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Emerging tensions? How younger generations are dividing on masculinity and gender equality

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The terms of the debate

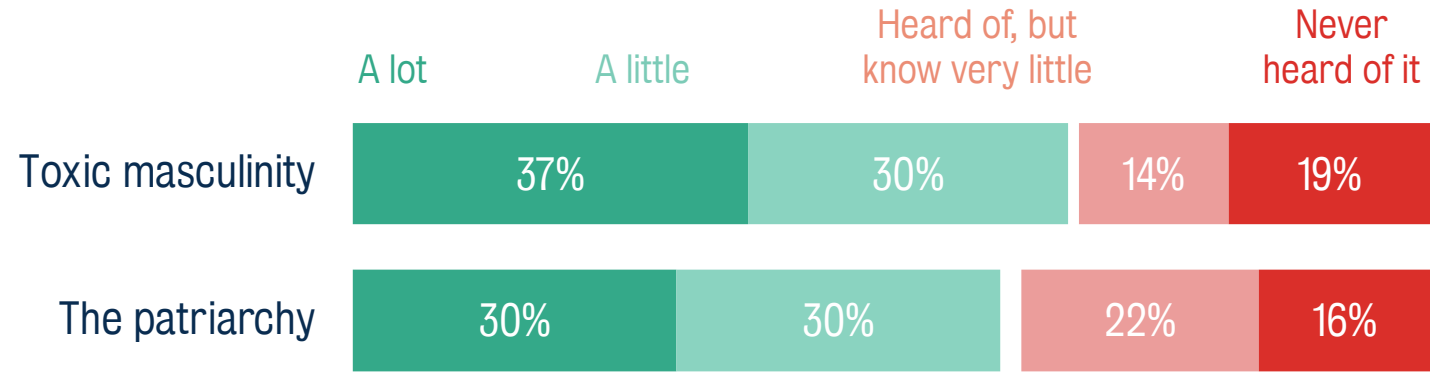
Note: some aggregate figures described in text differ from charts due to rounding

A majority of the public say they've heard at least a little about toxic masculinity and the patriarchy, though awareness varies considerably with age

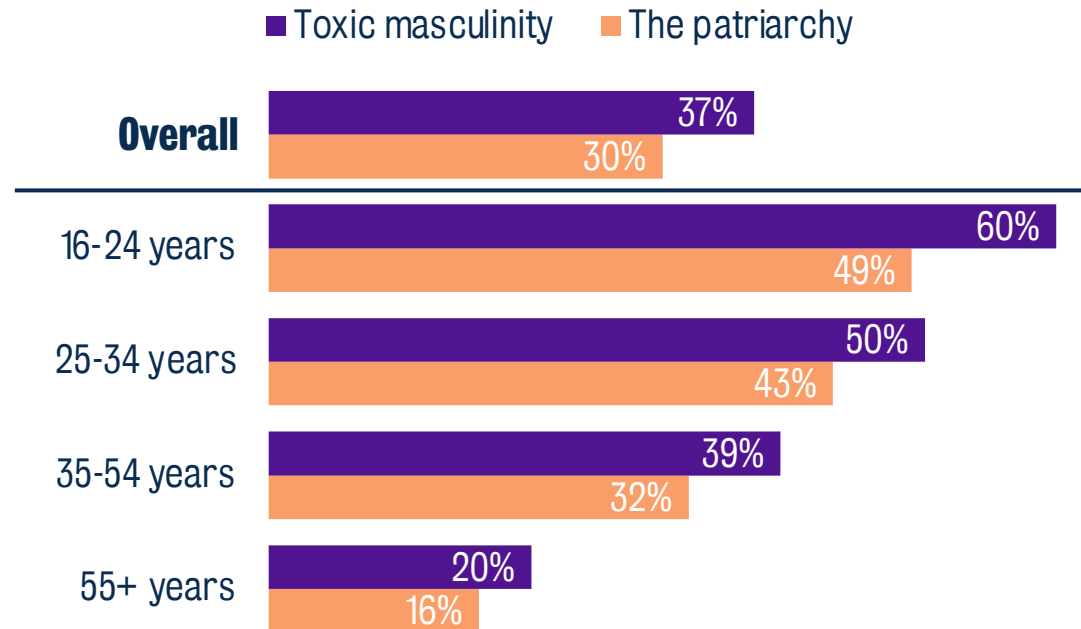
Two-thirds (67%) of the public say they've heard a lot or a little about toxic masculinity, with awareness of the phrase "the patriarchy" slightly lower (60%).

Younger people are most likely to say they know about these terms. For example, 60% of 16- to 24-year-olds say they've heard or read a lot about toxic masculinity – three times the proportion of those aged 55+ who say the same.

