



**THE  
POLICY  
INSTITUTE**



# Two years of life under lockdown

For more information, contact:

**Bobby Duffy**

[bobby.duffy@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:bobby.duffy@kcl.ac.uk)

**Gideon Skinner**

[gideon.skinner@ipsos.com](mailto:gideon.skinner@ipsos.com)

**23 March 2022**

**How have people's  
lifestyles and behaviours  
changed since the  
pandemic started?**

An abstract graphic consisting of numerous thin, parallel, wavy lines in a yellow-green color. These lines flow from the right side of the image towards the left, creating a sense of movement and depth. The lines are set against a solid dark blue background.

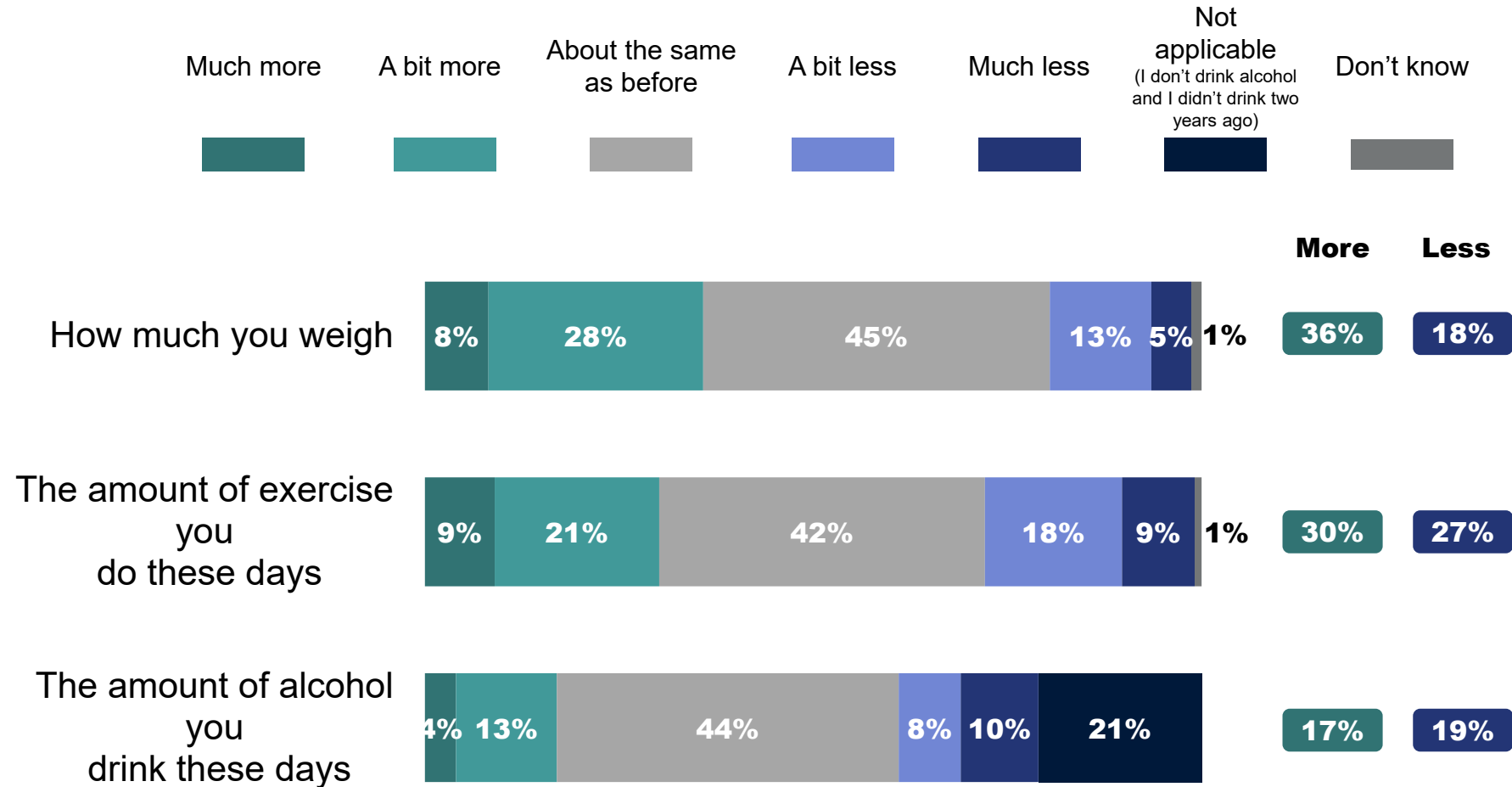


More than a third of people say they weigh more than they did before the pandemic started (36%), although almost a third (30%) say they exercise more.

Alcohol habits are split – a similar proportion of people say their alcohol consumption has increased (17%) than those who say it has decreased (19%).

Overall, close to half of people say their weight, amount of exercise done and alcohol consumption is about the same as it was before the pandemic started.

## For each of the following, would you say they are more or less than they were before the pandemic started, or about the same?

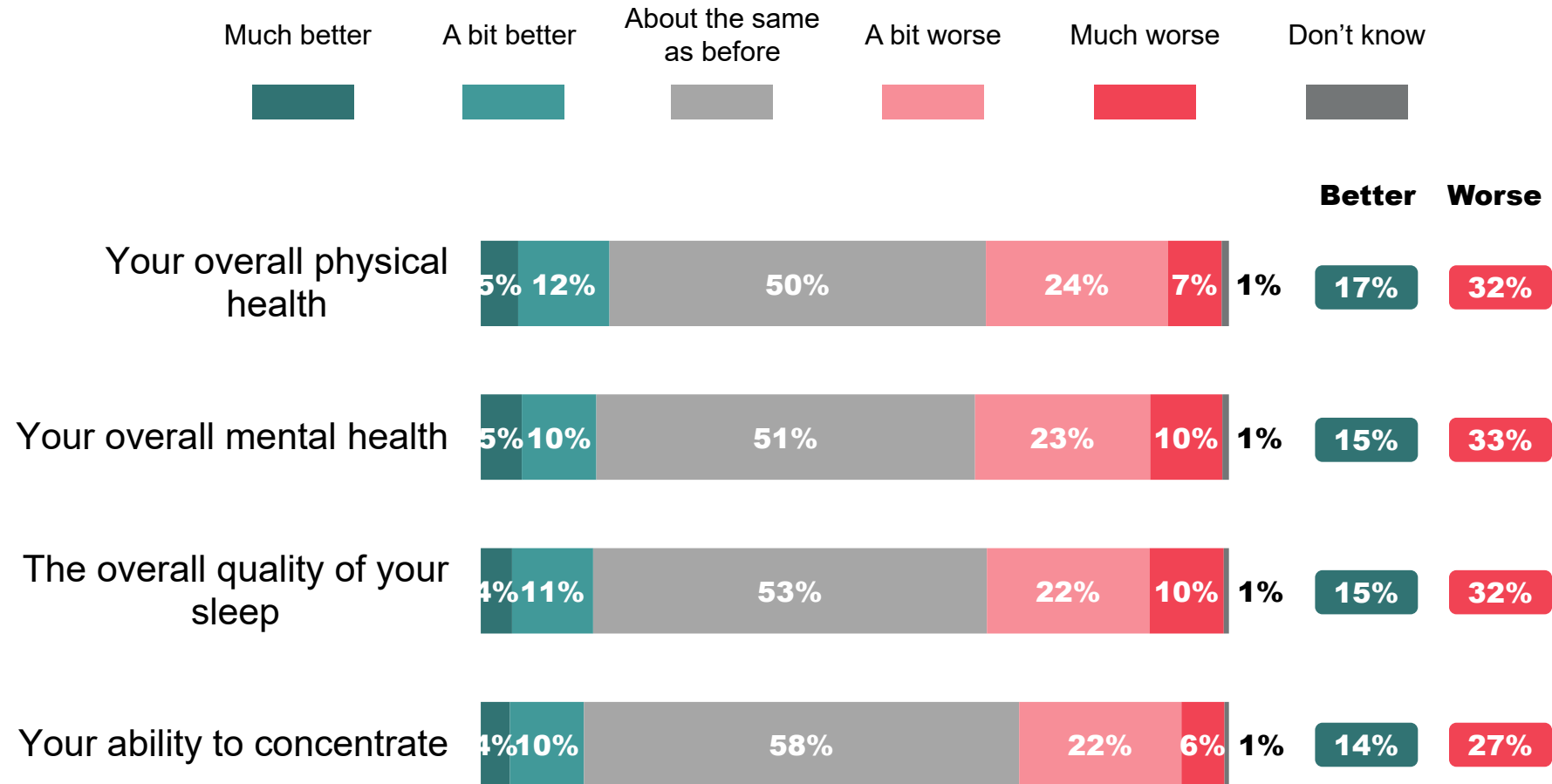


Base: 1,229 UK adults aged 16+, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022

Around half of people say their health, sleep and concentration have remained the same as before the pandemic started.

A third of people (32%) say their overall physical health is worse than before the pandemic started. The same amount of people say their mental health (33%) and quality of sleep (32%) is also worse.

## Would you say that each of the following are better or worse than they were before the pandemic started, or about the same?



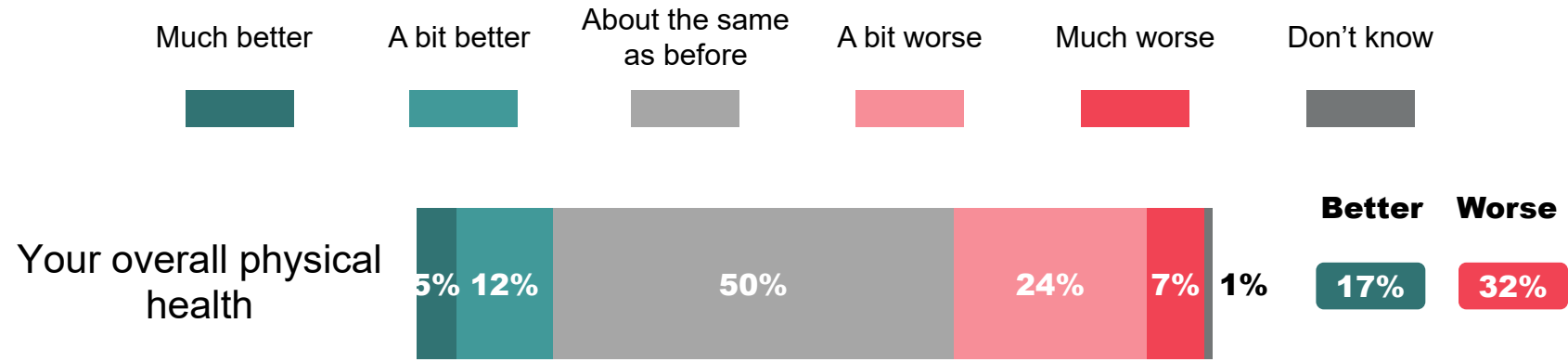
Base: 1,229 UK adults aged 16+, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022

A third of people (32%) say their overall physical health is worse than before the pandemic started, and only 17% say it is better.

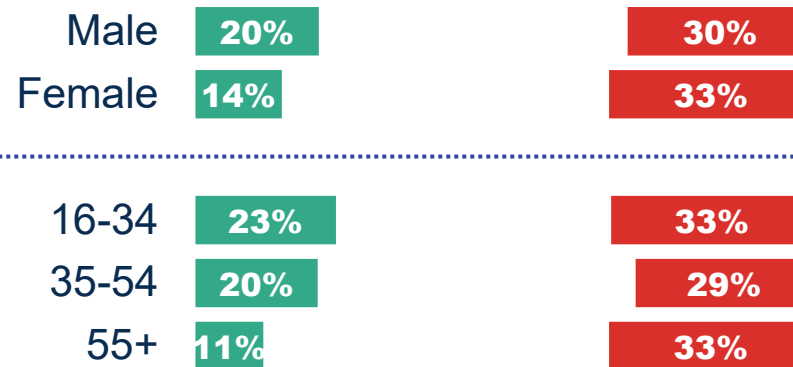
Men are more likely than women to say their overall physical health is now better.

