



Act Green 2023

Understanding audience attitudes
towards the role of cultural organisations
in tackling the climate emergency

Benchmark Report – September 2023

77%

of audiences and visitors think cultural organisations have a responsibility to influence society to make radical change in response to the climate emergency

“

“By raising awareness, shaping attitudes and inspiring action, cultural organisations can drive positive change towards a more sustainable future.”

- Act Green respondent 2023



Indigo Share is the collective approach to audience insight for the cultural sector.

Find out more: indigo-ltd.com/share

Act Green is an [Indigo Share: Hot Topic](#). Hot Topics are designed to respond at pace to current sector challenges and the changing environment.

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Please reference any data you quote or publish from this report as follows:

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This research was free for cultural organisations in the UK to take part in thanks to generous support from our research sponsors

SUPERCOOL.

Introduction from Indigo



indigo **Katy Raines**
Founder & CEO

The results of this year's *Act Green* clearly show what audiences and visitors perceive the role of cultural organisations to be in tackling the climate emergency. They have high expectations for what organisations should be doing to reduce their own carbon emissions, and how they should be facilitating conversations and inspiring action in their communities.

There is a challenge for organisations to effectively communicate what they're doing and engage audiences to help them reach their sustainability goals through provision of information and infrastructure, as well as taking a creative role in imagining a different future for us all.

We are so grateful to the 86 cultural organisations who took part in Act Green 2023, and to research sponsors Supercool whose support meant we could offer the research free to the sector.

This was a collective effort, and we hope the results will benefit the whole sector.

Introduction from research sponsors Supercool



SUPERCOOL. Kate Mroczkowski
Strategy Director

Understanding what your audiences expect, and would like you to do, when it comes to the climate crisis helps cultural organisations join up sustainability goals with your audience engagement and development goals.

In the current climate it can be overwhelming. Where do you start? And how do you enact meaningful change when resources are limited and there are long to-do lists to get through? Last year's *Act Green* gave us all a starting point, a clear direction on what matters most to our audiences.

The data shows that audiences still feel cultural organisations have an important role to play in influencing society about climate change. And 52% of audiences would be willing to support fundraising activity focused on the climate crisis. But balancing audience perceptions with impact can be challenging. But once we know what audiences expect, we can educate and inform, reducing our impact on the planet whilst meeting audience expectations.

At Supercool, we take great care in trading lightly on the planet and help our clients to do the same. Supporting this research is a great opportunity for us to have a meaningful impact on the cultural sector. We hope everyone benefits from the findings and resources in the report.

Context

In May 2022, Indigo Ltd released the results of the first *Act Green* survey. Its aim was to understand more about what audiences expected from cultural organisations in tackling the climate emergency, and what part they were willing to play.

The results of the 2022 *Act Green* have been used widely by organisations to inform their communications strategies, by Theatre Green Book and to inform a new pilot project funded by Arts Council England exploring sustainable audience travel.

In running *Act Green* again, we aimed to generate responses from a wider range of cultural attenders and sought particularly to involve museums, galleries and cinemas in addition to performing arts organisations. We are pleased to have achieved that.

As audience specialists, we want to empower the whole sector with an understanding of audiences, helping to improve communications with audiences and increase audience engagement with and awareness of sustainability initiatives.

Methodology

Cultural organisations in the UK, including theatres, arts centres, festivals, touring companies, museums and galleries, were invited to participate in the *Act Green* research. The research was open to all cultural organisations in the UK, and it was free for organisations to take part.

Organisations were each provided with a unique link to send out to a recommended sample of around 3,000 - 5,000 of their previous attenders. They were provided with a link to see the results from their own organisation in real time, and the results from all organisations were then aggregated to form the baseline data set.

The survey ran throughout July 2023 and during that month, 17,479 complete responses were gathered through 86 cultural organisations.

Act Green 2023: Participating organisations

Aberdeen Performing Arts
Anvil Arts
Ayr Gaiety Partnership
Birmingham Hippodrome
Blackpool Grand Theatre
Bradford Theatres
Brighton Dome & Brighton Festival
Bristol Old Vic
Byre Theatre, University of St Andrews
Cast
Castlefield Gallery
Chapter Cardiff Ltd
City of Birmingham Symphony
Orchestra
Compass Live Art
Compton Verney
Corn Exchange Newbury
Curve
Dance Consortium
Eden Court Highlands
Edinburgh International Festival
Farnham Maltings
Harewood House

Henry Moore Institute
Henry Moore Studios & Gardens
HOME
Hope Mill Theatre
Howard Assembly Room
Hull Truck Theatre
Ikon Gallery
Leeds City Council
Leeds Heritage Theatres
Leeds Playhouse
Lichfield Garrick Theatre
Little London Arts
Lyric Theatre, Belfast
Maltings Berwick Trust
Manchester Art Gallery
Manchester Craft and Design Centre
Manchester Histories
Manchester Jewish Museum
Manchester Libraries (Manchester City Council)
Manchester Literature Festival
Manchester Museum
Mayflower Theatre

Midlands Arts Centre
MK Gallery
Music at Oxford
National Football Museum
NEC Group
Newcastle Theatre Royal
Northern Ballet
Northern Stage
Octagon Theatre
Open Eye Gallery
Opera North
Oxford Playhouse
Queen's Film Theatre
Reform Radio CIC
Rose Theatre
Royal Northern College of Music
Royal Shakespeare Company
Sage Gateshead
Showroom Cinema
Taliesin Arts Centre
Tête à Tête
The Courtyard
The Hippodrome

The Library Presents (Cambridgeshire County Council)
The Lowry Centre
The MAC
The Market Place Theatre Armagh
The North Wall Arts Centre
The Place Theatre, Bedford
The Point and The Berry Theatre
The Roses Theatre
The Stoller Hall
The Y Theatre
Theatre by the Lake
Theatre Royal Wakefield
Three Choirs Festival
Turner Contemporary
Turner Sims Southampton
Watermans
Waterside
Yvonne Arnaud Theatre
Z-arts

Act Green 2023: Key stats

Survey overview

86 Participating organisations

17,479 Audience responses

Cultural audiences and the climate crisis

87% of cultural audiences are worried about climate crisis

93% have made changes to their lifestyle

The role of cultural organisations

77% think cultural organisations have a responsibility to influence society about the climate emergency

17% think cultural organisations place great importance on the role they play in the climate emergency

Organisations and sustainability initiatives

93% expect organisations to ensure their buildings are as energy efficient as possible

91% expect organisations to ensure materials are reused after an event or exhibition

94% expect organisations to be reducing and recycling waste

90% expect organisations to avoid disposable packaging and single-use plastic

Getting audiences involved

51% want to actively play their part in supporting a cultural organisation's sustainability efforts

92% would reduce their use of disposable packing and single use plastic at venues

66% want more information about how to travel sustainably

67% Would choose more sustainable food options at cultural venues if given the choice

Act Green 2023: Summary findings

- 1 Cultural audiences and visitors are concerned about the climate emergency and the majority have made changes to their lifestyle to help tackle it.
- 2 They think organisations are not doing enough or feel that they are not communicating what they are doing effectively.
- 3 Audiences and visitors want to play their part to help organisations fulfil their sustainability goals but need information and infrastructure to help them do that.
- 4 Audiences see cultural organisations having a role in leading the way and facilitating conversations about the climate emergency – but they don't want to feel they are being told off or 'preached at'.
- 5 Audiences recognise the unique power cultural organisations hold, both individually and collectively, to influence society at all levels.

Act Green 2023

Full results



Sections

- Section 1: Respondent and organisation profile
- Section 2: Cultural audiences and the climate emergency
- Section 3: The role of cultural organisations
- Section 4: Organisations and sustainability initiatives
- Section 5: Getting audiences involved

Section 1

Respondent and organisation profile

What types of cultural organisations took part and who from their audiences responded to the Act Green survey?



Overview:

86 Participating organisations

17,479 Audience responses



Location

England - 74
Scotland - 6
Northern Ireland - 4
Wales - 2



Age

9% - under 35
30% - 35 to 54
60% - 55 or over



Type

Theatre - 30
Arts Centre - 19
Museum/Gallery - 12
Other - 25



Profile

16% have children under 16
14% identify as disabled



Frequency

43% attend at least once a month



Support of culture

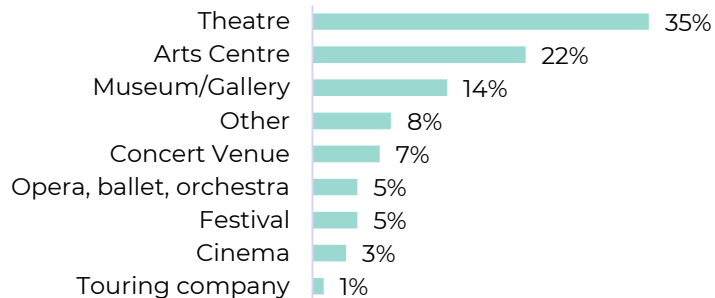
39% give regularly
64% have previously donated

Participating organisations: location and types

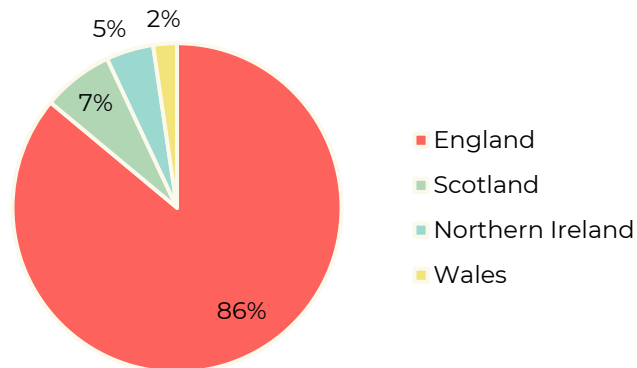
86 Participating organisations

17,479 Audience responses

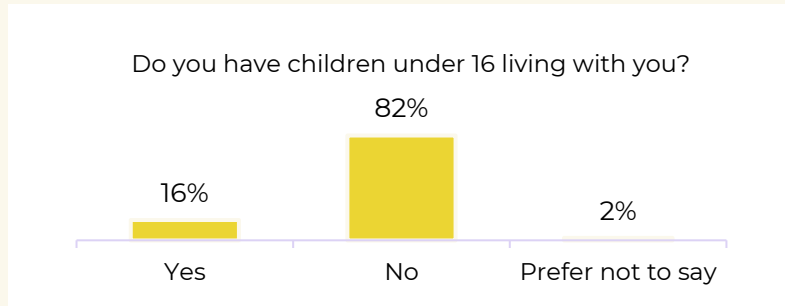
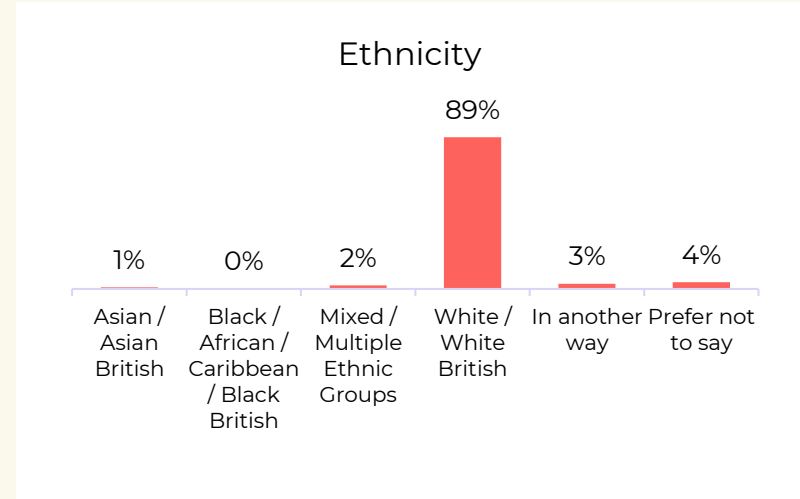
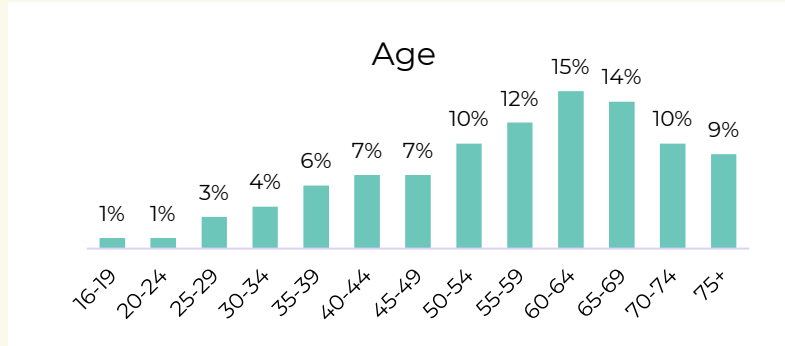
Types of participating organisation



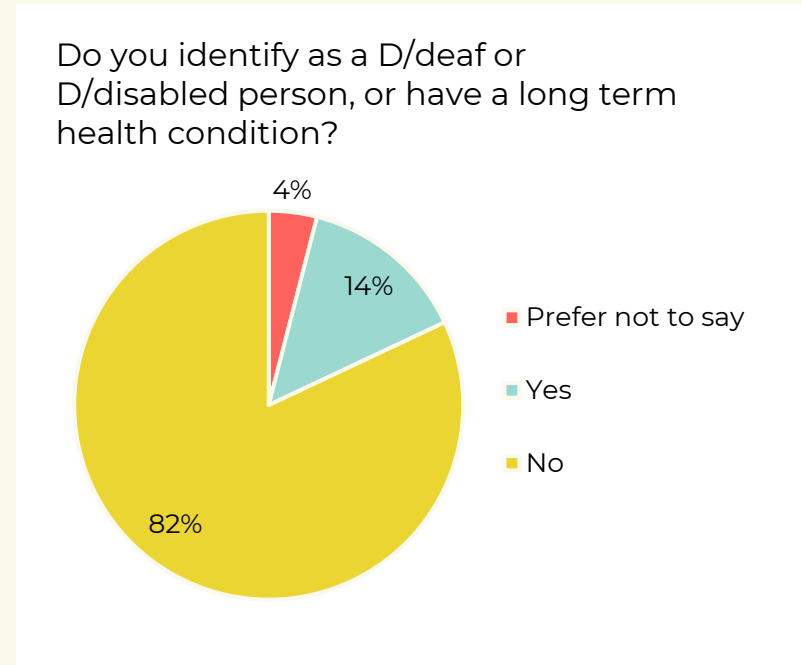
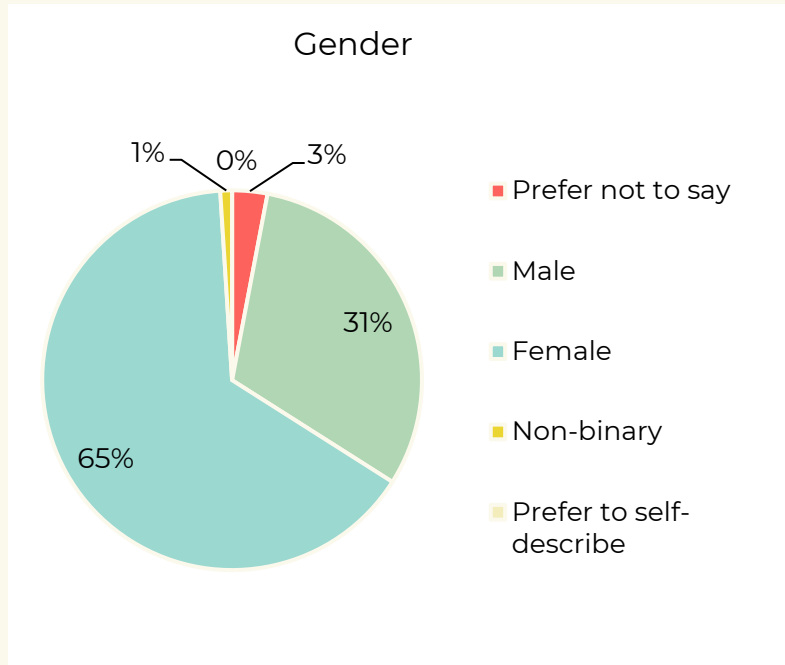
Location of participating organisations



