

Public Perceptions Tracker

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FOR THE 2019/20 FINANCIAL YEAR
WAVE 3.1, 3.2 AND 3.3. (FIELDWORK: JULY 2019 TO MARCH 2020)

Aims and approach



Methodology

Tracking the public's perceptions towards the IOPC

- Populus has conducted regular online surveys among adults in England and Wales since 2017. These are nationally representative with sample sizes of approximately n=1850 – 3000 depending on the wave.
- The most recent wave was conducted between 18-20 March 2020 (Wave 3.3). Some slides display aggregated data across Waves 3.1 (July 2019), 3.2 (January 2020) and 3.3 (March 2020).
- The numbers of respondents from the SEG groups C2 and DE were boosted in Wave 3.3 to 1000 in total.
- The survey is repeated at regular intervals.
- The results are available to view in the IOPC/Populus dashboard.
- The first four of these surveys in 2017 were conducted before the organisation became the IOPC.



This wave of the Public Perceptions Tracker is the second to be conducted after qualitative research, in the format of deliberative events, and was carried out by Populus for the IOPC among members of the public in London and Leeds. We have subsequently updated the Tracker questionnaire to reflect our more detailed understanding of public attitudes towards the IOPC and the police complaints system.

Executive summary



Executive summary

- Overall awareness of the IOPC using our new measure is 51%. However, most of this is surface-level awareness only. Almost 8 in 10 of the public do not know enough about the IOPC to say anything about what it does. The qualitative deliberative events conducted by Populus among the public also showed that there is very limited knowledge of the IOPC beyond some name recognition.
- A minority of the public can recall seeing or hearing about specific issues in relation to police conduct, such as police road pursuits. However, the IOPC is rarely spontaneously mentioned in relation to these issues.
- As such, the vast majority of people want the IOPC to promote its work to the public to create greater awareness. Most of those who call for public engagement believe the IOPC should be promoting its work through social media and advertisements on national radio and TV.
- Close to half of the public have confidence that the IOPC does a good job, but only a small proportion are 'very confident' – again, this reflects limited knowledge of the organisation. BAME respondents are the least likely to have confidence in the IOPC.
- The idea that the IOPC is independent from the police is not taken for granted by the public. Only 24% think it is 'completely independent', but twice as many think it is only 'somewhat independent'. Those with negative personal experiences with the police are less likely to think that the IOPC is independent of the police.
- Around half of the public are confident that the police deal fairly with complaints made against the police, and most say they would be likely to complain if they were unhappy with how a police officer behaved. When asked why they are not more likely to complain, a range of concerns arise, including personal consequences, scepticism about outcomes, the time it would take, and a lack of knowledge about where or who to complain. These concerns were also borne out in the deliberative events conducted among the public by Populus.
- When asked how their feelings towards the IOPC might be improved, the most commonly selected options relate to evidencing ways in which the IOPC is changing policing for the better: sharing lessons from investigations, working to change the way the police works to ensure no mistakes are repeated, and ensuring that the police carries out the recommendations it makes.

Awareness of the IOPC

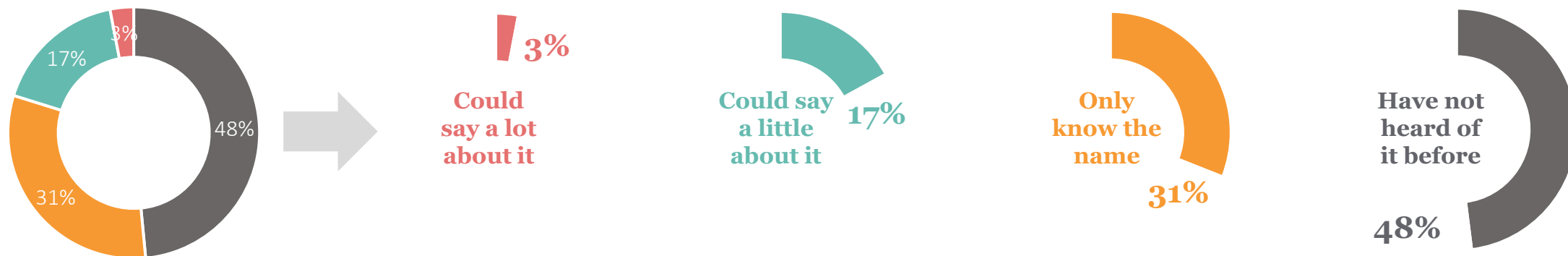
Populus



- Awareness of the IOPC is mostly surface-level. About half of the public have heard of the IOPC, while 3% of people could say a lot about it.
- Bearing in mind the change in question wording, there has been no increase in awareness of the IOPC in 2019/2020.
- The IOPC is far more known among older respondents and white respondents than among younger respondents and BAME respondents.
- The vast majority of people believe there is a need for the IOPC to promote its work to the public to create greater awareness. This is true for all demographics. Those in the C2DE social grades are slightly more likely than those in the ABC1 social grades to call for public engagement.
- Most of those who call for public engagement believe the IOPC should be promoting its work through social media and advertisement on national radio and TV.
- Specific issues in relations to police conduct are each recalled by a minority. The IOPC is rarely spontaneously recalled in relation to these stories.

While about half have heard of the IOPC, awareness of it is mostly surface-level with 3% of people saying they could say a lot about it

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

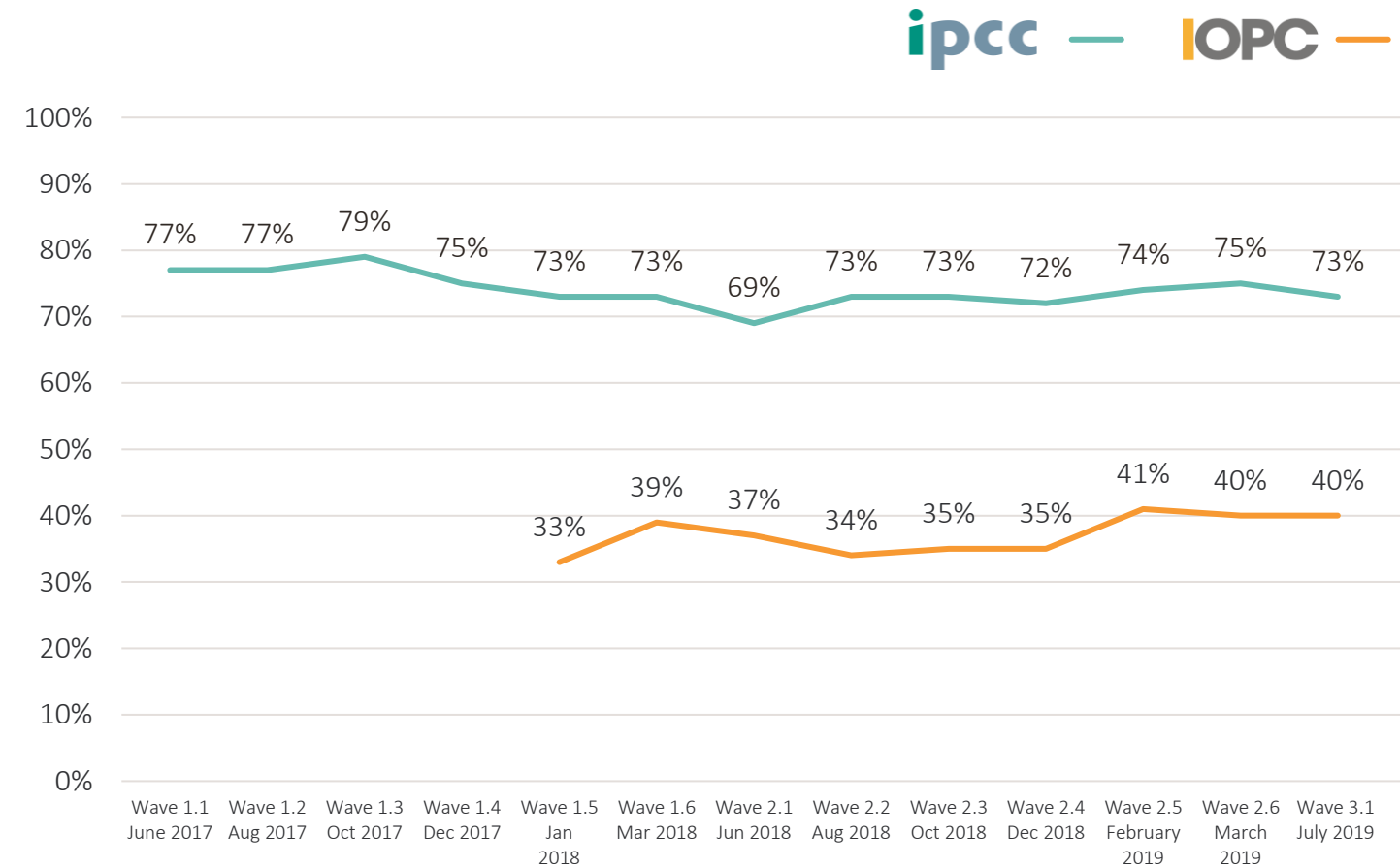


3% say they could say a lot about the IOPC

8 in 10 of the people don't know enough about the IOPC to say anything about what it does

