

Towards the manifestos: What's the agenda for fixing poverty and tackling inequality?

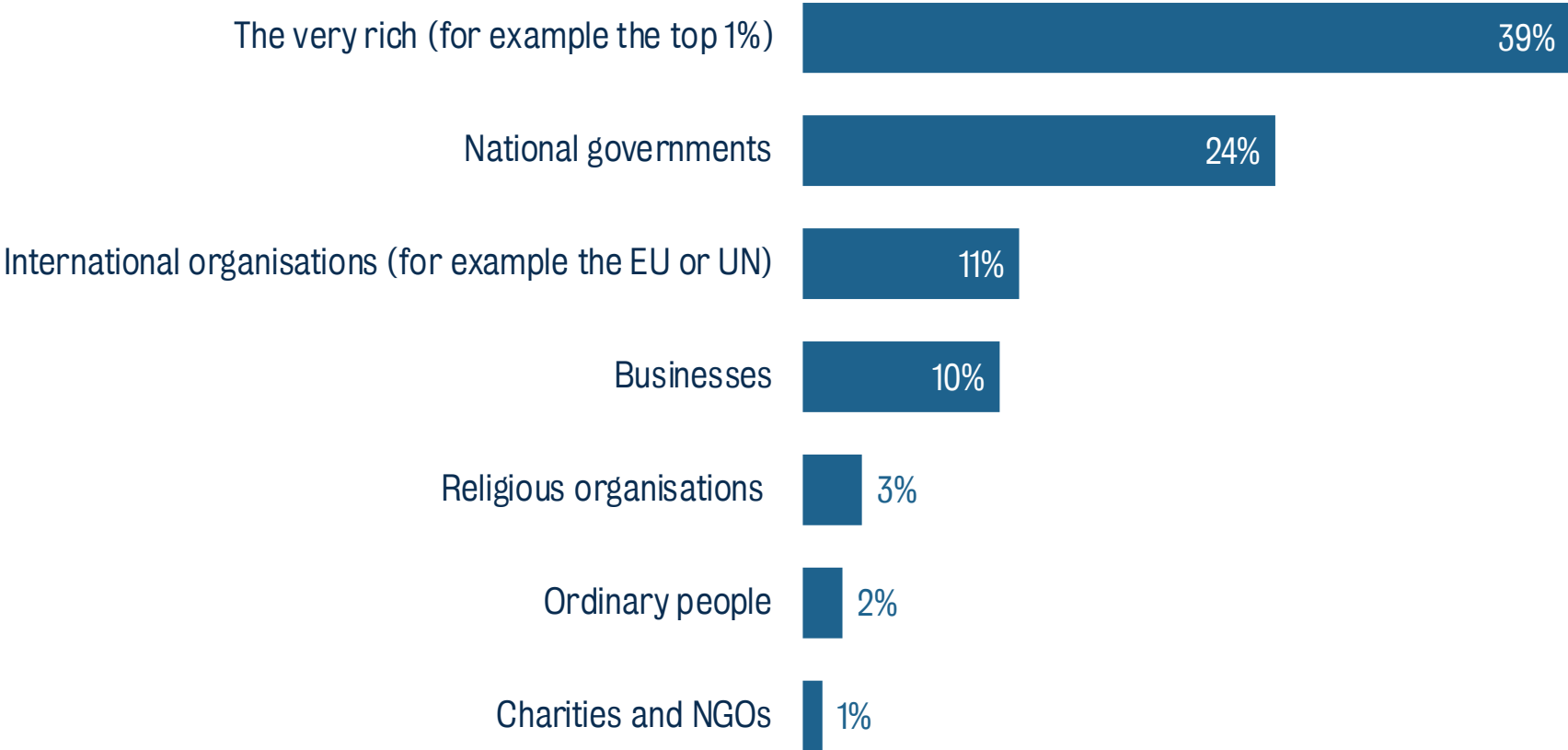
July 2023

**Context: shifting attitudes
on the impact of wealth
inequality**



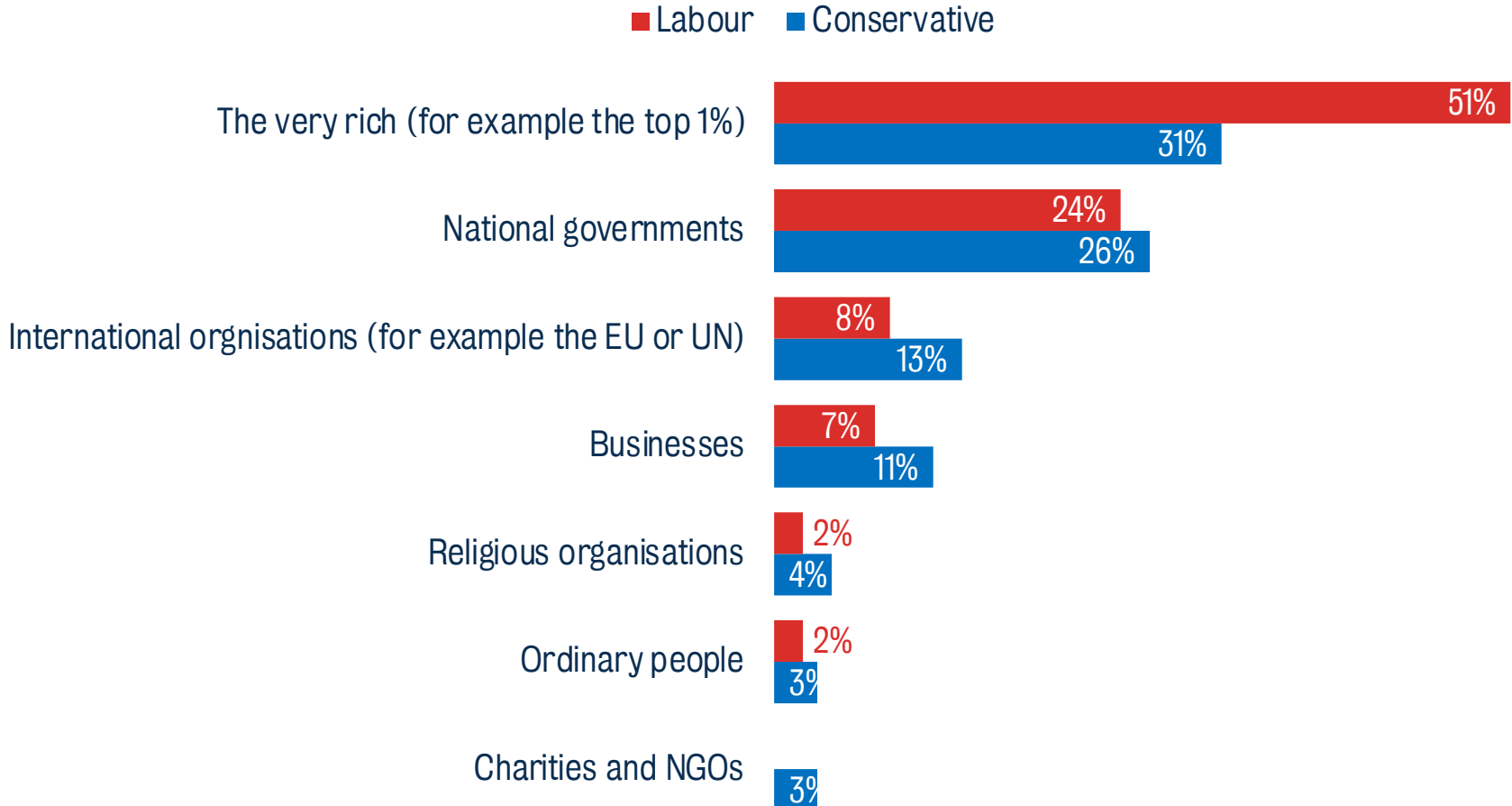
The public think the very rich today are more powerful than governments

Today, [in 2023](#), which of the following groups do you think has the most power? By “power” we mean the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events. (% who rank each as having the most power)



There are differences in views between 2019 Conservative and Labour voters, but...

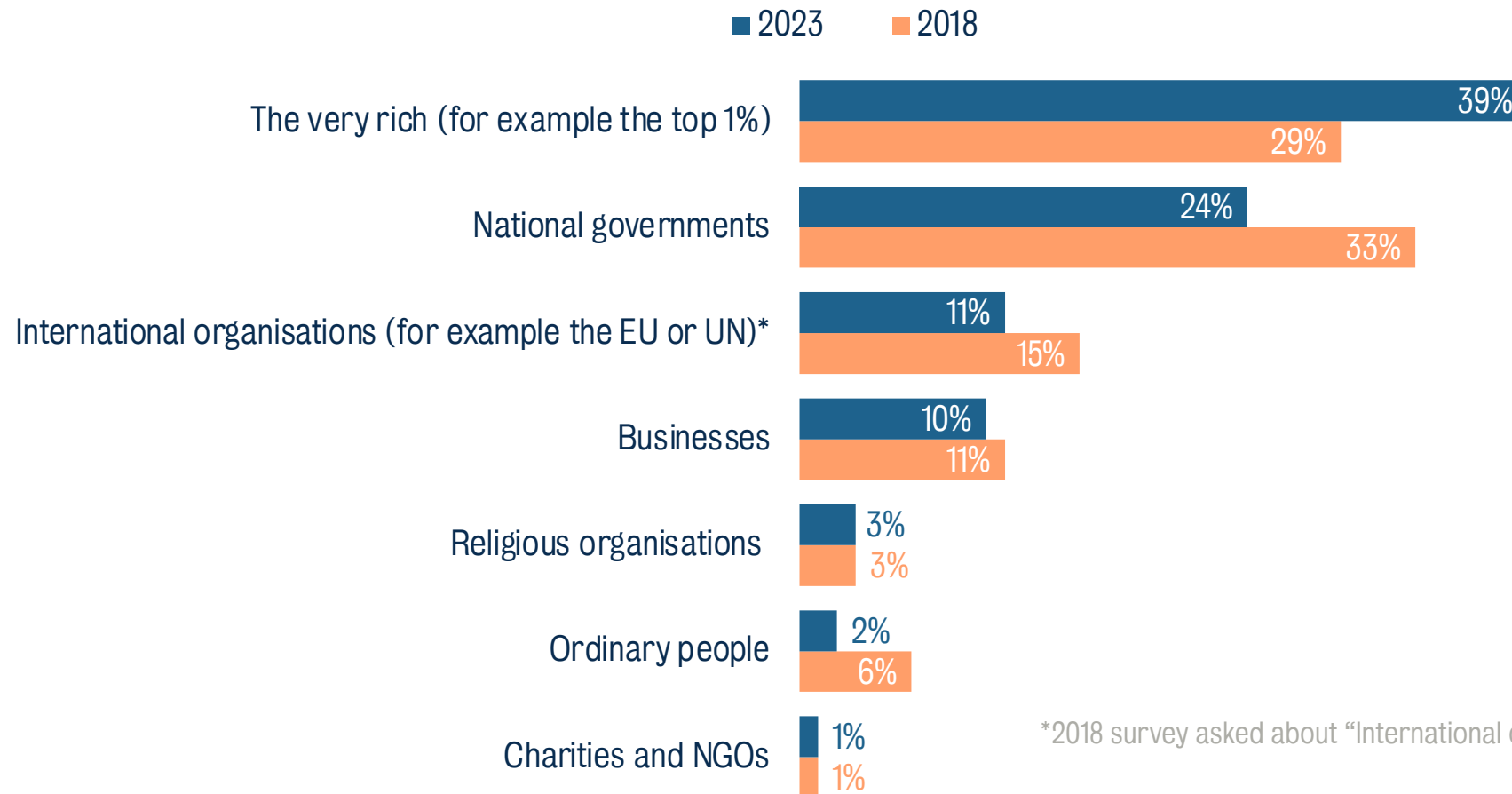
Today, [in 2023](#), which of the following groups do you think has the most power? By “power” we mean the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events. (% who rank each as having the most power)



...this seems to be a shift from 2018, when the public thought governments were more powerful

2023 survey: Today, [in 2023](#), which of the following groups do you think has the most power? By “power” we mean the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events. Please rank from 1 to 7 with 1 having the most power and 7 the least.
(% who rank each as having the most power)

2018 survey: Today [in 2018](#), which of the following groups do you think has the most power? By “power” we mean the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events.
(% who select each option)

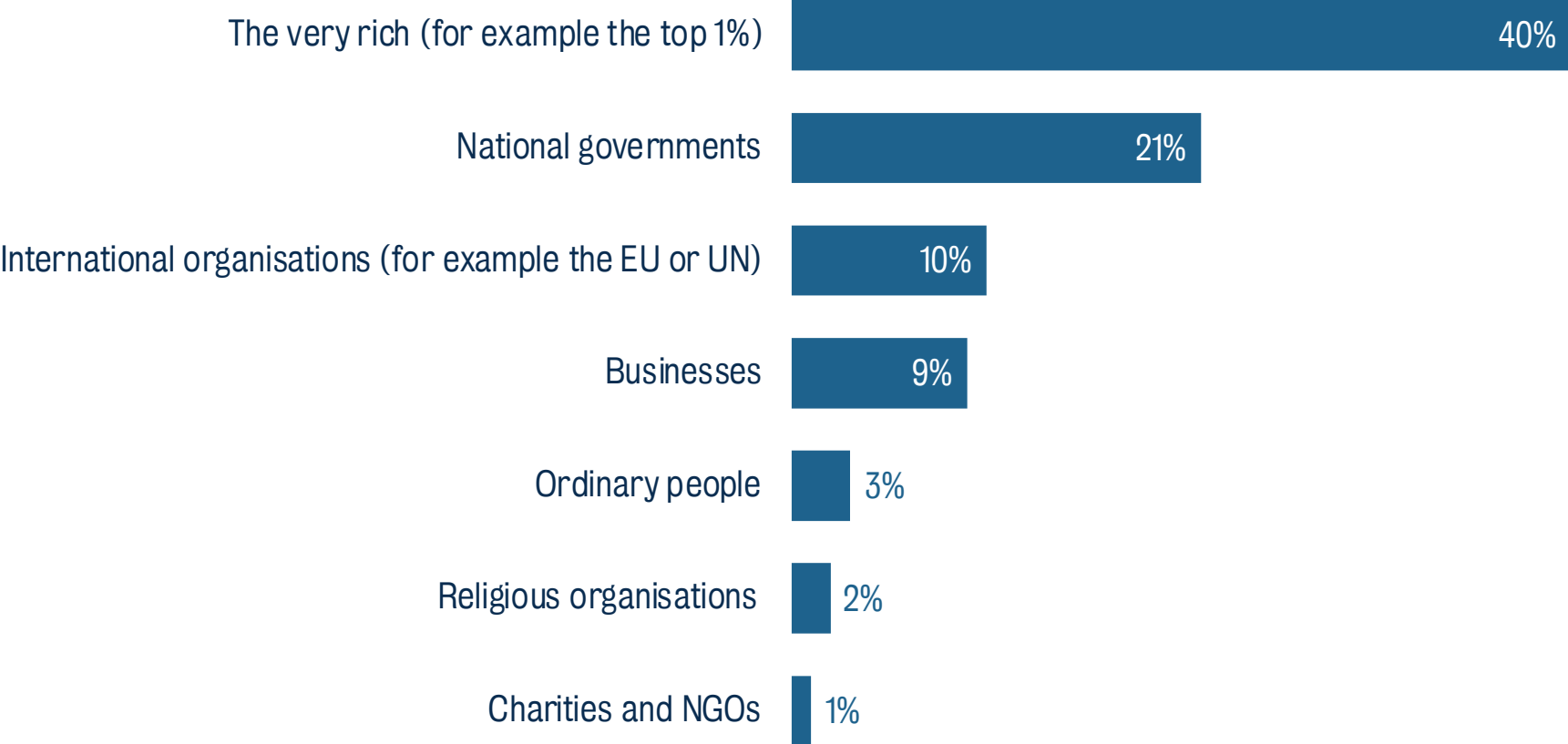


*2018 survey asked about “International organisations e.g. the EU, G7 etc”

