

# Londoners' experiences of heat and priorities for action

## Survey insights from summer 2025

Kirstie Hewlett, Paolo Morini, Andrea Mechelli, Michael Smythe,  
Nick Bridge, Zara Regan, Suzanne Hall

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# About the survey

This survey captured how people living in London experience periods of very hot weather, the things they do to adapt, and the types of government-led action they would prioritise to help themselves and others cope with rising temperatures. 1,013 people living in London took part, alongside a nationally representative sample of people living in Great Britain (1,924, excluding London).

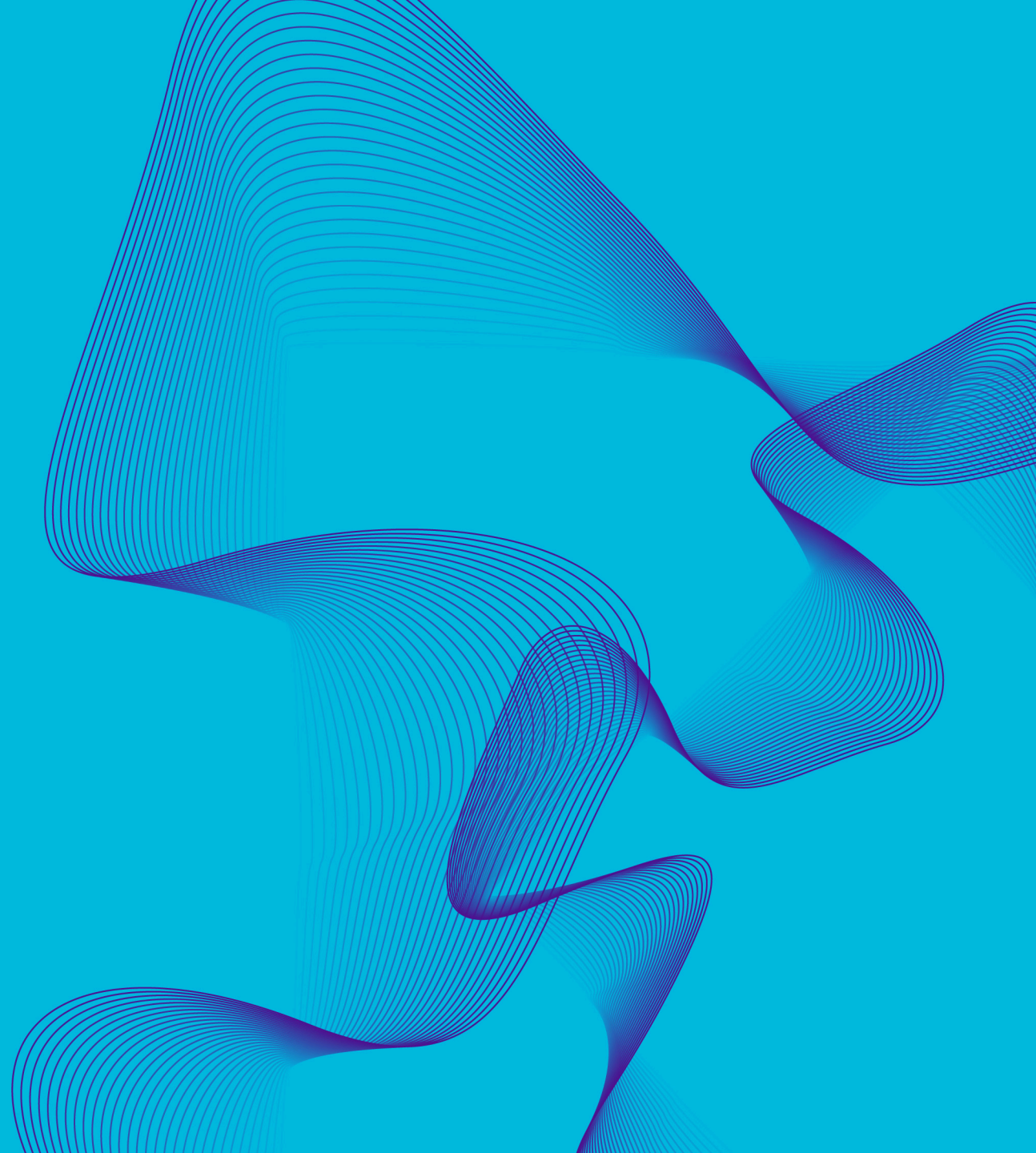
The survey was conducted between 12-15 August 2025, during the final heatwave of the summer. This marked the end of the warmest summer on record in the UK,<sup>1</sup> following above-average temperatures in June and July – which exceeded 30°C in parts of the UK, including London.

This was also a period of unsettled weather. July and August not only saw wildfires and amber heat health warnings across the UK, but storms caused damage and disruption, including surface water flooding.<sup>2</sup> The findings in this report therefore offer a snapshot into a week where people living in London were not only feeling the cumulative impact of a more drawn-out, hotter summer, but also reflects a period where the impact of more volatile weather was high on the news agenda.

The survey was funded by the Wellcome Trust as part of [a study](#) exploring the effects of extreme heat events on mental health in vulnerable urban communities.

Data collection was carried out by [Focaldata](#). The findings presented in this report are weighted to be representative of Greater London and Great Britain, respectively (see Technical Appendix).

# Experiences and perceptions of heat risk in London



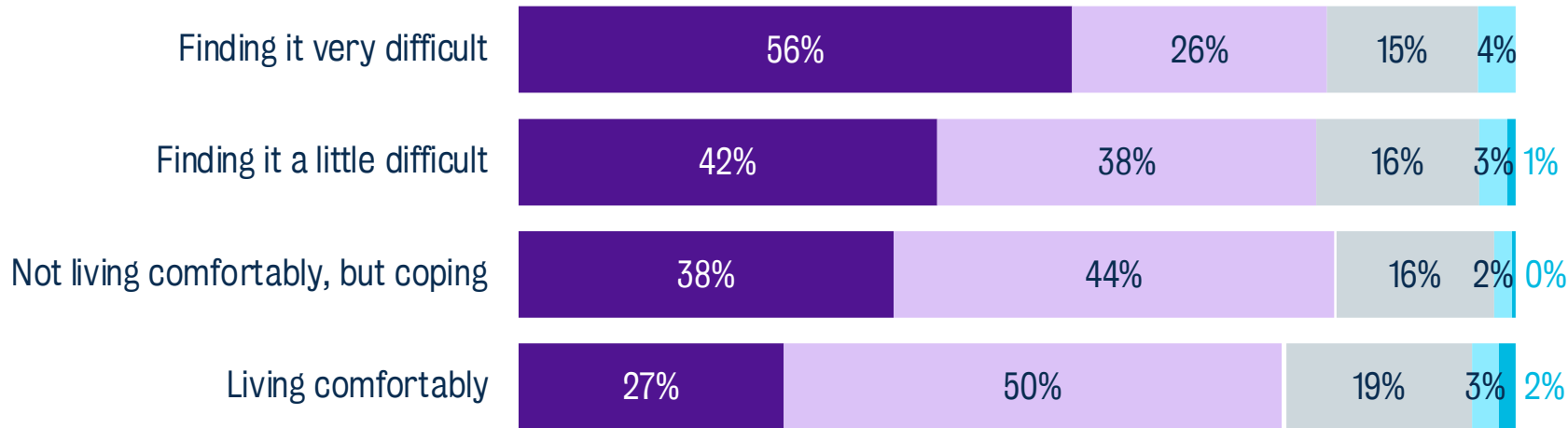
# 4 in 5 Londoners described their local area as being too hot during the final heatwave of 2025 – this was most pronounced among those who were struggling financially

In the last few days, temperatures have reached 34°C in some parts of the UK. In general, would you say that the temperature in your local area has felt too hot, too cold, or about right as you go about your day-to-day life?

■ Much too hot  
 ■ Slightly too hot  
 ■ About right  
 ■ Slightly too cold  
 ■ Much too cold



