



CELEBRATING EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN SINCE 1955

Each year our annual lunch and awards celebrates the achievements of four hundred and fifty specially chosen women from across the UK and around the world who are doing remarkable work and making a difference to others. From shifting and serving society, to saving lives, breaking glass ceilings and building communities, Women of the Year recognises women whose exceptional efforts today are paving the way for the women of tomorrow.

Women of the Year

August 2024



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Picture on right: Natasha Benjamin, Lorraine's Inspirational Woman of the Year Winner with Lorraine Kelly at The Women of the Year Awards and Luncheon at The Royal Lancaster Hotel, London on 13 October, 2019





1. Executive summary

Objectives and methodology



Aims & Objectives

The Women of the Year Lunch & Awards is celebrating 70 years of inspirational, trailblazing and pioneering women in 2024.

As part of the celebrations for the 70th anniversary, the Women of the Year team have delved into their archives to revisit a survey originally conducted in 1996. Recognising the significant changes and advancements over nearly three decades, a new survey has been designed to capture and reflect the opinions, experiences, and insights of women 28 years later.

The survey aims to provide a comprehensive comparison and highlight the evolution of perspectives within this community.



Methodology

A 10-minute online survey was conducted between Thursday 27th June and Monday 12th August 2024.

The survey was shared via email with Women of the Year alumnae and 2024 lunch attendees.

In total, **479 women** responded to the survey.

The results are due to be shared ahead of this year's lunch which is taking place on Monday 7th October 2024.

NB: Throughout this report, Women of the Year are referenced as WOY.

Setting the scene for 1996...



**Prime minister:
John Major**



Royal family divorces



**Nelson
Mandela state
visit**



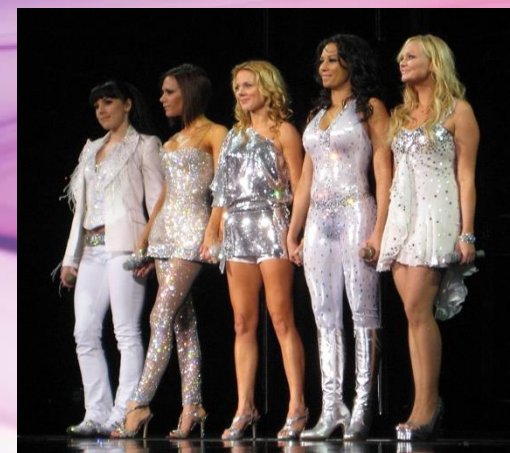
**England lose in the
Euros semi-final**



**"Education,
education,
education"**



**Ab Fab, Inspector Morse and
The Archers**

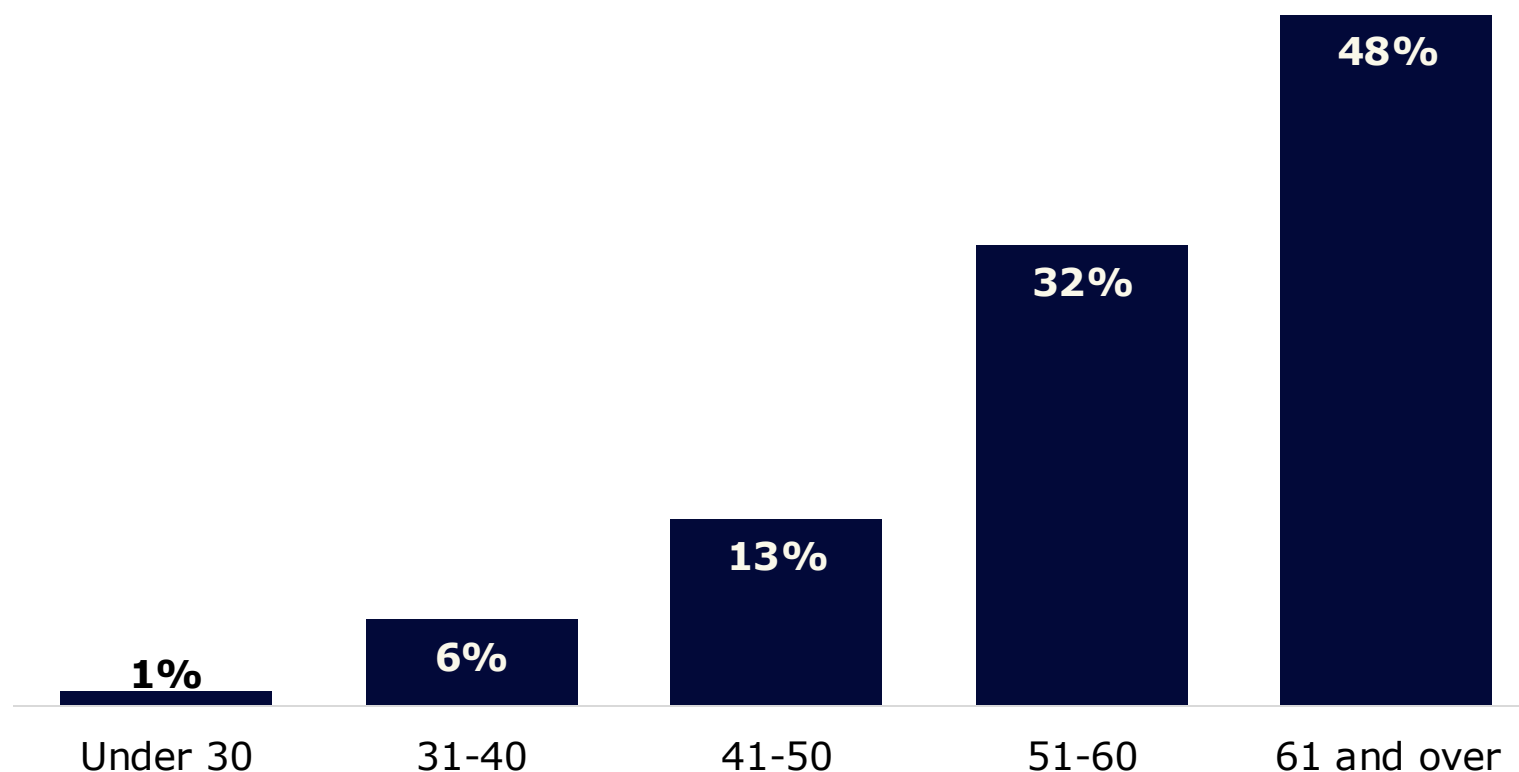


The Spice Girls

The 1996 Women of the Year Lunch took place on Monday 7th October. The President and Founder of the Lunch is Lady Lothian, historian, journalist and writer. Floella Benjamin, broadcaster, writer and producer is Executive Chairman. Speakers include Princess Michael of Kent, Madame Vigdis Finnbogadóttir, outgoing President of Iceland, Heather Rabbatts, CEO London Borough of Lambeth, and Victoria Wood.

