Energy policy after the General Election: Priorities for consumers

Antonia Dickman, Joint Head of Environment Research, Ipsos MORI

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Ipsos MORI
Social Research Institute

Government and industry face significant challenges

Affordable supply

Energy security

Low carbon economy

Climate change mitigation

Competitive, transparent energy industry

What I'll cover today

What do the public think?

- Concerns?
- Priorities?

- **What does this mean for policymakers?**
  - Priorities going forwards**?**
  - Messaging?

Affordability:

Four in five …

…agree there is currently ‘a cost of living crisis’ in the UK (82%)

…are concerned about their household energy bills (84%)

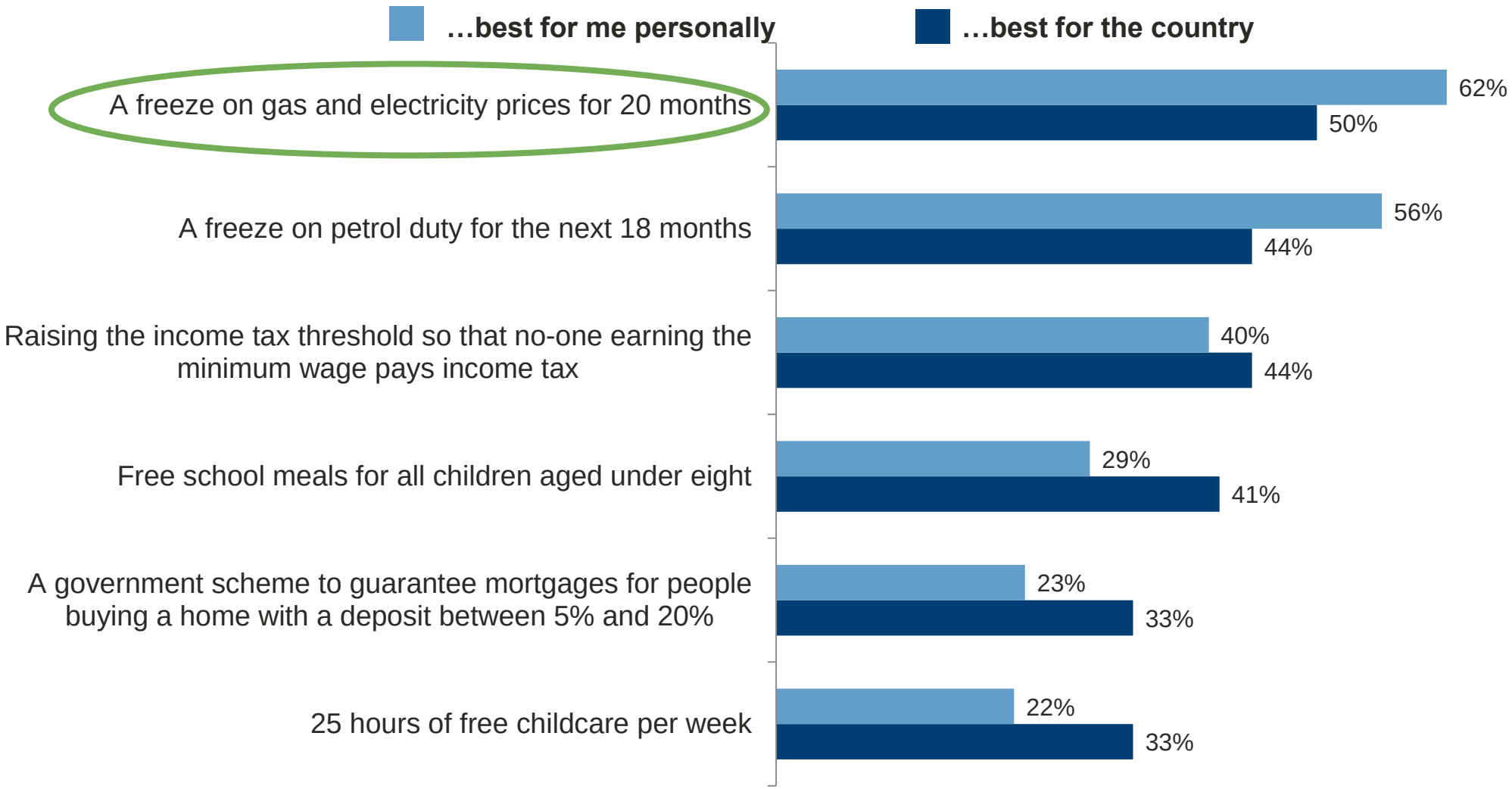
Source: Ipsos MORI / DECC

Base: GB adults aged 18+ who are at least partly responsible for paying household energy bills: (2,159) 5th and 20th October 2012

Source: Ipsos MORI / Political Monitor

Base: 513 British adults 18+, 5th – 7th April 2014

Public supported price freeze following announcement



Base: 1,004 British adults 18+, 12th -15th October 2013, split sample question- approximately half (c.500) the sample were asked each iteration

Source: Ipsos MORI Political Monitor

Competitive & transparent industry?

% trusting their supplier to…

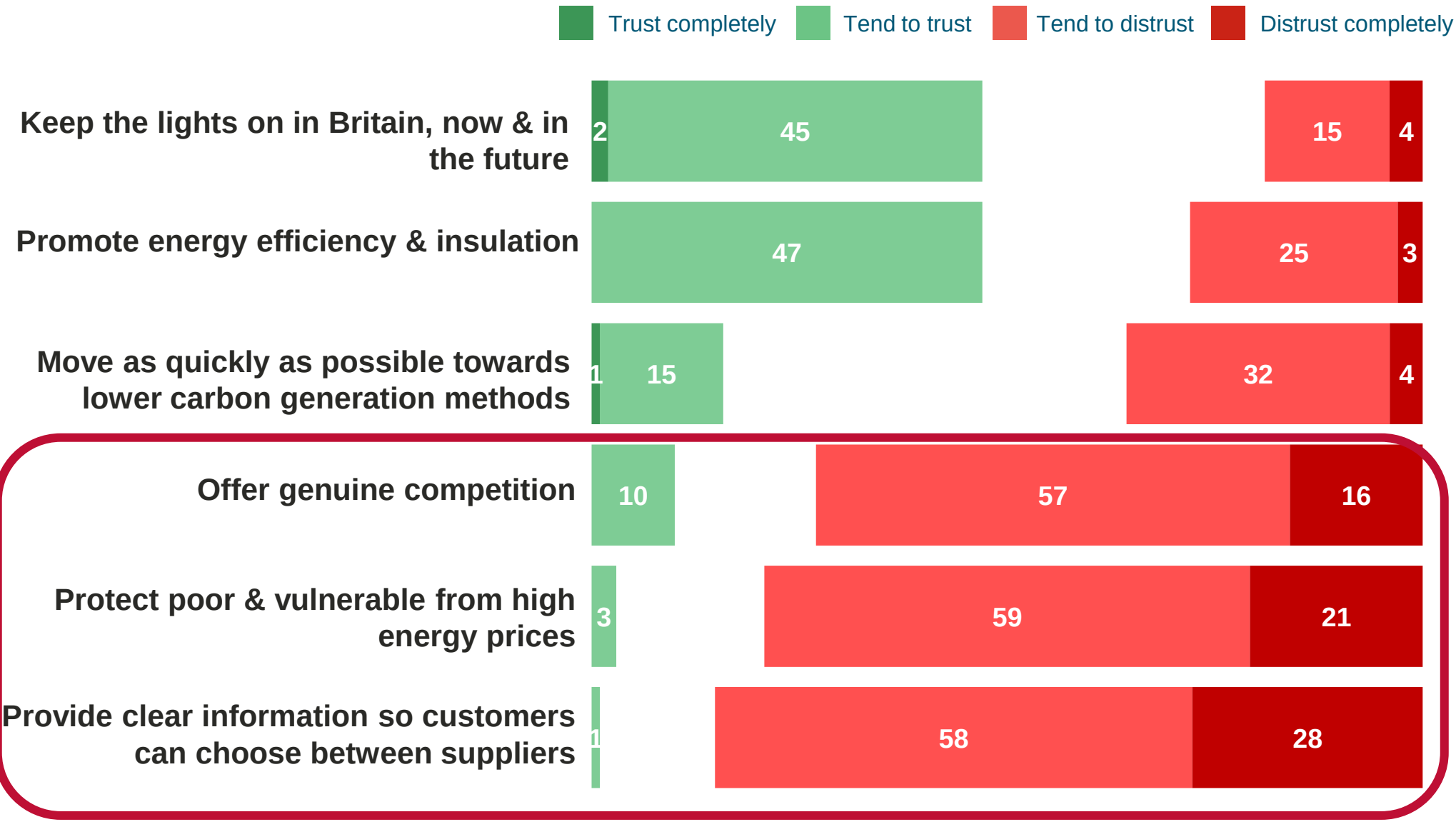
…provide them with value for money – 45%