## Breakdown by financial security (self-rated)

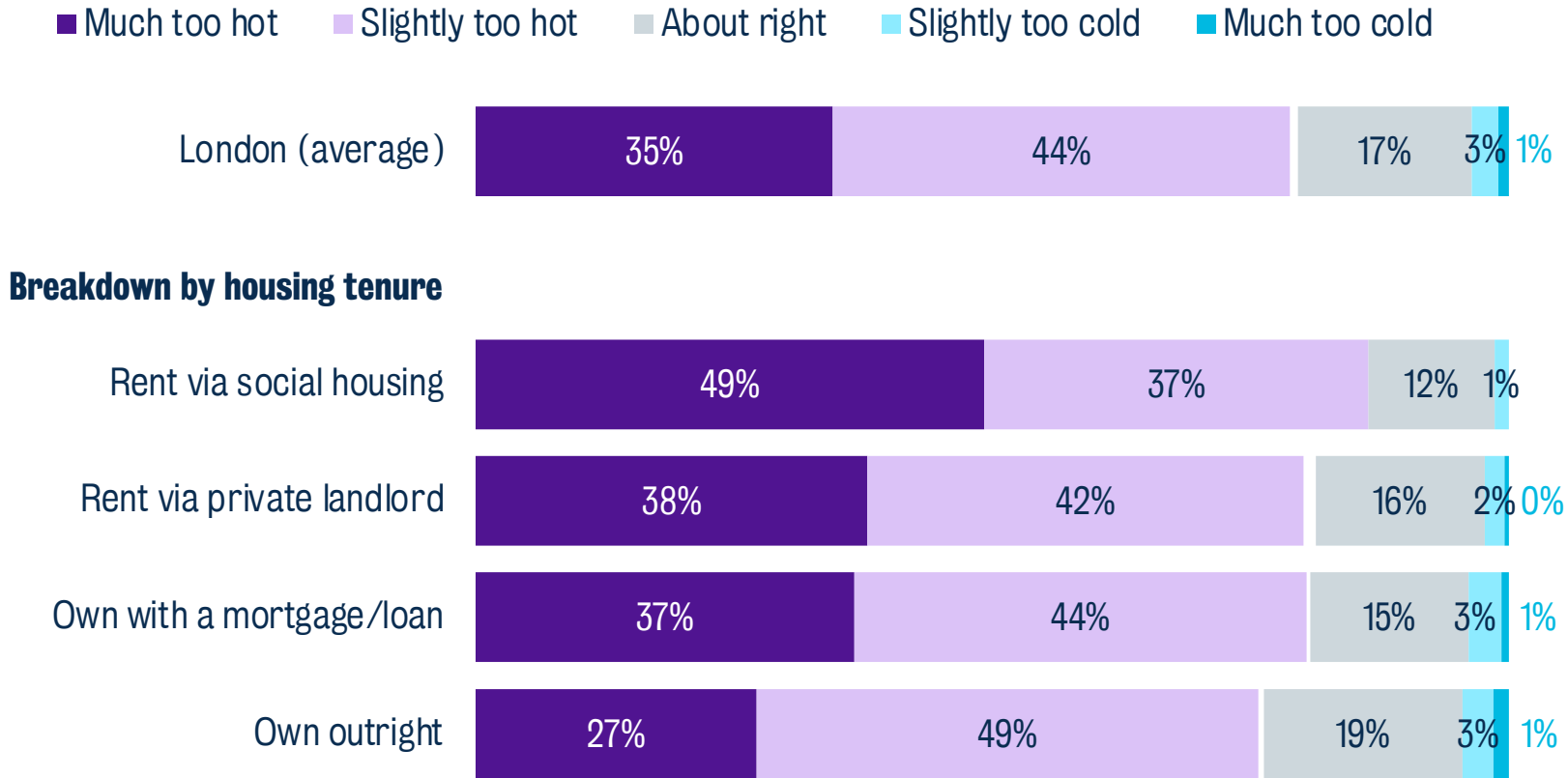


A majority of respondents in London (79%) described their local area as being too hot during the final heatwave of August 2025 – with just over one in three respondents in London (35%) finding the temperature much too hot.

There was a clear economic disparity in how people living in the capital experienced the heatwave. Respondents in London who described themselves as finding it very difficult financially were more than twice as likely to report that their local area was much too hot (56%) compared to those who described themselves as living comfortably (27%).

# Londoners living in social housing were also more likely to describe their local area as being ‘much too hot’ during the heatwave, compared to homeowners and private renters

In the last few days, temperatures have reached 34°C in some parts of the UK. In general, would you say that the temperature in your local area has felt too hot, too cold, or about right as you go about your day-to-day life?

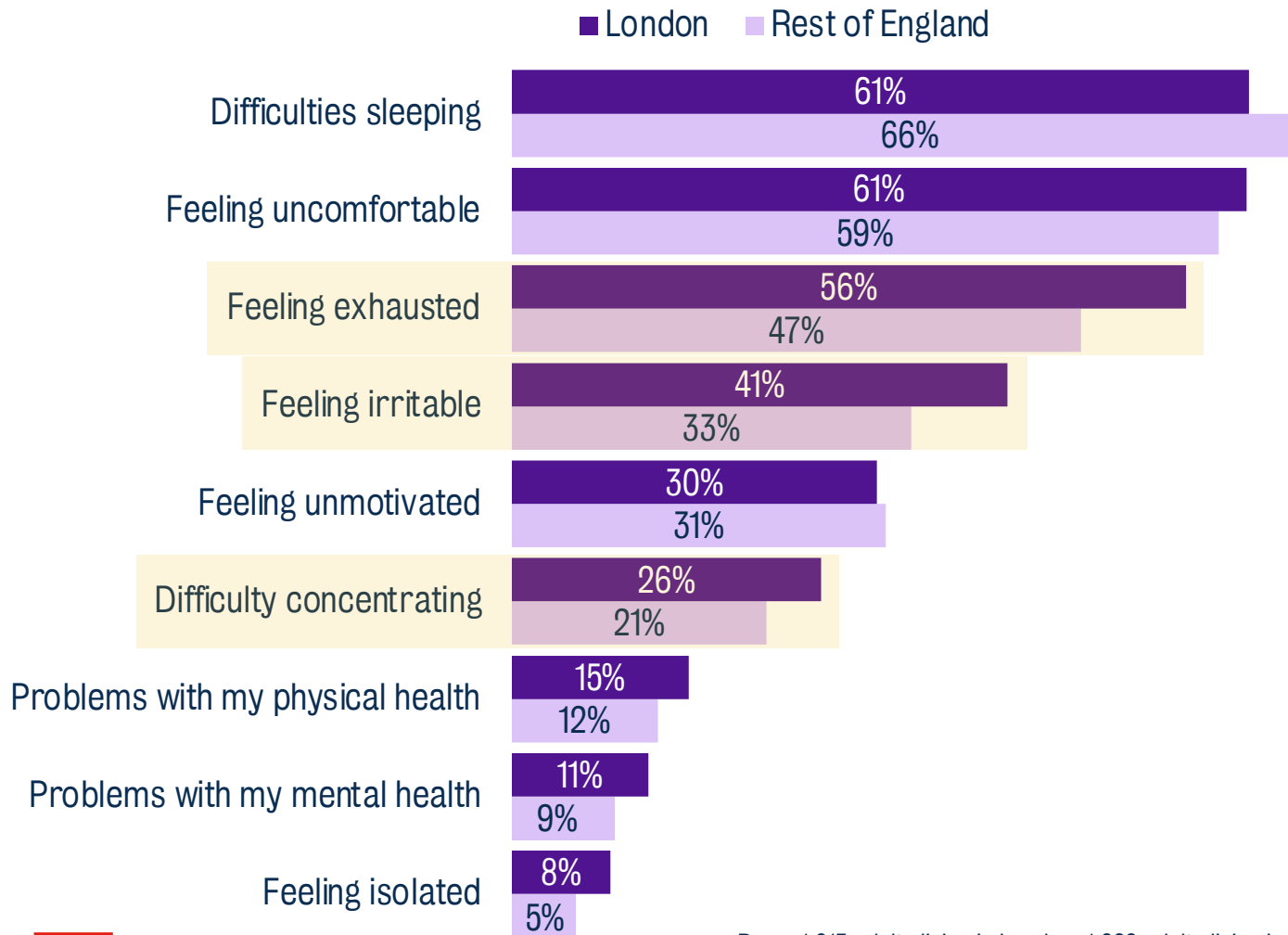


49% of respondents in London living in social housing described their local area as being much too hot – 14 percentage points higher than the London average, and 22 percentage points higher than respondents who own their homes outright.

This reflects wider patterns in the types of homes and areas in which respondents reported living. Social renters were more likely to report living in a self-contained flat in an inner-city area, and were less likely to have access to a private garden. Along with private renters, they also had fewer cooling measures in their home (eg shutters, black out curtains, cross-ventilation, air conditioning, insulation, etc).

# Londoners reported feeling the heat differently to people in the rest of England – feeling more exhausted, more irritable and having greater difficulty concentrating

Which of the following, if any, do you typically experience during periods of very hot weather? (Tick all that apply)

