

Coronavirus: how the UK views vaccines

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Introduction

This report includes findings from a survey of 2,244 UK residents aged 16-75 by King's College London and Ipsos MORI, conducted on 20-24 November 2020.

It finds that the UK public tend to have a negative view of anti-vaxxers, although a notable minority have a favourable perception of people who would refuse a coronavirus vaccine:

- A third of Britons (33%) think people who discourage the public from getting vaccinated are selfish, and 4 in 10 (41%) think they are stupid – compared with 5% who think they are trying to help others and 3% who think they are smart. 1 in 6 (17%) go as far as saying they think anti-vax campaigners are bad people.
- Stupidity (31%) and selfishness (25%) are also the top negative characteristics attributed to people who would refuse a coronavirus vaccine – however, 1 in 8 (13%) say they respect such people.

Across several measures, those who say they get a great deal or fair amount of information on Covid-19 from social media have a more favourable view of people who discourage the public from getting vaccinated than does the population overall:

- For example, 41% nationally think such people are stupid, but this falls to 27% among those who use WhatsApp and 26% who use YouTube as key sources of information on coronavirus.

- Taken together, 1 in 9 (11%) users of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and WhatsApp say they respect anti-vax campaigners – around twice as many as the proportion of the UK public overall who say the same (5%).

When it comes to scenarios for the rollout of a coronavirus vaccine:

- 59% of people say they'd find it acceptable for parents to choose whether to vaccinate their children against coronavirus or not, compared with 29% who say they'd find it unacceptable. And men (34%) are more likely than women (23%) to say that giving parents a choice on this issue would be unacceptable.
- At the same time, however, 51% of the public say they'd accept parents having to vaccinate their children when the government says they have to, indicating that some people hold inconsistent views on this issue.
- The overwhelming majority of the country – 90% – say it'd be acceptable for more vulnerable people to be offered a coronavirus vaccine before them.

Finally, the public's reported likelihood of getting vaccinated against Covid-19 is largely unchanged since July. 54% now say they'd be certain or very likely to get inoculated, 1 in 5 (19%) say they'd be fairly likely to, and another 1 in 5 (20%) say they are unlikely to or definitely won't.

How the public view anti-vaxxers



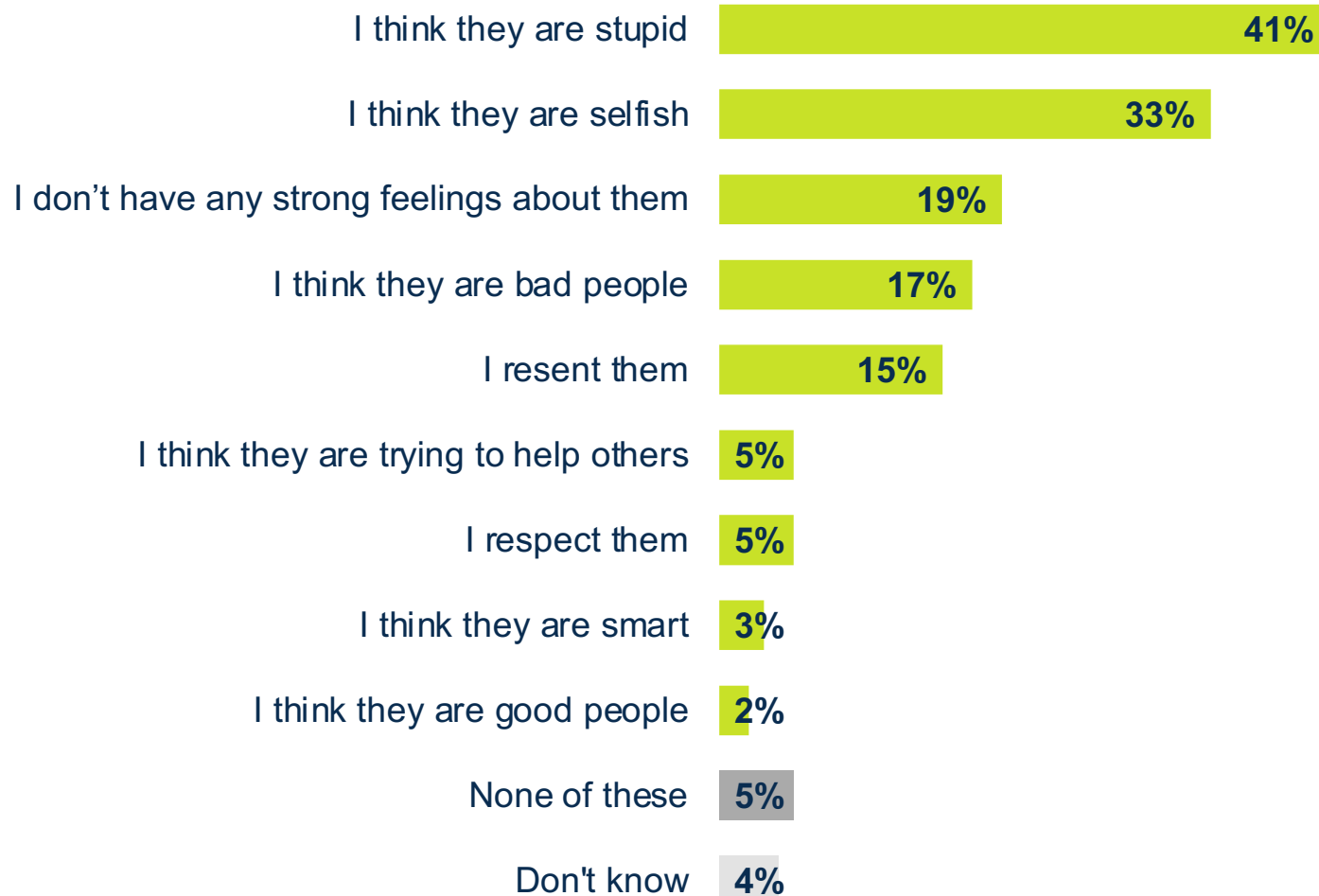
The UK public tend to have a negative view of people who discourage the public from getting vaccinated, with only a small proportion having a positive view.

For example, 41% think that such people are stupid and 33% that they are selfish – compared with 3% who think they are smart and 5% who they are trying to help others.

1 in 6 (17%) go as far as saying they think they are bad people.

Which of these, if any, best describe how you feel about the following groups, or do you not have strong feelings about them? You can select more than one answer.