… be open and transparent – 50%

Base: 2,021 British adults aged 18+ at least partly responsible for paying household energy bills, August/September 2014

Source: DECC/ Energy UK

MPs trust industry less in some areas too



Q Could you please tell me the extent to which you trust or distrust energy companies in general to do each of the following:

Base: All MPs (93), Conservative MPs (38), Labour MPs (44) and Liberal Democrat MPs (8) asked, summer 2012

Energy security: a significant public concern

% Concerned that in the future…

81% The UK will become too dependent on energy from other countries

78% Supplies of fossil fuels (e.g. coal and gas) will run out

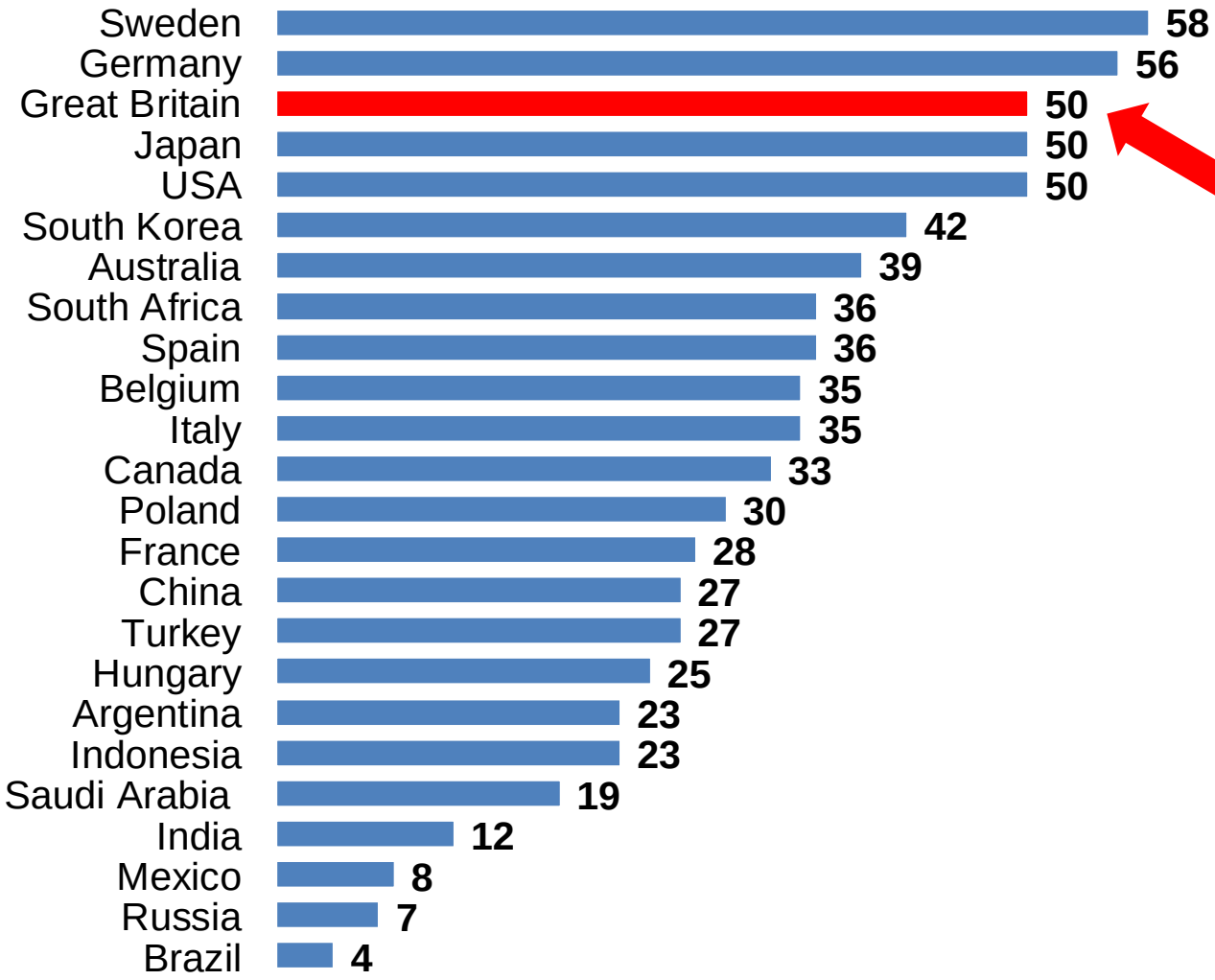
Base:1,822 British adults, aged 15 and over, 6th January-26 March 2010

Source: Ipsos MORI / Cardiff University

Brits care more than most about energy security

What are the three most important environmental issues in your country?

% Future energy sources and supplies



Base: Between 500-1010 respondents per country, February 2 - 14 2011

Source: Ipsos Global @dvisor

Public recognise energy use contributes to climate change

% in UK thinking that each activity contributes to climate change a lot / moderate amount…

Burning coal, oil & gas in power stations to produce electricity → **87%**

Industry & manufacturing e.g. production of goods → **85%**

Heating & cooling our homes and offices → **80%**

Base:1,040 UK adults, 2014

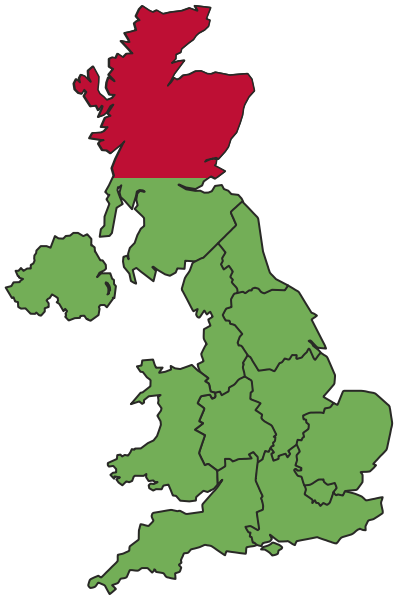
Source: Ipsos MORI / Chatham House

Although concern about climate change has been falling … (until the 2013/14 floods)