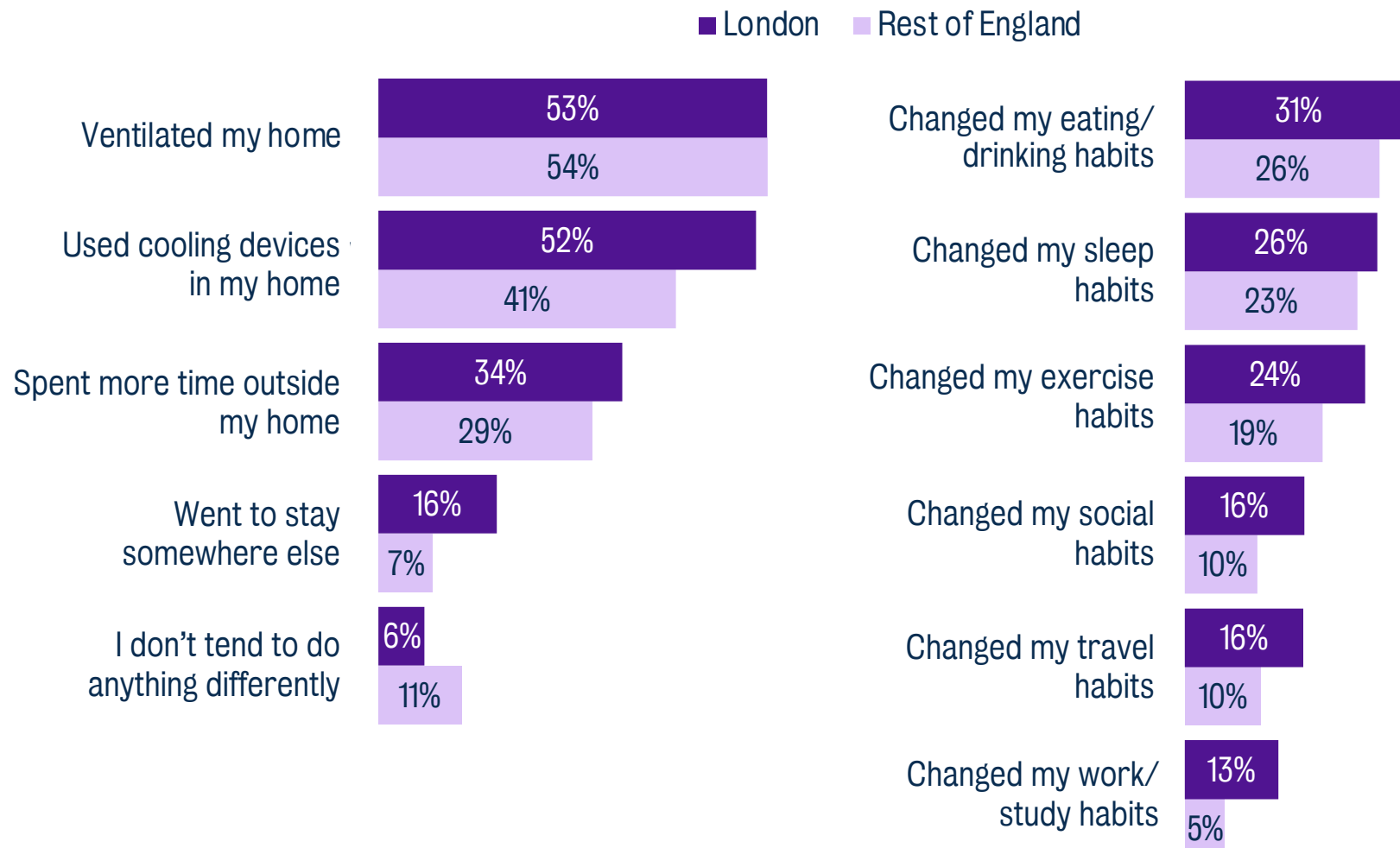


Having difficulties sleeping and feeling uncomfortable were reported as being relatively common experiences during periods of very hot weather across England. Respondents living in London were also more likely to report experiences such as feeling exhausted, irritable and having difficulty concentrating.

In general, respondents in London who reported feeling more exhausted and irritable tended to be younger, and/or have caring responsibilities. People with a physical disability were also more likely to report feeling exhausted during periods of very hot weather.

# Londoners were more likely to take actions that helped them to cope with very hot weather during the heatwave – including changing their habits

Which of the following things, if any, have you done in the last few days to adapt to the very hot weather? (Tick all that apply)

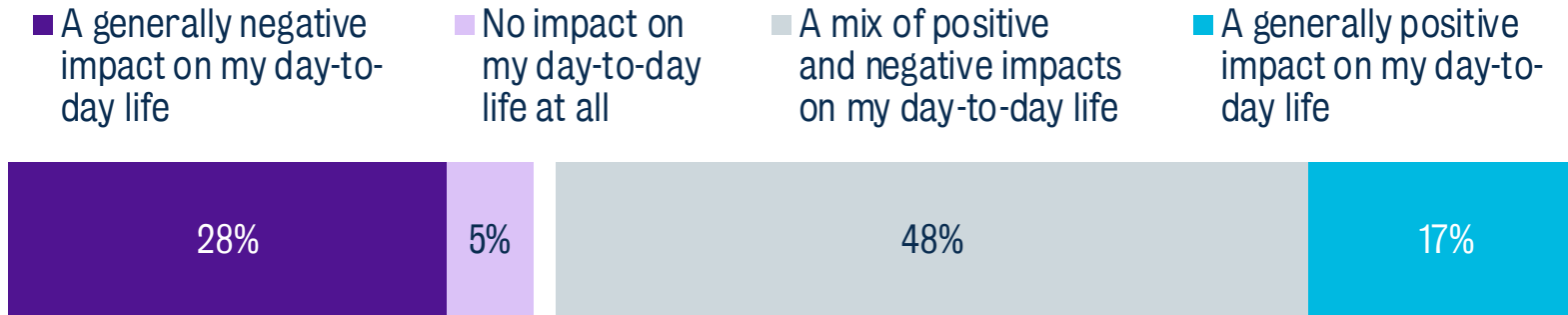


On average, respondents in London reported taking more actions to adapt to very hot weather. Most notably, this included using cooling devices in the home (11 percentage points higher in London than the rest of England) – and for some, even going to stay somewhere else (9 percentage points higher).

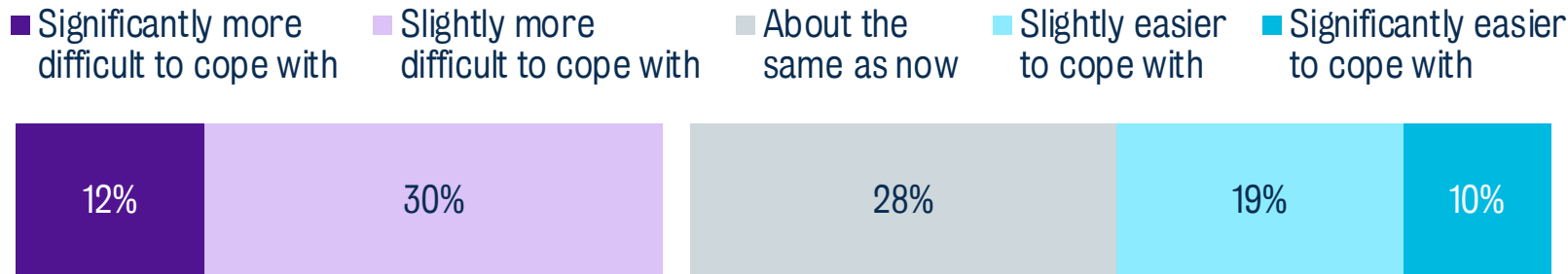
Londoners were also more likely to say they had made behavioural changes, with larger proportions reporting changing how they socialised, travelled, exercised and worked/studied. Such changes to habits were marginally more common among Londoners with a pre-existing mental health condition.

# Londoners shared mixed views on how heat impacts them personally, and were relatively divided in their expectations around their ability to cope with rising temperatures in the future

Thinking about your experiences generally during periods of very hot weather, which of the following statements comes closest to your experience? On balance, very hot weather has ...



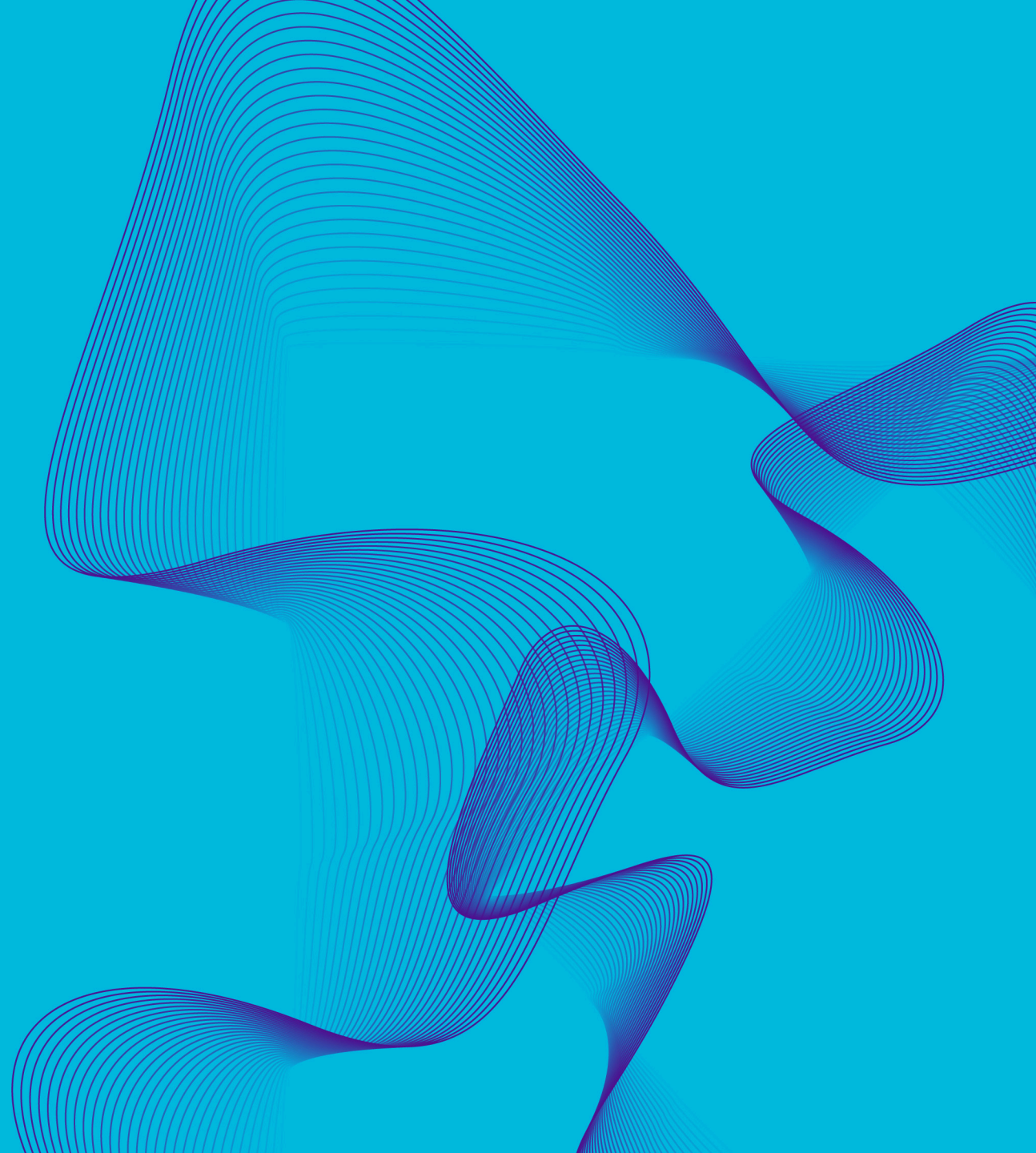
To what extent do you feel the effects of very hot weather will become easier or more difficult to cope with for you personally over the next five years?



