

# Attitudes towards immigration

Survey conducted in collaboration with British Future

Fieldwork 17-28 February 2024

British Future...



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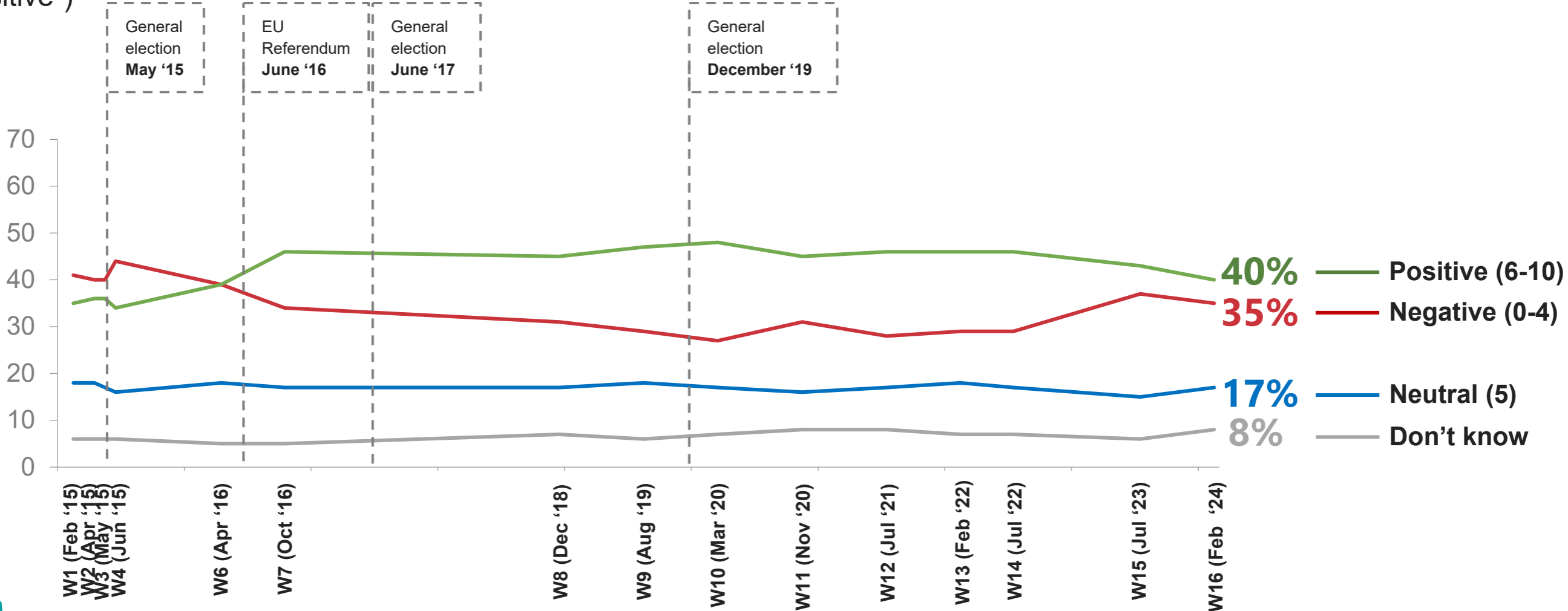
# Technical note

- Ipsos interviewed 3,000 adults aged 18+ across Great Britain online. Data are weighted to reflect the population profile.
- Fieldwork dates were 17-28 February 2024.
- The survey was conducted in collaboration with British Future with funding from Unbound Philanthropy and the Barrow Cadbury Trust.
- Percentage scores are shown out of 100%. Where figures do not add up to 100%, this is due to computer rounding. An asterisks indicates a score less than 0.5%, but greater than zero. Combined figures (e.g. net agree) are taken from computer tables, and may differ from the sum of the constituent parts due to rounding. All polls are subject to a range of potential sources of error.

# Immigration

# The proportion of people who think migration has had a positive impact on Britain has steadily decreased since July 2022, though more are still positive than negative

Q On a scale of 0 to 10, has migration had a positive or negative impact on Britain? (0 is “very negative”, 10 is “very positive”)

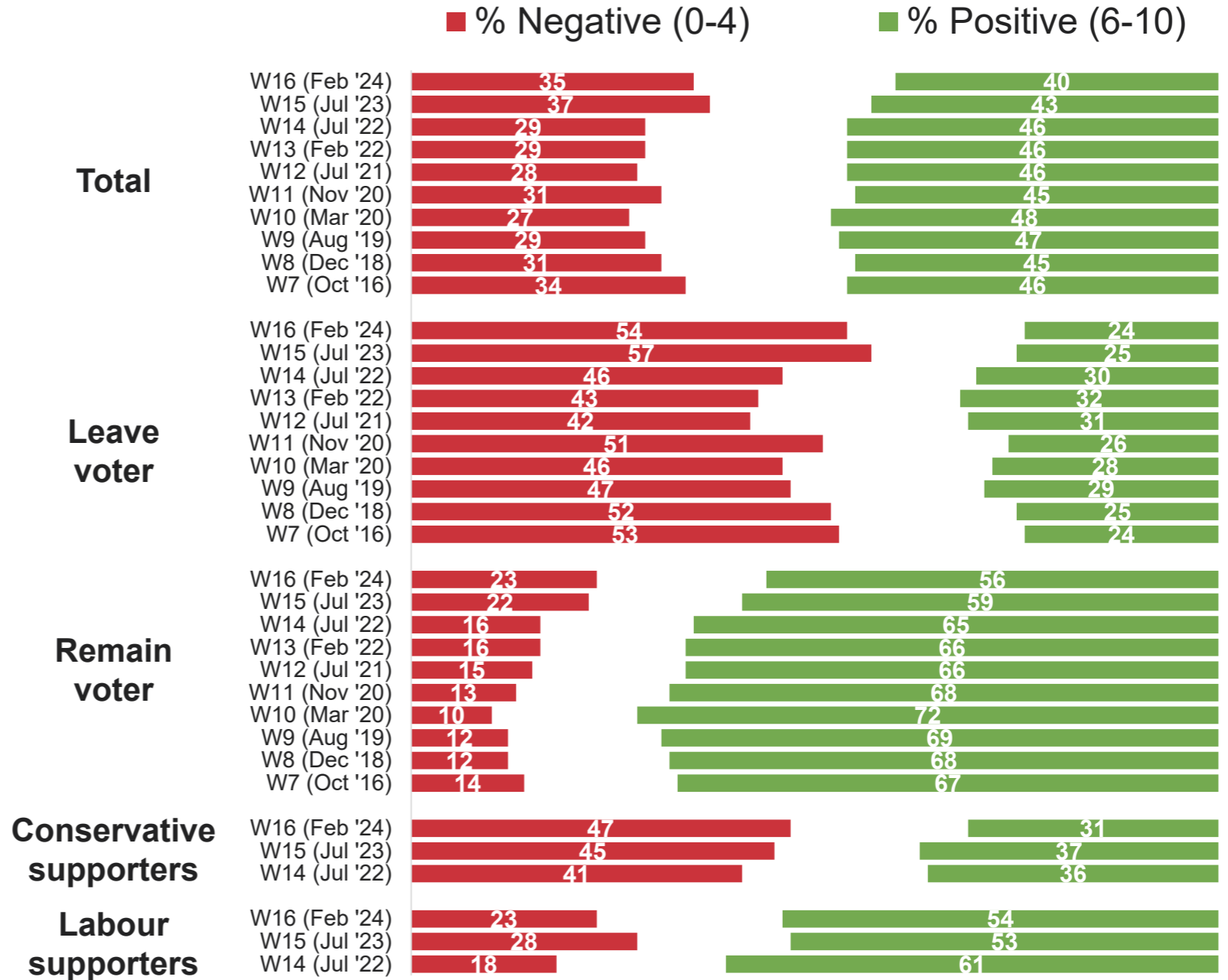


Base: All respondents (W1: 4574; W2: 3770; W3:3023; W4:2698; W6: 4002; W7: 4071; W8: 2520; W9 2006; W10: 2100; W11: 2532; W12: 4000; W13: 3206; W14: 3,004; W15: 3,000; W16: 3,000): Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024

**Overall, four in ten (40%) think migration has had a positive impact on the country, over a third (35%) disagree.**

**Views have become less positive across the political spectrum since 2022**

Q On a scale of 0 to 10, has migration had a positive or negative impact on Britain? (0 is “very negative”, 10 is “very positive”)

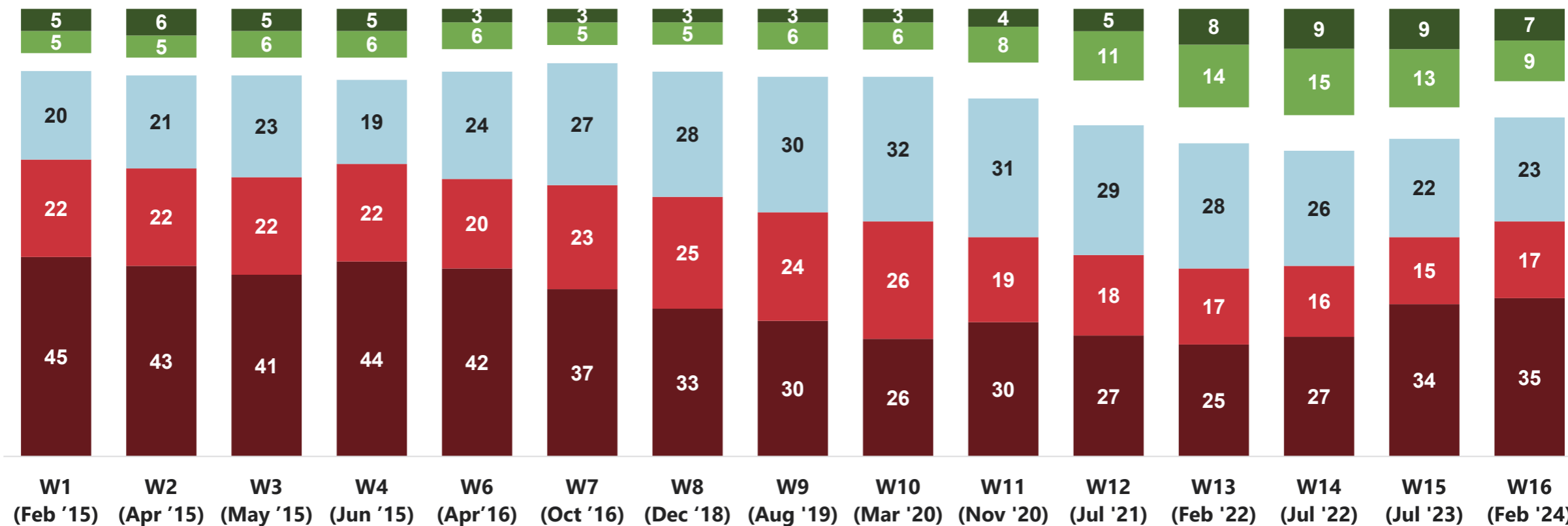


Base: All respondents (W7: 4071; W8: 2520; W9: 2006 ; W10: 2100; W11: 2532; W12: 4000; W13: 3206; W14: 3004; W15: 3000; W16: 3000);  
Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024

# A majority of people now want to see immigration reduced, while those wanting an increase has reduced to around one in six.

Q Do you think the number of immigrants coming to Britain nowadays should be increased a lot, increased a little, remain the same as it is, reduced a little, or reduced a lot?

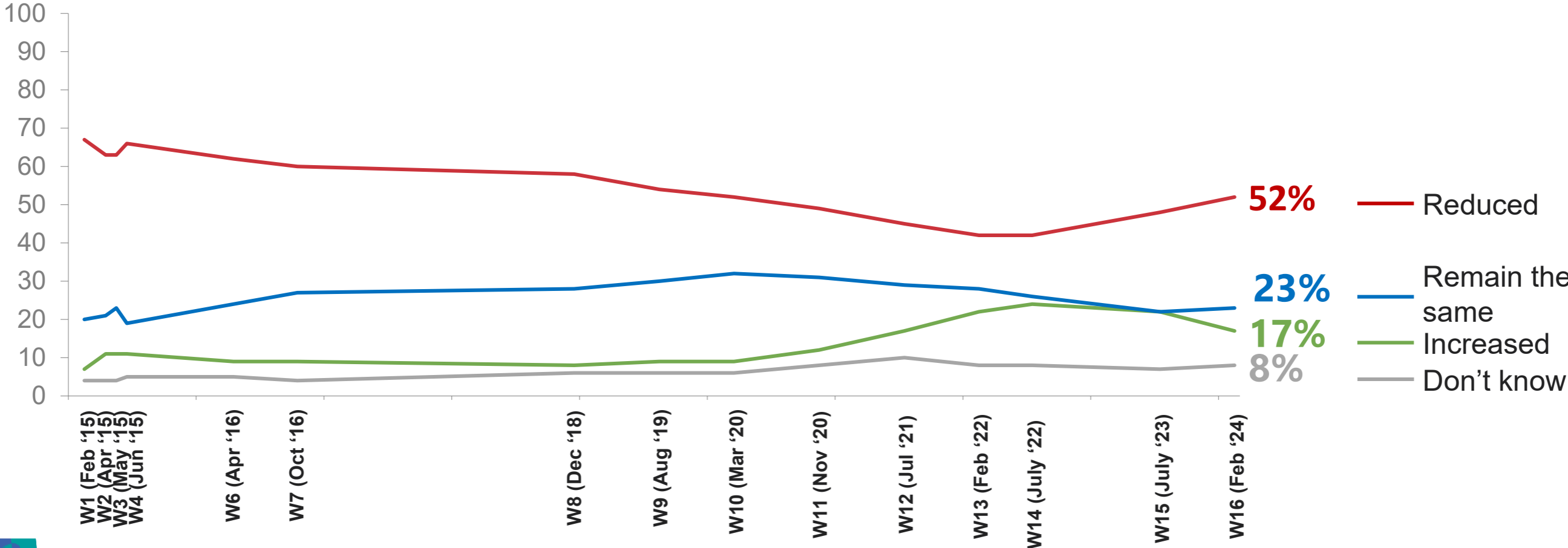
■ % Reduced a lot ■ % Reduced a little ■ % Remain the same as it is ■ % Increased a little ■ % Increased a lot



Base: All respondents (W1: 4574; W2: 3770; W3:3023; W4:2698; W6: 4002; W7: 4071; W8: 2520; W9: 2006; W10: 2100; W11: 2532; W12: 4000; W13: 3206; W14: 3004; W15: 3000; W16: 3000): Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024

# The proportion wanting to see a reduction in immigration has increased since 2022, with a majority now in support of reducing numbers.