2005

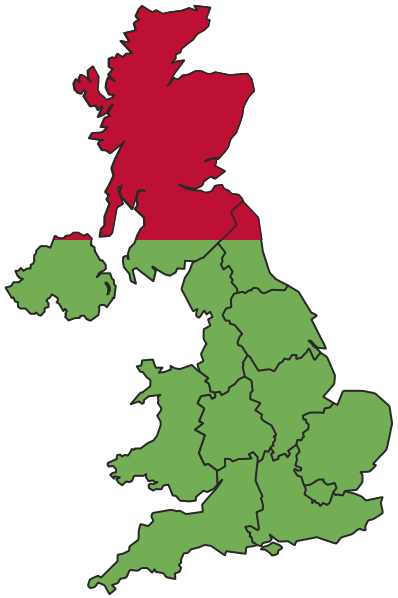
82% concerned

2010



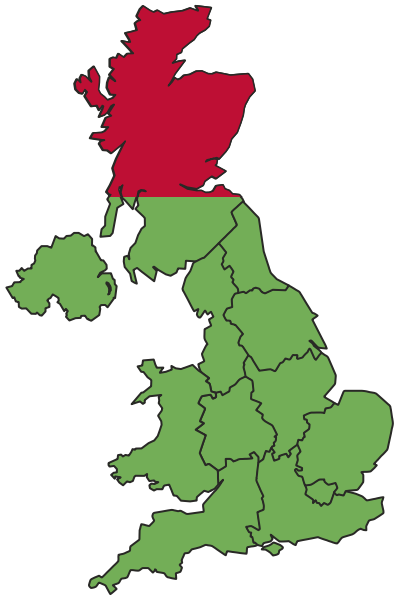
71% concerned

2013



60% concerned

2014



68% concerned

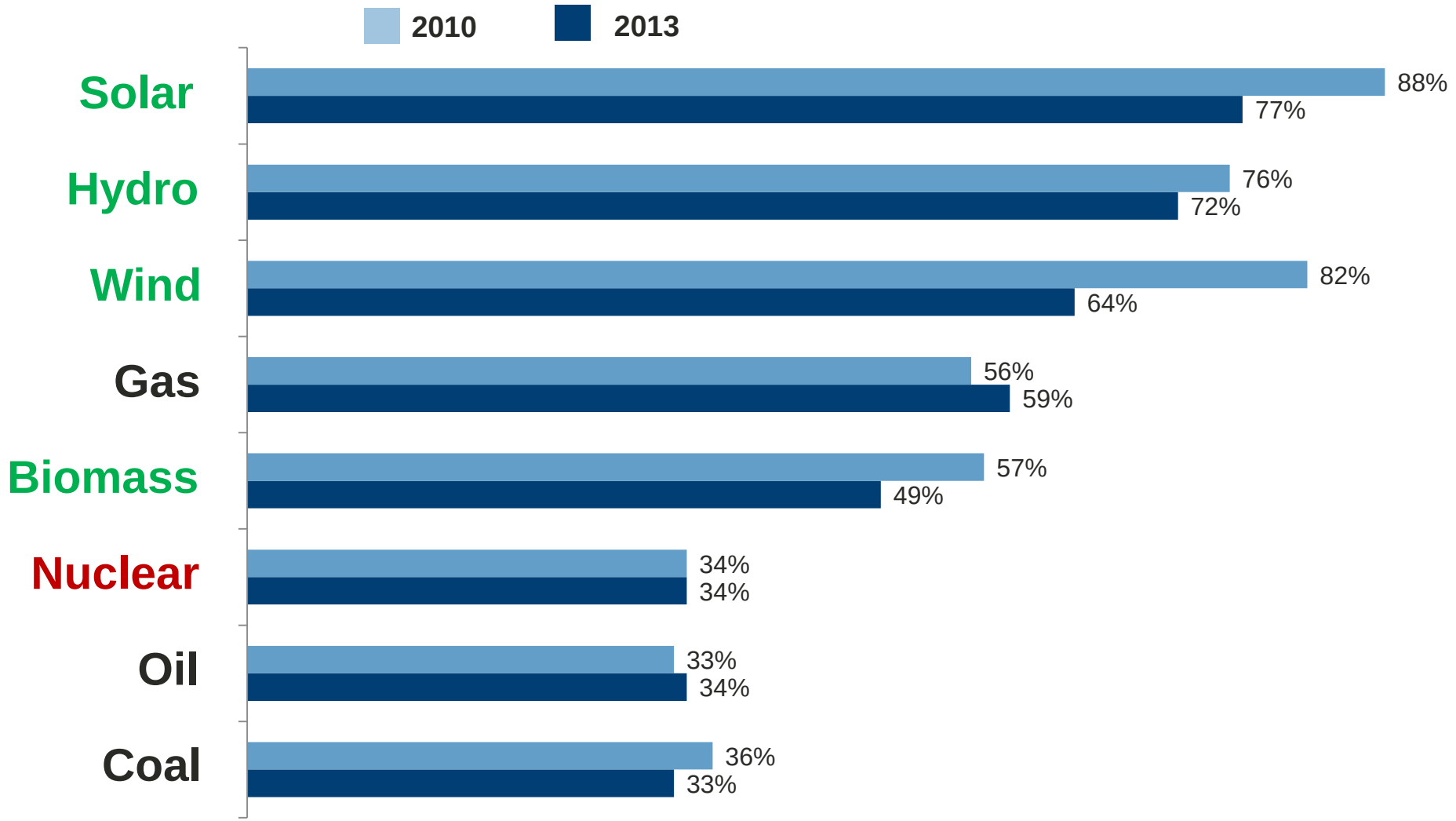
Base: **2014:** 1,002 British adults, 28th August – 31st October **2013:** 973 Great British adults, aged 15 and over, 8th - 26th March 2013; **2010:** 1,822 Great British adults, aged 15 and over, 6th January - 26th March 2010; **2005:** 1,491 Great British adults, aged 15 and over, 1st October – 6th November 2005. **Methodology:** face-to-face in-home

Source: Ipsos MORI/Cardiff University

How accepting are public of policies aiming to meet goals of security of supply, affordability & climate change mitigation?

Renewables favoured over fossil fuels, though support shows signs of decline

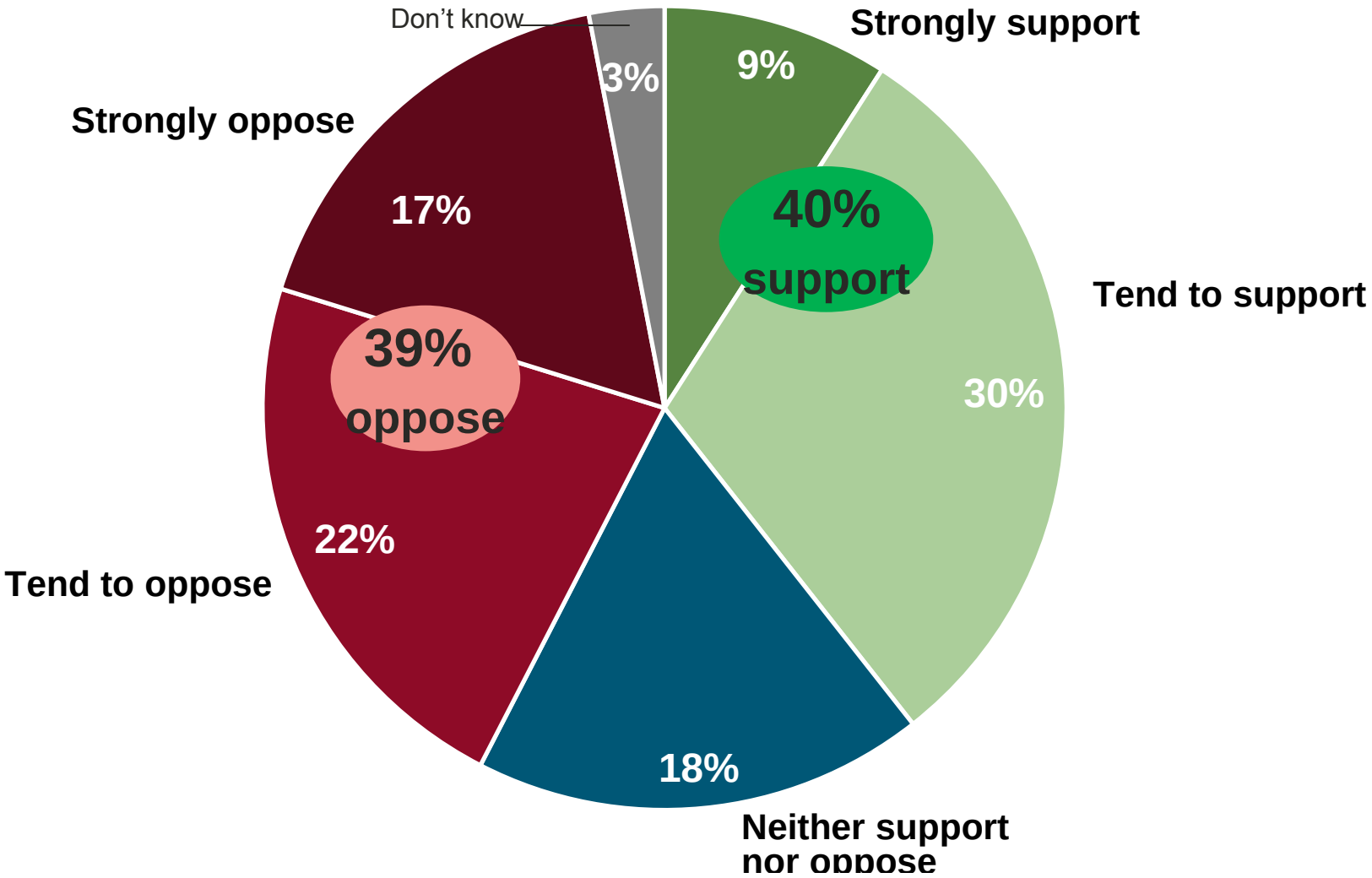
% Very/fairly favourable



Bases: 2013: 973 British adults, aged 15 and over, 8th - 26th March 2013; **2010:** 1,822 British adults, aged 15 and over, 6th January - 26th March 2010

Source: Ipsos MORI / Cardiff University

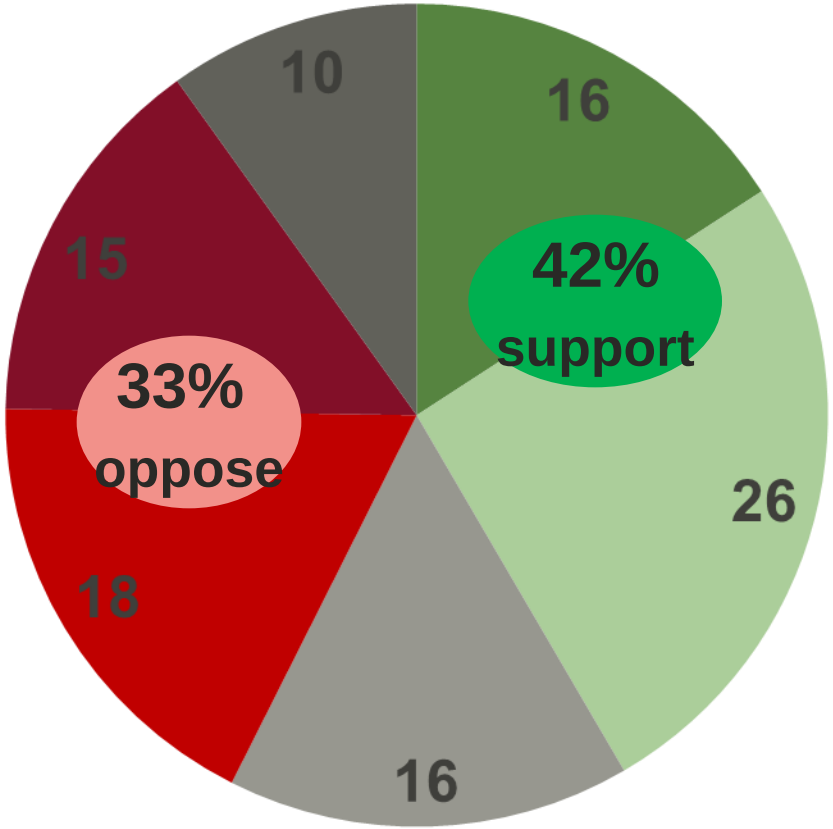
Support for tax increases to pay for more renewable energy



