



Capitals and Covid: how Londoners and Parisians see their cities in light of the pandemic

September 2021



1. The key issues now facing the capitals

Covid-19 tops both Londoners' and Parisians' lists of the most important issues facing their cities – but there are big differences in what they see as the next most pressing priorities

The cost of living and crime and policing are much greater concerns in Greater London than in Greater Paris, while the cleanliness of streets, parks and other public spaces is the third biggest issue according to those living in the French capital – something which doesn't even make the top 10 in London.

Immigration also comes eighth in Parisians' list of priorities for their city, but appears much lower – 17th – on Londoners' list. And compared with in 2019, Brexit has become considerably less of an issue for those in the UK capital.

Crucially, Parisians have lower levels of concern about most of the issues asked about.

Note: “Greater Paris” includes people interviewed in both the city of Paris and its inner suburbs; “Greater London” includes people interviewed across the Greater London area

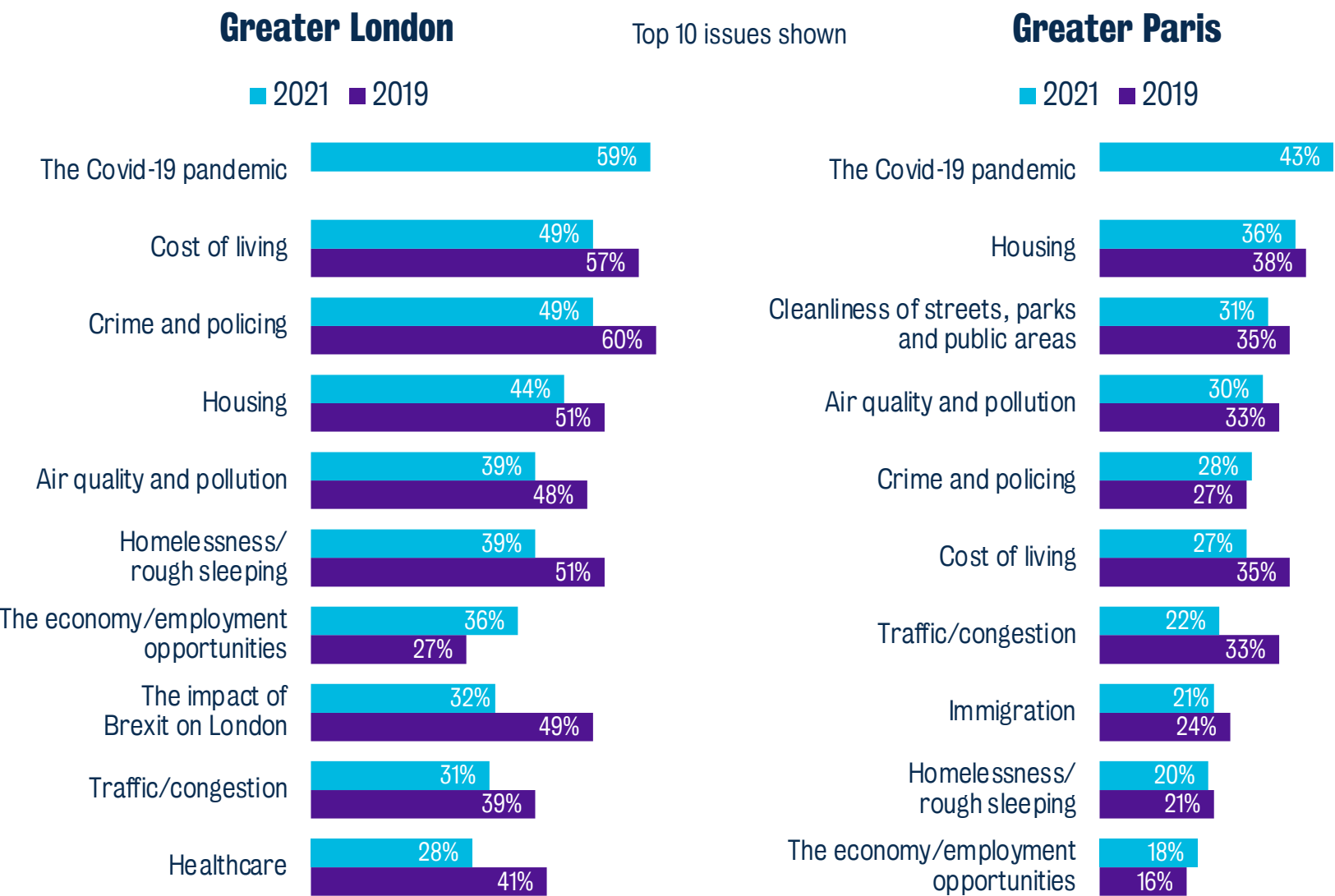
The Covid-19 crisis is seen as the most important issue facing both cities, with Londoners (59%) considerably more concerned than Parisians (43%) about the pandemic.

Londoners are also much more likely to see the cost of living in their city as an important issue (49% vs 27%) – although concern about this has fallen since 2019.

Cleanliness of public spaces is the third biggest issue for Parisians, with 31% saying it’s a concern. By contrast, this doesn’t even feature in Londoners’ top 10.

Concern about the economy and employment has risen in Greater London over the past couple of years (36% vs 27%), and while 49% of the UK capital’s residents said the impact of Brexit on the city was a pressing issue for them in 2019, 32% now feel this way – a significant decline.

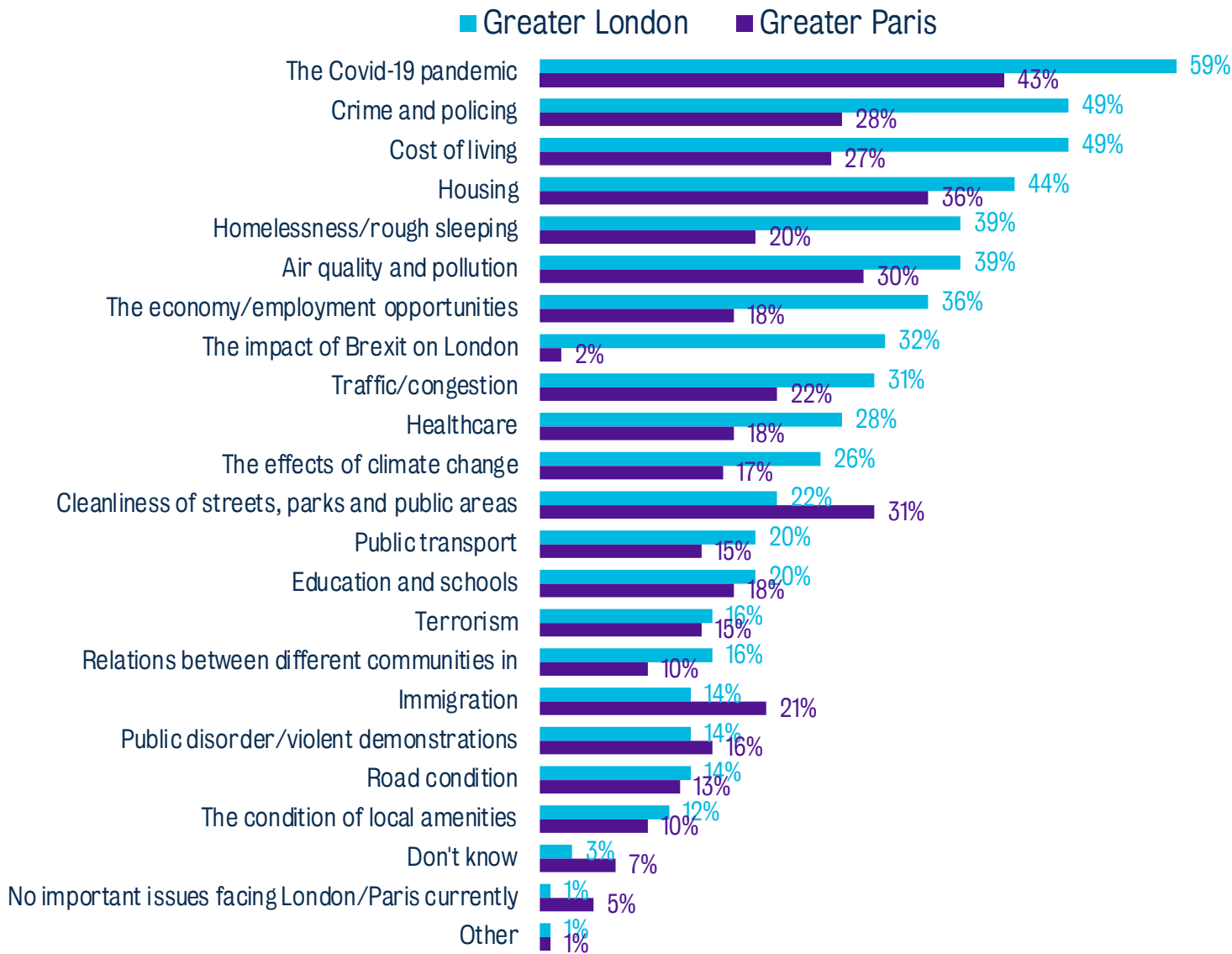
What would you say are the most/other important issues facing London/Paris today?



Looking at the full list of issues asked about in 2021, people in Greater Paris generally have less concern about them – even on healthcare, where, despite the pandemic, only 18% see it as important issue facing their city, compared with 28% in Greater London.

Londoners are also twice as likely as Parisians to see the economy and economic opportunities as a key concern (36% vs 18%).

What would you say are the most/other important issues facing London/Paris today?



Base: 1,002 adults aged 18+ in Paris and 1,000 in London, interviewed online (23 April–5 May 2021 in London; 26 April–17 May in Paris)



2. Views of local areas in light of Covid



Despite lockdowns forcing people to spend much more time closer to home over the past year, people's satisfaction with their local area is largely unchanged from 2019 – and there's actually been a considerable increase in satisfaction with local services

Spending more time locally as a result of the pandemic may have led to some developing a newfound appreciation for their local services. Majorities in both Greater London and Greater Paris now say they're satisfied with services such as schools, transport and police – a notable change from two years ago.

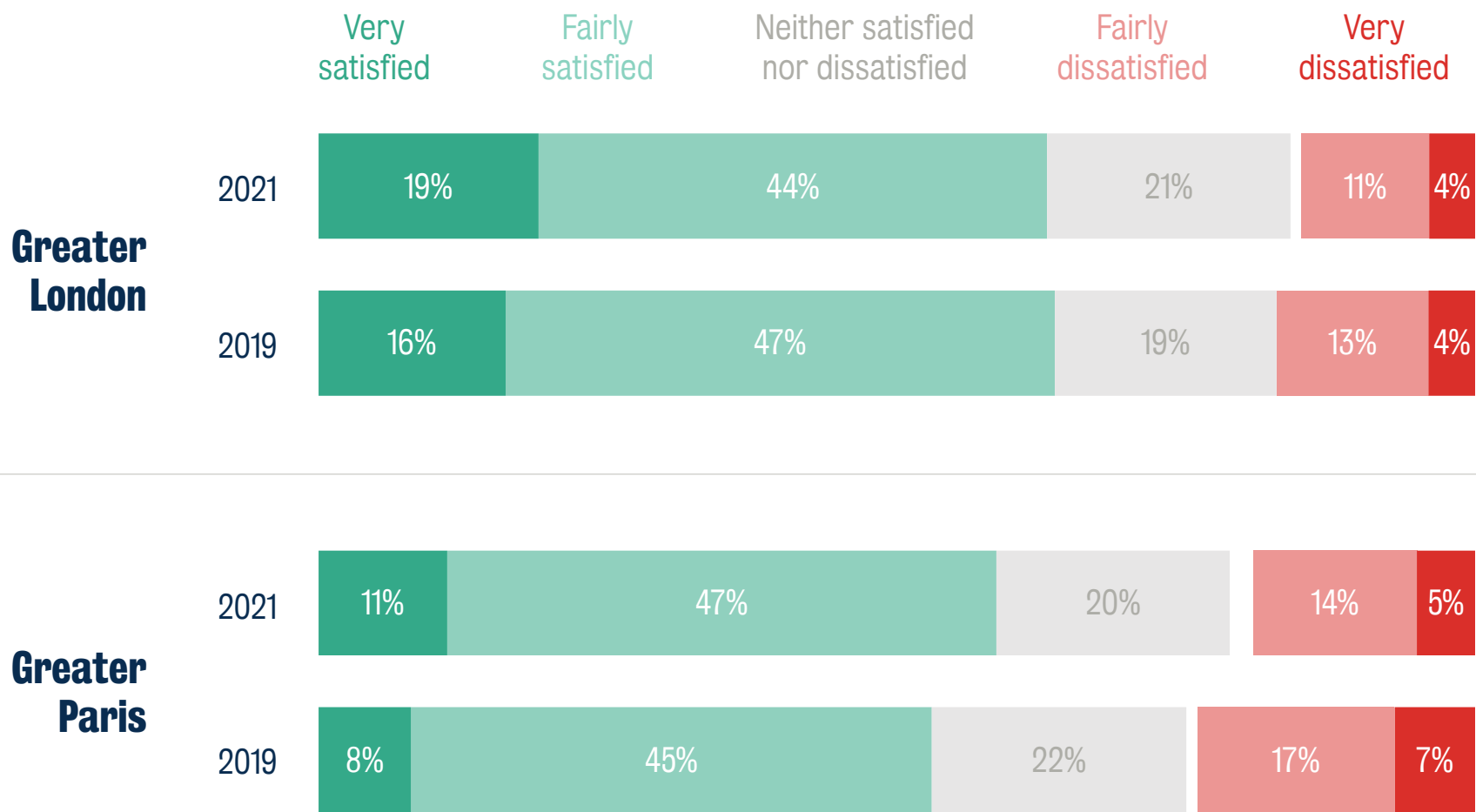
And Londoners and Parisians largely agree on what makes a local area good to live in – aside from on public transport links, which those in the UK capital see as a much bigger factor, and on environmental quality, which those in Greater Paris think is a more important consideration.

People’s satisfaction with their local area overall, as a place to live, is largely unchanged in both cities – despite lockdowns forcing people to spend much more time closer to home.

In Greater Paris, 59% say they’re satisfied with their local area, compared with 53% in 2019, while in Greater London, 63% also feel this way – the same as two years ago (64%).

Note some figures differ from charts due to rounding.