People who discourage the public from getting vaccinated

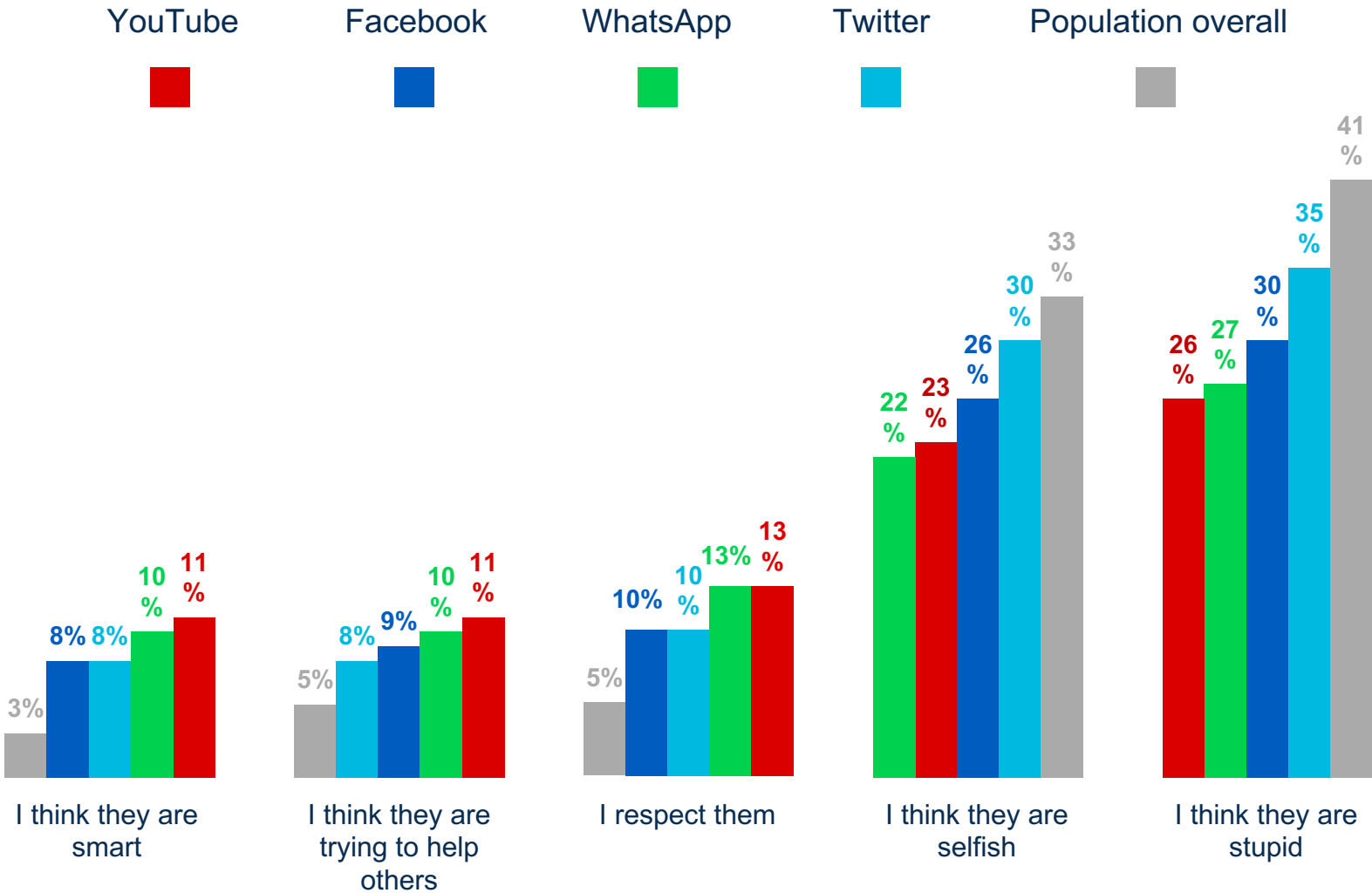


Across several measures, people who get a great deal or fair amount of information on Covid-19 from social media have a more favourable view of anti-vax campaigners than does the population overall. For example, 41% nationally think they are stupid, but this falls to 27% among those who use WhatsApp and 26% among those who use YouTube as key information sources.

22% of those who use WhatsApp and 23% who of those use YouTube in this way also think anti-vax campaigners are selfish, compared with 33% who think the same across the population as a whole.

These users of social media platforms (11%) are around twice as likely as the UK public overall (5%) to say they respect people who discourage others from getting vaccinated.

Differences in perceptions of people who discourage the public from getting vaccinated: those who get a great deal or fair amount of information on coronavirus from social media platforms compared with the population overall



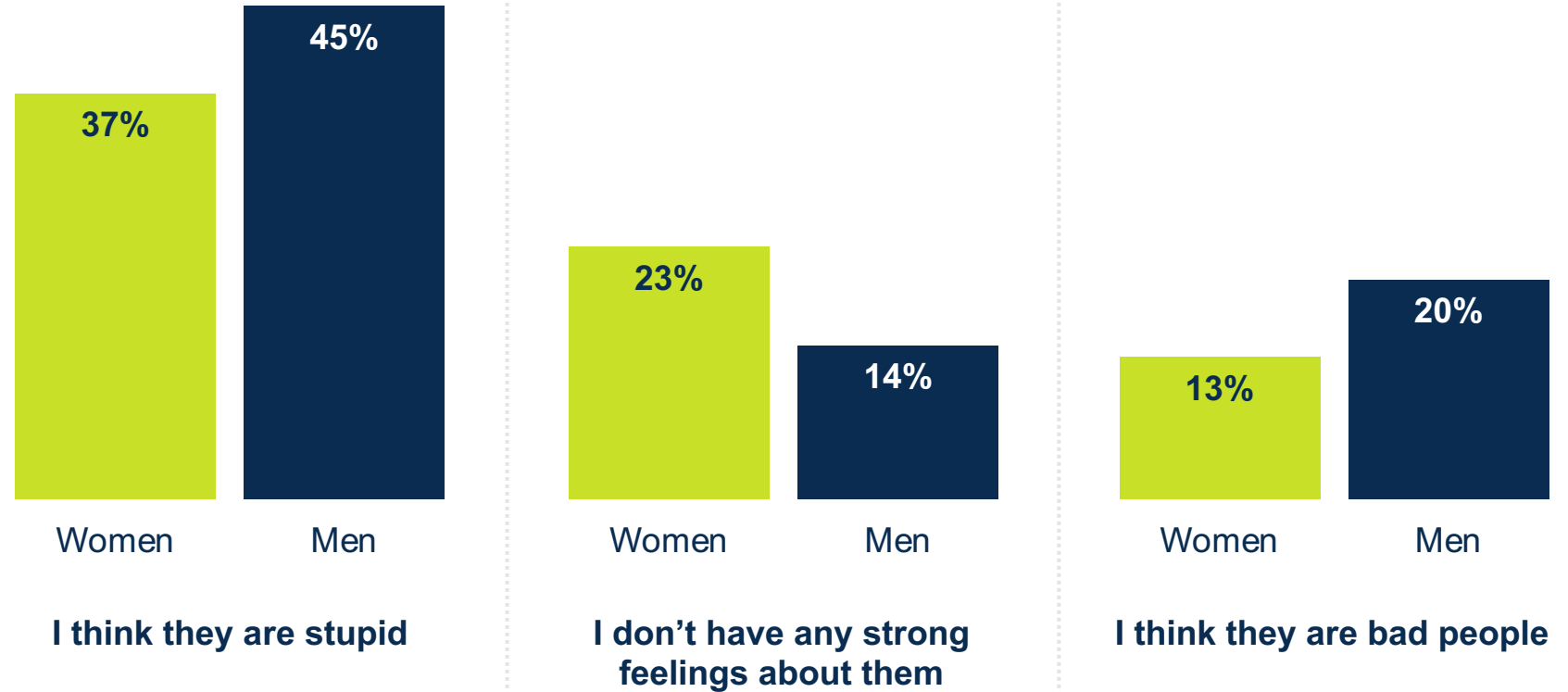
Men are more likely than women to hold certain negative views about people who discourage others from taking vaccines.

45% of men say they think anti-vax campaigners are stupid, compared with 37% of women who think the same. And 20% of men think they are bad people, higher than the 13% of women who hold this view.

Women (23%) are also more likely than men (14%) to say they don't have any strong feelings about anti-vax campaigners.

However, women and men have similarly negative views of other perceived characteristics of such people, such as whether they are selfish, worthy of respect, or smart.

Gender differences in views of people who discourage the public from getting vaccinated

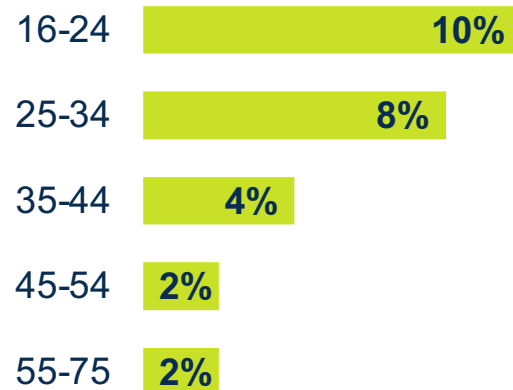


1 in 10 16-24-year-olds (10%) say they respect people who discourage the public from getting vaccinated, making them the age group most likely to hold this view.