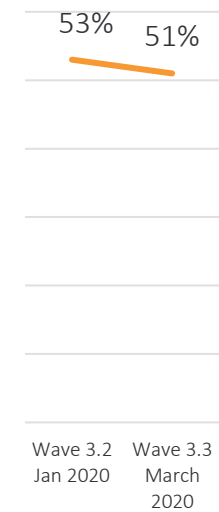
The new awareness measure compared with previous benchmarks

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



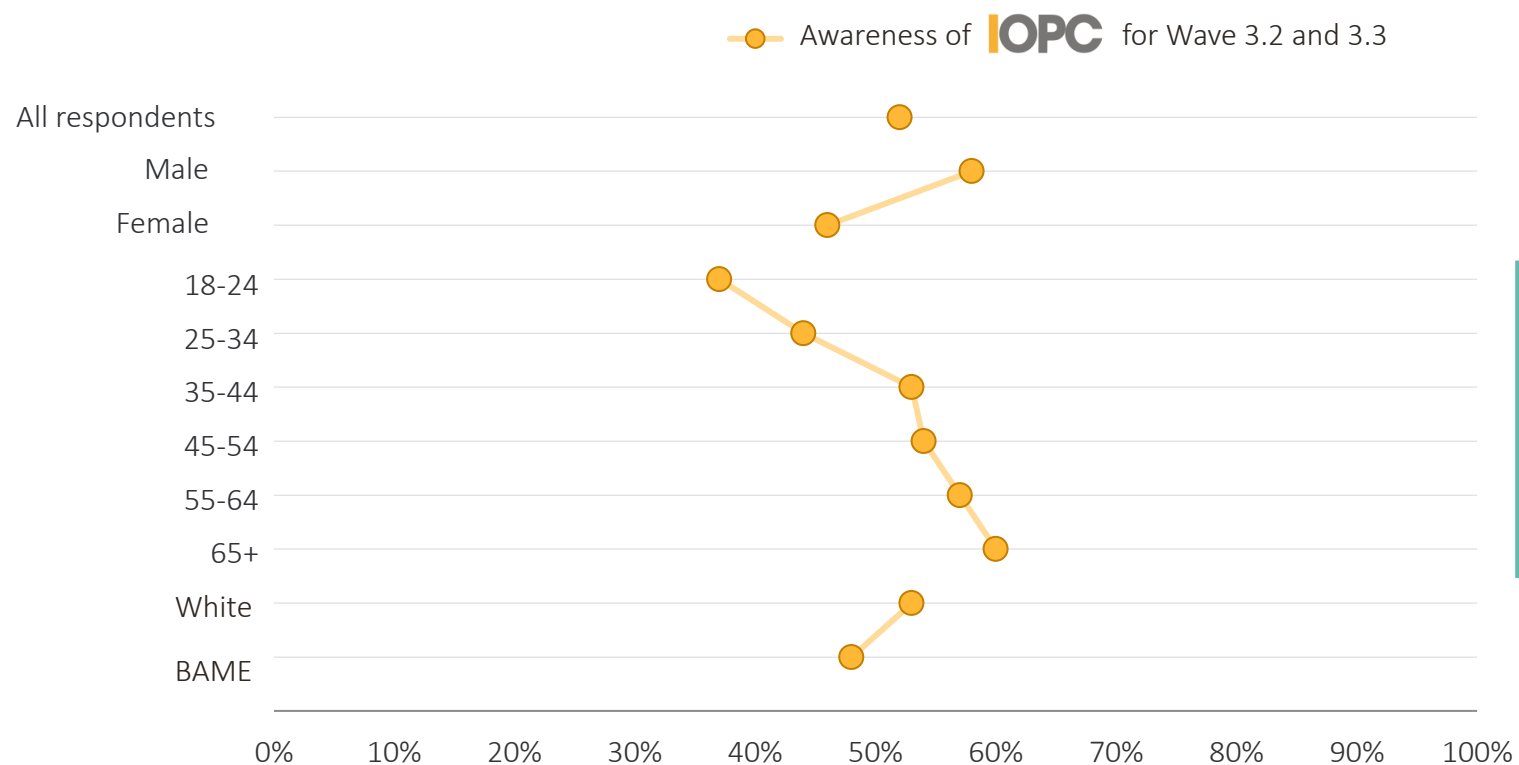
Q. Have you heard of the IOPC (the Independent Office for Police Conduct)? [% saying 'yes'] New

- ↓
- a) Yes – and I could say a lot about it
 - b) Yes – and I could say a little about it
 - c) Yes – but I only know the name
 - d) No – I don't think I have heard of it before



Awareness of the IOPC, by demographic

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

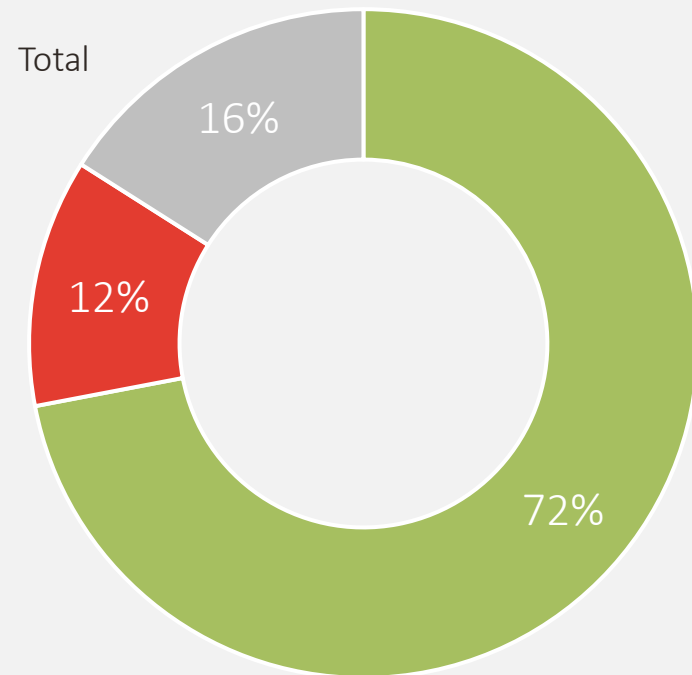


Awareness of the IOPC increases with age

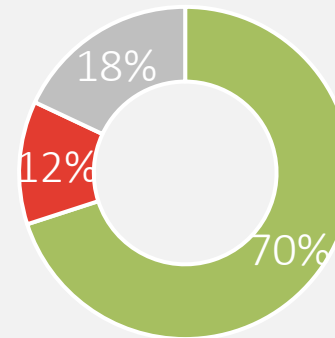
The vast majority of people believe there is a need for the IOPC to promote its work to the public to create greater awareness. This is true for all demographics

Q. Do you think there is a need for the IOPC to promote its work among the public to create greater awareness about what it exists to do?