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

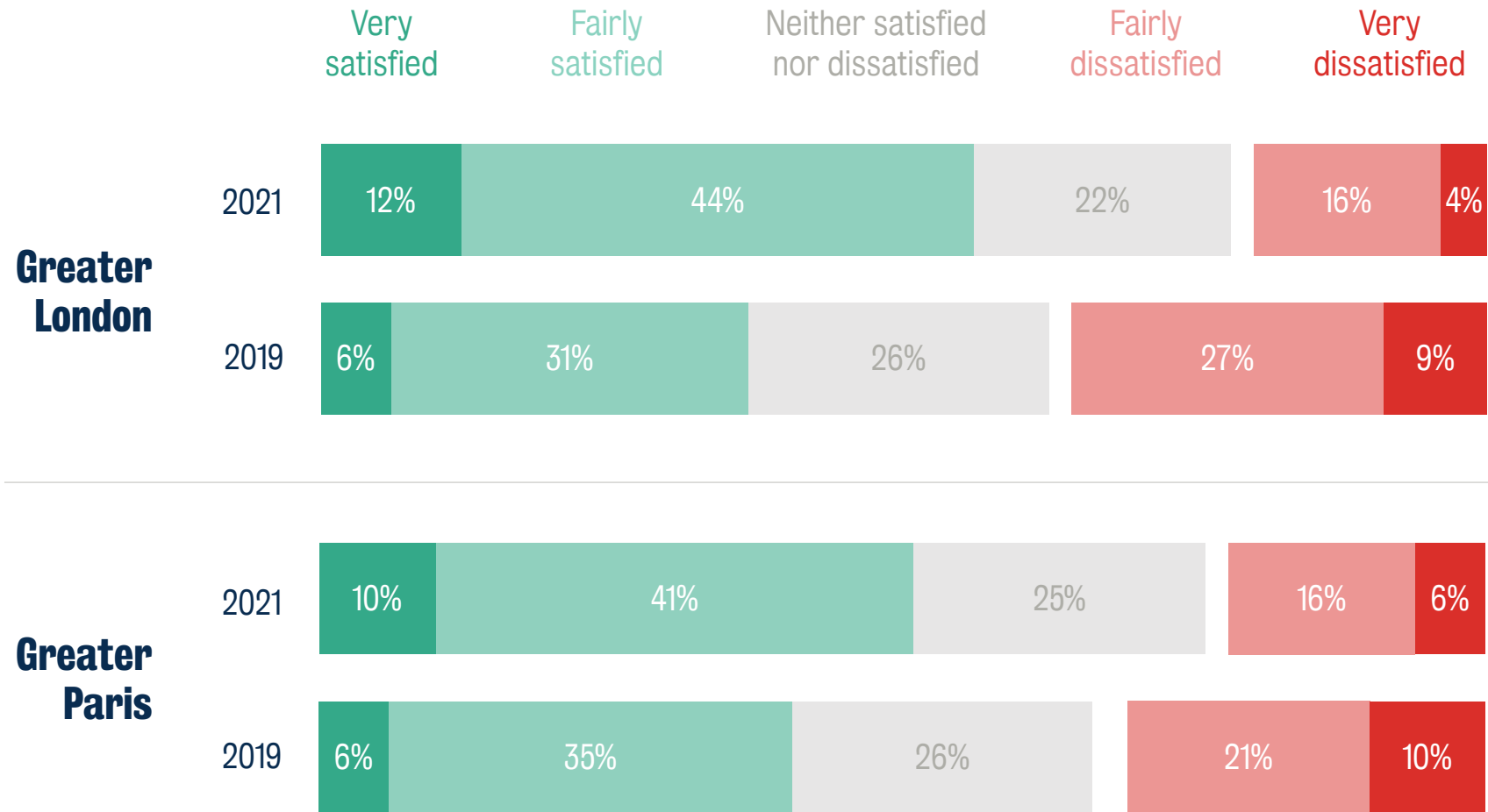


2021 base: 1,002 adults aged 18+ in Paris and 1,000 in London, interviewed online (23 April–5 May 2021 in London; 26 April–17 May in Paris)
2019 base: 1,010 adults aged 18+ in Paris and 1,000 in London, interviewed online (29 November–4 December 2019)

56% of Londoners now say they are satisfied with local services such as schools, transport and police – up from 37% in 2019.

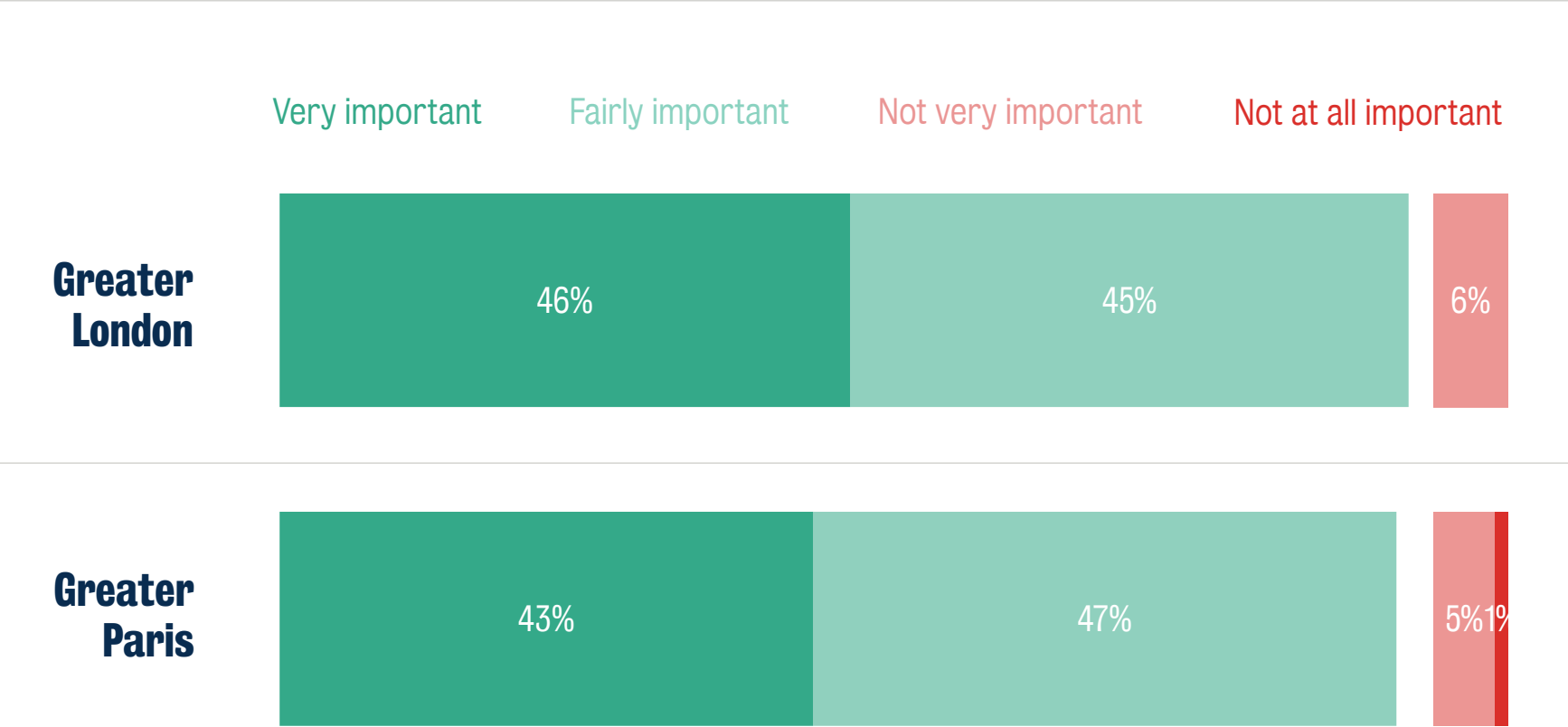
And in Greater Paris, satisfaction has risen from 41% to 51% over the same period.

Thinking about local services in London/Paris such as schools, transport and police, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you, in general, with the level of service provided?



The idea of a “15-minute city” is supported by the overwhelming majority of residents of both Greater London and Greater Paris: nine in 10 people in each of the two cities think it’s important to have sufficient local facilities that are reachable in this time.

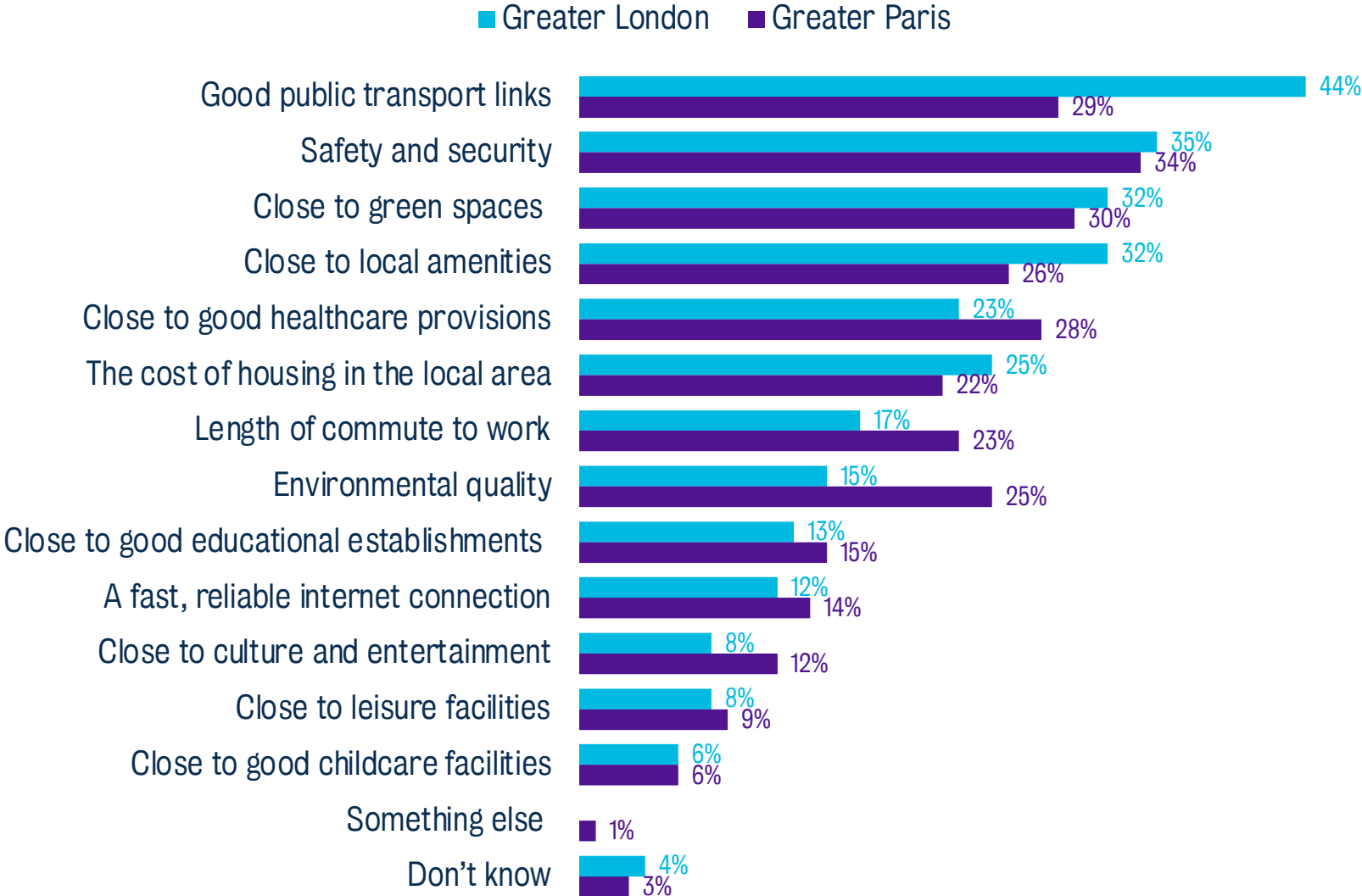
How important, if at all, do you think it is that people living in London/Paris have access to all of the local facilities they need within their local area, that is the area within 15-20 minutes’ walking distance from their home?



44% of Londoners say good public transport links are one of the most important considerations for a good local area – the most commonly chosen feature, and much more widely selected than in Greater Paris, where 29% of residents say the same.

Parisians, on the other hand, are much more likely to say that environmental quality is key for a good local area (25% vs 15%).

Which three or four of the following, if any, are most important to you personally in thinking about what makes a good local area to live in?



Base: 1,002 adults aged 18+ in Paris and 1,000 in London, interviewed online (23 April–5 May 2021 in London; 26 April–17 May in Paris)



**3. Do people now want
to escape city life?**

There is little sign of a mass exodus from either city as a result of Covid, but there are a couple of key differences between the two when it comes to the motivations some have for moving out

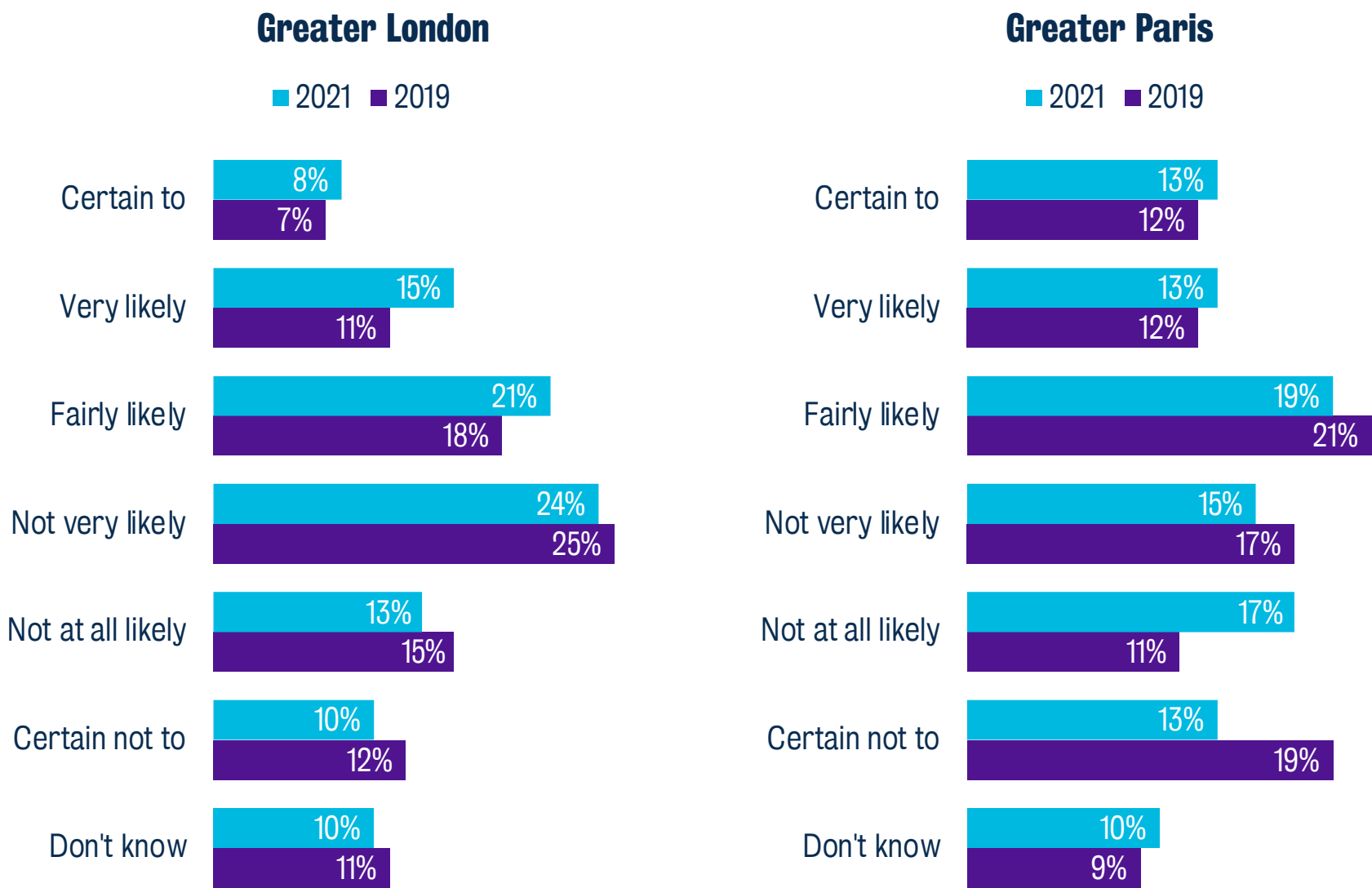
The desire to live in a better physical environment is a much bigger motivation for Parisians looking to leave the city, while affordability and the cost of living are far greater drivers in Greater London.