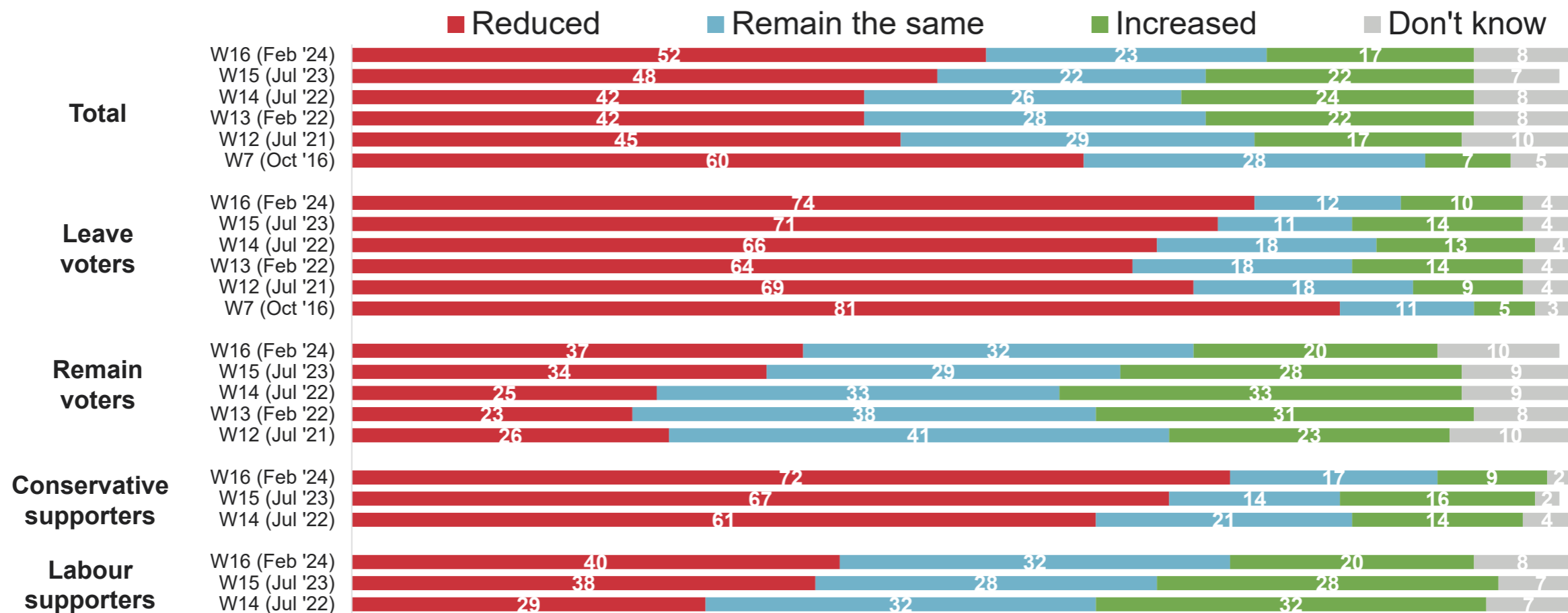
Q Do you think the number of immigrants coming to Britain nowadays should be increased a lot, increased a little, remain the same as it is, reduced a little, or reduced a lot?



Base: All respondents (W1: 4574; W2: 3770; W3:3023; W4:2698; W6: 4002; W7: 4071; W8: 2520; W9 2006; W10: 2100; W11: 2532; W12: 4000; W13: 3206; W14: 3004; W15: 3000; W16: 3000). Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024

# There has been an increase in sentiment amongst both Leave and Remain voters to reduce immigration. Conservative and Leave supporters are most likely to have this view.

Q Do you think the number of immigrants coming to Britain nowadays should be increased a lot, increased a little, remain the same as it is, reduced a little, or reduced a lot?



Base: All respondents (W7: 4071; W12: 4000; W13: 3206; W14: 3004; W15: 3000; W16: 3000): Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024

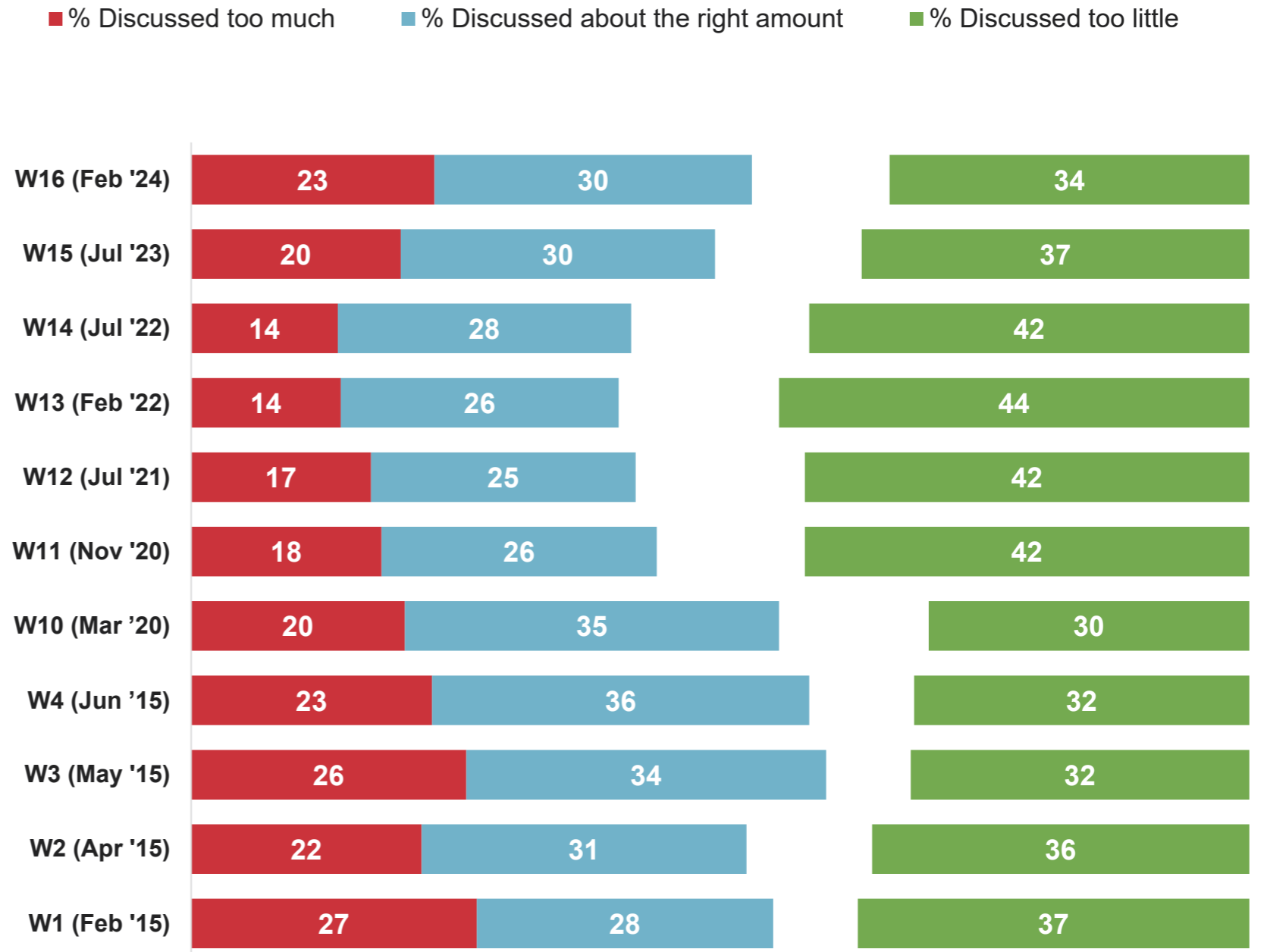




# Nearly a quarter say immigration has been discussed too much in Britain, an increase over the last two years.

## A third think it is discussed too little.

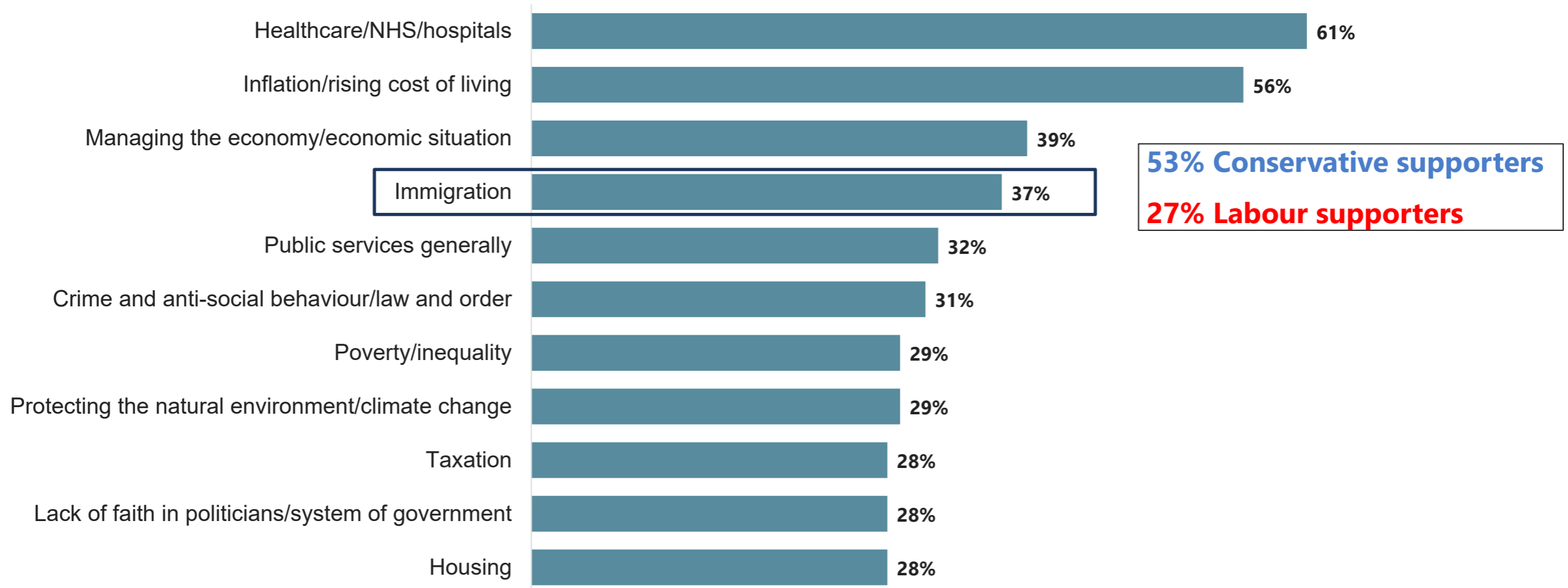
Q Generally speaking, do you think that the issue of immigration has been discussed in Britain too much, too little or about the right amount over the last few months?



Base: All respondents (W1: 4574; W2: 3770; W3:3023; W4:2698; W10: 2100 W11: 2532; W12: 4000; W13: 3206; W14: 3004; W15: 3000; W16: 3000);  
Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024)

# The top issues for the public are the NHS and economic concerns. Immigration is in fourth, but more pressing for Conservative supporters.

