



# Impact of Covid-19 on Wellbeing in Scotland: Wave 2



Fieldwork 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2020

# Methodology

These findings are based on an Ipsos MORI telephone survey of 1,004 adults in Scotland aged 16+. At the time fieldwork was conducted (10<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> December 2020), different areas of Scotland were subject to different levels of COVID-19 restrictions, up to a maximum of Level 3 across much of the Central Belt. Further limitations on Christmas gatherings and plans for nationwide Level 4 restrictions from Boxing Day had yet to be announced (they were announced on Saturday 19th December). The first COVID-19 vaccinations in Scotland were conducted the week fieldwork started.

This was the second wave of the survey – a first wave was conducted between 27<sup>th</sup> April-3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020, during the initial lockdown (which began on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020). The questionnaire drew on the Wave 1 (May 2020) survey, but also included a number of new questions.

Quotas were set based on gender, age, working status and Scottish Parliament region and the data was weighted to ensure the final sample was representative of the Scottish population as a whole.

**Note:** all samples have a margin of error around them. For a sample of around 1,000, this is +/- 3 percentage points. Findings based on sub-groups are subject to a wider margin of error. Where results do not sum to 100 or the 'difference' appears to be +/-1 more/less than the actual, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of 'don't know' or 'refused' responses.

# Key findings

The second wave of the COVID and wellbeing in Scotland survey highlights both the ongoing challenges that the pandemic presents to people's wellbeing, and the fact that the impacts did not remain static, but evolved over the course of 2020.

A third of people in Scotland have seen COVID at close-hand – either having had it themselves (5%) or someone close to them having had it. And 3 in 10 reported self-isolating at some point last year.

Many people's working lives have been changed by the pandemic – over 4 in 10 said their work situation or hours had changed since the outbreak started in March. However, people have been affected in very different ways – while those on higher incomes were most likely to say they were working from home more, those on lower incomes were most likely to say they had lost their job or been made redundant.

A majority of people (around 8 in 10) in Scotland feel strongly connected to their neighbourhood and say they can rely on their neighbours if they need help. However, again, particular groups stand out as less likely to feel they have local support networks – younger groups, those in deprived areas, and those with limiting health conditions were all less likely to agree they could rely on other locally for help.

Most people had regular social contact with others (in person or by videocall), but 1 in 5 had social contact less than once a week. Compared with May, fewer reported feeling cut off from family and friends. However, women and those with limiting conditions were more likely than men/those without health conditions to say they felt cut off, and that they were struggling with restrictions on socialising.

## Key findings (continued)

While the level of support people say they have personally received appears to have fallen off a little since May, around 6 in 10 nonetheless said they had received some help in the last month – from others getting in touch to check they were OK (45%), to financial help with bills (8%). Many were also providing help to others – three-quarters said they had checked others were OK, and over half had done food shopping for others in the last month. However, while a majority said there was no other help they needed, again some groups expressed higher levels of unmet need, including private renters and those with limiting health conditions.

In terms of people's general emotional wellbeing, the survey found similar levels of self-assessed happiness in December as in May, while average (mean) anxiety levels had fallen a little. For many people, their family and friends becoming seriously ill with COVID remained a serious worry. However, compared with May fewer people were seriously worried about this, or about themselves becoming seriously ill with COVID (note: fieldwork took place prior to widespread coverage of new more infectious variants). However, levels of concern about other people's mental health had increased from May.

The impact of the crisis on financial wellbeing has been particularly unevenly distributed. Those on the highest incomes were the group most likely to say their income had increased since the start of March, while those in the most deprived areas of Scotland were the group most likely to say their income had fallen. Younger people, those on lower incomes or in deprived areas, renters, and people with limiting conditions were all more likely than others to report difficulties accessing or paying for essentials, like fuel bills or food.

Many aspects of people's behaviours have changed since March. However, compared with May, there was a fall in the proportions saying they were calling/messaging family and friends more often than they did pre-crisis, and in the proportions saying they were following the news, and drinking more (though 1 in 7 still said they were drinking more than they did before the pandemic).

# **DIRECT EXPERIENCES OF COVID**

# 1

## Key findings

A THIRD OF PEOPLE  
IN SCOTLAND  
REPORT EITHER  
HAVING HAD COVID  
THEMSELVES OR  
SOMEONE CLOSE  
TO THEM HAVING  
HAD IT.

3 IN 10 SAID THEY  
HAD SELF-ISOLATED  
AT SOME POINT  
SINCE MARCH 2020.

3 IN 10 REPORTED  
EXPERIENCING  
LONELINESS WHILE  
SELF-ISOLATING.

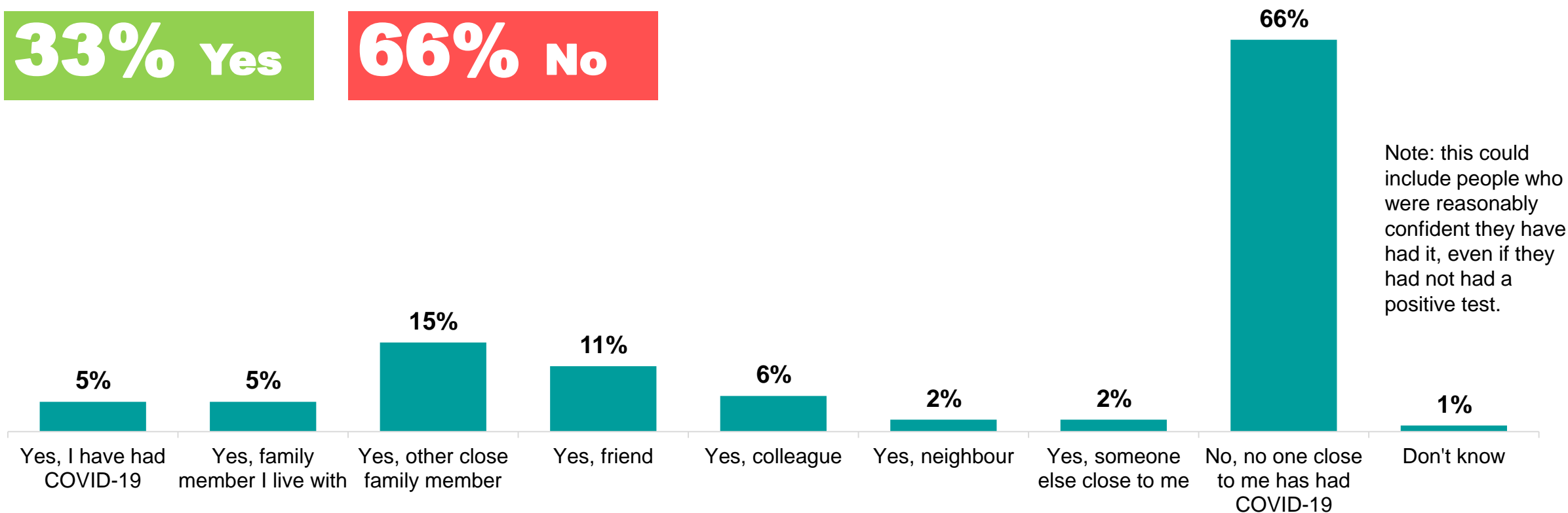
# A third reported either having had COVID-19 themselves, or knowing somebody who has had Covid-19

This was most commonly a family member outside of their household (15%) or a friend (11%)

*Have you or anyone close to you had COVID-19?*

**33% Yes**

**66% No**

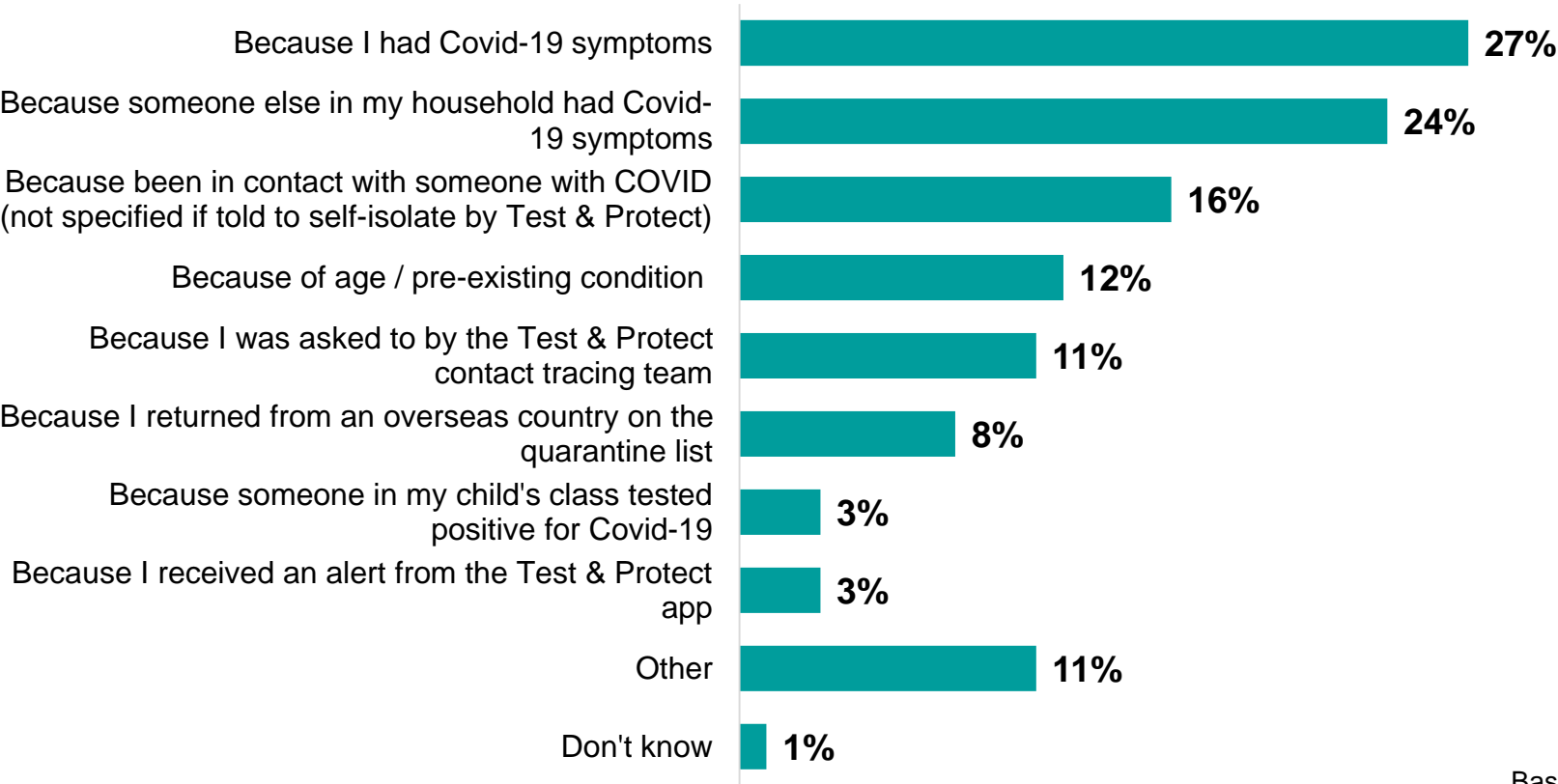


Base: (1,004) All

# While only 5% reported having had Covid, 30% said they had self-isolated at some point since March

This was most commonly due to them/someone in their household having symptoms

For what reasons have you had to self-isolate?



**30%**  
of all participants  
have self-isolated

Groups who were more likely to say they had self-isolated included: under 55s, those living with children, private renters, and those living in more deprived areas.