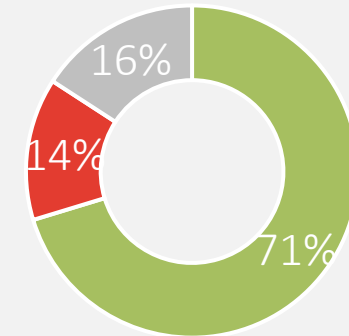
■ Yes there is ■ No there is not ■ Don't know



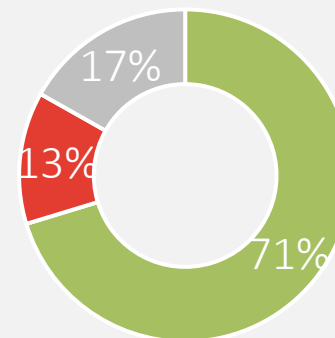
Young people, age 18-24



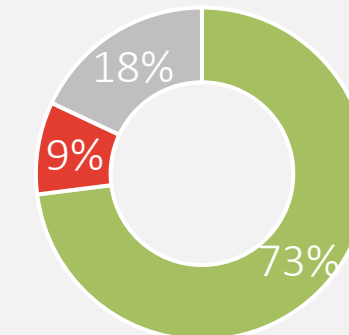
SEG ABC1



BAME

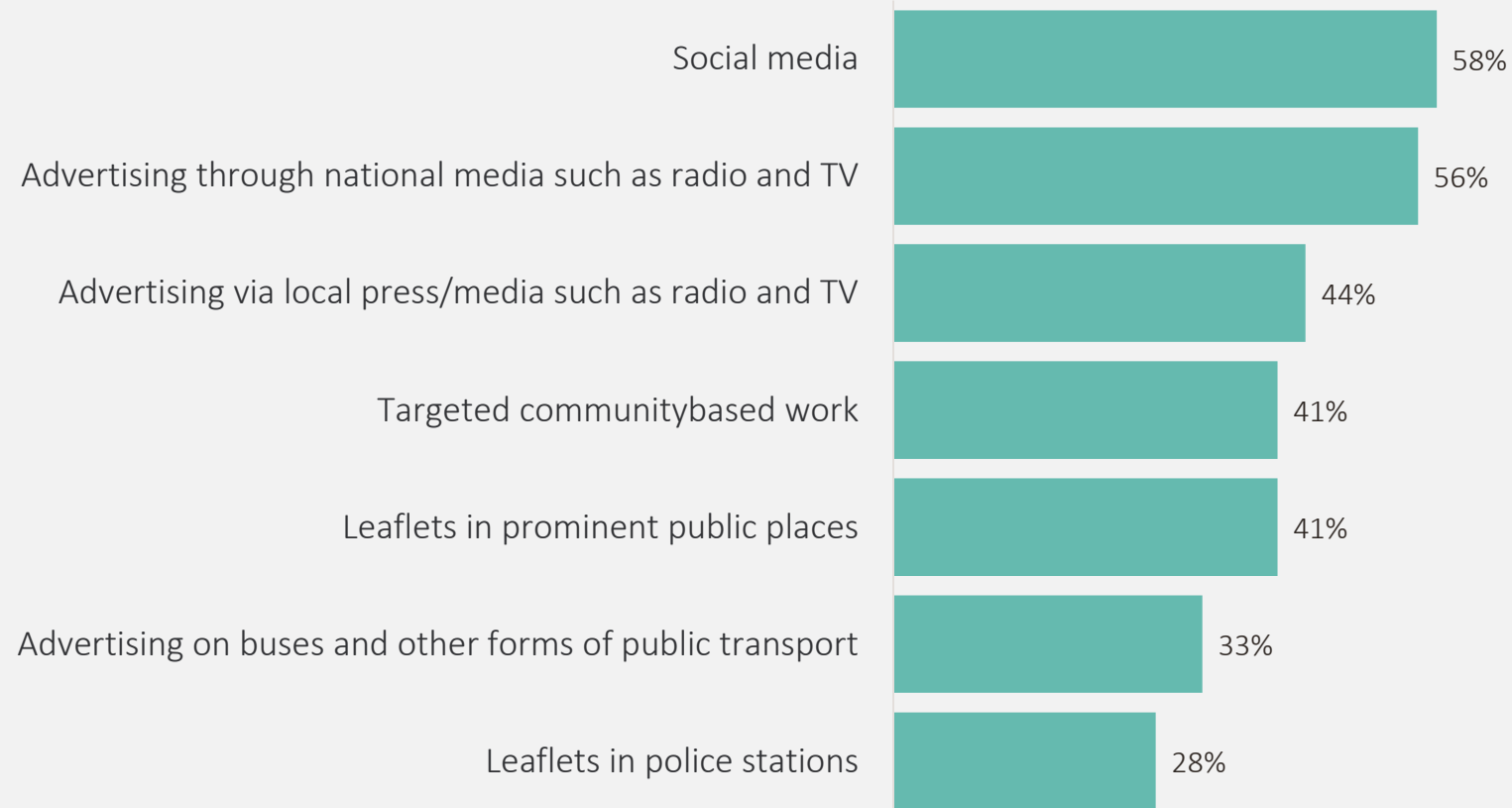


SEG C2DE



The most popular way among the public for the IOPC to promote its work is through social media and advertisement on national radio and TV

Q. In which of the following ways do you think that the IOPC should promote its work among the public? [% selecting option]



Base: All respondents who think there is a need for the IOPC to promote its work among the public (n=1456)

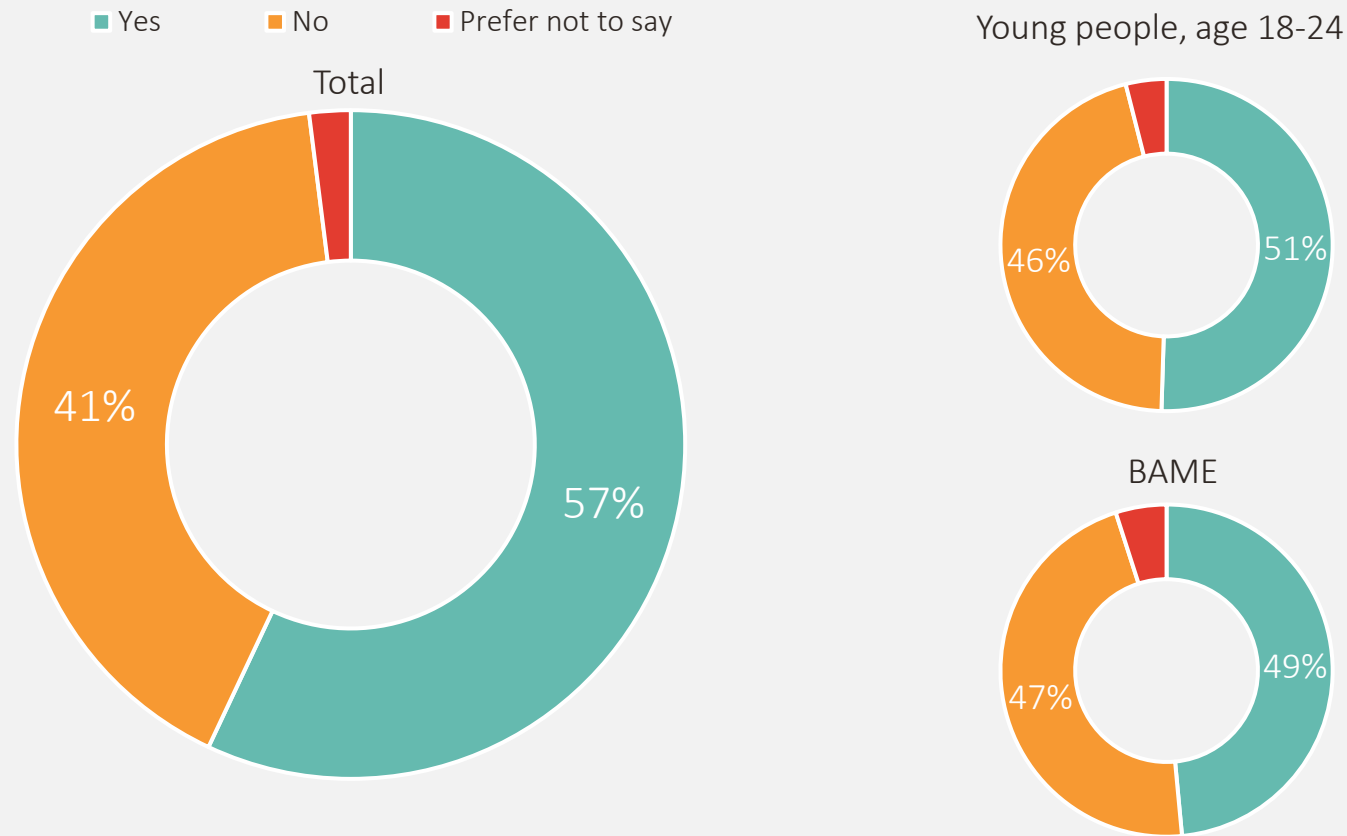
Experience of and attitudes towards the police



- Most people say they or someone they know has come into contact with the police, and previous research has shown that personal experience is a driver of confidence in police. Out of those who have had contact with the police, out of those who had contact with the police a quarter would describe their experience as negative.
- However, BAME respondents who have had contact with the police or know someone who has are much more likely to say that the police's conduct was negative.
- Throughout the reporting period, the public has remained divided on whether the police can deal fairly with complaints made against the police. In the most recent waves, there has been an increase in trust in the police's handling of complaints.
- Older people and white people are significantly more likely to trust the police than others. Across the 2019/20 financial year, those with the least trust in the police when it comes to handling complaints fairly are BAME respondents and those who have had a negative experience with the police.
- Around two thirds of the public say that they would be either very likely or fairly likely to complain if they were unhappy about the conduct of a police officers.
- The biggest concerns around complaining are people feeling worried it will impact them negatively, thinking the complaint won't be dealt with properly, and not knowing who to complain to.

