

INDEPENDENT OFFICE FOR POLICE CONDUCT (IOPC)

IOPC Public Perceptions Tracker Summary Report, Financial Year 2024/25

March 2025

.YONDER

Methodology & research objectives

Tracking the public's perceptions towards the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)

- + Yonder has conducted regular online surveys among adults in England and Wales since 2017. These are nationally representative with sample sizes of approximately 1,800–3,000 depending on the wave.
- + This report includes results from three waves of research. The most recent wave was conducted between 28 February and 5 March 2025 (Wave 8.3). Some slides display aggregated (combined) data across waves 8.1 (September 2024), 8.2 (December 2024) and 8.3 (March 2025).
- + The total number of respondents (n) combined between waves 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 was 6,383. Subgroups for Black, Asian and 18-24 year old respondents were boosted in all waves to a total of 335, 721 and 1,047 respectively. Wave 8.3 individually comprised 2,227.
- + The research objective for this project is to track and explore public perceptions relating to the IOPC and the police complaints system, against the backdrop of news stories and events.
- + Wave 8.2 included an extra module about the IOPC's independent investigations, we have included this section at the end of the report.

Executive summary (1/2)

1. Half of the public are positive towards the police

Half of people say they feel positive towards the police. Sentiment towards the police has remained stable over the last three years.

The public recall recently seeing news stories about policing of protests and report closely following stories about policing of riots and public demonstrations. Stories about police abuse of power for sexual purposes have the greatest negative impact on perceptions of the police.

Sentiment varies by demographic subgroups, with older people being more positive towards the police. Those from mixed ethnic group and the LGBTQ+ community are more likely to have a negative perception of the police.

One-in-five say their local police force is better than the police overall. Positivity towards local police forces is largely similar across regions and is highest among in the South West of England.

2. Most say they would complain about a police officer's behaviour

The public continue to be more likely to lack confidence, than feel confident, in the police to deal fairly with complaints against officers. People of mixed ethnicities and members of the LGBTQ+ community have slightly lower confidence in the police when it comes to dealing with complaints.

Despite this, the majority of the public say they would complain about an officer's behaviour, if they were unhappy. Black people, those in the ABC1 social grade* and those living in rural areas are slightly more likely than other groups to say they would complain about a police officer's behaviour.

However, the public are slightly more likely to complain to the police force of the officer involved than to an independent body such as the IOPC.

3. Awareness of the IOPC has plateaued

The public's awareness of the IOPC remains below awareness levels of the IPCC pre-2019, with just a third being able to say at least a little about the IOPC and what it does. Older people and men are more likely to have heard of the IOPC.

The majority of the public think the IOPC is at least somewhat independent of the police.

The public most frequently remember seeing or hearing about the IOPC in relation to investigations into the police and police misconduct.

*Social grade system of demographic classification based on the occupation of the head of a household – see link for more information: <https://www.mrs.org.uk/resources/social-grade>

Executive summary (2/2)

4. Black people are more likely to think the IOPC will help improve policing

Two-in-five feel confident that the IOPC does a good job. This remains consistent with previous years. Confidence in the IOPC is highest among Black members of the public and those aware of the IOPC.

Around half of people say they think the IOPC will help improve policing. Black respondents are more likely than average to think the IOPC will help improve policing. A sense that the IOPC will help improve policing is also slightly higher among those aged 18-24, those living in rural areas and those aware of the IOPC. Meanwhile those in the LGBTQ+ community are more likely to think the IOPC will have little to no impact on policing.

5. Most think the IOPC should prioritise corruption and abuse of power

When deciding which incidents and complaints the IOPC should investigate, the public tend to understand the term 'serious' as defined by the type of incident – such as violent behaviour and sexual misconduct.

The vast majority think the severity of the incident is an important factor to consider when deciding which incidents to investigate. Most also think police misconduct or abuse of power is important.

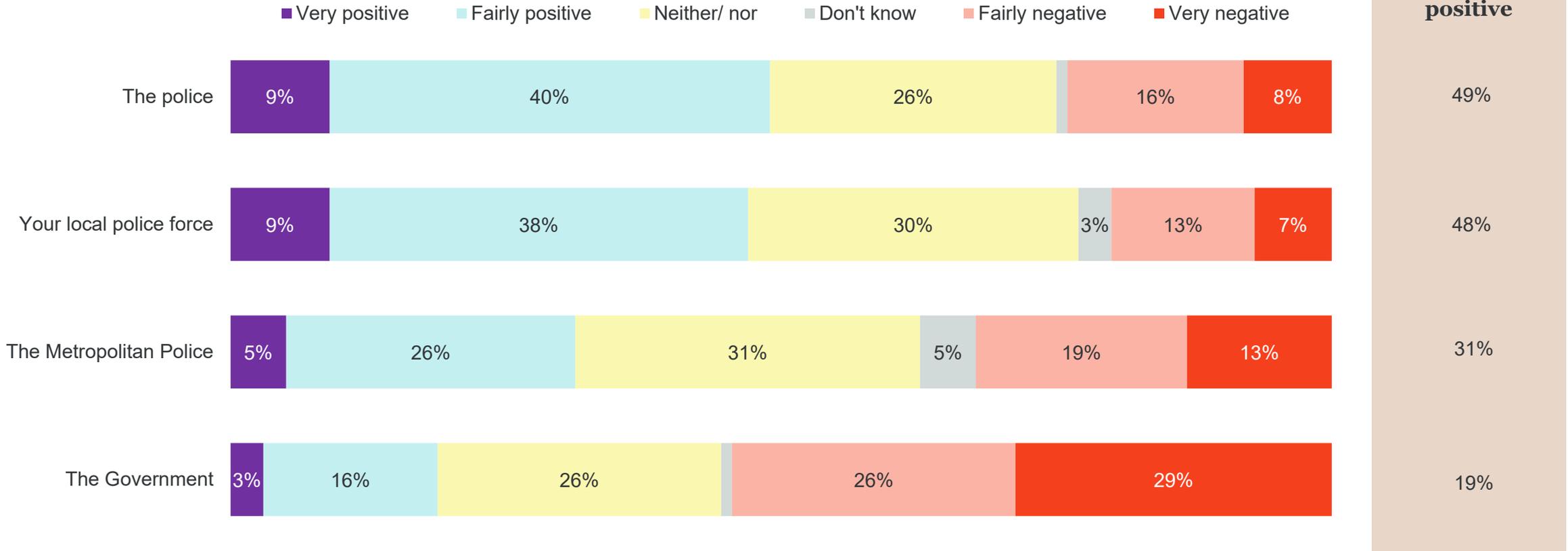
When asked what the IOPC's primary purpose should be, two-in-five say accountability within police forces. This figure rises to almost half among those aware of the IOPC.

The majority of the public think the IOPC should prioritise corruption and abuse of power. Many also think death and serious injury and child sexual abuse should be prioritised.

Attitudes towards police

Around half of the public feel positive towards the police and their local police force

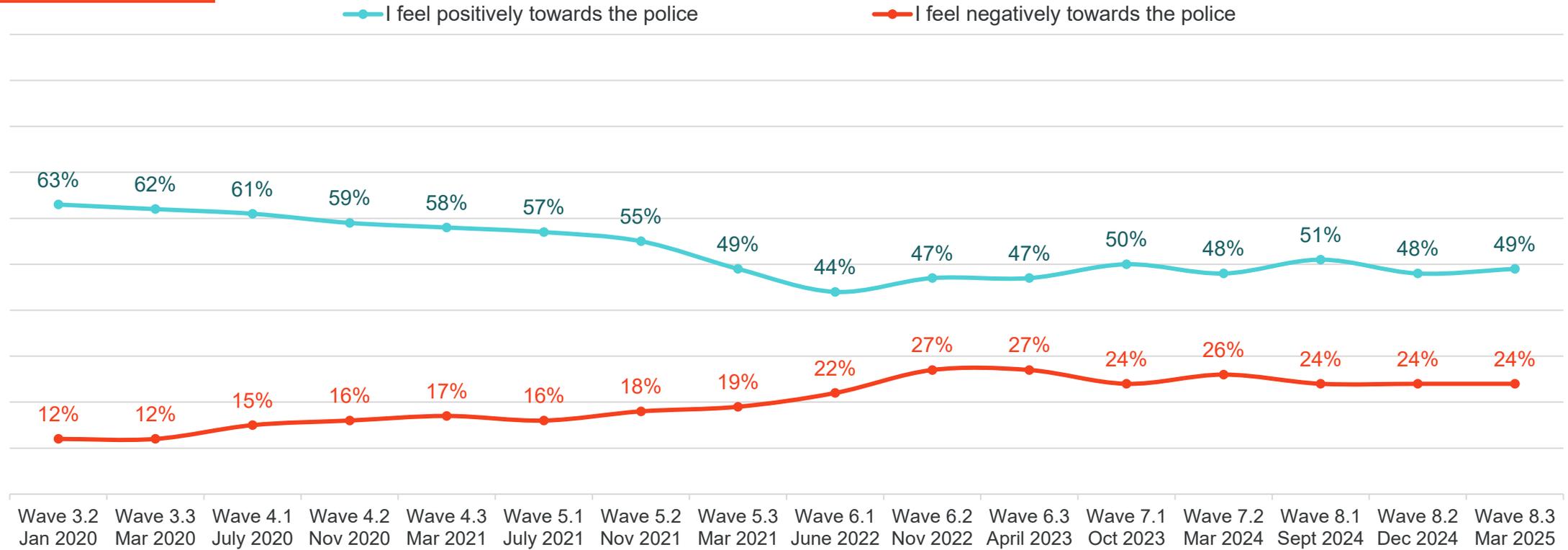
Q. How positive or negative do you feel towards each of the following?



Public sentiment towards the police has remained stable over the last three years

Q. How positive or negative do you feel towards each of the following? [The police]

The police



Base: All waves approx. n=1,800 – 3,000, Wave 8.1 n=1,924, Wave 8.2 n=2,232, Wave 8.3 n=2,227
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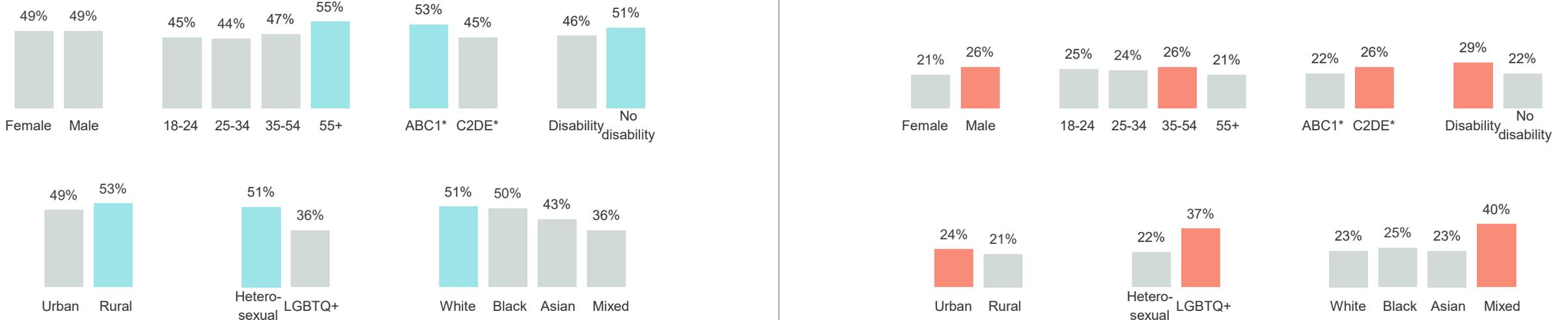
Older people are more positive towards the police, while negativity is highest among those from a mixed ethnic group or LGBTQ+ community

Q. How positive or negative do you feel towards each of the following? [The police]

Very positive Fairly positive Neither/ nor Don't know Fairly negative Very negative



Total % positive
49%

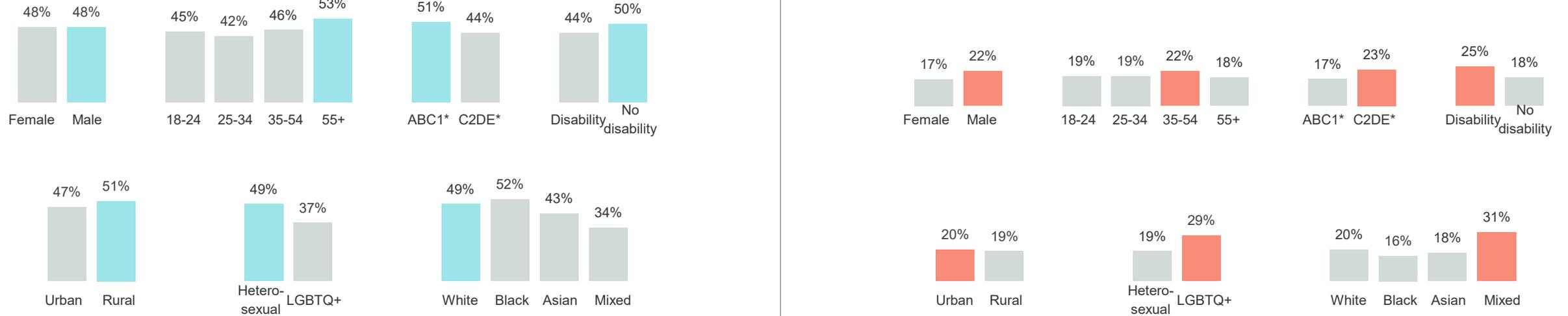
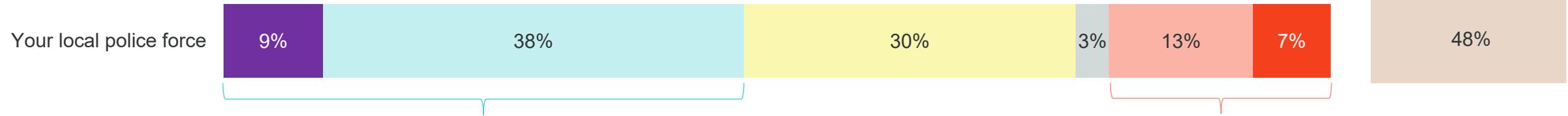


