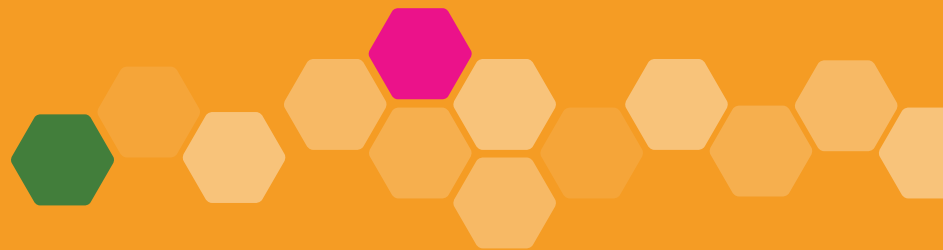




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The Impact of COVID-19 on Wellbeing in Scotland: Wave 4

Fieldwork 26 Jan – 11 Feb 2022



PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES



A group of people wearing face masks walking in a city street at night. The image is overlaid with a diagonal teal and blue graphic on the left side.

Impact of COVID-19 on Wellbeing in Scotland: Wave 4

Fieldwork 26 Jan – 11 Feb 2022

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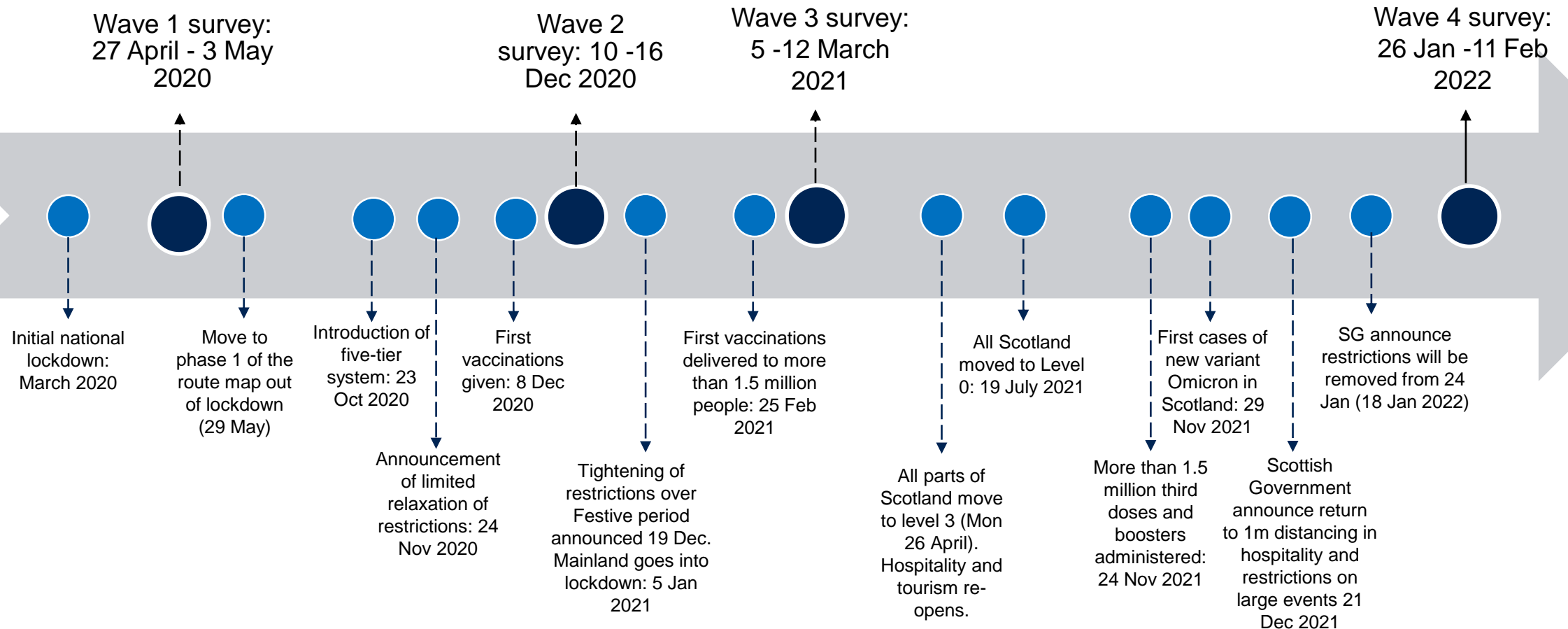
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Context

These findings are based on an Ipsos telephone survey of 1,006 adults in Scotland aged 16+, conducted 26th January – 11th February 2022. This was the fourth wave of the survey.

- **Wave 1** was conducted 27th April-3rd May 2020, during the initial lockdown (which began on 23rd March 2020).
- **Wave 2** was conducted 10th-16th December 2020, at which point different areas of Scotland were subject to different restrictions depending on their ‘tier’.
- **Wave 3** was conducted 5th-12th March 2021, when the whole of Scotland was in Level 4 lockdown, albeit elements of a ‘deliberately cautious’ framework for moving out of lockdown had been announced by the First Minister on 23rd February 2021. The vaccination programme, which had only just started at the time of the December 2020 survey, was also well underway by March 2021.
- **Wave 4** took place shortly after a spike in cases as a result of the Omicron variant in late December 2021/early January 2022, but at a time when restrictions were again being eased – various restrictions, such as one-metre physical distancing in hospitality venues and attendance limits for indoor events were lifted from 24th January 2022. All adults in Scotland had also been offered two doses and a booster vaccine by this point.

Timings of the Covid-19 and wellbeing surveys and relevant milestones in Scotland's Covid-19 timeline



Methods

Questionnaire design

The questionnaire drew on earlier surveys conducted by Ipsos on behalf of the Scottish Government in April/May 2020 (Wave 1), December 2020 (Wave 2) and March 2021 (Wave 3).

It also included a number of new questions that focused on the social impacts of COVID-19 including social cohesion, social contacts and relationships.

Fieldwork

1,006 adults aged 16+ resident in Scotland were interviewed by telephone from 26th January – 11th February 2022.

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

Analysis and reporting

This report summarises key findings and statistically significant differences between sub-groups.

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.

Interpretation: Where results do not sum to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of 'don't know' categories.

Key Findings

- This is the fourth wave of a telephone survey commissioned by the Scottish Government and conducted by Ipsos Scotland to provide insight into the impacts of COVID-19 on wellbeing in Scotland.
- Many of the inequalities observed in previous waves were again apparent – those in deprived areas, those on lower incomes, disabled people, and unpaid carers all fare worse across a number of measures.
- While many of us feel we can recover quickly from adversity, those on low incomes and disabled people are more likely to find this difficult.
- However, at a general population level, there are some more positive signs regarding wellbeing – compared with previous waves, fewer people said they felt they had less sense of purpose, felt cut off from family and friends, or were finding current social restrictions difficult to deal with.
- Neighbourhood cohesion also remains high: the vast majority say that if they needed help, they could go to one of their neighbours. However, a third feel there are fewer places for planned and spontaneous socialising with others in their neighbourhood since the pandemic.

Personal wellbeing

1

Key findings:

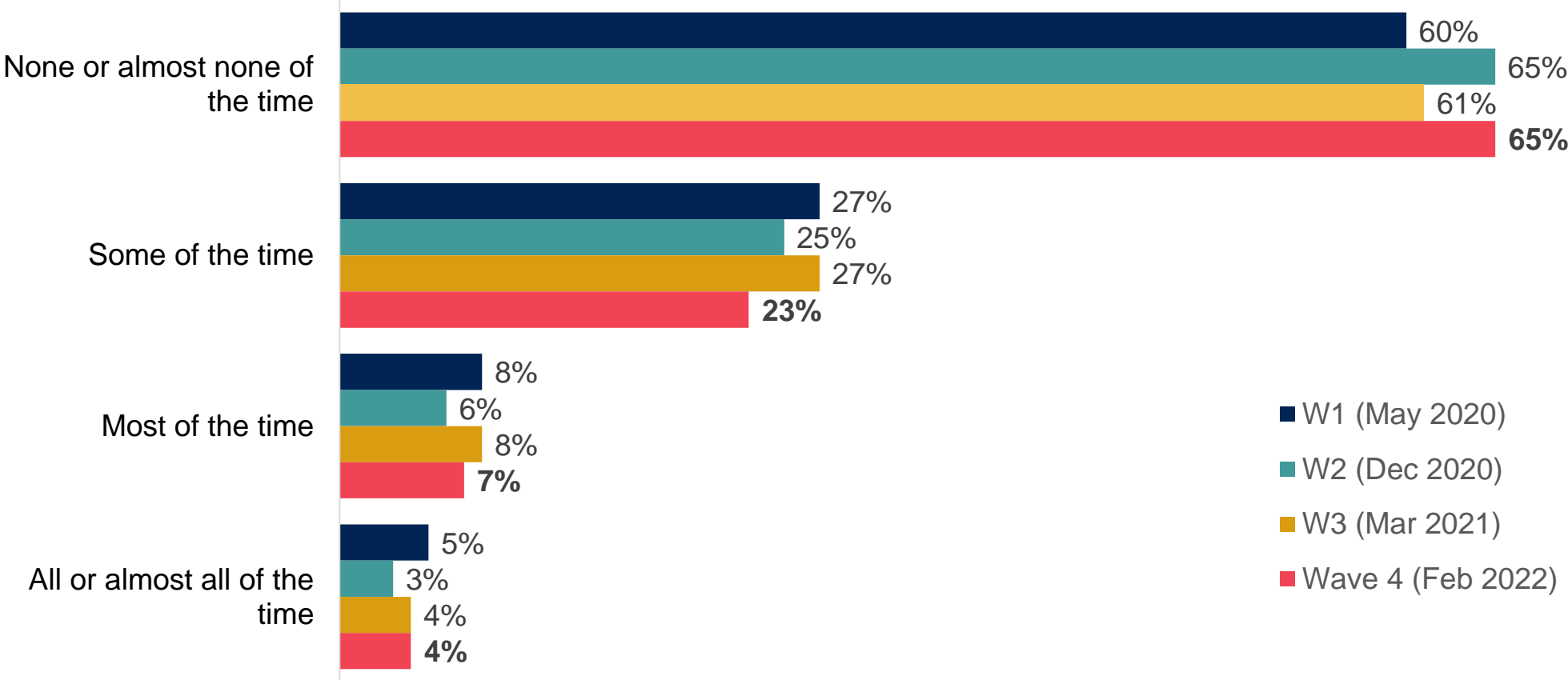
A third say they felt lonely at least some of the time in the week prior to the survey (a slight fall on March 2021).

Compared with March 2021, fewer people now report feeling 'less of a sense of purpose'.

People on low incomes and disabled people find it more difficult to quickly recover from adversity.

65% said that they felt lonely none, or almost none of the time in the week prior to the survey

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



Base: W1 (1,000), W2 (1,004), W3 (1,000), W4 (1,006), All respondents



But 34% said they felt lonely at least some of the time

This was similar to December 2020, but a little lower than either May 2020 (40%) or March 2021 (39%), which were both conducted when lockdown or near lockdown restrictions were still in place (though the differences are modest – a reminder that Covid-19 restrictions are not the only factors affecting loneliness).