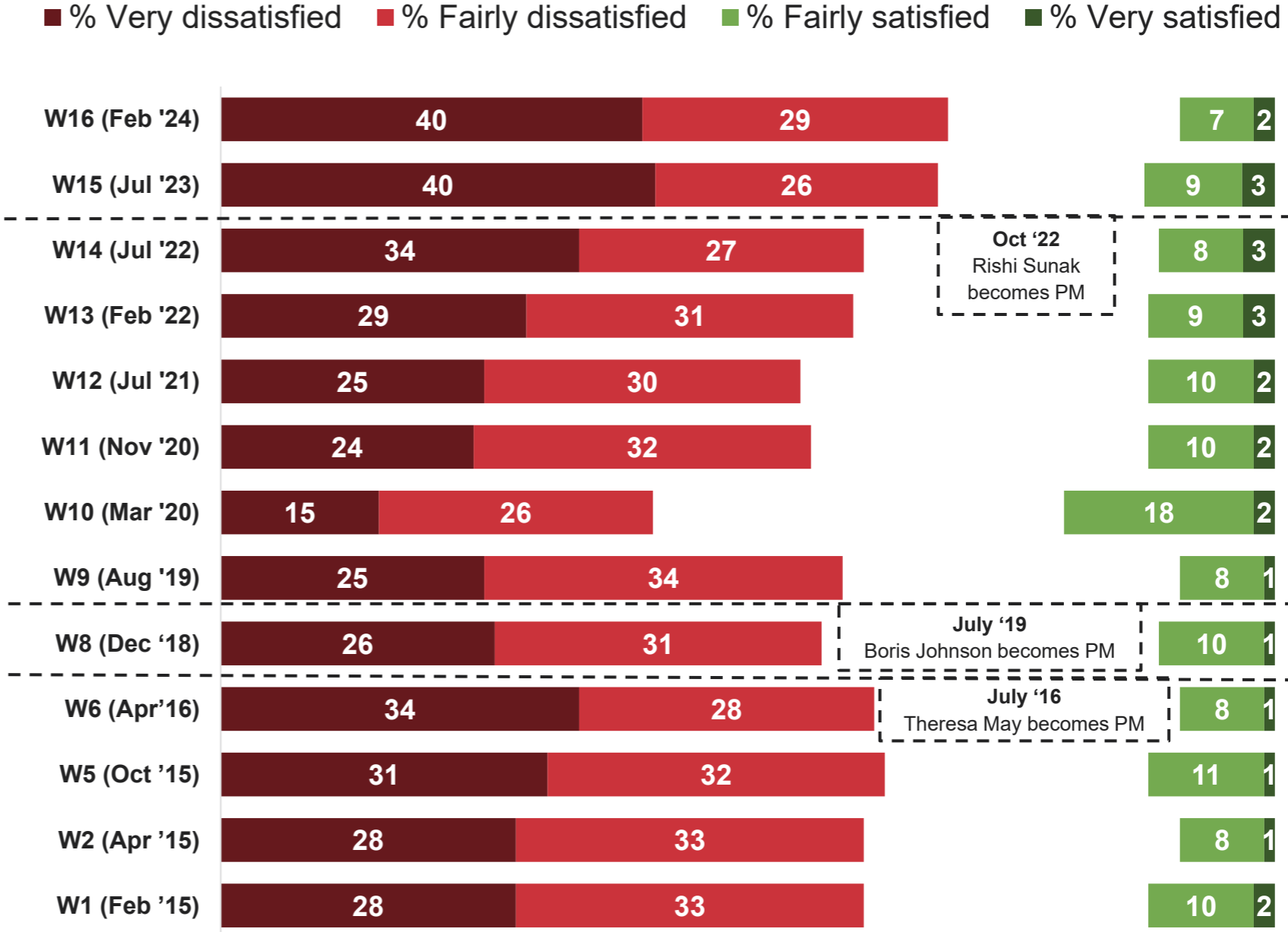
Q Looking ahead to the next General Election, which, if any issues, do you think will be very important to you in helping you to decided which party to vote for?



Base: All respondents (W16: 3000): Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024)

# Dissatisfaction with the way the current government is dealing with immigration has increased steadily since 2020 to its highest level in the series

Q Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the current government is dealing with immigration?

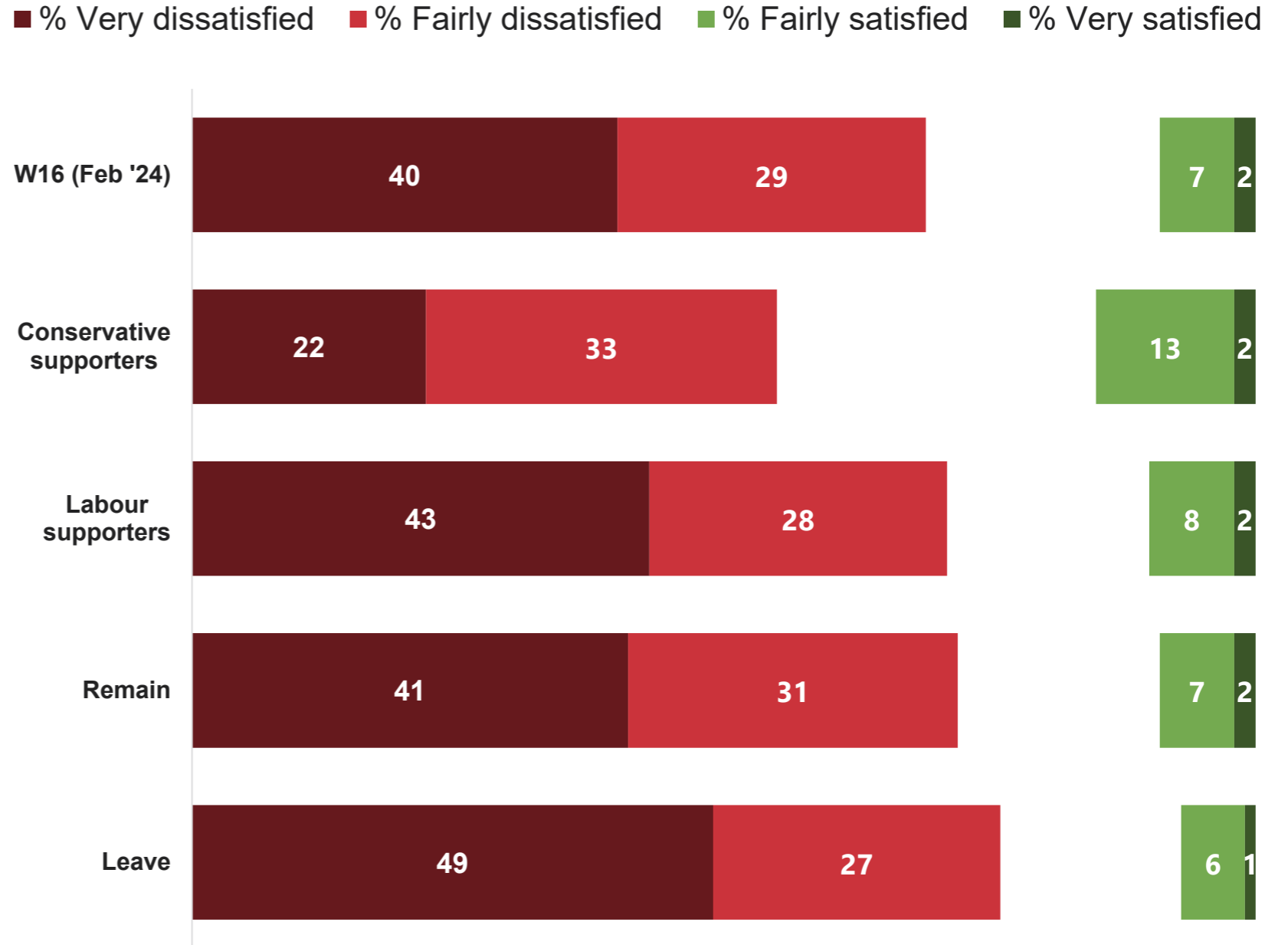


Base: All respondents (W1: 4574; W2: 3770; W5:1941; W6: 4002; W8: 2520; W9: 2006; W10: 2100; W11: 2532; W12: 4000; W13: 3206; W14: 3004; W15: 3000; W16: 3000);  
 Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024

# A majority of supporters of both main parties are dissatisfied with the government's handling of immigration.

## Leave voters are the most dissatisfied.

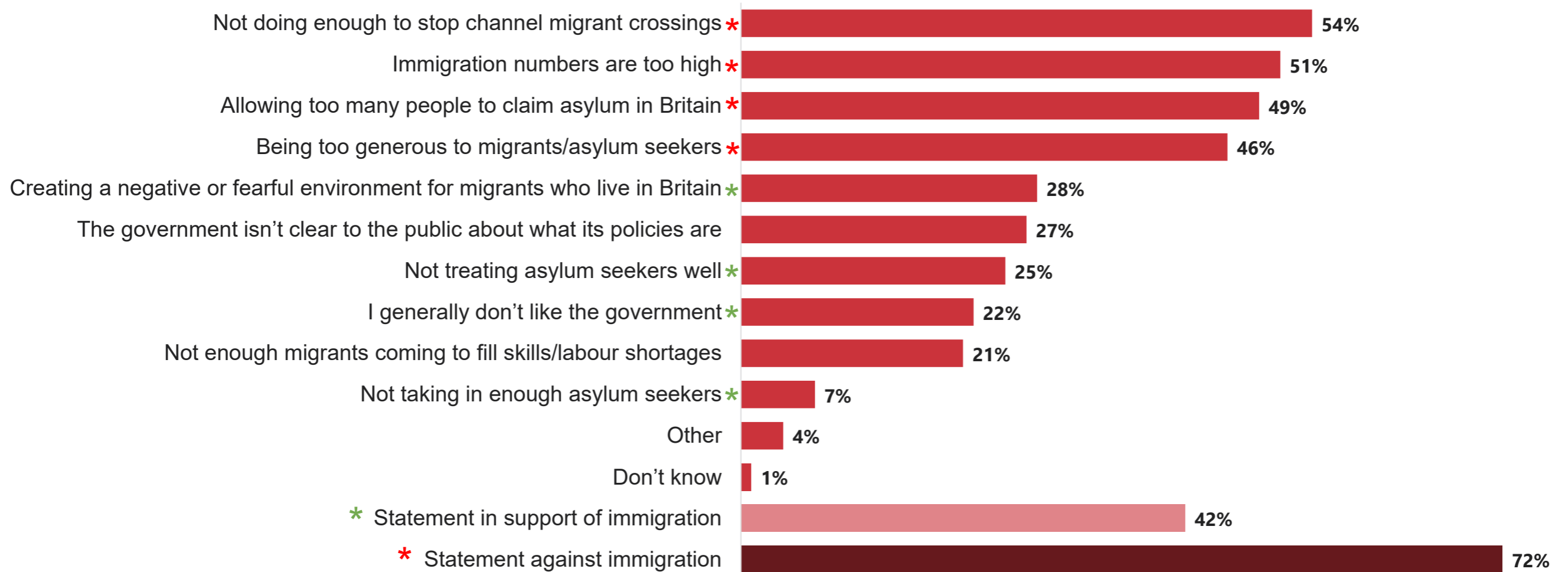
Q Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the current government is dealing with immigration?



Base: All respondents (W16: 3000): Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024

# More than half of those dissatisfied with the government's handling of immigration cite not enough being done to stop channel crossings

Q And for which of the following reasons, if any, make you dissatisfied with the way the current government is dealing with immigration?

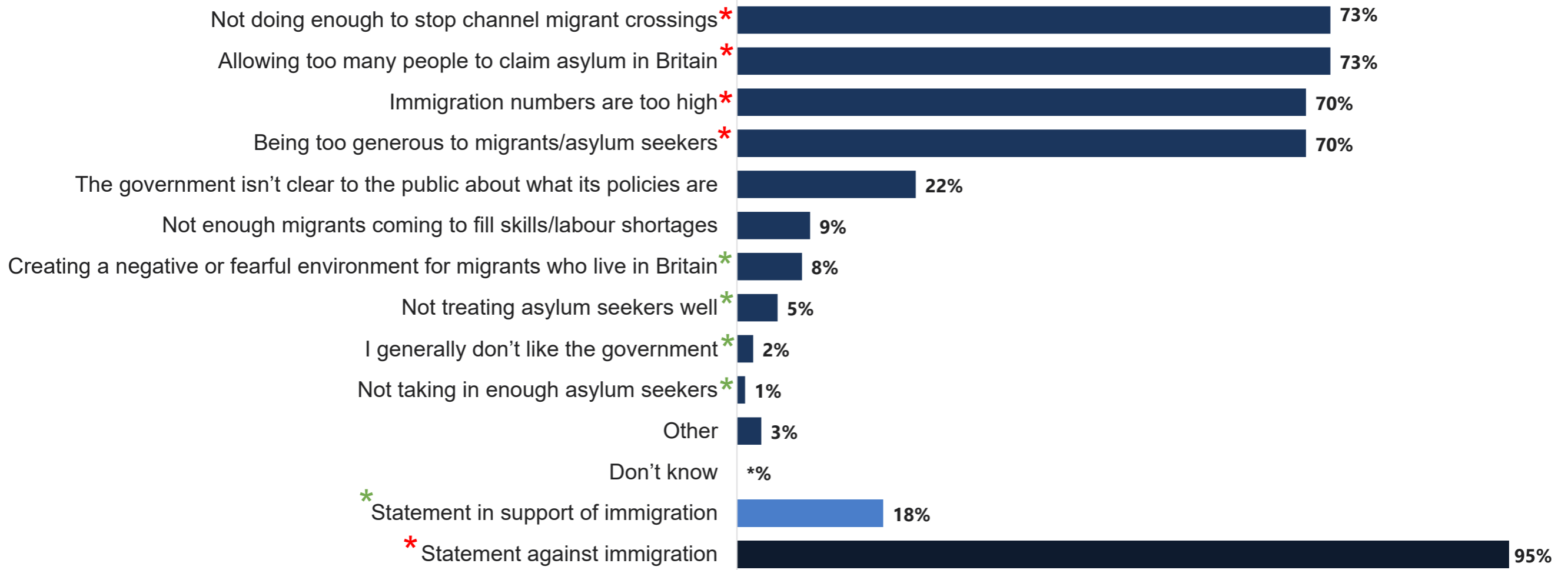


Base: All respondents dissatisfied with the way the Government's dealing with immigration (W16: 3000); Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024)



