Scots back solar energy and storage, poll finds

Solar Energy Scotland

10 November 2026

Far more Scottish people support building solar farms near where they live than oppose them, according to new polling figures. Around twice as many people said they were in favour than opposed.

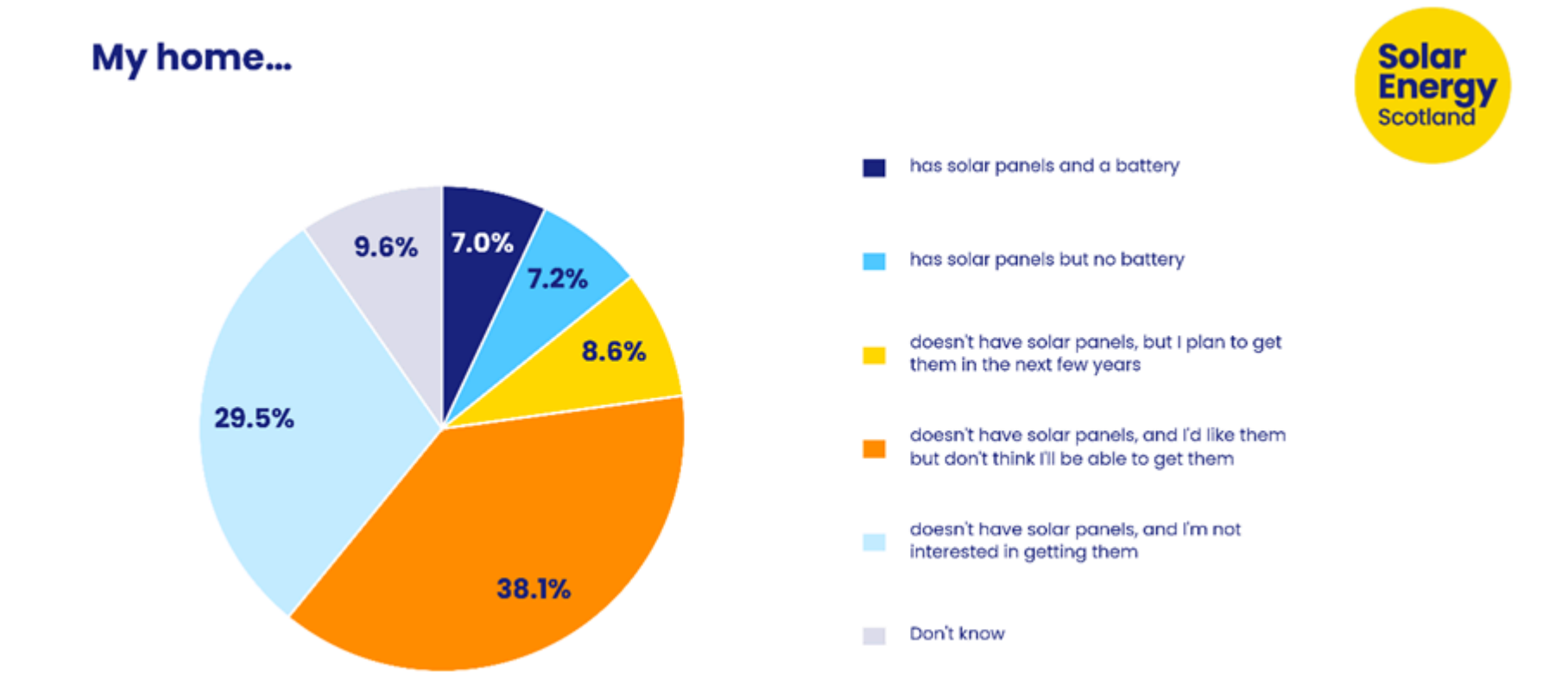
Installing solar power on public buildings was also popular, with 70% in favour and only 6% opposed. Support for grants to help households install solar and battery storage systems was 63% for, and 8% against.

Nearly two in five Scots (38 per cent) say that they would like solar panels for their home, but don't think they will be able to get them. A further 9 per cent say that they plan to get solar panels in the next few years, while there is also firm support for putting solar panels on schools, hospitals and other public buildings.