Those over 55 are less likely to say their overall health is now better than those under 55.

## Would you say that each of the following are better or worse than they were before the pandemic started, or about the same?



### % who say their overall physical health is now better or worse



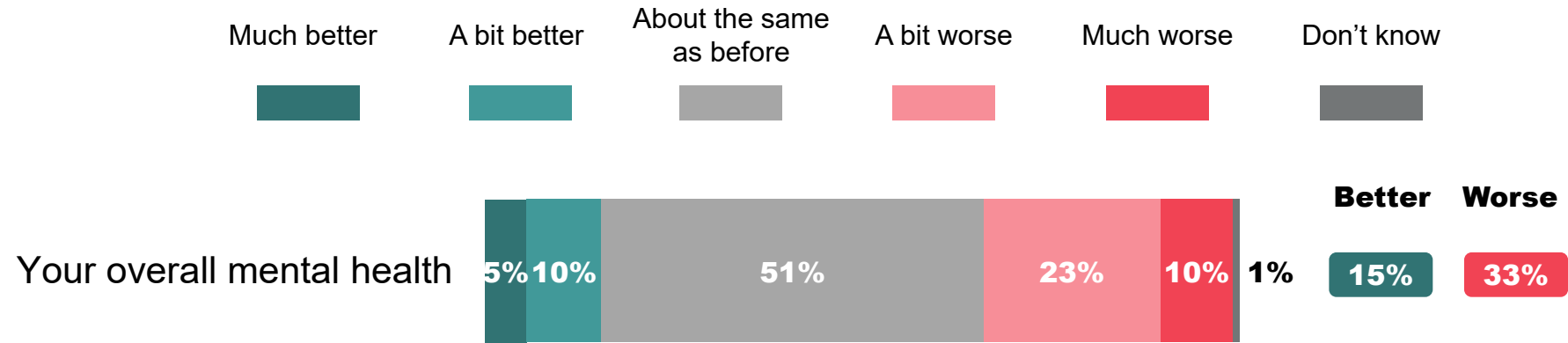
Base: 1,229 UK adults aged 16+, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022

A third of people (33%) say their overall mental health is worse than before the pandemic started.

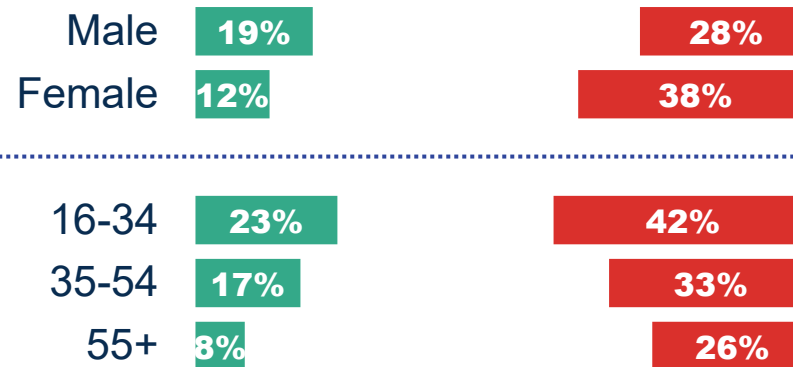
Women are more likely than men to say their overall mental health is now worse.

Those aged 16-34 are more likely to say their overall mental health has changed, both for better (23%) and worse (42%).

## Would you say that each of the following are better or worse than they were before the pandemic started, or about the same?



### % who say their overall mental health is now better or worse

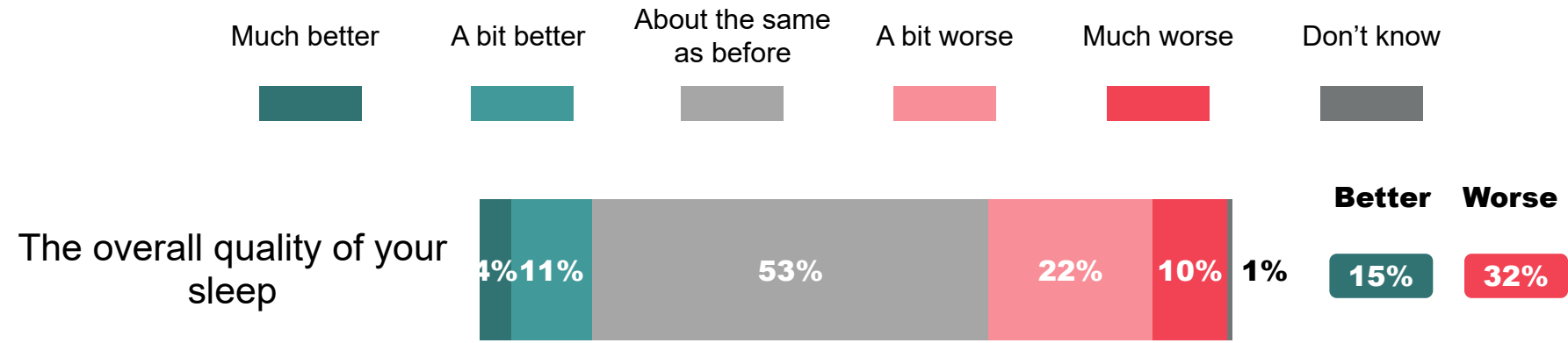


Base: 1,229 UK adults aged 16+, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022

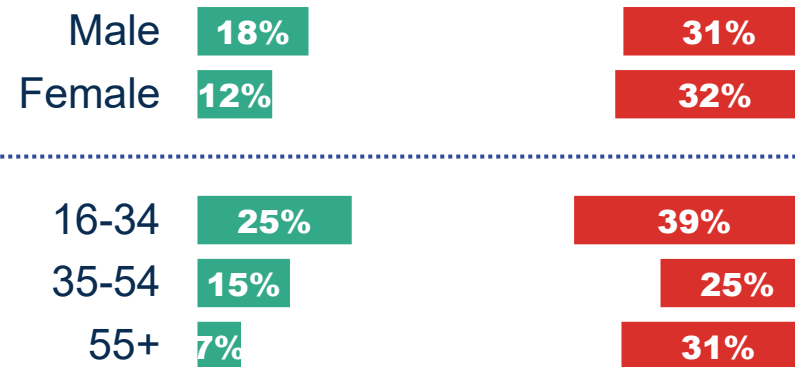
Around a third of people (32%) say their overall quality of sleep is worse than before the pandemic started.

Men and those aged 16-34 are more likely to say the overall quality of their sleep is now better. However, two fifths (39%) of those aged 16-34 also report worse quality of sleep.

## Would you say that each of the following are better or worse than they were before the pandemic started, or about the same?



### % who say the overall quality of their sleep is now better or worse



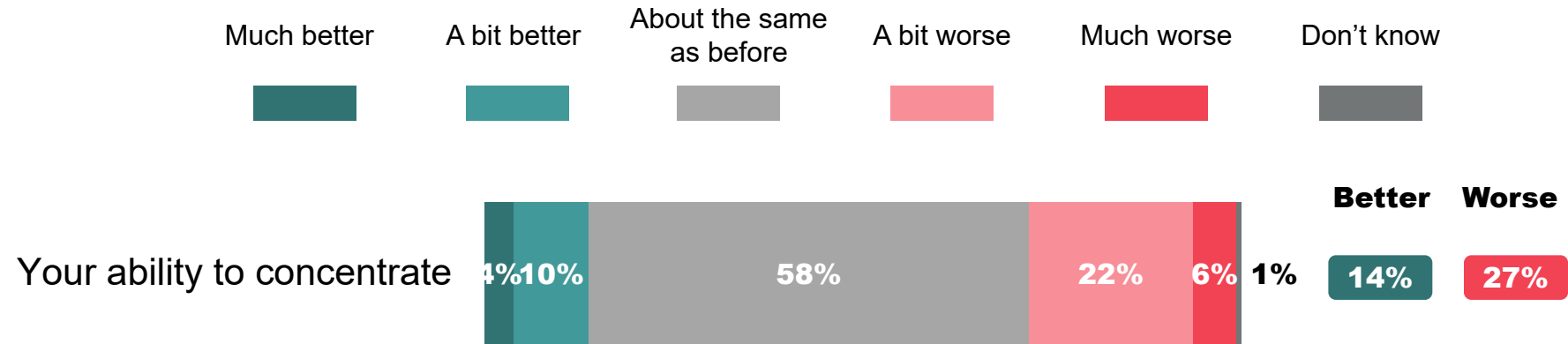
Base: 1,229 UK adults aged 16+, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022

Around a quarter of people (27%) say their ability to concentrate is worse than before the pandemic started.

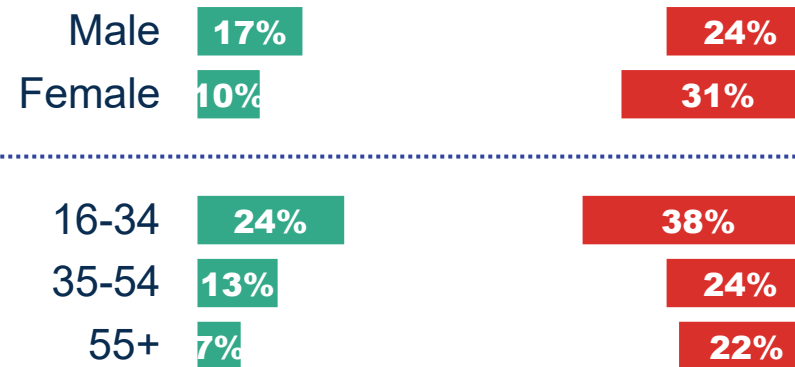
Women are more likely than men to say their overall ability to concentrate is now worse.

Like with other aspects, those aged 16-34 are more likely to say both that their ability to concentrate is better (24%) and worse (38%).

## Would you say that each of the following are better or worse than they were before the pandemic started, or about the same?