Base: Total n=6,383, Female n=3,348, Male n=3,015, 18-24 n=1,047, 25-34 n=1,006, 35-54 n=2,085, 55+ n=2,245, ABC1* n=3,734, C2DE* n=2,649, Disability n=1,546, No disability n=4,713, Urban n=5,297, Rural n=1,086, Heterosexual n=5,701, LGBTQ+ n=581, White n=5,062, Black n=335, Asian n=721, Mixed n=165. *Social grade system of demographic classification based on the occupation of the head of a household – see link for more information: <https://www.mrs.org.uk/resources/social-grade>

Similarly, older people feel more positively towards their local police, and those from a mixed ethnic group or LGBTQ+ community are more negative

Q. How positive or negative do you feel towards each of the following? [Your local police force]

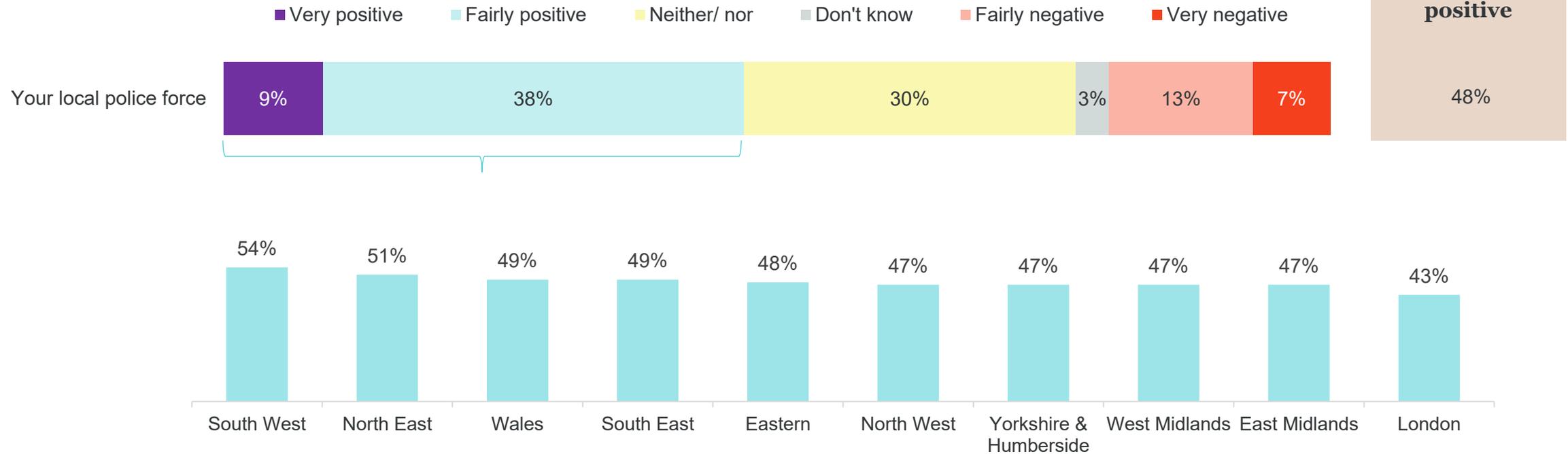
Very positive Fairly positive Neither/ nor Don't know Fairly negative Very negative



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Positivity towards local police forces is largely similar across regions; it is highest in the South West of England and lowest in London

Q. How positive or negative do you feel towards each of the following? [Your local police force]

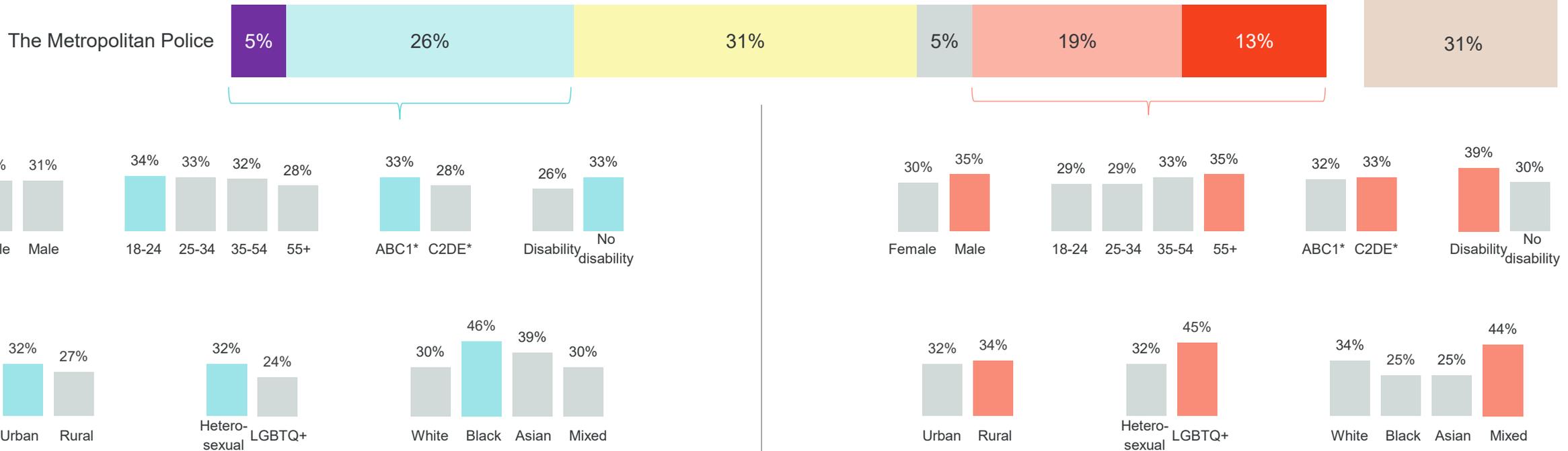


Base: Total n=6,383, North East n=291, North West n=821, Yorkshire & Humberside n=565, West Midlands n=620, East Midlands n=517, Wales n=339, Eastern n=648, London n=1,041, South East n=931, South West n=610

Negativity towards The Met is highest among the LGBTQ+ community, while Black people report higher levels of positivity than average

Q. How positive or negative do you feel towards each of the following? [The Metropolitan Police]**

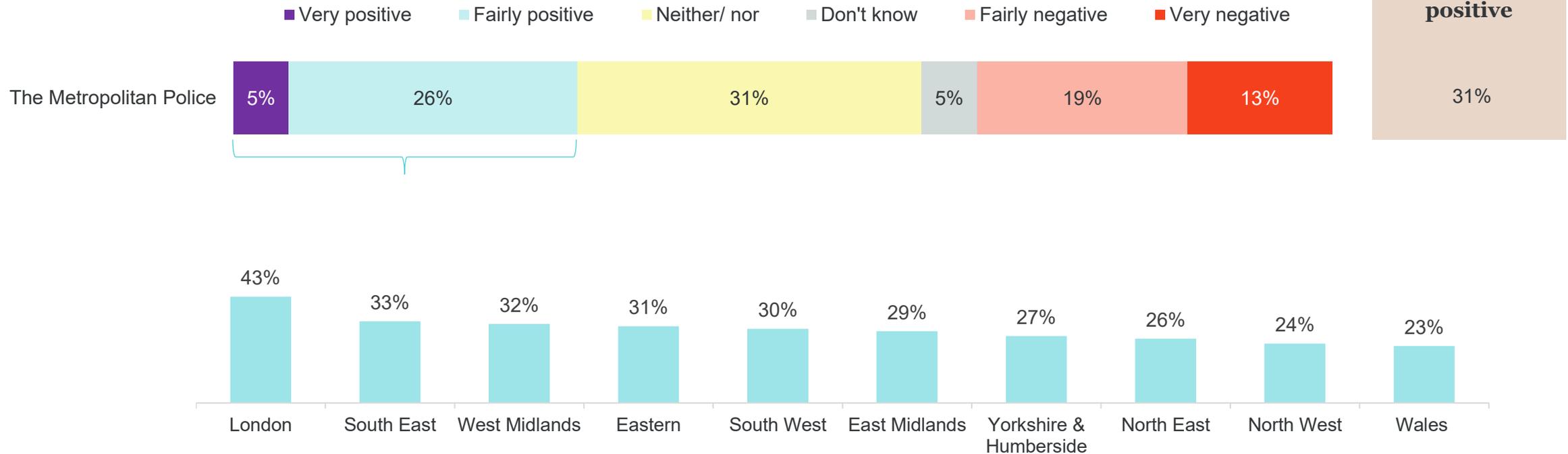
Very positive Fairly positive Neither/ nor Don't know Fairly negative Very negative



Base: Total n=6,383, Female n=3,348, Male n=3,015, 18-24 n=1,047, 25-34 n=1,006, 35-54 n=2,085, 55+ n=2,245, ABC1* n=3,734, C2DE* n=2,649, Disability n=1,546, No disability n=4,713, Urban n=5,297, Rural n=1,086, Heterosexual n=5,701, LGBTQ+ n=581, White n=5,062, Black n=335, Asian n=721, Mixed n=165. *Social grade system of demographic classification based on the occupation of the head of a household – see link for more information: <https://www.mrs.org.uk/resources/social-grade>
 **NB: Favourability towards The Met was tested to understand how far this influences perceptions of policing overall given recent high profile news stories.

Londoners are more likely to feel positive towards The Met than people from other regions across England and Wales

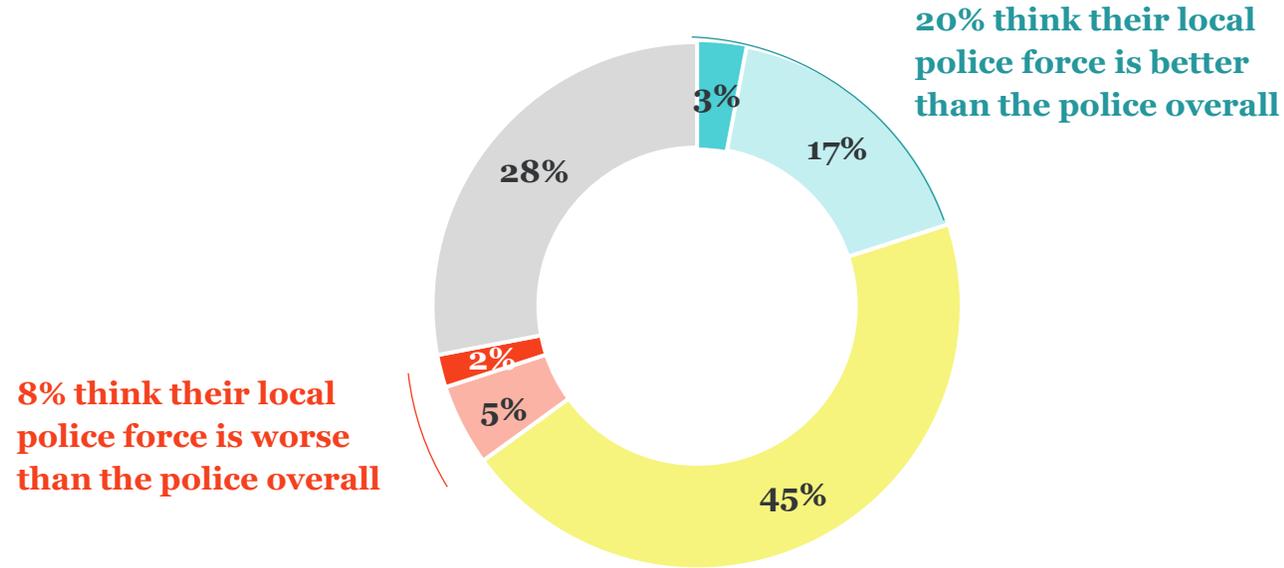
Q. How positive or negative do you feel towards each of the following? [The Metropolitan Police]*



Base: Total n=6,383, North East n=291, North West n=821, Yorkshire & Humberside n=565, West Midlands n=620, East Midlands n=517, Wales n=339, Eastern n=648, London n=1,041, South East n=931, South West n=610. *NB: Favourability towards The Met was tested to understand how far this influences perceptions of policing overall given recent high profile news stories

Around one-in-five think their local police force is better than the police overall

Q. To what extent do you think your local police force is better or worse than the police in the country overall?

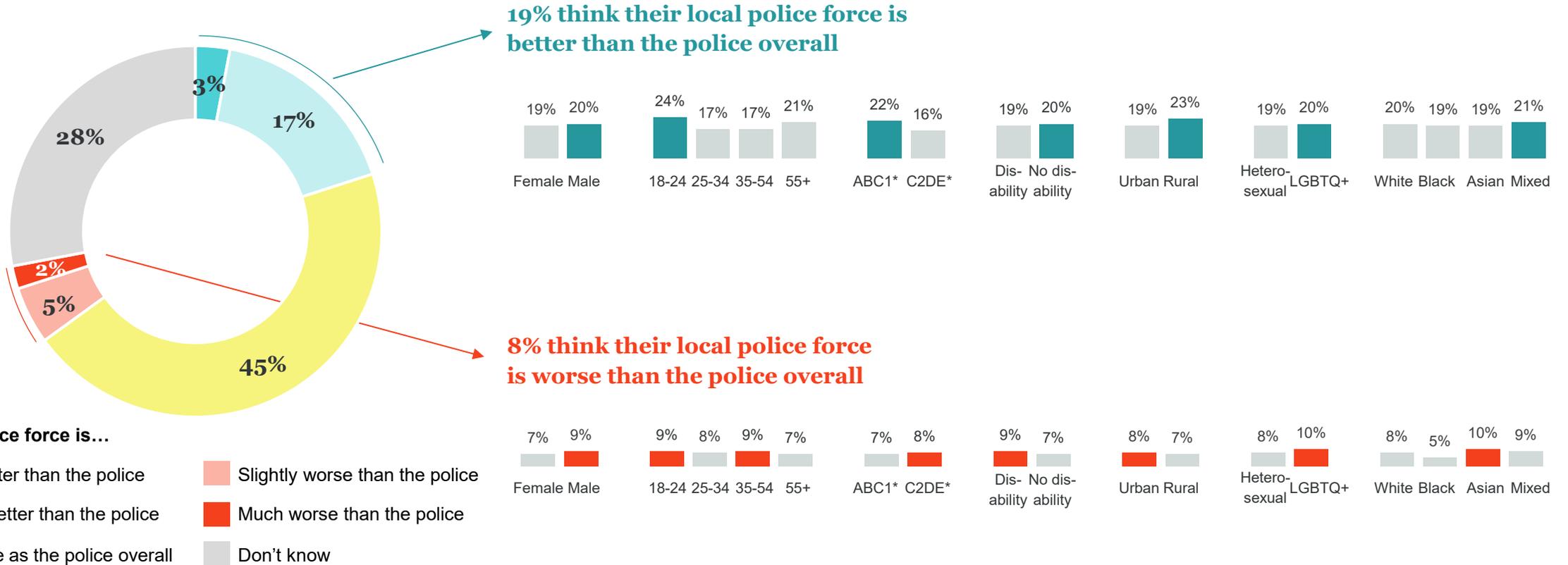


My local police force is...