While more Londoners felt that very hot weather generally had a negative impact on their day-to-day life (28%) than positive (17%), almost half of the sample (48%) felt it brought a mix of positive and negative impacts.

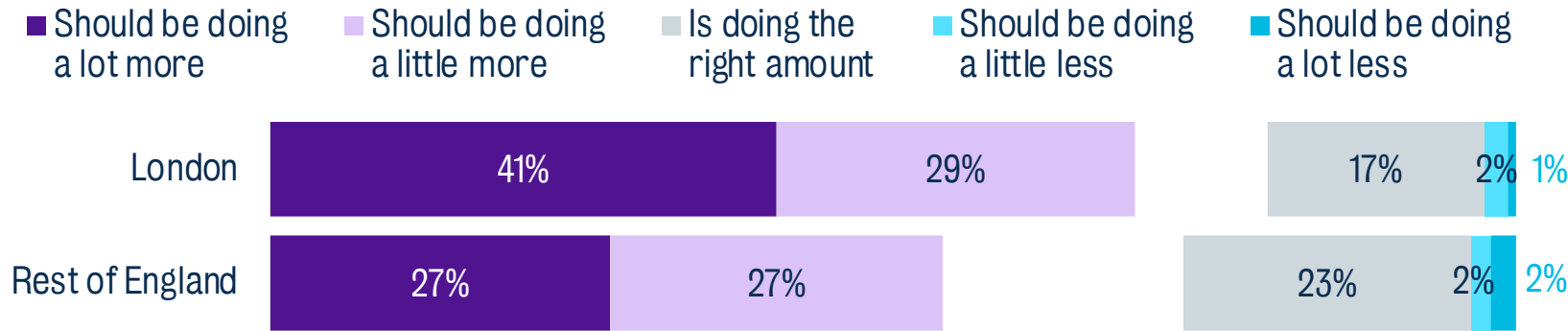
Similarly, while more respondents in London said that very hot weather would become more difficult for them to cope with over the next five years (42%), this was far from a majority view. Rather, roughly three in ten Londoners believed that coping with very hot weather would become easier (29%) or stay about the same as now (28%). This perceptual divide poses a challenge for policy-makers, who need to bridge those who are concerned about rising temperatures and those who welcome them.

# Priorities for action

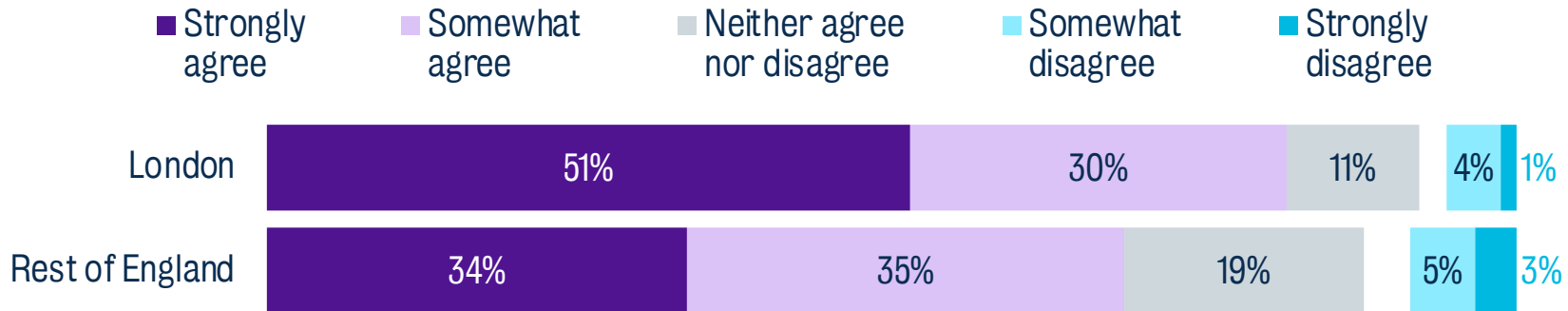


# A large majority of Londoners believed that government should be doing more to help people adapt to very hot weather, particularly the most vulnerable

Thinking about actions that the UK government could take to help people adapt to very hot weather, which statement best describes the scale of action you would like to see? The government...



Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: The government has a responsibility to protect the people who are most vulnerable to the impacts of very hot weather.

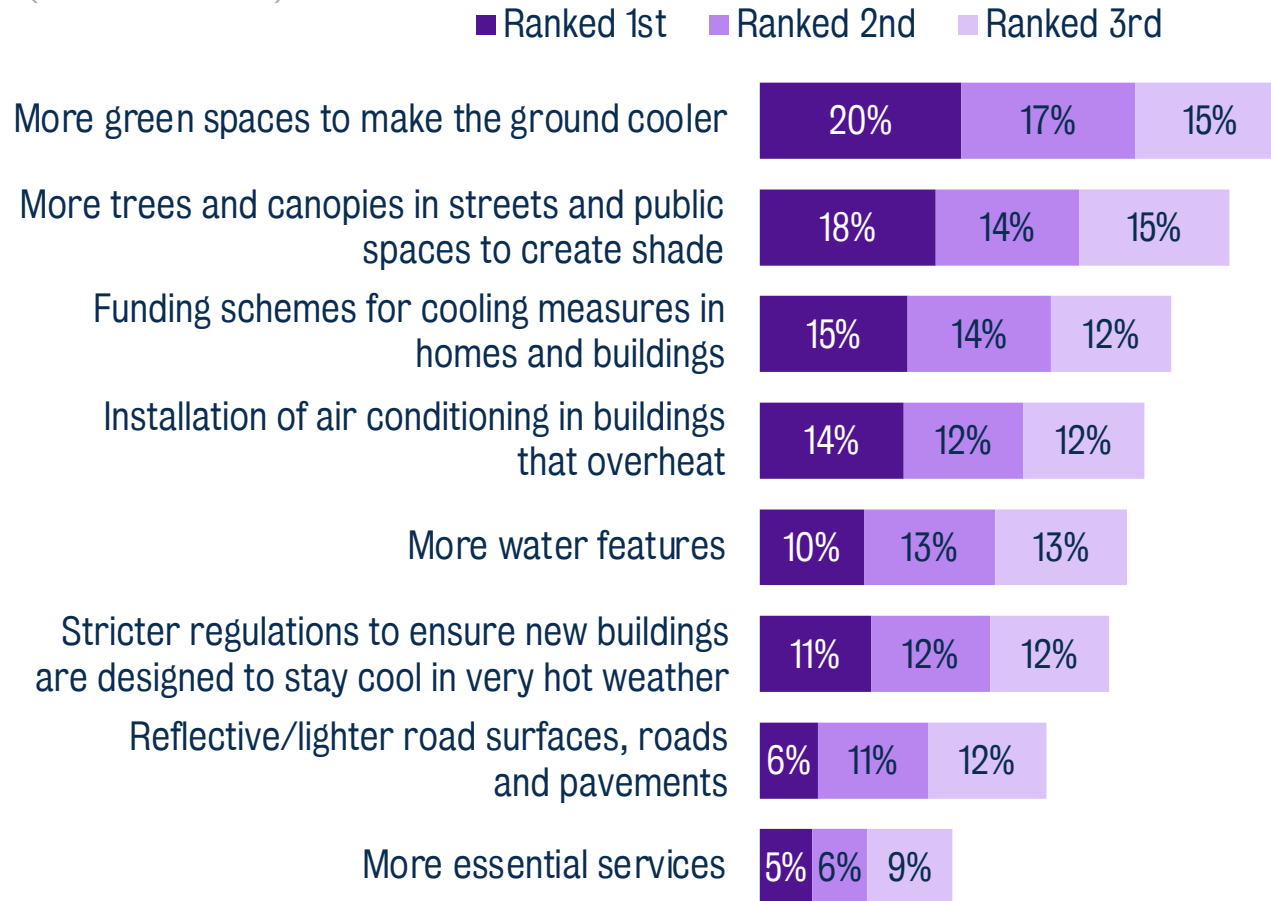


A large majority of respondents in London (70%) felt that the government should be doing more to help people adapt to very hot weather – showing notably higher levels of support than respondents in the rest of England (54%).

Similarly, respondents in London were more likely to recognise the need for action targeted towards groups that are more vulnerable to heat risk. Four in five respondents in London (81%) agreed that the government has a responsibility to protect those who are most vulnerable to the impacts of heat – 12 percentage points higher than levels of support reported in the rest of England.

# Nature-based solutions ranked highest among Londoners when asked which actions should be prioritised to help people in the UK adapt to very hot weather

In your opinion, which of the following actions should be prioritised to help people in the UK adapt to very hot weather?<sup>9</sup> (rank and order)



When asked to prioritise the actions that would be most beneficial to help people in the UK adapt to very hot weather, respondents in London were more likely to prioritise green infrastructure, such as green spaces (52% ranked as top 3) and tree planting (47% top 3).

