

# **The Health Foundation COVID-19 Survey – second poll**

**A report of survey findings**

**Ipsos MORI, Public Affairs  
September 2020**

**Ipsos MORI**



# Contents

1

Background, context and methodology

3

The Government's handling of the Coronavirus crisis

5

The public's experience and views of the NHS

2

Executive summary

4

The public's views on immigration reform and social care

# 1. Background, context and methodology

# Background and context

The Health Foundation commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a representative poll of the general public in Great Britain to understand opinion on a range of issues including:

- Experience of using NHS services during the pandemic and perceptions as to how services are managing;
- The impact of Coronavirus on people's health and wellbeing, including mental health;
- Levels of support or opposition to the Government's handling of the Coronavirus pandemic;
- Attitudes towards a potential contact tracing app;
- Likelihood to engage with the NHS Track and Trace system;
- Support for a social care visa;
- Views on health inequalities.

This report excludes the results for the contact tracing app, health inequalities and the impact of Coronavirus, which will be published separately.



# Methodology

The July survey was conducted by telephone on the Ipsos MORI CATI Omnibus survey, a weekly telephone omnibus survey of a representative sample of people aged 18 and over in Great Britain. **Fieldwork took place between 17<sup>th</sup> July and 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020. A total of 2,246 people were interviewed.** For the main sample, quotas were set on age, gender, Government Office Region and working status. In addition to the people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds interviewed as part of the main sample, a booster survey was conducted. The sample includes a total of 423 interviews conducted with BAME participants.

For the overall July findings, data has been weighted to the known population proportions for age within gender, Government Office Region and working status and social grade. For the BAME findings, data has been weighted to the known population proportions for age, gender, Government Office Region, working status and social grade.

The **May** survey was also conducted via telephone on the Ipsos MORI CATI Omnibus survey. A total of 1,983 people were interviewed **between 1<sup>st</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020**. Where questions were repeated in the July survey, these have been included in the report against the May data for comparison, with significant differences commented upon.

Throughout the report findings will highlight, and make reference to, different sub-groups based on responses to certain questions. When interpreting the survey findings, it is important to remember that the results are based on a sample of the population, not the entire population. Consequently, results are subject to margins of error, and not all differences between sub-groups are statistically significant (i.e. a real difference). Differences between sub-groups which have been reported are all statistically significantly different.

## 2. Executive summary

# Executive summary: Government handling and social care visas

- The public are becoming **more critical of the Government's handling of the Coronavirus outbreak**. A majority (56%) now believe that the Government has not handled it well, significantly more than in May (39%). Half of the public think that the Government measures do not go far enough (50%), while a minority believe the measures are about right (40%).
- **The clarity of the Government's current official guidance varies**. The Government's **guidance on travelling safely is clear** (78%), along with the guidance on self-isolation (68%) and staying safe outside the home (62%). However, significant minorities think the advice is not clear (for example, 46% think the guidance on visiting places safely is not clear) and a majority of 54% think the guidance around **who and how many people they can meet with is *not* clear**.
- There is **scepticism among the public that other people are following the Government's advice**, with three in five believing that other people are *not* following advice on who and how many people you can meet with (62%), and advice on visiting places such as pubs and shops (59%). Perceptions of the clarity of Government advice appears to affect how the public perceive compliance with this advice – there is a clear correlation between guidance which the public believe is unclear, and guidance which the public believe other people are not following.
- **The majority of the public (77%) would support a social care visa** for those who want to come and start working in social care in the UK.

# Executive summary: Use of health services

- **The impact of Coronavirus on the use of health services appears to be lessening:** around two in five of the public have used health services since the Government introduced lockdown (42%, compared with 24% in May), and **fewer people have had an appointment cancelled/been asked not to come compared with May** (down from 12% in May to 7% in July). Most commonly, people access their GP practice (61%) or local hospital (24%).
- However, **people from BAME backgrounds are less likely to report using health services** (36% have, compared with 42% overall), and are more likely to have considered using a health service but decided not to (9%, compared with 5% overall), an important finding given the known increased impact of Coronavirus on BAME communities.
- **Where people accessed services, the majority felt comfortable doing so**, though there was some variation depending on the service used. Compared with May, the public would also now feel more comfortable over the next 3-4 weeks if they needed to use their local hospital (77% would now feel comfortable, compared with 52% in May) or GP service (89% would now feel comfortable, compared with 78% in May). Where people are uncomfortable accessing services, **this is largely due to concern about Coronavirus exposure** (72% for hospitals and 53% for the GP services).
- **People from BAME backgrounds also say they would feel less comfortable accessing their local hospital** (28% would feel uncomfortable, compared with 22% overall).

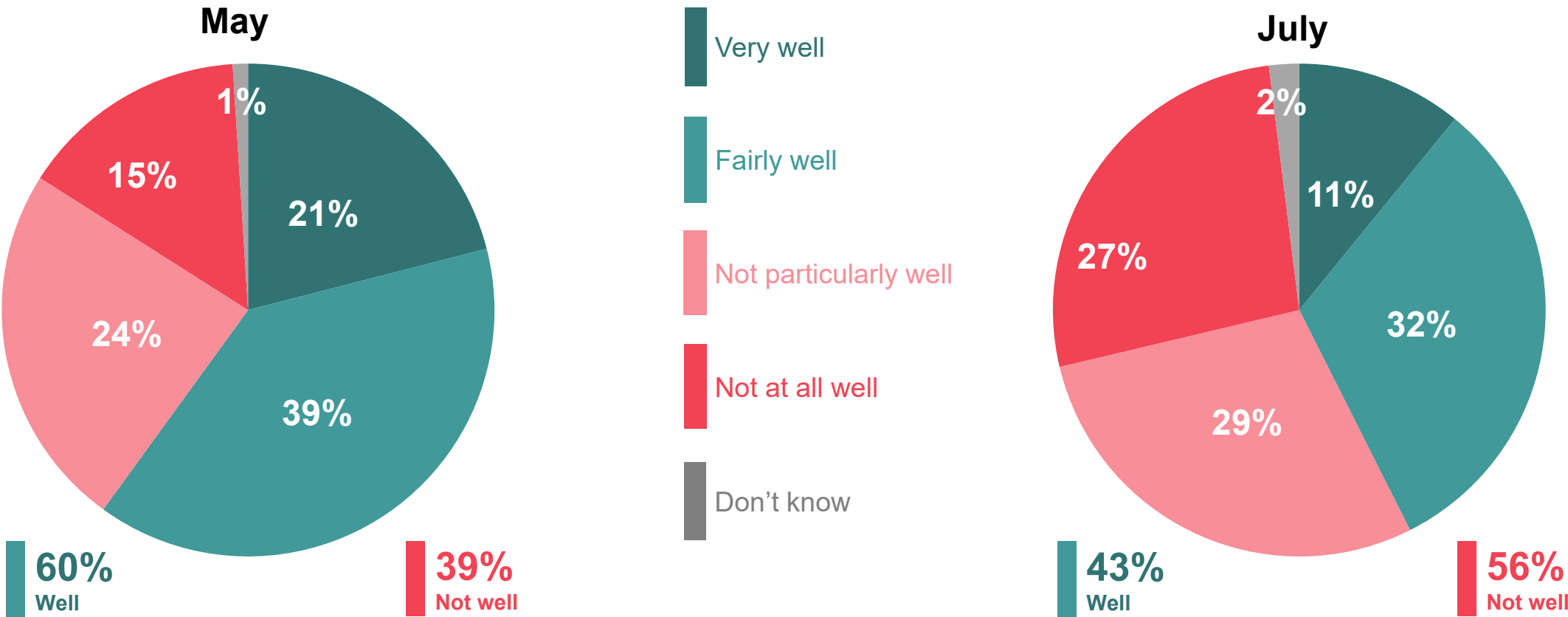


# **3. The Government's handling of the Coronavirus crisis**

# A majority of the public think that the Government has not handled the Coronavirus outbreak well

Over half (56%) of the public think that the Government has not handled the Coronavirus outbreak well, with around four in ten (43%) believing the Government has handled it well. Approval of the Government's handling has **fallen considerably since May**, with 60% believing the Government was handling the Coronavirus outbreak well in May, compared with 43% saying this in July.

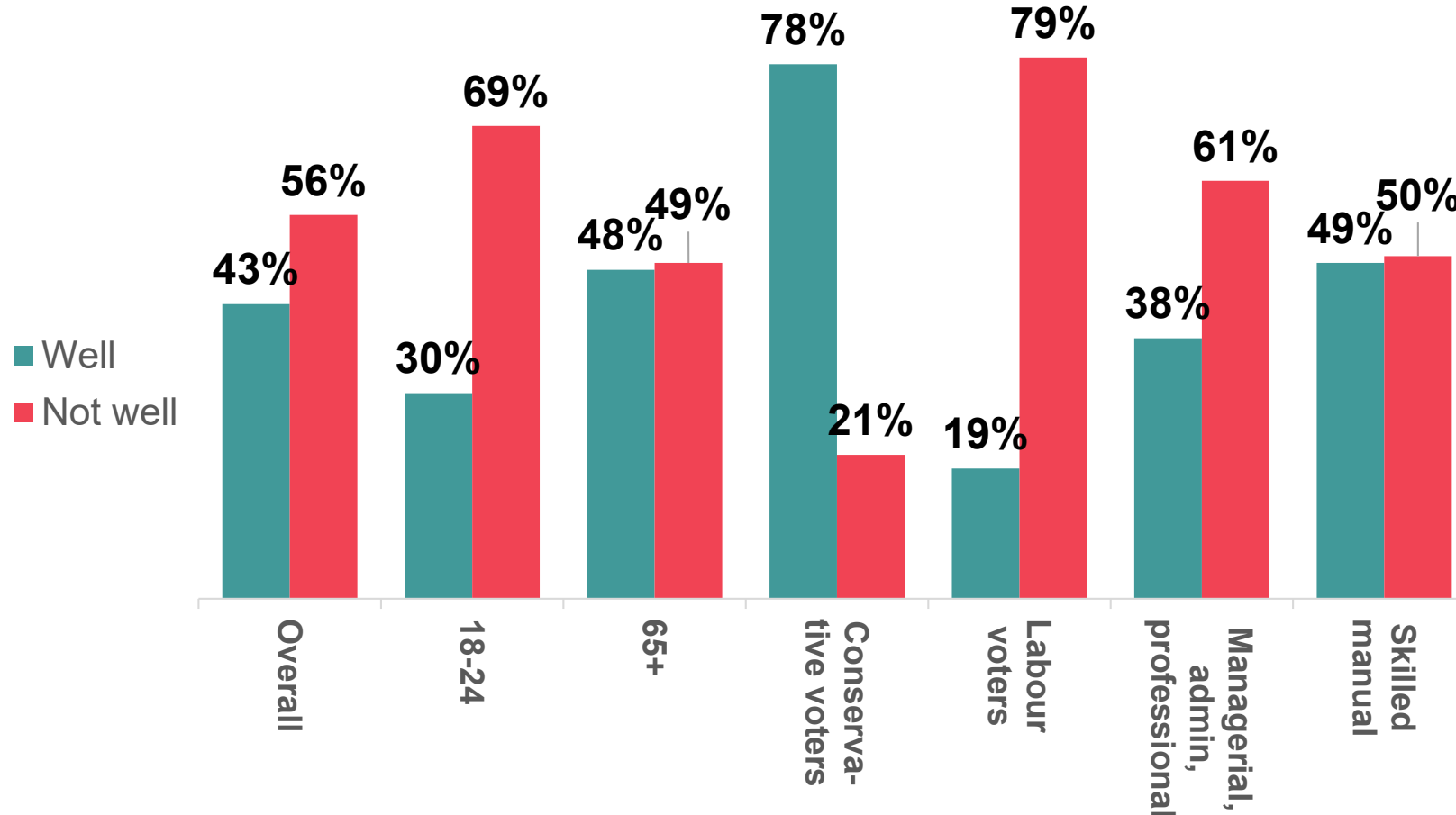
Q. Overall, how well, if at all do you think the UK Government has handled the Coronavirus outbreak so far?