Base: 2,000 UK adults aged 18+, surveyed 27 Feb–6 Mar 2023, and 2,007 surveyed 29 March–3 April 2018

The public don't see this changing much by 2030

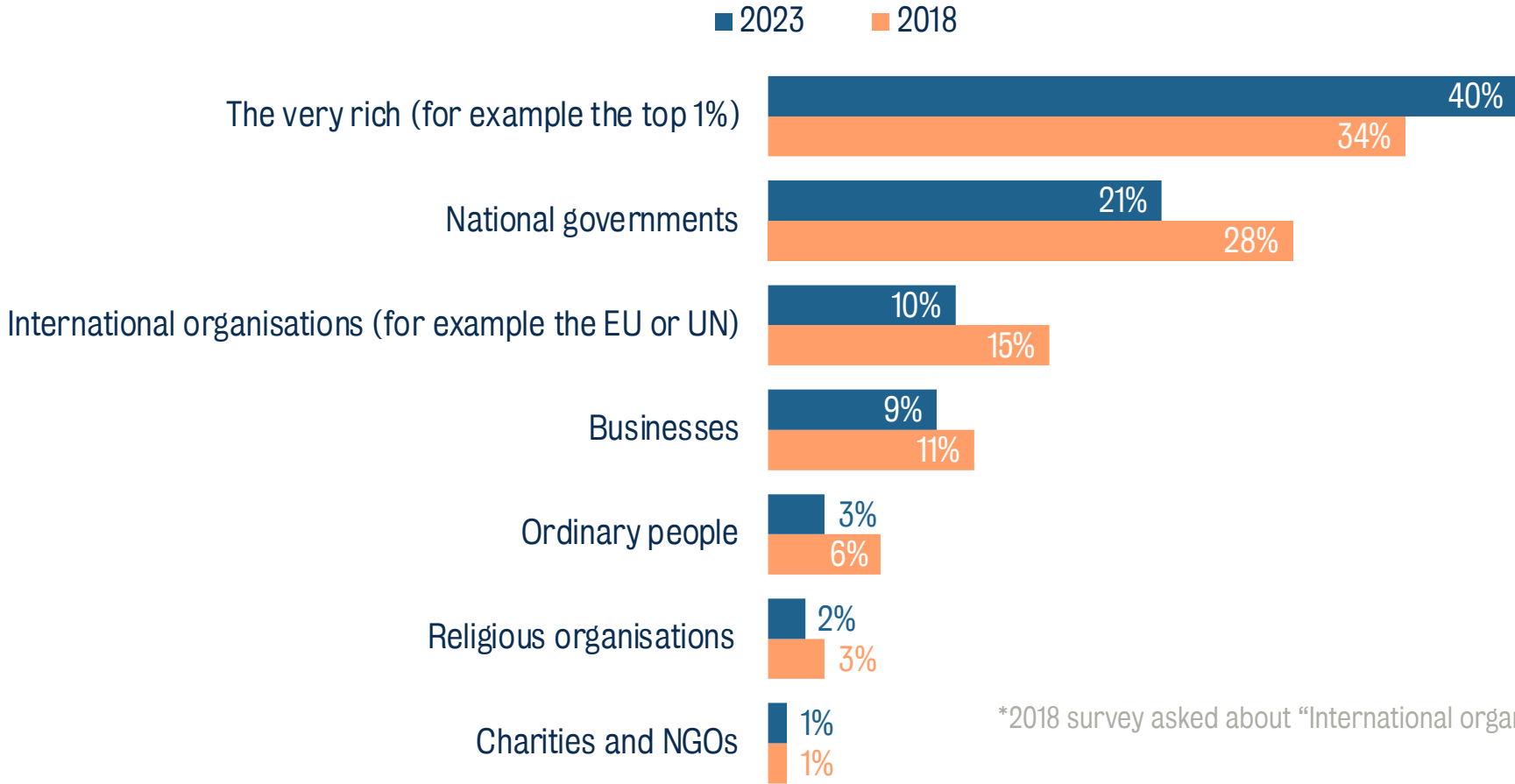
And which of the following groups do you expect will have the most power [in 2030](#)? By “power” we mean the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events. (% who rank each as having the most power)



Looking back to 2018, we're just ahead of schedule?

2023 survey: And which of the following groups do you expect will have the most power in 2030? By “power” we mean the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events. Please rank from 1 to 7 with 1 having the most power and 7 the least. (% who rank each as having the most power)

2018 survey: And who do you expect will have the most power in 2030? By ‘power’ we mean the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events. (% who select each option)

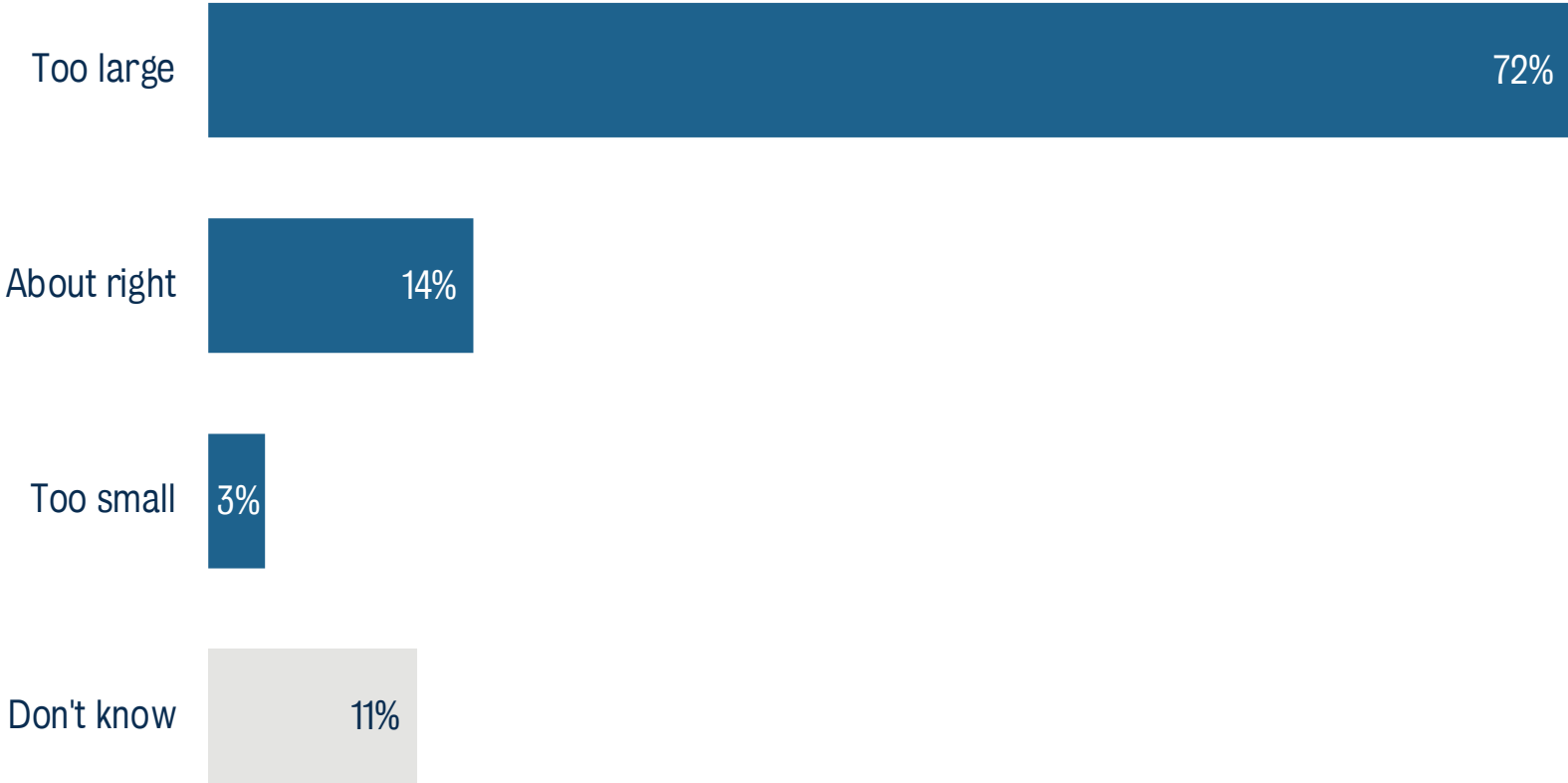


*2018 survey asked about “International organisations e.g. the EU, G7 etc”

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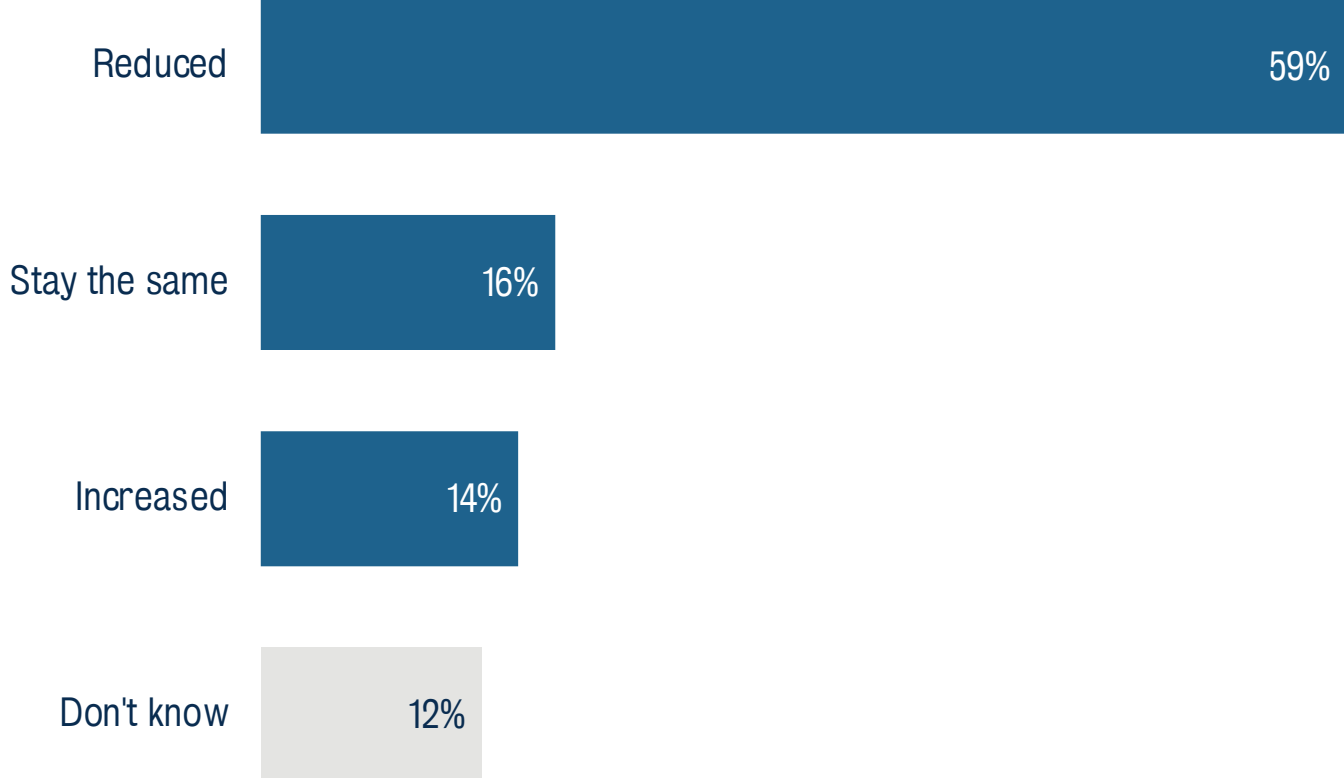
More generally, seven in 10 think differences in wealth are too large in Britain today...

Thinking of wealth levels generally in Britain today, would you say that the gap between those with lots of wealth and those with little wealth is too large, about right, or too small?



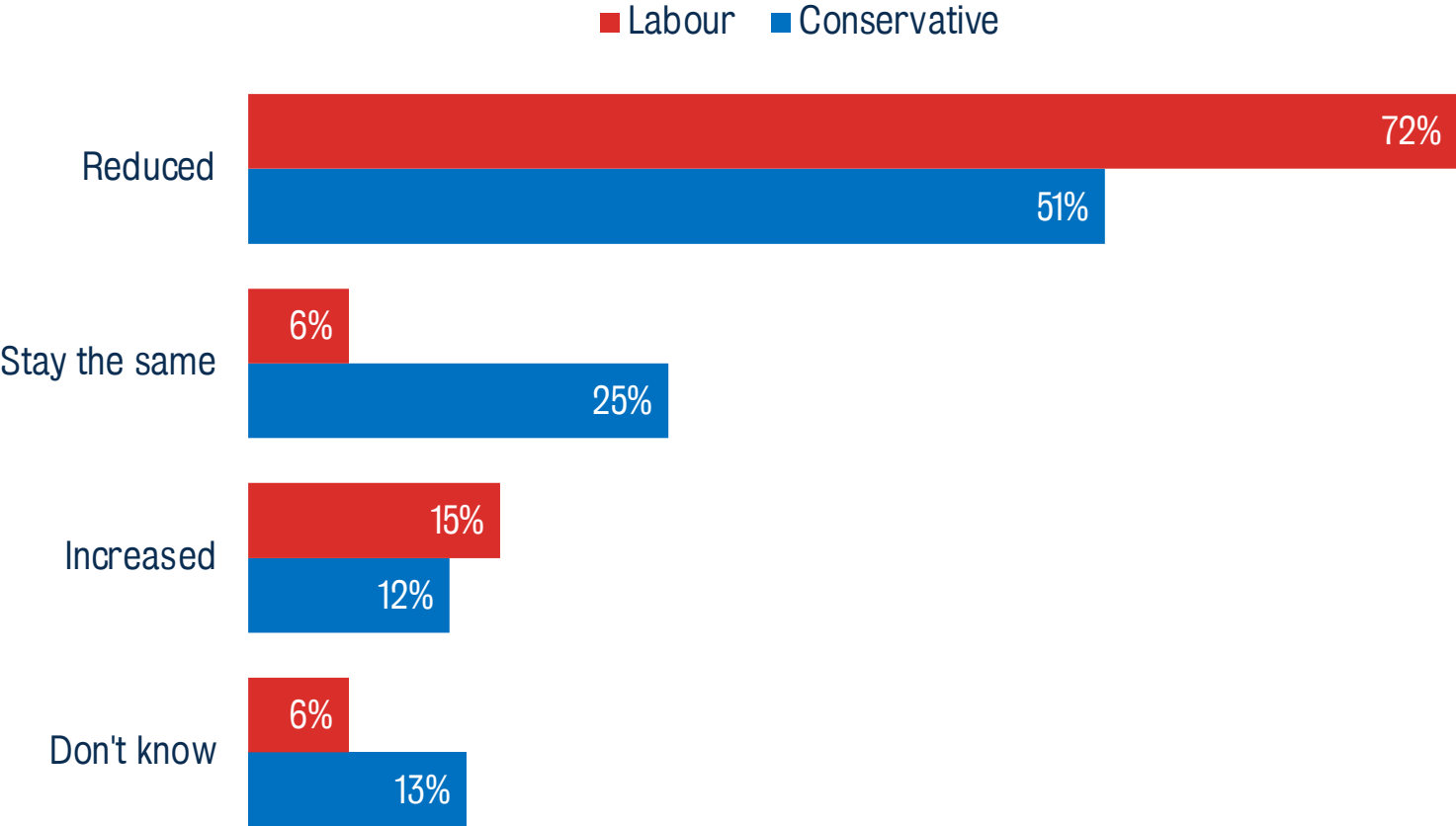
...and six in 10 people say the wealth gap should be reduced – but three in 10 think it should stay the same or even be increased

Thinking of wealth levels generally in Britain today, would you say the gap between those with high wealth and those with little wealth should be reduced, stay the same, or increased?