Felt lonely at least some of the time:

40% in W1 (May 2020)

34% in W2 (Dec 2020)

39% in W3 (Mar 2021)

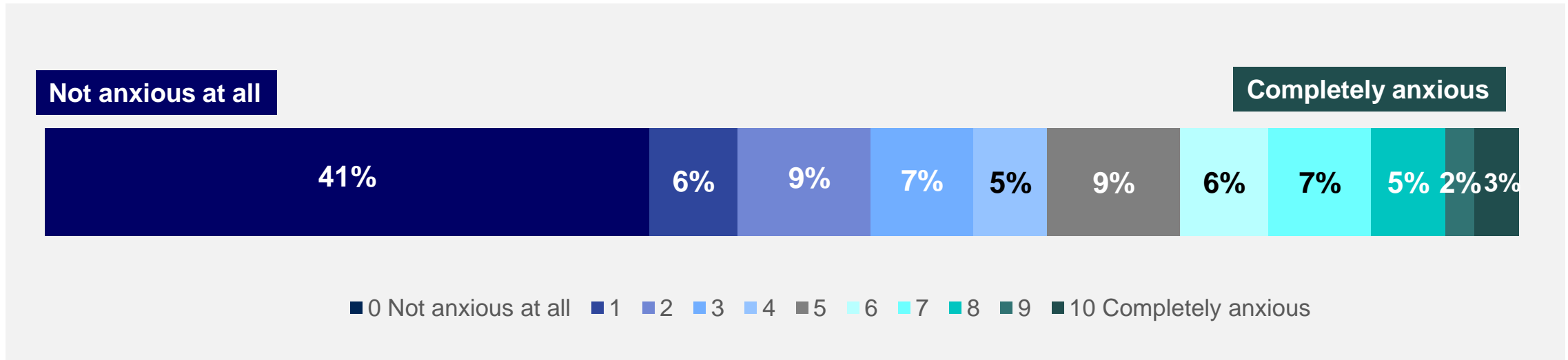
34% in W4 (Feb 2022)

Groups more likely to report feeling lonely at least some of the time included:

- **Women** (39%, compared with 29% of men)
- **16-24 year-olds** (44%, compared with 39% of 25-34 year-olds, 33% of 35-54 year-olds, 30% of 55-69 year-olds, and 33% of those aged 70 or older)
- **Disabled people** (55%, compared with 26% non-disabled people)

Average anxiety levels are in line with those from March 2021, with 41% reporting that they did not feel anxious at all

Q 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?



Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022

W1 mean score: 3.6
W2 mean score: 3.0
W3 mean score: 2.8
W4 mean score: 2.8

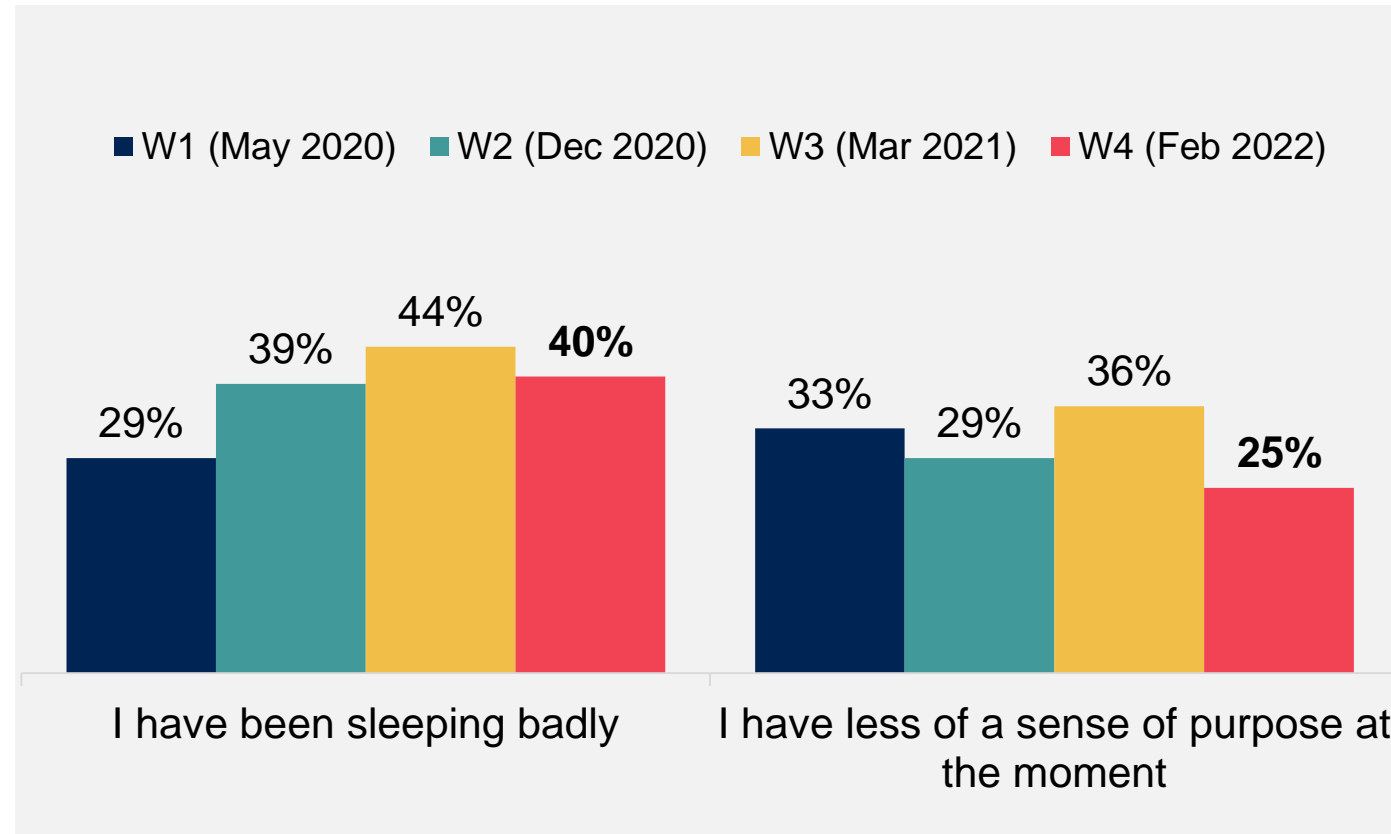
However, anxiety continues to be unevenly distributed

- **Mean anxiety (2.8 overall) was higher among:**
 - People **under 35** (3.5 among 16-24 year-olds, 3.4 among 25-34 year-olds, 3.0 among 35-54 year-olds, 2.3 among those 55-69, and 2.0 among those aged 70+ - very close to the mean scores by age at Wave 3)
 - **Women** (3.1, compared with 2.4 for men)
 - People on **lower incomes** (3.5 among those with incomes under £15,600, compared with 2.4 for those with incomes of £52,000 or more)
 - **Disabled** people (4.4, compared with 2.2 among non-disabled people)
 - **Unpaid carers** (3.4 among those who give unpaid regular help or support to others because of long-term ill health or disability or issues relating to old age, compared with 2.5 among those without such unpaid caring responsibilities)

There has been a significant drop since Wave 3 (March 2021) in the proportion who feel they have less of a sense of purpose at the moment

However, 40% still say they are sleeping badly, broadly in line with figures for December 2020 and March 2021

Q Which of the following statements apply to you?



Groups who are more likely than average to report a loss of sense of purpose include:

- **Disabled** people (48%, vs 17% non-disabled people)
- Those **not currently in work** (excluding retired people) (40%, compared with 25% overall)
- People on **lower incomes** (40% of those on less than £15,600, compared with 19% of those on £52,000 or more)

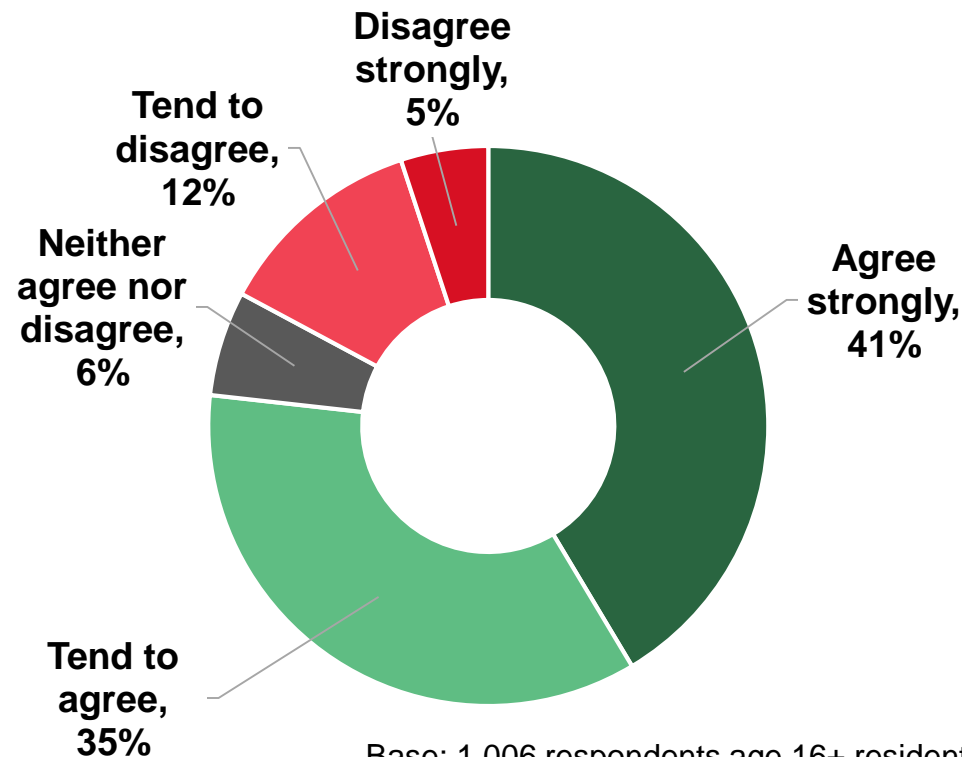
Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022

Most people's responses to questions on dealing with adversity suggest a degree of resilience

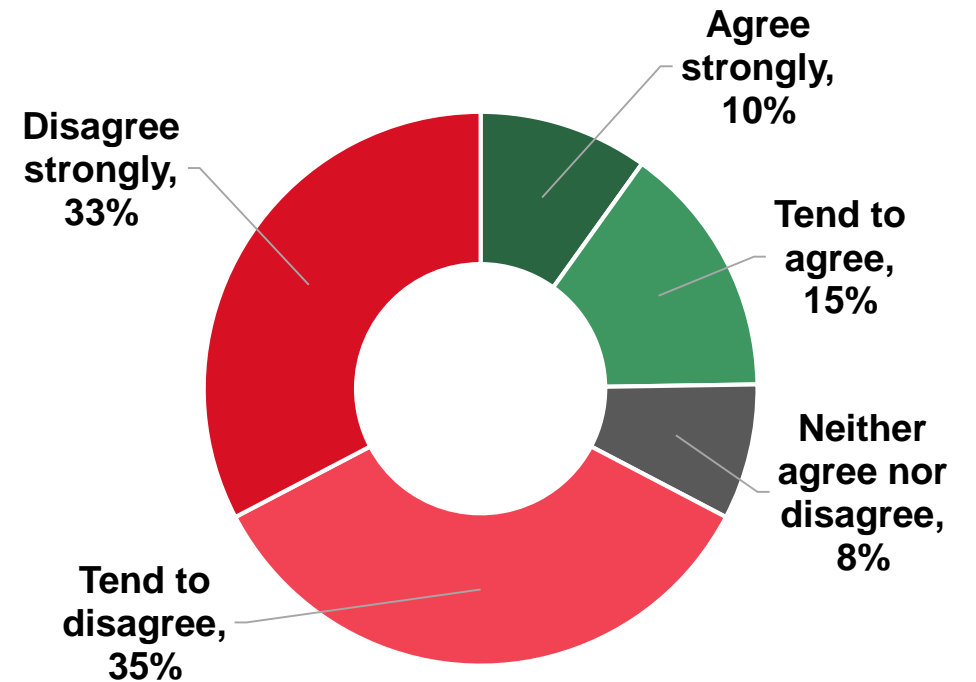
76% agree that they tend to bounce back quickly after hard times, and 68% disagree that they tend to take a long time to get over setbacks in their life

Q Different people deal with stress in different ways. For each of the following, please say how strongly you agree or disagree ...

