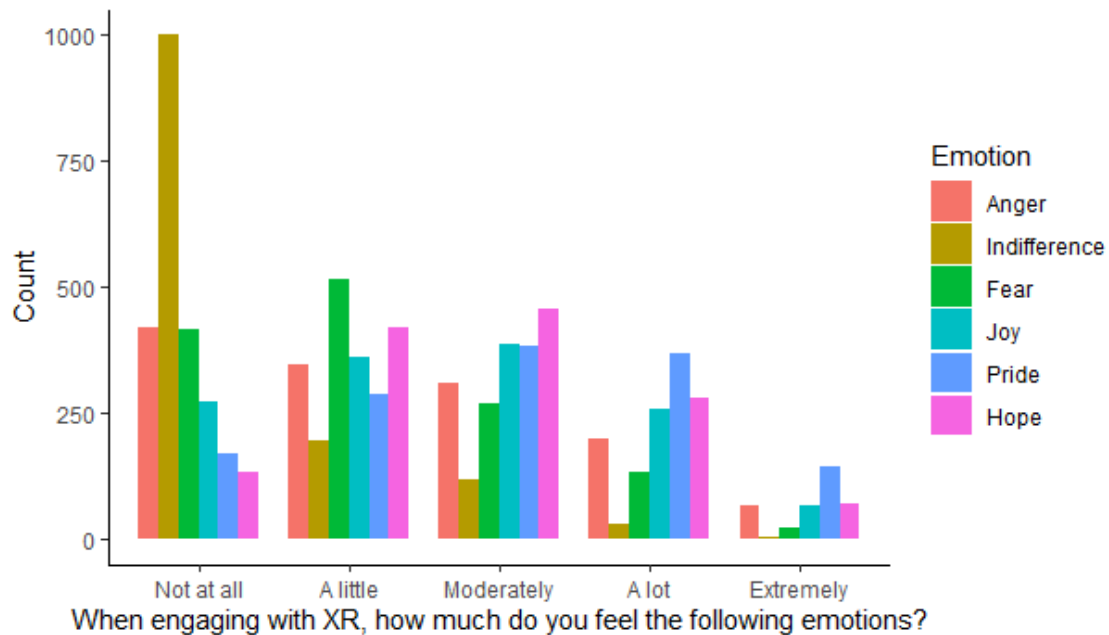


Figure 5 The extent to which respondents feel a range of emotions when engaging with XR.

Effectiveness of XR

The overwhelming feeling amongst respondents is that XR is “Somewhat” effective in achieving all seven of the goals they were asked about. In terms of where respondents felt XR was most effective, this was in the social domain: 47% of people felt that XR is effective to a large extent or to a very large extent in strengthening solidarity within the climate activist movement and 30% in improving media coverage. On the other hand, when it comes to influencing governmental action, 71% felt that climate activism in the UK was not at all or to a minimal extent effective in increasing government protection for vulnerable populations. Similar negative perceptions were felt around encouraging government action to rapidly reduce CO2 emission (56%) and in Increasing regulation of companies that pollute the environment (57%). Figure 6 shows this in more detail.