Source: Ipsos MORI / Cardiff University

Base: 1,002 British adults, 28th August – 31st October 2014

On balance public likely to support replacing our nuclear power stations, but some work to be done to convince more



Q. To what extent do you support or oppose the building of new nuclear power stations in Britain to replace those being phased out over the next few years? This would ensure that the previous proportion of nuclear energy is retained.

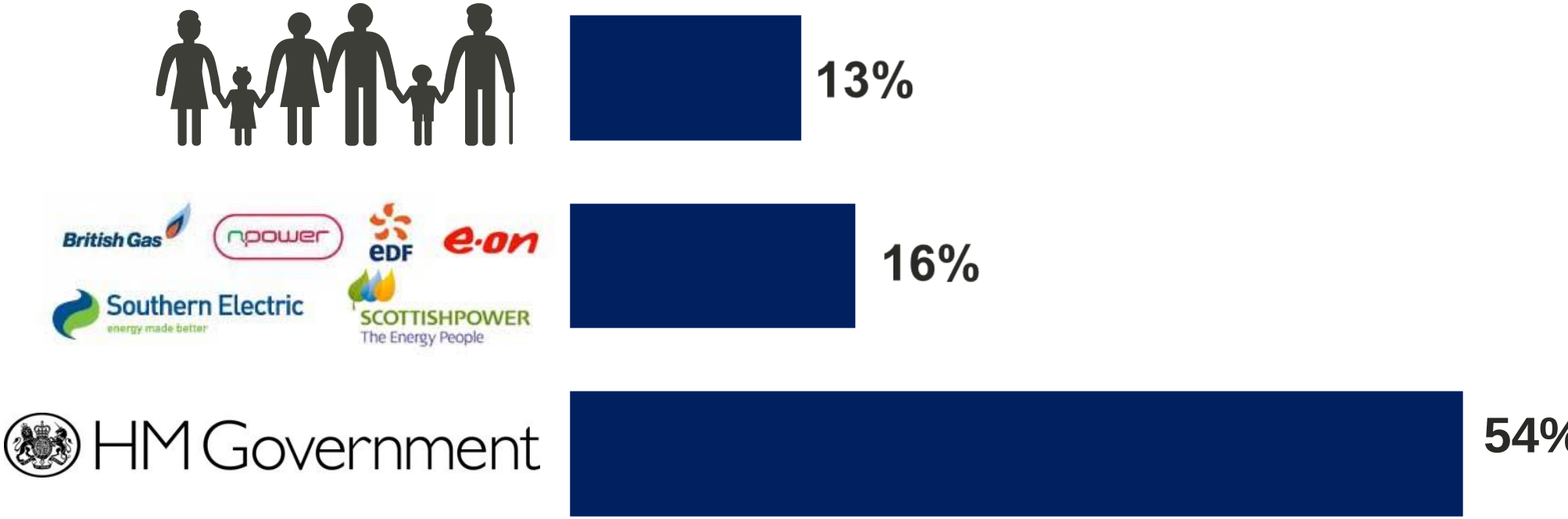
Base: 973 British adults, aged 15 and over, 8th - 26th March 2013

Source: Ipsos MORI / Cardiff University

How willing are public to act themselves?

Responsibility firmly placed on Government

"Mainly responsible for ensuring appropriate changes are made to UK energy system over next 40 years"



Base: 2,441 British adults, aged 15 and over, 2nd-12th August 2012

Source: Energy Systems, Ipsos MORI / Cardiff University/UKERC, 2013

We do have aspirations to reduce our energy use

74% I have tried to reduce the amount of energy I use at home

59% I think there is more I could do to reduce the amount of energy I use at home

84% Likely to buy more energy efficient appliances

Base: 2,210 British adults aged 18+ at least partly responsible for paying household energy bills, 5th April – 2nd May 2013

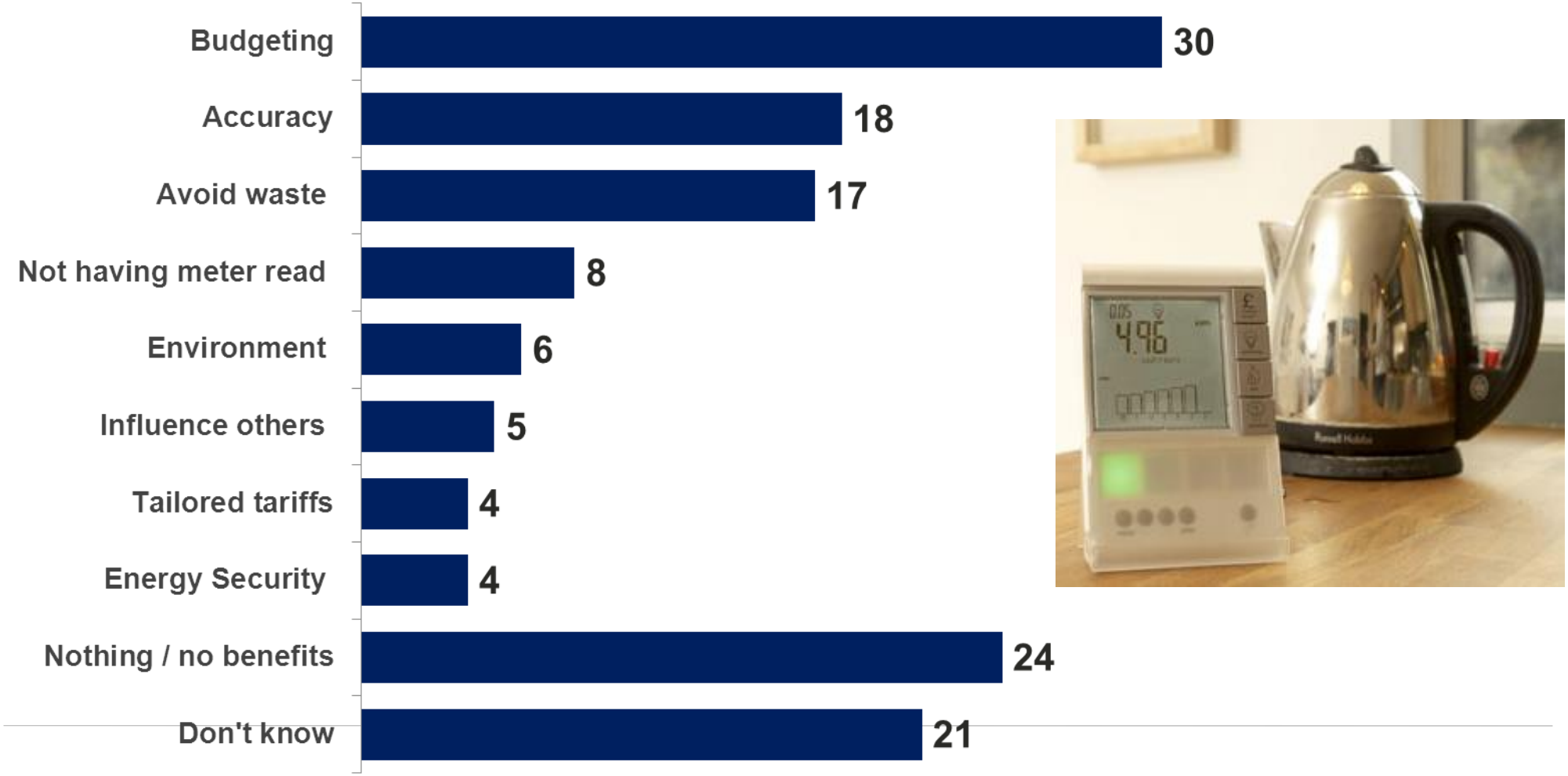
3rd statement: Base: 1,002 British adults, 28th August – 31st October 2014