Base: May: All respondents (1,983 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 1-10<sup>th</sup> May 2020), July: All respondents (2,246 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

# There are demographic variations in how people rate the Government's handling of the Coronavirus outbreak

Q. Overall, how well, if at all do you think the UK Government has handled the Coronavirus outbreak so far?



Those aged **65+** are more likely to believe the Government has handled Coronavirus well (48% vs 43% overall). Conversely **younger people (18-24)** are less likely to think the Government has handled Coronavirus well, with only 30% of people aged 18-24 thinking this (compared with 43% overall).

Those in **managerial, administrative and professional jobs** are also less likely to think the Government has handled the outbreak well (38% vs 43% overall), while **skilled manual workers** are more positive, with 49% thinking it has been handled well (vs. 43% overall).

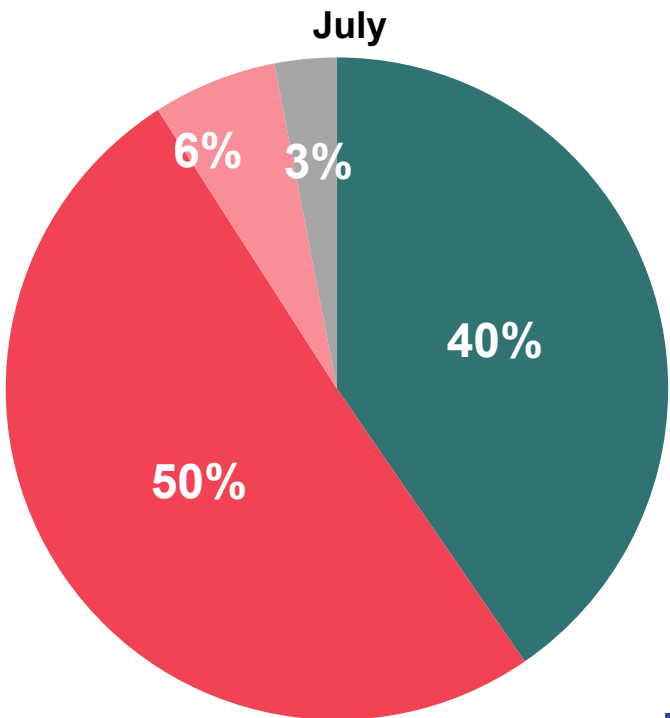
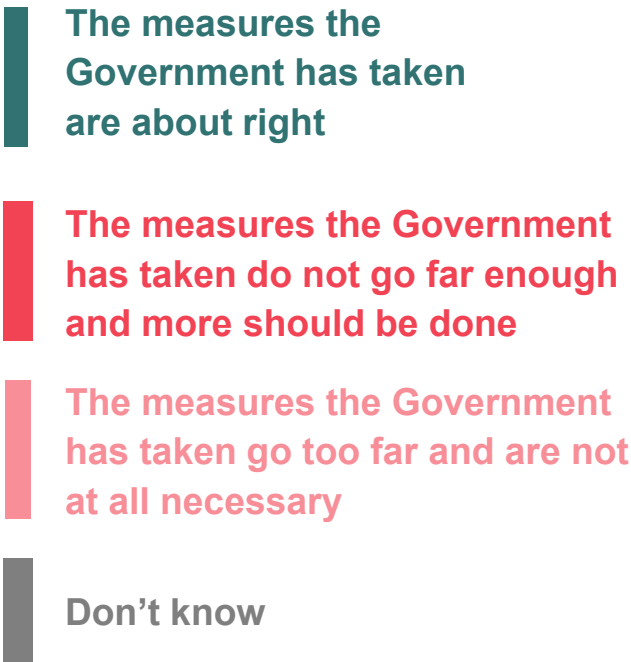
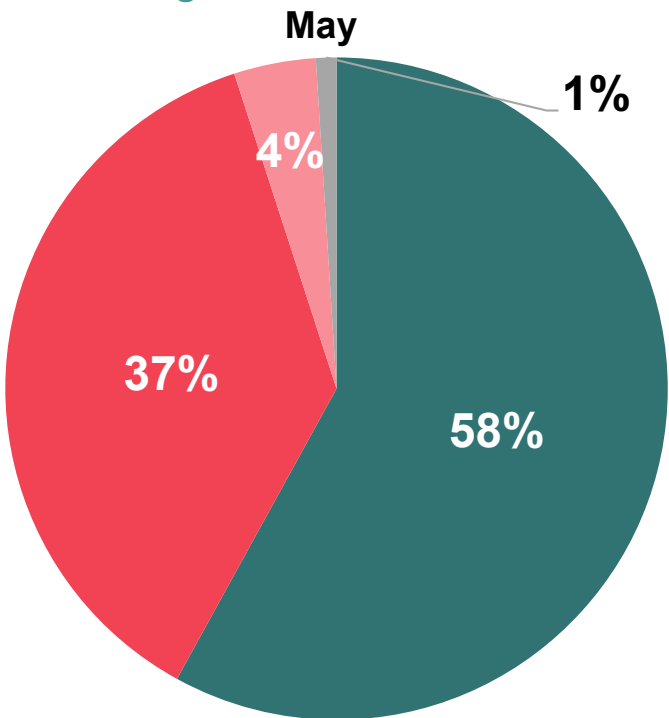
As would be expected, there is a divide along political lines, with four in five (78%) **Conservative voters** believing the Government has handled the outbreak well, compared with just 19% of Labour voters.

Base: July: All respondents (2,246 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

# And half think that the Government measures have not gone far enough, a significant increase since May

Half of the public (50%) think that the measures the Government has taken do not go far enough and more should be done. This has increased significantly since May, when 37% thought the measures did not go far enough. People from a **BAME background** are **less likely to believe that the measures taken are about right** (33%, compared with 40% overall). The following groups are more likely than overall (50%) to believe that the measures do not go far enough: those in **London** (56%); **women** (52%); **younger people aged 18-24** (59%).

Q. When thinking about the different measures the Government has taken so far in order to tackle the Coronavirus outbreak, which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

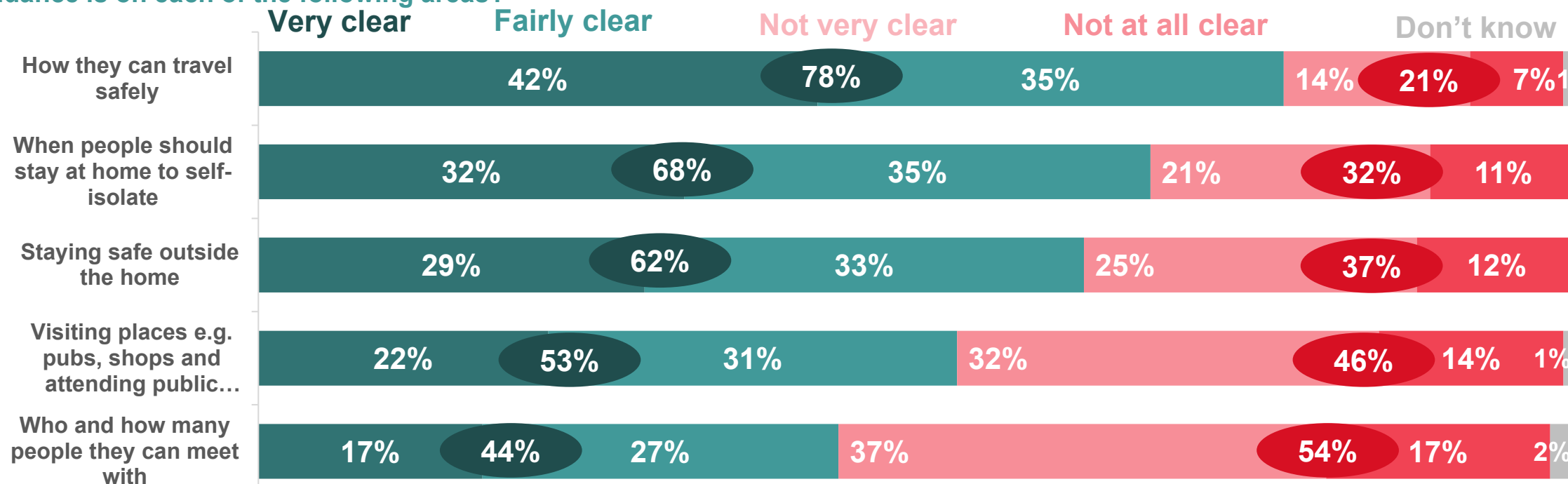


Base: May: All respondents (1,983 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 1-10<sup>th</sup> May 2020), July: All respondents (2,246 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

# The clarity of the Government's current official guidance varies, with advice on meeting with other people particularly unclear

Nearly four in five (78%) think the Government's guidance on travelling safely is clear, while around two-thirds also think the guidance on self-isolation (68%) and staying safe outside the home (62%) is clear. However, significant minorities think the advice is not clear (for example, 46% think the guidance on visiting places safely is not clear) and a majority of 54% think the guidance around **who and how many people they can meet with is not clear**. Across all the advice, older people aged 65+, women and routine and manual workers, state pensioners and the unemployed are generally more likely to think the advice is clear, while men, those in professional, administrative and managerial jobs and younger people are less likely to think the advice is clear.