Respondent profile: age, ethnicity, children under 16

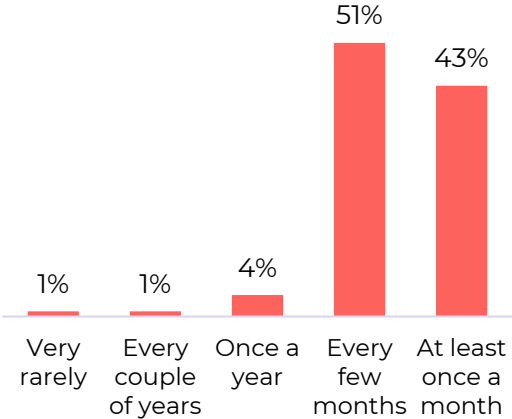


Respondent profile: gender and disability

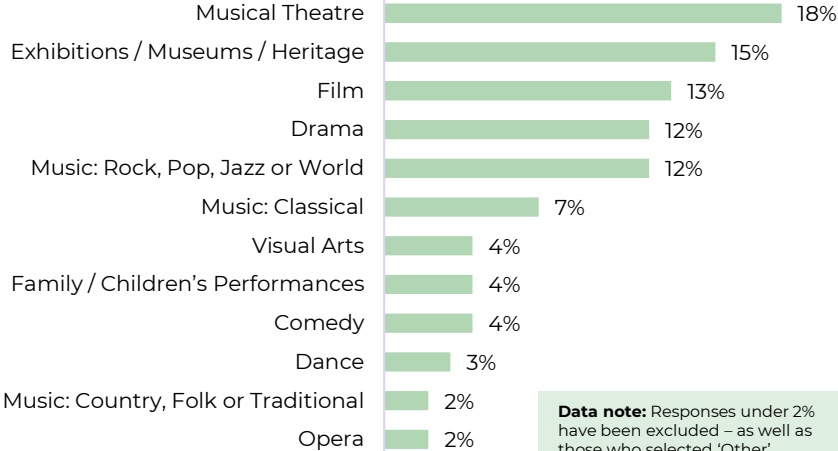


Respondents are frequent attenders who go to a wide range of types of cultural events

How frequently would you say you attend arts and cultural events or venues?

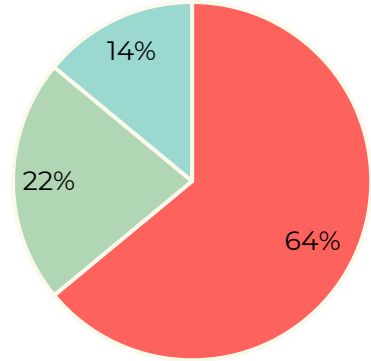


Which artform do you tend to go to most regularly?



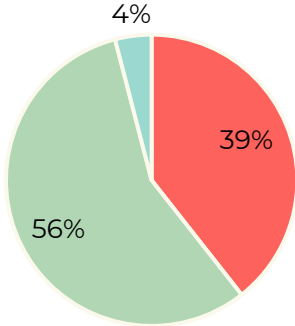
The majority of respondents have made a donation in the past to a cultural organisation and more than a third are regular supporters

Have you ever made a donation to a cultural organisation?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure

Are you a regular supporter of any cultural organisations e.g. through a membership scheme?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure

Section 2

Cultural audiences and the climate emergency

How concerned are cultural audiences about the climate emergency?



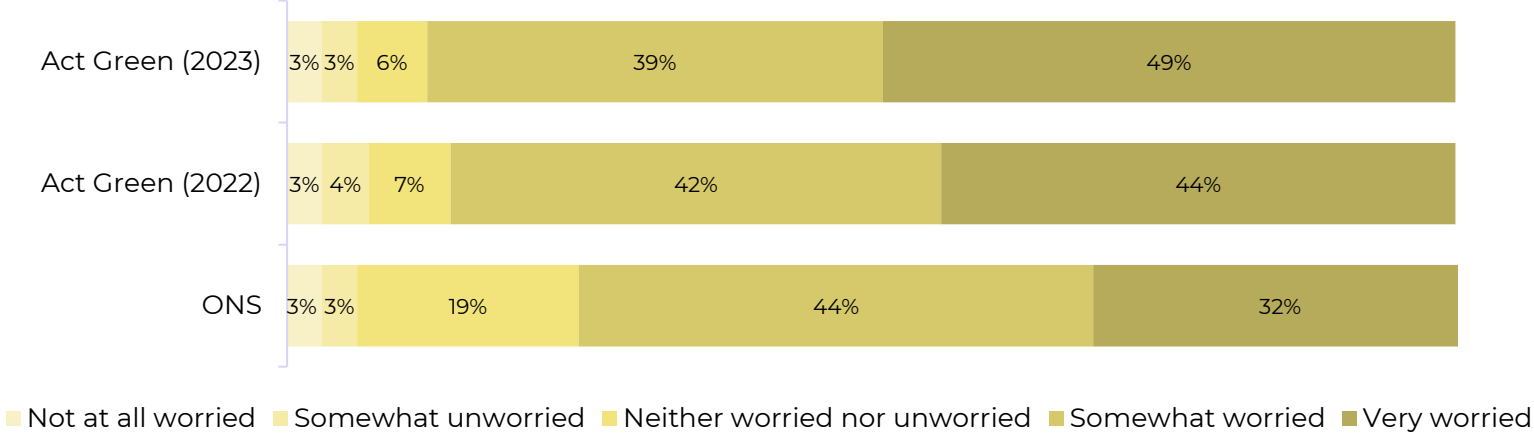
Key findings:

- **88%** of cultural audiences are worried about the impact of climate change, compared to **76%** of the general population.
- Concern is high across all age groups, though there is slight variation by age – **92%** of Under 35s are worried compared to **87%** of over 55s are worried.
- **93%** of respondents have made changes to their lifestyle to tackle climate change.

Note: Responses in this section are compared with Office for National Statistics data relating to the general population: [*Data on public attitudes to the environment and the impact of climate change, Nov 2021*](#)

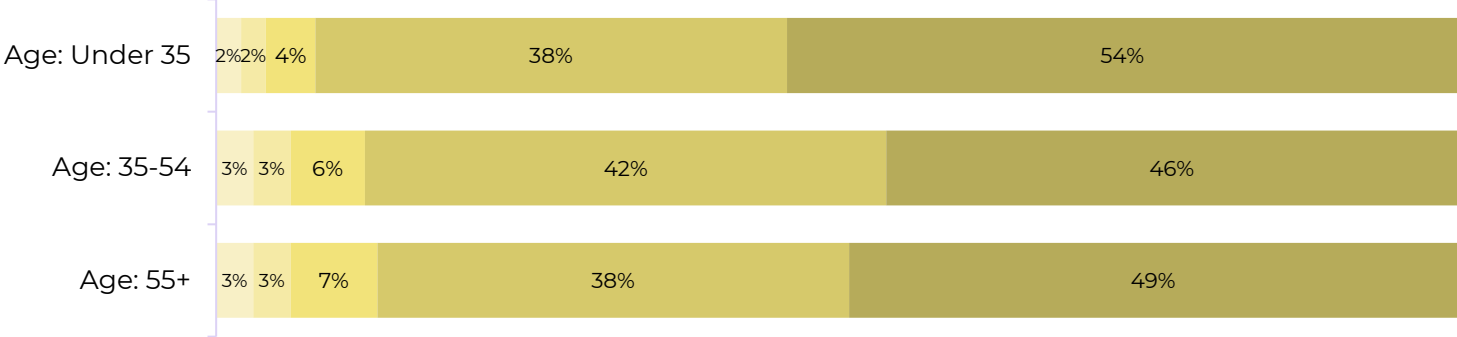
Cultural audiences are **more concerned** about the impact of climate change than the general population and concern has grown slightly since the previous *Act Green* survey in 2022

How worried or unworried are you about the impact of climate change?



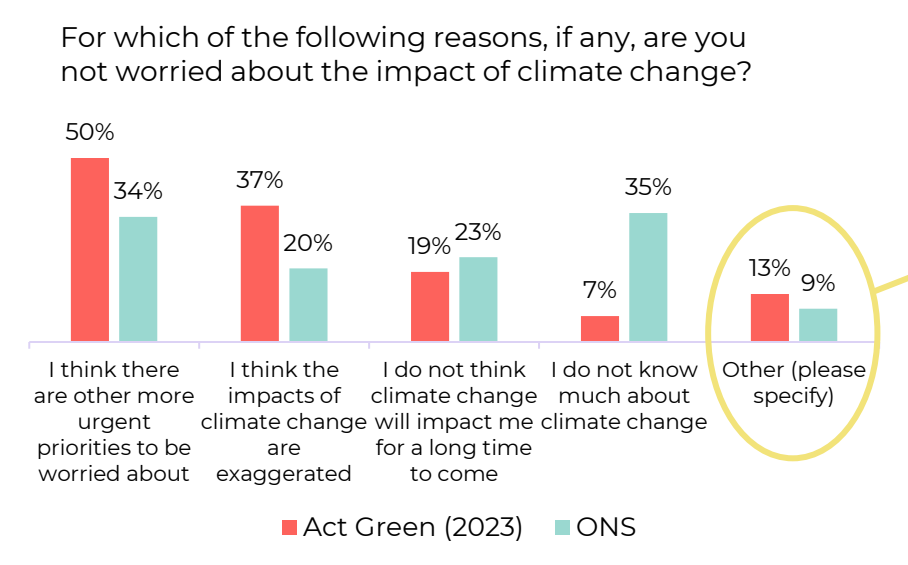
Respondents aged under 35 are most worried – but there is not a huge variation by age, with 87% of over 55s somewhat or very worried

How worried or unworried are you about the impact of climate change?



■ Not at all worried ■ Somewhat unworried ■ Neither worried nor unworried ■ Somewhat worried ■ Very worried

Compared to the general population, Act Green respondents who are not worried (6%) are more likely to think there are more urgent priorities or that the impacts of climate change are exaggerated



“I think we are too late in changing our ways and that climate change is inevitable sadly.”

“Read the data. Climate change does not exist.”

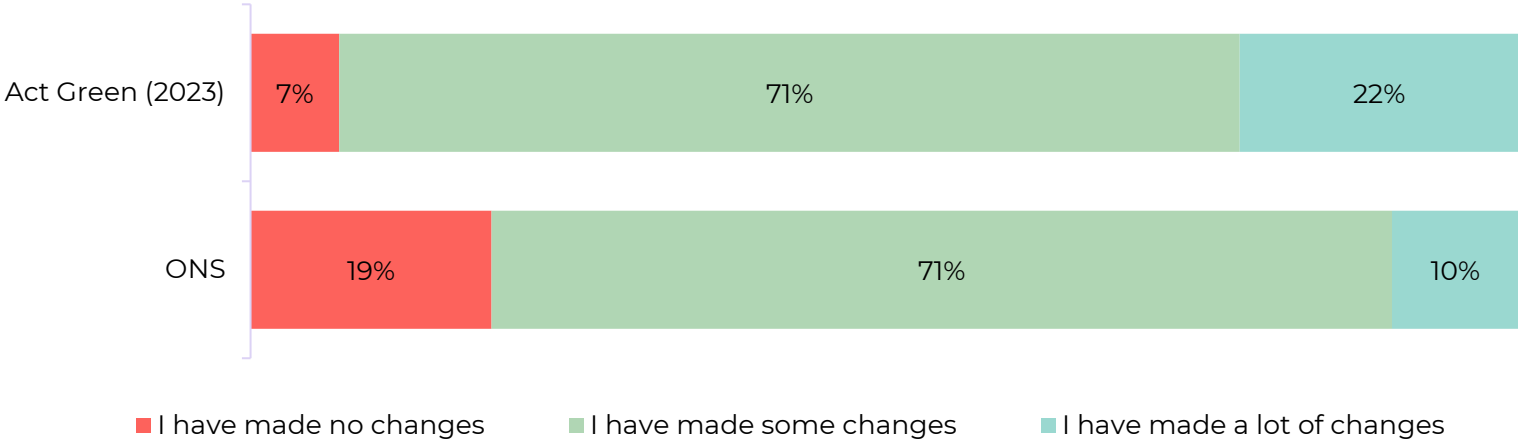
“I will be long dead before any significant changes are noticed”

“Science will overcome the challenges of climate change.”