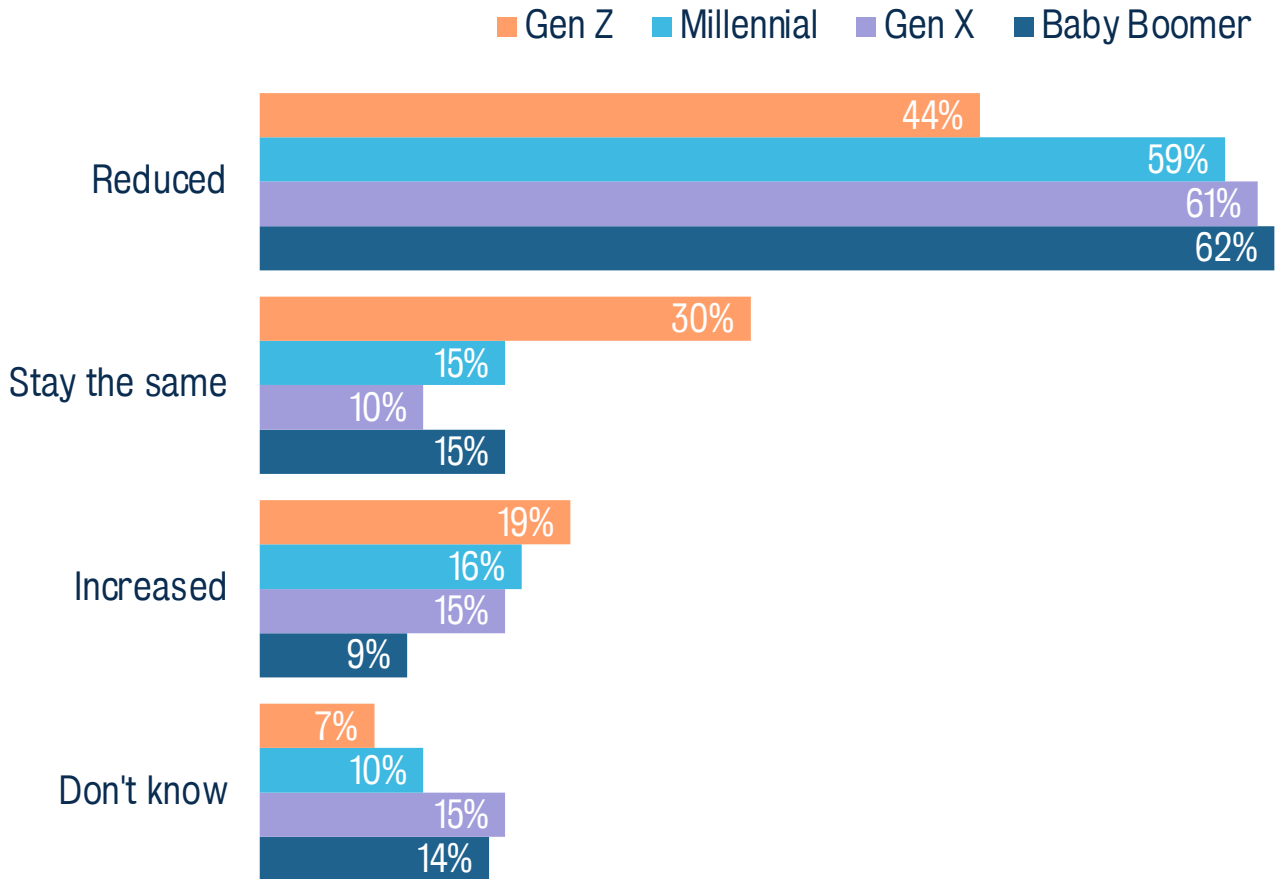
Majorities of both Labour and Conservative voters think Britain's wealth gap should be reduced, though this view is more common among Labour voters

Thinking of wealth levels generally in Britain today, would you say the gap between those with high wealth and those with little wealth should be reduced, stay the same, or increased?



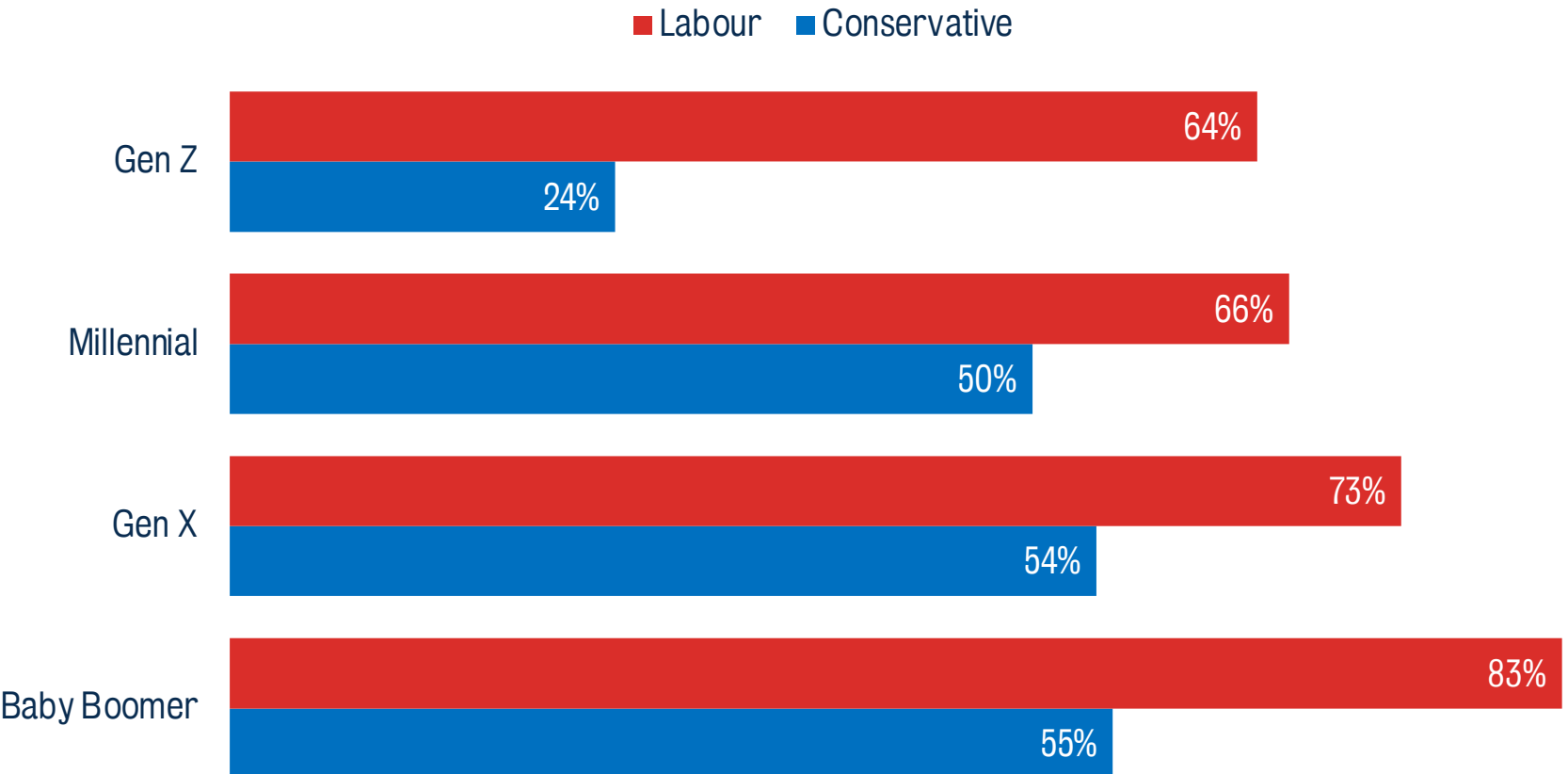
Gen Z stand out as the generation least likely to believe the gap between rich and poor in Britain should be reduced, with less than half holding this view – BUT...

Thinking of wealth levels generally in Britain today, would you say the gap between those with high wealth and those with little wealth should be reduced, stay the same, or increased?



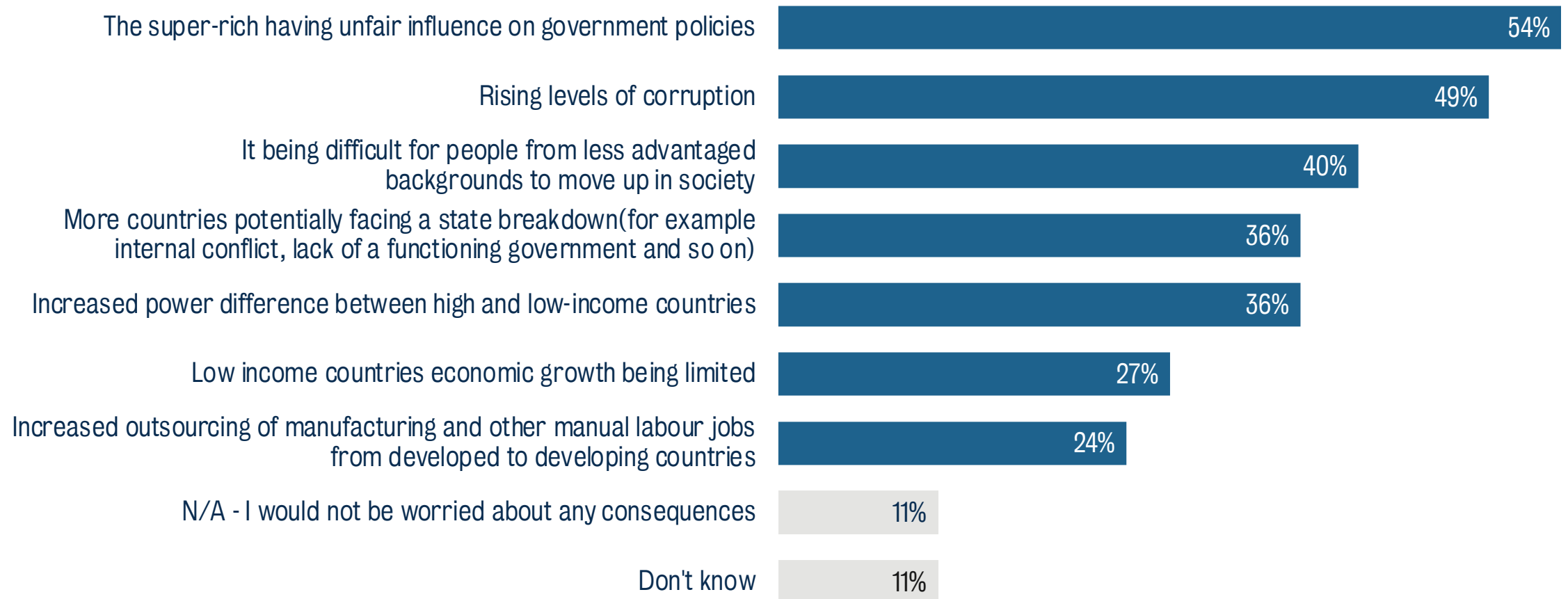
...this is driven by significantly lower support among Gen Z Conservative voters

Thinking of wealth levels generally in Britain today, would you say the gap between those with high wealth and those with little wealth should be reduced, stay the same, or increased? (% who say reduced)



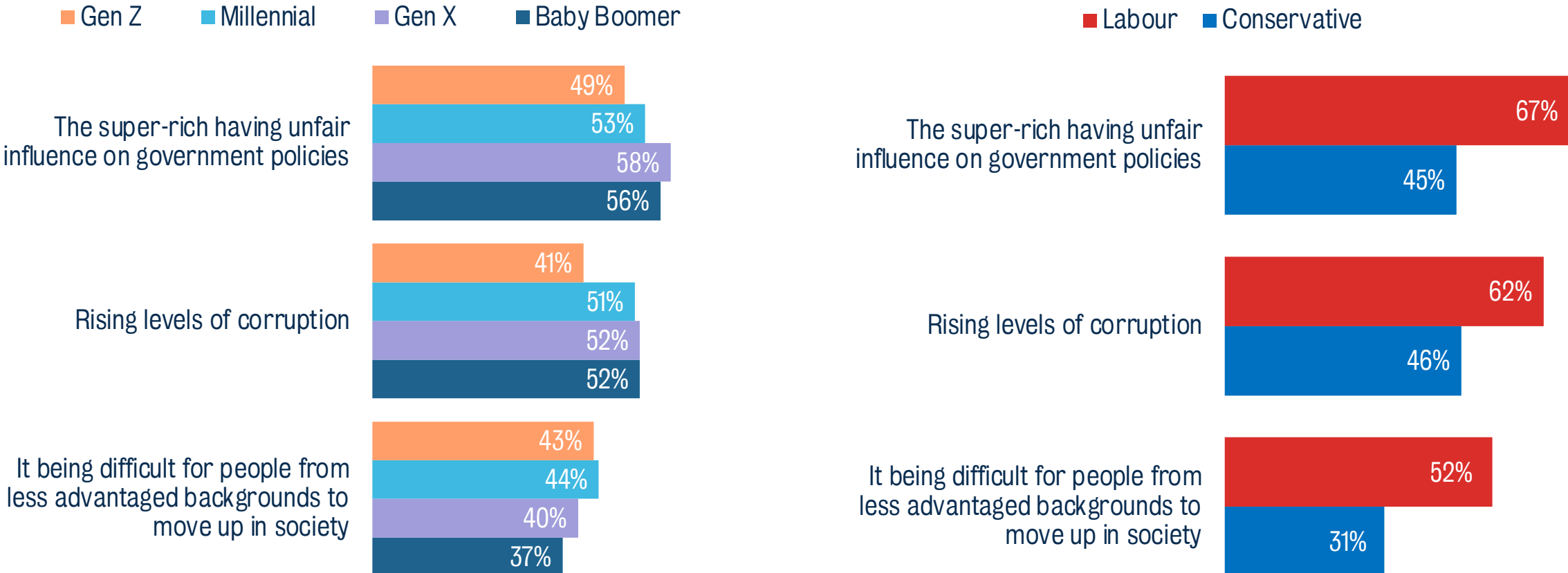
The public see a number of possible negative consequences from rising inequality, in particular unfair influence over government and rising corruption

If global inequality were to rise, would you be worried about any of the following potential consequences? Please select the ones you would be worried about. If you would not be worried about any consequences or do not think any of the following would be consequences, you can select N/A. By global inequality rising, we mean the gap between the richest and poorest in societies around the world as a whole getting bigger.



Levels of concern about the consequences of inequality are similar across generations, but Labour voters are more concerned than Conservatives

If global inequality were to rise, would you be worried about any of the following potential consequences? Please select the ones you would be worried about. If you would not be worried about any consequences or do not think any of the following would be consequences, you can select N/A. By global inequality rising, we mean the gap between the richest and poorest in societies around the world as a whole getting bigger.