I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times



I tend to take a long time to get over setbacks in my life



Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022

Lower resilience to adversity

- **Disabled** people were less likely to agree that they bounce back quickly from hard times (60%, compared with 82% of non-disabled people) and more likely to agree that they tend to take a long time to get over setbacks (41% vs 18% of those without).
- **Women** – 70% of women vs 83% of men agreed that they bounce back quickly from hard times.
- People on **low incomes** were more likely to agree they take a long time to get over setbacks (32%, vs 13% of those on the highest incomes).

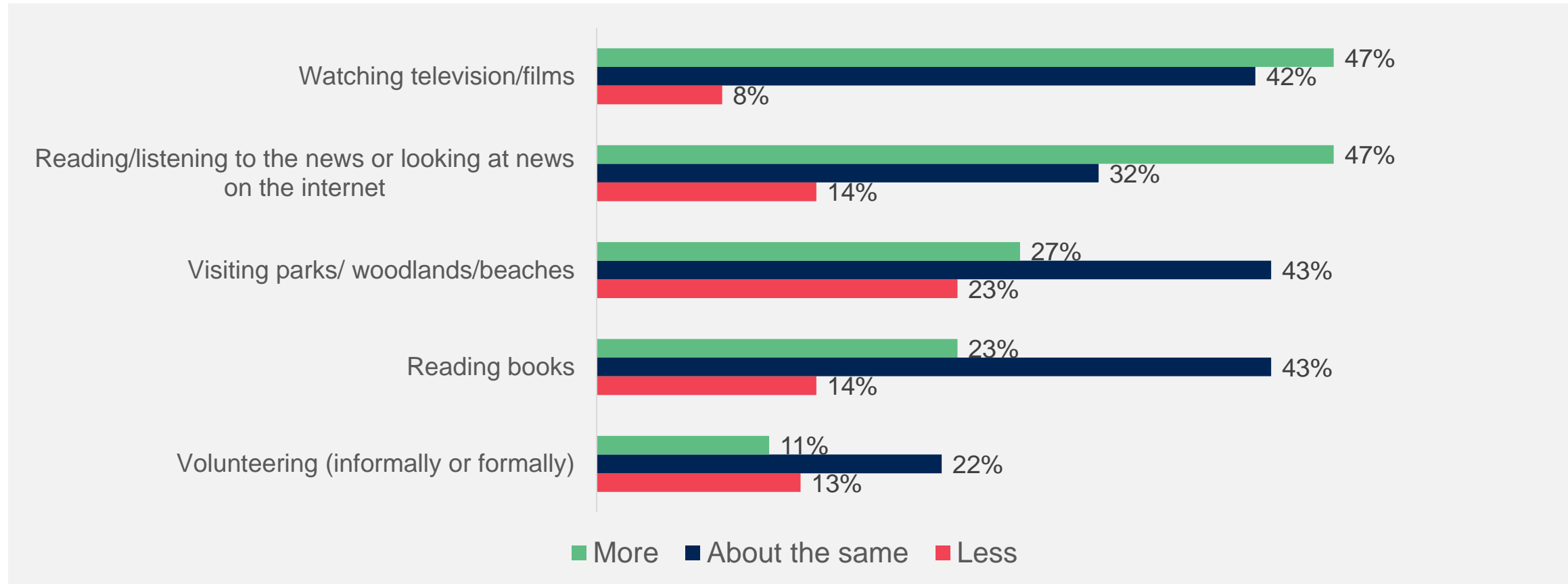
VS.

Higher resilience to adversity

- People on the **highest incomes** are more likely to agree that they tend to bounce back quickly (89% of those on £52,000 or more, compared with 76% overall).
- Those from **rural areas** were more likely to agree that they bounce back quickly from hard times (84% vs 74% of those in urban areas).
- Those **over the age of 70** were more likely to agree that they bounce back quickly from hard times (82% vs 76% overall) and disagree that they tend to take a long time to get over setbacks in life (76% vs 68% overall).

Around half say they are watching TV or films, and following the news more often, compared with pre-pandemic

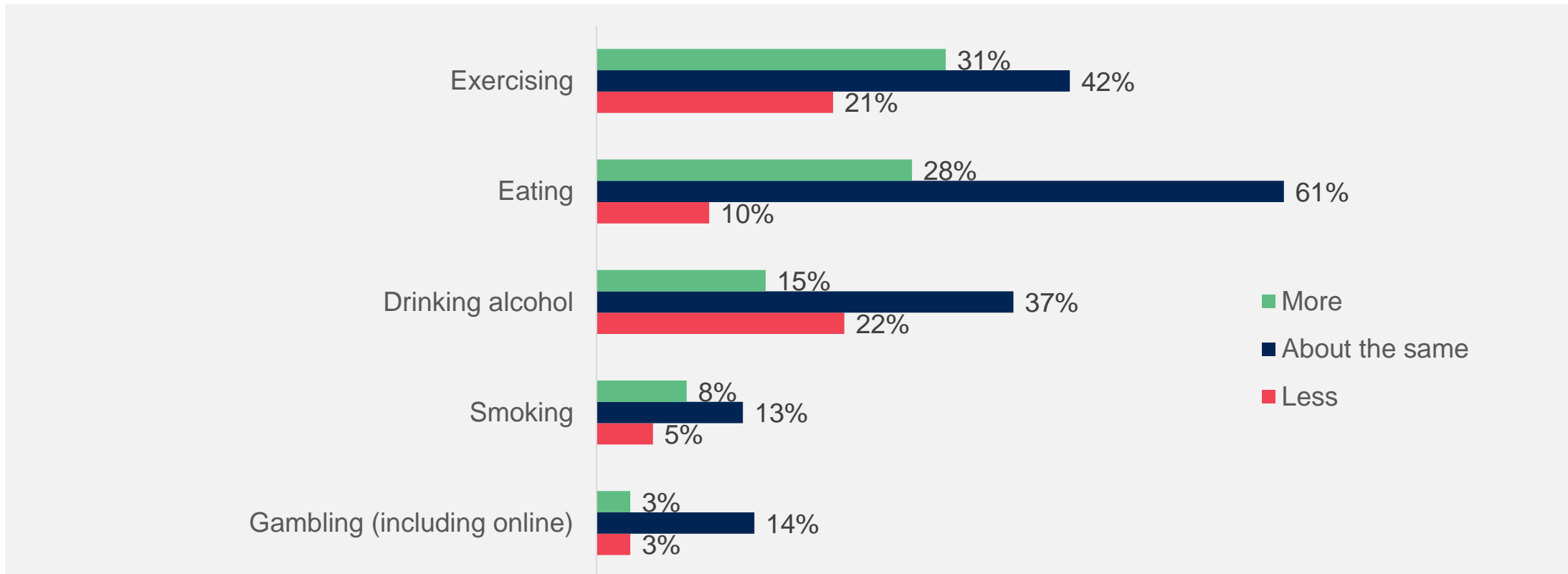
Q Compared before the Coronavirus outbreak started in the start of March 2020, are you doing the following things more, less, or the same amount these days?



Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022. NB the % who said they 'did not do this anyway' are not shown.

Across a range of health-related behaviours (such as drinking or exercising), there is no clear pattern in terms of whether people are doing these more or less compared with pre-pandemic

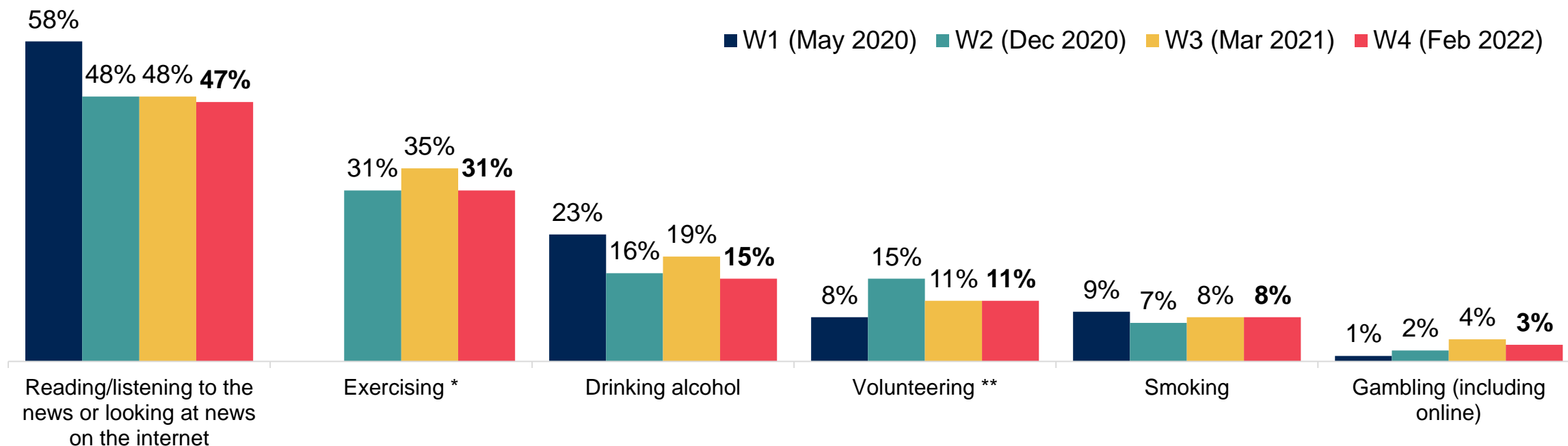
Q Compared before the Coronavirus outbreak started in the start of March 2020, are you doing the following things more, less, or the same amount these days?



Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022. NB the % who said they 'did not do this anyway' are not shown.

The proportion reporting doing various things more often compared with pre-pandemic was very similar to December 2020

Proportion responding “more” for each activity



*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), W3 (1,000), W4 (1,006)

Some groups were more likely to report changes in their behaviours

- **Disabled** people were more likely to say they were exercising less (29% vs 18% of non-disabled people), visiting parks/ woodlands/ beaches less (34% vs 18%), and smoking more (13% vs 6%) compared with pre-pandemic.
- **Young people** aged 16-24 were more likely to report cutting down on alcohol (31%, compared with 21-27% of those aged 25-69, and just 10% of those aged 70+) and exercising more (42%, compared with 35% of those aged 25-34, 31% of those aged 35-54, 27% of those aged 55-69, and 21% of those aged 70+).
 - However, the youngest age group was also most likely to say they were smoking more (15% of 16-24 year-olds, compared with 13% of 25-34 year-olds, 8% of 35-54 year-olds, 3% of those aged 55-69, and 5% of those aged 70+).