- Much better than the police
- Slightly better than the police
- The same as the police overall
- Slightly worse than the police
- Much worse than the police
- Don't know

Those aged 18-24 and people from rural areas are slightly more likely to think their local police force is better than the police overall

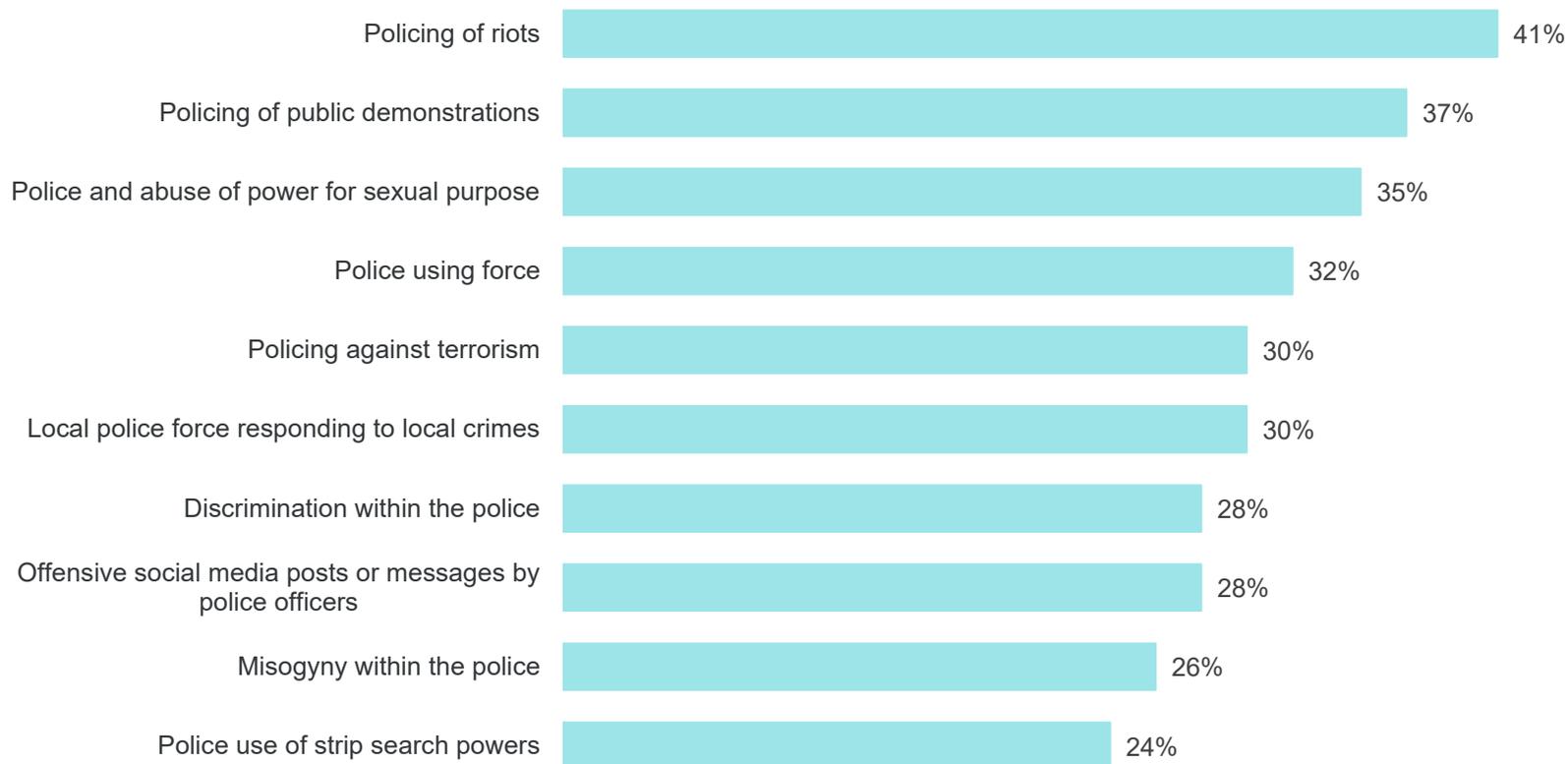
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Similarly, policing of riots and public demonstrations are the most followed news stories surrounding the police

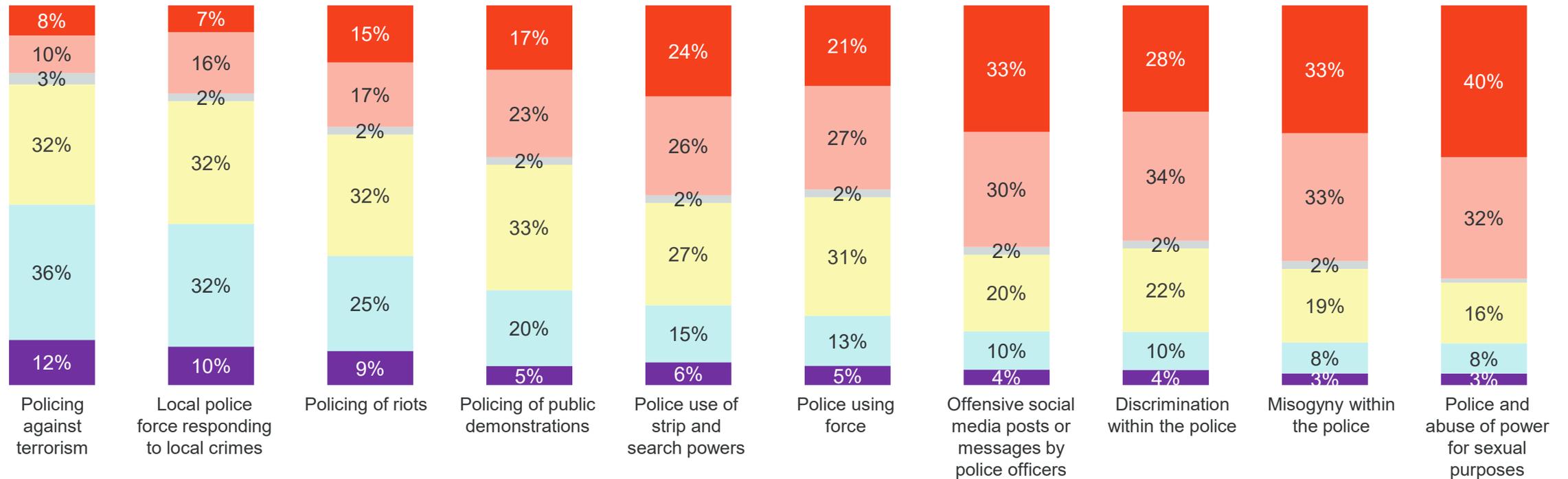
Q. How closely have you followed any of the following news stories surrounding the police, if at all? [Sum: Closely]



Stories about abuse of power for sexual purposes and misogyny within the police negatively impact people’s perceptions of the police the most

Q. You said you have followed the below news stories. How, if at all, have these stories impacted how you feel about the police?

■ Much more negative about the police
 ■ Somewhat more negative about the police
 ■ Don't know
 ■ Neither more positive nor more negative about the police
 ■ Somewhat more positive about the police
 ■ Much more positive about the police



Base: All who said very or fairly closely for news stories about the police 1,584 – 2,678
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Local police forces doing their job well by being present and responsive in communities drives positivity towards them

Q. Why do you think your local police force is better than police in the country overall?

Local police force is better than the police overall

Does its job well	58%
Does its job well	17%
Present in the community	16%
Responsive	12%
Positive personal experience	8%
Communicates well	7%
Approachable	7%
Caring	3%
Helpful	3%
Operates under better conditions	35%
Involved in less controversy than police overall	12%
Operates in a better area	11%
Deals with less crime	11%
General positive	20%
Has a good reputation	11%

Fewer systemic issues	4%
Less corrupt than police overall	3%

“ ”

*“I’ve seen more of their **community involvement**, as well as their **responses to local events**.”*

*“They seem to **get on with the job** pretty well. I feel reasonably **confident**.”*

*“I live in a small city and it seems **the police respond very quickly** to any incident.”*

*“Simply the police are **better at handling local issues** compared with **the London Metropolitan Police** which has a **shocking record** for discrimination, misogyny and injustice to innocent people.”*

Failure to tackle local crimes drives perceptions of local police forces as worse than the police overall

Q. Why do you think your local police force is worse than police in the country overall?

Local police force is worse than the police overall

Failure to tackle crime / lack of presence	68%
Doesn't tackle crime properly	30%
Not present in community	23%
Unresponsive	18%
Too much crime in local area	11%
Doesn't have the right priorities	6%
Doesn't care	4%
Poor attitude	3%
General negative	23%
Other	13%
Bad reputation	10%
Structural issues	20%
Underfunded	7%
Understaffed	6%
Corruption	6%
Poor leadership	3%

Specific incidents	8%
Poor personal experience	7%
Systemic issues	3%
Racism	2%

“ ”

“High crime [and] no active presence.”

“They are *not proactive* for major crime, they are *unresponsive*, they *do not have a consistent presence*.”

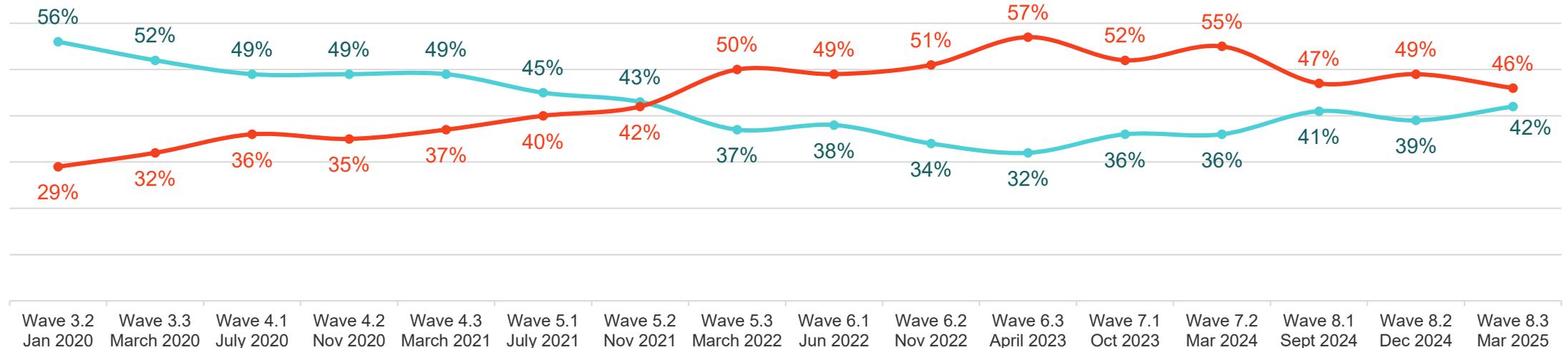
“Cultural problems, *institutional racism*, *poor response time* and *no resource* to investigate bag thefts, phone snatching, dangerous cycling etc.”

“Because it is so *underfunded*.”

Police complaints

Less than half of the public feel confident that the police deal fairly with complaints, though confidence has risen slightly since April 2023

Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the police deal fairly with complaints made against the police?



