

Participant Information Sheet

About this study:

This survey is part of a study to understand consumer understanding and beliefs about microplastics. As part of this, I am surveying a sample of the UK.

- The researchers who are conducting this study are based at the University of Bath.
- The survey should take no more than 15 minutes of your time.
- There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Please remember that your honest opinion is the most valuable to us.
- The data will be held on a password-protected computer file.
- Your identity and those of other participants will be anonymous.
- If you agree to take part in this survey but feel at any stage that you would like to stop, you are free to do so at any time, and your data will be deleted.
- If, after the survey has taken place, you decide you do not want your responses used in the study, you are free to do so, and your data will be deleted.

If you have any questions about this study, feel free to contact us:

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1. I agree to take part in this survey under the conditions explained to me above: Please select one

Yes
No

Section 1:

Please complete the following survey.

We are asking these questions to understand the survey responses better. Your data will be held securely and only used for research purposes.

Q1) Please specify your gender:

Please select one

- Man
 - Woman
 - Other

Q2) Please specify your current age:

Please select one

- 18-25
 - 26-39
 - 40-55
 - 56-70
 - 71+

Q3) Approximately how far would you say you live from the coast? Please select

one

- 0 – 2 miles
 - 3 – 10 miles
 - 11 – 20 miles
 - 21 – 50 miles
 - 50+ miles

Q4) On average, how many trips do you make to the coast annually?

Please select one

- 0
 - 1 - 2
 - 3 - 5
 - 6+

Q5) Please indicate your knowledge of microplastics and their effects on the environment and human health?

Please select one

	No knowledge	Little	Average	Good	Strong	
Low level						High level

Section 2:

- A) Microplastics are small plastic particles, up to 5mm in diameter. Microplastics are some of the most commonly found types of plastic in the environment. The majority of microplastics in the environment come from larger plastics, such as packaging, that have broken down.
- B) Some microplastics in the environment come from products, such as fertilisers, tyres, and personal care products that once used, may then be washed via sewage to the sea. As sewage sludge may be applied as fertiliser, some microplastics will stay in the environment and not reach the sea
- C) Microplastics released to the environment cannot realistically be removed and may persist there for many thousands of years. A small amount of microplastics may be present in water and seafood, which is consumed by humans and animals. The potential for adverse effects is a cause of concern. However, it is not currently possible to determine the long-term impact of exposure on the environment and human and animal health.
- D) The survey results will be useful for future microplastic policies so we would like you to answer all questions as realistically and accurately as you can.

Section 2A:

This section considers a policy to deal with the release of microplastics from wastewater sewage. It would be administered by water companies.

Q6) Suppose that the UK was going to introduce a policy that would fund research into the longterm environmental and health effects of microplastics in the environment. The research would definitely resolve the scientific uncertainty about any possible effects, though it would have no effect on the amount of microplastics currently entering the environment from wastewater sewage. An increase in your water bills would cover only the cost of this research. Any follow up action, depending on the research findings, would be funded separately.

Would your household be willing to pay £10 [Random value from: £5, £10, £20, £30, £40, £50, £60, £70] per year in extra water bills specifically for such research?

Please select one

- Yes
- No

Q6B) [If they answered no] You said you would not be willing to pay anything, could you please state why?

please elaborate.

Q6C) How sure are you of your choice?

Please select one

- Very Sure
- Quite Sure
- Unsure

Q7) An alternative possible policy option would stop microplastics from wastewater sewage entering the environment now, before waiting for the results of the research discussed in the previous question.

Suppose that the UK was going to introduce a policy that would pay to upgrade wastewater treatment plants filtering systems so that they would capture all the microplastics in sewage wastewater heading to the environment. An increase in your water bills would be used to pay for the cost of this investment.

Would your household be willing to pay £10 [Random value from: £5, £10, £20, £30, £40, £50, £60, £70] per year in extra water bills to implement this policy?

Please select one

- Yes
- No

Q7B) How sure are you of your choice?