"Scotland is not short of people who want solar power, whether on the ground or on their roof. Whilst some progress has been made in recent years, it is clear that there is strong public support for ramp up deployment significantly so that the many benefits of low cost solar can be realised by people everywhere," said SES' Acting Chair George Baxter.

A quarter of the 1,035 people polled by More in Common for trade body Solar Energy Scotland last month think that their home is unsuitable, another quarter having misplaced fears that the technology would not pay for itself. But the biggest concern is upfront cost, with 48% put off by it.[1]

However, a new Government scheme will enable many more households enjoy the huge savings a rooftop solar and battery installation offers.



"Fortunately, the Westminster Government has just launched the Warm Homes Loan Scheme, which provides low or zero-interest loans for solar, battery, heat pump and other household energy upgrades across the UK.[2] Early indications are that take-up has been impressive," he added.

The scheme overcomes cost worries by ensuring that the savings outweigh loan repayments. This has been demonstrated by earlier, privately backed finance schemes.[3]

The Scottish Government cut similar low-cost loans from the Home Energy Scotland service in June 2023.[4] An academic analysis earlier this year found that the scheme reduced fuel poverty significantly, by broadening access to the people who would most benefit.[5]

The survey found that the most relevant barriers vary by age, with younger Scots often being renters, while older Scots cite cost and payback period.

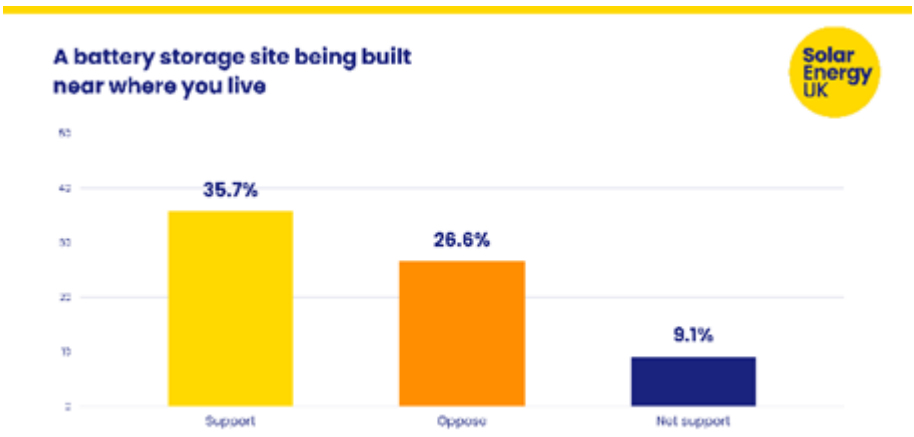
Stephen Gethins MSP, Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Energy.[6]

Backing for solar farms and battery sites

Installing solar power on public buildings was the most popular policy tested in the survey, with 70% in favour and only 6% opposed, with grants to help households install solar and battery storage systems coming second at 63% for and 8% against.

Only a fifth (22%) of the 1,035 people surveyed were opposed to building a solar farm near their home, with 43% in favour. The most positive were people in the 55-64 age bracket, at 52%, though they also had the greatest degree of doubt, with 15% strongly opposed.

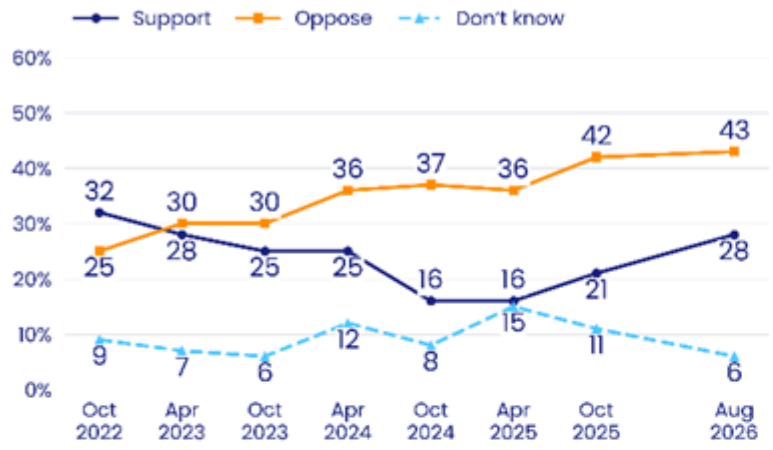
Public views were more equivocal for battery storage sites, being a newer and less familiar technology, subject to a great deal of myth and misinformation. Nevertheless, support for them still outweighed opposition by nine percentage points (36% to 27%).