An abstract graphic on the right side of the slide, featuring a series of concentric, wavy lines in shades of blue and purple that create a sense of depth and movement, resembling a stylized face or a complex wave pattern.

43% of Londoners say it's likely they'll leave the city in the next five years – a slight increase from 37% who said the same in 2019.

The proportion of Parisians who say they'll move out is virtually unchanged since two years ago (45% vs 44%).

How likely, if at all, is it that you will move out of London/Paris in the next five years?

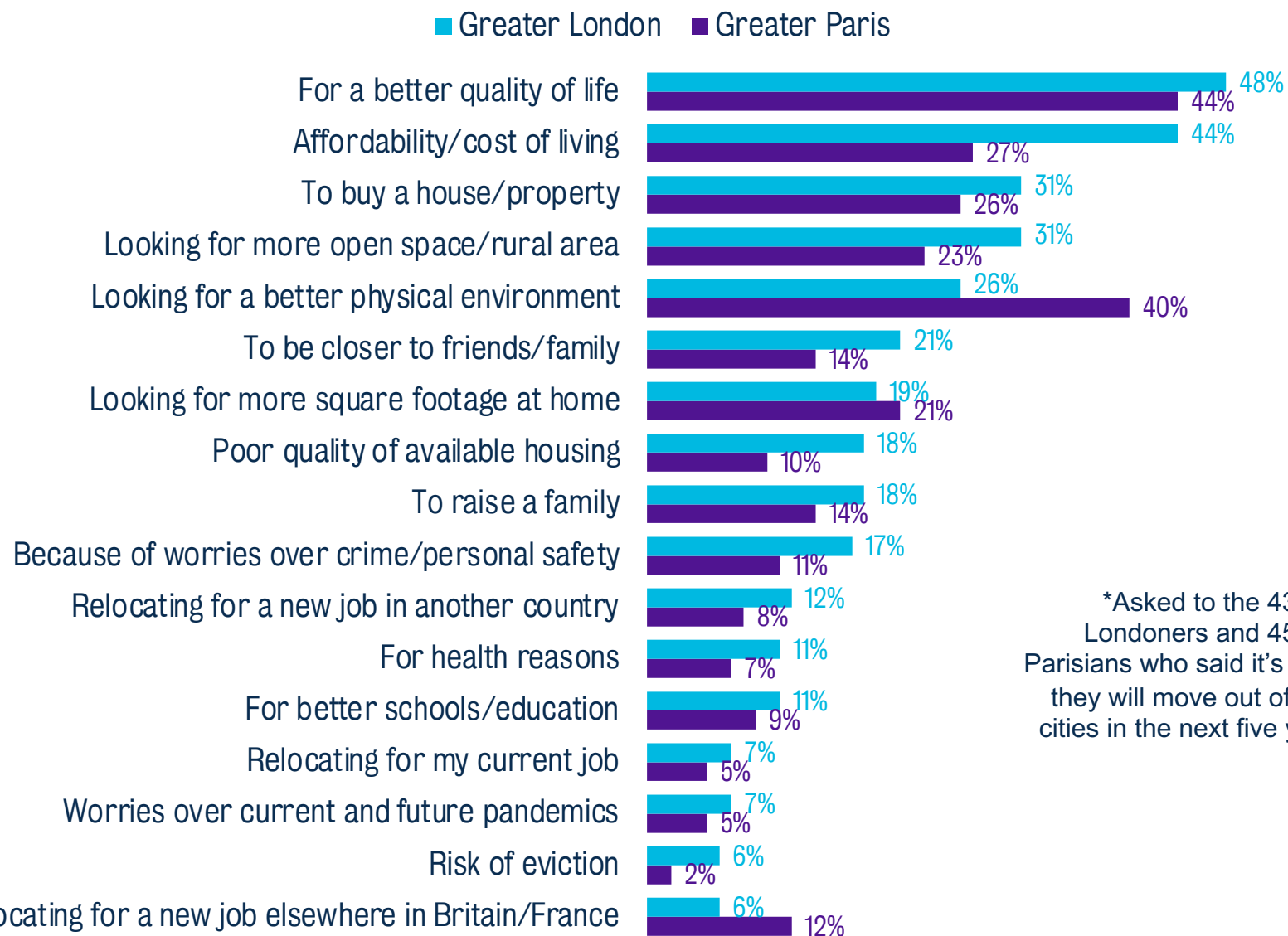


2021 base: 1,002 adults aged 18+ in Paris and 1,000 in London, interviewed online (23 April–5 May 2021 in London; 26 April–17 May in Paris)
2019 base: 1,010 adults aged 18+ in Paris and 1,000 in London, interviewed online (29 November–4 December 2019)

One of the biggest divides in motivations for moving out of the two cities is the desire to find a better physical environment: 40% of Parisians who are considering leaving cite this as a reason, compared with 26% of Londoners.

By contrast, Londoners (44%) are much more likely than Parisians (27%) to say the cost of living in their city is a key factor influencing their decision to want to leave.

For which of the following reasons, if any, are you considering leaving London/Paris?*



*Asked to the 43% of Londoners and 45% of Parisians who said it's likely they will move out of their cities in the next five years

Base: 462 adults aged 18+ in Paris and 431 in London who say they are certain or very likely or fairly likely to leave London/Paris in the next five years, interviewed online (23 April–5 May 2021 in London; 26 April–17 May in Paris)



4. Social cohesion and immigration



Londoners are much more likely than Parisians to think that social cohesion is good in their city, and are far more positive about immigration to their capital

People in Greater London are twice as likely as their Parisian counterparts to say that immigration from outside of the country has had a positive impact on their capital.

A majority of Londoners are also positive about immigration from elsewhere in the UK – much higher than the proportion of Parisians who say the same about the situation there.

And more generally, residents of Greater Paris are much more adamant that their city doesn't need any more immigration. This is despite the fact that Paris already has a far lower share of foreign-born residents than London (20% vs 35%).

74% of Londoners say people of different backgrounds get on well together in their local area – compared with 57% of Parisians who feel the same way.

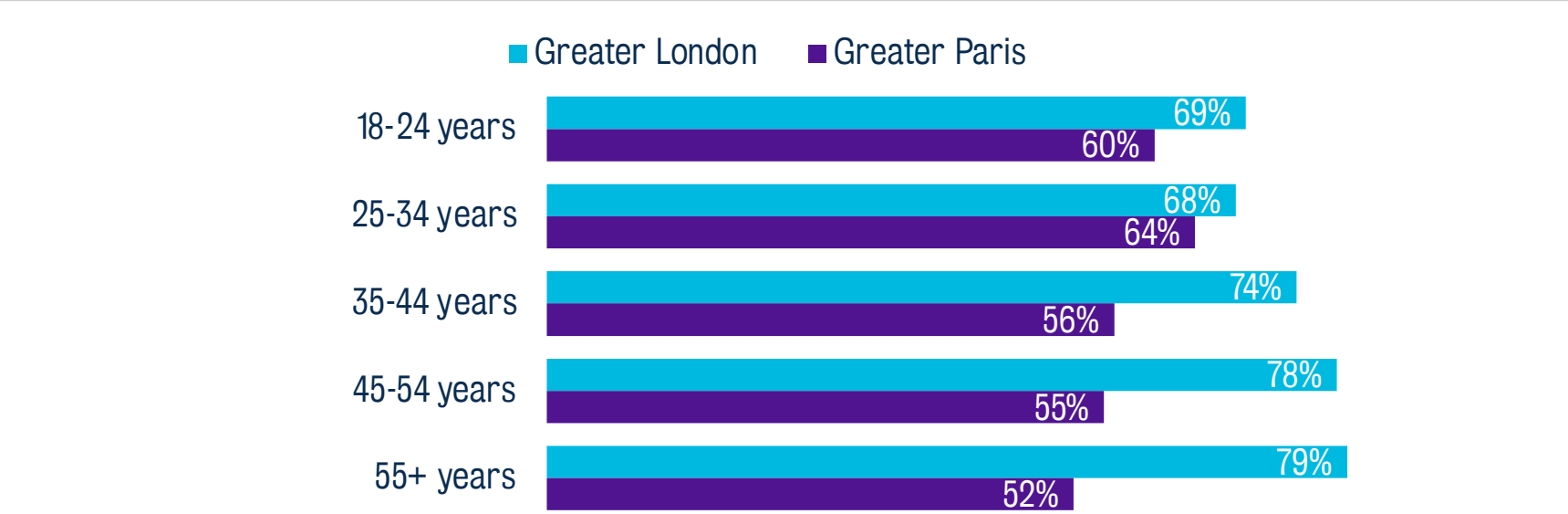
And Parisians twice as likely as Londoners to actively disagree that (29% vs 14%) that this kind of social cohesion is good in their local area.

There are also differing age gradients to the responses given in both cities: in Greater London, the older people are, the more likely they are to say that people in their local area get on well together, whereas in Greater Paris, it is younger age groups who are more likely to feel this way.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different social, ethnic or religious backgrounds get on well together?



% who definitely or tend to agree



Base: 1,002 adults aged 18+ in Paris and 1,000 in London, interviewed online (23 April–5 May 2021 in London; 26 April–17 May in Paris)

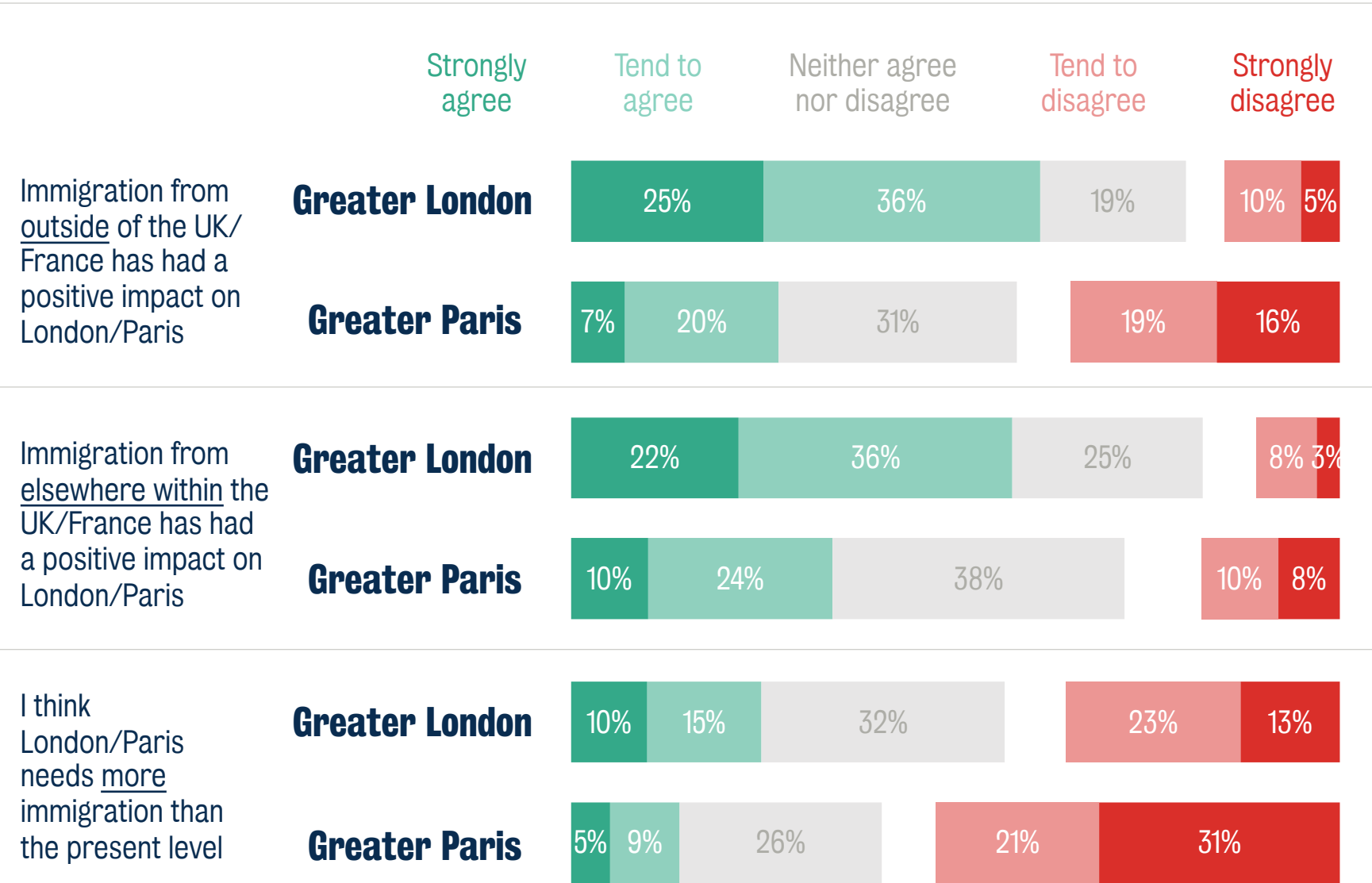
Londoners have a much more favourable view of immigration to their city than do Parisians.