Social cohesion and neighbourhoods

2

Key findings:

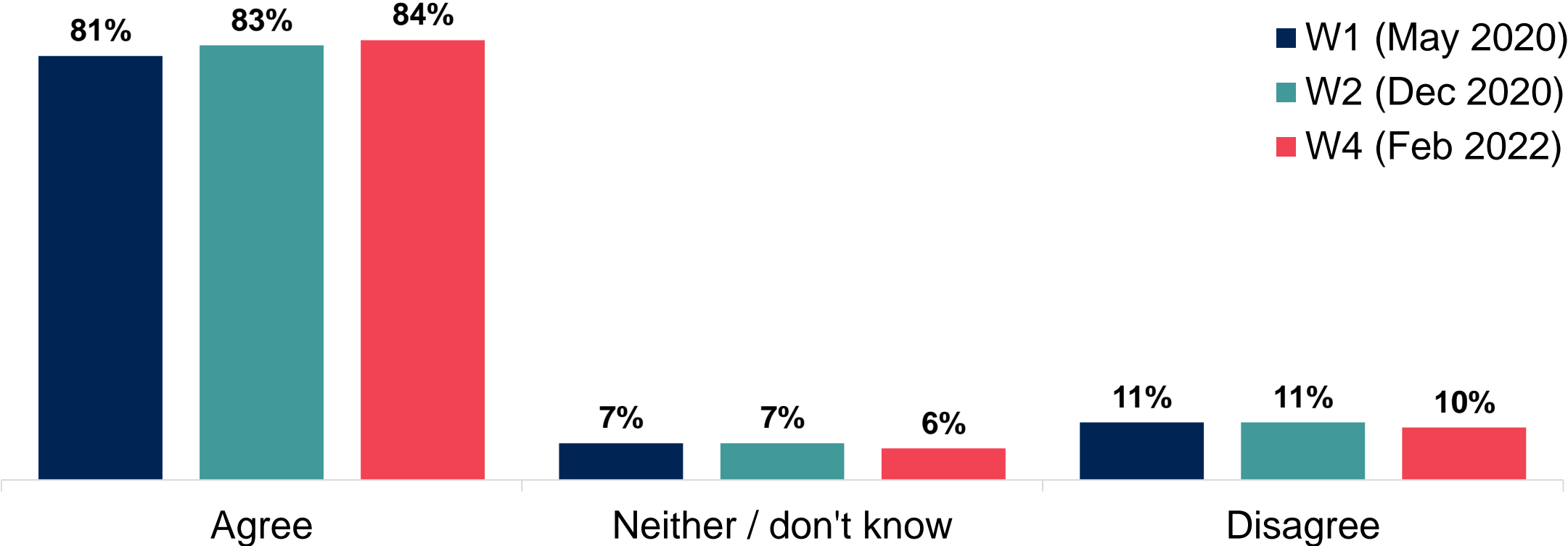
Most agree that there are places they can socialise in their neighbourhood – although 3 in 10 disagree.

A third say that, compared to before the pandemic, they have less access to places where they can socialise with others in their neighbourhood.

While most people think their neighbourhood has stayed the same since the pandemic, more say it has got worse than say it has improved.

Most people (84%) agree they could rely on someone in their neighbourhood to help them (very similar to previous waves)

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your neighbourhood?
If I was alone and needed help, I could rely on someone in this neighbourhood to help me



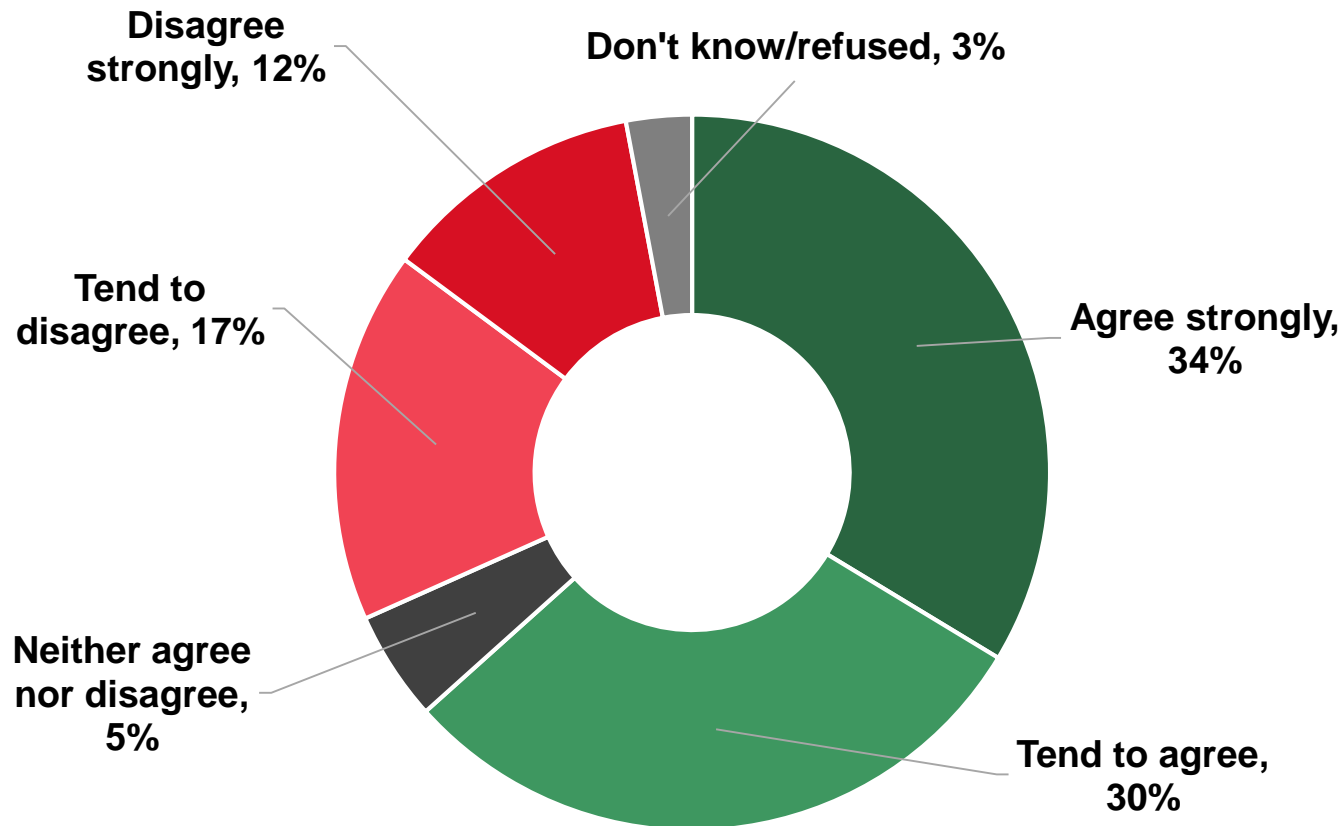
Base: W1 (1,000), W2 (1,004), W4 (1,006), All respondents



Most (64%) agree that there are places people can meet up and socialise in their neighbourhood – but 29% disagree

Q How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your neighbourhood?

There are places where people can meet up and socialise.



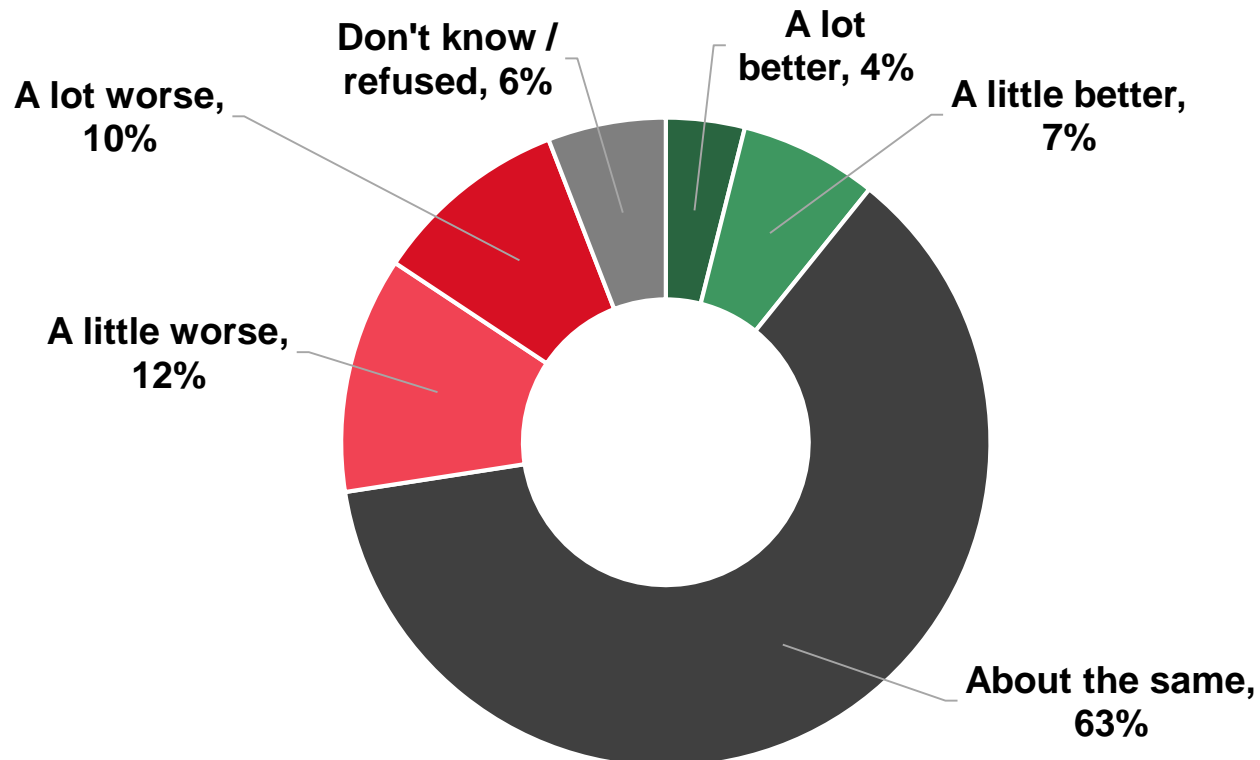
Those in **more deprived areas** are **less likely to agree** that there are places in their neighbourhood where people can meet up and socialise (55% of those in the most deprived areas, compared with 72% in the least deprived).

Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022

Most (63%) feel their neighbourhood has, in general, stayed the same since the start of the pandemic

However, twice as many think their neighbourhood has got worse (22%) since March 2020 as think it has got better (11%)

Q Thinking about your local neighbourhood, in general do you think it has got better, stayed the same, or got worse since the start of the pandemic in March 2020?

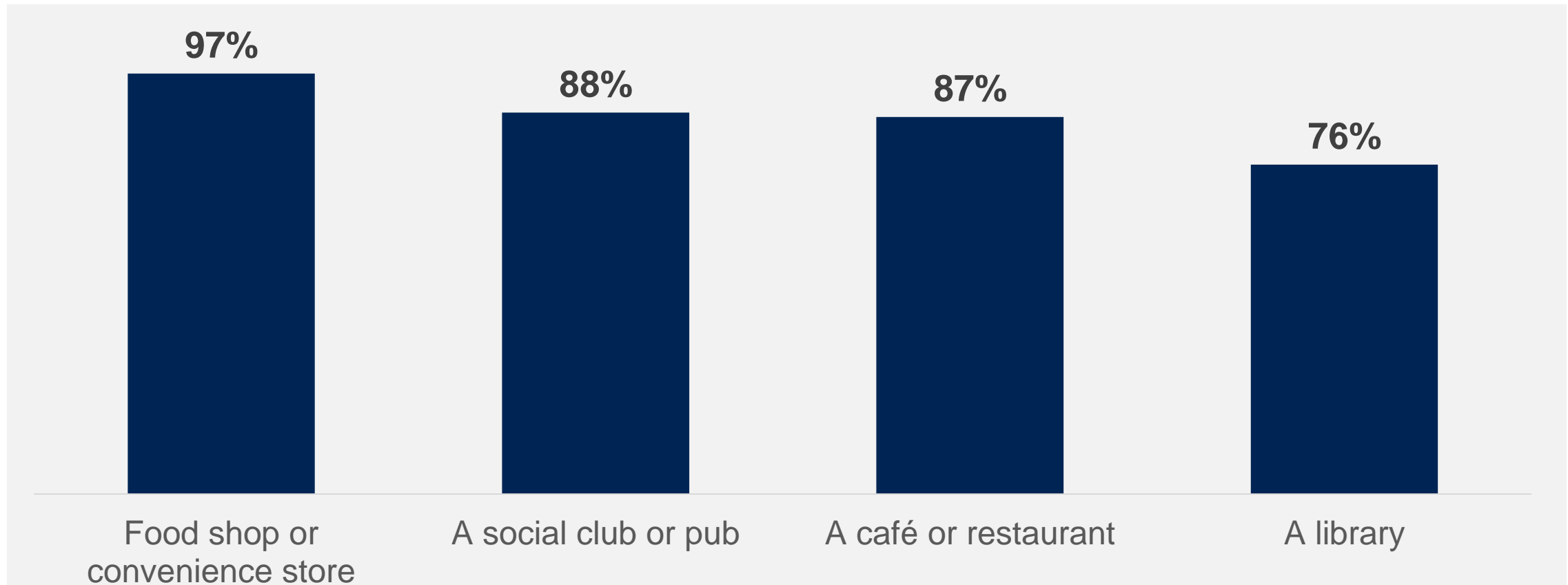


Those in the **most deprived areas** are more likely to say their neighbourhood has **got worse** (33%, compared with 12% in the least deprived areas).

Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022

Most report having access to various amenities and services within 15-20 minutes of their home

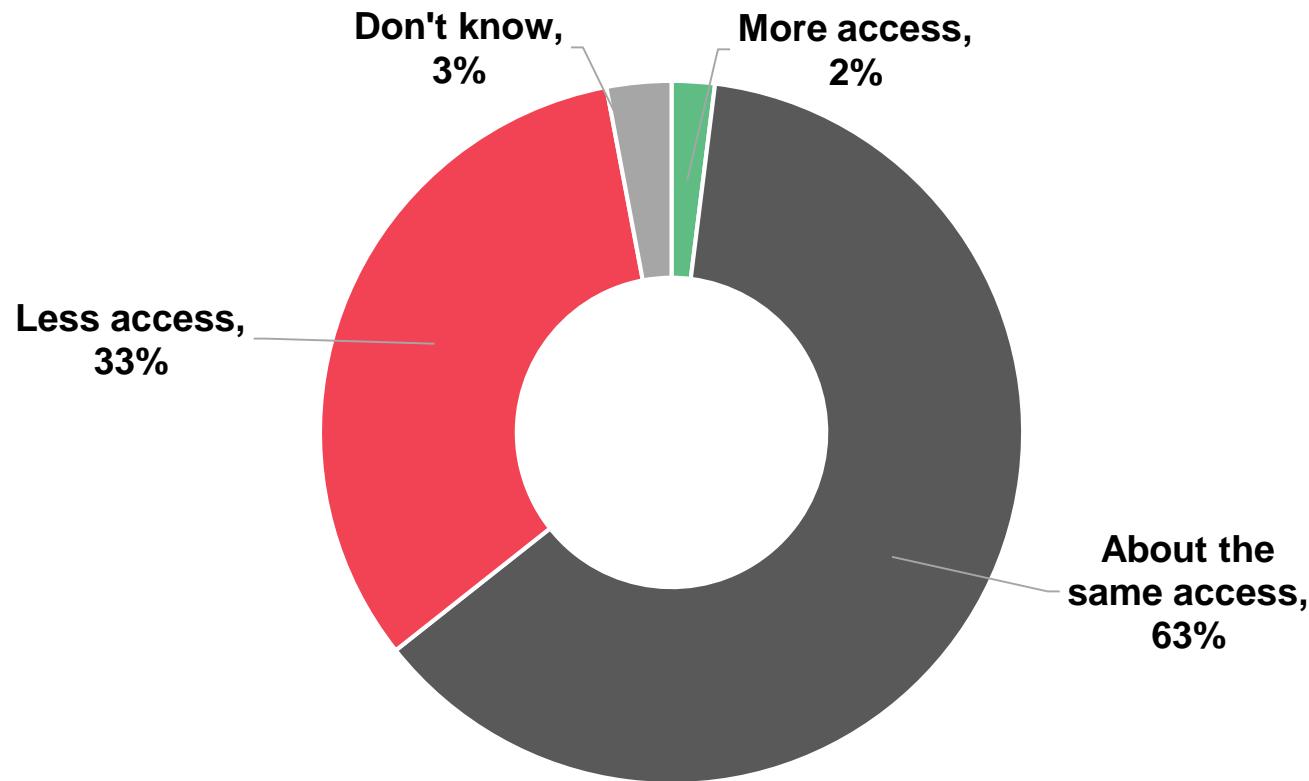
Q As far as you know, which, if any, of the following services or amenities are available within 15-20 minutes of your home?



Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022

However, compared to before the pandemic, a third (33%) say they have less access to these kinds of places where they might meet up with or bump into other people, and only 2% say they have more access

Q Compared with before the pandemic, how much access to places like this where you might meet others from your area do you feel you have?



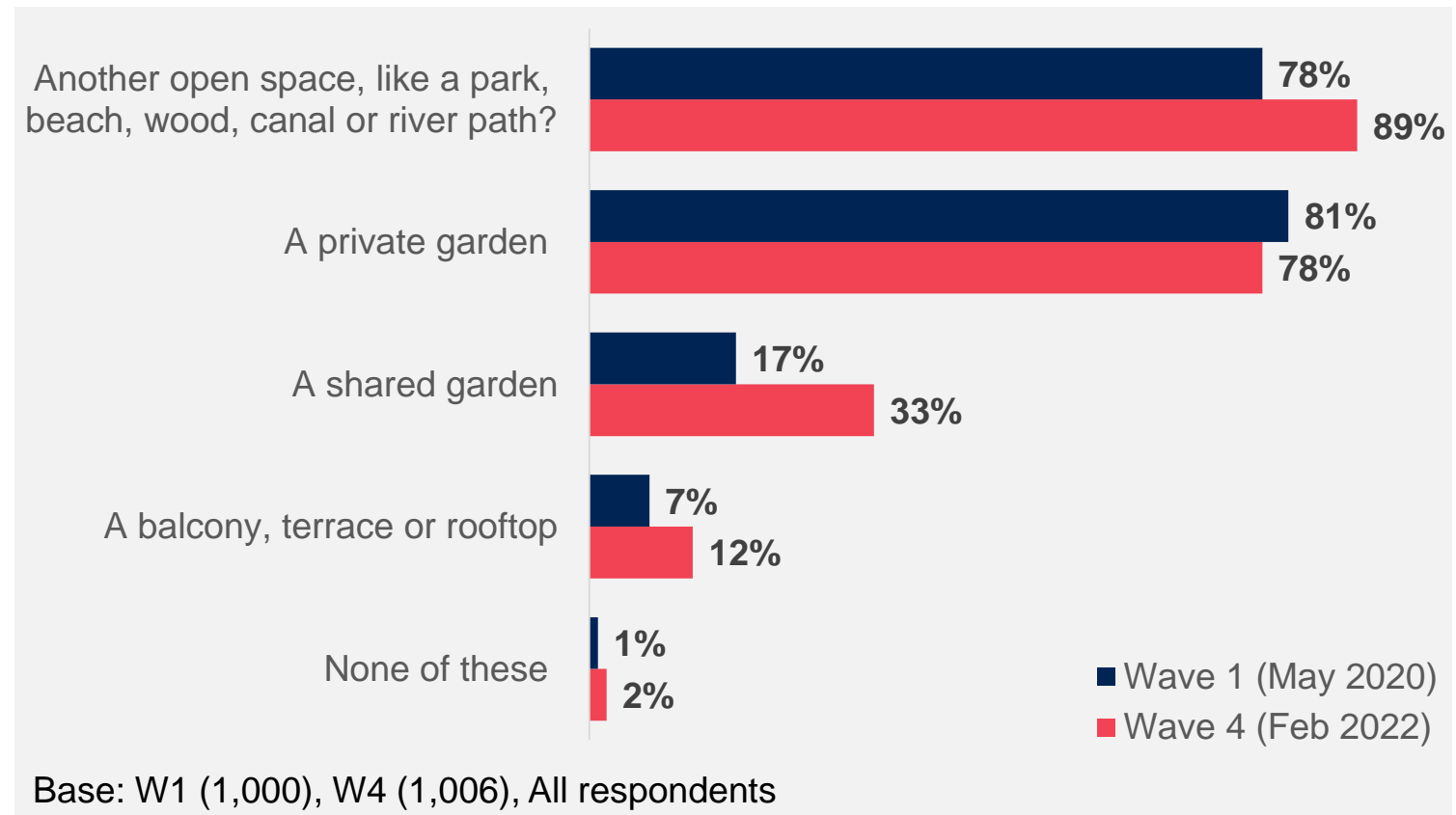
In contrast with other findings, there were no significant differences by area deprivation on this measure.

Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022

The vast majority (89%) say they have access to another open space, like a park, beach, wood, canal or river path within a 10-15 minute walk

This was higher compared to Wave 1 (May 2020), when comparatively fewer people reported access to shared gardens or other open spaces (possibly reflecting access restrictions during the initial lockdown)

Q At the moment, do you have access to any of the following within a 10-15 minute walk?



- Those **aged 35 and over** were more likely to have access to a **private garden** (85%-86% of age groups over 35, compared with 46% of 16-24 year-olds, and 68% of 25-34 year-olds).
- Those living in **rural areas** were more likely to have access to a **private garden** (89% vs. 75%), whereas those living in urban areas were more likely to have access to a shared garden (36% vs 26%).
- Those in the **most deprived areas** were less likely to have access to a **private garden** (61%, vs 77%-94% of those in less deprived areas).

Social contacts and relationships

3

Key findings:

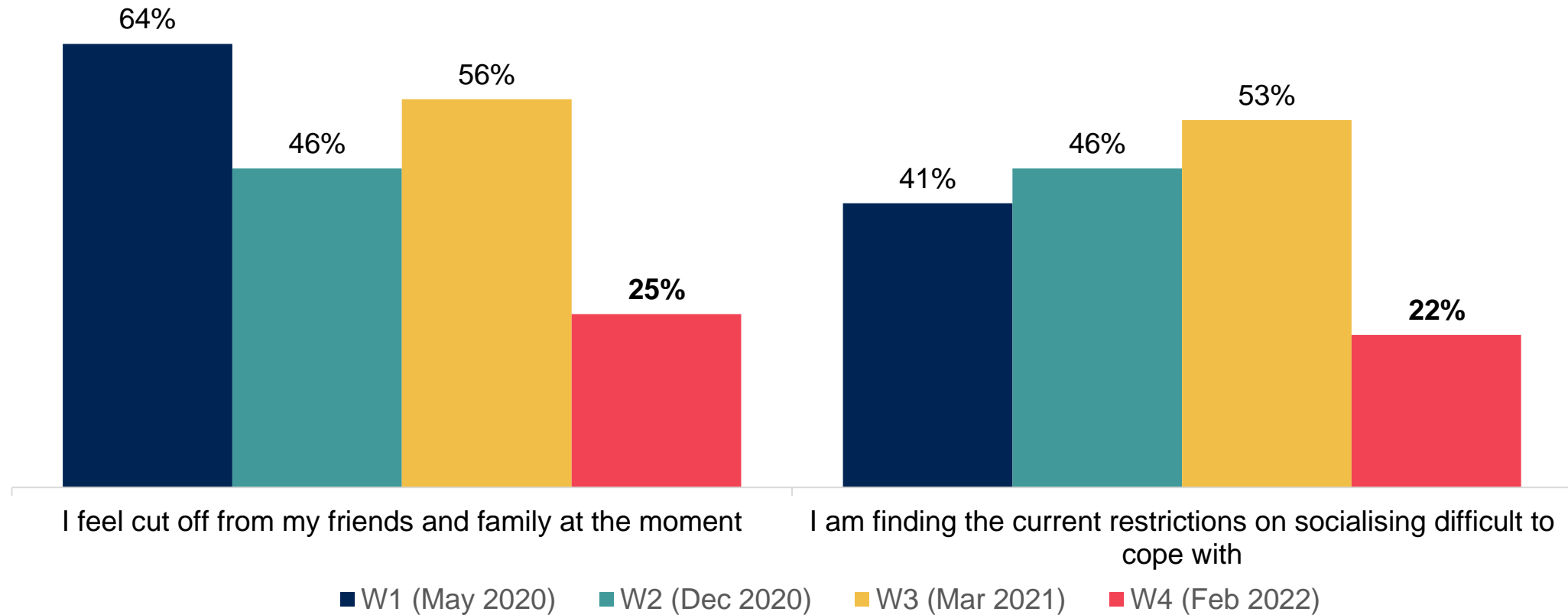
Compared with March 2021, far fewer people felt cut off from family and friends, or were struggling to cope with restrictions on socialising.

