

Wales and West Utilities Customer Priorities

Primary Market Research

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Executive summary

- The order of importance at a summary group level is the same for domestic and SME customers
- Since the previous survey, 'Designing our future' has overtaken 'Driving outstanding service' to become the fourth most popular commitment group for both domestic and SME customers
- There are some changes at the commitment level, particularly amongst the safety commitments which have grown in importance for domestic customers since 2022
- Only one commitment in the top 5 for domestic and SME customers is not related to value for money or safety
- SME customers value 'sustainable energy', 'outstanding service' and 'designing our future' more than domestic customers
- Domestic customers prioritise 'value for money' and 'safety' compared to SME customers



5 most important commitments

Domestic

- 1 Keep charges down to the lowest practical level, by keeping our portion of the household bill at an average of £133* a year from 2021 through to 2026
- 2 Attend gas emergencies in under an hour, on average, to keep our customers safe
- 3 Increase safety for over half a million people living near old metal gas pipes by spending an additional £400m to replace them
- 4 Make sure customers get the best value for money by becoming a more efficient business
- 5 Keep people safe by continuing to monitor and maintain our pipes to a standard endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive

SME

- 1 Attend gas emergencies in under an hour, on average, to keep our customers safe
- 2 Keep charges down to the lowest practical level
- 3 Make sure customers get the best value for money by becoming a more efficient business
- 4 Reuse and recycle at least 80% of our operational and general business waste by 2026 and send zero waste to landfill by 2035
- 5 Keep people safe by continuing to monitor and maintain our pipes to a standard endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive



Research overview & method

Background & business needs

Wales and West Utilities are currently working towards their GD3 plan for 2026 – 2031. As part of the development of this plan, there is a need to **update their understanding of customer priorities**

WWU have been tracking customer priorities over successive waves of quantitative research to identify the ranking of customer priorities using a MaxDiff exercise. Prior to the current research, this was last updated at the end of 2022

The social, economic and environmental macro environment continues to rapidly change, and WWU wished to **understand how this has impacted customer priorities**



WWU strategy & priorities

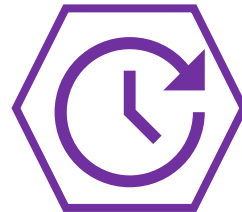
Delivering VALUE FOR MONEY

We always spend and invest more wisely, working smarter to offer affordable, value for money services



Designing OUR FUTURE

We're building a skilled, resilient, and diverse team to work in partnership with our stakeholders



Demanding SAFETY ALWAYS

We never compromise on the safety, wellbeing and health of our colleagues and customers, always raising the bar and improving standards



Doing all we can to provide SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

We're future proofing to deliver reliable, greener energy for heat, power and transport, and reducing our environmental impact to achieve net zero targets



Driving OUTSTANDING SERVICE

We strive to exceed customer expectations by offering fair, inclusive, quality services for all, whilst looking after those most in need



Research questions



What impact has changes in social, economic and environmental factors had on customer priorities? Are the commitments identified for 2021-2026 appropriate (and if not, why?)



Are there any new or emerging areas of importance? How important are these relative to existing priorities?



How do priorities vary by customer group (different demographics and geographies)?



What do priorities mean to customers? What are their expectations for a GDN?

Research approach



For this round of research, there was **no qualitative phase**



The design of the quantitative survey was based predominantly on the design used for the previous wave of research

Additional questions were included to provide insight into customer communication preferences

The wording of certain MaxDiff commitments was updated to reflect new developments since 2022. One commitment was removed as it no longer reflects WWU plans with a replacement commitment added to ensure consistency in the MaxDiff design



An online survey was used to engage with WWU domestic, business, and future customers

Quotas were set based on relevant census and government datasets. This has allowed us to look at results by different customer types, including demographics (age, gender, social grade), location (South Wales, North and Mid Wales, South West England, South West England; Rural vs urban), on and off gas and business size.



Face-to-face interviews targeted digitally excluded, vulnerable, future and business customers.



Where quotas were relaxed to ensure an adequate sample size was achieved, the data were weighted to the precise demographic and customer characteristics data to be representative of the population in WWU's operational area



Method

Survey design

The survey length was approx. **20 minutes** and covered **the following topics**

- 1** Covid-19 checks and digital access [face-to-face only]
- 2** Demographic and business characteristics profiler
- 3** Awareness of WWU and Priority Service Register (PSR) use and eligibility
- 4** MaxDiff exercise
- 5** Environmental, social and economic attitudes
- 6** Communication preferences



Sampling and weighting

Domestic

1,003 interviews across both the online and face-to-face methods were conducted with domestic customers.



Online: 879 interviews were conducted online. Quotas were set for the following key subgroups of interest, including:

- **Demographics:** age (18-34, 35-64, 65+), gender, social grade (AB, C1, C2, DE)
- **Location:** South Wales, North and Mid Wales, South West England, South West England; Rural vs urban areas
- **On and off gas**
- **Current/future customers**

Face-to-face: 124 targeted interviews were completed to ensure the inclusion of the digitally disengaged and to boost the proportion of interviews with vulnerable customers / customers from BAME communities who are less likely to be on online panels. A £5 incentive was included as a thank you for taking part.



Business

150 interviews across both the online and face-to-face methods were conducted with businesses. This provided a robust sample to allow the data to be analysed on a stand-alone basis. Businesses with fewer than 50 employees were targeted for this research:



Online:- we interviewed **107** small and micro business decision-makers



Face-to-face: 43 face-to-face business interviews were completed, mainly targeting sole traders and micro businesses that are challenging to find online. A £10 incentive was provided as a thank you for taking part.

- The sampling approach allows for breakdown analysis of main segments i.e., Region, Demographics, Key Behavioural splits etc., where the sample size is a minimum of 50 participants
- The quotas were developed, and the data weighted, based on England and Wales Census data and ONS population estimates



Sample overview

Domestic customers: Demographics

1,003 interviews completed, representative of Wales and West Utilities region

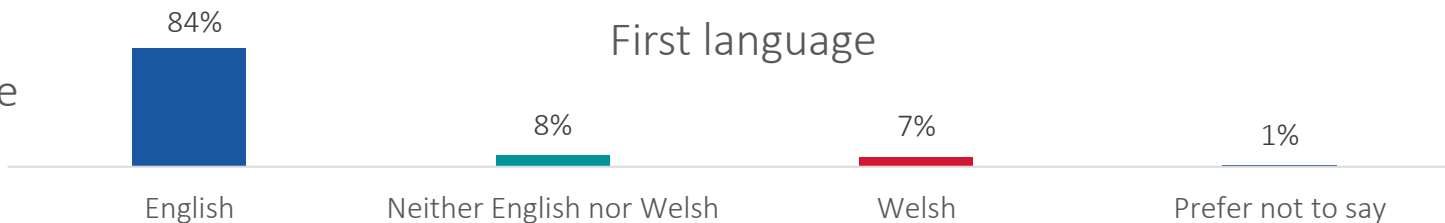


Online
86%

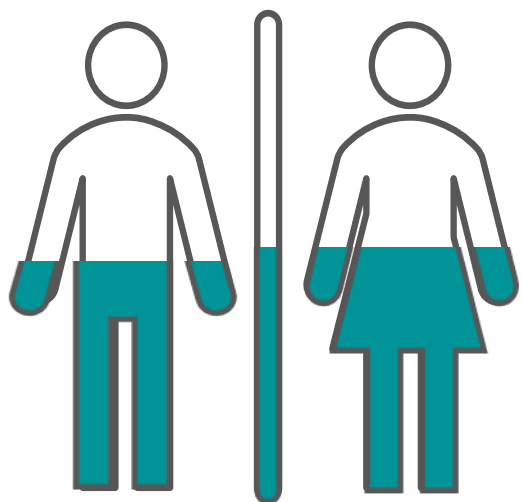


Face-to-face
14%

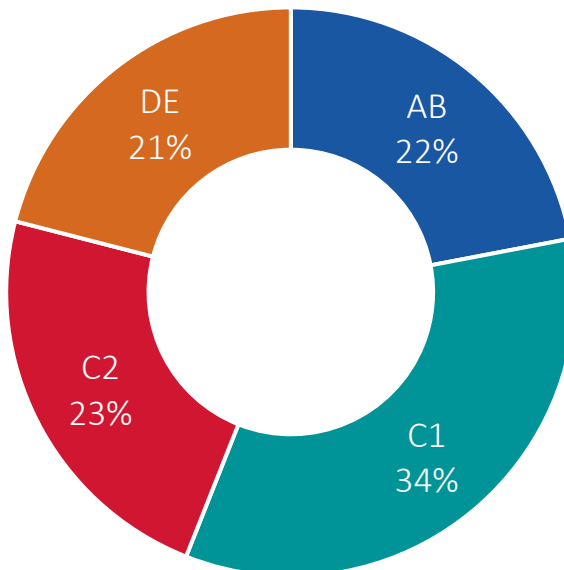
First language



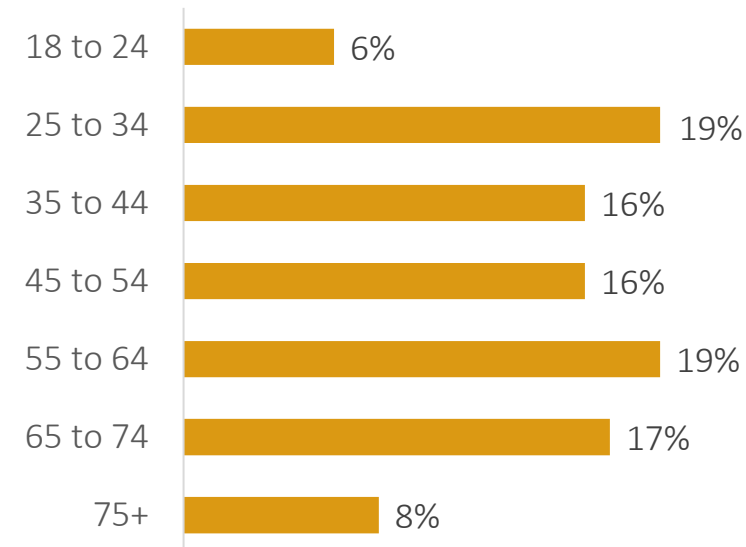
Male 48% | 52% Female



Social Economic Grade



Age group



Q29. Are you... Male/Female. Base: 1153

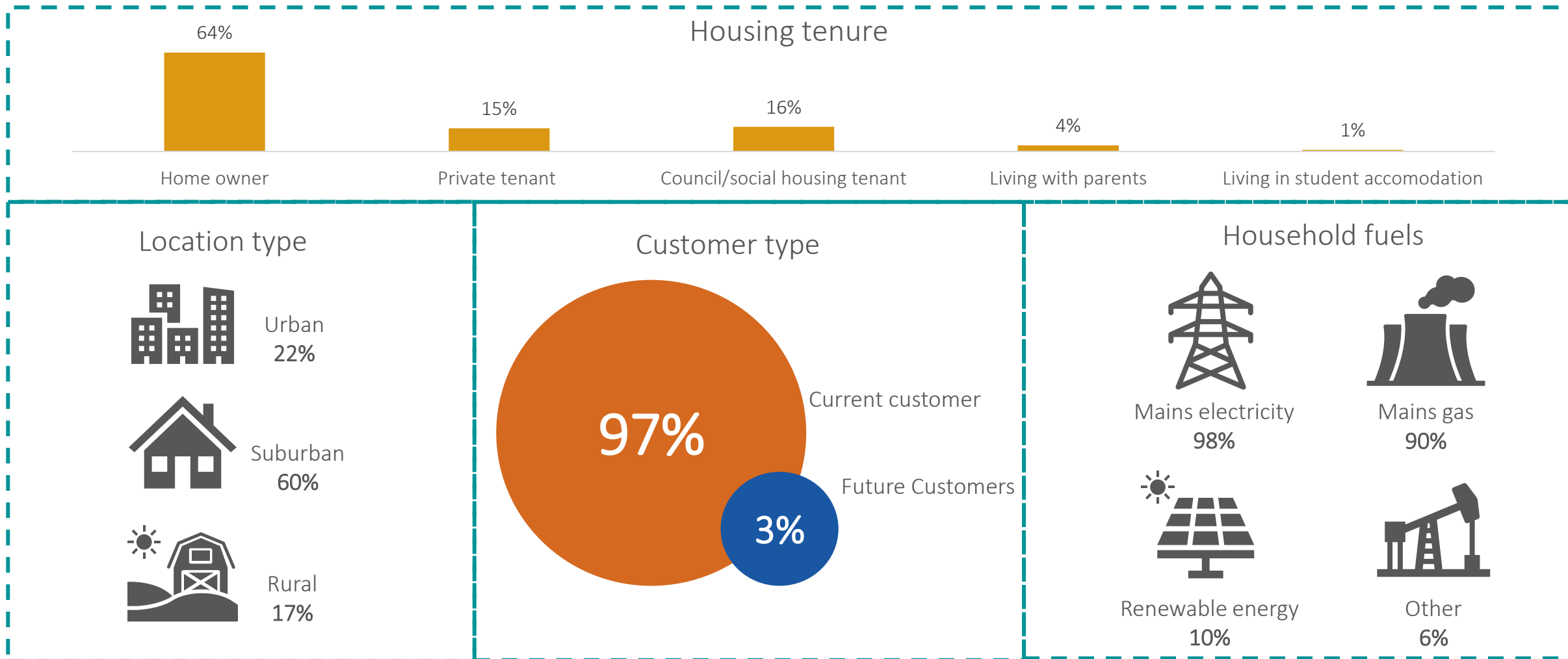
Q30. Which of the following age groups do you fall into? Base: 1153

SEG - Q25. Which ONE of the following best describes the occupation of the main income earner in your household? Q26. Does the main income earner have a state pension, a private pension or both? Q27. How would you describe the main income earner's occupation before retirement? Base: 1003

Q52. Is your, or is someone in your household's, first language one other than English? Base: 1003

Domestic customers: Customer characteristics

We interviewed people with a range of key customer characteristics



Q23. Which of the following best describes the area where your organisation is/where you live? Base: 1153

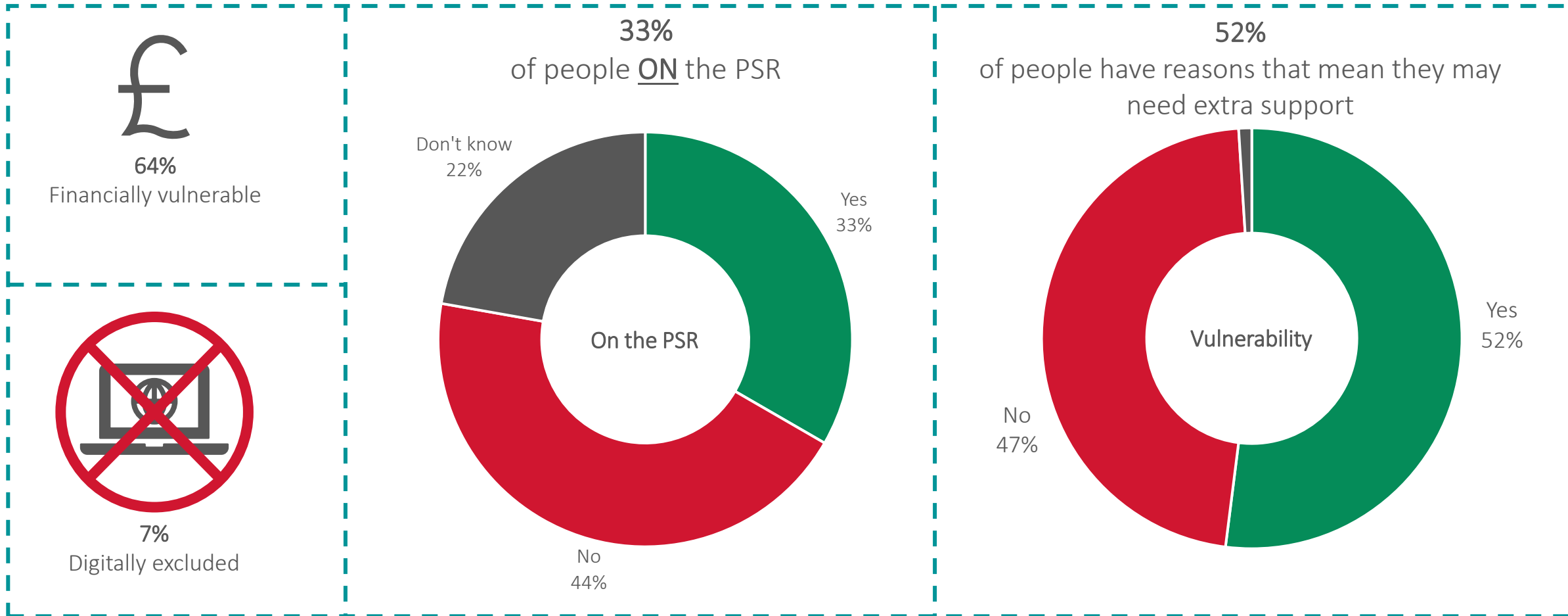
Q24. Which of the following energy sources do you have at your organisation/home? Base: 1153

Q33. Which of the following best describes your household? Base: 1003

Q32. Who is responsible for paying your household's energy bills? Base: 1003

Domestic customers: Vulnerable groups

42% of participants reported that they can only pay their energy bill if they conserve energy or go without other things to do so



Q49. Which of the following best describes how affordable you find your energy bills (or energy costs if you do not receive a bill) and other household bills? Base: 951

Q7. Have you used the Internet via a computer, tablet or smartphone in the last 3 months? Base: F2f domestic only - 161

Q8. Which of the following best describes you? [Internet use confidence level] Base: F2f domestic only - 161

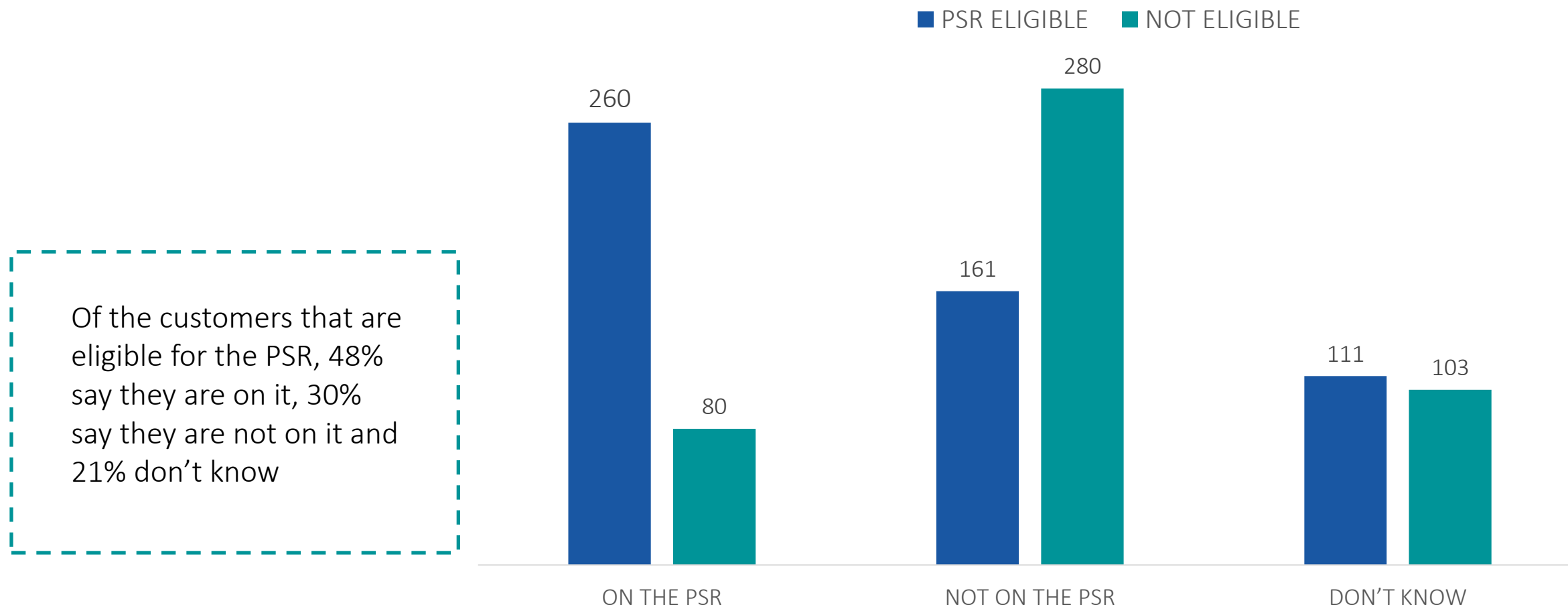
Q9. Which of these items do you have in your home and that are available for you to use? [Digital technology] Base: F2f domestic only - 161

Q39. Do you know whether your household is on your gas supplier or gas distribution network's Priority Services Register? Base: 1003

Q42. Do you feel that any of the following factors apply to you or anyone in your household at the moment that might mean you need extra support? Base: 1003

Is the PSR message getting through?