61% of Greater London residents think that immigration from outside of the UK has had a positive impact on their city, compared with 27% of Greater Paris residents who say the same about immigration from outside of France.

Similarly, Londoners are much more likely than Parisians to feel that immigration from elsewhere in the country has been good for their capital (58% vs 34%).

25% of Londoners also agree that the city needs greater immigration, while 14% in Greater Paris feel this way. But there's an even bigger gap when it comes to disagreement with this statement: around half of Parisians (52%) think their city doesn't need more immigration, compared with a third of Londoners (36%).

Thinking now about immigration to London/Paris, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



And linked to potential tensions with the rest of their respective countries, Londoners are more likely than Parisians to think their city gets more than its fair share of central government spending

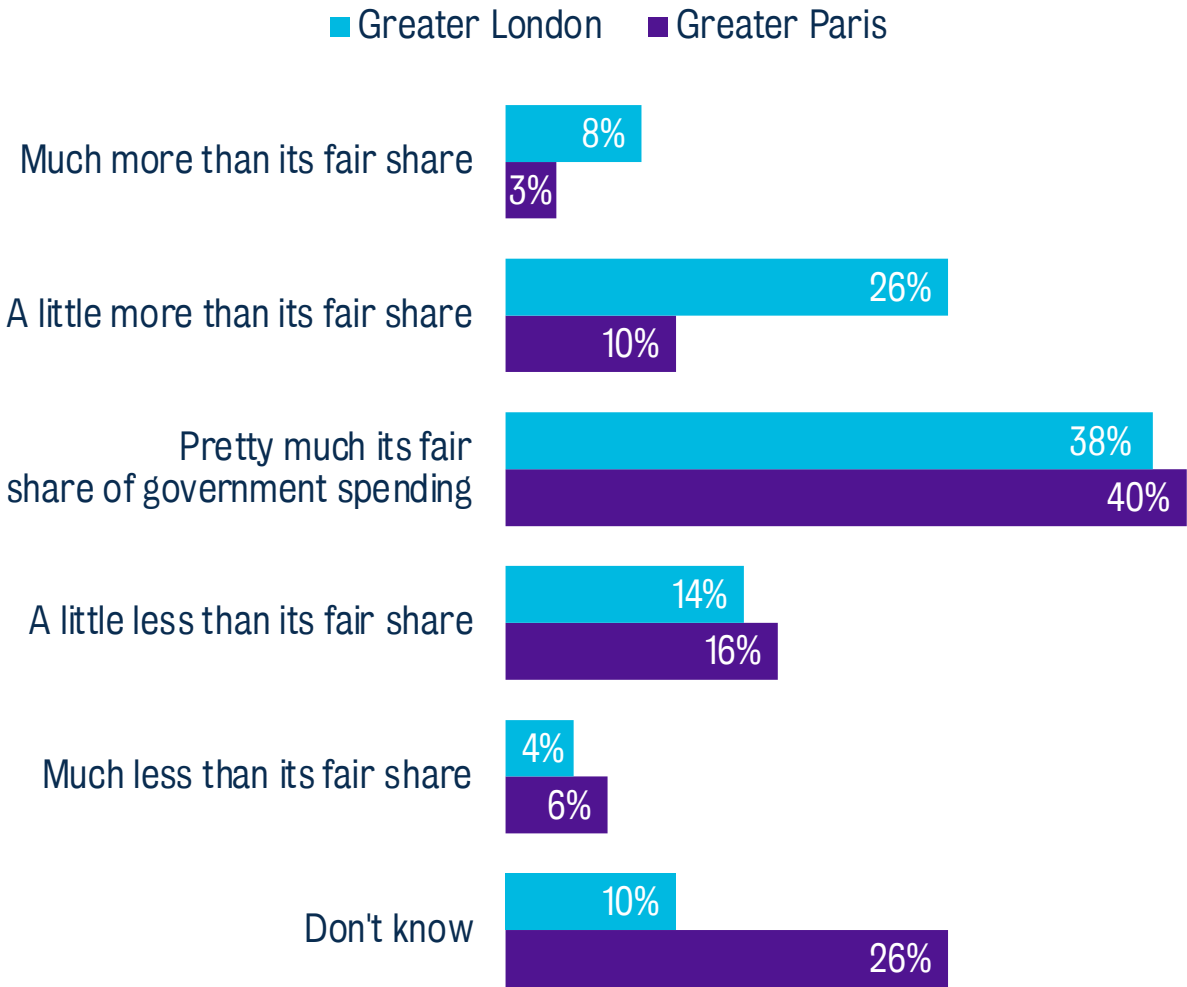
If people interpret a “fair share” as an equal share, then this could be seen as a misperception: the UK’s Office for National Statistics has found that Londoners provide more in tax revenues than they receive in public spending – which is seemingly recognised by only around one in five London residents.



34% of Londoners think their city gets more than its fair share of central government spending compared with other parts of the country. This compares with 13% of Parisians who think the same about their city.

But the most common response, given by around four in 10 people in both capitals, is that their city receives pretty much the right amount of spending.

Would you say that compared with other parts of the UK/France London/Paris gets pretty much its fair share of public spending, more than its fair share, or less than its fair share of central government spending?





5. Safety



In both cities there is a gender divide in perceived safety, but Greater London fares worst for reports of people acting in unwanted or offensive ways towards women

On average, women in Greater London say they've been stared at inappropriately 15.1 times during the time they've lived in the city, while the equivalent figure for women in Greater Paris is 10.1 times.

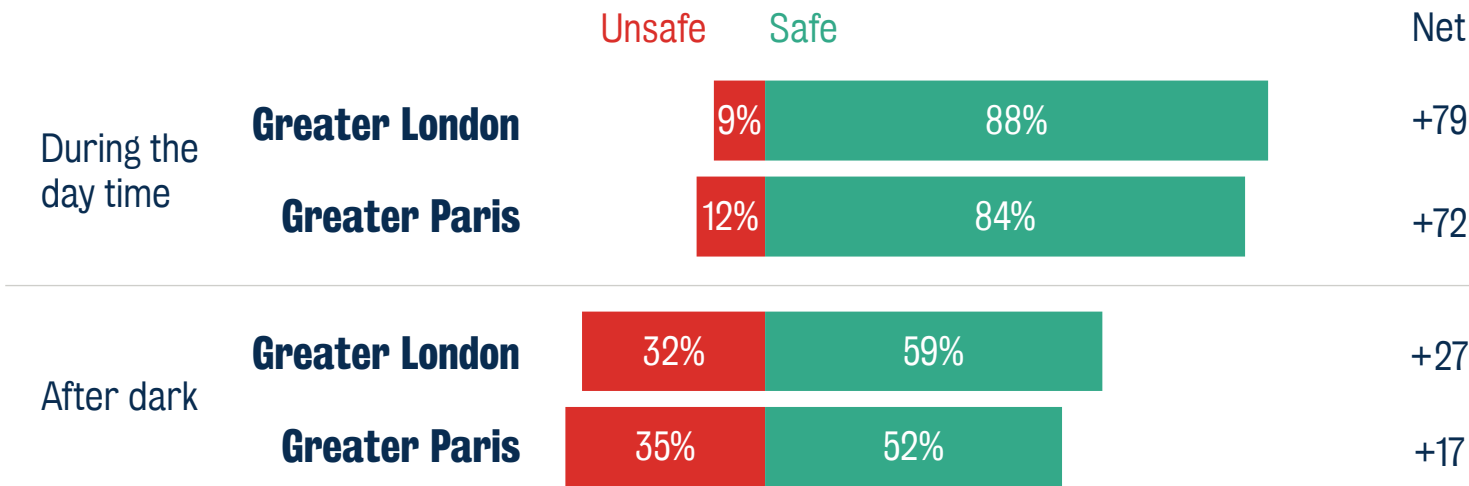
There is an even bigger gap when it comes to inappropriate jokes or sexual comments, with London women saying they've experienced this an average of 13.3 times, compared with five times for women in Greater Paris.

Unwanted touching of women appears to be a bigger problem in London than Greater Paris, too.

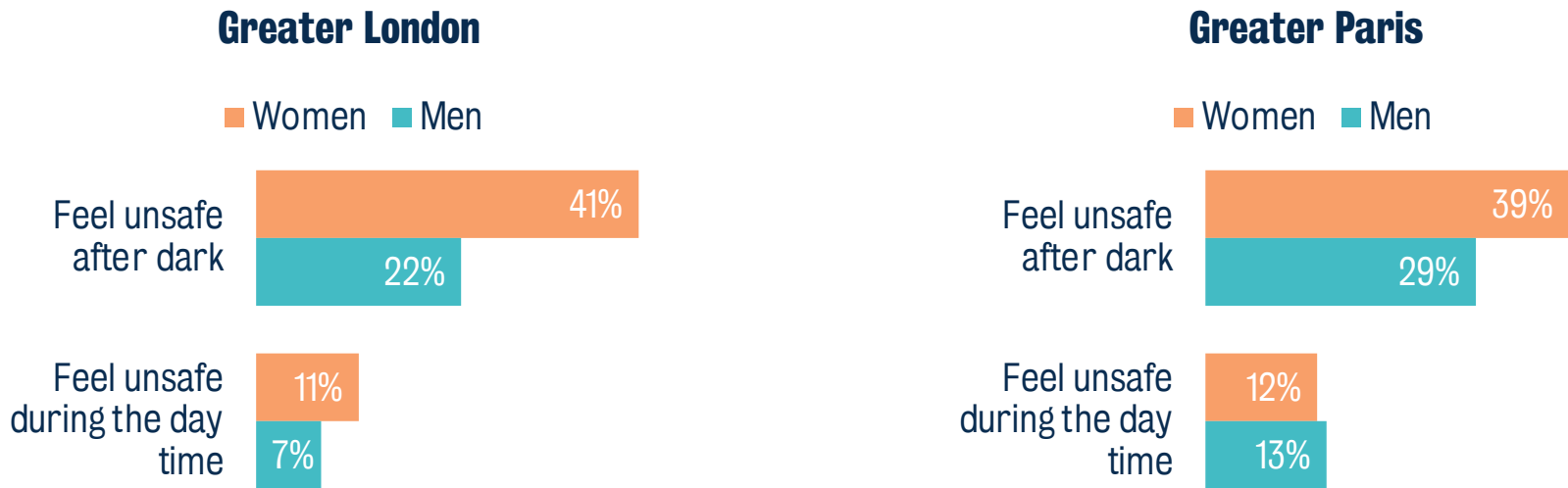
Londoners and Parisians have very similar perceptions of safety in their respective cities: more than eight in 10 people in each capital feel safe during the day time, and at least half in each feel safe after dark.

In both cities there is a gender gap in perceived safety at night, with women more likely than men to say they feel unsafe.

How safe do you feel walking alone in your local area during the day time/after dark?



% who feel unsafe

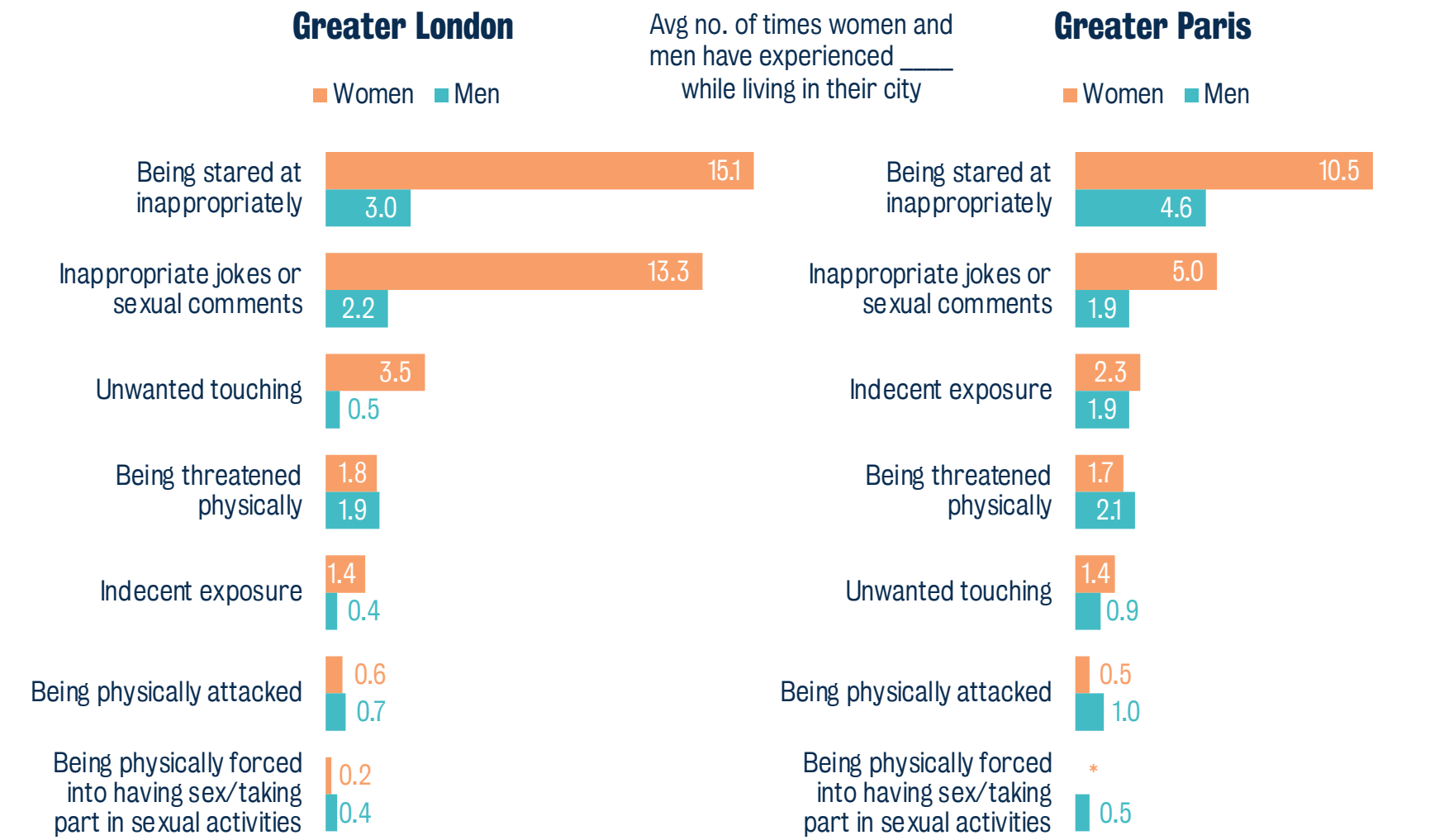


In both capitals, women report having experienced inappropriate staring or inappropriate jokes or sexual comments many more times than men do.