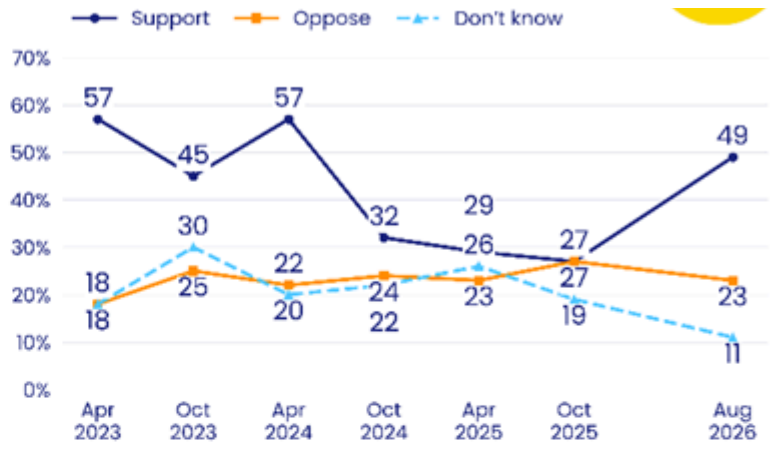


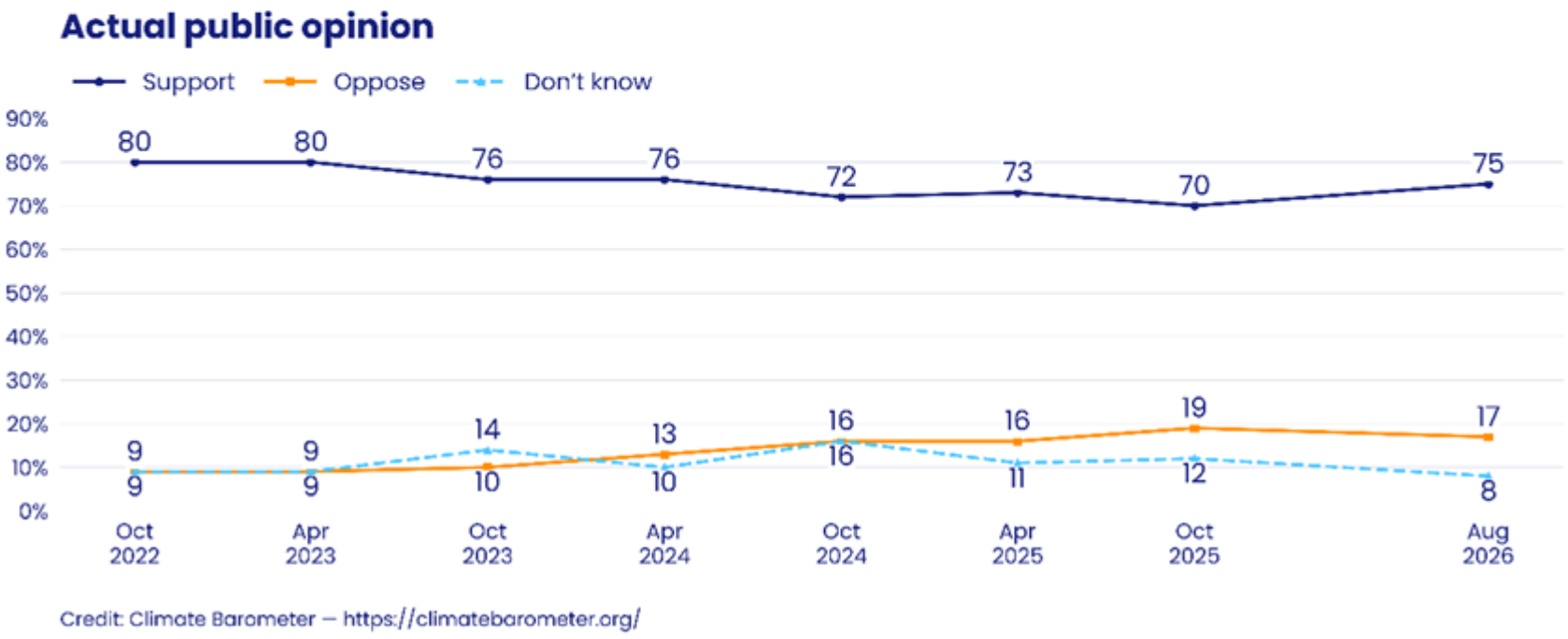
“So much support for solar farms is a clear signal that the misinformation about them being bad for farming is simply not believed by most ordinary folk. Grazing and other forms of agriculture can still carry on between and around the panels – and they are great for diversifying farming businesses, keeping farms running after bad harvests. They are also good for biodiversity and it seems Scots are much more in tune with reality than many politicians are. To hit solar farm targets will only require 0.1% of Scottish land, that’s far less than golf courses or airports,” said Baxter.