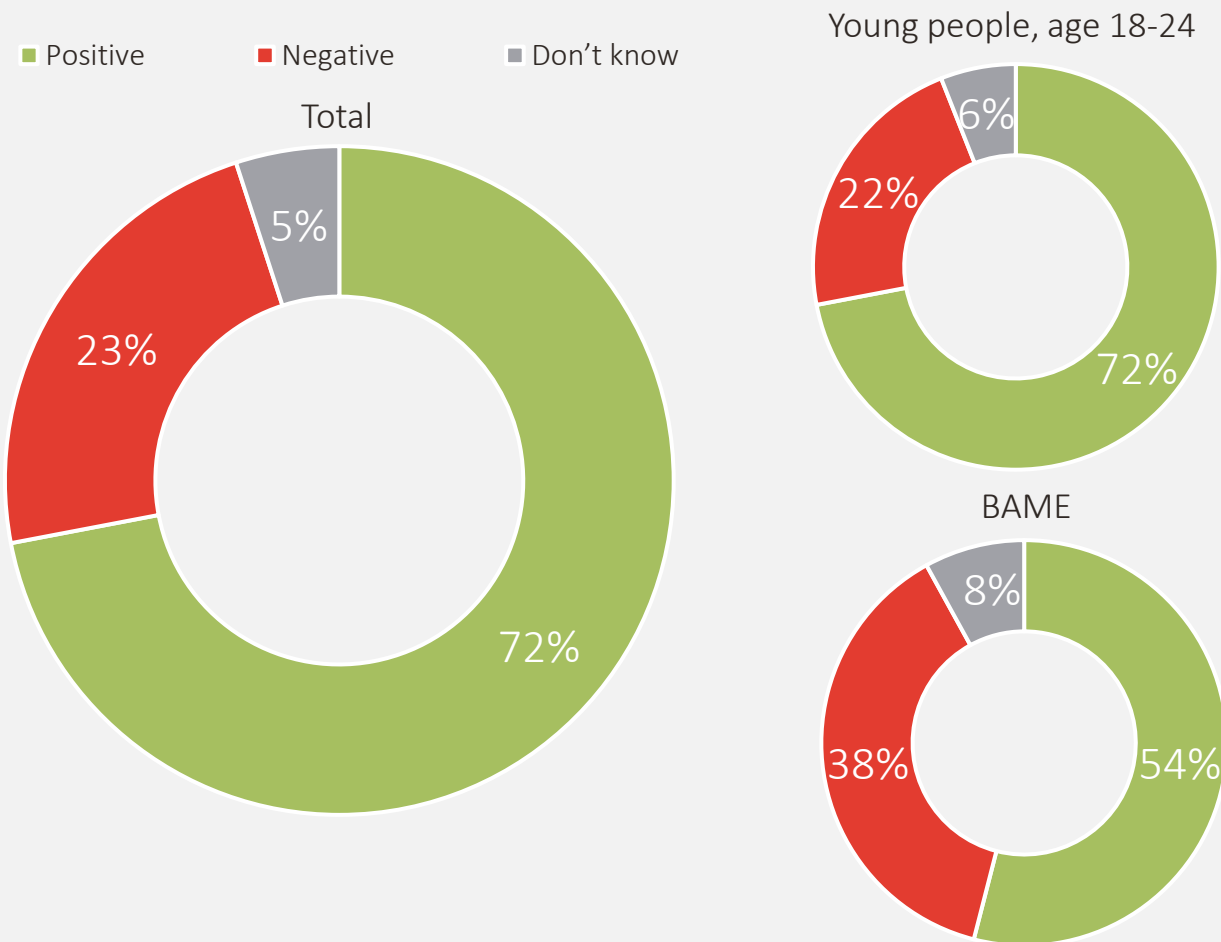
Most people say they or someone they know has come into contact with the police, and previous research has shown that personal experience can influence confidence levels in police

Q. Have you, or anyone close to you, come into contact with the police in any way?



23% say their contact with the police was negative, but BAME respondents are almost twice as likely to say this

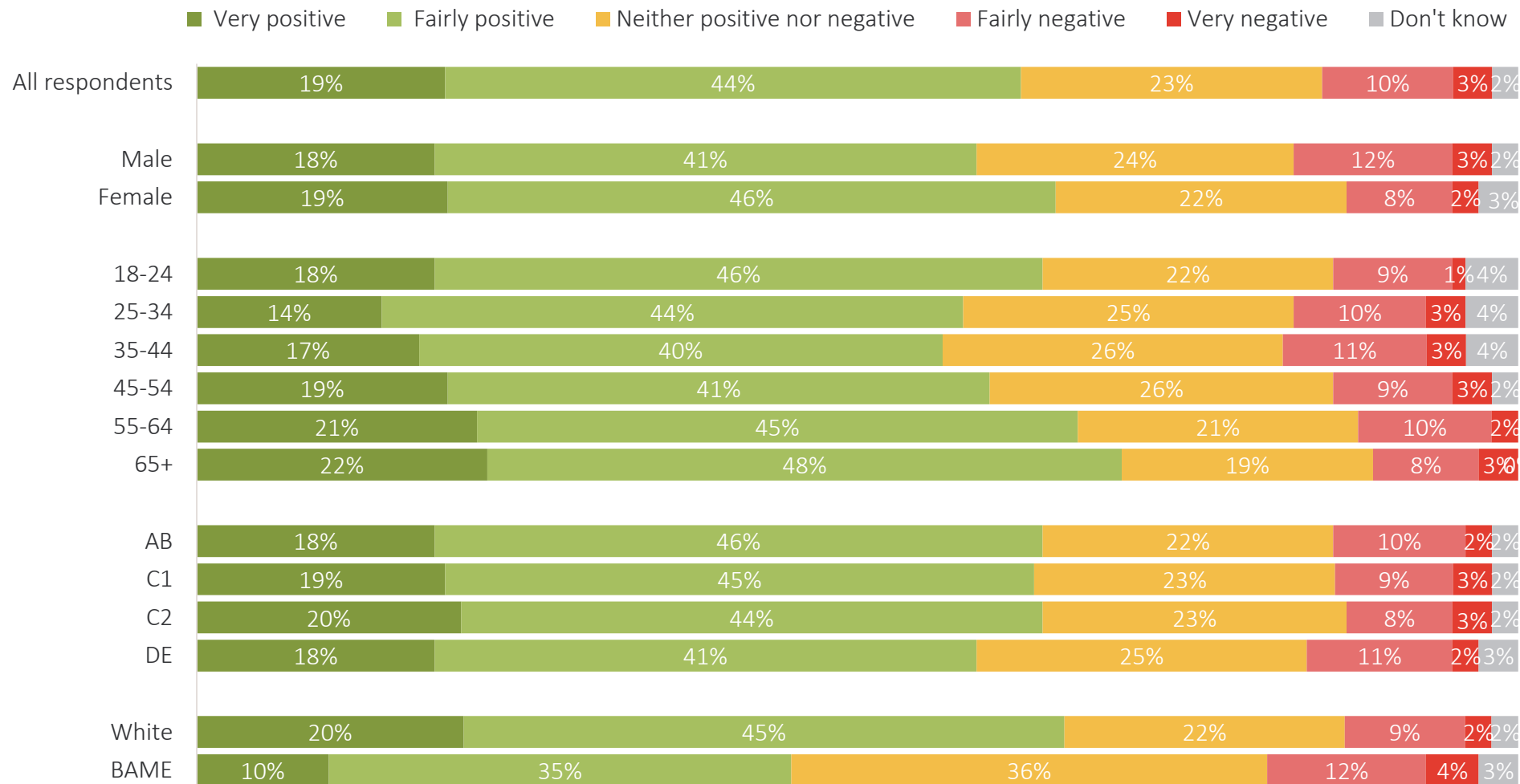
Q. And thinking about that contact that you or someone close to you had with the police, would you describe the police's conduct as mostly positive or mostly negative?