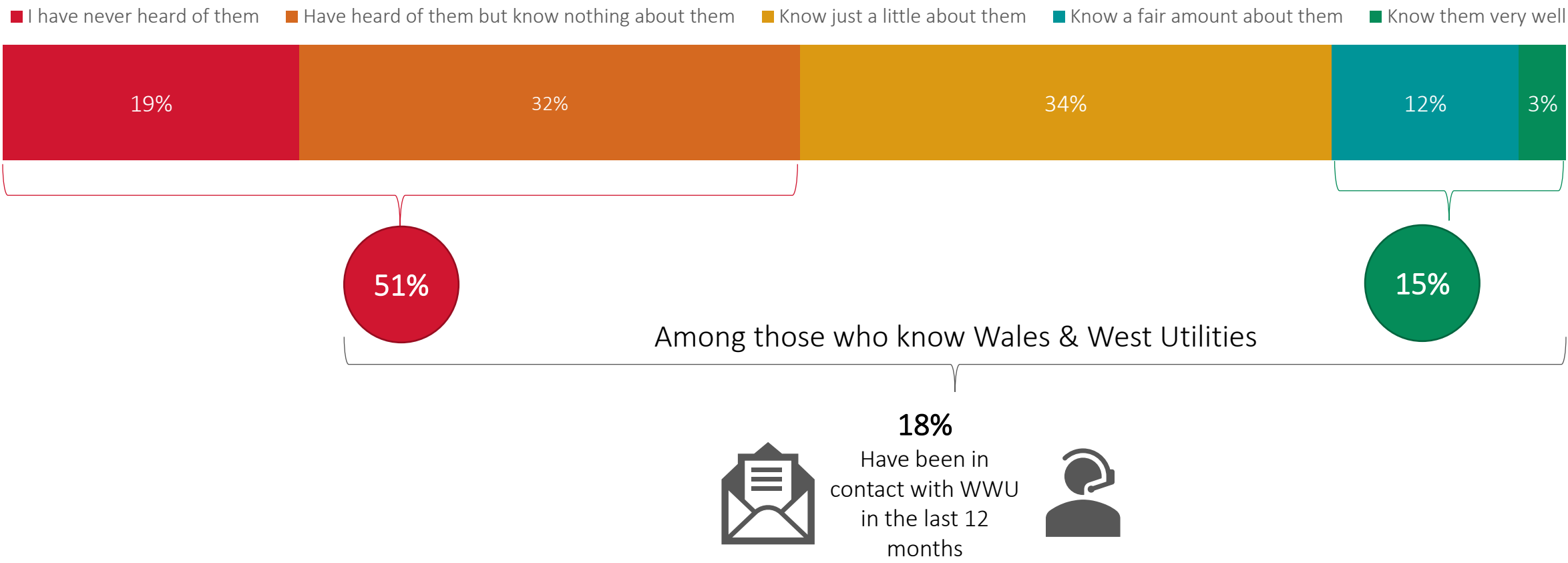
There is room for improvement getting the message out about the PSR and ensuring those who are eligible, get on the PSR and know they are on it



Q39. Do you know whether your household is on your gas supplier or gas distribution network's Priority Services Register? Base: 1003

Domestic customers: WWU awareness

Domestic participants typically had a low level of knowledge about WWU although awareness improved from 8% to 15% between 2022 and 2024. Just under 1 in 5 participants have had contact with WWU in the last year



Q34. How well do you feel you know Wales & West Utilities and the services it is responsible for? Base: 1003

Q35. Have you had any contact with Wales & West Utilities in the past 12 months? Base: 810

Business customers: Sample breakdown

150 interviews were completed across a range of locations



Online
71%



Face-to-face
29%

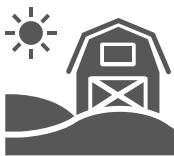
Location type



Urban
37%



Suburban
43%



Rural
20%

Location

South West
England
35%



Wales
68%

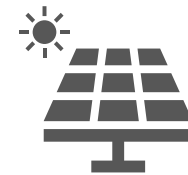
Business site fuels



Main electricity
97%



Mains gas
100%



Renewable energy
20%



Other
6%

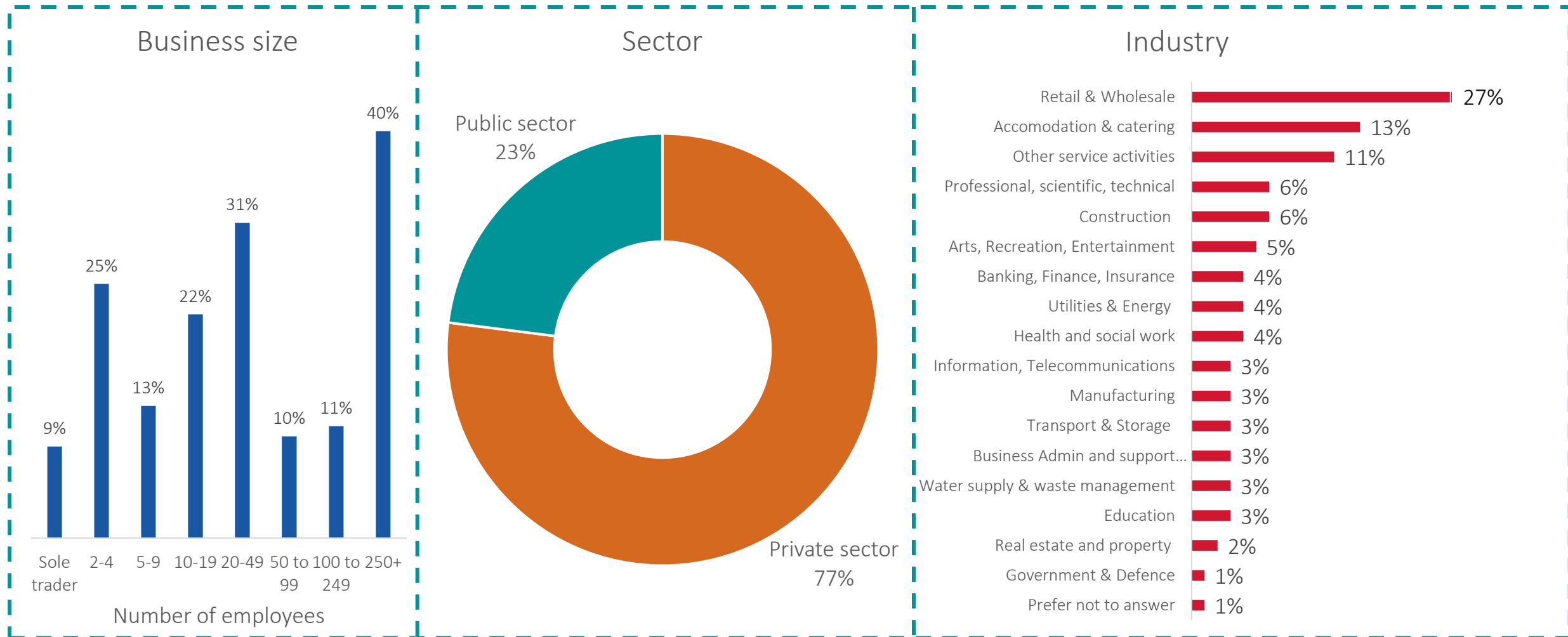
Q23. Which of the following best describes the area where your organisation is/where you live? Base: 150

Q21. Please specify which area you work in. Base: 150

Q24. Which of the following energy sources do you have at your organisation? Base: 150

Business customers: Characteristics

We had a good spread of businesses from the public and private sectors with a mix of sizes



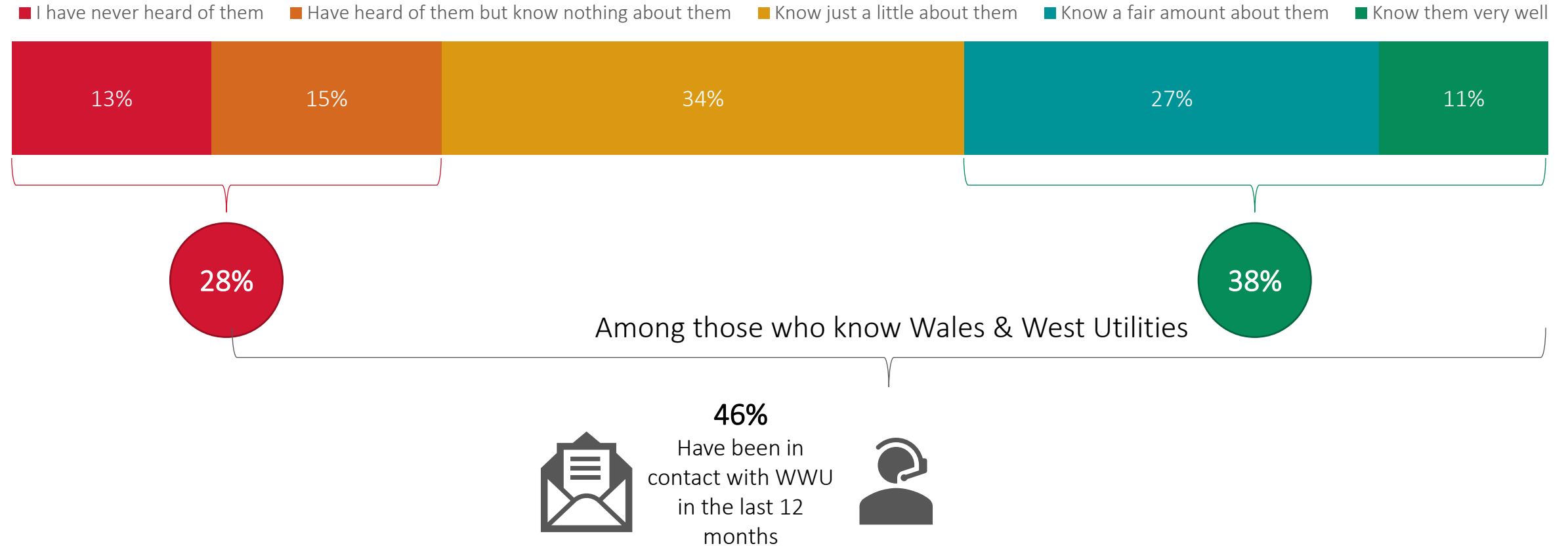
Q12. How many employees does the company you currently work for have? Base: 710

Q36. Which of the following best describes the sector your organisation works in? Base: 150

Q37. Which of the following best describes the type of organisation you work for? Base: 150

Business customers: WWU awareness

Most business participants knew at least a little about WWU (72%), and around 1 in 2 have been in recent contact with WWU



Q34. How well do you feel you know Wales & West Utilities and the services it is responsible for? Base: 150

Q35. Have you had any contact with Wales & West Utilities in the past 12 months? Base: 131



MaxDiff

Maximum Differentiation (MaxDiff)



SUMMARY

MaxDiff is an effective tool to identify **commitments that are most important to consumers**

- Presented as a set of tasks
- Offers the **benefits of both ranking and rating scales** - determines not only the rank order of items, but also the 'distance' between items
- It follows the principle that **choosing extremes is easier than rating**
- Removes any scale bias



HOW IT WORKS

Each respondent is shown a set of attributes and is asked to pick the most and least important. Then.....another set is shown. In this study 12 sets were shown to each participant, but split into 2 sets to avoid fatigue

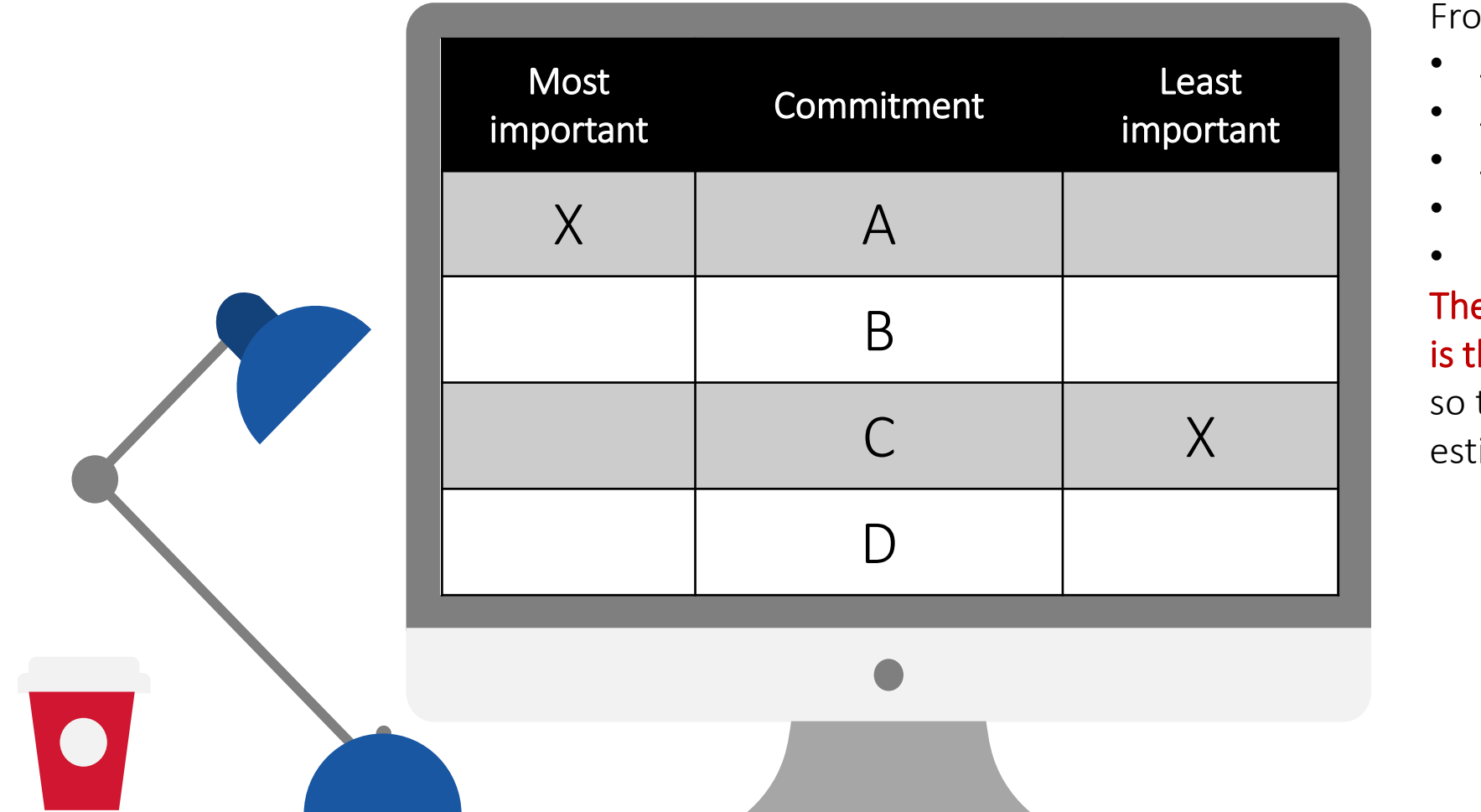
WHAT they are shown is underpinned with a design which ensures every attribute has an even chance of being seen across the entire set

Which of these attributes do you think is the most important and which is the least important?

Least Important	Features	Most Important
✓	Value for money	
	Recycling waste	
	Safety	
	Looking after vulnerable customers	✓

How does MaxDiff work?

Consider the following;



Most important	Commitment	Least important
X	A	
	B	
	C	X
	D	

From this alone, we know that:

- $A > B$
- $A > C$
- $A > D$
- $B > C$
- $D > C$

The only combination we don't know is the relationship between B and D, so this relationship needs to be estimated

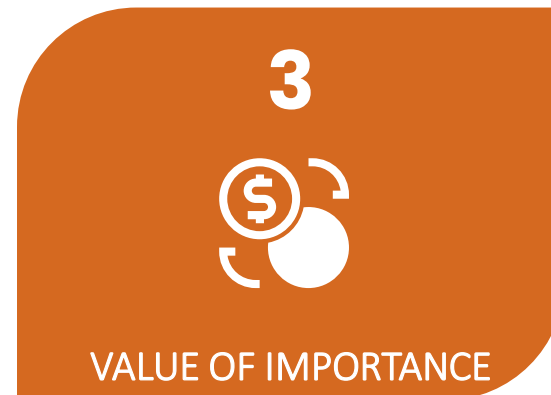
How does MaxDiff work?

Knowing what a respondent picks first and last, when each commitment is seen multiple times means we can estimate a 'utility' or 'value of importance' for each commitment



This 'value of importance' tells us how much the person likes the commitment, and it also tells us how much they like it more or less than the others.

Across the whole sample, we then average all the 'value of importance' scores



Importantly – unlike driver analysis, Max Diff gives us a value of importance for each individual, therefore we can analyse the importance by profile information

What participants saw

Please remember to hover on the ⓘ button if you need more information to help you make your choices

Please read these five commitment areas and indicate which one is the most important to you and which one that is the least important to you.

Most
important

Least
important



Reduce the risk of cyber attacks that could disrupt our gas network system by investing in our technology platforms ⓘ



Support the provision of financial, energy, and carbon monoxide advice and help for those who are living in vulnerable situations and/or who are on a low income and unable to keep their homes warm at a reasonable cost ⓘ



Reuse and recycle at least 80% of our operational and general business waste by 2026 and send zero waste to landfill by 2025 ⓘ



Work toward

The Priority Services Register is a free service offered by all utility operators to support customers in need. We support the creation of a single Register to improve customer experience. A single register for all gas, water and electricity would mean customers only need to sign up once to get support from each of their gas, water and electricity operators. At the moment, each energy supplier, electricity network operator and water company looks after its own Priority Services Register.



Increase safe metal gas pip



Hover over
example

Themes

The commitments are grouped under the following five priority themes:

Driving outstanding service	Demanding safety always	Doing all we can to provide sustainable energy	Designing our future	Delivery value for money
6 commitments	6 commitments	8 commitments	2 commitments	3 commitments
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain an average customer satisfaction score of at least 9 out of 10 Support the provision of financial, energy, and carbon monoxide advice and help for those who are living in vulnerable situations and/or who are on a low income and unable to keep their homes warm at a reasonable cost Maintain nationally recognised high standards of inclusive consumer vulnerability support and customer service Significantly Increase the number of people signed up for priority support Work towards a common Priority Services Register for gas, electricity and water Engage more with our local customers through a Citizens' Panel and our group of gas network experts 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Attend gas emergencies in under an hour, on average, to keep our customers safe Increase safety for over half a million people living near old metal gas pipes by spending an additional £400m to replace them Keep people safe by continuing to monitor and maintain our pipes to a standard endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive Promise customers an average time without gas of less than 10 hours for any unplanned interruptions to the supply of gas Proactively identify theft of gas to protect the safety of our customers and to ensure fair charging Reduce the risk of cyber attacks that could disrupt our gas network system by investing in our technology platforms 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce our gas emissions by a further 10% by replacing 400km of leaky old metal pipes Reuse and recycle at least 80% of our operational and general business waste by 2026 and send zero waste to landfill by 2035 Help solve the UK's energy challenges by working on innovative projects with the Government, energy regulator Ofgem and wider industry Make sure the investments we make today will support future energy solutions Setting our ambition to reduce carbon emissions through the delivery of a net zero ready network by 2040 Replace over 75% of our company cars with hybrid or electric cars by 2026 and replace old commercial vehicles in our fleet where green alternatives are available Invest in old gas work sites to reduce the negative impacts to our communities Align our priorities to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the skills of our workforce and also invest in high-quality apprenticeships Continue to make our workforce inclusive, making sure it better reflects the communities we serve 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Keep charges down to the lowest practical level (NHH) / Keep charges down to the lowest practical level, by keeping our portion of the household bill at an average of £133* a year from 2021 through to 2026 (DOMESTIC) Make sure customers get the best value for money by becoming a more efficient business Invest in innovation by working with external organisations

Summarising the themes: Rescaling to ensure equality

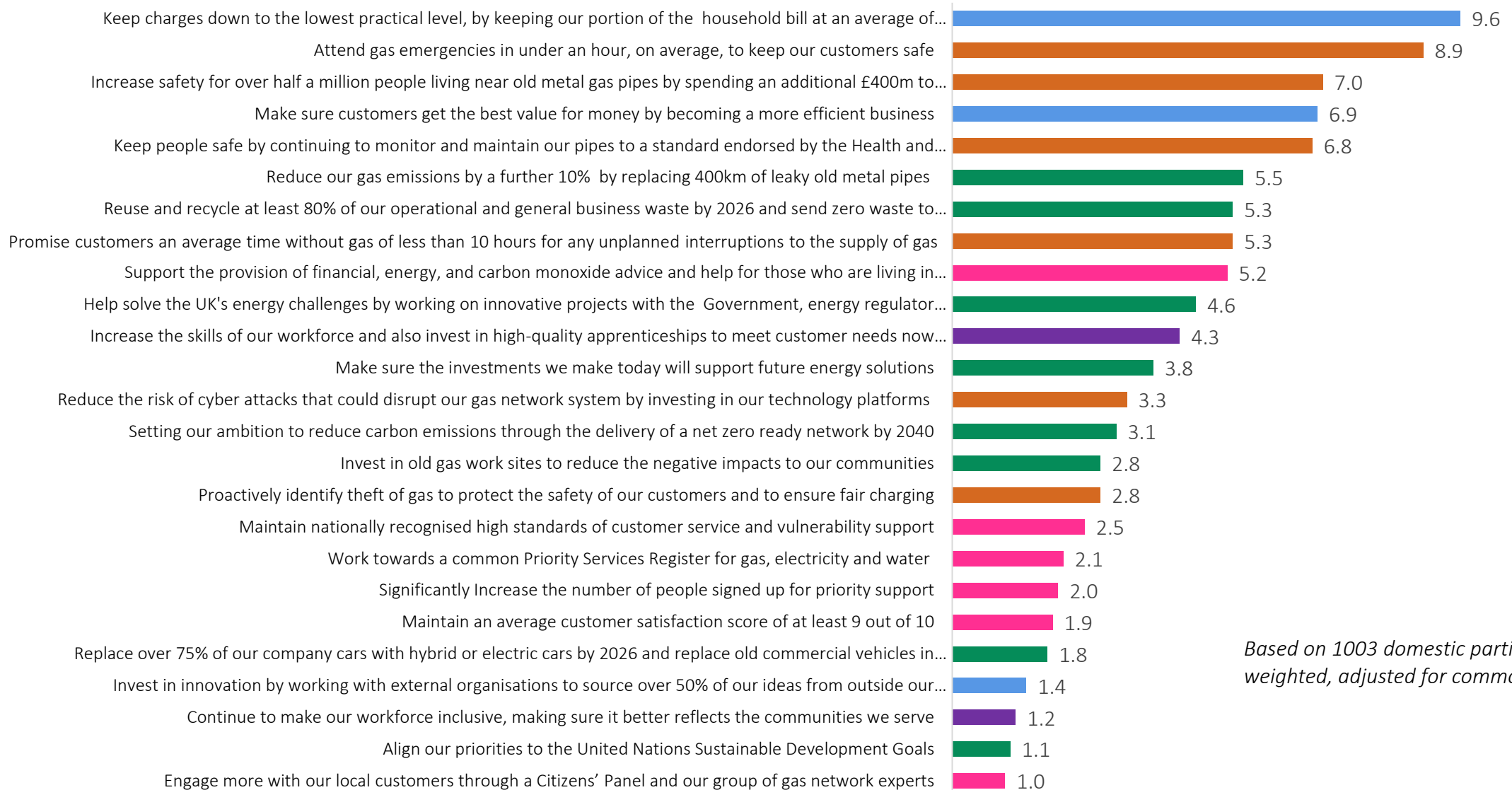




Domestic Priorities

Commitment Importance: Domestic 2024

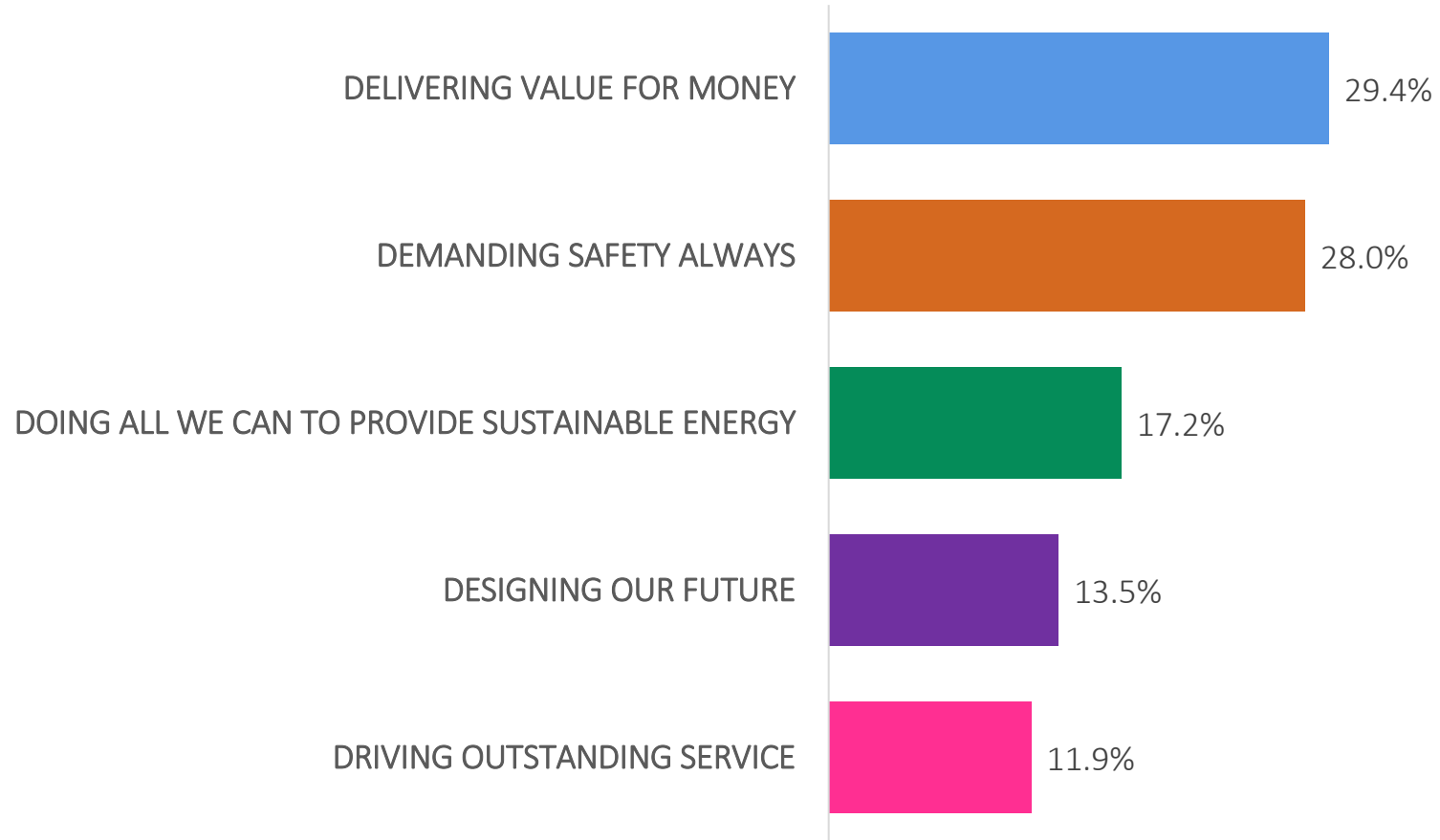
Value for money and safety continue to be at the forefront of importance