Base: All waves approx. n=1,800 – 3,000, Wave 8.1 n= 1,924, Wave 8.2 n=2,232, Wave 8.3 n=2,227
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People from a mixed ethnic group and those from LGBTQ+ communities have slightly lower confidence in the police to deal with complaints

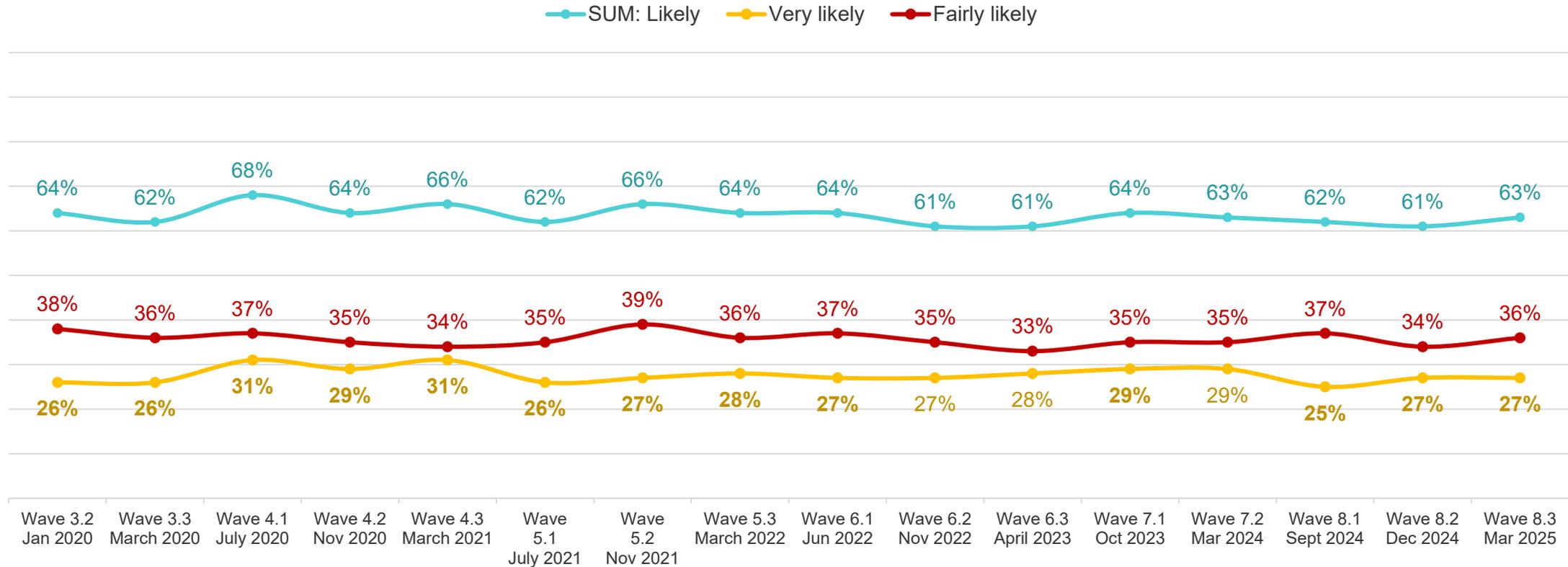
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The proportion of the public who are likely to complain about a police officer's behaviour remains consistent with previous waves

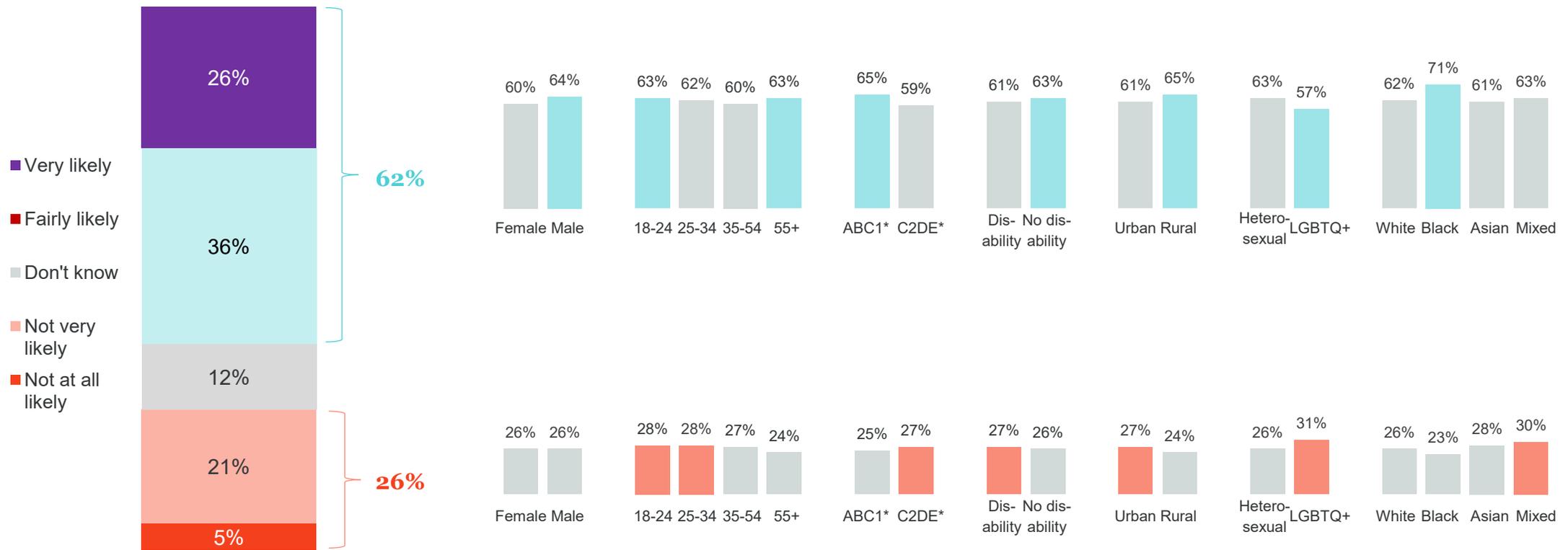
Q. If you were really unhappy about how a police officer behaved towards you, OR handled a matter in which you were involved, how likely would you be to complain?



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Black people, ABC1s and those living in rural areas are slightly more likely than other groups to complain if they were unhappy with a police officer

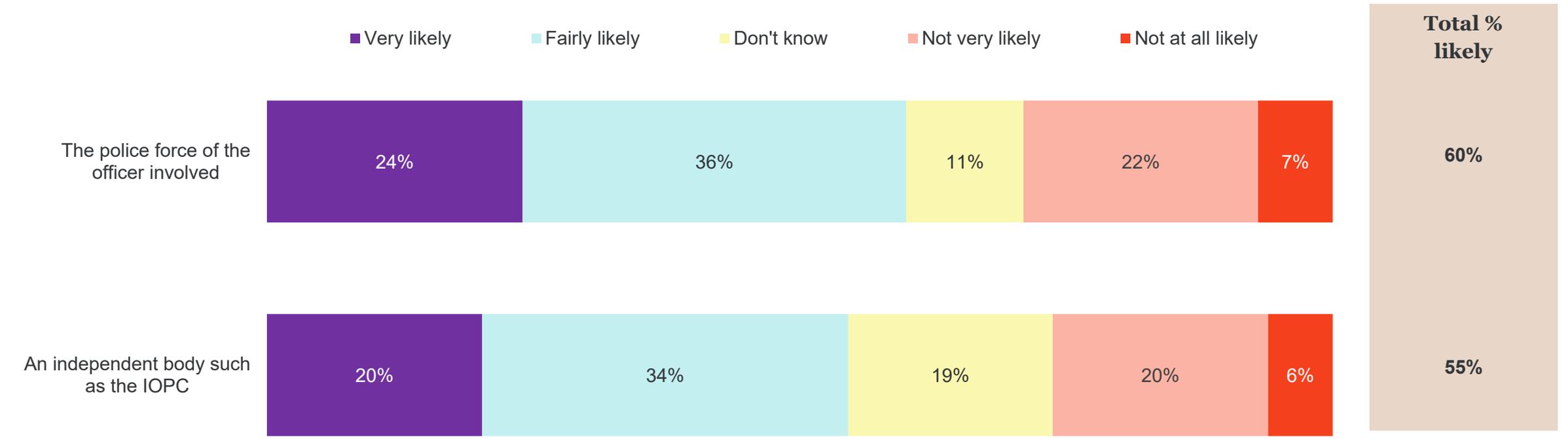
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If unhappy, the public are slightly more likely to complain to the force of the officer involved than an independent body such as the IOPC

Q. Please keep imagining a scenario where you were really unhappy about how a police officer behaved towards you, OR handled a matter in which you were involved. How likely would you be to complain to...

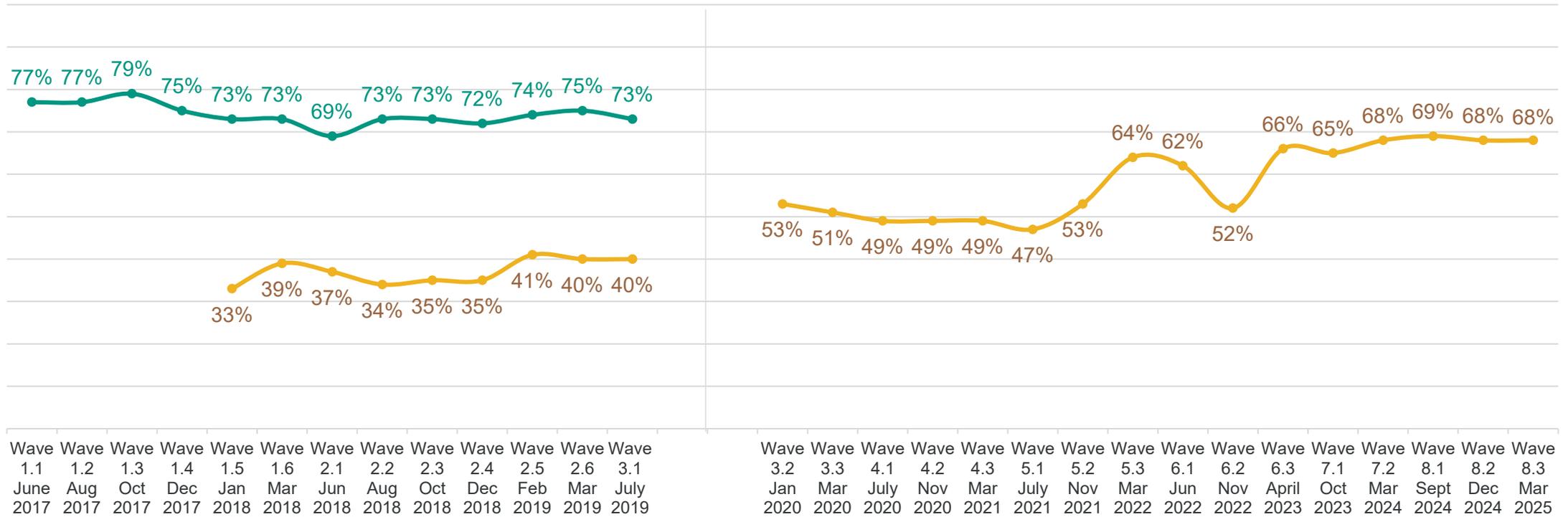


IOPC

Awareness of the IOPC has remained stable over the last 2 years but remains lower than awareness of the IPCC pre-2019

Q. Have you heard of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) before today? [% saying 'yes']

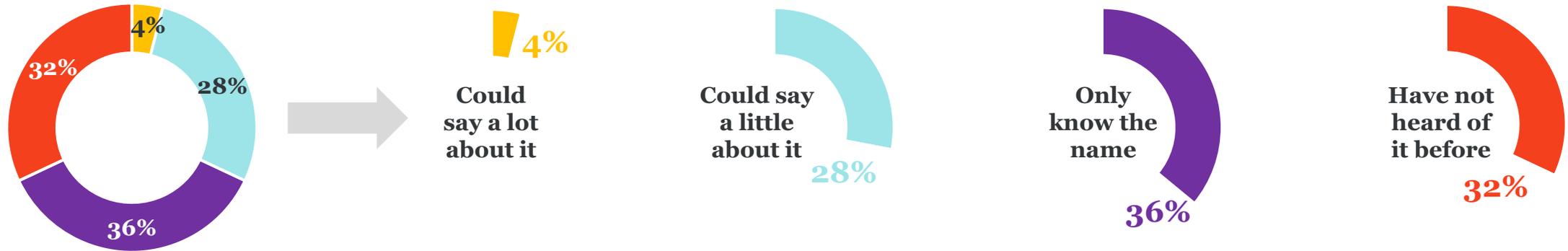
Q. Have you heard of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) before today? [% saying 'yes']



Base: All waves approx. n=1,800 – 3,000, Wave 8.1 n= 1,924, Wave 8.2 n=2,232, Wave 8.3 n=2,227
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A third of the public could say at least a little about the IOPC and what it does

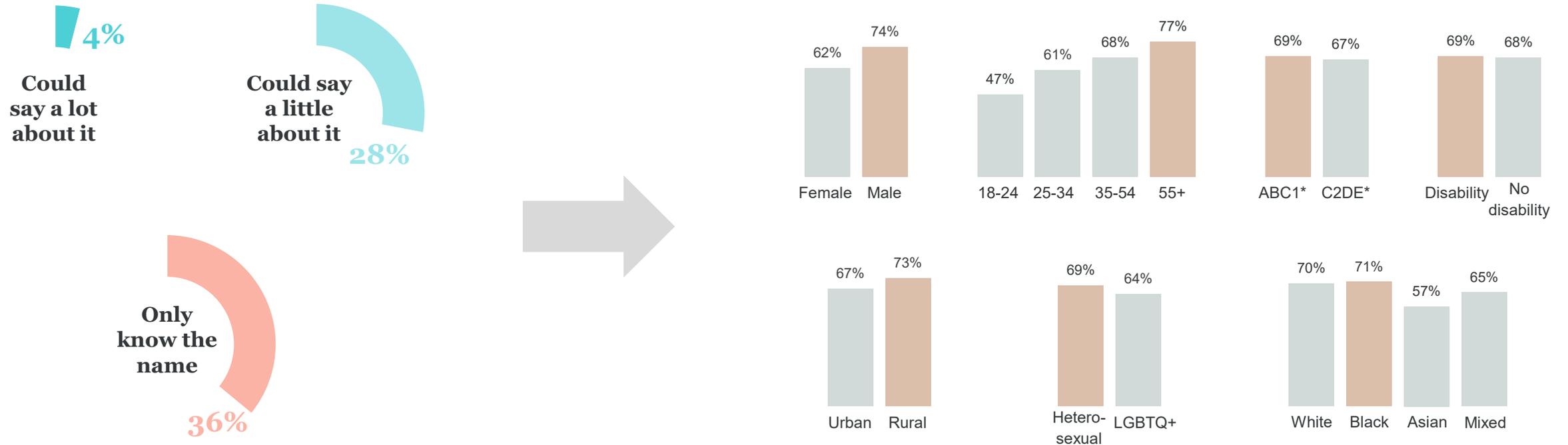
Q. Have you heard of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) before today?