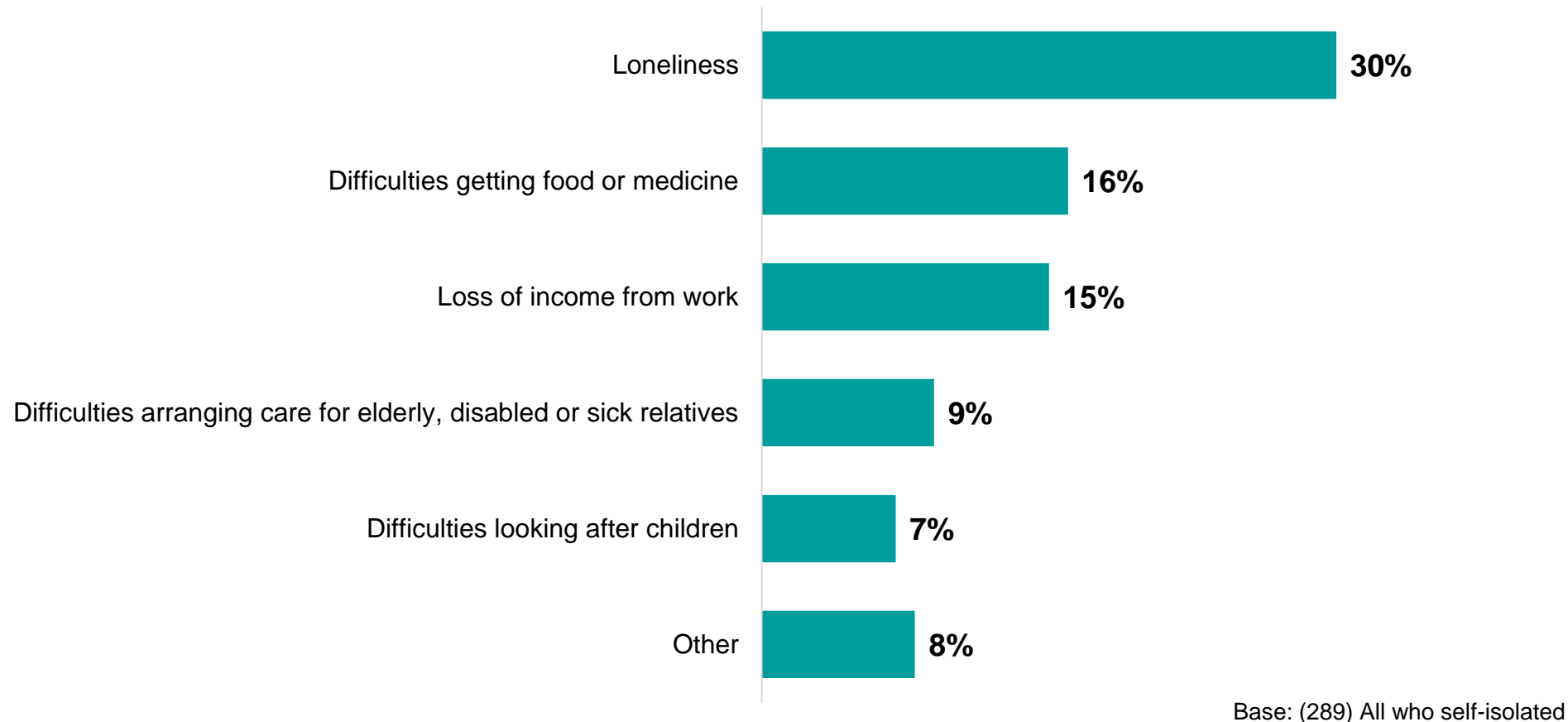
Base: (289) All who self-isolated



# 30% of those who self-isolated said they experienced loneliness during this period

16% had difficulties accessing food or medicine, and 15% reported losing income from work

*When you were self-isolating, did you experience any of the following issues?*



# COVID AND WORK

# 2

## Key findings

OVER 4 IN 10 PEOPLE SAID THEIR WORKING SITUATION OR HOURS HAD CHANGED SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC.

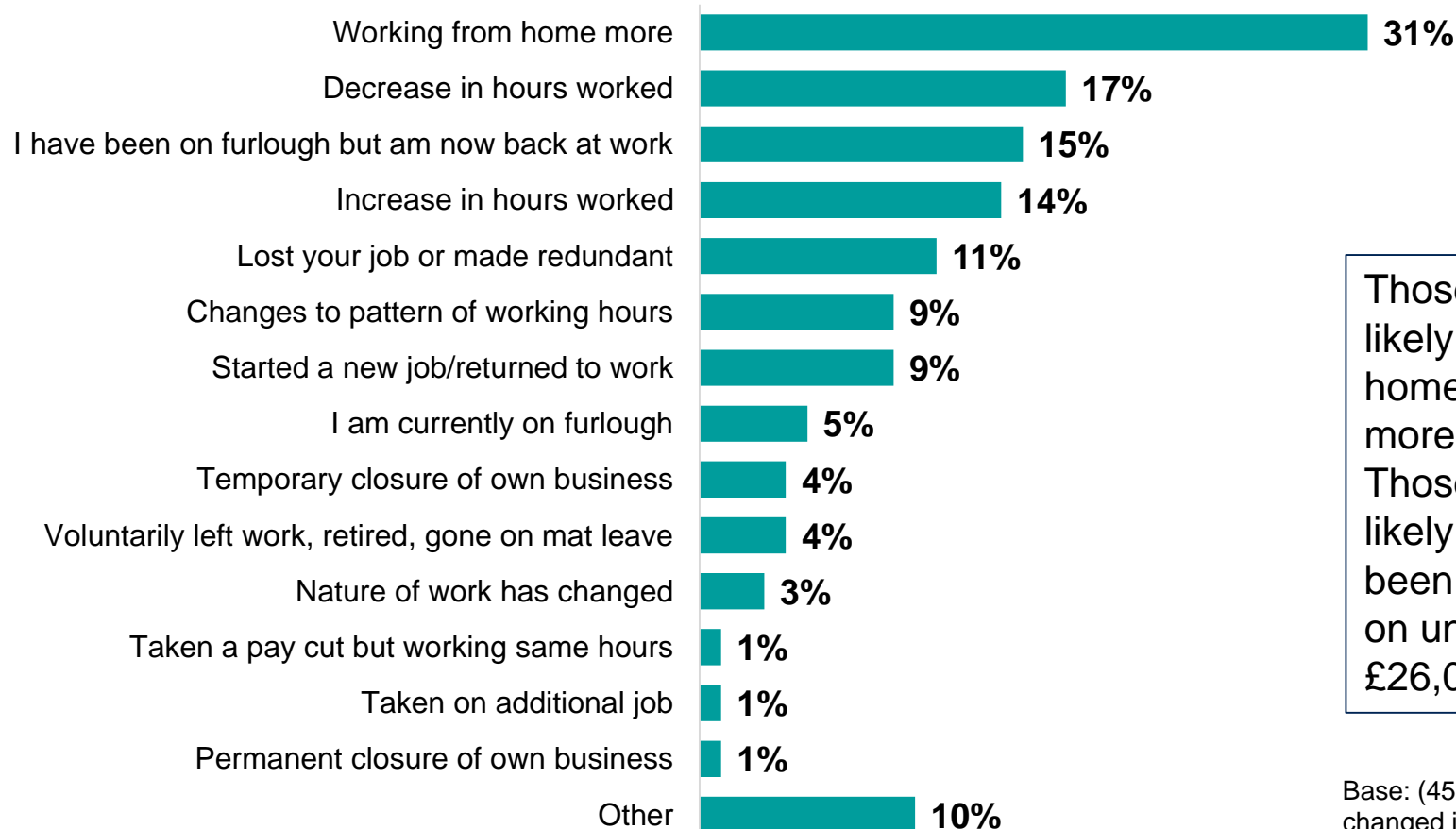
THOSE ON HIGHER INCOMES WERE MORE LIKELY TO SAY THEY WERE WORKING FROM HOME MORE. THOSE ON LOWER INCOMES WERE MORE LIKELY TO SAY THEY HAD LOST THEIR JOB.

AROUND 1 IN 5 OF THOSE IN WORK NEEDED TO MAKE CHANGES BECAUSE OF THE CRISIS TO HELP THEM MANAGE CHILDCARE OR OTHER CARING RESPONSIBILITIES.

# 43% reported changes in their working situation or hours since the start of the pandemic

The most common change was working from home more. Similar proportions reported a decrease in hours (17%) and an increase in hours (14%).

*How has your working situation or working hours changed?*



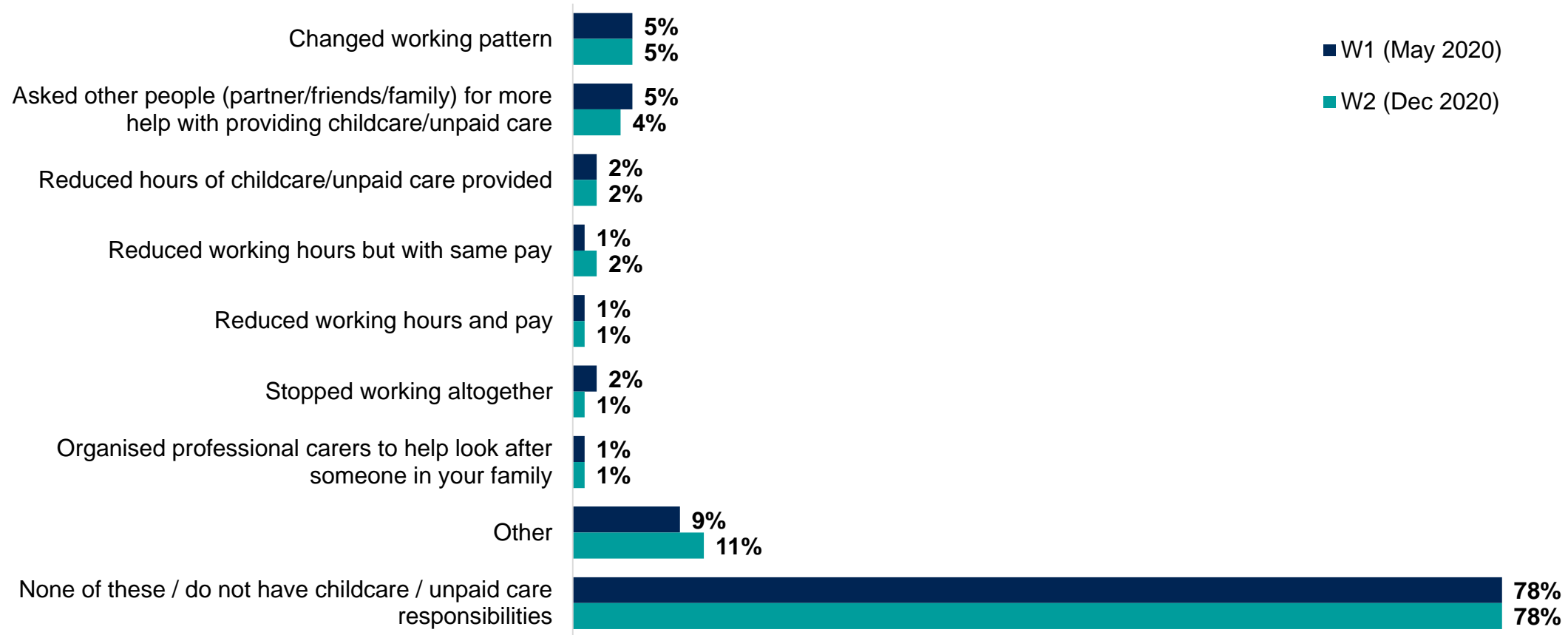
**43%**  
of all respondents  
reported a change  
in working situation  
or hours

Those on higher incomes were more likely to say they were working from home more (48% of those on £52,000 or more; 5% of those on £15,600 or less). Those on lower incomes were more likely to say they had lost their job or been made redundant (20-21% of those on under £26,000; 5-8% of those on £26,000 or more).

Base: (455) All whose work situation or working hours have changed in some way since the start of the outbreak

# Around 1 in 5 have made changes since the start of the crisis to help manage child or other caring responsibilities

*Have you had to make any changes since the start of the Coronavirus crisis to help you manage any child care or other caring responsibilities you may have?*



Base: W1 (572), W2 (589)  
All who are working full-time, part-time or self-employed

# NEIGHBOURHOOD PERCEPTIONS

# 3

## Key findings

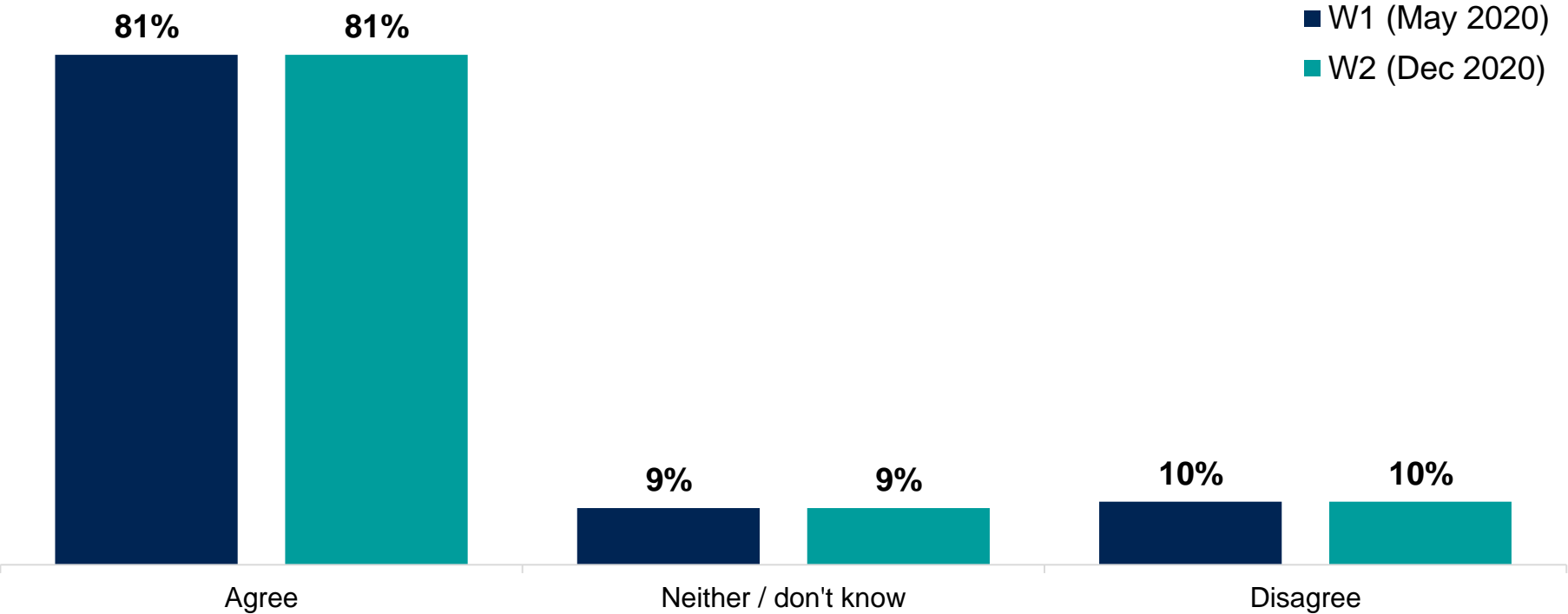
**MOST PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND FEEL THEY BELONG TO THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD, TRUST THEIR NEIGHBOURS, AND FEEL THEY COULD RELY ON THEM FOR HELP.**