For example, the average Greater London woman says they have experienced inappropriate jokes or sexual comments 13.3 times while living in the city. Men in Greater London, by contrast, say they have experienced such jokes or comments an average of 2.2 times. There is a similar, albeit smaller, gender divide in Greater Paris.

And while there is little difference between men and women in the French capital when it comes to experiences of unwanted touching, there is a bigger split in Greater London, where women say they have experienced this an average of 3.5 times, compared to men's 0.5 times.

At times you may have experienced people acting towards you in a way that you felt was unwanted and offensive. How many times, if at all, have you experienced any of the following while living in London/Paris?





6. Work and family life



Greater London is seen as a better place to work, while Greater Paris is seen as better for family life – and there are big differences in which city is seen as a good place to live for certain groups of people

A much bigger share of Greater London residents than Greater Paris residents see their city as a good location for rich people.

Parisians, on the other hand, are more likely to see their capital as a good place to live for poor people, old people and families.

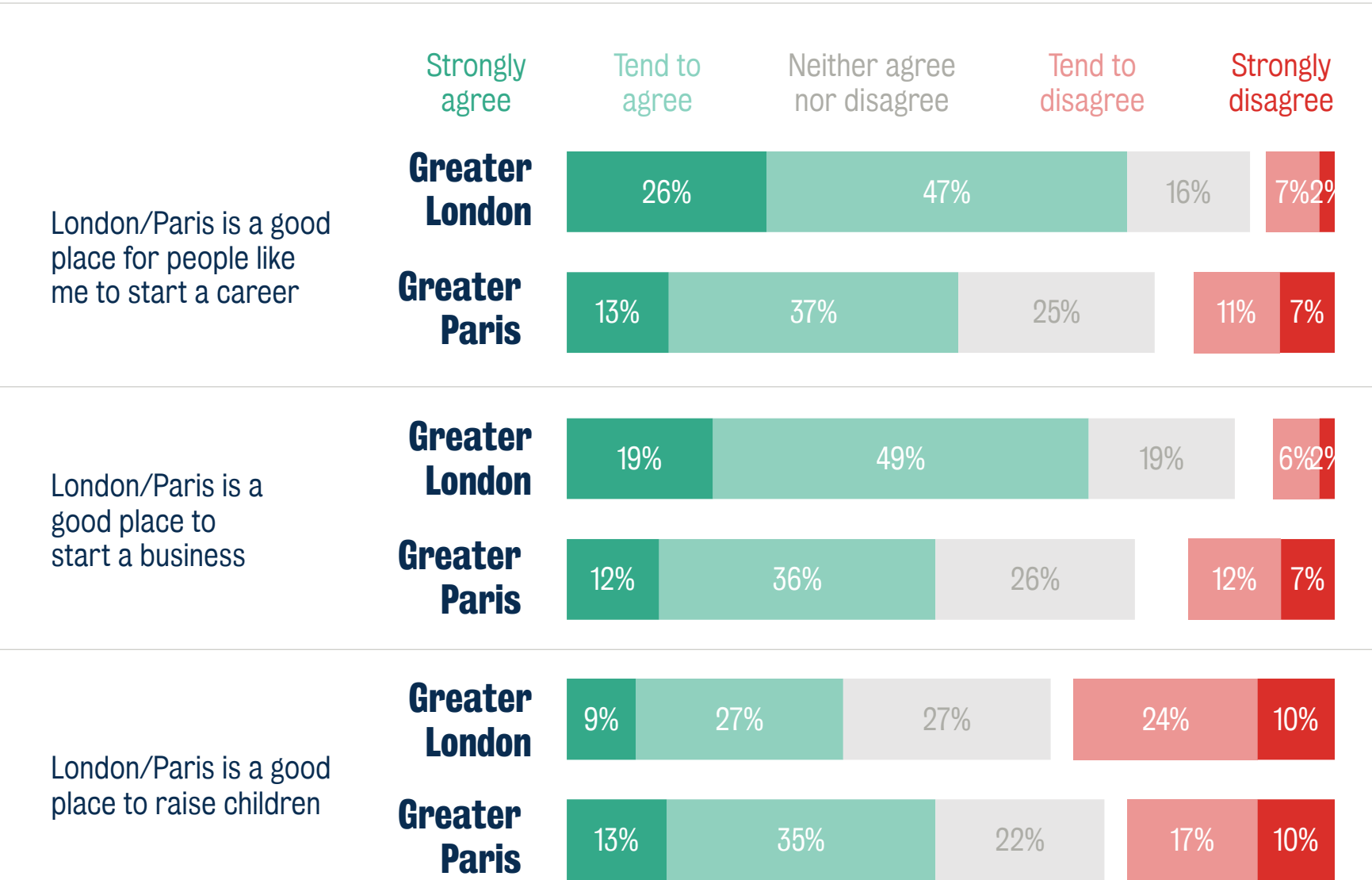
There have also been changes in people's perceptions of their cities over the past couple of years, with Parisians now more likely to see their city as being accommodating to the poor.

Greater London is seen as a better place to work, while Greater Paris is seen as better for family life:

- 73% of Londoners think their city is a good place for people like them to start a career and 68% say it's a good place to start a business – compared with 51% and 48% who say the same respectively in Paris.
- 48% of Parisians say their capital is a good place to raise children, while 36% of Londoners feel this way.

Note some figures differ from charts due to rounding.

Thinking now about living in London/Paris, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

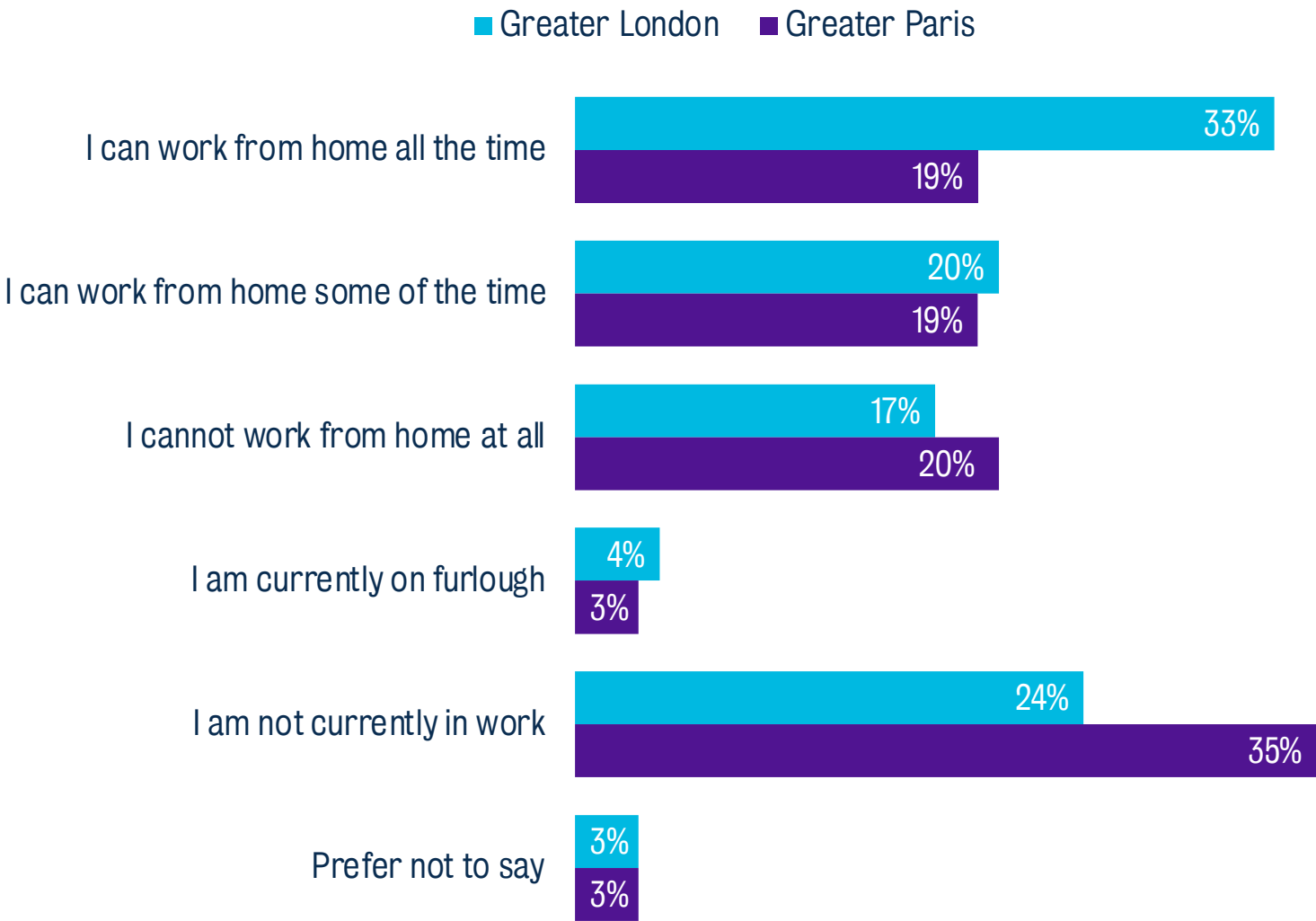


Base: 1,002 adults aged 18+ in Paris and 1,000 in London, interviewed online (23 April–5 May 2021 in London; 26 April–17 May in Paris)

Londoners (33%) are much more likely than Parisians (19%) to report being able to work from home all the time during the pandemic.

And 35% of people in Greater Paris say they are not currently in work – compared with 24% in Greater London who say the same.

Which of these best describes your current working arrangements?

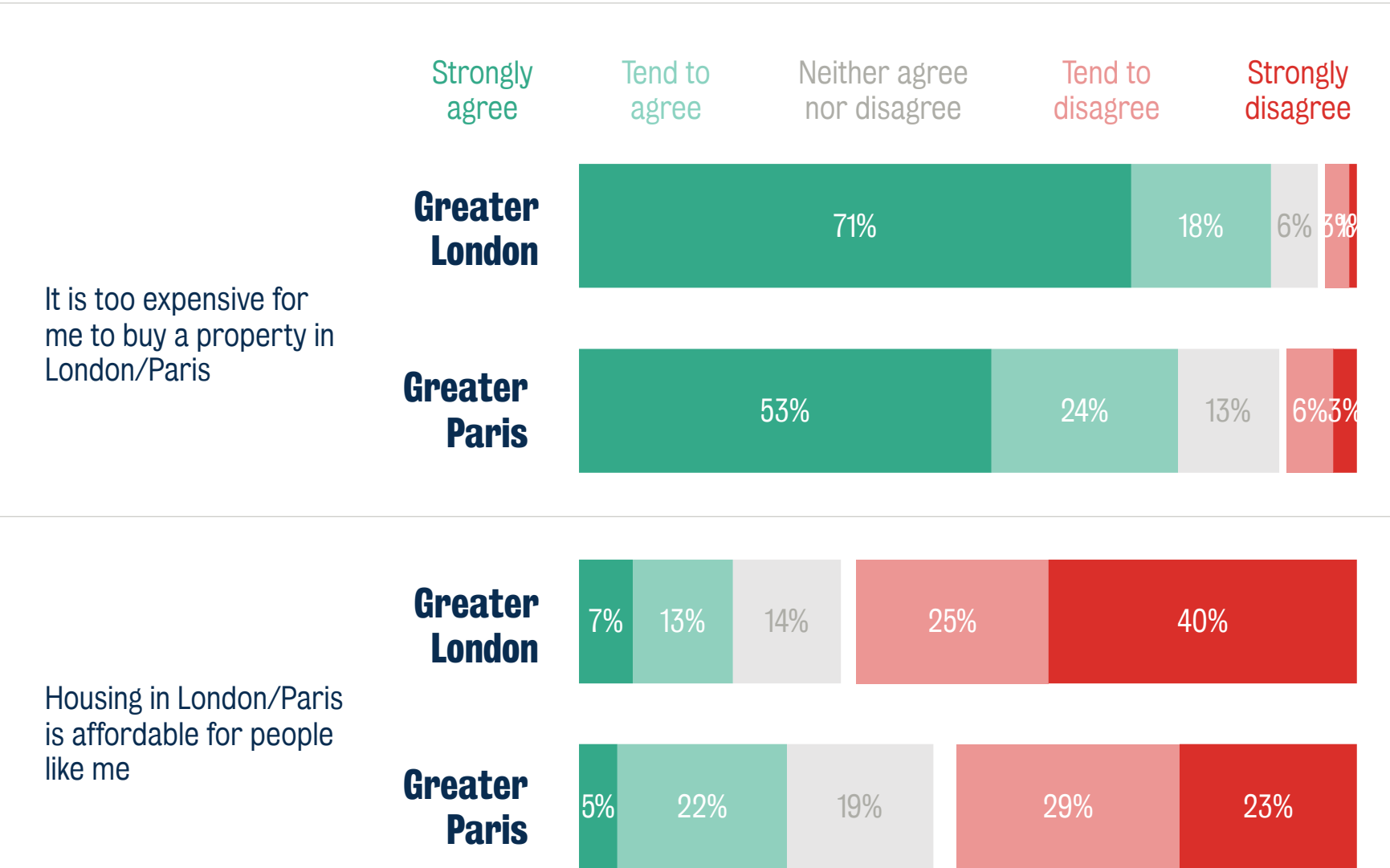


Among those who do not own their own home, Londoners (89%) are more likely than Parisians (76%) to agree that it's too expensive for them to buy a property in their city.

And more generally, residents of Greater London are more likely to disagree that housing in their capital is affordable for people like them (65% vs 52%).

Note some figures differ from charts due to rounding.