The majority have either not heard of the IOPC or only know the name

Older people and men are more likely to say they have heard of the IOPC than other demographic subgroups

Q. Have you heard of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) before today? [% saying 'yes']



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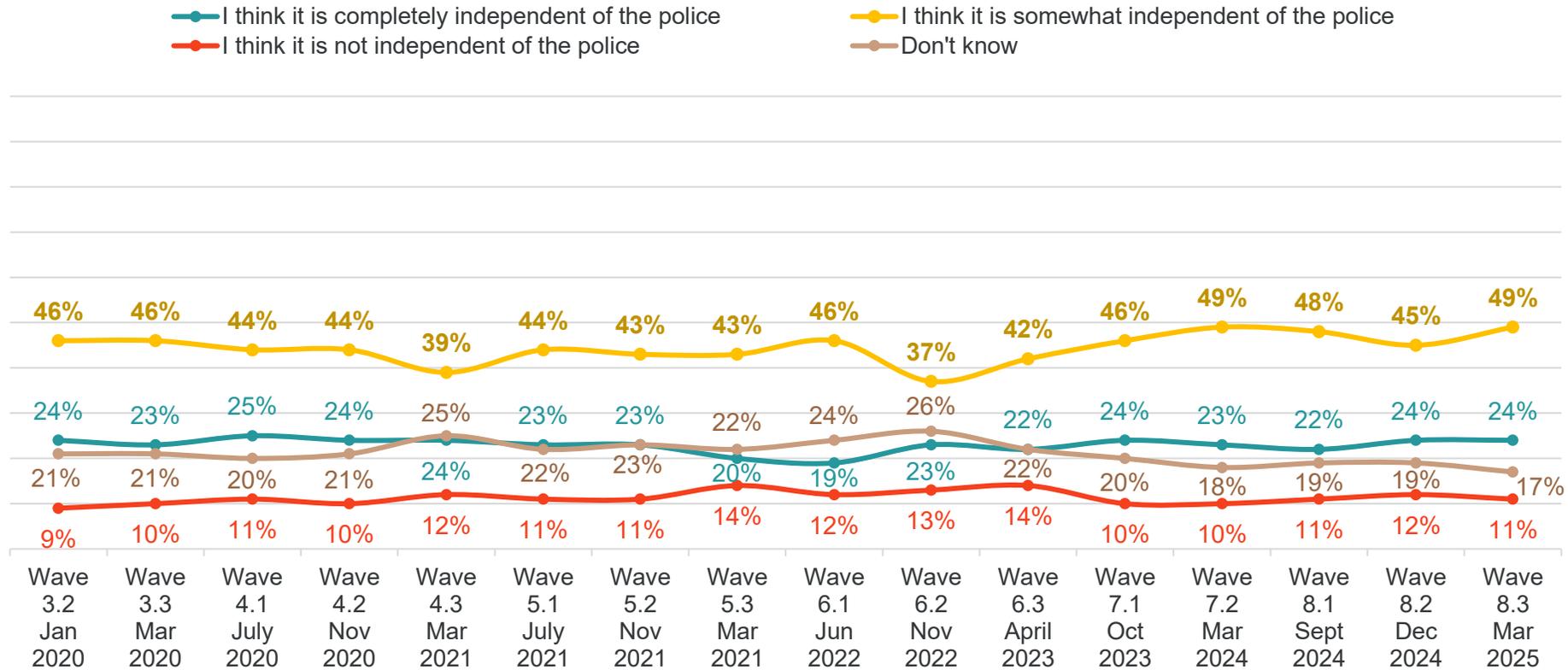
The public most often recall hearing about the IOPC in relation to general investigations into the police and instances of police misconduct

Q. What can you remember seeing or hearing about the IOPC recently, if anything at all?



Almost three-quarters of the public consider the IOPC to be at least somewhat independent of the police

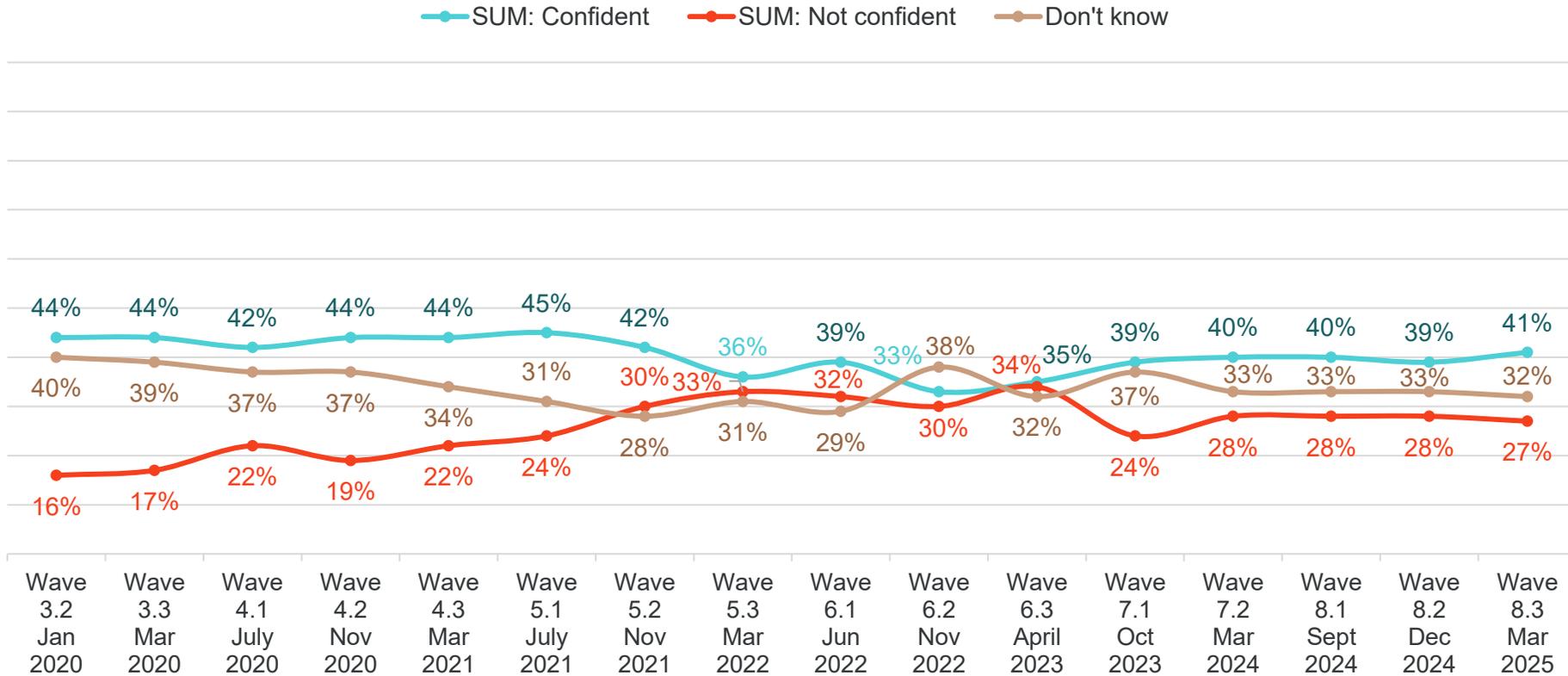
Q. The IOPC (Independent Office for Police Conduct) is the body that oversees complaints made about the police in England and Wales. It investigates all of the most serious incidents involving the police. It uses learning from its work to influence changes in policing. Based on what you know, do you think that the IOPC is independent of the police?



Base: All waves approx. n=1,800 – 3,000, Wave 8.1 n= 1,924, Wave 8.2 n=2,232, Wave 8.3 n=2,227, Wave 8.3 n=2,227. No data available pre-Jan 2020.

Confidence in the IOPC has remained stable over the past 12 months

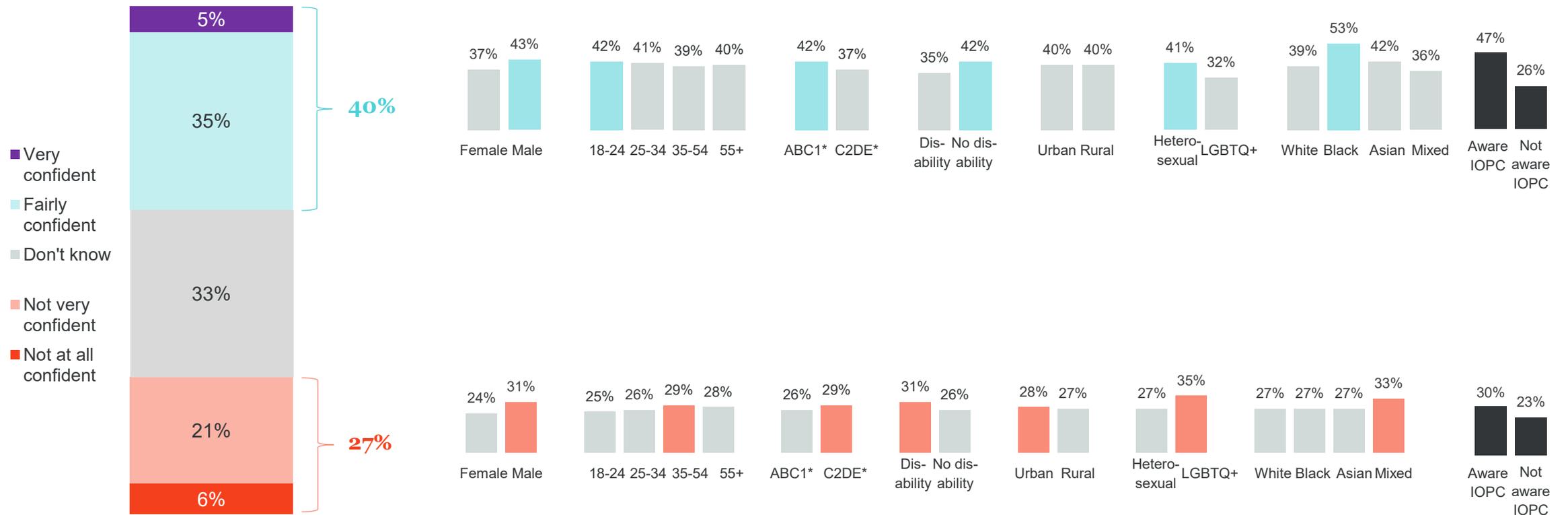
Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the IOPC does a good job?



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Black respondents and those aware of the IOPC are more likely to say they are confident the IOPC does a good job

Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the IOPC does a good job?

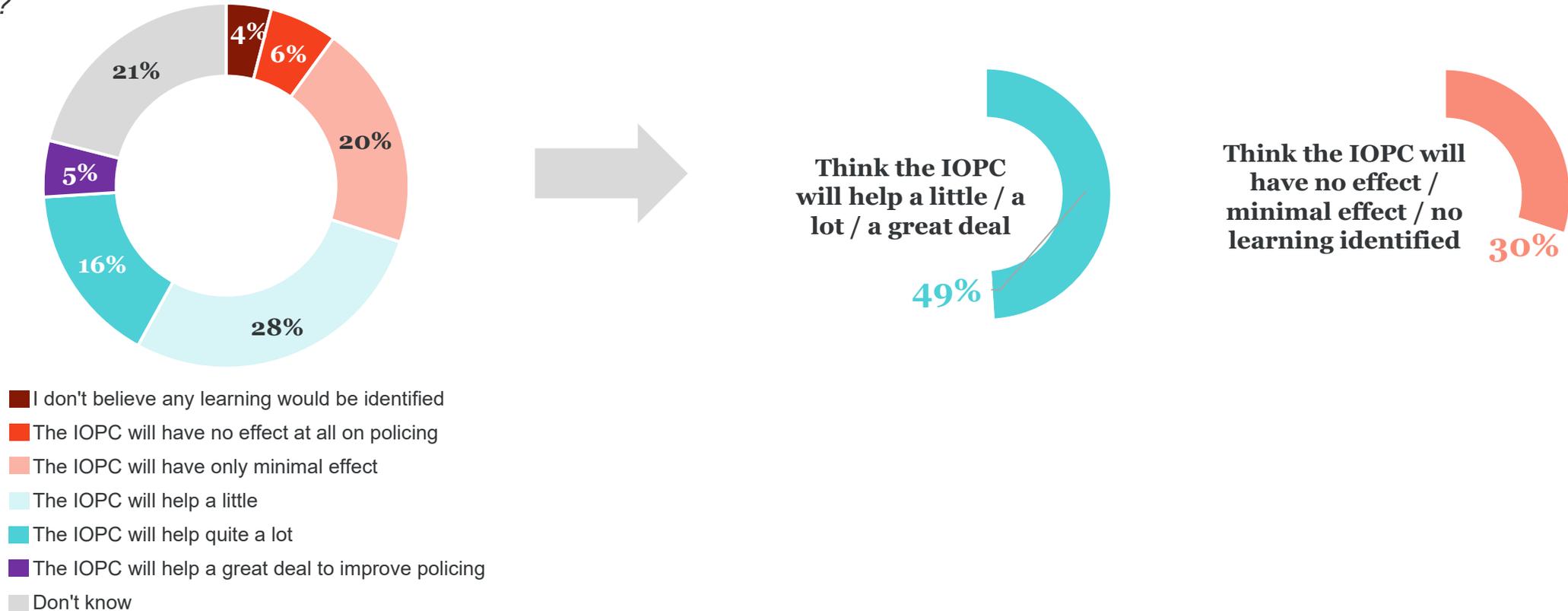


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Almost half of the public believe the IOPC will help to improve policing by identifying ways the police can learn from the IOPC's work

Q. As part of its work, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) carries out investigations into the way police officers have behaved. To what extent do you believe that the IOPC will help to improve policing in the future by identifying ways the police can learn from the IOPC's work?



Base: Total n=6,383

Black people, younger people, ABC1s, and those aware of the IOPC are slightly more likely to think the IOPC will help improve policing

Q. As part of its work, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) carries out investigations into the way police officers have behaved. To what extent do you believe that the IOPC will help to improve policing in the future by identifying ways the police can learn from the IOPC's work?



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Racial discrimination

Around half say they would report an incident of racial discrimination to the police, rising to over three-in-five among Black respondents

Q. If you were a victim yourself OR were made aware of racial discrimination (e.g. direct, indirect, harassment, assault), how likely would you be to report it to the police?

