Public perceptions of local policing and the police

Fieldwork: April 2021

Ipsos MORI

Ipsos

Perceptions of how effective local police are have remained largely stable since 2017

In the past 12 months how effective, if at all, do you think the police in your local area have been at each of the following?

- Public opinion on how effective local police are is largely similar to that recorded in 2017.

- People view local police as most effective at providing advice or guidance to the public (42%) and responding when called (39%).

- The public feel local police are least effective in protect people online (23%).
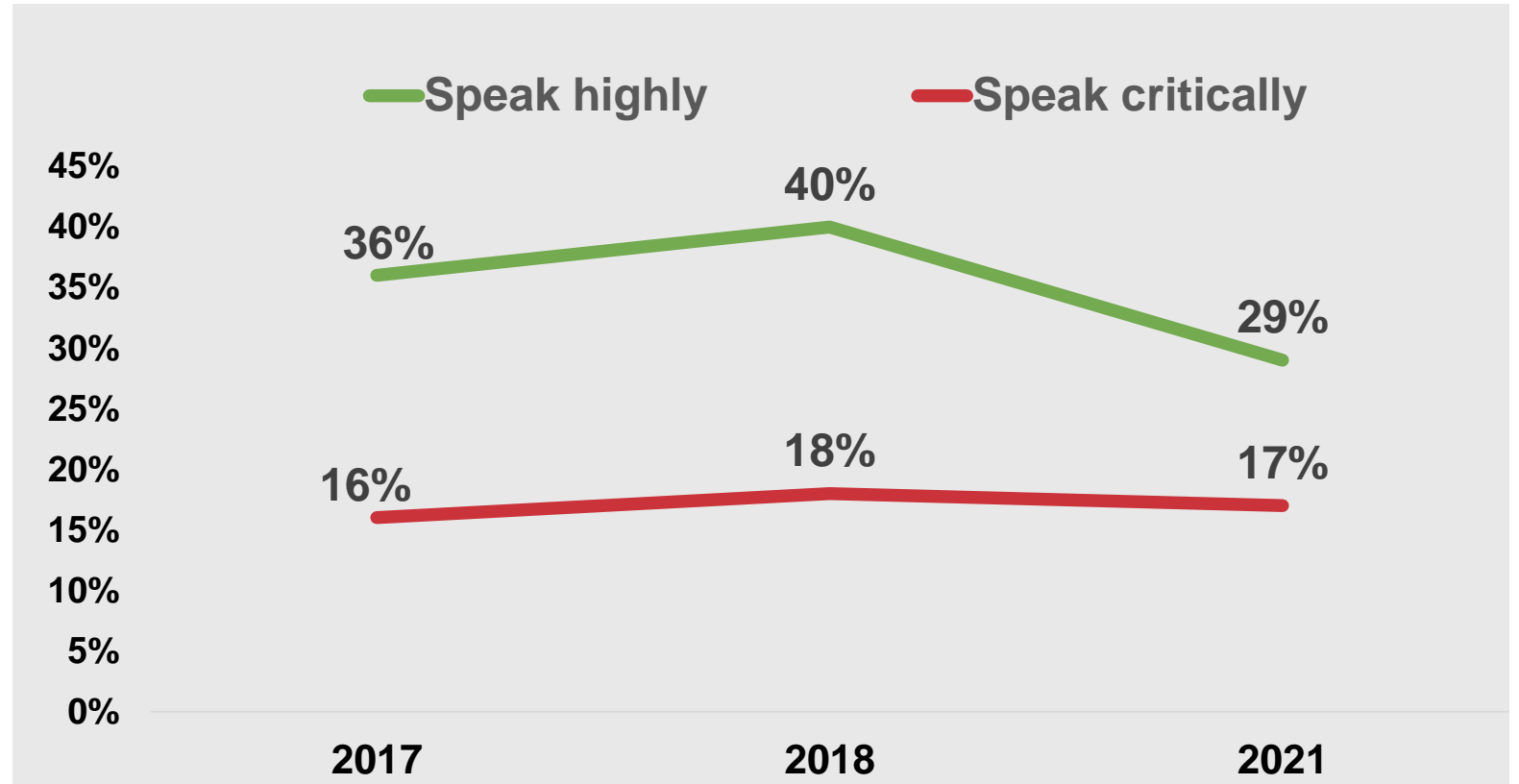
	% Not at all effective	% Not very effective	% Fairly effective	% Very effective	% Effective 2021	% Effective 2017
Providing advice or guidance to the public	17	8	31	11	42%	40%
Responding when a member of the public calls	16	7	28	11	39%	37%
Enforcing coronavirus restrictions	22	13	27	9	36%	N/A
Protecting those at greatest risk of harm	17	7	28	7	36%	35%
Tackling anti-social behaviour	24	12	27	7	35%	36%
Reducing crime	24	9	27	7	34%	34%
Investigating offending	20	7	27	6	34%	34%
Preventing offending	23	9	25	7	32%	29%
Protecting those who are online	19	10	17	5	23%	21%