The 1996 WOY event

The majority of the women who responded are aged 51+

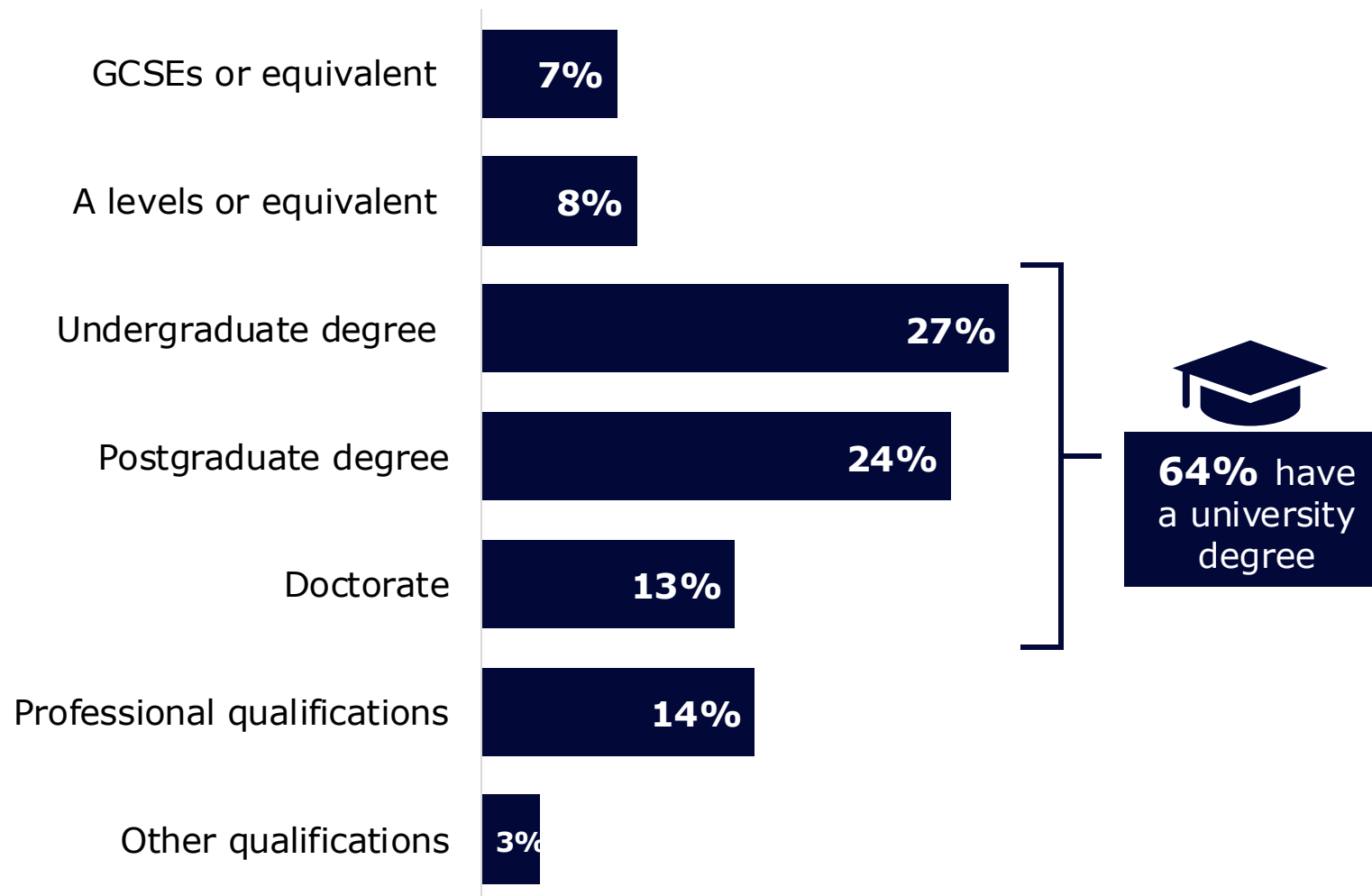


**WOMEN
OF THE YEAR**
We can compare
this to the
following result
from 1996...

51%

were aged
between 35 to 50
years

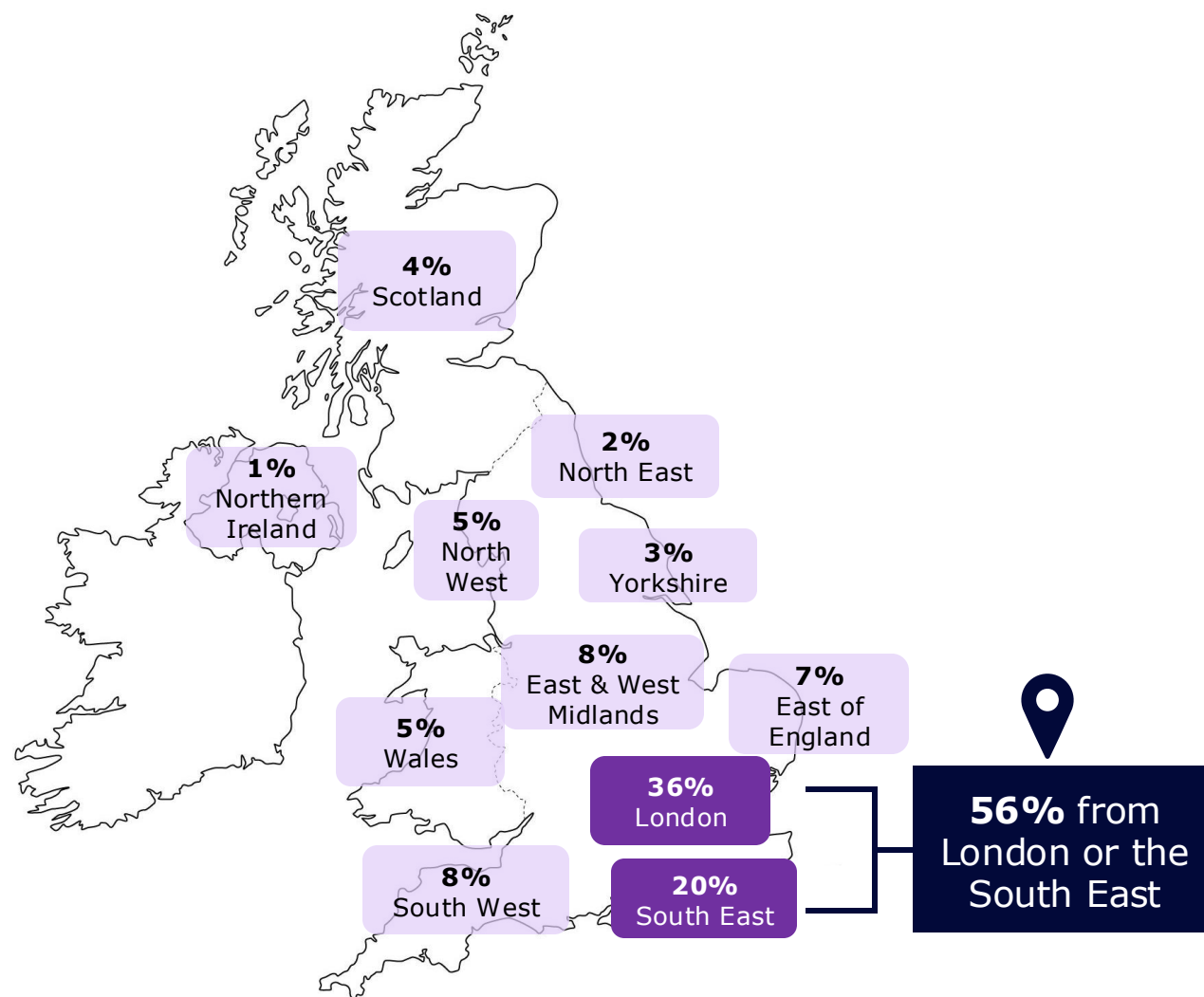
Most have an undergraduate or postgraduate degree, similar to WOY in 1996



**WOMEN
OF THE YEAR**
We can compare
this to the
following result
from 1996...

72%
had a university
education, of
which almost half
had a
postgraduate
degree

The majority live in London or the South East, with a good spread across the rest of the UK



**WOMEN
OF THE YEAR**
We can compare
this to the
following result
from 1996...

62%

lived in London
or the South East
of England

Key findings

1

90% of WOY feel that more action needs to be taken to tackle ageism. It is widely acknowledged as a problem, with 34% of those aged 31-50 reporting that they have experienced it, and 37% of those aged 51+.

2

53% of WOY are dissatisfied with the healthcare services currently available to women. This reflects trends seen in other research which show all-time low satisfaction with the NHS.

3

WOY continue to want a **better work-life balance, better salaries and more effort to remove the glass ceiling**, at similar levels to 1996. Have things moved on enough?

4

90% of WOY continued working when their children were young, with 44% changing their working pattern or status. In contrast, in 1996 82% continued working when their children were young, with 65% changing their working pattern.

5

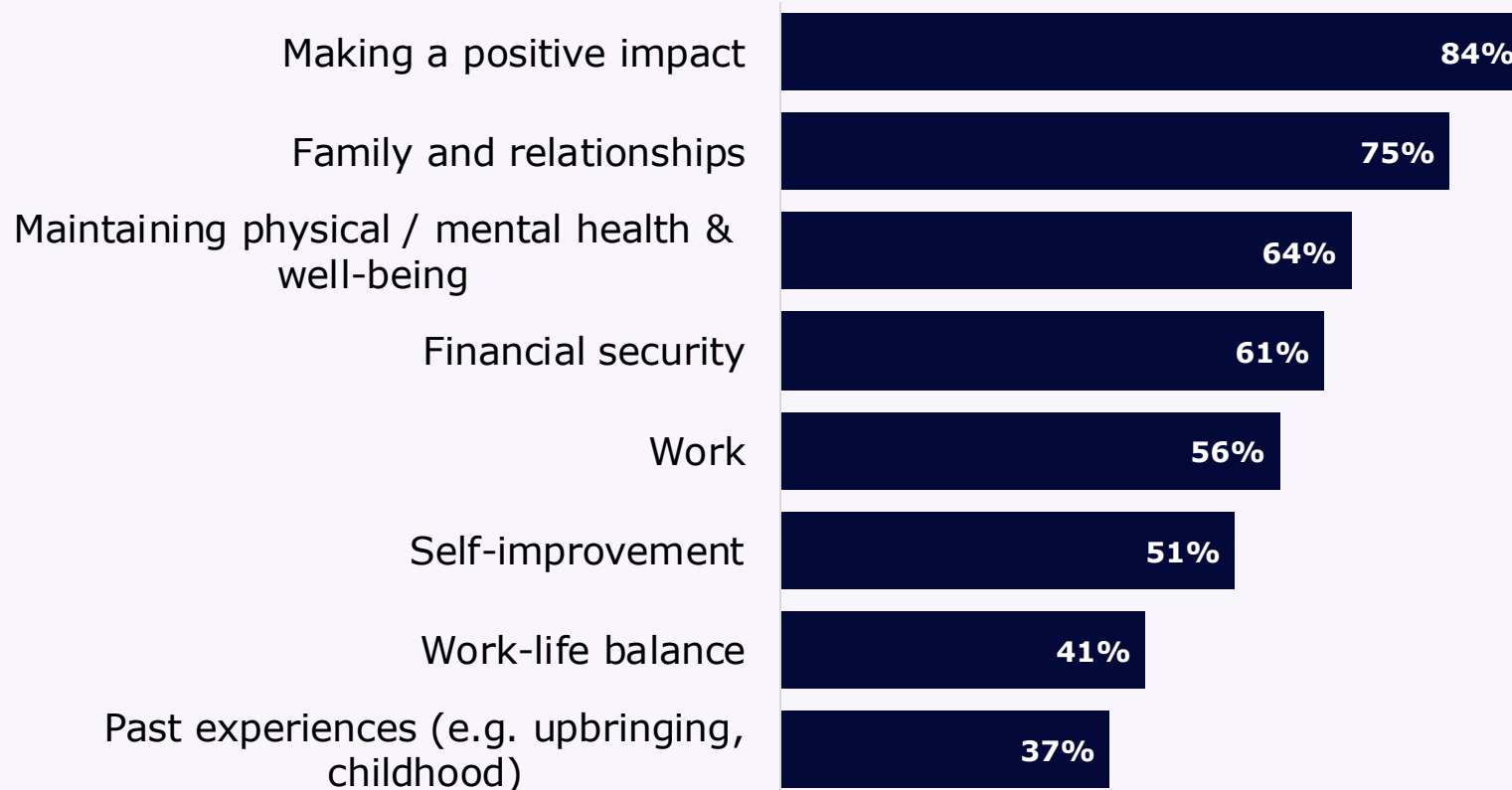
The main traits associated with the women invited to the WOY lunch include determination, integrity and courage. Making a positive impact is reported as the key driving force in WOY's lives.