Data note: question only asked to those who are neutral or not worried about the impact of climate change

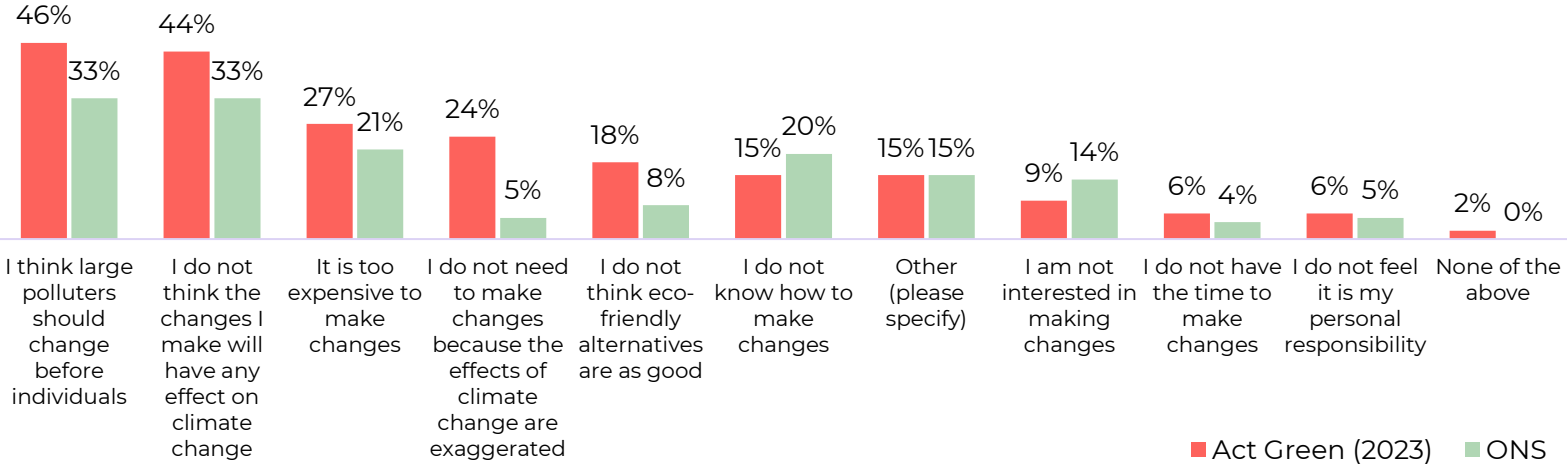
Cultural audiences are more likely to have made changes to their lifestyle to tackle climate change

To what extent have you made changes to your lifestyle to help tackle climate change?



Cultural audiences who have not made changes (7%) think 'large polluters' need to make changes before individuals and their changes would have little impact

Which of the following are reasons you have not made any changes to your lifestyle to tackle climate change?



Data note: question only asked to those who are neutral or not worried about the impact of climate change

A small number are concerned that 'sustainable alternatives' are actually worse for the environment:

“Many of the supposed eco technologies are not actually eco-friendly and are not as energy efficient as existing technology.”

“I believe some alternatives are more damaging.”

Data note: These are responses to the 'Other' option of the previous question, which was only asked to those who are neutral or not worried about the impact of climate change

Others feel they cannot make changes as the infrastructure is not there to allow them:

“Living in a rural area, with little public transport, change is more difficult.”

“It is just not practical (e.g. taking public transport to work), or it is unsafe (e.g. cycling).”

“I am a single house occupier on limited income – my old property is difficult to improve.”

Section 3

The role of cultural organisations

What role do audiences expect the organisations they attend to play in tackling the climate crisis?

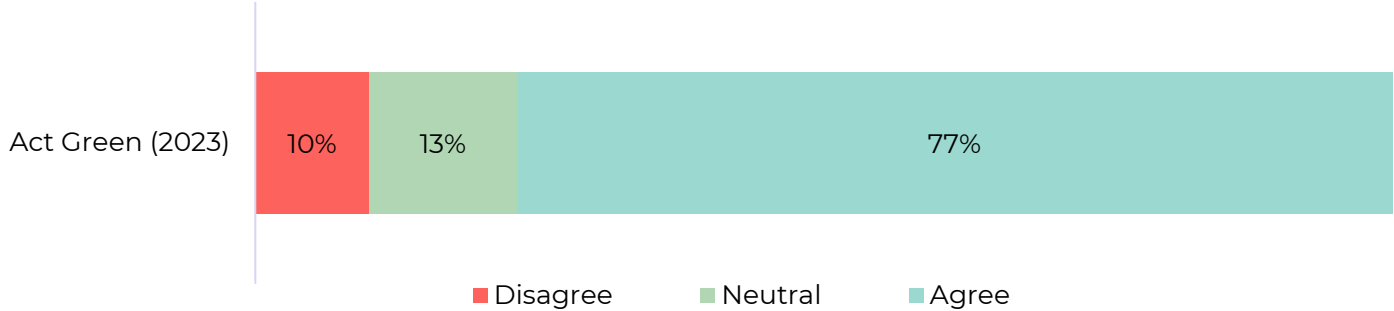


Key findings:

- **77%** of cultural audiences think cultural organisations have a responsibility to influence society to make radical change to address the climate emergency – including **85%** of under 35s.
- **Only 17%** think cultural organisations place great importance on playing an active role in tackling climate change.
- When asked to say how much importance the organisation who sent them the survey places on playing an active role in tackling climate change, **25%** said they don't know.

More than 3 in 4 respondents think cultural organisations have a responsibility to influence society to make radical change to address the climate emergency

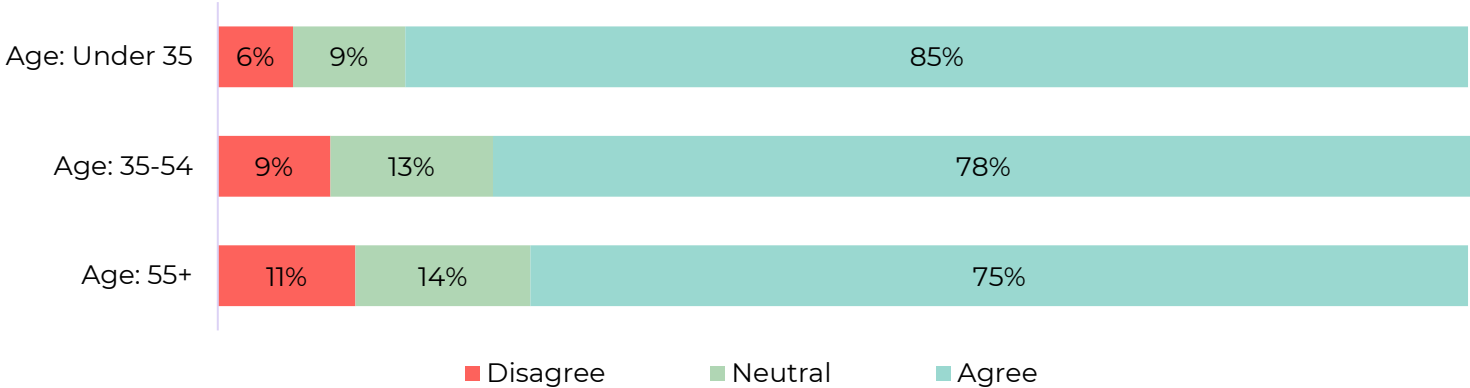
To what extent do you agree with the following statement?
“Cultural organisations have a responsibility to influence society to make radical change to address the climate emergency”



Data comparison:
These are the same as 2022 results

Younger respondents are even more likely to think organisations have a responsibility to influence society to address the climate emergency

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?
“Cultural organisations have a responsibility to influence society to make radical change to address the climate emergency”



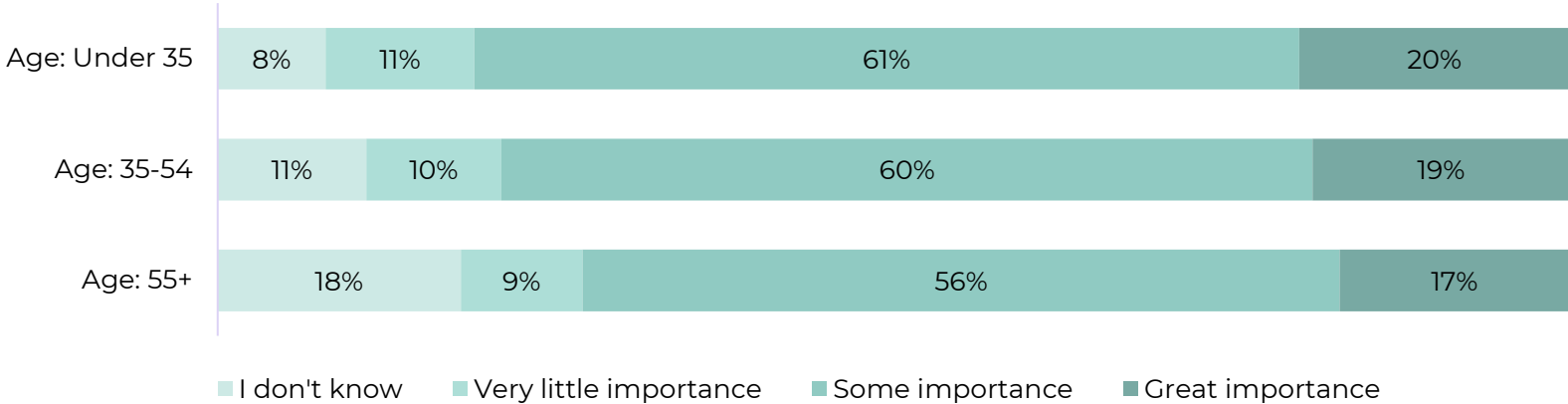
Fewer than 1 in 5 respondents think cultural organisations place great importance on tackling the climate crisis

Thinking generally about the cultural organisations you visit, how much importance do you think they place on playing an active role in tackling climate change?



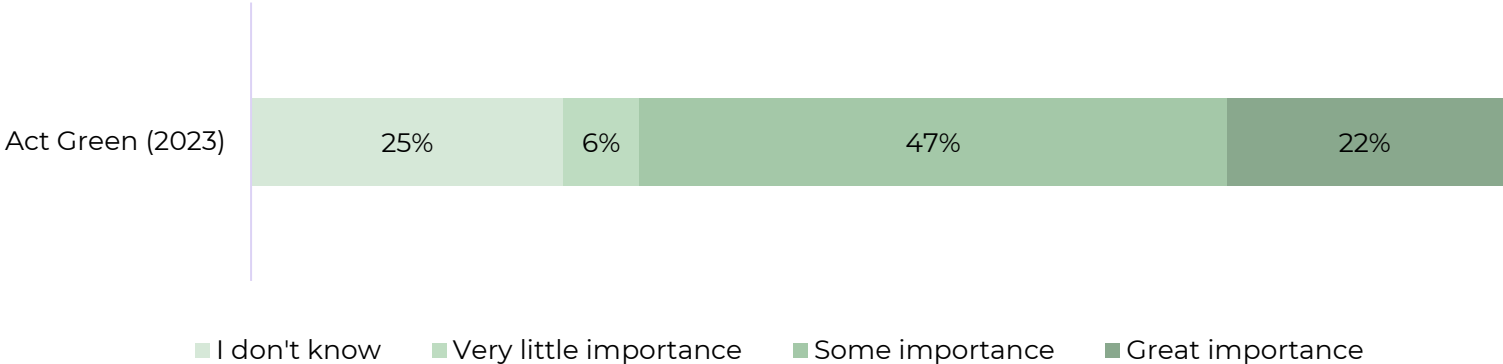
Younger respondents are more likely to have an opinion about this – and more likely to say cultural organisations place at least some importance on tackling climate change

Thinking generally about the cultural organisations you visit, how much importance do you think they place on playing an active role in tackling climate change?



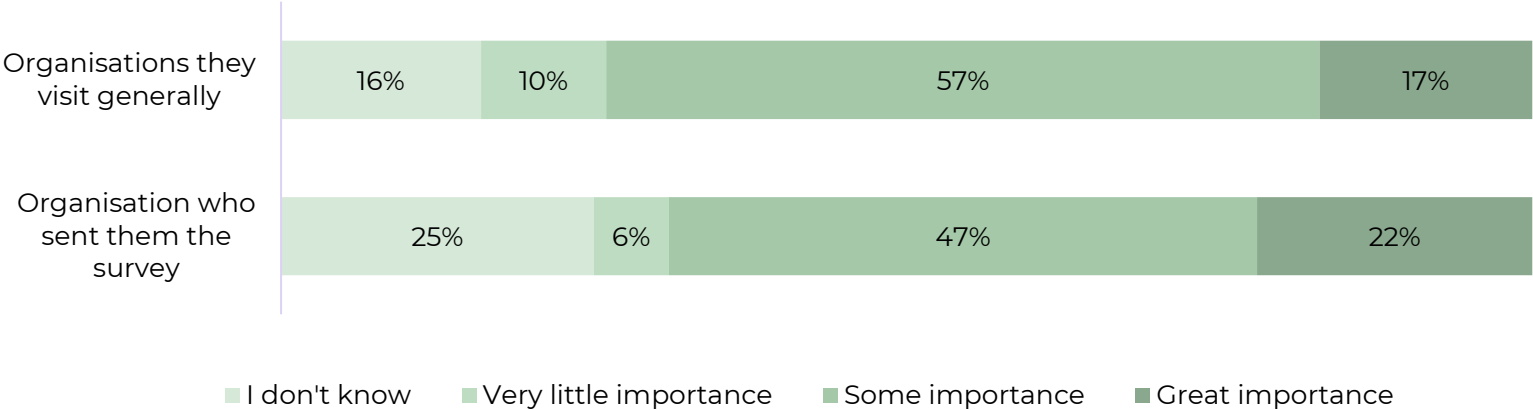
When asked about the specific organisation who sent them the survey, 25% of respondents said they don't know how much importance they place on tackling climate change

Thinking specifically about the organisation who sent you this survey, how much importance do you think they place on playing an active role in tackling climate change?



Respondents are more likely to say they don't know how much importance is placed by cultural organisations when asked about the specific one who sent the survey

Comparison: How much importance do you think cultural organisations place on playing an active role in tackling climate change?



Section 4

Organisations and sustainability initiatives

What sustainability initiatives do audience members expect from cultural organisations and which do they think are the most important?



Key findings:

Respondents had high expectations in many areas – in particular:

- **94%** expect organisations to be reducing and recycling waste.
- **93%** expect organisations to ensure they are as energy efficient as possible.
- **91%** expect them to ensure materials are reused after an event or exhibition.
- **90%** think organisations should avoid disposable packaging and single-use plastic.
- **89%** think they should minimise food waste.
- **88%** expect organisations to provide designated recycling bins.

Note: The questions in this section were structured to match the Theatre Green Book and Arts Green Book.

Theatre Green Book

Arts Green Book

The Theatre Green Book and Arts Green Book brought together practitioners and sustainability experts to create a common standard for making theatre and the arts sustainable. They are free resources for everyone in the cultural sector.

Find out more: theatregreenbook.com / artsgreenbook.com

The questions in the next section were structured to align with the volumes of the Theatre Green Book and Arts Green Book.



