



Barriers to Sustainability

We heard compelling evidence that global heating is proceeding well ahead of central predictions. The need for change is increasingly urgent, therefore an honest reflection on the barriers to adopting sustainability is an important part of our findings.

From a multi-disciplinary perspective, we identified these common barriers to change:

- **Leadership** - Lack of leadership at the firm or industry level
- **Inconsistent** messages from professional bodies and the government.
- **Risk** - Lack of understanding of the magnitude of the risk of climate change & the risk of a decarbonising economy on individuals and businesses. A general lack of understanding of risk in the wider pollution.
- **Effects** - Lack of understanding of how climate change or decarbonisation might affect our clients or our service lines.
- **Truth** - Lack of honesty when speaking about the climate risk with our clients.
- **Silos** - Working in silos and not sharing knowledge and not sharing questions.
- **Greenwash** – people are scared of getting it wrong (or at least use it as an excuse) and the need for perfection is limiting.
- **The Perception** is that Clients aren't "into it" and therefore aren't interested/aren't asking about it and it's only "hippies" that are interested in it.
- **Fringe** – Treated as a fringe issue by specialist teams rather than the core of every business model.
- **Register of expertise** - No ability to identify experts in the area.
- **Training and CPD** – There are Lots of different schemes and not compulsory.
- **Skill** - There is a Lack of people with the necessary skills and individuals & firms don't know where to start.
- **Lack of practical** guidance and support from Professional bodies.
- **Priorities** - Not prioritised over whatever immediate profit or firefight is current.
- **Under-resourced firms** – This Means there are too many other fires to fight currently.
- **Short-term profits** are valued too highly over longer-term profits.
- **Short-termism** is preventing practitioners from seeing the medium-term risks.
- **Wellbeing & nature** – Not all costs are measured when looking at profits.
- **Business case** – overreliance on the business case as a catalyst for change and creates delays.
- **Technology** – forces unhelpful framing of our advice as it's been designed with unsustainability in mind.
- **Techno salvation** – The false assumption that technology and efficiency will be enough.
- **Gaps in technology** to support the new service offerings.
- **Processes** – the process designed to deliver unsustainable advice will continue to deliver unsustainable results.
- **Materiality** – differing views on what this means across the professions.