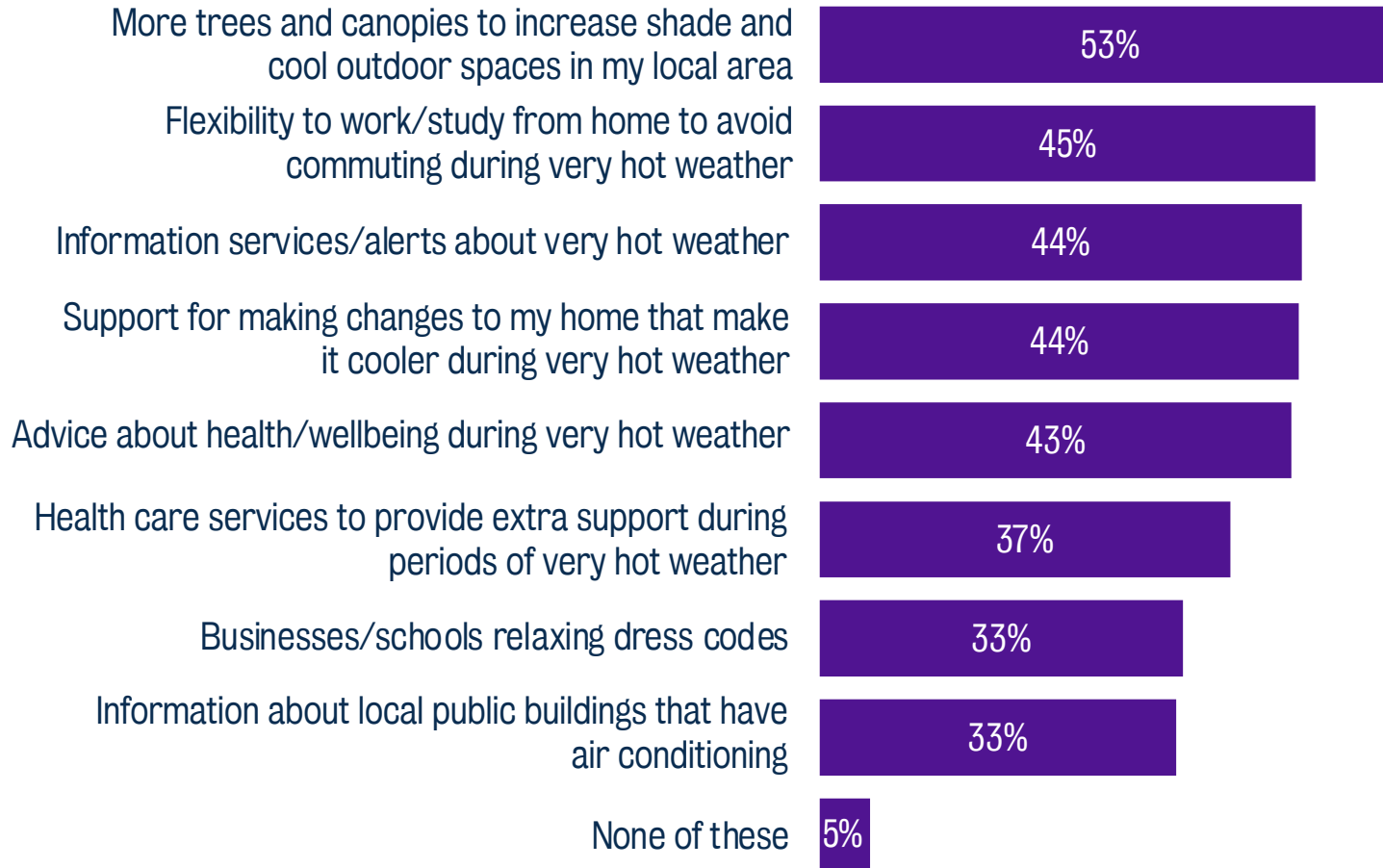
Adaptations such as installing air conditioning ranked lower, but were still prioritised within the top 3 choices of 38% of Londoners. Air conditioning was ranked similarly to passive cooling measures such as water features (36%) but higher than potentially less well-known interventions such as reflective surfaces (29%).

Regulation of new builds to better withstand heat ranked lower (35% ranked as top 3) than providing support to retrofit existing buildings (41%) – revealing a clear contrast to priorities for action emerging from deliberative spaces.<sup>3</sup>

Base: 1,013 adults living in London. Fieldwork dates 12-15 August 2025. Rank 4-8 and “don’t know” not shown.

# Alongside green infrastructure, Londoners' saw flexibility, information and practical support to adapt their home as important resources for them personally during periods of very hot weather

In your opinion, which of the following resources would be important for you to have during periods of very hot weather? Please tick all that apply



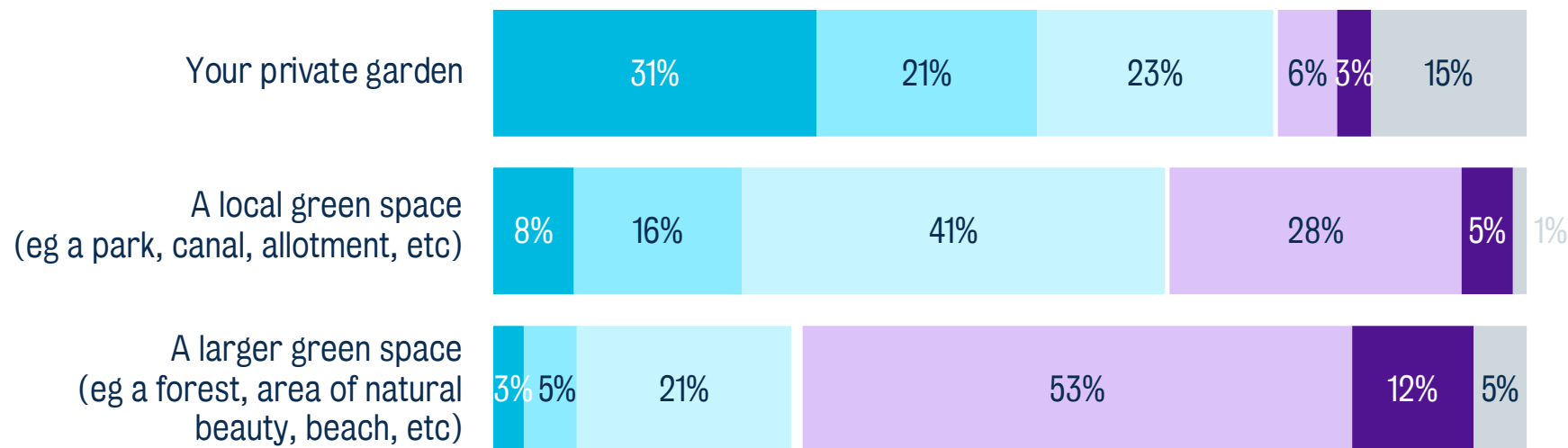
Similarly, when it came to the types of resources respondents prioritised for themselves, over half of respondents in London (53%) saw having more trees and canopies as important for them personally during periods of very hot weather.

Respondents in London also saw a need for interventions alongside green infrastructure. Flexibility to change working patterns (45%), support to adapt one's home (44%) and access to information were endorsed relatively frequently by respondents in London as being important. Information alerts about heat (44%) and advice on health and wellbeing (43%) were a clear focus for communications; information about cool spaces was a lower priority (33%).

# A majority of Londoners accessed green spaces regularly across July and August – with smaller, local green spaces being particularly well-used during the heatwave

Roughly how often, if at all, have you spent any time in each of these green spaces over the past 30 days?

■ Every day 
 ■ 4-6 times a week 
 ■ 1-3 times a week 
 ■ Less than once a week 
 ■ Never 
 ■ Not applicable



The importance of green spaces was also reflected in how respondents in London reported spending their time during the heatwave. Around two thirds (65%) of respondents in London noted that they had accessed a local green space at least once a week during July and August – just 10 percentage points lower than those who accessed a private garden at least once a week.

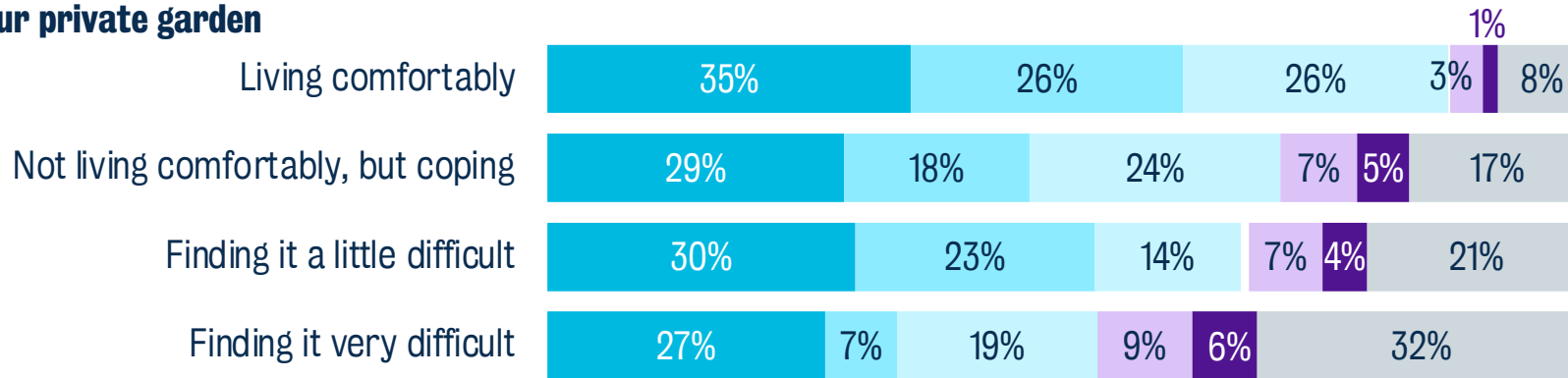
By contrast, larger green spaces were accessed less frequently, with less than half as many respondents in London saying they accessed larger green spaces on a weekly basis (29%), compared to local green spaces.