**Q30N. Please think now about the Government's current official guidance for the public. How clear, if at all, do you think the official guidance is on each of the following areas?**

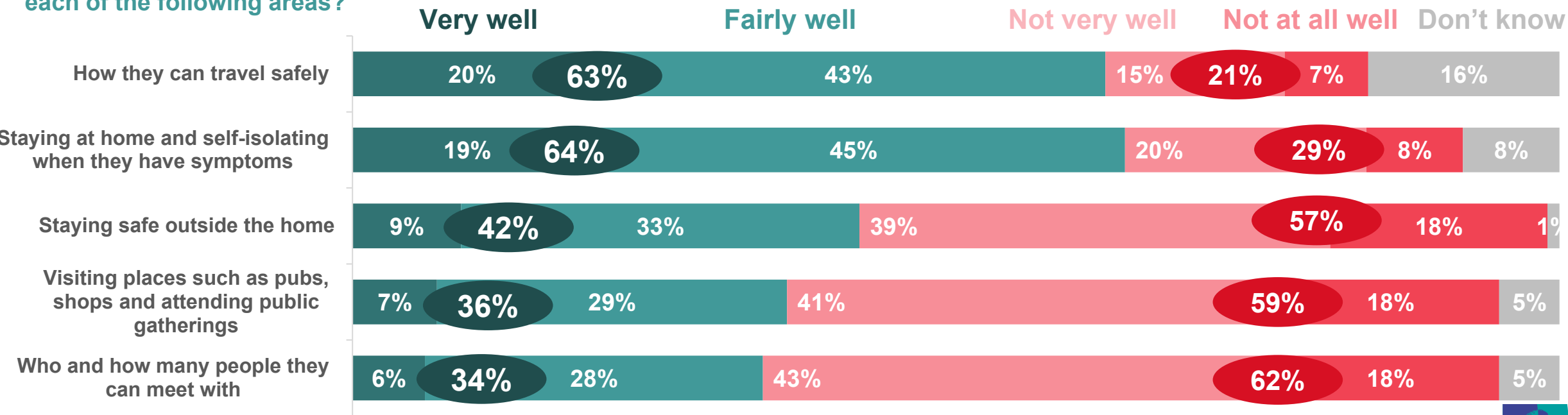


Base: July: All respondents (2,246 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

# And the public are sceptical that other people are following parts of the Government's advice

Generally, there is scepticism among the public that other people are following parts of the Government's advice. Around three in five think that other people are **not following Government advice on visiting places such as pubs (59%)** and **advice on who and how many people they can meet with (62%)**. The public are **more positive about other people travelling safely and self-isolating**, with 63% and 64% respectively believing others are following this advice well. Across the different types of advice generally, those in professional, administrative and managerial jobs, men and younger people (18-34) are more likely to think that people are following the advice well, while women and older people are less likely to think people are following the advice well.

Q31N.And how well, if at all, do you think that people generally are following the official Government guidance on each of the following areas?

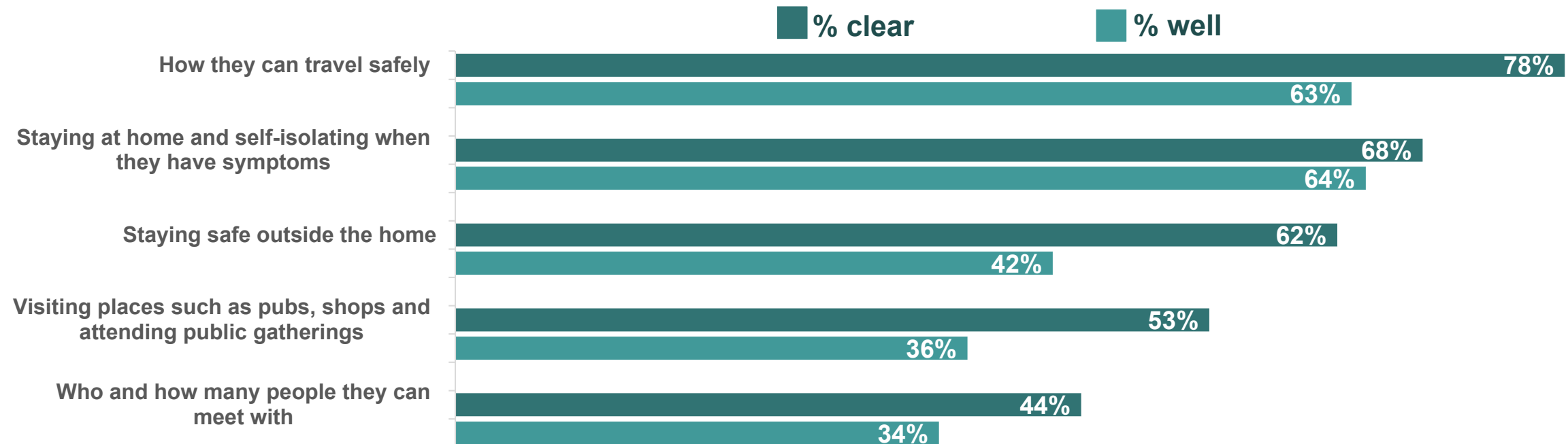


Base: July: All respondents (2,246 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

# There is correlation between how clear the guidance is and how well people are thought to be following it

For each piece of guidance, **people are more likely to say the advice is clear than to say they think other people are following it well**. There is a strong correlation between the proportion of people saying that the Government guidance is clear, and the proportion saying that people are following this advice well. For example, while just over two thirds (68%) believe that the advice on when to stay at home and self-isolate is clear, around the same proportion (64%) believe that other people are following this advice well. This suggests that **greater clarity may aid adherence to the guidance**.

Q. How clear, if at all, do you think the official guidance is on each of the following areas? / And how well, if at all, do you think that people generally are following the official Government guidance on each of the following areas?



Base: July: All respondents (2,246 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

# **4. The public's views on immigration reform and social care**



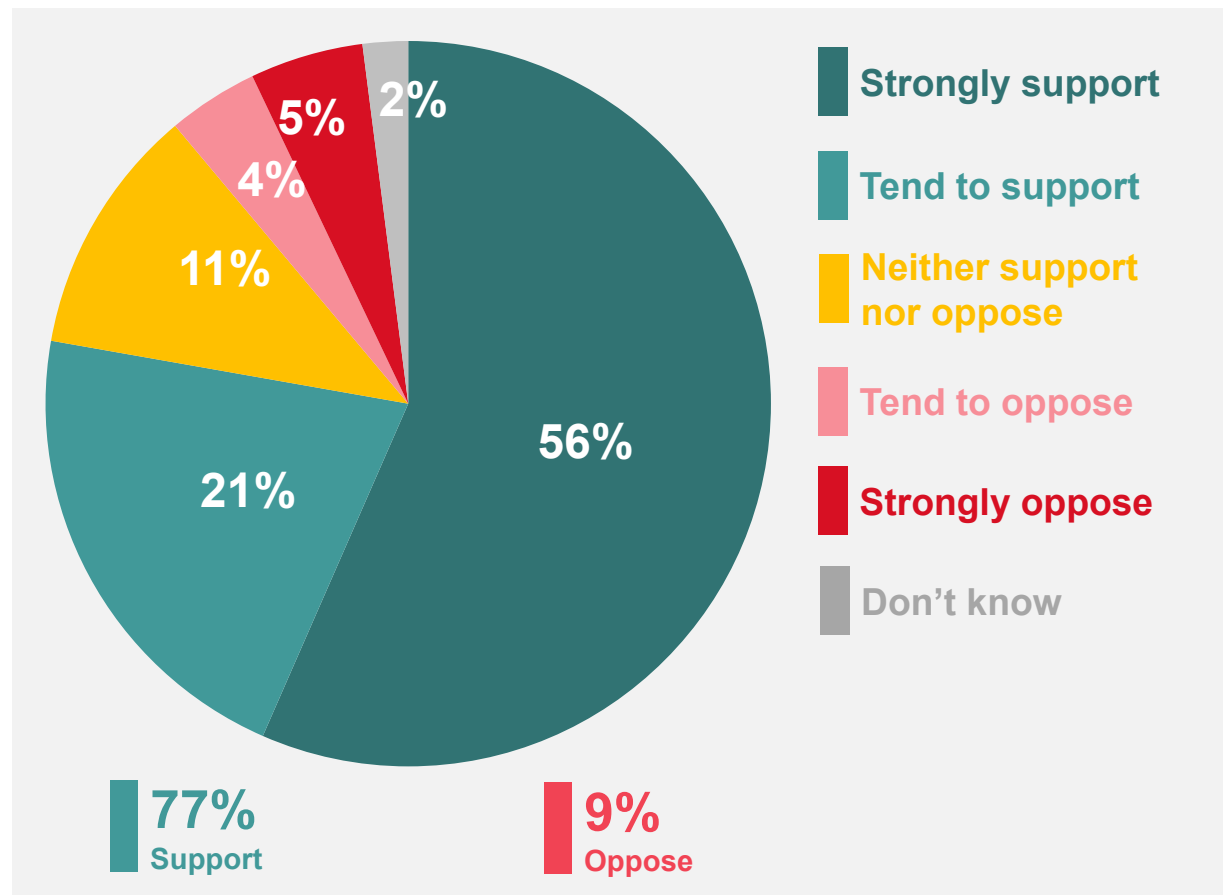
# The public support a social care visa for those who want start working in social care in the UK

A new points-based immigration system will be put in place in January 2021. Under the current plans, people living in the EU are unlikely to be able to come to the UK to work in social care, for example working in care homes or caring for people in their own homes. Some people have suggested there could be a social care visa, which would make it easier for international workers in the social care sector to work in the UK.

