



The future of local government

Summer 2010

Ipsos MORI

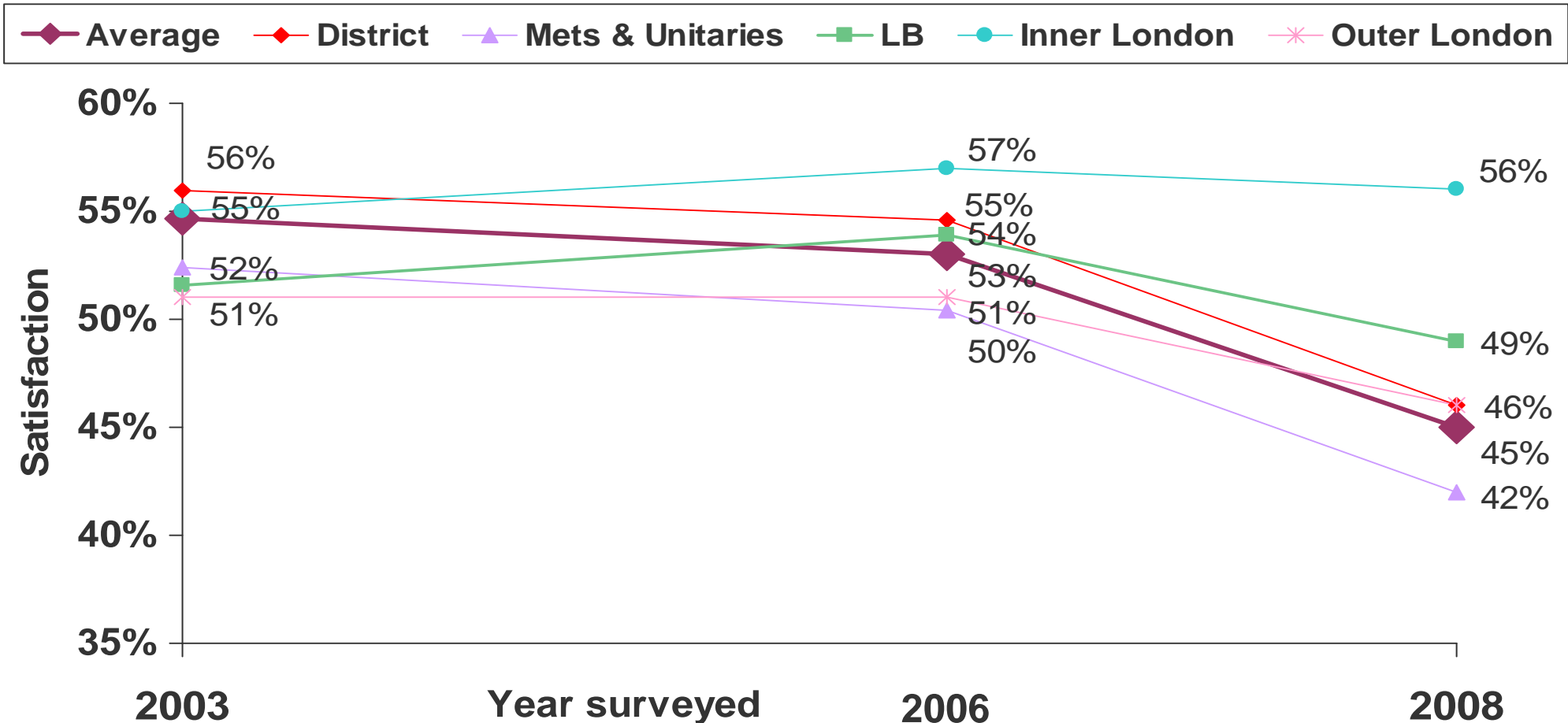
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1. What people think of local government

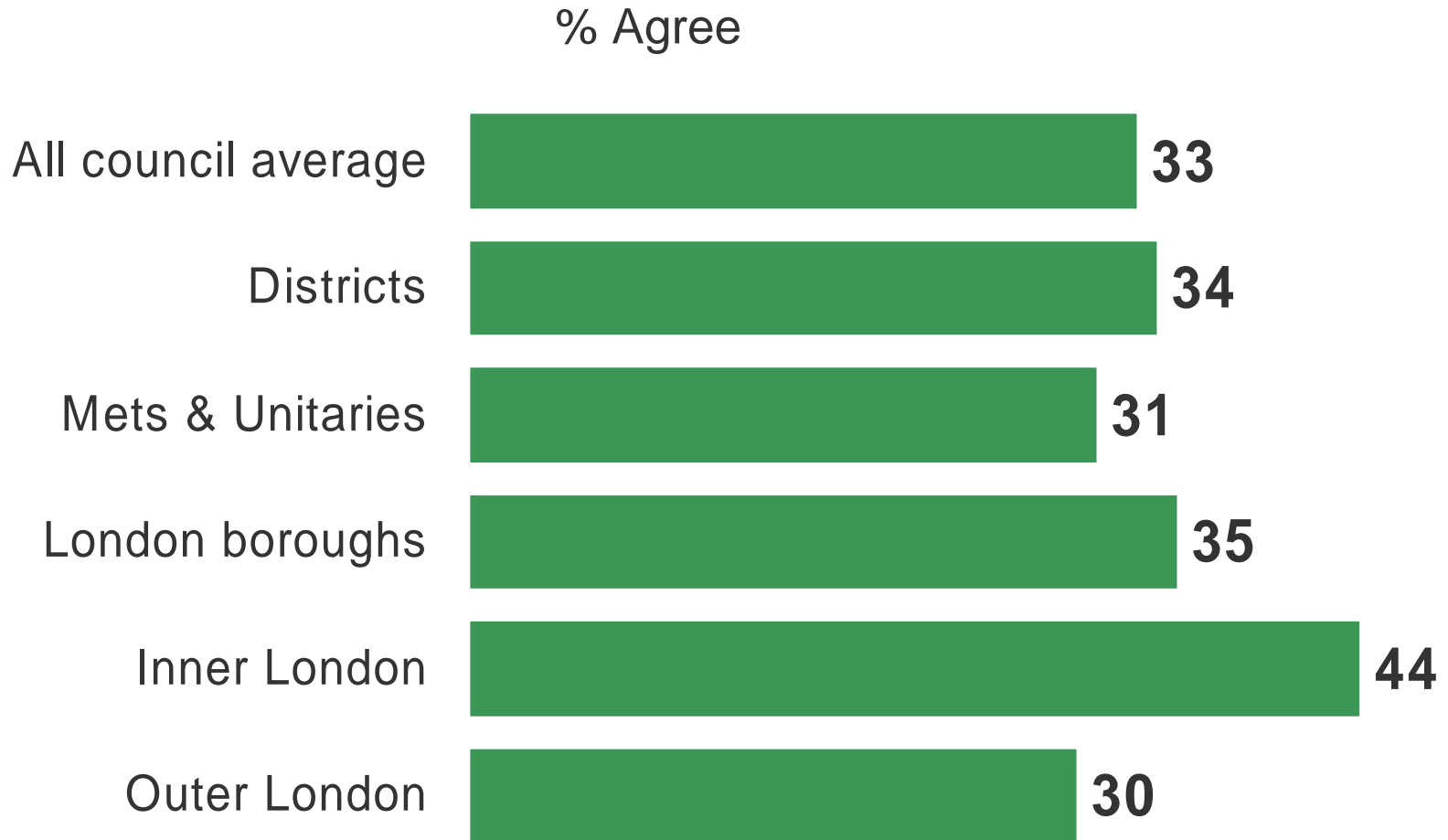
Satisfaction with councils has dropped over time

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your local council runs things?



And only a minority think local government delivers value for money

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local authority provides value for money?



With public advocacy of councils poorest amongst the key local public service providers

Q *Can you tell me which of the phrases on this card best describes the way you would speak about that service to other people?*



% Critical



% Speak highly

Net
score

Your local
council

-28

21

-7

The police in
my local area

-19

32

+13

My local
hospital

-16

54

+38

Local NHS (GPs,
hospitals, ambulance
service, dentists and
other parts of the
NHS)

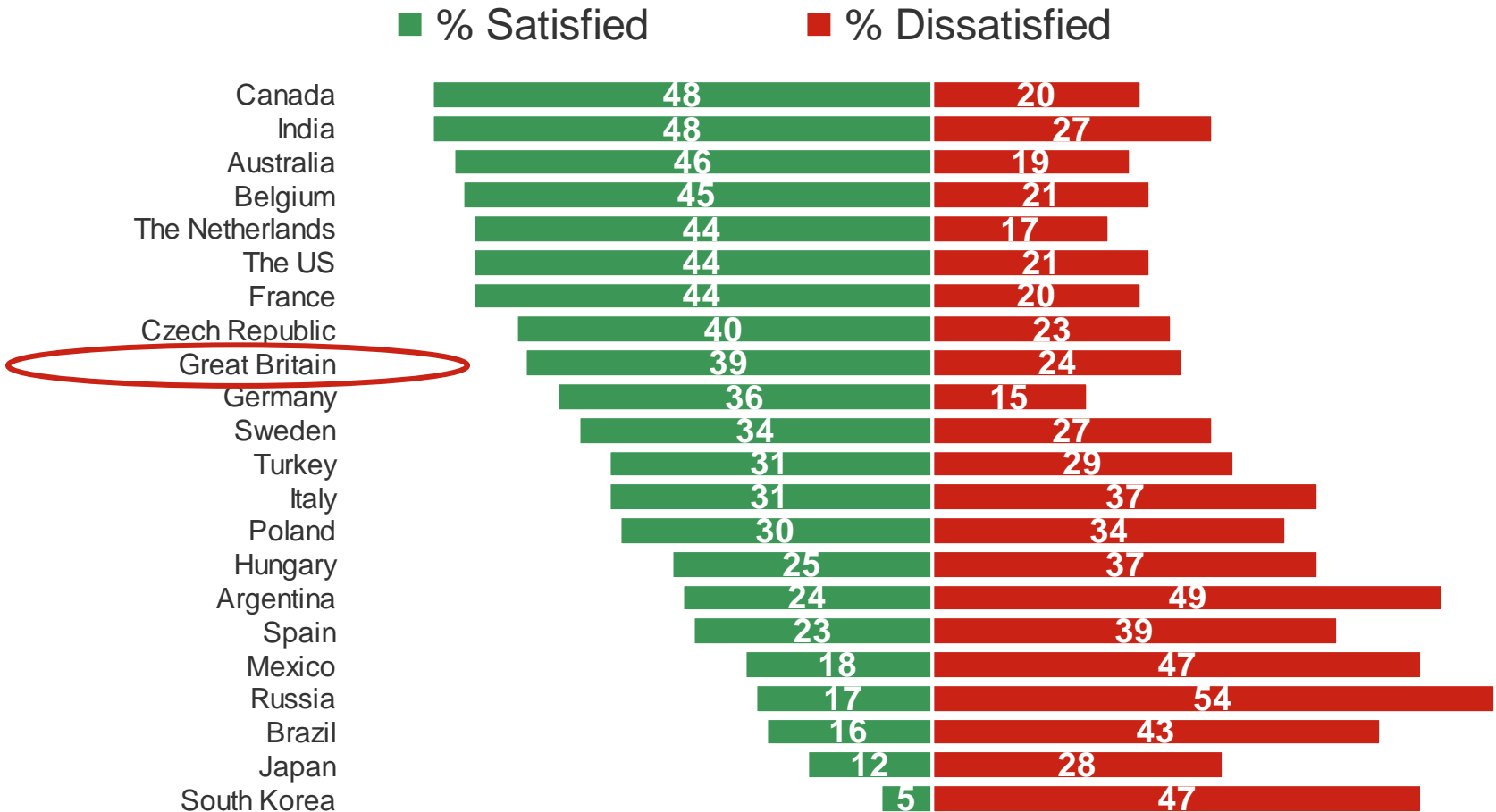
-12

63

+51

Although satisfaction above Europe and G8 averages

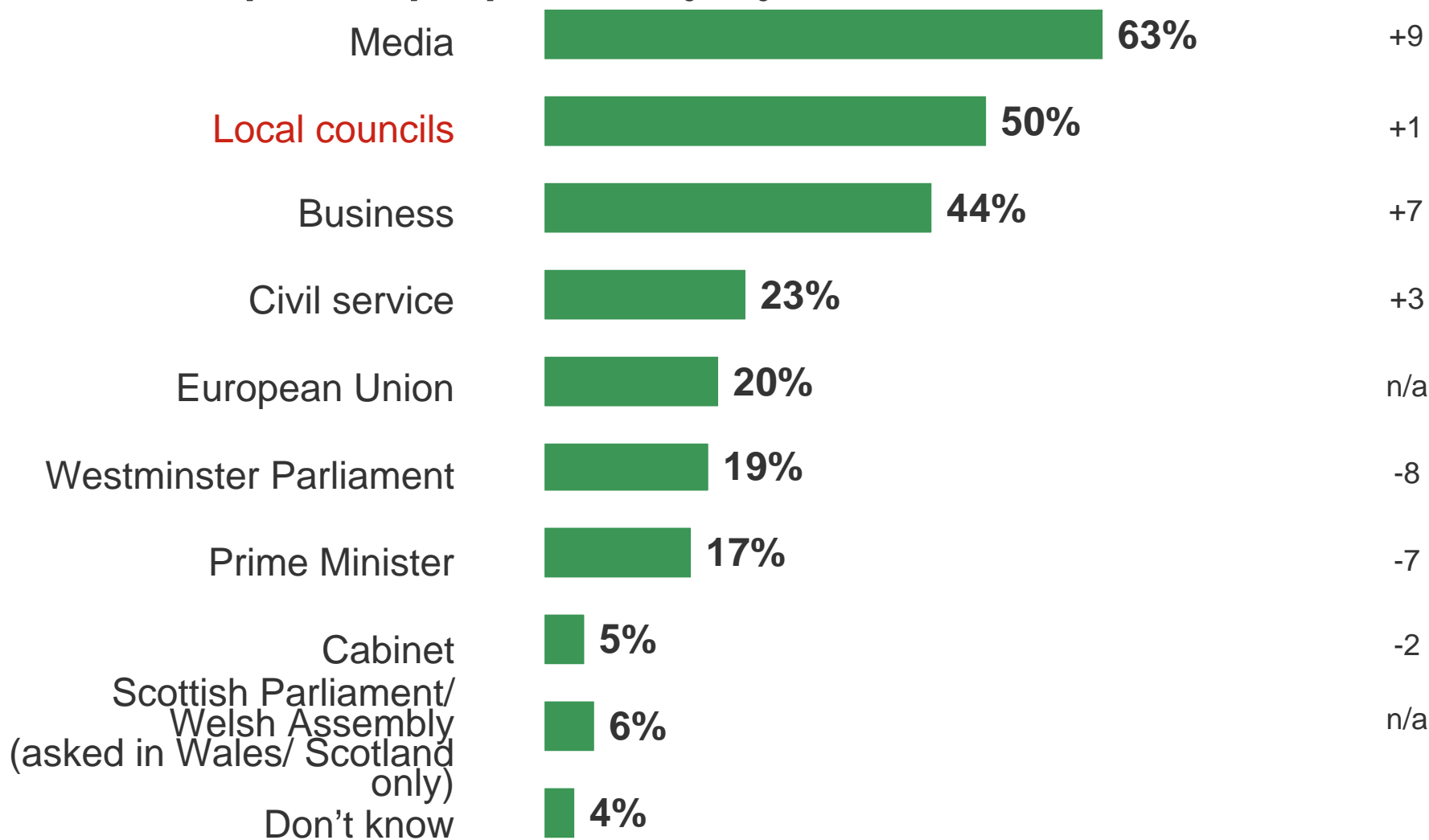
Q *And now taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your local council/municipal authority/local government runs things?*



People recognise councils have an impact on everyday lives

Q From this list, which two or three of the following do you believe have most impact on people's everyday lives?

