

Defence Polling

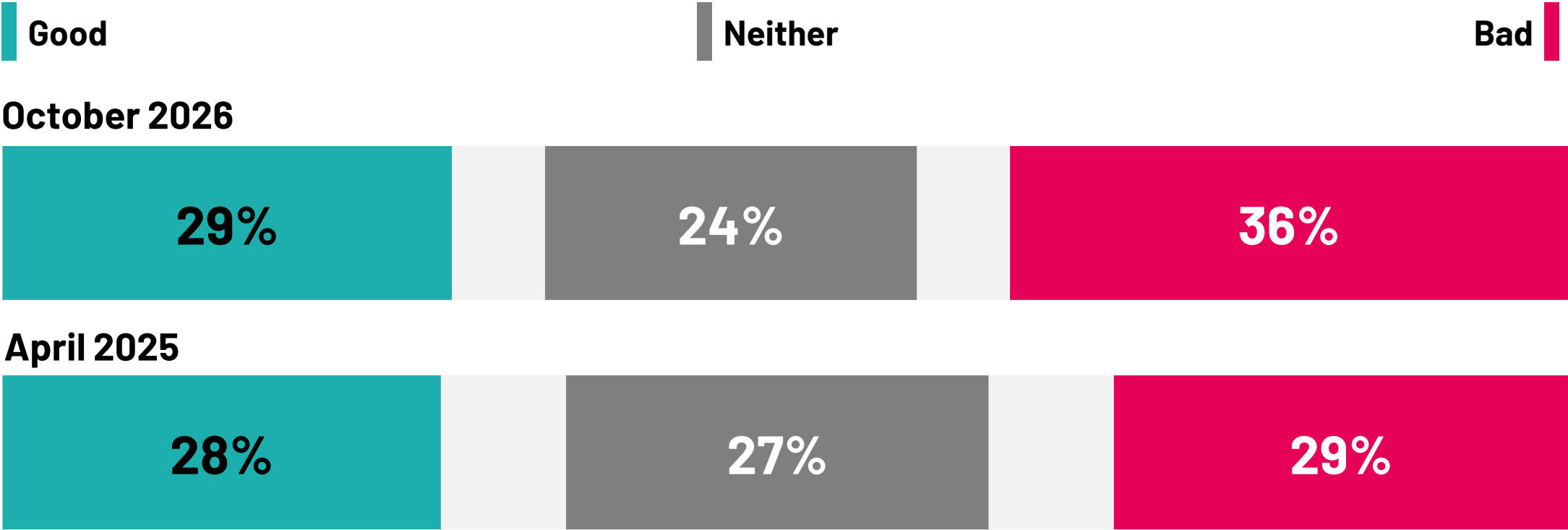
October 2026

**DOWNING
STREET SW1**
CITY OF WESTMINSTER

**WHITEHALL
SW1**
CITY OF WESTMINSTER

Britons are slightly more likely to describe the state of the UK's Armed Forces as bad compared with April 2025

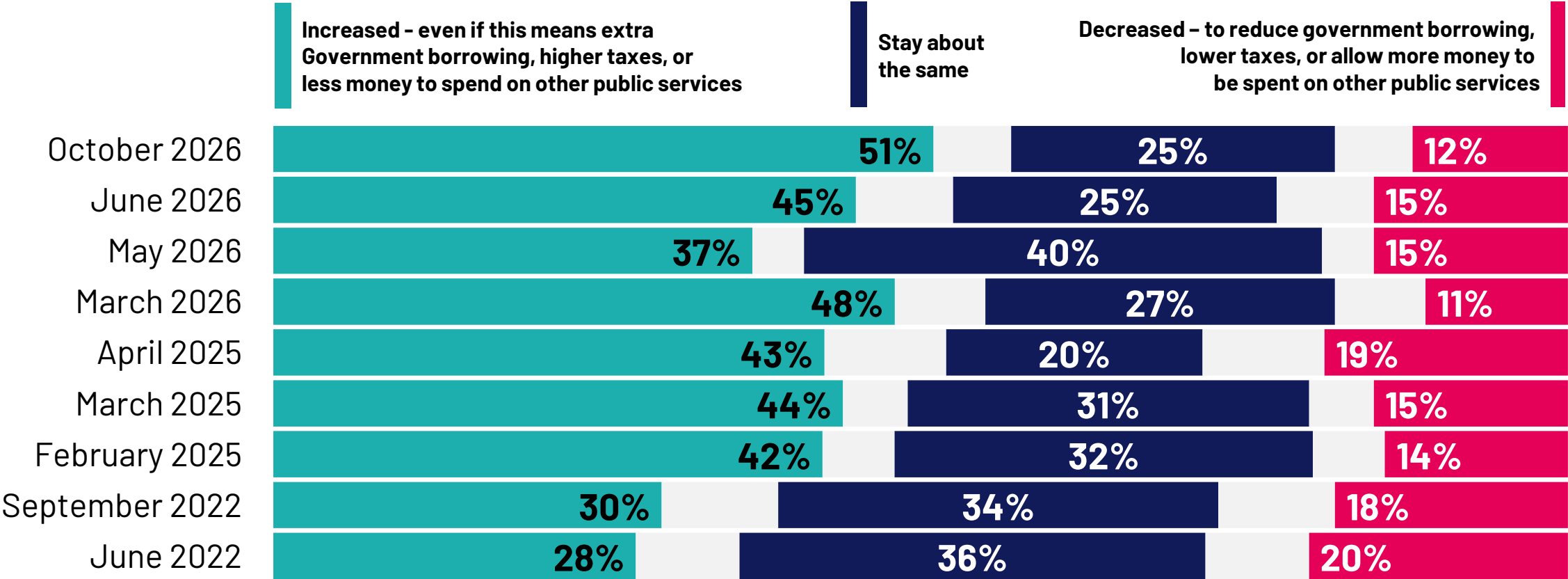
In your opinion, would you describe the state of the UK's Armed Forces as good or bad, if either?