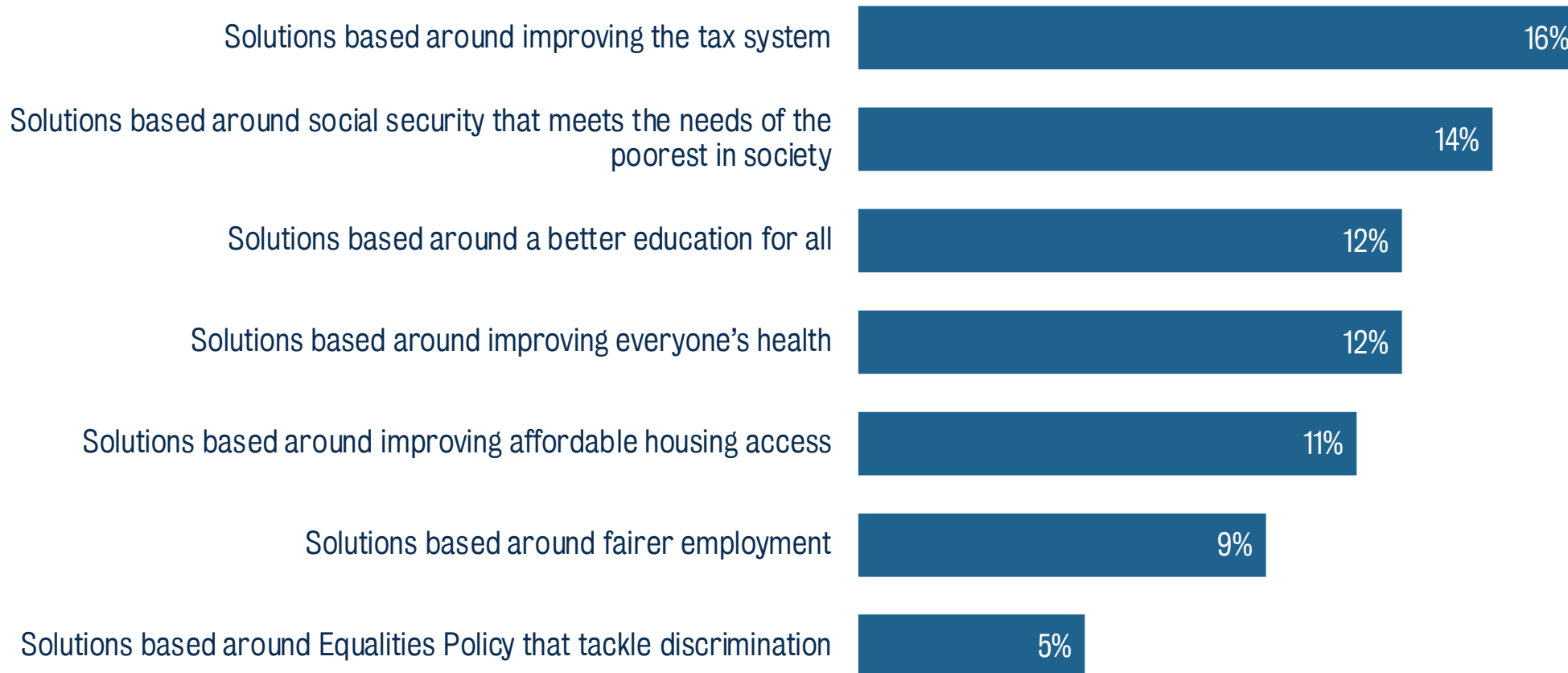


Solutions for tackling inequality in Britain: what the public think



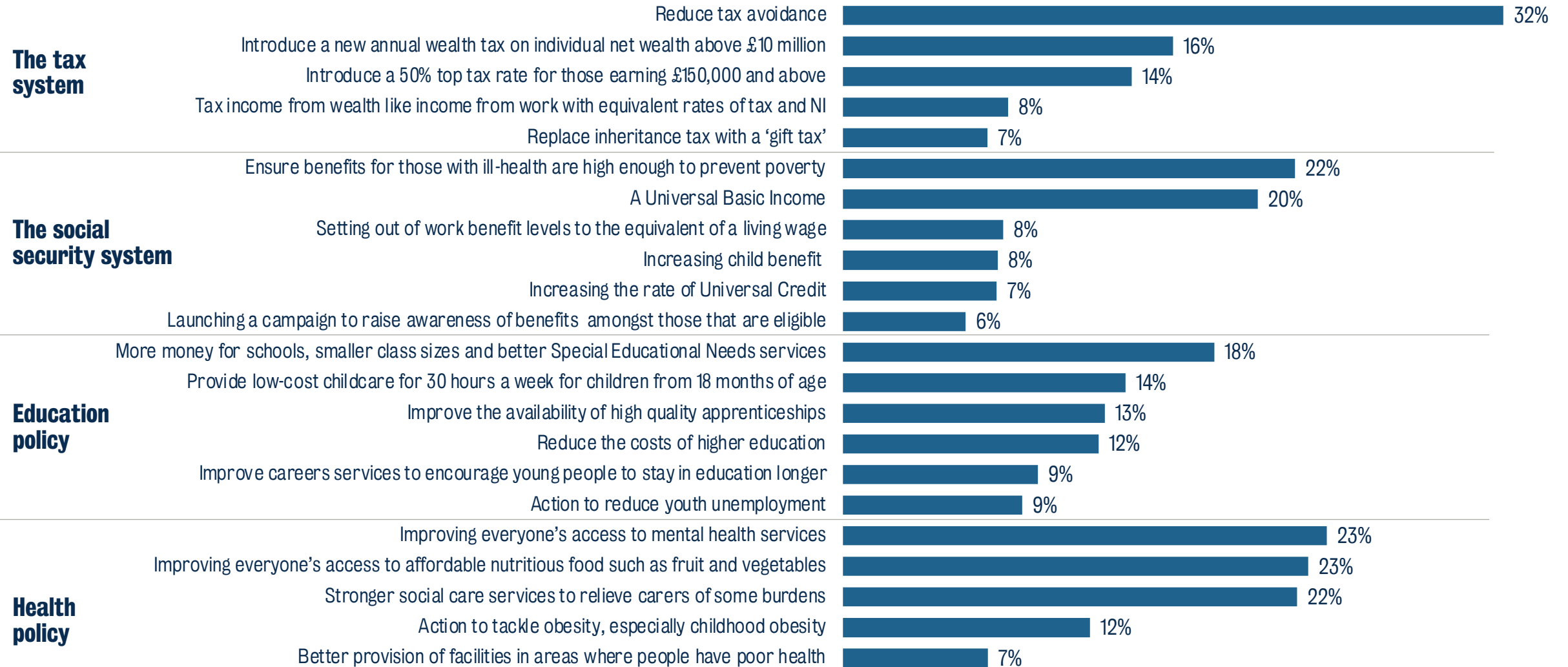
The big picture: public asked to rank groups of solutions, after going through detailed proposals

Thinking about all the answers you've given above, what solutions do you think would work best to reduce inequality in Britain over the next 10 years? Please rank the answers from one to seven with one being the solution you believe would work best and seven being the solution you think would work least well.
(% who rank each as number one)



The detail... 7 policy areas, 4-7 measures in each, 3 questions on each

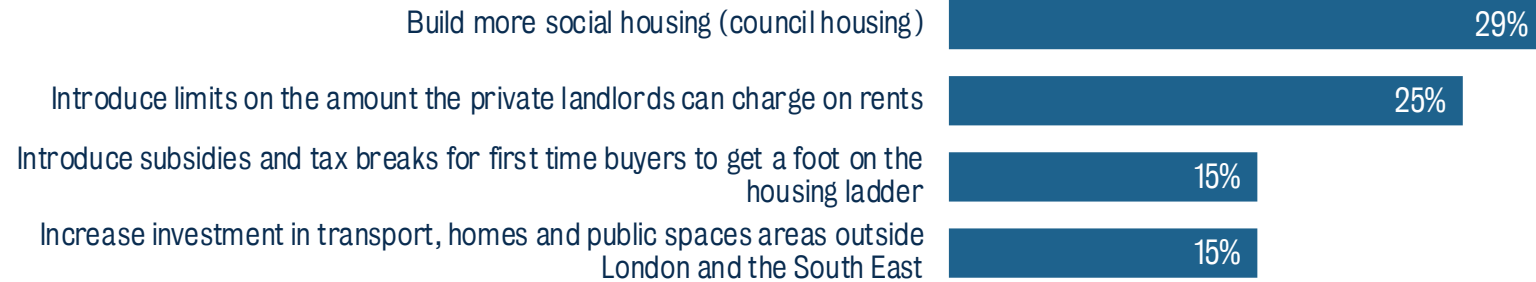
% who rank each policy as number one in terms of **support** from those presented



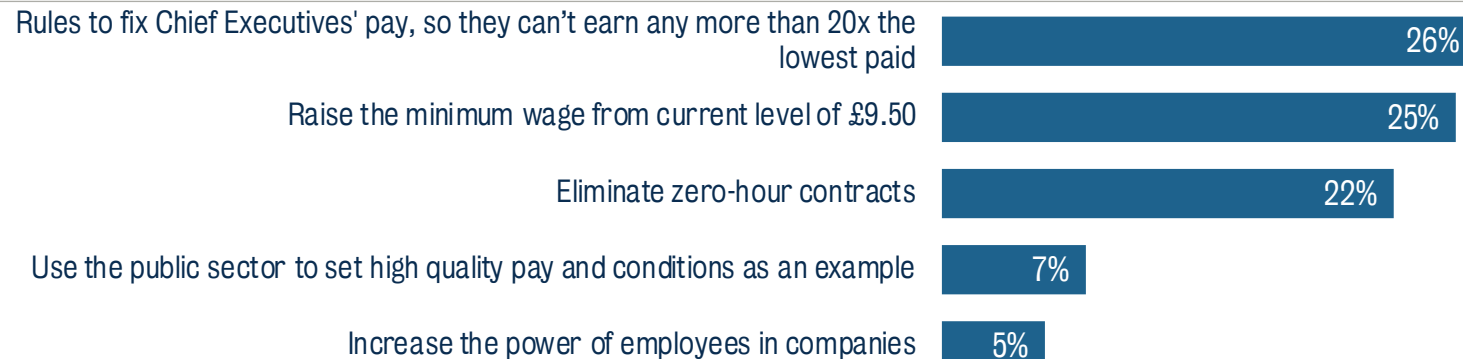
The detail... 7 policy areas, 4-7 measures in each, 3 questions on each...

% who rank each policy as number one in terms of **support** from those presented

Housing and regeneration policy



Employment rules



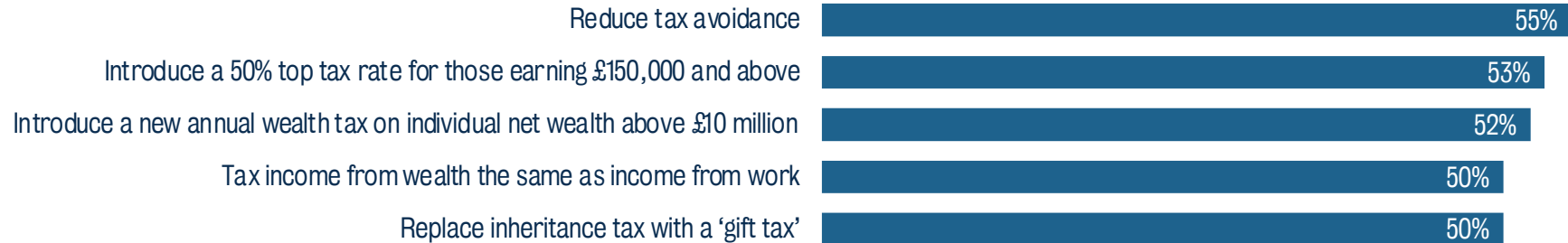
Equality policy



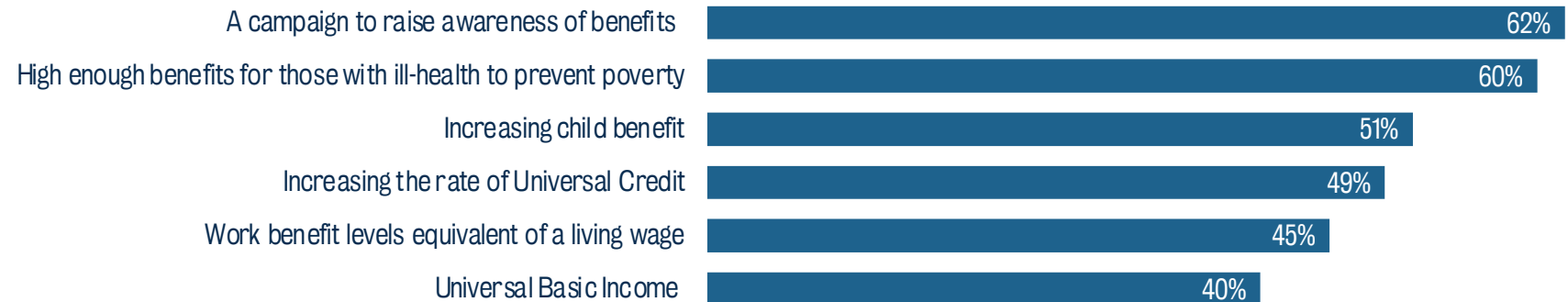
...quite different pattern on what is seen as credible for governments to introduce

% who think each measure is **credible** (whether you think it is possible for a new UK Government to introduce the idea and that you believe they would follow through with it if they promised it)

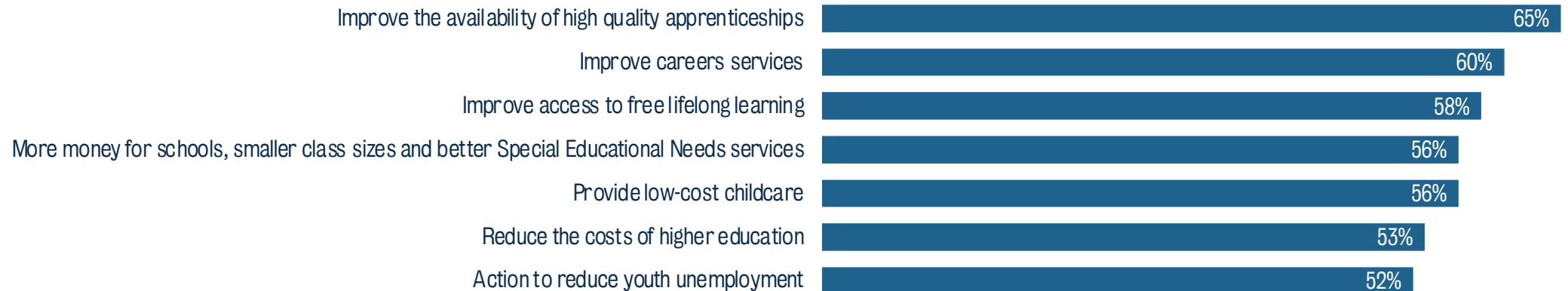
The tax system



The social security system

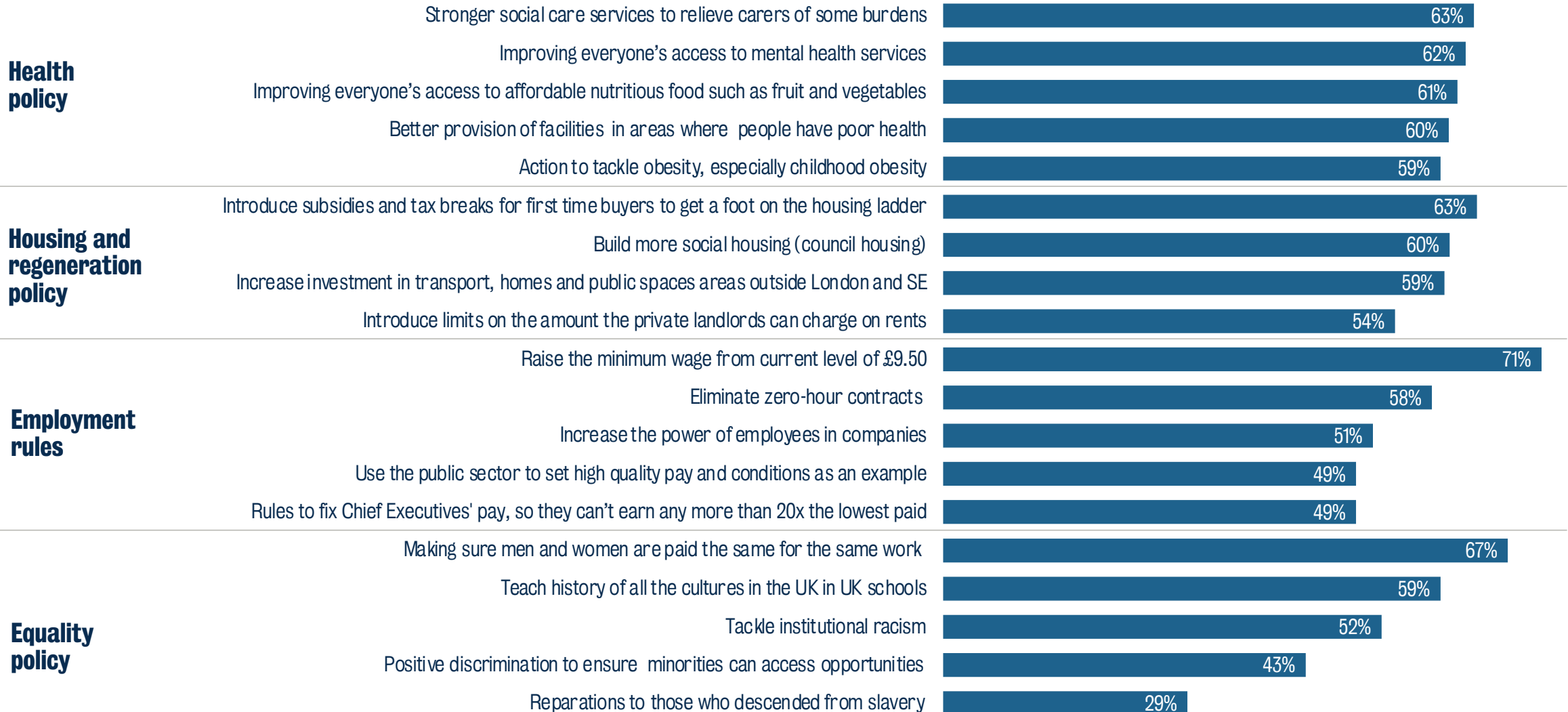


Education policy



...quite different pattern on what is seen as credible for governments to introduce