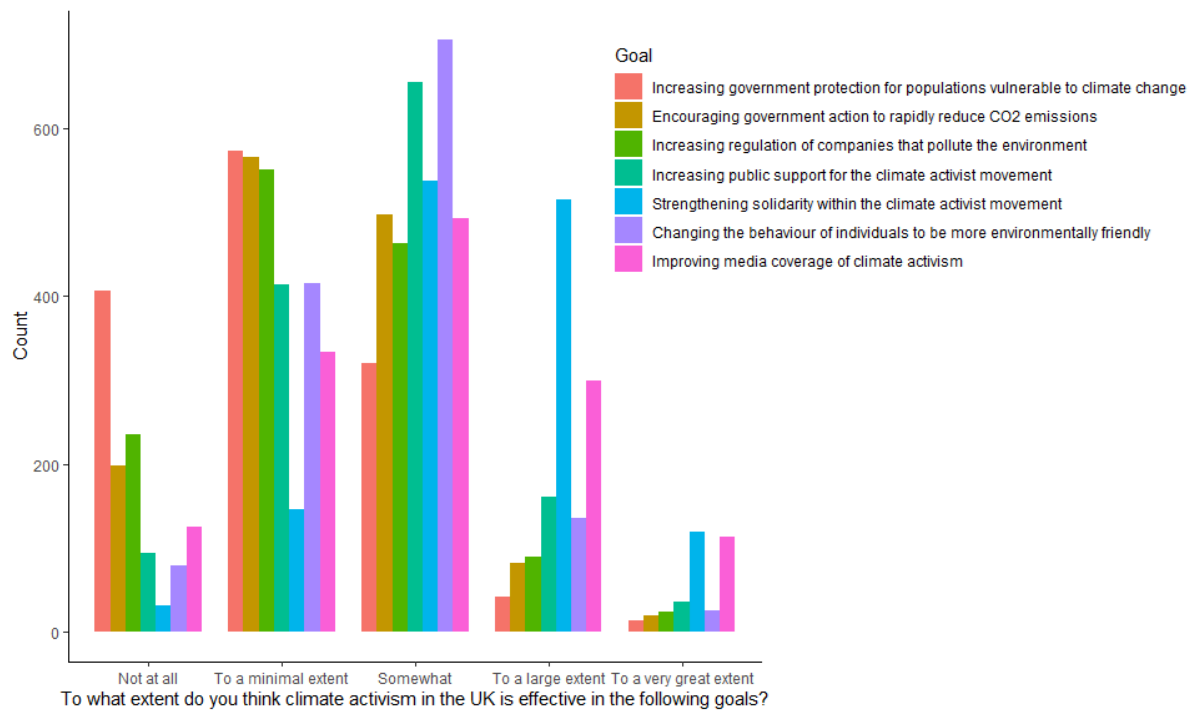


Figure 6 Respondents' views on the effectiveness of climate activism in the UK in achieving goals.

Participative-efficacy

In addition, respondents were asked how much they felt that they, as an individual, can contribute to the climate movement's success. A huge 57% of respondents feel that they can contribute to the climate movement's success not at all or (only) a little. Perhaps more surprisingly, therefore 43% felt they could make a difference, moderately, a lot or extremely! Figure 7 shows the breakdown of responses.

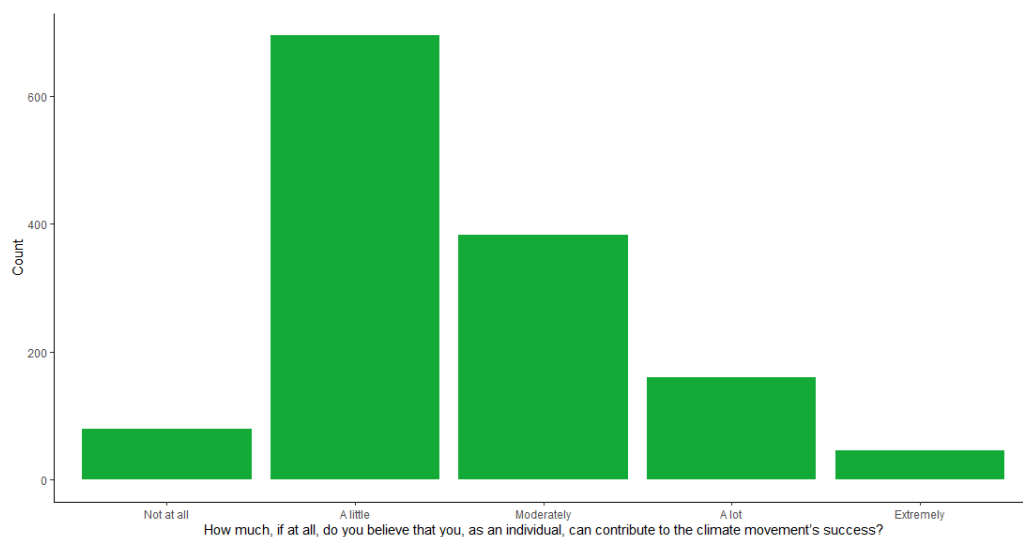


Figure 7 The extent to which respondents feel they can personally, as an individual, contribute to the success of the climate movement.