Source: DECC / Ipsos MORI

Source: Cardiff University / Ipsos MORI

Smart meters expected to help households budget & avoid wasted energy use

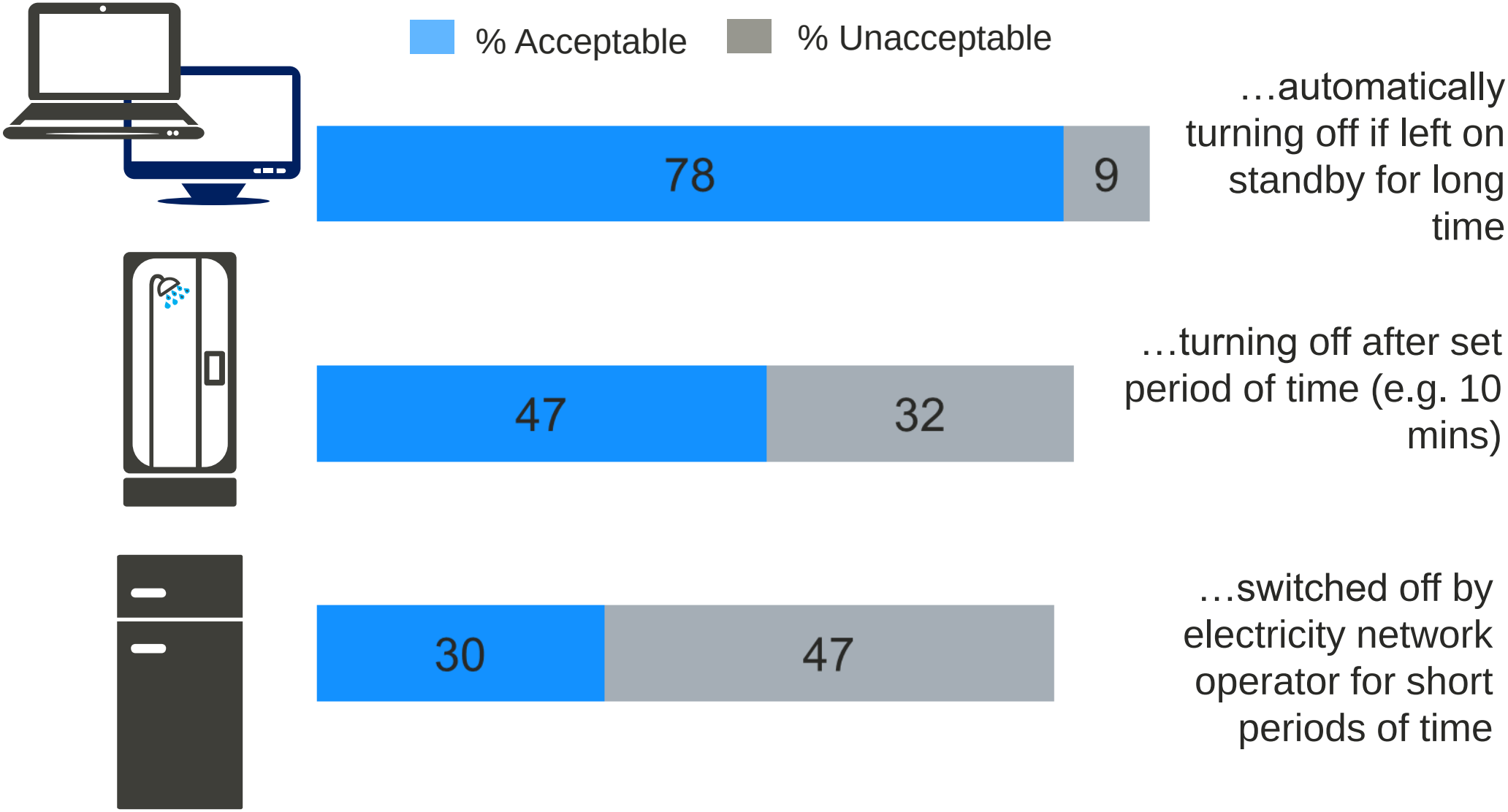
What, if anything, do you think you would benefit from if you had a smart meter installed in your home? *(spontaneous)*



Base: 2,210 British adults aged 18+ at least partly responsible for paying household energy bills, 5th April – 2nd May 2013

Source: DECC/ Ipsos MORI

But concerns about getting too “smart”



Base: 2,441 British adults, aged 15 and over, 2nd-12th August 2012

Source: Cardiff University / Ipsos MORI

Gas is still the default option for heating our homes

If you were going to replace your current heating system, what types of heating system would you consider to heat both your home and hot water?

81%

3%

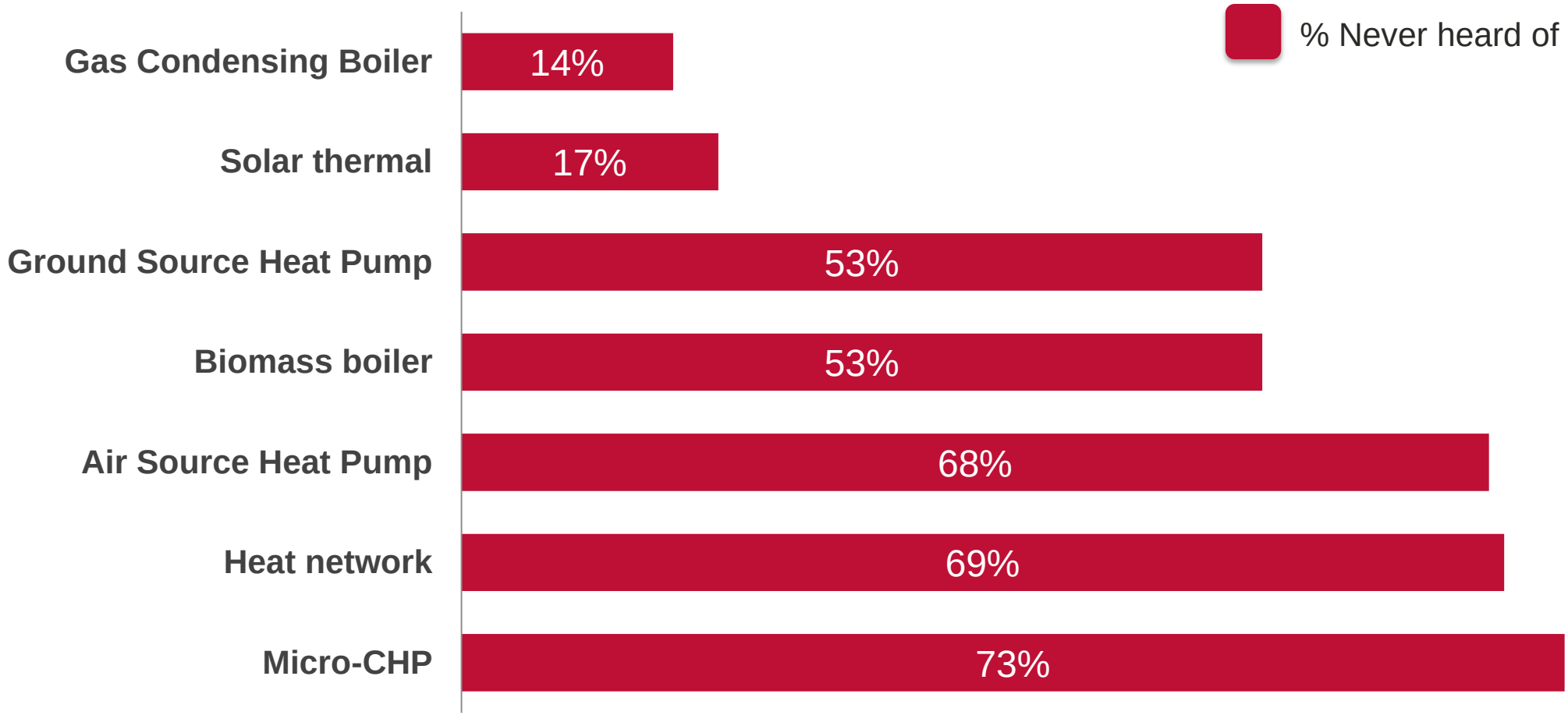
3%

Base: All GB homeowners aged 18+ who do not currently heat their home mainly using a GSHP, ASHP, biomass boiler or heat network (2,848), 28th August to 14th October 2012

Source: More Efficient Heating Study, Ipsos MORI / DECC, 2013

With many consumers unaware of lower carbon options

Which of the following best describes the extent to which you had heard of each of these ways of heating your home and/or hot water before today?