2. Society

WOY say that making a positive impact is their main driver

Key influences that drive the women's lives



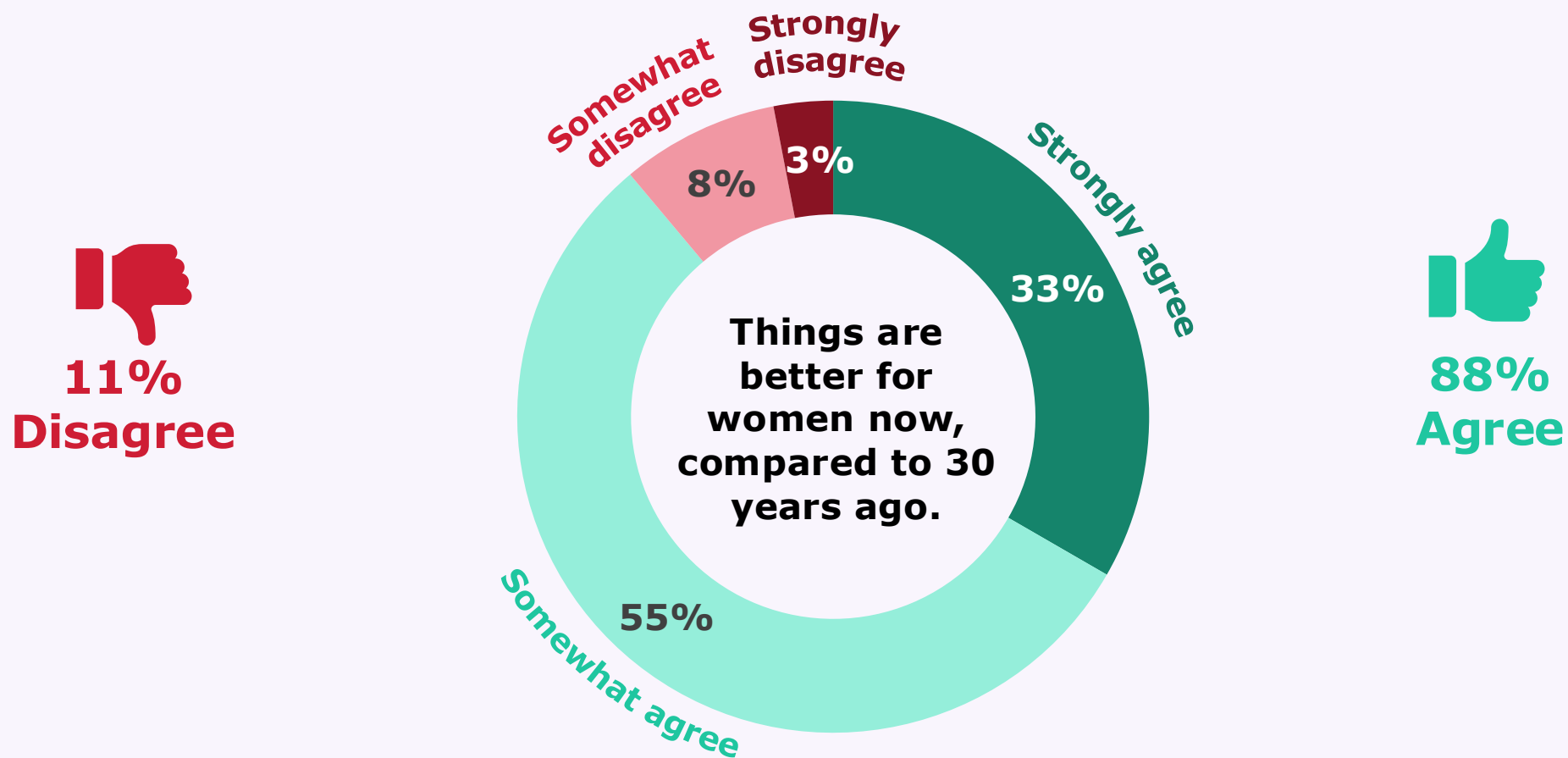
67%

reported that **work** was the major motivating force in their life*

**88% of WOY agree that things are
'better for women now than 30
years ago'**

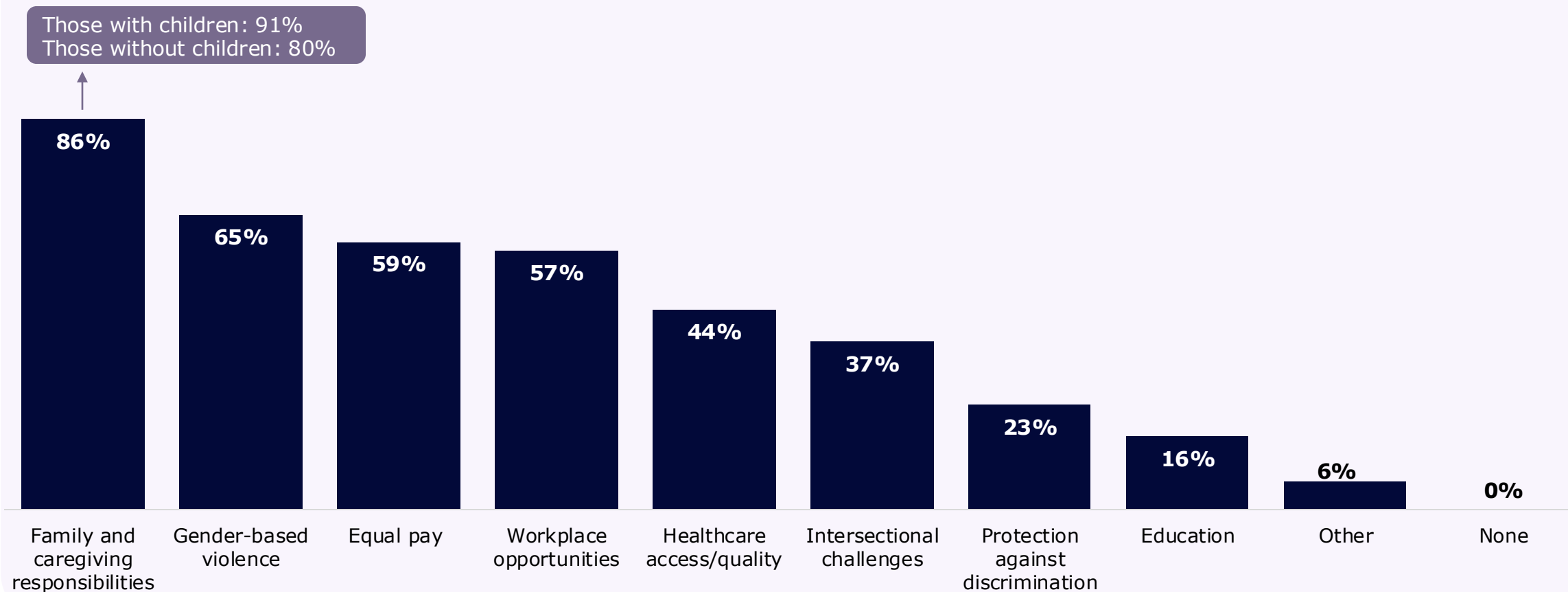
However, they strongly feel that family and caregiving responsibilities are a challenge for women today (regardless of whether or not they personally have children). Gender-based violence and workplace-related issues (such as unequal pay or lack of opportunities) are also reported as challenges.

The majority feel that things are better for women now, compared to 30 years ago



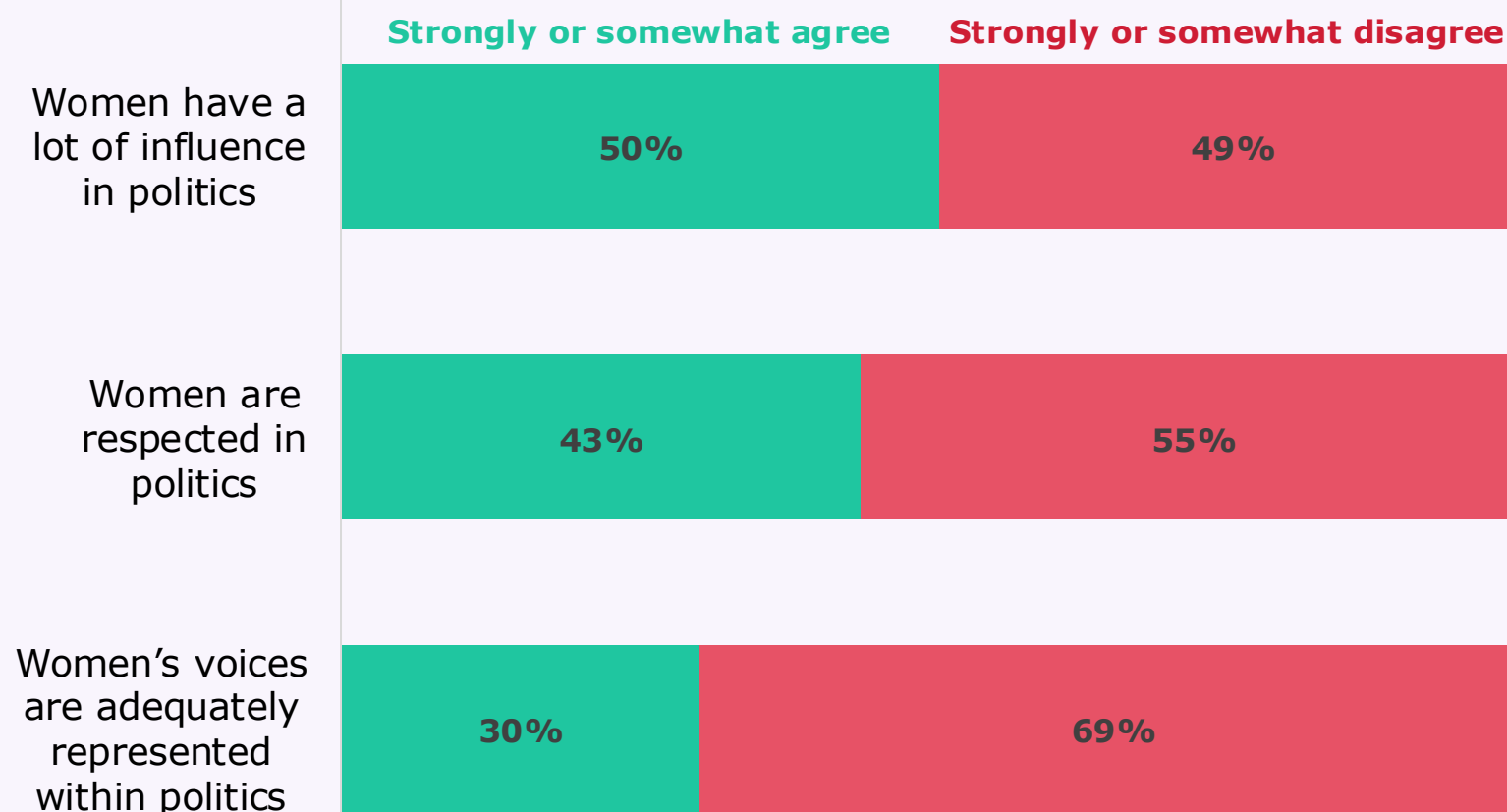
However, all WOY recognise that there are challenges facing women

Key challenges facing women in today's society



Opinion is split over the influence women have in politics, but only 49% disagree compared to 83% in 1996

Agreement with statements about women in politics



WOMEN OF THE YEAR
We can compare this to the following result from 1996...