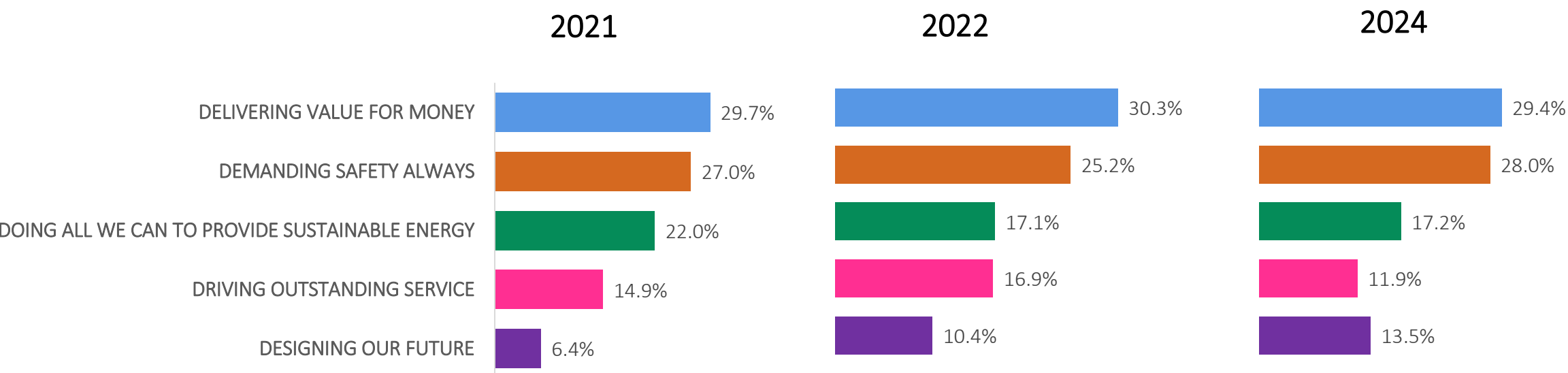
Based on 1003 domestic participants weighted, adjusted for common commitments

Commitment Importance: Domestic 2024

SUMMARY - RESCALED



Comparison 2024 vs 2022 and 2021: Summary



The results show relative consistency throughout three years, except for a change in the order of 'Driving outstanding service' and 'Designing our future' in 2024

2024: Based on 1003 domestic participants weighted, adjusted for common commitments in each group

2022: Based on 951 domestic participants, weighted, adjusted by number of commitments in each group

2021: Based on 804 domestic participants, weighted, adjusted by number of commitments in each group

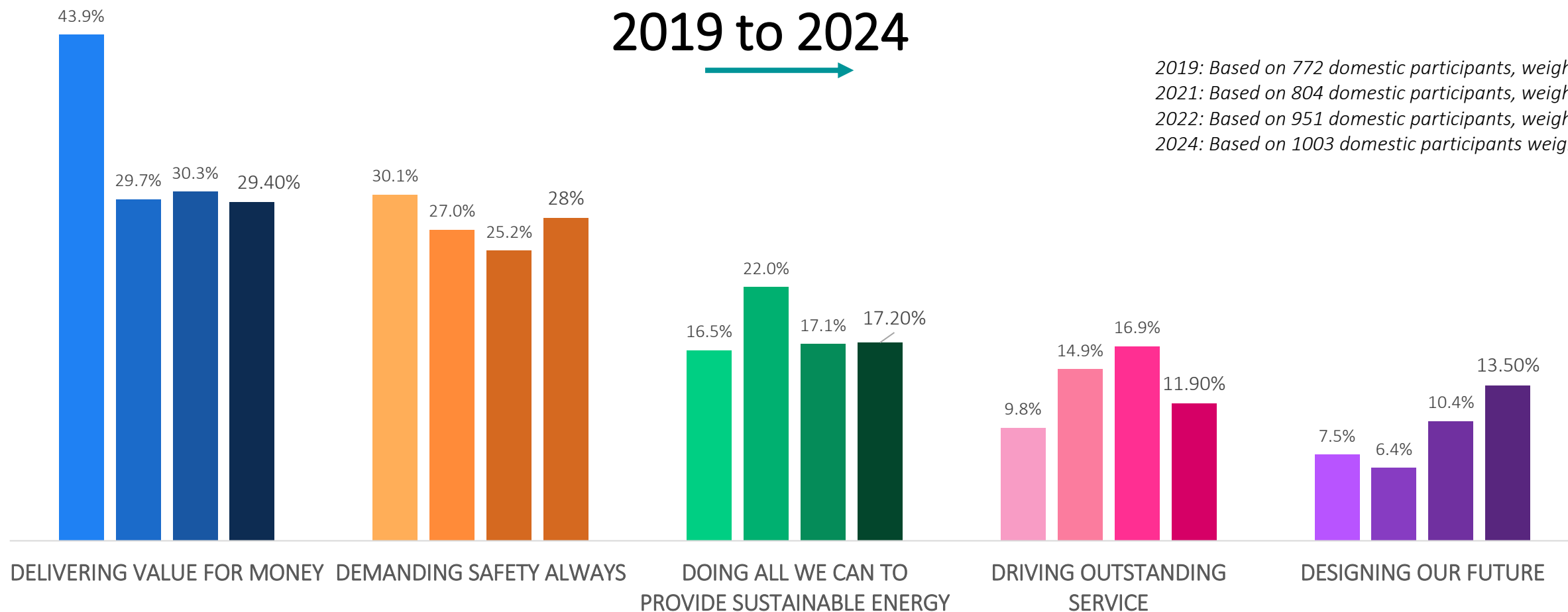
Comparison 2019 to 2024: Summary

‘Driving outstanding service’ has decreased in importance for customers with ‘Designing our future’ considered more important than at any other time

2019 to 2024

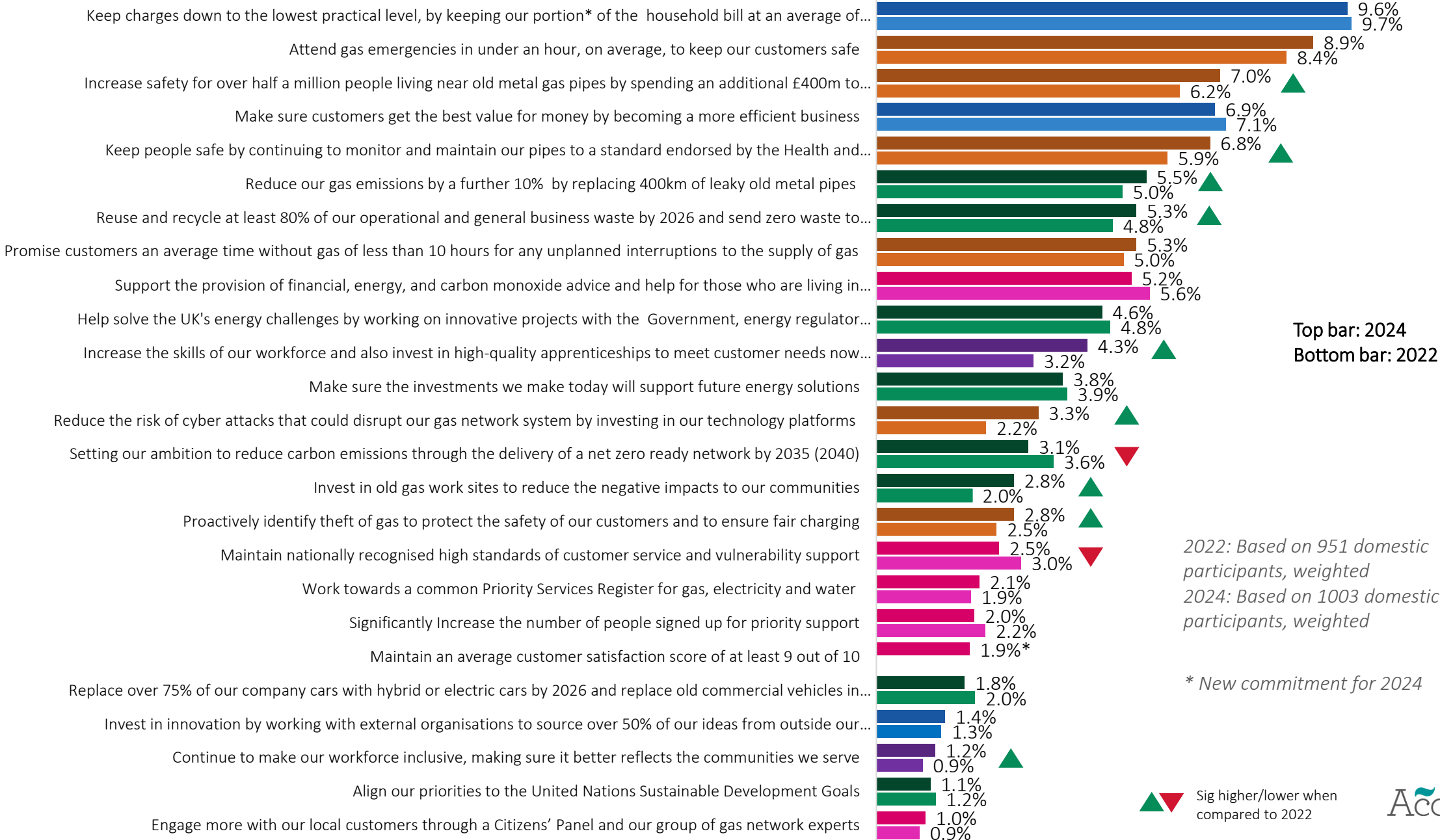


2019: Based on 772 domestic participants, weighted
 2021: Based on 804 domestic participants, weighted
 2022: Based on 951 domestic participants, weighted
 2024: Based on 1003 domestic participants weighted



Domestic comparison 2022 vs 2024: OVERALL

Domestic



Top bar: 2024
Bottom bar: 2022

2022: Based on 951 domestic participants, weighted
2024: Based on 1003 domestic participants, weighted

* New commitment for 2024

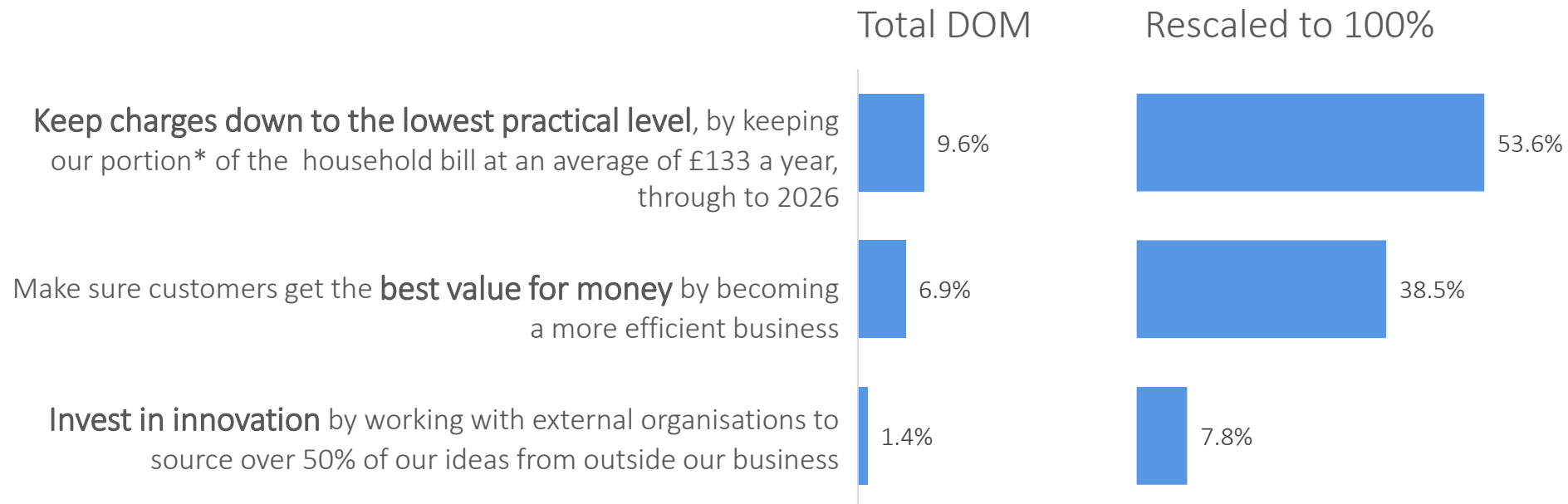
▲ ▼ Sig higher/lower when compared to 2022



Delivering value for money

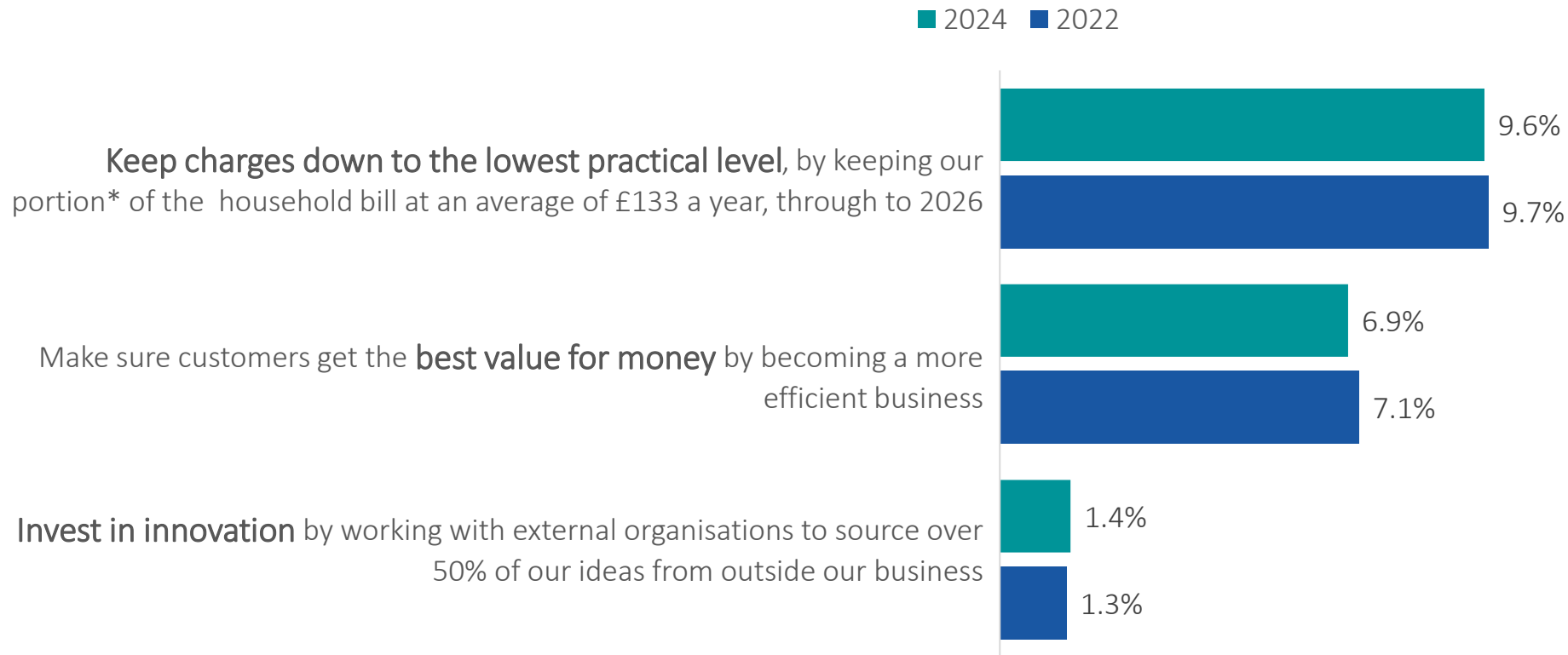
'Keeping charges down to the lowest practical level' was the most important commitment for domestic customers

Delivering value for money
29.4%



Delivering value for money: comparison 2024 vs 2022

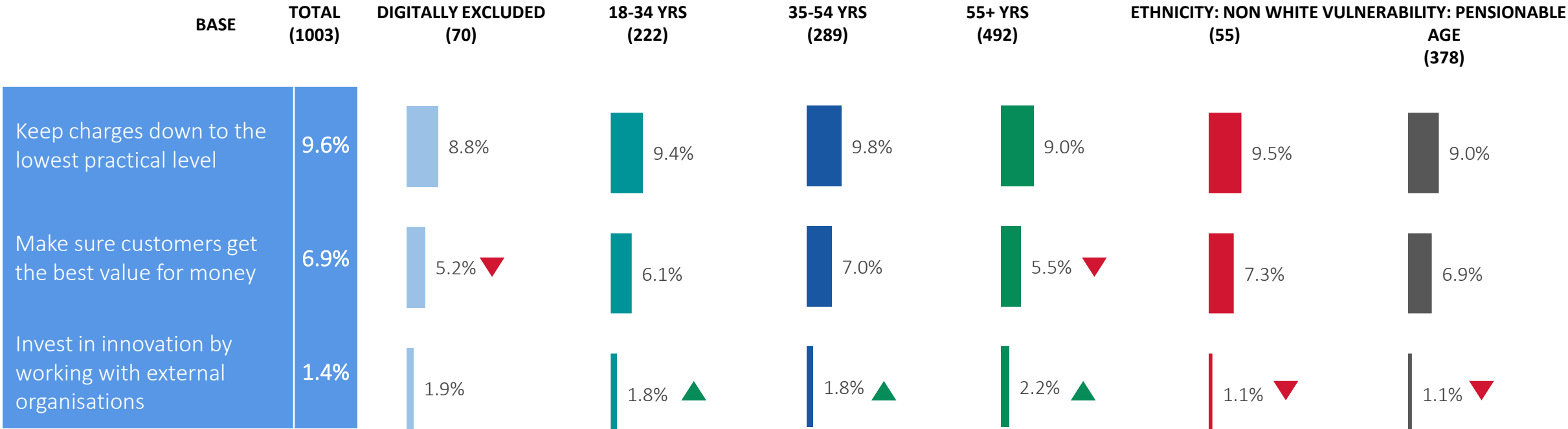
The results were very similar between 2024 and 2022. There was a slight decrease in 2024 in the value placed on making sure customers get the best value for money



Delivering value for money – subgroup analysis

Delivering the best value through efficiency was significantly less important for digitally excluded and non-white customers whereas innovating with external organisations was significantly more important for younger customers

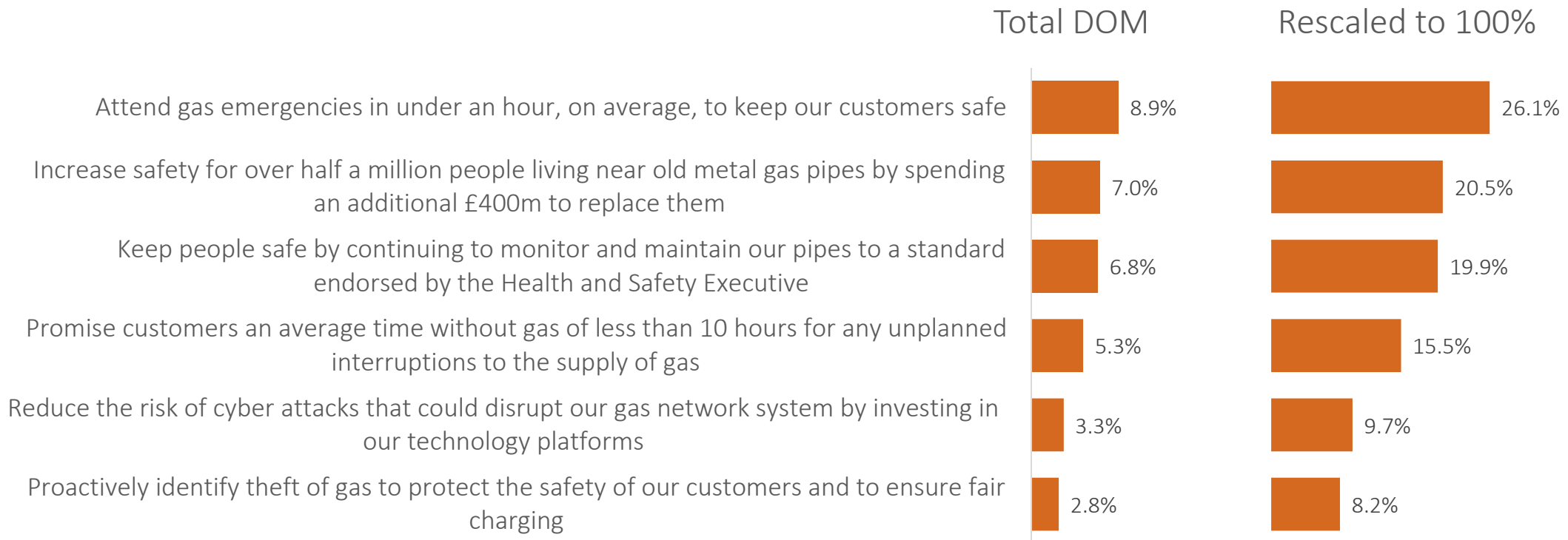
Delivering value for money: 29.4%



Demanding safety always

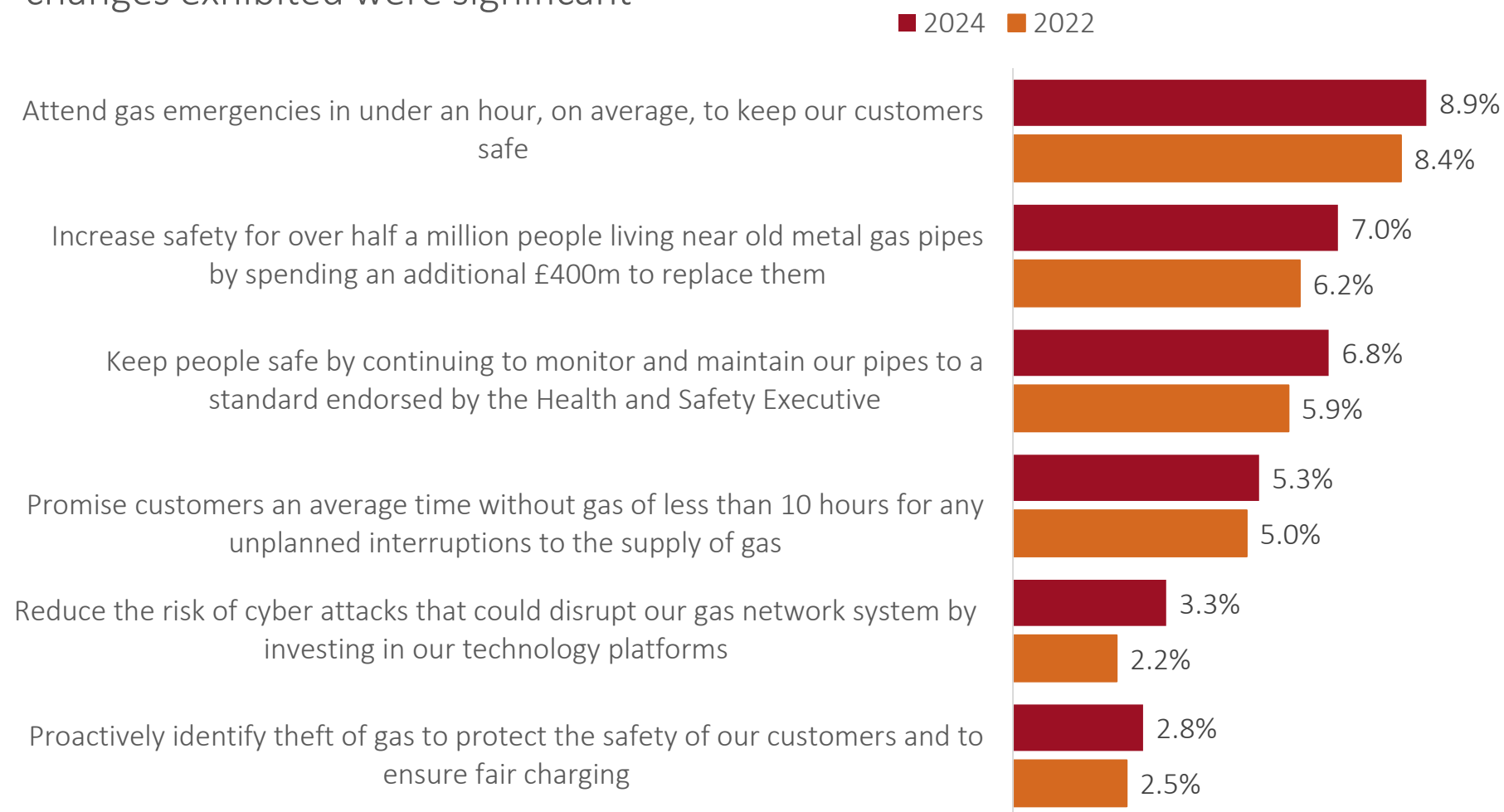
‘Attending gas emergencies in under an hour on average’ was the most important commitment for customers within this theme