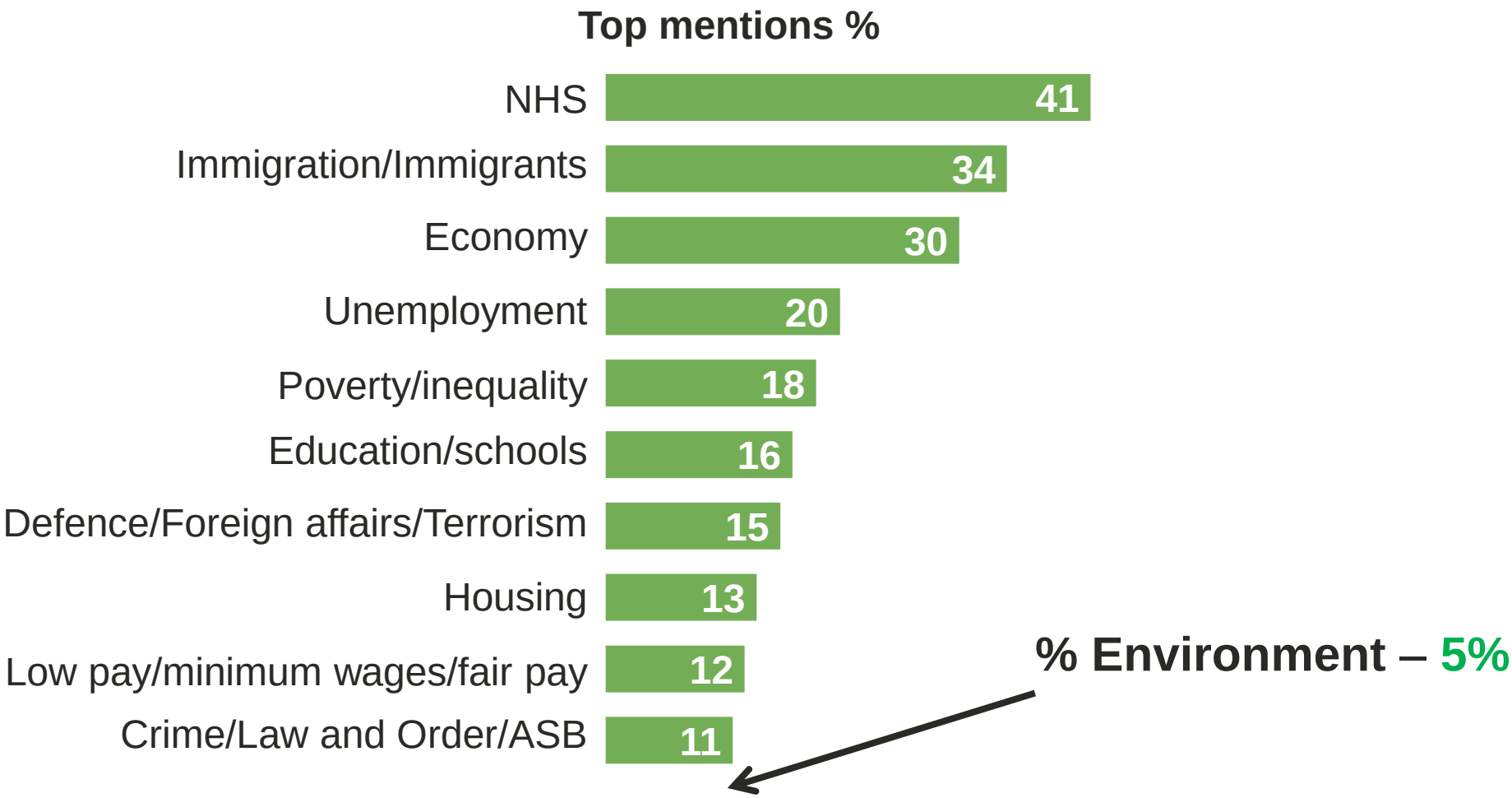
Source: Ipsos MORI/DECC More Efficient Heating Study, 28th August to 14th Oct 2012

Base: All GB homeowners aged 18+ (2,900)

Challenges for policymakers

Energy competing against many other issues

What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?

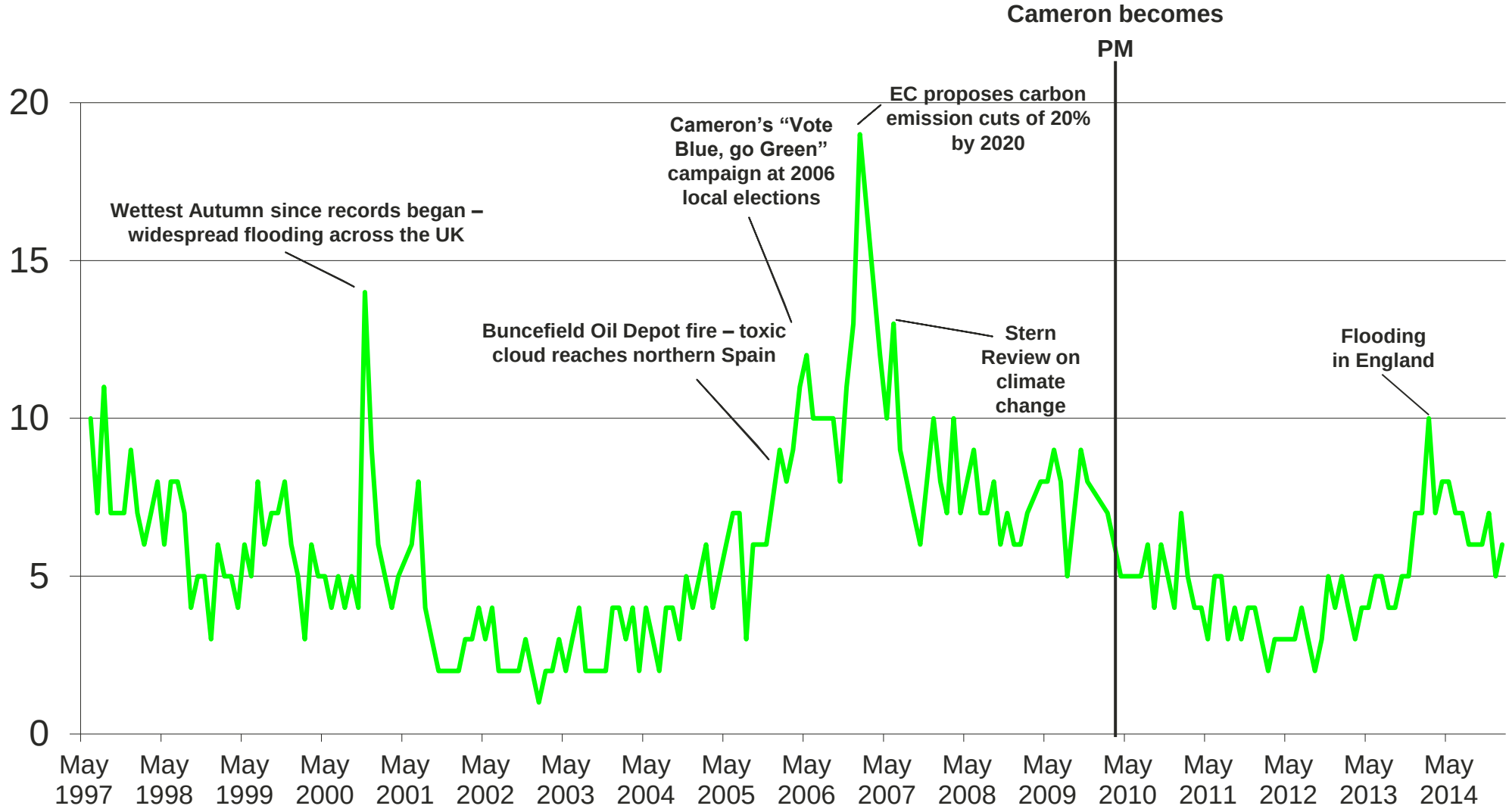


Base: 966 British adults 18+, 6th – 15th February 2015

Source: Ipsos MORI Issues Index

Concern about the environment similar now compared to before 2010 election

What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?