83%

thought that women did not have enough influence in politics

The NHS is the most pressing issue for WOY today, with climate change also top of mind

Top 5 highest priority issues for politicians in the UK today

Showing % of women that chose each option in their top 5

1	The NHS (85%)
2	The environment / climate change (68%)
3	Standards of education (61%)
4	Poverty (57%)
5	Inflation and cost of living (47%)

This aligns with latest ONS data¹; when asked about the important issues facing the UK today, the most commonly reported include the NHS (89%) and climate change and the environment (58%). WOY are less likely to be concerned about the cost of living compared with the UK public (88%).



Given the chance, the order in which Women of the Year would tackle British social issues was:

- 1) Standards of Education
- 2) Unemployment
- 3) The NHS
- 4) Homelessness
- 5) Law and Order
- 6) The Environment
- 7) State Pensions
- 8) Inequality
- 9) Taxation
- 10) Inflation

Most WOY feel that ageism is an issue that needs tackling – 90% agree more action needs to be taken

Almost 2 in 5 WOY have experienced ageism, either at work or outside it. Other forms of discrimination are also widely experienced.

AGEISM
— IS NEVER
IN STYLE

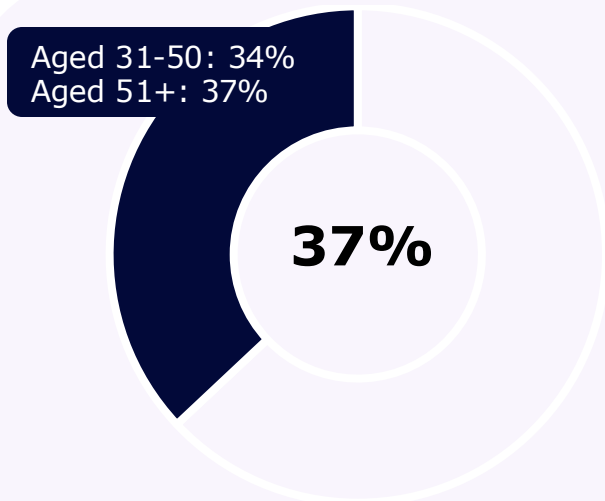
Private & Confidential
~~still~~ got it

AGEISM
— IS NEVER
IN STYLE

~~grandma~~

~~remove~~

The majority recognise the negative impact of ageism and agree more needs to be done to tackle it



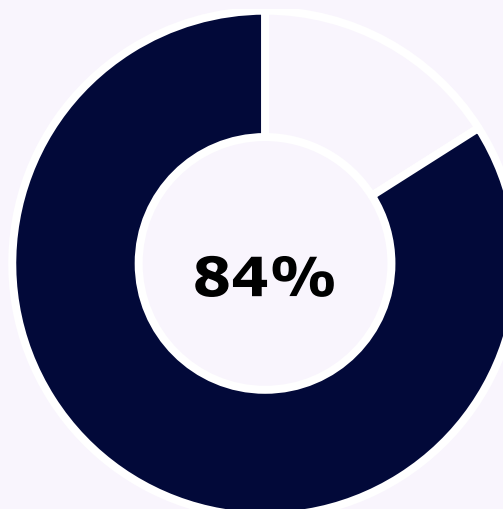
Have experienced **ageism**



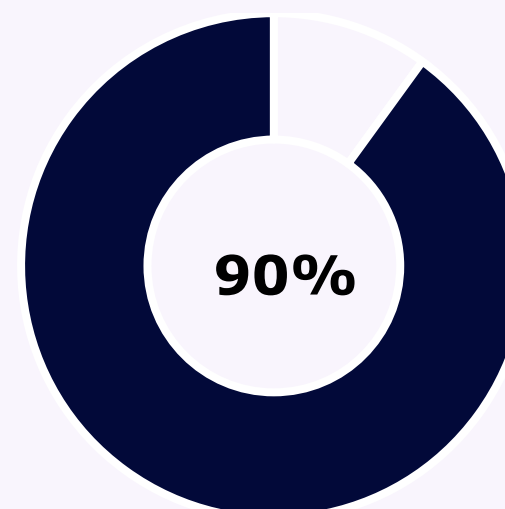
27% in a workplace / professional context



18% outside of a workplace / professional context



agree that ageism negatively impacts the opportunities available to all women

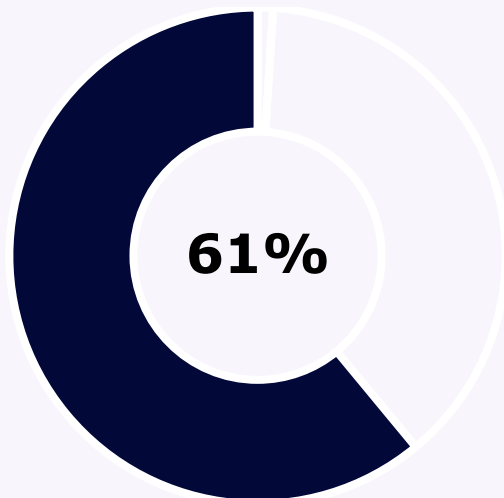


agree that more action needs to be taken to tackle ageism

**AGEISM
— IS NEVER
IN STYLE**

The Ageism is Never in Style Campaign works to change the narrative, and empower and drive positive, social change – these findings demonstrate its relevance to WOY.

3 in 5 WOY have experienced gender-based discrimination, mainly in the workplace



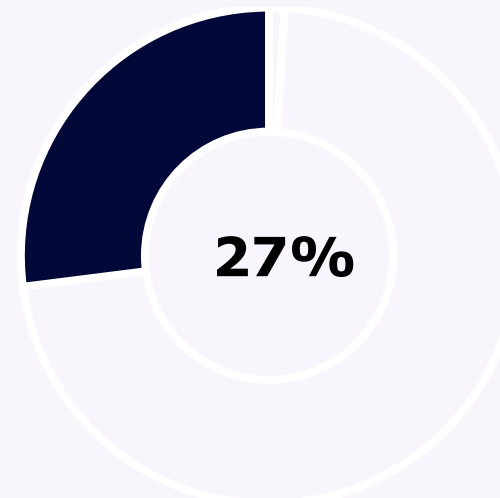
Have experienced
gender-based discrimination



51% in a workplace / professional context



28% outside of a workplace / professional context



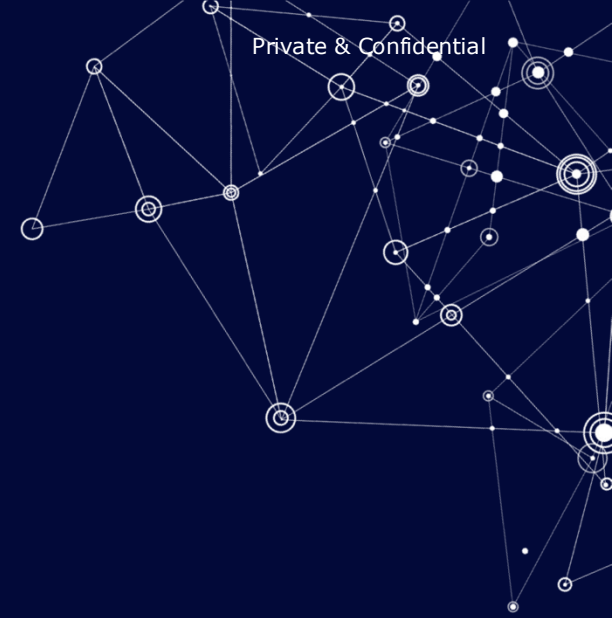
Have experienced
other forms of discrimination
(e.g. based on race, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation)



19% in a workplace / professional context



17% outside of a workplace / professional context



3. Women of influence

Women in the royal family, politicians, activists and those in the arts are most admired by WOY

Examples of admired British women



The royal family

E.g. The late Queen Elizabeth II, Princess Anne, Kate Middleton, Princess Diana



Politicians

E.g. Margaret Thatcher, Harriet Harman, Angela Raynor, Caroline Lucas, Baroness Hale of Richmond



Campaigners and activists

E.g. The Pankhursts, Malala Yousafzai, Millicent Fawcett, Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, Doreen Lawrence



Authors, performers and academics

E.g. Judi Dench, Emma Thompson, Floella Benjamin, Mary Beard

But many women commented that they struggled to choose just one!



We can compare this to the following result from 1996...

Among those listed were the Queen, Margaret Thatcher, Cherie Blair, Gillian Shephard and Lady Lothian. Many commented along the lines of 'I can't think of any one woman to name' or 'too many to name'.

The British women admired by WOY in 2024 share similar traits



Queen Elizabeth:
"Length of duty, putting the country before herself."

Judi Dench:
"Enduring career, navigated personal loss, always presents positivity, aspirational for many."

Emily Pankhurst:
"Passionate about women's rights, prepared to make personal sacrifices, motivated."

Margaret Thatcher:
"She led the way in breaking down barriers, irrespective of her policy views."

Harriet Harman:
"Her dedication to public service, feminism and equality."

Princess Anne:
"Resilient. Gets on with things. Extraordinary sense of duty. Long service. No drama."

Emma Thompson:
"She stands up for what she believes in and does a lot of good for charity."

Malala Yousafzai:
"Her courage to stand up for the rights of girls' education."

In terms of admired men, three were mentioned most: Attenborough, Obama and Mandela

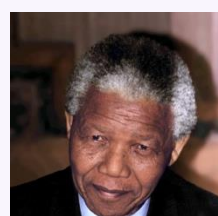
Most admired men



David Attenborough



Barack Obama



Nelson Mandela

Other men include...

Gordon Brown

King Charles

A family member or partner

Dr Michael Moseley

Volodymyr Zelenskyy

Richard Branson

Prince William



**We can compare
this to the
following result
from 1996...**

One man on the international scene stands head and shoulders above the rest when it comes to impressing Women of the Year - Nelson Mandela. Among British men there is also clear winner, Richard Branson.