### % who say their overall ability to concentrate is now better or worse



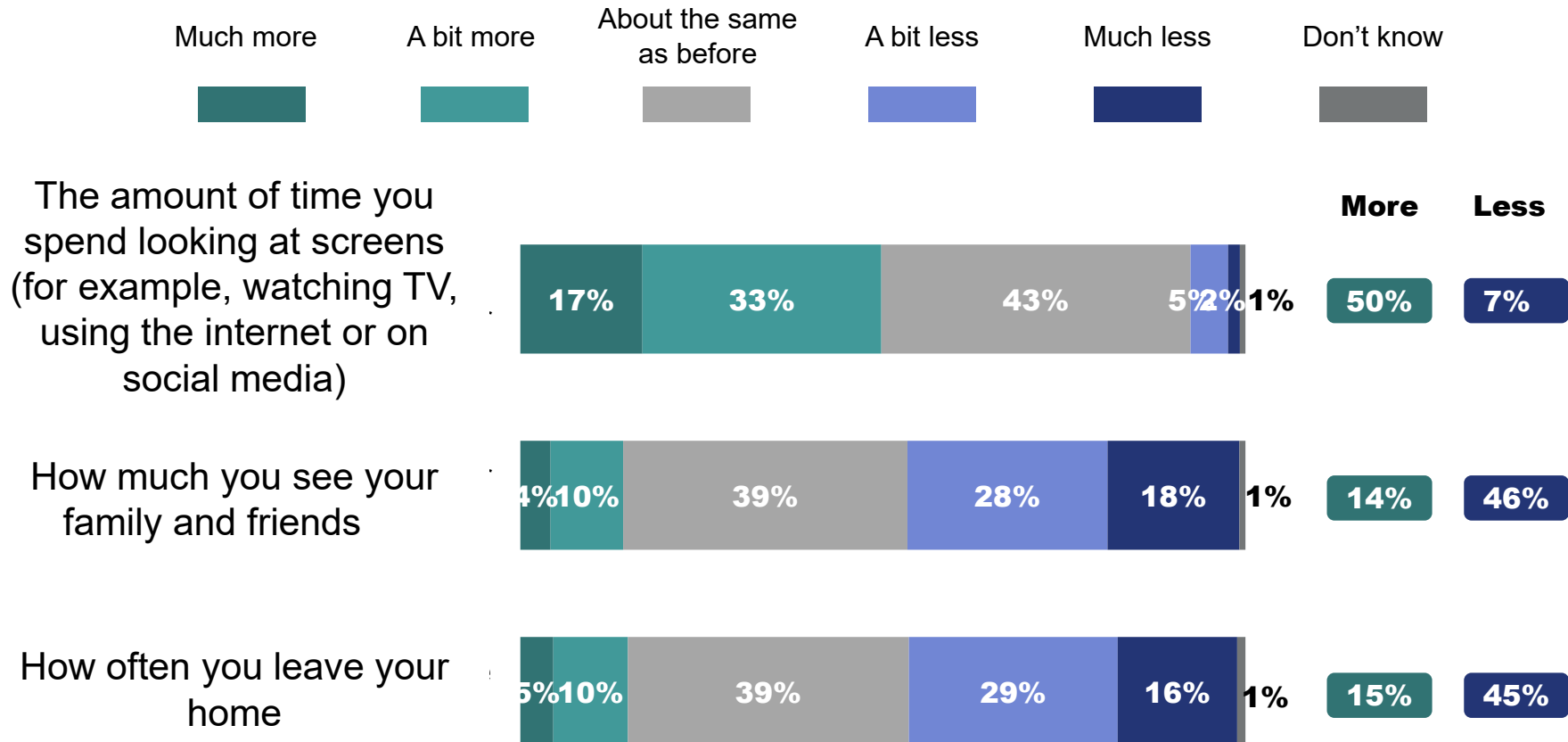
Base: 1,229 UK adults aged 16+, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022



Half say the amount of time they spend looking at screens has increased compared with before the pandemic started. One in six (17%) say their screen time is 'much more' than pre-pandemic.

Conversely, close to half of people say they see their family and friends less (46%) and leave home less (45%) than before the pandemic.

## For each of the following, would you say they are more or less than they were before the pandemic started, or about the same?



Base: 1,229 UK adults aged 16+, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022

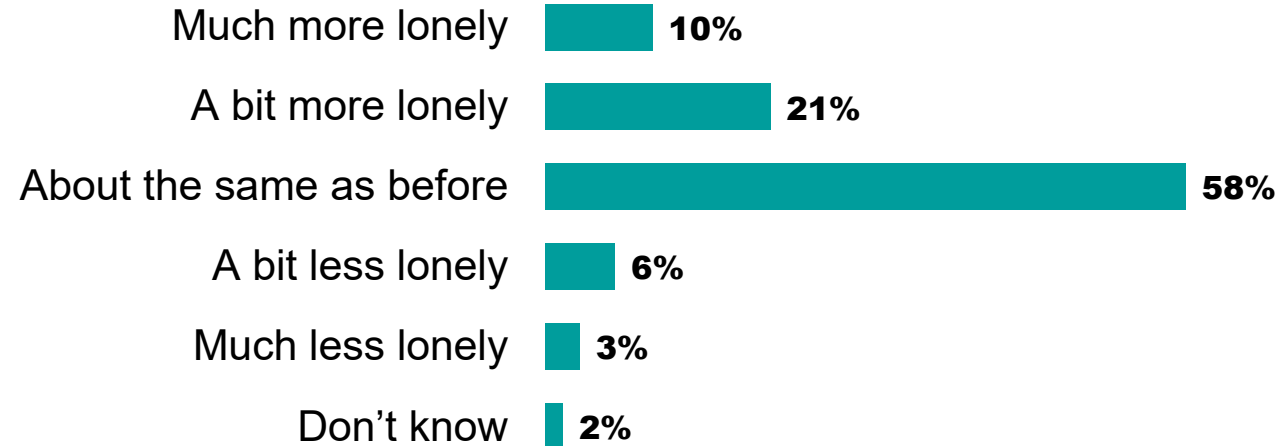
One in ten people say they feel much more lonely than they did before the pandemic started. Three in ten (30%) overall feel more lonely than they did pre-pandemic. However, most people say they feel about the same (58%).

Those who are single (36%) or widowed/divorced/separated (44%) are more likely to feel more lonely than those who are living in couples (24%).

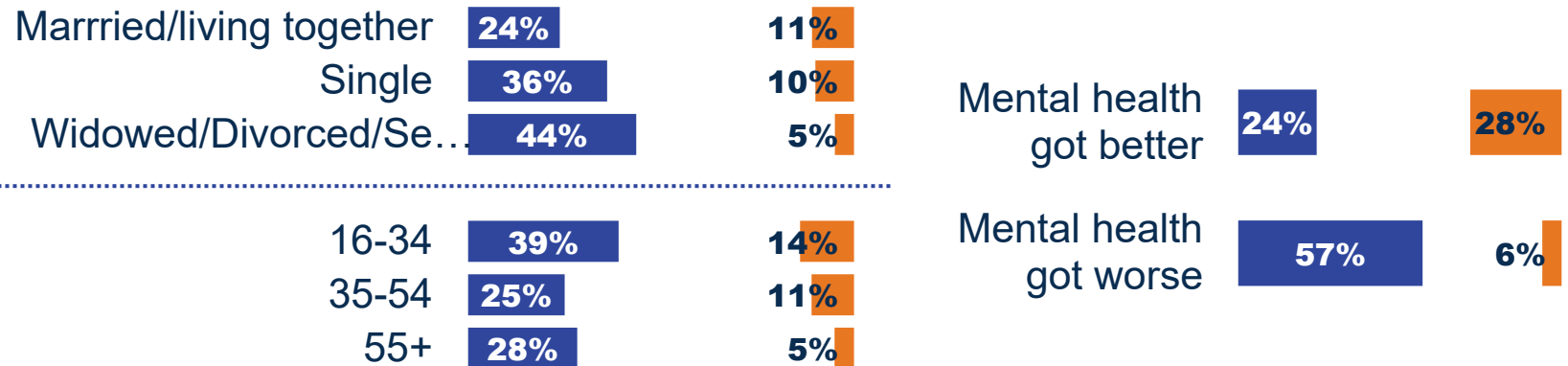
Younger people tend to say they feel more lonely than older people, though they are also more likely to feel less lonely.

There is a clear link between loneliness and mental health, with 57% of those whose mental health has worsened since the pandemic started saying they feel more lonely.

## Would you say that you feel more or less lonely than you did before the pandemic started, or about the same?



### % who say they are now more lonely or less lonely

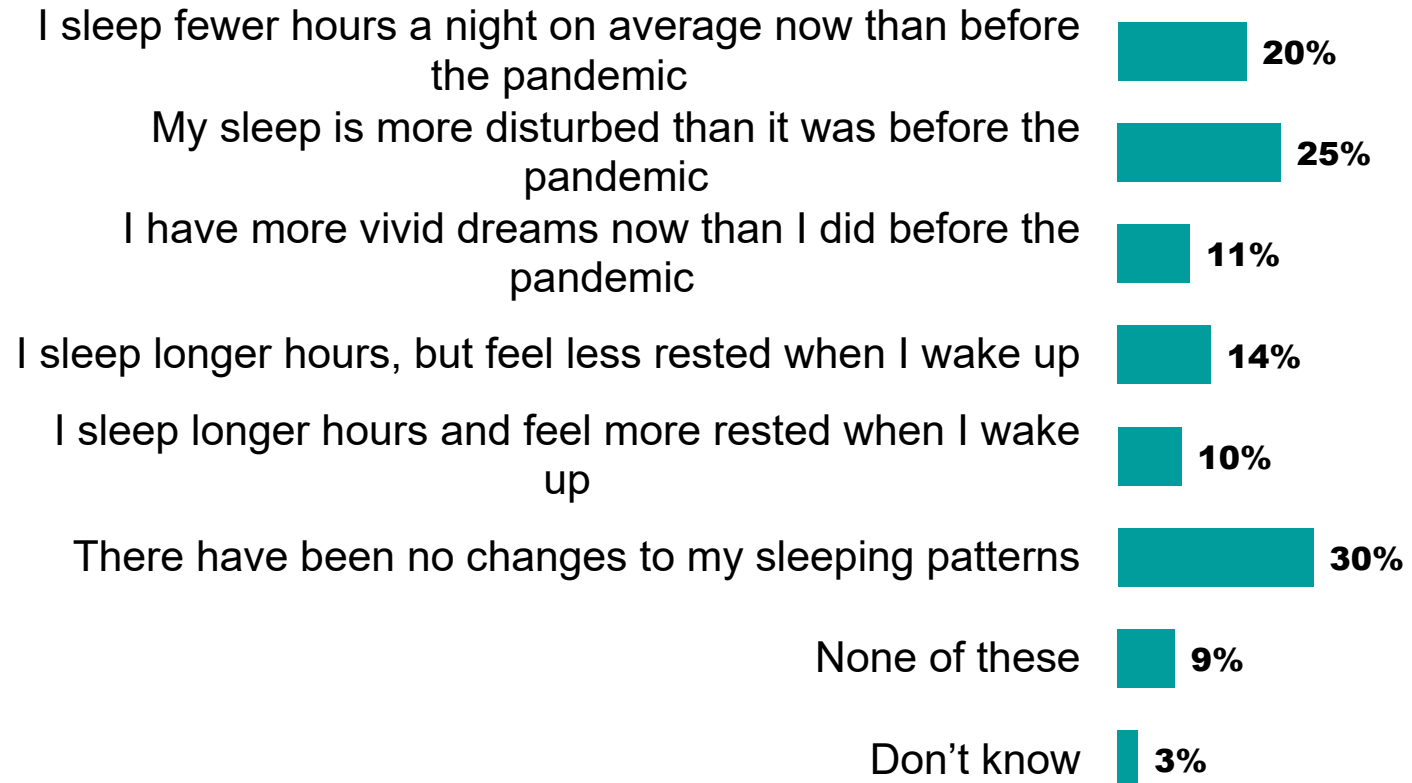


Base: 1,229 UK adults aged 16+, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022

More than half of people (58%) report a change in their sleeping patterns from before the pandemic started – although this includes some people who feel more rested.

The most common reported changes are more disturbed sleep (25%) and fewer hours of sleep (20%).

## Thinking about your sleeping patterns now, and how they compare with your sleeping patterns from before the pandemic started, which, if any, of these apply to you.