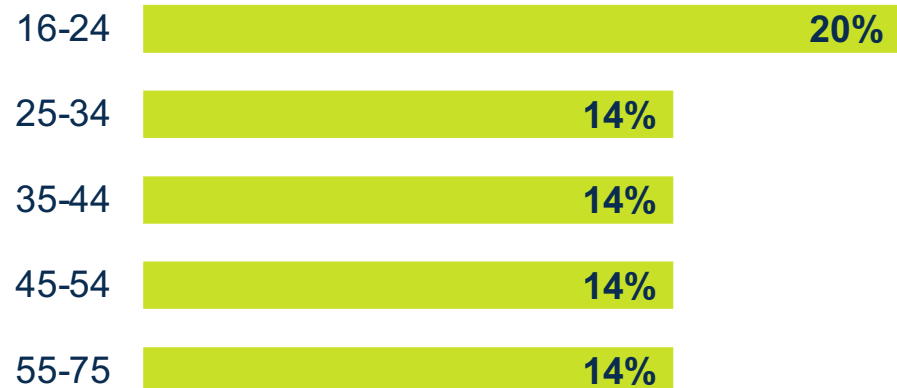
But at the same time, those aged 16 to 24 are also most (20%) likely to say they resent such people.

They are also just as likely as older age groups to have other negative perceptions of anti-vax campaigners.

% who say they respect people who discourage the public from getting vaccinated



% who say they resent people who discourage the public from getting vaccinated

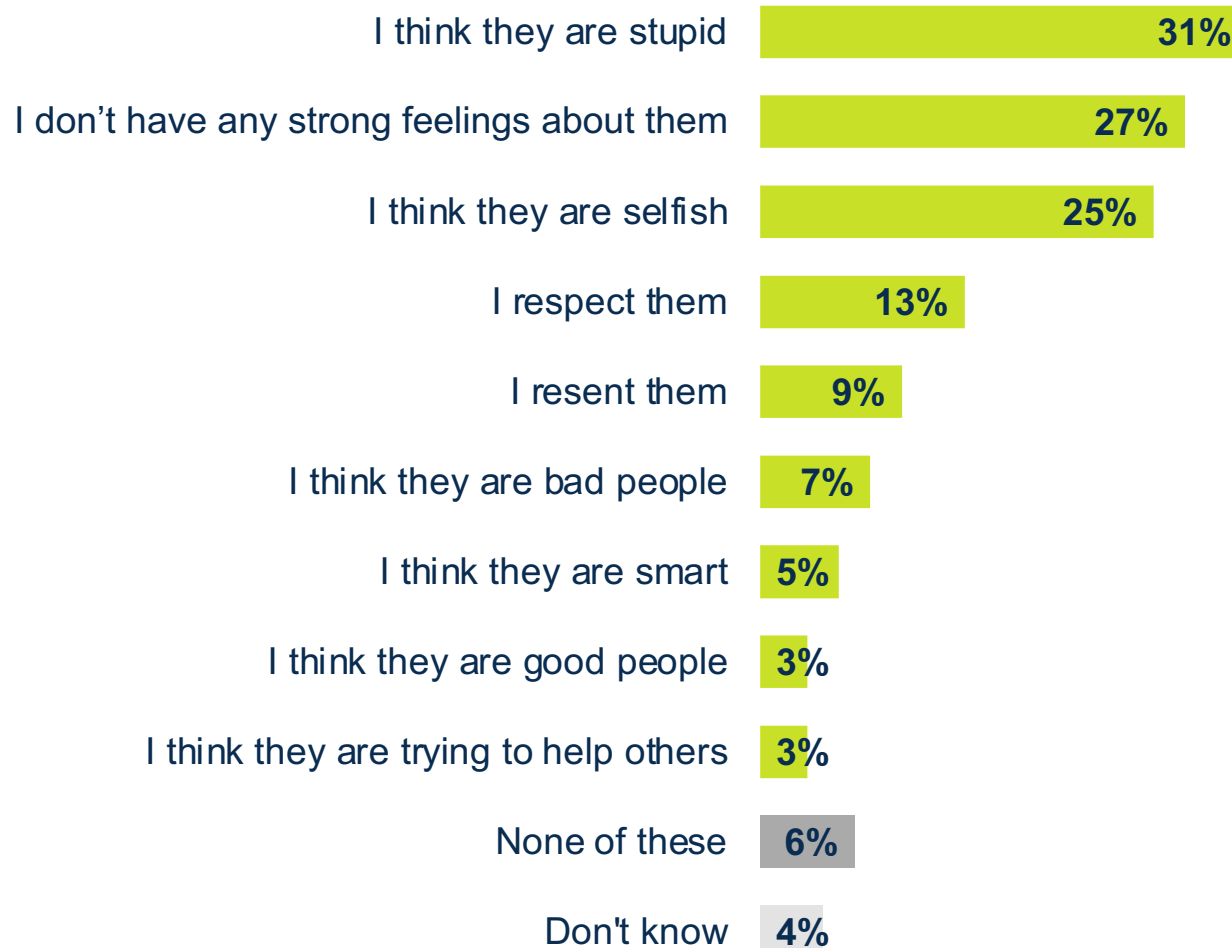


The public hold mostly negative views of those who would refuse a coronavirus vaccine – although 1 in 8 (13%) say they respect such people.

As with those who discourage others from getting vaccinated, stupidity (31%) and selfishness (25%) are the top negative characteristics attributed to Covid vaccine refusers.

Which of these, if any, best describe how you feel about the following groups, or do you not have strong feelings about them? You can select more than one answer.

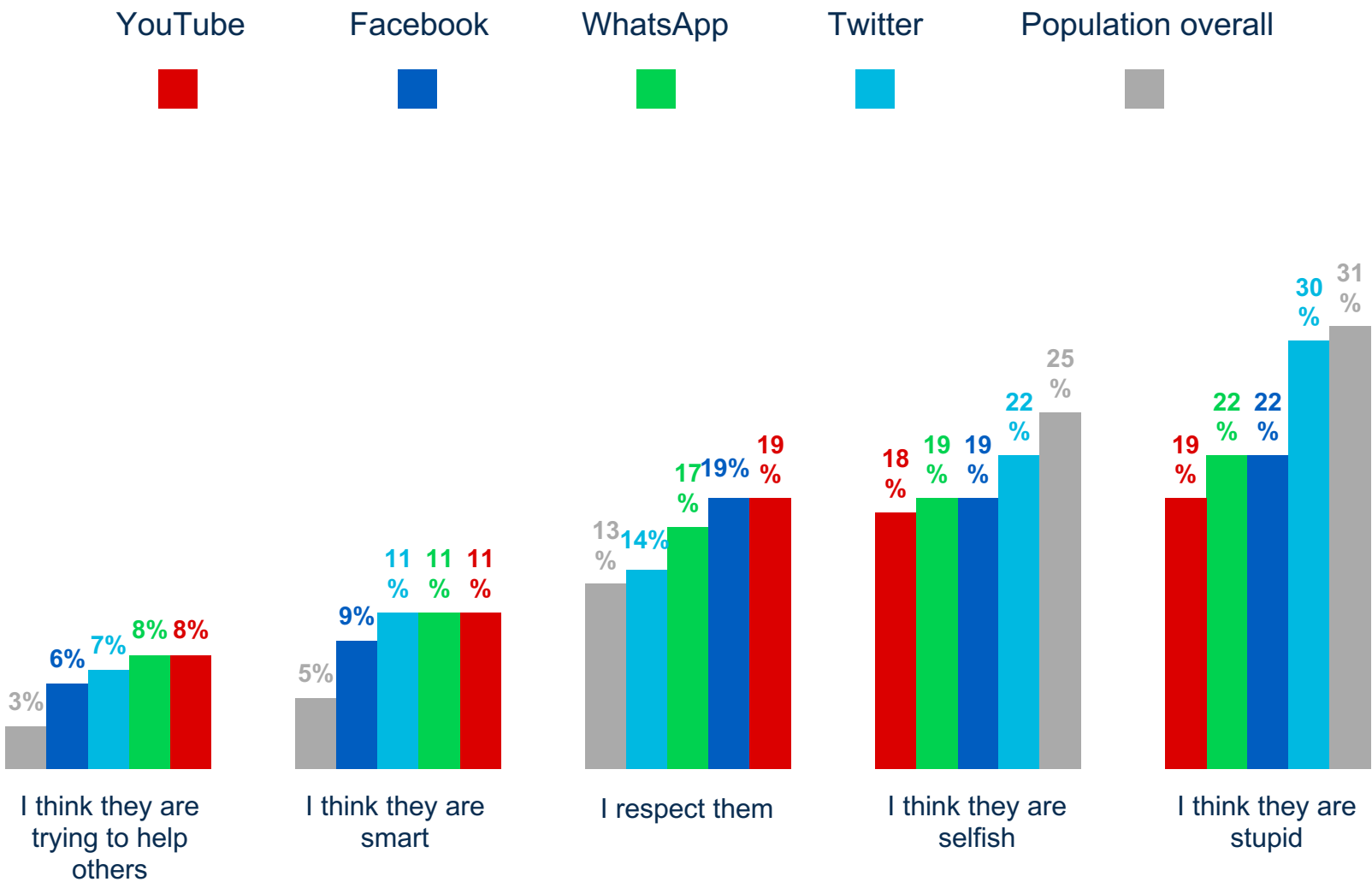
People who would refuse a coronavirus vaccine if they were offered it