Please select one

- Very Sure
- Quite Sure
- Unsure

Q7C) [If they answered yes] Would your household be willing to pay [Random value: £10, £20, £40, £60, £80, £100, £120, £140] per year in extra water bills to implement this policy?

Please select one

- Yes
- No

Q7C) [If they answered no] Would your household be willing to pay [Random value: £2.50, £5, £10, £15, £20, £25, £30, £35] per year in extra water bills to implement this policy?

Please select one

- Yes
- No

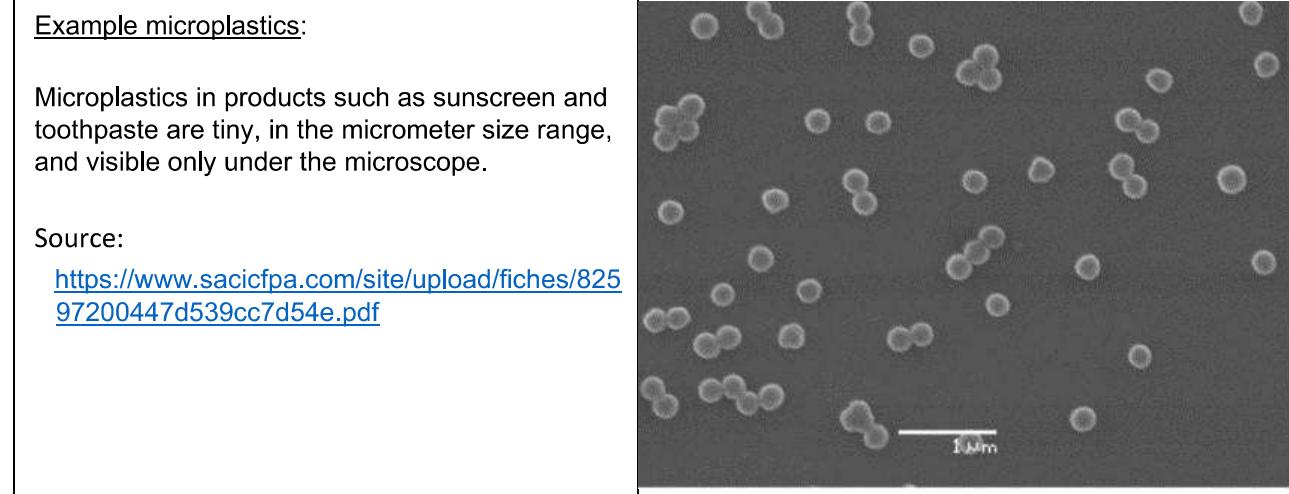
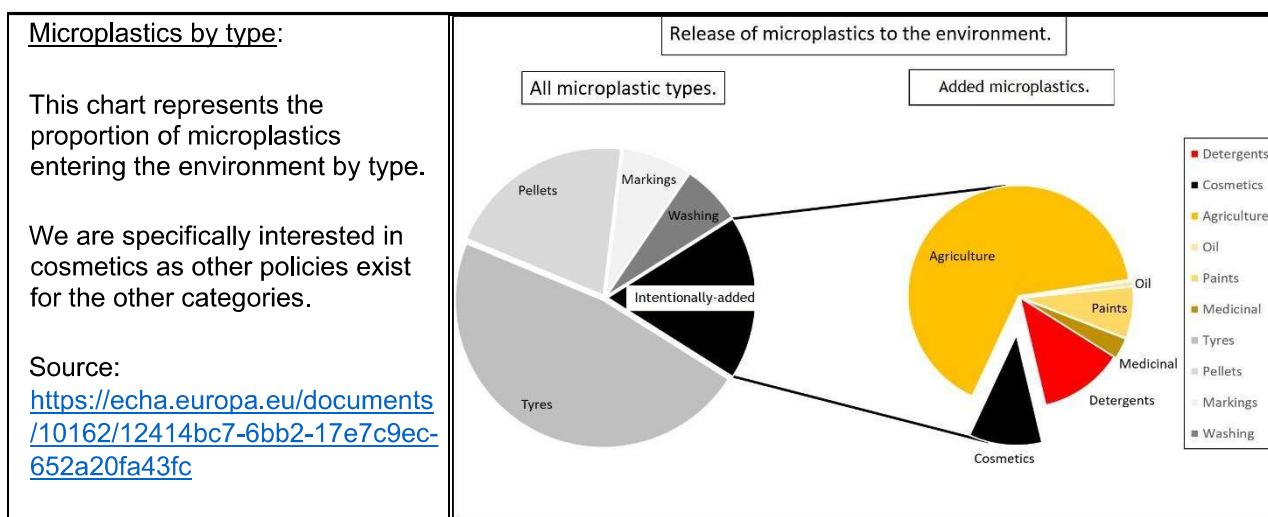
Q7D) [If they answered no] You said you would not be willing to pay anything, could you please elaborate on the reasons why?