# For Conservative supporters, their dissatisfaction with the government is largely based on not stopping the channel crossings and immigration/asylum numbers generally

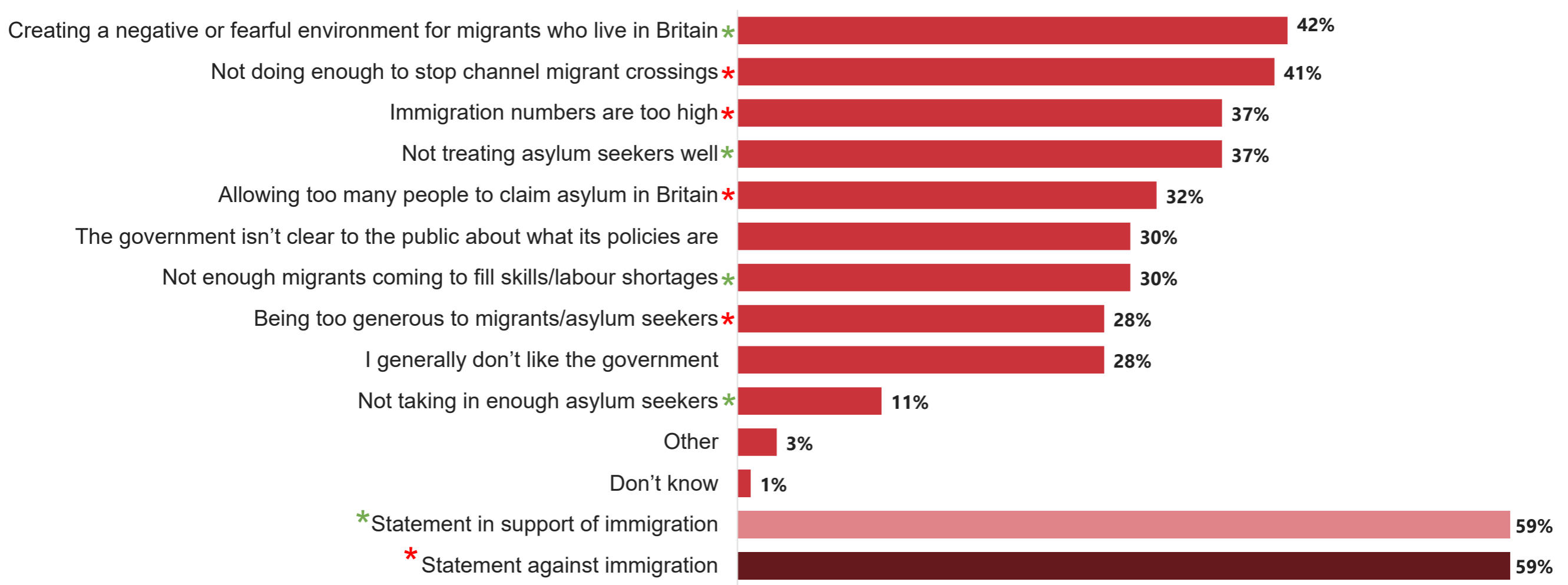
Q And for which of the following reasons, if any, make you dissatisfied with the way the current government is dealing with immigration?



Base: All Conservative supporters dissatisfied with the way the Government's dealing with immigration (W16: 330): Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024)

# Dissatisfaction drivers among Labour supporters are more mixed between not doing enough to stop the channel crossings/high immigration numbers and more supportive feelings of immigration

Q And for which of the following reasons, if any, make you dissatisfied with the way the current government is dealing with immigration?



Base: All Labour supporters dissatisfied with the way the Government's dealing with immigration (W16: 788); Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024)



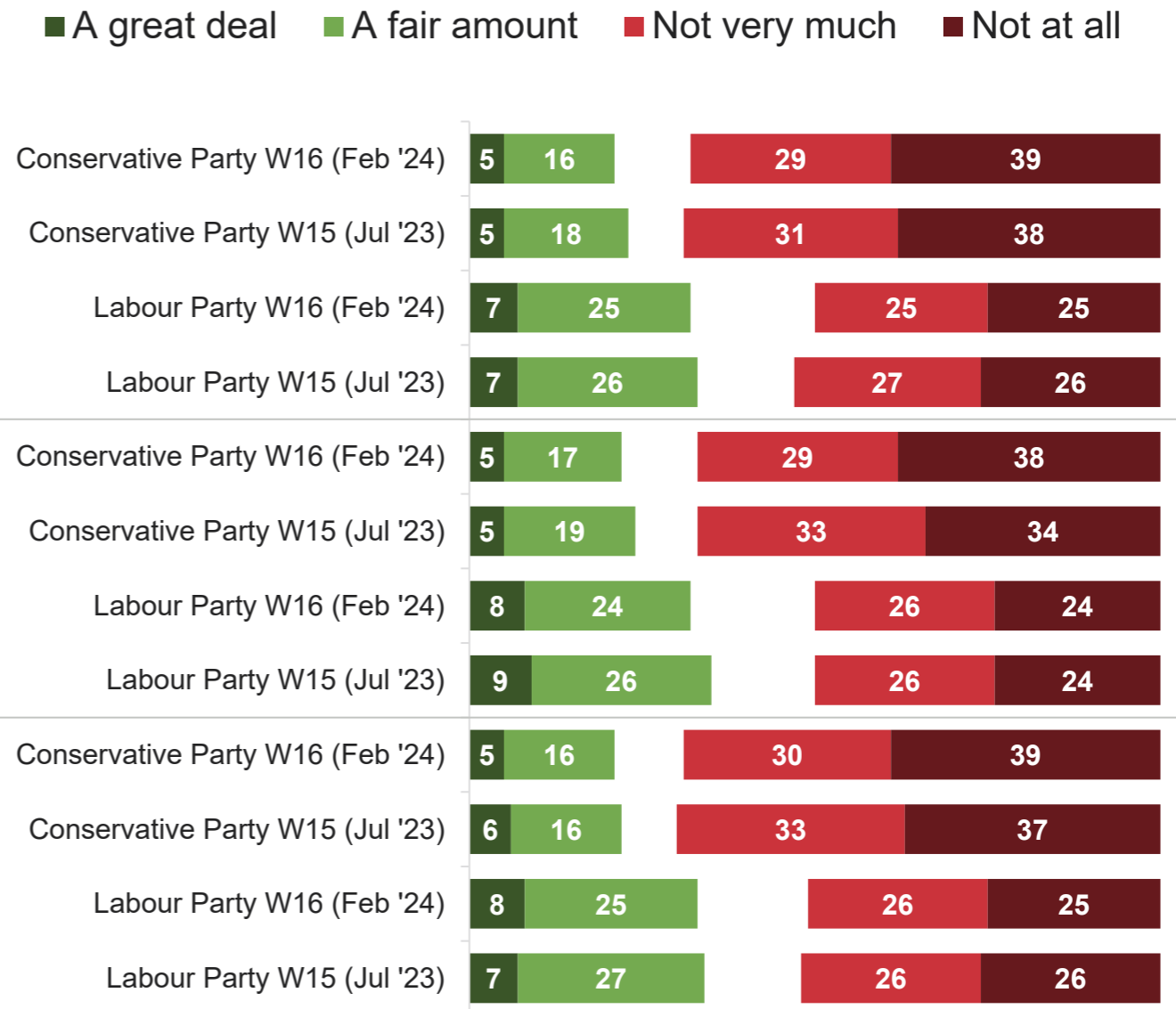
# Labour are more trusted by the public on aspects of immigration and asylum policy, but confidence is low in both parties

Q To what extent, if at all, do you trust each of the following political parties to have...

**The right immigration policies overall?**

**The right policies on immigration visas for working in Britain?**

**The right policies towards asylum seekers and refugees?**



Base: All respondents (W15: 3000; W16: 3000); Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024

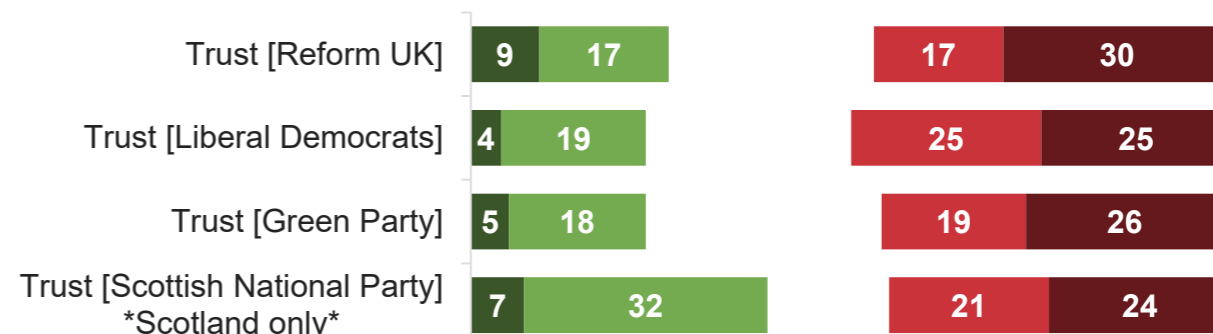


# Trust in other parties is also low; within Scotland the SNP does better

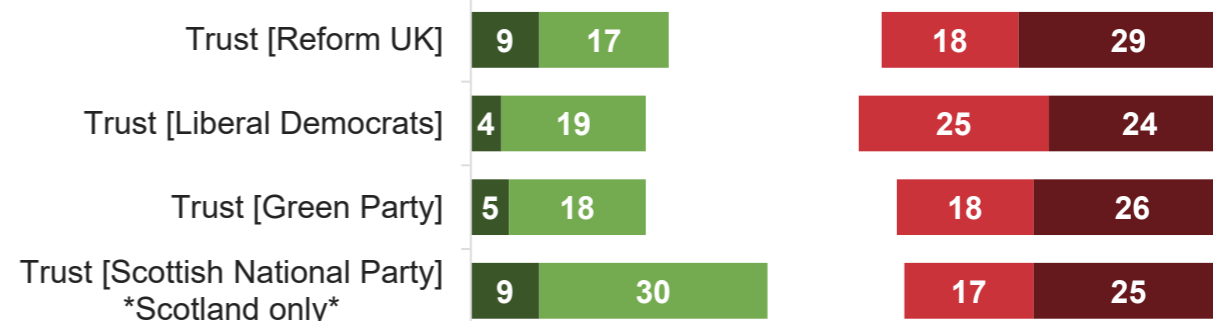
Q To what extent, if at all, do you trust each of the following political parties to have...

■ A great deal ■ A fair amount ■ Not very much ■ Not at all

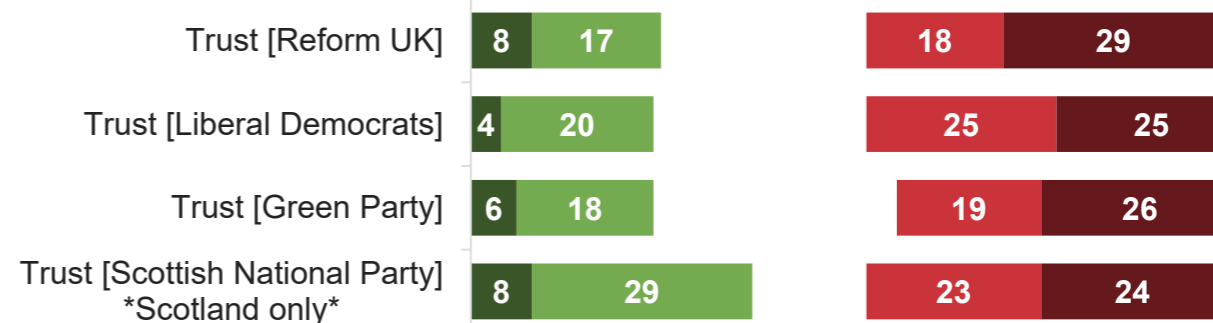
## The right immigration policies overall?