# Local green spaces also created more equity in access to green space – being accessed by a majority of Londoners across July and August 2025, irrespective of financial situation

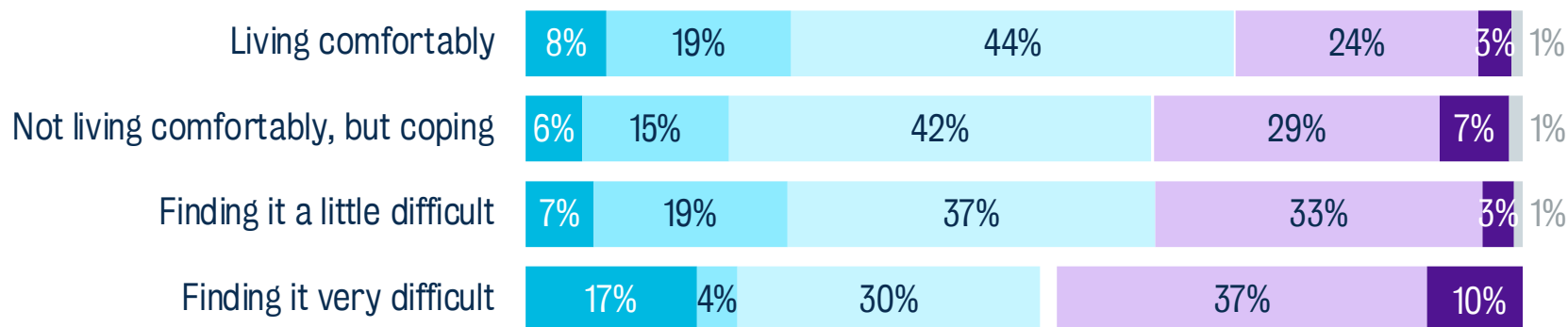
Roughly how often, if at all, have you spent any time in each of these green spaces over the past 30 days?

■ Every day ■ 4-6 times a week ■ 1-3 times a week ■ Less than once a week ■ Never ■ Not applicable

## Your private garden



## A local green space

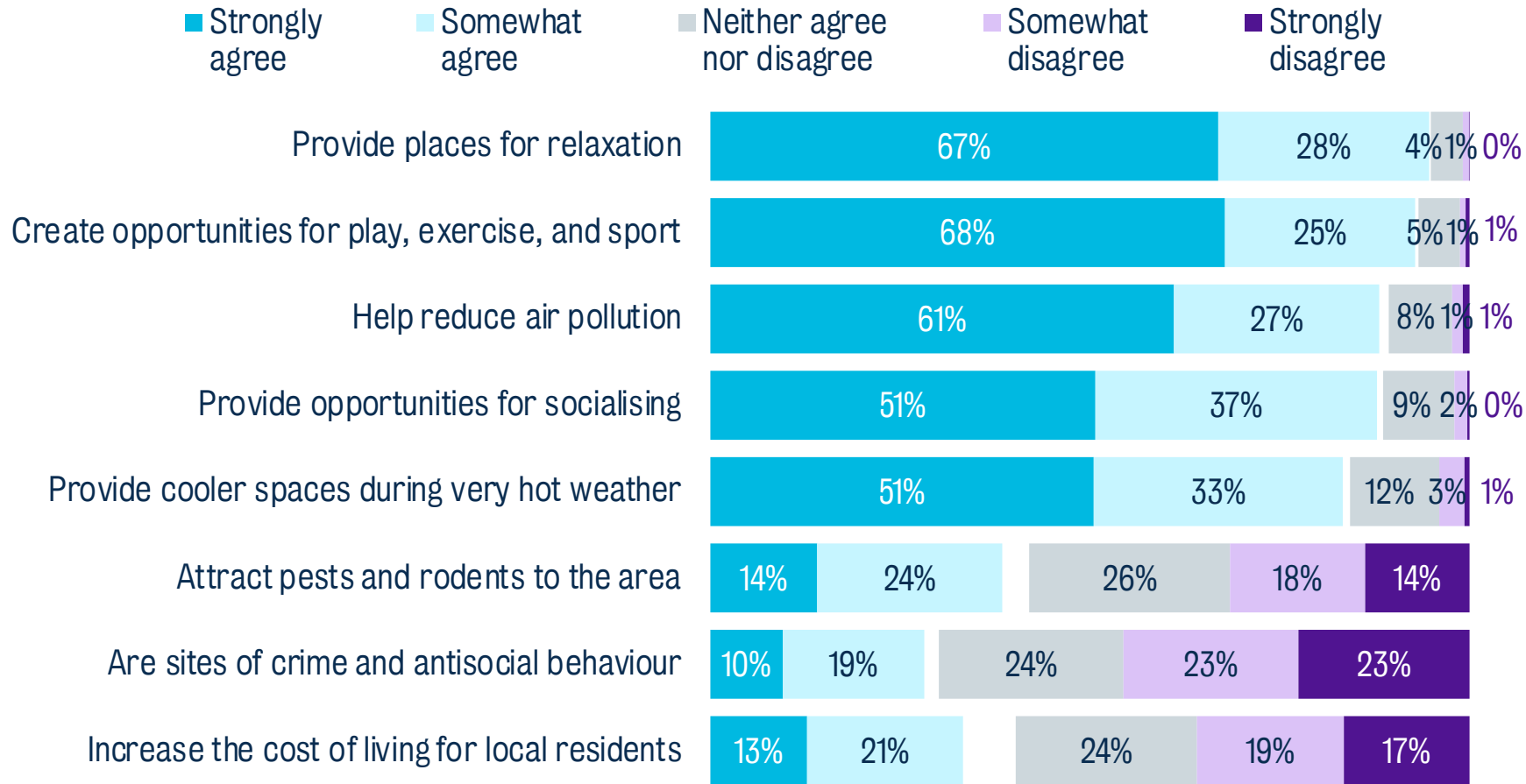


While respondents in London who were living comfortably still accessed local green spaces more frequently, the gap between groups was much smaller when it came to the frequency of accessing local green spaces, compared to accessing a private garden.

Importantly, practically every respondent in London reported having access to a local green space, even if they did not use it. By contrast, four times as many respondents who said they were finding it very difficult financially said they did not have access to a private garden (32%), compared to those who were living comfortably (8%).

# A large majority of Londoners associated green spaces with benefits for relaxation, fitness and socialising, alongside environmental benefits such as reducing air pollution and cooling

Thinking about green spaces in your area, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.  
**Green spaces...**



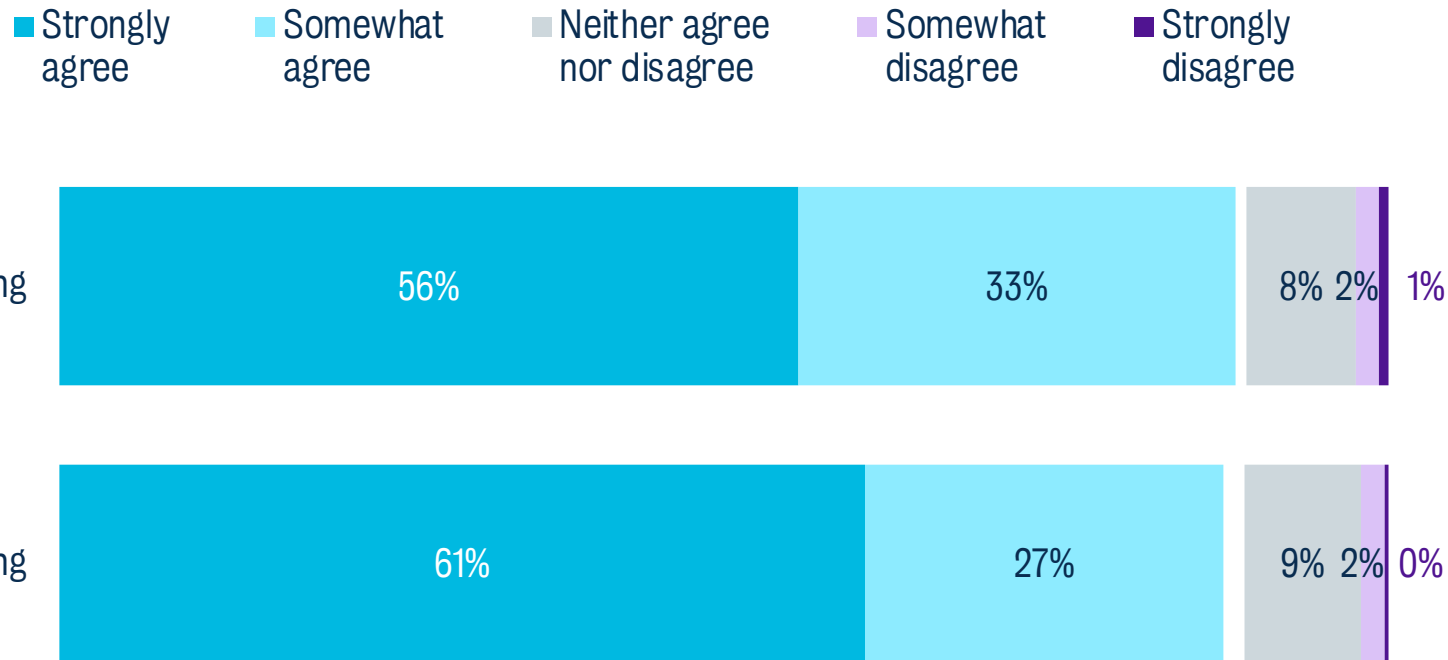
Almost all respondents in London reported that having green spaces close to their home was important to them (94%), and more than half (53%) said they would have liked to spend more time in green spaces over the past month.