Demanding safety always
28%



Demanding safety always: comparison 2024 vs 2022

All the commitments in this theme gained importance in 2024 compared to 2022, although none of the changes exhibited were significant



Demanding safety always – subgroup analysis

Attending gas emergencies in under an hour on average is more important for older people and less important for young people and those whose ethnic background is not white. Interruptions in gas supply over 10 hours are less important for younger people

Demanding safety always: 28%

	BASE	TOTAL (1003)	VULNERABILITY: PENSIONABLE AGE (378)	18-34 YRS (222)	55+ YRS (492)	ETHNICITY: NON WHITE (55)
Attend gas emergencies in under an hour, on average		8.9%	9.7% ▲	7.4% ▼	9.9% ▲	7.1% ▼
Spending an additional £400m to replace old metal pipes		7.0%	7.2%	6.5%	7.3%	6.8%
Monitor and maintain our pipes to a standard endorsed by the HSE		6.8%	7.2%	6.1% ▼	7.2%	6.3%
An average time without gas of less than 10 hours for unplanned interruptions		5.3%	5.8%	4.3% ▼	5.9%	5.0%
Proactively identify theft of gas		2.8%	2.8%	2.9%	2.9%	2.6%
Reduce the risk of cyber attacks		3.3%	3.5%	3.1%	3.5%	3.4%

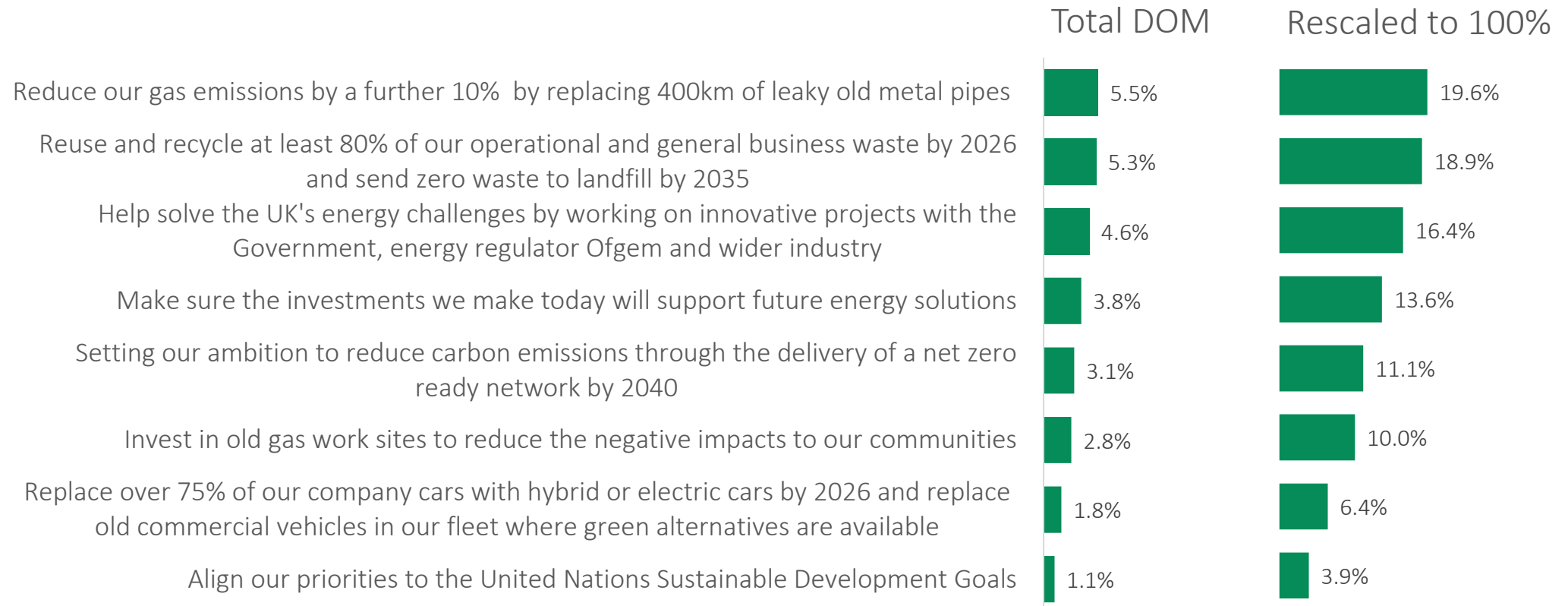
40 2024: Based on 1003 domestic participants, weighted. Only subgroups with at least one significant commitment have been included.

▲ ▼ Sig higher/lower when compared to another item in the same category

Doing all we can to provide sustainable energy

‘Reducing gas emissions by a further 10% by replacing leaky old metal pipes’ was the most important commitment under the sustainable energy theme for domestic customers

Doing all we can to provide sustainable energy
17.2%



Doing all we can to provide sustainable energy – Comparison 2024 vs 2022

No significant changes were observed across two years within this commitment theme. Certain commitments such as ‘delivery of a net zero ready network’ were seen as less important in 2024 and others such as ‘replacing leaky pipes’ and ‘recycling waste’ gained importance in 2024 compared to 2022



2022: Based on 951 domestic participants, weighted
 2024: Based on 1003 domestic participants, weighted

Doing all we can to provide sustainable energy – subgroup analysis

Older and SEG AB participants placed more importance on investing in future energy solutions whereas younger and non-white participants valued replacing company cars and aligning priorities to UN goals

Doing all we can to provide sustainable energy: 17.2%

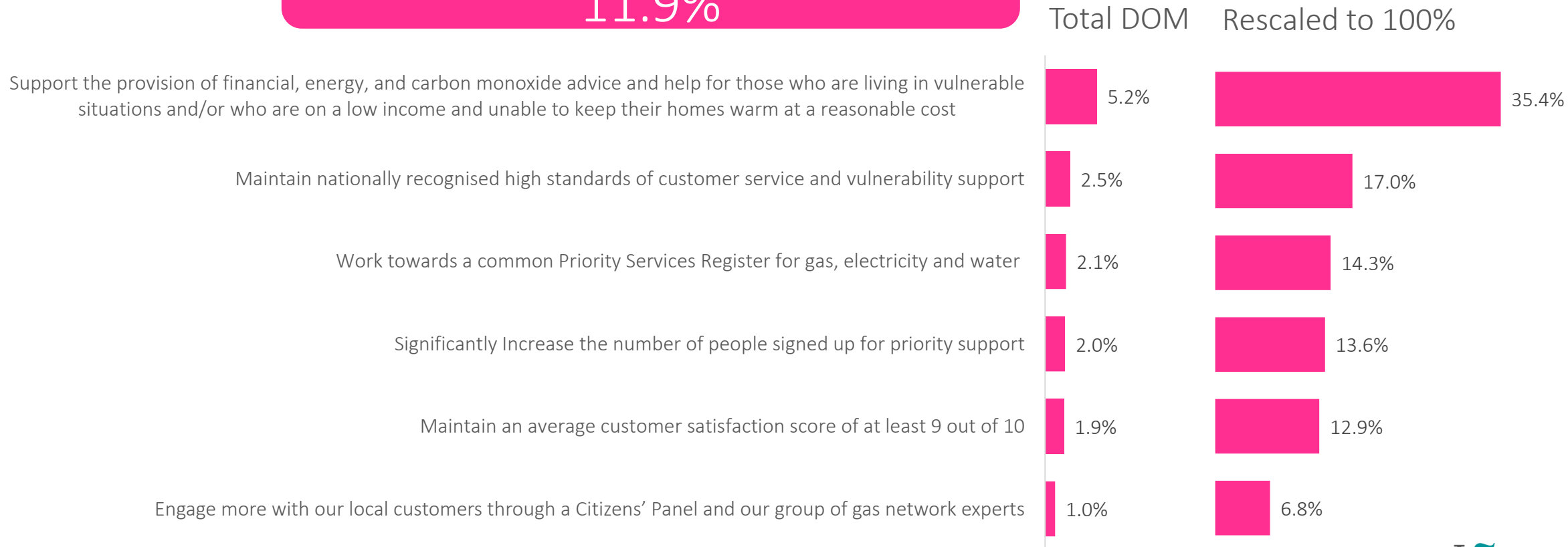
	BASE	TOTAL (1003)	18-34 YRS (222)	35-54 YRS (289)	55+YRS (492)	ETHNICITY: NON WHITE (55)	SEG: AB (208)	KNOWLEDGEABLE OF NET ZERO (270)	VULNERABILITY: PENSIONABLE AGE (378)
Reduce our gas emissions by a further 10% by replacing leaky old pipes		5.5%	4.9%	5.3%	6.0%	5.1%	5.4%	5.8%	6.2% ▲
Reuse and recycle at least 80% of our operational and general business waste by 2026		5.3%	6.0%	5.7%	4.8%	6.4%	5.2%	5.5%	4.8%
Help solve the UK's energy challenges by working on innovative projects		4.6%	4.9%	4.5%	4.4%	4.1%	5.0%	4.9%	4.3%
Make sure the investments we make today will support future energy solutions		3.8%	3.5%	3.3% ▼	4.3% ▲	3.2%	4.3% ▲	4.1%	4.4% ▲
Delivery of a net zero ready network by 2040		3.1%	3.6%	3.4%	2.7%	4.1%	3.5%	3.8% ▲	2.6%
Replace over 75% of our company cars with hybrid or electric cars by 2026		1.8%	2.4% ▲	2.0%	1.3% ▼	3.0% ▲	1.7%	2.0%	1.4%
Invest in old gas work sites		2.8%	3.0%	2.9%	2.7%	2.8%	2.3% ▼	2.8%	2.6%
Align our priorities to the UN Sustainable Development Goals		1.1%	1.4% ▲	1.2%	0.8% ▼	1.7% ▲	0.9%	1.2%	0.9%

2024: Based on 1003 domestic participants, weighted. Only subgroups with at least one significant commitment have been included.

Driving outstanding service

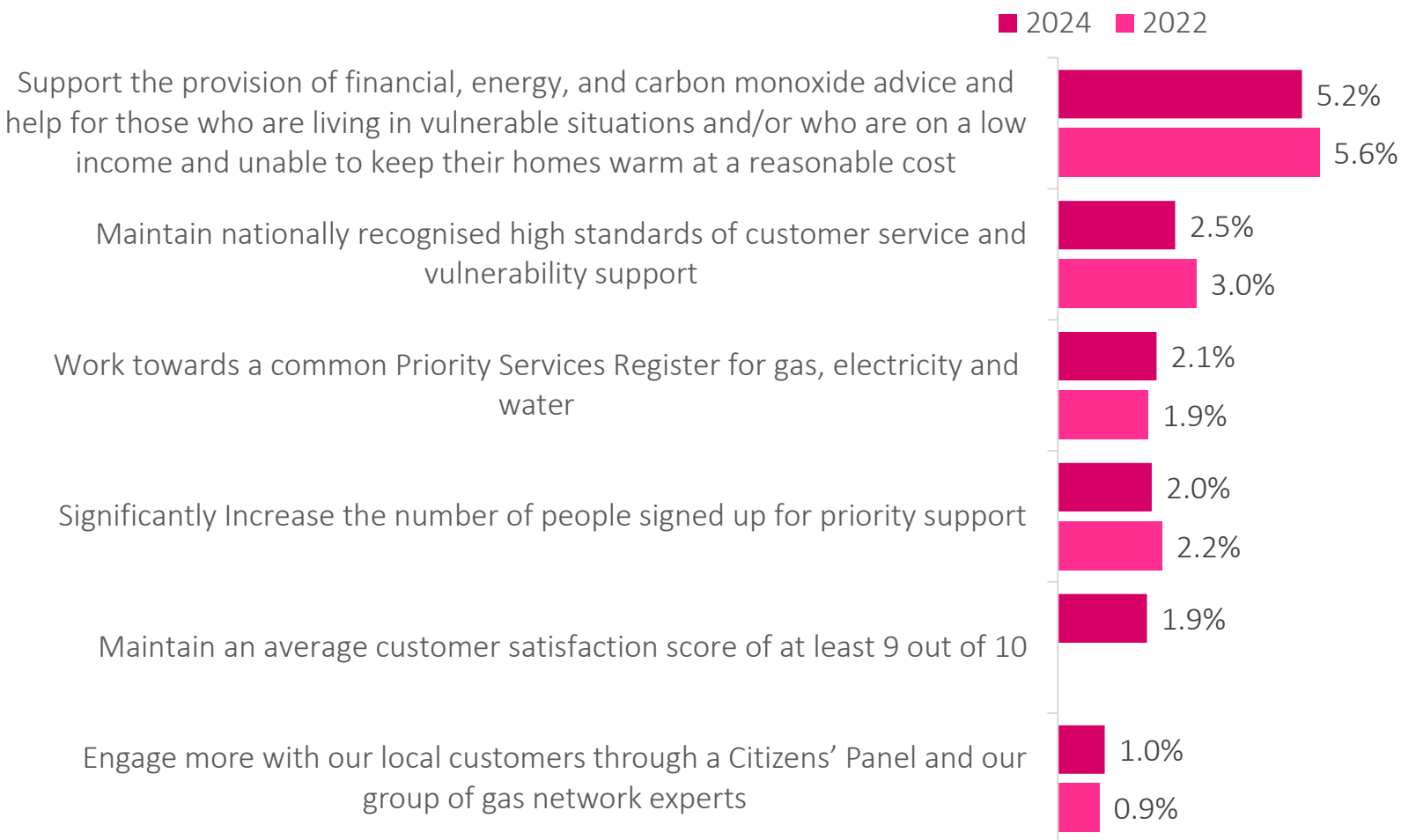
For domestic customers, ‘supporting the provision of financial, energy, and carbon monoxide advice and help for those who are living in vulnerable situations and/or who are on a low income and unable to keep their homes warm at a reasonable cost’ was the most important commitment under this theme

Driving outstanding service
11.9%



Driving outstanding service: comparison 2024 vs 2022

The scores are relatively consistent between 2024 and 2022 with ‘maintaining high standards of customer service’ and ‘supporting provision of advice and help for vulnerable customers’ decreasing slightly between 2022 and 2024

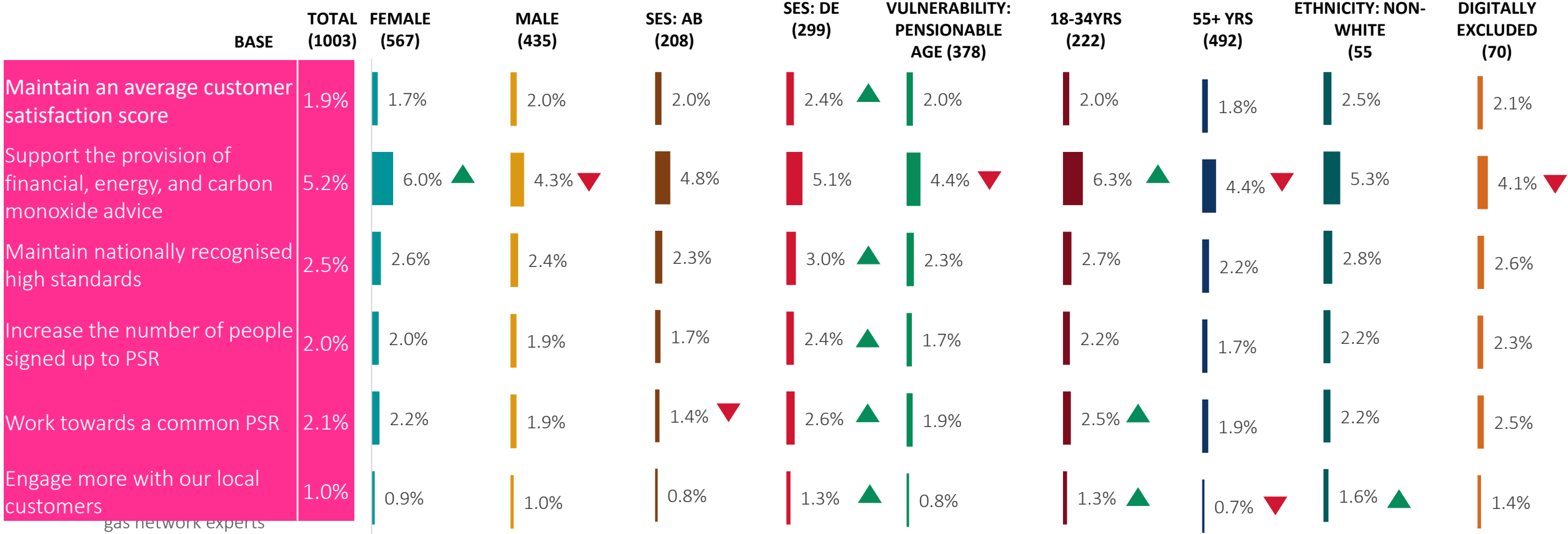


2022: Based on 951 domestic participants, weighted
 2024: Based on 1003 domestic participants, weighted

Driving outstanding service – subgroup analysis

Younger and female participants were significantly more likely to prioritise providing advice and help for vulnerable customers than older, male or digitally excluded participants. SES DE participants were significantly more likely to value working towards a common PSR than SES AB participants

Driving outstanding service : 11.9%



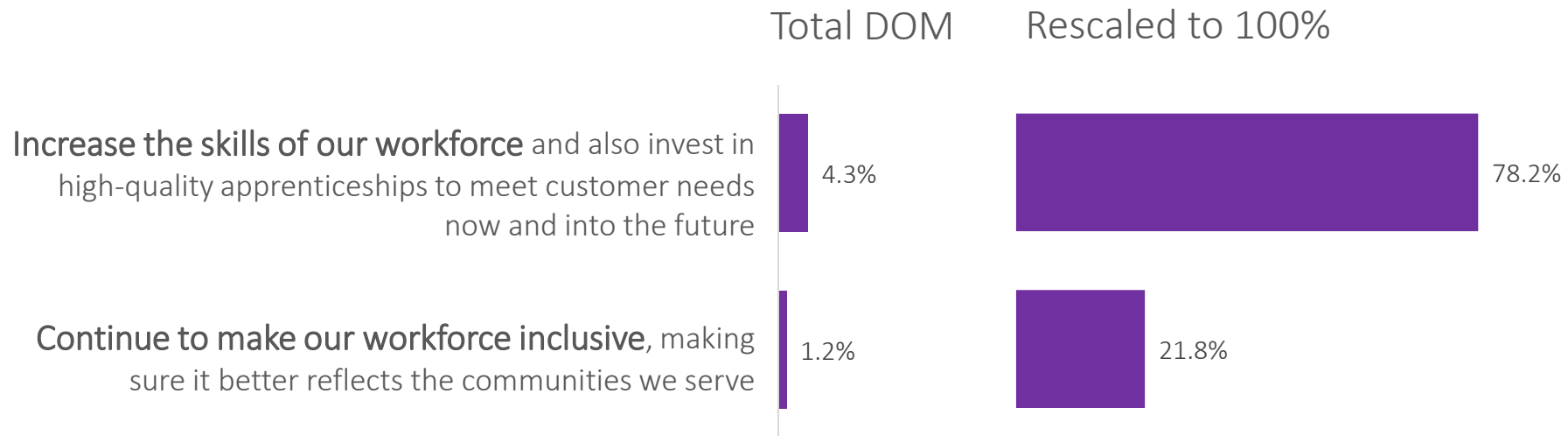
46 2024: Based on 1003 domestic participants, weighted. Only subgroups with at least one significant commitment have been included.

▲ ▼ Sig higher/lower when compared to another item in the same category

Designing our future

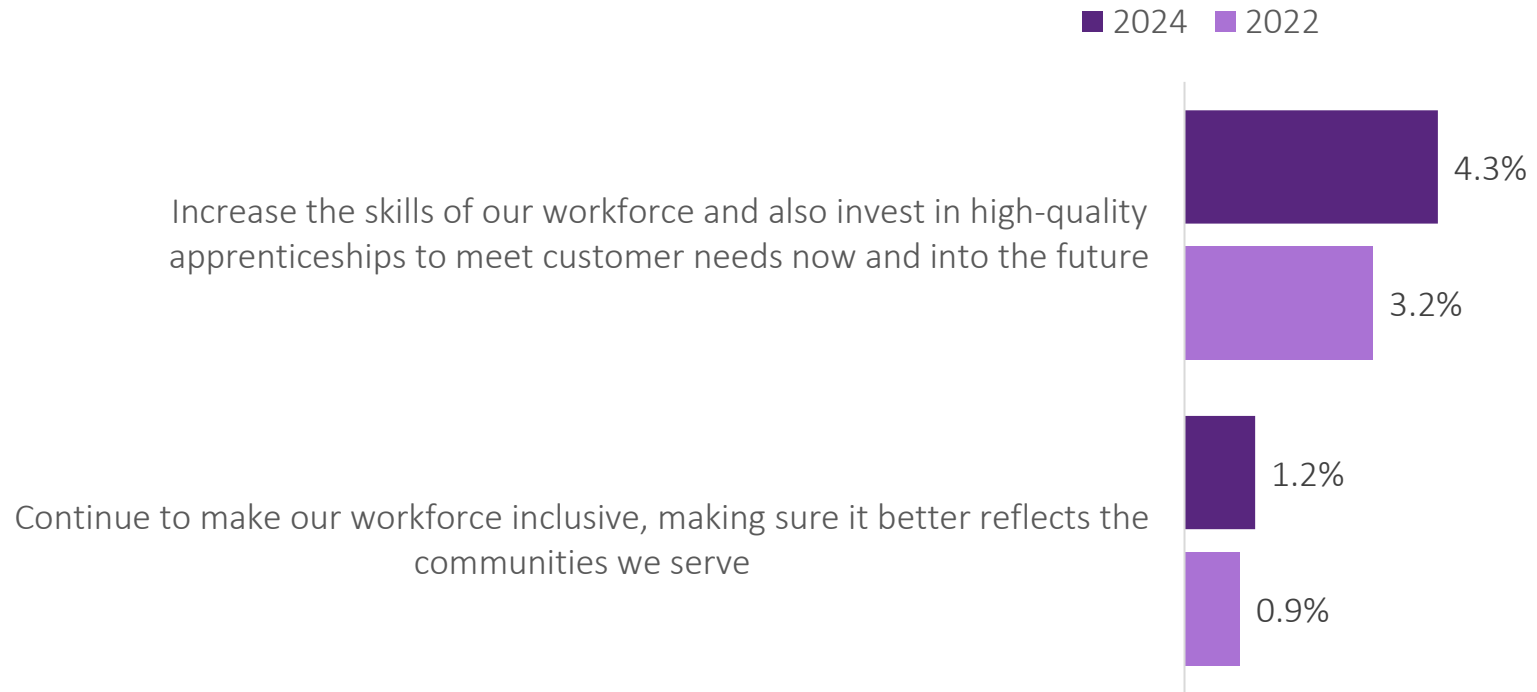
Both of the commitments under this theme were in the bottom 50%, with ‘increasing the skills of the workforce’ coming out as more important than ‘continuing to make the workforce inclusive’