People who get a lot of their knowledge about Covid-19 from YouTube (19%), WhatsApp (22%) and Facebook (22%) are less likely than the public overall (31%) to think that those who would turn down a coronavirus vaccine are stupid.

There are smaller differences in views when it comes to other perceived characteristics. For example, 1 in 5 (19%) Facebook and YouTube users say they respect people who would refuse a vaccine – compared with 1 in 8 (13%) among the population as a whole.

Differences in perceptions of people who would refuse a coronavirus vaccine: those who get a great deal or fair amount of information on coronavirus from social media platforms compared with the population overall



How the public view people who promote or accept vaccines

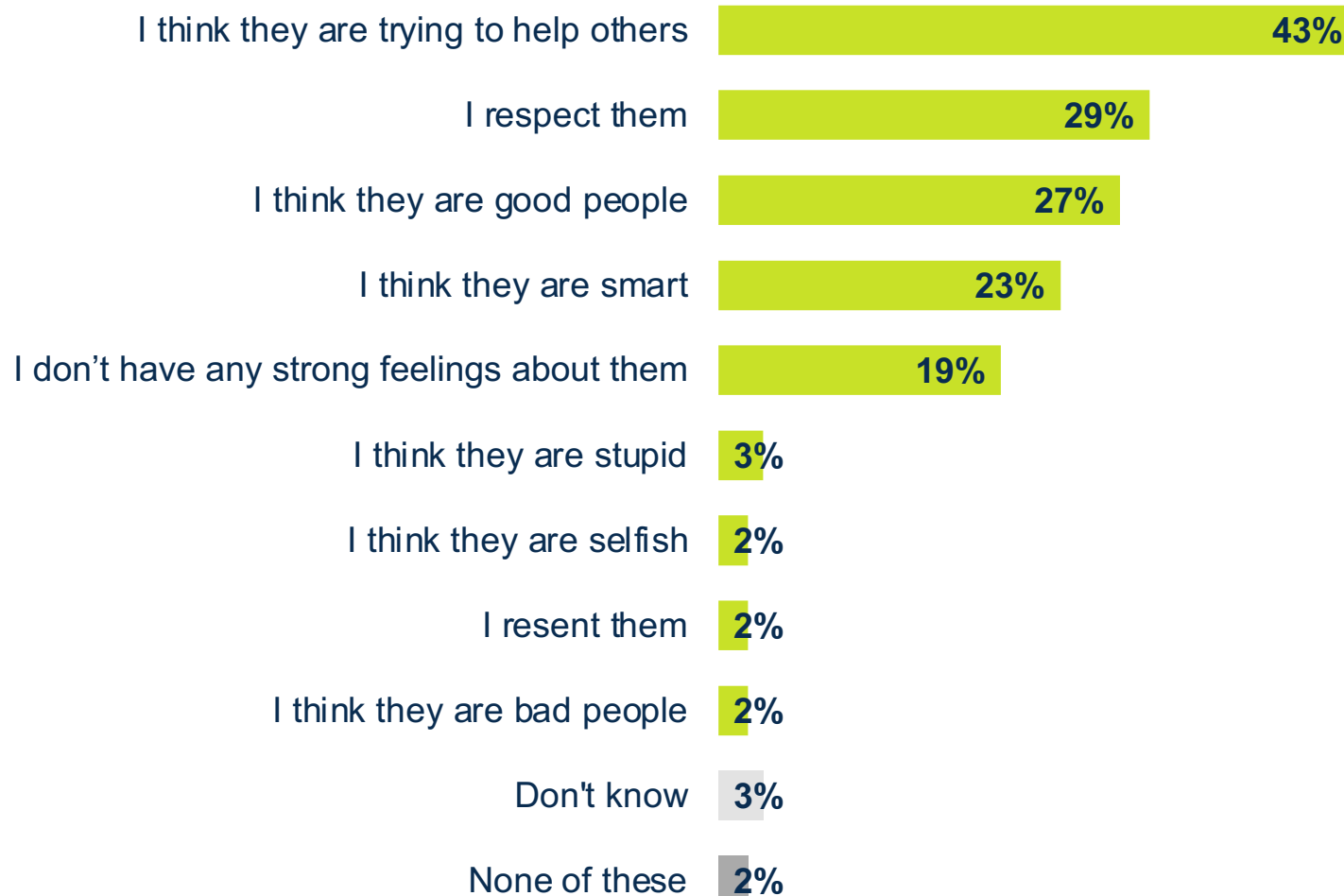


The public have a very positive view of vaccine campaigners. 43% think those who encourage people to get vaccinated are trying to help others – the most common perception of this group. This compares with just 2% who think they are selfish.

29% also say they respect them and 27% say they are good people – much higher than the 2% who say they resent them or think they are bad people.

Which of these, if any, best describe how you feel about the following groups, or do you not have strong feelings about them? You can select more than one answer.