More people are meeting up with others more than once a week, while levels of phone and video contact also remain high.

Though most say relationships with others have remained the same, a quarter say their relationships with friends are weaker than pre-pandemic.

Compared with previous waves, far fewer people were feeling isolated from friends and family or finding restrictions on socialising difficult to cope with

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



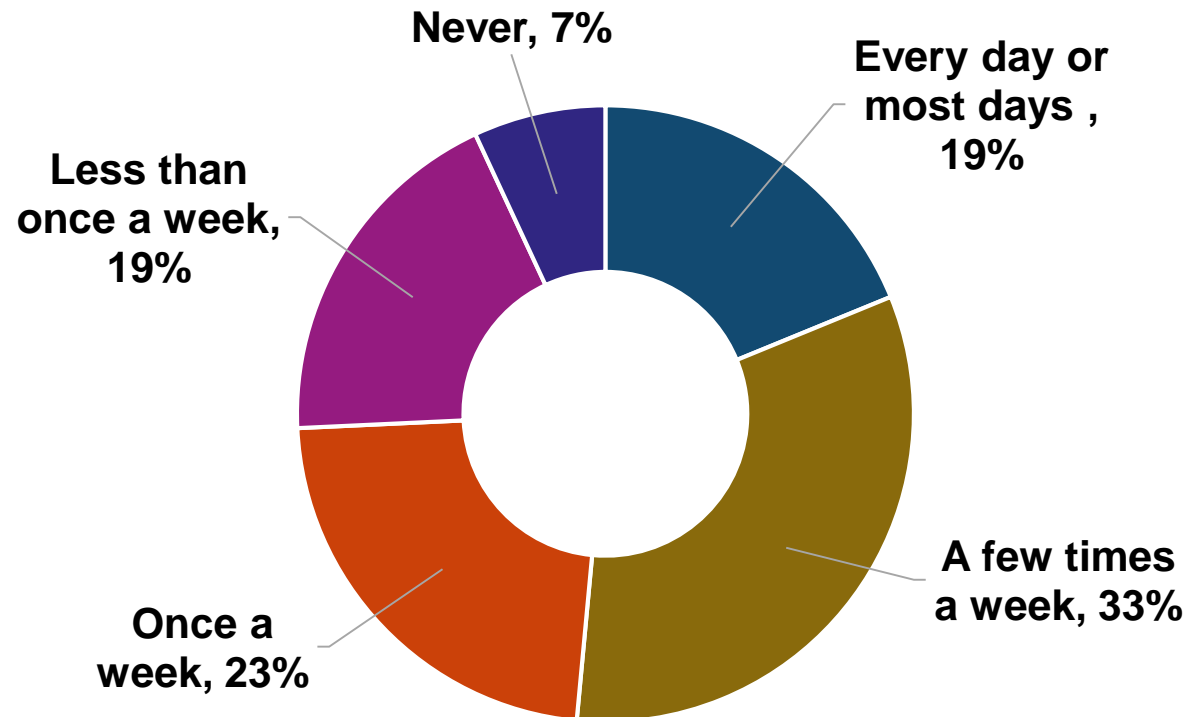
Base: W1 (1,000), W2 (1,004), W3 (1,000), W4 (1,006) All

However, some groups were still more likely to be feeling isolated and to find the restrictions difficult

- **Disabled** people were more likely to feel cut off from family and friends (42%, compared with 19% of non-disabled people), and to be finding the current social restrictions difficult to deal with (36% vs 17%).
- People on **lower incomes** were more likely to feel cut off from friends and family (35% of those with household incomes under £15,600, 32% of those on £15,600-£25,999, 19% of those on £26,000-£51,999 and 17% of those on £52,000 or more). Those on the lowest incomes (under £15,600) were also more likely to say they were finding restrictions difficult (31%, compared with 22% overall).

75% say they meet in person with friends, relatives, neighbours, or work colleagues at least once a week

Q In the last month, how often, if at all, have you met up in person with friends, relatives, neighbours or work colleagues, for exercise or any other reason?

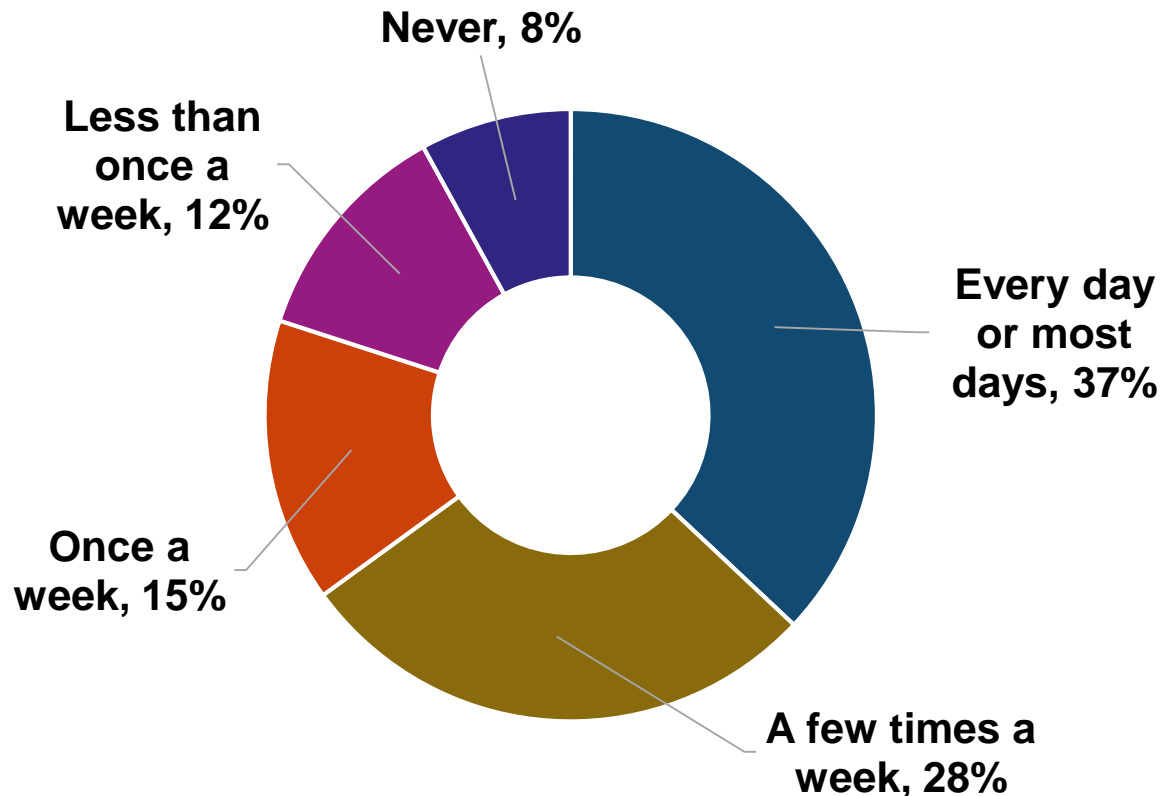


- Compared with March last year, **people were meeting in person more often** - 52% were meeting more than once a week, compared with 31% in March 2021.
- **16-24 year olds** were more likely to have met with others more than once a week (65%, vs 52% overall).
- **Disabled** people were more likely to say they met others in person less often than once a week or never (35%, compared with 22% of non-disabled people).

Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022

Levels of phone or video contact also remain high – 65% have phone or video calls at least a few times a week

Q And in the last month, how often, if at all, have you had phone or videocalls with friends, relatives, neighbours or work colleagues?



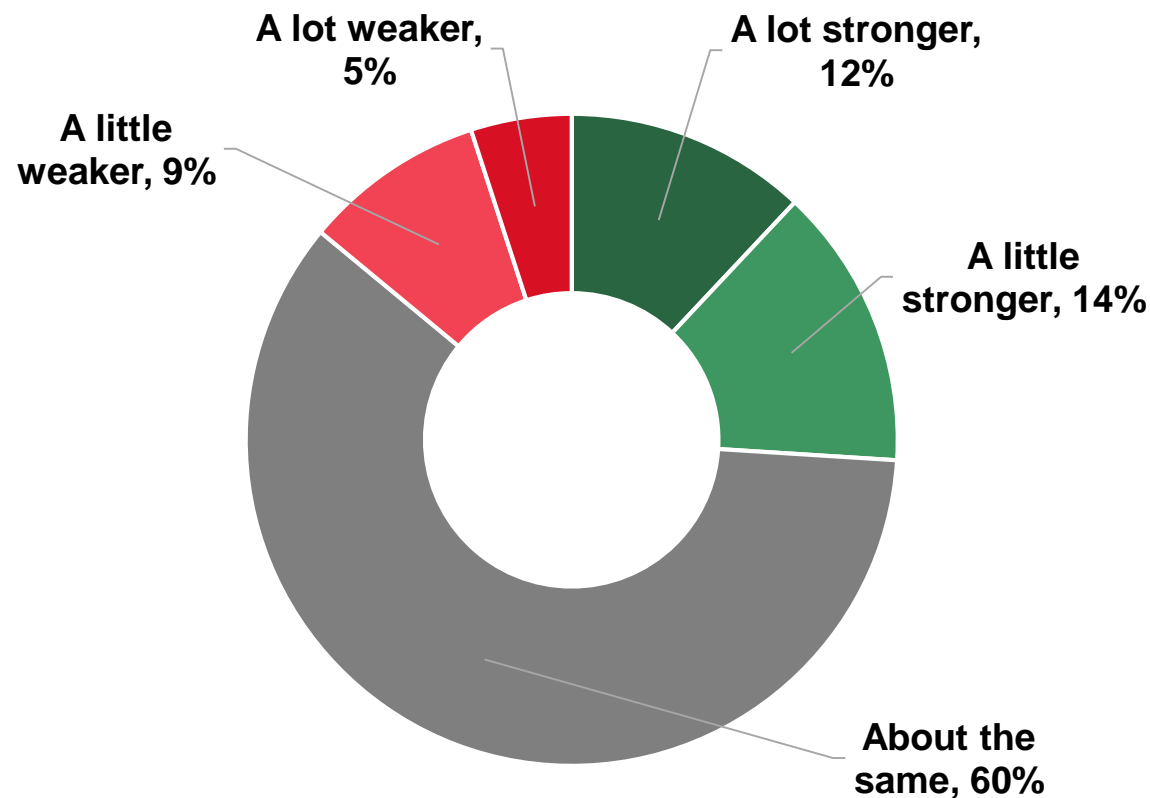
- The proportion reporting regular (more than weekly) phone or videocalls was similar in February 2022 (65%) to March 2021 (69%).
- Levels of phone/video contact were **similar across age groups**.
- People in the **lowest income households** and **disabled** people were in phone/video contact with others less frequently (28% and 25% respectively said they did this less than once a week or never, compared with 20% overall).

Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022

A majority of people (60%) feel their relationships with family members are the same as they were pre-pandemic

However, more (26%) say their relationships with family members are stronger compared to before the pandemic than say they are weaker (14%)

Q Compared with before the pandemic, do you feel that your relationships with family members in general are..?



