

How to talk about  
the cost of living  
and climate crises  
at the same time

**MESSAGING**  
*this* **MOMENT**

People in the UK face worsening financial strain.  
They are also more concerned than ever about the climate crisis.

While the crises share the same root causes and solutions, we're seeing a rise in potent and **persuasive narratives that pit tackling climate *against* tackling the cost of living crisis.**

Evidence and logic point to moving away from unaffordable oil and gas. But to make this happen **facts need to be woven into a clear and compelling story that effectively connects the climate and the cost of living crises. A story that's repeated again and again.**

This is essential if we're to build and maintain strong support for an affordable, clean energy future - as well as immediate financial relief.

These recommendations can help you communicate the crises' connected causes and solutions to broad public audiences. The messages can be adapted to different mediums, messengers, campaigns and content. They're based on research carried out in August and September 2022.

# Three powerful stories

## The UK's potential

Now is the time for our islands, with their huge potential for wind, wave and solar power, to show the world how to tackle the cost of living crisis and the climate crisis at the same time.

Both of them have the same root cause: expensive oil and gas. And both have the same solution - affordable, clean energy that's become more and more effective and popular over the last few years.

## Our children's future

We all want our children to be secure and comfortable this winter, and in the future.

But reliance on oil and gas is driving up our bills, making it harder to provide for our children today, while worsening climate change and threatening their future.

The only way to be free of unpredictable energy prices permanently is to move away from expensive gas and oil and towards cheaper and cleaner renewables.

## Stability and freedom

We need to be set free from unstable energy prices for good by turning to affordable, clean power and the certainty it can give us.

The only way to be free of unpredictable energy prices permanently is to move away from expensive gas and oil and towards cheaper and cleaner renewables.

# Three powerful stories

Exploring the story elements

## The UK's potential

Now is the time for **our islands, with their huge potential** for wind, wave and solar power, to **show the world** how to tackle the cost of living crisis and the climate crisis at **the same time**.

Both of them have the **same root cause: expensive oil and gas**. And both have the **same solution - affordable, clean energy** that's become **more and more effective and popular** over the last few years.

Talk about how the UK can lead the way, based on our geography

Connect the crises' causes and solutions explicitly

Be clear what costs more, **after** setting the scene with a bigger picture story

Say that clean energy is effective and popular - it is!

## Stability and freedom

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# Three powerful stories

Exploring the story elements

The UK's  
pot

Connect the present  
and the future by  
talking about our  
children's future

Now is the time to act  
with the government  
wave and solar power, to show the  
world how to tackle the cost of  
living crisis and the climate crisis  
at the same time.

Both of them have the same root  
cause: expensive oil and gas.  
And both have the same solution  
- affordable, clean energy that's  
become more and more effective  
and popular over the last few years.

## Our children's future

We all want **our children** to be  
secure and comfortable this winter,  
and **in the future**.

But **reliance on oil and gas** is  
driving up our bills, making it harder  
to provide for **our children** today,  
while worsening climate change  
and threatening their **future**.

The only way to be **free of**  
**unpredictable energy prices**  
**permanently** is to move away from  
**expensive gas and oil** and towards  
**cheaper and cleaner renewables**.

## Stability and freedom

We need to be set free from  
the uncertainty of energy prices  
good by  
power  
us.

Be explicit about the  
role of oil and gas

The only way to be free of  
unpredictable energy prices

Be clear what costs more,  
**after** setting the scene  
with a bigger picture story

# Three powerful stories

Exploring the story elements

## The UK's potential

Now is the time for our islands, with their huge potential for wind, wave and solar power, to show the world how to tackle the cost of living crisis and the climate crisis at the same time.

Both of them have the same root cause: expensive oil and gas. And both have the same solution - affordable, clean energy that's become more and more effective and popular over the last few years.

Use language of freedom and stability to talk about a clean energy future

Be explicit about the role of oil and gas

Be clear what costs more, **after** setting the scene with a bigger picture story

## Stability and freedom

We need to be set **free** from **unstable** energy prices for good by turning to affordable, clean power and the **certainty** it can give us.

The only way to be **free** of unpredictable energy prices permanently is to move away from **expensive gas and oil** and towards **cheaper and cleaner renewables**.

# Do

- ✓ Begin with a big picture principle:  
**The UK's potential, our children's future or freedom and stability.**  
  
For example: *“To protect our children now and in the future, more and more people want the UK to be on the path to affordable, clean energy for all.”*

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- ✓ Focus on and repeat what's true.  
  
For example: *“Our islands have incredible potential to be free of expensive oil and gas for good. Wind, wave and solar energy power are cheaper and cleaner than oil and gas.”*

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- ✓ Bring the conversation to our narrative terrain, instead of engaging with the frames set by others.  
  