Base: 1,090 Online British adults aged 18-75, 29 September – 1 October 2026

There is increased support for greater spending on defence and the Armed Forces even if this means extra borrowing, higher taxes or less money to spend on public services

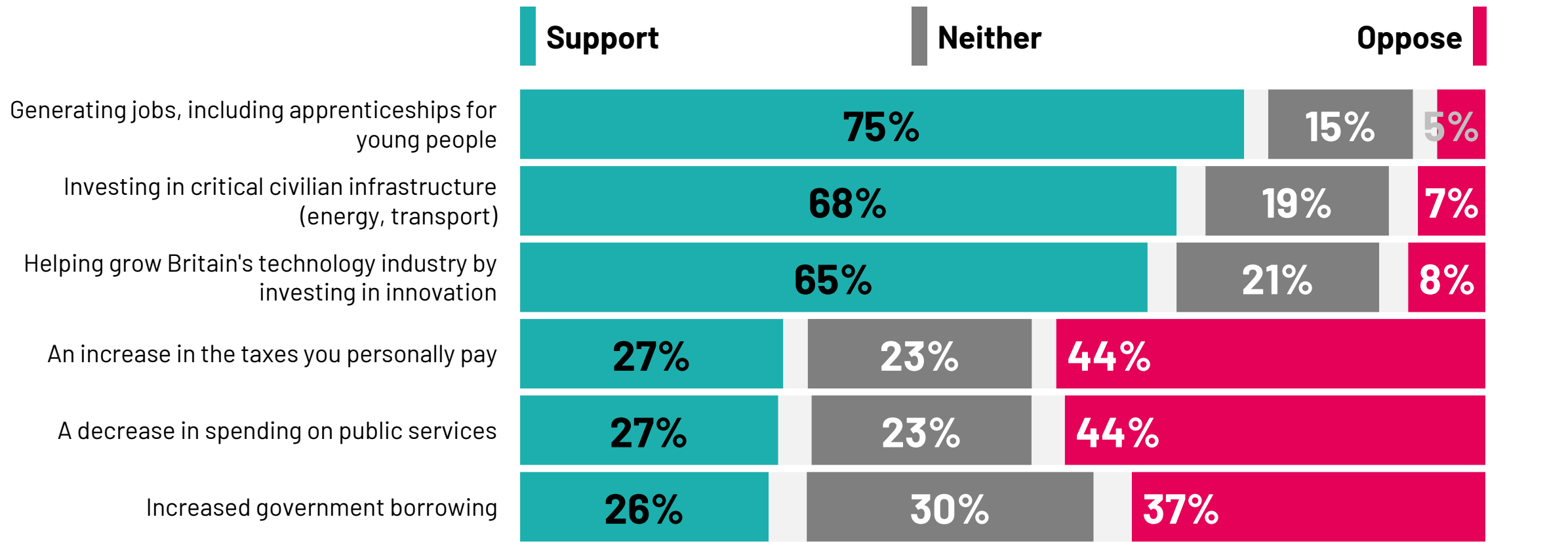
Do you think government spending on defence and the Armed Forces in the UK should be...?



Base: 1,090 Online British adults aged 18-75, 29 September – 1 October 2026

Whilst three quarters of Britons support increasing spending on defence if it generated jobs, they are more cautious if it leads to an increase in the taxes they pay and a decrease in spending on public services

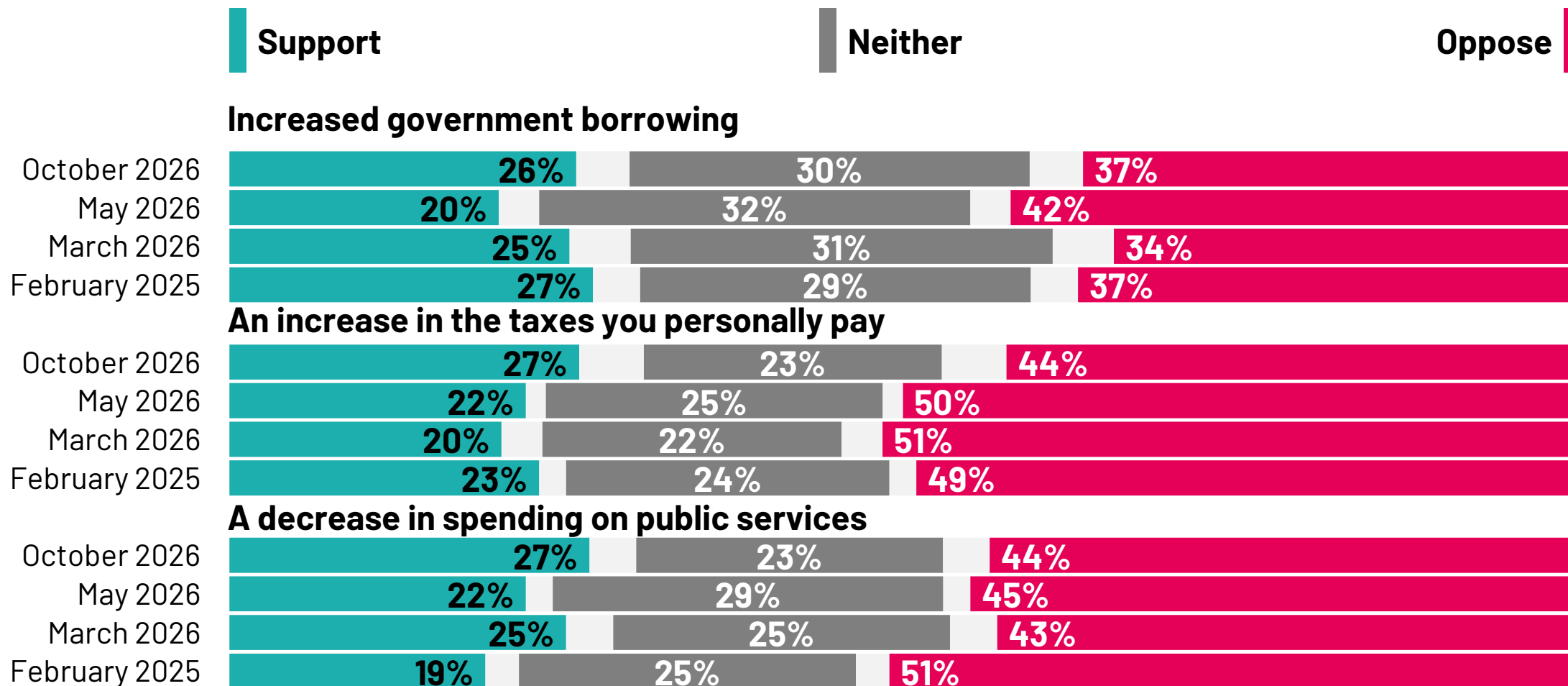
To what extent would you support or oppose increasing spending on defence if it meant each of the following:



Base: 1,090 Online British adults aged 18-75, 29 September – 1 October 2026

Attitudes to defence spending - Trends

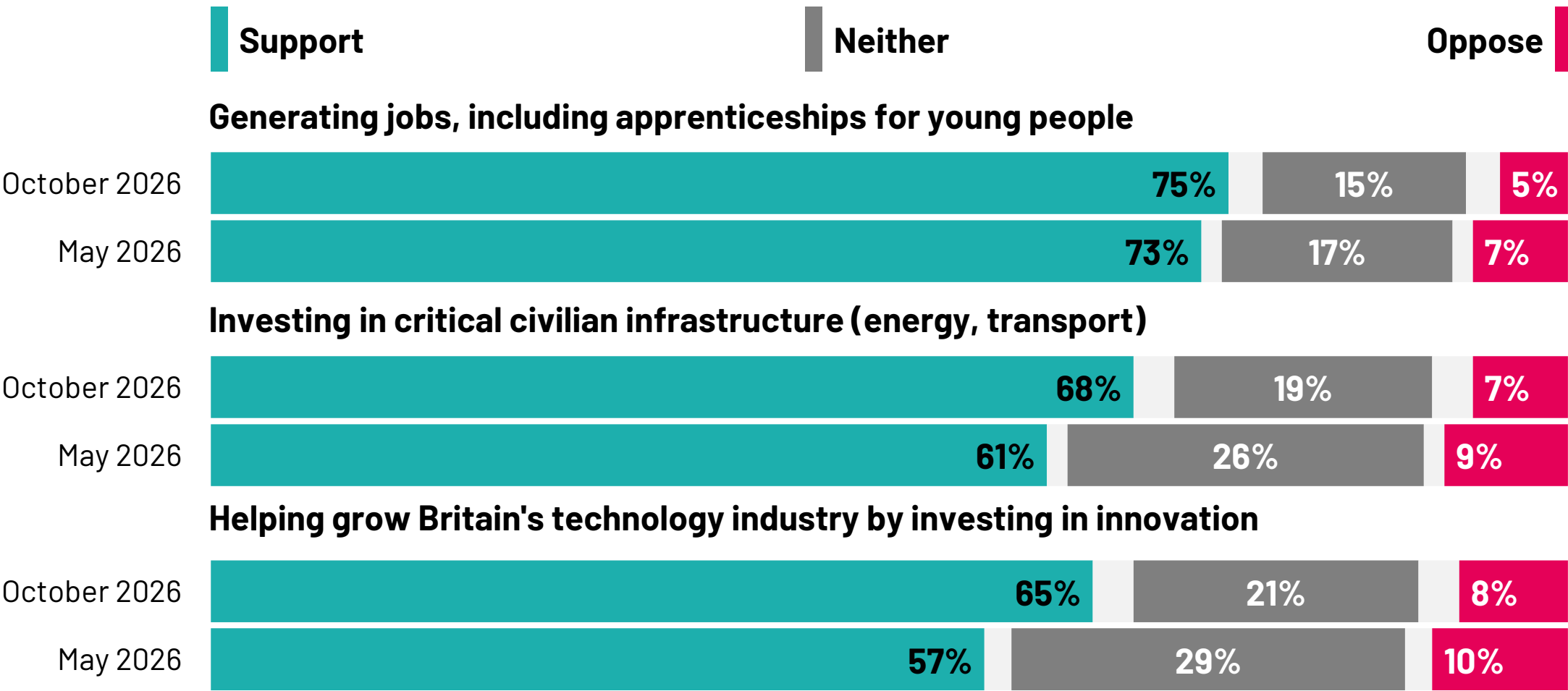
To what extent would you support or oppose increasing spending on defence if it meant each of the following:



Base: 1,090 Online British adults aged 18-75, 29 September – 1 October 2026

Attitudes to defence spending - Trends

To what extent would you support or oppose increasing spending on defence if it meant each of the following:



Base: 1,090 Online British adults aged 18-75, 29 September – 1 October 2026

Britons are split on whether spending less money on public services or higher taxes should be the main way that the government funds additional defence spending

You mentioned that you think defence spending should be increased, even if this means extra government borrowing, higher taxes, or less money to spend on public services.

Which of the following do you think should be the main way the government funds additional defence spending?