Change since 2006 ±%points

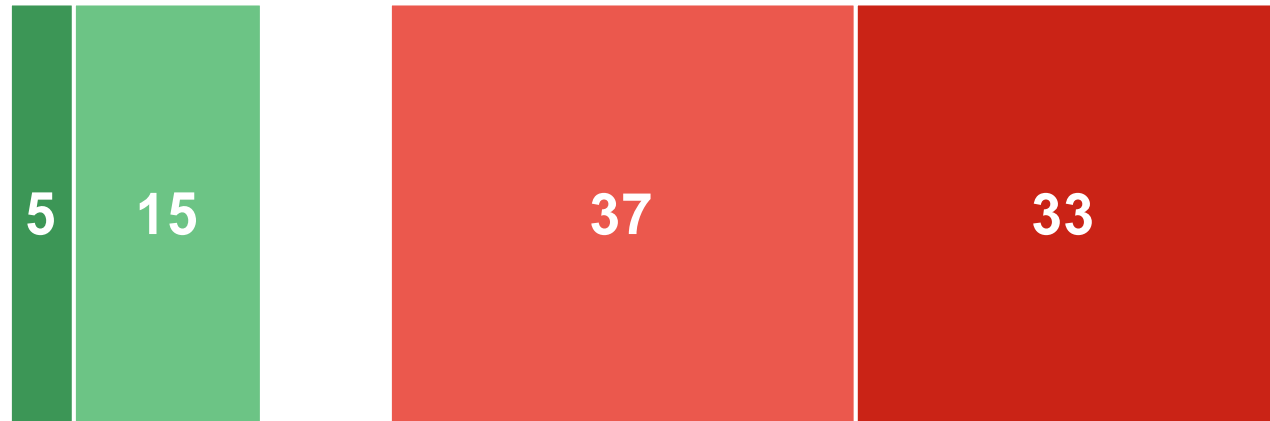


But, most don't feel they have influence over public services

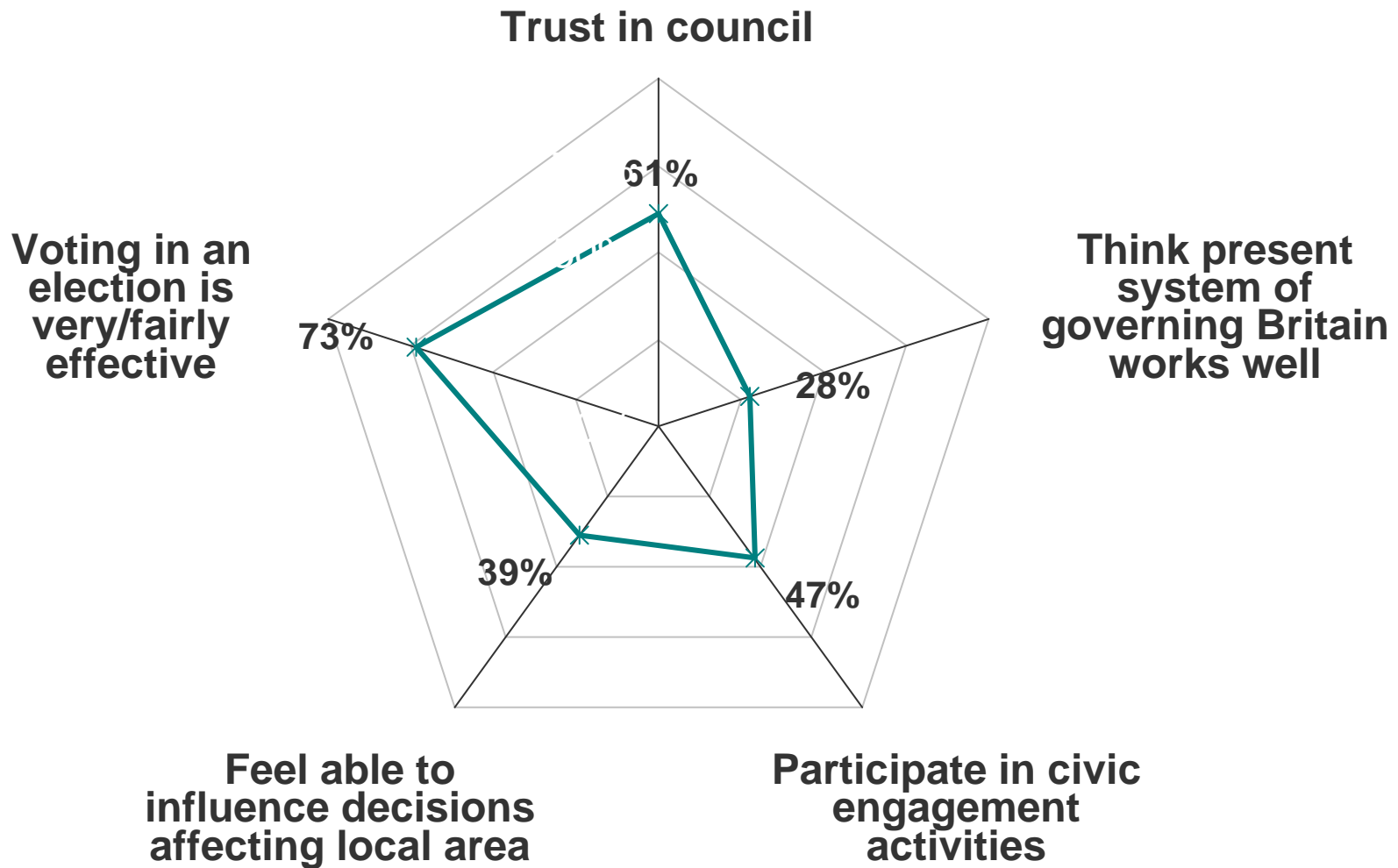
Q *On balance, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?*

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Tend to agree ■ % Tend to disagree ■ % Strongly disagree

I have influence over how public services are delivered



Civic engagement and feelings of influence are relatively low

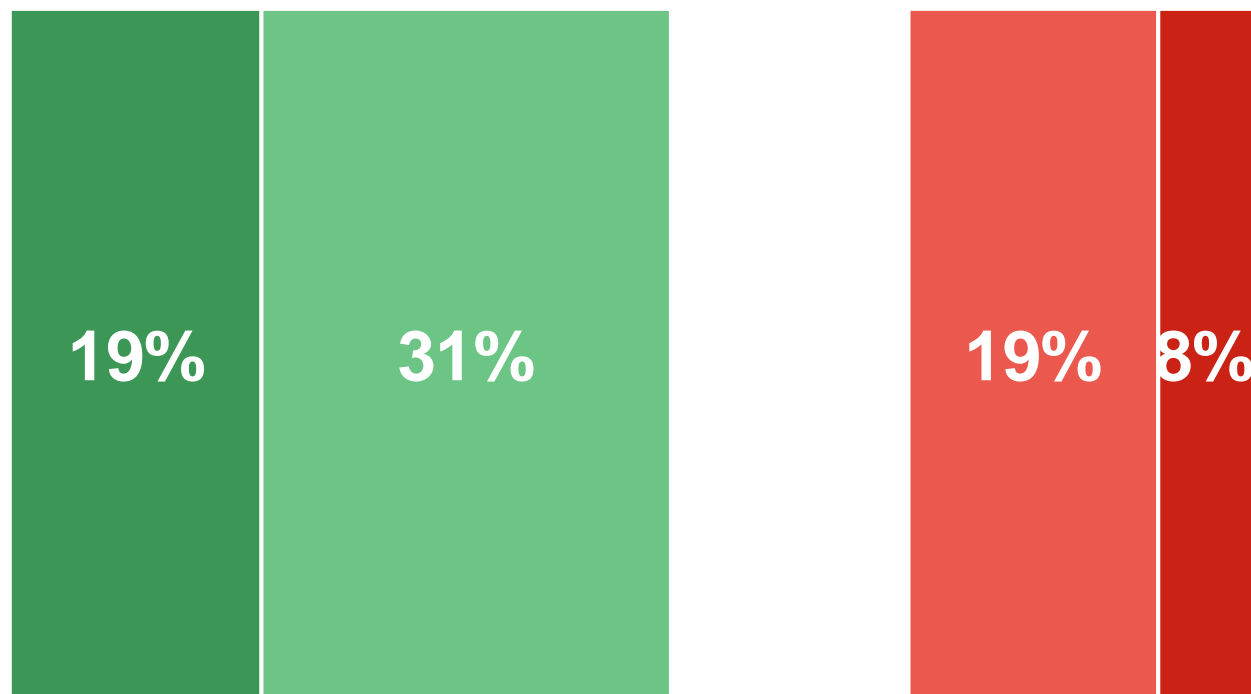


But, the public don't want the state to withdraw too much in the future

Q *Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement...*

■ Strongly agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree

I am worried that government and public services will do too little to help people in the years ahead (*Base: 490*)



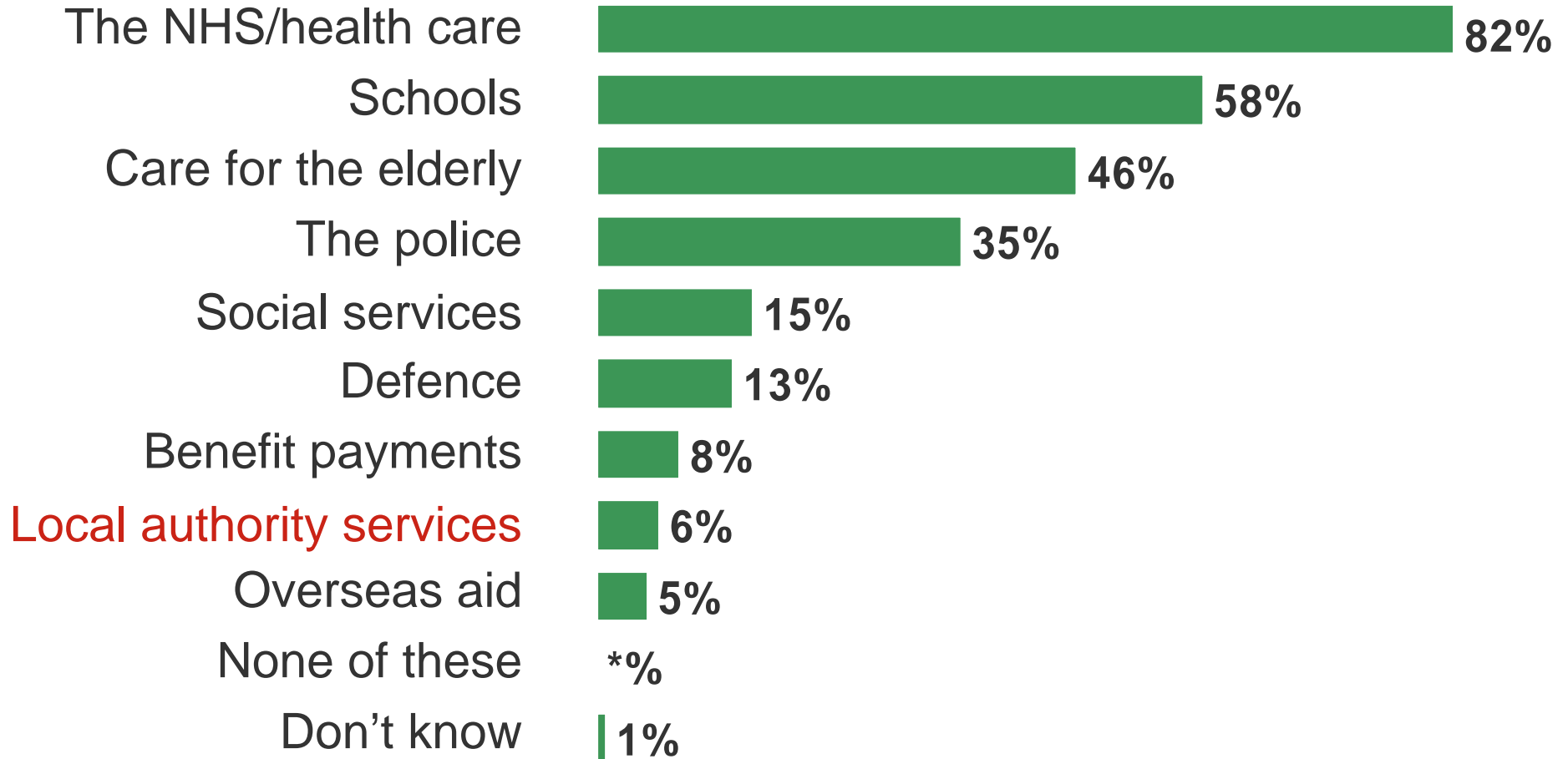
2. The big challenge: spending

Of the £6.25 billion savings that are required by government in 2010/11, local government will bear a £1.2 billion reduction in grants.

There will be some challenging conversations with both the general public and public sector workers on the tough decisions ahead. So how can local councils manage expectations in the face of tightening budgets?

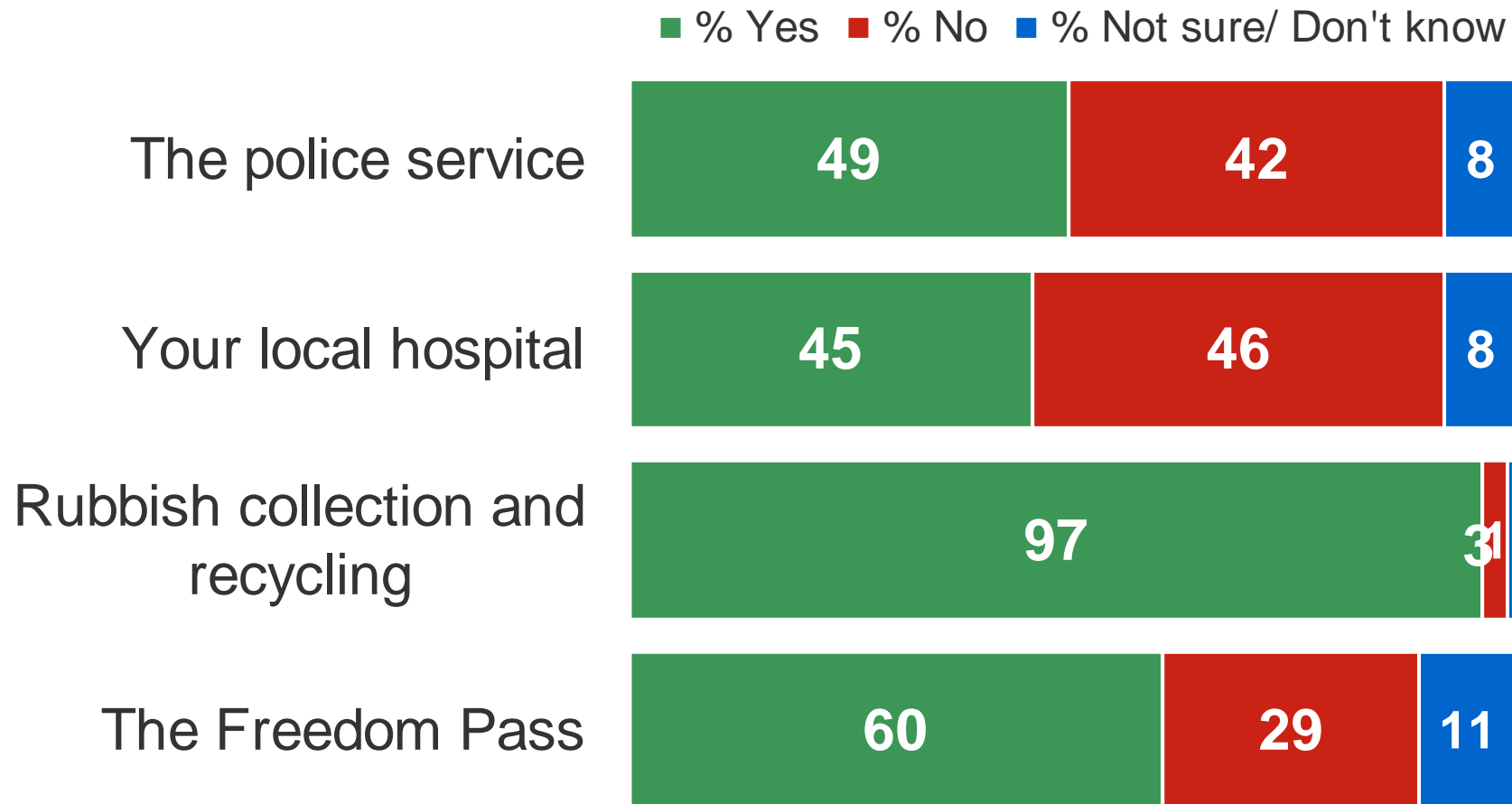
Local authorities appear to be an easy target for cuts

Q Which TWO or THREE, if any, of the following main areas of public spending do you think should be protected from any cuts?