% who think each measure is **credible** (whether you think it is possible for a new UK Government to introduce the idea and that you believe they would follow through with it if they promised it)

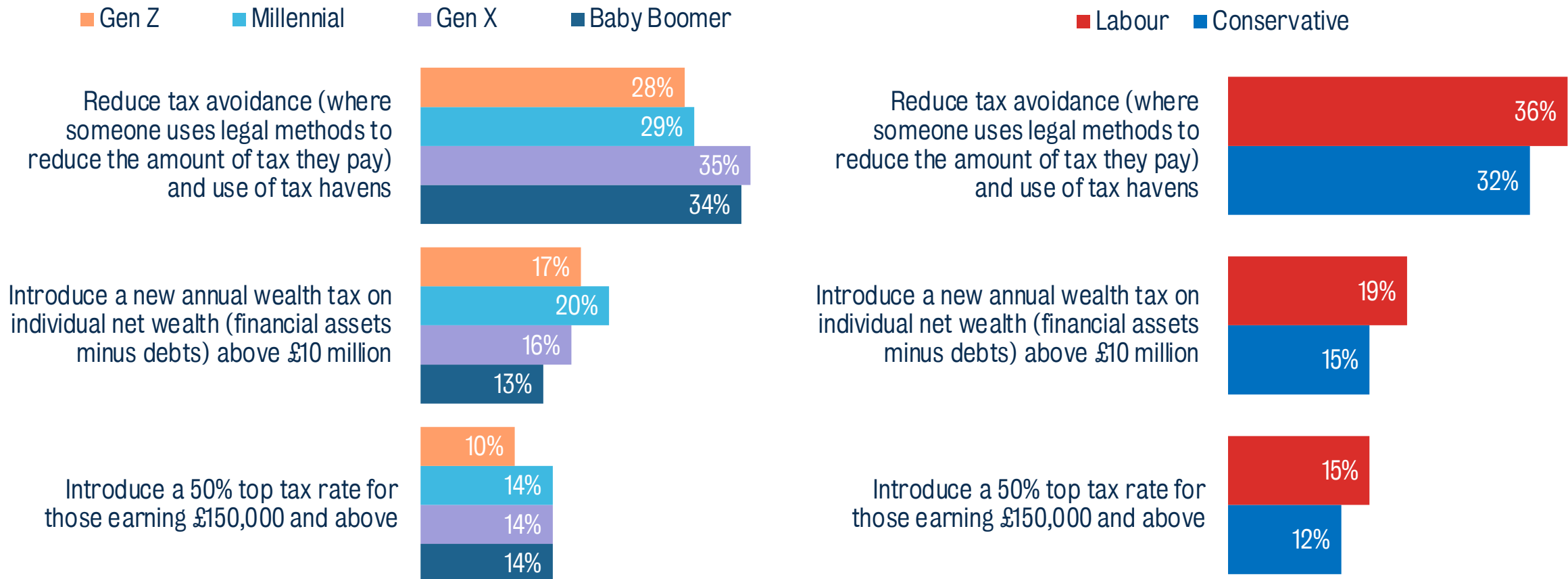


There are two or three dividing lines on many measures to tackle inequality: age, politics and mindset.

But the big picture is significant consistency, with a few exceptions.

1. For example, there are very consistent views of tax system measures among different generations and voters for the two main parties

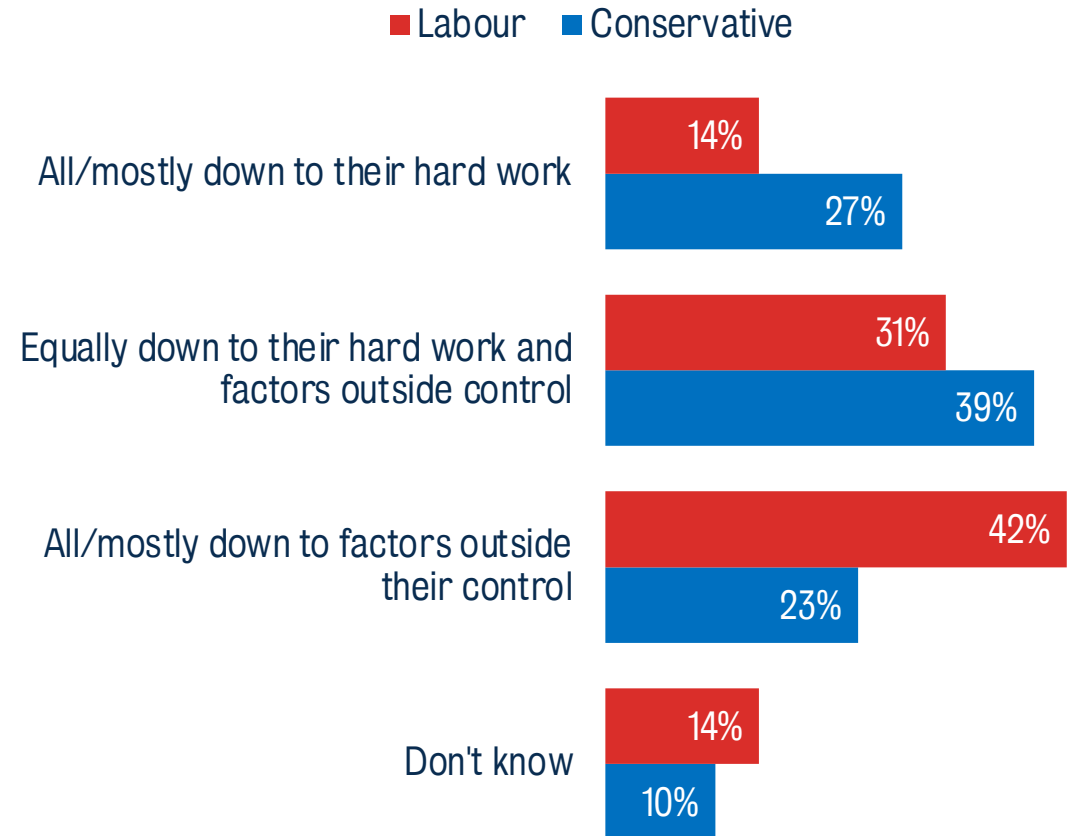
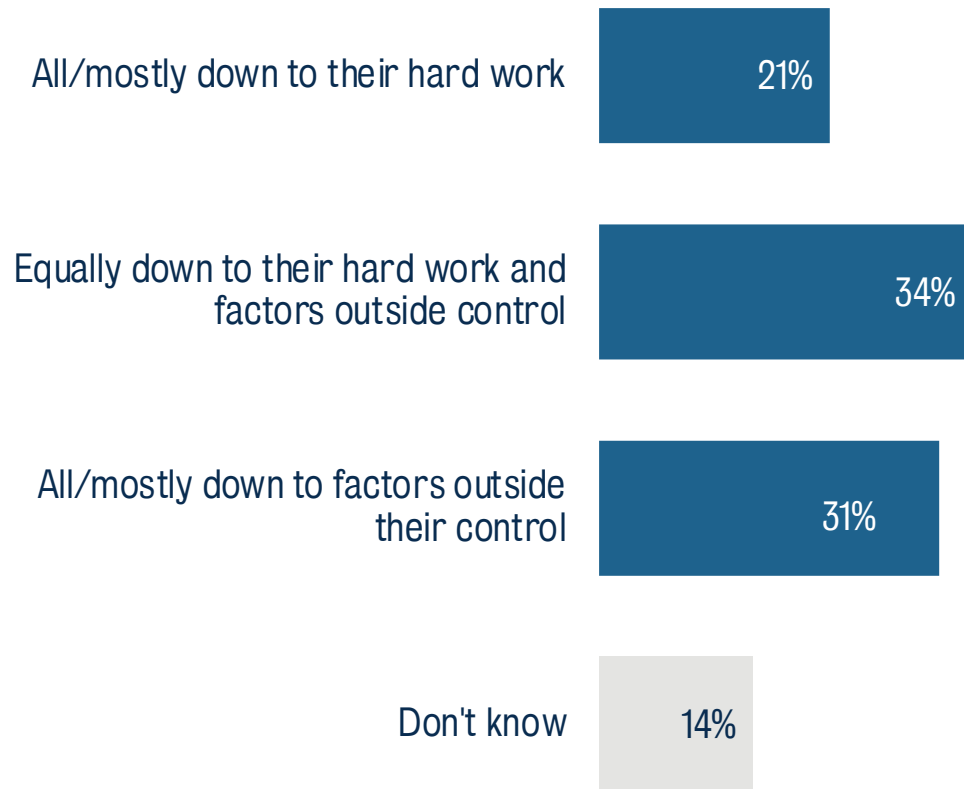
The following are ideas put forward by experts to [use the tax system](#) to reduce inequality in Britain. **Which measures would you support most?** Please rank the answers from one to five, with one being the measure you support most, and five being the one you support least. (% who rank each as number one)



1. A third dividing line? Individualist versus structuralist mindsets

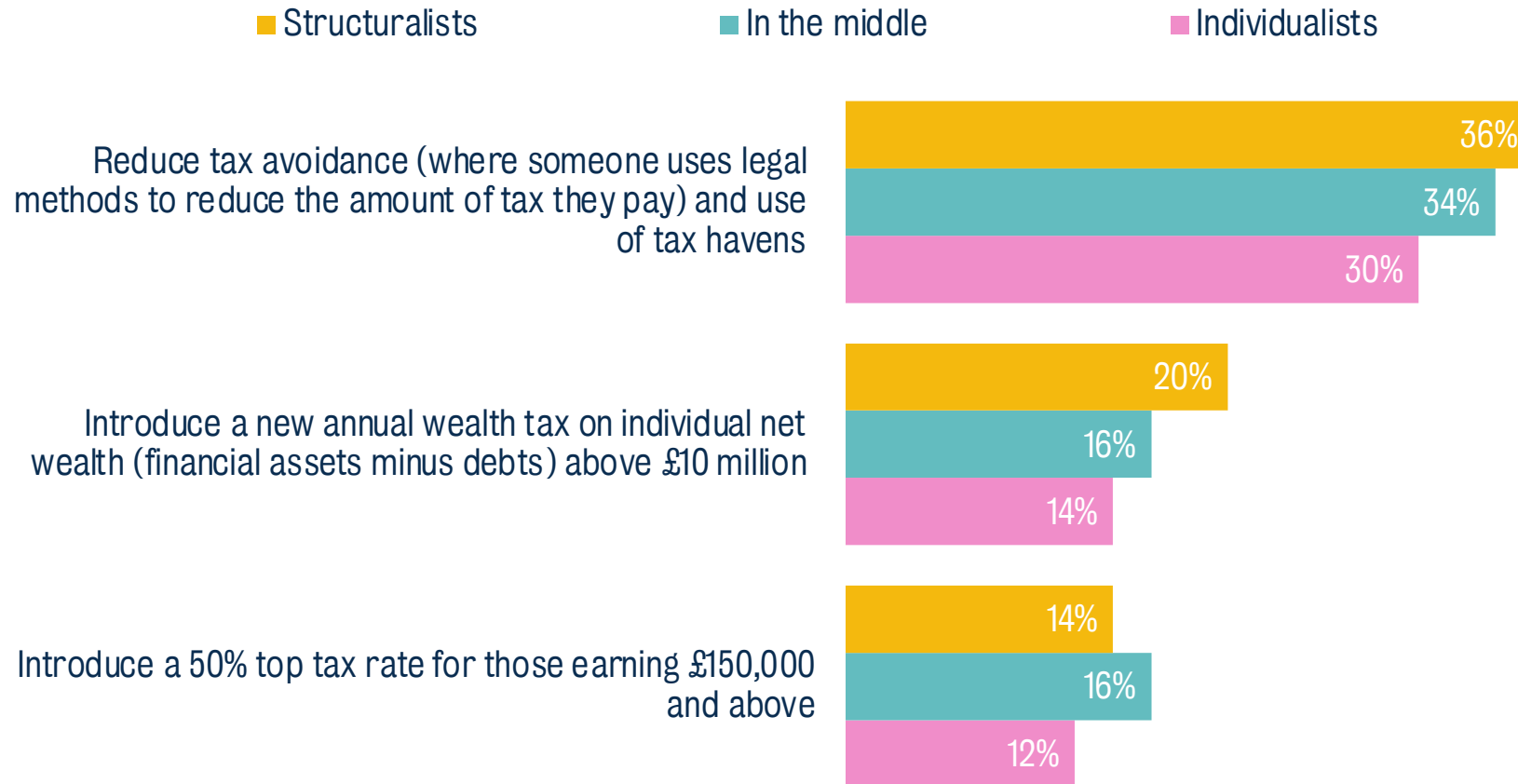
Thinking about the people in the UK who have the most wealth, to what extent do you think their financial wealth (investments, cash) is because of their hard work, or due to factors outside their control?