Spending less money on other public services, even if this means cuts to services that I personally use

37%

+4

Higher taxes, even if this means that taxes that I personally pay might go up

36%

+1

Extra government borrowing, even if this means higher interest rates / inflation

18%

+3

Don't know

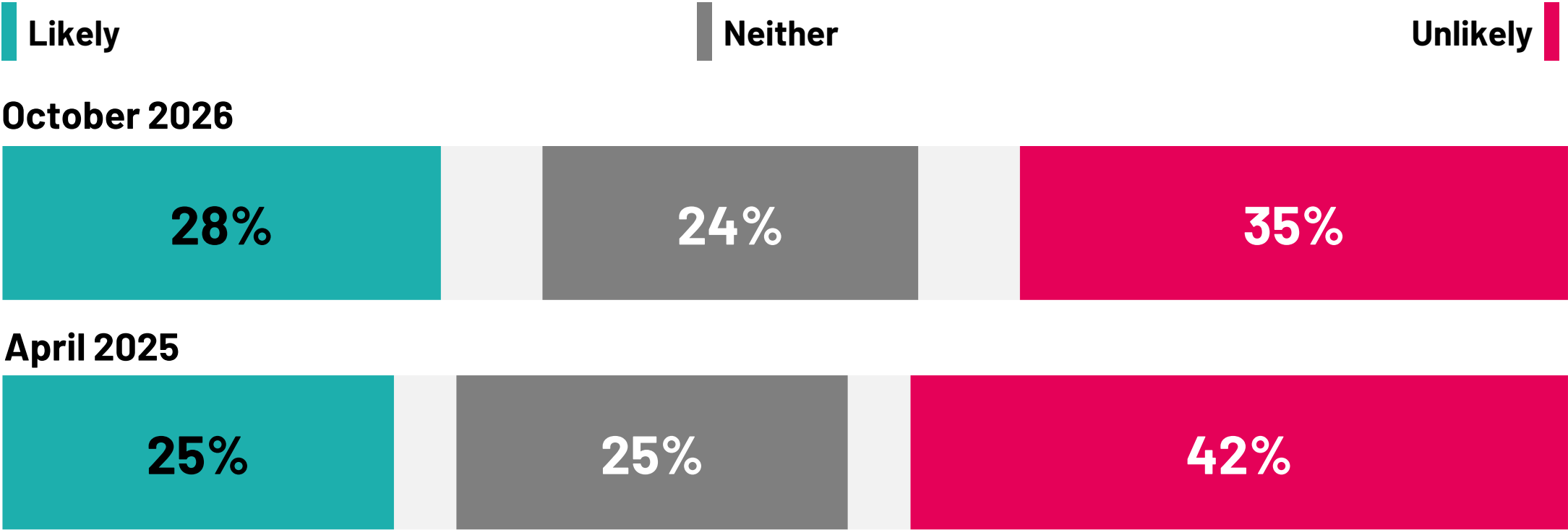
9%

Change since
May '26

Base: 564 Online British adults aged 18+ who say government spending on defence should be increased, 29 September – 1 October 2026

Few Brits are likely to purchase war bonds to facilitate higher defence spending

How likely or unlikely would you be to purchase war bonds in order to facilitate higher defence spending?