BAME respondents who have had contact with the police or know someone who has are much more likely to say that the police's conduct was negative

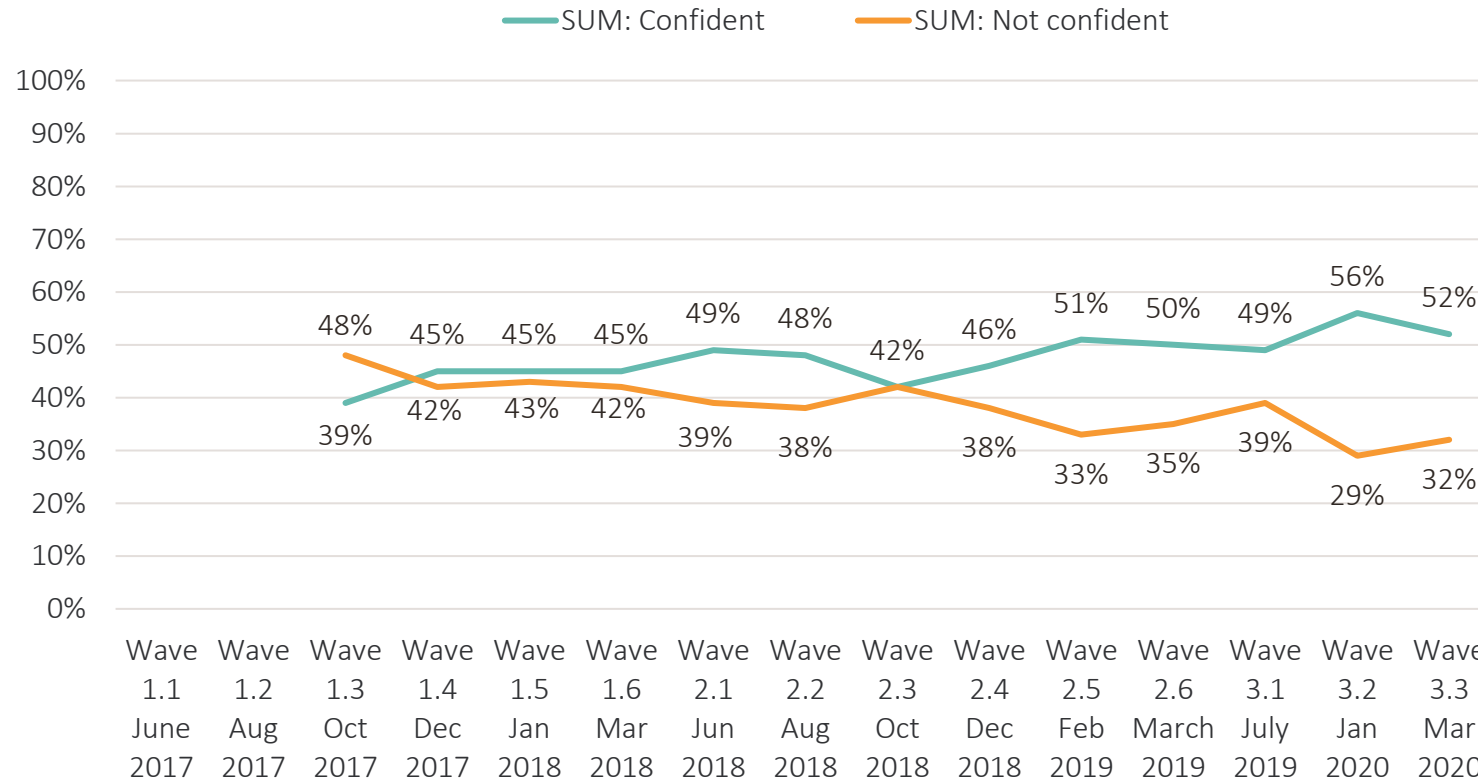
Most of the public feel positive towards the police however only 1 in 5 are 'very positive', but BAME respondents are slightly less positive towards the police

Q. How positive or negative do you feel towards the police?



Confidence in the police's handling of complaints, over time

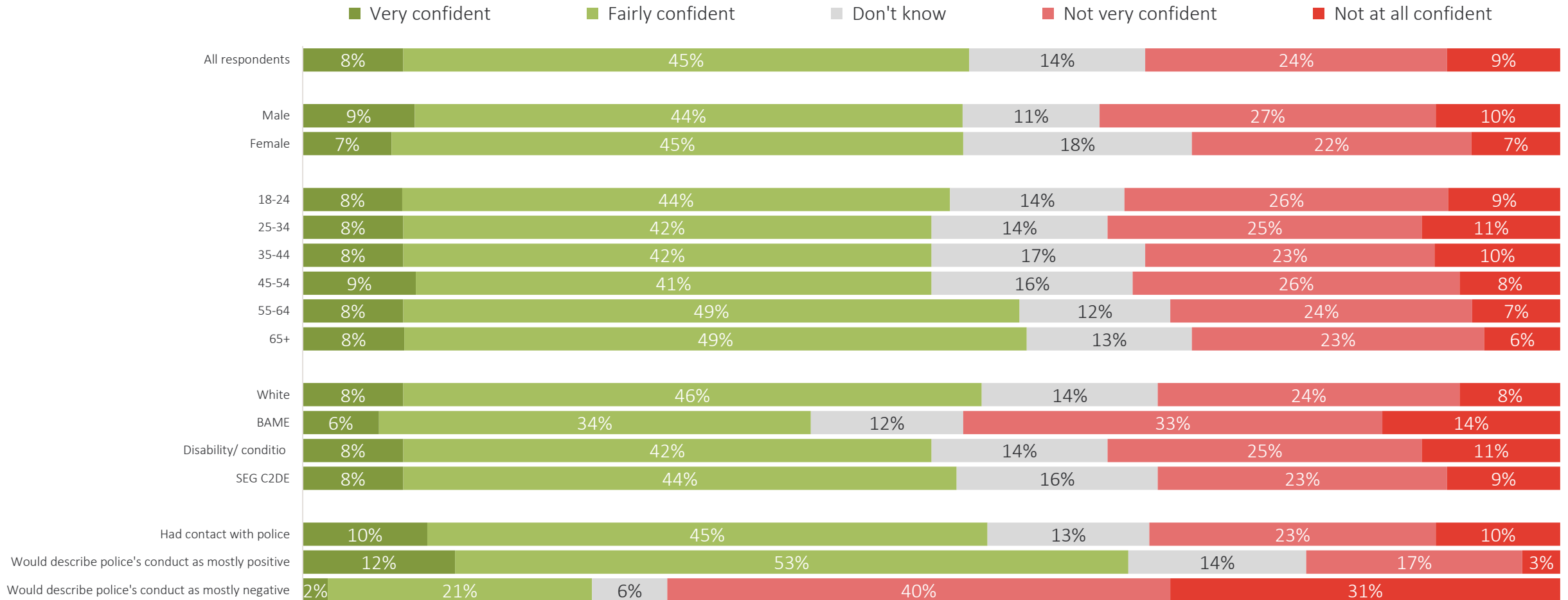
Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the police deal fairly with complaints made against the police?



The gap has decreased slightly this wave. The spike last wave was most likely a General Election effect.