“Overall, the findings belie common assumptions. Separate work by Climate Barometer has found a huge and persistent gap in perception between what the public really thinks about solar farms and what they and many politicians assume public opinion to be. The gap is most profound among MPs, who vastly underestimate public support,” he added.

The organisation reported in October that people living near a solar farm, or if proposed or under construction, tend to “feel accepting, proud, and relieved… for the most part, emotional responses are positive.” [7]



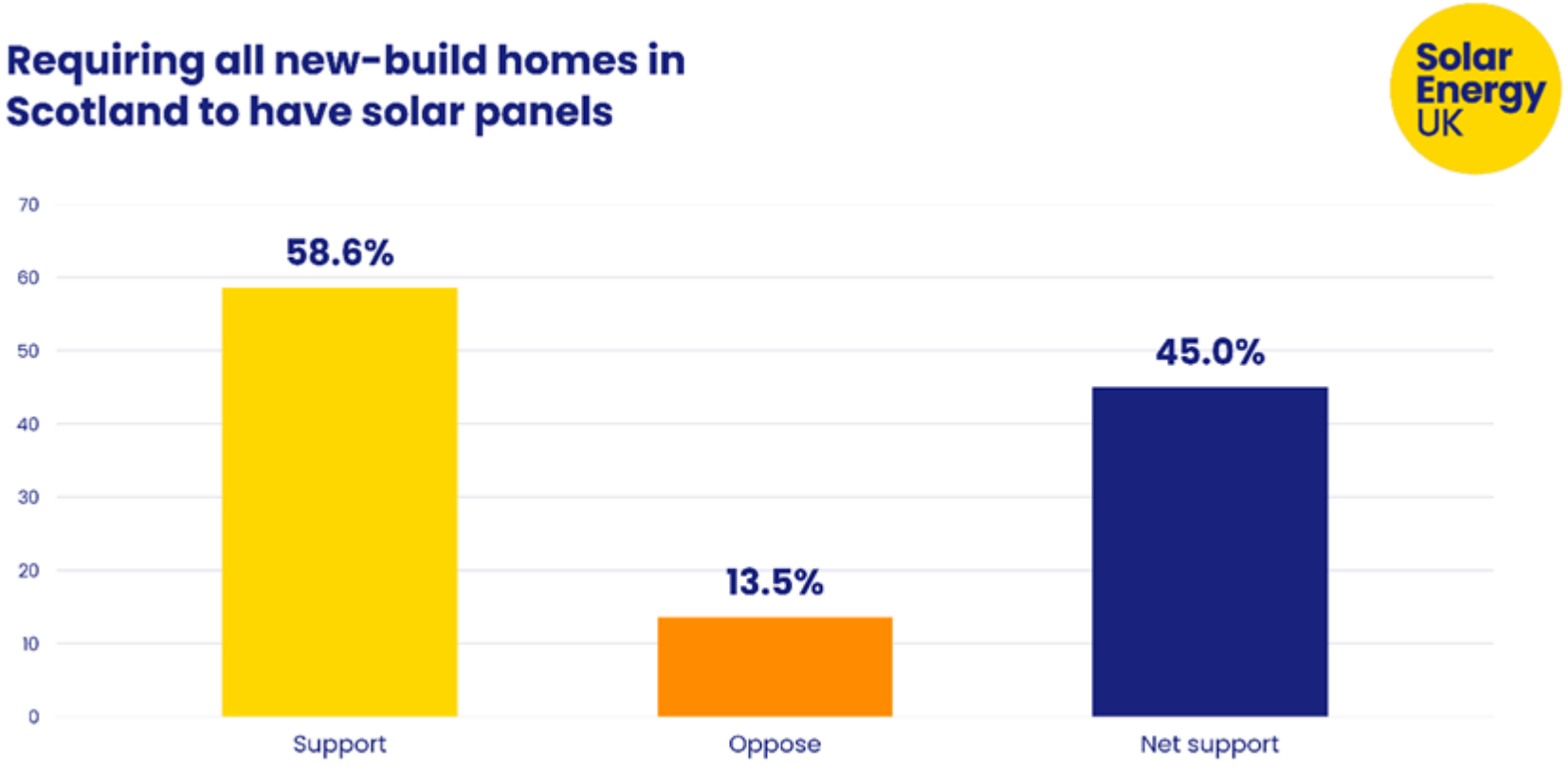




New homes

Similarly, there was enthusiasm for requiring all new-build homes in Scotland to have solar panels fitted, reflecting agreed Welsh and English policies.[8,9] Overall, 59% were in favour.

The Scottish Government introduced solar power to its rules for new homes in 2015, helping to kickstart a thriving industry and more domestic installations per capita than the rest of the UK. But this was later dropped. New rules set to be introduced in 2028, already criticised as obsolete, make the same mistake.[10] Retrofitting a solar array on an existing home is around three times more expensive than installing a system on a new home.



Meanwhile, three times more people wanted the country to continue moving towards wind and solar, compared to those who want to move back to fossil fuels. Views were linked strongly to age, with younger people more in favour of decarbonisation, though no age group had more than 14% support for reversing course.

But Scots doubt that Holyrood is delivering: Half are either unsure of what the Scottish Government is doing (30%) or think it is doing too little to grow solar generation (20%).

Only 12% opposed the policy.

Solar Energy Scotland Manifesto

Ahead of the last Scottish elections, Solar Energy Scotland published its own solar manifesto.[11] It set out the following calls for the Scottish Government to:

- **Set a clear national target**: Commit to 9GW of solar by 2035, signalling confidence to investors, communities and local authorities.
- **Unleash rooftop solar**: Update building standards so new homes and non-residential buildings include solar as standard, in line with the European Solar Standard.