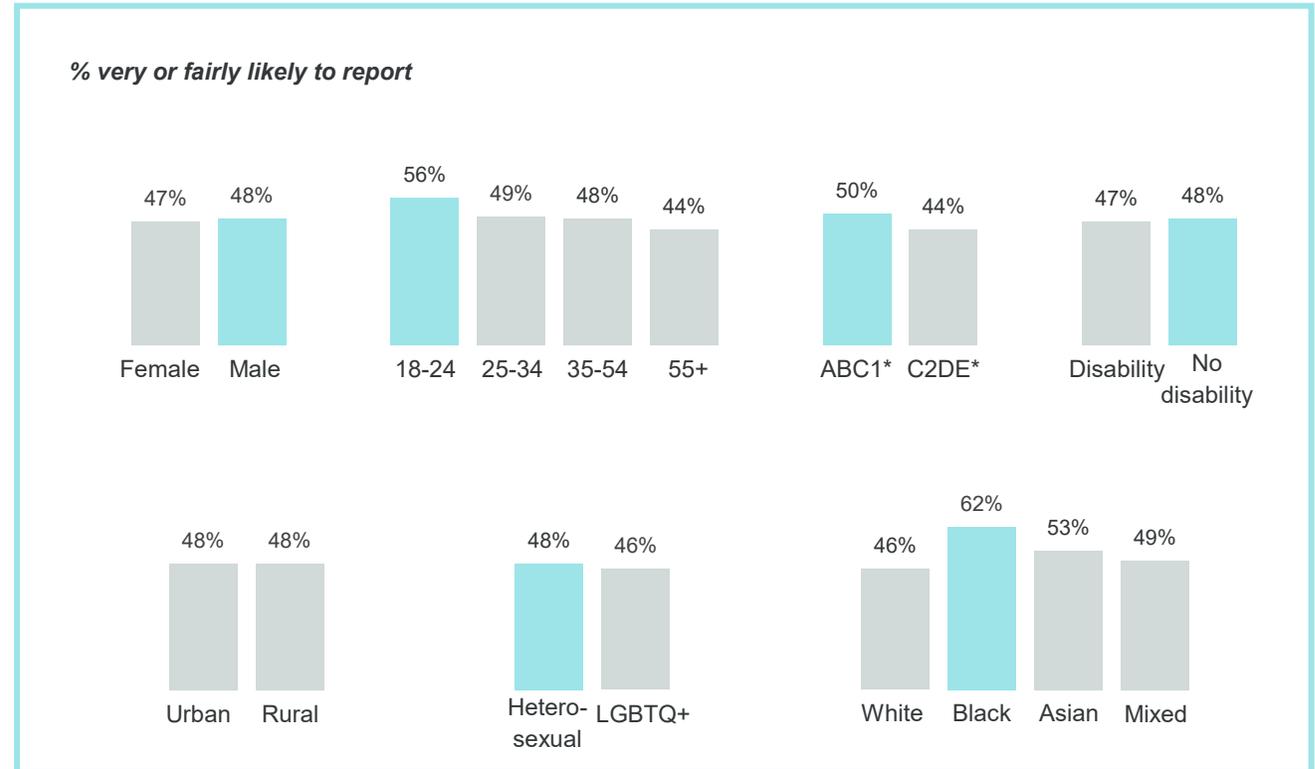
Report to police

48%

48% say they would be **very or fairly likely** to report to the police if they were a victim or were made aware of racial discrimination

35%

35% say they would be **not very or not at all likely** to report to the police if they were a victim or were made aware of racial discrimination



Base: Total n=6,383, Female n=3,348, Male n=3,015, 18-24 n=1,047, 25-34 n=1,006, 35-54 n=2,085, 55+ n=2,245, ABC1* n=3,734, C2DE* n=2,649, Disability n=1,546, No disability n=4,713, Urban n=5,297, Rural n=1,086, Heterosexual n=5,701, LGBTQ+ n=581, White n=5,062, Black n=335, Asian n=721, Mixed n=165. *Social grade system of demographic classification based on the occupation of the head of a household – see link for more information: <https://www.mrs.org.uk/resources/social-grade>

Most say they would complain to the police force involved if they were unhappy with the response after reporting racial discrimination

Q. You said you would be likely to report racial discrimination to the police if you were a victim yourself or made aware of incidents of it. If you weren't satisfied with the response after reporting this, how likely would you be to make a complaint to the police force involved?

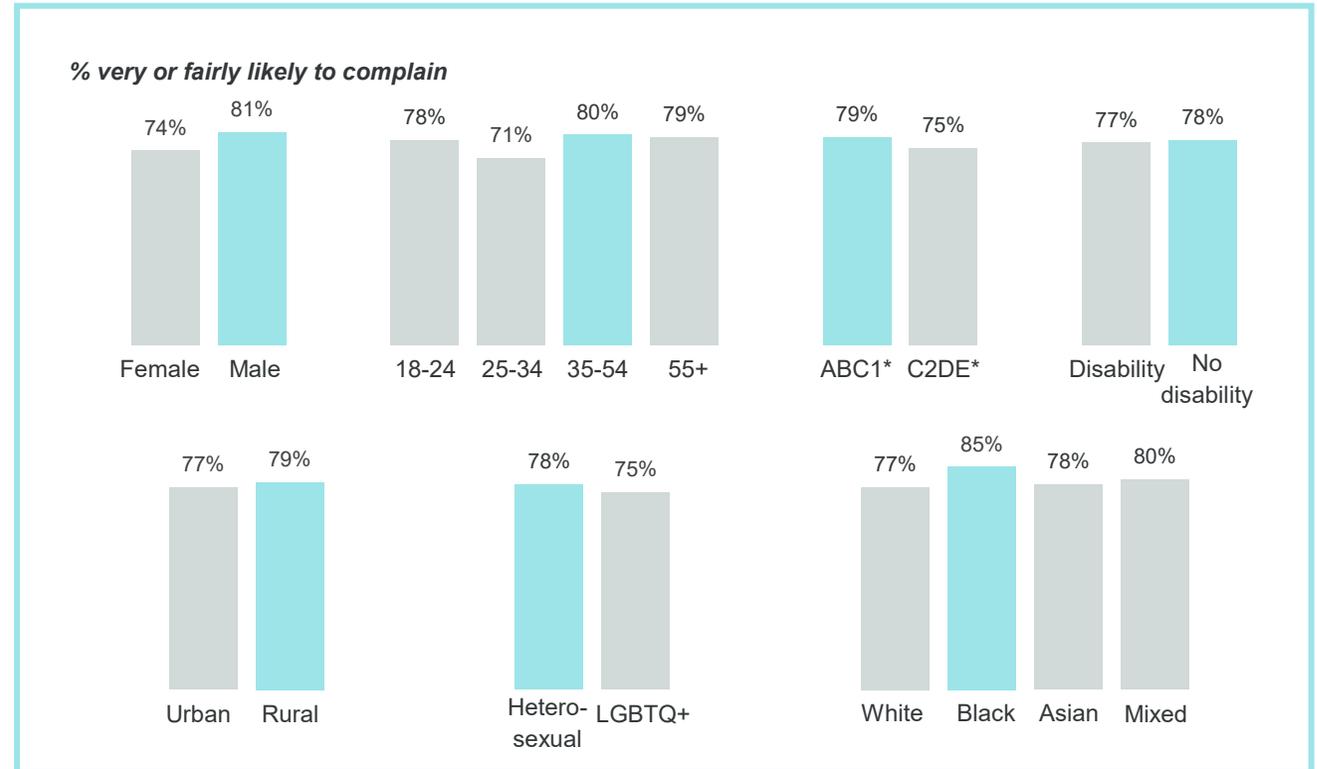
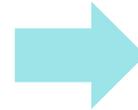
! Complain to police

77%

77% say they would be **very or fairly likely** to make a complaint to the police if they were not satisfied with the response after reporting racial discrimination

12%

12% say they would be **not very or not at all likely** to make a complaint to the police if they were not satisfied with the response after reporting racial discrimination



Base: All respondents likely to report incident to the police n=3,101, Female n=1,620, Male n=1,473, 18-24 n=590, 25-34 n=504, 35-54 n=1,012, 55+ n=995, ABC1* n=1,927, C2DE* n=1,174, Disability n=739, No disability n=2,321, Urban n=2,576, Rural n=525, Heterosexual n=2,792, LGBTQ+ n=276, White n=2,379, Black n=207, Asian n=391, Mixed n=84. *Social grade system of demographic classification based on the occupation of the head of a household – see link for more information: <https://www.mrs.org.uk/resources/social-grade>

A similar proportion would complain to an independent body such as the IOPC if unhappy with the response to reporting racial discrimination

Q. You said you would be likely to report racial discrimination to the police if you were a victim yourself or made aware of incidents of it. If you weren't satisfied with the response after reporting this, how likely would you be to make a complaint to an independent body such as the IOPC?

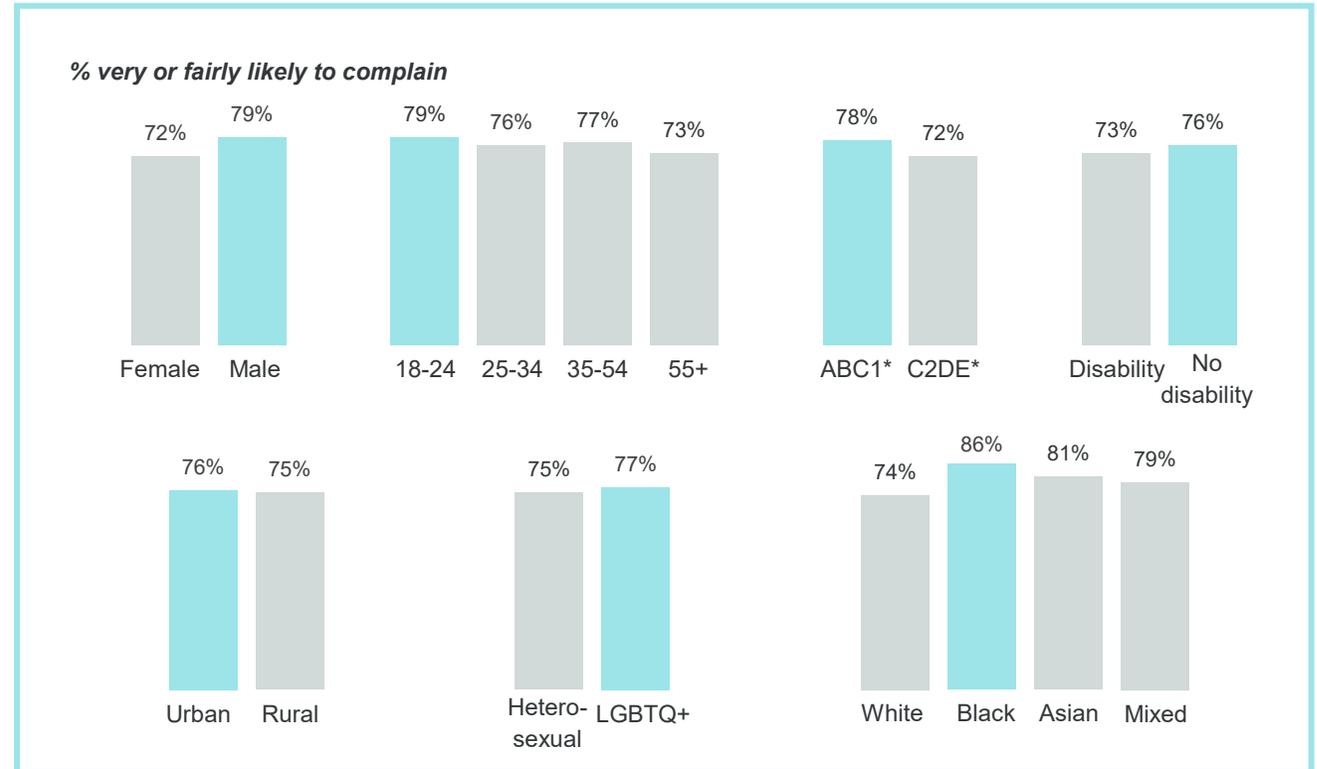
! Complain to independent body

76%

76% say they would be **very or fairly likely** to make a complaint to the IOPC if they were not satisfied with the response after reporting racial discrimination

12%

12% say they would be **not very or not at all likely** to make a complaint to the IOPC if they were not satisfied with the response after reporting racial discrimination

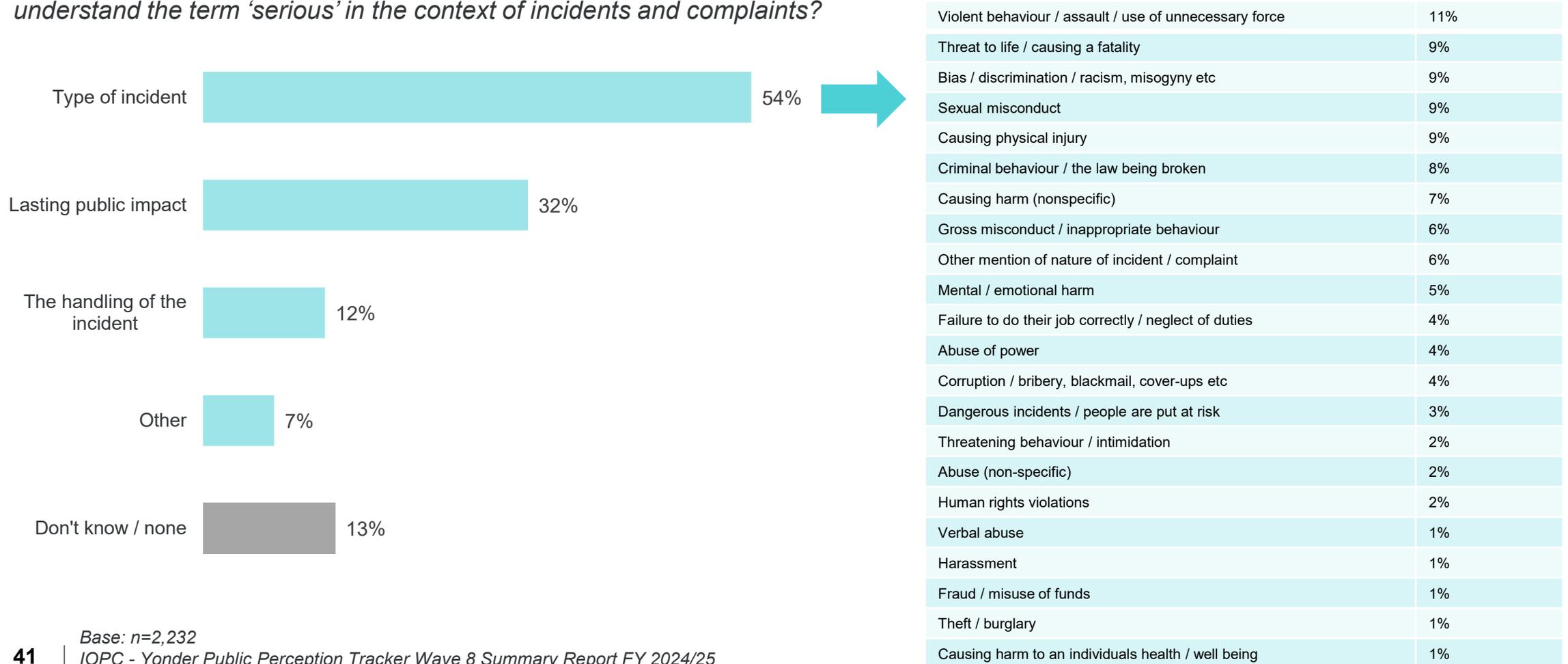


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Extra module: independent investigations