**HOWEVER, YOUNGER PEOPLE, THOSE IN DEPRIVED AREAS, AND THOSE WITH LIMITING HEALTH CONDITIONS ARE LESS LIKELY TO FEEL THEY CAN RELY ON OTHERS LOCALLY.**

**THE PUBLIC ARE SPLIT ON WHETHER THEY CAN INFLUENCE DECISIONS AFFECTING THEIR LOCAL AREA.**

# Most trust the people in their neighbourhood (identical to May)

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? *This is a neighbourhood where most people can be trusted*



Base: W1 (1,000), W2 (1,004) All

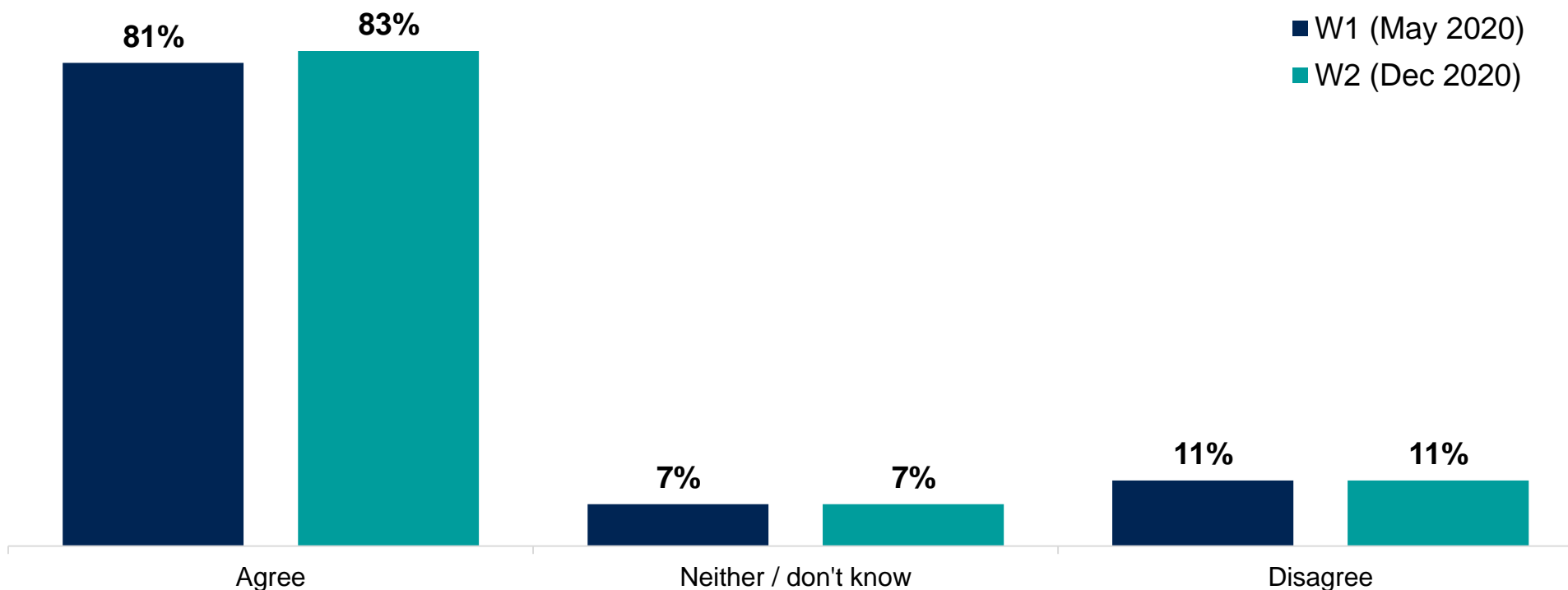




# Most people (83%) say they could rely on someone in their neighbourhood to help them (very similar to May)

*How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?*

*If I was alone and needed help, I could rely on someone in this neighbourhood to help me*



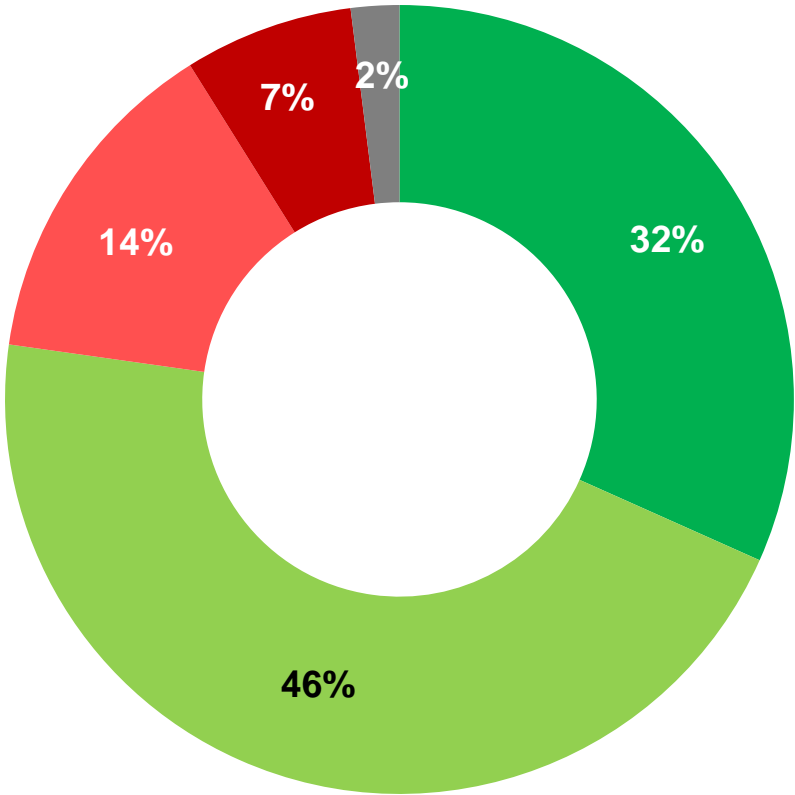
Base: W1 (1,000), W2 (1,004) All

# Three quarters said they feel strongly that they belong to their immediate neighbourhood

How strongly do you feel you belong to your immediate neighbourhood?

77%  
Net strongly

21%  
Net not strongly



Base: (1,004) All

- Very strongly
- Fairly strongly
- Not at all strongly
- Not at all strongly
- Don't know

78%  
of people in Scotland in 2019  
also felt a very/fairly strong  
sense of belonging to their  
immediate neighbourhood,  
according to the Scottish  
Household Survey (SHS)

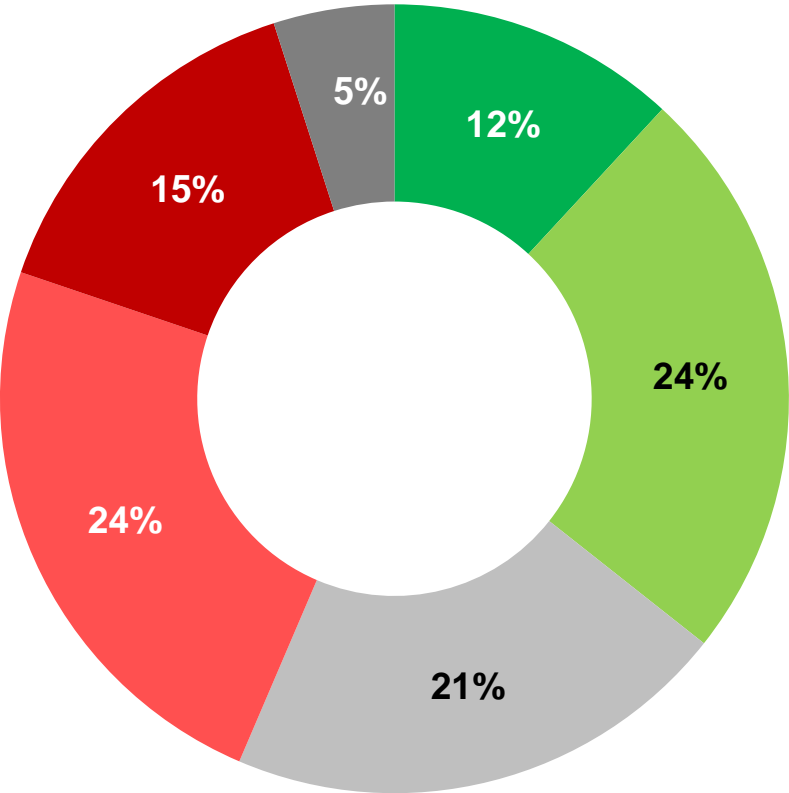
# However, the public are split on perceptions of influence over decisions affecting their area

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

*I can influence decisions affecting my local area*

**35%**  
Net agree

**39%**  
Net Disagree



Base: (1,004) All

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**18%**  
Of people in Scotland in 2019 agreed that they could influence decisions affecting their local area, according to the SHS\*

\*note that differences between this survey and the SHS may result from differences in methodology. Given these differences, it is not possible to conclude that perceptions of influence have improved.



# Key subgroup differences

- Younger people were less likely to feel connected to others and their neighbourhood on most measures
  - For example, 64% of those under 25 felt they belonged to their local neighbourhood 'very' or 'fairly' strongly, compared with 67% of those aged 25-34, 78% of 35-54 year-olds, 83% of those aged 55-69, and 88% of those aged 70 or older.
- Those living in more deprived areas of Scotland were also less likely to feel they strongly belonged to their neighbourhood, and less likely to agree that they could rely on others for help, or that most people in their neighbourhood can be trusted
  - 71% of those living in SIMD 1 areas (the most deprived) agreed they could rely on someone in their neighbourhood for help if they needed it, compared 89% of those in SIMD 5 areas (the least deprived).
- People with a limiting physical or mental health condition were less likely to agree that they could rely on others in their neighbourhood for help (74% vs. 85% of those without a limiting condition).