The main traits associated with WOY include determination, integrity and courage

Traits or values that best reflect the women invited to the Women of the Year lunch

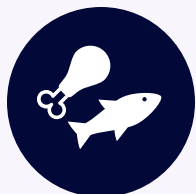




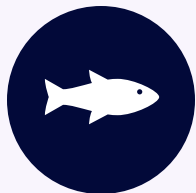
4. Health

WOY have a mixture of lifestyle and dietary preferences

Lifestyle and dietary preferences



71% eat majority meat/fish options



17% are pescatarian



7% are vegetarian



1% are vegan



57% drink alcohol



6% smoke cigarettes and/or vape



9%

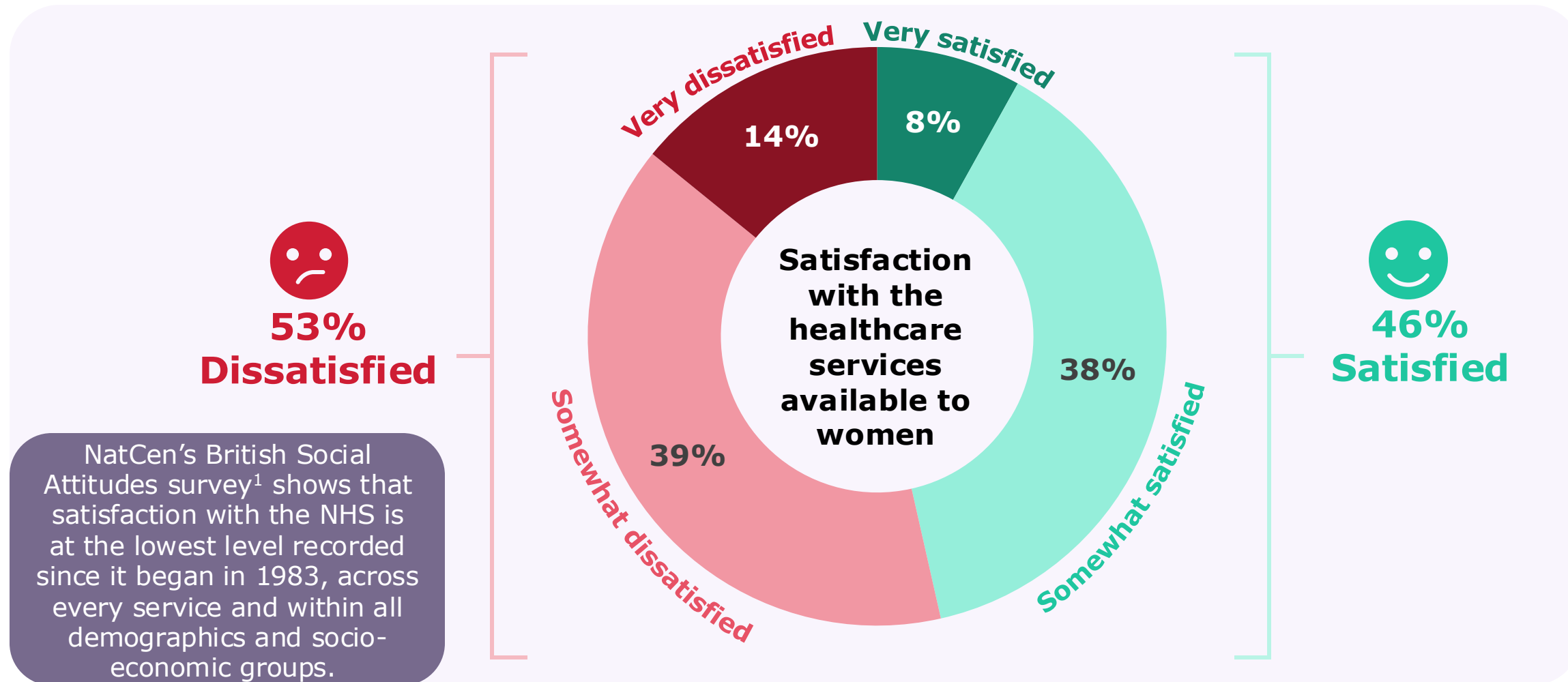
were vegetarian or vegan

Dissatisfaction with the healthcare services available to women is high

This reflects trends seen in other research which show all-time low dissatisfaction with the NHS.

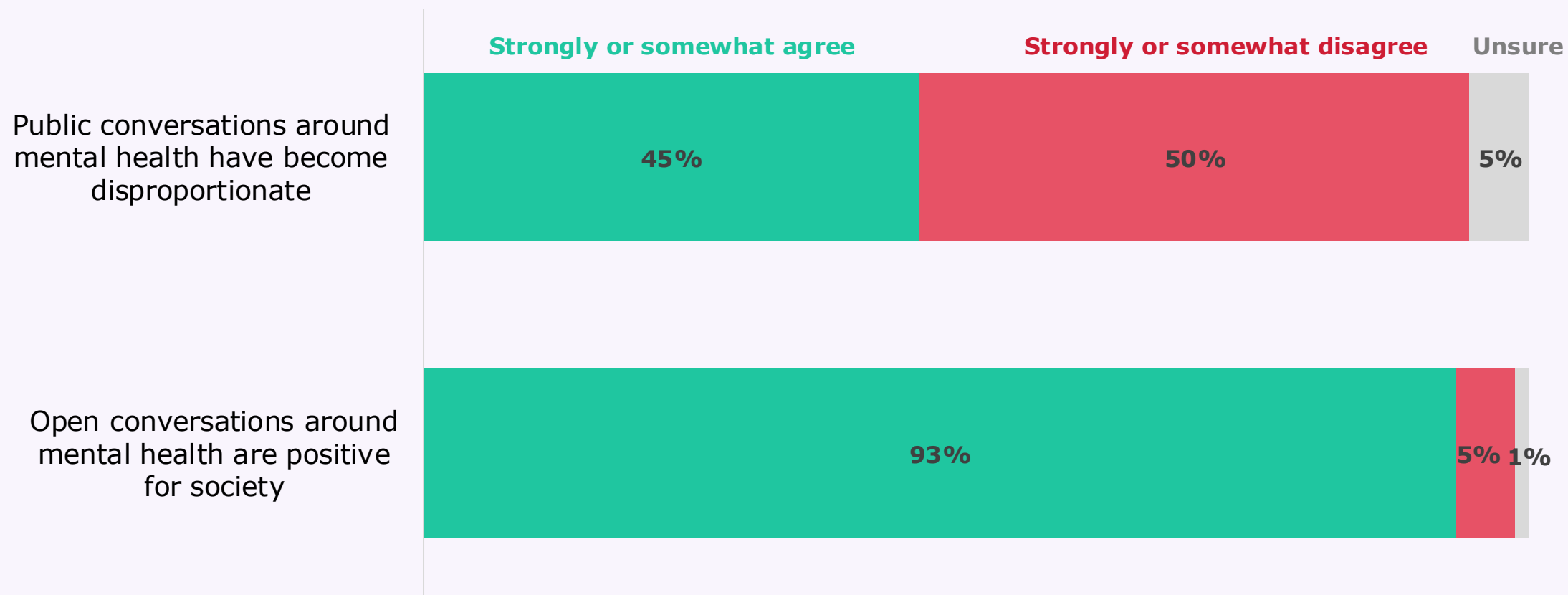


Over half of WOY are dissatisfied with the healthcare services available to women



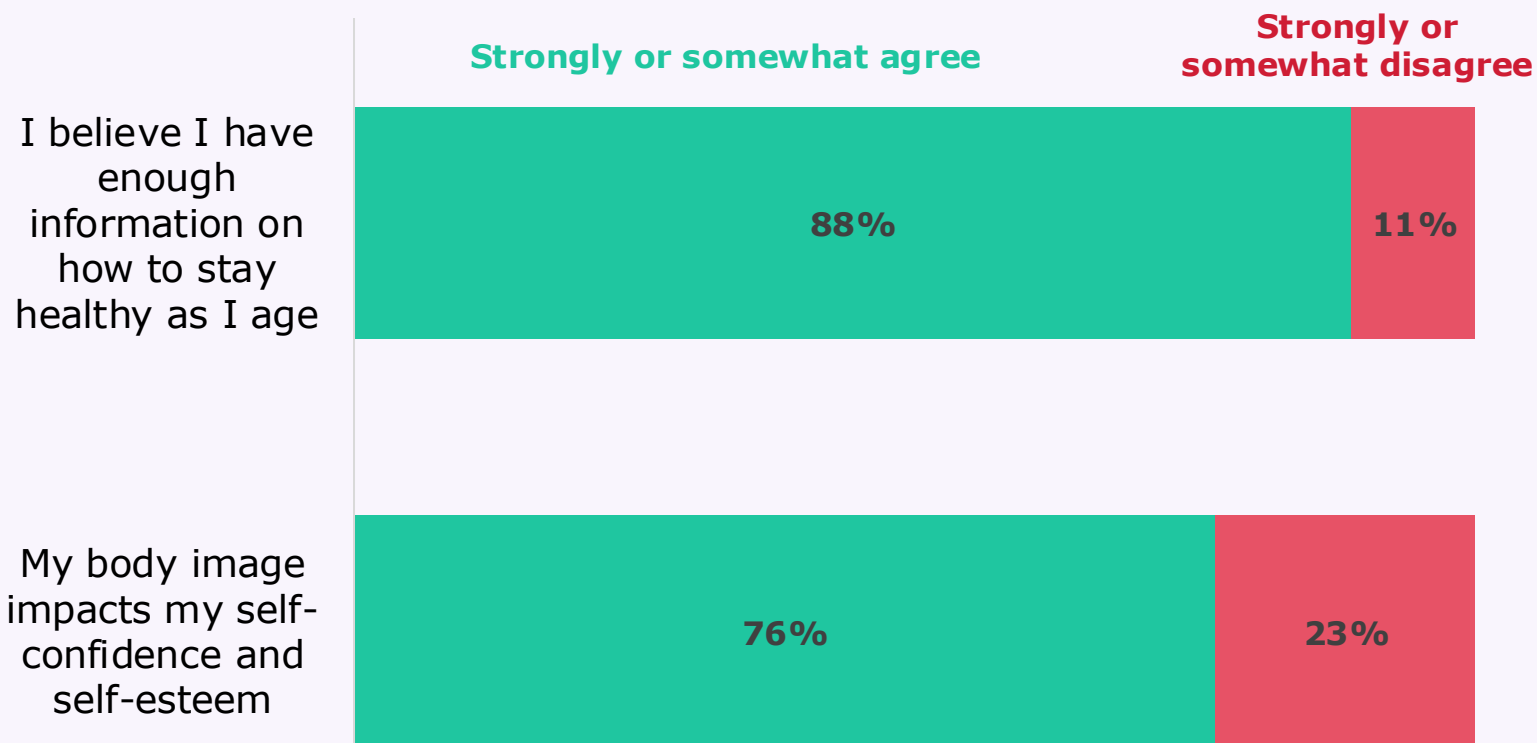
Almost all agree that open conversations about mental health are positive for society

Agreement with statements about mental health



WOY feel informed about aging healthily, but for 3 in 4, their body image impacts their self-esteem