## The right policies on immigration visas for working in Britain?



## The right policies towards asylum seekers and refugees?

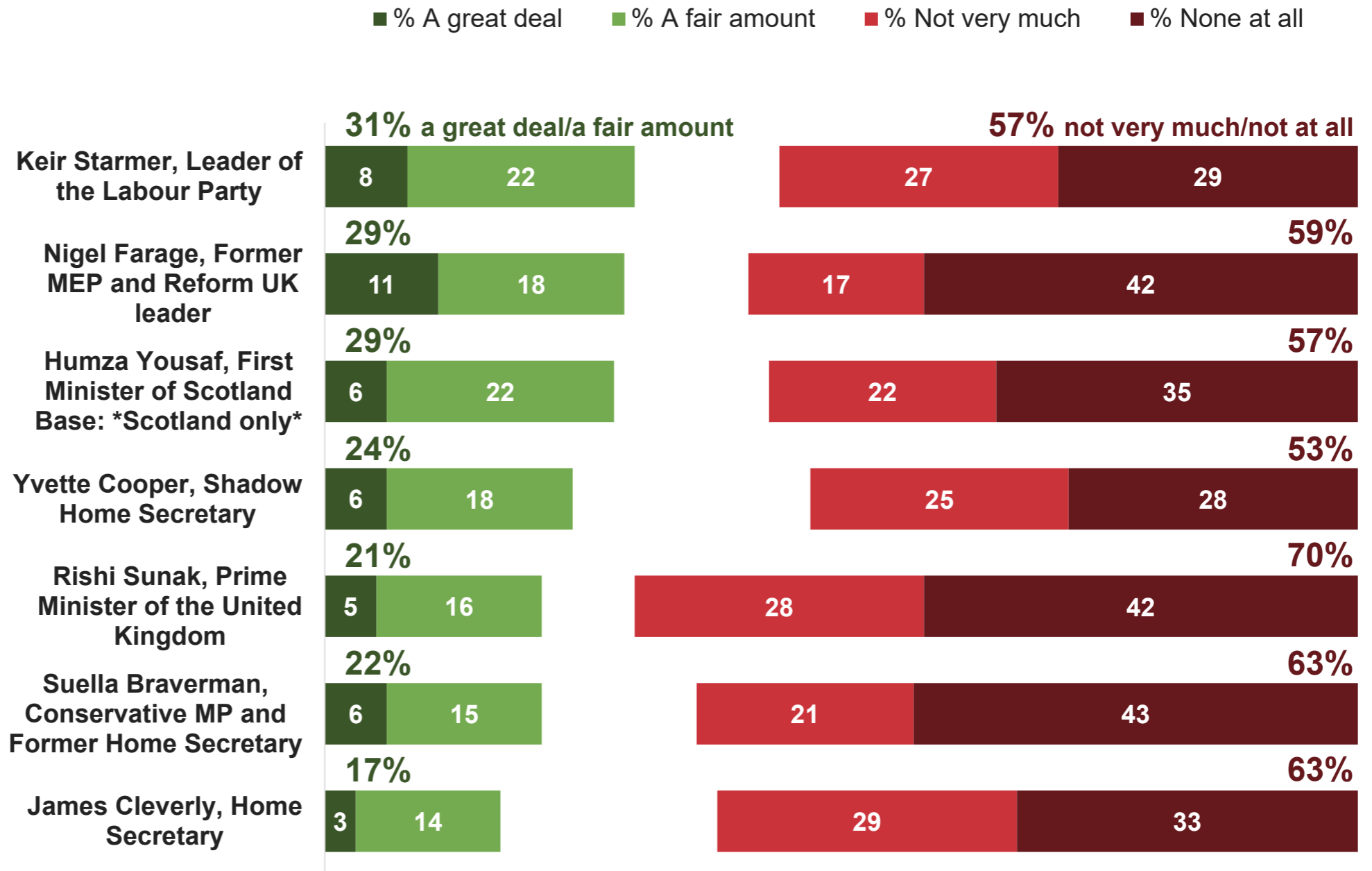


Base: All respondents from Scotland only (W16: 252), All respondents (W16: 3000): Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024

**3 in 10 trust Keir Starmer when talking about immigration – no other party leader/MP receives better scores (while none are highly trusted).**

**Rishi Sunak is the least trusted.**

Q To what extent, if at all, do you trust each of the following politicians when they talk about immigration...?

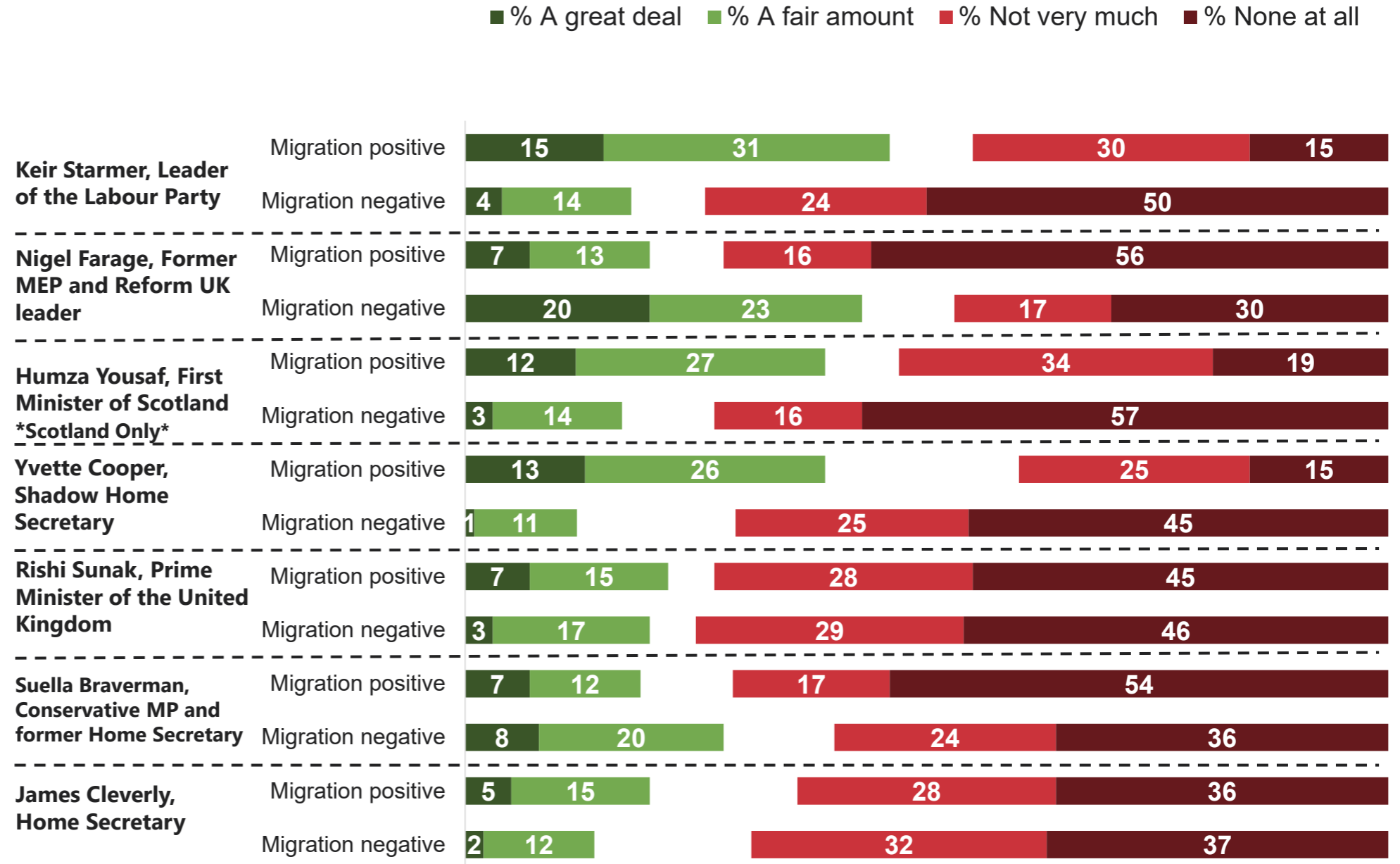


Base: All respondents (W16: 3000), All respondents from Scotland (W16: 252): Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024)



# Trust in politicians varies by views towards immigration, though trust is low on both sides towards Conservative politicians

Q To what extent, if at all, do you trust each of the following politicians when they talk about immigration...?

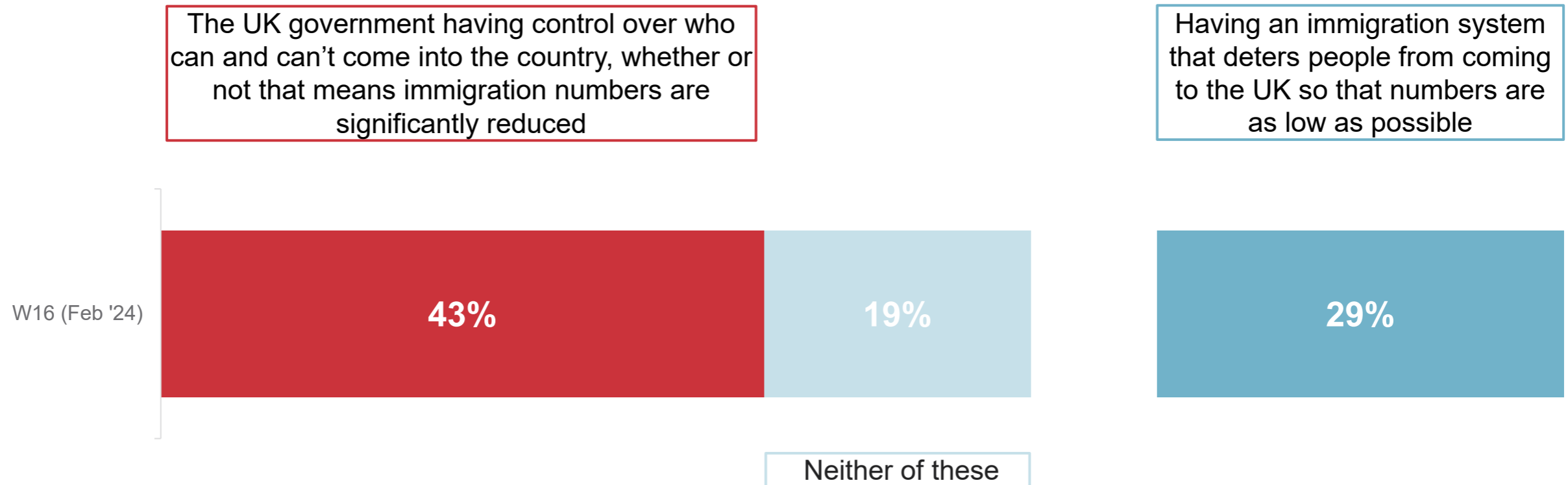


Base: All respondents from Scotland (W16: 252), All respondents (W16: 3000): Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024)



# More think the government should prioritise controlling and selecting who comes into Britain than those who think it should prioritise reducing overall immigration numbers through deterrence.

Q When thinking about the government's immigration policy, which of the following statements is most important to you?

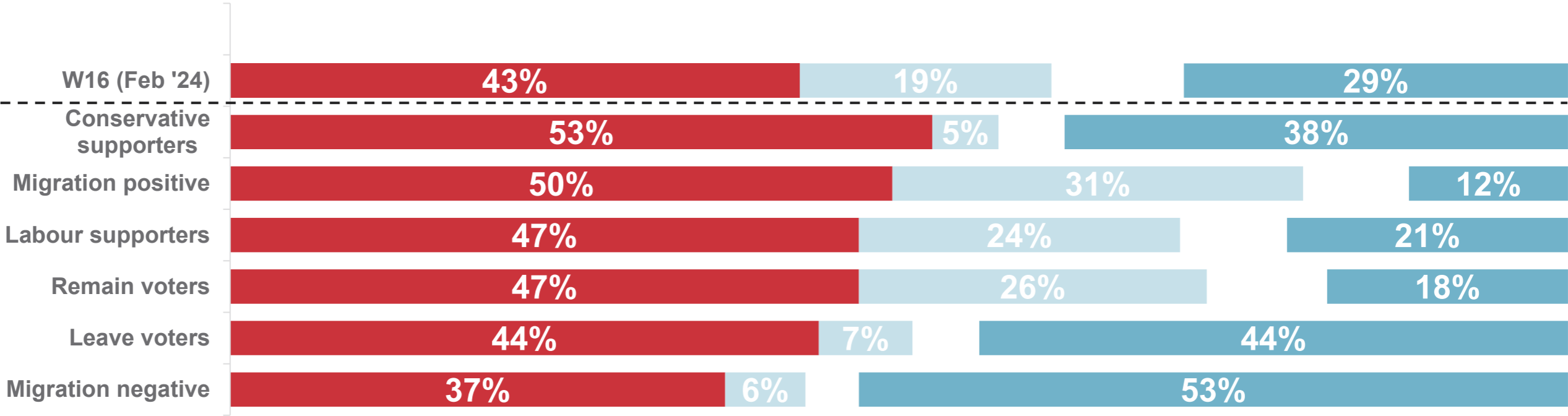


# Conservative supporters are especially split, being more likely to choose both control and keeping numbers low

Q When thinking about the government's immigration policy, which of the following statements is most important to you?