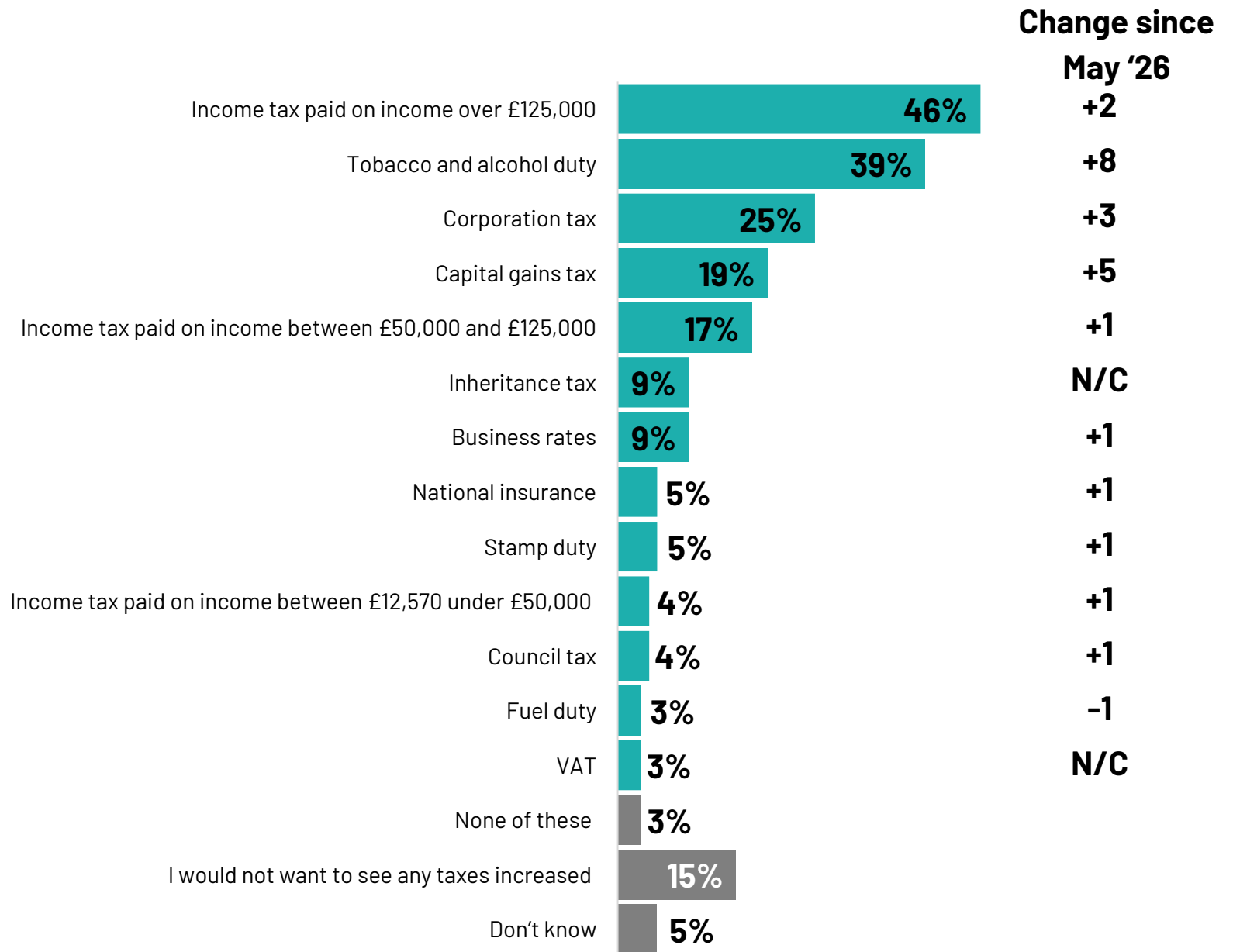


Base: 1,090 Online British adults aged 18-75, 29 September – 1 October 2026

Almost half of Britons say they would prefer to see income tax paid on income over £125,000 increased to pay for additional defence spending if the government had decided to pay for the spending by raising taxes

Imagine that the government has decided to increase defence spending through raising taxes.

Which, if any, of the following types of tax would you prefer to see increased in this scenario? Please choose up to three from the list below.



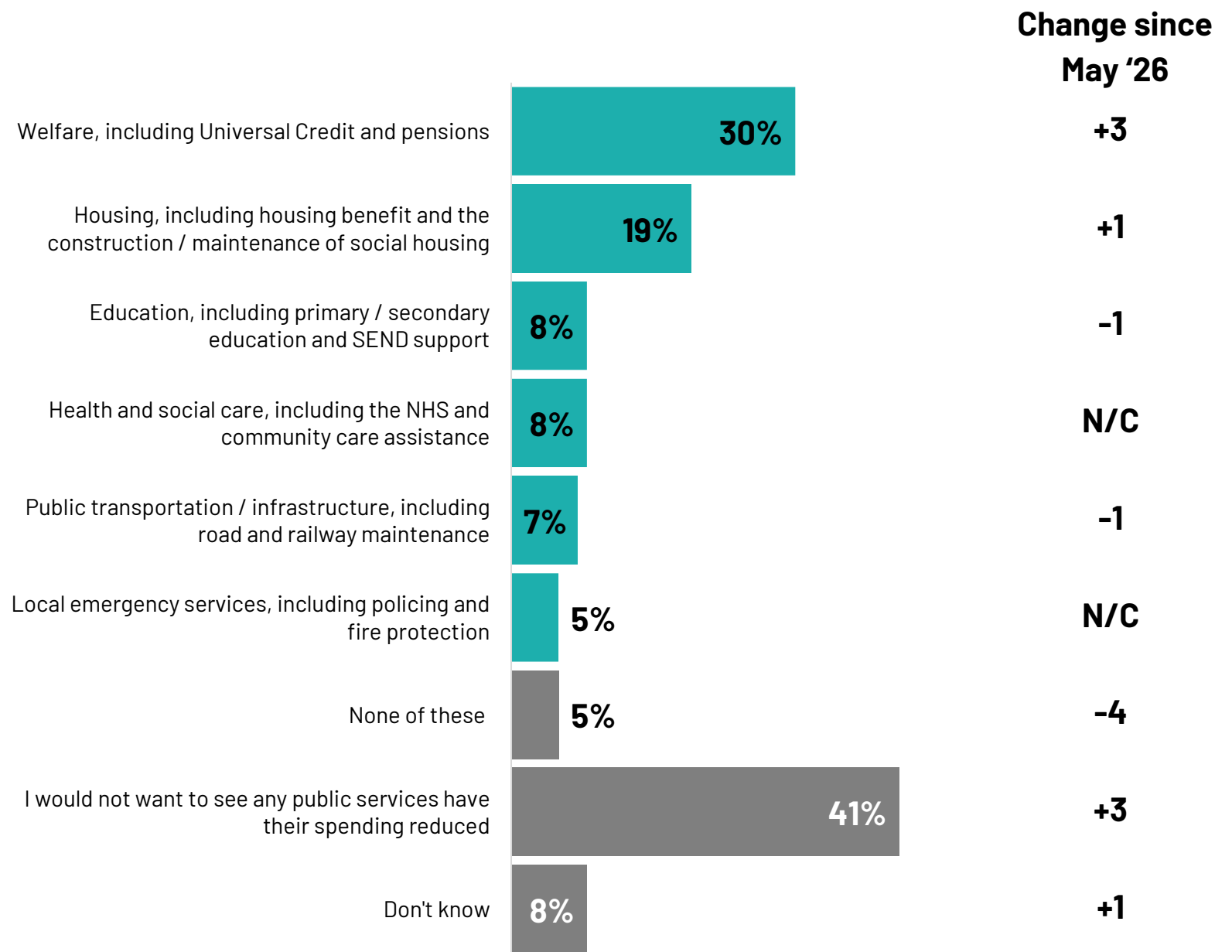
Base: 1,090 Online British adults aged 18-75, 29 September – 1 October 2026

Three in ten Britons would prefer to see welfare spending reduced if the government chose to pay for increased defence spending through public service cuts. However, four in ten do not want to see any public service spending cuts.

Imagine that the government has decided to increase defence spending through reducing spending on public services.