Agreement with statements about body image/ageing



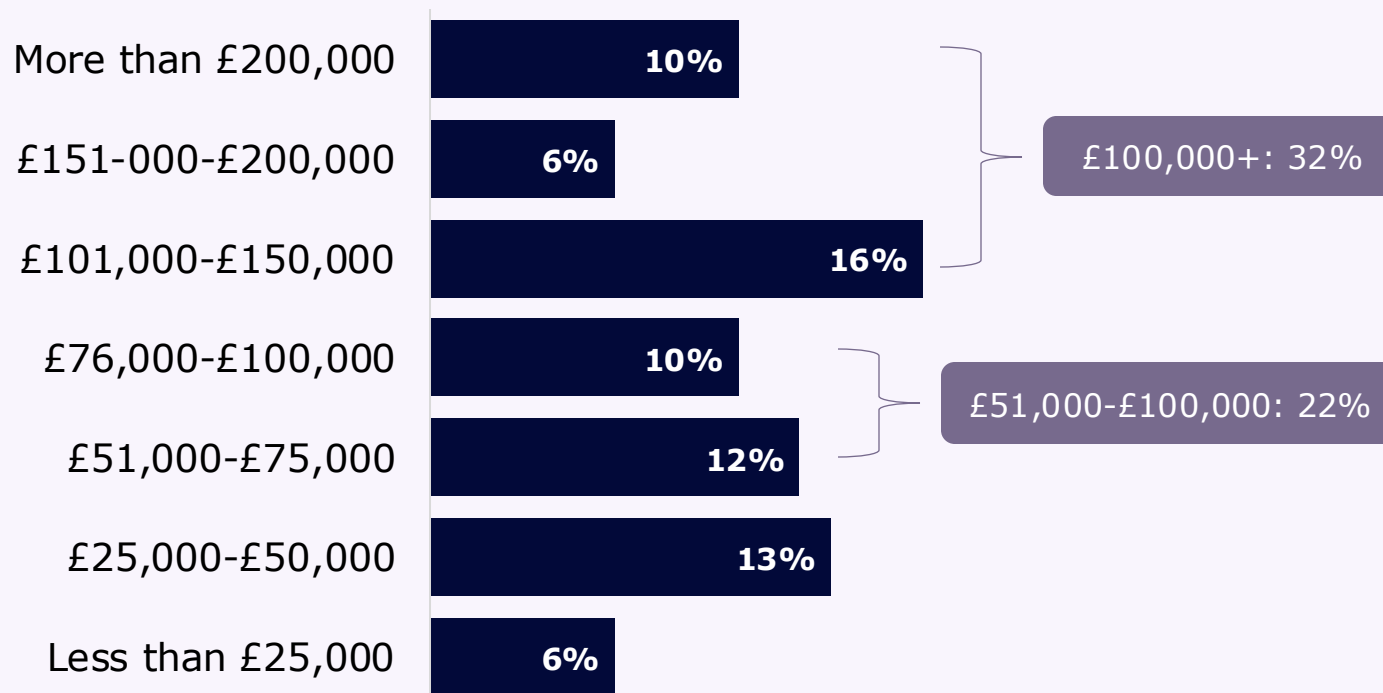
Concerns about getting old focus primarily on failing health (62%), putting on weight (14%), loss of looks (8%), loss of mental faculties (6%), loss of independence (5%). Only 1% are primarily concerned about not being sexually attractive.



5. Work

Over half of WOY earn £51,000 or more

Current yearly income



13% are retired, and 3% are not currently working full or part time



22%

earned between
£51,000 and
£100,000

11%

earned more than
£100,000

Almost half of WOY would like to see more women in senior positions at work

Better work-life balance and more effort to remove the glass ceiling continue to be key themes, reported at similar levels to those in 1996. Positively, the majority of WOY feel that having a successful career and family is possible.



Attitudes to work-life balance, the glass ceiling and salaries are very similar to 1996

Top 5 changes required in the women's workplaces

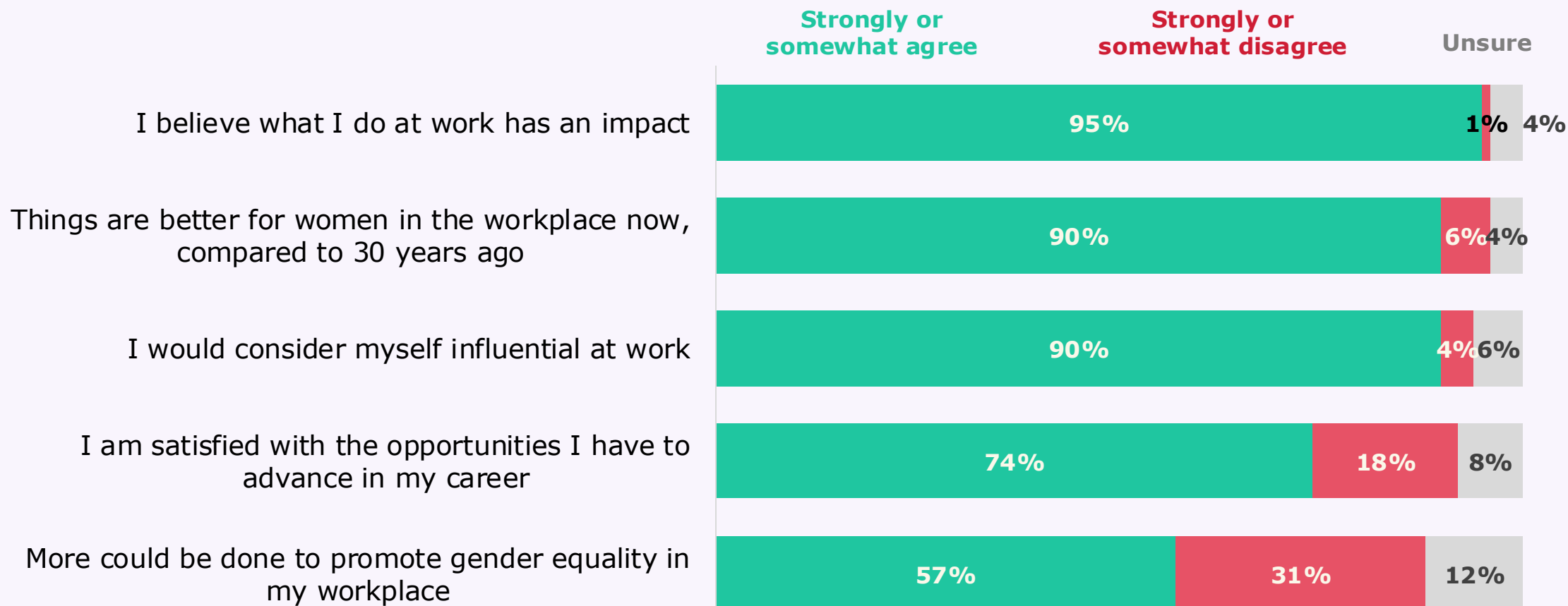
- 1** More women in senior positions (47%)
- 2** Better work-life balance (45%)
- 3** More effort to remove the glass ceiling / policies / training to tackle gender bias (36%)
- 4** More flexible working (35%)
- 5** Better salaries (35%)
- 6** More help with childcare (34%)



The majority would like to see changes in the workplace, particularly more help with childcare (67%), a reduction in the long hours work ethic (51%), better salaries for women (39%) and more effort to break the glass ceiling (34%).

WOY are likely to feel influential at work and believe that what they do has an impact

Agreement with statements about women at work





6. Media

WOY's favourite TV programmes include...

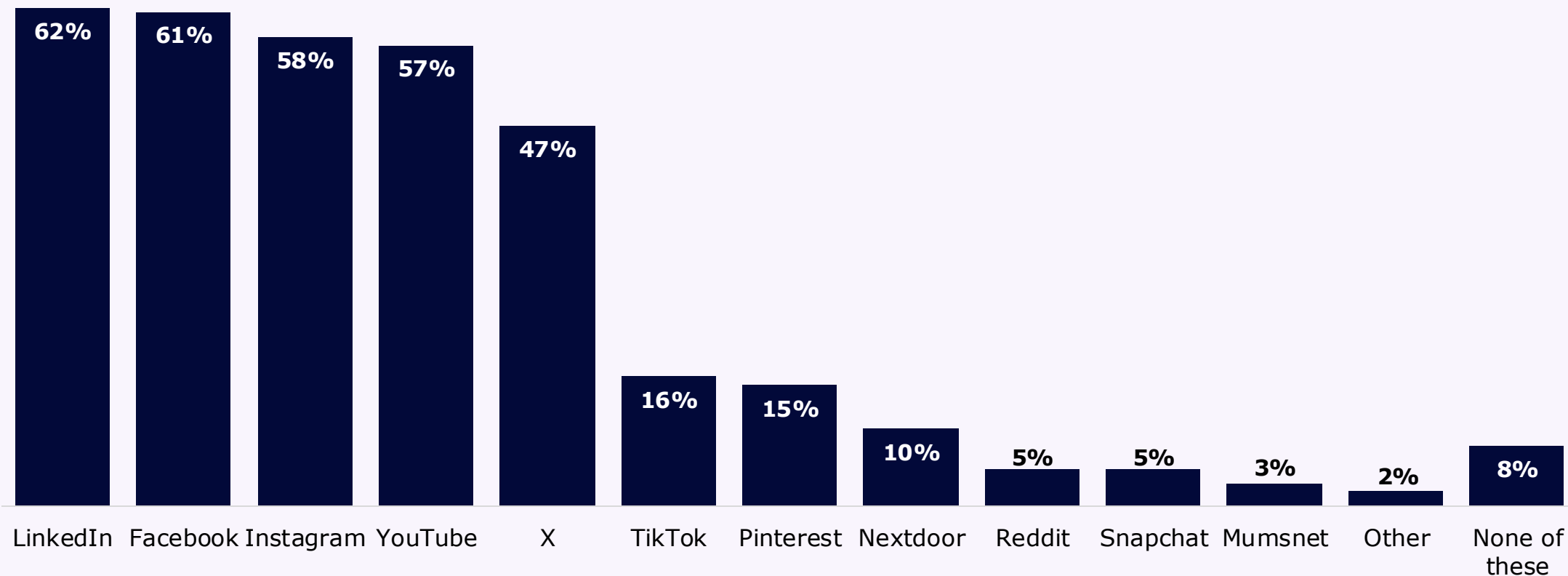


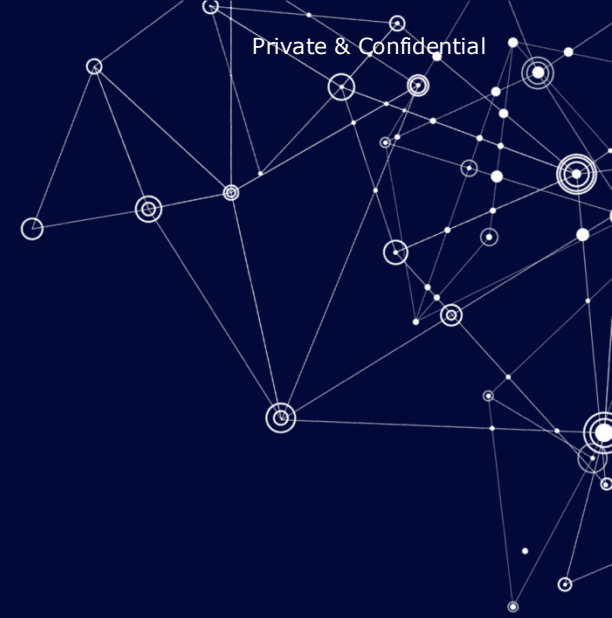
We can compare
this to the
following result
from 1996...