The UK government having control over who can and can't come into the country, whether or not that means immigration numbers are significantly reduced

Having an immigration system that deters people from coming to the UK so that numbers are as low as possible



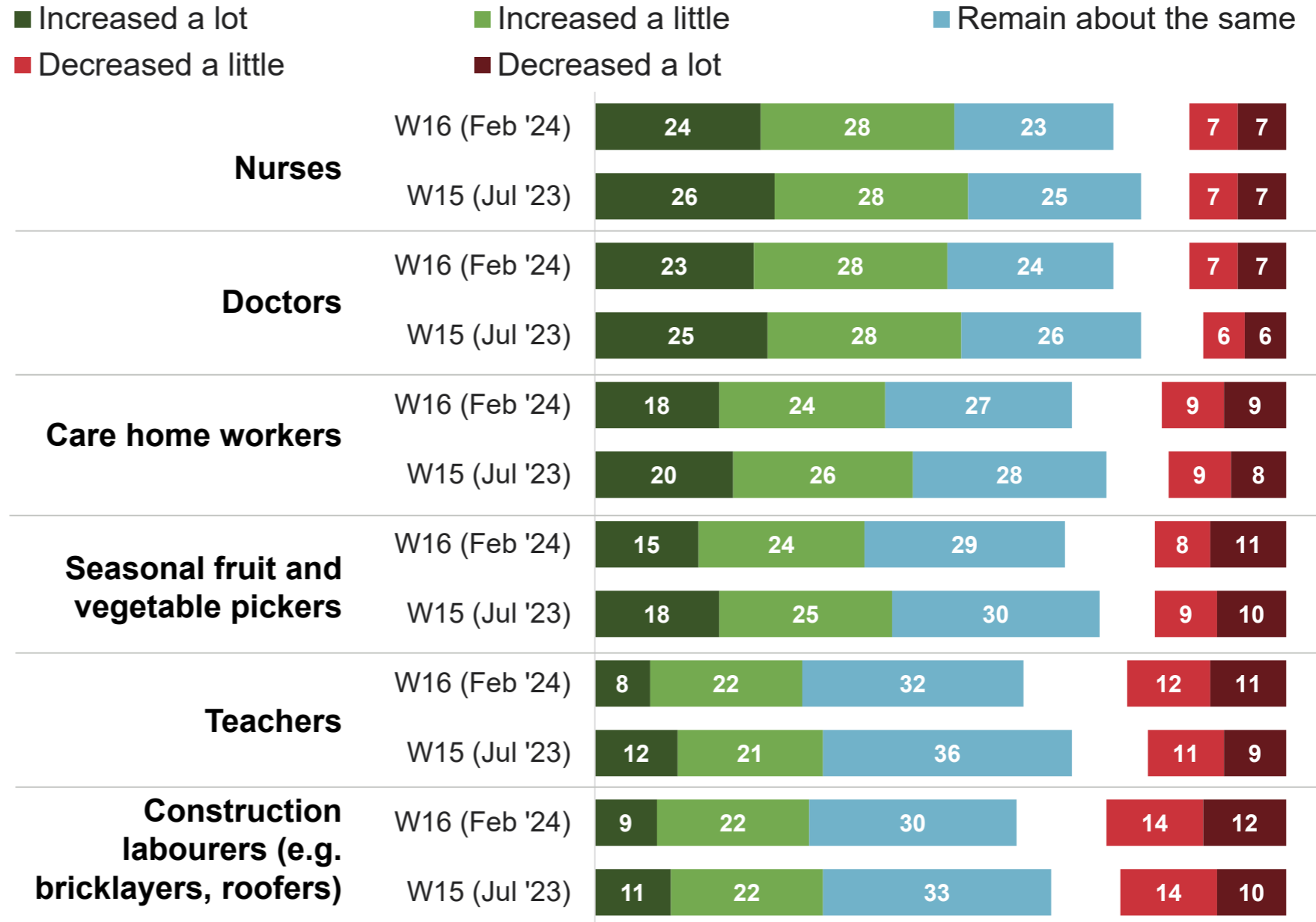
Neither of these



Base: All respondents (W16: 3000); Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024

# Around half would like to see the number of migrants who are doctors or nurses to be increased, and four in ten would like to see more care home workers.

Q Would you prefer the number of migrants (from any country) from each of the below groups coming to live in the UK to be increased, reduced, or should it remain about the same?

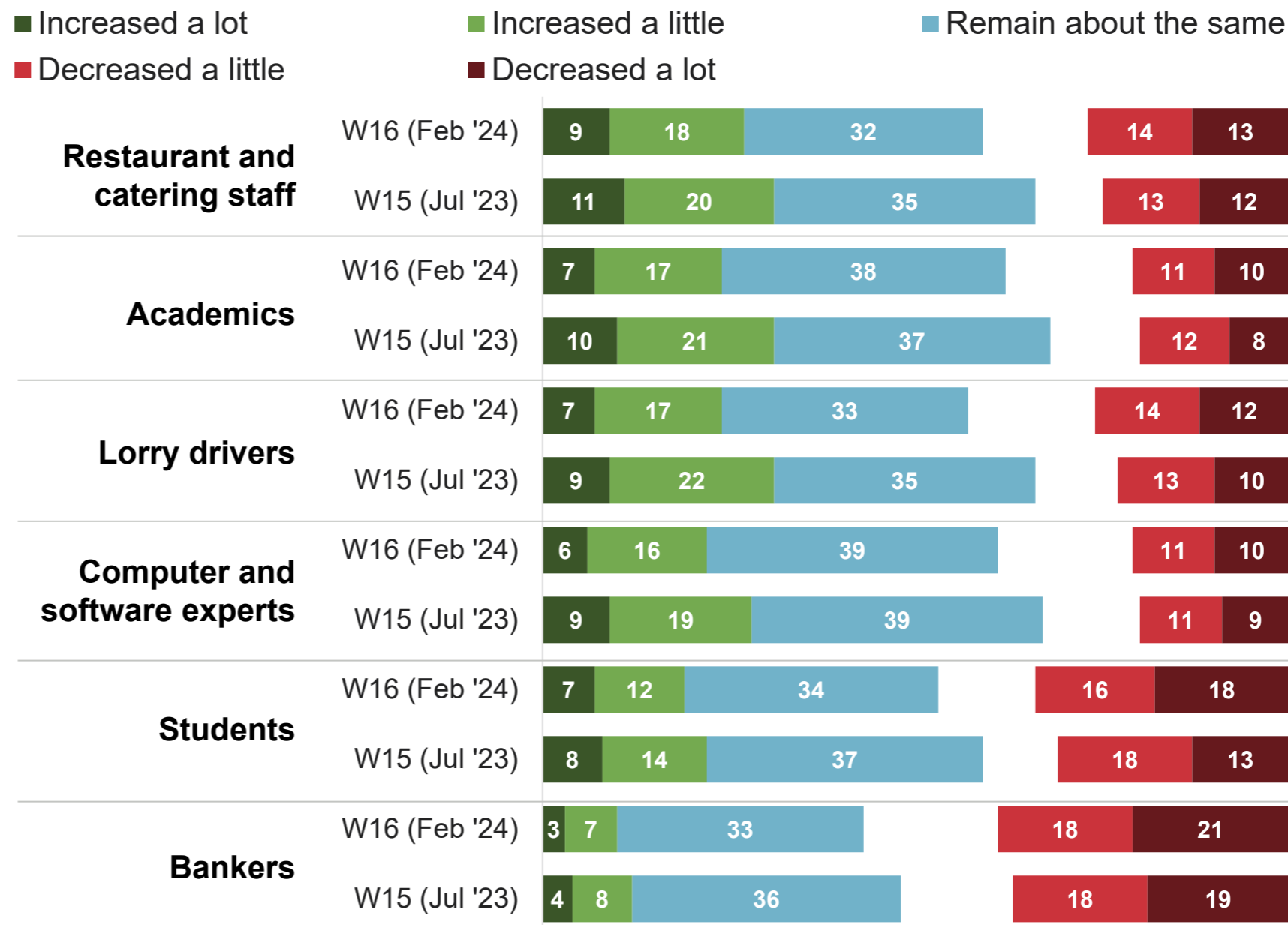


Base: All respondents (W15: 3000; W16: 3000); Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024



# There is increasing support for reducing the proportion of migrants who are bankers or students (39% and 35% respectively) since July 2022.

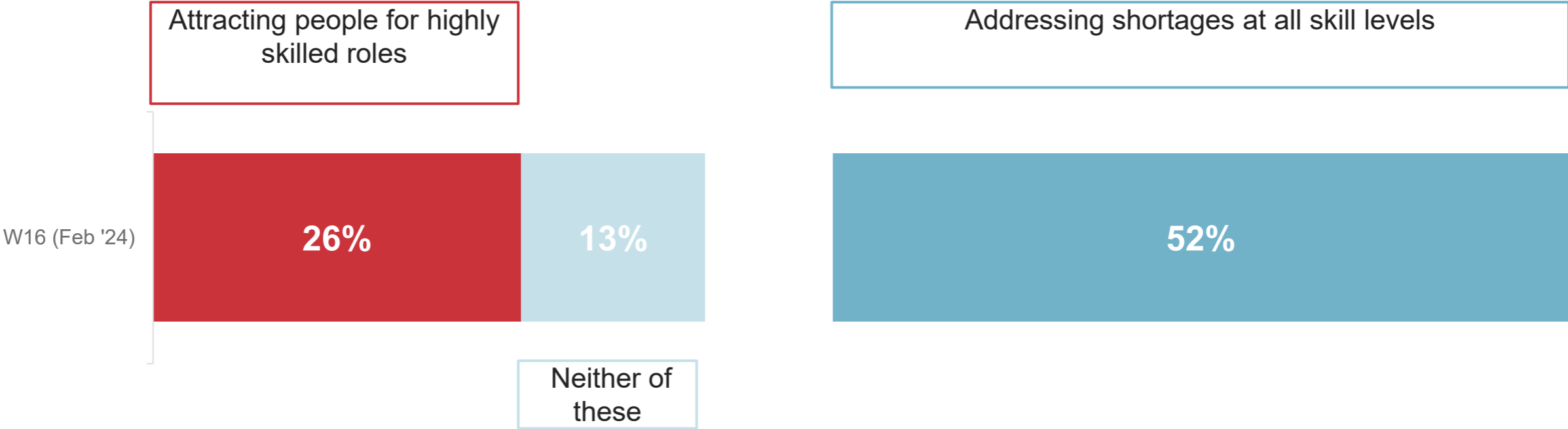
Q Would you prefer the number of migrants (from any country) from each of the below groups coming to live in the UK to be increased, reduced, or should it remain about the same?



Base: All respondents (W15: 3000; W16: 3000); Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024

# A majority think addressing skill shortages at all levels should be the priority when allocating work visas, over targeting high skills when allocating work visas.

Q Which, if either, of the following do you think should be the government's priority when allocating work visas to immigrants coming to the UK?

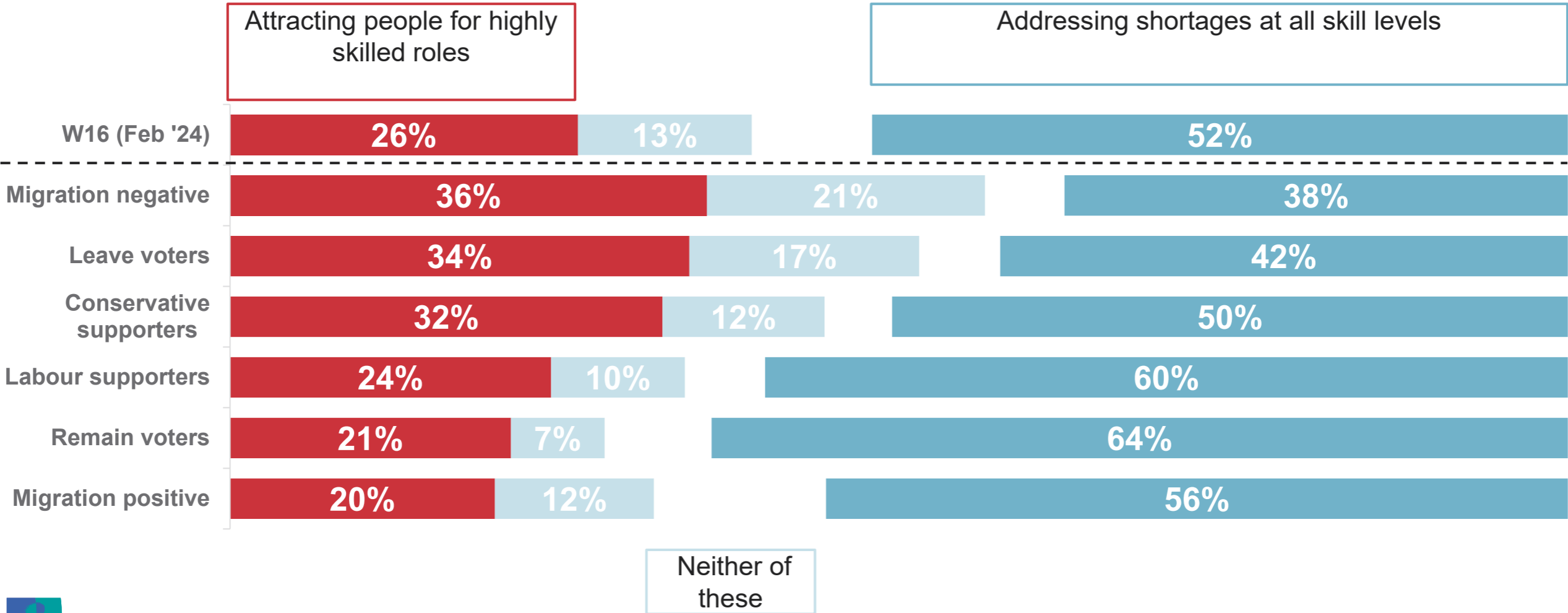


Base: All respondents (W16: 3000); Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024



# Most groups prioritise addressing shortages at all skill levels, but Leave voters and those negative towards migration are more split

Q Which, if either, of the following do you think should be the government's priority when allocating work visas to immigrants coming to the UK?



Base: All respondents (W16: 3000); Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024

# Just under half support granting 2-year post study visas to international students, while one in five are opposed.

Q Currently international students at UK universities are eligible to apply for a 2 year post-study visa which allows them to work in any job after they have finished their course.

After 2 years, the visa expires, and they must either leave the UK or apply for a new visa including meeting certain requirements such as a minimum income.

To what extent, if at all, do you support or oppose international students being able to apply for a 2 year post study visas?