# **SOCIAL CONTACT**

# 4

## Key findings

**MOST HAD  
REGULAR SOCIAL  
CONTACT WITH  
OTHERS, BUT 1 IN 5  
SAW OTHERS IN  
PERSON OR BY  
VIDEOCALL LESS  
THAN ONCE A  
WEEK.**

**PEOPLE FELT LESS  
CUT OFF FROM  
FAMILY AND  
FRIENDS THAN IN  
MAY.**

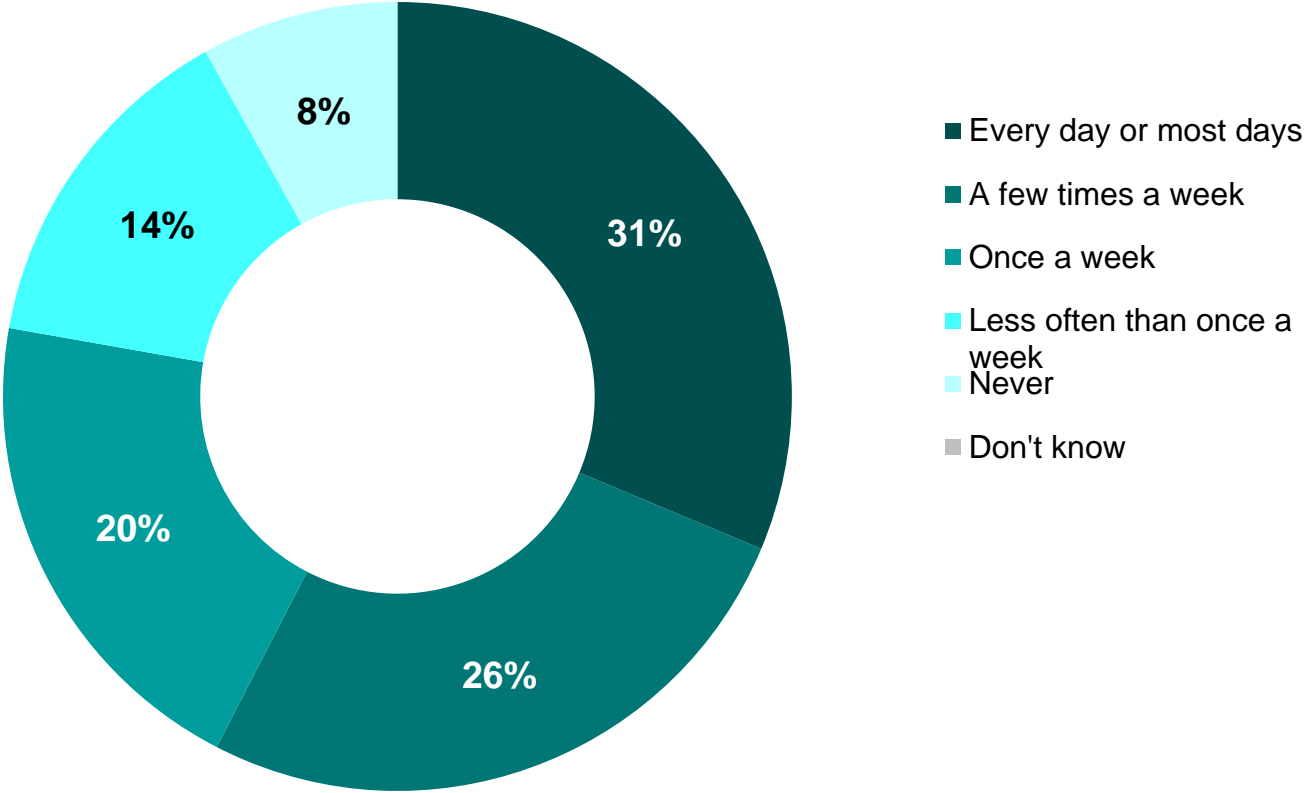
**HOWEVER, WOMEN  
AND THOSE WITH  
LIMITING HEALTH  
CONDITIONS WERE  
MORE LIKELY THAN  
OTHERS TO FEEL CUT  
OFF, AND TO BE  
FINDING  
RESTRICTIONS ON  
SOCIALISING HARD.**

# While a majority had regular social contact with others, 1 in 5 said they were socialising (either in person or by videocall) less than once a week

*In the last month, how often, if at all, have you met socially with friends, relatives, neighbours or work colleagues?  
This could either be meeting in person, or by videocall.*

**57%**  
Net more than  
once a week

**22%**  
Net less than  
once a week

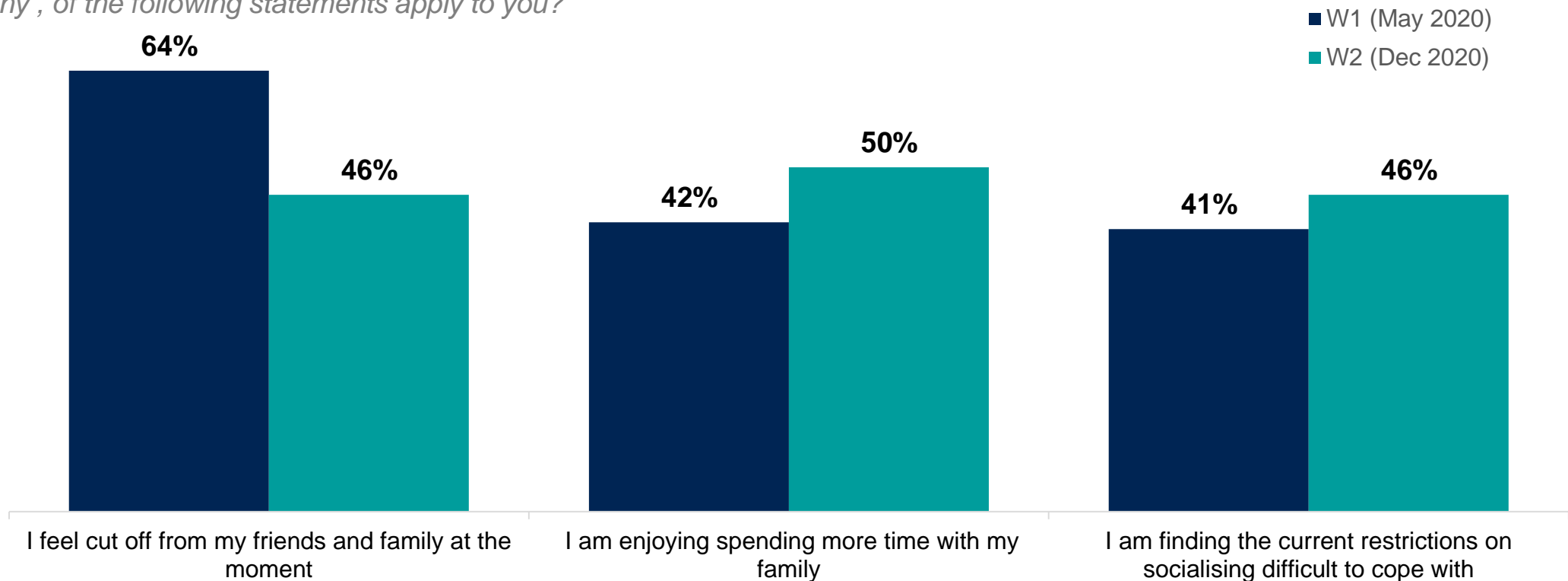


Base: (1,004) All

# People felt less cut off from family and friends in December compared with May

However, they were slightly more likely to say they were finding restrictions on socialising difficult to cope with

Which, if any, of the following statements apply to you?



Base: W1 (1,000), W2 (1,004) All



# Key subgroup differences

- Younger people under 25 were more likely to have social contact with others more than once a week (73%, compared with 53-57% of older age groups)
- People with a limiting health condition were more likely to say they had social contact with others less than once a week/never (29% vs 20% of those without a limiting condition). They were also more likely to say they were feeling cut off from friends and family (55% vs. 44%) and that they were finding restrictions on socialising difficult (54% vs. 44%)
- Women were more likely to say they were finding restrictions on socialising difficult (51% vs 42% of men) and that they felt cut off from friends or family (50% vs. 43%).

# HELP AND SUPPORT

# 5

## Key findings

AROUND 6 IN 10  
HAD RECEIVED  
SOME FORM OF  
HELP IN THE LAST  
MONTH (LOWER  
THAN IN MAY).

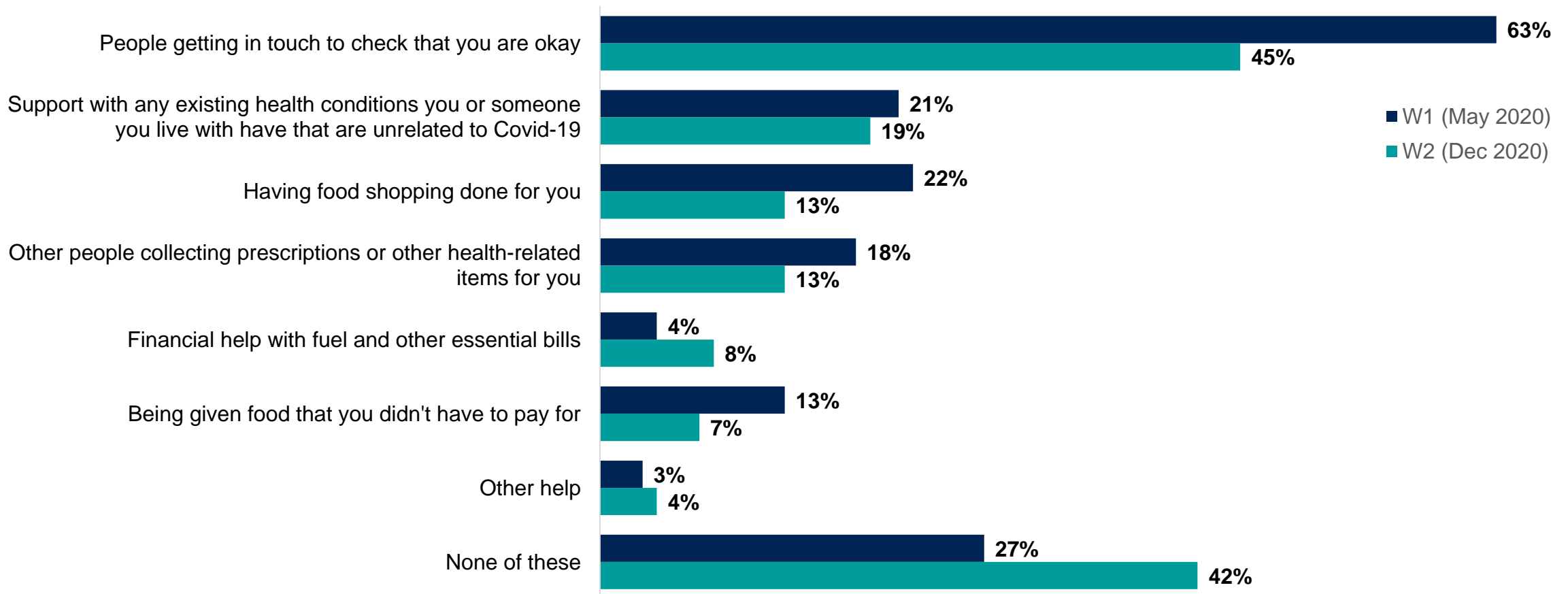
A NUMBER OF  
GROUPS, INCLUDING  
PRIVATE RENTERS  
AND PEOPLE WITH  
LIMITING  
CONDITIONS, STAND  
OUT AS MORE LIKELY  
TO HAVE UNMET  
NEEDS FOR HELP.

MANY PEOPLE  
REPORT GIVING  
HELP TO OTHERS –  
THREE-QUARTERS  
SAY THEY HAVE  
CHECKED OTHERS  
ARE OK, AND OVER  
HALF HAVE DONE  
FOOD SHOPPING  
FOR OTHERS.

# Around 6 in 10 report having received help in the last month – though this was lower compared with May

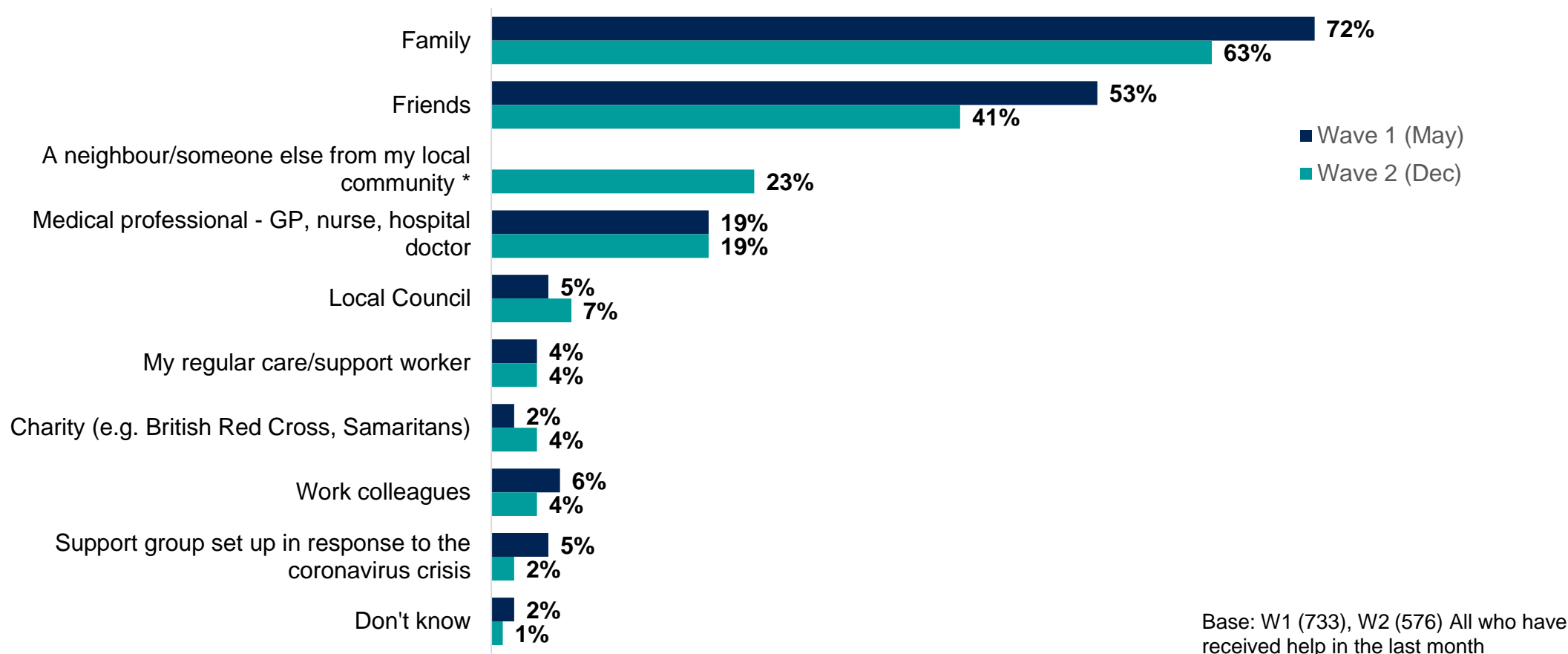
**42% said they hadn't received any of the kinds of help asked about in the last month – up from 27% in May.**