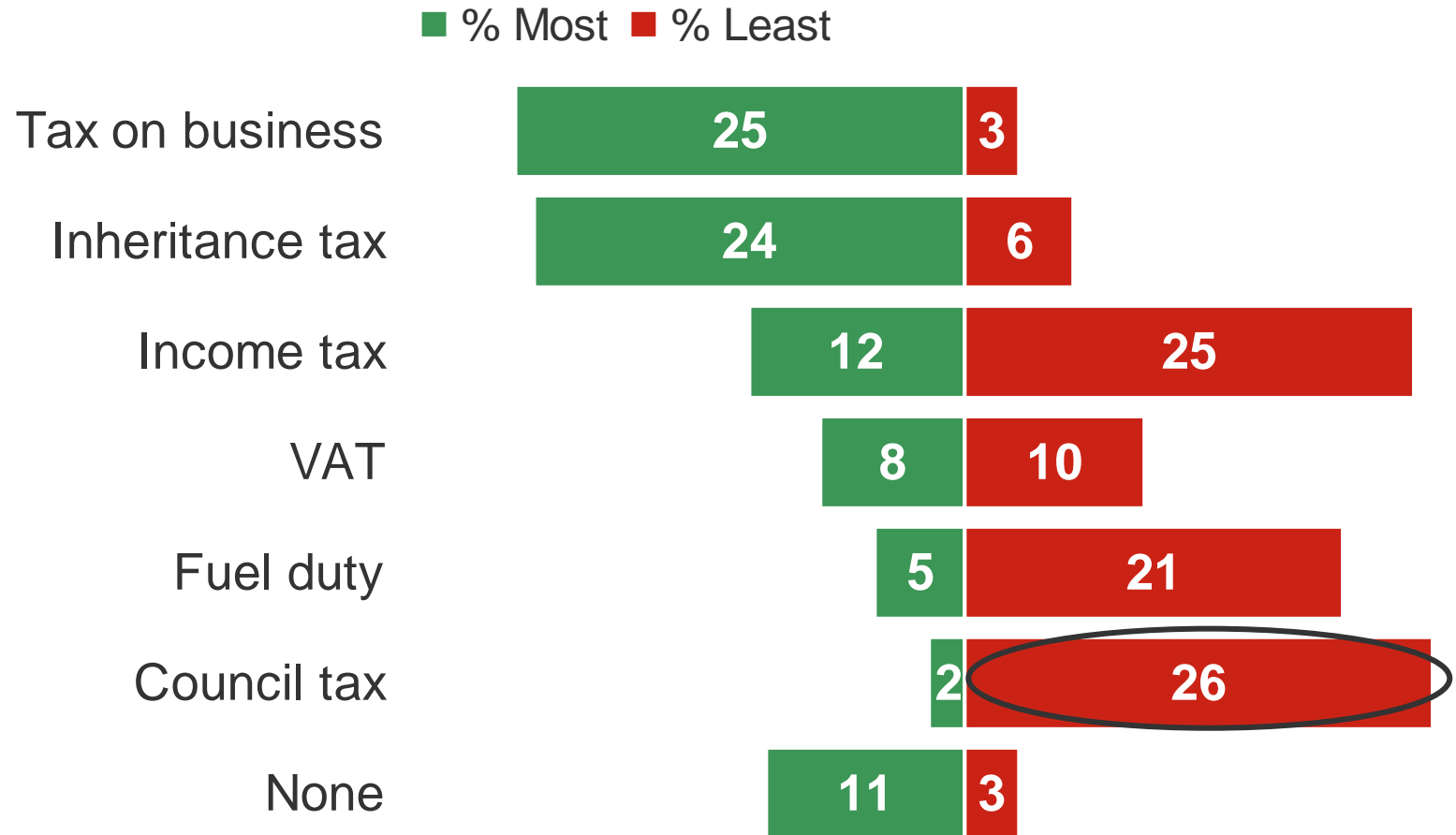
Is this because people don't know what local government does?

Q *I am going to read out a list of services and, for each one, I would like you to tell me whether you think it is the responsibility of you local London Borough Council or not...*



Whilst our survey suggests the new freeze on council tax rises is in line with public mood, it adds to the problem of shrinking budgets

Q *In order to bring the nation's debts under control, many experts think it is highly likely that the level of taxation will increase in future. If taxes were to rise, which of these, if any, would you be most/least in favour of being increased?*

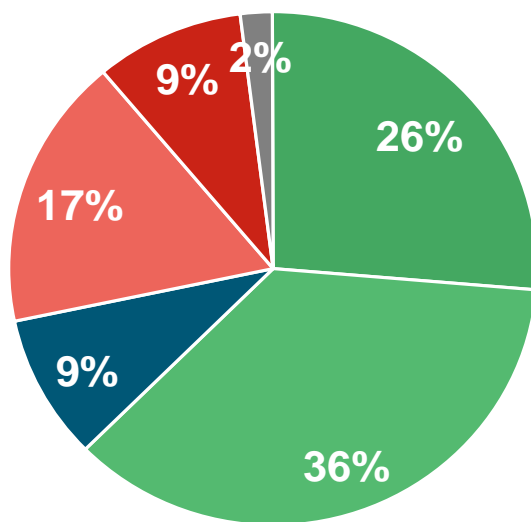


The public still believe that greater efficiency can do it

Making public services more efficient can save enough money to pay off the very high national debt we now have, without damaging services the public receive

■ Strongly agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Neither ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know

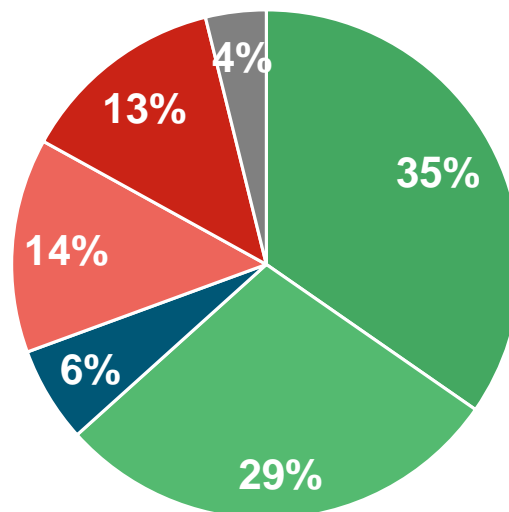
Nov '09



Net agree = +36

Base: 1,006 British adults, 13th-15th November 2009

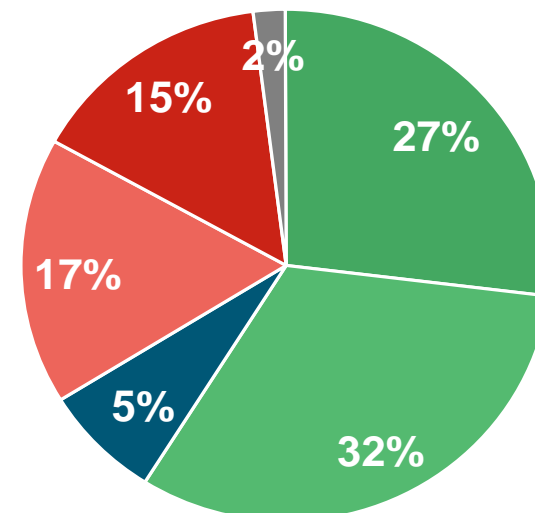
March '10



Net agree = +37

Base: 1,503 British adults 18+, 19th-22nd March 2010

June '10



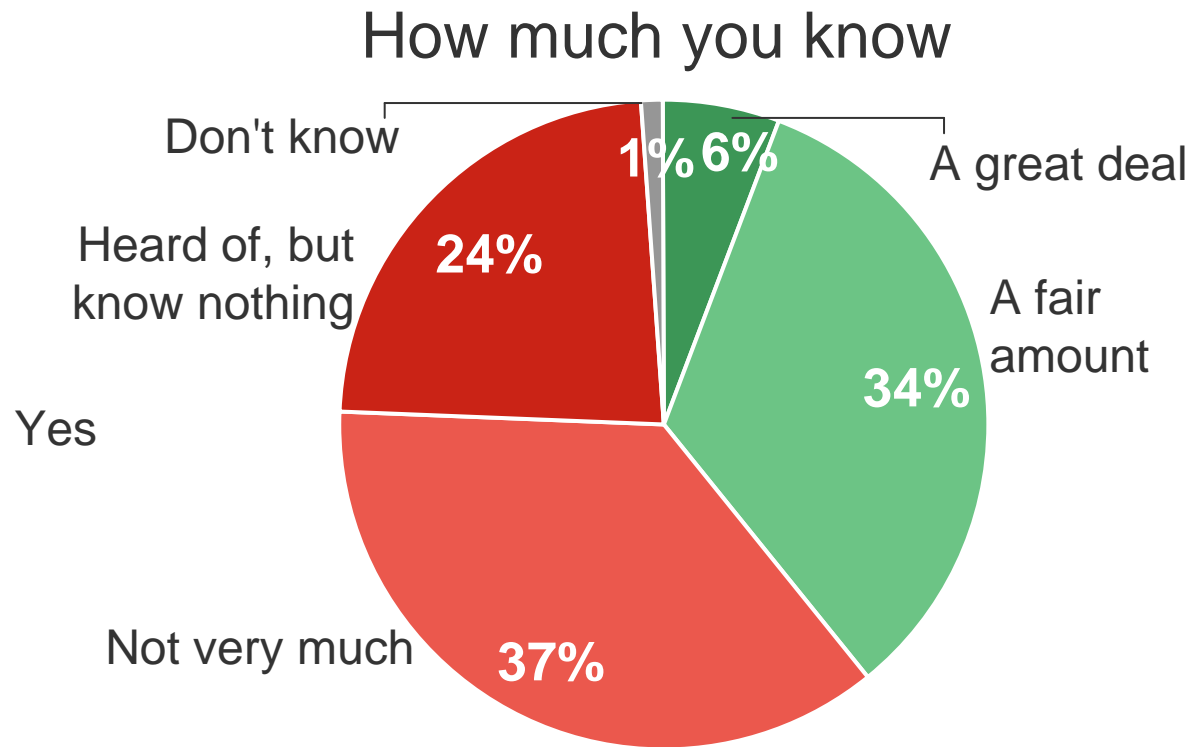
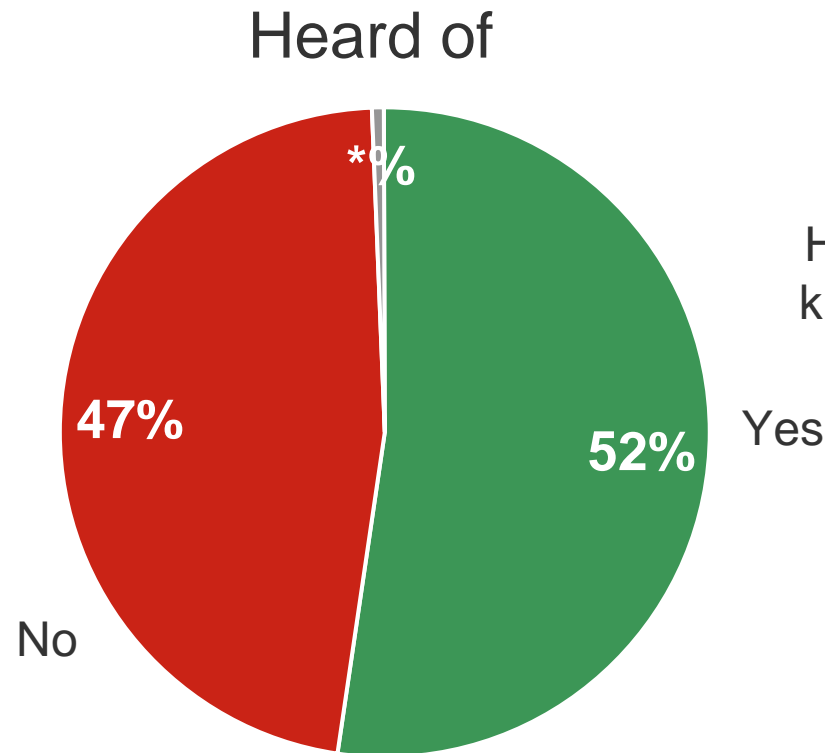
Net agree = +27

Base: 1,002 British adults 18+, 18th-20th June 2010

3. Personal responsibility and the 'Big Society'

Many have heard about the 'Big Society', but fewer know a lot about it – although this is increasing

- Q During the recent election campaign David Cameron and the Conservative Party talked about their plans to create a “Big Society” in Britain. Do you remember hearing anything about this, or not?
- Q How much, if anything, do you feel you know about their plans for a “Big Society”?



Base: 1,009 British adults 18+ 544 British adults 18+ who remember hearing about 'Big Society'.