Pivot to ensure that you're always establishing one of the three big picture principles.

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- ✓ Know that **most people are already with you**. They care about climate change and the cost of living crisis. So opt for a “we all already know” tone rather than the “we have to convince you” tone.  
  
For example: *“Most of us are worried about the cost of living and the climate. That's why so many people want the freedom and stability that only clean energy can give us.”*

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- ✓ Use down to earth, straightforward language.

# Don't

- ✗ Assert solutions and benefits without first establishing the bigger picture.  
  
For example: *“The cost of onshore wind has reduced by 40% in the last decade, while oil and gas have gone up by 40% in the same time period.”*

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- ✗ Focus on and repeat myths, even if you're attempting to rebut or correct them.  
  
For example: *“We keep hearing that we need more gas to shore up our supply and bring down the cost of energy, when in fact renewables are nine times cheaper than gas at the moment.”*

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- ✗ Engage with the idea of trade-offs and “tough choices” on these issues - or attempt to disprove this framing with facts.  
  
People are susceptible to the idea that we can't do both right now. Don't allow this frame to take hold- tell a powerful different story instead.

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- ✗ Talk about climate deniers, delayers or NIMBYs in public-facing communications. These perspectives are now rare so don't give them oxygen.  
  
For example: *“Even if you're a climate denier you should support renewable energy because it's a sound economic investment at this difficult time.”*

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- ✗ Slip into jargon.  
  
For example: *“Achieving net zero in the UK through renewable energy would cost 2% of GDP, but will have a net benefit of 4% GDP.”*

# How to answer common questions

In order to keep reinforcing our stories, we'll often need to pivot the conversation. Here are some ideas for how to do this in response to common questions.

**“ *But renewables can't do everything, can they?* ”**

Our islands have incredible potential to show the world how to be free of expensive oil and gas for good. Wind, wave and solar energy are more affordable, effective and reliable than fossil fuels\*. The cost of living crisis and the climate crisis have the same root cause: expensive oil and gas. And the same solutions - affordable, clean energy and better insulation for our homes so we can be warmer, and waste less of the energy we produce.

**“ *Of course we need to be thinking about the environment, but right now we must do whatever it takes to get bills down. Doesn't this mean shoring up our own supplies of oil and gas as well as renewables?* ”**

We need to be set free from unstable energy prices for good by turning to affordable, clean power and the certainty it can give us. The only way to be free of unpredictable energy prices permanently is to move away from expensive gas and oil and towards cheaper and cleaner renewables\*. If we don't tackle the root causes now, we'll be in the same situation again, and again.

**“ *What do you say to claims that this is utopian nonsense or bourgeois environmentalism and that we need to get real and practical?* ”**

People in the UK want to be able to heat their homes and feed their children this winter, and they want their children to have a future. More than 80% of us are worried about the climate and want more action to address it. People know that it's our reliance on oil and gas that's driving up bills and worsening climate change. The cost of living crisis and the climate crisis have the same root cause: expensive oil and gas. And the same solution - affordable, clean energy.

\* Possibility to insert fact about reliability/cost of renewables here.



# How we reached these recommendations

Together with a group of 20 researchers and strategists, we pooled existing insights on how best to communicate these issues. We drafted more than 30 potential messaging approaches.

We tested the messages in a three-stage process involving more than 10,000 members of the UK public. Our testing approach gauged how compelling people found the different messages, and whether they shifted respondents' perspectives and policy preferences. We then used social testing to learn more how the top messages performed in-situ.

This research builds on previous research and insight from organisations like More In Common, GSCC, Climate Outreach, On Road Media, PIRC, FrameWorks and many others.

This project is a collaboration between [Reset Narratives](#), [On Road Media](#) & [Rubber Republic](#).

It has benefitted from the input of a wide group, including colleagues from [More In Common](#), [Futerra](#), [GSCC](#), [Climate Outreach](#), [NEON](#), [Uplift](#), [CLASS](#), [Save the Children](#), [The Climate Coalition](#), [Centre for Countering Digital Hate](#), [Climate Emergency Collaboration Group](#), [The Climate Coalition](#) and [Common Cause](#).

## The messages we recommend:

- Move people to see the solutions to the climate and cost of living crises as the same
- Reduce fatalism, moving people to agree that “we can avoid the worst consequences of climate change if we act quickly and decisively”
- Move people towards supporting policy solutions: emergency financial relief, renewables and insulation
- Work for both Conservative and Labour voters (2019)

It'd be great to know if you use these messages and how they work for you. **Click here to do that.**