Designing our future
13.5%



Designing our future: comparison 2024 vs 2022

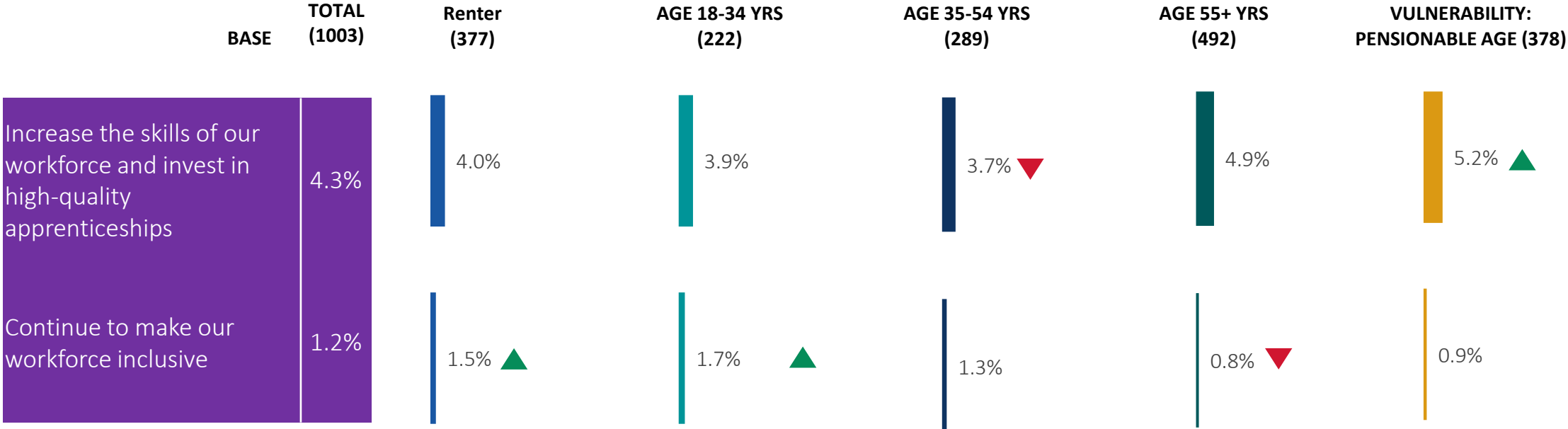
The importance participants assigned to these commitments increased slightly in 2024 compared to 2022, particularly the commitment to increase workforce skills



Designing our future – subgroup analysis

Older participants aged 55+ valued increasing workforce skills more than participants below the age of 54 whilst renters and participants aged 18-34 placed significantly more importance on workforce inclusivity than participants aged 55+

Designing our future: 13.5%



Key subgroup differences

VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS – Those on PSR, Medical and Pensionable Age Vulnerabilities

There were few significant differences for medically and financially vulnerable participants. Pensionable participants placed significantly more value on upskilling the workforce, safety and investing in future energy

Less likely:

Pensionable age participants significantly less likely to value **supporting the provision of financial, energy and carbon monoxide advice and help for those who are living in vulnerable situations**, 4.4% (378) v 5.2% (1003)

Those with more than one vulnerability (financial, medical, age) were less likely to value **setting ambition to reduce carbon emissions** and the **reuse and recycling of waste**, 2.8% (352) v 3.1% (1003) and 5.1 (352) vs 5.3 (1003)

PSR participants less likely to value **keeping charges down to the lowest practical level**, 9.2% (340) v 9.6% (1003)

More likely:

Participants who are eligible for the PSR are more likely to value **attend gas emergencies in under an hour**, 9.2 (539) vs 8.9 (1003)

As in 2022, pensionable age vulnerability significantly more likely to value **increase the skills of the workforce**, 5.2% (378) v 4.3% (1003)

Financially vulnerable participants and participants with more than one health condition more likely to value **supporting the provision of financial, energy and carbon monoxide advice and help for those who are living in vulnerable situations**, 5.4% (657) v 5.2% (1003) and 5.7% (149) v 5.2% (1003)



SME Priorities

Commitment Importance: SME 2024

SME

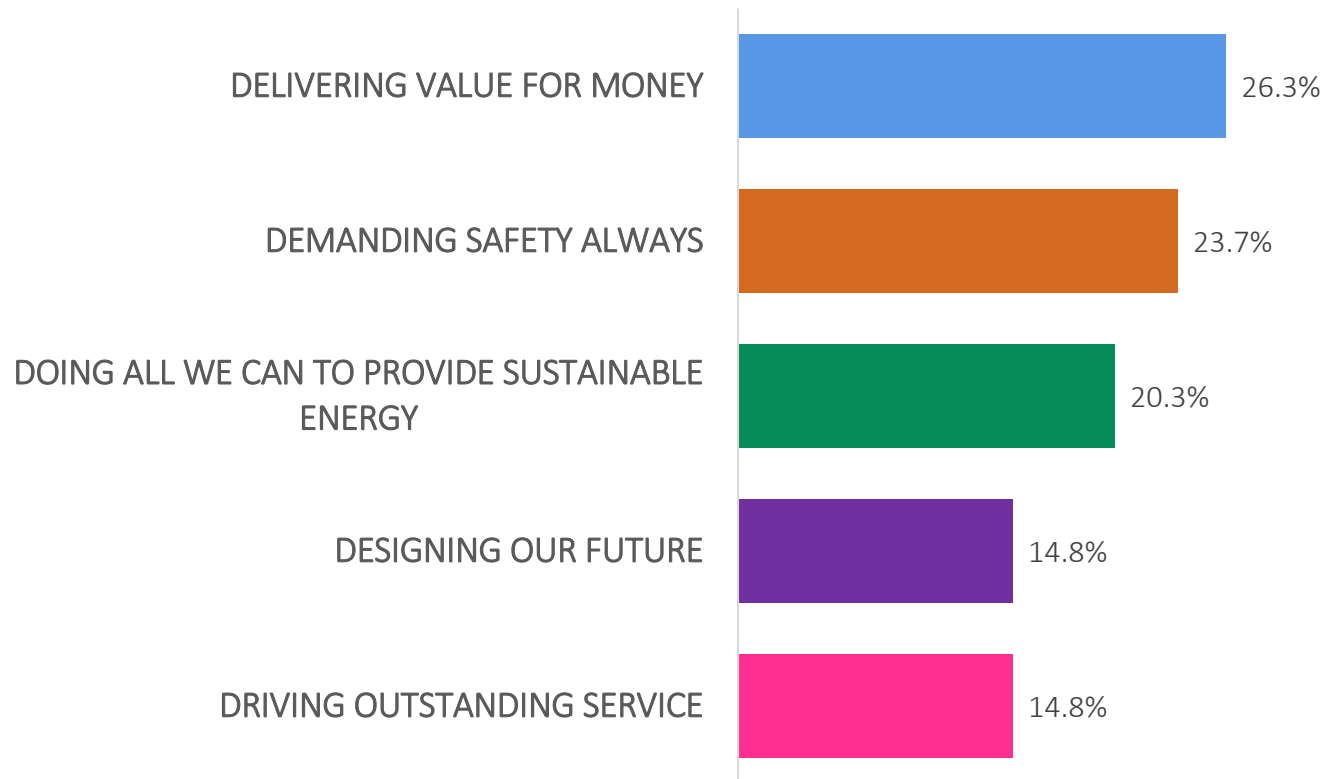


Based on 150 SME participants, weighted

Commitment Importance: SME 2024

Value for money and safety continue to be at the forefront of importance

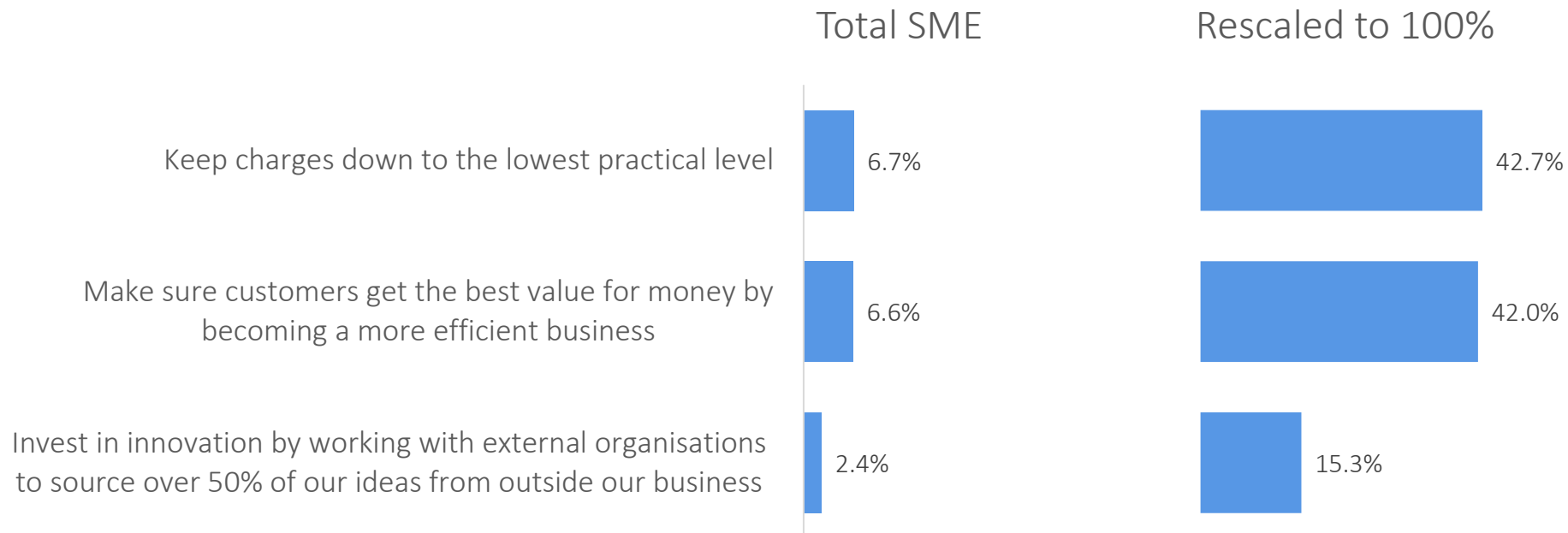
SUMMARY - RESCALED



Delivering value for money

As with domestic customers, 'keeping charges down to the lowest practical level' was also the most important commitment for SME customers

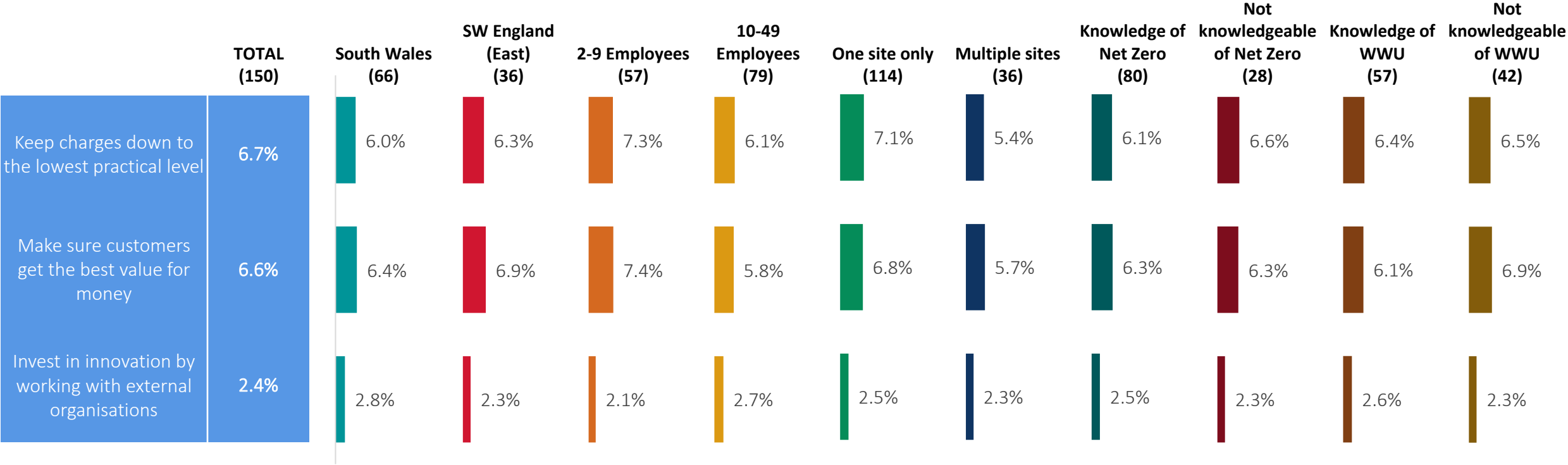
Delivering value for money
26.3%



Delivering value for money – subgroup analysis

SMEs with multiple sites do not prioritise keeping charges down compared to SMEs with one site or those with fewer employees. The same trend can be found regarding delivering the best value through efficiency

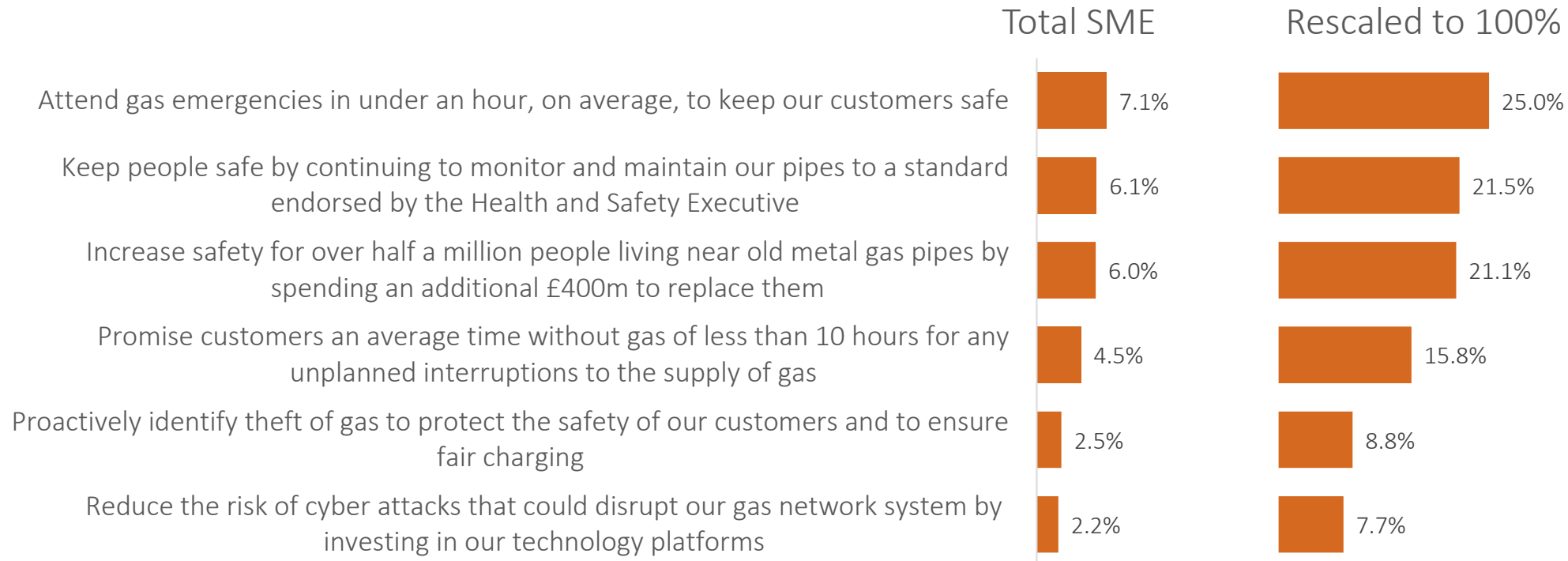
Delivering value for money: 26.3%



Demanding safety always

'Attending gas emergencies in under an hour on average' was the most important commitment for SME customers within this theme, closely followed by 'monitoring and maintaining pipes to a standard endorsed by the HSE'

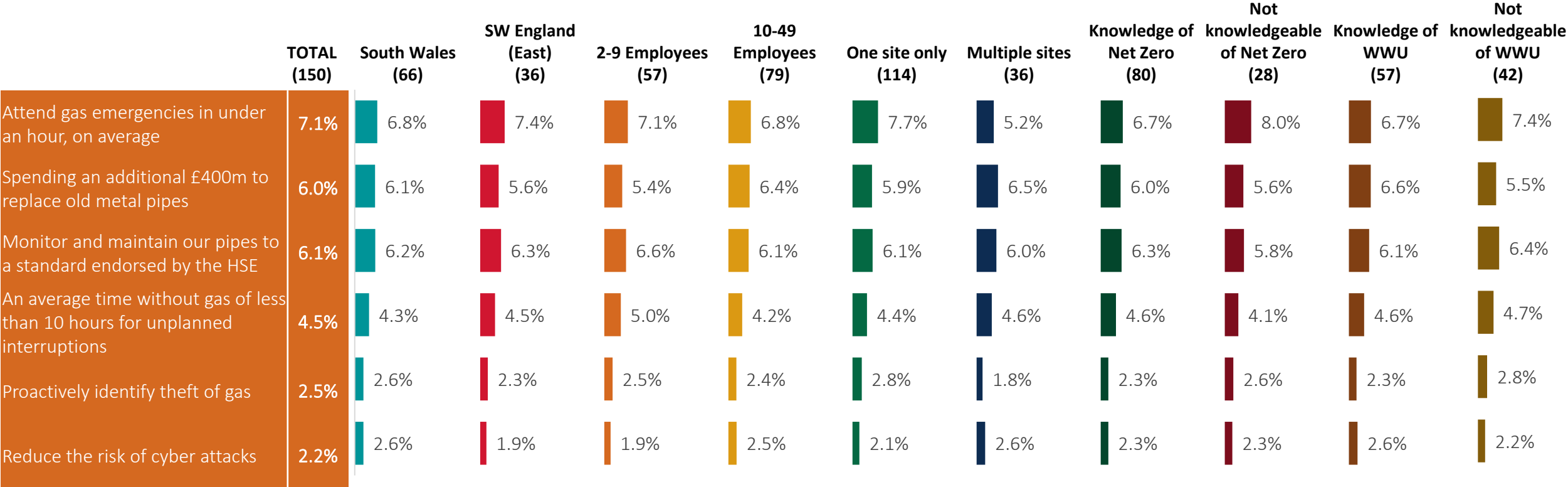
Demanding safety always
23.7%



Demanding safety always – subgroup analysis

WWU attending gas emergencies quickly and identifying gas theft are far more important for SMEs with one site only compared to SMEs with multiple sites. SMEs with 10-49 employees prioritise gas pipe replacement more than SMEs with 2-9 employees

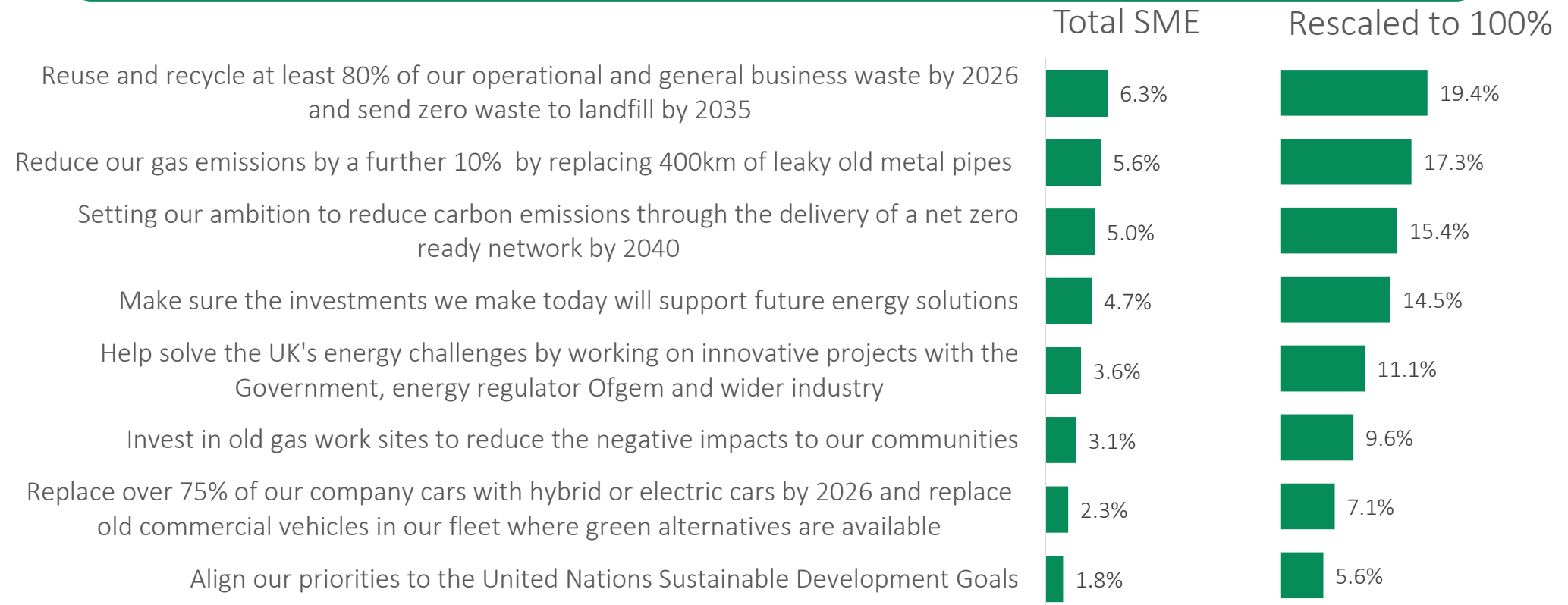
Demanding safety always: 23.7%



Doing all we can to provide sustainable energy

'Recycling operational and general business waste' was the most important commitment under the sustainable energy theme for SME customers

Doing all we can to provide sustainable energy
20.3%



Doing all we can to provide sustainable energy – subgroup analysis

SMEs with 10-49 employees and multiple sites were more likely to value recycling waste and significantly less likely to value investing in future energy solutions than SMEs with 2-9 employees and only one site

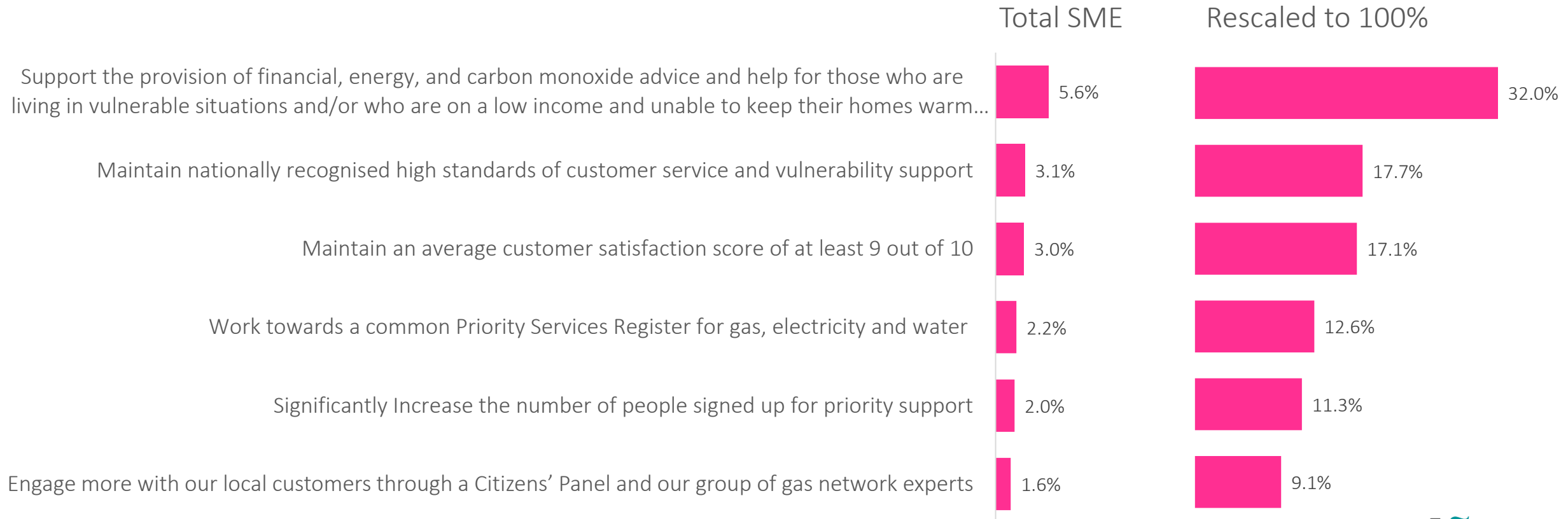
Doing all we can to provide sustainable energy: 20.3%