Strategy

Respondents were asked about their opinions of the two recent shifts in XR strategy, firstly in 2023, a permanent⁴ move away from targeted public disruption and then a temporary move away from non-violent direct action (NVDA) for The Big One event in April 2023. Figure 8 shows the responses.

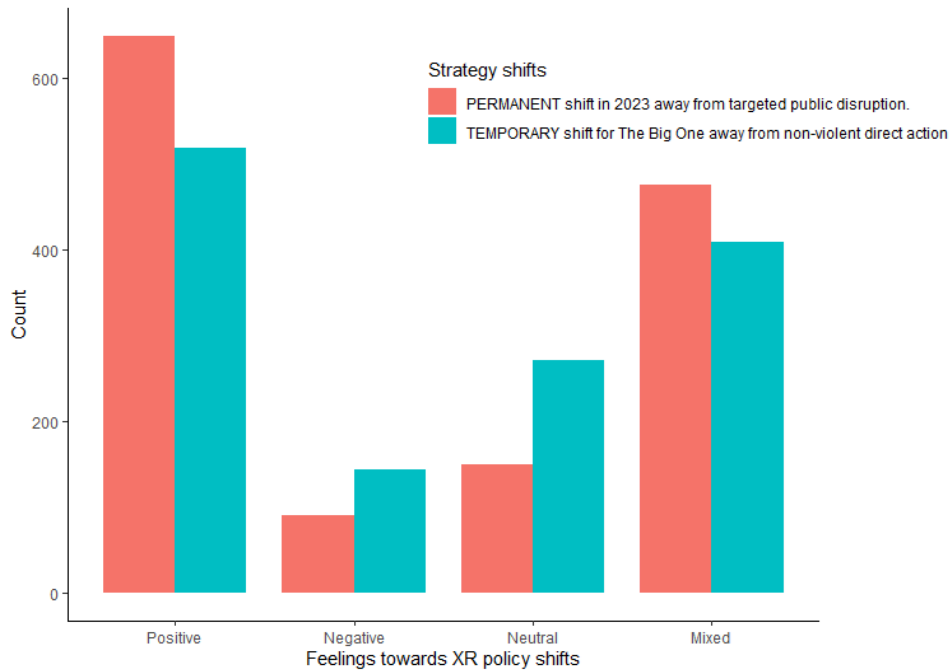


Figure 8 Feelings about the permanent shift in XR policy in 2023 to move away from targeted public disruption and then a temporary move away from non-violent direct action (NVDA) for The Big One event in April 2023.

Overall, the general sentiment towards both shifts is positive, which was the most common response for both the permanent (48%) and temporary (39%) shifts in strategy. Only 7% of respondents felt negatively about the permanent shift and 11% the temporary.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to leave an open-text comment about their feelings towards these changes and Pete Gardner has produced an excellent analysis of these qualitative responses. It can be found [here](#). The text responses offered a more nuanced picture of respondents' opinions and the executive summary offers an overview:

“The general mood on the strategy across all 1175 respondents could be summarised with one response: “I feel that it’s safer and more inclusive but less effective now”. Positive perspectives included increased safety and security for activists, greater inclusivity, coalition-building, recruitment of people unwilling or unable to engage in arrestable protest, and critiques of public disruption as

⁴ DAIC has been reminded that the “We Quit” message was not intended as permanent at the time, but this was the question asked.

garnering disapproval from the public, negative reportage in the media, and failure to change policy. Meanwhile, criticisms of the strategy included a feeling that XR had lost a key part of its founding identity, that recent protests - including The Big One - were ineffective, gained little to no traction with the media, policymakers or public, that gains in recruitment have been limited or short-term, and that the “We Quit” messaging caused problems for the movement. Those who have experienced arrest, court, or prison for their activism tended to feel betrayed by the change of strategy. More neutral responses included the idea that the strategy allowed to create clear water between XR as a moderate flank and JSO and others as radical flanks. Many felt unsure about the relative effectiveness of different strategies. Among those supportive of the strategy, strong support was vocalised for the development of strategies that are able to ramp up XR’s impact and public engagement in the short term.”