**Three-quarters of the public (77%) would support a social care visa** (56% strongly support and 21% tend to support), and a minority would oppose (9%).

This support is consistent across most demographic groups, including people from BAME backgrounds. However, those working in managerial, administrative or professional jobs are more likely to support a social care visa (84%, compared with 77% overall). In addition, those who would vote Labour or Liberal Democrats are more likely to show support (86% and 88% respectively), compared with 74% of Conservative voters who would support this.

Q. To what extent would you support or oppose a social care visa for those who want to come and start working in social care in the UK?



# 5. The public's experience and views of the NHS

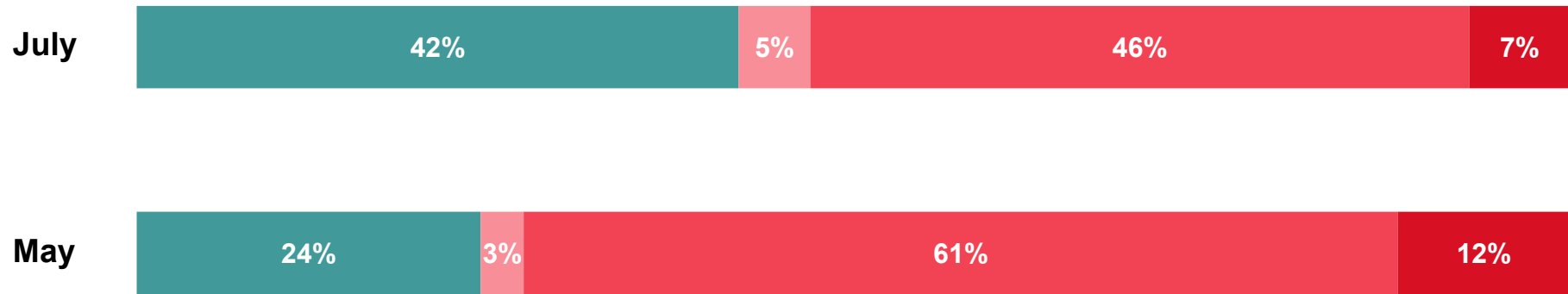
# More of the public have used health services than in May

**Around two fifths (42%) of the public have used a health service since the Government introduced lockdown in response to Coronavirus.** This is a greater proportion compared with those asked this question in May (where only 24% had used a health service), though this is to be expected given that more time has passed since lockdown was introduced). However, the **majority of the public continue to report that they have not used a health service since lockdown (58%),** mostly due to not having any health issues (46%).

The **impact of Coronavirus on use of health services appears to be lessening:** in July seven per cent of the public had an appointment cancelled/were asked not to come, a decrease compared with 12% of people reporting this in May. However, in July five per cent considered using a service for a health issue but decided not to, an increase compared with three per cent in May.

Q. Since lockdown began on the 23rd of March, have you used a health service?

- Yes
- No, because I have not had any health issues
- No, but I considered it because I had a health issue
- No, I had an appointment but I was asked not to come/it was cancelled

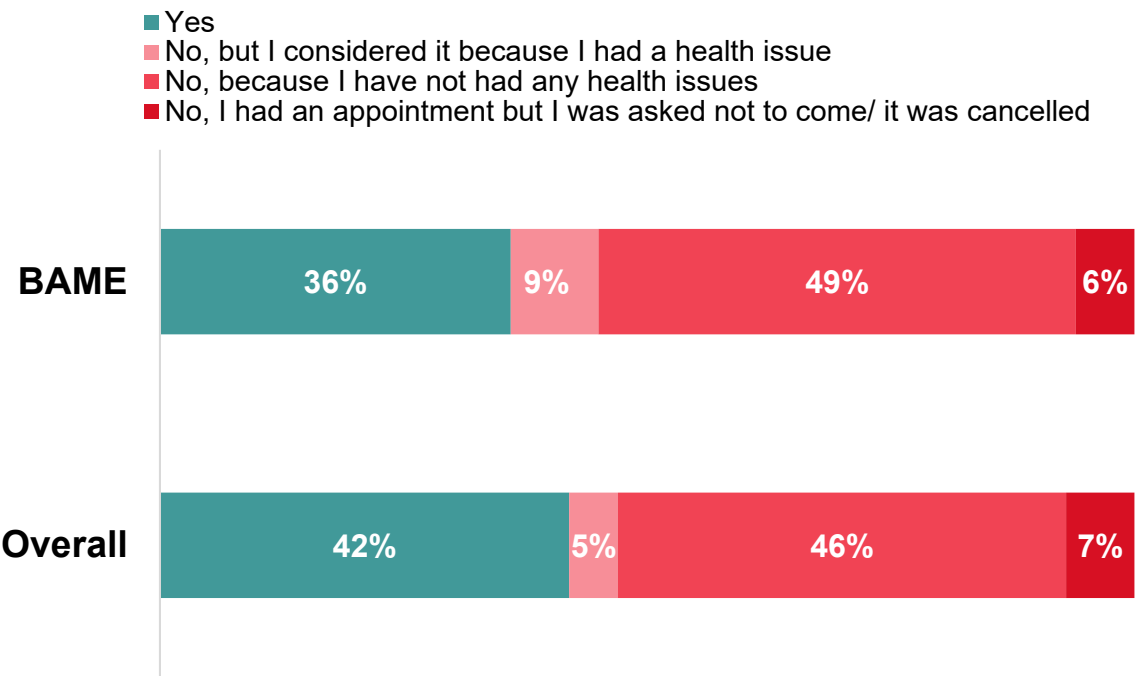


Base: May: All respondents (1,983 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 1-10<sup>th</sup> May 2020), July: All respondents (2,246 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

# However, people from BAME backgrounds are less likely to report using health services

Although overall use of health services has increased, **people from BAME backgrounds are less likely to report using a health service** (36%, compared with 42% overall). In addition, **more people from BAME backgrounds considered using a service for a health issue but decided not to** (nine per cent compared with five per cent overall). This finding is important given the known increased impact of Coronavirus on BAME communities, and suggests that access to health services could exacerbate health inequalities for BAME groups.

Q. Since lockdown began on the 23rd of March, have you used a health service?



There are some other differences in the profile of people who reported using health services.

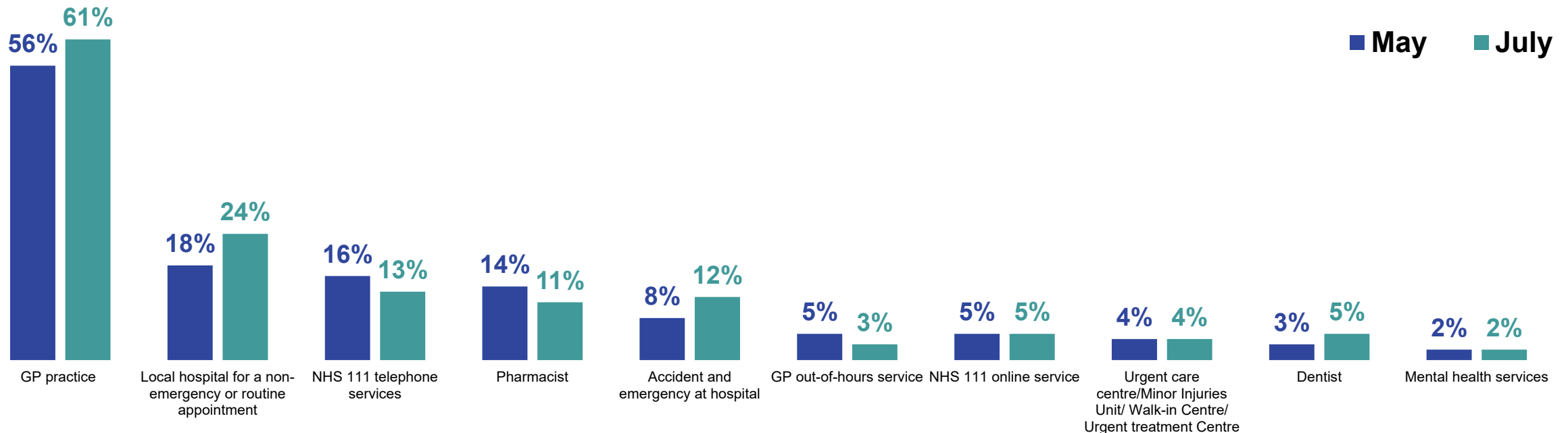
- **Women are more likely to have used a health service** (50%, compared to 34% of men). However, **men are less likely to have needed to use a health service** for any issues: 55% did not have any health issues compared to 38% of women.
- **Some groups are more likely to have an appointment cancelled/be asked not to attend:** overall seven per cent reported this, compared with 10% of those aged 65+, 12% of those with a disability and nine per cent of those who had a flu jab. These groups were also more likely to have used a health service.

Base: July: All respondents (2,246), BAME respondents (423) (GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17th – 29th July 2020)

# The public continue to most commonly access their GP practice or local hospital

Of those who accessed a health service since lockdown began, **almost two-thirds used their GP practice (61%)** and **one in five accessed their local hospital (24%)**. Comparing results between May and July, the public are more likely to report accessing frontline services: 12% report accessing A&E (compared with eight per cent) in May, and 24% reporting accessing their local hospital for a routine appointment (compared with 20% in May). Looking at people from BAME backgrounds who accessed a health service since lockdown began, they are less likely to report accessing their GP practice (51% compared with 61% overall) and more likely to use NHS 111 telephone services (26% compared with 13% overall).