The public most often understand the term ‘serious’ as defined by the type of incident, such as violent behaviour or an assault

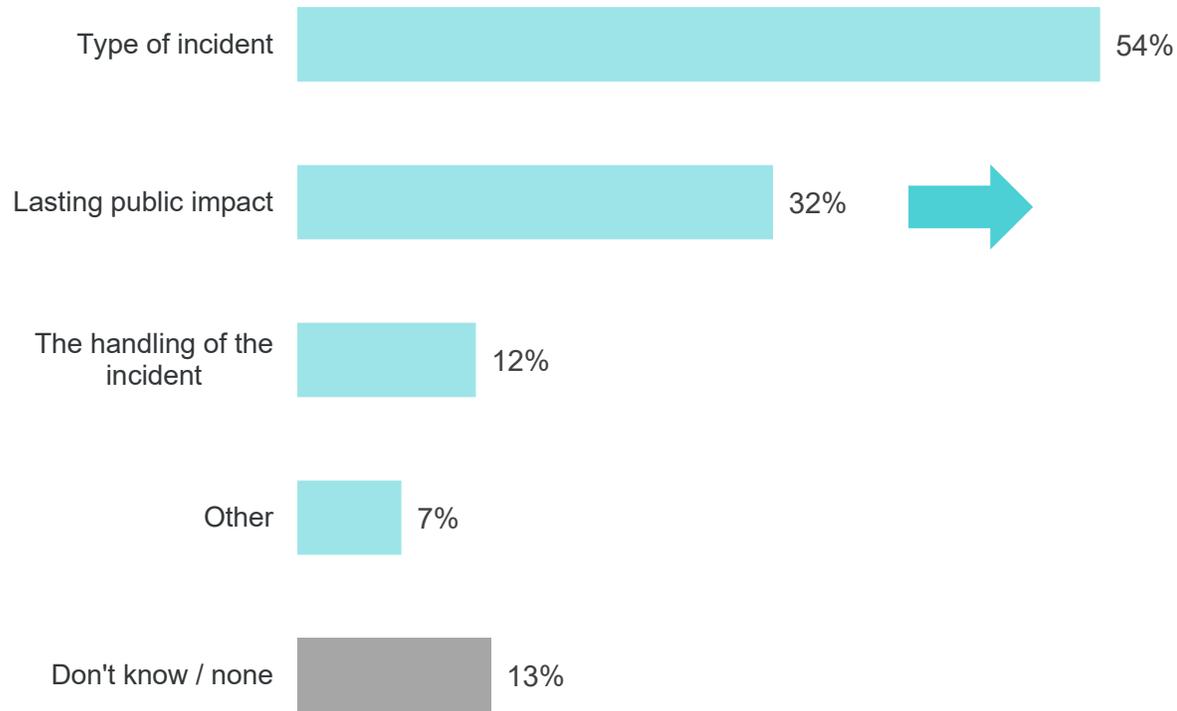
Q. The IOPC uses the term ‘serious’ when describing the types of police conduct incidents and complaints it investigates. How do you understand the term ‘serious’ in the context of incidents and complaints?



Base: n=2,232

Around a third perceive the term ‘serious’ to relate to the lasting impact an incident has on the public

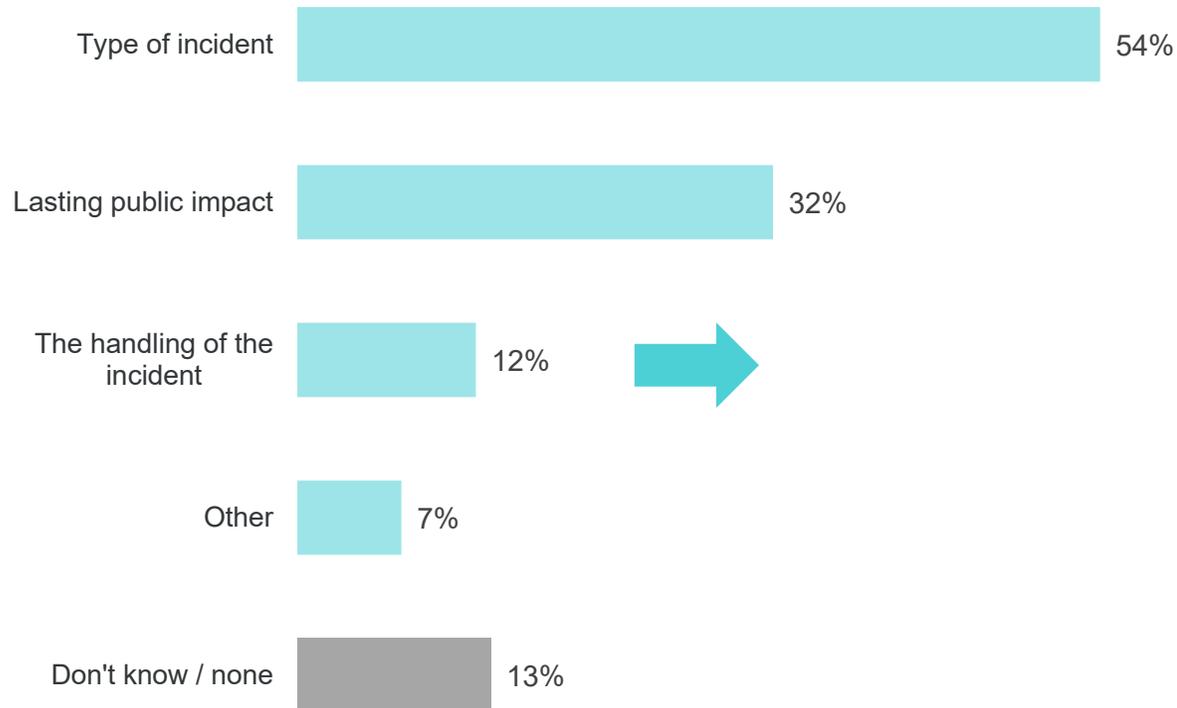
Q. The IOPC uses the term ‘serious’ when describing the types of police conduct incidents and complaints it investigates. How do you understand the term ‘serious’ in the context of incidents and complaints?



It is serious / important / a bad / major incident	12%
It has caused a severe impact / life changing harm / a lasting affect	8%
Institutional damage has been caused / their ability to do their job is compromised / faith in the police is diminished	6%
It effects the general public / wider community	5%
High profile incidents / in the public interest / newsworthy incidents	2%
Involvement of leadership / senior officers	2%
Systematic failure / occurring over a sustained period / multiple complaints made	1%
A verifiable incident / a real / credible complaint	1%
An incident of great concern / causing alarm	1%
Other mention of lasting public impact	1%

Some understand ‘serious’ as defined by how the incident or complaint was handled

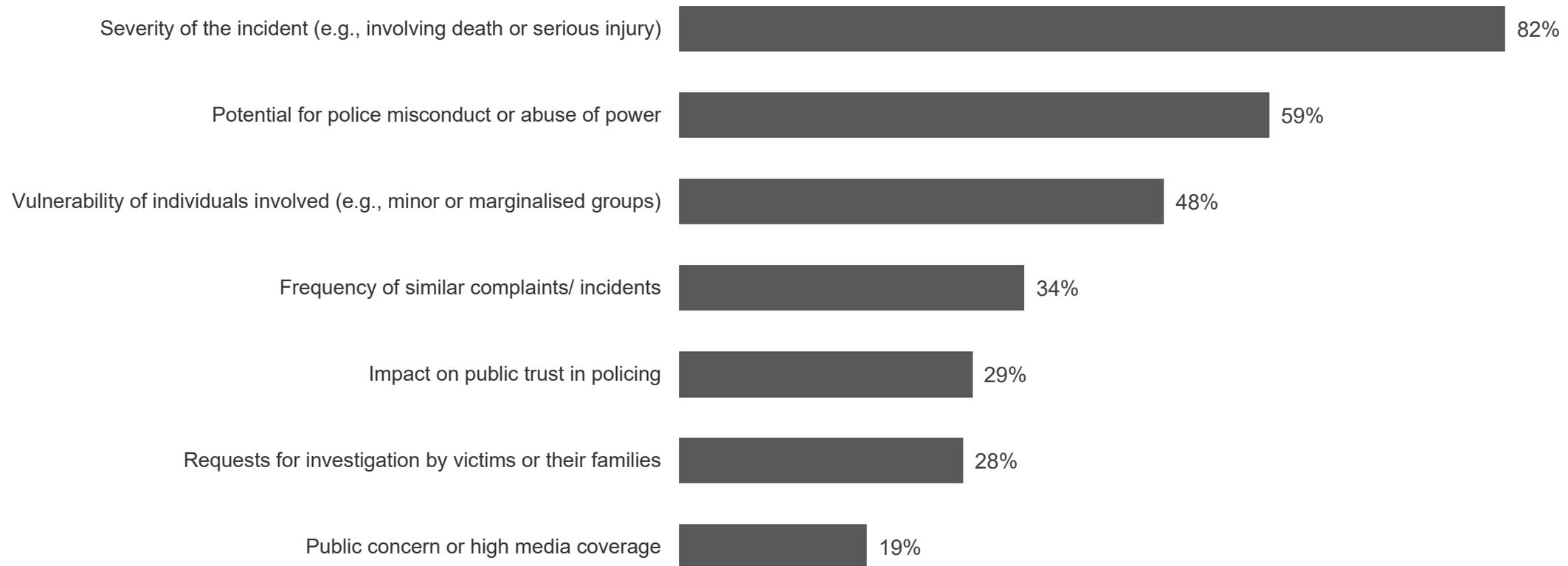
Q. The IOPC uses the term ‘serious’ when describing the types of police conduct incidents and complaints it investigates. How do you understand the term ‘serious’ in the context of incidents and complaints?



An appropriate level of investigation carried out / dealt with thoroughly	4%
They take complaints seriously / act upon complaints	3%
Deal with complaints quickly / treat as a matter of urgency/ priority	3%
It can lead to legal action being taken/ arrest / prosecution	2%
It will be escalated / dealt with by top people	1%
Other mention of handling incidents	1%

The majority think the severity of an incident is an important factor to consider when deciding whether to investigate a complaint