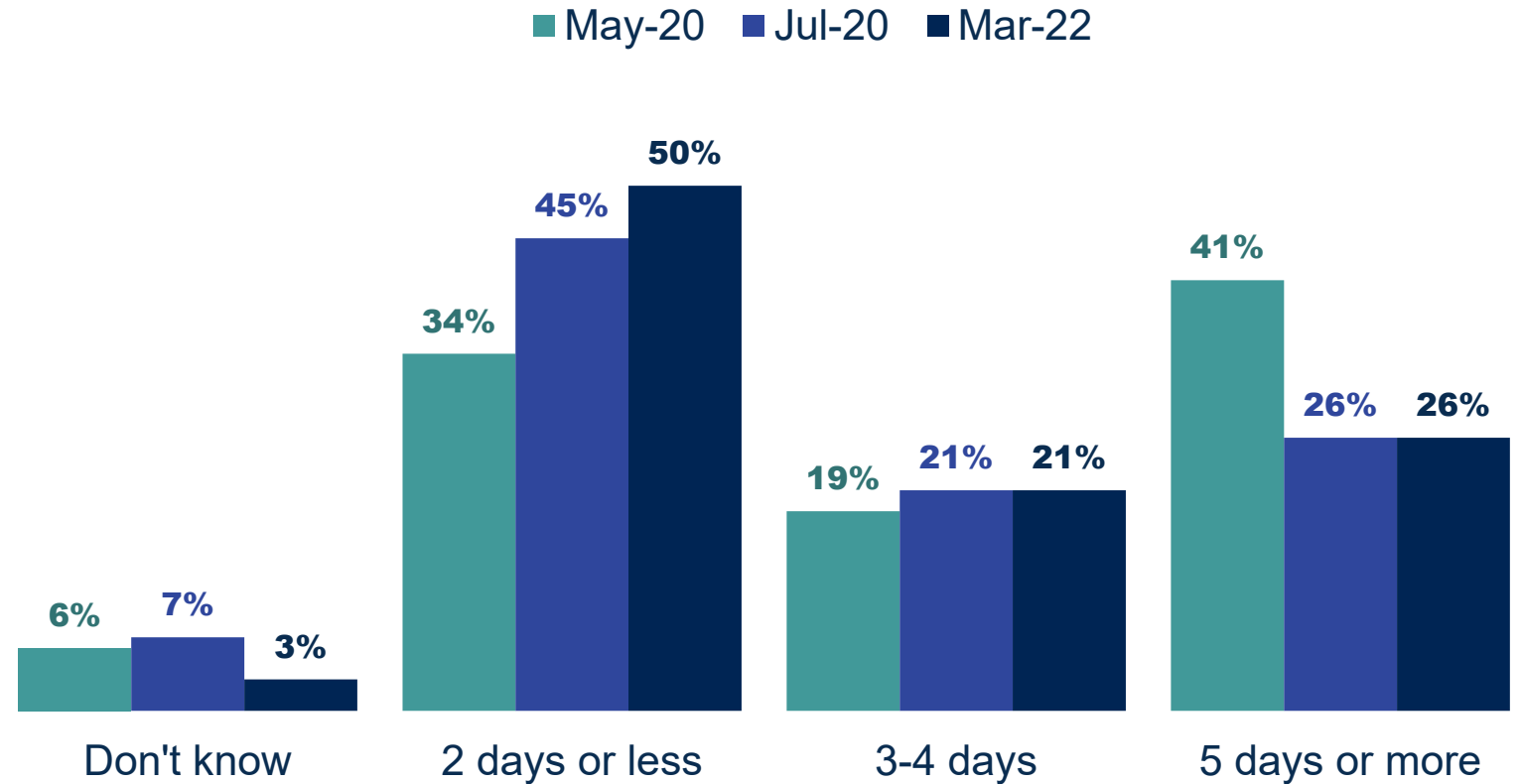
Base: 1,229 UK adults aged 16+, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022

Half of people aged 16-75\* (50%) say they did not leave home for two or fewer days in the past week.

However, there are still around a quarter of people (26%) who are staying at home for five or more days a week.

Although the proportions of people staying at home for most of the week have fallen from the first national lockdown in May 2020, they are roughly similar to July 2020.

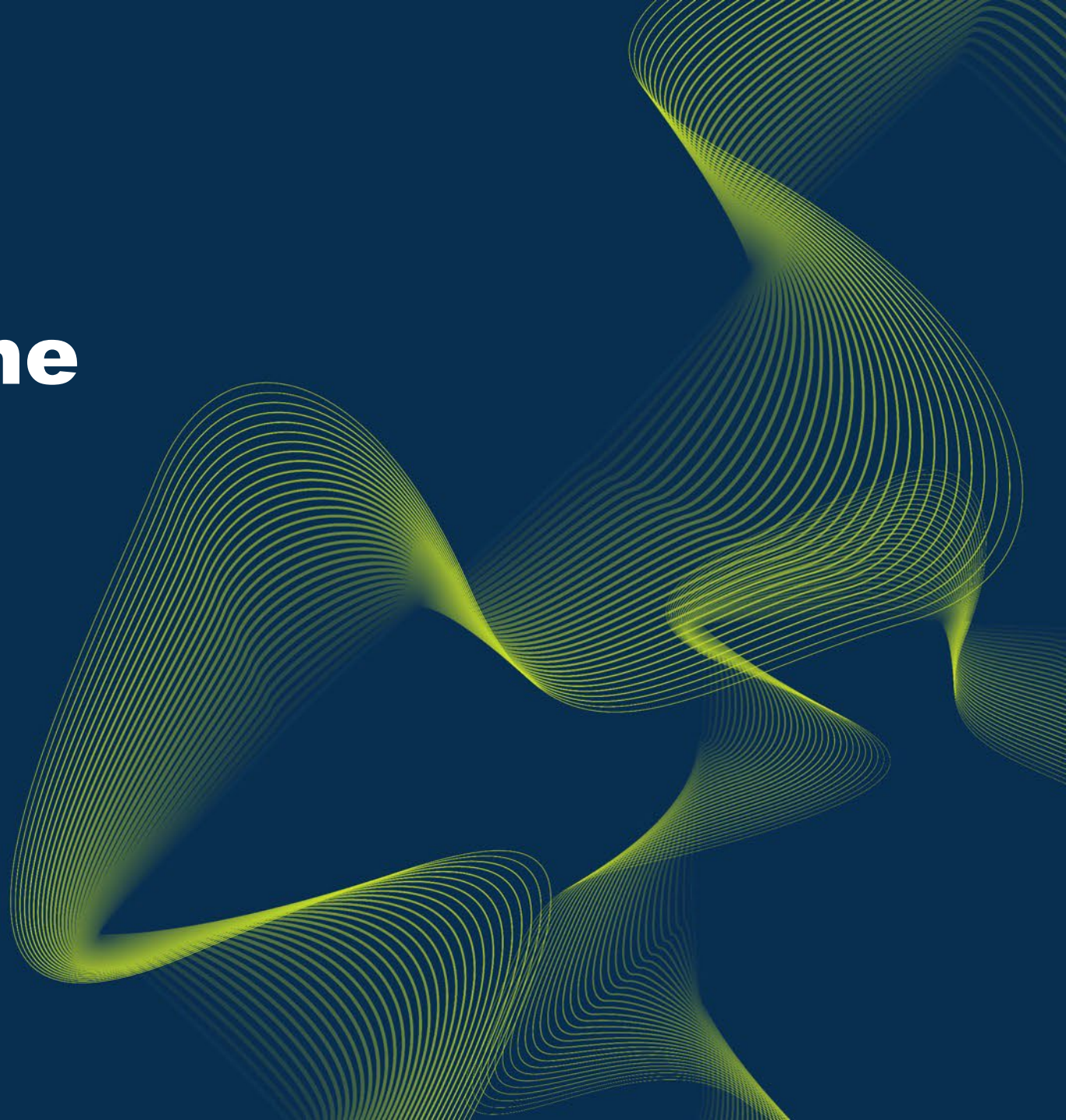
## Thinking about the last 7 days, on how many days did you not leave your home at all?



Base: 2,237 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 17-20 July 2020; 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020; 1,129 UK adults aged 16-75, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022. \*Note based on 16-75 year olds for trend comparisons



# **The state of the pandemic**



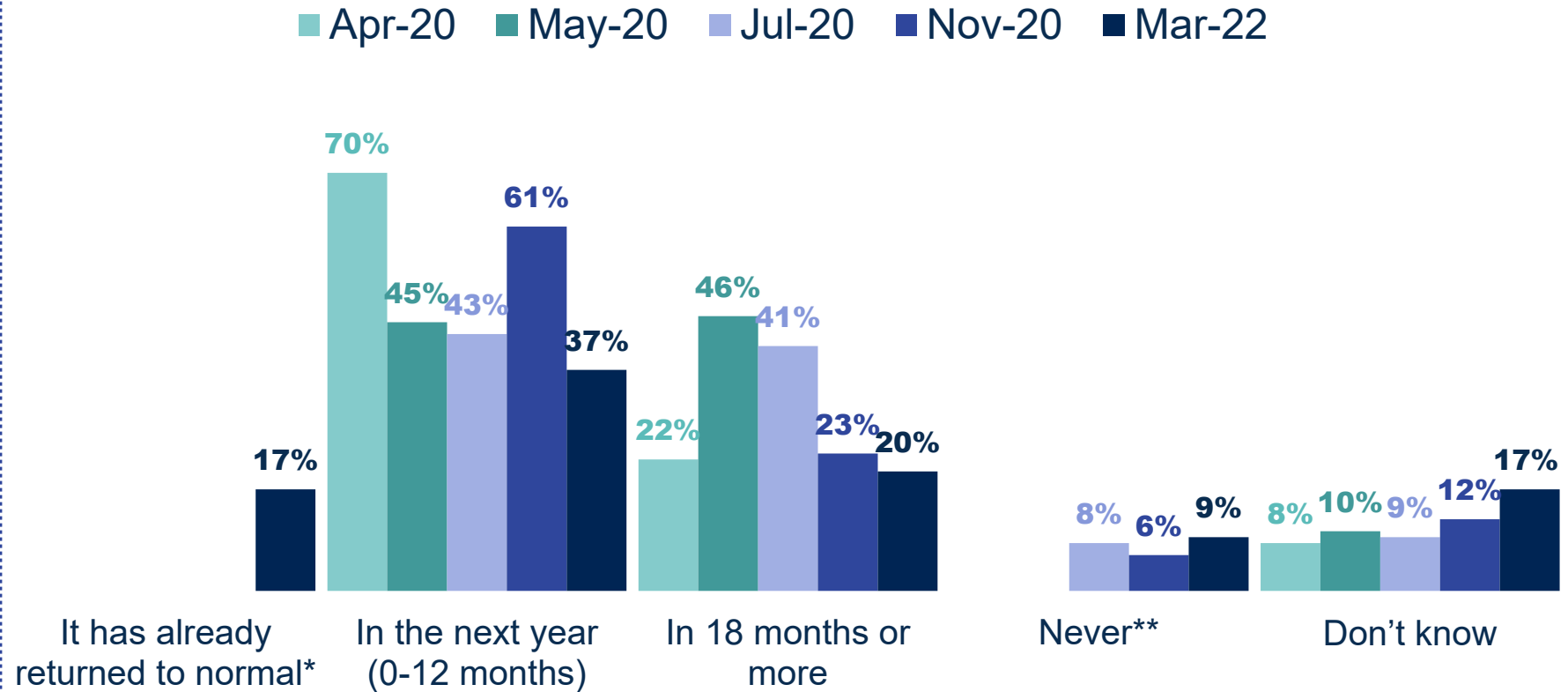
On the whole, just over half of people aged 16-75\* think there will be a return to normality within the next year: 17% think life has already returned to normal and 37% think life will return to normal in the next year.

However, there is higher uncertainty than before – 1 in 6 people (17%) say they don't know when life will return to normal.

Since May 2020, there has been a decrease in the proportion of people who think life will not return to normal for 18 months or more: currently, only 20% think it will take this long – although this has not changed much since November 2020.

Close to one in ten (9%) remain convinced life will never return to normal.

## When, if at all, do you expect life to return to 'normal' with people living much as they did before the pandemic?



Question wording in Apr-Jul 2020: When, if at all, do you think the following will happen?

Life to return to "normal", with people living much as they did before...

Question wording in Nov 2020: Once a vaccine has been approved and released, when, if at all, do you think we will be able to go back to how we lived before the coronavirus crisis?

\*Answer option only asked in Mar-2022

\*\*Answer option only asked in Jul-2020, Nov-2020 and Mar-2022

Base: 2,244 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-24 November 2020; 2,237 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 17-20 July 2020; 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020; 2,250 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 1-3 April 2020; 1,129 UK adults aged 16-75, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022. \*Note based on 16-75 year olds for trend comparisons

One in five people agree that the coronavirus pandemic is completely over.