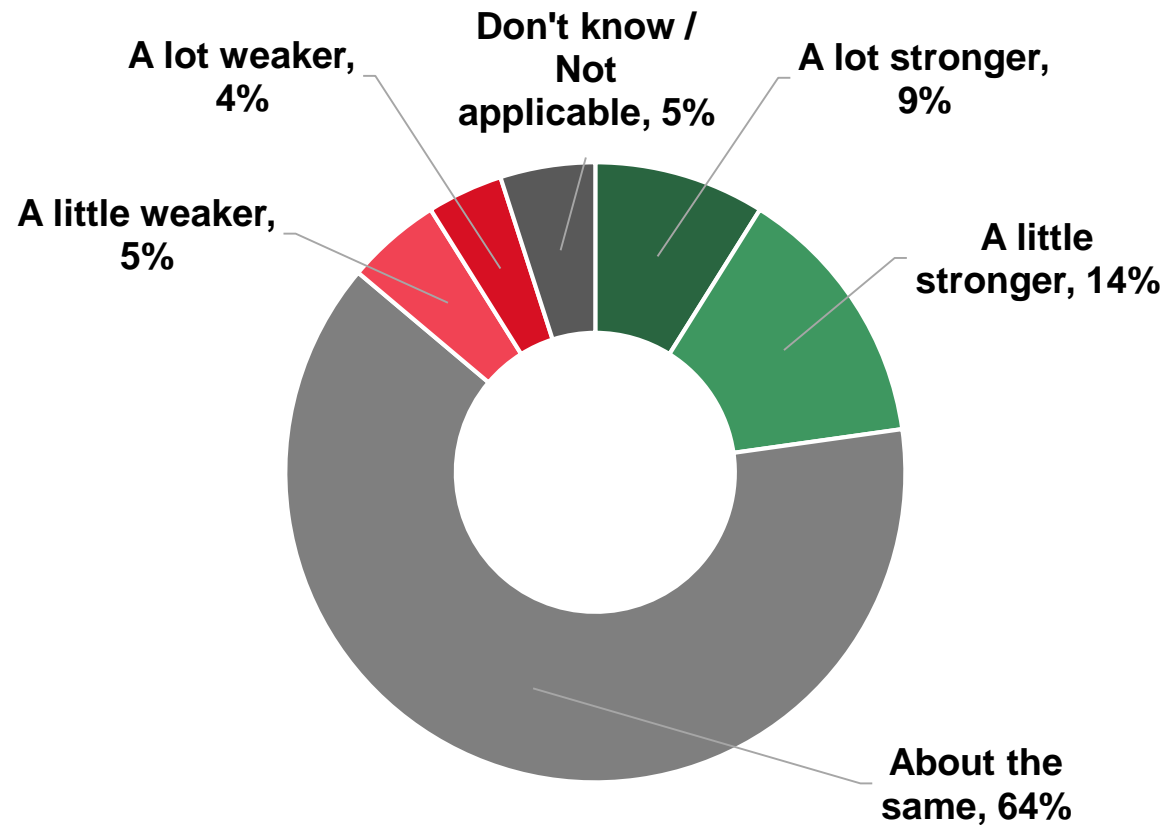
Groups more likely than average (14%) to say their relationships with family were **weaker** compared with pre-pandemic include:

- Disabled people (21%)
- Unpaid carers (17%)
- Those who felt lonely most or all the time in the last week (34%)

Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022

Similarly, people were more likely to say that relationships with neighbours had got stronger (22%) than weaker (9%) since the pandemic

Q And you relationships with your neighbours? In general, compared with before the pandemic, do you feel that these are



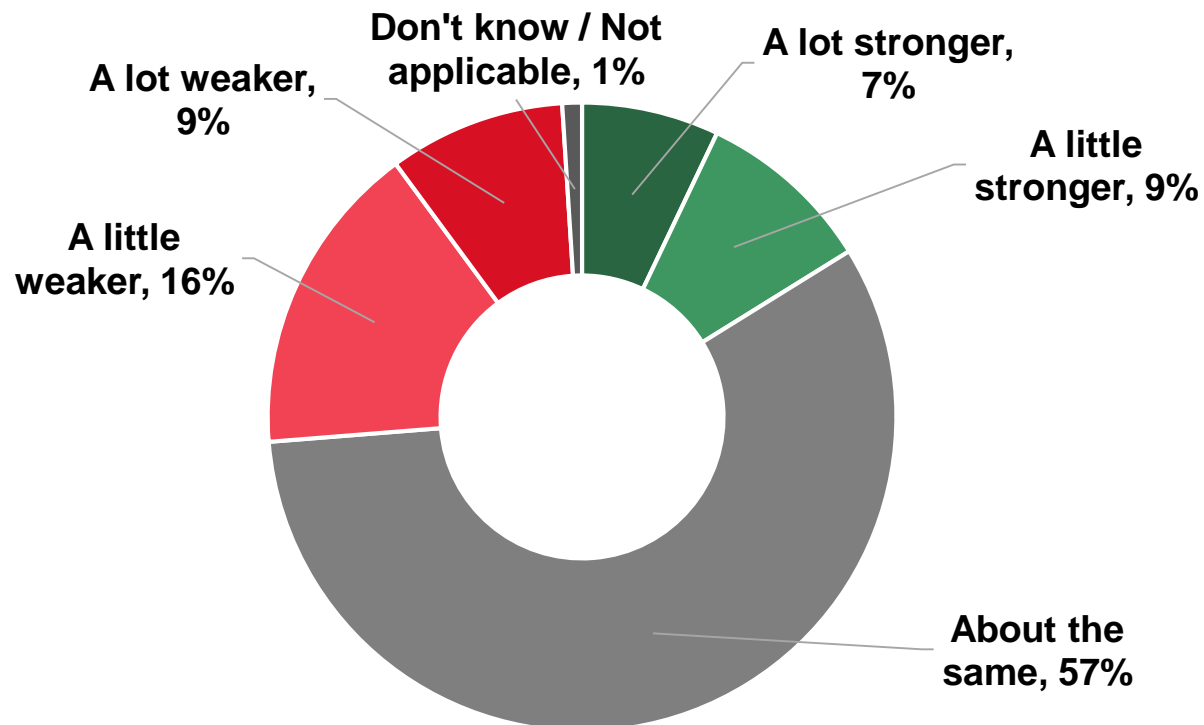
Groups more likely than average (9%) to say their relationships with neighbours were **weaker** compared with pre-pandemic include:

- People on low incomes (15% of those on less than £15,600 a year)
- People who felt lonely all or most of the time last week (17%)

Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022

In contrast, people were more likely to feel relationships with friends had got weaker (25%) than stronger (16%) – although again, the most common response (57%) was that they were about the same

Q And your relationships with friends? In general, compared with before the pandemic, do you feel that these are

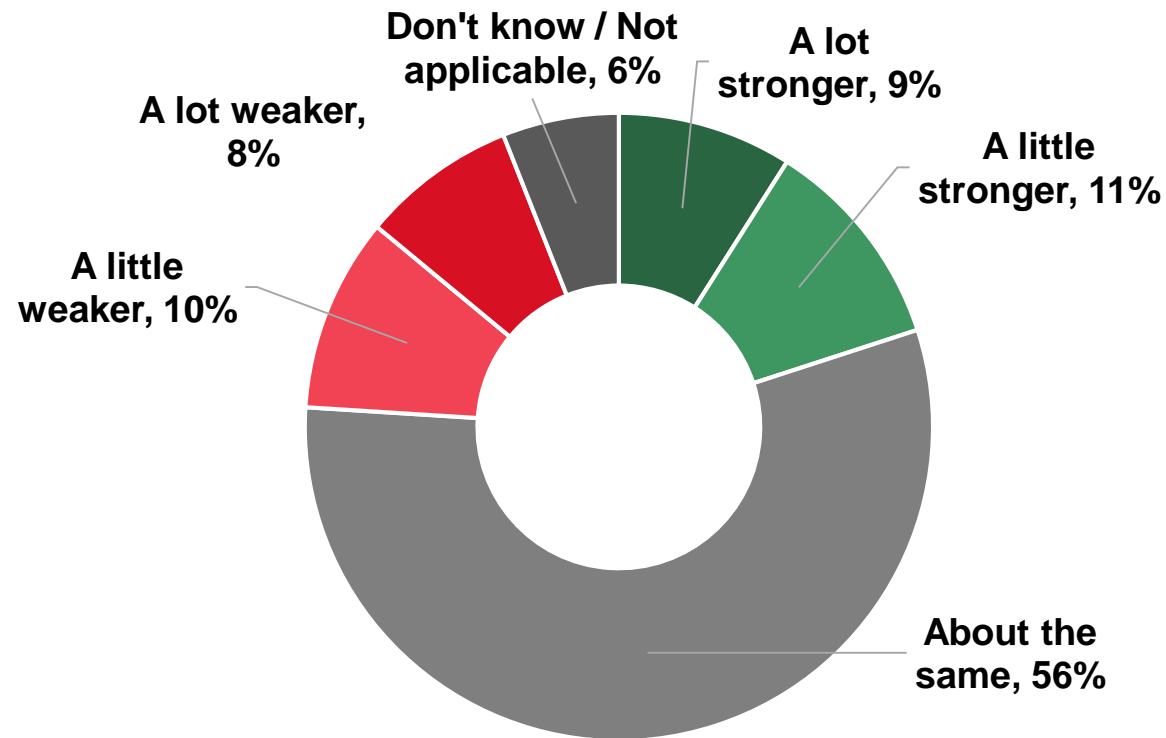


- Those aged **35-54** were more likely to say relationships with friends were weaker (33%). However, the youngest age group (16-24) were more likely than average to say that their relationships with friends were stronger (27%).
- People who **felt lonely** some (39%), or most or all the time (40%), those on **low incomes** (35%), **unpaid carers** (32%), and **disabled people** (32%) were all more likely to say that relationships with friends were weaker.

Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022

Similar proportions of those in work felt their relationships with colleagues had got stronger (20%) as said they had got weaker (18%)

Q And you relationships with colleagues or others you work with? In general, compared with before the pandemic, do you feel that these are



- Those who felt lonely most or all of the time were markedly more likely to report that relationships with colleagues were weaker (36% compared to the 18% average).
- There were no other notable variations in those who said these relationships were stronger or weaker.

Base: 581 respondents age 16+, in work and resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022

Formal and informal support

4

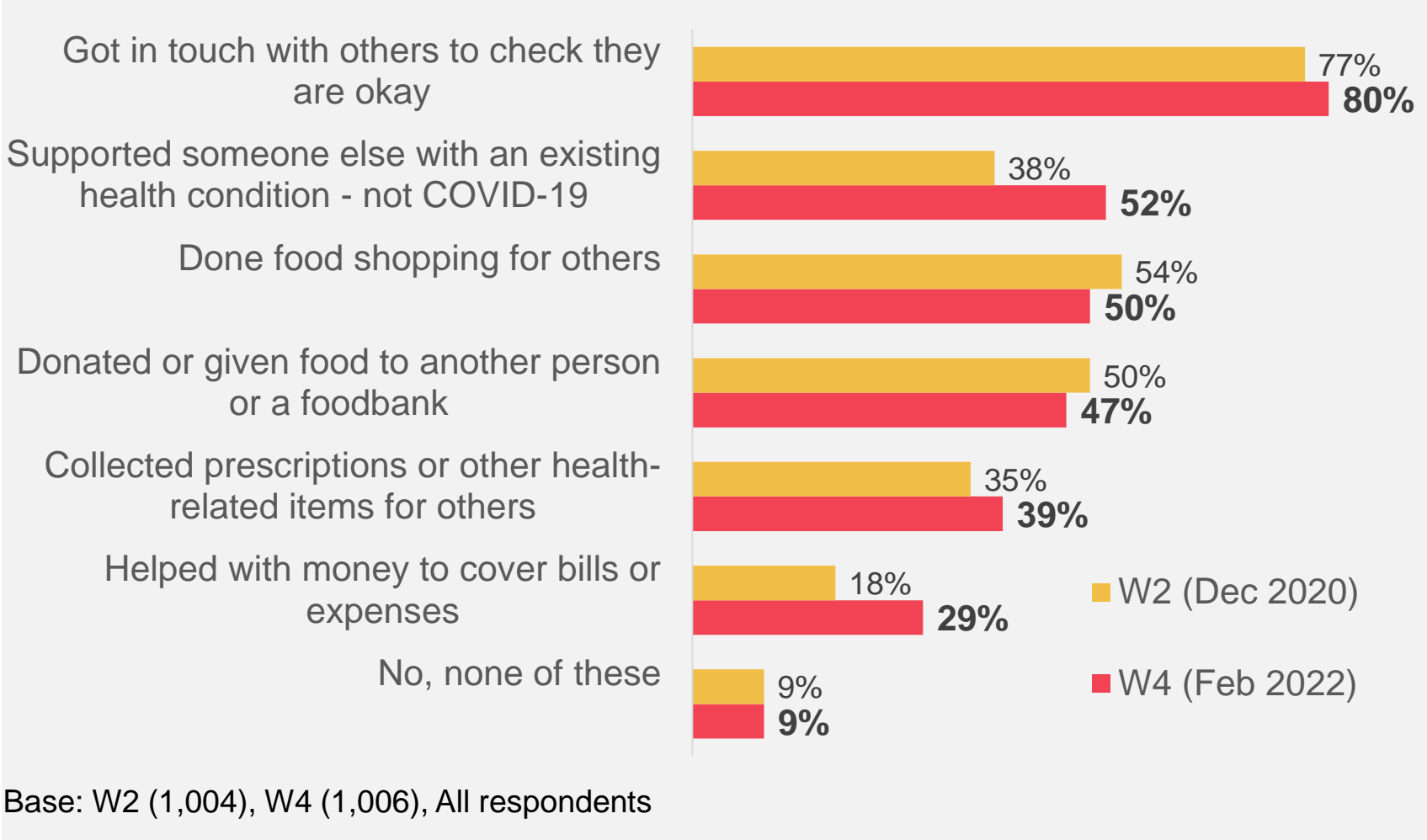
Key findings:

The vast majority say they have provided some kind of support and / or help to others in the last month.