	TOTAL (150)	South Wales (66)	SW England (East) (36)	2-9 Employees (57)	10-49 Employees (79)	One site only (114)	Multiple sites (36)	Knowledge of Net Zero (80)	Not knowledgeable of Net Zero (28)	Knowledge of WWU (57)	Not knowledgeable of WWU (42)
Reuse and recycle at least 80% of our operational and general business waste by 2026	6.3%	6.5%	6.2%	5.3%	6.8%	5.9%	7.4%	7.0%	6.3%	6.6%	5.8%
Reduce our gas emissions by a further 10% by replacing leaky old pipes	5.6%	4.8%	6.6%	6.4%	4.8%	5.8%	5.1%	5.7%	6.5%	4.9%	6.8%
Delivery of a net zero ready network by 2040	5.0%	4.7%	5.1%	4.6%	4.9%	4.9%	5.2%	5.6%	3.8%	4.9%	5.3%
Make sure the investments we make today will support future energy solutions	4.7%	3.9%	5.4%	6.0% ▲	3.6% ▼	5.1%	3.3% ▼	4.5%	4.5%	4.0%	5.5%
Help solve the UK's energy challenges by working on innovative projects	3.6%	3.6%	4.1%	4.0%	3.6%	3.4%	4.0%	3.9%	3.3%	3.7%	3.7%
Invest in old gas work sites to reduce the negative impact	3.1%	3.0%	3.6%	3.6%	2.8%	3.2%	2.6%	2.9%	3.7%	3.0%	3.1%
Replace over 75% of our company cars with hybrid or electric cars by 2026	2.3%	2.9%	1.6%	1.4%	3.2%	1.9%	3.4%	2.6%	2.3%	2.8%	2.1%
Align our priorities to the UN Sustainable Development Goals	1.8%	2.0%	1.5%	1.9%	2.0%	1.8%	1.8%	2.1%	1.9%	2.1%	1.4%

Driving outstanding service

'Providing advice for those living in vulnerable or low-income situations' was the most important commitment for SME customers within this theme

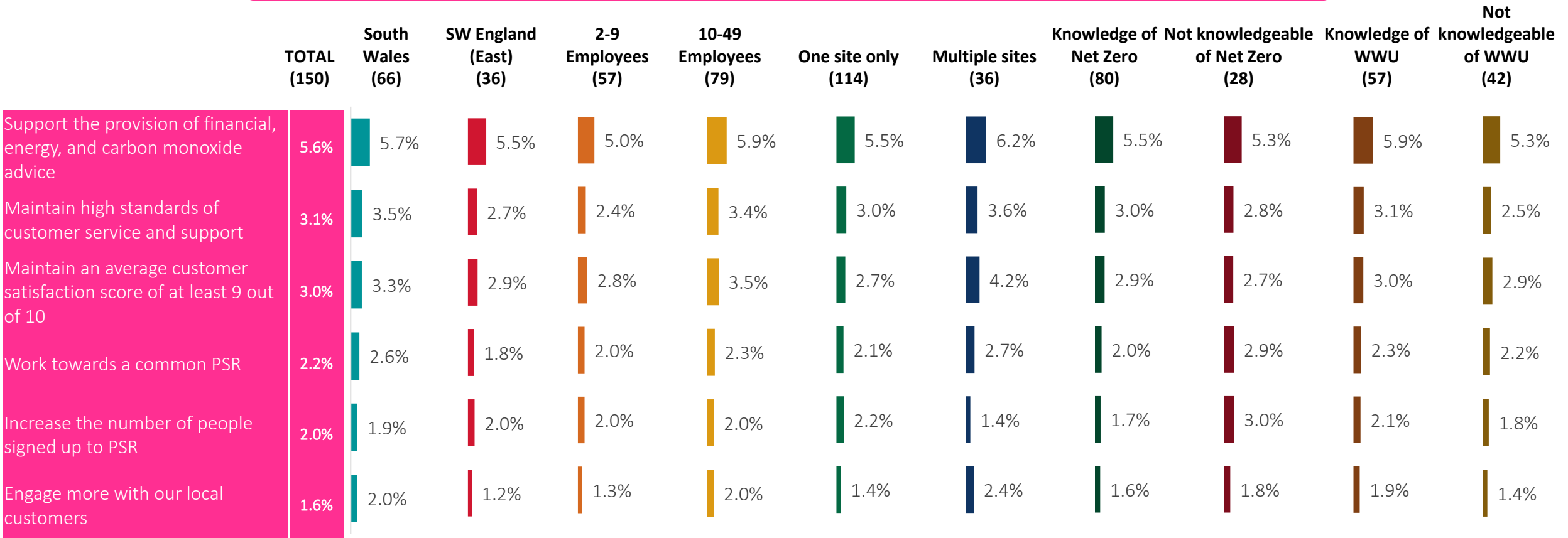
Driving outstanding service
14.8%



Driving outstanding service – subgroup analysis

Micro businesses rated maintaining nationally high standards of customer service as less important than businesses of 10-49 employees. SMEs with multiple sites prioritised customer engagement more than SMEs with one site only

Driving outstanding service: 14.8%

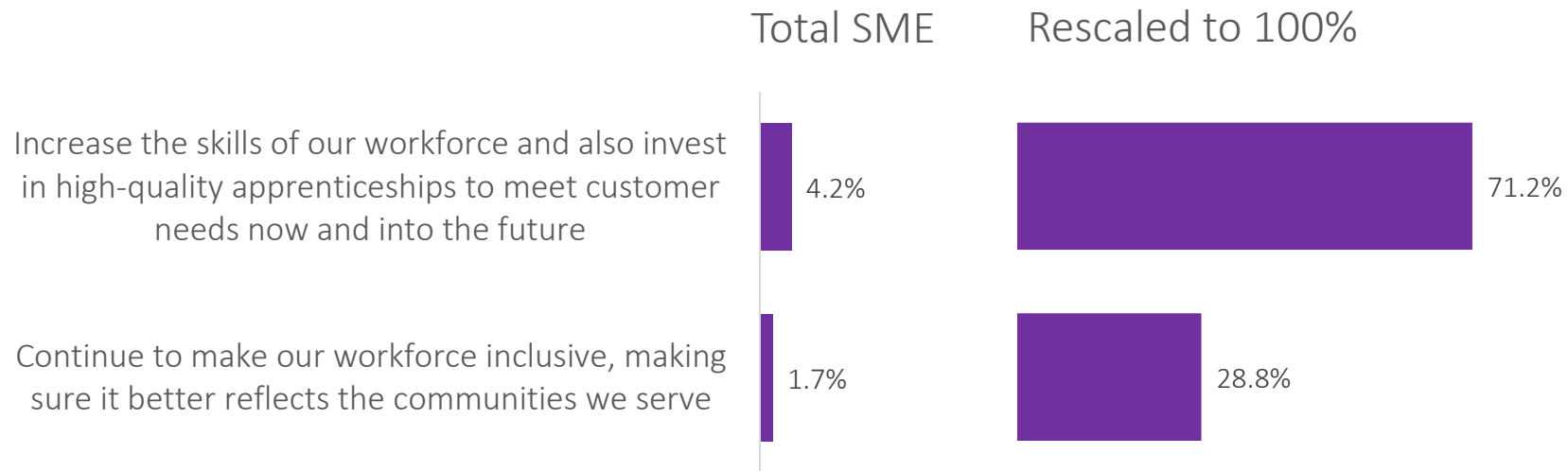


No significant differences

Designing our future

The results for the commitments in this theme were very similar for SME customers and domestic customers with 'increasing workforce skills' remaining the more prioritised commitment than making the workforce inclusive

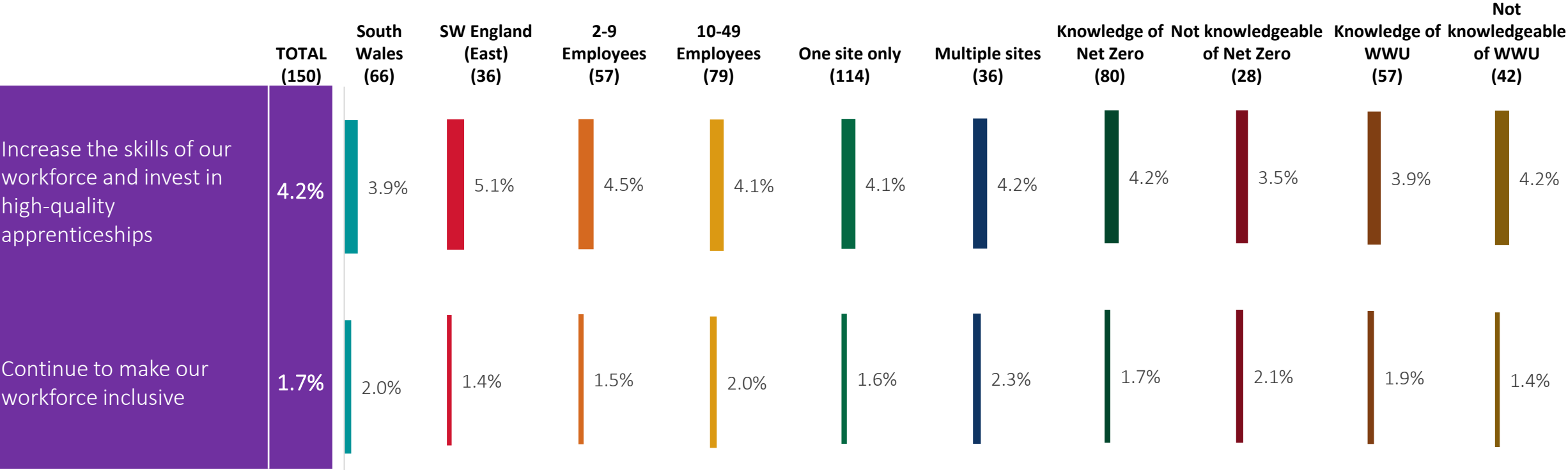
Designing our future 14.8%



Designing our future – subgroup analysis

SMEs in SW England were more likely to value increasing the skills of WWU’s workforce than SMEs in South Wales. SMEs with multiple sites prioritised workforce inclusivity more than SMEs with one site only

Designing our future: 14.8%



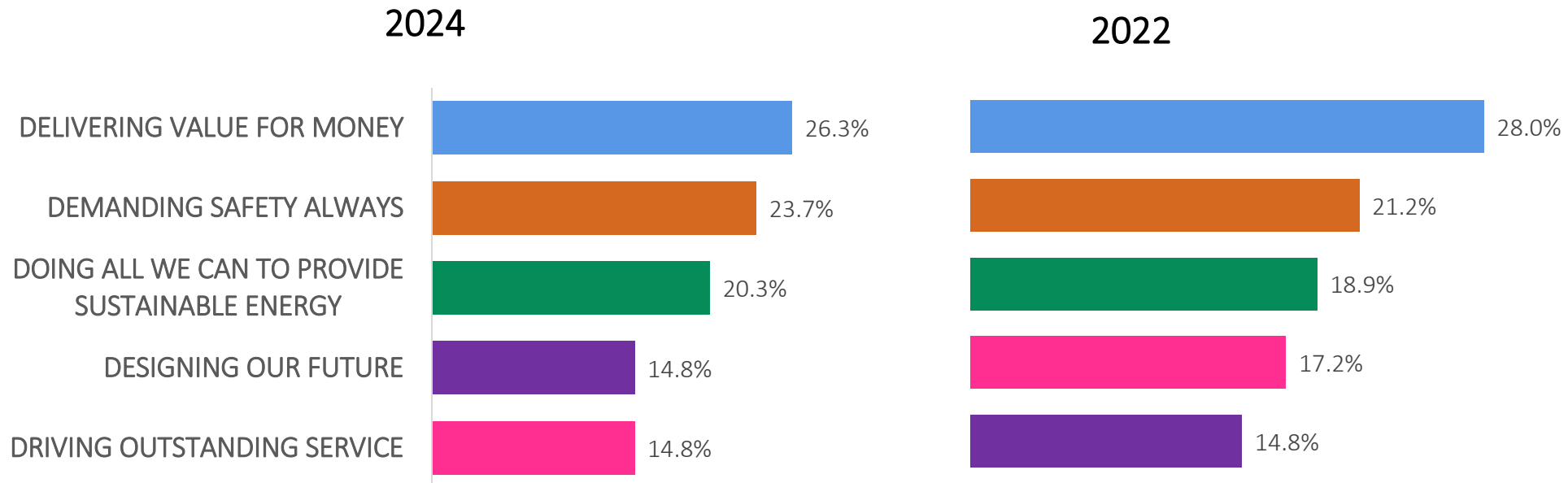
No significant differences

Comparison 2024 vs 2022: Summary

The results show relative consistency between 2024 and 2022 in terms of level of importance, with the most notable change being a decrease in the importance of 'Driving outstanding service'

'Delivering value for money' also experienced a small decrease with 'Designing our future' remaining the same

'Demanding safety always' and 'Doing all we can to provide sustainable energy' have increased slightly in comparison with 2022

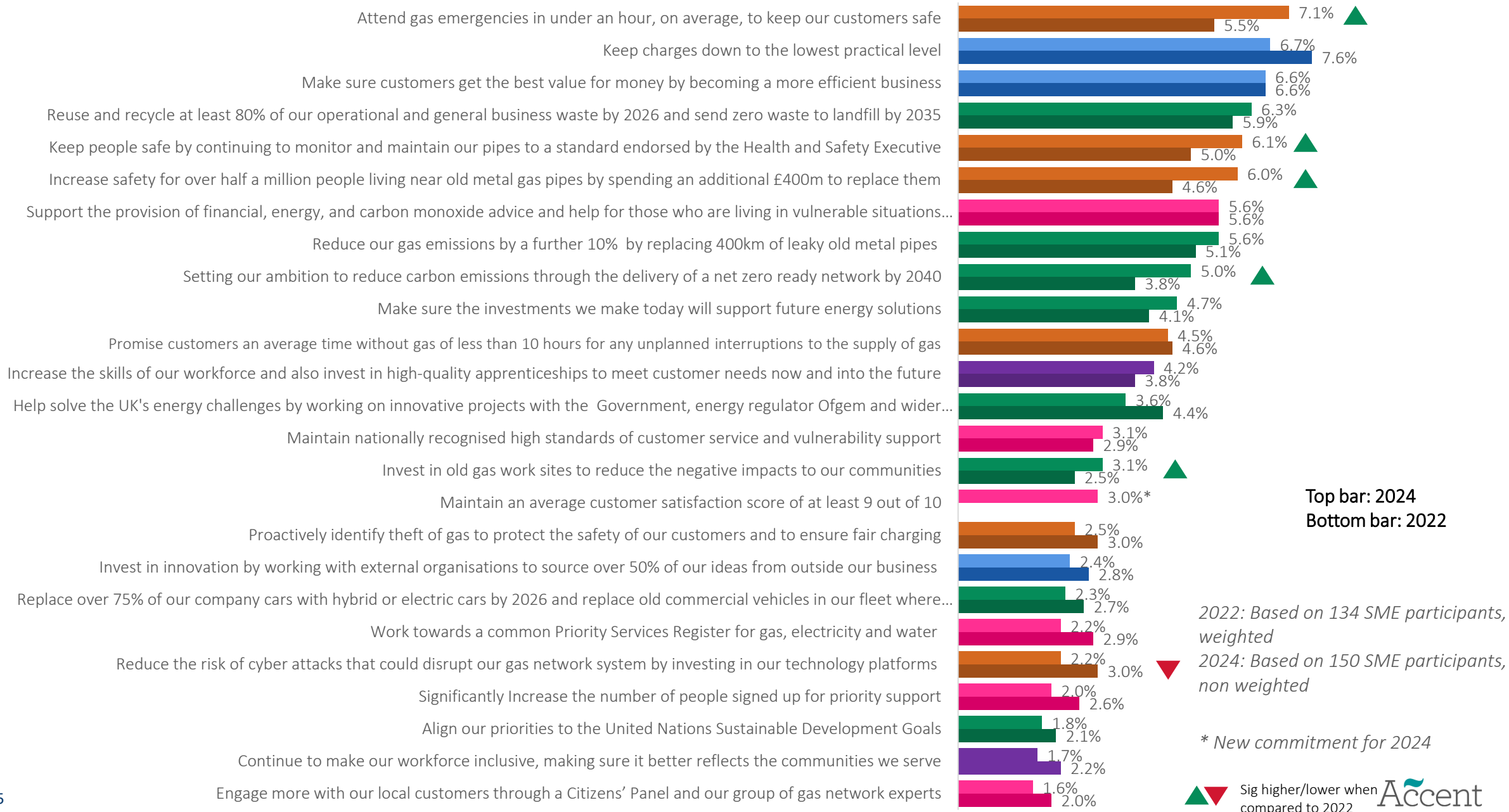


2022: Based on 134 SME participants, weighted

2024: Based on 150 SME participants, weighted

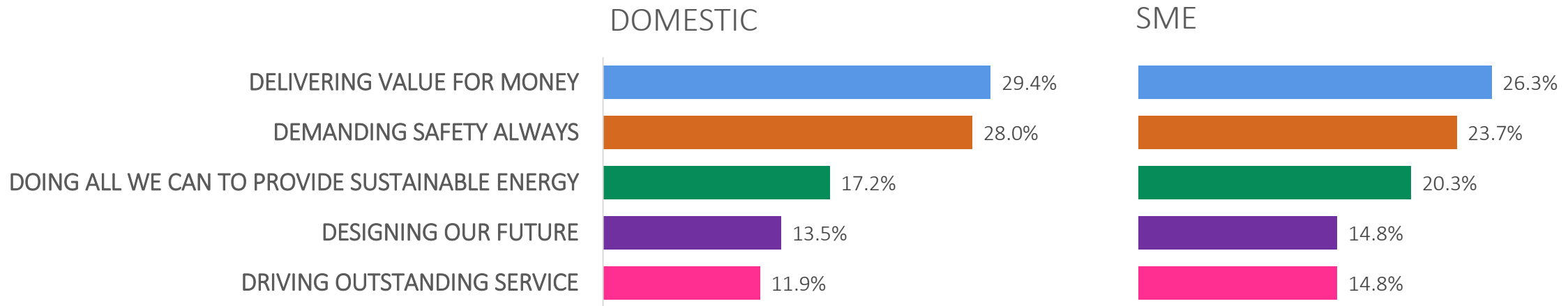
SME comparison 2022 vs 2024: OVERALL

SME



Domestic v SME Comparison 2024: Summary

The level of importance across all the commitment groups was similar between SME and domestic participants. Domestic participants placed slightly more importance on value for money and safety while SME participants prioritised sustainable energy, designing the future and driving outstanding service

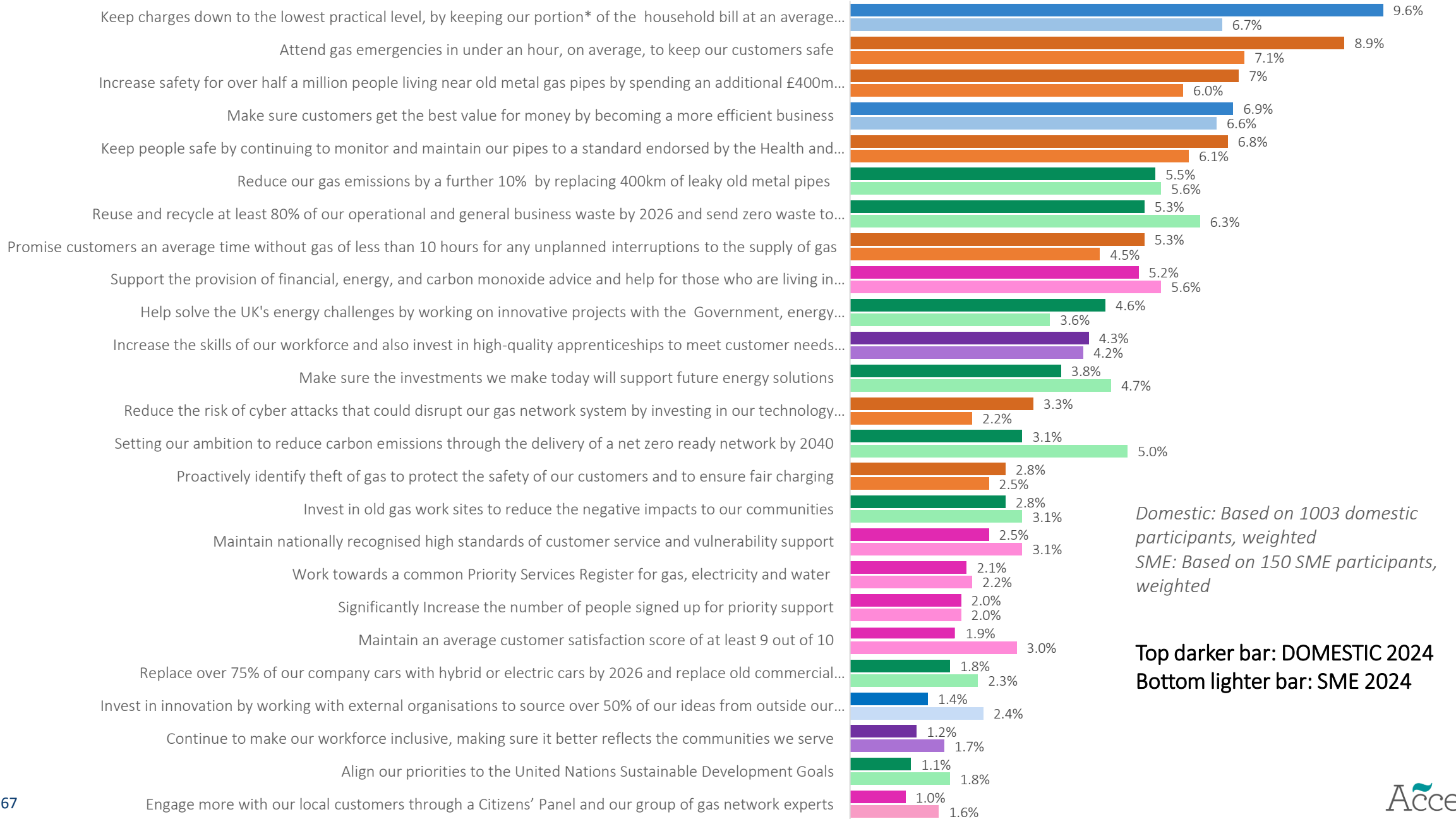


2024:

Based on 150 SME participants, weighted

Based on 1003 domestic participants weighted, adjusted for common commitments

Domestic vs SME Comparison 2024



Domestic: Based on 1003 domestic participants, weighted
 SME: Based on 150 SME participants, weighted