*In the last month, have you or your household received any of the following kinds of help, from any source?*



# Family and friends were the most common source of help, followed by neighbours and medical professionals

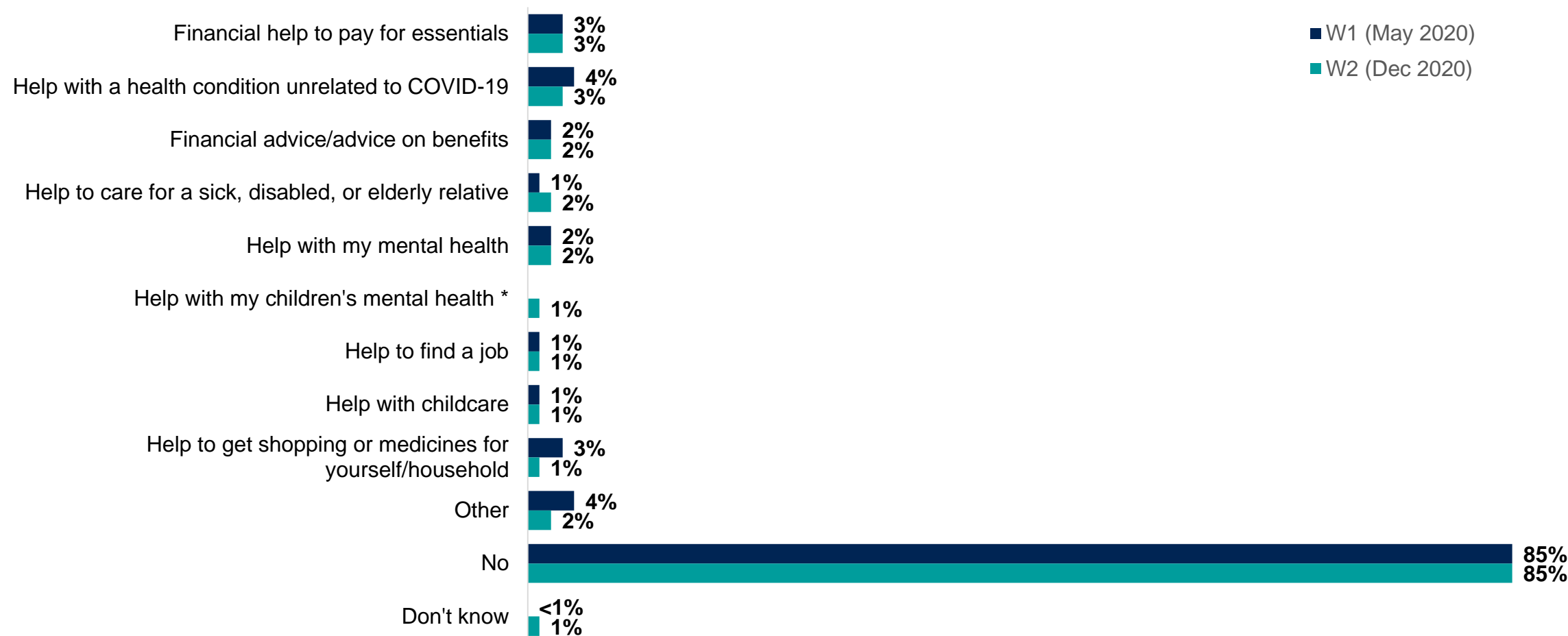
*Who has provided you or your household with this help?*



\* Note: 'Neighbour' was a new category, added at Wave 2 (December). It is possible that at Wave 1, neighbours would have been included with friends.

# The vast majority (85%) said they were not in need of any help that they were not currently receiving (identical to May)

*Is there any other help with anything, that you feel you currently need but you are not receiving?*



\* Category not included in Wave 1

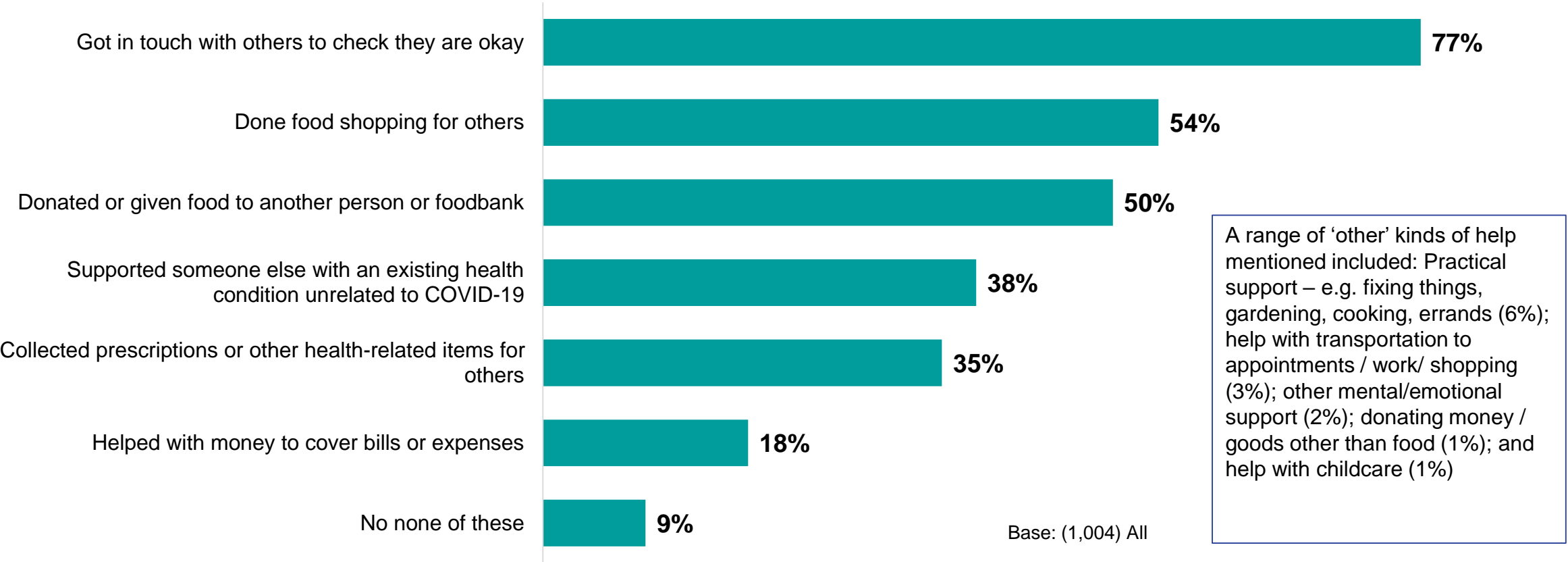
Base: W1 (1,000), W2 (1,004) All

## **However, there were some significant differences in unmet need for help between groups**

- Those under 55 were less likely than older people to say there was no other help they needed, and more likely to mention financial help to pay for essentials
- 11% of private renters said they needed financial help to pay for essentials, compared with 6% of social renters and just 2% of owner-occupiers
- Those with a limiting physical or mental health condition were more likely than those without to say they needed: financial help to pay for essential (8% vs. 3%); help with a health condition unrelated to COVID (7% vs. 2%); and help with their mental health (7% vs. <1%).

# Many people are providing help to others – 77% are checking in to make sure people are OK, and half have done food shopping for others (54%) or donated food (50%)

*In the last month, have you or anyone else in your household provided any of the following kinds of help to other people, outside your household?*





# GENERAL WELLBEING

# 6

## Key findings

THE MEAN HAPPINESS SCORE WAS SIMILAR IN DECEMBER AND MAY (BOTH WERE LOWER THAN ONS's FIGURE FOR SCOTLAND IN 2019).

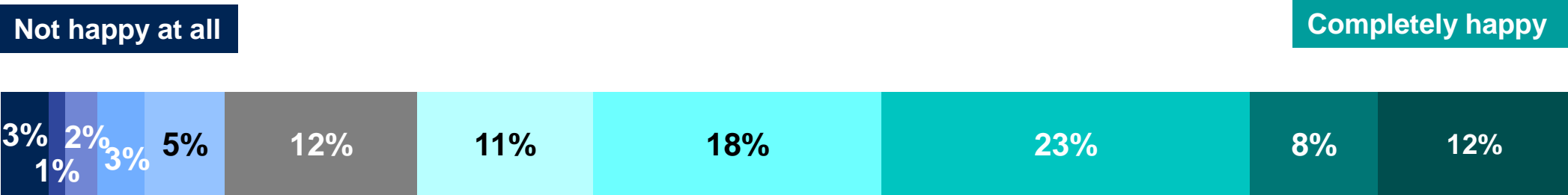
AVERAGE REPORTED ANXIETY LEVELS AND LONELINESS WERE LOWER IN DECEMBER THAN IN MAY.

MAJOR WORRIES CONTINUED TO BE OTHER PEOPLE OR THEMSELVES BECOMING SERIOUSLY ILL WITH COVID – THOUGH SLIGHTLY FEWER WORRIED ABOUT THIS THAN IN MAY.

# The mean ‘happiness’ score on a scale of 0-10 was 6.7

This is very similar to May (6.6), but lower than ONS’s estimate of happiness in Scotland in the year up to March 2020 (7.4)<sup>1</sup>

Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday, on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is not at all happy and 10 is completely happy?



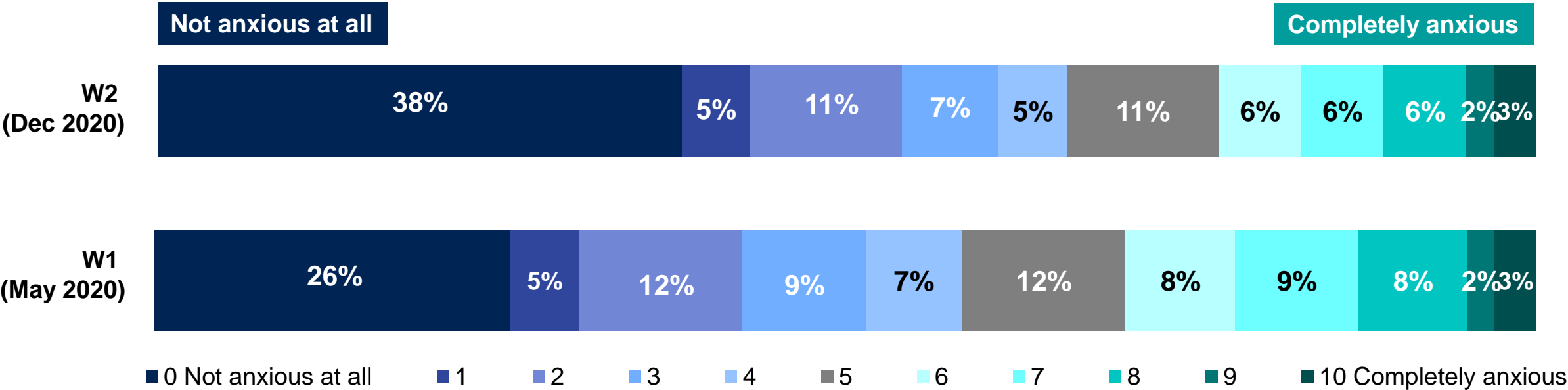
Base: W2 (1,004) All

W2 (Dec) mean score: 6.7  
W1 (May) mean score: 6.6

1 - <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/datasets/headlineestimatesofpersonalwellbeing>

# Average anxiety levels were lower in December compared with May

Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday, on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is not at all anxious and 10 is completely anxious?