However, more than half (58%) disagree.

Men are more likely to agree that the coronavirus pandemic is completely over, as well as those aged 16-34.

A large majority of those over 55 years old (78%) disagree that the pandemic is over.

## To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

**As far as I'm concerned, the coronavirus pandemic is completely over**



### % who agree or disagree



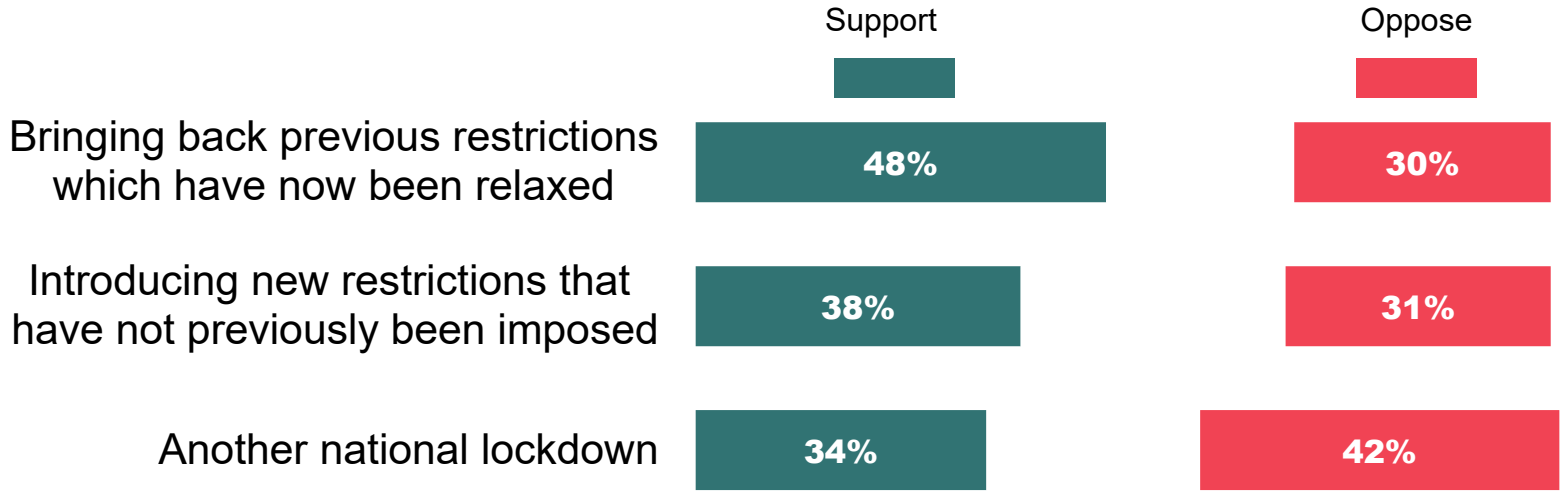
Base: 1,229 UK adults aged 16+, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022

Between a third and a half of people would support a range of precautionary measures if a new coronavirus variant emerged which was resistant to vaccines.

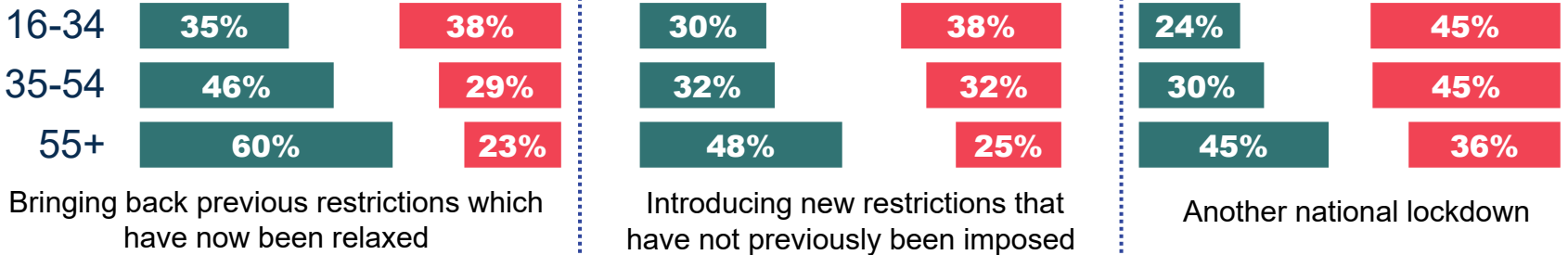
People are most likely to support bringing back previous restrictions, and least likely to support another national lockdown –two fifths (42%) oppose this measure.

All measures have similar pattern of support by different age groups. Those over 55 years old are more likely to support all measures, and those aged 16-34 more likely to oppose them.

### To what extent, if at all, would you support or oppose each of the following if a new coronavirus variant emerged which was resistant to vaccines?



#### % who agree or disagree by age...



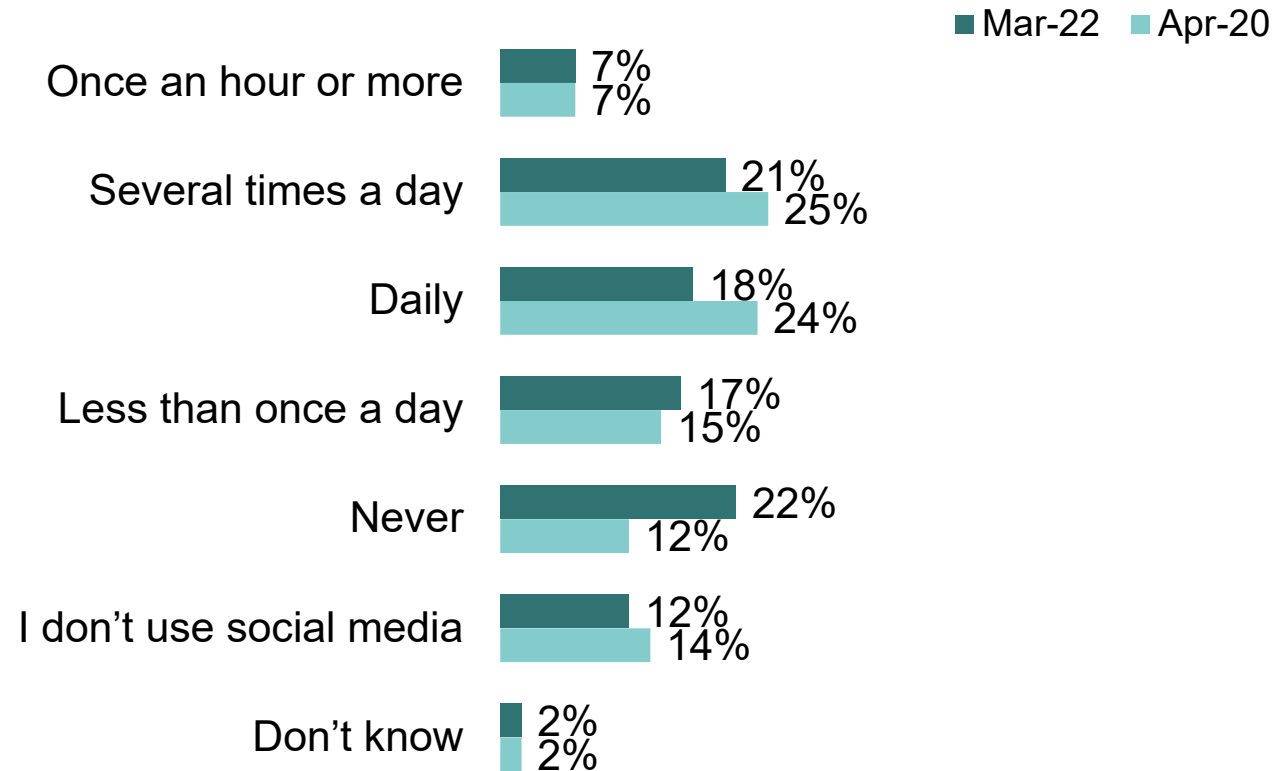
Base: 1,229 UK adults aged 16+, interviewed 4th - 7th March



Two-fifths of people aged 16-75\* (46%) say they check social media for information or updates about coronavirus once a day or more.

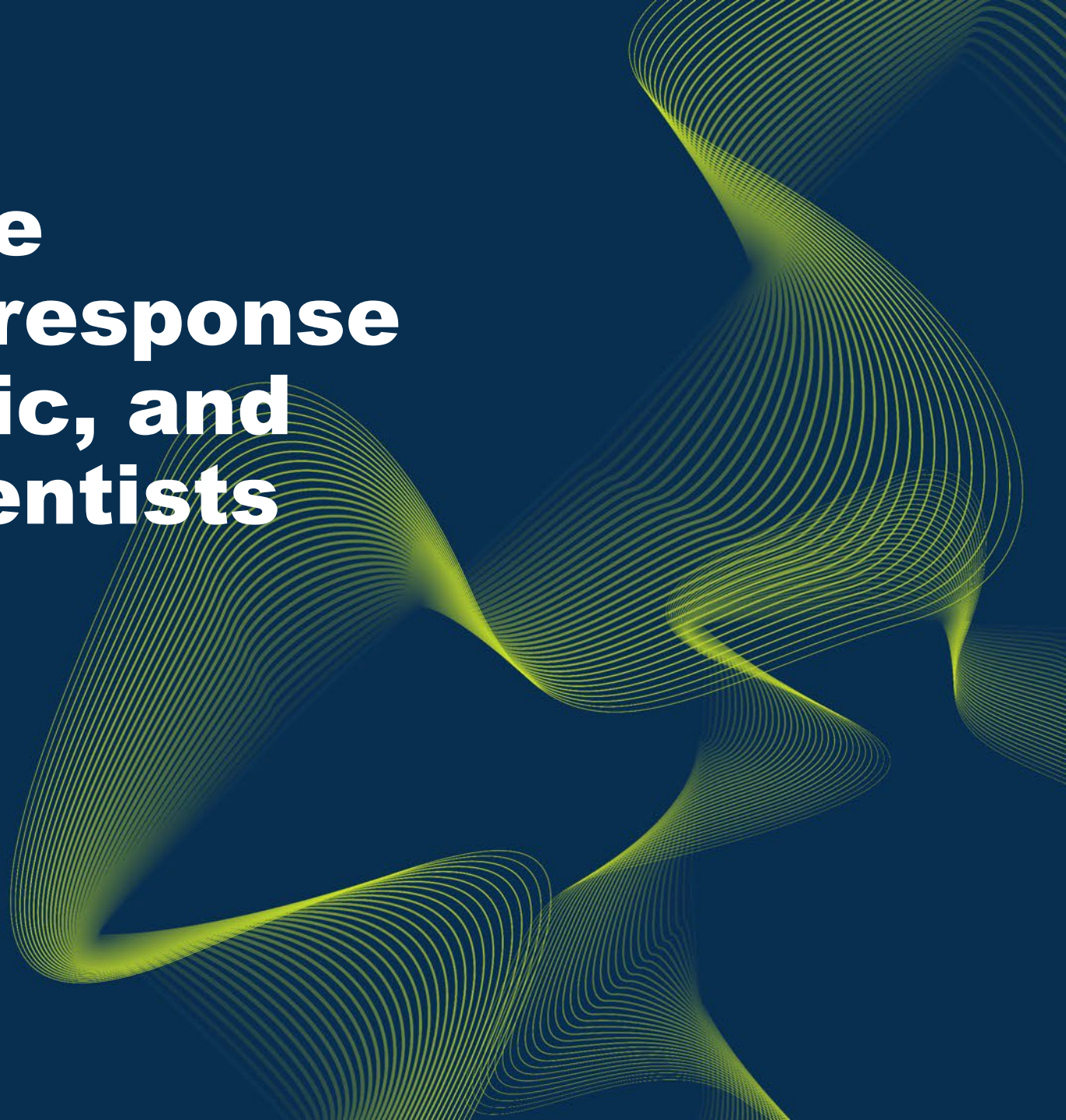
Compared with the start of the pandemic in April 2020, there has been a drop in those saying they check social media daily for information about the coronavirus, down 10 points from 56%.