Volume One

Sustainable productions

Managing exhibitions or producing events

Curating exhibitions and developing work



Volume Two

Sustainable buildings

Managing cultural buildings or festival sites



Volume Three

Sustainable operations

Engaging with audiences and visitors before and during a visit

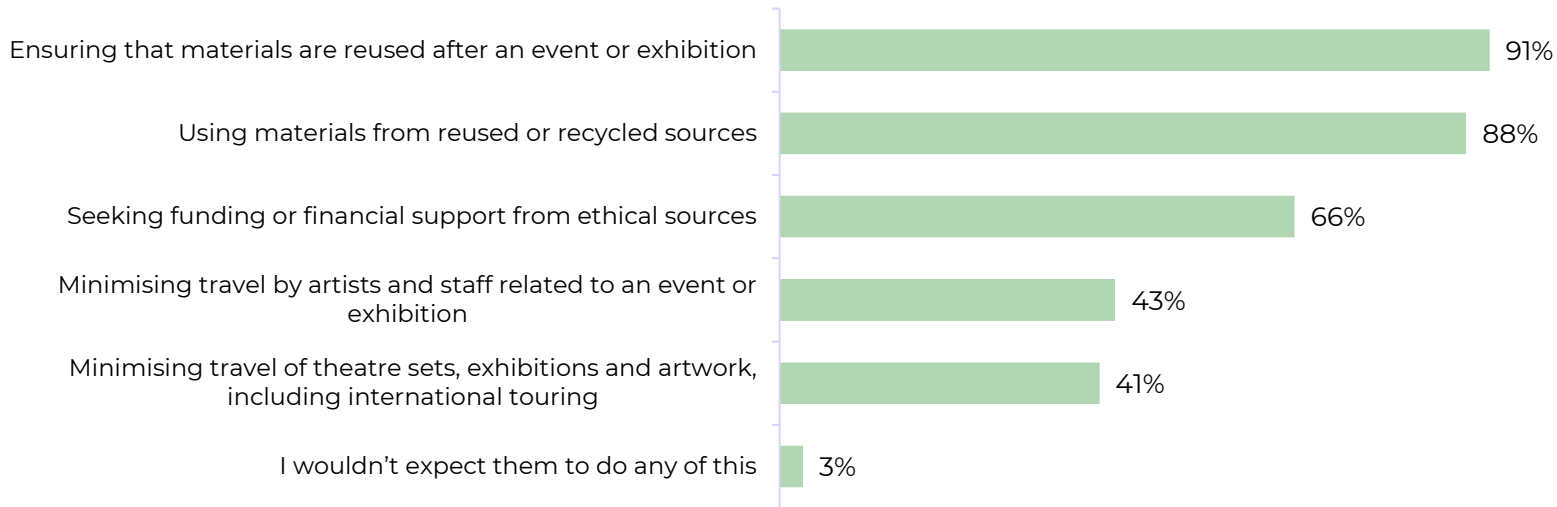
Encouraging sustainable travel

Managing the bar, café or restaurant



Almost all respondents expect organisations to ensure event or exhibition materials are reused or are from a reused or recycled source

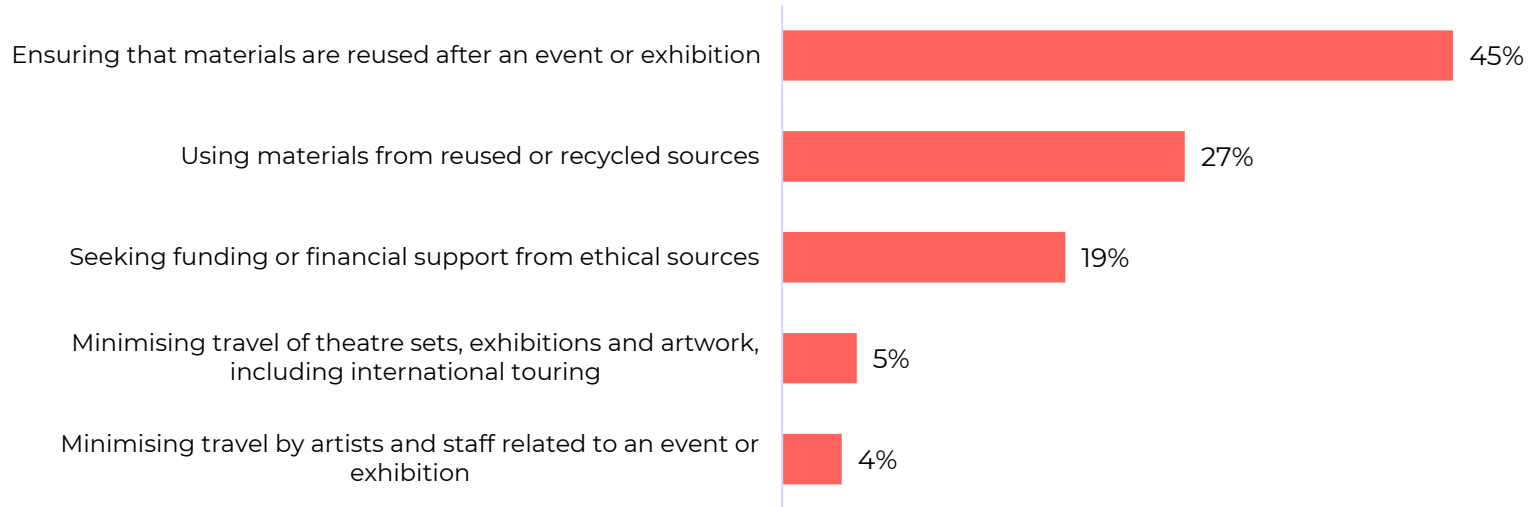
Which of the following would you expect a cultural organisation to be doing to tackle climate change when managing exhibitions or producing events?
(Select all that apply)





When asked which of those was most important to them:

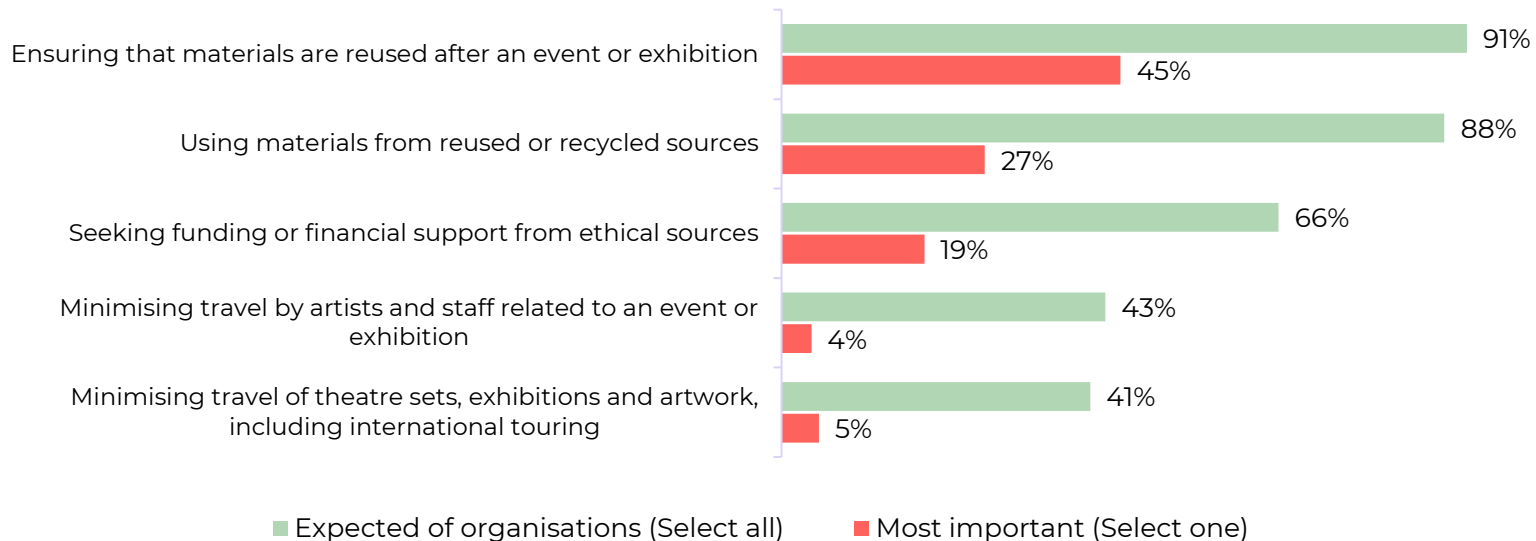
Which of the ones you selected would be the most important to you?
(Select one)





Ensuring materials are reused was most important for 3 in 4 audience members
– but seeking funding from ethical sources was most important for 1 in 5

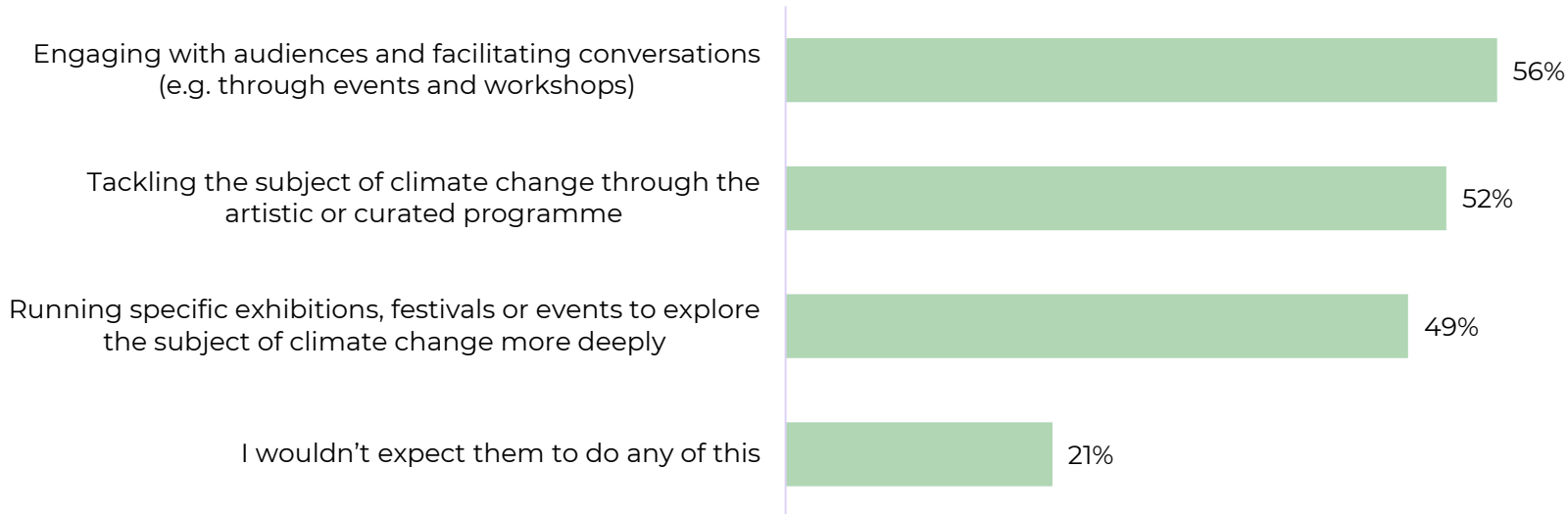
Which of the following would you expect a cultural organisation to be doing to tackle climate change when managing exhibitions or producing events?





More than half expect organisations to engage with audiences and facilitate conversation about the climate emergency

Which of the following would you expect a cultural organisation to be doing to tackle climate change when curating exhibitions and developing work?
(Select all that apply)





When asked which of those was most important to them:

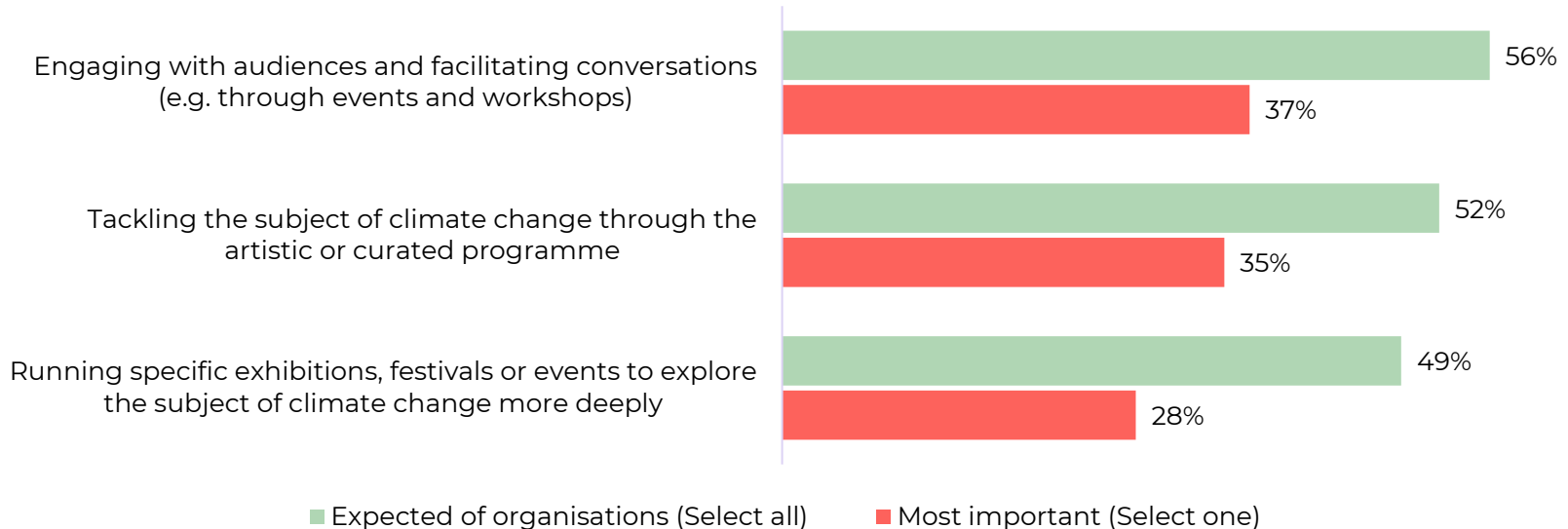
Which of the ones you selected would be the most important to you?
(Select one)





Significant proportions think it is important that sustainability is explored through the artistic programme and specific events

Which of the following would you expect a cultural organisation to be doing to tackle climate change when curating exhibitions and developing work?