■ % Not at all effective   ■ % Not very effective   ■ % Fairly effective   ■ % Very effective

Source: Ipsos MORI

Base: All respondents; 2021 (1,095), 2017 (12,662)

Ipsos MORI

Three in ten say they would speak highly of local police – which has fallen over the last three years

Thinking now about the police in your local area, which of these phrases best describes the way you would speak about them to other people?

- The proportion of respondents who would speak highly of the police has dropped since last measured in 2018.

- The proportion who would speak critically of local police, however, has remained stable.
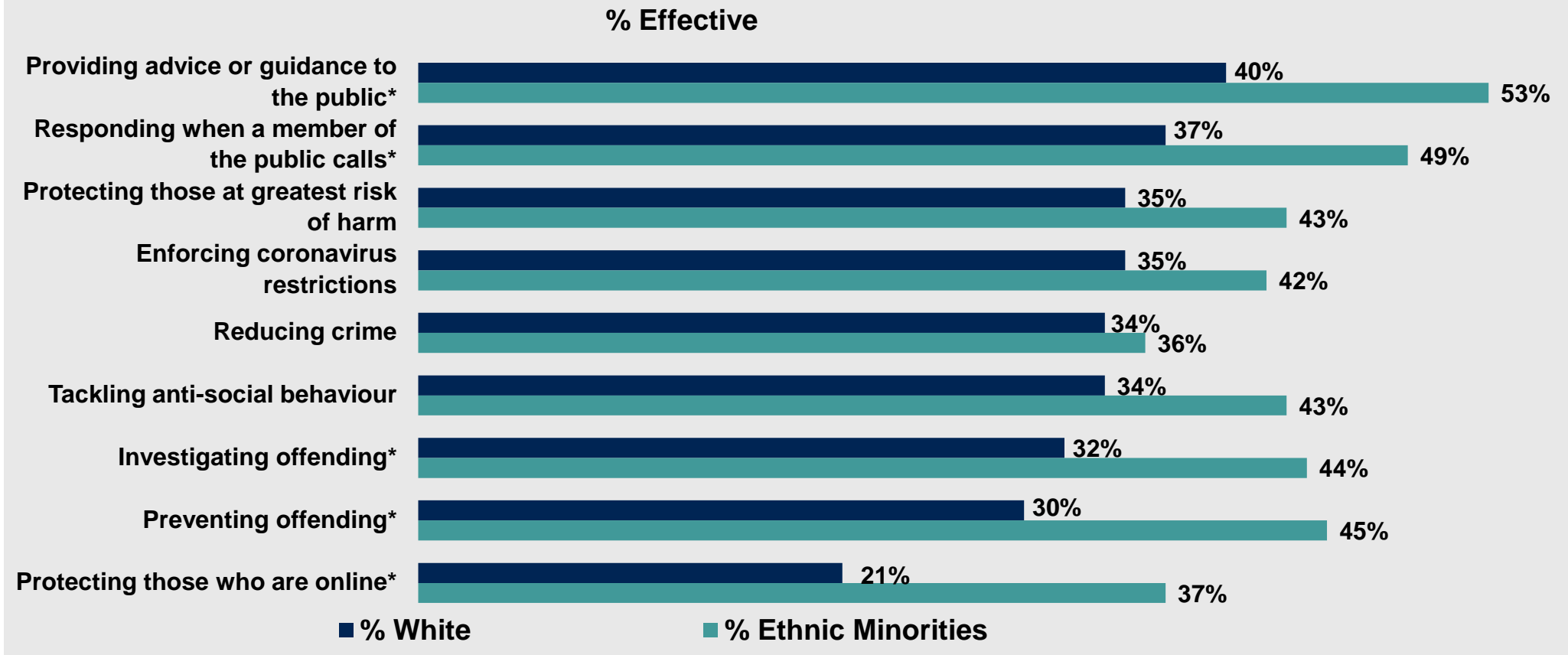