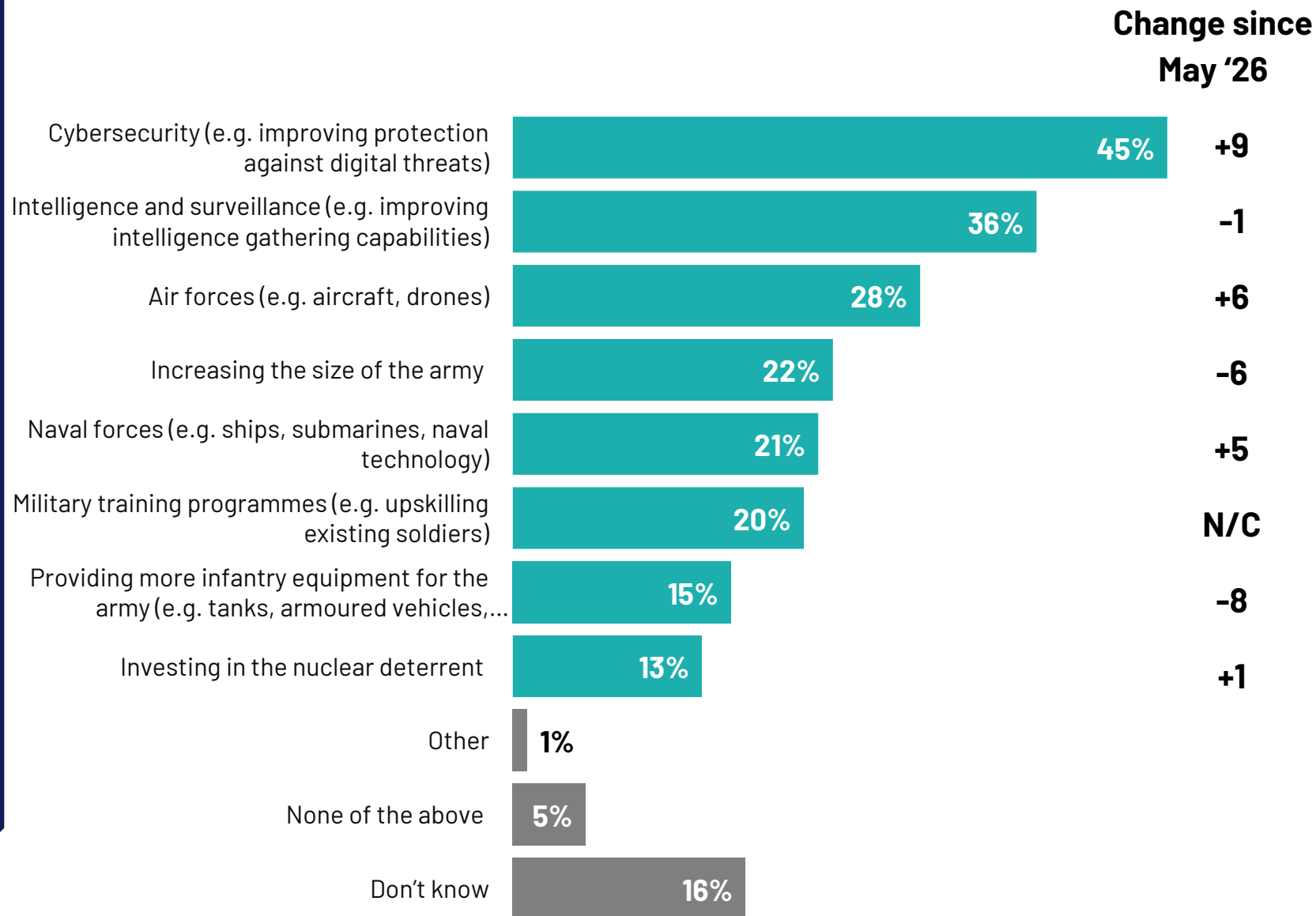
Which, if any, of the following public services would you prefer to see have their spending reduced? Please choose up to three from the list below.

Base: 1,090 Online British adults aged 18-75, 29 September – 1 October 2026



Britons continue to be most likely to think cybersecurity should be prioritised within the defence budget

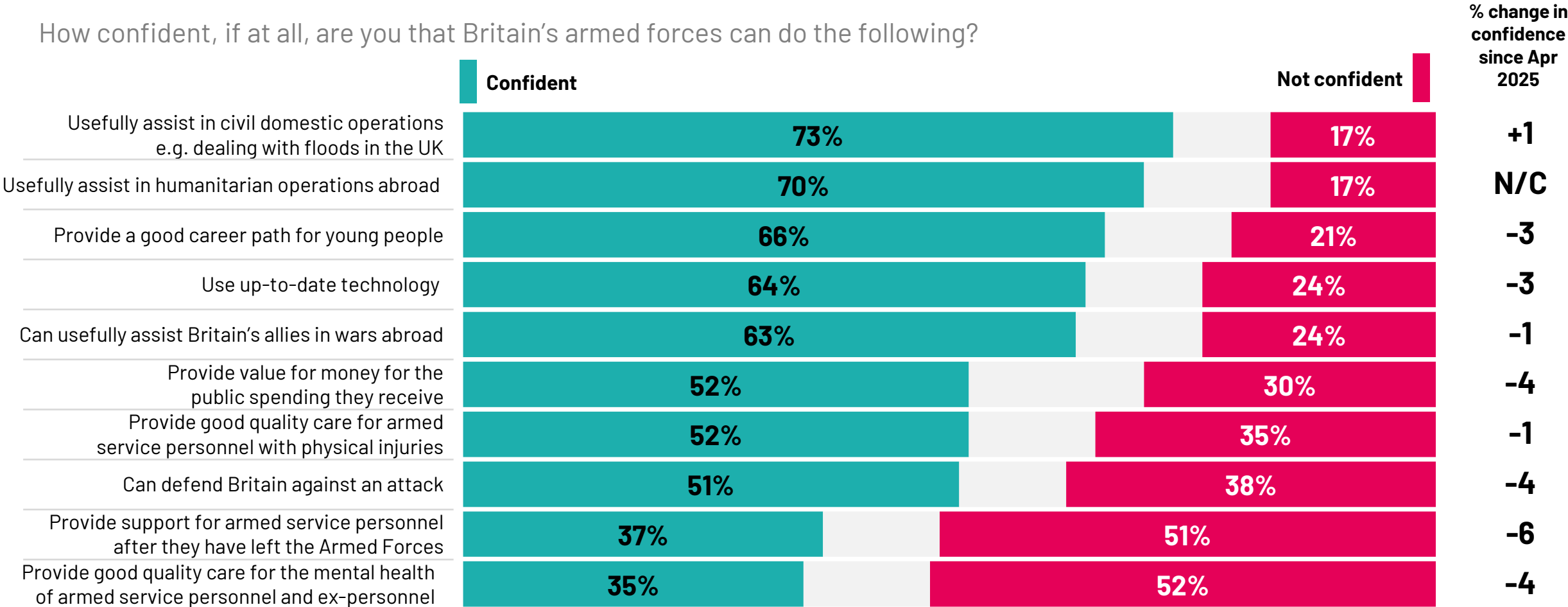
Thinking about how the UK defence budget is spent, which of the following areas, if any, do you think should be prioritised? Please choose up to three areas that you think are most important.