Thinking now about living in London/Paris, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Base: 566 adults aged 18+ in Paris and 433 in London who do not own their own home, interviewed online (23 April–5 May 2021 in London; 26 April–17 May in Paris)

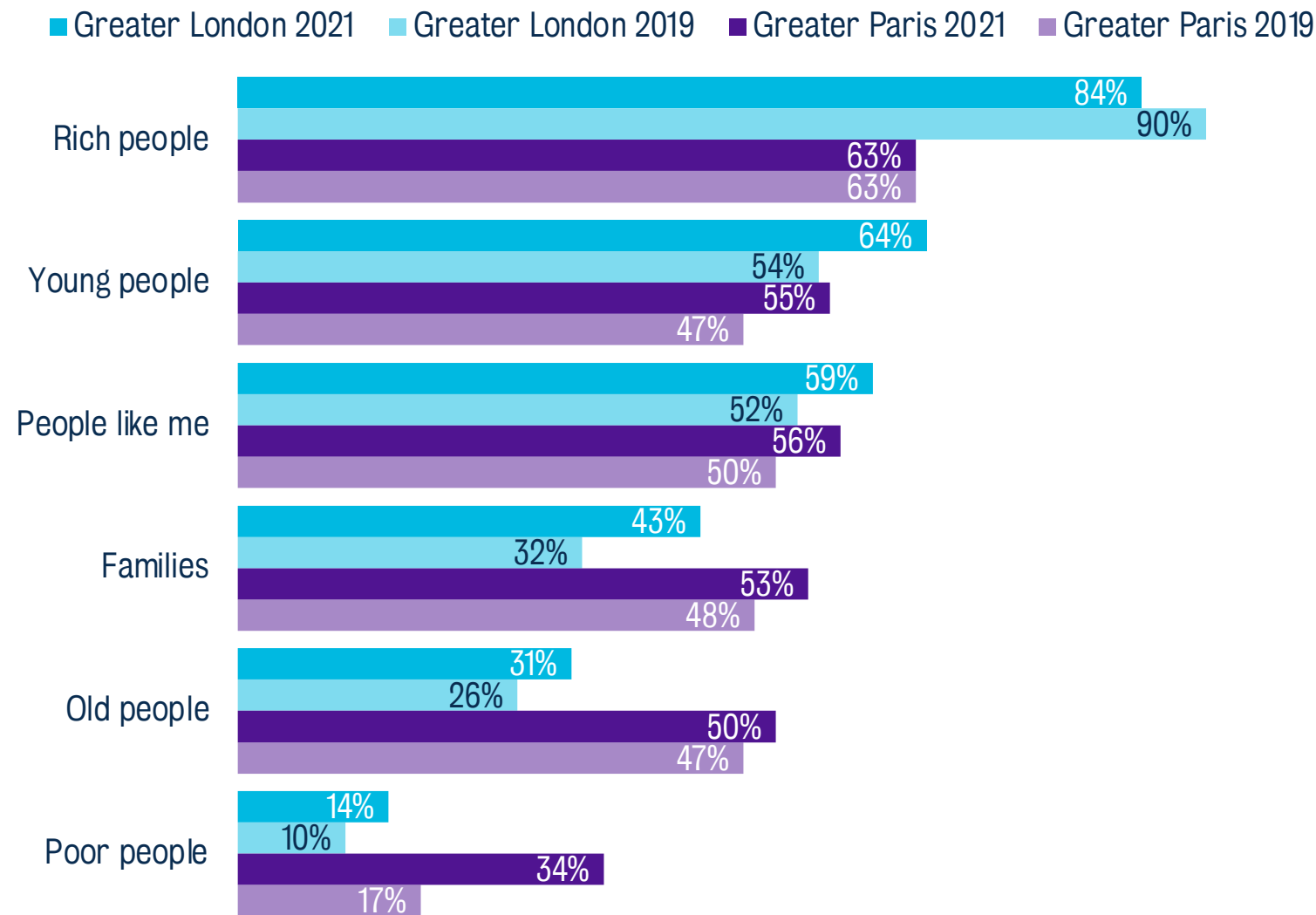
84% of Londoners say their city is a good place to live for rich people – much higher than the 63% of Parisians who say the same about their city.

By contrast, Parisians are much more likely to say their capital is a good place to live for old people (50% vs 31%) and poor people (34% vs 14%).

And the proportion of Greater Paris residents who think their city is suitable for the poor has doubled since 2019, rising from 17% to 34%.

Compared with two years ago, a greater share of Londoners also now see the city as good for families (43% vs 32%) and young people (64% vs 54%).

To what extent, if at all, would you say London/Paris is a good place to live for the following groups of people? % who say it's a good place to live for...



2021 base: 1,002 adults aged 18+ in Paris and 1,000 in London, interviewed online (23 April–5 May 2021 in London; 26 April–17 May in Paris)
2019 base: 1,010 adults aged 18+ in Paris and 1,000 in London, interviewed online (29 November–4 December 2019)



7. The future: recovering from the pandemic

Majorities in both Greater London and Greater Paris expect their capitals to bounce back from Covid – but there are varying levels of optimism about the impact on different aspects of city life

In both the UK and French capitals people are most likely to think the affordability of housing will get worse as a result of the pandemic and to believe it's unlikely that house prices will fall substantially.

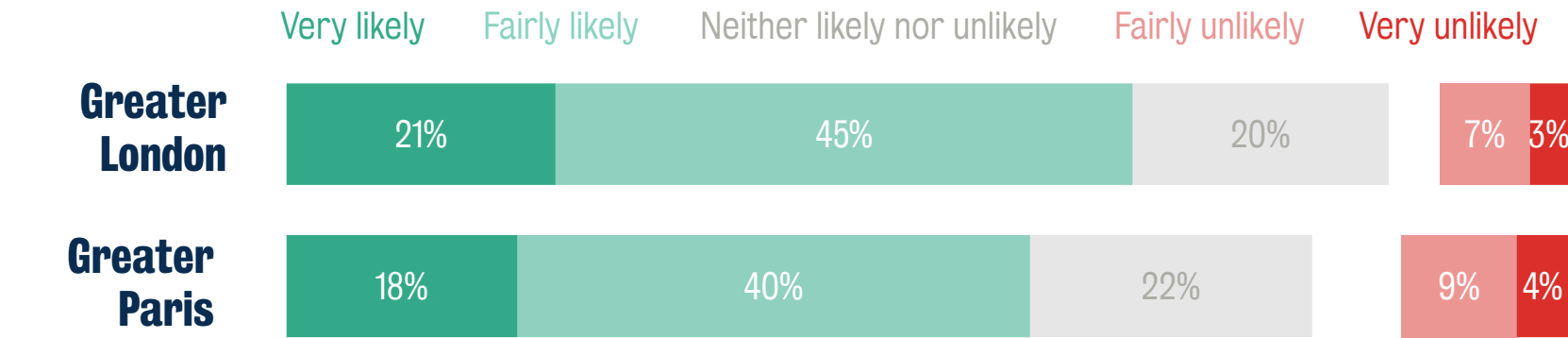
But Parisians are more certain than Londoners that their city's economy will get weaker and that immigration to the capital will increase. At the same time, they are also much more likely to think car ownership will become increasingly uncommon.

66% of Londoners and 57% of Parisians think it's likely that their city will recover from the Covid crisis.

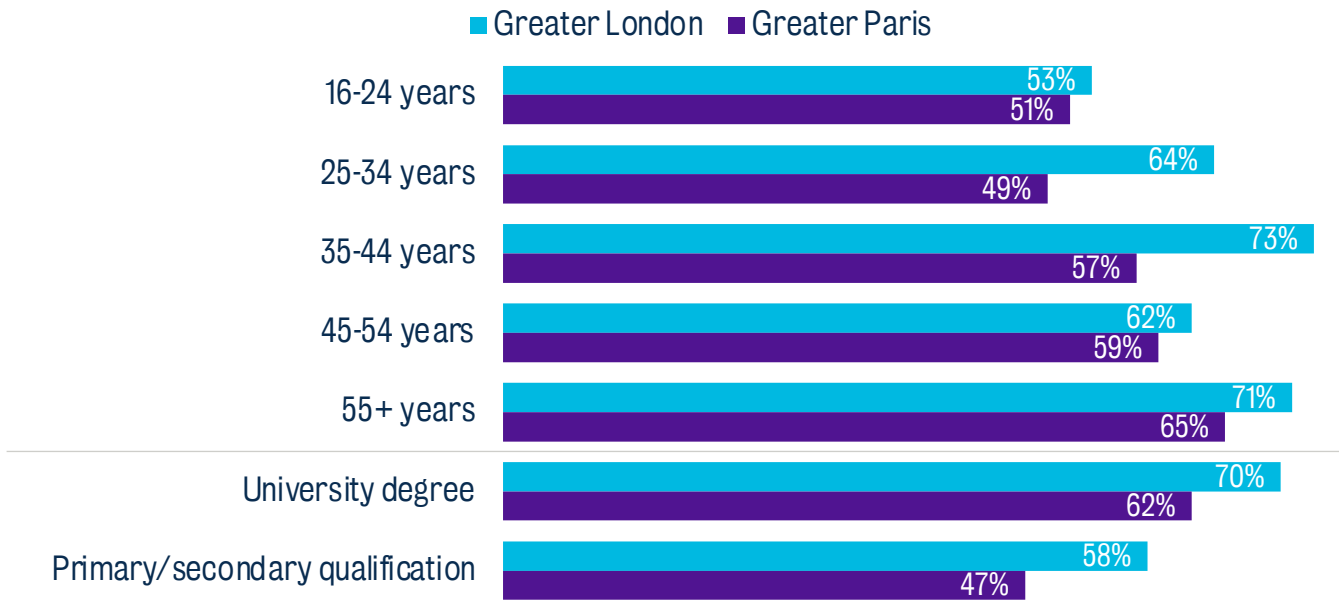
In Greater London, it is 35- to 44-year-olds who are the most optimistic, with 73% saying a recovery is likely. In Greater Paris, confidence in a recovery largely increases with age, with those 55 and above (65%) most certain that the city will bounce back.

In both cities, a higher proportion of graduates than non-graduates think they will recover.

How likely or unlikely would you say it is that London/Paris will bounce back from the coronavirus pandemic?



% who say very or fairly likely



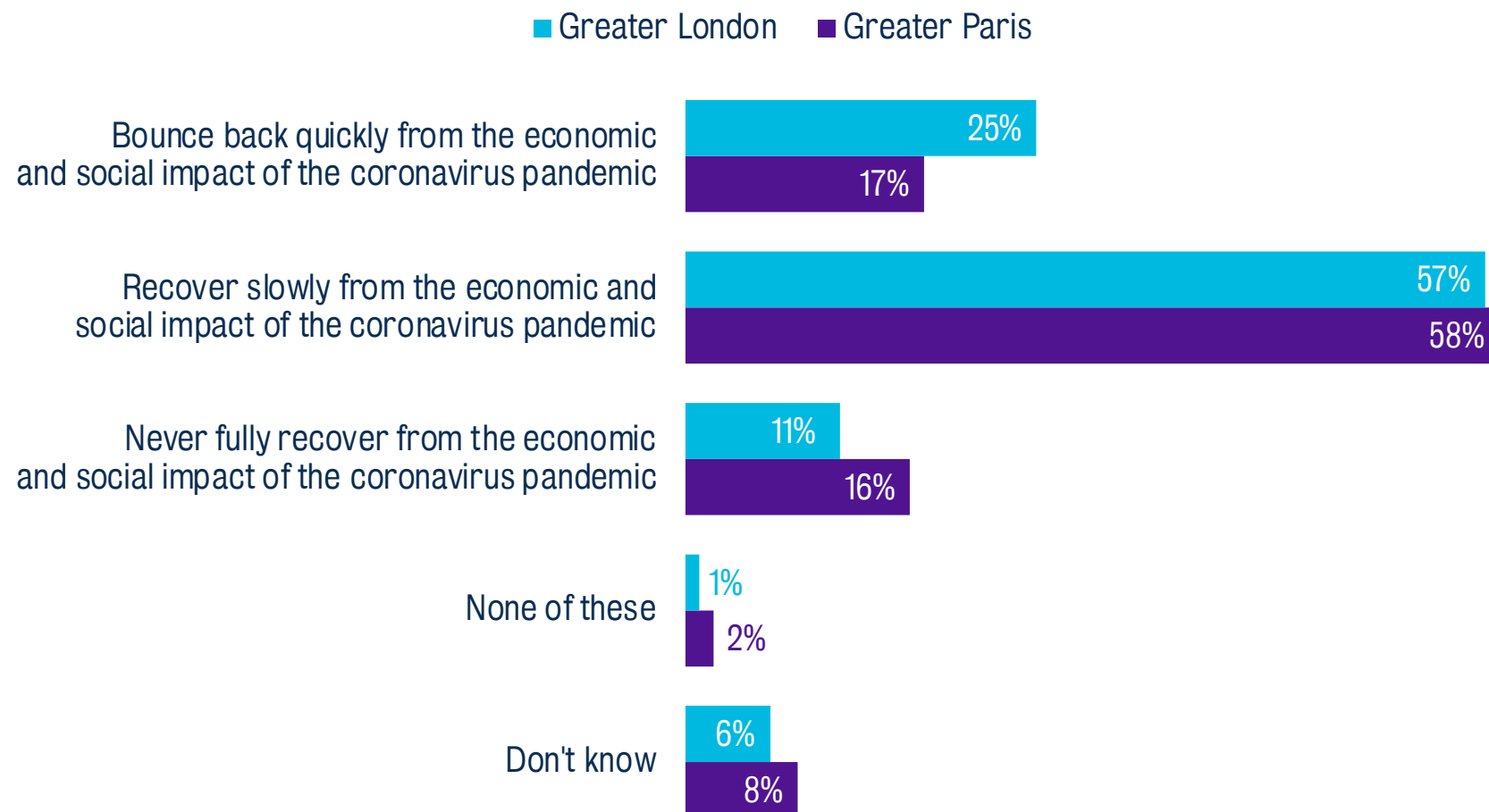
Base: 1,002 adults aged 18+ in Paris and 1,000 in London, interviewed online (23 April–5 May 2021 in London; 26 April–17 May in Paris)

Six in 10 people in both Greater Paris and London think their city will recover slowly from the pandemic.

Londoners are slightly more optimistic that the recovery will take less time, with 25% compared with 17% in Greater Paris saying their city will bounce back quickly.

One in nine people in Greater London and one in six in Greater Paris think their city will never fully recover from the crisis.

Which of the following statements, if any, is closest to your view?
% who say London/Paris will...