— **Speak highly**   — **Speak critically**

	2017	2018	2021
Speak highly	36%	40%	29%
Speak critically	16%	18%	17%

45%
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%

Ipsos MORI

Ethnic minorities are more positive about how effective local police are in some areas of policing than White people

In the past 12 months how effective, if at all, do you think the police in your local area have been at each of the following?
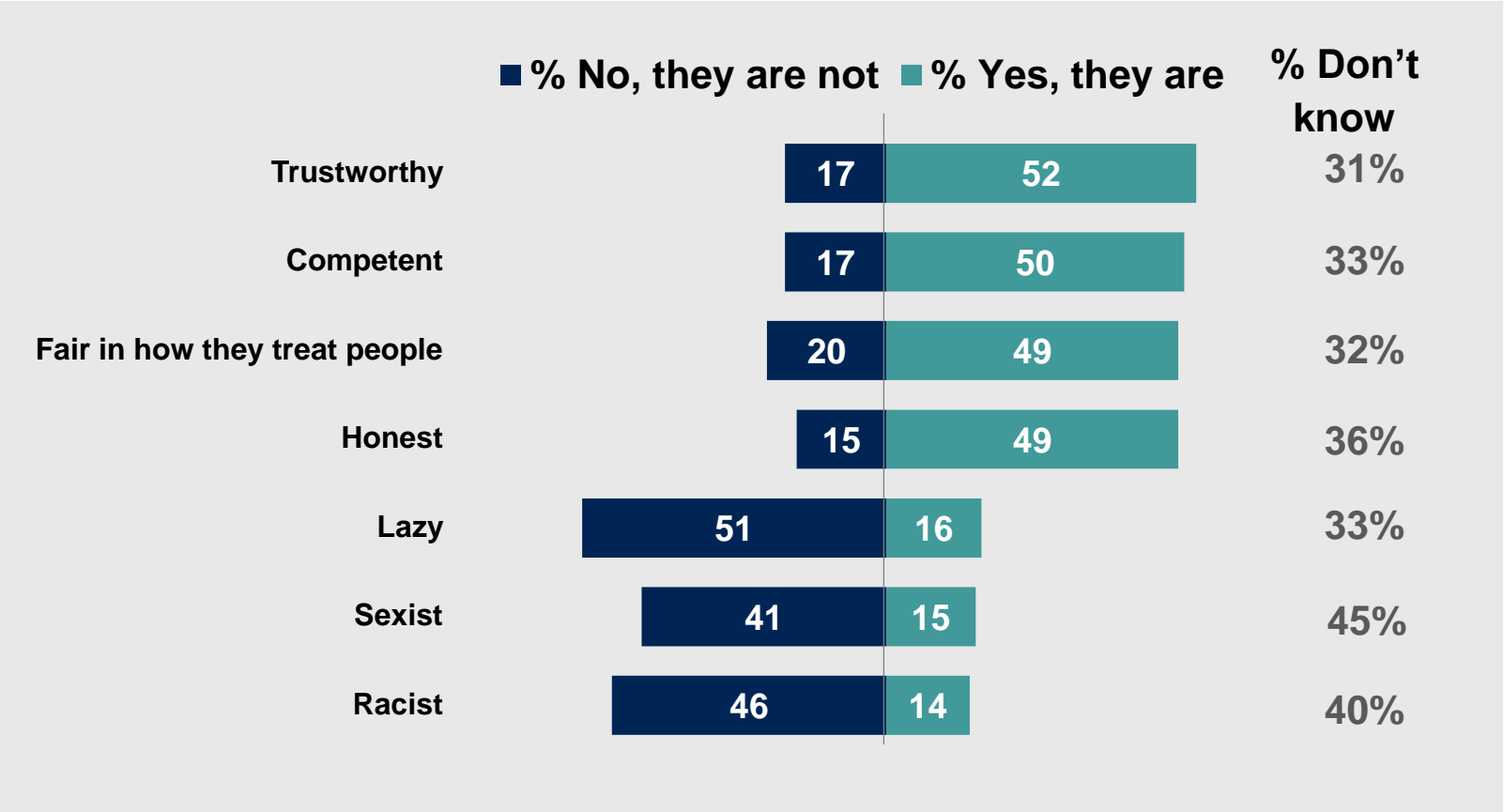
% Effective