People who encourage the public to get vaccinated



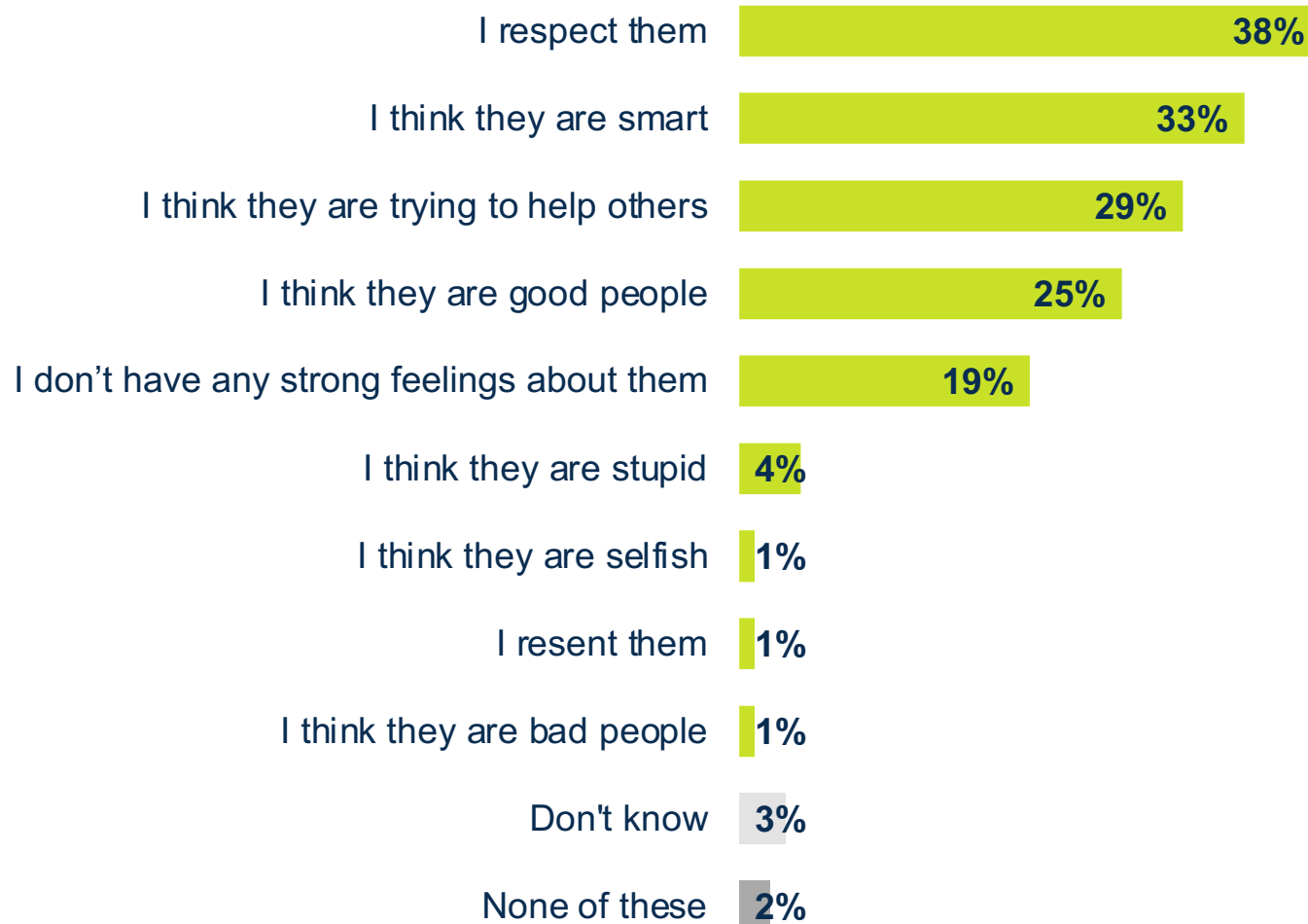
The public also have very positive views of people who would accept a Covid-19 vaccine if they were offered it.

33% say such people are smart – around 8 times higher than the 4% who say they are stupid.

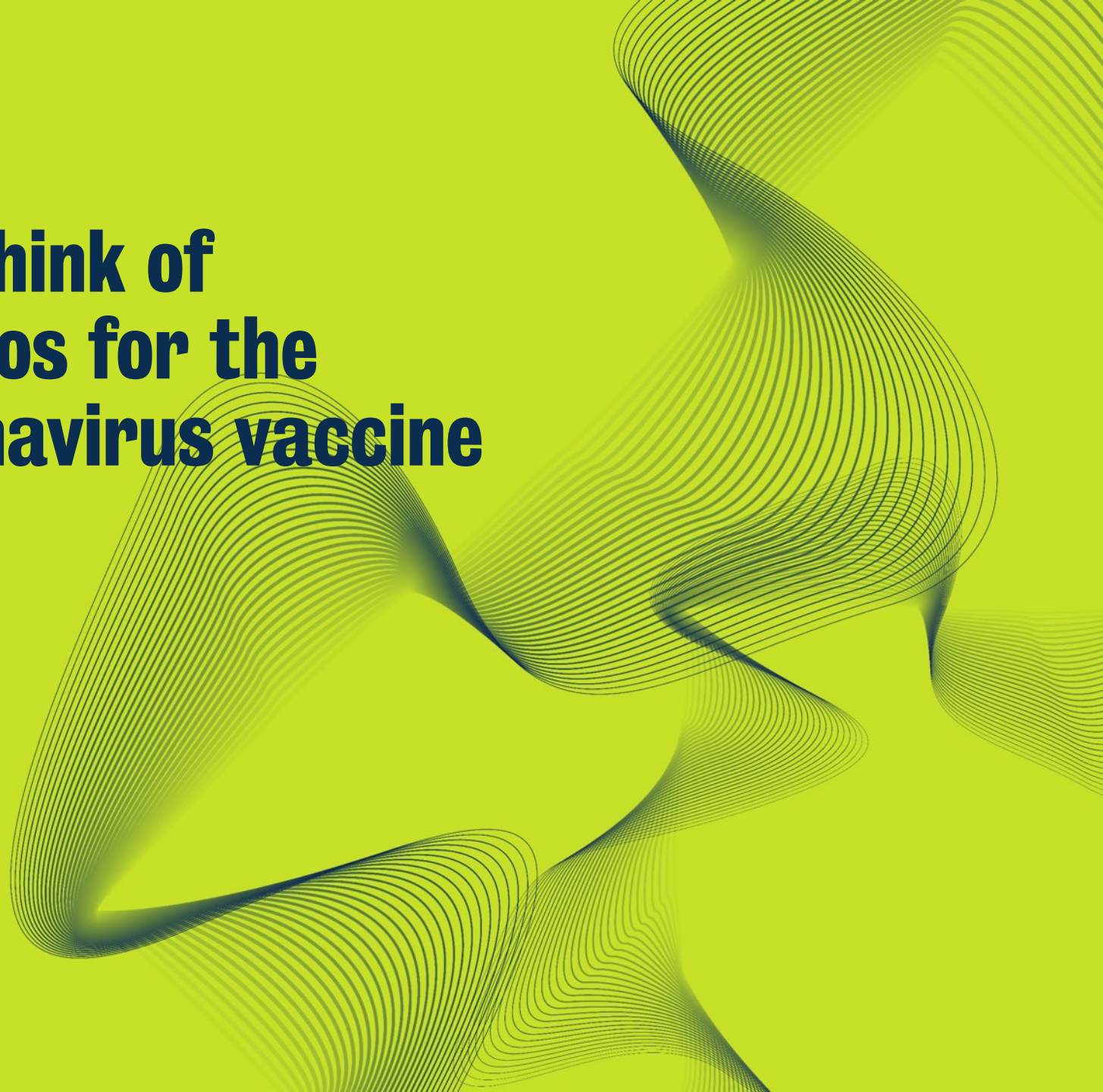
Just 1% think they are selfish, bad people, or say they resent them.

Which of these, if any, best describe how you feel about the following groups, or do you not have strong feelings about them? You can select more than one answer.

People who would get a coronavirus vaccine if they were offered it



What the public think of different scenarios for the rollout of a coronavirus vaccine



59% of the public say it'd be acceptable for parents to choose whether to vaccinate their children against coronavirus or not, compared with 29% who say it'd be unacceptable.

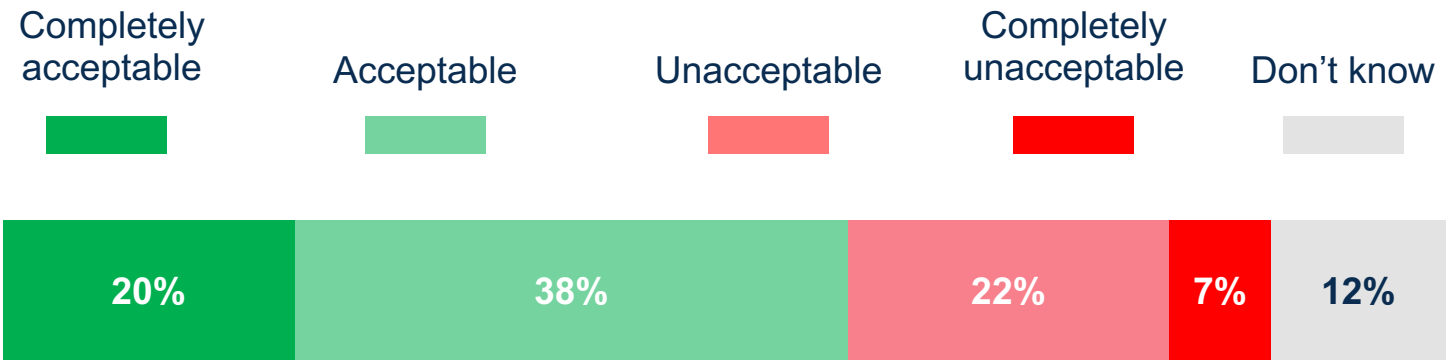
Those with at least one child aged 17 or under at home (65%) are more likely than those without (56%) to be accepting of this idea.