When managing buildings, almost all audiences expect organisations to reduce waste and ensure they are as energy efficient as possible

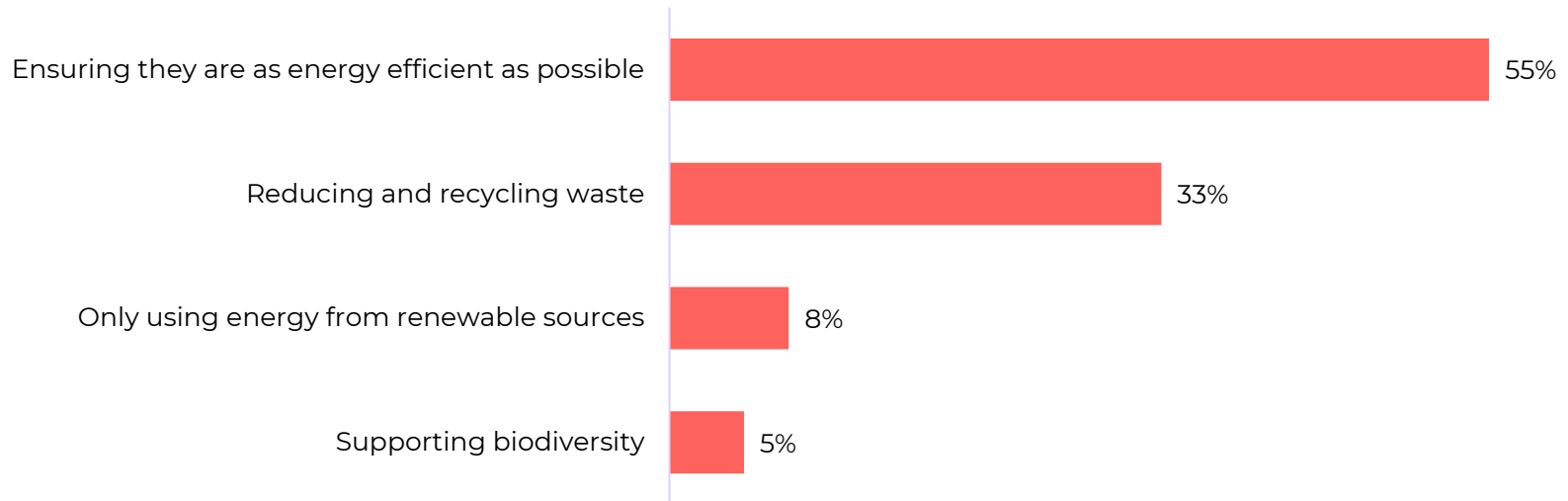
Which of the following would you expect a cultural organisation to be doing to tackle climate change when managing cultural buildings or festival sites? (Select all that apply)





When asked which of those was most important to them:

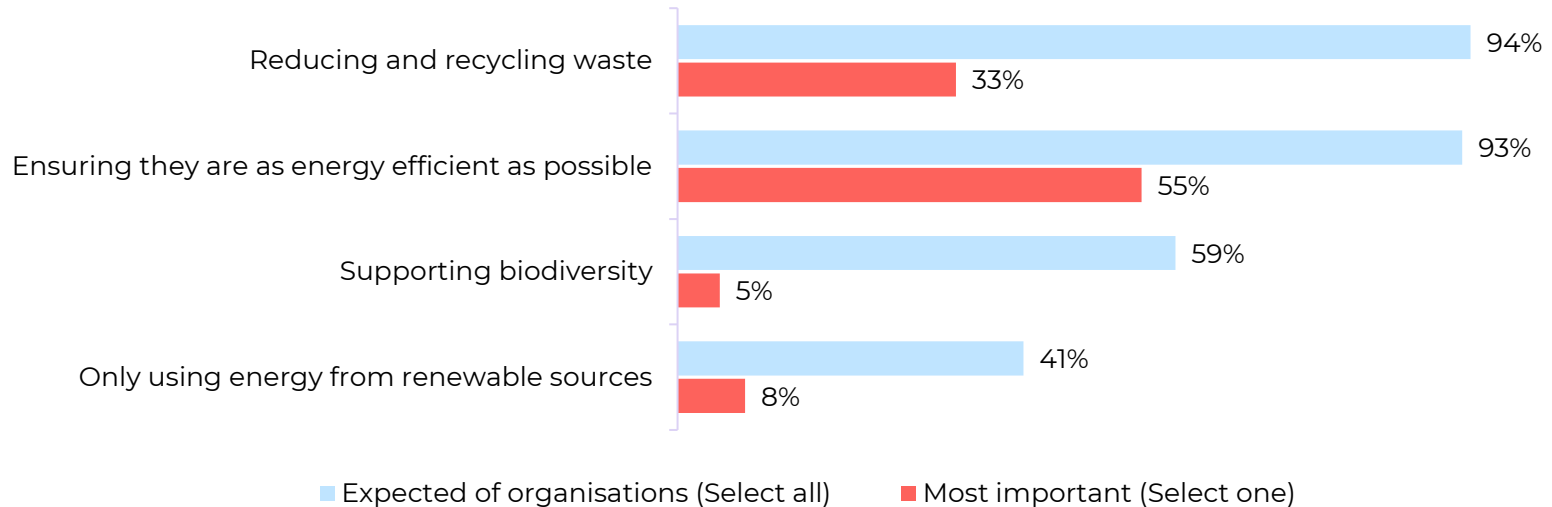
Which of the ones you selected would be the most important to you? (Select one)





For audiences, ensuring energy efficiency is the most important aspect of cultural building management

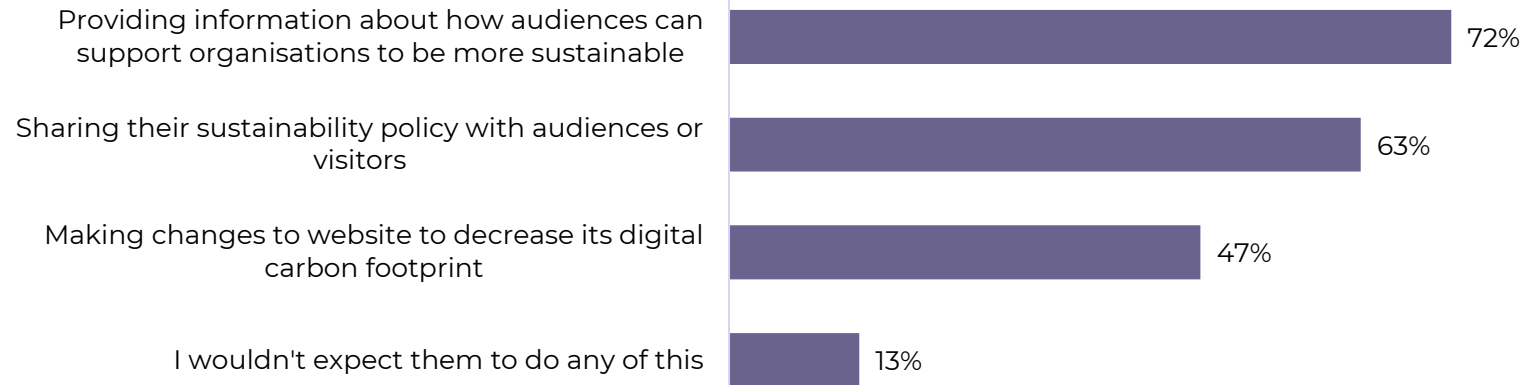
Which of the following would you expect a cultural organisation to be doing to tackle climate change when managing cultural buildings or festival sites?





3 in 4 audiences want information from organisations about how they can act more sustainably

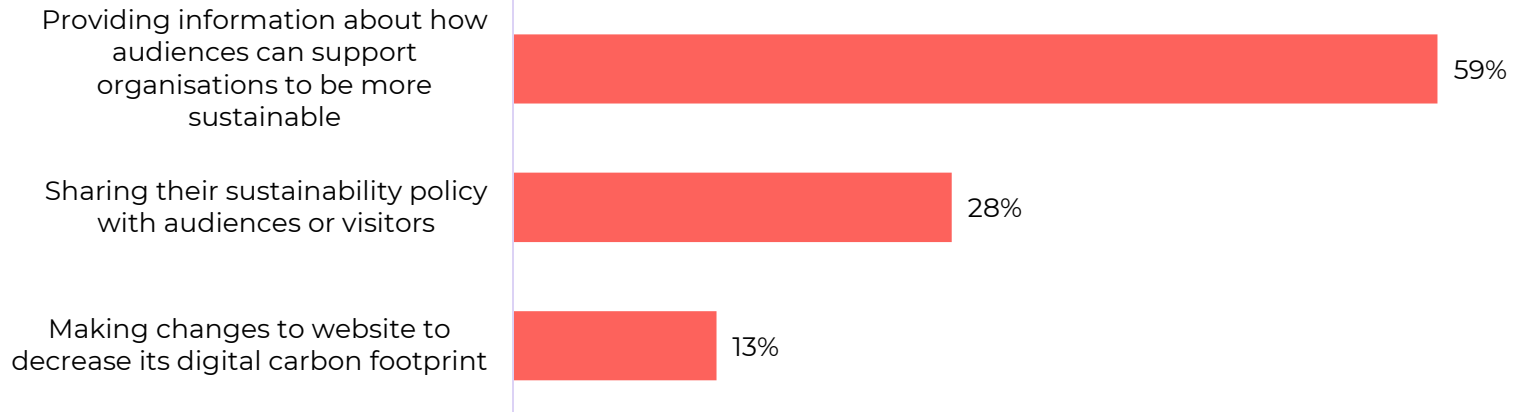
Which of the following would you expect a cultural organisation to be doing to tackle climate change when engaging with audiences and visitors before the event?
(Select all that apply)





When asked which of those was most important to them:

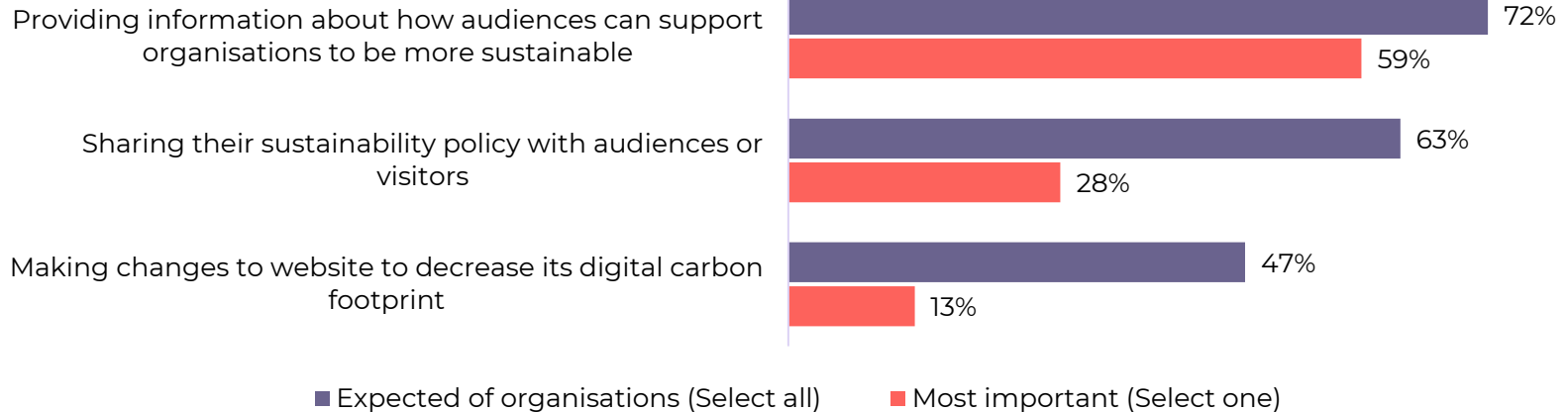
Which of the options you selected would be the most important to see them implement? (Select one)





Receiving more information is the most important thing to majority of audience members

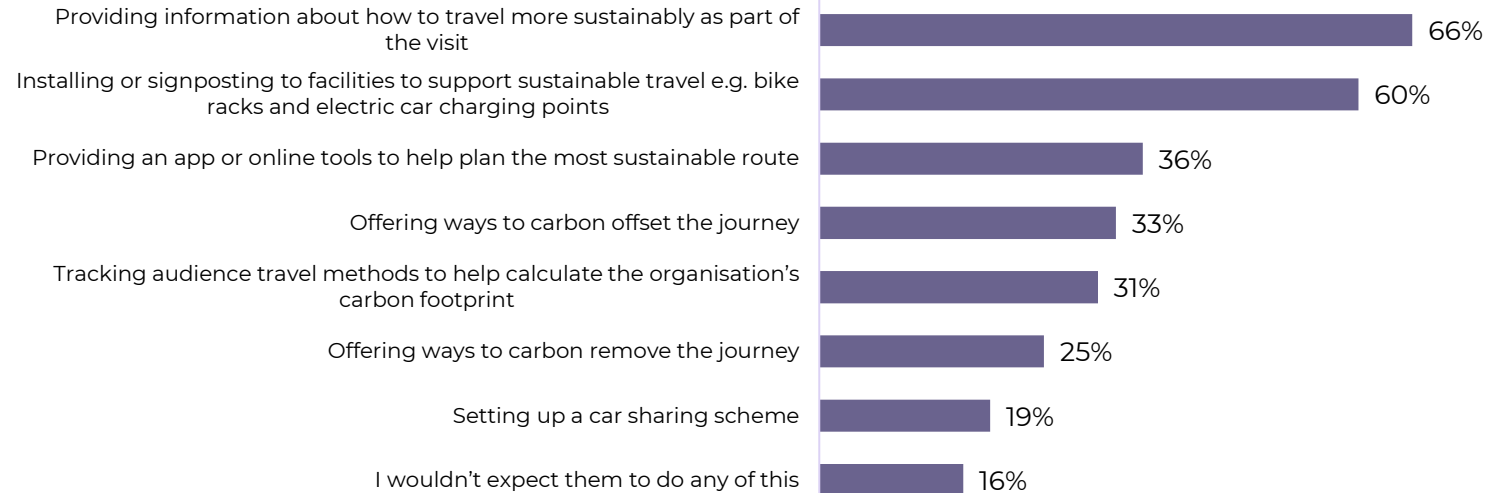
Which of the following would you expect a cultural organisation to be doing to tackle climate change when engaging with audiences and visitors before the event?