## Q. Which health service did you use?



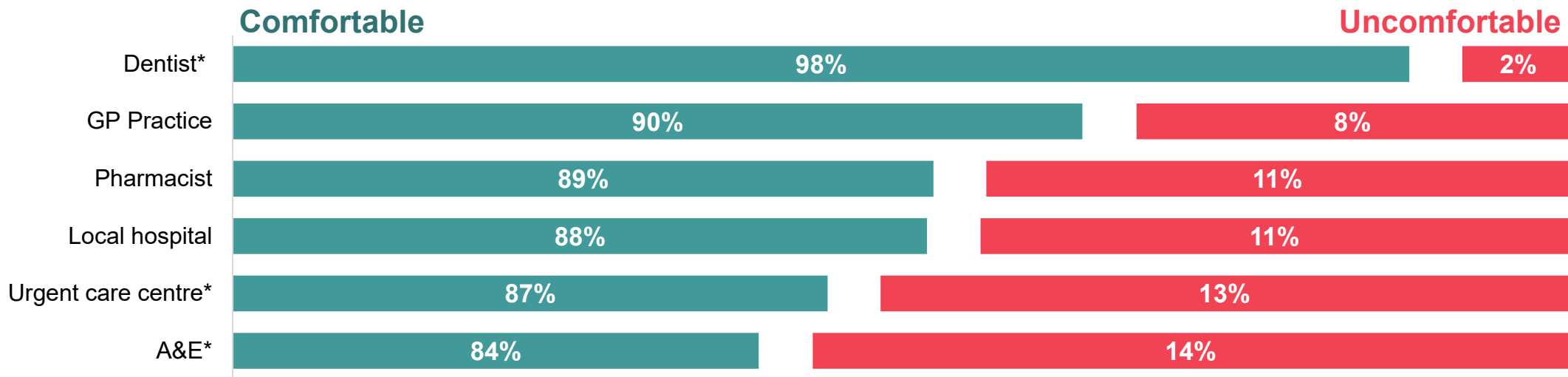
Base: May: All respondents who used a health service since lockdown began (486 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 1-10<sup>th</sup> May 2020), July: All respondents who used a health service since lockdown began (945 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

# Where people accessed services, the majority felt comfortable doing so

The **majority of people felt comfortable when they accessed health services**, though there was some variation depending on the service used. People were most likely to report feeling comfortable using their dentist or GP practice, and less likely to report feeling comfortable using “frontline services” such as their local hospital, urgent care centre or A&E.

Comparing results from July with May, **where people accessed services they were generally more comfortable doing so**: 90% were comfortable accessing their GP practice (compared with 84% in May), 84% were comfortable accessing A&E (compared with 70% in May) and 88% were comfortable accessing their local hospital (compared with 78% in May).

Q. How comfortable or uncomfortable did you feel using that part of the health service?



\*Please treat results with caution due to low base size <100.

Base: July: GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020: all who used a dentist (46), all who used a GP practice (566), all who used a pharmacist (110), all who used a local hospital (209), all who used an urgent care centre (33), all who used an A&E (98)

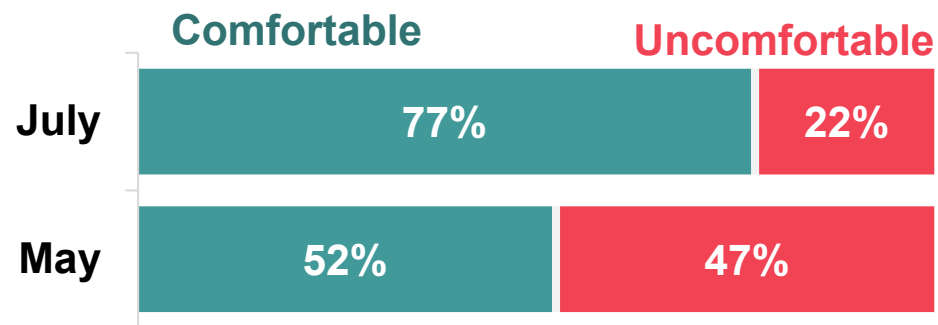
# The public would also now feel more comfortable if they needed to use health services over the next 3-4 weeks

All participants were asked how comfortable they would feel using their local hospital or local GP service if they needed treatment over the next 3-4 weeks. Overall, **the public would now feel more comfortable if they needed to use health services.**

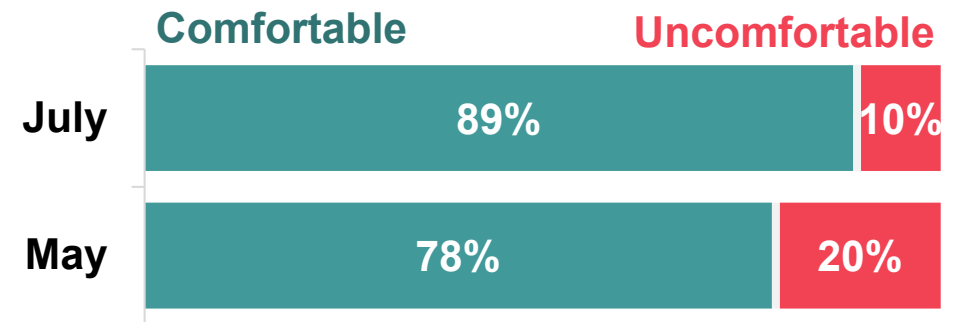
Around three-quarters (77%) report they would be comfortable accessing a hospital, a significant increase from 52% in May. Similarly, almost nine in ten (89%) report they would be comfortable accessing a local GP service, up from 78% in May.

For both services, a minority reported feeling uncomfortable, and this percentage has decreased. For example, in July only one in five (22%) would feel uncomfortable accessing their local hospital, whereas in May, a sizeable minority of respondents would have felt uncomfortable accessing their local hospital (47%).

Q. If you developed a health issue that you felt needed treatment over the next 3-4 weeks, how comfortable or not would you feel using your local hospital if necessary?



Q. If you developed a health issue that you felt needed treatment over the next 3-4 weeks, how comfortable or not would you feel using your local GP service if necessary?

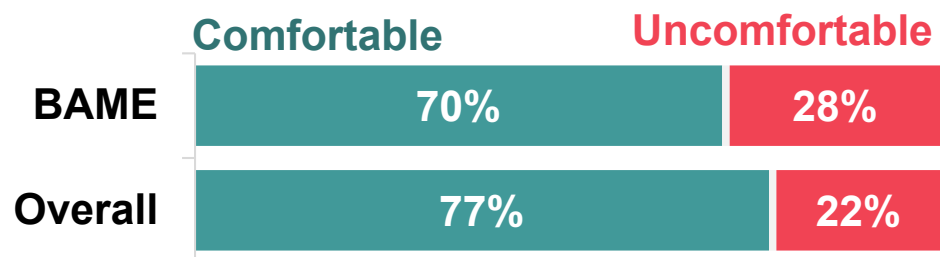


Base: May: All respondents (1,983 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 1-10<sup>th</sup> May 2020), July: All respondents (2,246 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

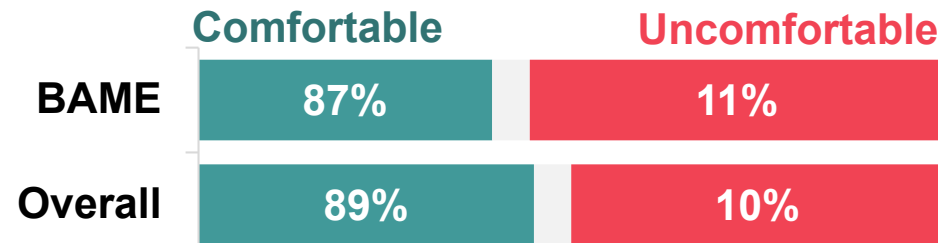
# However, people from a BAME background would feel less comfortable using a local hospital

People from BAME backgrounds report feeling less comfortable if they needed to use a hospital (70% would feel comfortable, compared with 77% overall). The majority of people from a BAME background say they would be comfortable using a GP practice (87%) which is in line with the overall figure (89%). However, fewer BAME people would be very comfortable (41%, compared with 52% overall).

Q. If you developed a health issue that you felt needed treatment over the next 3-4 weeks, how comfortable or not would you feel using your local hospital if necessary?



Q. If you developed a health issue that you felt needed treatment over the next 3-4 weeks, how comfortable or not would you feel using your local GP service if necessary?



Some other groups are also **more likely to feel uncomfortable accessing their local hospital**: those aged 65+ (25%) and those with a disability (34%). In contrast, males continue to report feeling more comfortable accessing their local hospital (80%, compared with 77% overall).

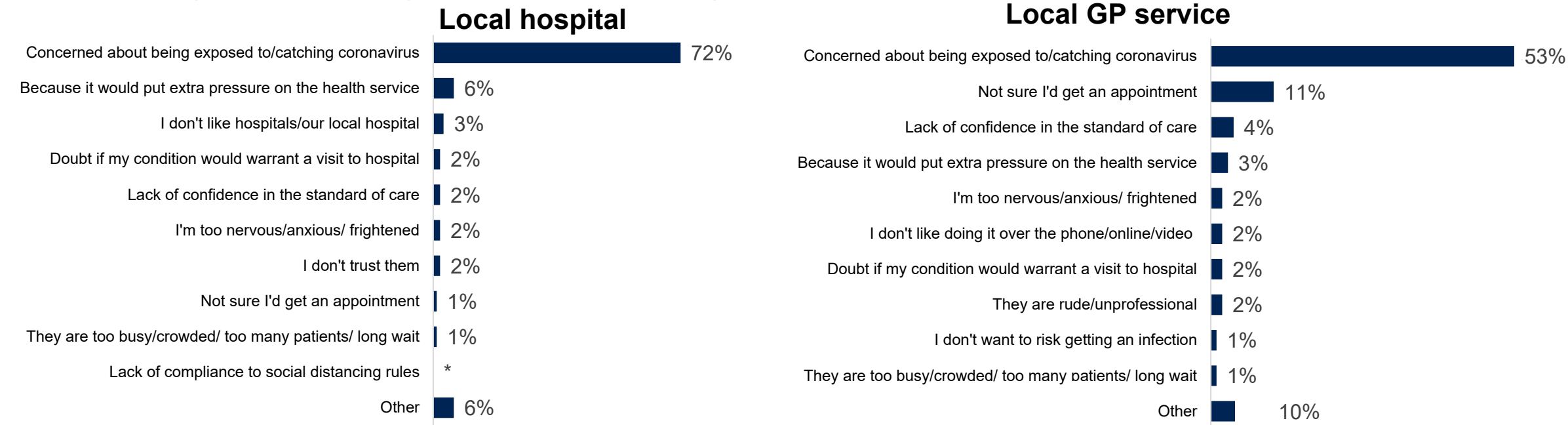
**There is less variation around how comfortable people would feel accessing their GP practice**, with the majority of people across subgroups reporting they would be comfortable. However, those with a disability are more likely to report they would feel uncomfortable accessing their local GP (16% compared with 10% overall).