## How often, if at all, do you check social media (such as Facebook or Twitter) for information or updates about coronavirus?



Base: 1,129 UK adults aged 16-75, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022, 2,250 UK adults aged 16-75 1-3 April 2020. \*Note based on 16-75 year olds for trend comparisons

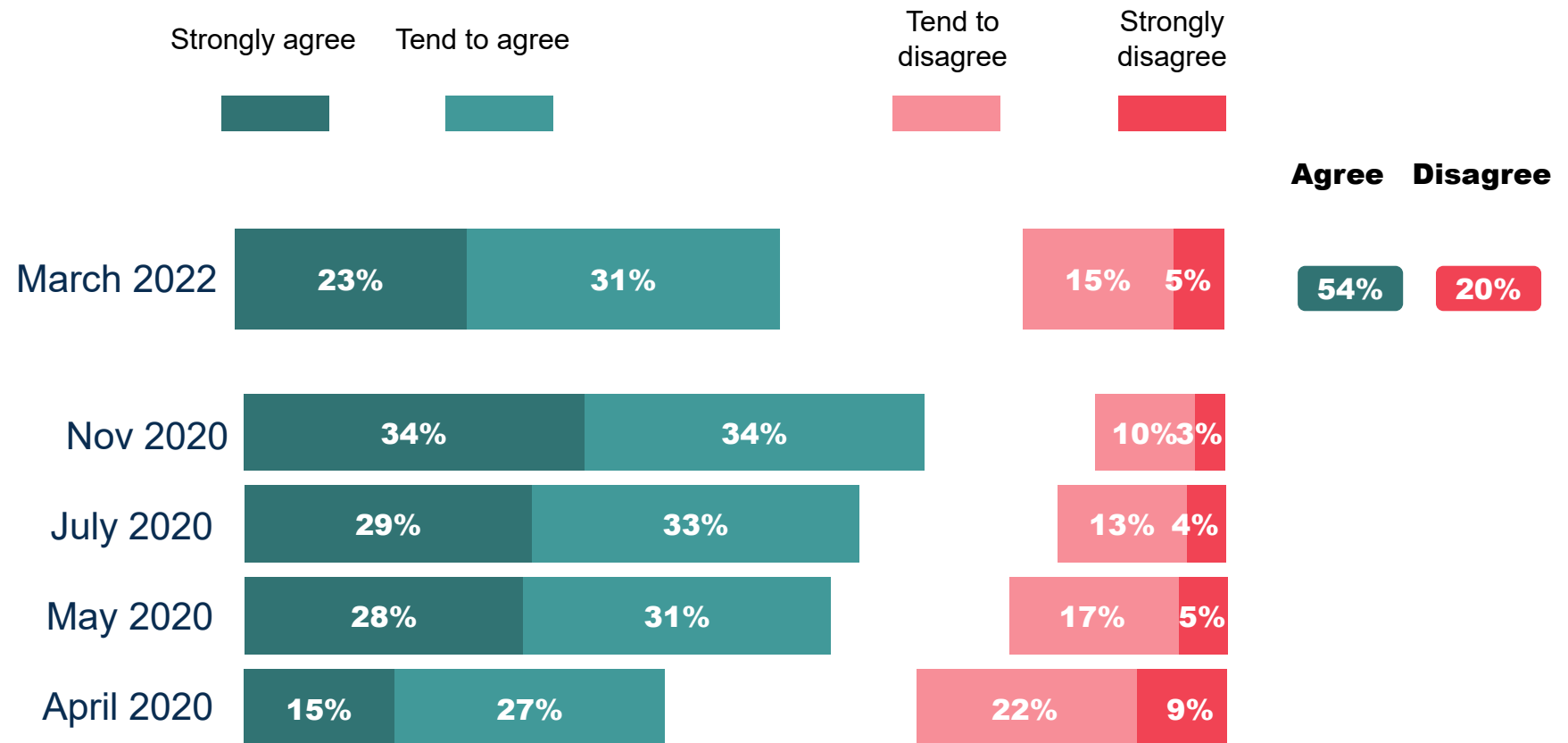
**Opinions on the  
Government's response  
to the pandemic, and  
the role of scientists  
and experts**



More than half of those aged 16-75\* (54%) agree that the UK government's response to the coronavirus has been confused and inconsistent – more than twice those who disagree (20%).

However, the proportion of people saying the UK government's response has been confused and inconsistent has declined from 2020, and is lower than it was during the second lockdown in November 2020 (68%).

## To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following? The UK Government's response to the coronavirus has been confused and inconsistent



Questions asked in April 2020 referred to "the government", rather than "UK government"

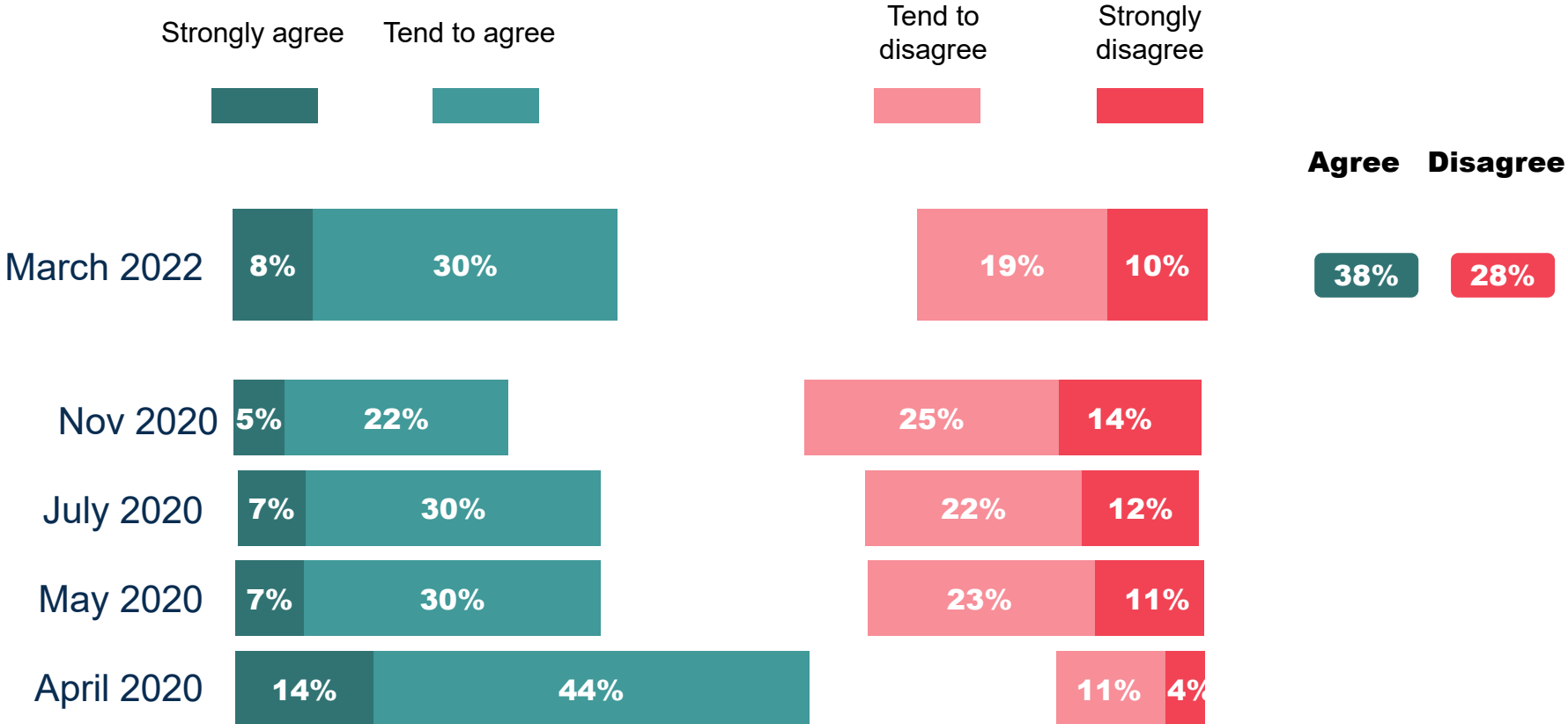
Base: 2,244 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-24 November 2020; 2,237 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 17-20 July 2020; 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020; 2,250 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 1-3 April 2020; 1,129 UK adults aged 16-75, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022. \*Note based on 16-75 year olds for trend comparisons

Two-fifths of people aged 16-75\* (38%) think the UK Government's plan has adapted well to the changing scientific information and situation, whilst around a quarter (28%) disagree.

Views on the Government's plan are more favourable than during the second lockdown in November 2020, when two-fifths (39%) disagreed with the statement.

## To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following?

### The UK Government's plan has adapted well to the changing scientific information and situation



Questions asked in April 2020 referred to "the government", rather than "UK government"

Base: 2,244 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-24 November 2020; 2,237 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 17-20 July 2020; 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020; 2,250 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 1-3 April 2020; 1,129 UK adults aged 16-75, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022. \*Note based on 16-75 year olds for trend comparisons

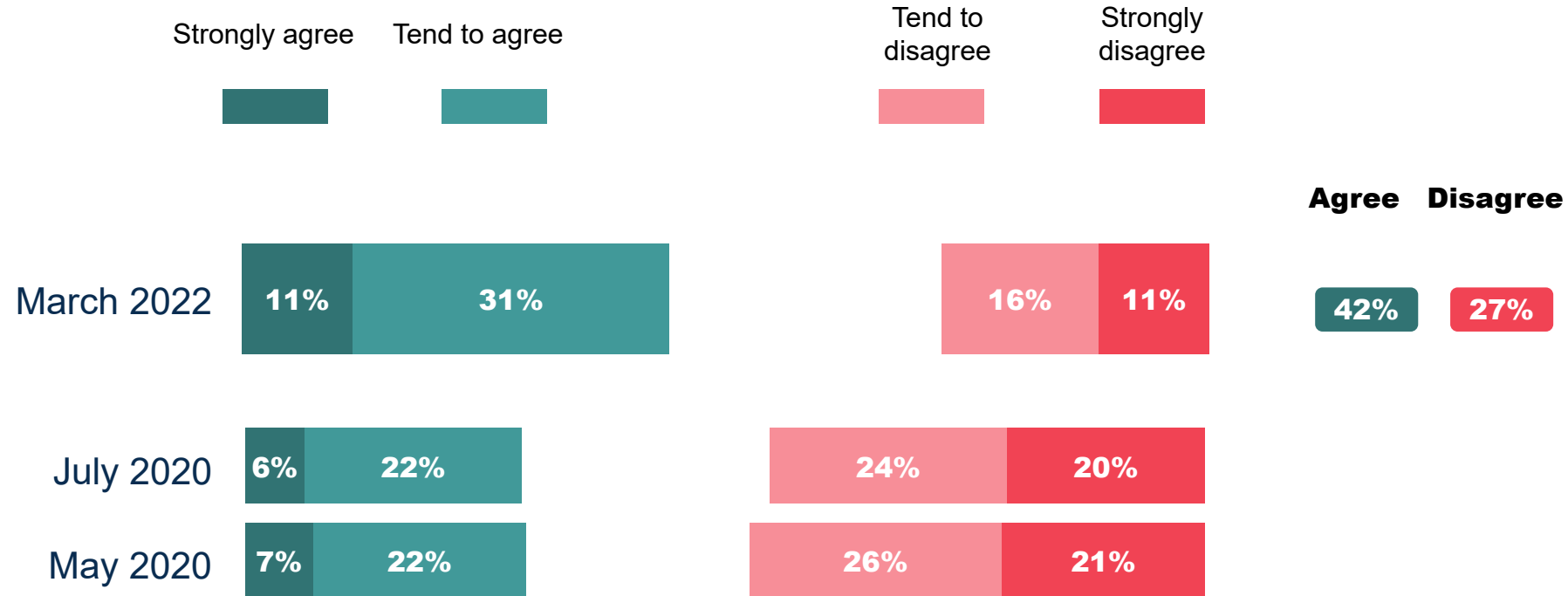


There is a more favourable perception of how well the UK is handling the pandemic compared with others: over two-fifths of people aged 16-75\* (42%) agree that compared with other countries, the UK Government has responded well to the coronavirus outbreak.