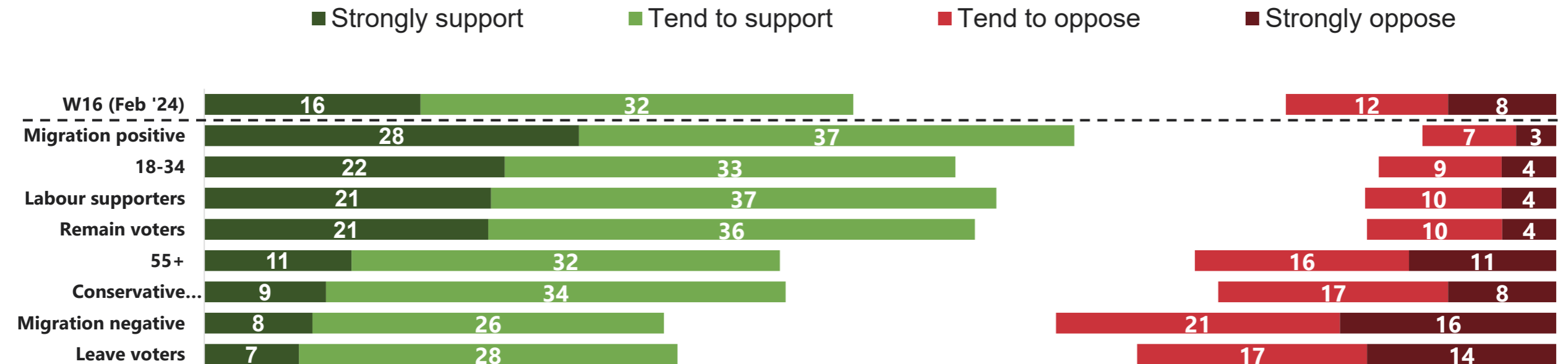


# Support for granting 2 year post-study visas highest among young people and those with favourable views towards migration

Q Currently international students at UK universities are eligible to apply for a 2 year post-study visa which allows them to work in any job after they have finished their course.

After 2 years, the visa expires, and they must either leave the UK or apply for a new visa including meeting certain requirements such as a minimum income.

To what extent, if at all, do you support or oppose international students being able to apply for a 2 year post study visas?



Base: All respondents (W16: 3000): Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024)

# There is no consensus on the minimum income threshold for spousal visas, though views clearly change as the level rises. On balance, more think that £22k is too low, and £38.7k is too high.

Q The government has recently changed the rules on family migration which will come into force in April 2024.

If you are a British citizen and want your non-British husband, wife or civil partner to live with you in the UK, you will have to earn more than £29,000 per year (the previous minimum income requirement was £18,600 per year). The government plans to increase this threshold to £38,700 by early 2025.

Migrants must still be able to speak English and will not be able to access benefits or social housing.

Which, if any, of the following best reflects your opinion on the minimum income requirement thresholds for a British citizen to earn in order for their non-British spouse/partner to be eligible for a visa to live in the UK?

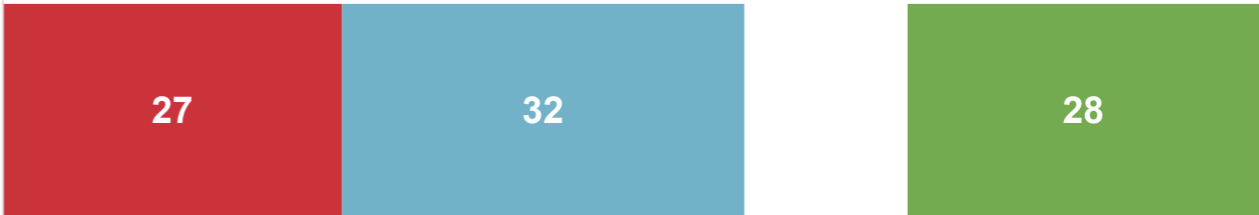


■ % This minimum income level is too high   ■ % The minimum income level is about right   ■ % This minimum income level is too low

£22,000 – meaning those earning the national minimum wage full-time would earn enough to bring their spouse or partner to live with them in the UK



£29,000 - meaning around 50% of the UK working population would earn enough to bring their spouse or partner to live with them in the UK



£38,700 – meaning around 30% of the UK working population would earn enough to bring their spouse or partner to live with them in the UK

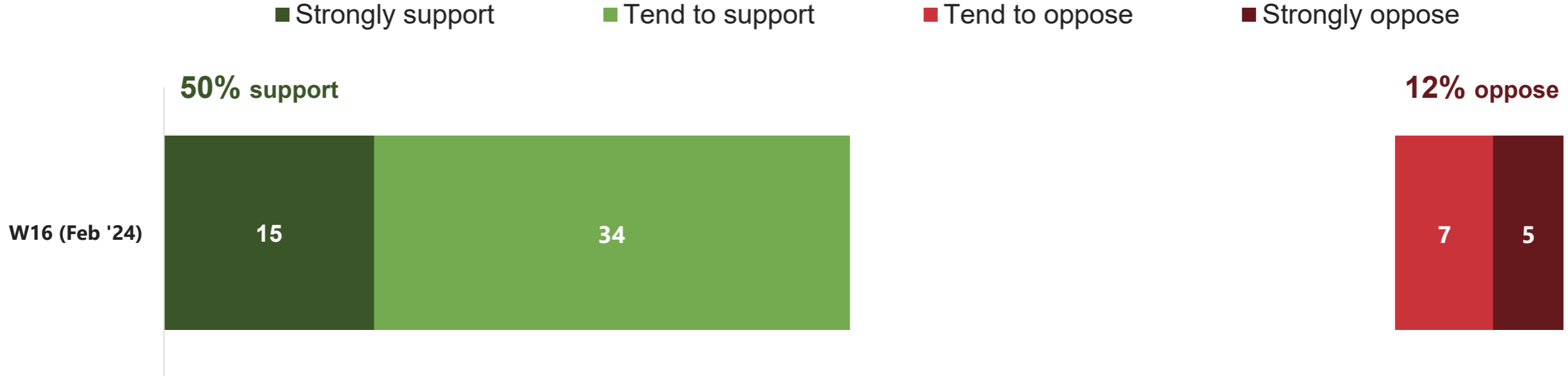


Base: All respondents (W16: 3000): Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024)

# Half of the public support the proposal for an annual migration plan to be presented to Parliament, while 12% oppose the proposal.

Q Some people have suggested that the Government should be required to present an annual migration plan to Parliament each year, like the budget, with MPs debating and voting on the plan. This would include the government setting out any immigration targets it wanted to set - for immigration overall or specific sectors, and reporting on its past performance and future policies.

To what extent, if at all, do you support or oppose this proposal on immigration policy?

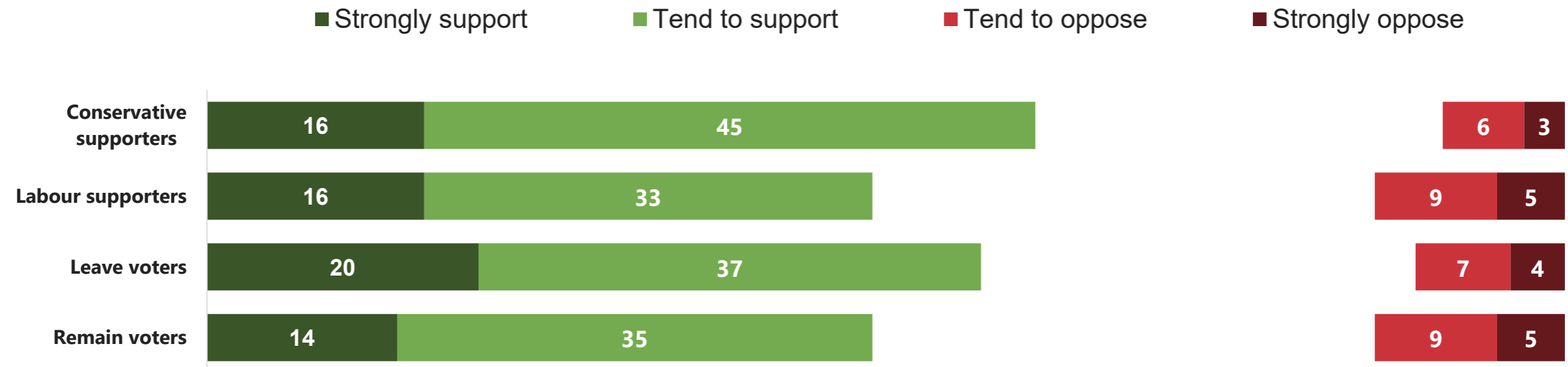


Base: All respondents (W16: 3000): Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024)

# Six in ten Conservative supporters agree with the proposal for an annual migration plan to be presented to Parliament

Q Some people have suggested that the Government should be required to present an annual migration plan to Parliament each year, like the budget, with MPs debating and voting on the plan. This would include the government setting out any immigration targets it wanted to set - for immigration overall or specific sectors, and reporting on its past performance and future policies.

To what extent, if at all, do you support or oppose this proposal on immigration policy?

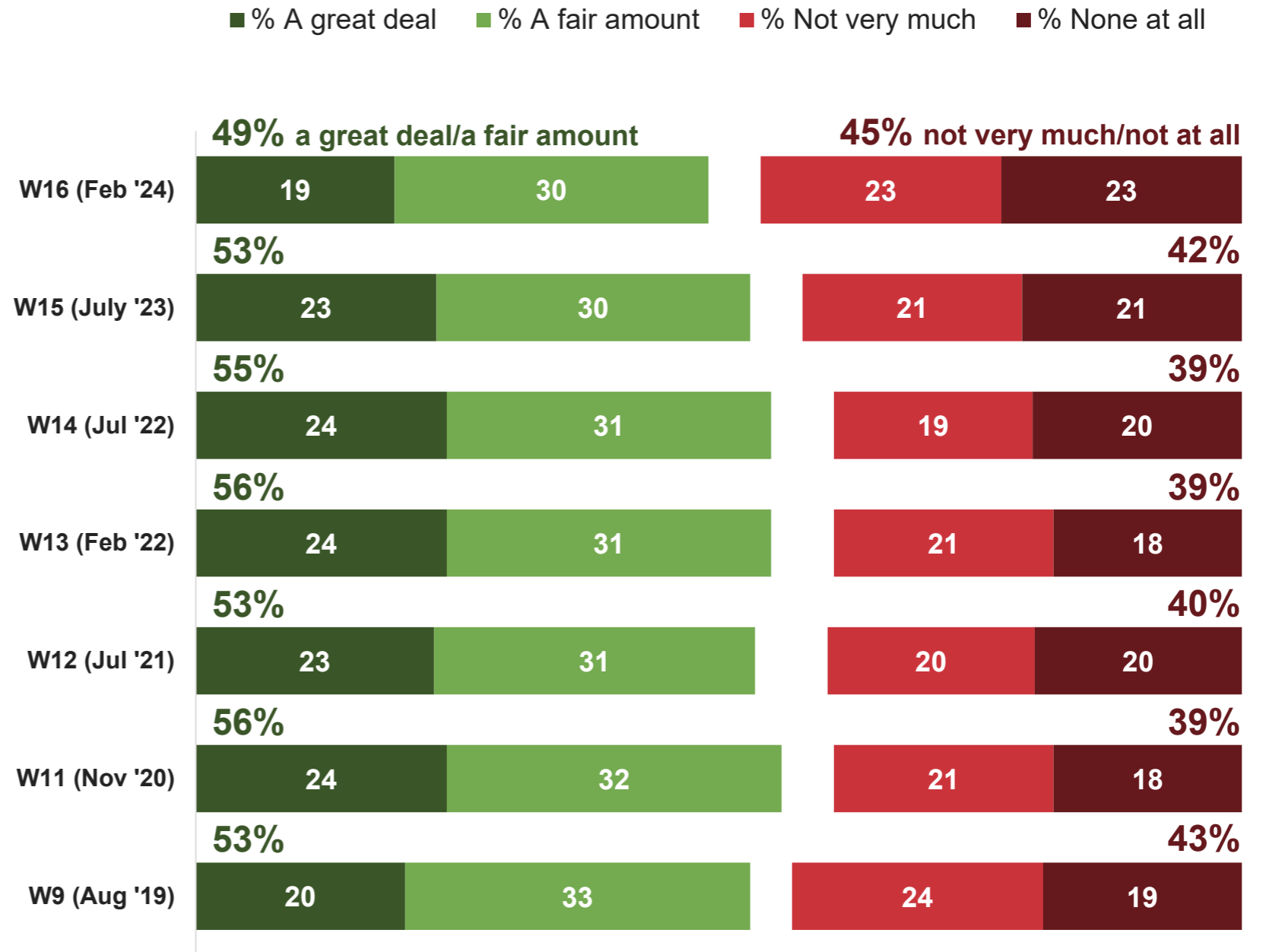


Base: All respondents (W16: 3000): Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024)

# Refugees and asylum

# Although half of people continue to have sympathy for migrants attempting to cross the English Channel, this proportion has decreased since 2022.

Q How much sympathy if at all, if any, do you have for the migrants attempting to cross the English Channel by boat to come to Britain?