Further quantitative analysis of the data split respondents by their time on the mailing list. Surprisingly little variance was found between responses based on this variable, with slightly more long-term members (7.86% of members versus 4.78% on average in other groups) feeling negatively towards the permanent shift. Forty-six percent of long-term members still said they felt positive about the permanent shift. Likewise, opinion of the strategy changes did not seem to differ based on level of past participation, the results of which can be found [here](#).

Climate change and biodiversity loss

Overall, 84% of respondents said they were extremely worried about climate change and 79% about biodiversity loss. Slightly more (3% v 1.6%) respondents worry ‘Not at all’, ‘A little’ or ‘Moderately’ about biodiversity compared to climate change.

Perceptions of repression

Figure 9 shows how likely respondents think climate protesters are to experience a range of surveillance or repression tools in the UK. ‘Likely’ was the most common response for all variables asked about, other than for surveillance, for which the most common response was ‘Very likely’.

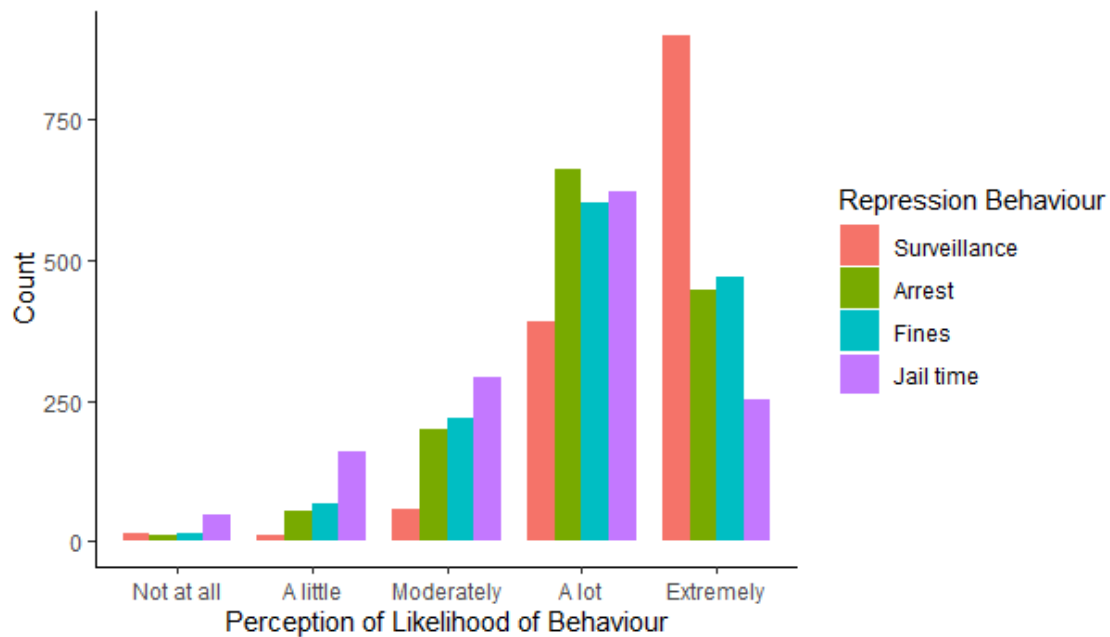


Figure 9 Perceptions of the risk of climate protests in the UK experiencing a range of repressive behaviours.

A third of respondents reported having experienced surveillance (36%) and fewer arrest (13%), fines (7%) or jail time (1%). However, this means that more than 1 in 10 respondents (173 respondents) report having experienced arrest as a climate protestor.