Fieldwork dates: 23rd – 25th July 2010

Source: Ipsos MORI/Reuters Political Monitor

Nowadays, more feel people should take individual responsibility

Q *Please read each pair of statements and decide which comes closest to your own opinion*

■
■
% Agree much
more with A

People should be responsible for making their own decisions about their health and welfare - it is no business of the state to interfere

20

28

■
■
% Agree much
more with B

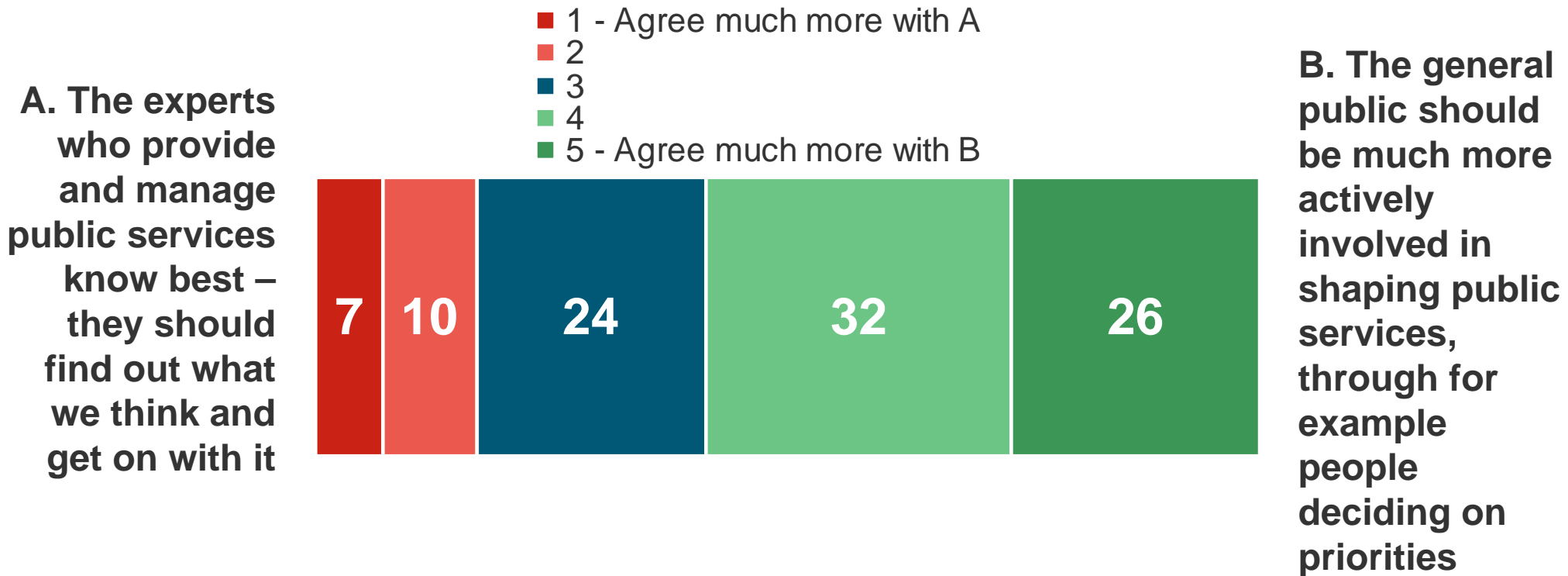
13

7

The state should take responsibility for the public's health and welfare - it must protect people from making mistakes they will regret later

And they agree the public should be more involved in the way services are run

Q *Please read each pair of statements and decide which comes closest to your own opinion*



People want more local control – but, are worried about local variation

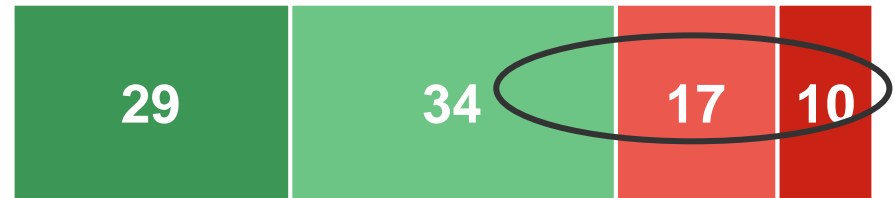
Q *To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:*

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Tend to agree ■ % Tend to disagree ■ % Strongly disagree

People should have more control over how public services are provided locally



People should have more control over how public services are provided locally, *even though it will mean that the services residents receive will vary between local areas**



Implications of local control worry people

- Greater localism (area budgets, co-ops, etc.) welcomed in theory
 - Give more control to people who understand areas
- But, concerns about how it would work in practice
 - How would decisions be when people disagree?
 - What happens if (when) things go wrong?
 - Interest group capture?
 - Do people have time to be involved?

"See, it sounds like a really good idea, but you still need someone looking over it... making sure it's all equal. If only the pushy parents are there, what about the other people?"

Female, 25-39, Oxford

"They've got to have a national standard. There's got to be a baseline that they have to work to, but then councils that have this amount of money, so long as the standards are met, they can actually have the flexibility to use that money in a way that community needs."

Male, 40-64, Kent

Large majority of people want services to be the same everywhere - even simple services like recycling

Q *Please can you tell me which of these statements comes closest to your own opinion:*



...should be the same everywhere in Britain



People should be able to decide for themselves how ... is provided in their area

The health service

81%

18%

Recycling

70%

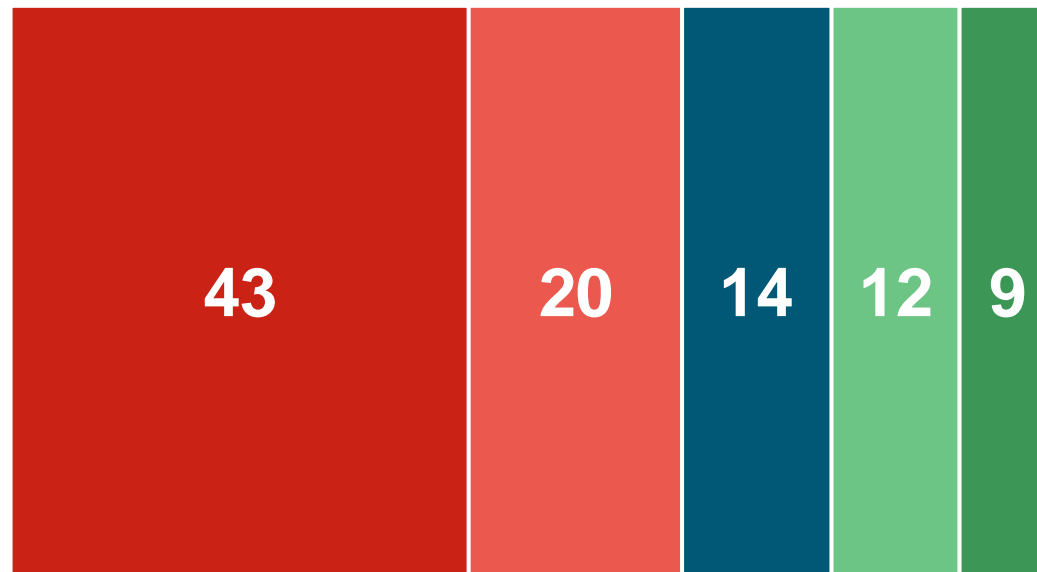
29%

Public wants to see fairness in service provision – no postcode lottery

Q *Please read each pair of statements and decide which comes closest to your own opinion*

- 1 - Agree much more with A
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 - Agree much more with B

A. Standards of public services should be the same everywhere in Britain

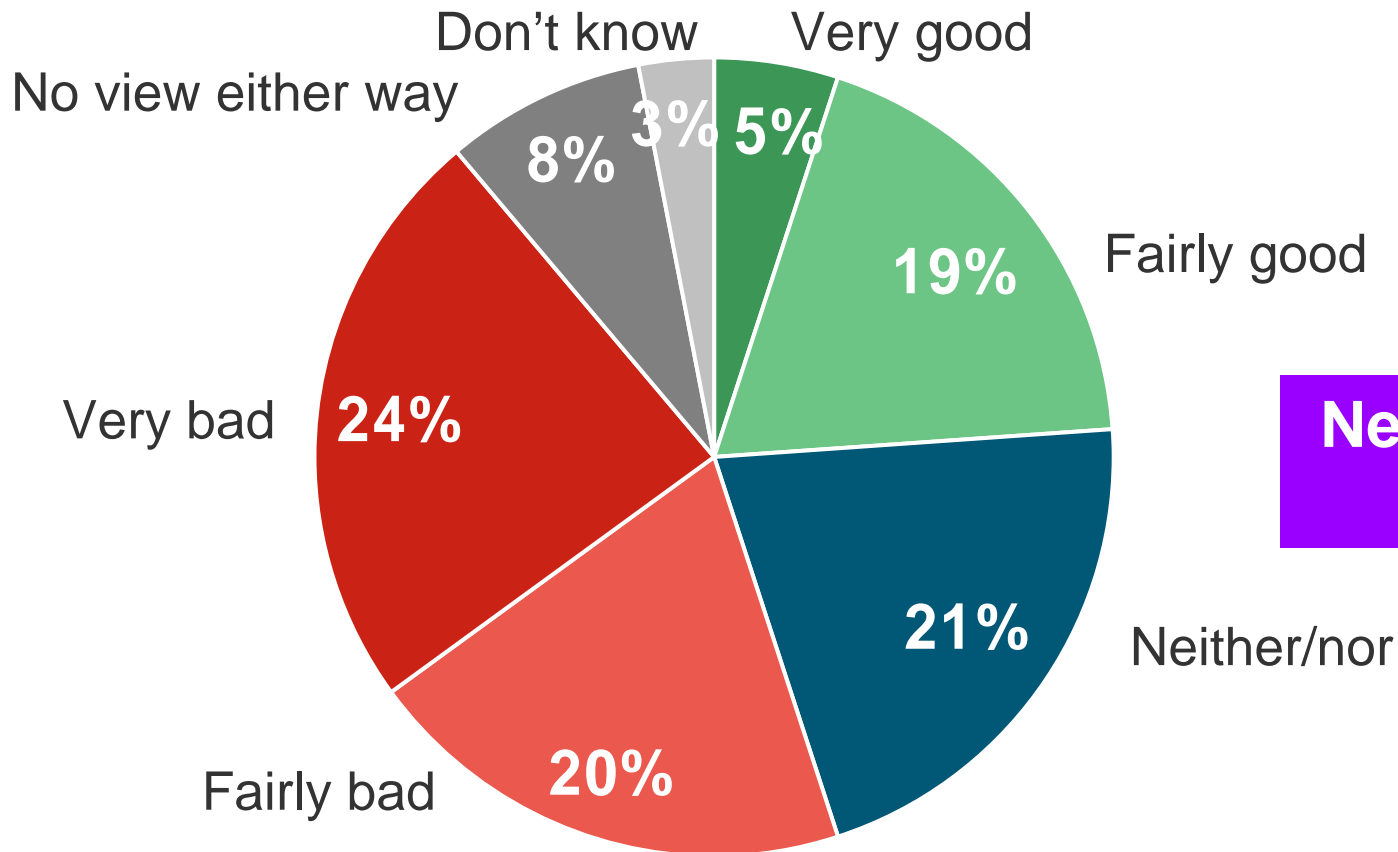


B. The people who live in different parts of Britain should be able to decide for themselves what standard of public services should be provided in their area

The level of local control and extent of community involvement differs depending on which service we're looking at. For example, schools...

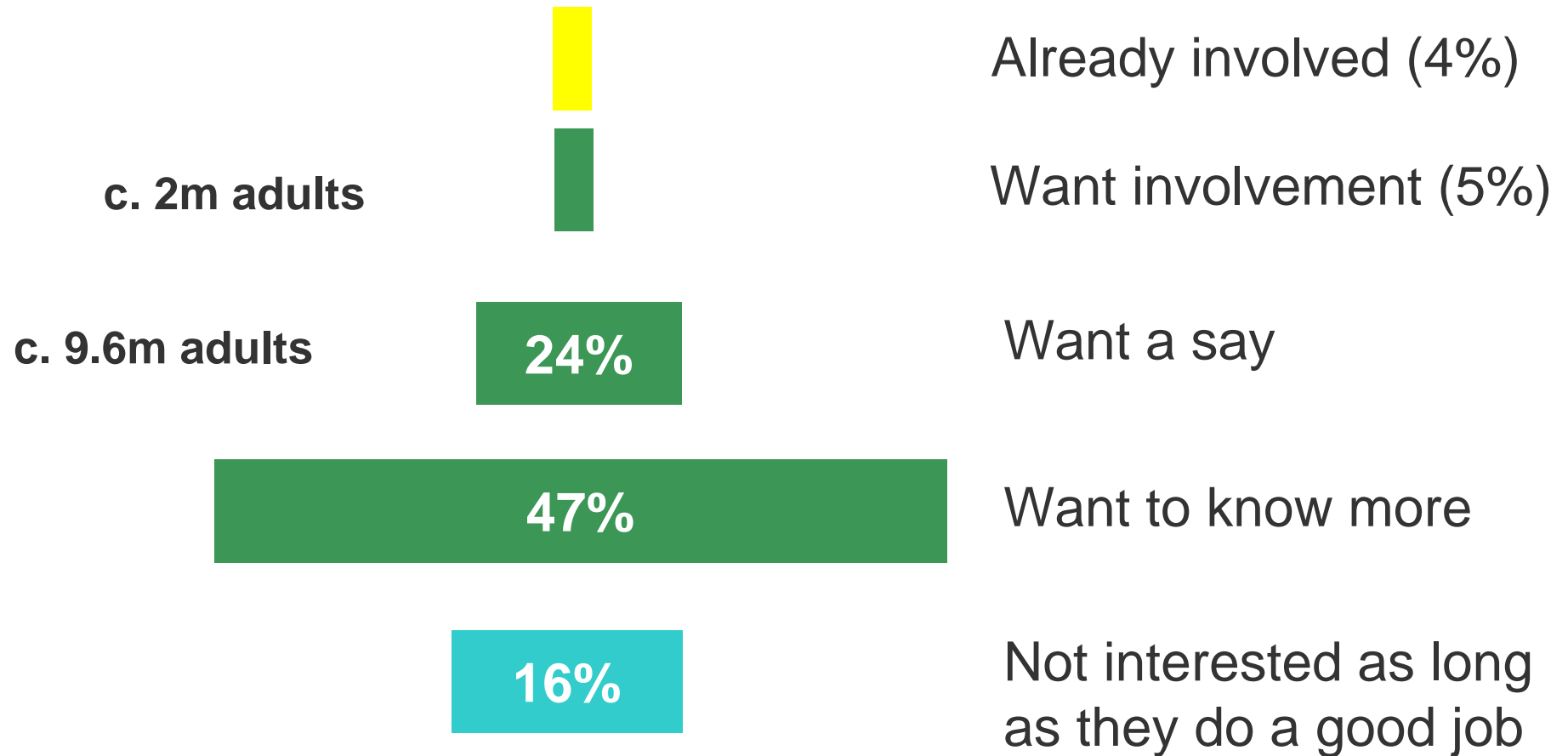
... the public is divided about alternative school providers and on balance think the idea is bad

Q *Some people have suggested that more schools in the future could be run directly by private companies, religious groups, charities or groups of parents, rather than being run by the local council as they generally are now. How far do you believe this is a good or bad idea, or do you have no view either way?*



**Net good:
-20**

Still, there are potentially 11 million who want more engagement or direct involvement



The future of involvement will be locally based in *your square mile* through a variety of flexible ways



Your Square Mile



THERE ARE 93,000 SQUARE MILES IN THE UK

We tend to only hear about two of them: the square miles of the City and Westminster. The Big Society Network is about enabling you to make changes in the square mile where you live and/or work: the other 92,998 square miles.

Whether you want get a new pedestrian crossing put in place because two children have died in your road in the last 5 years; or to fight the rising crime in your neighbourhood; to have more influence over your child's school; or to help the lonely pensioners in your street feel like "The Elders" and wanted, not "The Elderly" and ignored; to change the spending priorities of your local council or at least get them to recycle Tetrapak cartons, then we will be building a network that will very simply help you achieve those aims.

This simple, modest web-site, plus all the blogs, twitters, mobile apps, Facebook and Google groups that it will spawn, will grow into a resource library for your use; to give you the confidence and means to change your neighbourhood and improve your life.

