

Public attitudes to chemistry



The first national, in-depth study on how the UK public thinks and feels about chemistry, chemists and chemicals.

For more information rsc.li/pac



84% of the UK public agreed that chemists make a valuable contribution to society

But only

12% of the chemists we interviewed thought the public would have said so



62% of the UK public agreed that jobs in chemistry are interesting

But only

27% of the chemists we interviewed thought the public would have said so



88% of the UK public said chemists are approachable

But only

20% of the chemists we interviewed thought the public would have said so

People are positive about chemistry's contribution to society



59%

of the public believe the benefits of **chemistry** are greater than any harmful effects



55%

of the public believe it is important to know about **chemistry** in their daily life



72%

agree that **chemistry** research and developments make a direct contribution to economic growth in the UK

55%

for **science***

72%

for **science***

76%

for **science***

Most people can't think of chemistry beyond their school memories

When I talk about chemistry what comes to your mind? Top 5 answers



School/teachers



Science



Drugs/
tablets/pills



Chemicals/
elements



Medication

People strongly associate chemists with pharmacists

When I talk about a chemist what comes to your mind? Top 5 answers



Pharmacies/
pharmacists



Medication/
medicine



Prescriptions



Drugs/
tablets/pills



Shop/
chemist's
shop

Lack of confidence and feelings of inferiority could explain the absence of emotional connection with chemistry

School put me off...



Chemistry

25% agree

48% disagree

23% neither agree
nor disagree

4% don't know



Science*

24% agree

63% disagree

13% neither agree
nor disagree

1% don't know

I don't feel confident enough to talk about chemistry

58%
of women
agree

45%
of men
agree

Public attitudes to chemicals

Although there are some concerns about chemicals, these do not affect people's views on chemistry

60%

of the public agreed that "everything is made of chemicals"

70%

of the public agreed that "everything including water and oxygen can be toxic at a certain dose"

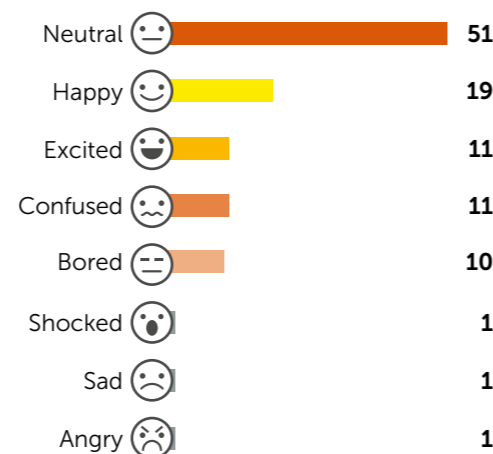
67%

of the public disagreed that "all chemicals are man-made"



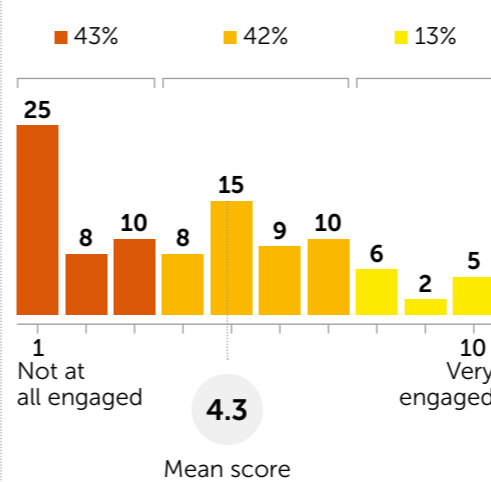
Public perceptions of chemistry are more positive than chemists expected

How do you feel about chemistry? (%)**



People don't have an emotional connection with chemistry

How engaged or interested are you with chemistry? (%)



Overall engagement is fairly low

People are interested in finding out more about chemistry, especially how it relates to their everyday life

How interested people are in finding out more about the role of chemistry in...

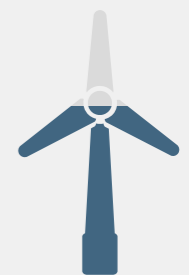
65%
feeding world
population



68%
developing clean
water technology



63%
developing
renewable energy
technologies



Public attitudes to chemistry is a study conducted by TNS BMRB on behalf of the Royal Society of Chemistry. TNS BMRB conducted qualitative research followed by 2,104 face-to-face interviews with UK adults aged 16+. Interviews were conducted between 13 and 25 February 2015 on the TNS omnibus. For more details on the methodology and data visit rsc.li/pac
*Ipsos MORI Public Attitudes to Science 2014
**Multi-coded questions represent % of respondents who select each category, but respondents can be in more than one category.