# Where people are uncomfortable accessing services, this is largely due to concern about Coronavirus exposure

For those who feel uncomfortable accessing either their local hospital or local GP service, **the overwhelming concern is fear of being exposed to Coronavirus**. Three quarters of participants (72%) would feel uncomfortable visiting their local hospital due to this. Although there is less concern of Coronavirus exposure for those uncomfortable accessing their GP service, over half (53%) report this reason. This level of concern is consistent across subgroups – people from BAME backgrounds are slightly more concerned about being exposed to Coronavirus in their local hospital (78% compared with 72% overall). In addition, around 6% of participants would not feel comfortable accessing their local hospital because it would put extra pressure on the health service. Around one in ten (11%) would not feel comfortable accessing their GP service because they are not sure they'd get an appointment.

## Q. You said that you would feel very/quite uncomfortable. Why is that?



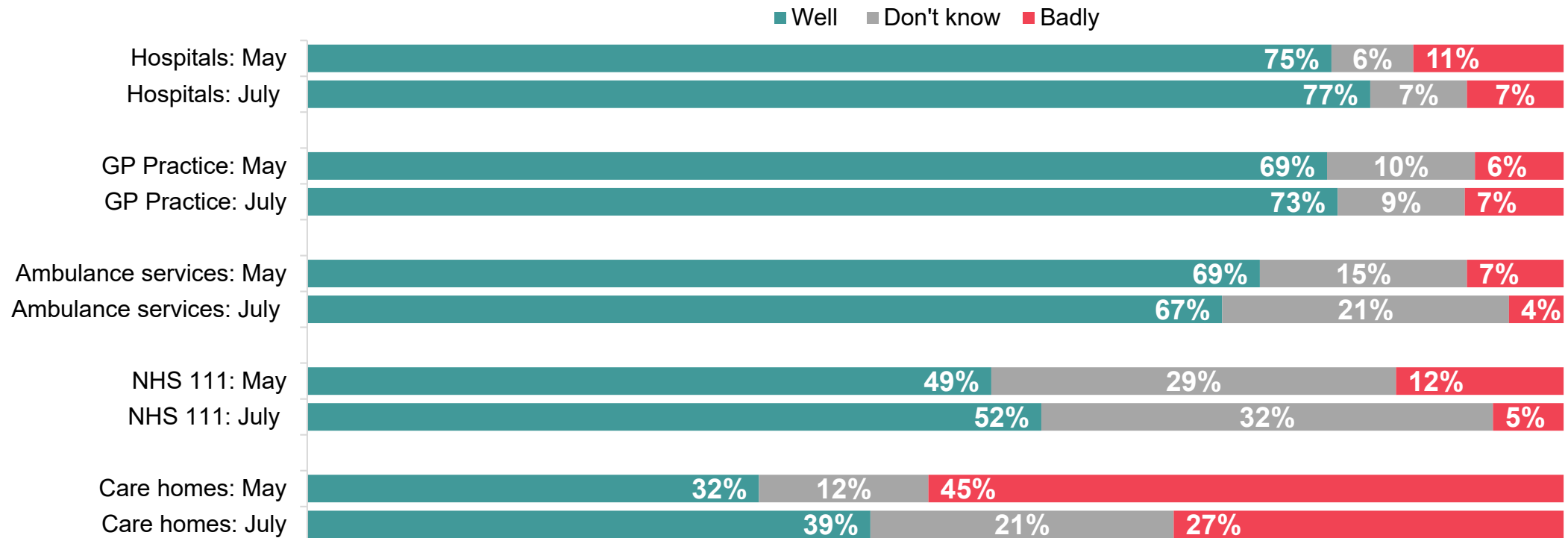
Base: July: GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020: all respondents who said they would feel uncomfortable using their local hospital (509), all respondents who said they would feel uncomfortable using their local GP service (233)

# Health services are perceived to be managing well overall

Taking everything into account, **the public think that most health services are managing well at the moment**, with a majority reporting that hospitals, GP practices and ambulances services are managing well (77%, 73% and 67% respectively). Around half of people (52%) think that NHS 111 is managing well.

**Fewer people think that care homes are managing well** (39%) – this has increased since May, when 32% thought care homes were managing well. However, the public is less likely to give an opinion (21% say they don't know, compared with 12% in May).

Q. Taking into account everything you have seen, how well or badly are each of the following services managing at this moment in time...



Base: May: All respondents (1,983 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 1-10<sup>th</sup> May 2020), July: All respondents (2,246 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

# However, there are differences in perceptions of health services between groups

**People from BAME backgrounds** are less likely to think hospitals are managing well (69%, compared with 77% overall) and less likely to think care homes are doing well (32%, compared with 39% overall).

**Women have a more optimistic view of some services:** 75% of women think GP surgeries are managing well (compared with 71% of men), 55% think that NHS 111 is managing well (compared with 49% of men), and 41% think care homes are managing well (compared with 36% of men).

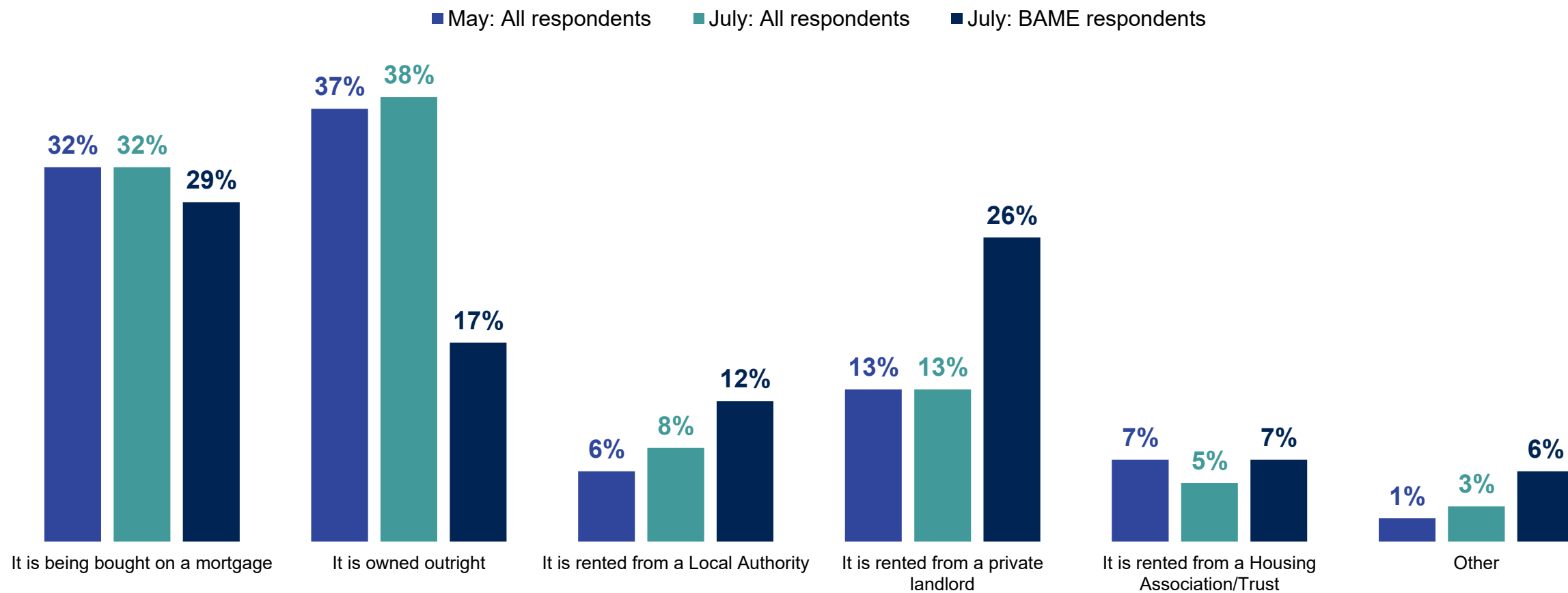
**There is no notable pattern of differences by age**, though those aged 65+ are more likely to think care homes are doing well (44%, compared with 39% overall). Younger people are more likely to think NHS 111 is doing well (65% of those aged 18-24 and 64% of those aged 25-34, compared with 52% overall).

Those working in **managerial, administrative or professional jobs are more positive about how several services are performing** (61% think NHS 111 is doing well, 75% think ambulance services are managing well; 78% think GP surgeries are doing well; 45% think care homes are doing well).