There is also a gender divide in views, with men (34%) more likely than women (23%) to say that giving parents a choice on this issue would be unacceptable.

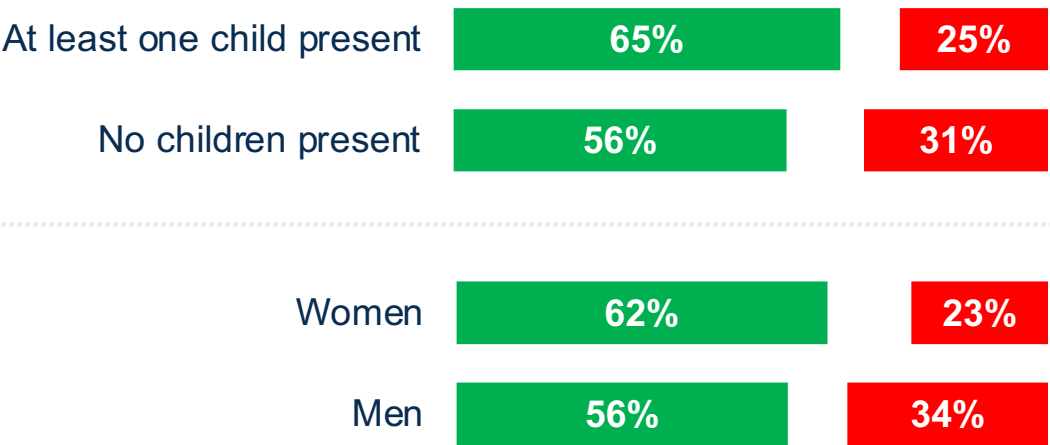
Note some figures differ from charts due to rounding.

If a vaccine or treatment that safely deals with the threat of coronavirus is developed within the next year, how acceptable or unacceptable would you find the following options?

Parents being able to choose whether to vaccinate their children or not



% who would find it acceptable or unacceptable

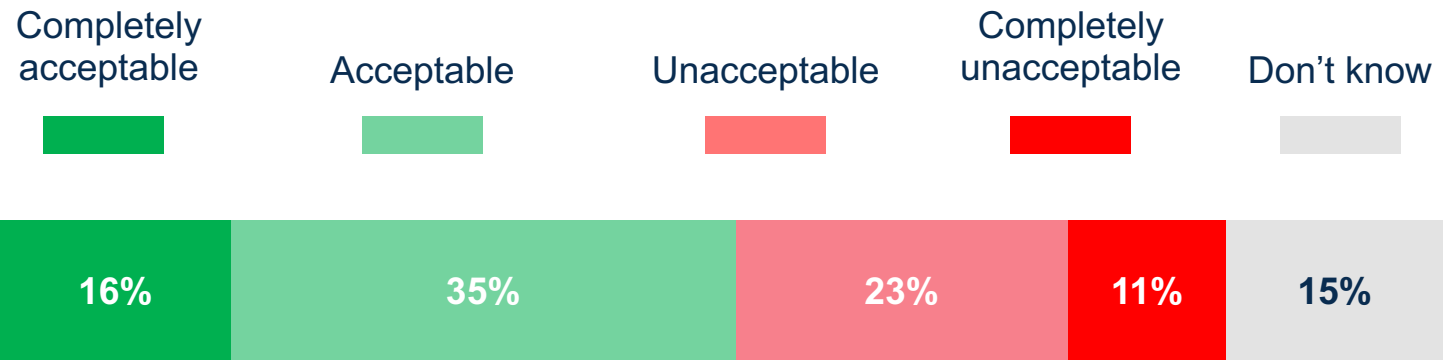


At the same time, however, 51% say it'd be acceptable for parents to have to vaccinate their children when the government says they have to, indicating that some people hold inconsistent views on this issue.

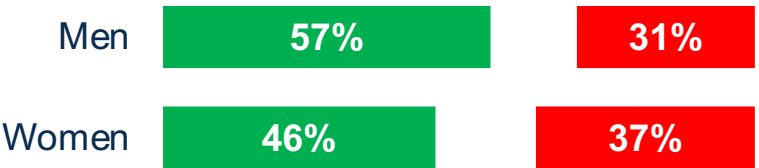
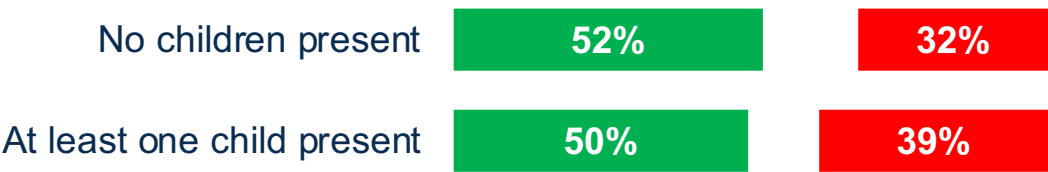
With this question, there is less of a divide in responses between those with and without children at home, while men are again more accepting than women of the idea.

If a vaccine or treatment that safely deals with the threat of coronavirus is developed within the next year, how acceptable or unacceptable would you find the following options?

Parents having to vaccinate their children when the government says they have to



% who would find it acceptable or unacceptable

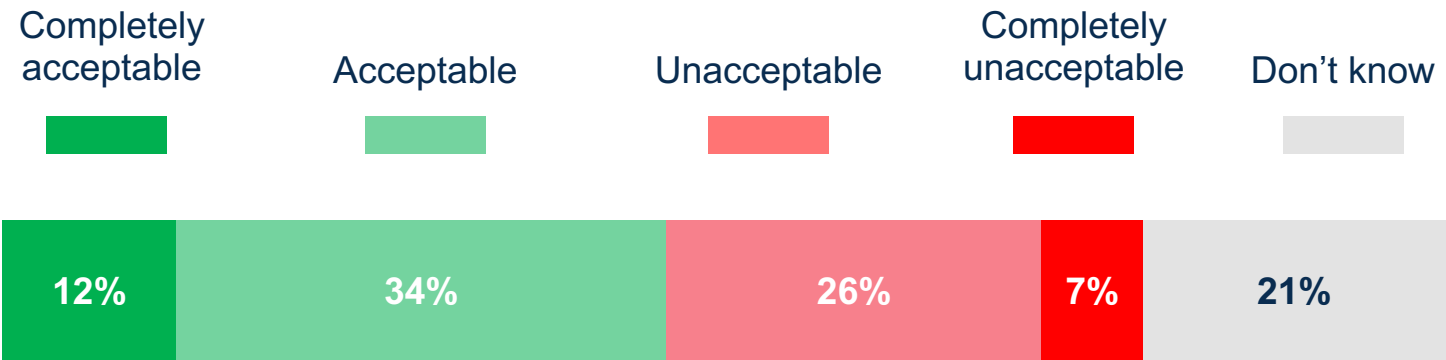


46% say they'd find it acceptable if people in work received a coronavirus vaccine before retired people, compared with 33% who feel it'd be unacceptable.

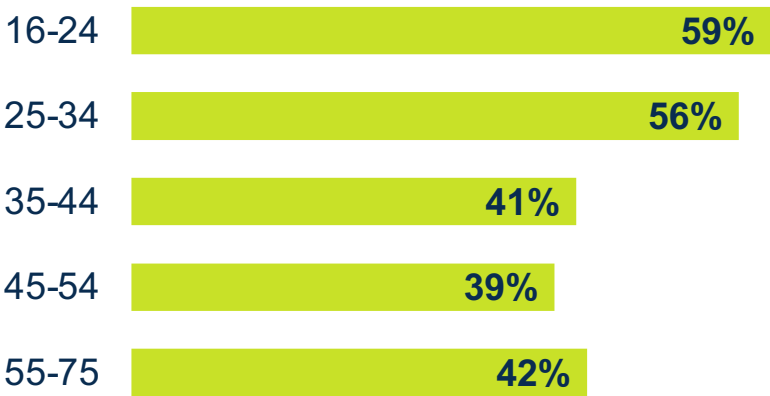
By 57% to 41%, 16-34-year-olds are much more likely than those aged 35 to 75 to find this acceptable.