Top darker bar: DOMESTIC 2024
Bottom lighter bar: SME 2024

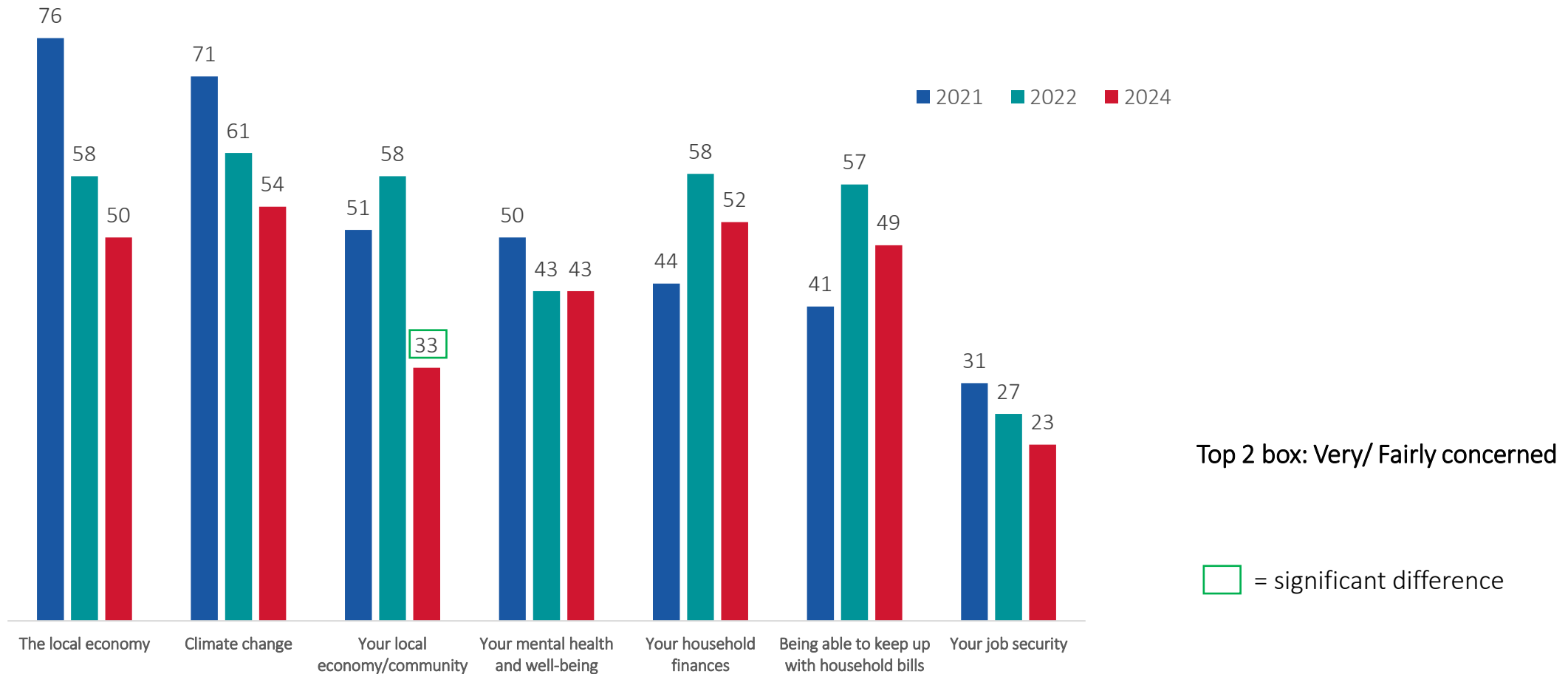


Attitudinal results

Combined domestic and SME sample

Economic, climate and community concerns

Overall, domestic customers are less concerned about the economic and climate situation in 2024 compared to 2022. The concern over the local community saw a significant drop from last year

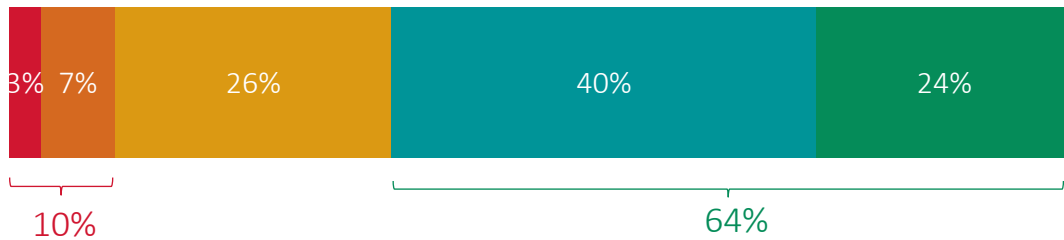


Social attitudes

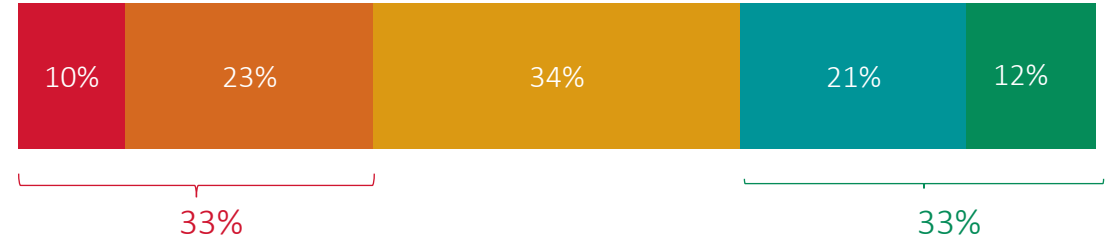
Although participants value a sense of community and helping others, only a third of participants actively look to take part in community events and projects

■ Definitely disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Definitely agree
 ■ Don't know

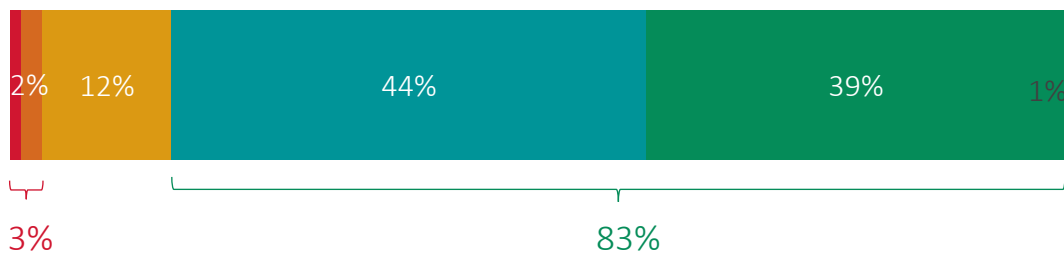
A sense of community is important to me



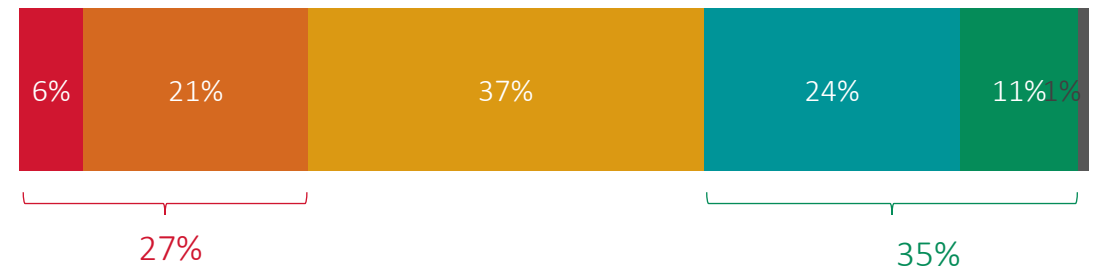
I actively look to take part in community events and projects



Helping others is very rewarding

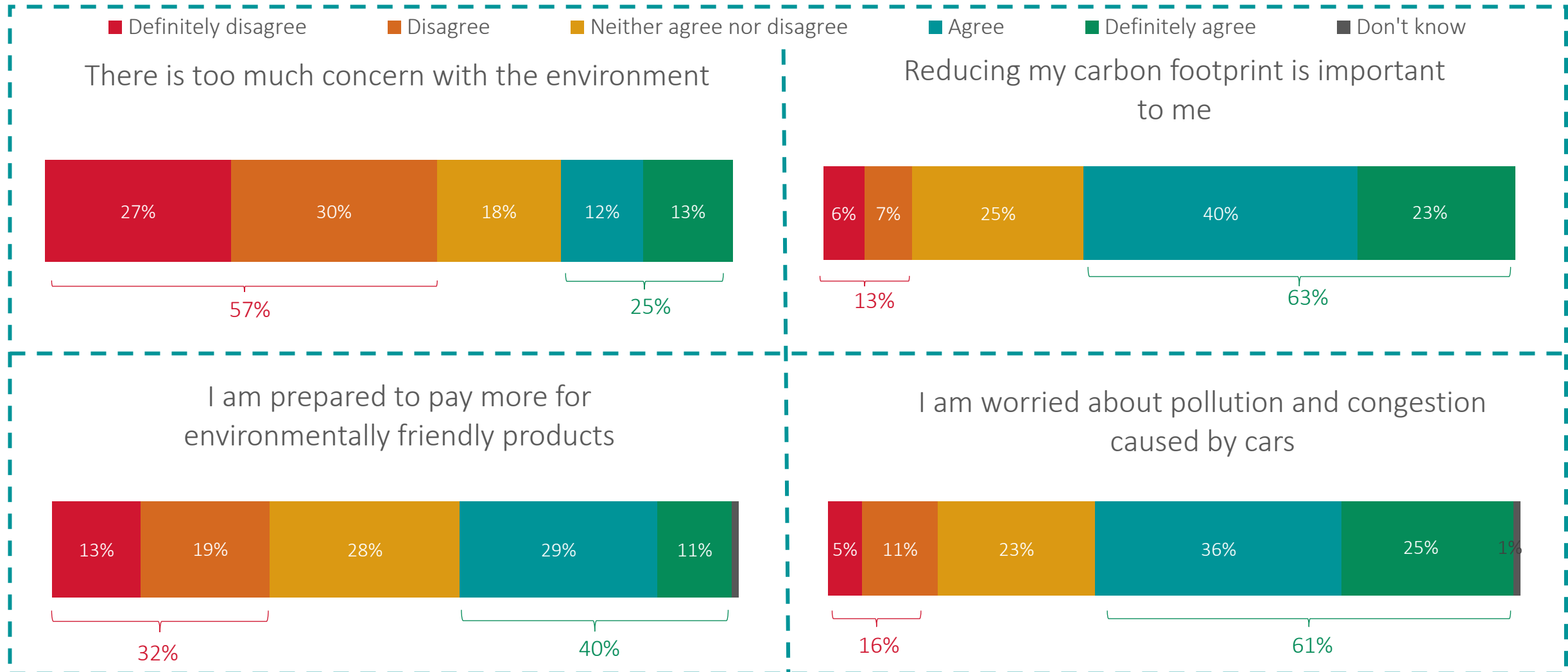


I need to put my problems above those of other people



Environmental attitudes

Only a quarter of participants agreed that there is too much concern for the environment with 2 in 5 participants expressing a willingness to pay more for environmentally friendly products

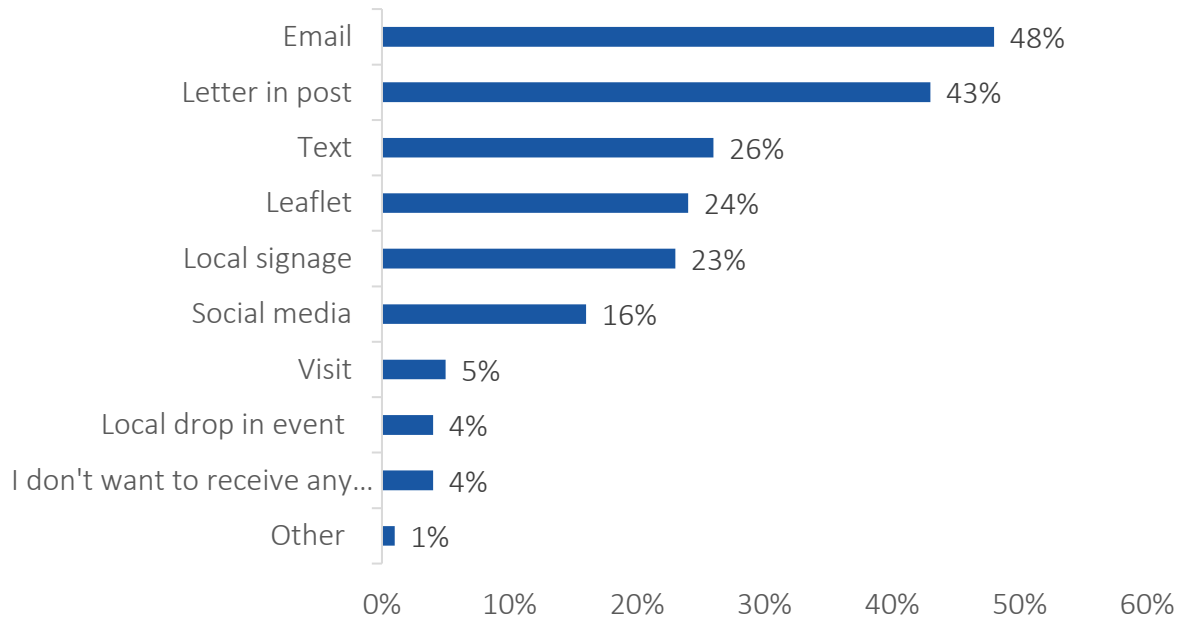


71 Q43. Below are some statements that describe different attitudes to life in general. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements.
 Base: Total sample 1153, weighted

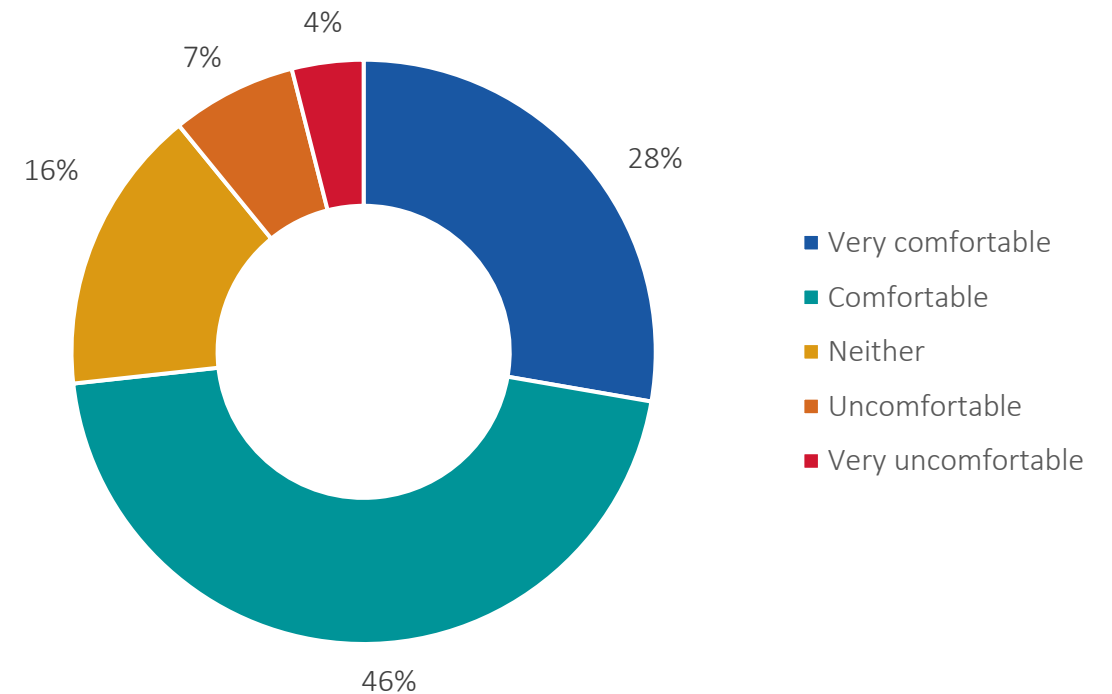
Communication preferences

Email and letter in post are the two most preferred methods of contact by customers. Almost three quarters of participants (74%) are comfortable with their contact details being shared

Communication preferences



Comfortable with contact details being shared

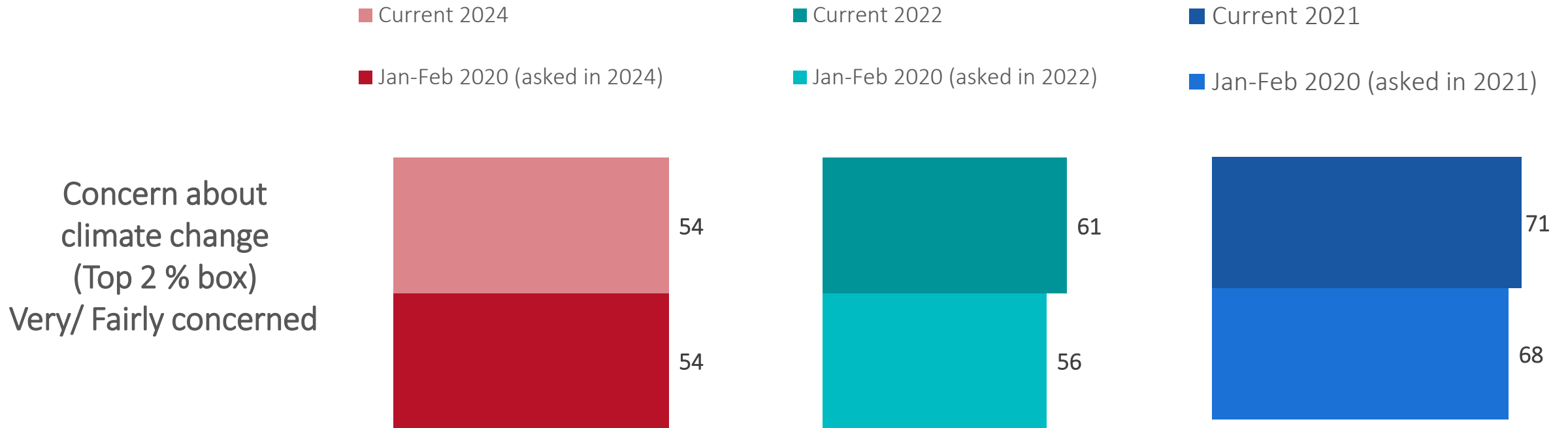


Q47a. Sometimes Wales & West Utilities must carry out roadworks to upgrade gas pipes. How would you prefer to be contacted to tell you about upcoming work and to update you on progress? Base: Total sample 1153, weighted

Q49a. How would you feel about your gas supplier sharing your contact details with Wales & West Utilities for the purpose of contacting you about its work in your area? Base: 961, weighted

Concern about climate change

Concern about climate change has reduced for domestic customers from 61% (asked in 2022) to 54% (asked in 2024). However, overall a majority of participants remain concerned about climate change



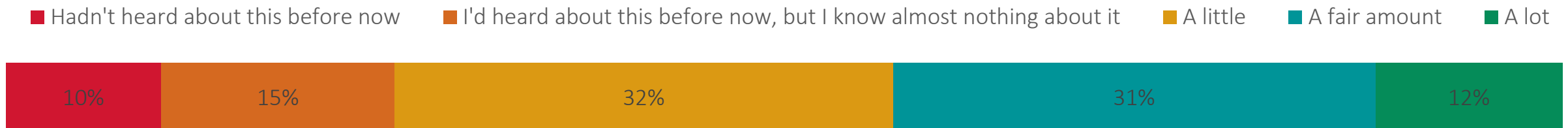
Q47r2. We'd now like you to think back to January and February 2020. Back then, how concerned were you, if at all, about each of the following? Climate change. Base: Domestic 2024 – 1,003; Domestic 2022 – 951; Domestic 2021 – 804

73 Q48r2. And now thinking about the situation today, how concerned are you, if at all, about each of the following? Climate change. Base: Domestic 2024 – 1,003; Domestic 2022 – 951; Domestic 2021 – 804

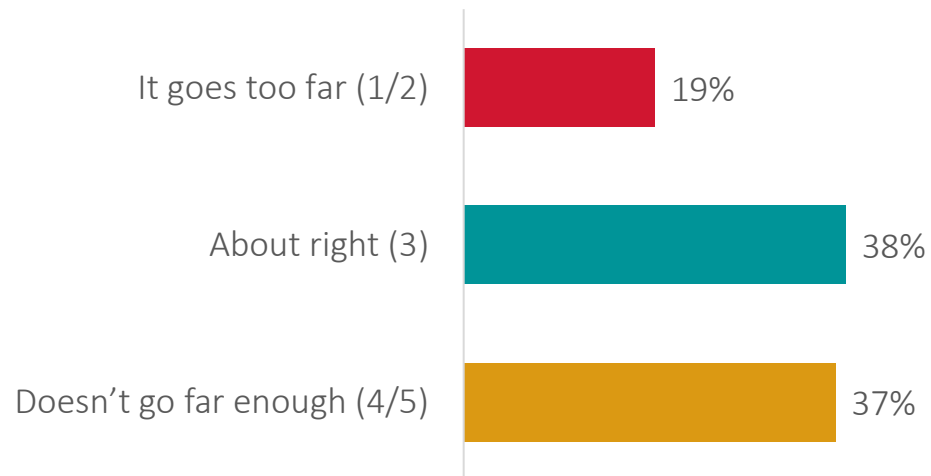
Attitudes to Net Zero

Stated levels of awareness was high within our sample, with three quarters of participants saying they know at least a little about the UK's Net Zero target. 43% of participants have a 'good knowledge' and only 1 in 10 have heard nothing about Net Zero previously

Awareness of UK Net Zero target



Agreement with UK Net Zero target





Thank you



Appendix A: Defining Vulnerable Customers

Vulnerability definitions

The classification of vulnerability is normally a combination of:

- PSR membership
- Pensionable age
- Presence of children under 5 years
- Medical condition
- Non- native English speaker
- Low income
- Difficulty paying bills
- PSR eligibility (medical condition, low income, non-native speaker, temporary life change, unemployment)

This classification across the utilities sector is not consistent and thus can vary from 20% of the population to 90% of the population.

More recently, across different studies and sectors we have seen a gradual increase in membership, irrespective of how it is calculated.