Public overall



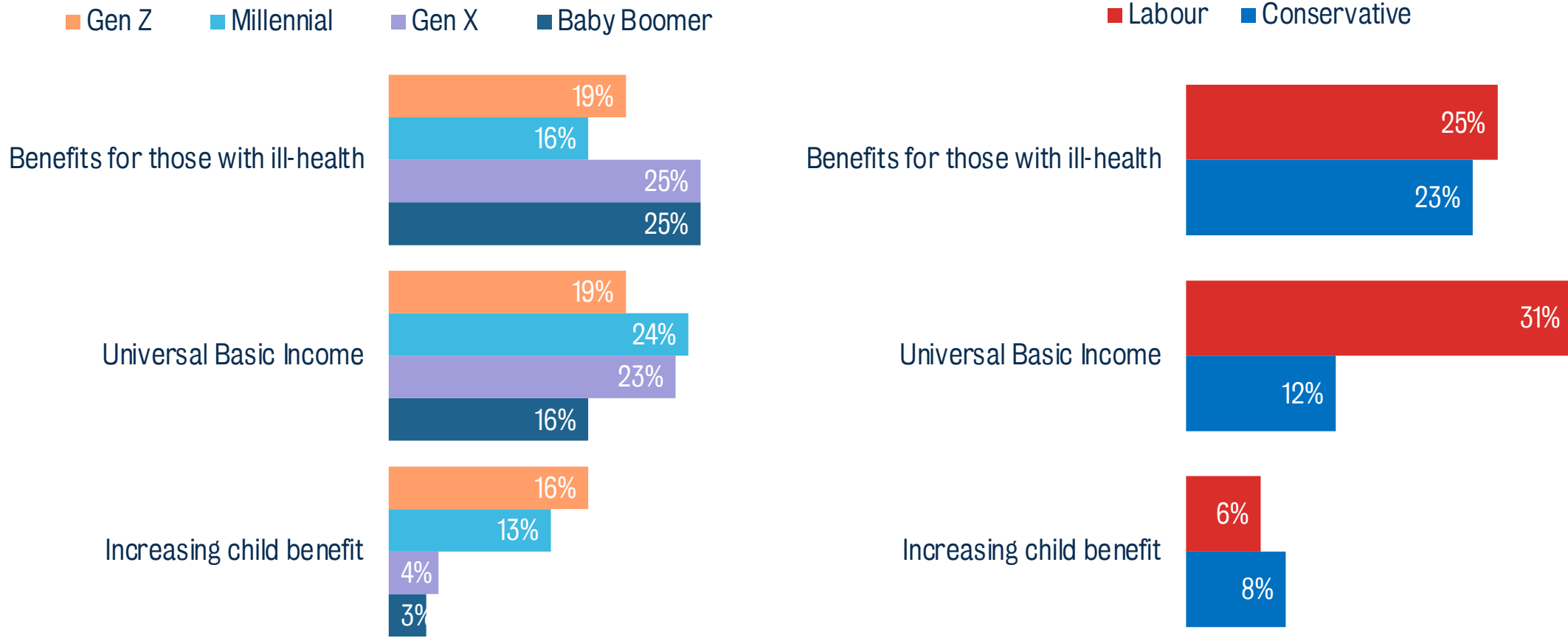
1. But structuralists and individualists are also in broad agreement on the appeal of different tax system solutions

The following are ideas put forward by experts to [use the tax system](#) to reduce inequality in Britain. **Which measures would you support most?** Please rank the answers from one to five, with one being the measure you support most, and five being the one you support least. (% who rank each as number one)



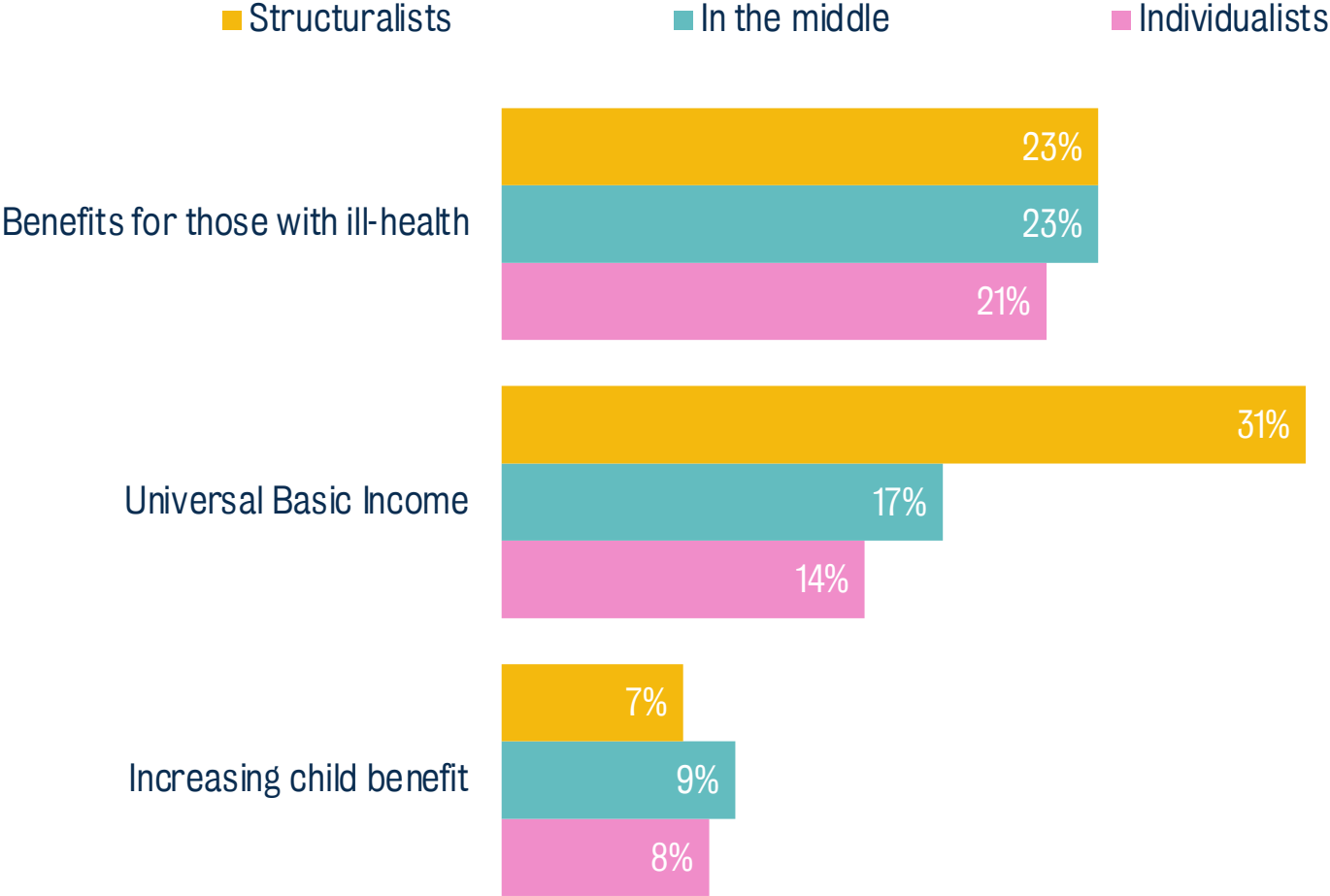
2. There are more marked differences on social security measures

The following are ideas put forward by experts to [use the social security system](#) to reduce inequalities in Britain. **Which measures would you support most?** Please rank the answers from one to six, with one being the measure you support most, and six being the one you support least. (% who rank each as number one)



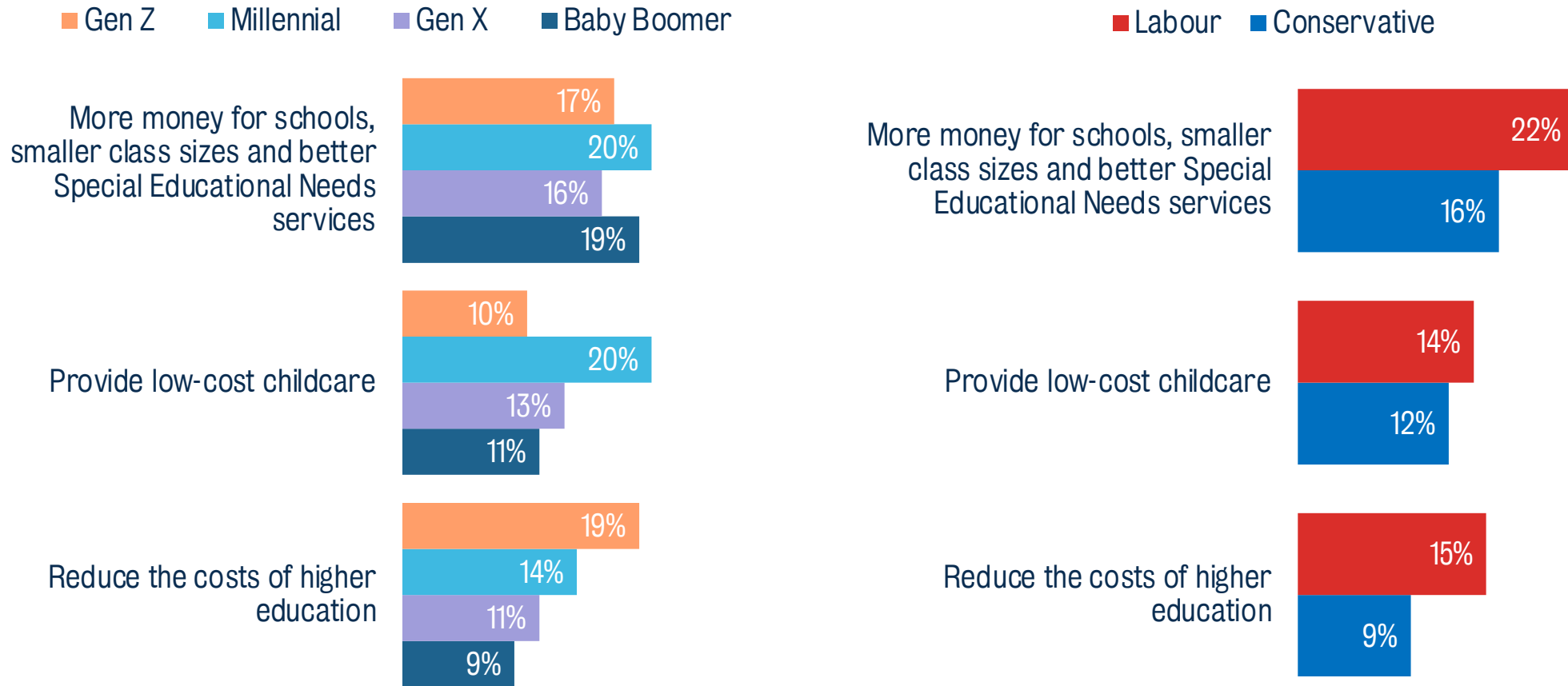
2. The structuralist/individualist split mirrors the Labour/Conservative split

The following are ideas put forward by experts to [use the social security system](#) to reduce inequalities in Britain. **Which measures would you support most?** Please rank the answers from one to six, with one being the measure you support most, and six being the one you support least. (% who rank each as number one)



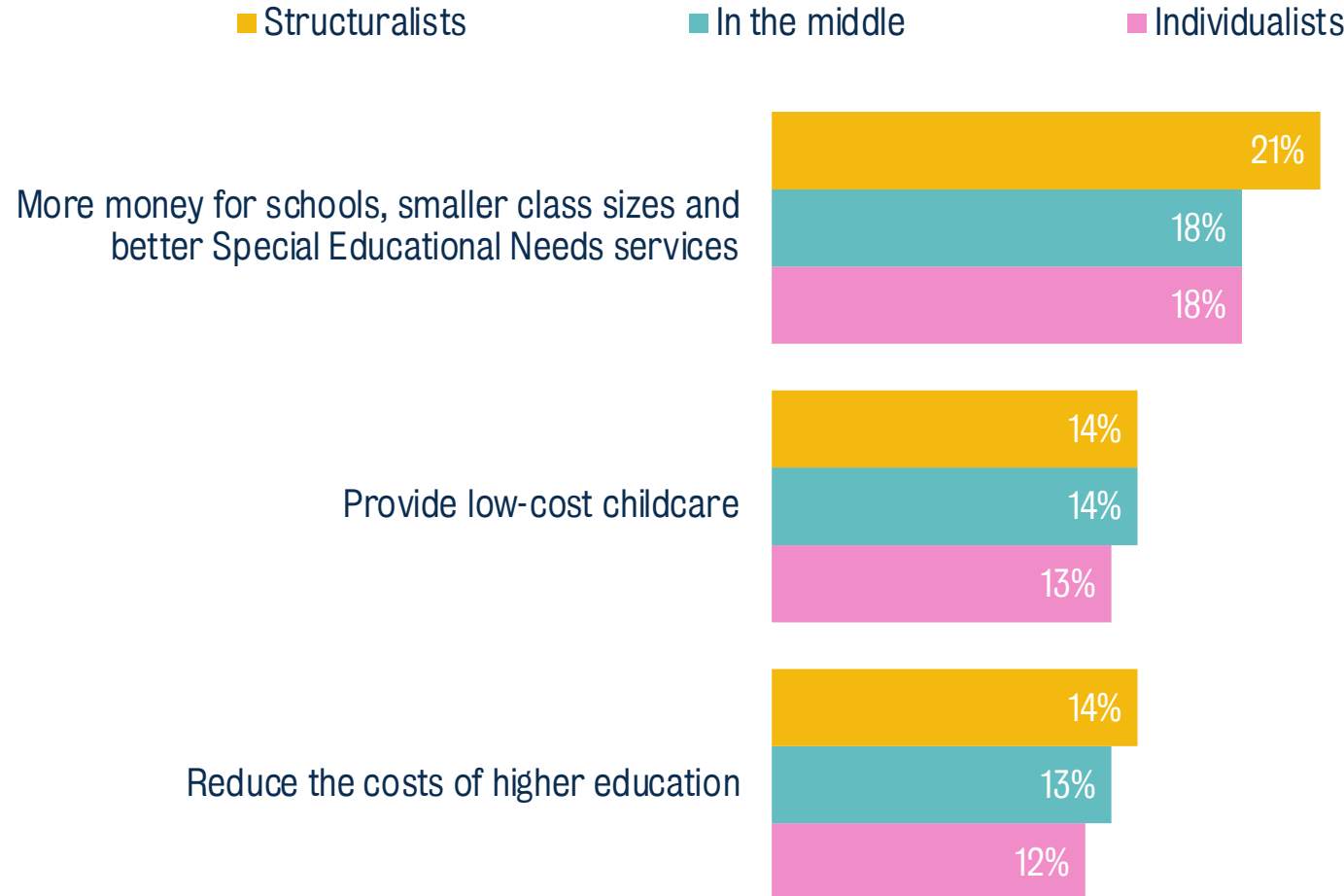
3. Support for education/childcare measures reflects life stage to some extent

The following are ideas put forward by experts to [use education policy](#) to reduce inequalities in Britain. **Which measures would you support most?** Please rank the answers from one to seven, with one being the measure you support most, and seven being the one you support least. (% who rank each as number one)



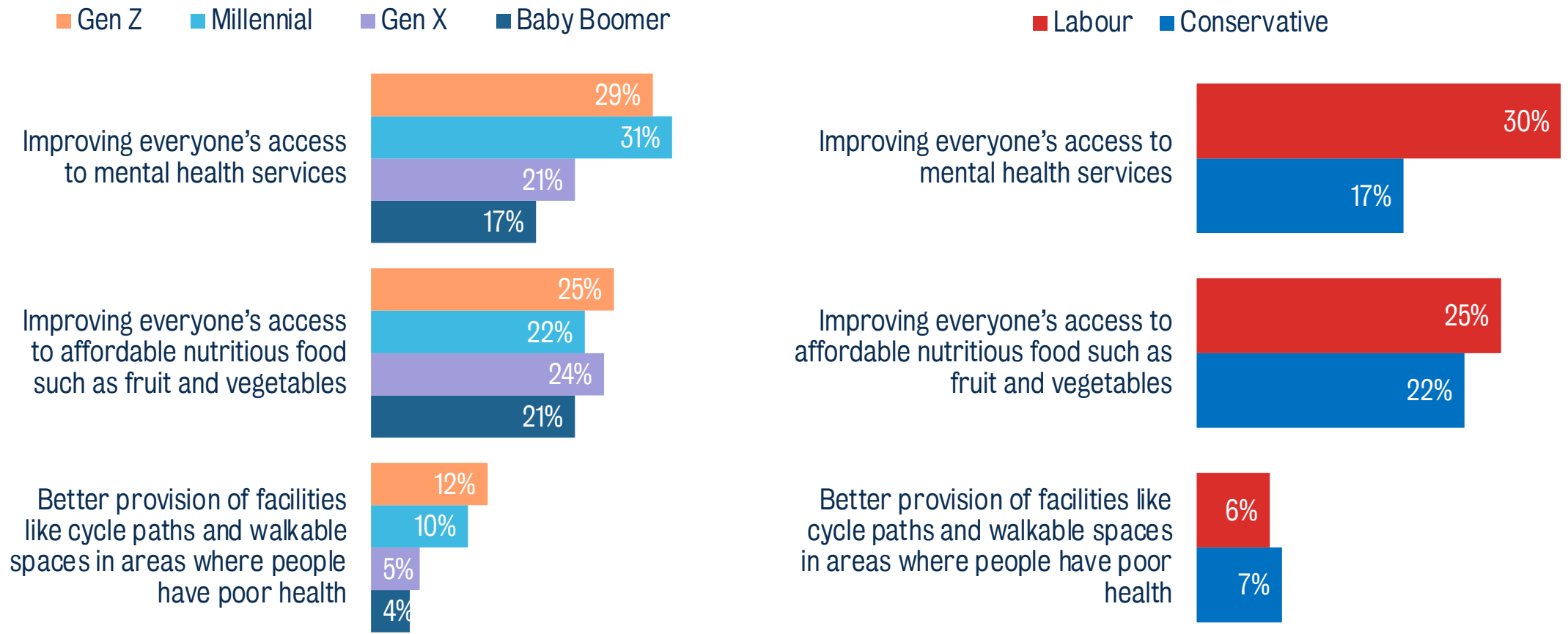
3. There is very little difference between structuralists and individualists