This proportion has increased since May-July 2020, when it stood at just under 3 in 10.

The share of people who disagree with this statement has declined, with only around a quarter (27%) negative about the Government's relative performance.

## To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following? Compared with other countries, the UK Government has responded well to the coronavirus outbreak



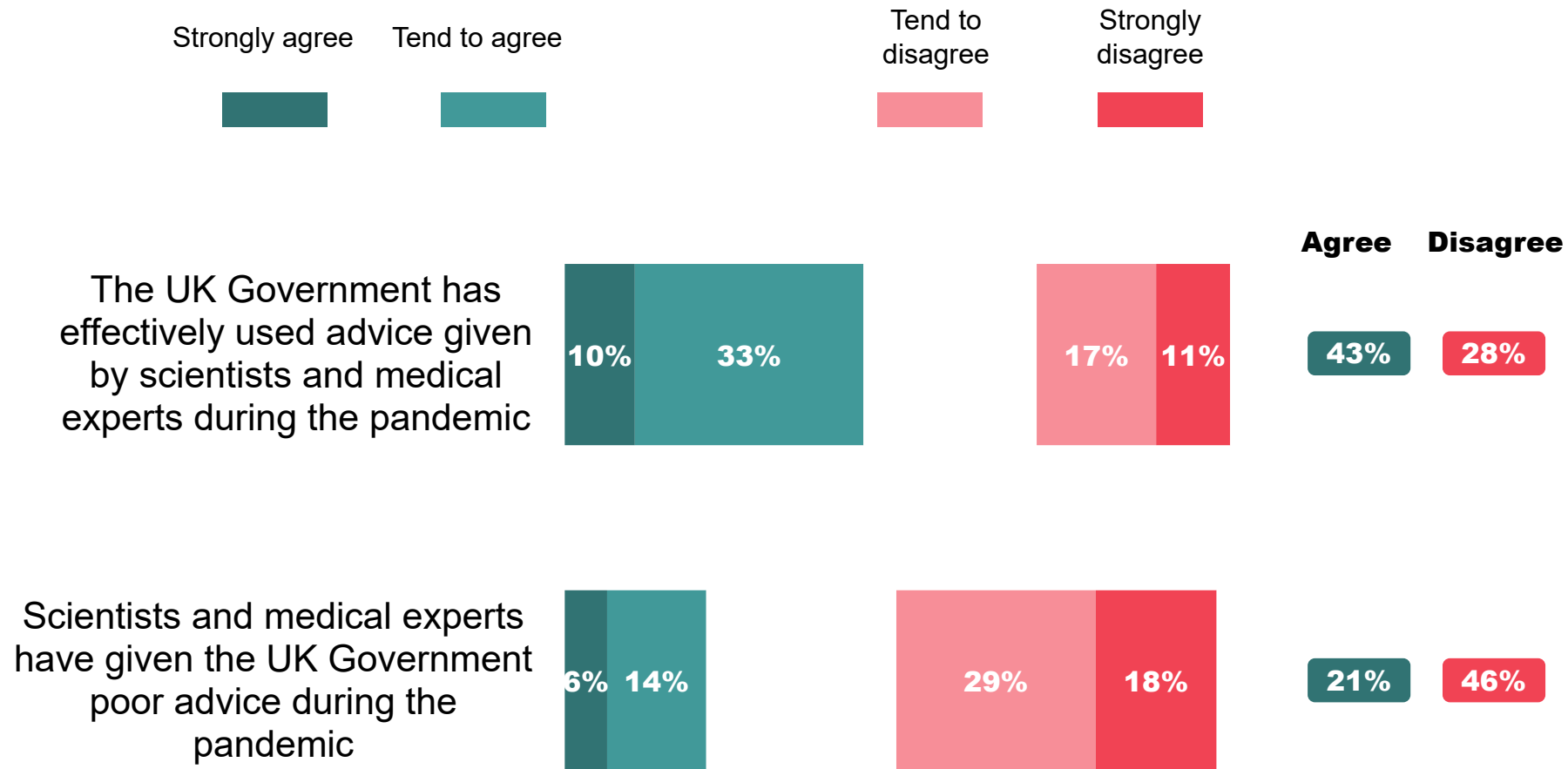
Base: 2,237 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 17-20 July 2020; 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020; 1,129 UK adults aged 16-75, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022. \*Note based on 16-75 year olds for trend comparisons

Only a minority criticise the advice from scientists and experts during the pandemic, and on balance people are more likely than not to think that the government has used it effectively.

Close to half of people (46%) do not agree that scientists and medical gave experts have given the UK government **poor** advice during the pandemic, although a fifth (21%) do think this.

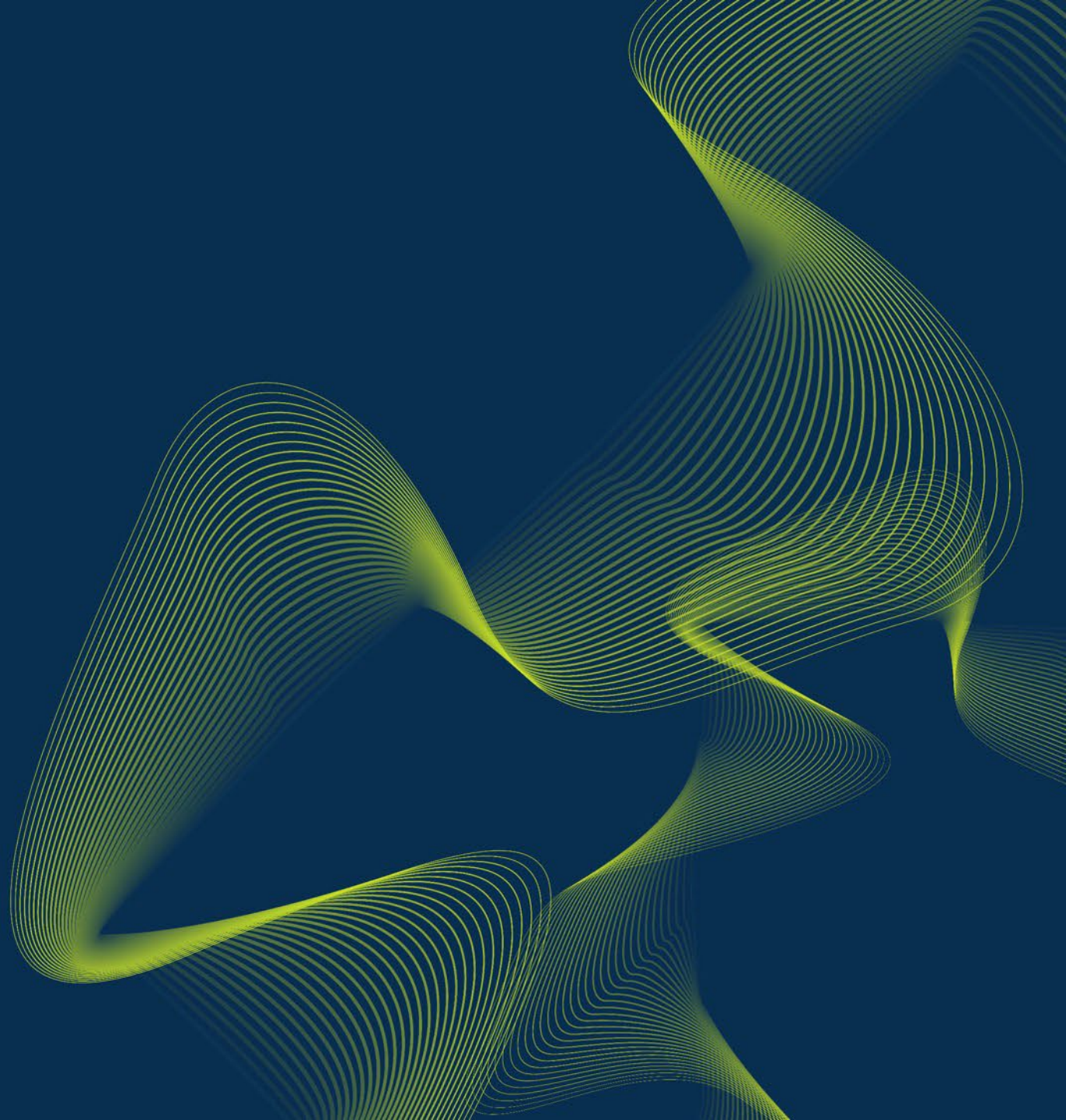
Over two-fifths (43%) think the government has used this advice effectively, while over a quarter (28%) do not.

## To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following?



Base: 1,229 UK adults aged 16+, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022

# Perceptions of NHS services

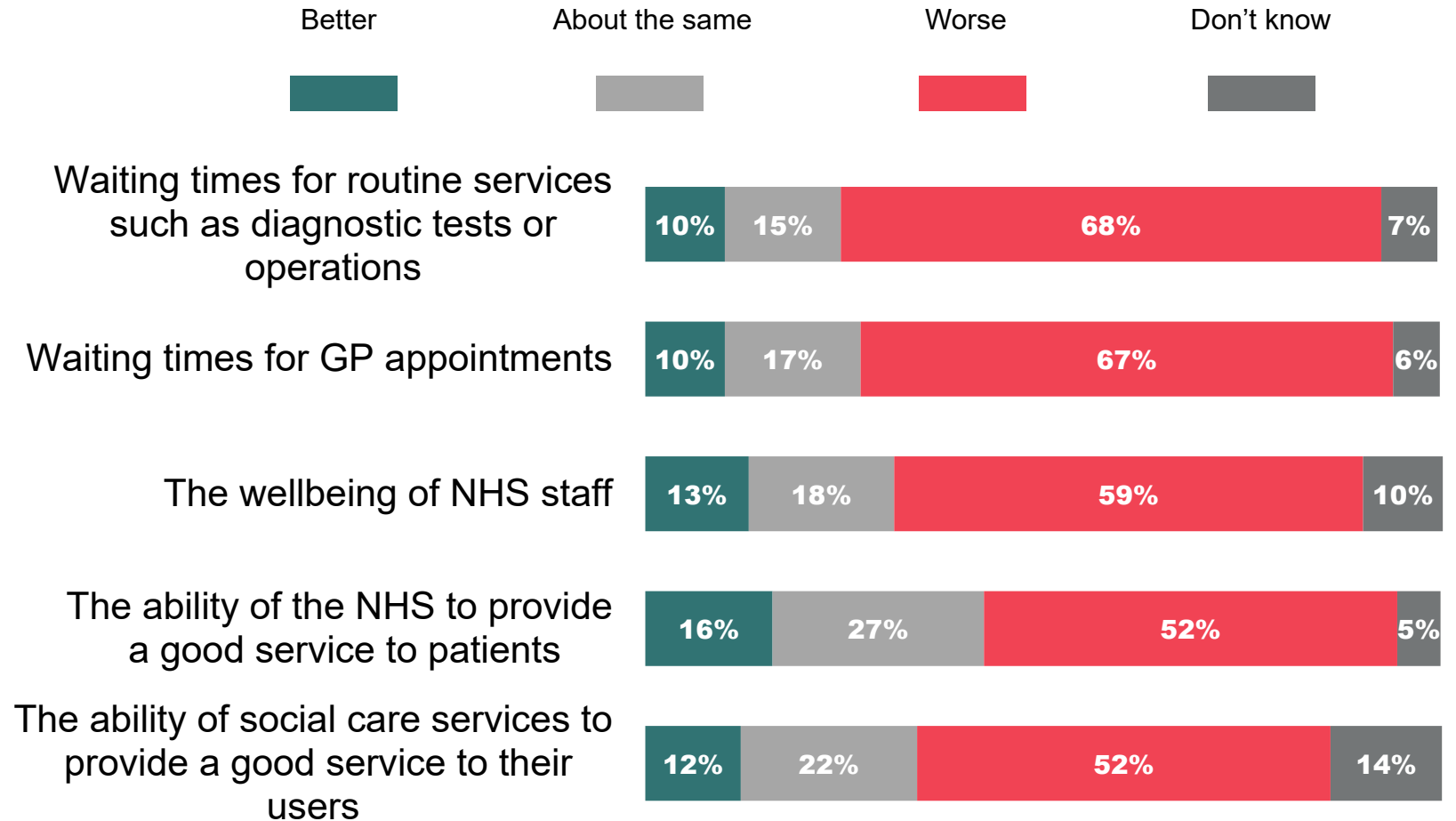


Most people think a range of NHS services are not at the same standard as they were before the pandemic started.