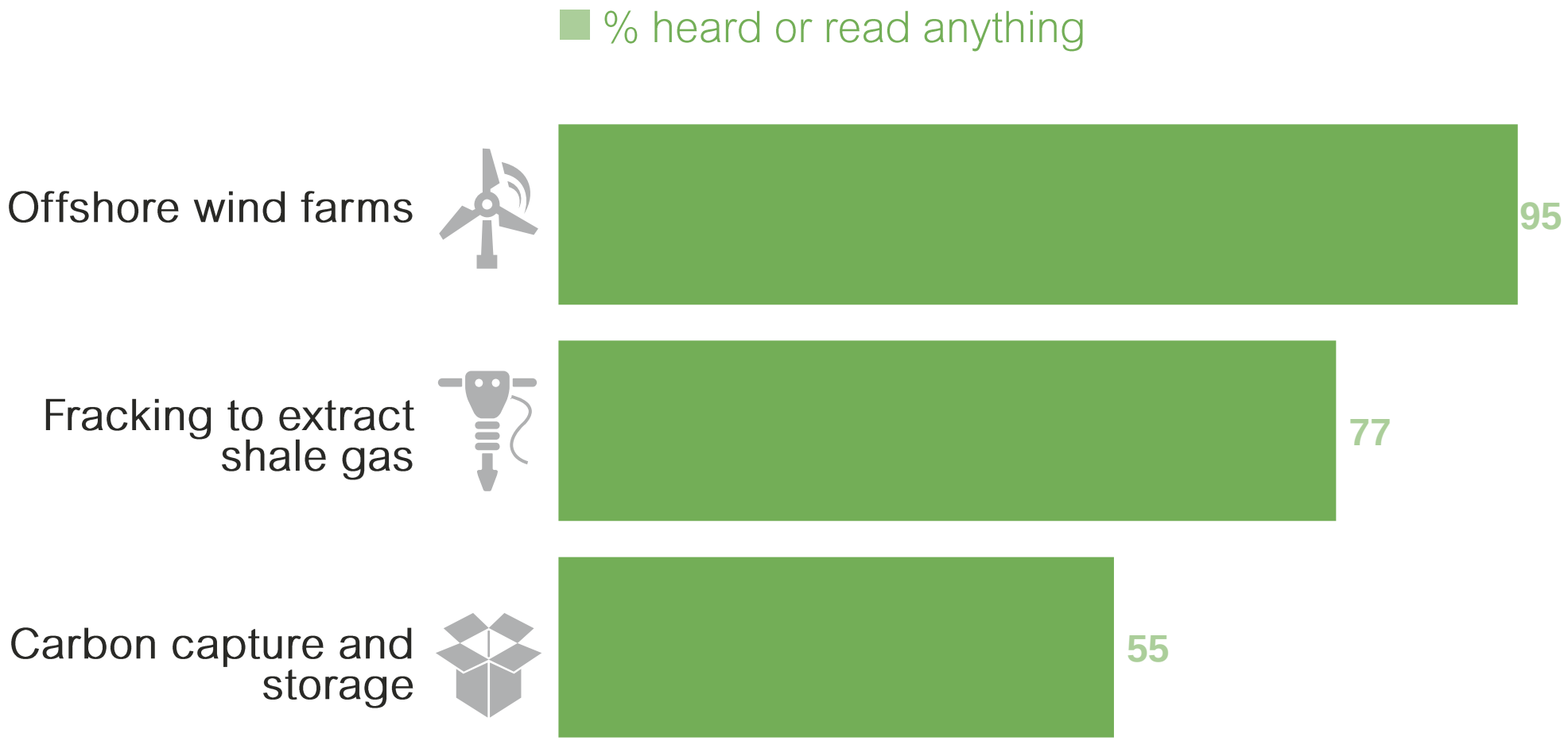


Base: representative sample of c.1,000 British adults age 18+ each month, interviewed face-to-face in home

Source: Ipsos MORI Issues Index

Energy is an issue people are hearing about…

How much, if anything, have you heard or read about the following energy technologies?

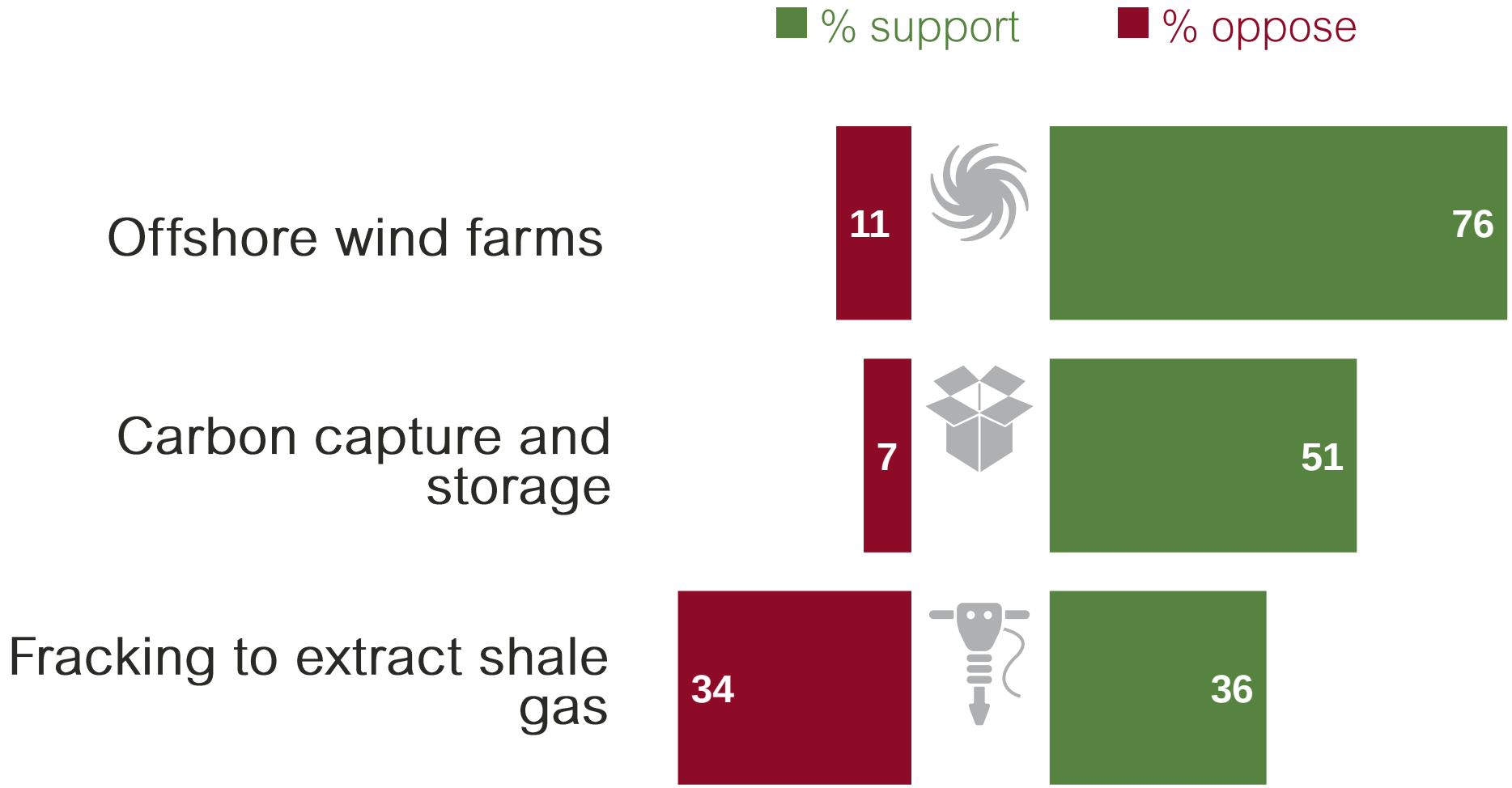


Base: 428 UK adults aged 16+

Source: Ipsos MORI Public Attitudes to Science

…but that doesn't always lead to favourable opinions

To what extent do you support or oppose the development of the following energy technologies in the UK?