Again, information provision is the most expected option from audiences about their travel to cultural venues

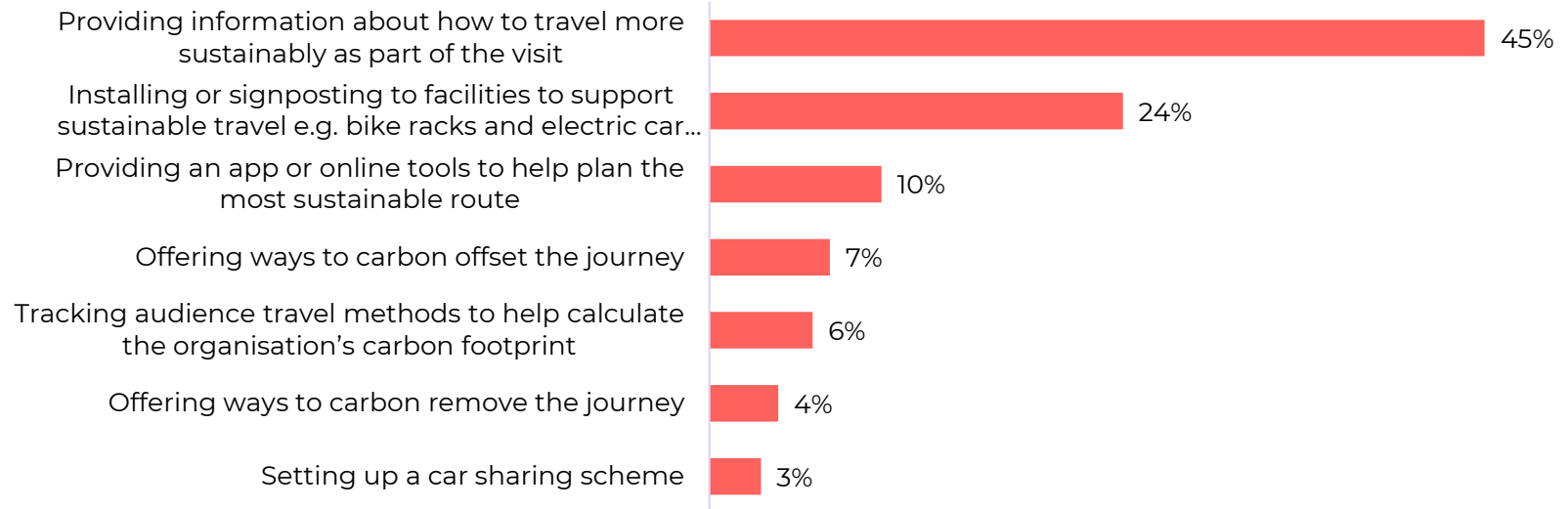
Which of the following would you expect a cultural organisation to be doing to tackle climate change when encouraging sustainable travel? (Select all)





When asked which of those was most important to them:

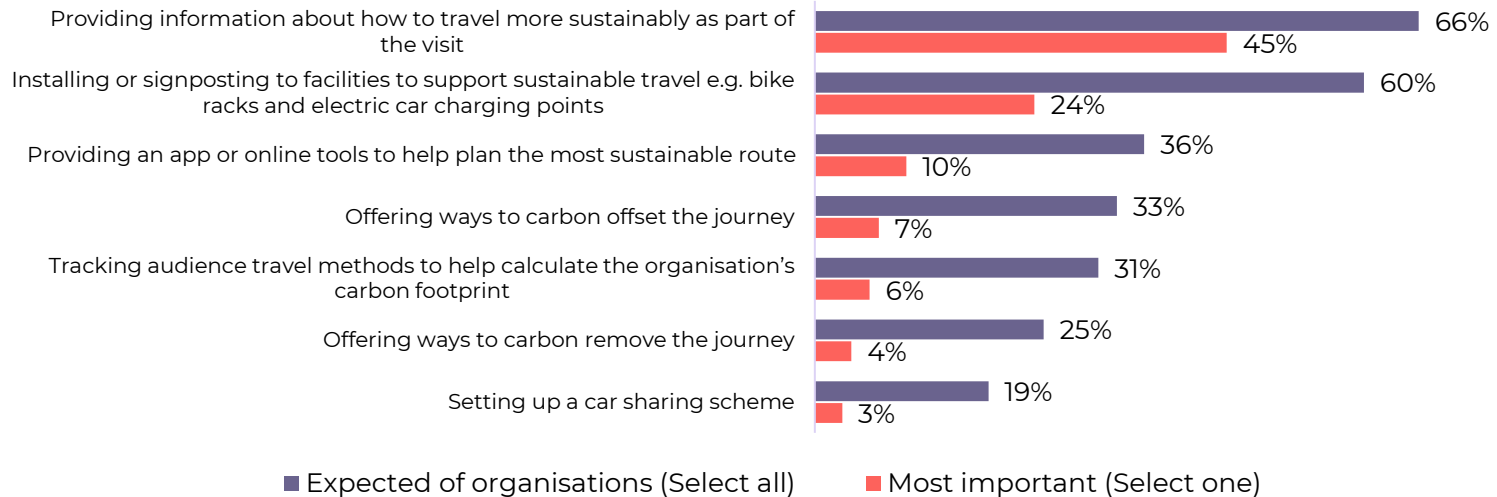
Which of the options you selected would be the most important to see them implement? (Select one)





The two most important things an organisation can do are provide information about travel options and infrastructure to support sustainable travel

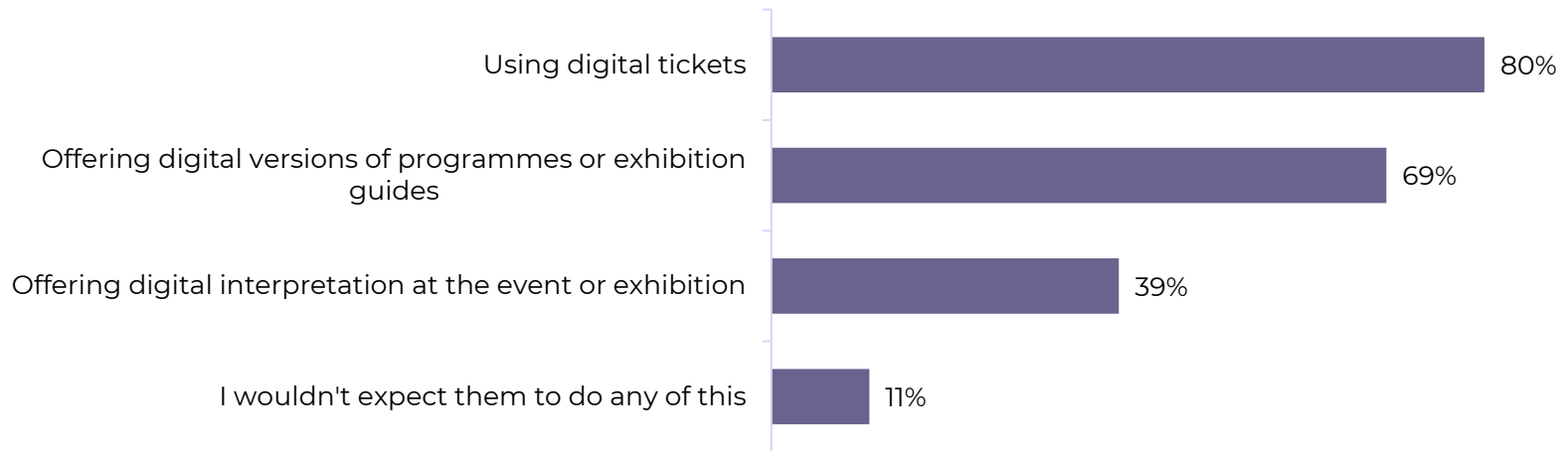
Which of the following would you expect a cultural organisation to be doing to tackle climate change when encouraging sustainable travel?





The majority expect digital tickets and programmes and a significant minority would expect digital interpretation

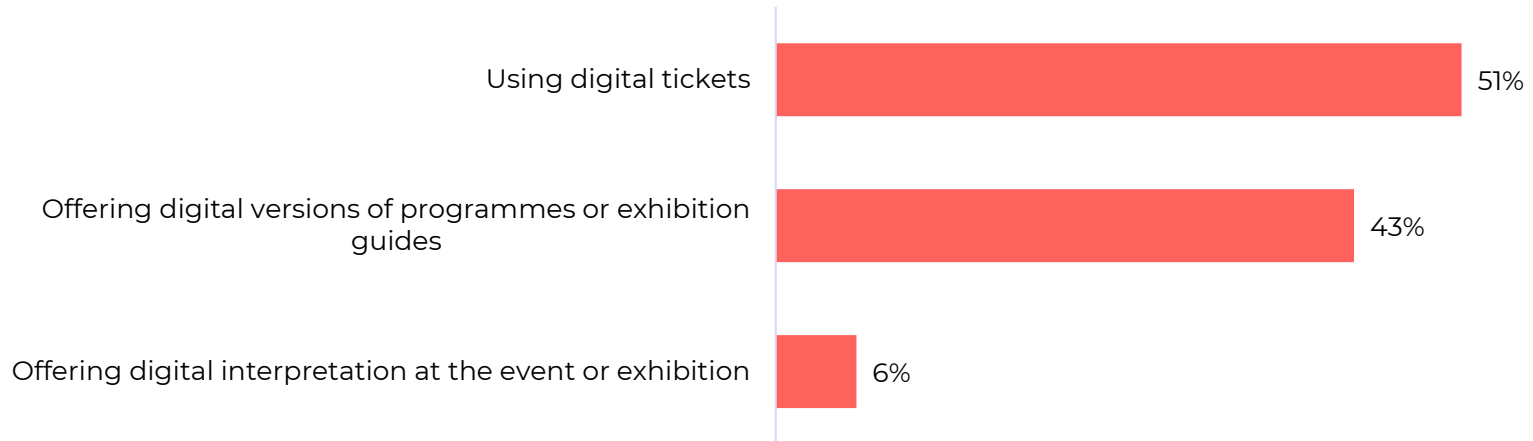
Which of the following would you expect a cultural organisation to be doing to tackle climate change when enhancing the audience and visitor experience?
(Select all)





When asked which of those was most important to them:

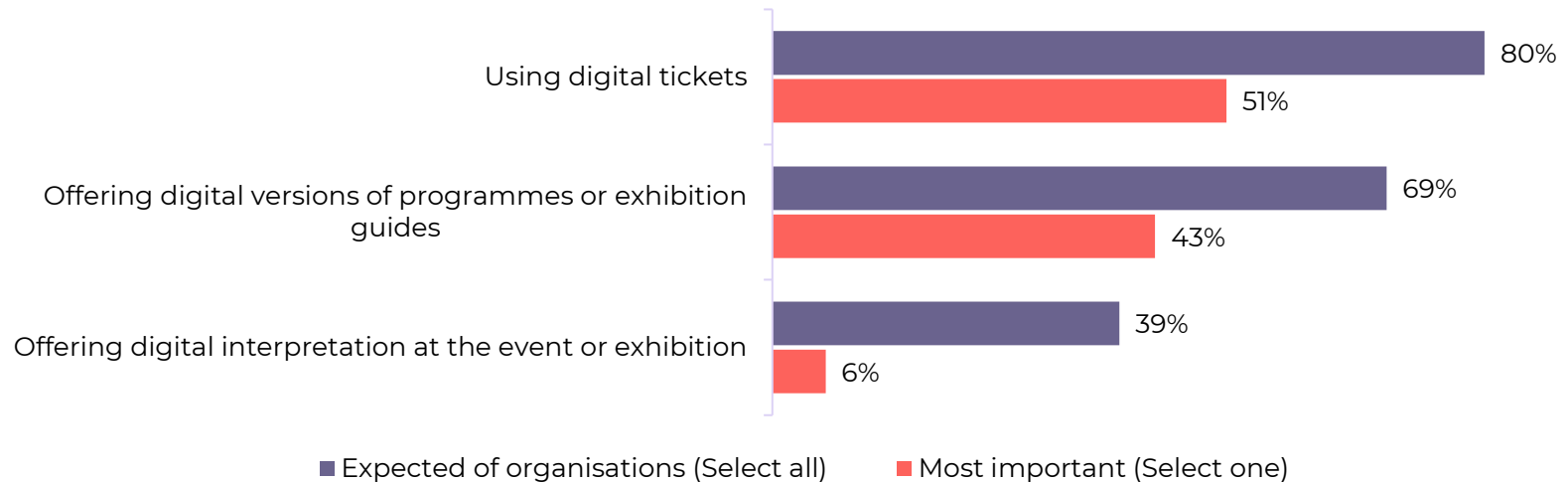
Which of the options you selected would be the most important to see them implement? (Select one)





Digital tickets and programmes are considered the most important

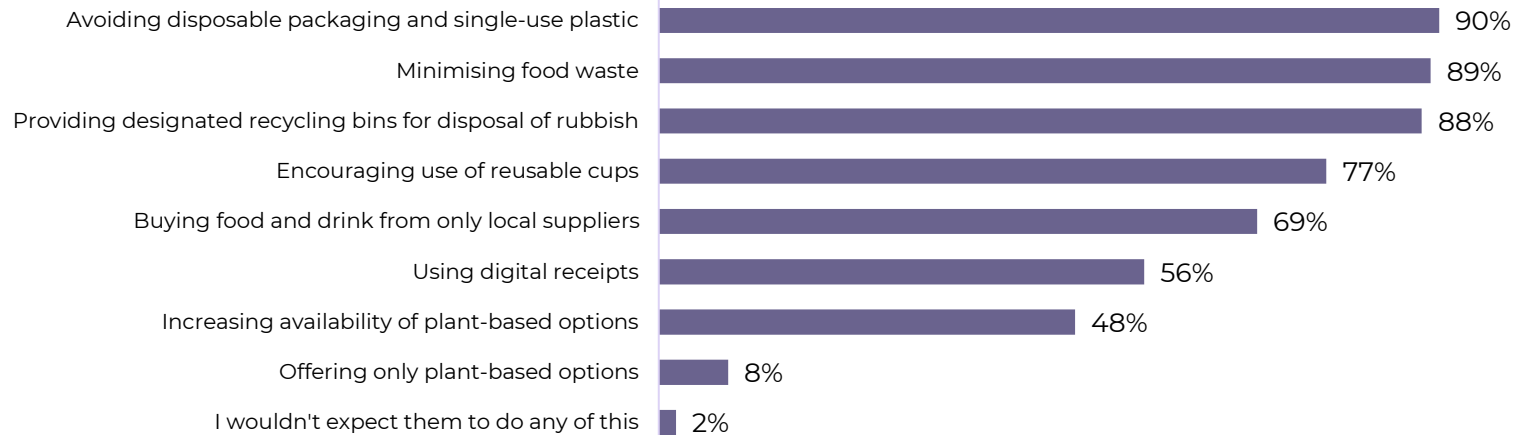
Which of the following would you expect a cultural organisation to be doing to tackle climate change when enhancing the audience and visitor experience?
(Select all)





Facilitating recycling and minimising food waste are the most selected options for organisations with a bar, café or restaurant