People are most likely to say waiting times have deteriorated, with 2 in 3 saying waiting times for routine services and for GP appointments have got worse.

Around 1 in 10 of people think NHS services have got better, with 1 in 6 (16%) saying the ability of the NHS to provide a good service to patients has improved.

## Please now think about the NHS. Do you think each of the following have got better or worse compared with before the pandemic started, or is it about the same?



Base: 1,229 UK adults aged 16+, interviewed 4th - 7th March 2022



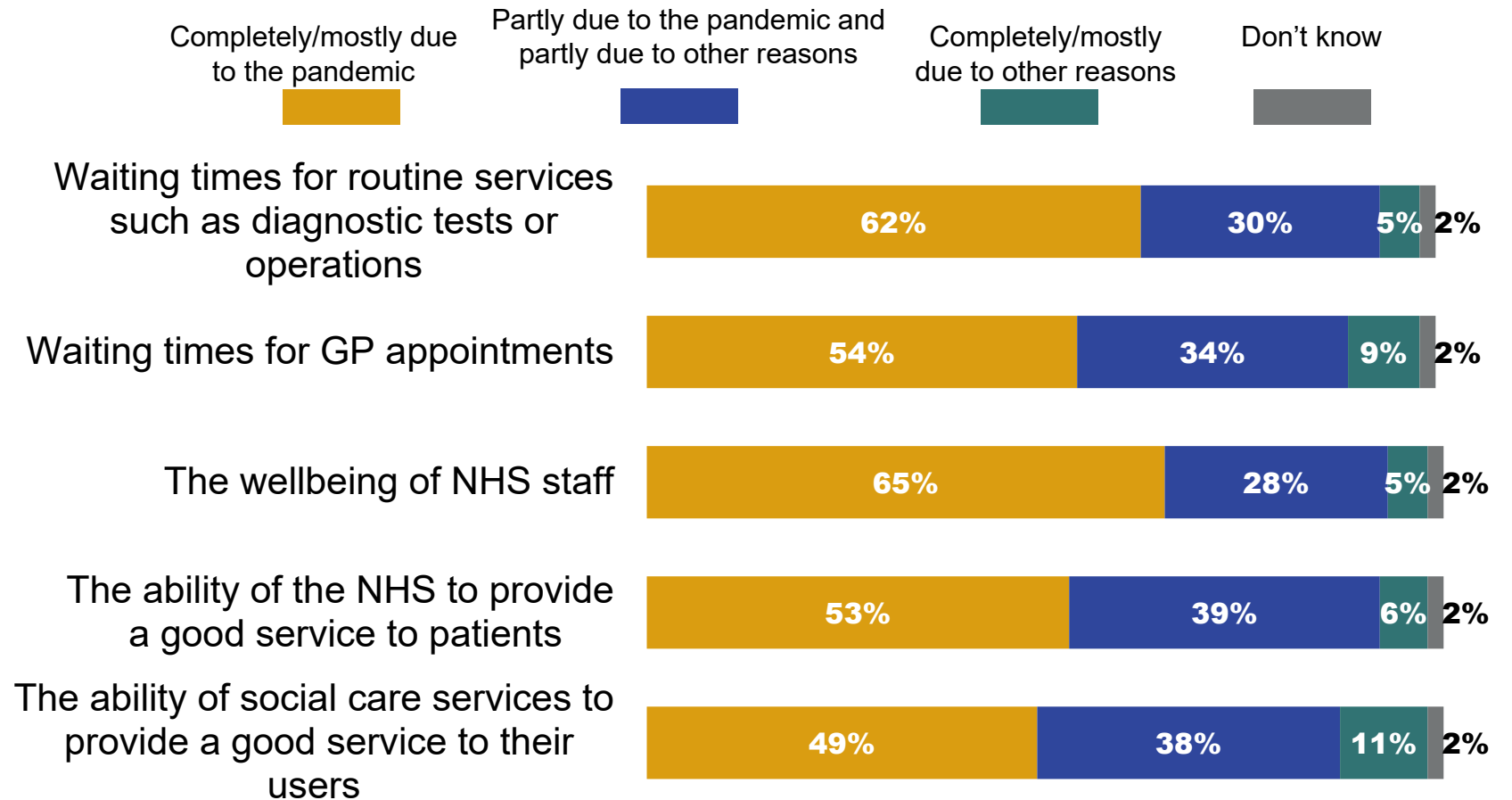
People are more likely to attribute services or aspects of the NHS getting worse to the pandemic, rather than to other reasons.

Around half or more of those who say some aspect of the NHS has got worse since the pandemic, say this is at least mostly due to the pandemic as opposed to other reasons.

Around 3 to 4 in 10 attribute the decline partly to the pandemic and partly to other reasons, but only few think it was mostly due to other reasons.

People are most likely to blame the pandemic for the wellbeing of NHS staff worsening (65%) and waiting times for routine services getting worse (62%).

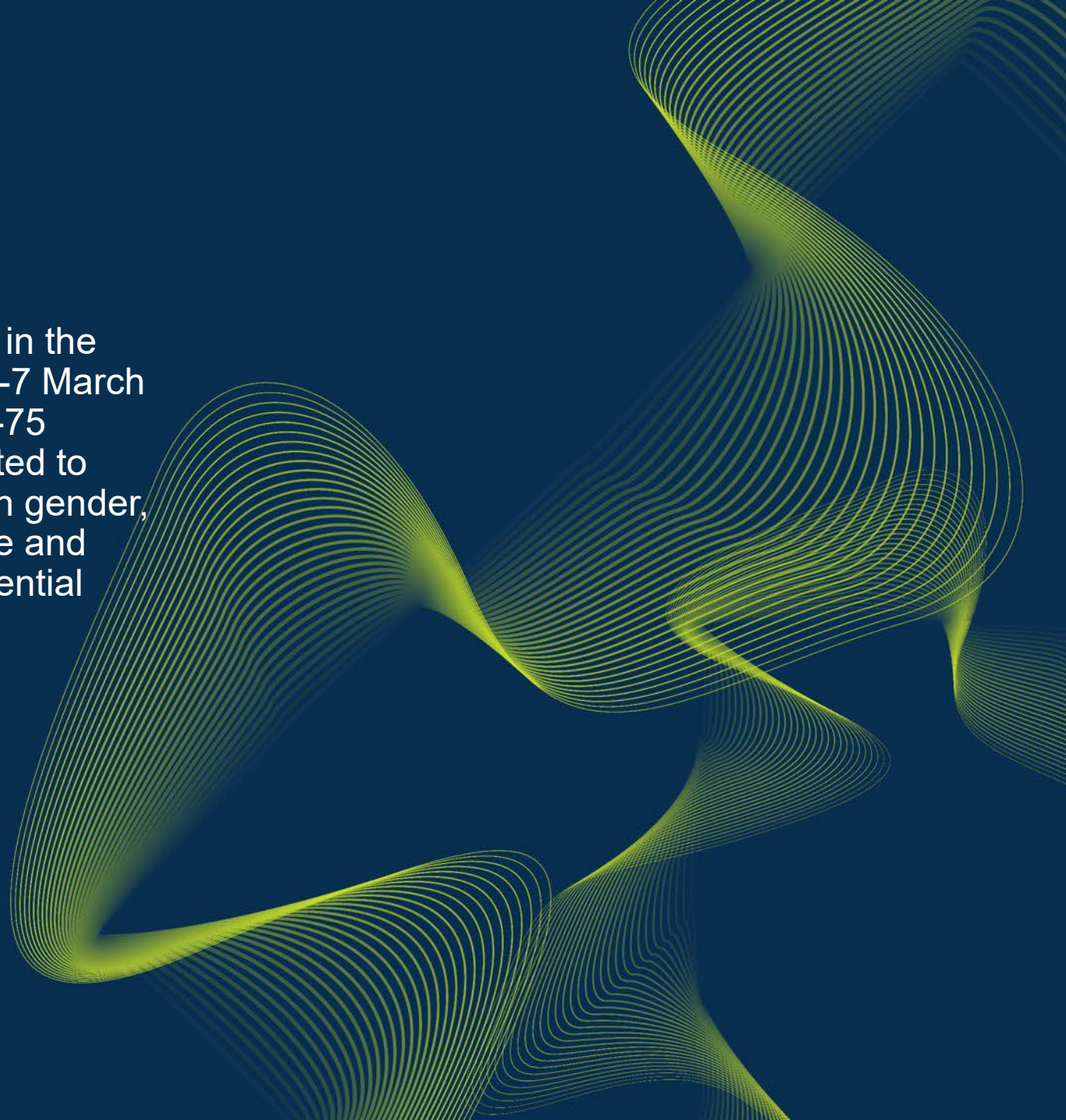
## You said that [this aspect] has got worse compared with before the pandemic started. To what extent, if at all, do you think this is due to the pandemic, or do you think it is due to other reasons?



Base: All who think some part of the NHS has got worse since the pandemic (ranging from 650 – 837)

# Technical details:

Ipsos interviewed a sample of 1,229 adults aged 16+ in the United Kingdom using its online i:omnibus between 4-7 March 2022. Certain questions are based on those aged 16-75 (1,129) for trend comparisons. Data has been weighted to the known offline population proportions for age within gender, government office region, working status, social grade and education. All polls are subject to a wide range of potential sources of error.





# THE POLICY INSTITUTE



For more information, contact:

## **Bobby Duffy**

Director

The Policy Institute  
King's College London

[bobby.duffy@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:bobby.duffy@kcl.ac.uk)

[@bobbyduffyking](https://twitter.com/bobbyduffyking)

## **Connect with us**

[@policyatking](https://twitter.com/policyatking) [kcl.ac.uk/policy-institute](https://www.kcl.ac.uk/policy-institute)

[@ipsosUK](https://twitter.com/ipsosUK) [ipsos.com](https://www.ipsos.com)

**Gideon Skinner**  
Research Director  
Ipsos

[gideon.skinner@ipsos.com](mailto:gideon.skinner@ipsos.com)

[@GideonSkinner](https://twitter.com/GideonSkinner)

**Kate Duxbury**  
Research Director  
Ipsos

[kate.duxbury@ipsos.com](mailto:kate.duxbury@ipsos.com)

**Daniela Alvarez Garcia**  
Research Executive  
Ipsos

[Daniela.AlvarezGarcia@ipsos.com](mailto:Daniela.AlvarezGarcia@ipsos.com)