Confidence in the police's handling of complaints, by demographics

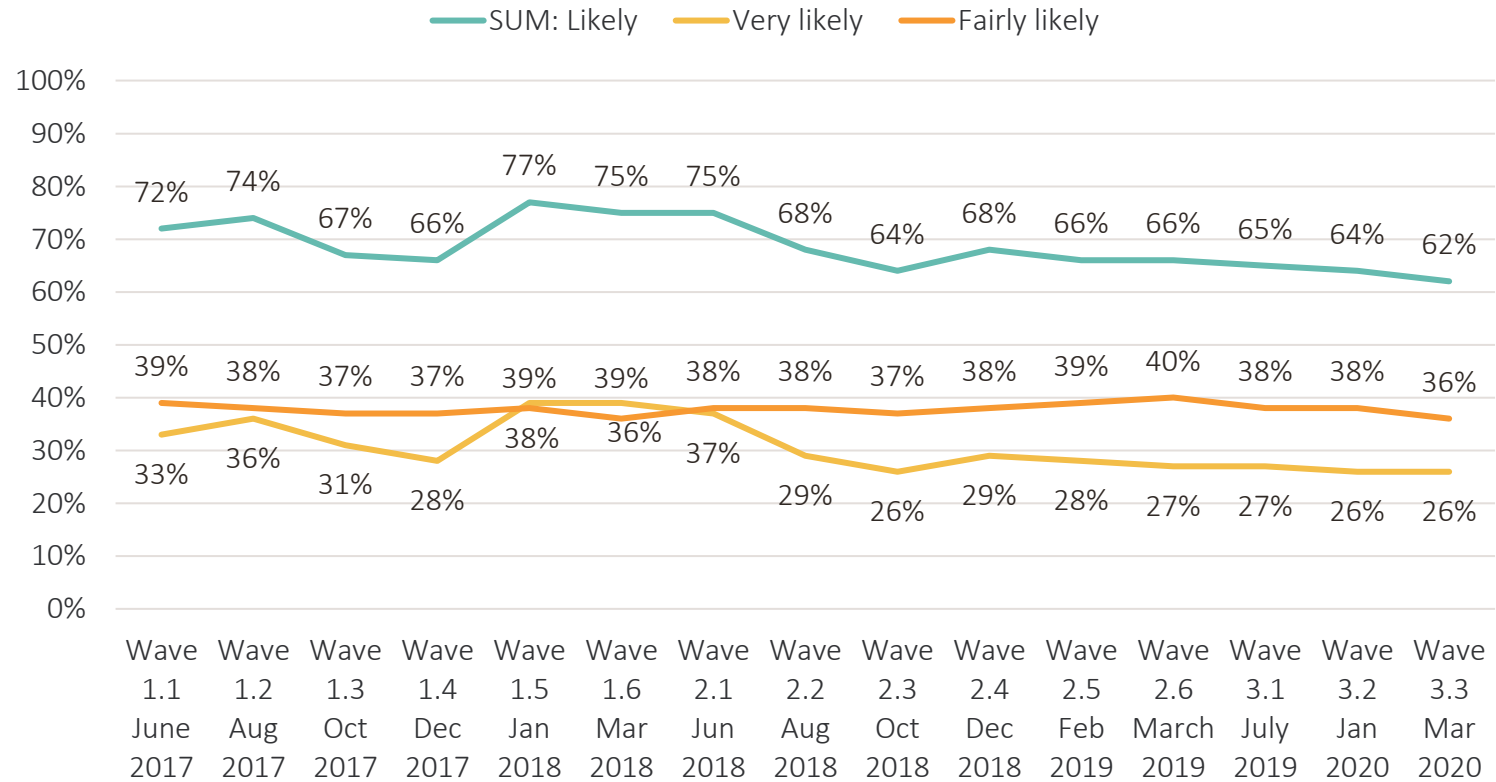
Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the police deal fairly with complaints made against the police?



Base: All, Wave 3.1, Wave 3.2 and Wave 3.3 (n=6303); male (n=2988), female (n=3315), 18-24 (n=937), 25-34 (n=1023), 35-44 (n=942); 45-54 (n=1072); 55-64 (n=919); 65+ (n=1410); white (n=5464), BAME (n=777); disability/condition (n=1521); SEG C2DE (n=2813); Q4 Yes (n=2531), Q5 Mostly positive (n=1788), Q5 Mostly negative (n=609).

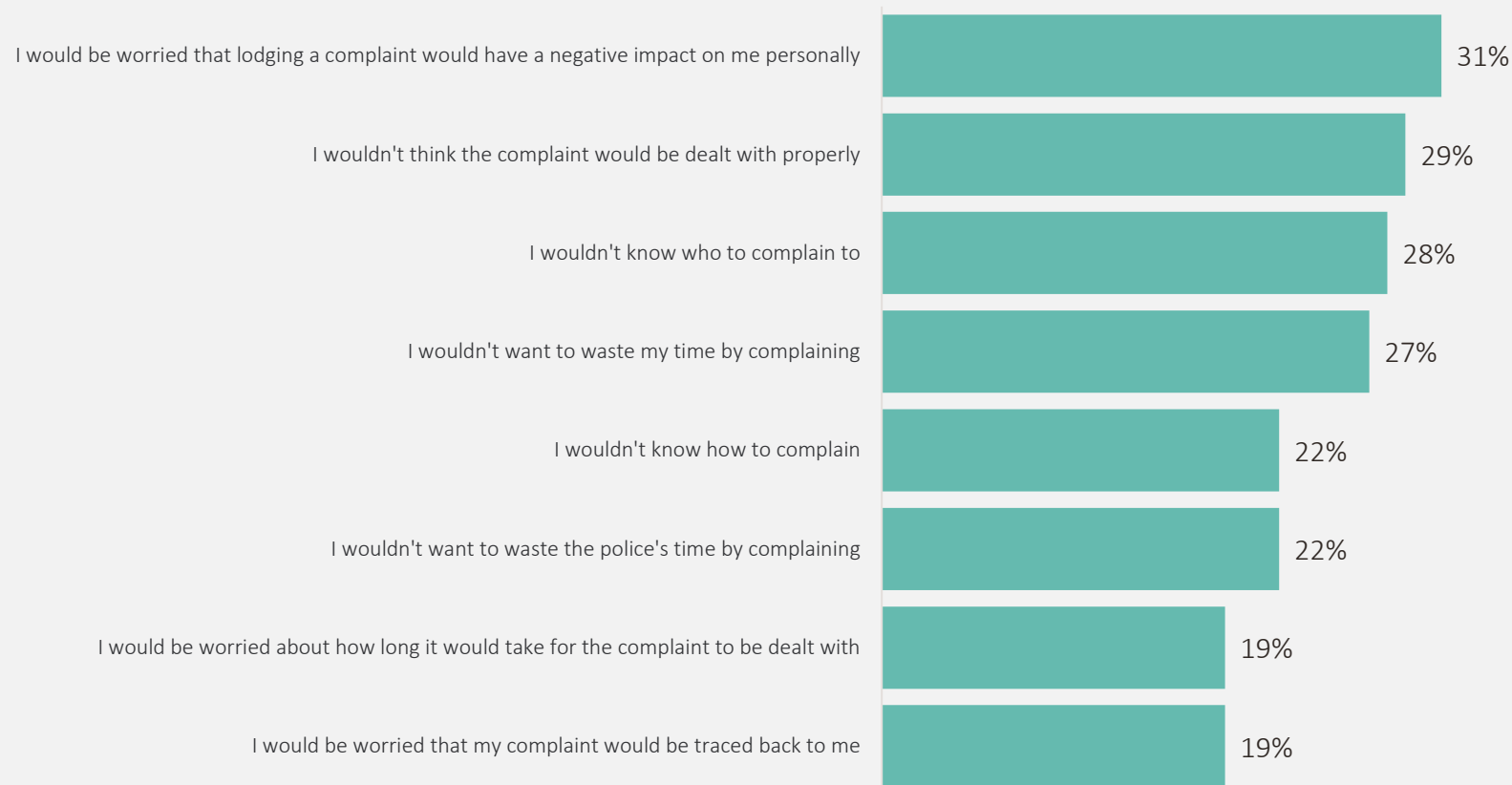
Likelihood to complain, over time

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?



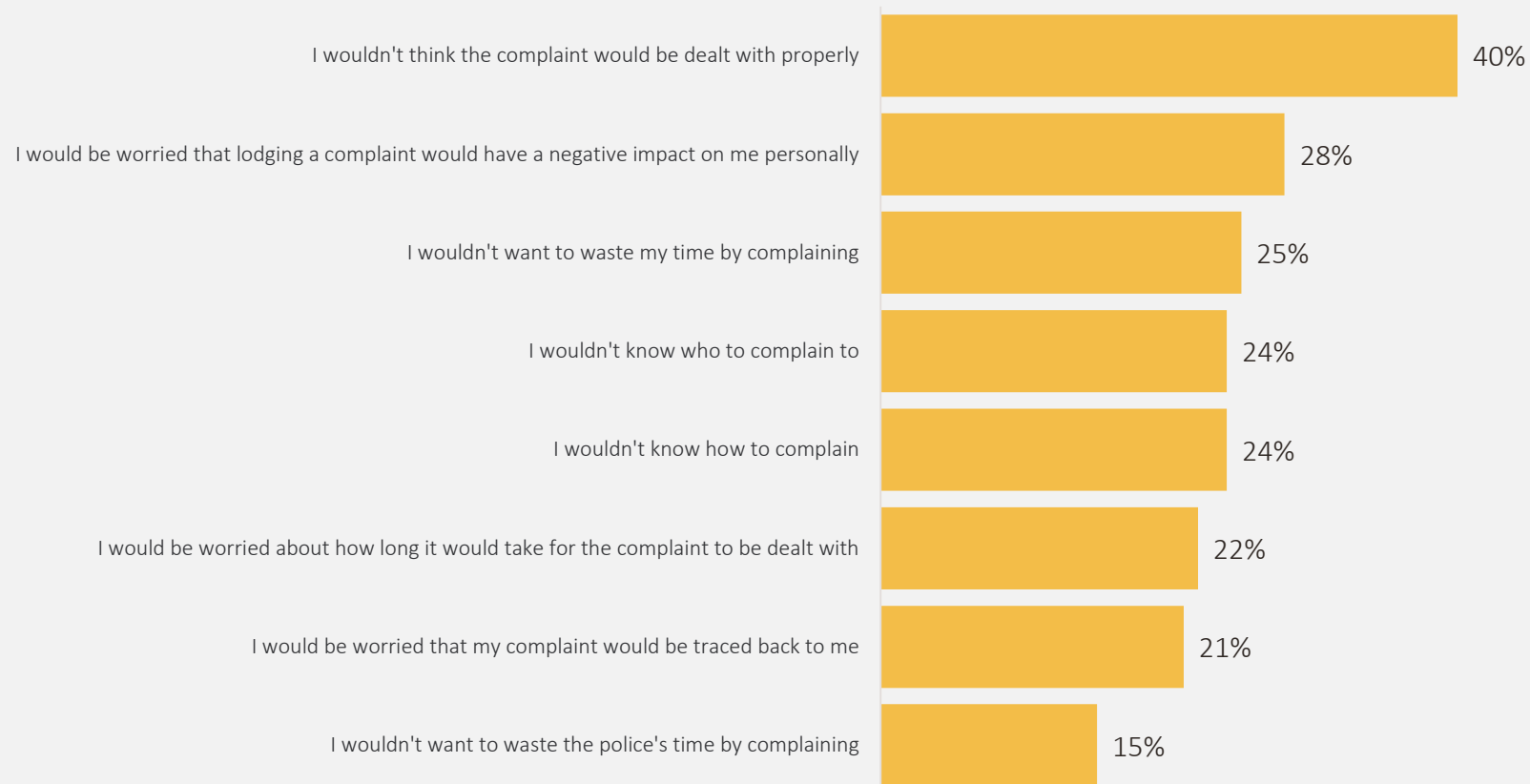
The top reasons for not being more likely to complain continue to be related to expectations about personal impact, outcomes, and time