If a vaccine or treatment that safely deals with the threat of coronavirus is developed within the next year, how acceptable or unacceptable would you find the following options?

Working people being given the vaccine before retired people



% who would find it acceptable

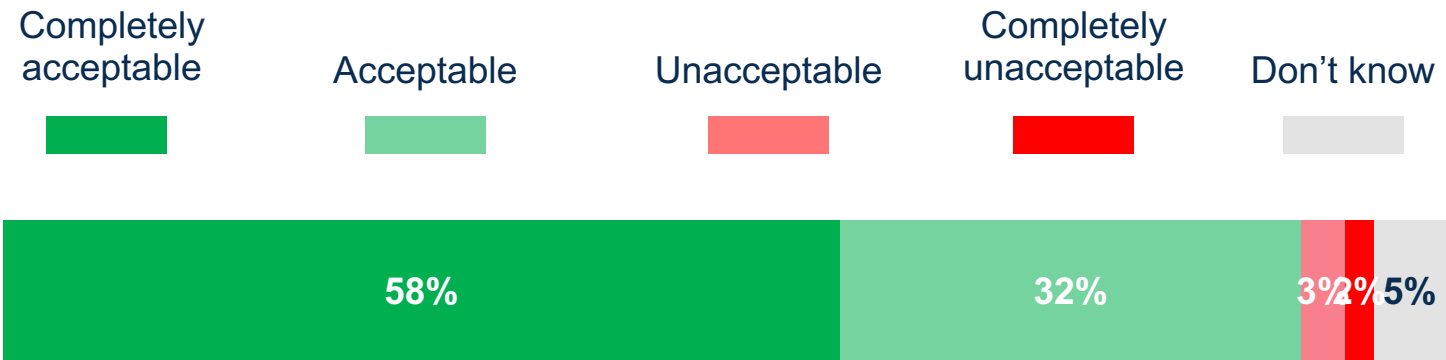


The overwhelming majority of the country – 90% – say they’d find it acceptable if more vulnerable people were prioritised in receiving a coronavirus vaccine before them.

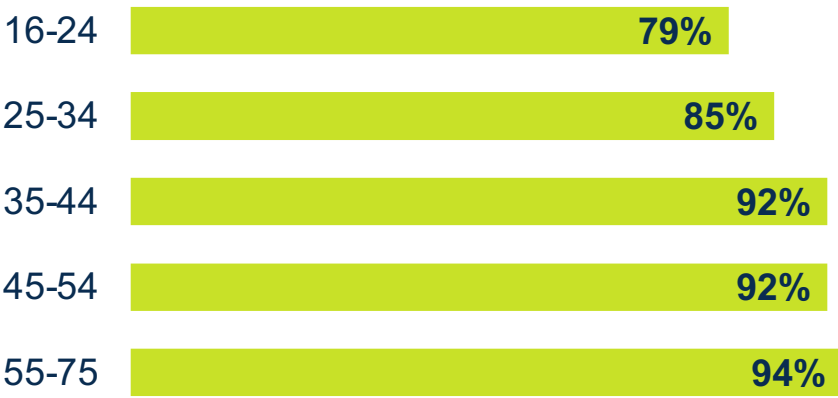
The acceptability of this increases with age: 79% of 16-24-year-olds would be OK with it, compared with 94% of 55-75-year-olds.

If a vaccine or treatment that safely deals with the threat of coronavirus is developed within the next year, how acceptable or unacceptable would you find the following options?

More vulnerable people being offered the vaccine before you



% who would find it acceptable



45% of people think it will be a year or more after a vaccine has been rolled out before we'll be able to return to normal life.

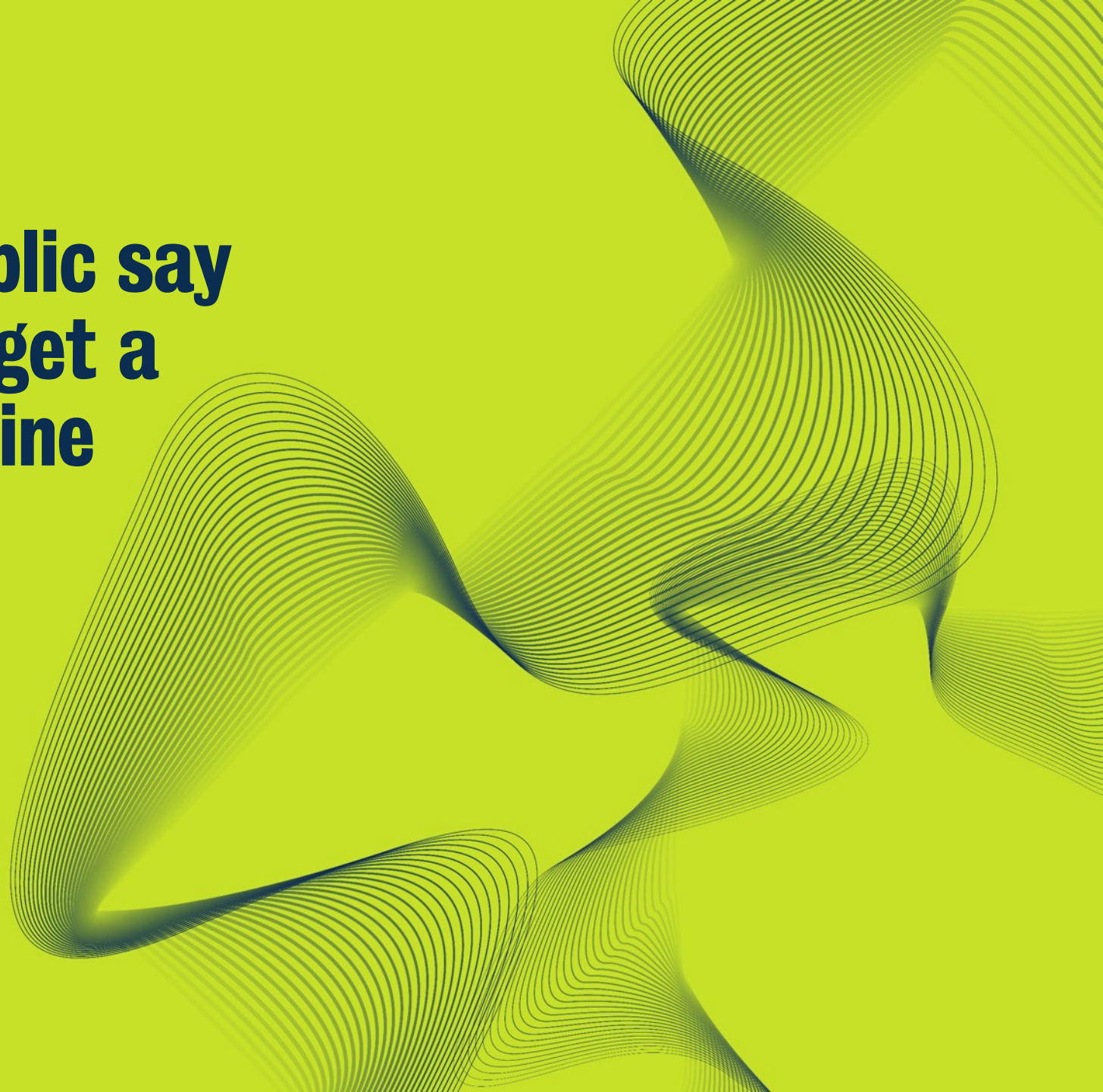
37% think it will take six months or less, while 6% think we will never return to normal.