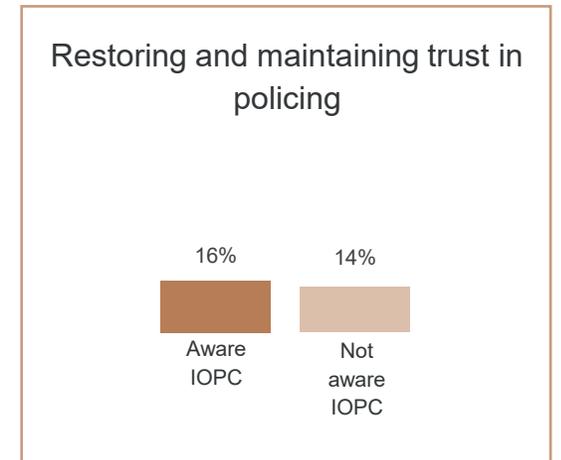
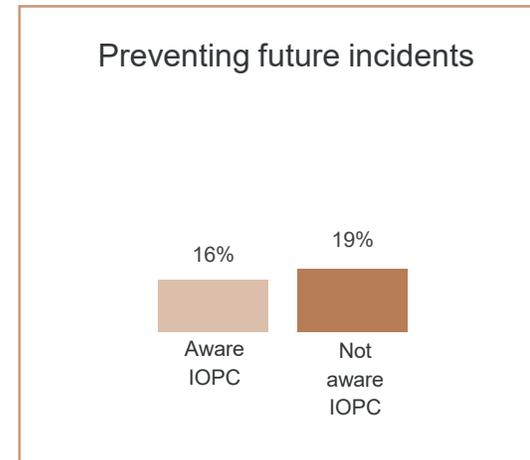
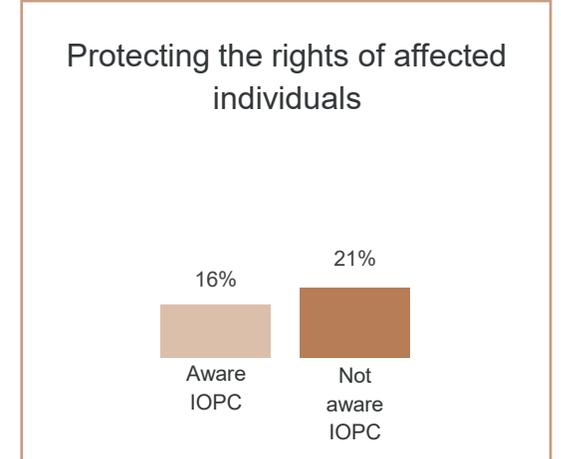
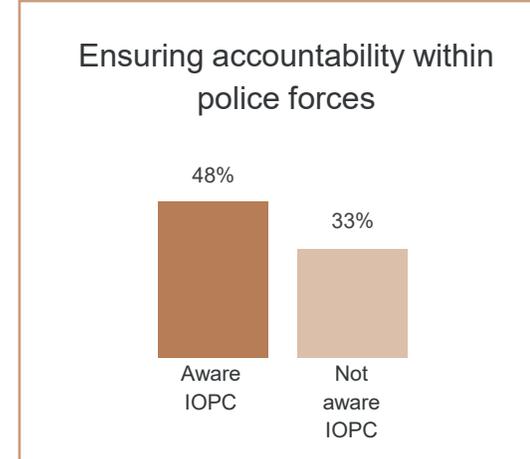
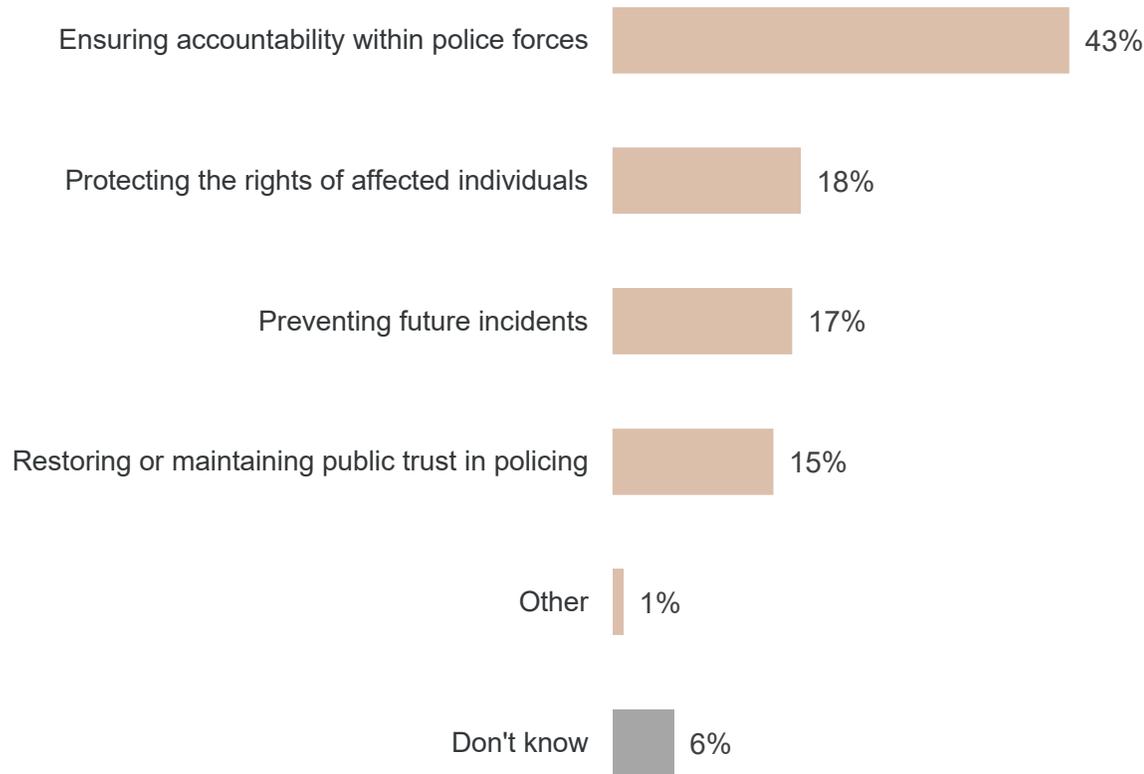
Q. The following factors are considered when the IOPC decides whether to investigate an incident or complaint made against the police. How important do you think each of these factors are? Please rank in order of importance. [% ranked in top 3]



Base: n=2,232

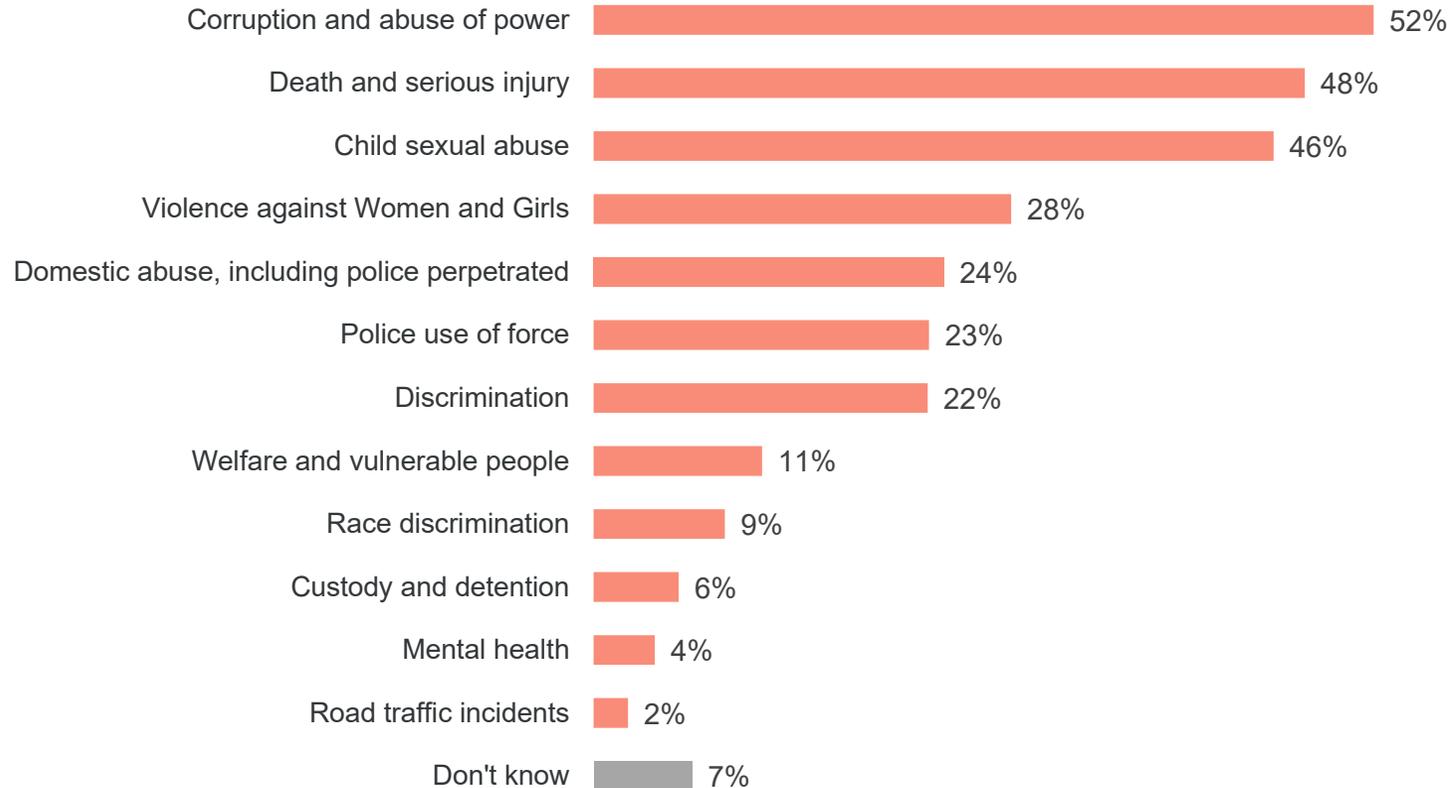
Around two-in-five think the IOPC’s primary purpose should be ensuring accountability within police forces, this jumps to almost half among those aware of the IOPC

Q. What do you believe should be the primary purpose of an IOPC investigation?



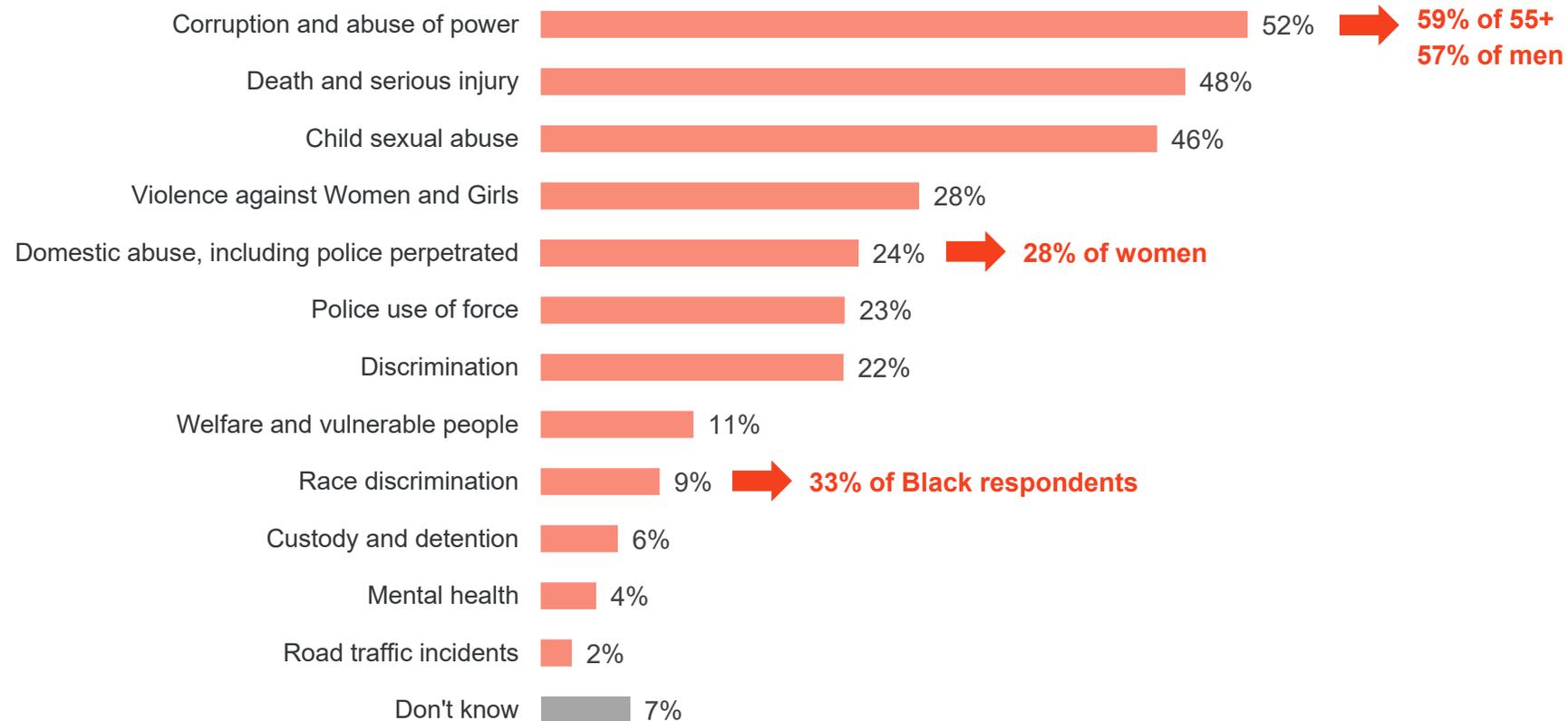
Most think the IOPC should prioritise corruption and abuse of power, as well as death and serious injury and child sexual abuse in its investigations

Q. From the following list, please select up to three areas that you believe the IOPC should prioritise in its investigations. [Select up to 3]



Perceptions of what the IOPC should prioritise somewhat vary by demographic subgroups

Q. From the following list, please select up to three areas that you believe the IOPC should prioritise in its investigations. [Select up to 3]

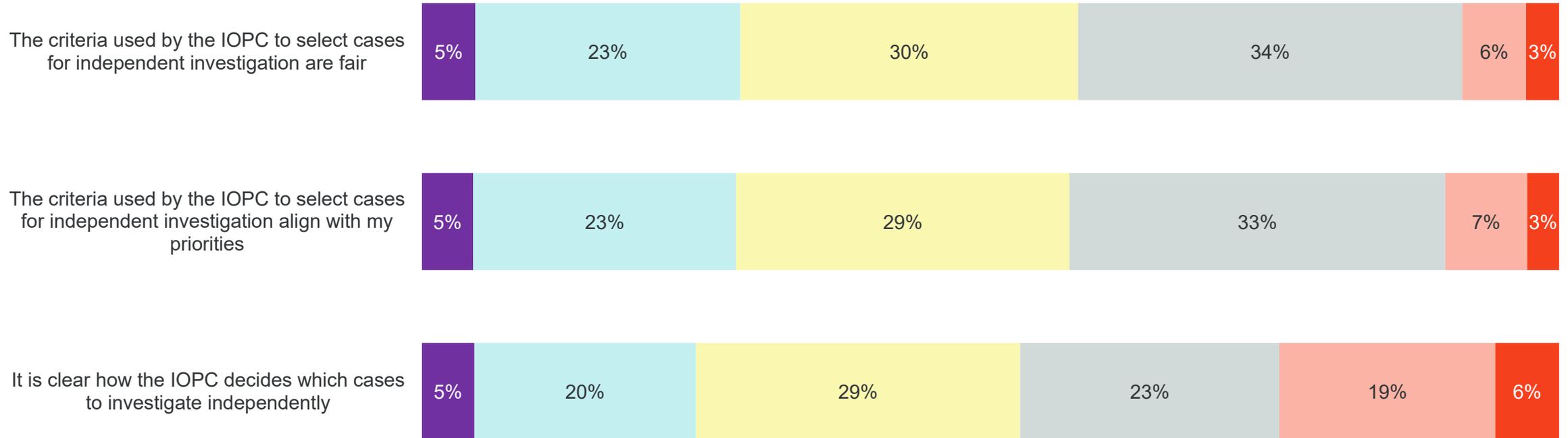


Base: n=2,232, 55+ n=776, men n=1,032, women n=1,188, Black n=112

The majority are unsure or impartial towards the IOPC's criteria for selecting cases to independently investigate

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

■ Strongly agree
 ■ Somewhat agree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Don't know
 ■ Somewhat disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree



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