Respondents in London also emphasised the positives of green spaces over potential downsides, seeing them as places for relaxation (95%), exercise (93%) and socialising (88%). Respondents in London also largely recognised the importance of green spaces for managing environmental hazards, such as reducing air pollution (88%) and providing cooler spaces during very hot weather (84%).

# The importance of green spaces for supporting physical and mental wellbeing was also widely recognised by Londoners

Thinking about green spaces in your area, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

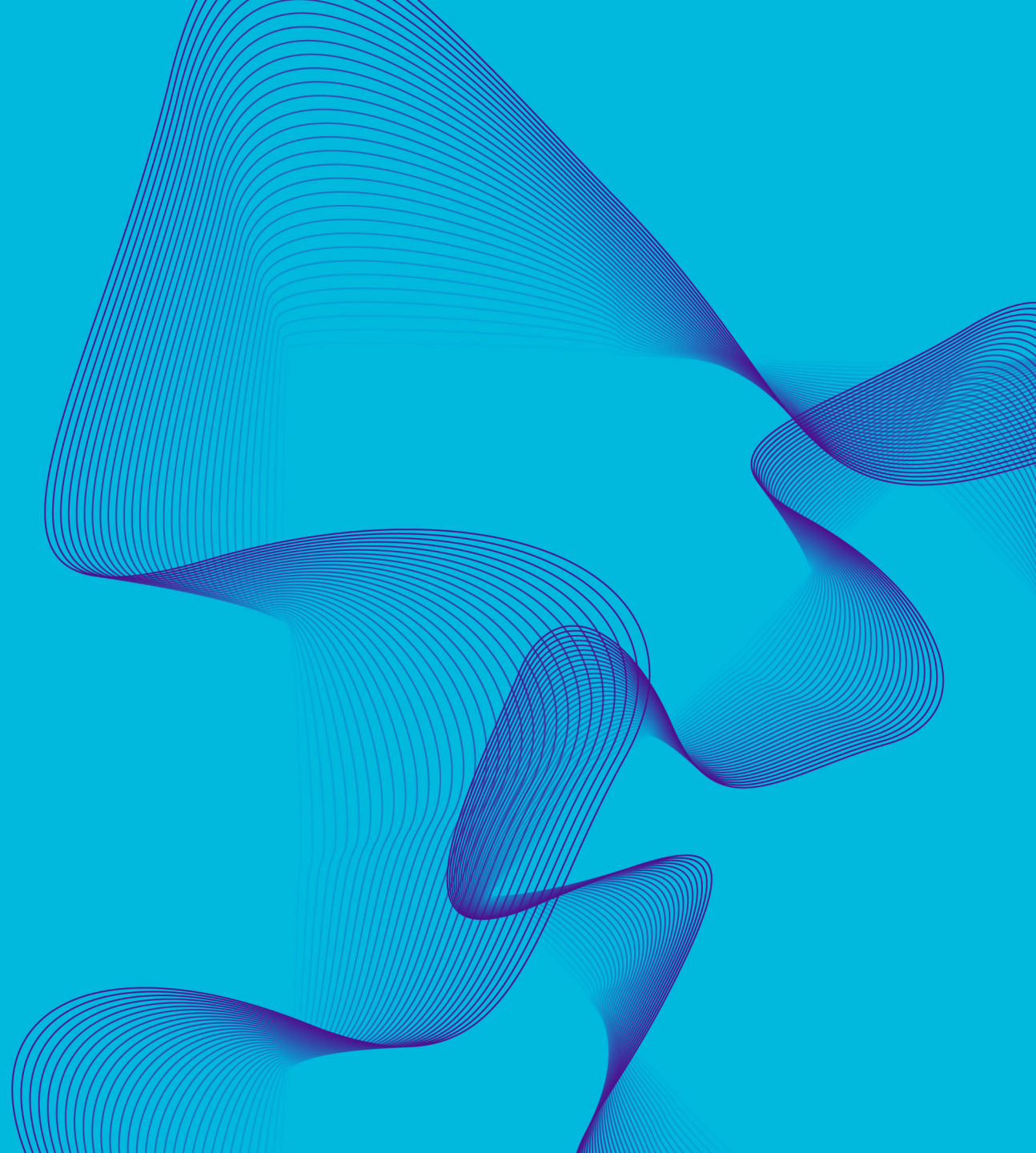
Having access to green spaces is important for my...



Almost nine in ten respondents in London agreed that green spaces were important for their physical and mental wellbeing (89% and 88%, respectively) – with a majority agreeing strongly. This degree of consensus was also largely consistent across different social and economic contexts, further signalling the importance of green spaces in bridging social and economic divides in the city.

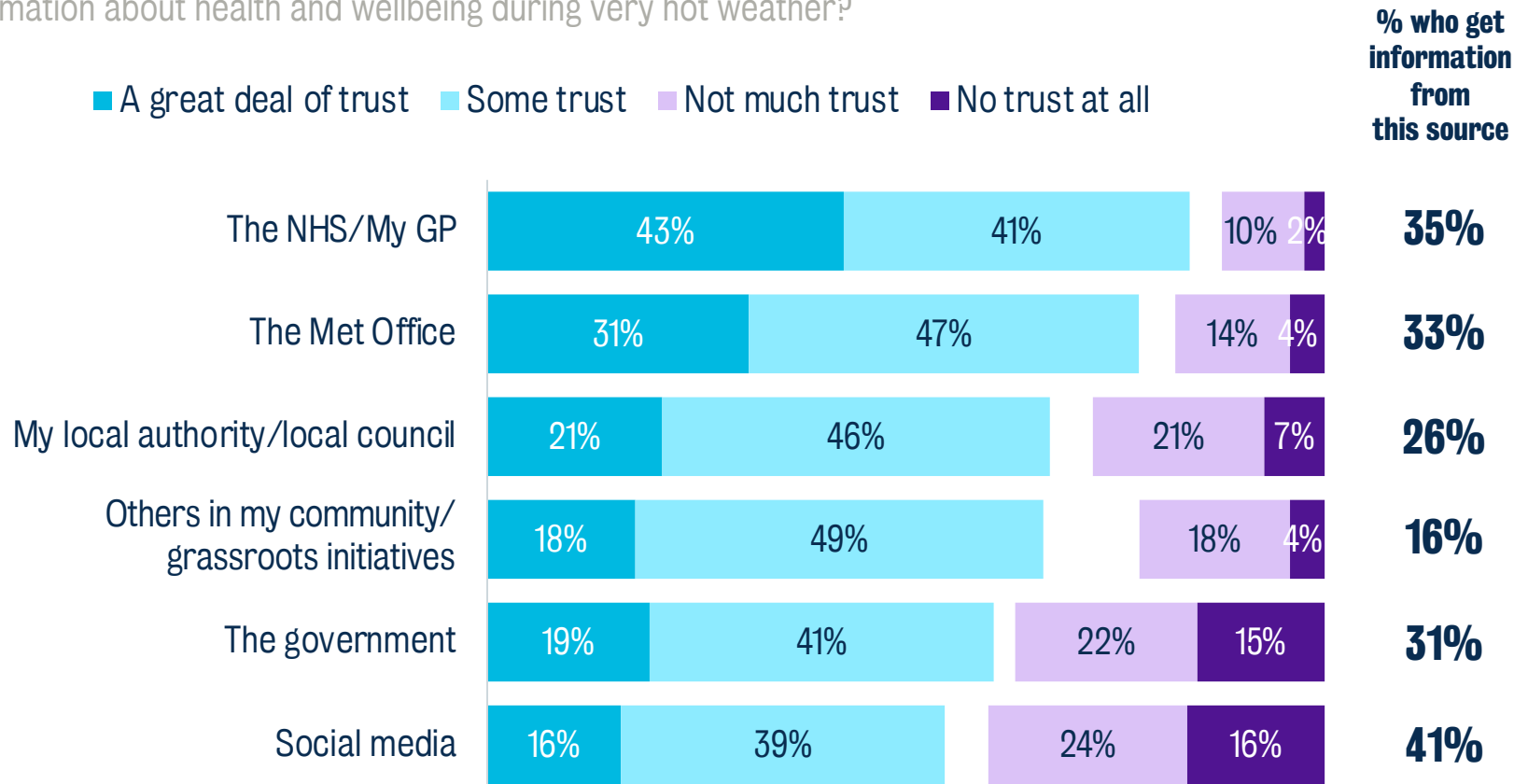
The benefits of green spaces for physical and mental wellbeing were, however, noted less frequently among the youngest (78%/81% agree aged 18-24) and oldest age groups in London (79%/74% aged 65+), compared to other age groups, 90-93% of whom considered green spaces important for their physical and mental wellbeing.

# Trusted messengers to communicate the risk of extreme heat



# There are a range of actors that Londoners said they trust to provide relevant and reliable information on heat – but they are not always the information sources that people access

How much trust do you have, if any, in the following groups to give you relevant and reliable information about health and wellbeing during very hot weather?



There are a range of actors that respondents said they trust to provide relevant and reliable information about health and wellbeing during very hot weather. For example, large majorities of respondents in London reported trusting healthcare providers in this capacity (84%), as well as the Met Office (78%).