Category	% White	% Ethnic Minorities
Providing advice or guidance to the public*	40%	53%
Responding when a member of the public calls*	37%	49%
Protecting those at greatest risk of harm	35%	43%
Enforcing coronavirus restrictions	35%	42%
Reducing crime	34%	36%
Tackling anti-social behaviour	34%	43%
Investigating offending*	32%	44%
Preventing offending*	30%	45%
Protecting those who are online*	21%	37%

■ **% White**　　　　■ **% Ethnic Minorities**

Statistically significant difference

Ipsos MORI

Overall, the public are fairly positive about the characteristics police officers may have

Here is a list of characteristics that a police officer may have. Thinking about the police in your area, please indicate whether you think that, on the whole, they are or are not…?

- Generally, respondents are more likely to see police officers as having more positive, rather than negative, attributes.

- Roughly half of respondents say that police officers are trustworthy, competent, fair in how they treat people, or honest.

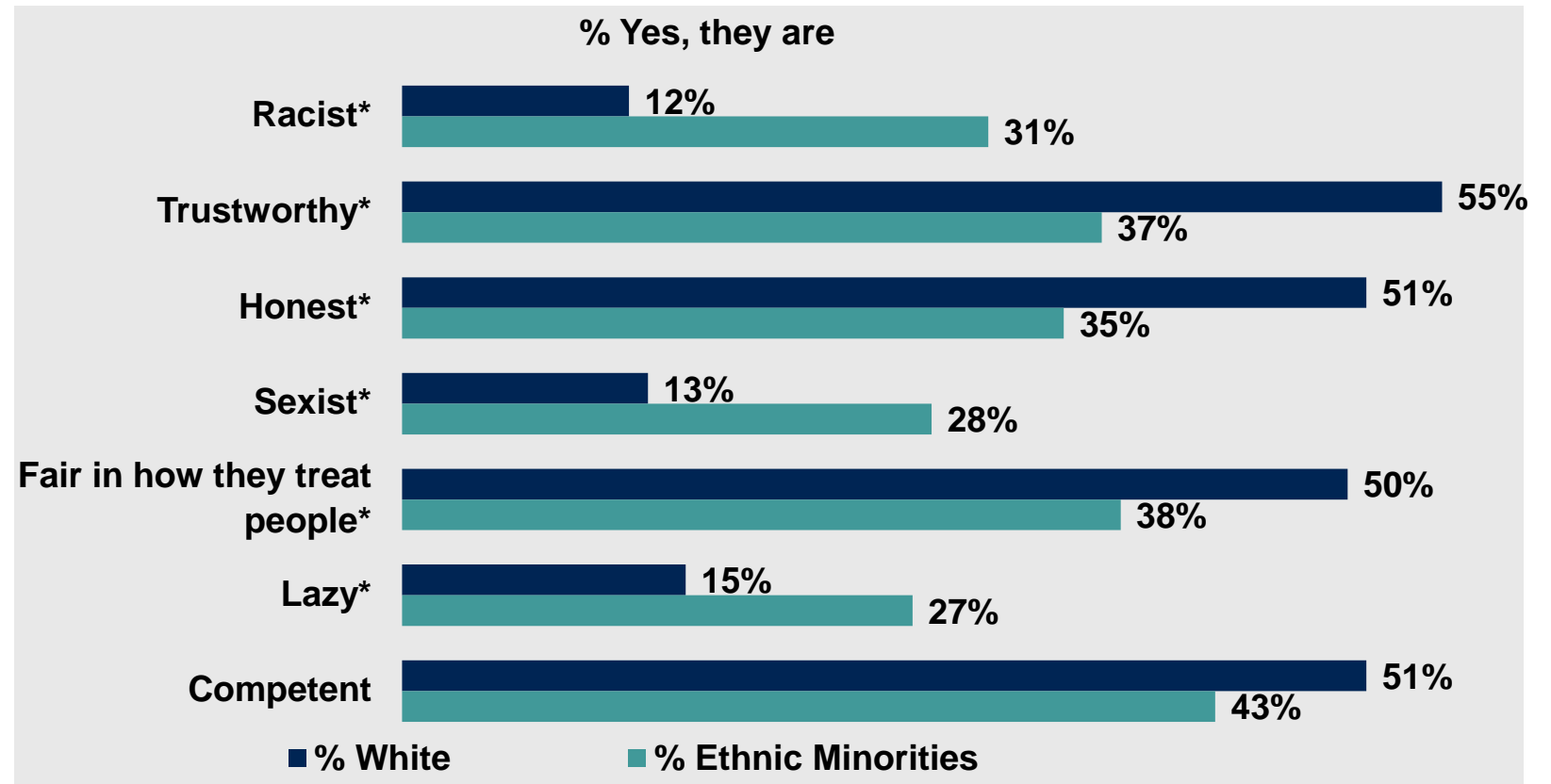- Around one in six think police officers are lazy, sexist or racist.

■ **% No, they are not**   ■ **% Yes, they are**   **% Don't know**

	% No, they are not	% Yes, they are	% Don't know
Trustworthy	17	52	31%
Competent	17	50	33%
Fair in how they treat people	20	49	32%
Honest	15	49	36%
Lazy	51	16	33%
Sexist	41	15	45%
Racist	46	14	40%

Source: Ipsos MORI 2021

Base: All respondents; (1,095)

Ipsos MORI

Ethnic minorities are more likely to say police officers are racist and are more negative about them on other attributes

Here is a list of characteristics that a police officer may have. Thinking about the police in your area, please indicate whether you think that, on the whole, they are or are not…?

- Three in ten (31%) ethnic minorities think that police officers are racist, compared with just 12% of White people.

- White people hold more positive views of police officers; half or more think they are trustworthy, honest, fair in how they treat people, and competent. This is lower among ethnic minority respondents.

% Yes, they are

Attribute	% White	% Ethnic Minorities
Racist*	12%	31%
Trustworthy*	55%	37%
Honest*	51%	35%
Sexist*	13%	28%
Fair in how they treat people*	50%	38%
Lazy*	15%	27%
Competent	51%	43%

■ % White   ■ % Ethnic Minorities

Source: Ipsos MORI 2021

Base: Respondents from White ethnic groups (943), respondents from ethnic minorities (140)

Statistically significant difference

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