Base: 1,090 Online British adults aged 18-75, 29 September - 1 October 2026

Britons continue to have confidence that the armed forces can assist civil domestic operations, but lack confidence in their ability to provide support and mental health care armed service personnel

How confident, if at all, are you that Britain’s armed forces can do the following?

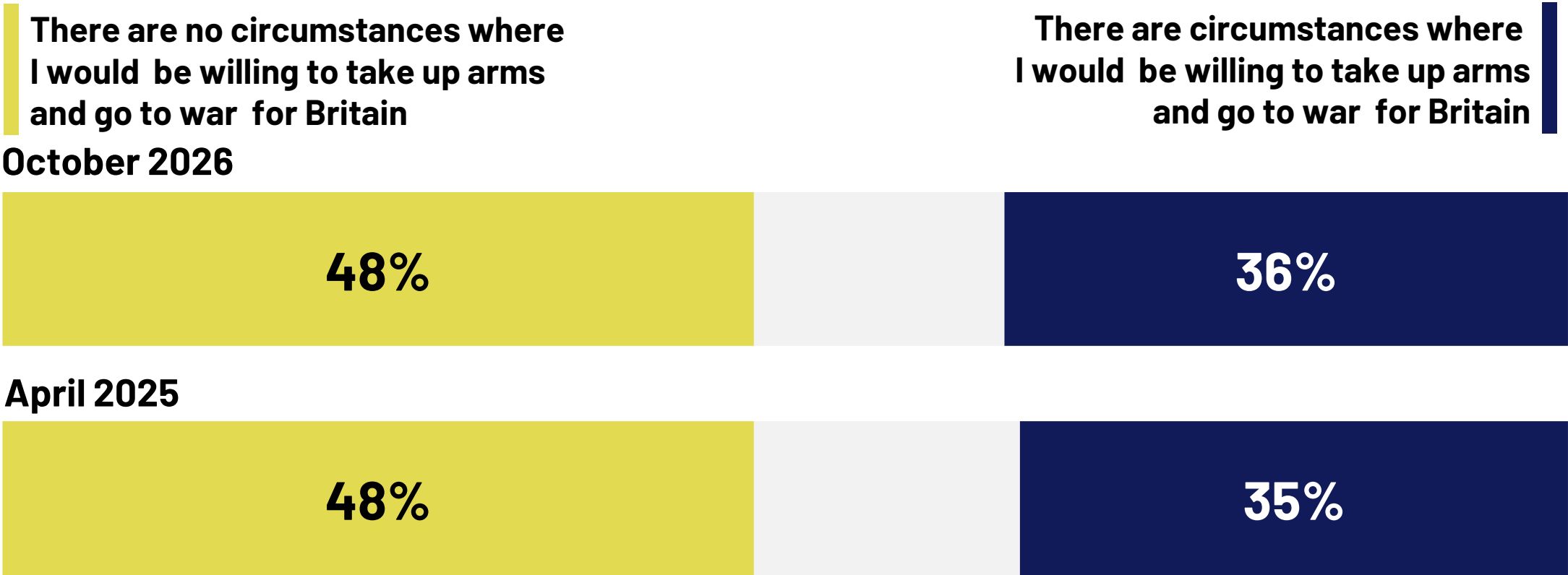


Base: 1,090 Online British adults aged 18-75, 29 September – 1 October 2026



Half of Britons continue to say there are no circumstances where they would be willing to take up arms and go to war for Britain

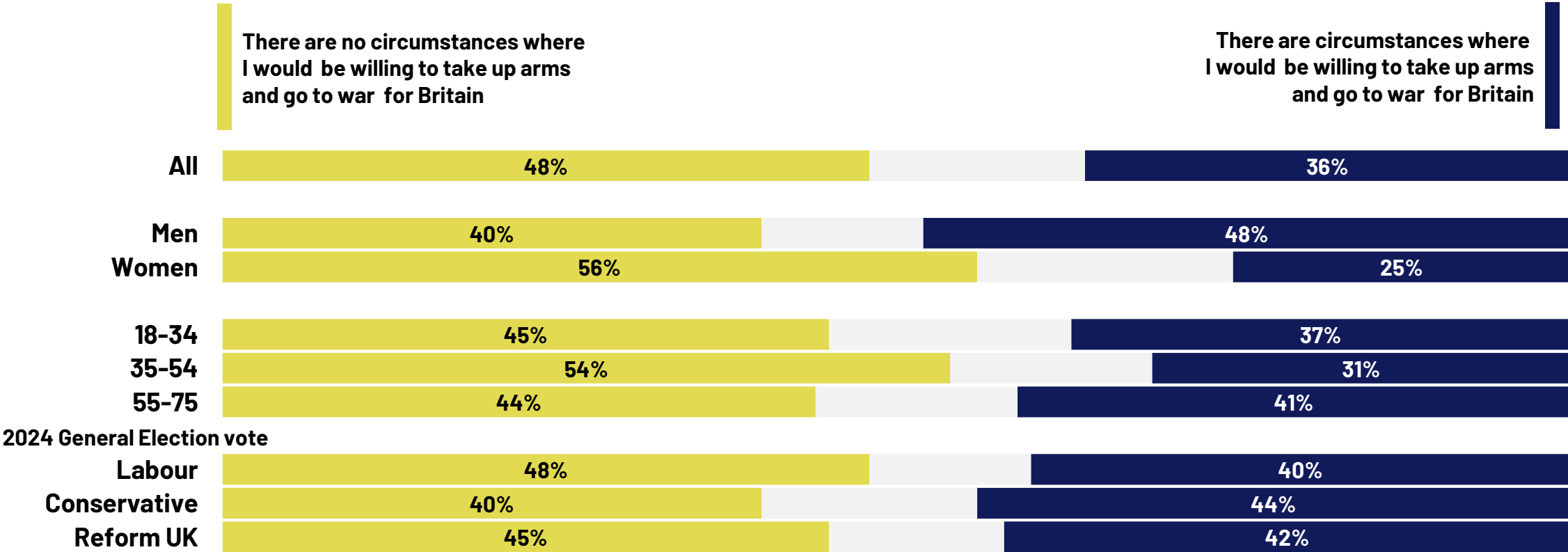
Which of the following best describes you?