# Demographics

# The majority own their home outright or are paying for a mortgage, whilst fewer currently rent

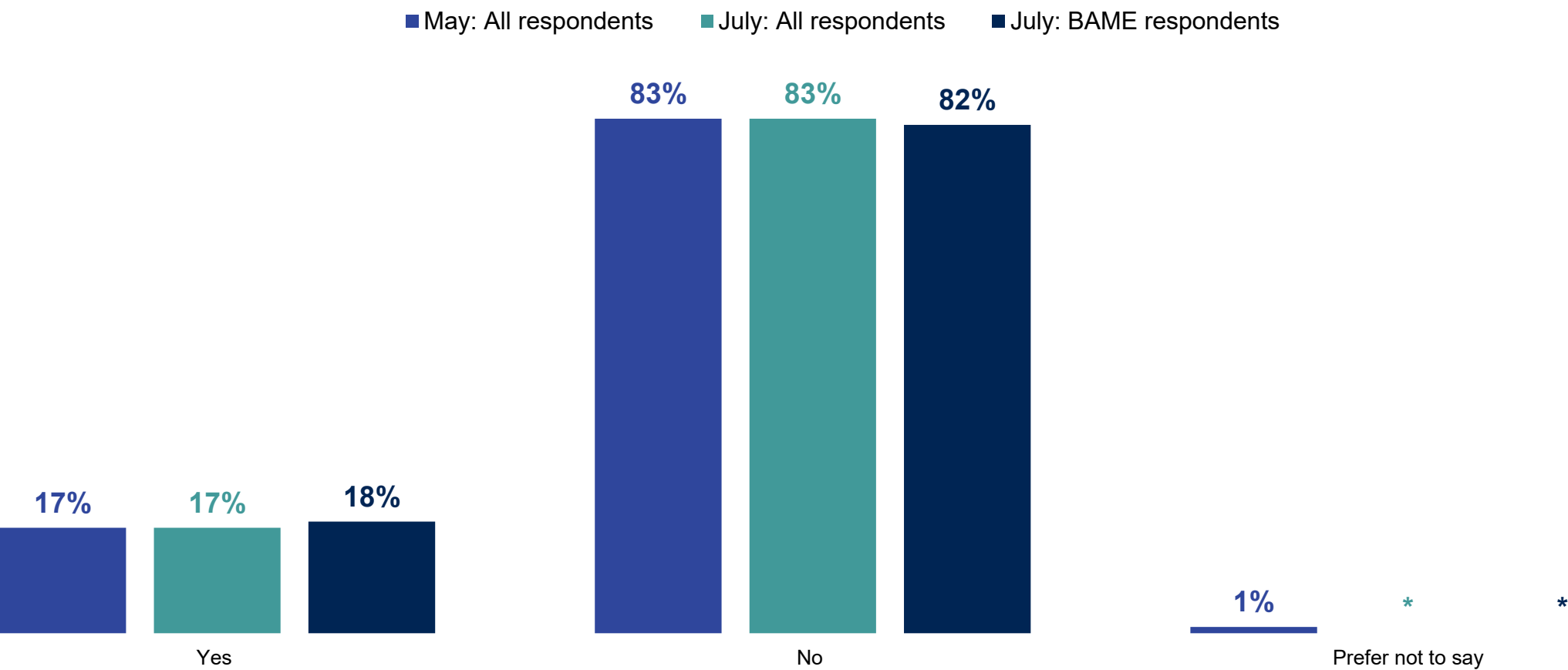
Q. Which of these applies to your home?



Base: May: All respondents (1,983 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 1-10<sup>th</sup> May 2020), July: All respondents (2,246), BAME respondents (423) (GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

# Nearly one in five have a long-term health condition

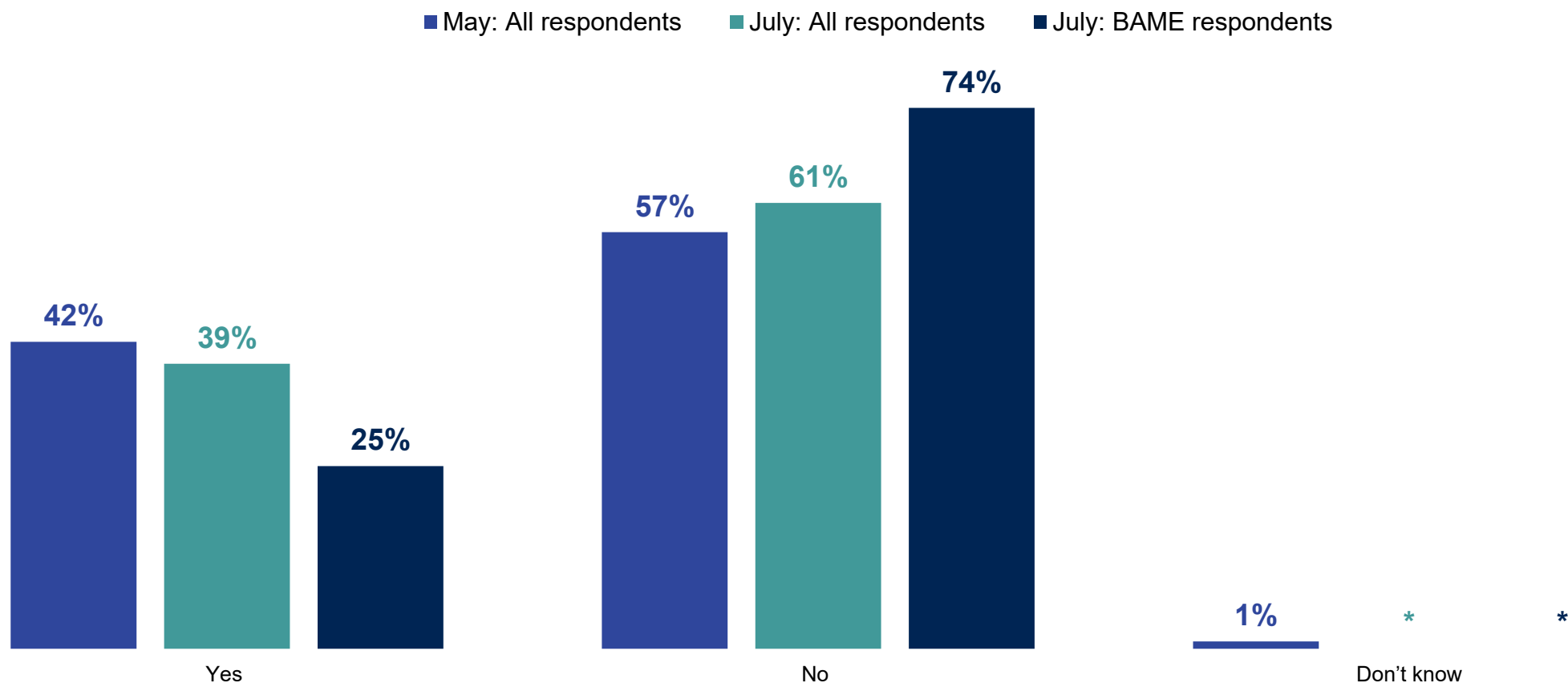
Q. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is it expected to last, at least 12 months?



Base: May: All respondents (1,983 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 1-10<sup>th</sup> May 2020), July: All respondents (2,246), BAME respondents (423) (GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

# Two in five have been offered a flu jab in the past 12 months

Q. In the past 12 months, have you been offered an influenza (flu) vaccine/jab because you have been identified as being at increased risk of flu?

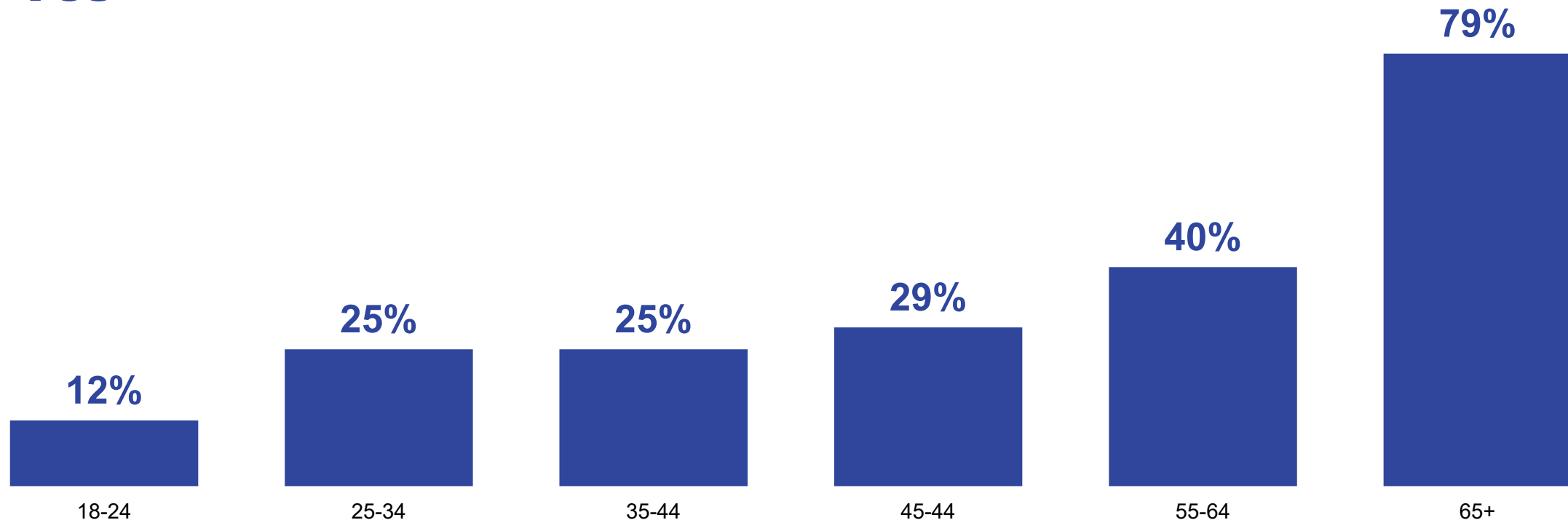


Base: May: All respondents (1,983 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 1-10<sup>th</sup> May 2020), July: All respondents (2,246), BAME respondents (423) (GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

# A significant proportion of flu jabs were offered to those over the age of 65

Q. In the past 12 months, have you been offered an influenza (flu) vaccine/jab because you have been identified as being at increased risk of flu?