- **Enable affordable finance**: Reintroduce low-cost or interest-free loans to support households and businesses installing solar and storage.
- **Level the playing field on grid access**: Increase Scotland's Transmission Impact Assessment threshold to match England and Wales (from 200kW to 5MW), improving access for commercial rooftops and community projects.
- **Make planning work for delivery**: Resource planning authorities and uphold National Planning Framework 4 so solar and storage projects can progress at pace.
- **Build Scottish solar skills**: Establish Regional Green Skills Hubs and training pathways to ensure Scottish workers benefit from new, high-quality jobs.

Methodology

1,035 Scottish adults were surveyed by More in Common over 9-13 October. Weighting was by age and sex, ethnicity and education.

The Climate Barometer data is from eight waves of surveys of approximately 100 MPs and approx. 1,000-2,500 GB/UK adults, conducted between October 2022 and September 2026.

[1] **Polling data** – More in Common

[2] **Solar & battery storage industry welcomes low cost loans for home upgrades** – Solar Energy UK

[3] **Warm Homes Loan Scheme: Factsheet** – Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

[4] **'No warning' of withdrawal of Scotland's solar home loans** – Solar Energy Scotland

[5] **Ending Scotland's solar loans was 'a big mistake'** – Solar Energy Scotland

[6] **The Future for Solar & Storage in Scotland 2026** – Solar Energy Scotland

[7] **Tracker data: Support for local renewables still higher than we think it is** – Climate Barometer

[8] **Wales to mandate rooftop solar power** – Solar Energy UK

[9] **Solar panels set to be standard on new homes and buildings** – Solar Energy UK

[10] **Solar sector concerned over 'outdated' Scottish Building Regulations plan** – Solar Energy Scotland

[11] **'Significant appetite' for more solar power, says Scotland's new energy plan** – Solar Energy Scotland

[12] **Scottish climate plan 'a colossal disappointment'** – Solar Energy Scotland

[13] **Solar Energy Scotland Manifesto** – Solar Energy Scotland

– ENDS –

Editor's notes:

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