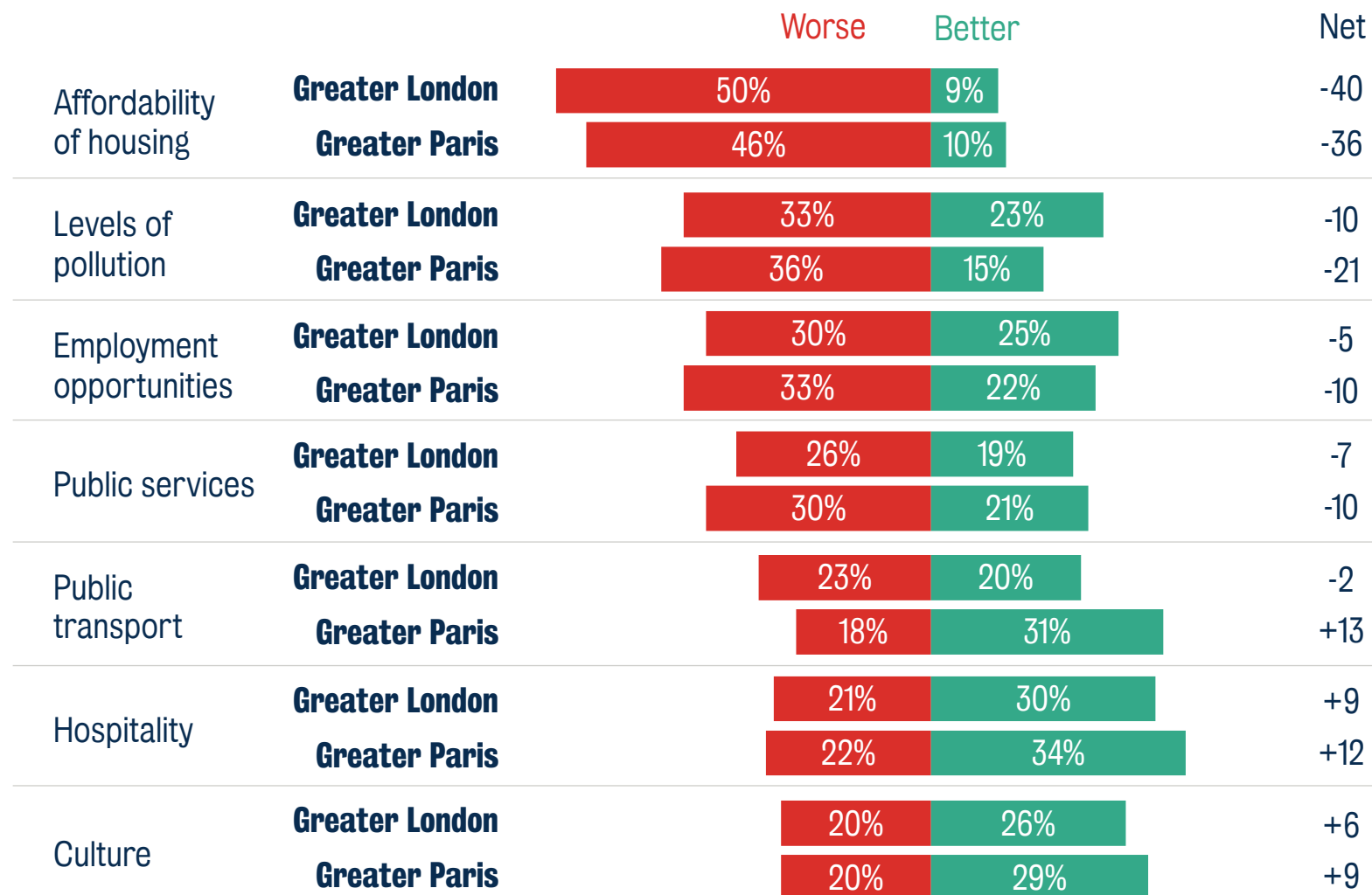


In Greater London and Greater Paris around half think the affordability of housing will get worse in the next few years, with only around one in 10 believing it will improve.

People in both cities are also more negative than positive about what will happen to levels of pollution, although on balance Parisians are the least optimistic.

But residents of Greater Paris are more likely than their London counterparts to say that public transport in their city will improve (31% vs 20%).

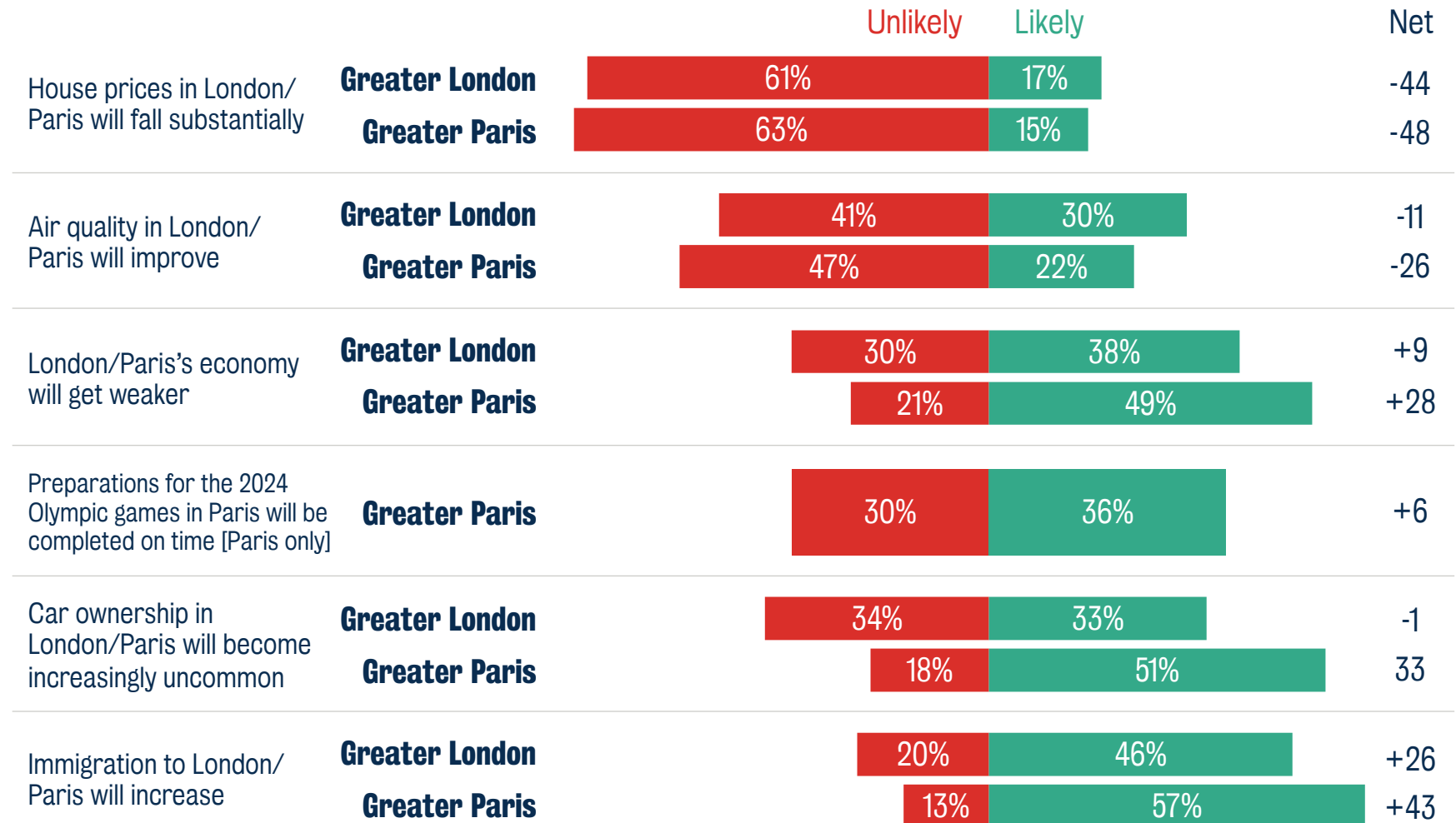
Thinking about London/Paris in the next few years after the coronavirus pandemic, do you think each of the following will get better, get worse, or stay the same?



Of the issues asked about, residents of both cities are most pessimistic about the prospect of house prices in their city falling substantially, with around six in 10 believing it's unlikely in the next few years.

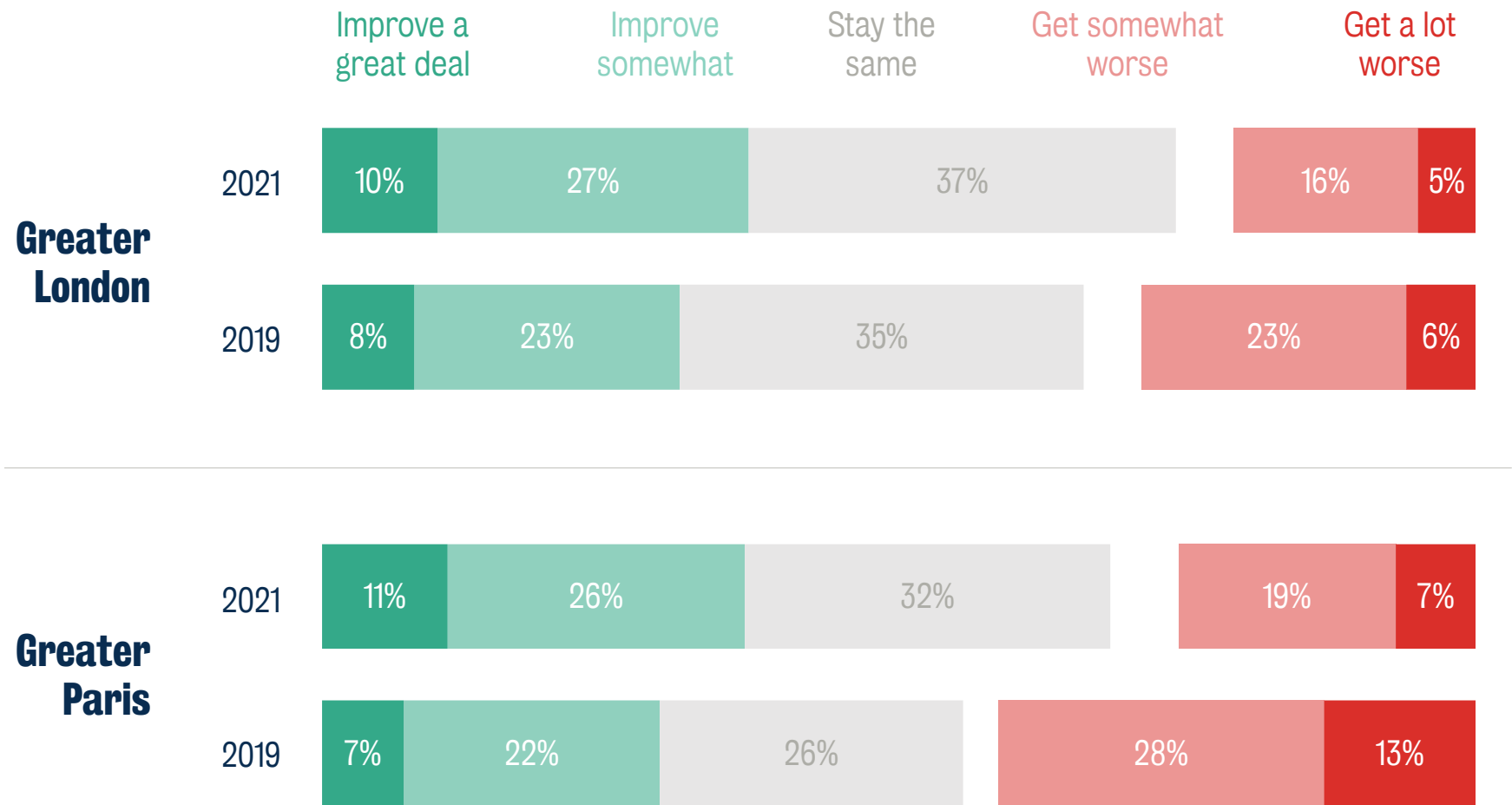
Parisians are more certain than Londoners that their city's economy will get weaker (49% vs 38%) and that immigration to the capital will increase (57% vs 46%) – and they are also more confident that car ownership will become increasingly uncommon (51% vs 33%).

Thinking now about the future of London/Paris, how likely or unlikely would you say it is that each of the following will happen in the next five years?



There has been an increase in people’s optimism that their standard of living will improve in the next five years. The biggest change can be seen in Greater Paris, where 37% now say living standards will get better, compared with 30% who thought this in 2019.

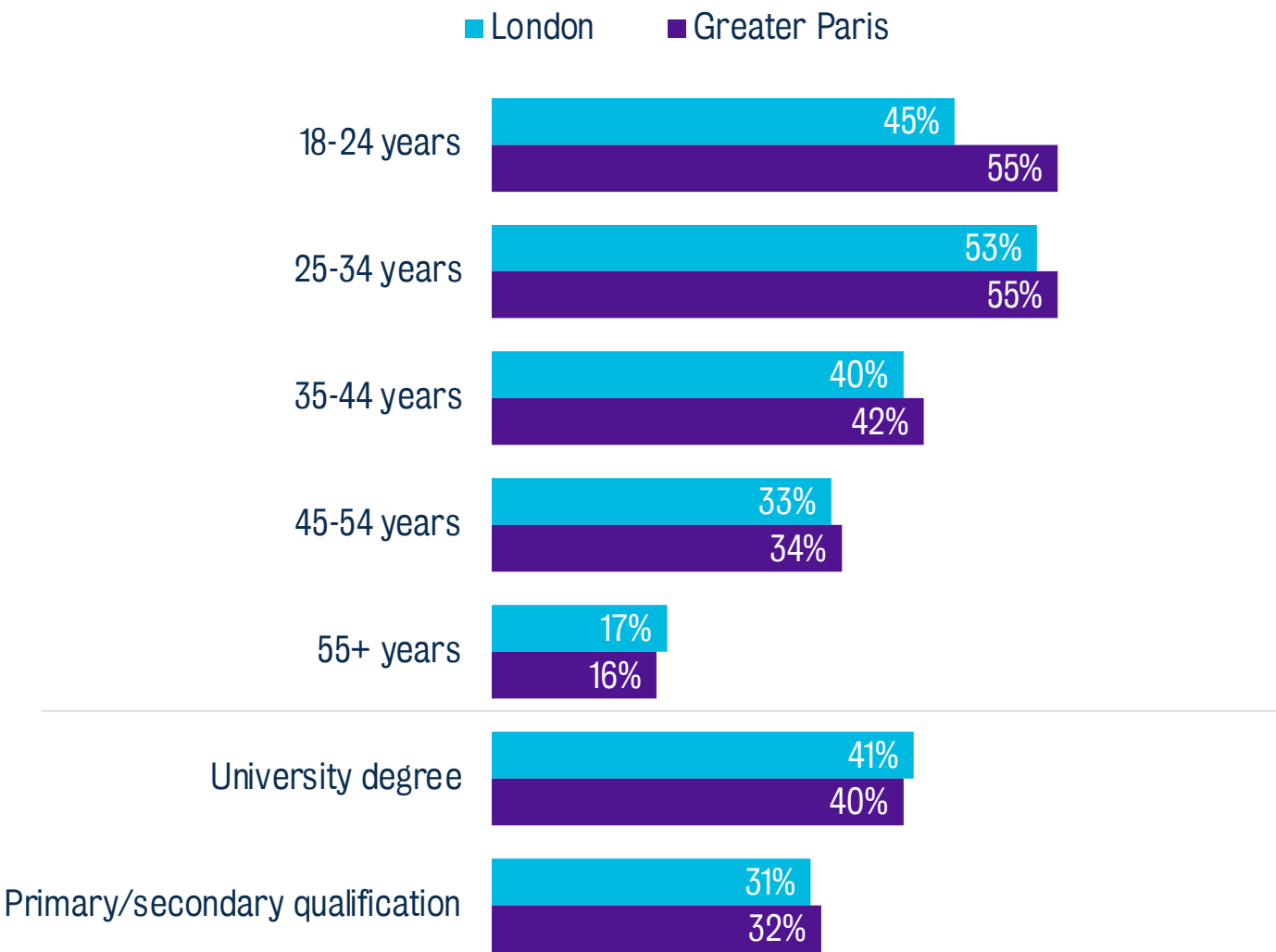
Do you expect that your standard of living will improve, get worse, or stay the same, over the next five years?