People are divided in how confident they currently feel about being able to access support from GPs, ambulances, and A&E in a timely manner.

Most people in Scotland (91%) report that they, or someone else in their household, have provided formal or informal support to others in the last month

Q 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?

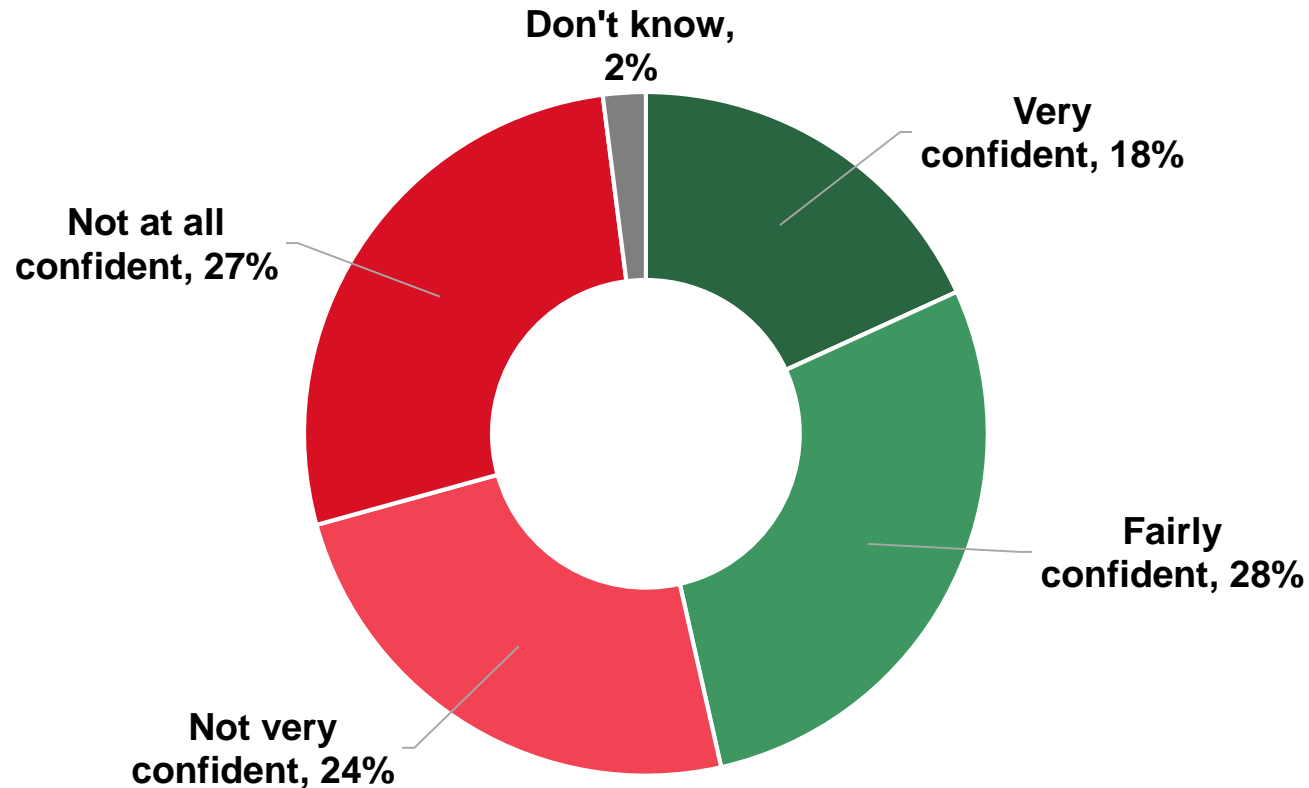


A range of 'other' kinds of help mentioned included: practical support – e.g. fixing things, gardening, cooking, errands (5%); help with transportation to appointments / work/ shopping (5%); other mental/emotional support (3%); donating money / goods other than food (3%); providing help through work/formal volunteering role (2%), and help with childcare (2%).



Half (47%) feel confident that they could get a GP appointment within a reasonable timeframe, but half (51%) do not feel confident about this.

Q How confident, if at all, would you say you are that you could get a GP appointment within a reasonable timeframe, if you needed one?

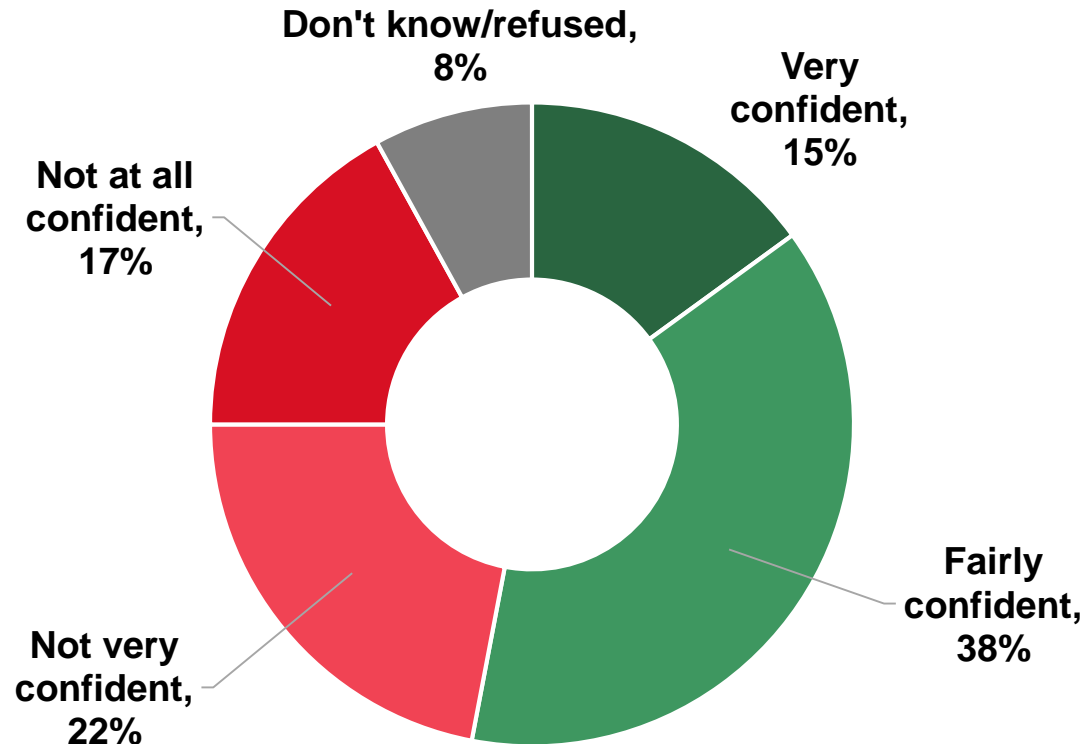


- People from **rural areas** were more likely to feel confident (53% vs 45% of those in urban areas).
- People in **more deprived areas** were more likely to say they were not very or not at all confident (58% of those in SIMD1, compared with 51% on average – although the pattern by deprivation was not linear).

Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022

Around half (54%) feel confident that, if they needed an ambulance, it would arrive quickly, but 39% do not feel confident about this

Q How confident, if at all, would you say you are that if you needed an ambulance, one would arrive quickly?

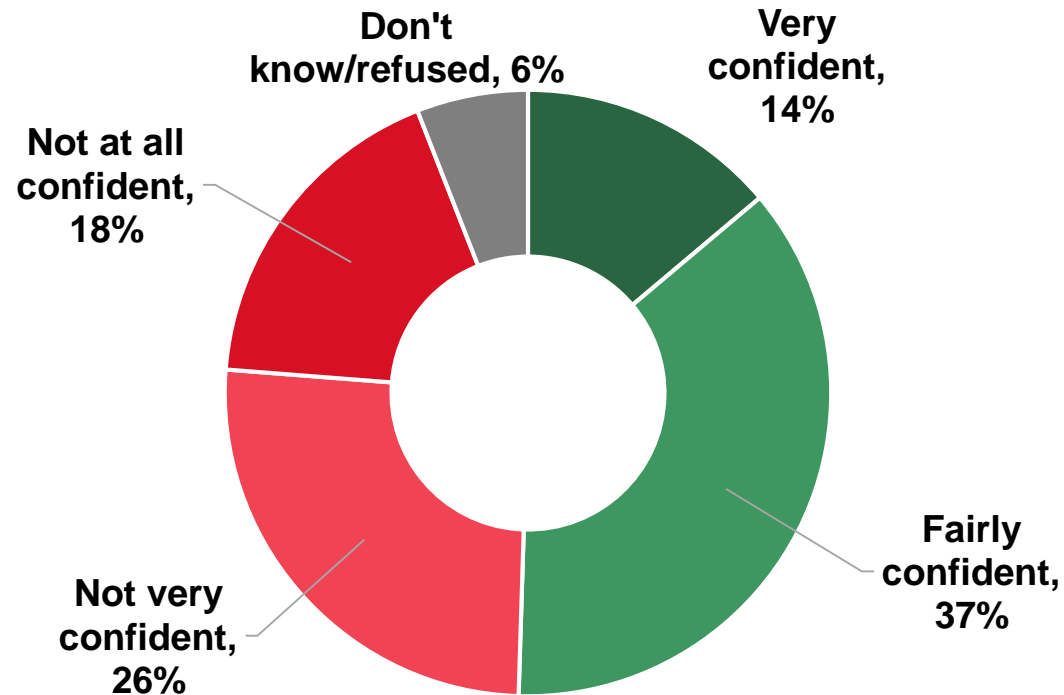


- People in **rural areas** were more likely to feel confident (60% vs 52% in urban areas).
- Those in **more deprived areas** were more likely to say they were not confident (43% of those in SIMD1 and 45% of those in SIMD4), as were **unpaid carers** (46%).

Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022

Around half (51%) feel confident that they would be able to access Accident and Emergency care if they needed it, while 43% do not feel confident about this

Q How confident, if at all, would you say you are that if you needed emergency care at an Accident and Emergency department, that you would be seen quickly?



- People in the **lowest income households** (55% of those on under £15,600), **disabled people** (52%), and those **aged 55-69** (50%) were all more likely than average to say they did **not** feel confident they would be seen quickly in A&E.

Base: 1,006 respondents age 16+ resident in Scotland; fieldwork = January 26 - February 11 2022

THANK YOU.

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