The Idea
Your Square Mile

Your Share
4 Minute Film

About us
Contact us

© 2010 The Big Society [Privacy Policy](#)

4. Public assurance and enabling an army of armchair auditors

R.I.P Comprehensive Area Assessment

- but what next?

The public value independent inspection

Q *How important do you think it is that all local public services in England are independently inspected so that the public knows how well or badly they are doing? Would you say ...?*

■ Very important ■ Fairly important ■ Not very important
■ Not at all important ■ Don't know/ No opinion

Nov 2009 (pre CAA publication)



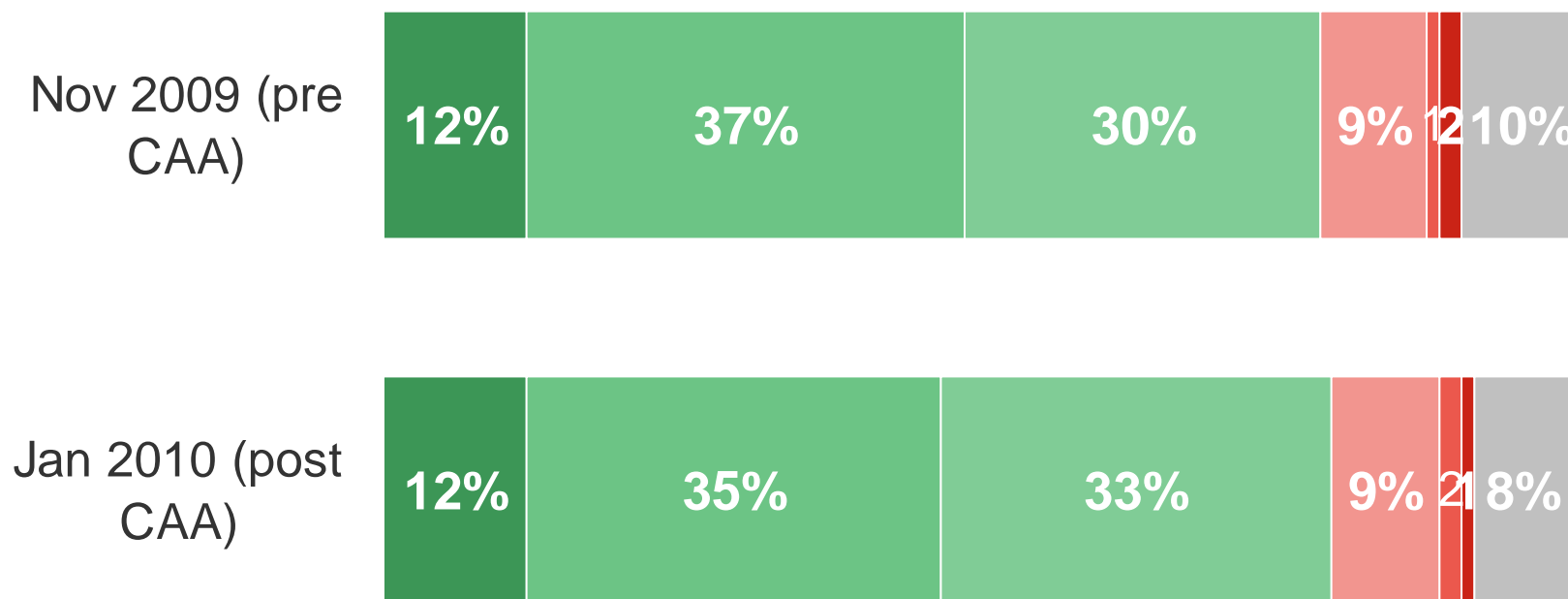
Jan 2010 (post CAA publication)



And feel they can lead to improvements

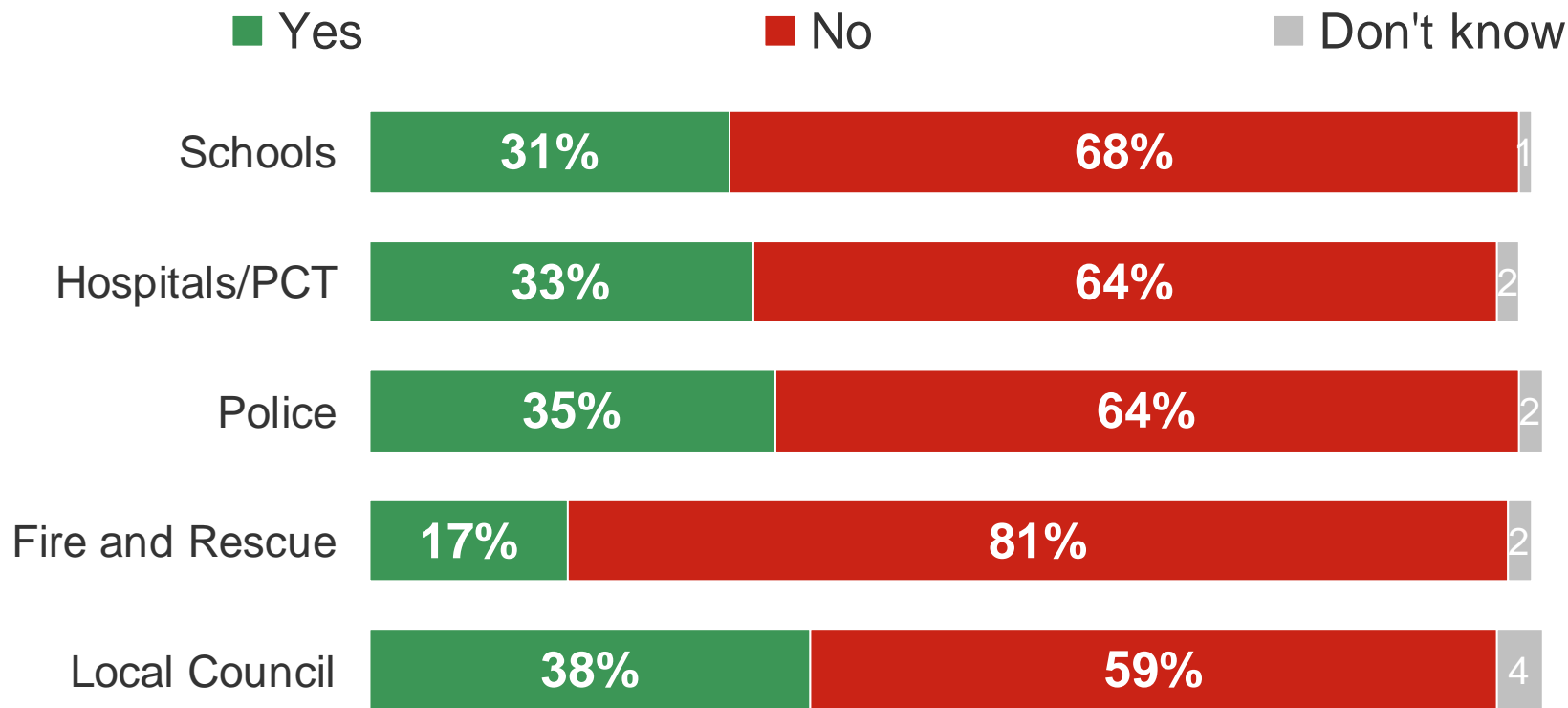
Q *And, how likely do you think it is that doing this will lead to under-performing local public services improving in the future? Would you say it is ...?*

■ Certain to ■ Very likely to ■ Fairly likely to
■ Not very likely to ■ Fairly likely not to ■ Certain not to
■ Don't know/ No opinion



Three in five have seen performance information for at least one local service...

Q *Have you previously seen any information about how each of the following local public services is performing in your area?*

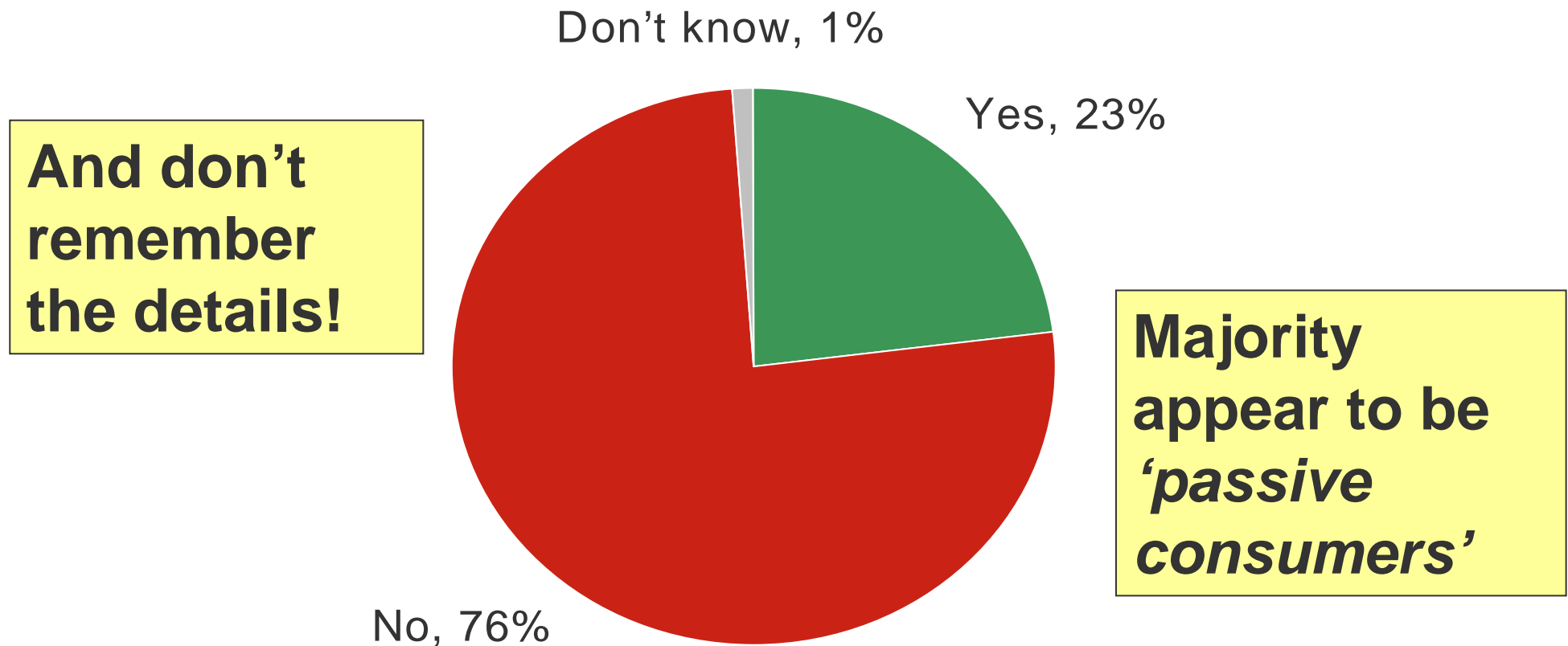


Seen at least one: 61%

Seen all: 6%

But, only a quarter of those who have seen performance information actively sought it out

Q *Thinking about the local public services that you saw information on most recently, did you actively seek it out?*



Following HM Treasury's lead with COINS, councils will publish performance and spending data (including spending over £500).

Be prepared for taxpayers and citizens using this data to hold services to account



www.taxpayersalliance.com

Research Note 65

Town Hall Rich List 2010

Since 2007 the TaxPayers' Alliance has provided an annual list of council staff whose total remuneration exceeds £100,000. Now in its fourth edition, the Town Hall Rich List has changed Government policy, with the introduction last year of a statutory instrument that would name all senior officials with details of their full remuneration. Unfortunately the legislation was watered down after a consultation process with local authorities and other public bodies.¹ The Conservatives have recently proposed publishing full details – including the name and position – of any council worker who earns more than the entrance pay of a senior civil servant, or around £58,500.²

Many workers in the public and private sectors expect pay freezes or cuts with resources scarce following the recession. Despite this, executive pay in town halls across the UK has continued to be insulated from economic reality. As councils look for savings, salaries have continued to rise for senior staff.

The Town Hall Rich List is still the most comprehensive guide to senior pay in local authorities. councils are not yet obliged to provide a full breakdown of the pay of senior

Or accessing sites like these, where people can access information about public services/ local areas

WhatDoTheyKnow?
.com

Make and explore Freedom of Information requests

another real
mys...

Make requestView requestsView authoritiesRead blogHelp

Hello! (Sign in)

Make or explore Freedom of Information requests

First, type in the **name of the UK public authority** you'd like information from. **By law, they have to respond** ([why?](#)).

Search

e.g. [Liverpool](#), [MRSA](#), [Treasury](#)

OR, **search** for information others have requested using WhatDoTheyKnow.com

[Wirral Borough Council](#) 239 requests

[Scottish Natural Heritage](#) 11 requests

[Royal Mail Group Limited](#) 180 requests

[Ministry of Defence](#) 391 requests

[Kent County Council](#) 273 requests

[Parking tickets](#) 26 minutes ago

[FOI request handling guidance](#) 37 minutes ago

[Standard employment contracts](#) 38 minutes ago

[Empty Residential Properties](#) 2 hours ago

[The General Treaty for the Renuncia...](#) 2 hours ago

Ipsos MORI

Ipsos

Who are the likely 'armchair auditors'?

Those who accessed performance information in the past tend to be:

- older residents
- social grade AB
- owner occupiers



This poses a considerable challenge in engaging others in the scrutiny of public service performance data

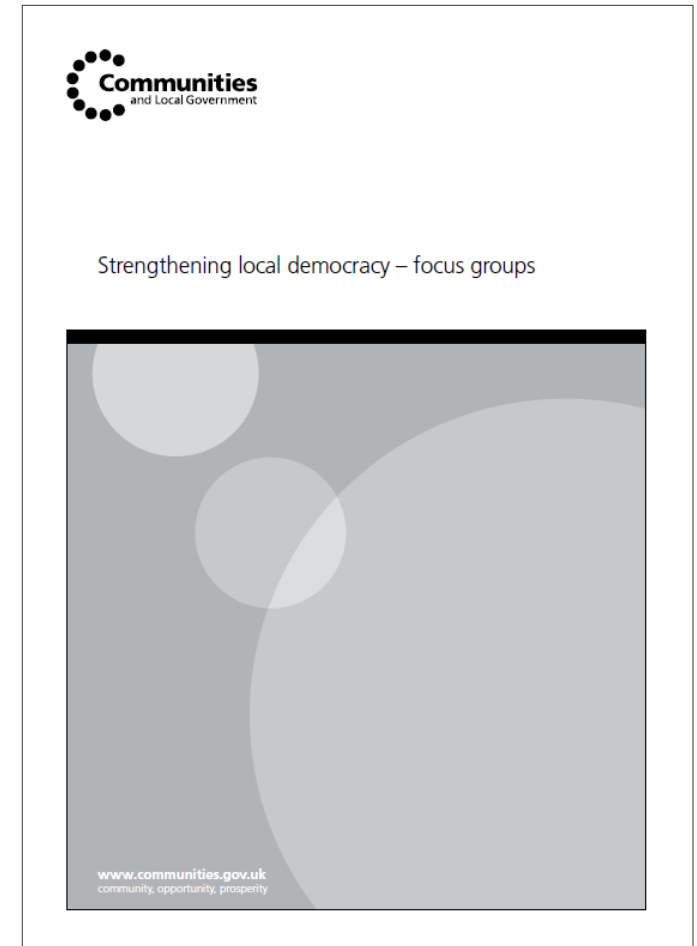
5. Building confidence in local institutions

A power of competence would be supported by local people

- our research shows that they feel it is right for councils to *stretch their powers* for the good of the area as a whole.**

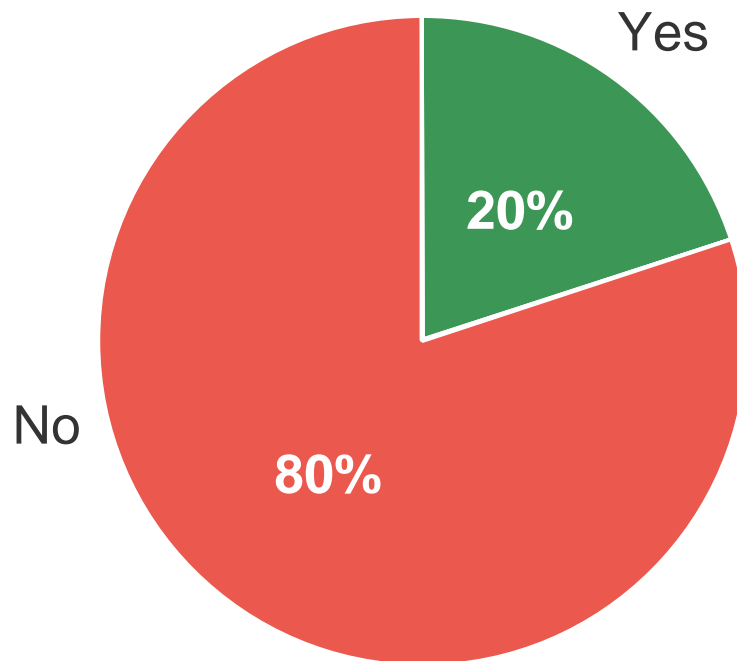
Study for CLG shows the public wants more leadership on local priorities...