Section 2B:

In this section we are interested in an alternative policy that would deal with the production of microplastics which are added to commonly used products. You are being asked about this as it is a different approach to controlling microplastics than those policies mentioned before.

Please note:

- Some types of microplastics added to personal care products, such as scrubs and exfoliators, were banned in the UK in 2018 as they were found to enter the environment. However, other types of microplastics added to personal care products have not been banned as there is limited evidence about their effects as discussed earlier in the survey.
- Although microplastics come from many sources, in this section we focus on those specifically added to personal care products, such as, toothpaste, shower gel, sunscreen and deodorant, as they are those most commonly used by consumers. See the following graph for context:



Please Remember: As the existence and extent of environmental and health effects from microplastics are uncertain, paying more for a personal care product without microplastics is a *precautionary* choice, i.e., it guards against the possibility of any potential adverse effects on environment and health.

The next section presents options A and B - please choose whichever you prefer, there is no right or wrong.

This section uses a different question format where you will be presented two options; A and B, which are described in terms of 3 characteristics:

- **Product Performance:** How effective personal care products are with and without microplastics.
 - Without microplastics, personal care products would feel different or run out more quickly. e.g. sunscreen without microplastics may be heavier or greasier to apply
 - The values presented are the estimated change in effectiveness between 0% change (no change) and 90% (significant change).
- **Release:** How many microplastics from personal care products are annually released to the environment.
 - Approximately 500 tons of microplastics from personal care products are estimated to be released to the environment annually from the UK.
 - The values presented are the percentage reduction in the tonnage of microplastics coming from personal care products that may end up in the environment.
- **Price:** How costly personal care products are with and without microplastics.
 - Without microplastics, producers must find alternative, more expensive substitutes.
 - The values presented are the estimated increase in the price of a personal care product, such as an average bottle of SPF50 sunscreen if more expensive substitutes are used.

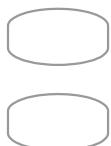
These characteristics will take different values for each option. We then ask you to carefully select which option you prefer – there is no right or wrong answer.

You will be given a table like this:

Then you will be asked which option you prefer:

Which option do you prefer?

	A	B
Please select one Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	50%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care products.	0%	100%
Increase in product price.	£0	£1



Option A
Option B

Option A represents current real levels.

- No change in price or quality.
- Some possibility of environmental and health effects.

Option B represents a proposed level.

- The Government would ban microplastics from being added to commonly used personal care products (toothpaste, shampoo, sunscreen etc).
- Prices would rise for products with lower quality.
- There would be a reduction in the likelihood of possible environmental and health impacts, although the existence and extent of these effects is uncertain in any case.
- You would have less money but would reduce the amount of microplastics going to the environment as a precaution against any potentially harmful effects.

We are interested only in which situation you prefer.

Q8) Do you prefer option A or B?

Please select one

- Option A
 Option B

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	90%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product .	0%	0%
Increase in product price.	£0	£5

Q8B) You said you would choose Option [A or B], could you please elaborate what made you select that option?

Q9) Do you prefer option A or B?

Please select one

Option A

Option B

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	50%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product.	0%	40%
Increase in product price.	£0	£5

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	50%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product.	0%	90%
Increase in product price.	£0	£1

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	5%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product.	0%	10%
Increase in product price.	£0	£5

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	10%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product.	0%	10%
Increase in product price.	£0	£2.50

Q10) Do you prefer option A or B?