The following are ideas put forward by experts to use education policy to reduce inequalities in Britain. **Which measures would you support most?** Please rank the answers from one to seven, with one being the measure you support most, and seven being the one you support least. (% who rank each as number one)



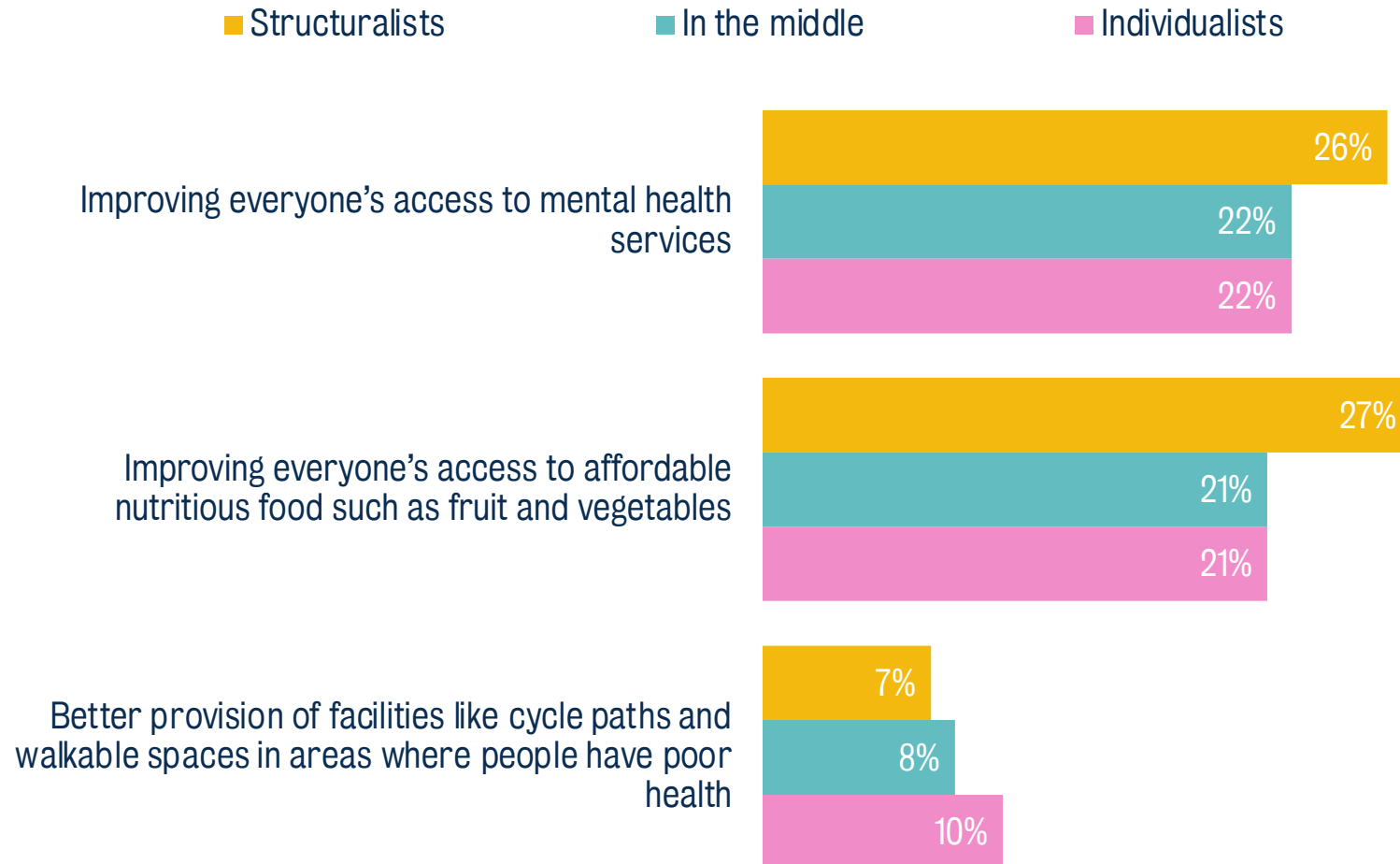
4. There is a bigger divide on mental health support by age and party...

The following are ideas put forward by experts to use health policy to reduce inequalities in Britain. **Which measures would you support most?** Please rank the answers from one to five, with one being the measure you support most, and five being the one you support least. (% who rank each as number one)



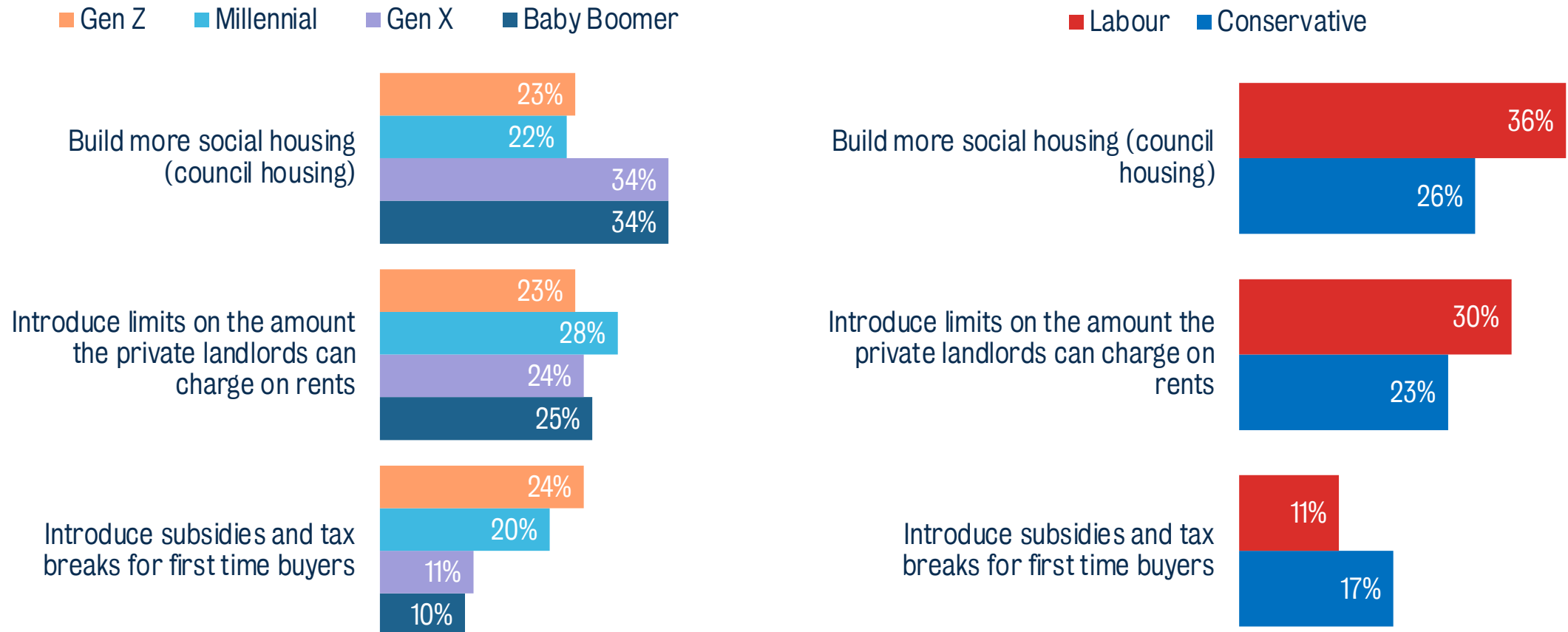
4. ...though less by individualist vs structuralist

The following are ideas put forward by experts to [use health policy](#) to reduce inequalities in Britain. **Which measures would you support most?** Please rank the answers from one to five, with one being the measure you support most, and five being the one you support least. (% who rank each as number one)



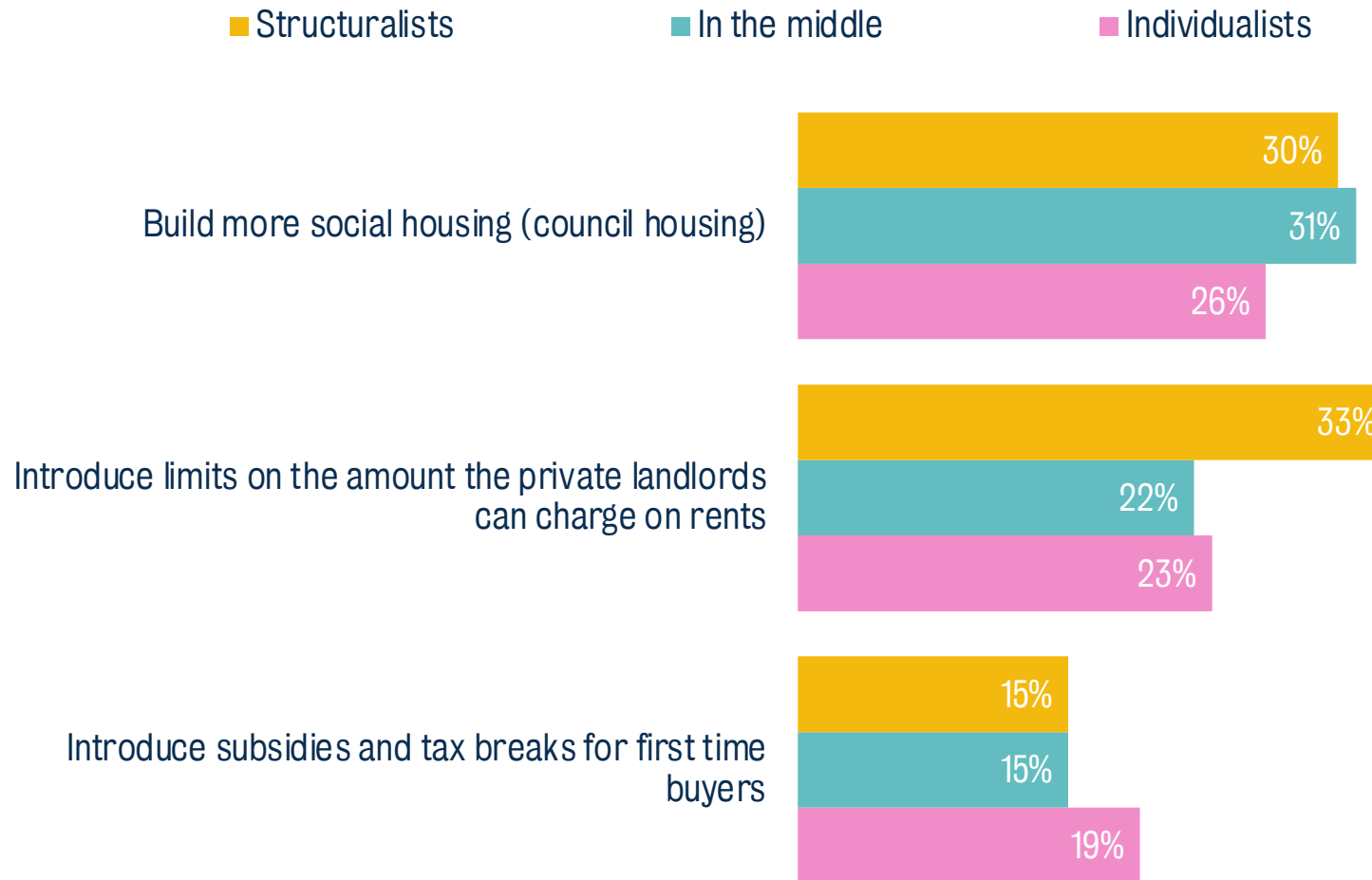
5. Older people and Labour voters are more supportive of building social housing, while the young are more focused than the old on support for first-time buyers

The following are ideas put forward by experts to [use housing and regeneration policy](#) to reduce inequalities in Britain. **Which measures would you support most?** Please rank the answers from one to four, with one being the measure you support most, and four being the one you support least. (% who rank each as number one)



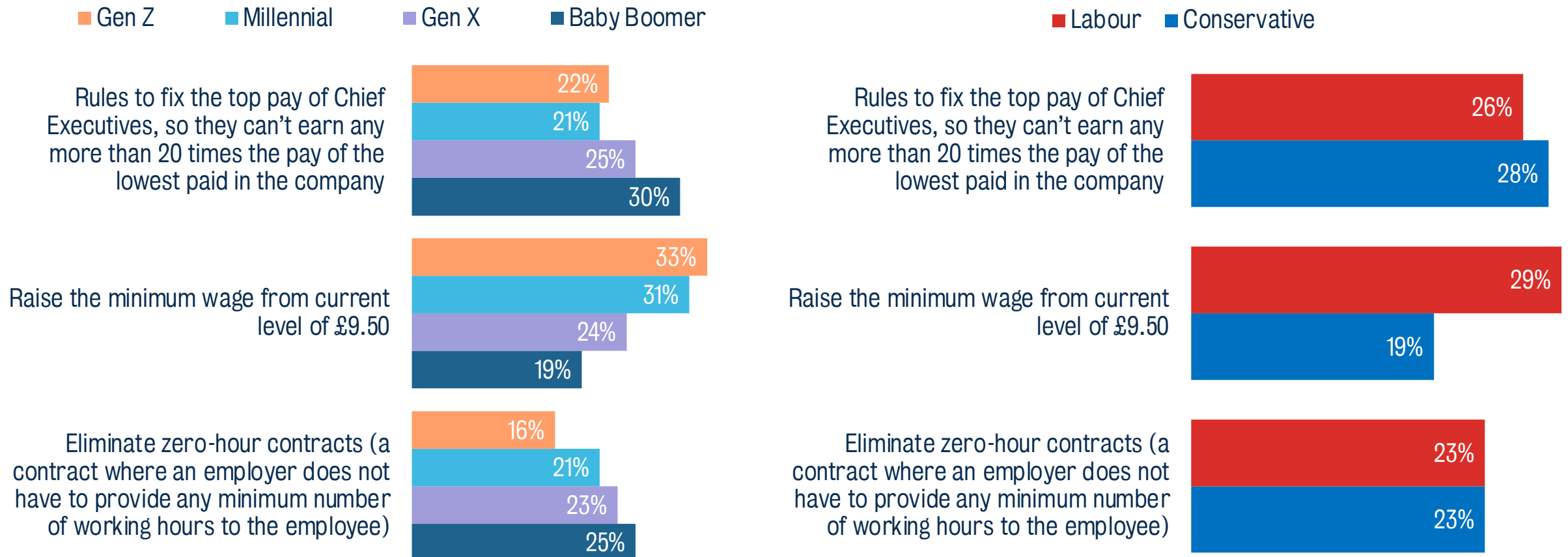
5. Structuralists are more supportive of government intervention to control rents than individualists