- Absolutely Fabulous
- Newsnight
- Inspector Morse
- Coronation Street

LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube are the main social media channels used by WOY

Social media channels used in the last 3 months





7. Relationships and parenting

The majority of WOY live with their partner or spouse

Living arrangements



69% with a spouse or partner



28% with children



22% live alone



3% with family



1% with friends and housemates

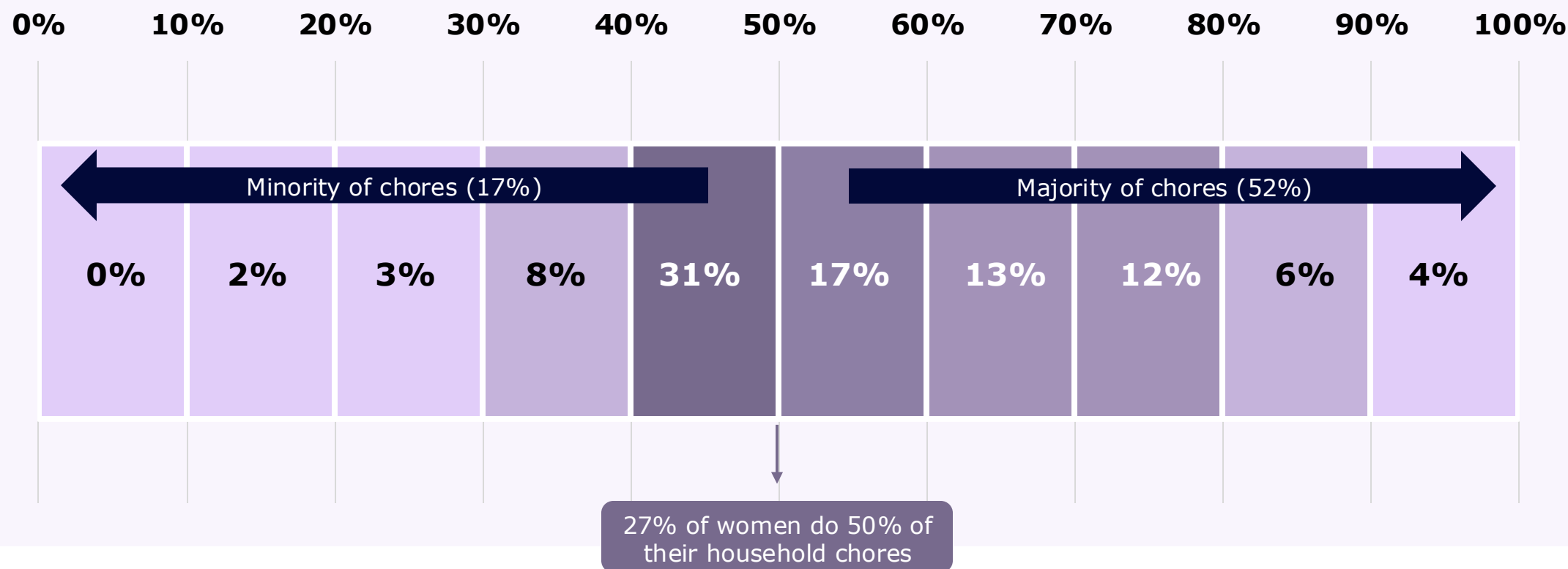


We can compare
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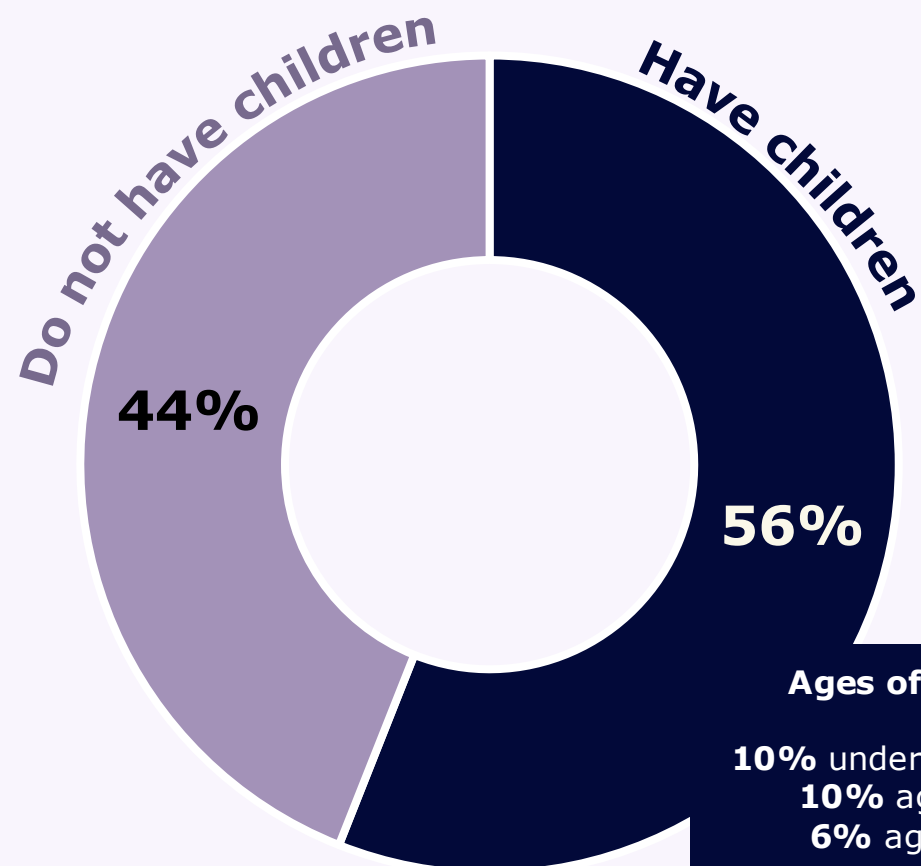
- **62%** were married
- **15%** single
- **12%** divorced
- **9%** cohabiting
- **2%** remarried

WOY are likely to be doing the majority of the chores in their household

Proportion of the household chores typically carried out by the Women of the Year



Over half of WOY have children



**WOMEN
OF THE YEAR**
We can compare
this to the
following result
from 1996...

63%

had children

WOY are less likely to have changed their working pattern since having children than they were in 1996

Changes to working patterns after children



46% continued working and did not change their working pattern or status after maternity leave



44% changed their working pattern or status to accommodate having children



7% took an extended break from work to care for their children



5% indefinitely stopped working to care for their children

Average annual childcare cost*: £15,500

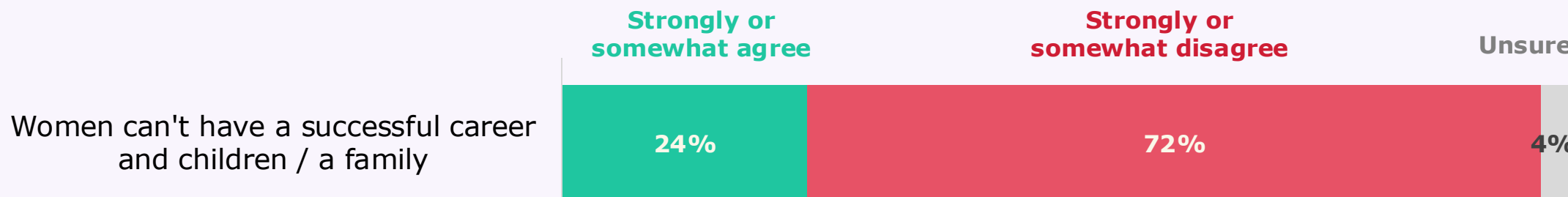


We can compare this to the following result from 1996...

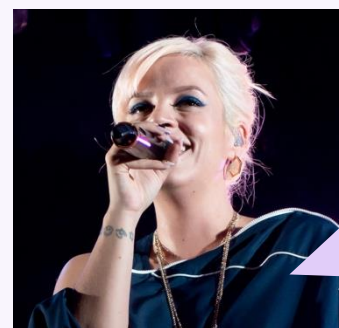
82%

continued working when their children were young, but for **65%** of them this meant a change in their working pattern or status.

WOY feel that it is possible to have a successful career and family; just 1 in 5 disagree



WOY who don't have children are more likely to agree that women can't have a successful career and children / a family (29%) – is this a barrier for these women? Do they feel like they're having to make a choice?