- People feel **councils should have the powers they need to deliver on major local issues.**
- In some cases it is acceptable to just get on with it, **as long as public views are taken into account.**
- **Local councils are better placed to make decisions for the local area than other layers of government.**



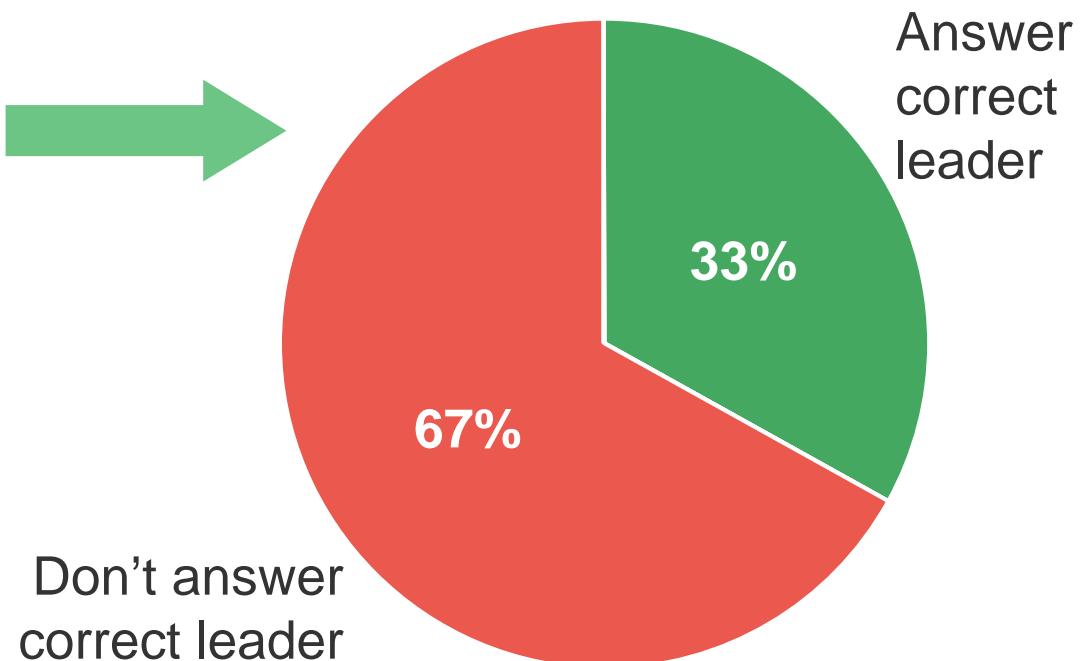
But, despite important place-shaping role, few identify with or know their local politicians...

Q Do you know the name of the local elected leader of your local London Borough council?



Base: 1,001 adults aged 18+ in Greater London, 11 -18 April 2008

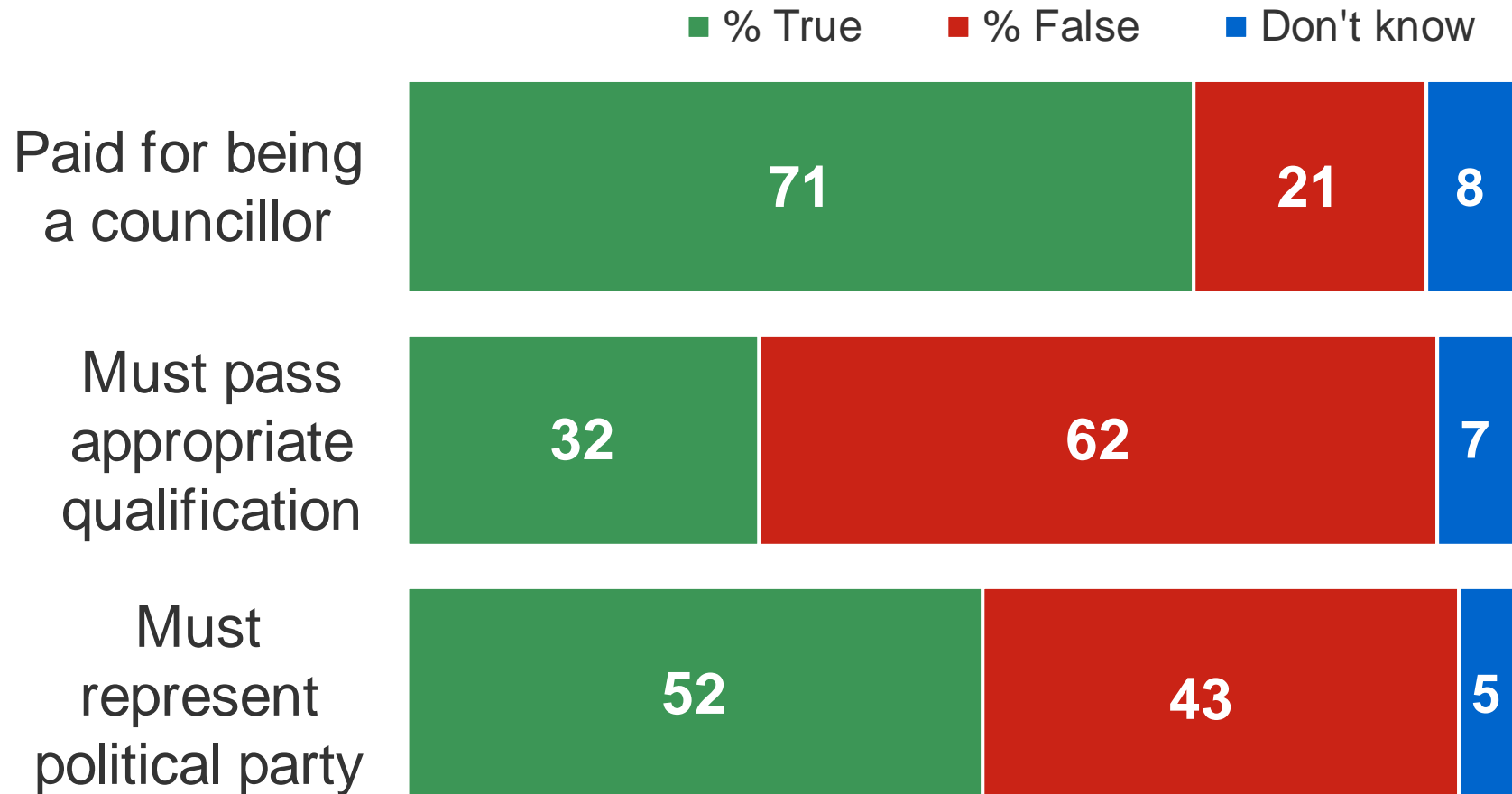
Q Can you tell me the name of the person who is local elected leader of your local London Borough council?



Base: 205 who say they know name of local leader

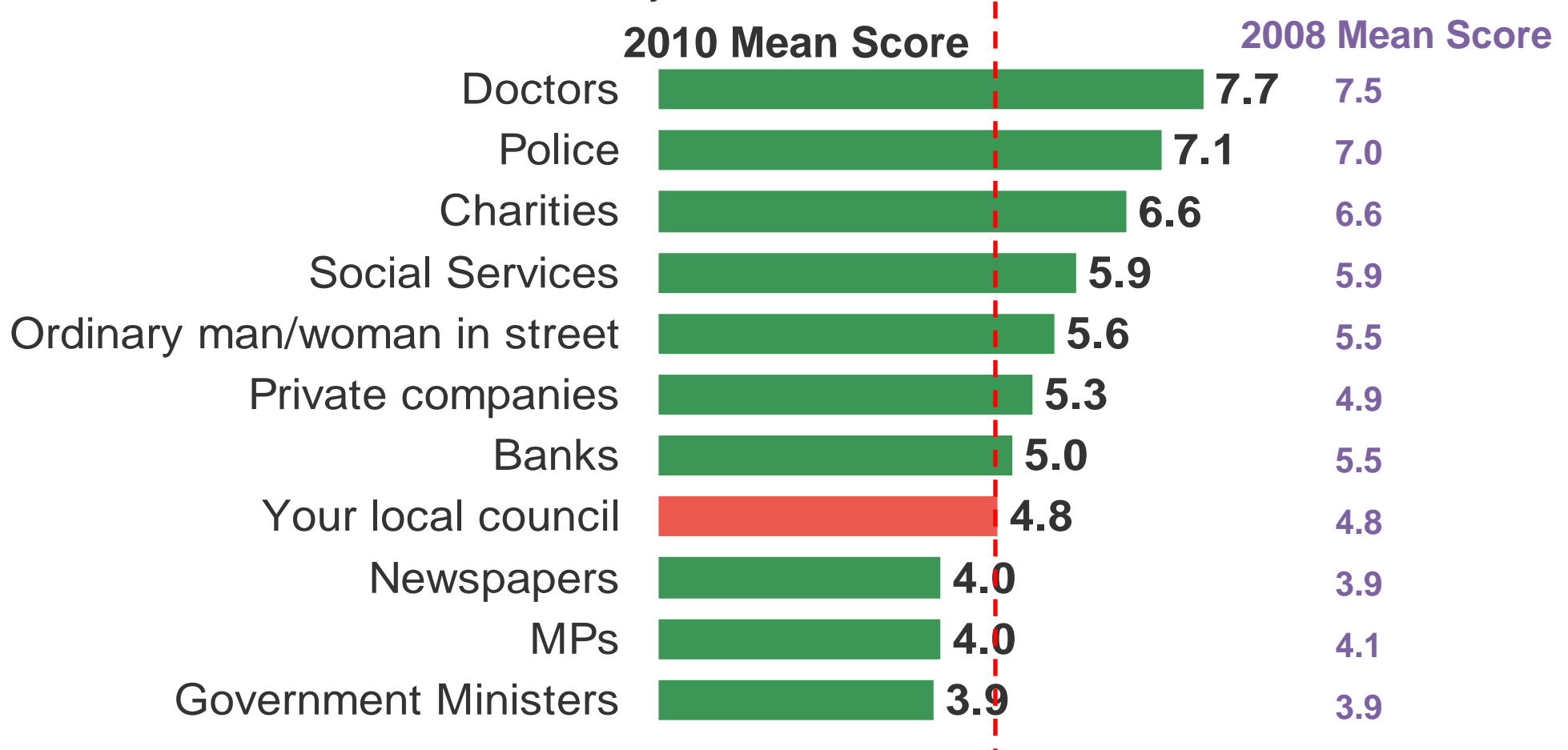
... or know what being a councillor actually means

Q *I am going to read out a list of statements about the role of a councillor, and I would like you to tell me which you would say are true and which are false? Local councillors...*



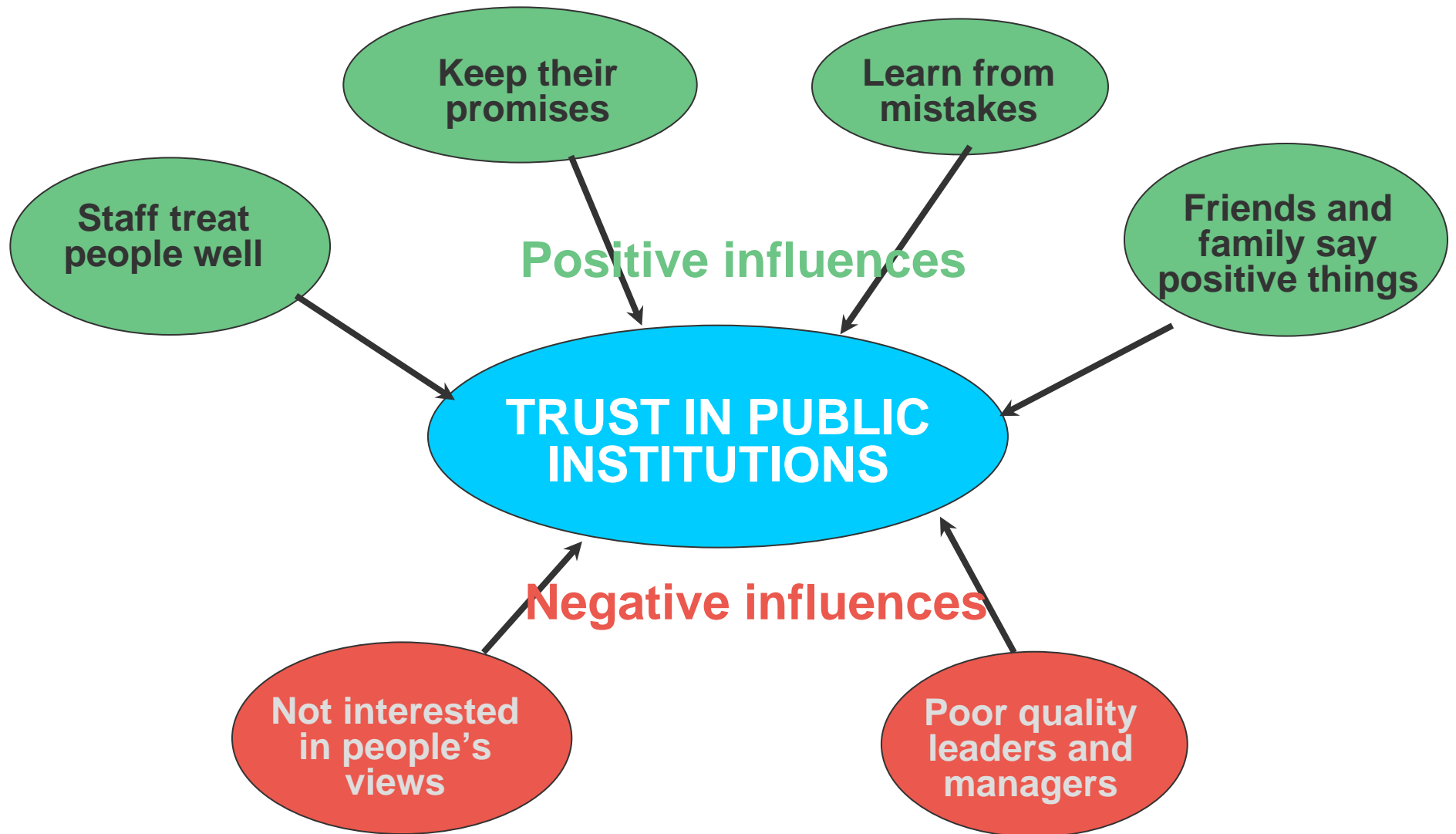
Public trust in councils is not as high as for other local services

I'm going to read out some different types of organisations and professions. On a scale of 0-10 where 10 means you trust them completely and 0 means you don't trust them at all, please tell me how much trust and confidence you have in each?