The following are ideas put forward by experts to [use housing and regeneration policy](#) to reduce inequalities in Britain. **Which measures would you support most?** Please rank the answers from one to four, with one being the measure you support most, and four being the one you support least. (% who rank each as number one)



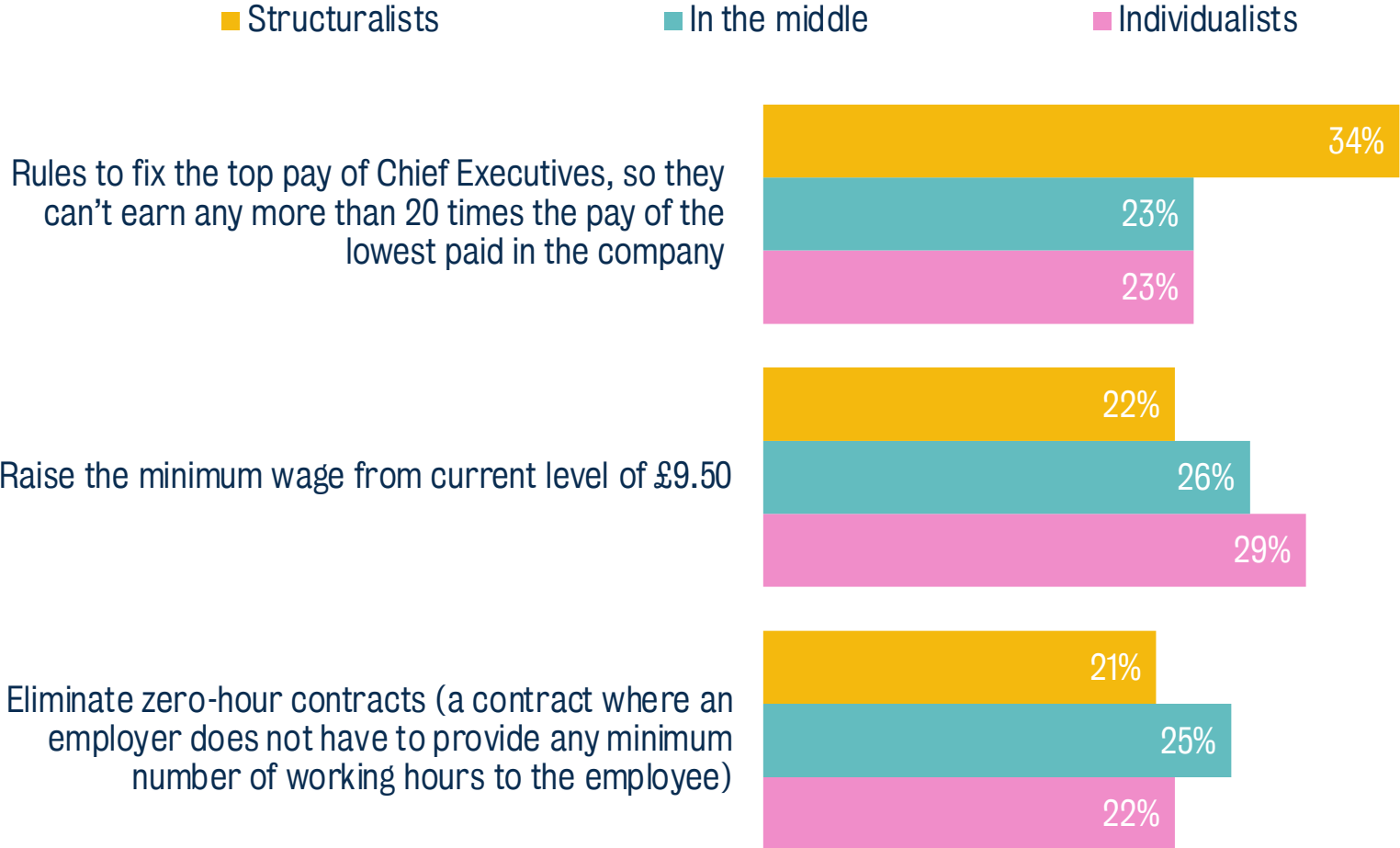
6. Labour and Conservative voters are equally supportive of rules to fix CEO pay, and there are interesting age profiles on minimum wage and zero hours contracts

The following are ideas put forward by experts to [use employment rules](#) to reduce inequality in Britain. **Which measures would you support most?** Please rank the answers from one to five, with one being the measure you support most, and five being the one you support least. (% who rank each as number one)



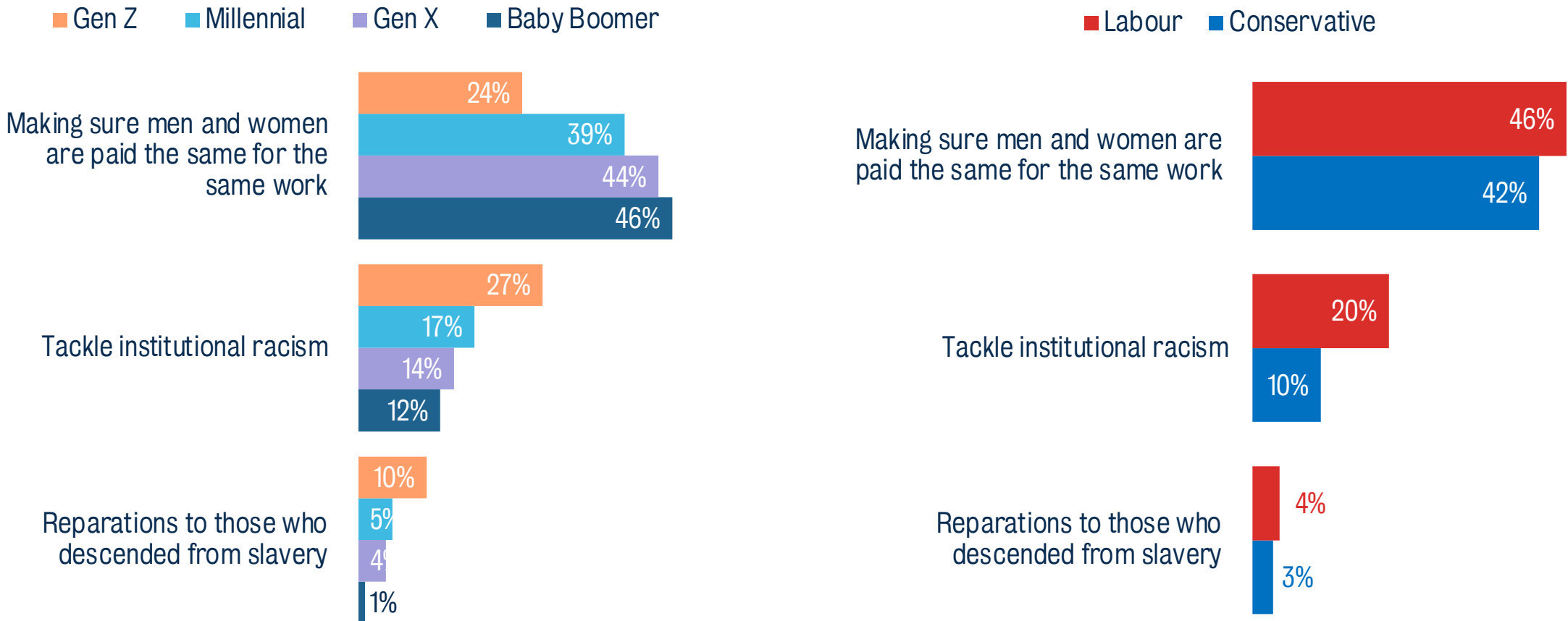
6. Structuralists are more supportive of government intervention to cap CEO pay

The following are ideas put forward by experts to use employment rules to reduce inequality in Britain. Which measures would you support most? Please rank the answers from one to five, with one being the measure you support most, and five being the one you support least. (% who rank each as number one)



7. Gen Z have a very different profile on equality policies, while Labour voters are more focused than Conservative voters on racism

The following are ideas put forward by experts to use equality policy to reduce inequality in Britain. Which measures would you support most? Please rank the answers from one to five, with one being the measure you support most, and five being the one you support least. (% who rank each as number one)



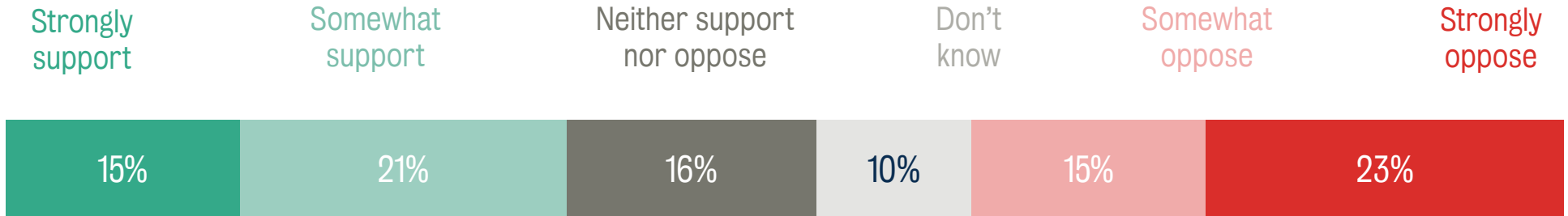
7. All are focused first on equal pay for women and men, with structuralists more focused on racism

The following are ideas put forward by experts to use equality policy to reduce inequality in Britain. **Which measures would you support most?** Please rank the answers from one to five, with one being the measure you support most, and five being the one you support least. (% who rank each as number one)



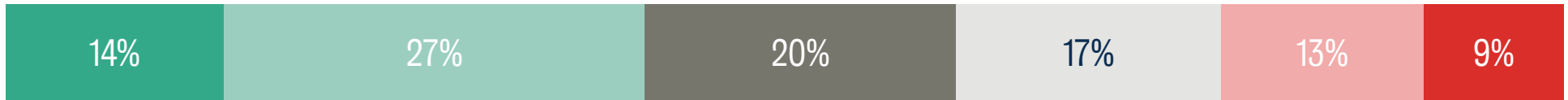
We also asked about financial support for younger generations: levels of support are similar for paying £10k to everyone up to the age of 25 – but there is greater opposition to giving this as cash rather than a tax break...

SPLIT SAMPLE A: Some experts have suggested that every young person is given a one-off payment of £10,000 at the age of 25, to help them start off in life. This would be paid for increases in inheritance tax, and could only be used for certain purposes such as training, setting up a business, mortgage deposits or pension savings. To what extent do you support or oppose this idea?



Base: 1,005 UK adults aged 18+, surveyed 27 Feb–6 Mar 2023

SPLIT SAMPLE B: Some experts have suggested that every young person is given a tax incentive where they would pay less tax on their income to help them start off in life. This reduction in tax would be up to a value of £10,000. This would be paid for increases in inheritance tax, and could only be used for certain purposes such as training, setting up a business, mortgage deposits or pension savings. As it is paid as a tax incentive, it would ensure the young people are working in order to receive it. To what extent do you support or oppose this idea?



Base: 995 UK adults aged 18+, surveyed 27 Feb–6 Mar 2023 **37**

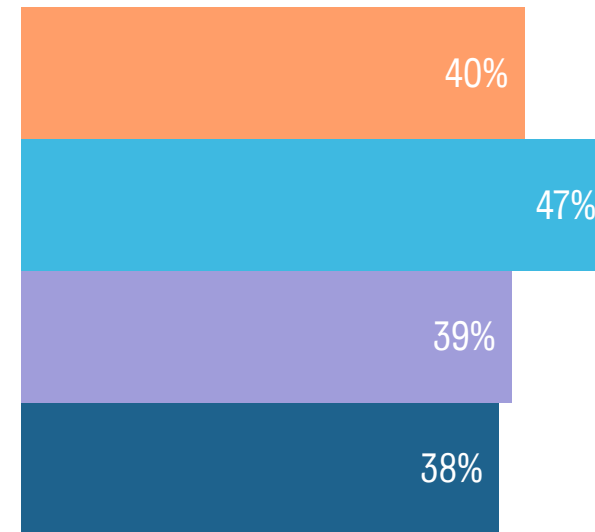
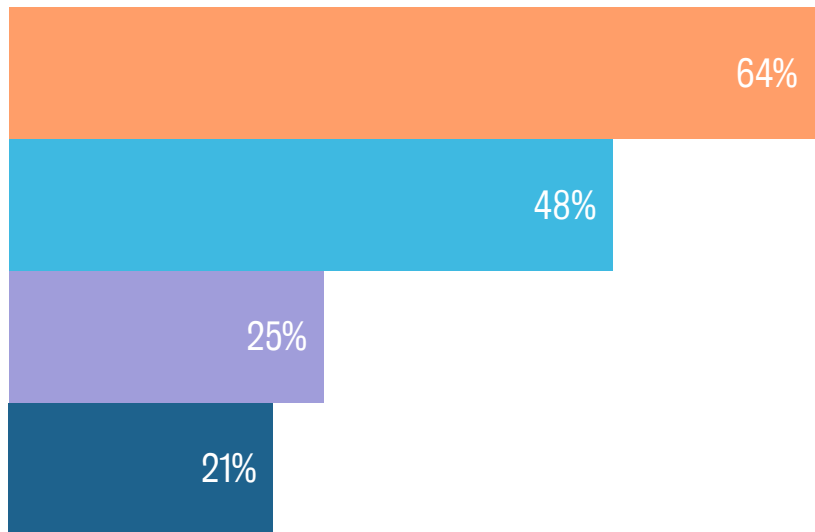
...but this varies greatly by generation: older people are much less supportive of a cash payment, while there is little difference between generations on tax incentives

Some experts have suggested that every young person is given a one-off payment of £10,000 at the age of 25, to help them start off in life. This would be paid for by increases in inheritance tax, and could only be used for certain purposes such as training, setting up a business, mortgage deposits or pension savings. To what extent do you support or oppose this idea? (% who say they support)

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■ Gen Z ■ Millennial ■ Gen X ■ Baby Boomer

■ Gen Z ■ Millennial ■ Gen X ■ Baby Boomer



The big picture

1. The public are worried about inequality, and increasingly recognise the shifting power implications from extreme wealth concentration.
2. But the public also don't see one magic bullet: there is a very even split of top priorities across broad domains.
3. There are favoured measures within each domain – but maybe the strongest cues are in what the public are *least* likely to support. It may be tough to make compelling cases on these interventions, but they should be explored more.
4. There are important differences in levels of support on some measures by life stage, politics and broader mindset, including whether people see inequalities as down to individual or structural factors. *But* the bigger picture is of relatively consistency across the public: there is plenty of potential for common ground.
5. There are many other potential solutions to inequality (and poverty) that haven't been included in this polling, such as early interventions to tackle health inequalities, universal basic services, efforts to support local economic growth, action on housing quality, measures related to air pollution and the climate crisis, various social security reforms, interventions to help people with the cost of energy and food, reforms to the citizenship curriculum, electoral reform, supporting trades unions and so on.
6. More research is needed on these and on issues such as the impacts and costs of different policy solutions, the influence of issue salience and framing on public attitudes, the difference between public perceptions of 'administrative' and 'political' credibility, how people think about trade-offs, and how attitudes are influenced by very detailed proposals rather than by more general policy ideas. We will be examining these in future work.

As the election countdown begins and the political parties prepare their manifestos, it is vital that we have the best ideas for fixing poverty and tackling inequalities on the table.

To galvanise the debate, the APPG on Inclusive Growth, the Policy Institute at King's College London and the Fairness Foundation have carried out new research into public attitudes to inequality and to a wide range of potential policy solutions, to help explore whether and where there might be an emerging consensus on those solutions that could unite a broad cross-section of the public, as well as experts and political parties.

Survey details

Opinium surveyed 2,000 UK adults online between 27 February and 6 March 2023. Results are weighted to be nationally and politically representative.

Data from 2018 taken from an Opinium online survey of 2,007 nationally representative UK adults, with fieldwork conducted between 29 March and 3 April 2018.