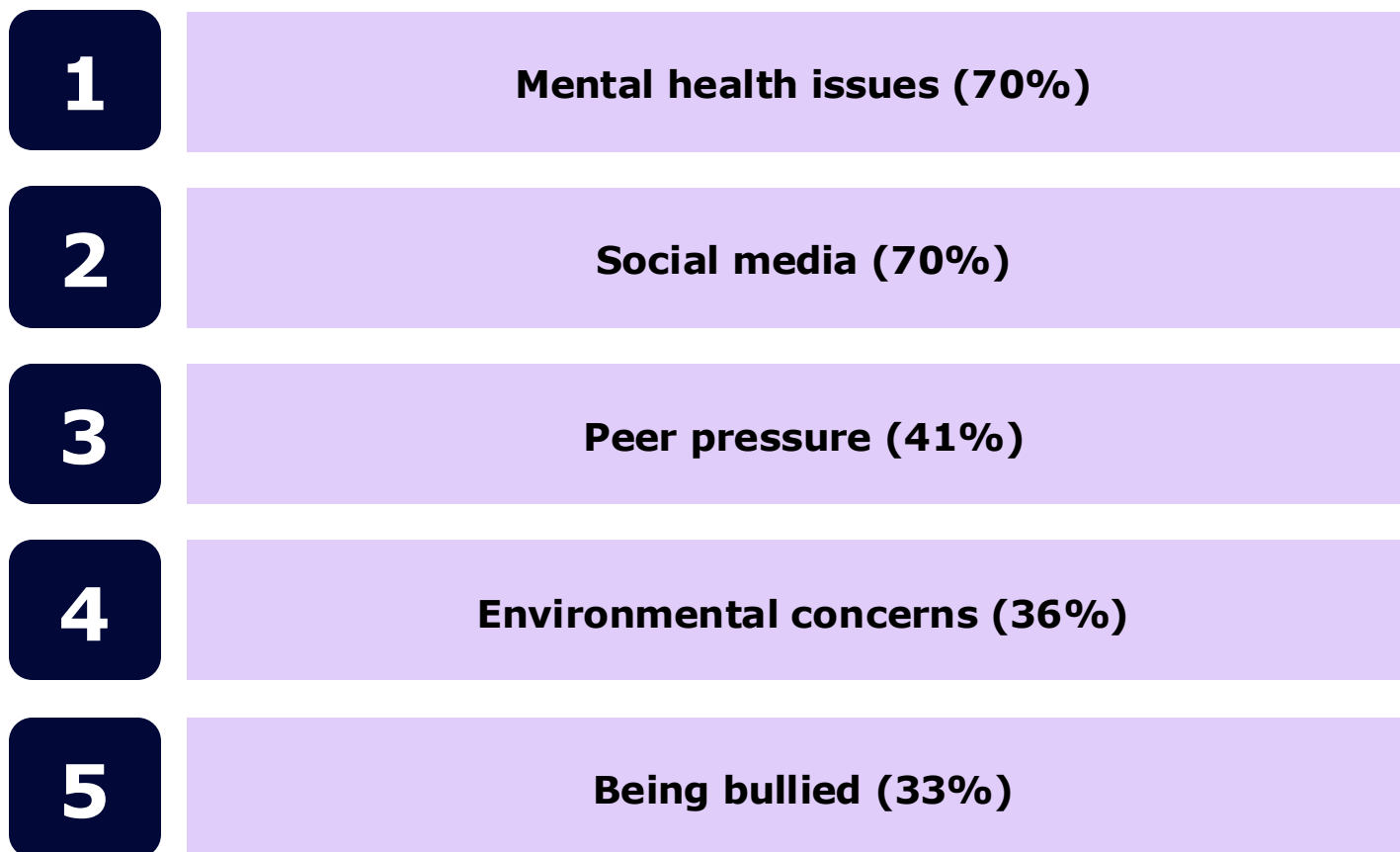


"It really annoys me when people say you can have it all because, quite frankly, you can't. Some people choose their career over their children and that's their prerogative."

Lily Allen, 2024

Mental health and social media are the top concerns parents have for their teenage children

Top 5 concerns for teenage children



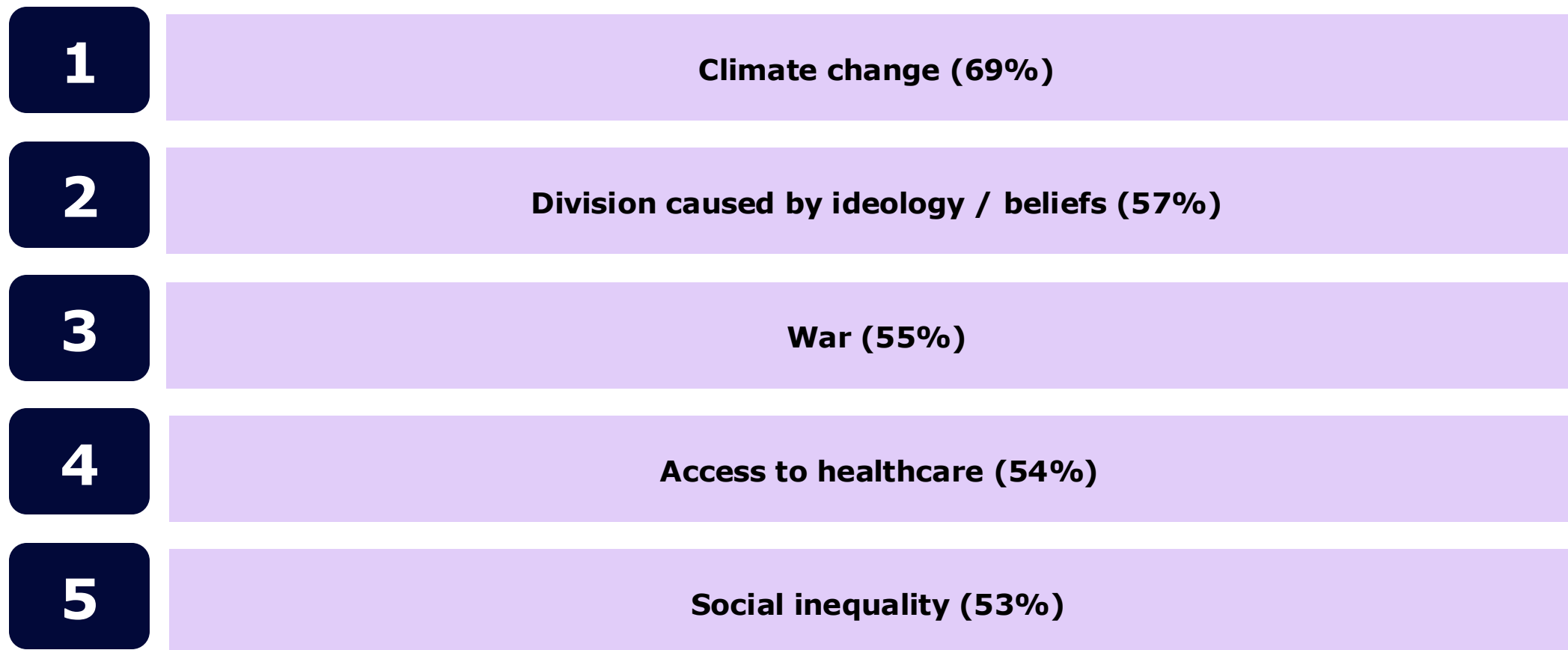
When it comes to looking after teenagers, the top five concerns voiced for parents are 1) Drugs, 2) Lack of job prospects, 3) Discipline, 4) Passing Exams and 5) Sex.



8. The future

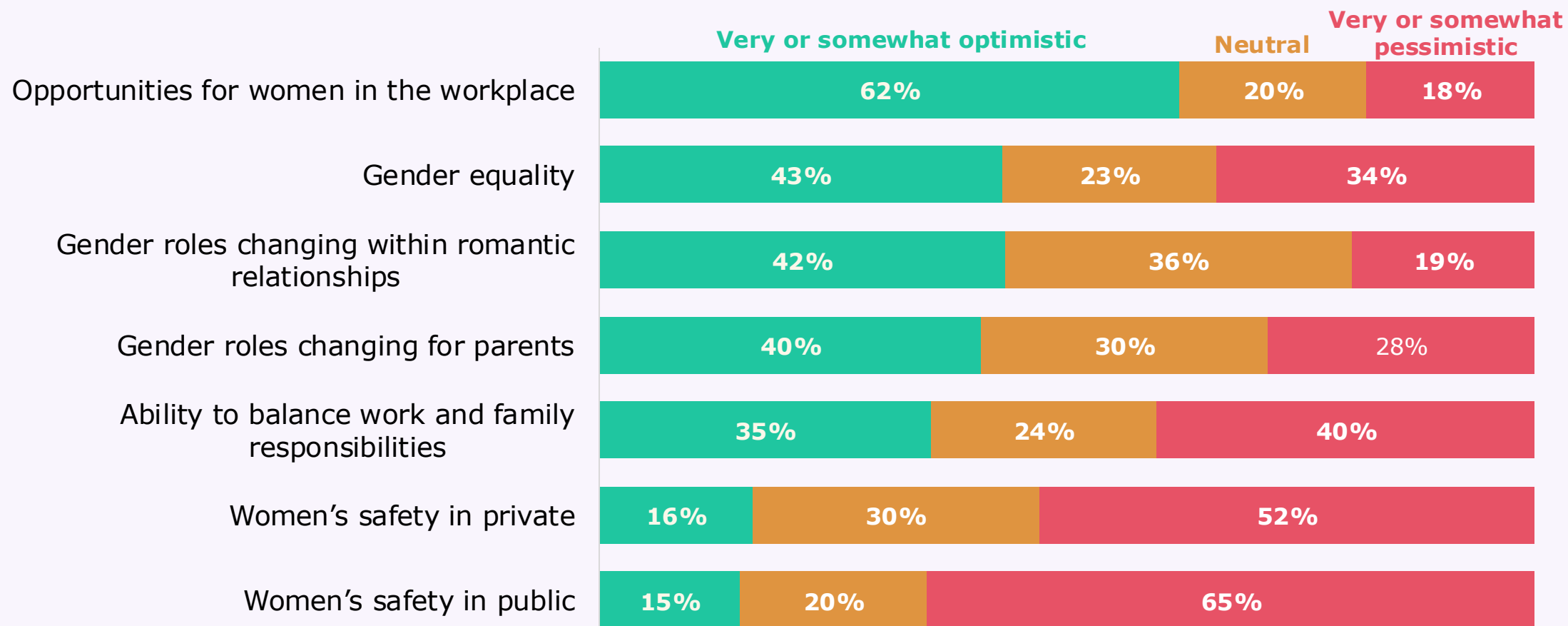
Thinking about the future, WOY are most worried about climate change

Top 5 concerns Women of the Year have for the future
Showing the 5 statements with the highest % answering very or extremely concerned



Whilst they feel optimistic about opportunities for women in the workplace, safety is a concern

Optimism about the future of women in society





Thank you!

Anastasia Knox | aknox@thinksinsight.com
Elsie Lauchlan | elauchlan@thinksinsight.com
Lucy Kearthland | lkeartland@thinksinsight.com
Emily Melling | emelling@thinksinsight.com

hello@thinksinsight.com
T: +44 (0)20 7845 5880
www.thinksinsight.com

Thinks Insight & Strategy
West Wing
Somerset House
London
WC2R 1LA
United Kingdom