Q. Which of the following best explains why you would not be more likely to complain?



BAME respondents are much more likely to think that the complaint would not be dealt with properly than the general public

Q. Which of the following best explains why you would not be more likely to complain?



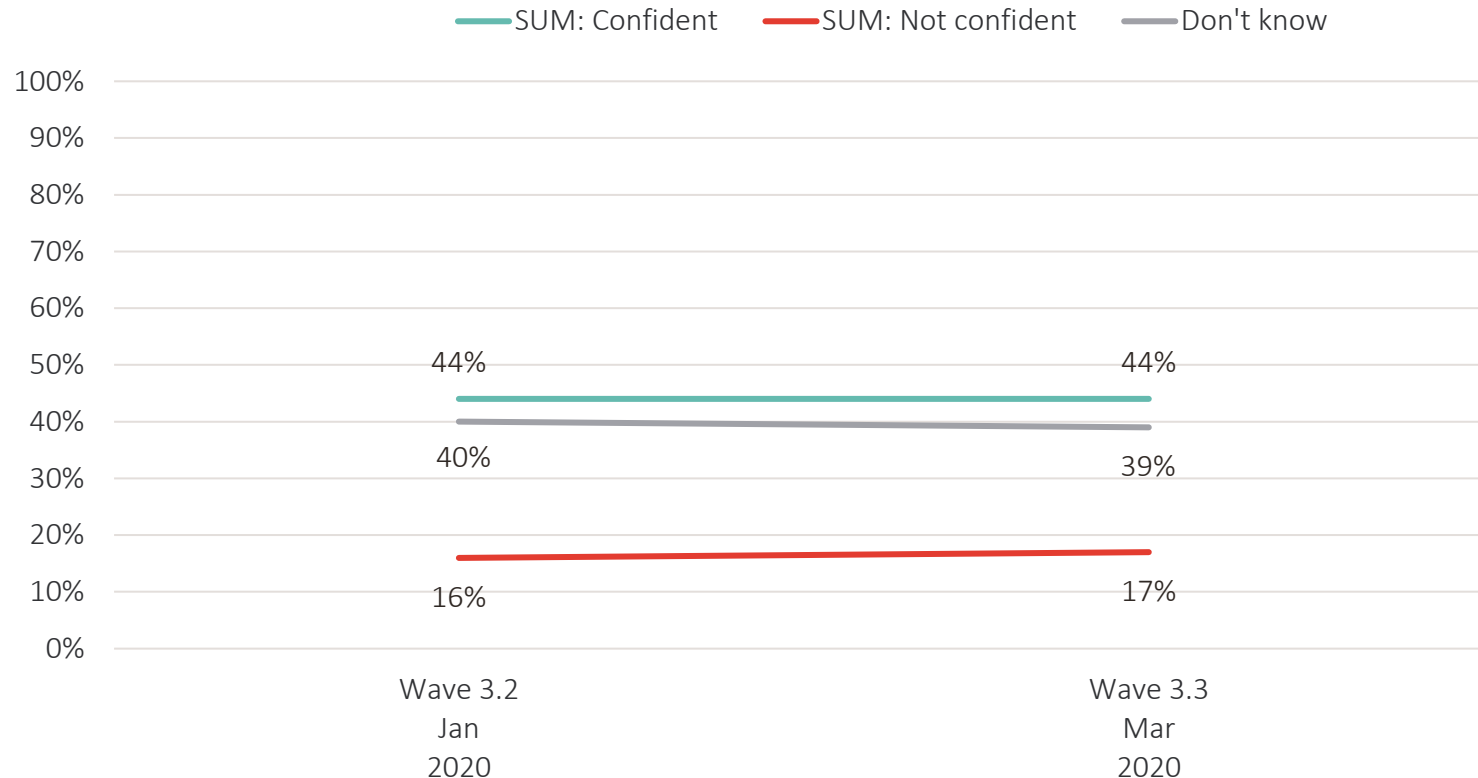
Perceptions of the IOPC



- Confidence in the IOPC doing a good job remains relatively high.
- However, most of this confidence is ‘soft’, with respondents far more likely to say they are ‘fairly’ rather than ‘very’ confident, and there is still a significant minority who say they are not confident.
- Overall, BAME respondents are the least likely to have confidence in the IOPC doing a good job, as well as those who have had a negative experience with the police.
- Around half think that the IOPC is somewhat independent of the police but only a quarter think it is fully independent. 1 in 5 don’t know and about 1 in 10 believe that it isn’t independent at all.
- These numbers are similar for people aged 18-24 and BAME respondents. However, if respondents feel negative towards the police, they are far more likely to believe the IOPC is not independent.
- When asked how their feelings towards the IOPC might be improved, respondents overall suggest the IOPC to share lessons from its investigations, work to change the way police works to ensure no mistakes are repeated and ensure police carries out recommendations made.

The public are far more likely to be confident in the IOPC than not, but many don't know

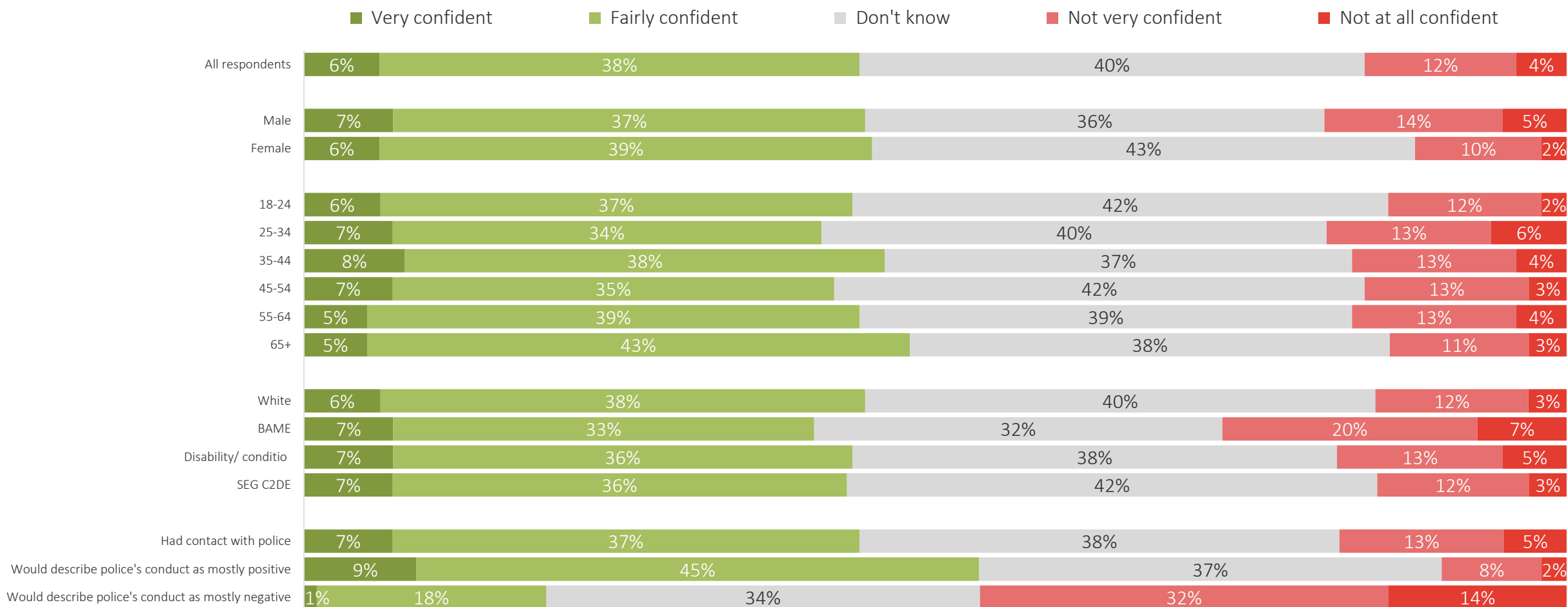
Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the IOPC does a good job?