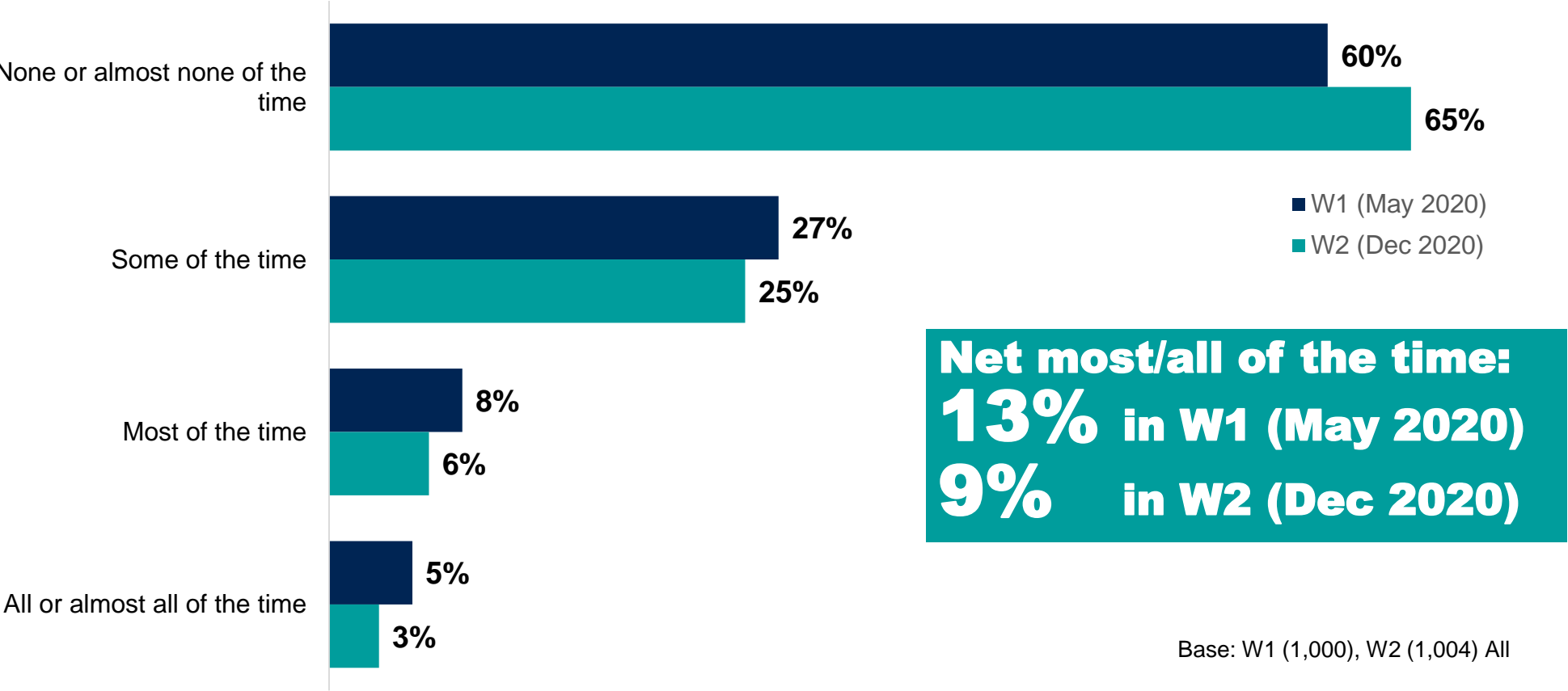
W1 mean score: 3.6  
W2 mean score: 3.0

Base: W1 (1,000), W2 (1,004) All

# The proportion saying they felt lonely at least some of the time was also lower in December compared with May

34% said they felt lonely at least some of the time, compared with 40% in May

How much of the time during the last week have you felt lonely?



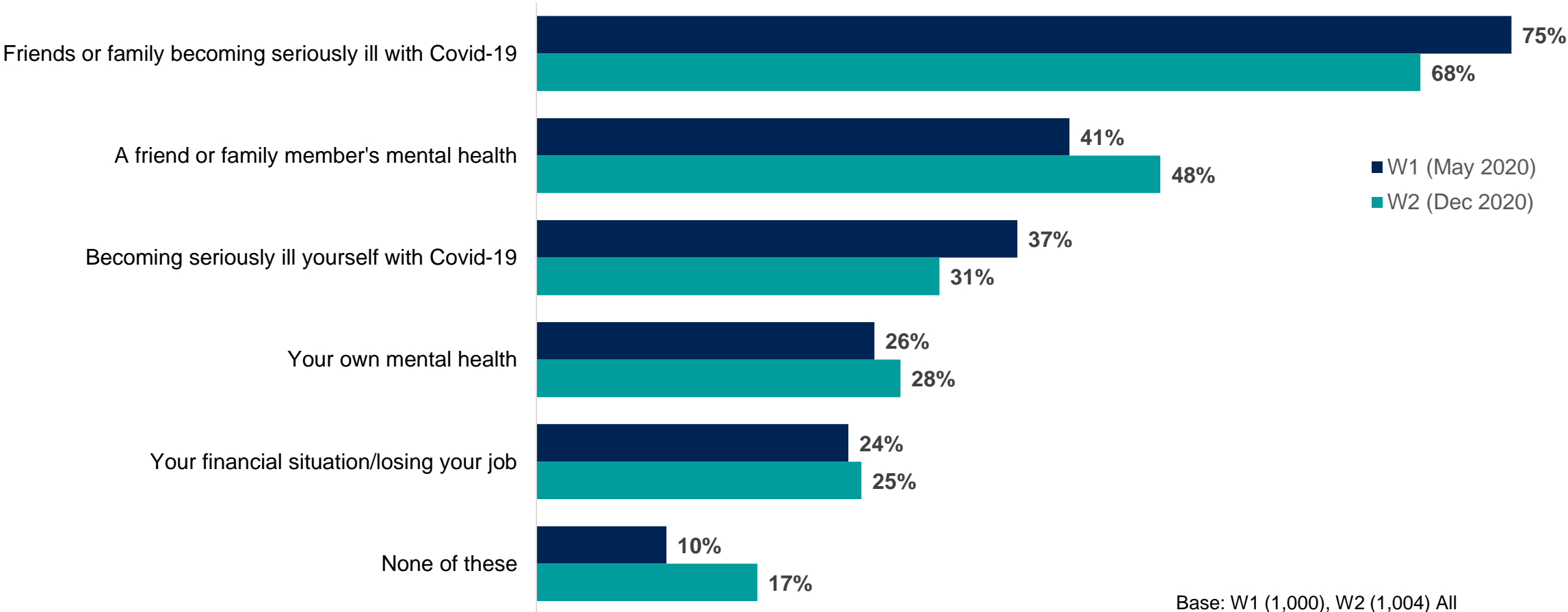
# Anxiety and loneliness are not evenly distributed

- Mean anxiety (3.0 overall) was higher among:
  - women (3.4 vs. 2.5 of men)
  - younger people (3.7 among 16-24 year-olds, 3.4 among 25-34 year-olds, 3.0 among 35-54 year-olds, 2.5 among those 55 or older)
  - those who have been furloughed (3.7) or who have lost their job or experienced a pay cut / cut in hours (3.6) since March
  - those on lower incomes (3.8 among those with incomes under £15,600, compared with 2.4 for those with incomes of £52,000 or more)
  - those in more deprived areas (3.9 among those in SIMD 1, compared with 2.3-3.1 in SIMD 2-5)
  - those with a limiting health condition (4.7, vs 2.5 among those without).
- Loneliness was also higher among younger people, those on lower incomes, those in more deprived areas, and those with a limiting health condition.

# People’s major worries continued to be the physical and mental health of family and friends

Compared with May, fewer were worried about either themselves or their family/friends becoming seriously ill with COVID, but more were concerned about other people’s mental health.

Which, if any, of the following things, are major worries for you at the moment?

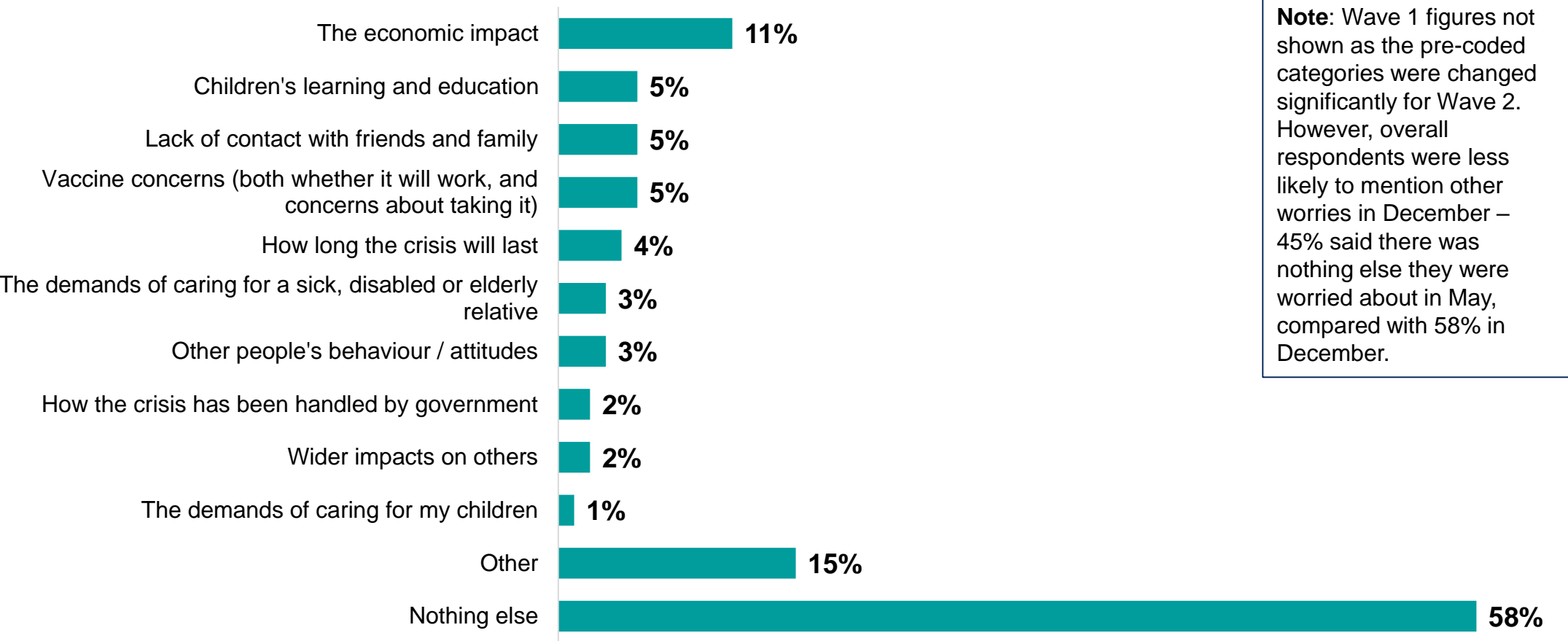


Base: W1 (1,000), W2 (1,004) All



# Other worries included economic impacts, not seeing friends/family, and the needs of children and the vulnerable

Are you seriously worried about anything else in relation to the coronavirus crisis?

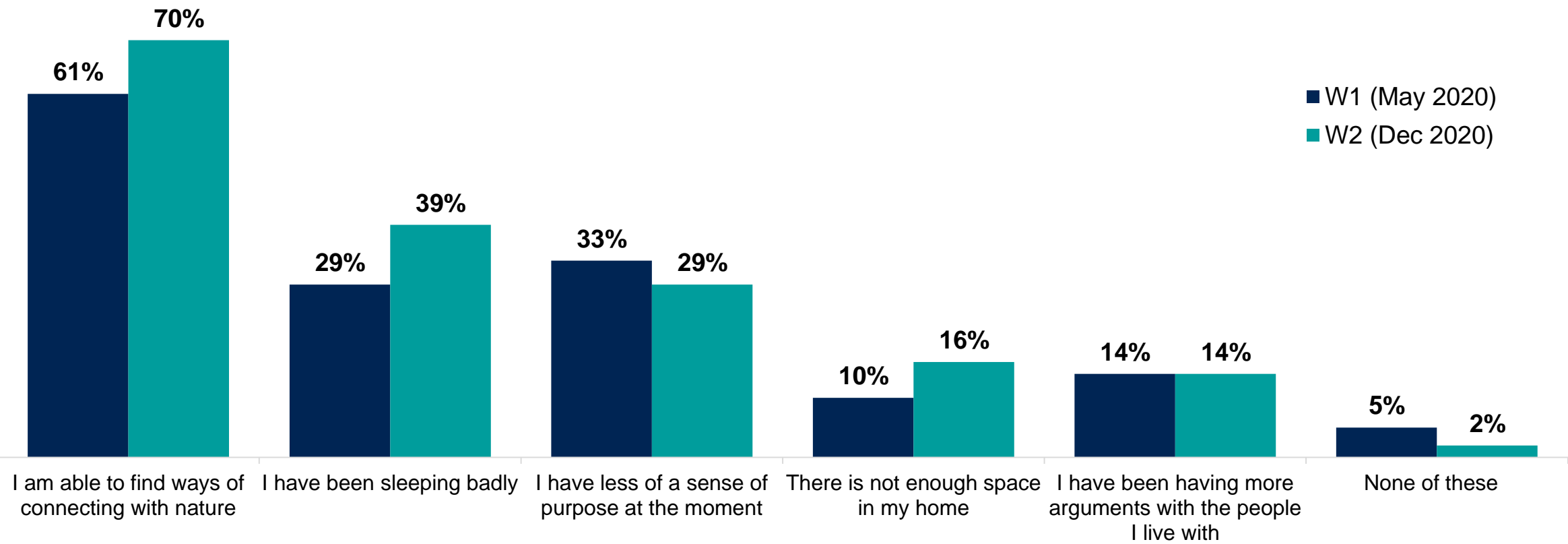


Base: 1,004 All



# More said they were able to connect with nature, but more reported sleeping badly and having inadequate space in their home

Which, if any , of the following statements apply to you?