Base: 1,150 British adults, 7th – 17th May 2010

There is a need to understand how to raise awareness and restore confidence

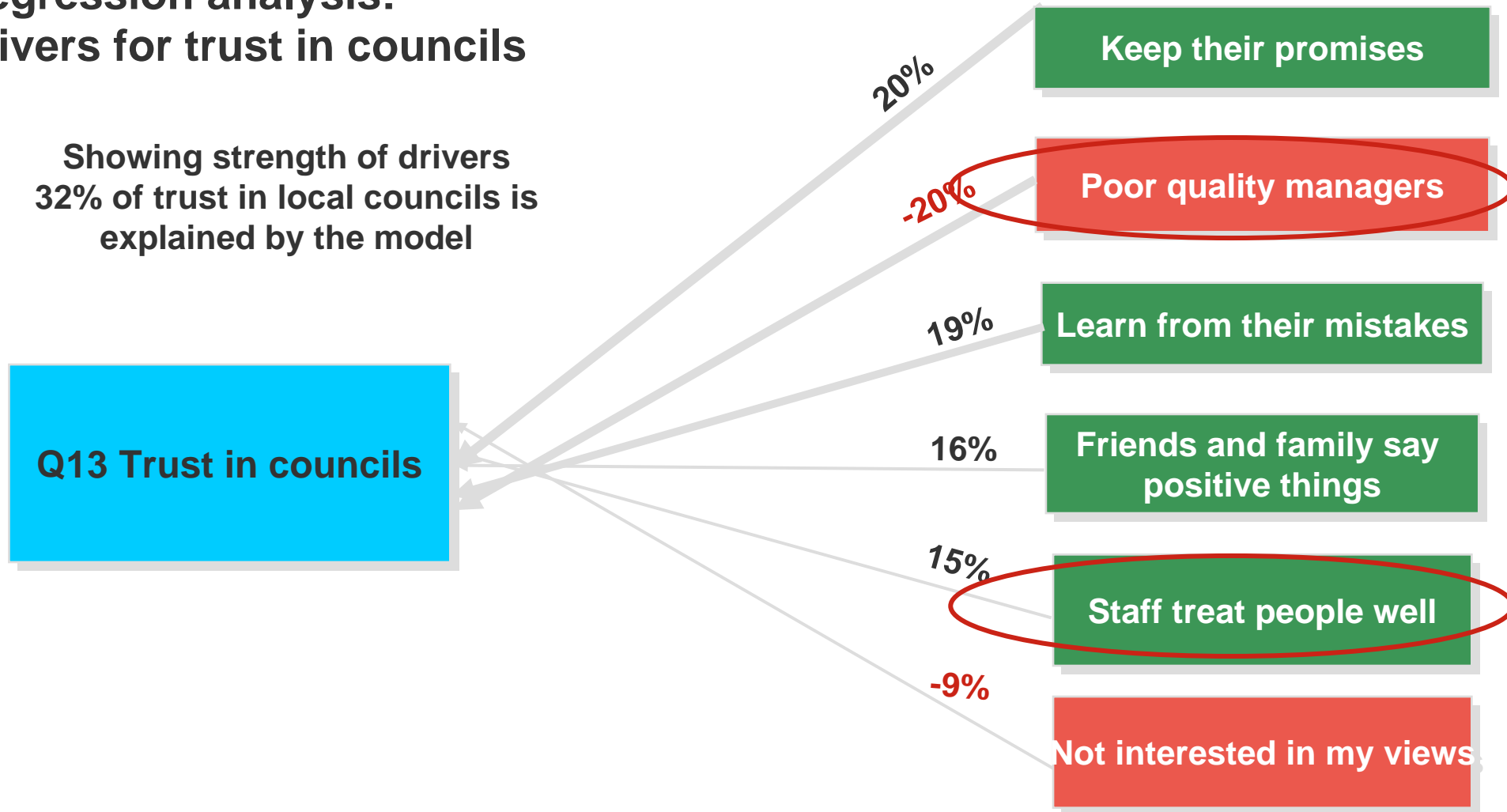


There is also a need to focus on engaging staff to maintain confidence – in the context of wage freezes, changes to pension benefits and re-organisations.

Quality and conduct of staff important driver of trust in local councils

Regression analysis: drivers for trust in councils

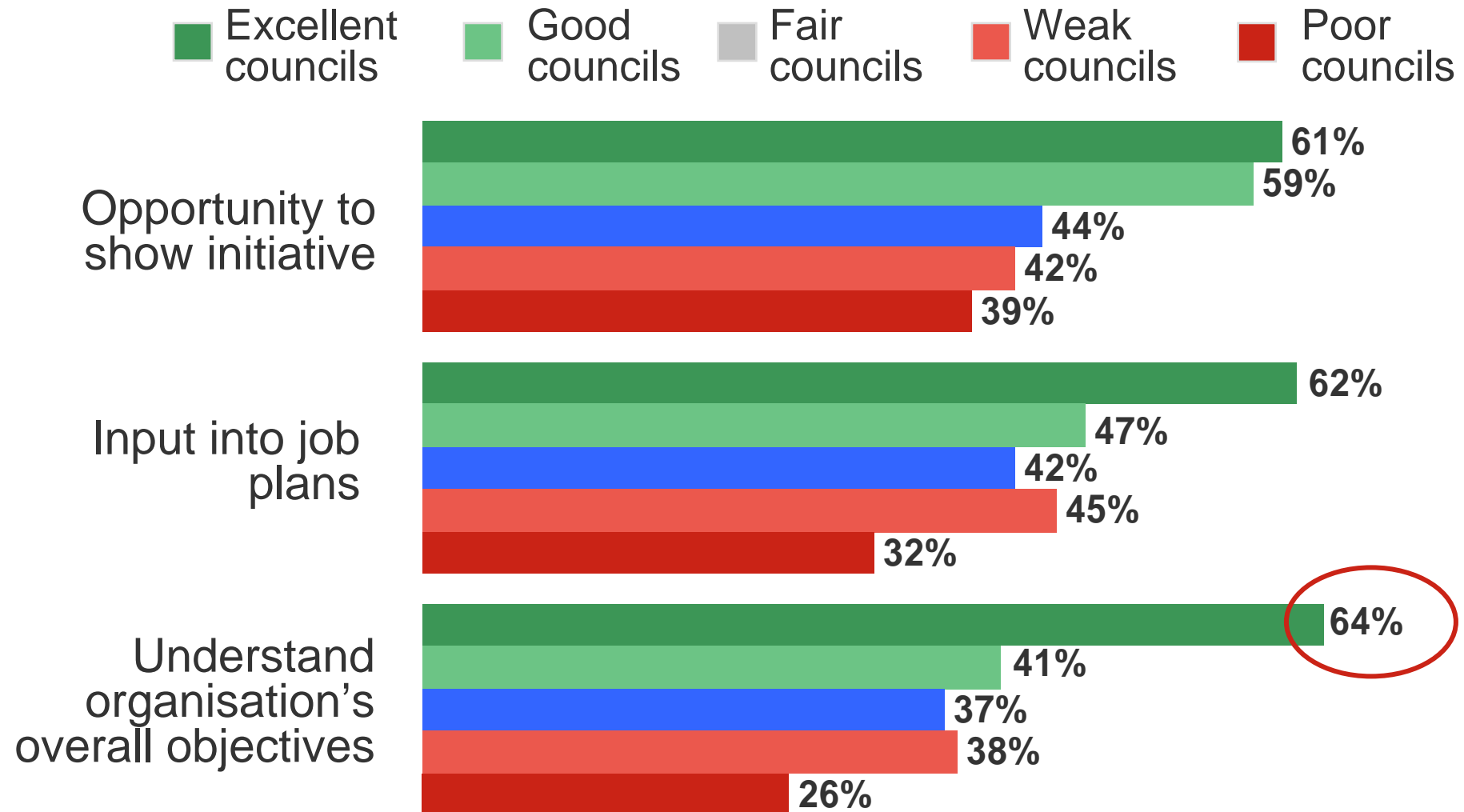
Showing strength of drivers
32% of trust in local councils is
explained by the model



Agreeing clear and authentic organisational objectives and providing strong leadership are key.

What do the best councils get right (when looking at former CPA ratings)?

% very satisfied with job factors/strongly agree

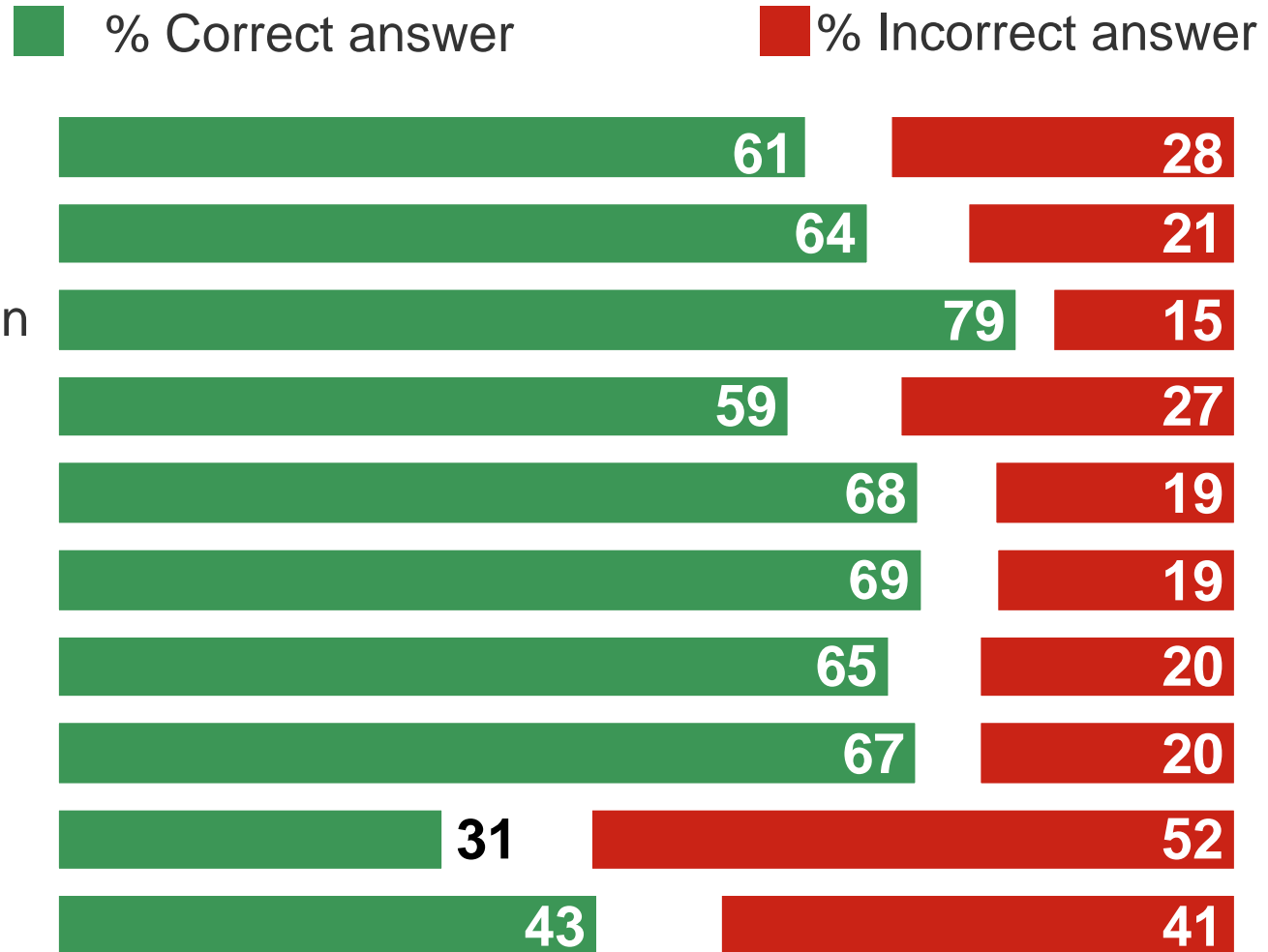


And in tough times the focus will be as much about leadership *leading the public* on tough decisions as leading staff.

6. Communications and information

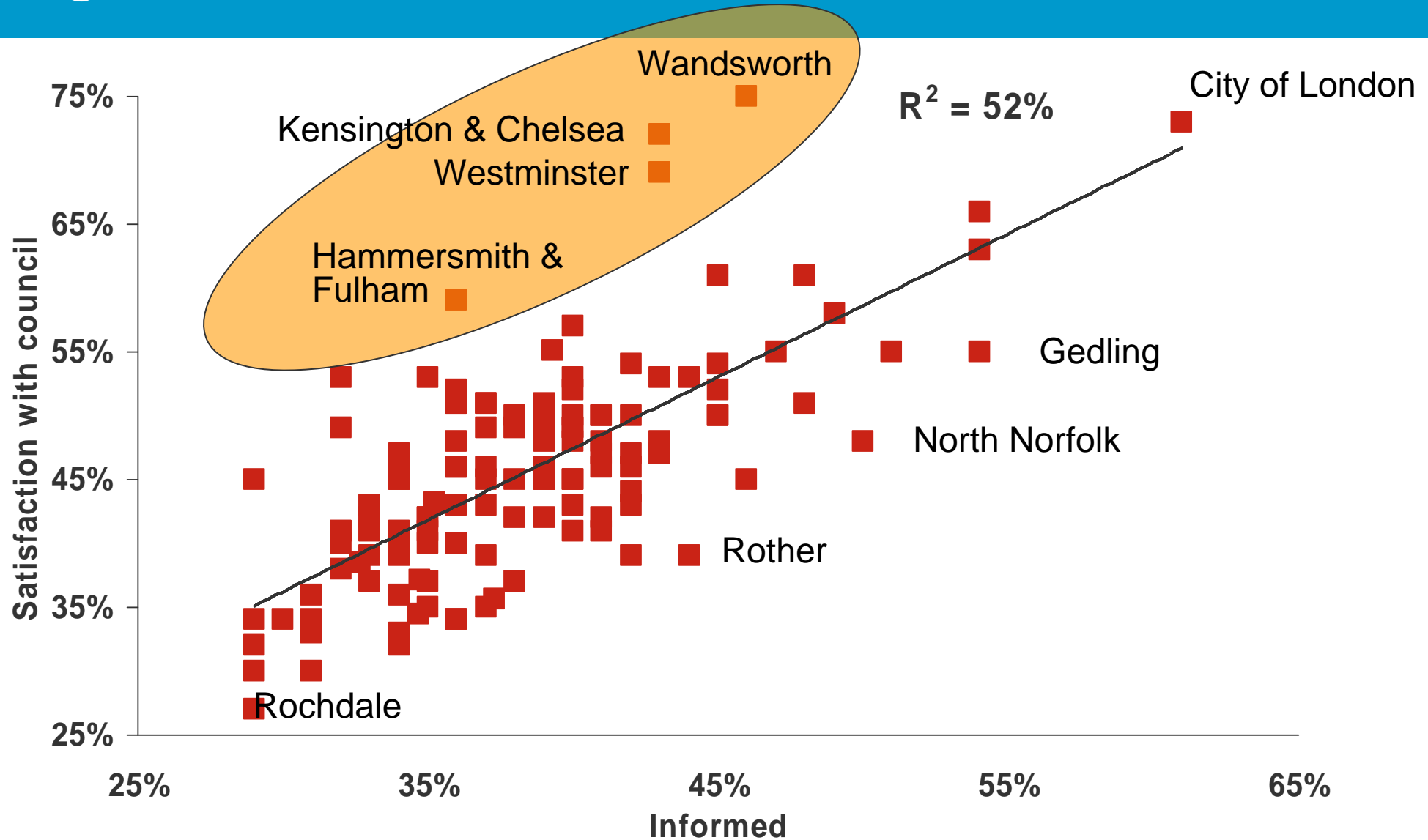
Public seem confused about the scope of the local council's function