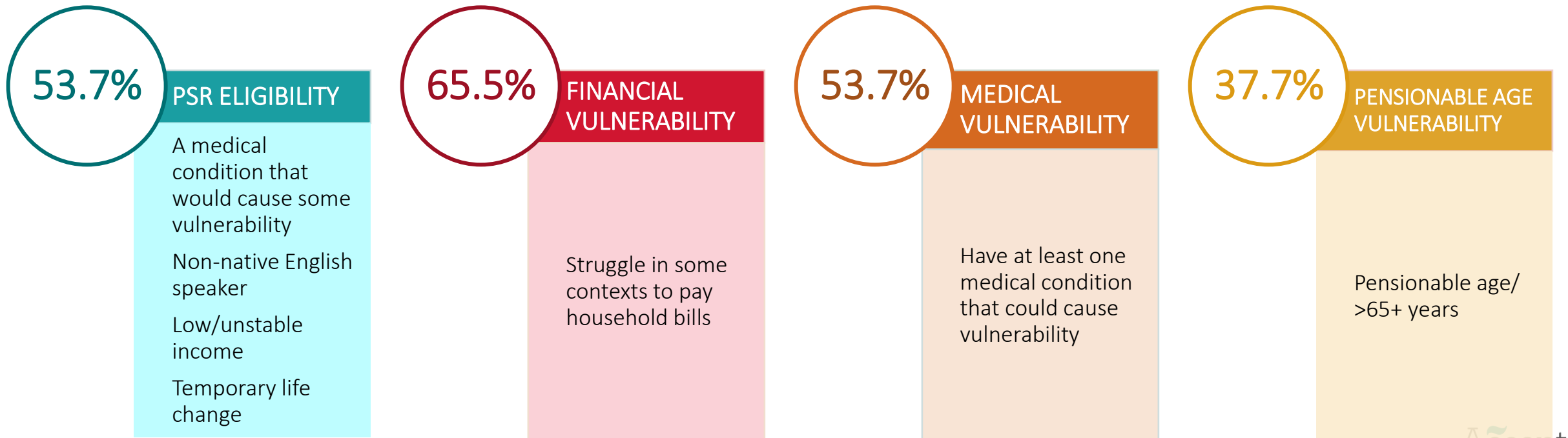
Investigation of the definitions

Using all vulnerability classifications, and this project's data, we found the following:

83.9% of participants have at least one of the following:

- PSR membership
- Pensionable age
- Presence of children under 5 years
- Medical condition
- Low income
- Difficulty paying bills
- PSR eligibility (medical condition, low income, non-native speaker, temporary life change, unemployment)

The percentage of participants with a medical vulnerability increased from 28.4% in 2022 to 53.7% in 2024



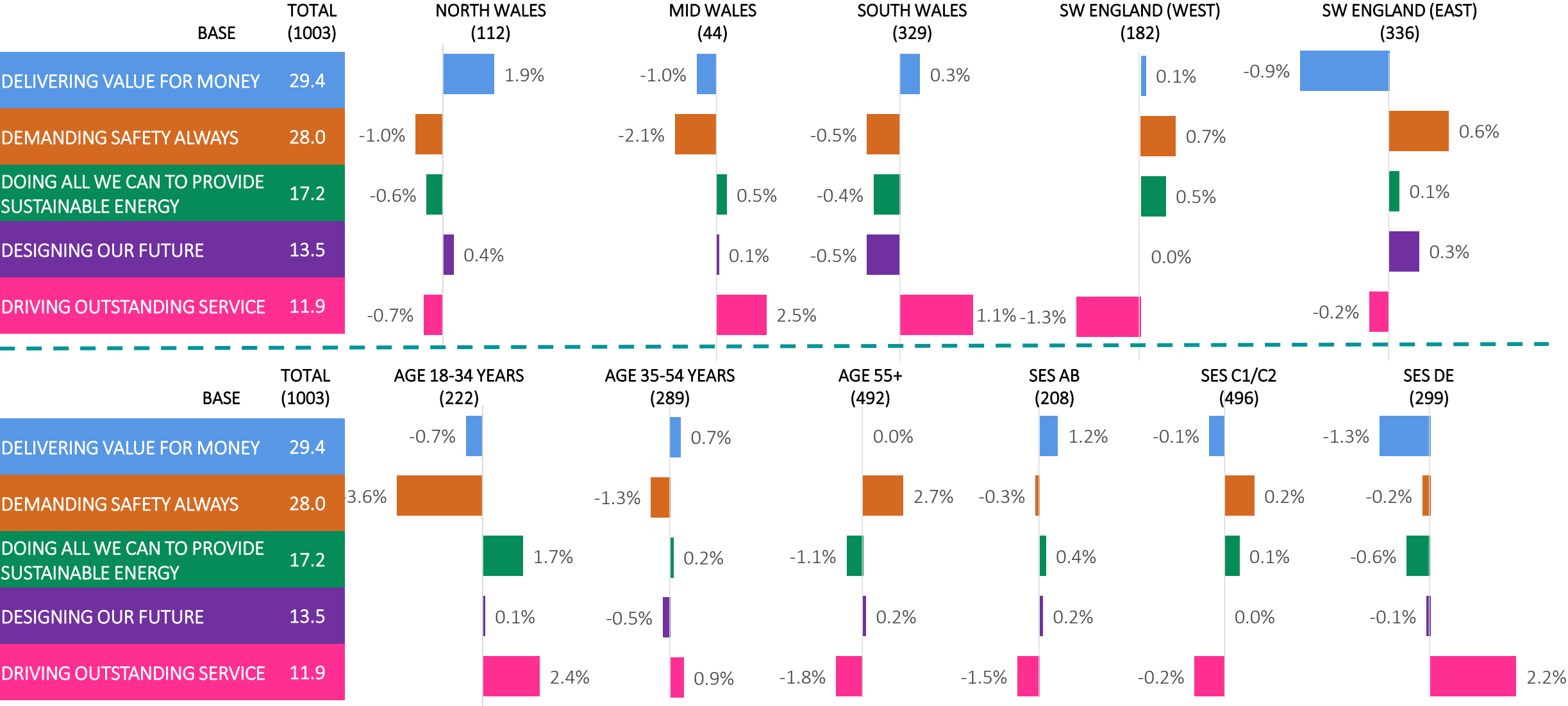
How we have defined vulnerability

- The definition of vulnerability is vast and not clearly established. We have looked at combinations of financial, medical and life-stage vulnerability, but did not find any combinations that were superior to the current definition of PSR eligibility (with respect to significant differences).
- This is because the actual definition is subjective and does not define their actual needs i.e.. A participant over 70 years has a different vulnerability to someone medically dependent, under different circumstances.
- The MaxDiff results have been split into 4 separate groups:
 - PSR ELIGIBILITY
 - FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY
 - MEDICAL VULNERABILITY
 - PENSIONABLE AGE VULNERABILITY



**Appendix B: Domestic subgroup
MaxDiff results**

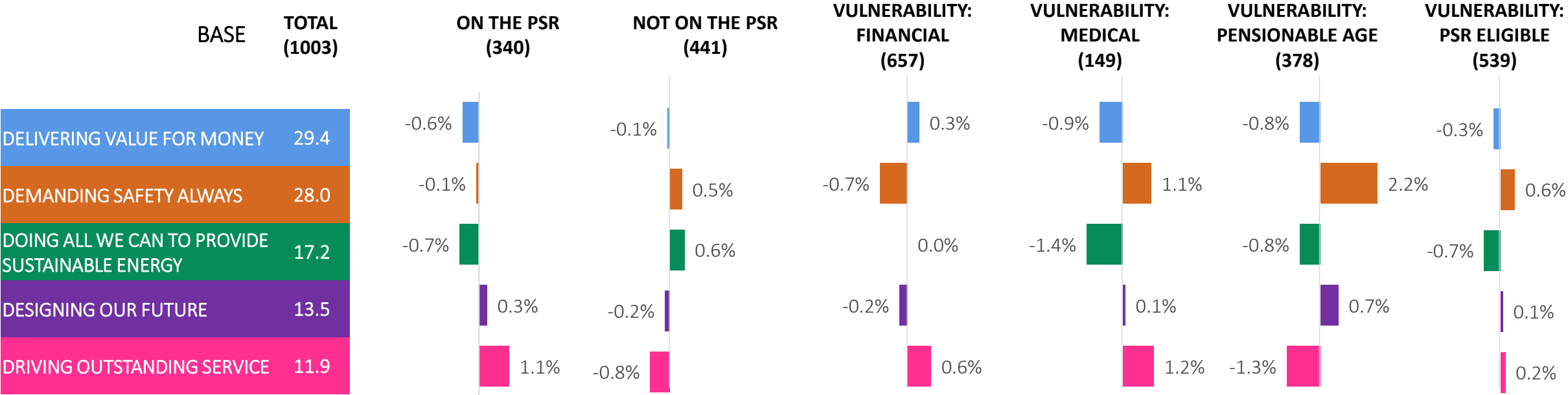
Summary groupings by segment – Region and demographics



2024: Based on 1003 domestic participants, weighted. Summary groupings are adjusted by number of statements, therefore no estimation of variance exists. An approximate significance has been used. If each group was assumed to have equal variance a guideline difference that would be needed for significance is 4-6% with a subgroup size of 200.

Summary groupings by segment – Vulnerability

The importance of 'Doing all we can to provide sustainable energy' was notably lower for people on the PSR than for customers who are not and was lowest for medically vulnerable customers. The opposite was found for 'driving outstanding service'



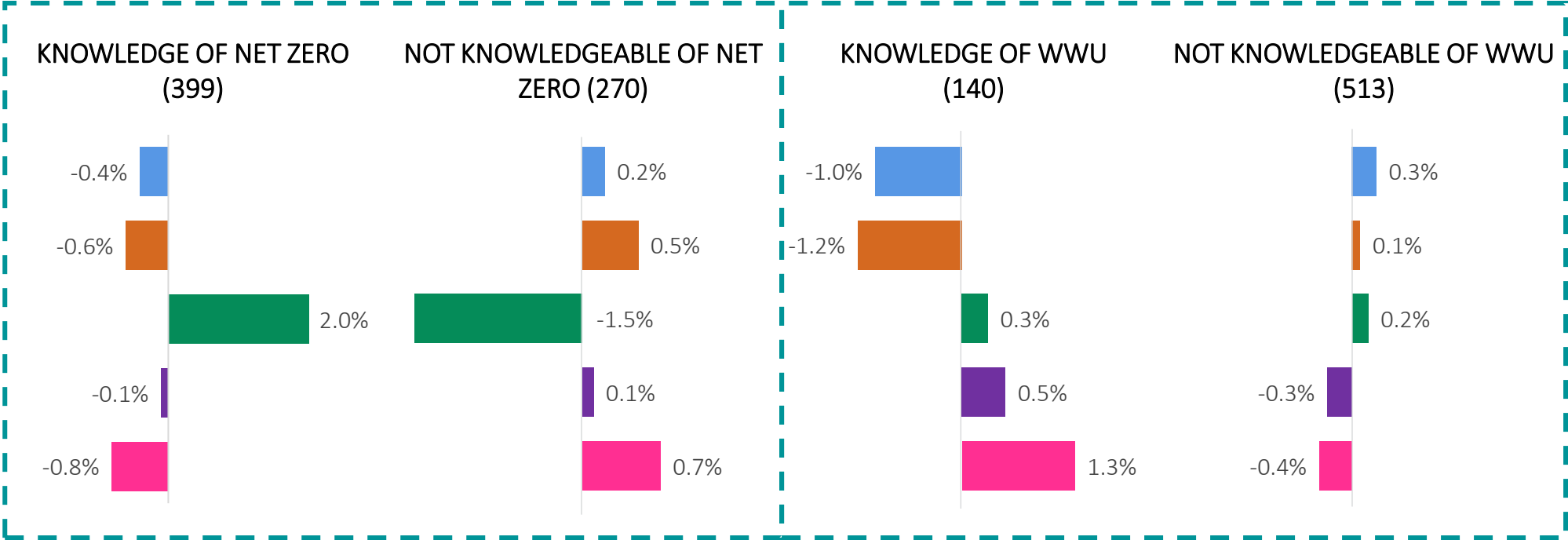
2024: Based on 1003 domestic participants, weighted. Summary groupings are adjusted by number of statements, therefore no estimation of variance exists. An approximate significance has been used. If each group was assumed to have equal variance a guideline difference that would be needed for significance is 4-6% with a subgroup size of 200.

Summary groupings by segment – Knowledge

Doing all we can to provide sustainable energy had the biggest disparity between customers who were knowledgeable about Net Zero and those who weren't

Driving outstanding service and demanding safety had the biggest levels of disparity between customers with knowledge of WWU and those without

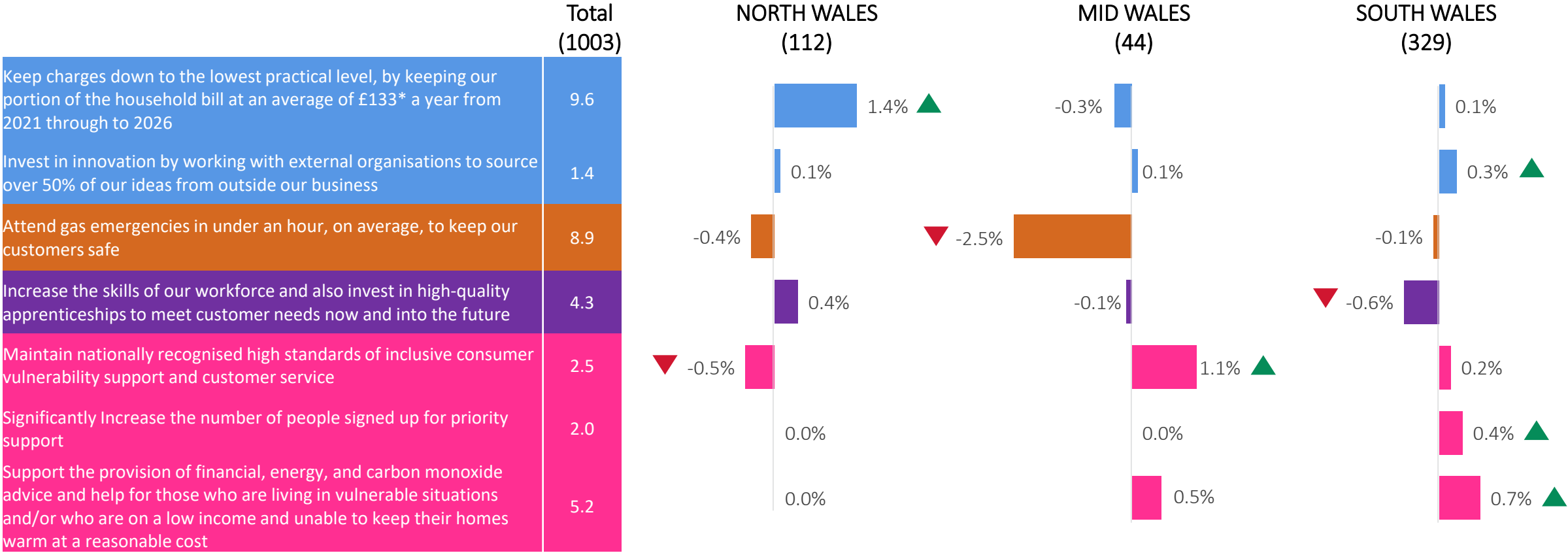
DELIVERING VALUE FOR MONEY	29.4
DEMANDING SAFETY ALWAYS	28.0
DOING ALL WE CAN TO PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY	17.2
DESIGNING OUR FUTURE	13.5
DRIVING OUTSTANDING SERVICE	11.9



2024: Based on 1003 domestic participants, weighted. Summary groupings are adjusted by number of statements, therefore no estimation of variance exists. No significance testing has been conducted. If each group was assumed to have equal variance a guideline difference that would be needed for significance is 4-6% with a subgroup size of 200.

Commitment grouping by segment – Welsh regions

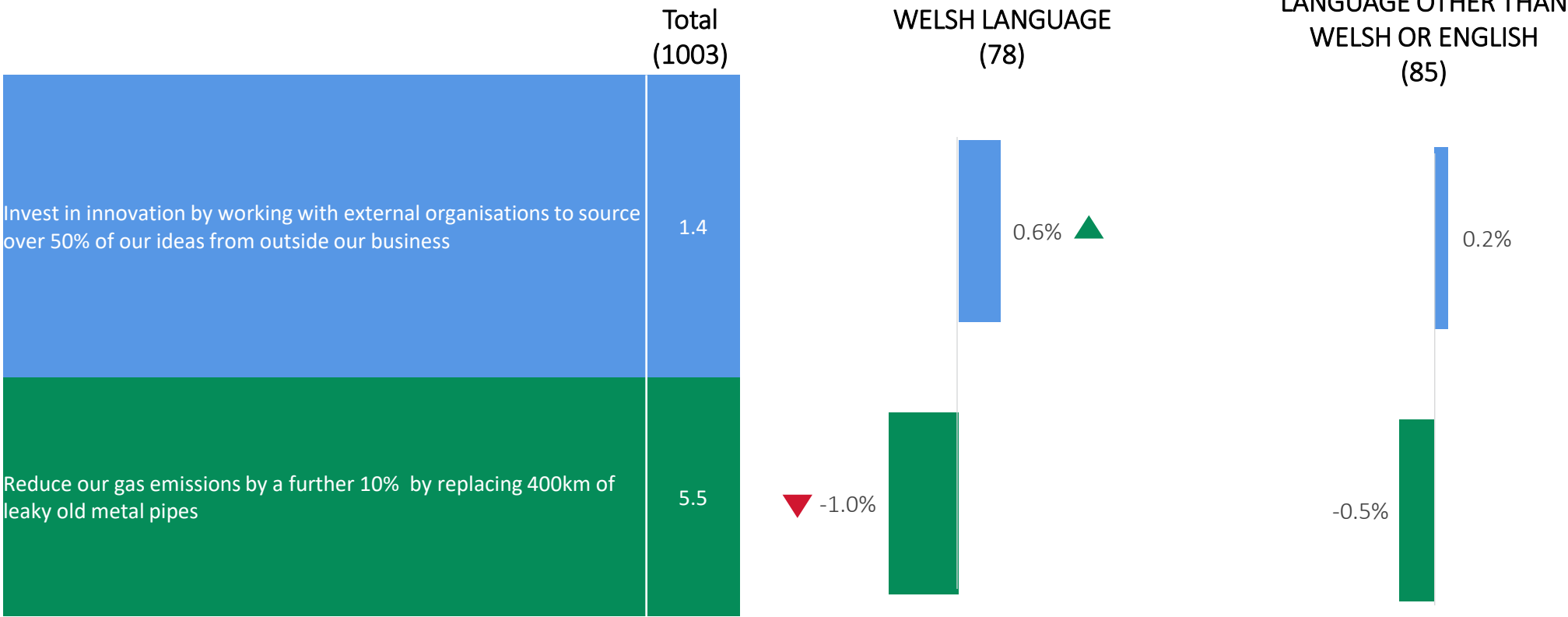
Participants in North Wales were significantly more in favor of keeping charges down to the lowest practical level, while participants in South Wales preferred the provision of advice and help for those in vulnerable situations. Mid Wales based participants were significantly less likely to prioritise attendance at gas emergencies in under an hour



2024: Total (1003), North Wales (112), Mid Wales (44), South Wales (329), weighted. Only subgroups with at least one significant commitment have been included

Commitment grouping by segment – First language

Participants who spoke Welsh as their first language were significantly more likely to support the idea of investing in innovation and significantly less likely to prioritise gas emissions reduction



2024: Total (1003), Welsh language (78), Language other than Welsh or English (85), weighted.

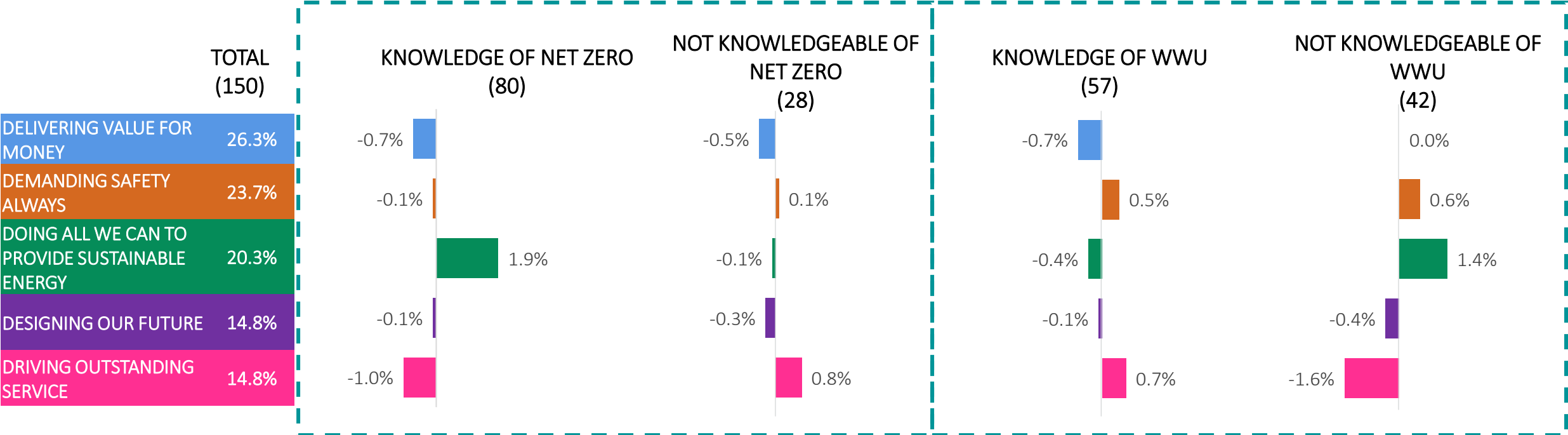


Appendix C: SME subgroup MaxDiff results

Summary groupings by segment – Knowledge

Doing all we can to provide sustainable energy had the biggest disparity between customers who were knowledgeable about Net Zero and those who weren't

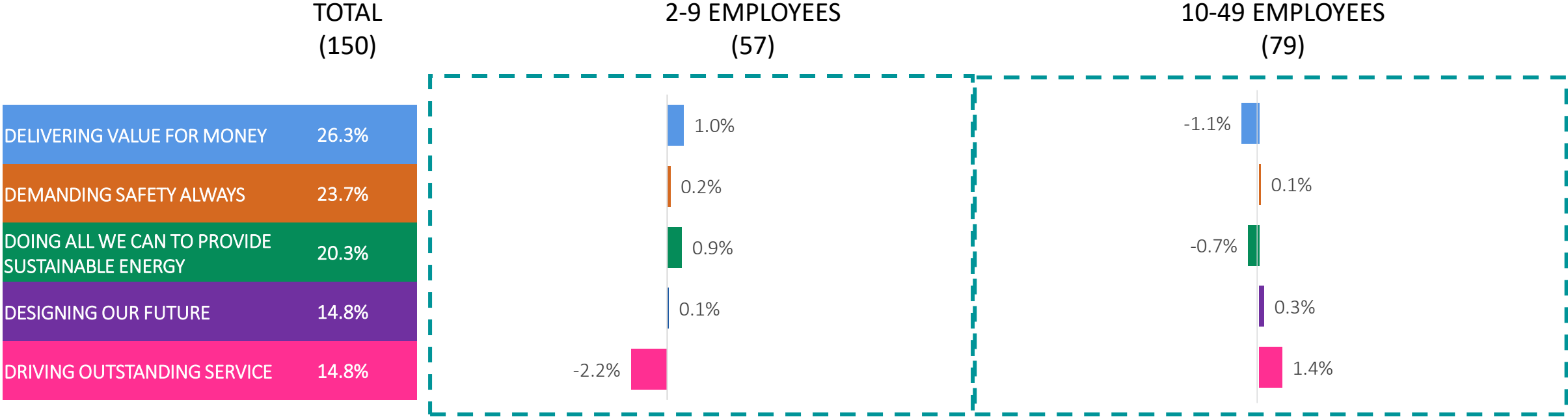
Driving outstanding service had the biggest level of disparity between SME customers who were knowledgeable of WWU and those who weren't



2024: Based on 150 SME participants. Summary groupings are adjusted by number of statements, therefore no estimation of variance exists. No significance testing has been conducted. If each group was assumed to have equal variance a guideline difference that would be needed for significance is 6-8% with a subgroup size of 50.

Summary groupings by segment – Business size

Businesses with 10-49 employees were more concerned about driving outstanding service and less concerned about value for money than companies with 2-9 employees



2024: Based on 150 SME participants. Summary groupings are adjusted by number of statements, therefore no estimation of variance exists. No significance testing has been conducted. If each group was assumed to have equal variance a guideline difference that would be needed for significance is 6-8%, with a subgroup size of 50.



Appendix D: MaxDiff participant feedback

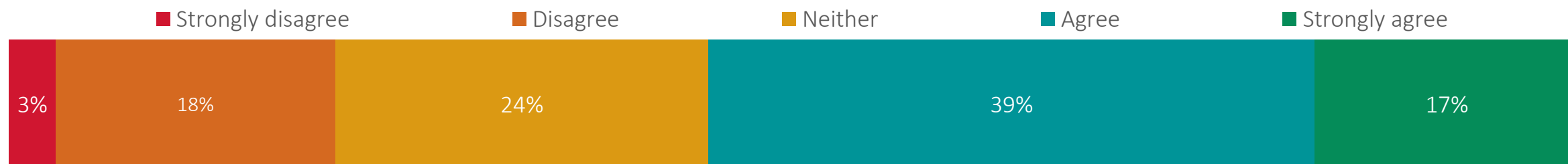
Domestic: MaxDiff feedback

88% of domestic participants agreed that they understood all of the choices involved in the MaxDiff exercise. However, only 56% agreed that they found it easy to choose between the options presented

“I was able to understand the choices”



“I found it easy to choose between the options”



Q44r1. Thank you for answering those questions. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the choices you have just made? I was able to understand the choices. Base: 1003 weighted

Q44r2. I found it easy to choose between the options. Base: 1003 weighted

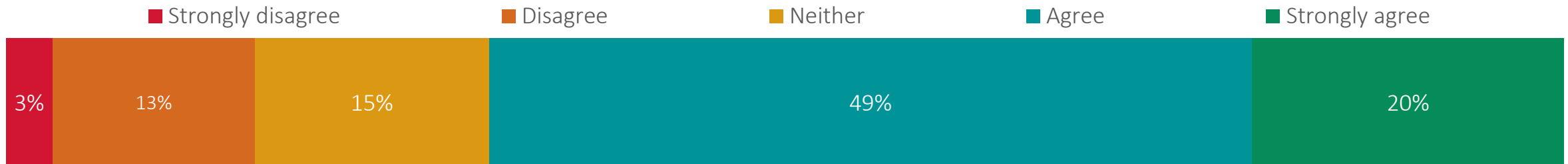
SME: MaxDiff feedback

84% of business participants agreed that they understood the choices involved in the MaxDiff exercise and 69% agreed that they found it easy to choose between the options presented

“I was able to understand the choices”



“I found it easy to choose between the options”



Q44r1. Thank you for answering those questions. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the choices you have just made? I was able to understand the choices. Base: 150

Q44r2. I found it easy to choose between the options. Base: 150

Thank you

Accent conforms to the requirements of ISO20252:2019

Accent



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