Base: All (approx. n=1850 – 3000). Base Wave 3.3: All (n=2001)

Those who are confident tends to be fairly confident, rather than very confident

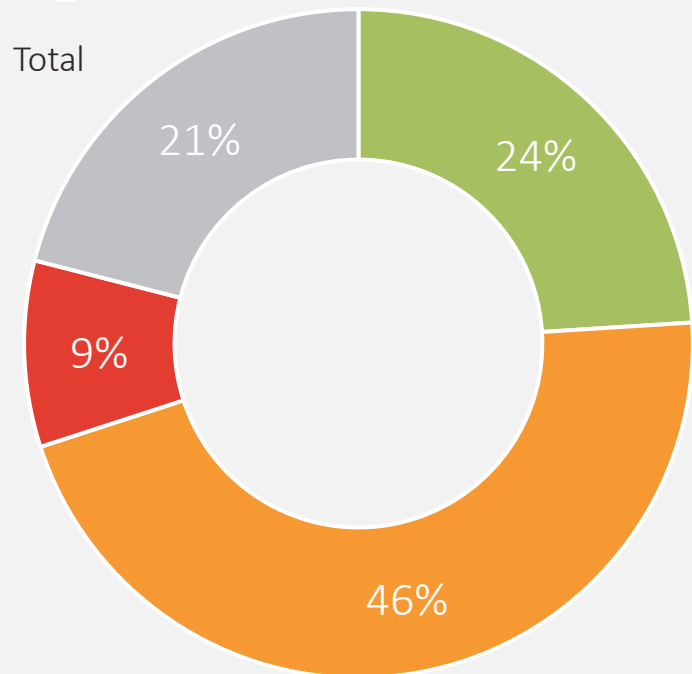
Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the IOPC does a good job?



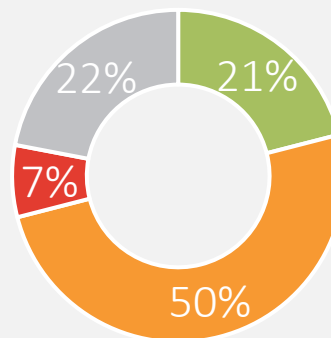
Only a quarter think the IOPC is completely independent of the police

Q. Based on what you know, do you think that the IOPC is independent of the police?

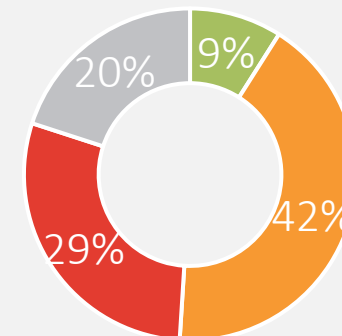
- I think it is completely independent of the police
- I think it is somewhat independent of the police
- I think it is not independent of the police
- Don't know



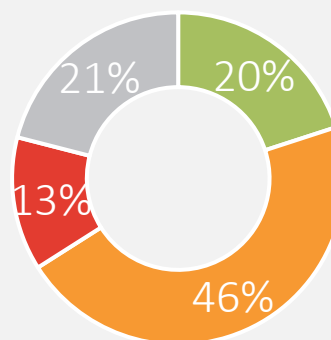
Young people, age 18-24



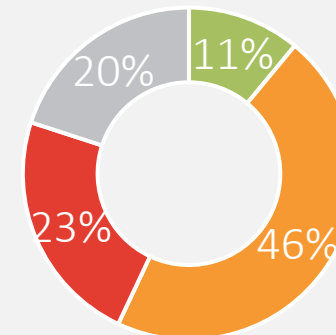
Those who feel negative towards the police



BAME

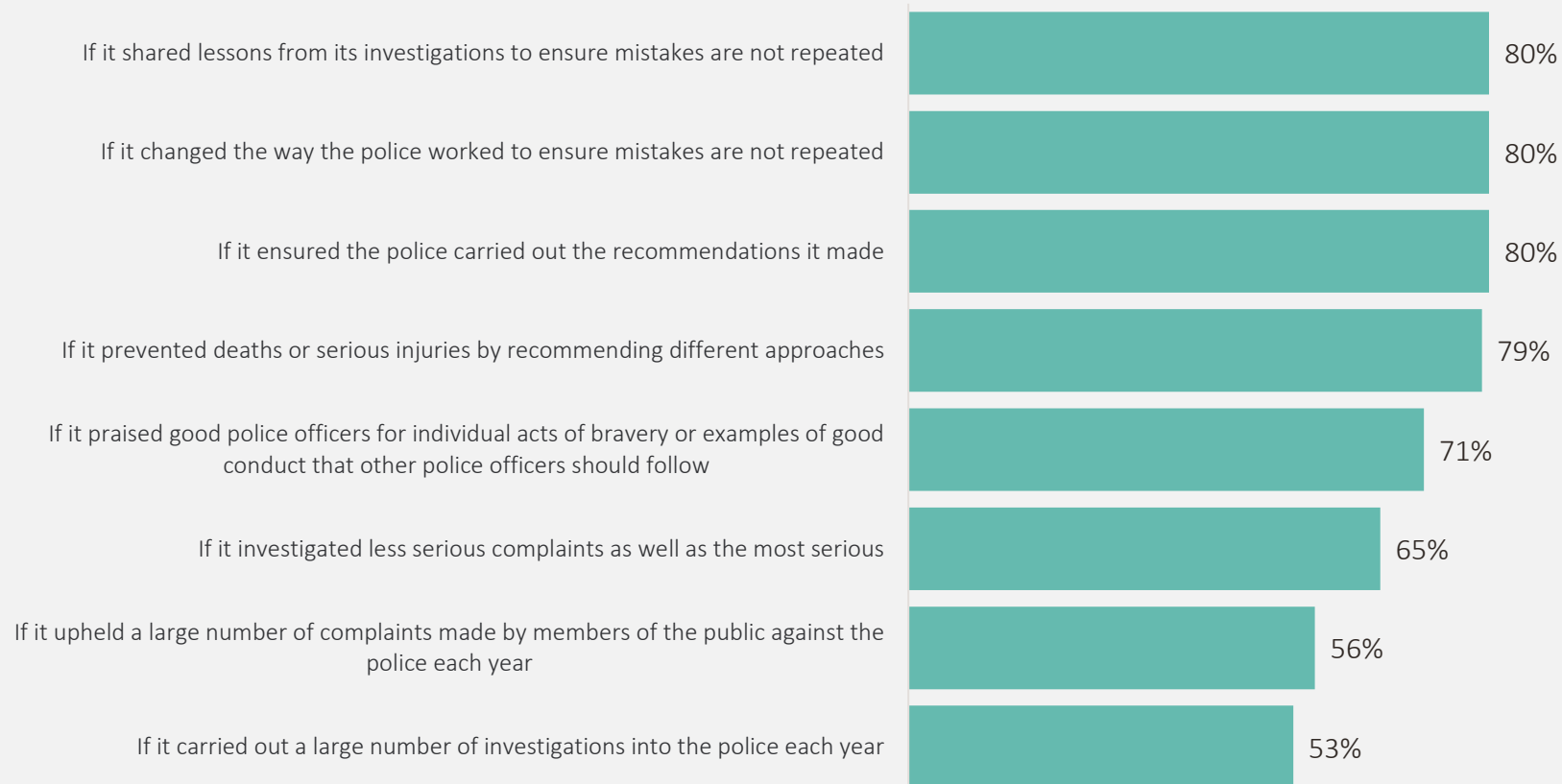


Those who would describe police's conduct as mostly negative



The most preferred factors that would increase positivity about IOPC all relate to driving meaningful change within the police force

Q. To what extent would each of the below make you think more positively or more negatively about the IOPC? [% saying 'positive']



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