Base: All respondents (W9: 2006; W11: 2532; W12: 4000; W13: 3206; W14: 3004; W15: 3000; W16: 3000): Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024)

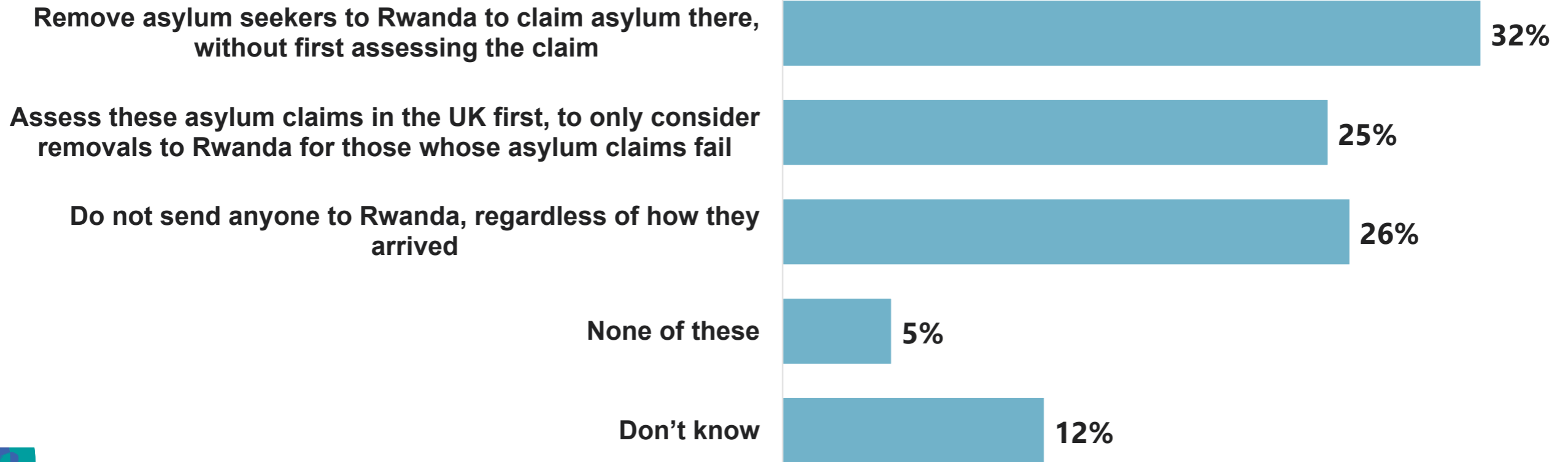




# There is no consensus on the principle of how to deal with asylum seekers who arrive without permission. A third would prefer to remove asylum seekers to Rwanda to assess claims there, a quarter each choose only sending them to Rwanda if their UK claims fail, or not sending anyone to Rwanda at all.

Q The Government has agreed a deal with Rwanda that people who seek asylum in Britain having entered without permission, such as by crossing the English Channel, can be removed to Rwanda and told to seek asylum there instead. This new policy is not yet in force. Under the previous system, people who entered Britain to seek asylum without permission could only be removed to another country if their claims for asylum in the UK failed.

Which of these options would you prefer for dealing with people who enter Britain without permission and then claim asylum here?



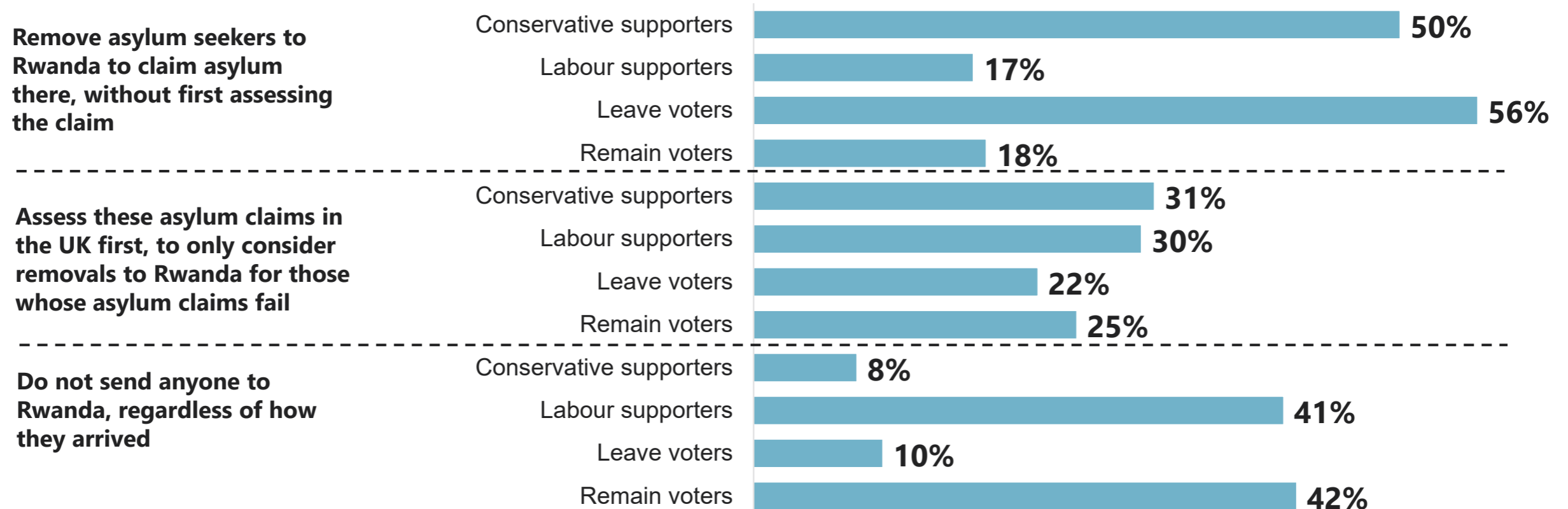
Base: All respondents (W16: 3000): Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024)



# Over half of Leave voters prefer removing asylum seekers to Rwanda, while less than a fifth of Remain voters feel the same way

Q The Government has agreed a deal with Rwanda that people who seek asylum in Britain having entered without permission, such as by crossing the English Channel, can be removed to Rwanda and told to seek asylum there instead. This new policy is not yet in force. Under the previous system, people who entered Britain to seek asylum without permission could only be removed to another country if their claims for asylum in the UK failed.

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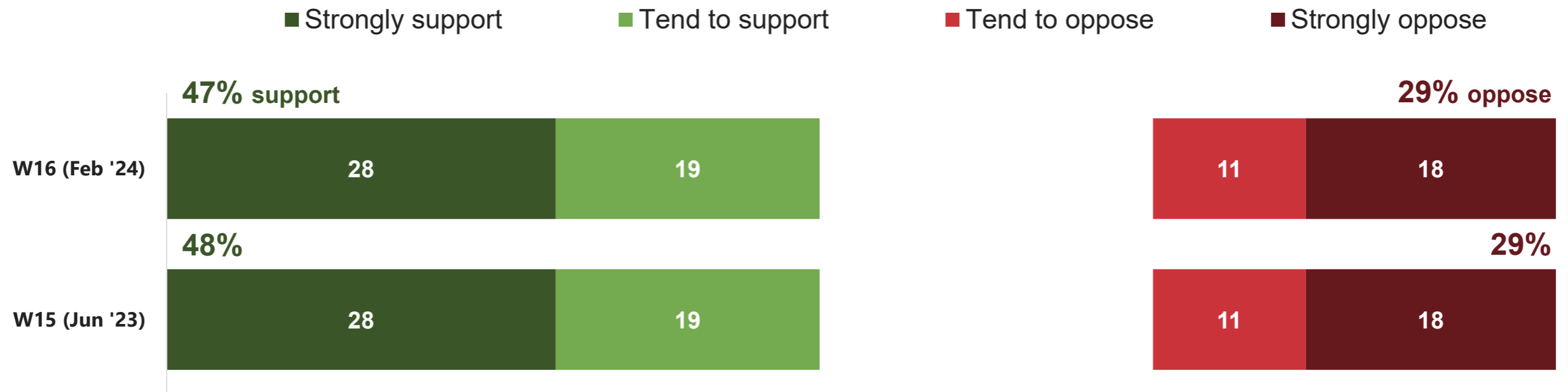


Base: All respondents (W16: 3000); Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024)



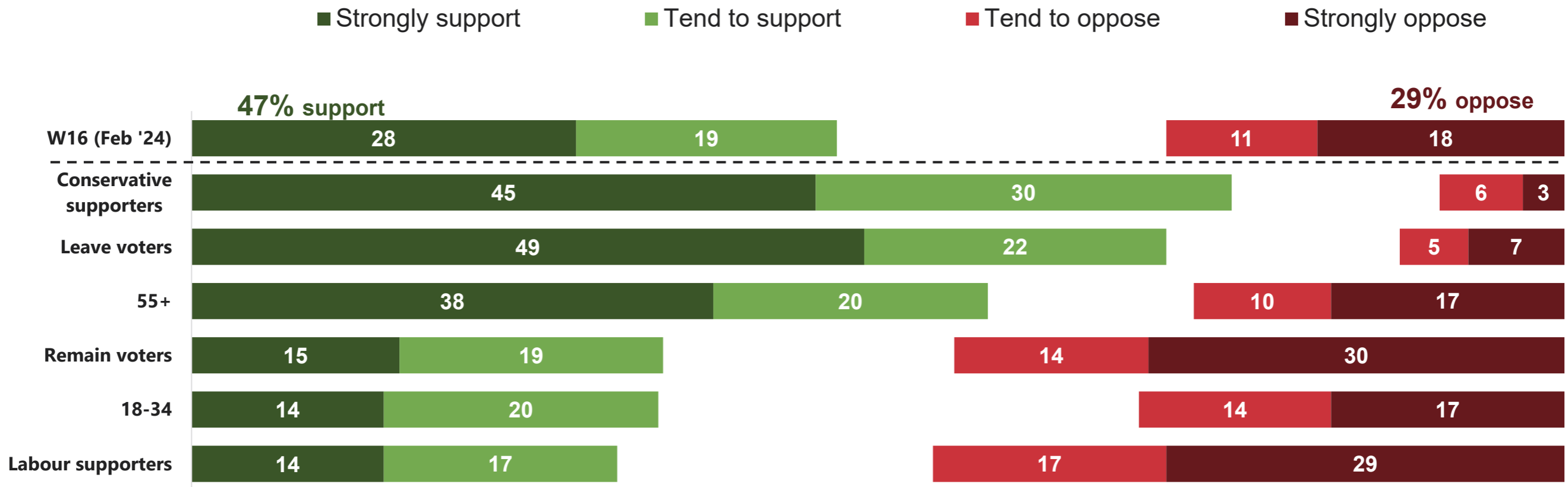
# When asked directly about the government's Rwanda policy just under half support it while three in ten oppose it

Q The UK Government policy is to refuse permission to seek asylum in the UK to anybody who has crossed the Channel without permission. Those who do so could be sent to Rwanda, to apply for asylum there instead. On balance, to what extent, if at all, do you support or oppose this policy?



# Support for Rwanda policy lowest among Labour supporters, but much higher among Conservatives

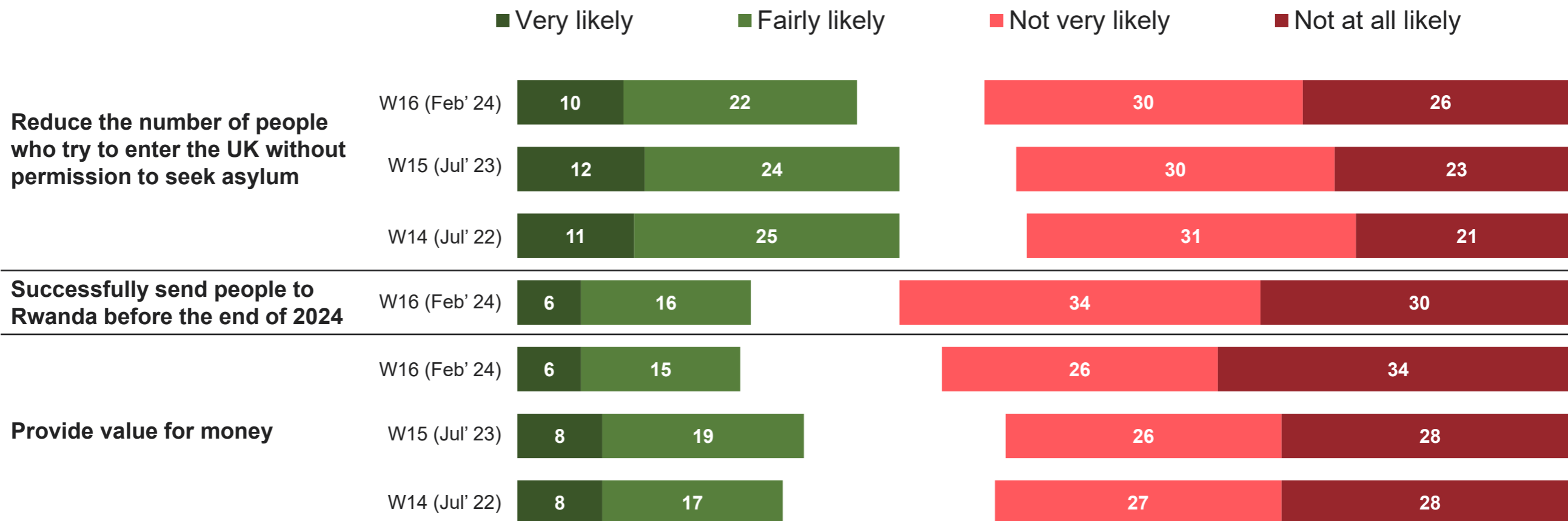
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Base: All respondents (W15: 3000; W16: 3000); Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024)

# Two thirds think it is unlikely that the Rwanda policy will successfully remove any arrivals before the end of the year. A majority also do not think the policy will act as a deterrent or provide value for money.

Q And how likely or unlikely do you think it is that this policy will...?



Base: All respondents (W14: 3004; W15: 3000; W16: 3000); Fieldwork dates: 17-28 February 2024

## FURTHER INFORMATION

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