Base: 1,090 Online British adults aged 18-75, 29 September – 1 October 2026

Women and 35-54s are most likely to say there are no circumstances where they would be willing to take up arms and go to war for Britain

Which of the following best describes you?



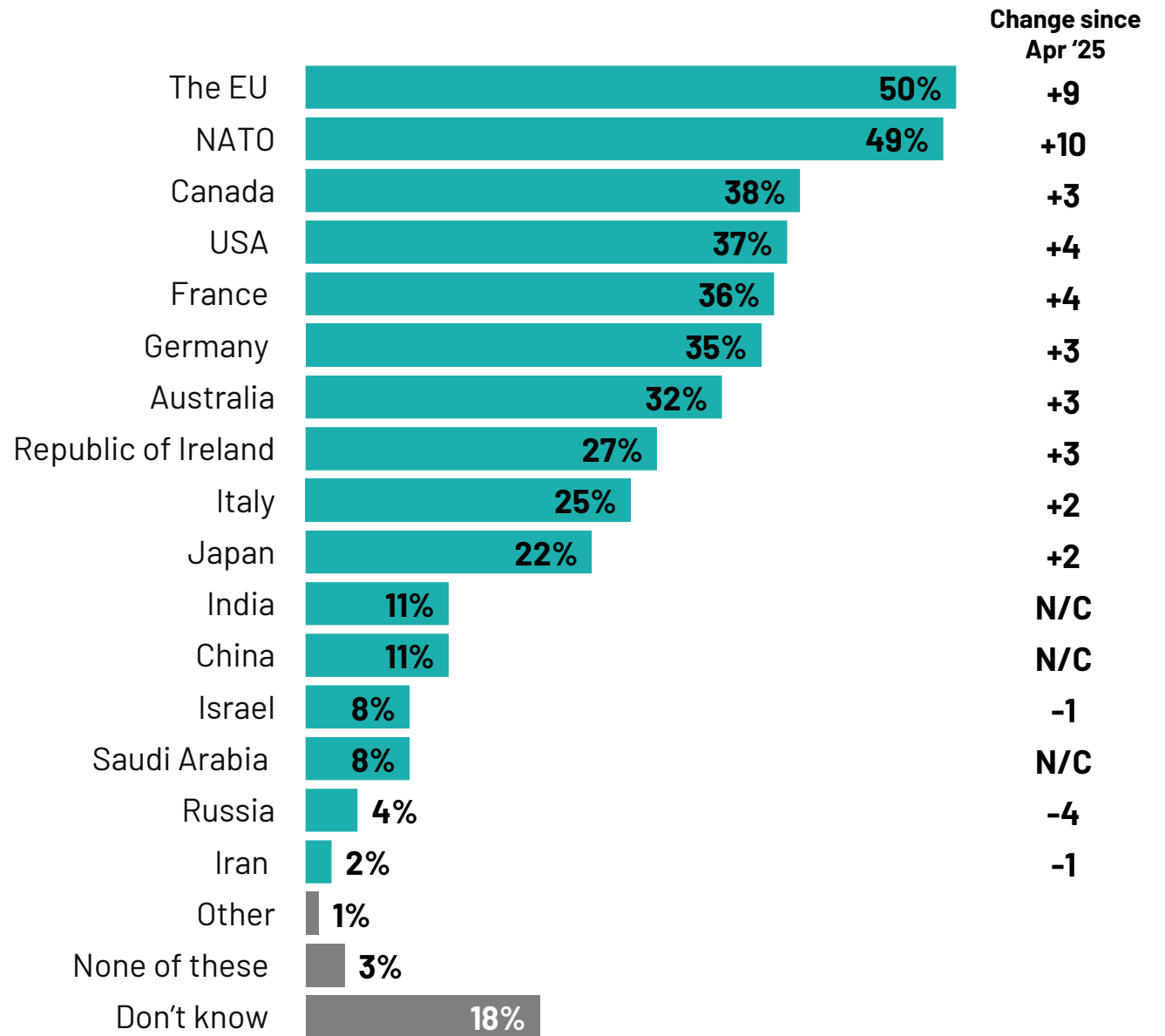
Base: 1,090 Online British adults aged 18-75, incl. 532 men, 552 women, 349 18-34s, 380 35-54s, 361 55-75s, 328 Labour 2024 voters, 158 Conservative 2024 voters, 107 Reform UK voters, 29 September – 1 October 2026



Half of Britons think the UK should prioritise building a closer defence relationship with the EU and NATO, which is up 9 and 10 percentage points respectively since April 2025

Which of the following, if any, do you think the UK should prioritise building a close defence relationship with? Please select all that apply.

Base: 1,090 Online British adults aged 18-75, 29 September - 1 October 2026





September 2026 Defence Polling

For more information

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