Note some figures differ from charts due to rounding.

Once a vaccine has been approved and released, when, if at all, do you think we will be able to go back to how we lived before the coronavirus crisis?



**How likely the public say
they would be to get a
coronavirus vaccine**



The public's reported likelihood of getting vaccinated against Covid-19 is largely unchanged since July.

54% say they'd be certain or very likely to get inoculated, compared with 53% who said the same five months ago.

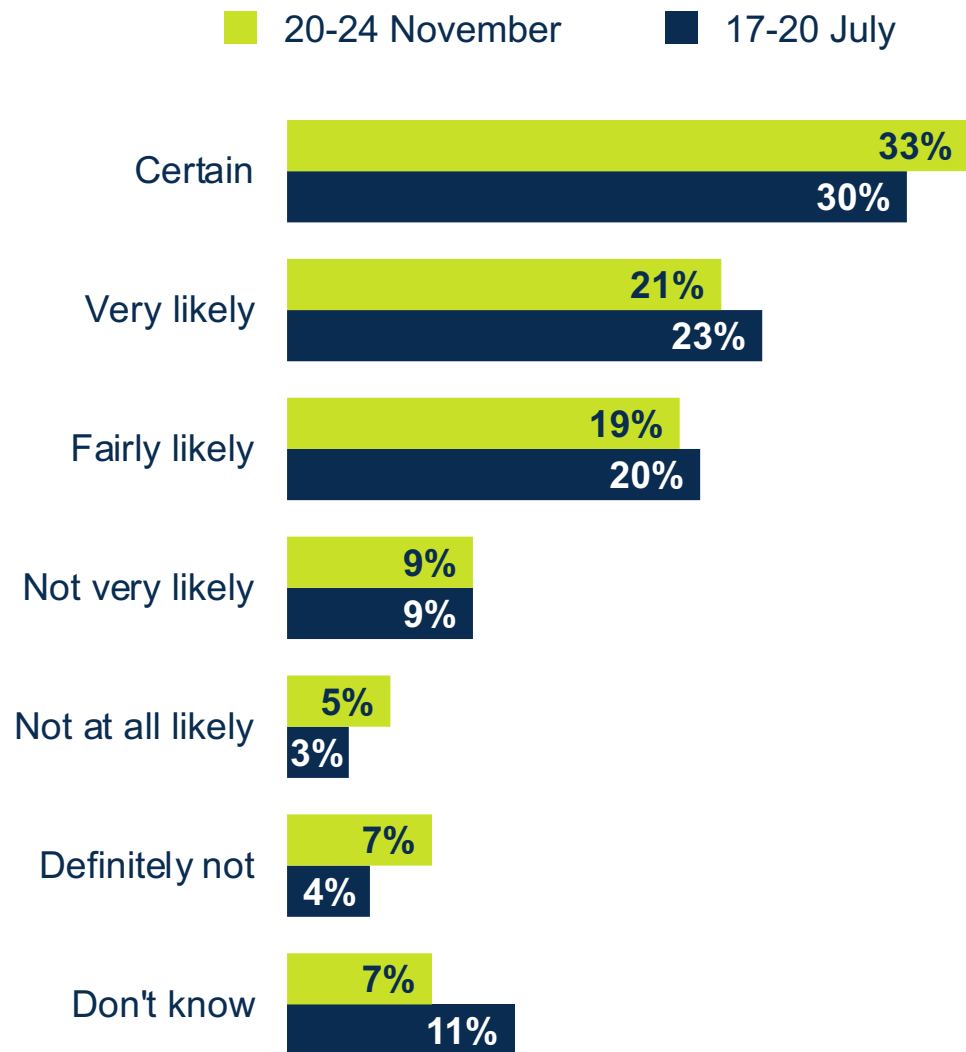
19% say they'd be fairly likely to get the vaccine – also virtually the same as in July (20%).

Around 1 in 6 people (16%) said they were unlikely to or definitely wouldn't when this question was asked previously – and this has risen slightly, to 20%.

By 79% to 71%, men are also more likely than women more likely to say they're likely to take the vaccine.

Note some figures differ from charts due to rounding.

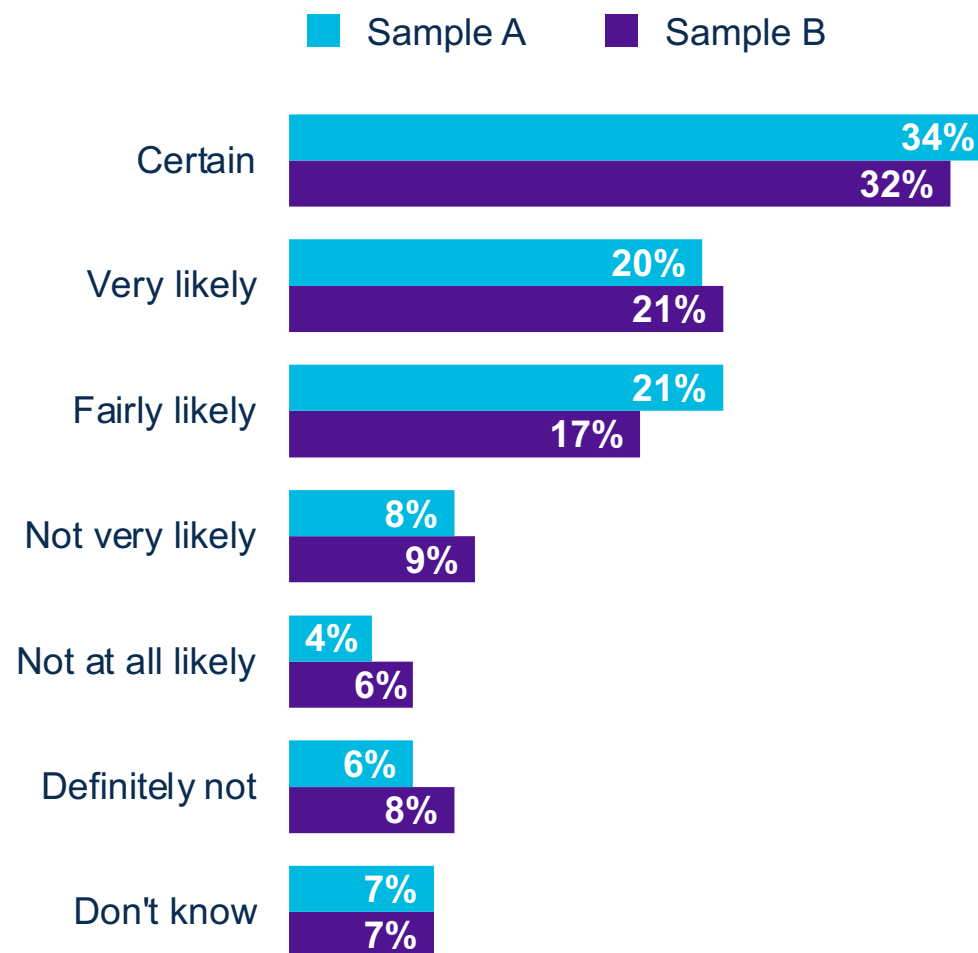
If a vaccine for coronavirus becomes available, how likely or unlikely would you personally be to get the vaccine?



Changing the wording of the question to make it clearer that respondents would be offered a coronavirus vaccine if it became available has little impact on how likely people say they would be to get vaccinated.

Sample A: If a vaccine for coronavirus becomes available, how likely or unlikely would you personally be to get the vaccine?

Sample B: If a vaccine for coronavirus becomes available, how likely or unlikely would you personally be to get the vaccine if it was available to anyone who wanted it?



Base: 1,122 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-24 November 2020, in sample A; and 1,122 in sample B

Technical details

Ipsos MORI interviewed a sample of 2,244 adults aged 16-75 in the United Kingdom using its online i:omnibus between 20 and 24 November 2020. Data has been weighted to the known offline population proportions for age within gender, government office region, working status, social grade and education. All polls are subject to a wide range of potential sources of error.

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