Base: W1 (1,000), W2 (1,004) All

# FINANCIAL IMPACTS

# 7

## Key findings

A QUARTER SAID THEIR INCOME WAS LOWER THAN IT HAD BEEN AT THE START OF MARCH (DOWN FROM A THIRD WHO SAID THIS IN MAY).

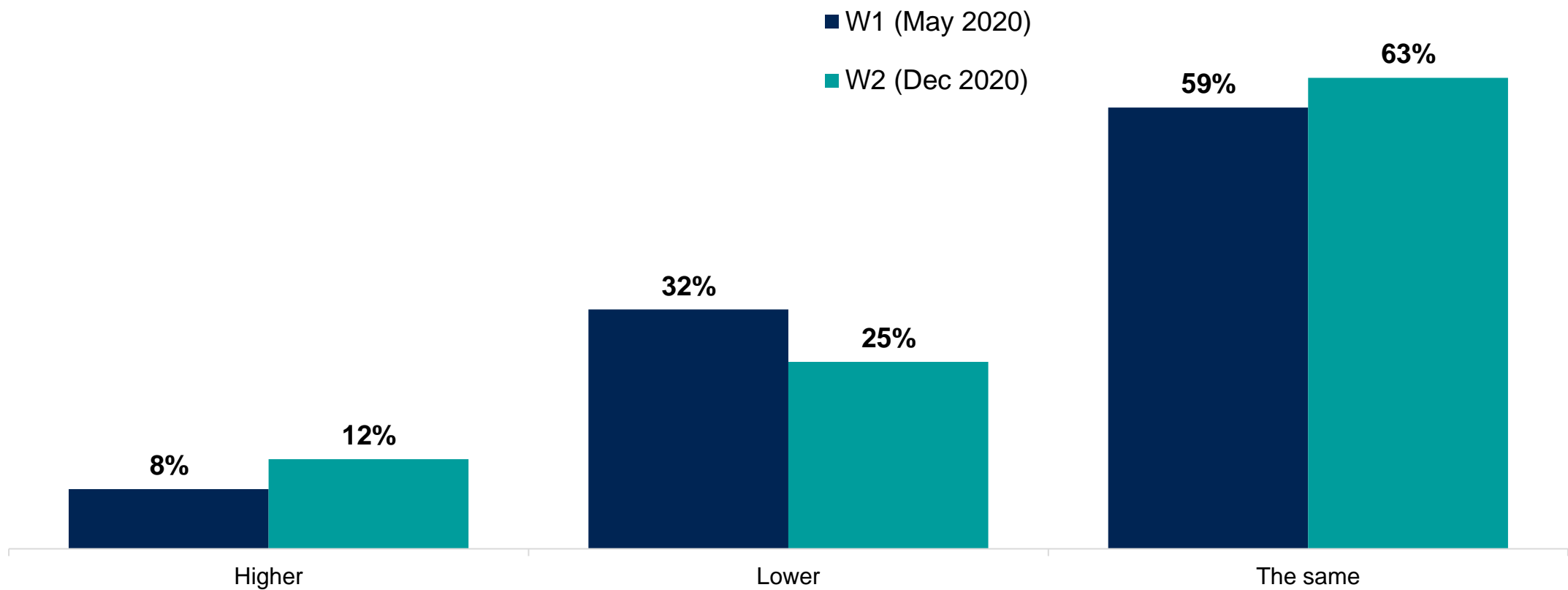
AROUND 1 IN 5 (SIMILAR TO MAY) REPORTED DIFFICULTIES ACCESSING OR PAYING FOR ESSENTIALS.

YOUNGER PEOPLE, THOSE ON LOWER INCOMES OR IN DEPRIVED AREAS, RENTERS, AND PEOPLE WITH LIMITING CONDITIONS WERE ALL PARTICULARLY LIKELY TO REPORT DIFFICULTIES.

# A quarter said their income was lower in December than at the start of March, compared to a third who said this in May

12% said their income was higher than it was in March

Compared to the start of March, is your total household income now higher, lower or about the same as usual?

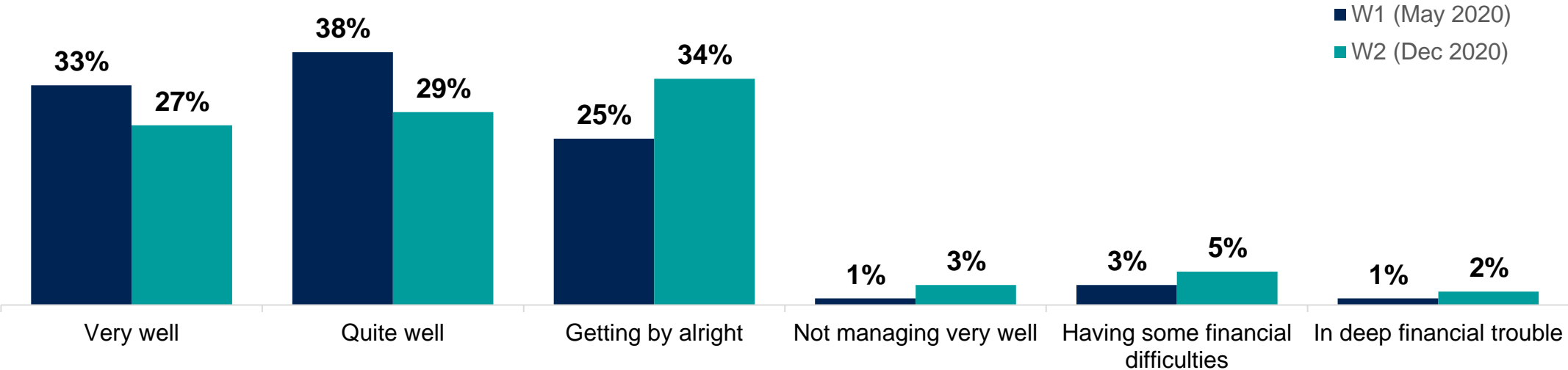


# Around 1 in 10 say they were not managing well financially, while 34% said they were ‘getting by alright’

Fewer said they were managing well compared with the proportion who reported (retrospectively) that they had been managing well before the March lockdown (57%, compared with 71%)

Wave 1: Thinking back to the start of March this year, before the Coronavirus lockdown, which of the following best describes how you and your household were managing financially?

Wave 2: How well would you say you are managing financially these days?

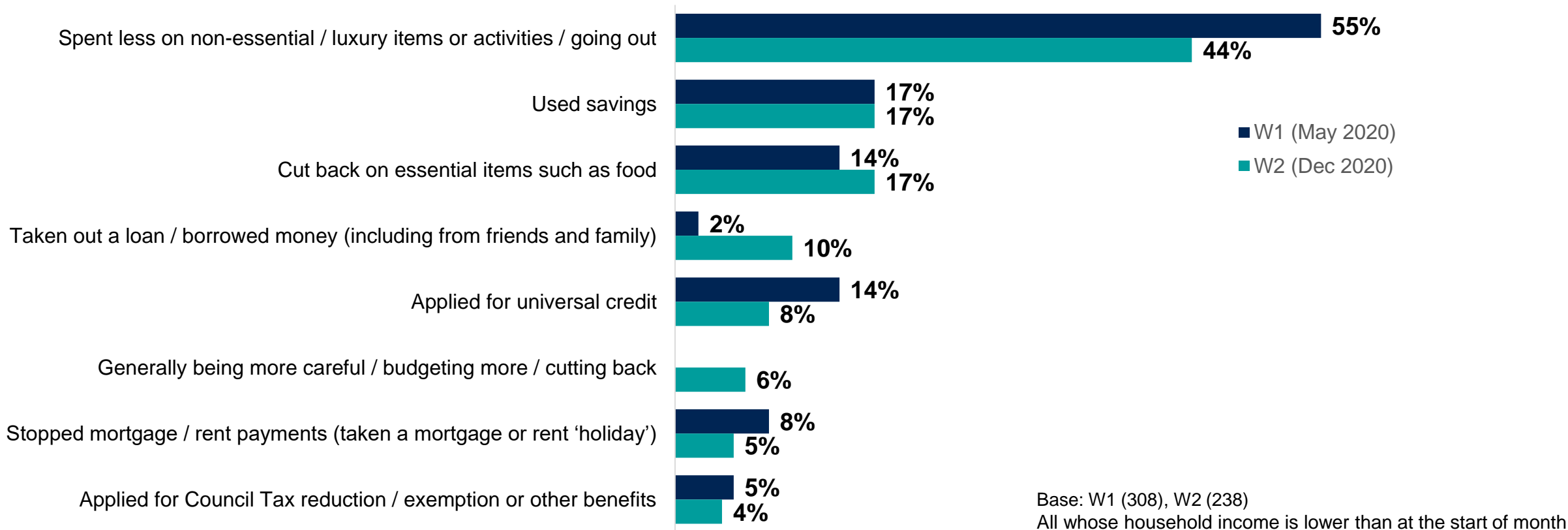


Base: W1 (1,000), W2 (1,004) All

# The most common action to manage on a lower income was to spend less on non-essential items/going out (though this was less common in December than May)

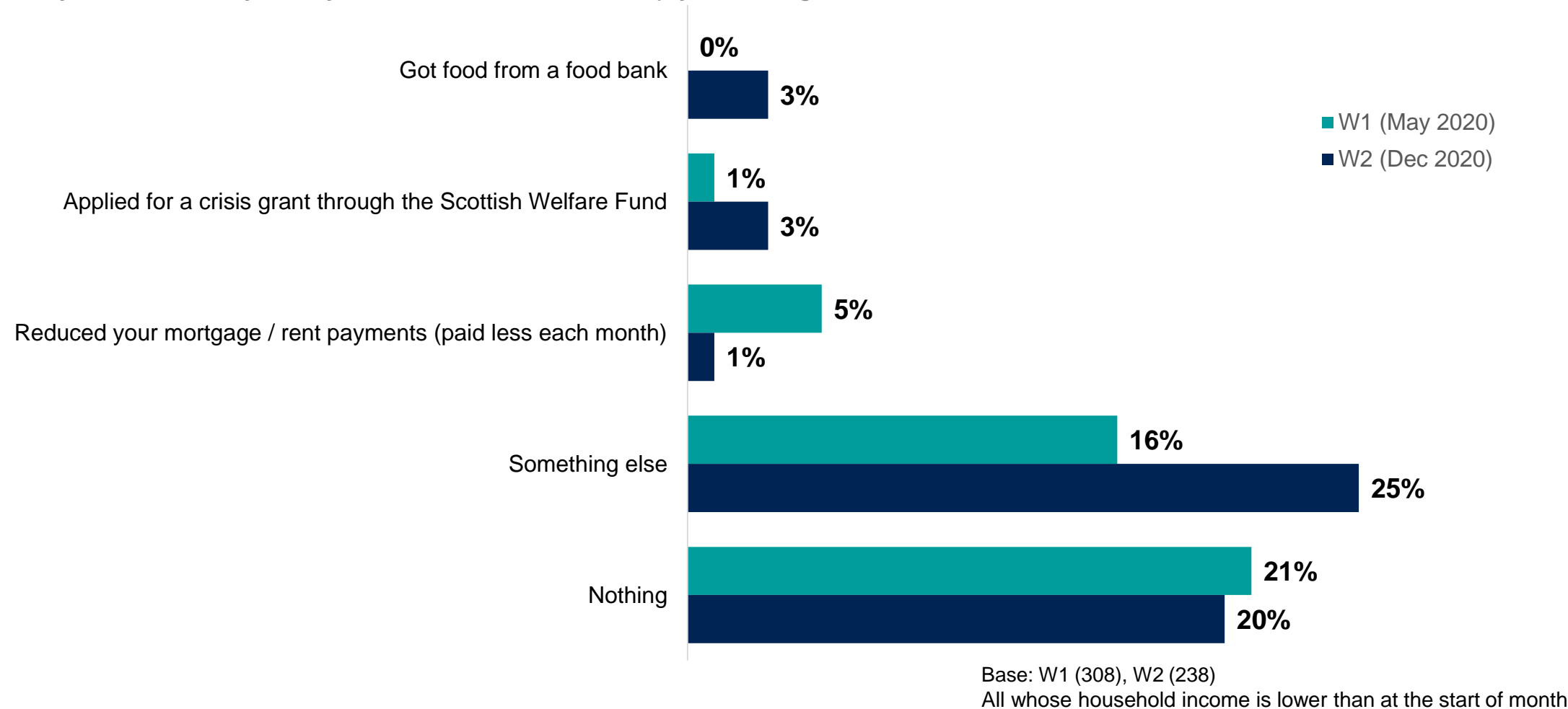
More said they had taken out a loan/borrowed money in December compared with May

What, if any, actions have you or your household taken to help you manage with a lower income?