Most respondents (92%) feel that the state policing of climate protests has ‘increased a little’ (18%) or ‘increased a lot’ (74%) over the last two years.

Attitudes towards repression

In terms of the emotions respondents feel towards the way in which the UK justice system is currently treating climate protests, people more strongly felt anger and outrage. There was a more mixed amount of contempt and less fear amongst the respondents. (Again, for more detailed graphics, you can find all descriptive statistics [here](#).)

Please note: repression is one of the areas in which DAIC are conducting more in-depth analysis and a link will be added here to that research when it is completed.

Barriers to engagement

Figure 10 shows the extent to which a series of barriers have reduced respondents’ participation in XR. The barrier that the most respondents cited as reducing their involvement in the movement was other commitments. Only 13% of respondents said that this did not reduce their involvement at all. Lack of knowledge about the movement, disapproval from other people outside the movement and not feeling

represented in XR were not seen by most (over 50%) as barriers to participation. Vulnerability to aggression or arrest was seen as reducing participation by a lot and extremely by 14% and 7% of respondents respectively.

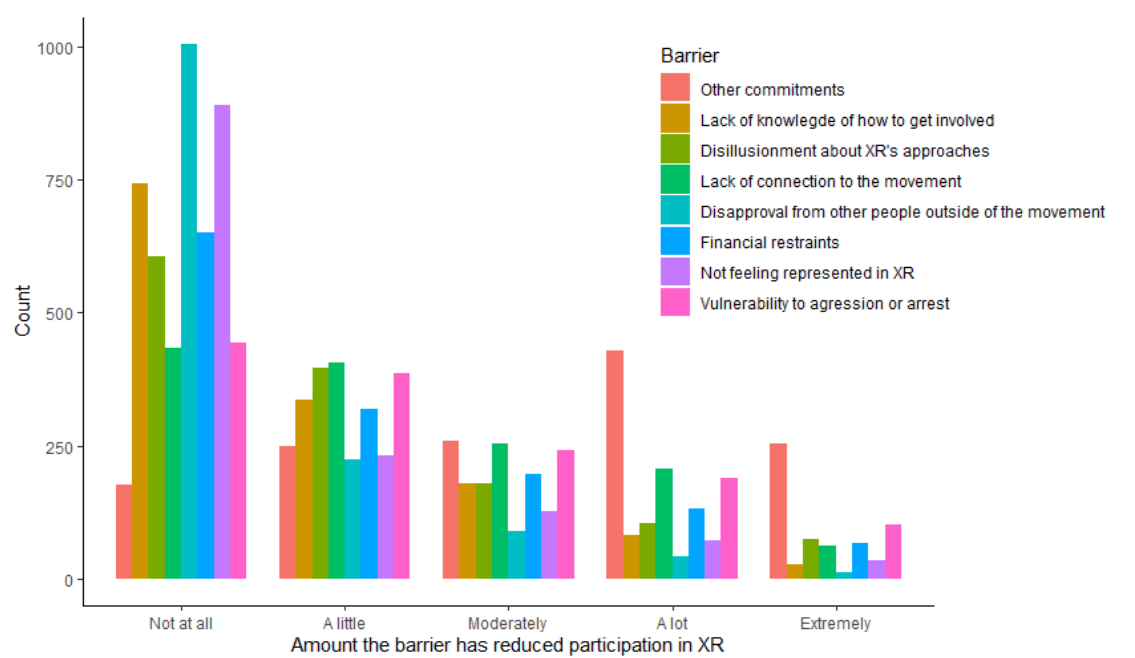


Figure 10 The amount to which a range of barriers have reduced respondents’ participation in XR.

Please note: barriers to engagement is one of the areas in which DAIC are conducting more in-depth analysis and a link will be added here to that research when it is completed.

Further information

If you have any questions about this report, or you would like any of the variables analysed in combination with others, the DAIC team would be happy to help. Please contact @jennydouch with your request.