Q *I would like you to tell me whether you think it is the responsibility of XX County Council, District Council or whether neither are responsible.*



**No authorities that
communicate well are rated
badly by the public – but,
some low-charging inner
London councils suggest that
you may not need to
communicate well to be highly
rated**

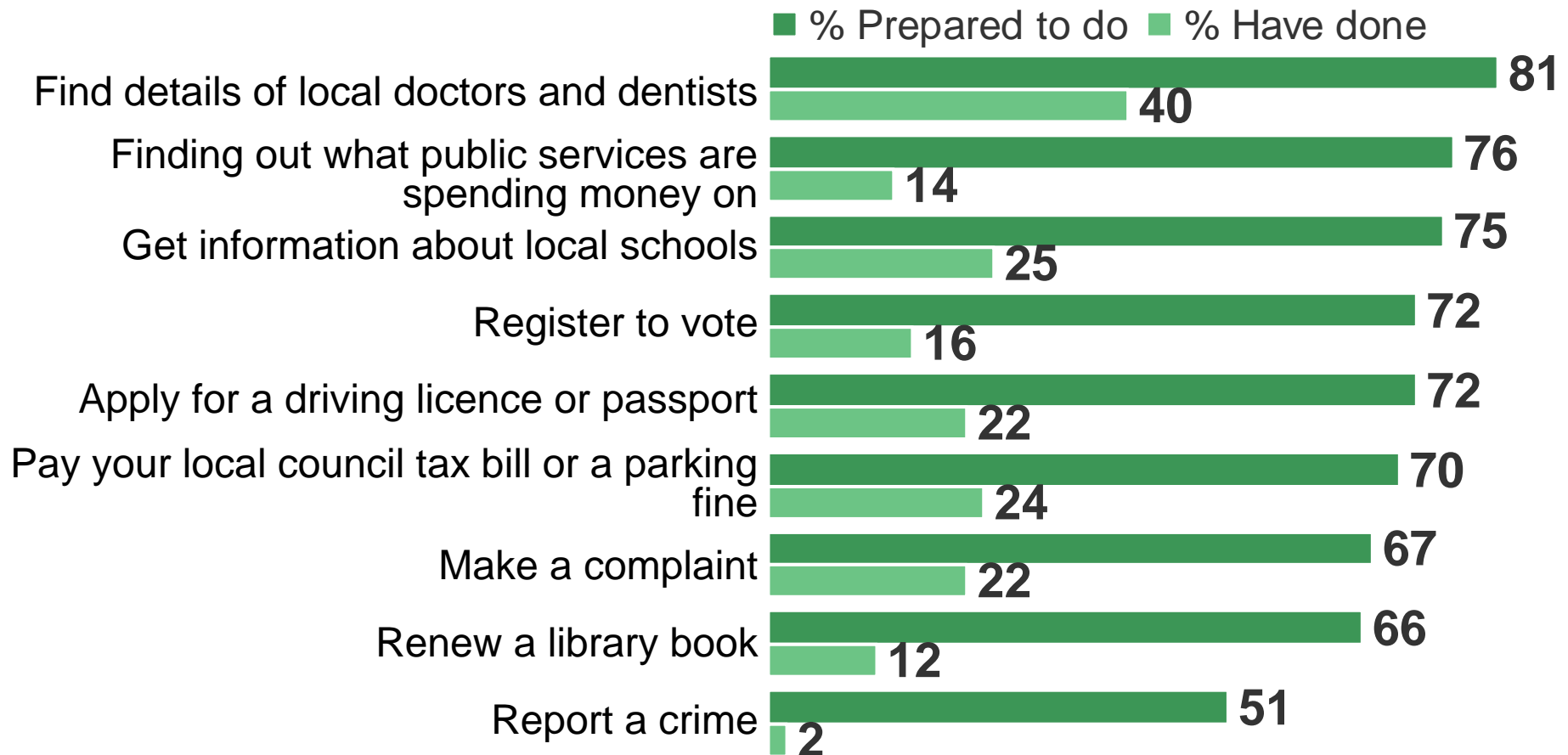
E.g. Wandsworth and co.



Cheaper and quicker: online potential remains untapped for communicating and contacting

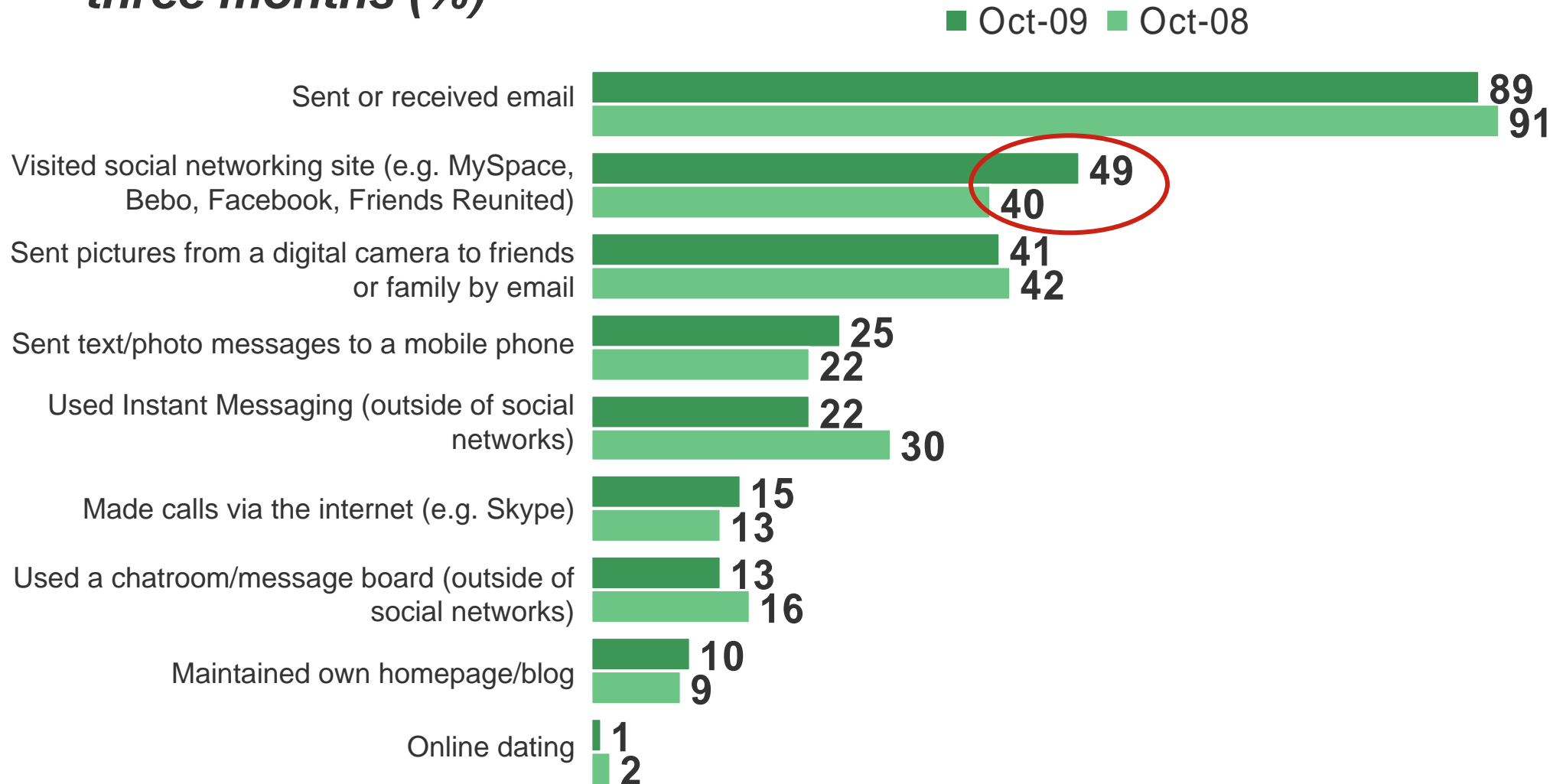
Q Thinking about public services, which, if any, of the following would you be prepared to do online?

Q And which have you actually done online in the last 6 months?



Social networking is on the rise too - are councils tapping into and watching this space?

Types of activity undertaken on the internet in the last three months (%)

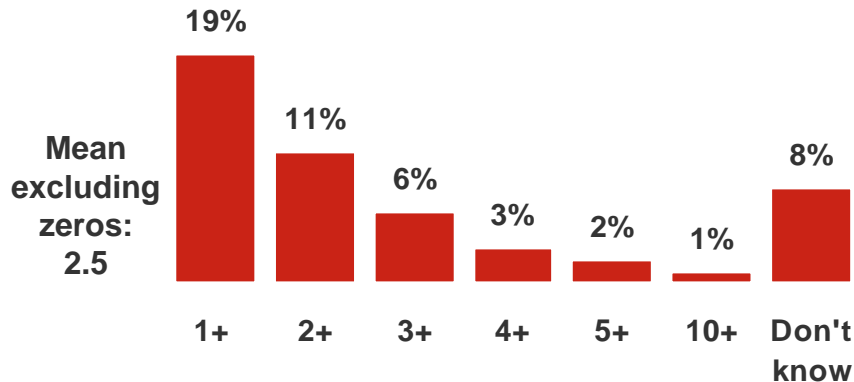


A quarter of us have posted feedback on consumer websites/ blogs

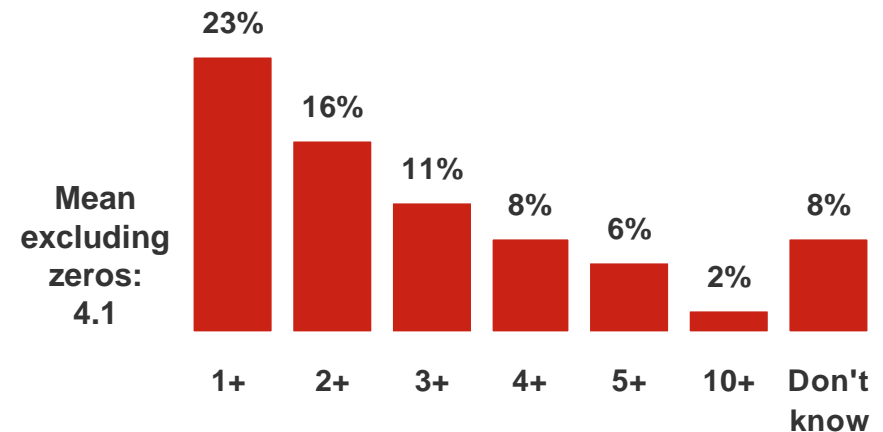
- A slightly larger proportion of consumers claim to have left positive feedback (23%) than negative feedback (19%) on dedicated websites and blogs.
- Overall, 27% of consumers claim to have used websites and blogs to leave feedback.
- Furthermore, the average number of positive comments logged is significantly higher than the number of negative ones: 4.1 vs 2.5.

Q *In the past 12 months, how many times have you...*

Left a **negative** feedback on a dedicated consumer feedback website or blog?



Left a **positive** feedback on a dedicated consumer feedback website or blog?



27% of the population claims to have left feedback (positive or negative) on dedicated consumer websites and blogs in the last 12 months

There will be more user-generated neighbourhood sites and this will be supported by the 'Big Society'



Harringayonline[®]

COMMUNITY *Connecting the Residents of Harringay*

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Connecting the residents of Harringay: sharing information, building stronger connections and working together to shape Harringay.

Featured Blog Posts

**Mouthful O'Jam**
Posted by [Hugh](#) on June 14, 2010 at 9:30pm — [4 Comments](#)

**"Neighbourliness declined by about half" since 1980**
Posted by [Hugh](#) on June 14, 2010 at 10:07am — [5 Comments](#)

Harringay Online

Launched in July 2007, Harringay Online is a double-award winning citizen-led network for the [neighbourhood of Harringay in the Borough of Haringey](#).

The Google Map to the right shows the boundaries of the neighbourhood Harringay, which is the main focus of the site. (Click on the picture for the full size map).

Questions on signing up? Click [here](#) (external link) for details on joining.



Latest Activity

[Liz](#) replied to [Liz's](#) discussion 'Evening children at Stroud Green Library' in

BROCKLEY CENTRAL

The online home for all things Brockley (SE4), St John's, Ladywell, Nunhead and Telegraph Hill

[Home](#) [Brockley on the Map](#) [Lewisham Central](#) [Reviews](#) [Photos](#) [Classifieds](#) [Suggest a Topic](#)

The Brockley Budget

Beyond the Brockley bubble, there is a momentous budget going on. Please feel free to use this thread to discuss it!

Posted by [Brockley Nick](#) on [22.6.10](#) [18 comments](#)

The Big Lunch in Brockley

[The Big Lunch](#) is an attempt to get the British to sit down together in public and enjoy a lunch party together. This year, the organisation is doing without the dloying [TV adverts](#) and - in Brockley at least - it seems to have paid off.

Last year, there were three events locally, this year there are eight, with others in Deptford, Honor Oak and Nunhead.

In Telegraph Hill, the organisers have cannily combined a Big Lunch on [Kitto Road](#) with the

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[Search](#)



DEBT PROBLEMS?

Want to know if you can wipe out all the debt you can't afford?

Take the 30 second test.

[Start Now](#)

Local councils will need to find ways of managing and monitoring online and social media chat to capture public mood and to anticipate issues and problems.

For further information, please contact:

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+44.20.7347.3186

Ipsos MORI

Further reading from
www.ipsos.com follows...

2020 Public Services Trust
at the RSA

What do people want,
need and expect from
public services?

Prepared by
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PEOPLE, PERCEPTIONS AND PLACE

Bobby Duffy and Debbie Lee Chan
June 2009

**Citizens and local
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What drives feelings of influence?



HEALTH & VALUE FOR MONEY & COMMUNITIES & CRIME & WORK & SAFETY & SCHOOLS
FORMATION & NEIGHBOURHOODS & MEETINGS & PLANS & CONSULTATION & COMPLAINTS
LEADS & VALUES & COMMUNITY & PRIDE & POLITICS & NEEDS & CITIZENSHIP & ASPIRATION

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**Mind the Gap: Frontiers of Performance
in Local Government V**

Revisions based on the findings of the
2008/09 Local Government Performance Review



January 2010



Our Nation's Civic Health

Summary Report