Please select one

Option A

Option B

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	10%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product.	0%	10%
Increase in product price.	£0	£0.50

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	5%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product.	0%	40%
Increase in product price.	£0	£2.50

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	5%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product.	0%	40%
Increase in product price.	£0	£0.50

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	5%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product.	0%	10%
Increase in product price.	£0	£1

Q11) Do you prefer option A or B?

Please select one

Option A

Option B

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	5%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product.	0%	90%
Increase in product price.	£0	£2.50

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	5%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product.	0%	10%
Increase in product price.	£0	£1

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	10%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product.	0%	90%
Increase in product price.	£0	£5

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	5%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product.	0%	90%
Increase in product price.	£0	£0.50

Q12) Do you prefer option A or B?

Please select one

Option A

Option B

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	50%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product.	0%	10%
Increase in product price.	£0	£0.50

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	50%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product.	0%	10%
Increase in product price.	£0	£2.50

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	10%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product.	0%	40%
Increase in product price.	£0	£1

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the personal care product.	0%	5%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from personal care product.	0%	10%
Increase in product price.	£0	£5

Section 3:

This section specifically asks you about your attitude towards the environment.

The following section asks you how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Please answer these on a sliding scale of 1-5, thank you.

Q13) Please indicate the degree to which you think that microplastic pollution *currently* presents a threat to yourself. Please select one

1	2	3	4	5		
Absolutely none	<input type="radio"/>	Absolutely critical				

Q14) Please indicate the degree to which you think that microplastic pollution *will in the future* present a threat to yourself Please select one

1	2	3	4	5		
Absolutely none	<input type="radio"/>	Absolutely critical				

Q15) Please indicate the degree to which you think microplastic pollution currently presents a threat to *the environment* Please select one

1	2	3	4	5		
Absolutely none	<input type="radio"/>	Absolutely critical				

Q16) How much of 'Blue-Planet II' TV series have you seen?

Please select one

- All of it
- Some of it
- None of it

Q17) Who do you think has the responsibility for reducing microplastics? Please select as many as you think.

- Firms (who produce/use microplastics)
- Consumers
- Government
- Local authorities:
- Other:

Q18) Have you ever donated to or been a member of a charity/group dedicated to environmental causes? Please select one

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Final section

Q19) Please indicate your knowledge of microplastics and their effects on the environment and human health **following this survey?** *Please select one*

	No knowledge	Little	Average	Good	Strong	
Low level	<input type="radio"/>	High level				

Q20) Do you think the results of this survey will matter to how regulators change their policies?

Please select one

- Yes
 No

Q21) How confident are you in the ability of experts to provide reliable information? *Please select one*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unconfident	<input type="radio"/>	Very confident				

Q22) Please indicate your highest completed level of education

Please select one

- GCSE's / O levels
 A level or college equivalent
 Bachelor's degree
 Postgraduate degree

Q23) How would you describe your current employment status? *Please select one*

- Full-time employment
 Part-time employment
 Self-Employed
 Retired
 Not in education, employment, training
 Student

Q24) Has your income been affected by the coronavirus crisis this year? *Please select one*

- Yes
 No

Q24A) Please indicate your approximate average monthly income before tax and before coronavirus? Please select one

- £0 - £500
- £501 - £1000
- £1001- £1500
- £1501 - £2000
- £2001 - £2500
- £2501 - £3000
- £3001 - £4000
- £4001 - £5000
- £5000+

Prefer not to say

Q25) On a scale of 1-10, how clear was this survey to complete? Please select one

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Did not understand	<input type="radio"/>	Perfectly clear									

If you have any further comments on the design or topic of this survey, please leave them here:

Your responses will remain confidential, but the results of this survey will be made publicly available. The results of this survey will be essential in developing future government programs to reduce the risks and severity of ingestion of microplastics. Your participation in this survey will be critical to its success.

For updates, withdrawals, questions and comments:

Researcher:

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That's all! Thank you for your time!