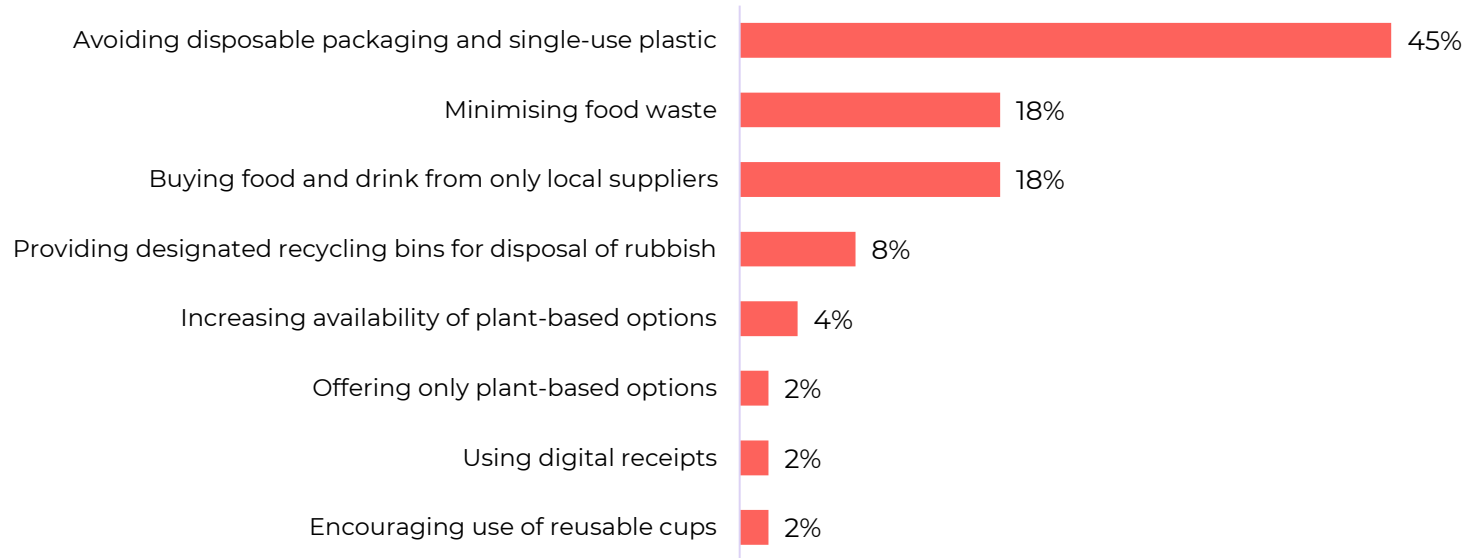
Which of the following would you expect a cultural organisation to be doing to tackle climate change at the bar, café or restaurant? (Select all that apply)





When asked which of those was most important to them:

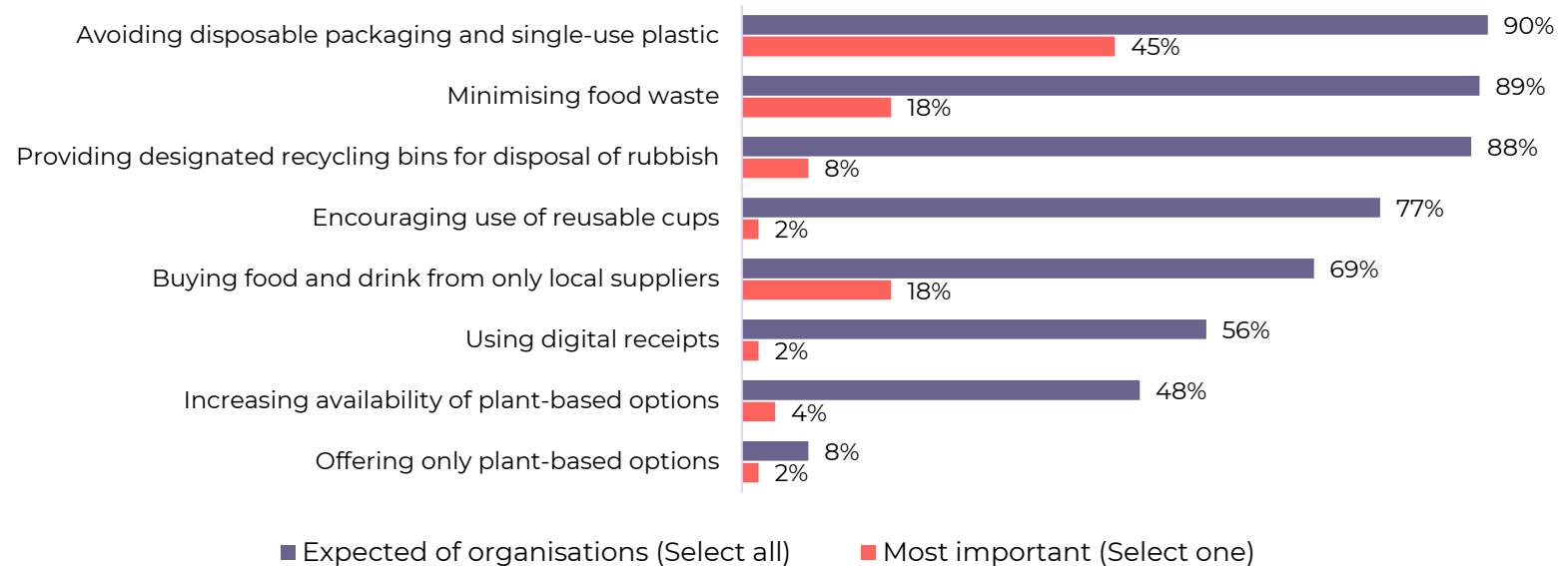
Which of the ones you selected would be the most important to you? (Select one)





Buying food from local suppliers is the most important to 1 in 5 respondents

Which of the following would you expect a cultural organisation to be doing to tackle climate change at the bar, café or restaurant?



Do you have any other comments to make about the role of cultural organisations in tackling climate change?

5,788 – **33%** of the total survey respondents – wrote a response to what role they thought cultural organisations had in tackling climate change. **6%** of these were from under 35s, **67%** from those aged over 55 and the remainder 35-54.

Many see the role of cultural organisations to **lead, share best practice, provide information and facilitate conversations** in this area:

“Cultural organisations are in a position to influence large numbers of people. They have a duty to maximise that position.”

“Cultural organisations are trusted influencers in communities, they are well placed to increase awareness of the urgency and devastation of climate change and engage communities in ways they can make a difference. Crucial work.”

“A cultural organisation should be the heart of the community and therefore has a duty to inform and support the community in tackling climate change.”

“Conversation is key but also helping others in finding ways to be sustainable is also important.”

“Cultural organisations play a vital role in addressing climate change. They should influence public opinion through creative expressions, educate about climate issues, lead by example with sustainable practices, and foster collaborations across sectors.”

Respondents highlighted the need for **sustainability to go across all aspects** of an organisation's work:

“It's important to embed good climate-friendly practice in every aspect of the working life of a cultural organisation.”

“Role must be naturally part of everyday running of the organisation not a "tacked on piece of marketing" to have maximum impact on audiences and contribute to tackling climate change.”

And were glad it was being **engaged with**:

“I am thrilled you are engaging us on this subject.”

“I see it as really important that you have offered this survey.”

Do you have any other comments to make about the role of cultural organisations in tackling climate change? (cont.)

But some want to know more about what is being done:

“I think some organisations have made some great progress in this space in recent years, but there is not enough explanation about why they're doing it.”

“I want to see organisations signposting and celebrating the changes they make to ensure these are visible to audiences.”

Another main theme that emerged was that, although people expected organisations to be taking action to tackle climate change, they didn't want to be lectured or preached to:

“I think that you should manage your business in a sustainable way, but it is not your role to preach a certain set of values to your audience, no matter how well meaning you may be.”

“I would expect cultural organisations to run their own businesses as sustainably as possible as I've indicated. But I wouldn't want to be lectured every time I visit a cultural event.”

There was a number of respondents who thought it was not the role of cultural organisations at all, and they should concentrate on their core mission, although they had different reasons for this response:

“The role of cultural organisations is to provide the highest quality cultural experiences, not to tackle climate change.”

“Stick to artistic work. Don't waste money on this subject.”

“I feel it is important for visitors to enjoy cultural organisations without feeling pressure or guilt about tackling climate change.”

A minority denied climate change exists, although interestingly, this minority was divided. There were many saying they didn't believe in climate change, but still expect organisations to take action to fight pollution, reduce waste or make energy savings – sustainable practices under a different banner:

“Apart from minimising waste, recycling and being as energy efficient as possible, I don't think cultural organisations should get involved in tackling climate change. It's just the latest fad!”

“Concentrate on what you're there for - culture, not politics. Many of the actions described are good, but as responsible actions towards sustainability and recycling, etc, NOT climate change.”

These responses show that choosing how and when to inform audiences about sustainable actions will be key, as will highlighting the co-benefits of particular actions, such as the amount of landfill saved from recycling, rather than overtly linking everything to the climate emergency.

Many respondents gave specific, practical suggestions which tied in with the other survey questions, often linking to their knowledge of particular venues or their own interests, for example installing solar panels or recycling sets or more plant-based menu options.

Do you have any other comments to make about the role of cultural organisations in tackling climate change? (cont.)

Ethical funding, suppliers, pensions and finances also appeared, although this was commented on predominantly by the over 55 age group:

“Be transparent about sources of funding - actively resisting unethical sources of funding.”

“They should also take care to have ethical sponsorship.”

Additionally, there were comments suggesting more digital performances, which have decreased since covid, to aid accessibility and reduce CO₂ travel impacts:

“Perhaps more rural towns could access live streaming of London shows. It brings the world nearer without the carbon footprint.”

“Provide more digital performances such as were available during lockdown to minimise carbon footprint.”

The theme of public transport was picked up by many respondents particularly thinking about start / end times of performances to correspond with local public transport provision and the possibility of discounts on either local transport or ticket discounts for using public transport:

“Offer discount if travelling by train, bus or tram.”

“Events should be timed to fit in with public transport as much as possible.”

“Where practicable having matinee performances which enable audience members to use public transport.”

Other responses illustrated the challenges faced by arts organisations particularly in communicating their environmentally sustainable activities. Virtue signalling, the attempt to demonstrate that you are virtuous to others by expressing opinions that appeal to them, is mentioned:

“All organisations should be prepared to use common sense decisions to avoid waste, use less energy etc. However, they should avoid virtue signalling.”

“Although I think any organisation should be aiming to reduce carbon output I do worry about virtue signalling. So it's important to be rigorous about the value of specific initiatives.”

As is the need for organisations to ensure their actions are not greenwashing:

“We all have a responsibility to become a 'greener' user of the earth and cultural organisations can also do this - but no greenwashing please!”

There are examples cited of specific organisations' actions or inaction which don't correspond with their claim to be acting sustainably:

“Why do you have an ad promoting a hired car below this questionnaire!”

“Stop using single use plastic cups!”

Do you have any other comments to make about the role of cultural organisations in tackling climate change? (cont.)

Other key themes appeared that weren't directly covered elsewhere in the survey.

This included the idea that arts organisations could use their influence to lobby local and national government and businesses about sustainable legislation and actions. There was a specific emphasis on lobbying or liaising to provide better public transport, which would help audiences to travel more sustainably to venues:

“Also lobby the government, as they will make the big changes with industry and manufactures.”

“Work with other organisations to lobby government to improve public transport.”

“I would also expect them to lobby local councils etc. to ensure that things like good public transport, particularly late at night, is available.”

There were acknowledgments of the costs linked to certain sustainable plans with some responders suggesting there would be the need for specific funding to support these actions and others worrying that this may mean an increase in ticket prices or that it would make an organisation less financially robust.

“Arts organisations need support from stakeholders / funders / government to be able to do these things.”

“Like all organisations cultural organisations should consider how to be as sustainable and environmentally friendly as possible - but not to the detriment of their core business or viability of the operation. A balanced approach should be taken.”

“I would not want hard pressed cultural organisations to take on policies that commercial organisations are not following if that increases costs that exclude those on lower incomes from accessing the arts.”

There were references to collaboration with other arts organisations, local groups, businesses or universities to share best practice, learn new ways of working and tap into expertise.

“They should work together in their locality to share resources, information, funding options.”

“I'd love to see cultural organisations engaging with other organisations locally to work together to improve sustainability in their community. For example, working with councils to improve active and public transport options, or with local schools to use the arts to engage young people with these issues.”

Do you have any other comments to make about the role of cultural organisations in tackling climate change? (cont.)

Although digital programmes and tickets were seen as important, many comments acknowledged that some people did not have the equipment or know-how to access these, so moving solely to digital could be discriminatory:

“Increasing digital use e.g. ticketing and programmes can disadvantage people who don't have phones or tech knowhow.”

“Please do not go cashless/digital completely-doing so excludes people who cannot access banks/smartphones.”

Equally there was a call for organisations to take disabled patrons into consideration when making any changes:

“I would like you to consider accessibility when you look at transport. I am disabled and have little choice about driving to the venue.”

“As a wheelchair user I feel that many of the initiatives leave disabled people out of this climate change agenda e.g. all transport options listed would not work for me.”

Some respondents saw the need for staff training and Board level representation to ensure proactive buy-in and understanding of an organisation's environmental policy across the company:

“Appoint a trustee with responsibility for sustainability. Create a 'sustainability group' to help/inform the Board of Trustees of progress on initiatives/actions relating to sustainability.”

“Cultural organisations need a programme to educate all staff and get them on board with 'why' take these measures.”

“Having sustainability staff who fully understand how to do this properly, and can innovate to make a difference, as well as not being afraid to shout about it to their supporters and customers.”

And finally, the survey itself has made people think differently and respondents are grateful for organisations asking their opinion and acting:

“This is an excellent idea and has made me think about how I engage with the arts. Bravo!”

“This is the first time I have thought about this and now realise our local cultural organisations certainly do have a role in tackling climate change.”

“This was an interesting survey as I had not previously thought about the potential or role of cultural organisations in tackling climate change. I think we all have a part to play, and as cultural organisations have the power to make us think and educate us through their productions/exhibitions, alongside the resources they use for these and for public consumption, I hope that they are all taking part.”

Overall, it was clear that respondents want to come on the journey with the arts organisations they attend. Even those who are not as interested or were actively against the idea of climate change have certain expectations that environmentally sustainable practices are in place.

Section 5

Getting audiences involved

What part are audiences willing to play to support sustainability initiatives from the cultural organisations they visit?