**% Yes**

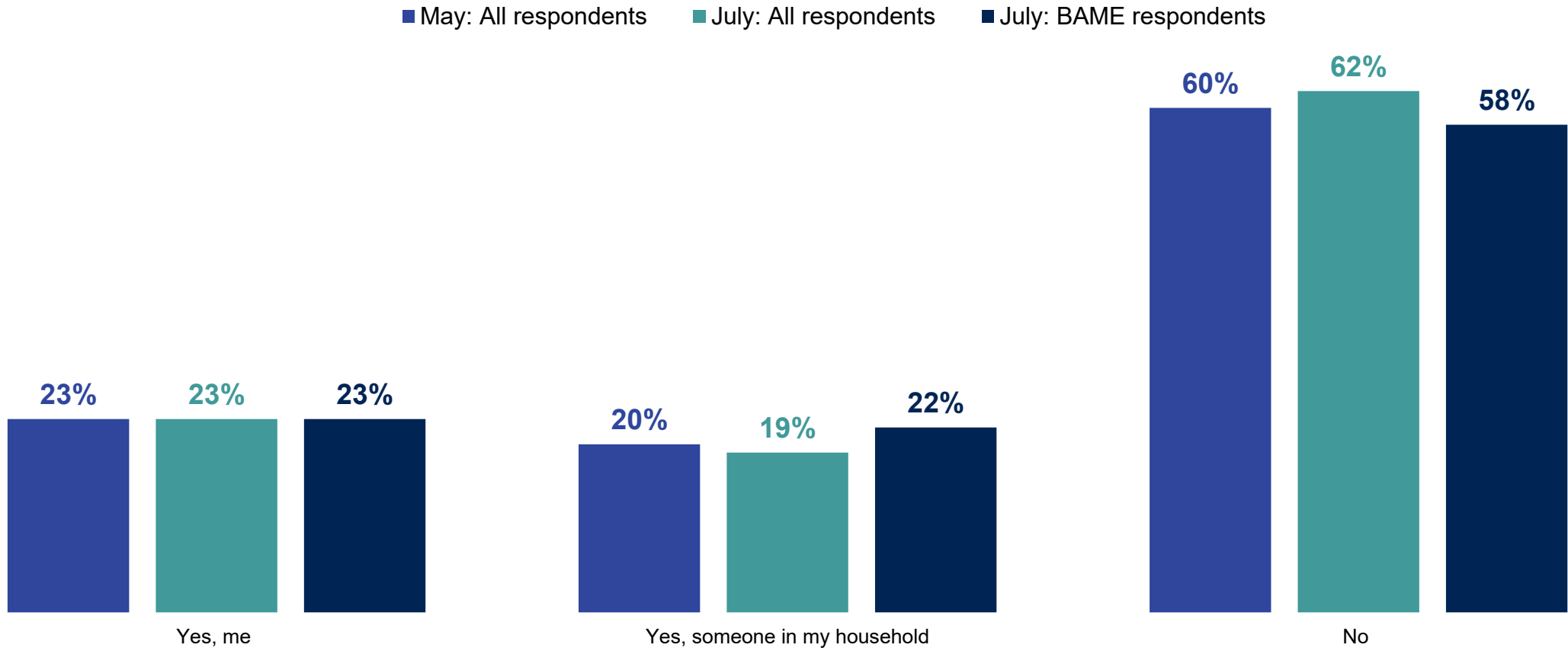


Base: July: All respondents (2,246 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)



# Around a quarter of those surveyed are designated key workers

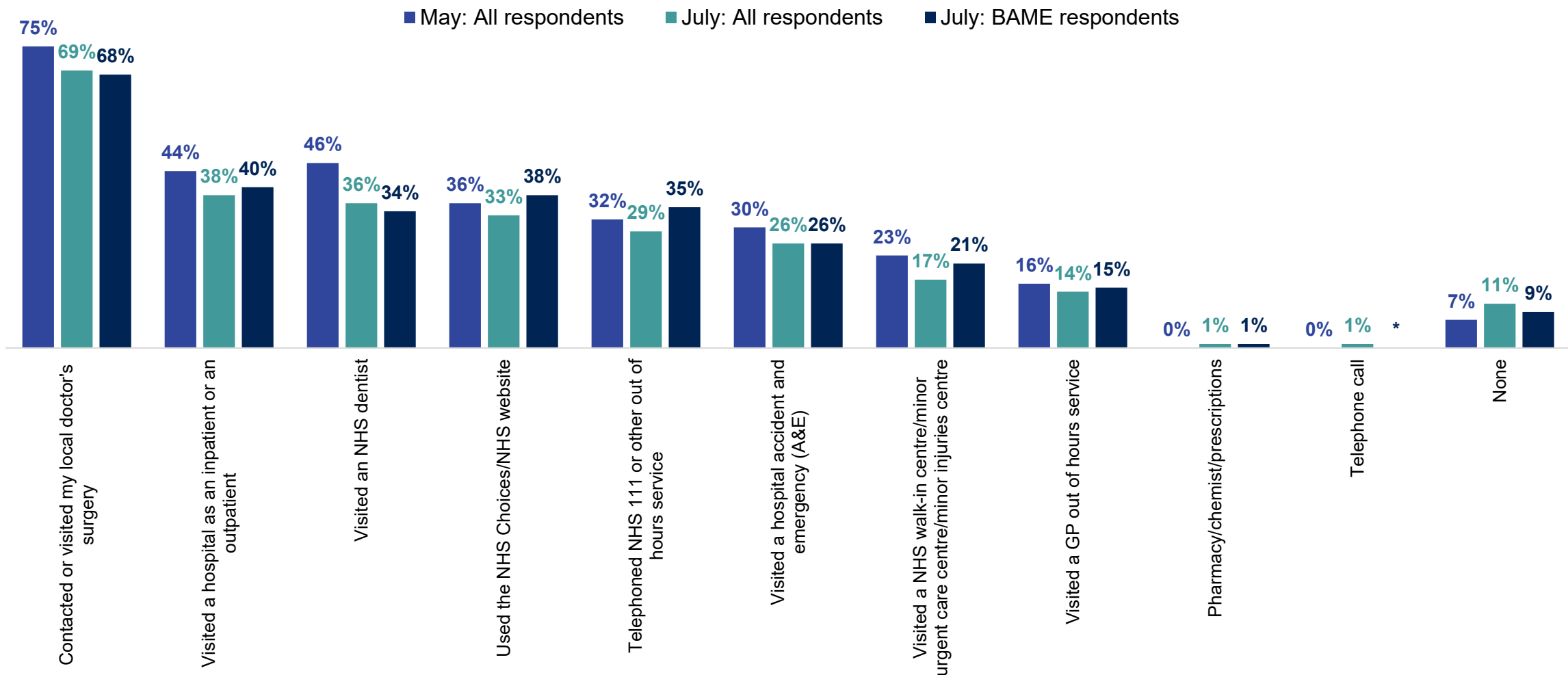
Q. Are you or someone in your household, a designated keyworker as identified in the UK Government’s official guidance?



Base: May: All respondents (1,983 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 1-10<sup>th</sup> May 2020), July: All respondents (2,246), BAME respondents (423) (GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

# Use of NHS services is varied

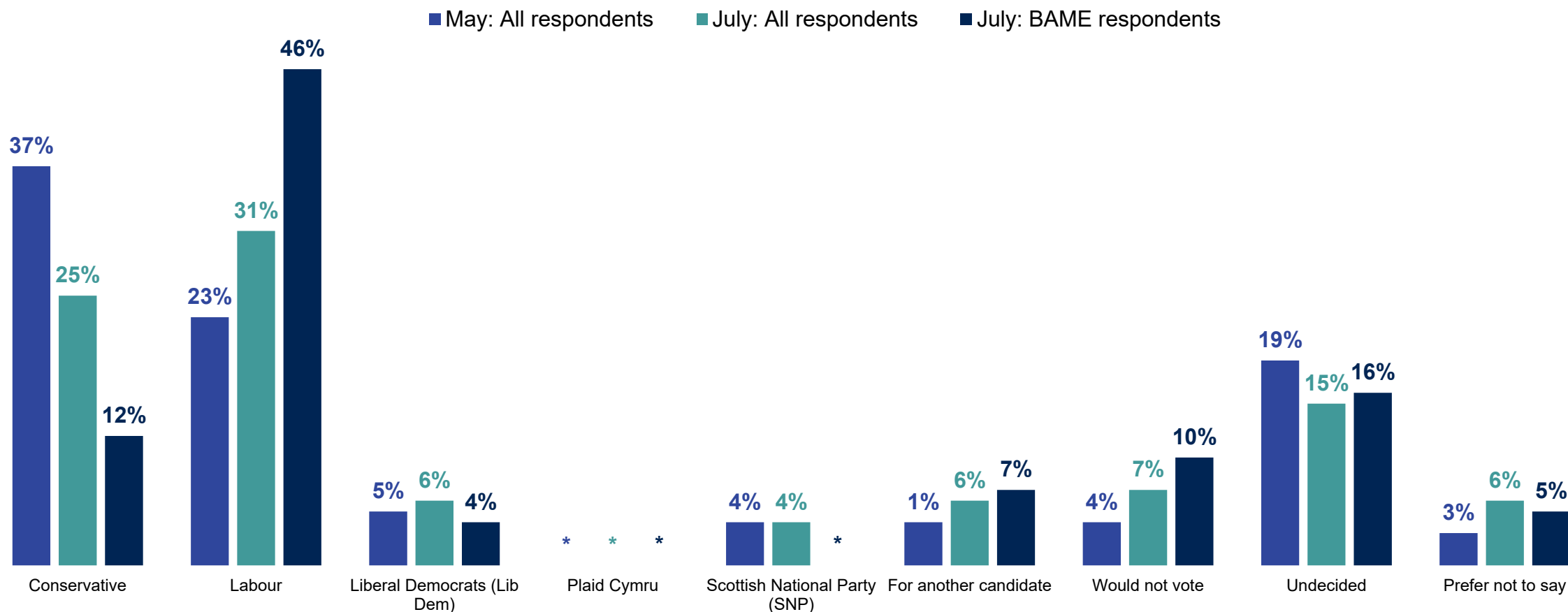
Q. In the last 12 months, in which of the following ways, if any, have you used NHS services?



Base: May: All respondents (1,983 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 1-10<sup>th</sup> May 2020), July: All respondents (2,246), BAME respondents (423) (GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

# The majority would vote Labour or Conservative in a general election

Q. How would you vote if there were a General Election tomorrow? Would you vote...?



Base: May: All respondents (1,983 GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 1-10<sup>th</sup> May 2020), July: All respondents (2,246), BAME respondents (423) (GB adults aged 18+, interviewed via telephone between 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

# For more information

**Kate Duxbury**

Research Director

[Kate.Duxbury@Ipsos.com](mailto:Kate.Duxbury@Ipsos.com)

**Toby Piachaud**

Senior Research Executive

[Toby.Piachaud@Ipsos.com](mailto:Toby.Piachaud@Ipsos.com)

**Joanna Barry**

Senior Research Executive

[Joanna.barry@Ipsos.com](mailto:Joanna.barry@Ipsos.com)