In both cities, younger age groups are more optimistic than older age groups that their living standards will improve.

There is also an education gap, with graduates in both capitals more likely than non-graduates to think things will get better for them.

Do you expect that your standard of living will improve, get worse, or stay the same, over the next five years? % who say improve a great deal or somewhat





8. The future:

environmental concerns



Large majorities in the two capitals say they're concerned about climate change, air quality and the loss of green spaces, but Londoners and Parisians differ on some of the policy solutions to address climate issues, as well as those already available to them

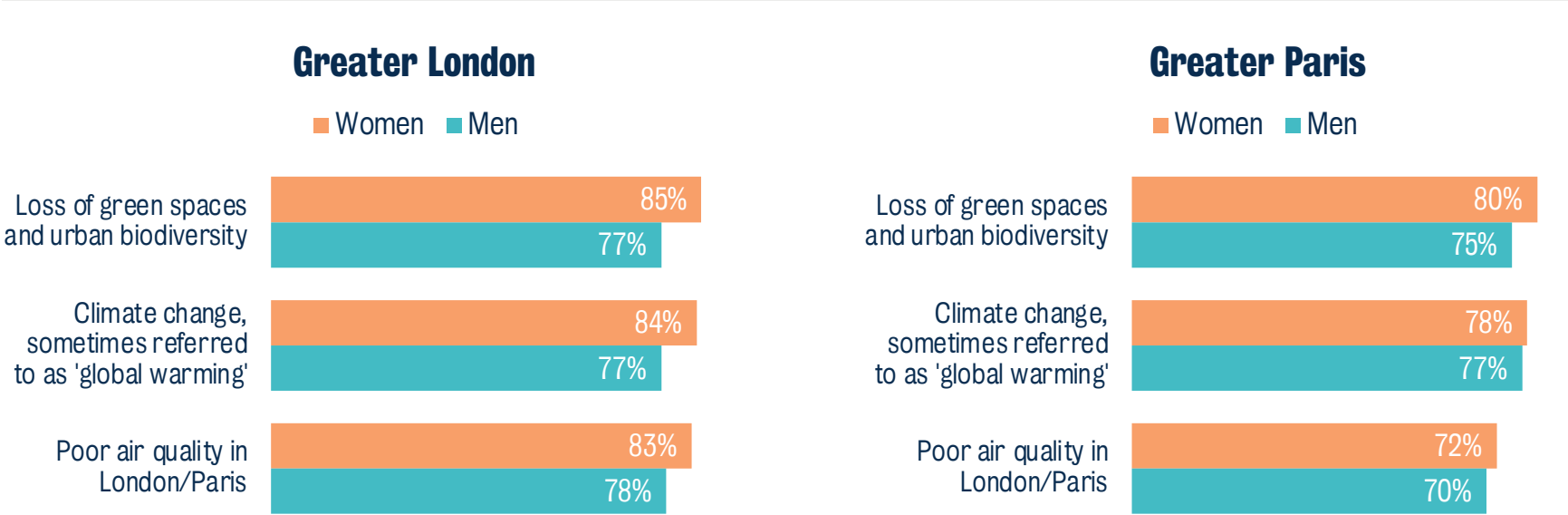
Londoners are more keen on reallocating space away from vehicles to cyclists and walkers, as well as on the idea of days when only electric or hybrid vehicles are allowed into the city centre.

And in Greater Paris, a lack of green spaces for leisure and exercise is seen as a bigger issue than it is in Greater London, with more than a quarter of Parisians saying such spaces are not sufficiently available to them.

This tallies with figures which suggest that 9.5% of Greater Paris is made up of parks or green space, compared with 33% of Greater London.

Big majorities in both cities say they are concerned about the loss of green spaces, poor air quality and climate change, with women in Greater London slightly more likely than men to see these issues as cause for concern.

How concerned, if at all, are you about each of the following? % who say very or fairly concerned



Climate change and air pollution are the top national environmental concerns for residents of both Greater London and Greater Paris, with around four in 10 saying they are among the most important such issues.

Overpopulation (27% vs 19%) and emissions (17% vs 6%) are bigger national concerns for Londoners than Parisians, while people in Greater Paris are comparatively more concerned about water pollution (17% vs 8%) and the depletion of natural resources (20% vs 11%).

In your view, what are the three most important environmental issues facing the UK/ France today?



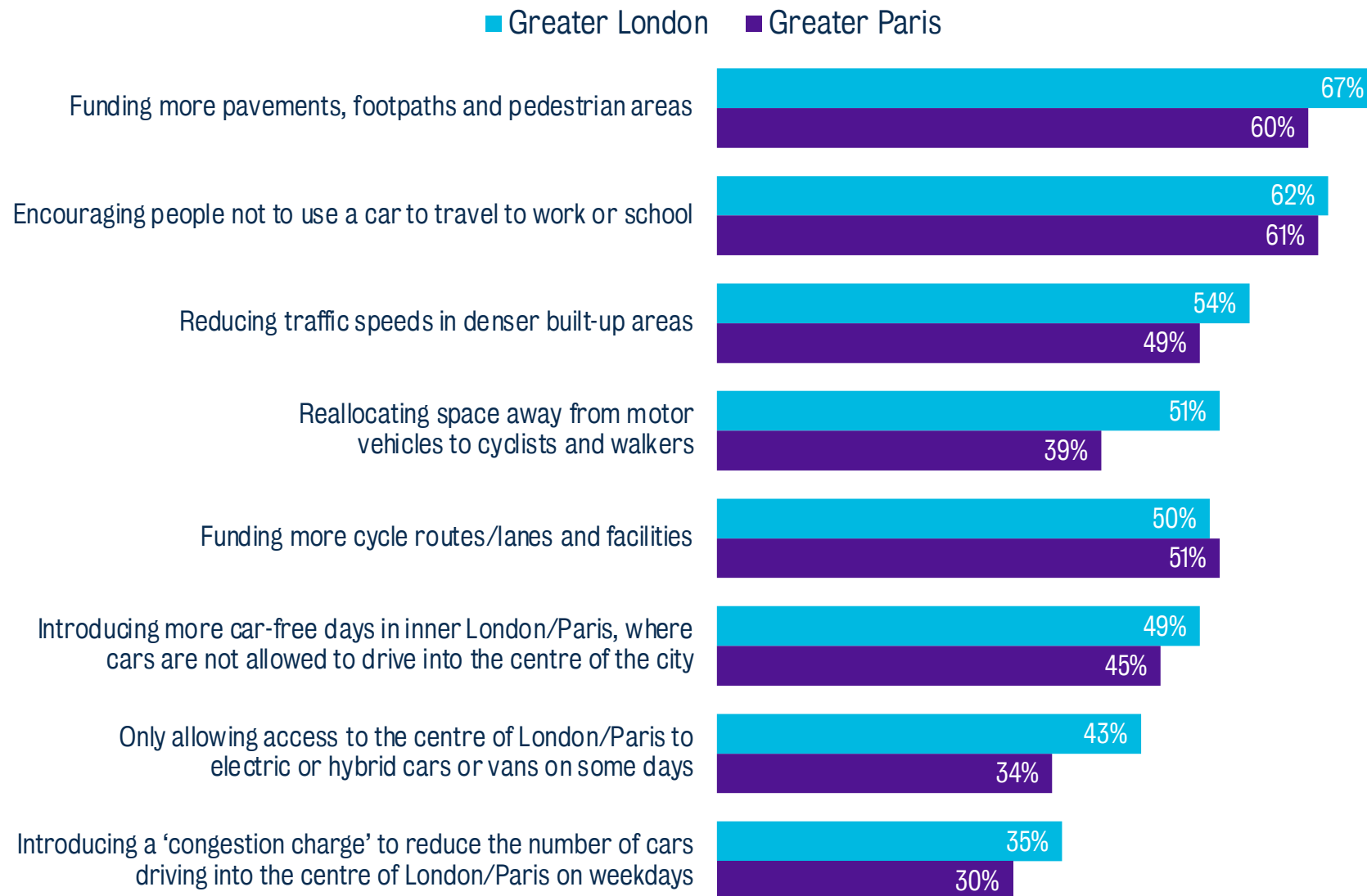
Base: 1,002 adults aged 18+ in Paris and 1,000 in London, interviewed online (23 April–5 May 2021 in London; 26 April–17 May in Paris)

There is significant support for a range of green policies in both capitals, particularly funding for more pavements and footpaths and measures that discourage car use, with around six in 10 or more supporting these ideas.

One area of difference between the two cities is on reallocating space away from vehicles to cyclists and walkers, where Londoners (51%) are more supportive than Parisians (39%) of such a move.

Londoners are also more positive about the idea of days when only electric or hybrid vehicles are allowed into the centre of their city (43% vs 34%).

In principle, to what extent would you support or oppose introducing the following policies in London/Paris? % who strongly or tend to support

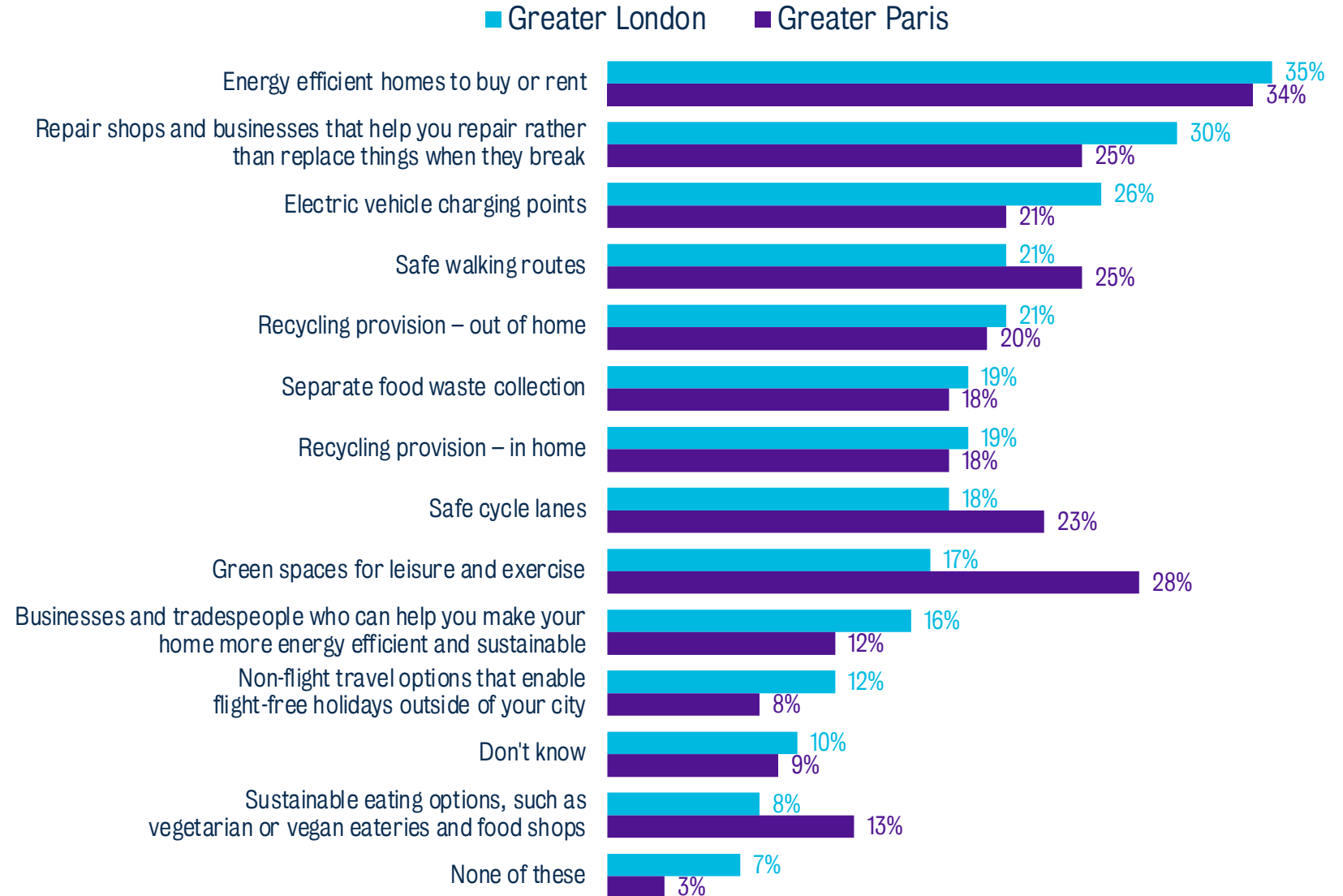


Base: 1,002 adults aged 18+ in Paris and 1,000 in London, interviewed online (23 April–5 May 2021 in London; 26 April–17 May in Paris)

Londoners and Parisians are both most likely to cite a lack of energy efficient homes as a key environmental measure that is not sufficiently available in their city, with around a third feeling this way.

Meanwhile, a lack of green spaces for leisure and exercise is seen as a bigger issue in Greater Paris than Greater London, with 28% of people living in the former saying such spaces are not sufficiently available, compared with 17% of Londoners who say the same.

Which, if any, of the following do you believe are not sufficiently available to citizens living in London/Paris to help tackle climate change?



Base: 1,002 adults aged 18+ in Paris and 1,000 in London, interviewed online (23 April–5 May 2021 in London; 26 April–17 May in Paris)



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Technical details

Ipsos MORI interviewed 1,000 adults aged 18+ in London between 23 April and 5 May 2021, and 1,002 adults aged 18+ in Greater Paris between 26 April and 17 May 2021. Interviews were carried out online, and data are weighted by age, gender, region within the city, and work status to the profile of the population. All polls are subject to a wide range of potential sources of error.