# Other actions taken to manage with a lower income

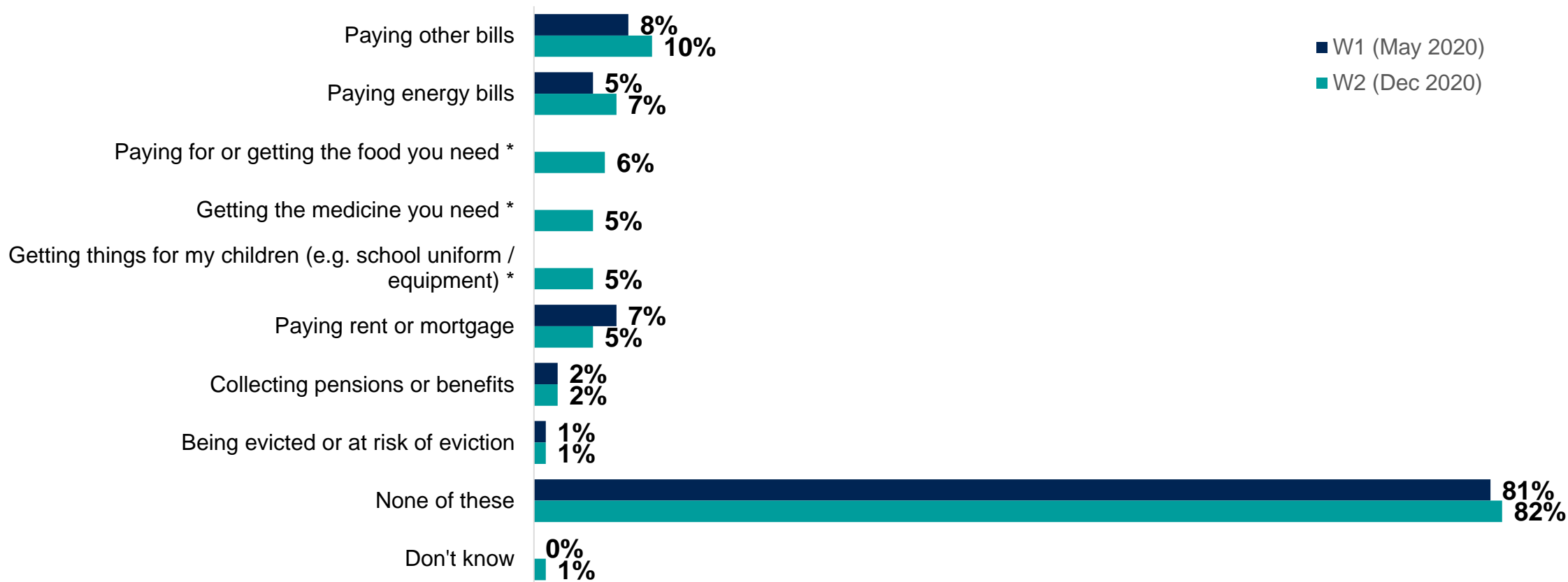
What, if any, actions have you or your household taken to help you manage with a lower income?



# Around 18% of people reported difficulties paying bills or accessing essentials (similar to May)

7% were experiencing difficulties paying energy bills and 10% difficulties paying other bills

Are you experiencing difficulties with any of the following things at the moment?



\*not asked in Wave 1. 'Getting the food and medicine you need' was asked as one category in Wave 1, with 10% reporting they were having difficulties with this.

Base: W1 (1,000), W2 (1,004) All



# Key subgroup differences

- Those on highest incomes were most likely to say that their income had *increased* since March – 20% of those on household incomes of £52,000 or more said their income was higher than usual compared with the start of March 2020, compared with 12% overall.
- People living in the most deprived areas of Scotland were more likely to say their income was lower – 34% of those in SIMD 1 areas, compared with 20% of those in SIMD 5 areas.
- The self-employed stand out as being particularly likely to say their income was lower – 56% (compared with 25% overall).\*
- Among those who had lost their job or experienced cuts to their hours or pay since the start of the pandemic, 66% said their income was lower in December than it had been at the start of March – indicating that for most of this group the impacts on their income were ongoing.

\* The base size for the self-employed was low (n = 63), so while this difference is significant some caution should be applied in extrapolating from the exact figures.

# Key subgroup differences

- A number of groups stood out as particularly more likely to report difficulties accessing or paying for essentials, including:
  - Younger people – e.g. 13% of 16-24 year-olds and 10% of 25-34 year-olds reported difficulties paying rent or mortgage, compared with 0-4% of older age groups
  - Those on lower incomes – e.g. 21% of those with household incomes under £15,600 reported difficulties paying energy bills, compared with 9% of those with incomes of £15,600-£25,999, 3% of those earning £26,000-£51,999, and none of those in the £52,000+ group
  - Those living in the most deprived areas – e.g. 16% of those in SIMD 1 areas said they had difficulties paying for or getting the food they needed, compared with 5-6% of those in SIMD 2-4 areas, and 1% in SIMD 5.
  - Those who rent rather than own their accommodation (both social and private renters) – e.g. 12% of private renters and 18% of social renters reported difficulties paying energy bills, compared with just 3% of owner occupiers.
  - Those with a limiting health condition – e.g. 15% of those with a limiting condition said they had difficulties paying for or getting the food they needed, compared with 4% of those without any such condition.

# BEHAVIOURS DURING THE CRISIS

# 8

## Key findings

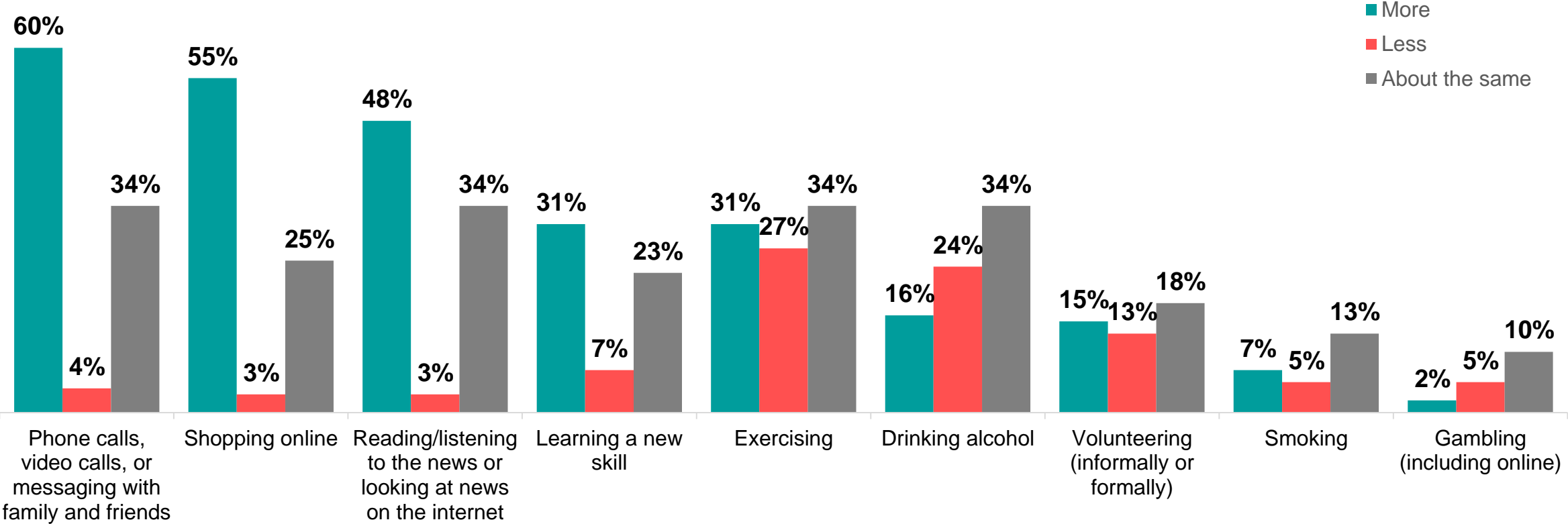
**MANY ASPECTS OF PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOUR HAVE CHANGED SINCE THE CRISIS .**

**HOWEVER, COMPARED WITH MAY FEWER SAID THEY WERE CALLING OR MESSAGING FAMILY AND FRIENDS MORE THAN THEY DID BEFORE THE CRISIS.**

**16% SAID THEY WERE DRINKING MORE THAN PRE-CRISIS – THOUGH THIS FIGURE WAS LOWER THAN IN MAY.**

# Many aspects of people's behaviour have changed compared with before the Coronavirus

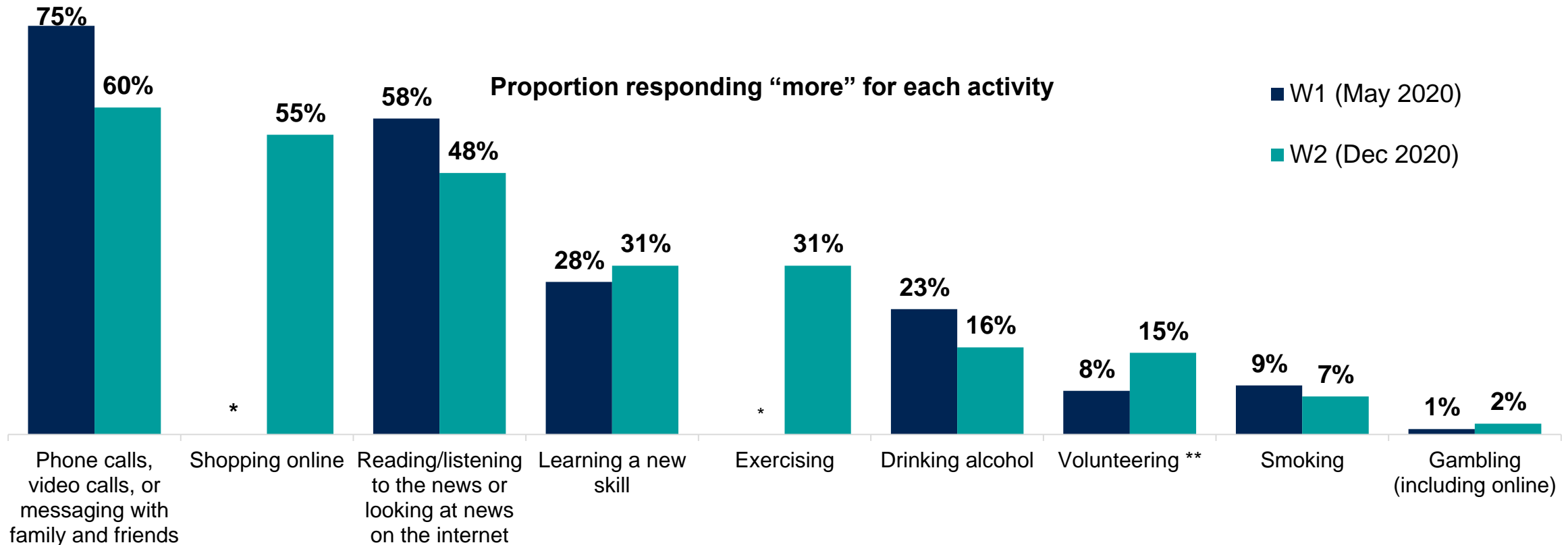
Compared to how often you did them before the Coronavirus outbreak started in the start of March, are you doing the following things more, less, or the same amount these days - or did you not do them anyway?



Note: the % who said they did not do these things anyway is not shown

Base: (1,004) All

# People were less likely than in May to say they were calling/messaging family and friends more, engaging with news more, or drinking alcohol more



\*not asked in Wave 1 \*\* NB in Wave 2, ‘formally or informally’ was added to ‘volunteering’. This could partly explain the increase from wave 1 to wave 2 – people may be including a wider range of informal activities

Base: W1 (1,000), W2 (1,004) All

# THANK YOU.

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