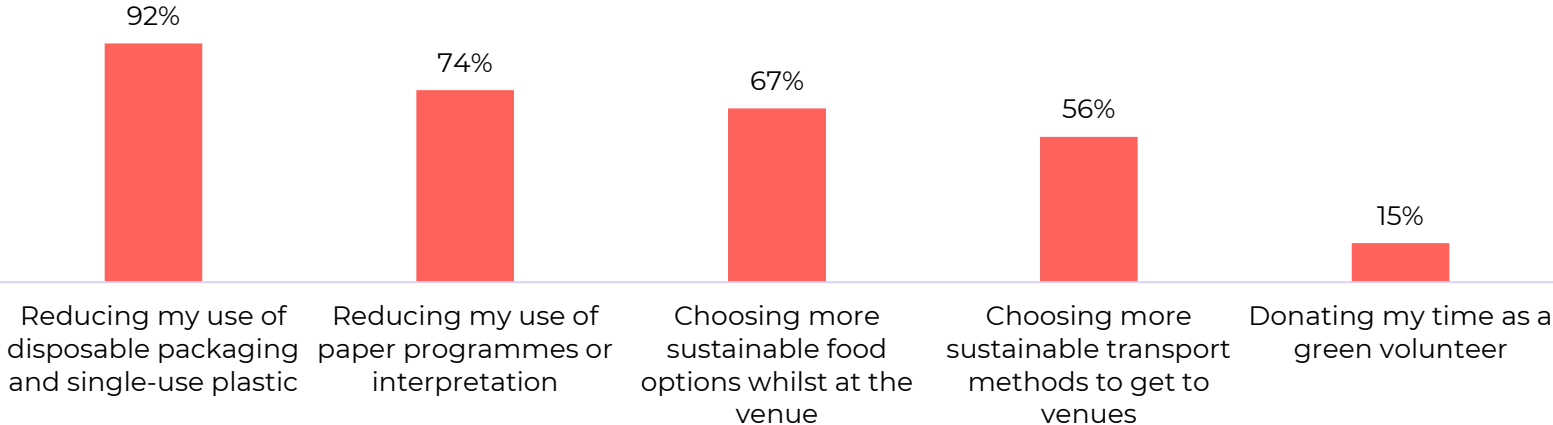


Key findings:

- **51%** of audiences and visitors say they want to actively play their part in support a cultural organisations efforts to become more sustainable
- A further **29%** would make changes if it is easy and doesn't inconvenience them.
- When asked what they would do to support organisations, **91%** would reduce their use of disposable packaging at the venue, **67%** would choose more sustainable food options and **15%** said they were quite likely to donate their time as a 'green volunteer'.

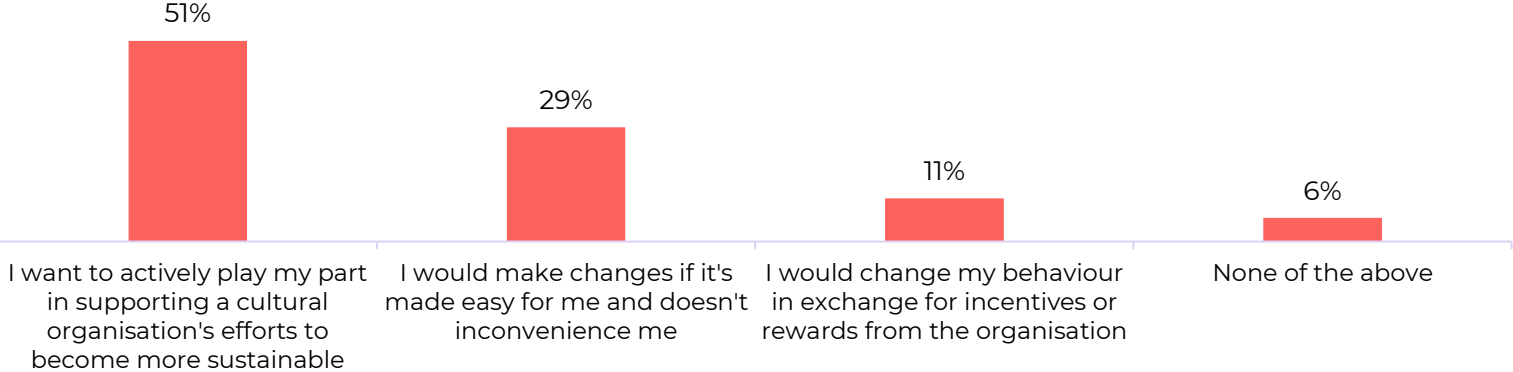
The majority of respondents said they were 'quite likely' to support the organisations they attend in a variety of ways

How likely is it that you would do any of the following to support cultural organisations to achieve their sustainability objectives? (% 'quite likely')



Half of respondents want to actively play their part in supporting a cultural organisations efforts to become more sustainable

Which of the following would best describe your motivation to act sustainably when visiting cultural events? (Select one)



Data note: 4% selected 'Other' and their responses are covered on the next page

Which of the following would best describe your motivation to act sustainably when visiting cultural events? Responses from those who selected 'Other':

The free text responses were split into three groups: those already on board, those that needed specific reasons to motivate them and those who responded more negatively to the idea.

The first group felt they already acted sustainably and that everyone should be acting sustainably. They saw their motivation to be part of their way of living, not just linked to visiting cultural events:

“I try to act sustainably all the time, not just at events.”

A small group of respondents highlighted future generations as their motivation to act sustainably:

“Thinking of future generation.”

The second group all required a reason to motivate them. Many of these respondents specifically referenced public transport needing to change to enable them to act. This group included several responses from disabled visitors who felt their motivation to act sustainably was constrained by the options available to them:

“The availability of easy public transport would make a real difference.”

“Some of these options do not take into account people who have disabilities especially mobility issues.”

Other respondents in this group either wanted to be shown or told why they should act sustainably to motivate them.

“Being shown by practical example how to reduce the impact I have on climate.”

“I need more info around how to act sustainably.”

And there was a further subsection who would only be motivated if cultural organisations were seen to be acting themselves.

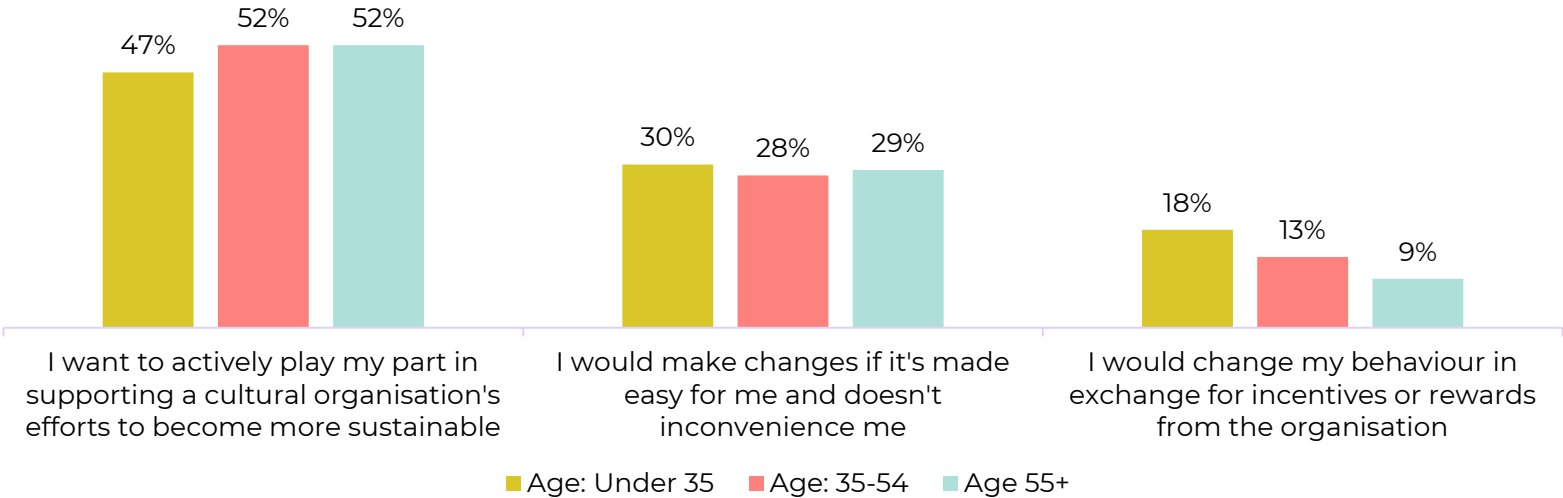
“I can be active if I can see the organisation doing the same.”

“Organisations need to show they are genuine for change.”

The negative response group, which was in the minority, included those who thought it was not the organisation's role or that it was someone else's role or only the organisation's role to change, climate change deniers and those who thought it was too late.

Younger respondents are more interested than other respondents in incentives or rewards to motivate them to act sustainably

Which of the following would best describe your motivation to act sustainably when visiting cultural events? (Select one)



Do you have any suggestions for how cultural organisations could encourage audiences and visitors to help more in their sustainability efforts?

26% of respondents gave comments in response to this question. 6% of those who provided a comment were Under 35, 66% were 55+ and the remainder 35-54.

The key themes that came out reflected the responses within the rest of the survey, although there seemed more support for some actions than other survey responses may have suggested.

The most common was to offer incentives in some way, especially discounts on tickets if a visitor had used public transport. Drinks discounts for reusable cups and free or discounts on digital programme also featured:

“Cheaper ticket prices for customers using public transport.”

“Offer a discount for using own cups on drinks.”

A sub-section within this group reiterated the suggestion of working with public transport providers to offer discounted travel on provision of a venue's ticket:

“Discounts with local bus/train companies as part of the ticket offer.”

“Partnering with train companies to ensure that train timetables coincide with performance times, discounted or combined theatre and train tickets.”

And others suggested playing with pricing to incentivise the sustainable options:

“Make less sustainable options more expensive.”

“Charge less for sustainable options.”

The general provision of information, for example via websites, emails, around the venue and short films, was a popular response, with some people highlighting they didn't know what they could or should do:

“...it would be helpful for cultural organisations to provide inspiring materials regarding sustainability to visitors in an easily-digestible and easily-understood format.”

“Provide active suggestions to audiences on how they can play their part. Don't assume people know, make sure you tell them.”

Do you have any suggestions for how cultural organisations could encourage audiences and visitors to help more in their sustainability efforts? (cont.)

In a similar vein, other respondents were more specific about wanting organisations to show what they were doing to support their environmental objectives so that they learnt more about what they could do this way:

“To openly share what they are doing, explaining why, and what visitors can do - and to be honest where they are failing or can do better (so that their messaging is believed).”

“The commitment needs to be visible, as does the request for help, so that audiences can unite in support. Share the success stories too.”

“Being transparent about the work that the organising is doing too so that the responsibility isn't just being placed on audiences.”

“Communicate well and be transparent on what they're doing, what's working, what's not working and needs more focus, and what positive difference the actions can make.”

Public transport or supporting active travel was another popular theme with both lobbying or liaising with public transport providers for better timings or transport provision and venues scheduling performances which fit better with public transport timings regularly cited again.

Plus providing information either on transport options or end times of performances to aid decision making:

“Programme around transport times or set up regional hubs with bus and train companies to ensure better travel.”

“De-emphasise car travel to venues and facilitate active travel with good facilities.”

“Work with local councils and transport companies to ensure public transport is always available to get people home after shows.”

“Lobby councils to improve evening / late night public transport.”

Other respondents suggested making it easy or simple for audiences to be sustainable, with some people flipping this and suggesting organisations took away the unsustainable options, therefore making it easy by default:

“Sustainability needs to be easy, like only providing recyclable products / packaging.”

“Make it easy. Where choices are removed, have somewhere or someone there to explain why.”

“Don't give people options to do anything [other than the sustainable option] and make it easier for lower income people to be included / supported.”

Do you have any suggestions for how cultural organisations could encourage audiences and visitors to help more in their sustainability efforts? (cont.)

Linked to this, another theme was **provision of facilities** to enable patrons to be sustainable.



“More availability of recycling facilities.”



“More plant-based options.”



“Provide more charging points for electric cars.”



“Provision of cycle racks.”

Respondents also suggested **engaging with or asking audiences** what they thought:



“Solicit ideas and participation from audiences. Let people contribute opinions and ideas (ideally in real life forums and situations rather than just online).”



“Ask for their views & communicate regularly on what is planned & how things are going.”

Inclusion of **climate change content within cultural programmes** (although this seems more popular within exhibitions or visual arts); digital programmes and ticketing and using data to illustrate an organisations environmental impact were seen as important to some respondents:



“More shows that explicitly address climate change as a topic.”



“Workshops, plays, which have the climate crisis as a core basis.”



“Regularly release reports on the results of its sustainability efforts in quantifiable presentations that are easy for the general public to understand.”

The **use of humour or introducing fun** into engaging with the audiences was referenced too:



“Make it fun and stress the positives of a cleaner, carbon free future.”



“Make it easy, make it fun.”

Thank you

For more analysis of *Act Green 2023* including a recording of the results webinar:

Visit our blog:

indigo-ltd.com/blog

Sign up to receive emails:

indigo-ltd.com/contact

We will be releasing further insights during Autumn 2023, including specific cuts by region, artform type and more.

About us

We are award-winning audience specialists.

We work individually with arts and cultural organisations to bring the audience's voice into decision-making, as well as running sector-wide research projects on particular issues and topics.

Our ground-breaking sector-wide research during the Covid-19 crisis included *After the Interval*, the *Culture Restart Toolkit* and *Missing Audiences*. It was used by over 500 cultural organisations and gathered over 500,000 responses, and won us multiple national awards, including a national 'Outstanding Leadership' award for Katy Raines, Indigo's CEO.

You can see all our previous reports, plus the latest articles and insights on our [blog](#).



In January 2023, we launched [Indigo Share](#): the collective approach to audience insight:



[Subscription](#) – a flexible annual programme featuring post-visit surveys and an annual survey.



[Hot Topic](#) – FREE ad hoc surveys responding to particular topics and sector challenges.



[Co-Create](#) – a collaborative and cost-effective way to access bespoke research.

If you are interested in finding out more about Indigo Share or would like to speak about a potential project, please email us: info@indigo-ltd.com

Or book in a call with one of the team:

Katy Raines, CEO | [Book a 30 minute call](#)

Flo Carr, Associate Director | [Book a 30 minute call](#)

Kerry Radden, Associate Director | [Book a 30 minute call](#)

About our research sponsor

Hi, we're Supercool. We love crafting websites and digital strategies that make life easier for some of the UK's leading arts, cultural and heritage organisations – and your audiences.

From big music venues to intimate theatres, global touring companies to local festivals, we partner with the likes of:



We believe it's our responsibility to be as environmentally responsible and sustainable as possible. That's both in terms of what we create for clients, and how we run Supercool day-to-day.

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Here's a collection of resources to help you think about – and take practical action – on sustainability:

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If you'd like to have a chat about a new website project, or how you can be more digitally sustainable, get in touch with us:

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