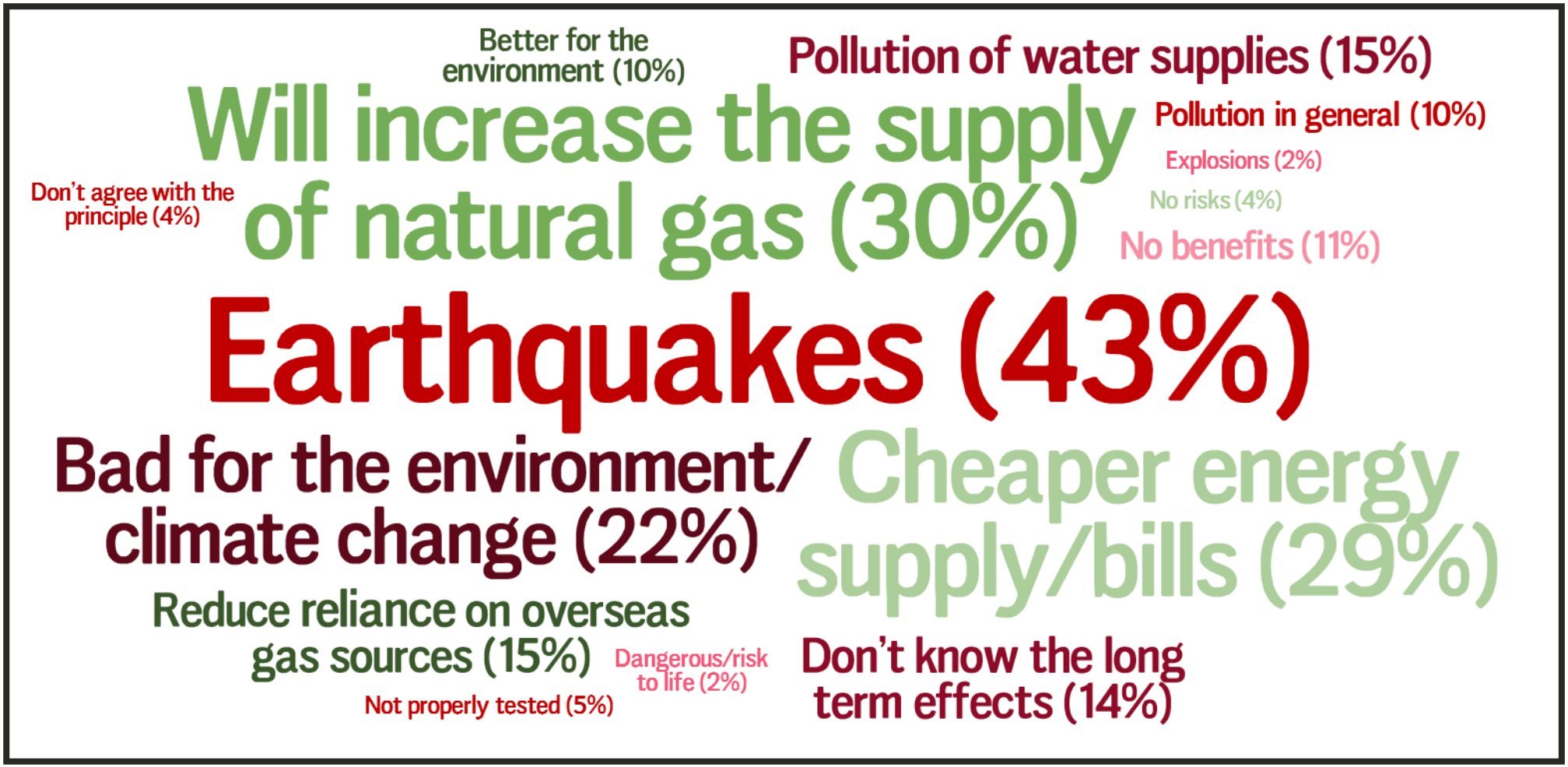


Base: 428 UK adults aged 16+

Source: Ipsos MORI Public Attitudes to Science

Depends on messages getting through

What would you say are the main benefits/risks, if any, of fracking to extract shale gas?

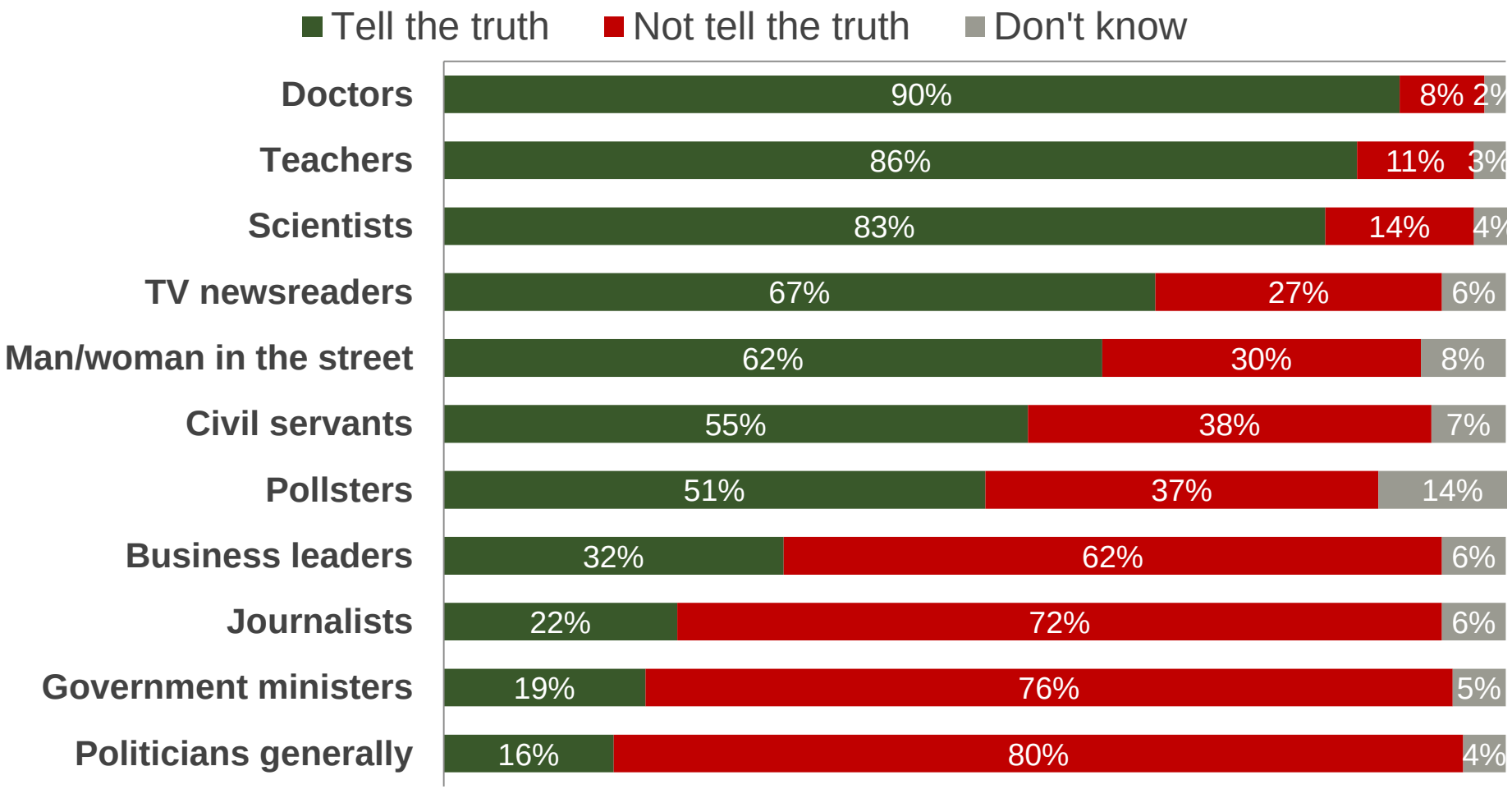


Base: 315 adults who have heard of fracking to extract shale gas
N.B. word clouds are illustrative of data, not statistically representative; only codes registering 2% or more are shown

Source: Ipsos MORI Public Attitudes to Science

And who is delivering the message

Now I will read you a list of different types of people. For each would you tell me if you generally trust them to tell the truth or not?



Source: Ipsos MORI Veracity Index, December 2014
Base: All GB adults aged 15+ (1,166),

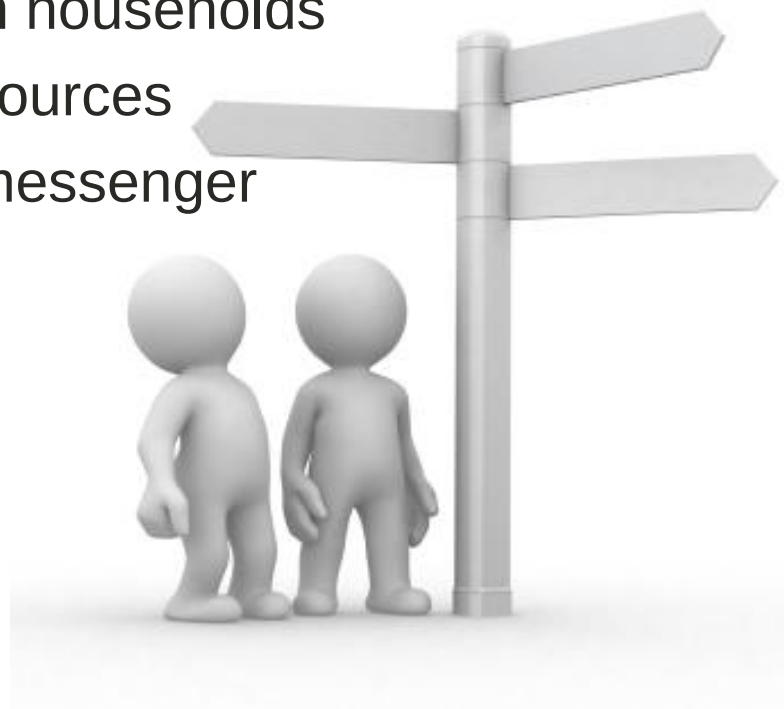
Some clear preferences, but also some challenges

Public would like our future energy system to involve…

- A secure supply – with mix likely to include renewables & nuclear
- An affordable supply & fair pricing from suppliers

But significant challenges remain…

- Responsibility firmly placed on Government
- Concerns around impact of cost of changes on households
- Mixed picture on opinions of different energy sources
- Opinions greatly influenced by message and messenger



Version 1 | Public

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Antonia Dickman, Joint Head of Environment Research, Ipsos MORI

020 7347 3157; antonia.dickman@ipsos.com

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