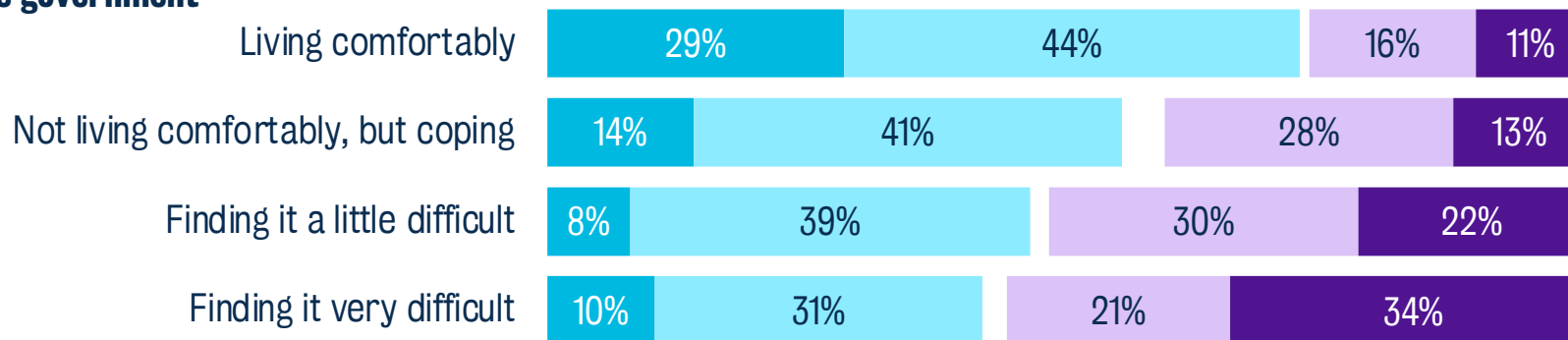
Yet there can be a mismatch in patterns of trust and patterns of use. Specifically, around half of all respondents accessed information through social media (41%) – the least trusted information source. Similarly, while local authorities rank third as a trusted messenger (67%), only a quarter of Londoners (26%) reported turning to them for information during very hot weather.

# Londoners who are struggling financially are the least likely to say that they trust national and local government to provide relevant and reliable information on health and wellbeing during very hot weather

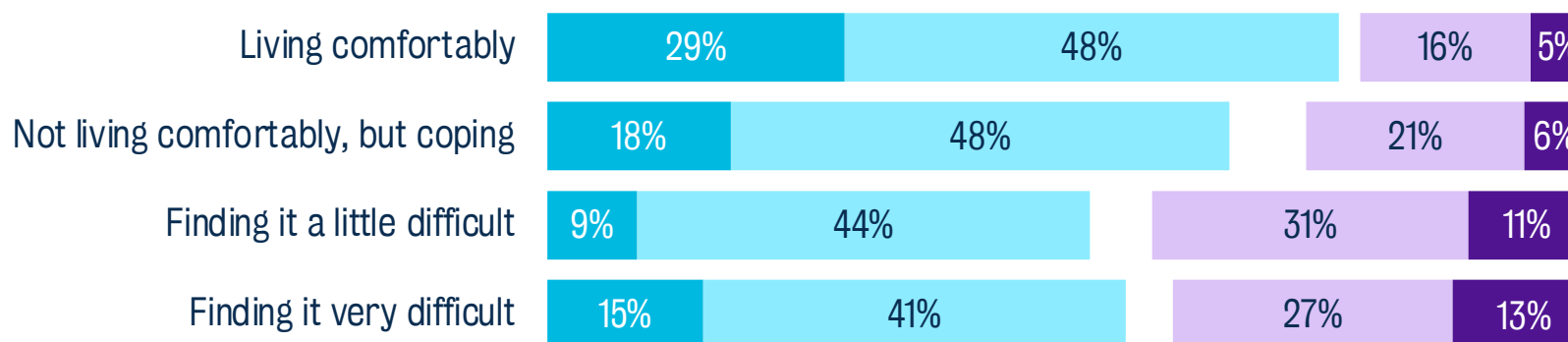
How much trust do you have, if any, in the following groups to give you relevant and reliable information about health and wellbeing during very hot weather?

■ A great deal of trust ■ Some trust ■ Not much trust ■ No trust at all

## The government



## My local authority/local council

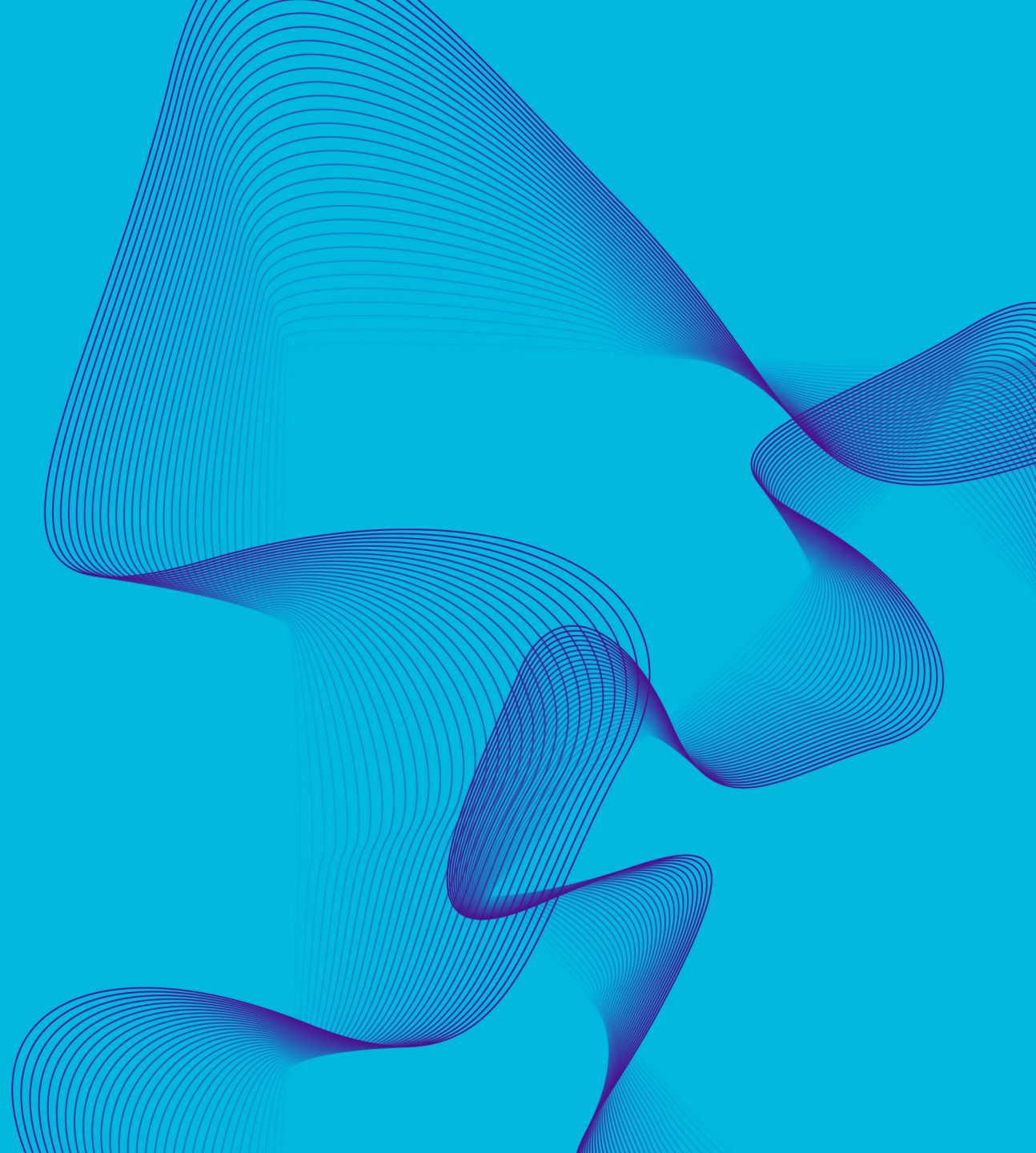


There are also challenges for government at a national and local level in engaging across London on heat – particularly with lower income households, which are often recognised as being more vulnerable to the impacts of rising temperatures.

More than half of respondents in London who described themselves as finding it a little or very difficult to cope financially (52%/55% respectively) said that they would not trust the government to provide relevant and reliable information about health and wellbeing during very hot weather. Roughly two in five respondents from these groups (42%/40%) said the same for local government.

This presents clear challenges for policymakers and points to the importance of working alongside trusted actors.

# Technical appendix



# Technical information

## Subgroup base sizes

Q: Which region or nation do you live in?

North East England	97
North West England	236
Yorkshire and the Humber	213
East Midlands	172
West Midlands	197
East of England	198
Greater London	1,013
South East England	317
South West England	199

Q: Which of the statements below best describes how well you are coping financially at the moment? **(London sample only)**

Living comfortably	512
Not living comfortably, but coping	271
Finding it a little difficult	137
Finding it very difficult	75

Q: Do you own or rent this accommodation? **(London sample only)**

Own outright	461
Own with a mortgage or loan	220
Part-own and part-rent (shared ownership)*	10
Rent (through a private landlord)	178
Rent (social housing)	94
Live here rent-free*	39
Prefer not to say*	11

\* Excluded from analysis due to low base size.

## Weighting

London sample data are weighted by age and gender to be representative of Greater London. Great Britain/Rest of England sample data are weighted by age, gender, region and education to be representative of Great Britain.

## References

[1] Met Office (2025) [Summer 2025 is the warmest on record for the UK](#)

[2] Met Office (2025) Monthly Weather Reports from the Met Office for [June](#), [July](#) and [August](#) 2025

[3] Hewlett et al. (2026) [Hopeful Futures: Londoners' visions for a city that is well adapted to climate change](#)

For more information, please contact:

**Dr Kirstie Hewlett**

Senior Research Fellow  
Policy Institute at King's College London  
[kirstie.hewlett@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:kirstie.hewlett@kcl.ac.uk)

**Dr Paolo Morini**

Research Fellow  
Policy Institute at King's College London  
[paolo.morini@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:paolo.morini@kcl.ac.uk)

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