How much, if anything, have you heard or read about the following terms or phrases?



% who say they have heard or read a lot about _____



Younger people overall have a more favourable view of the term “toxic masculinity” – but young men are far more negative about it than young women

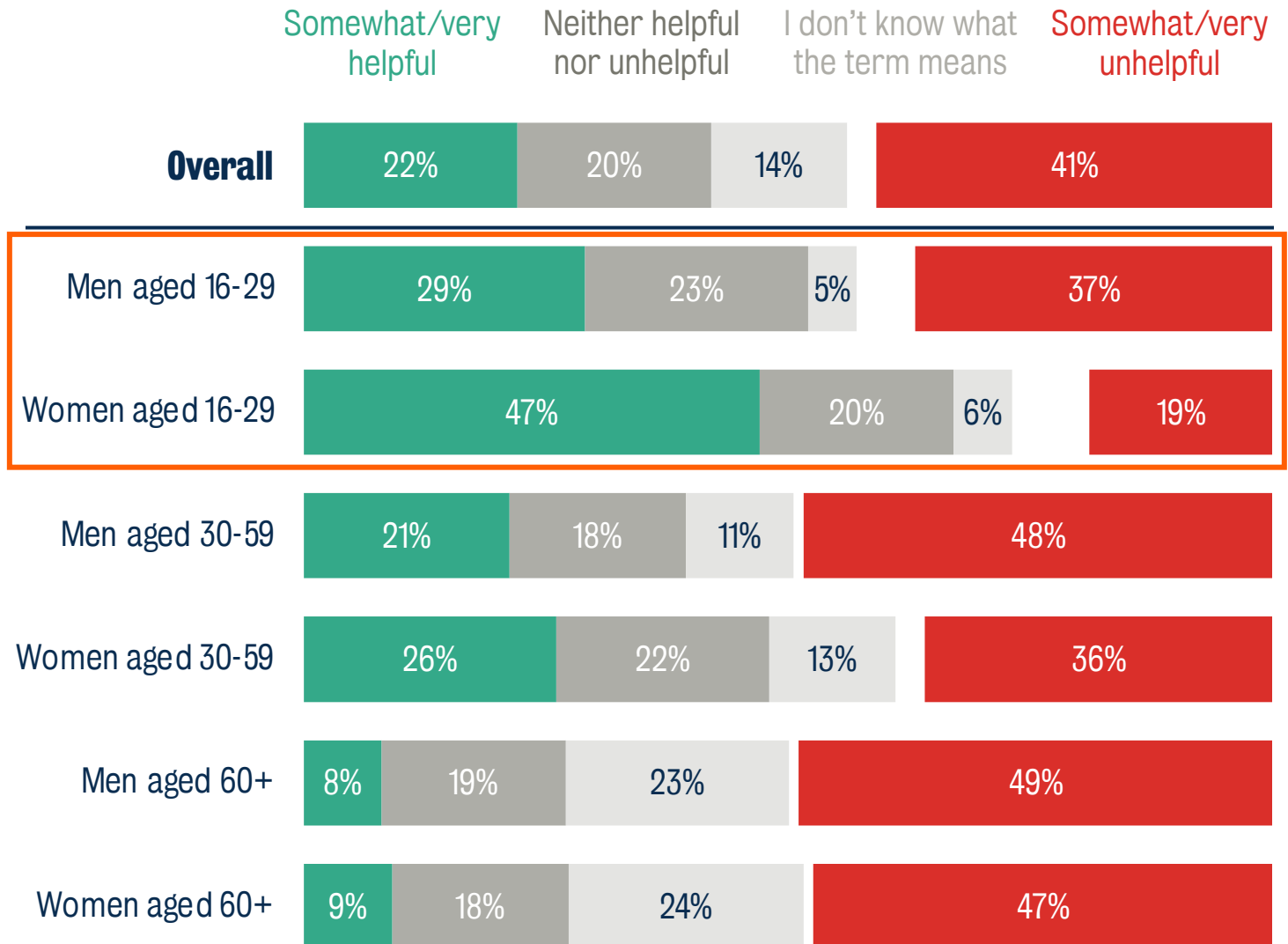
The biggest gender divide in views of the term “toxic masculinity” is found among the youngest age group – despite their being most supportive of the term overall.

37% of men aged 16 to 29 say “toxic masculinity” is an unhelpful term, roughly double the 19% of young women who feel this way.

Correspondingly, young women (47%) are considerably more likely than young men (29%) to find it a helpful term.

However, younger men though still find the term more helpful than older men.

To what extent, if at all, do you personally find the term “toxic masculinity” helpful or unhelpful when thinking about relations between men and women in Britain today?





Women and men: who has it tougher?

Note: some aggregate figures described in text differ from charts due to rounding

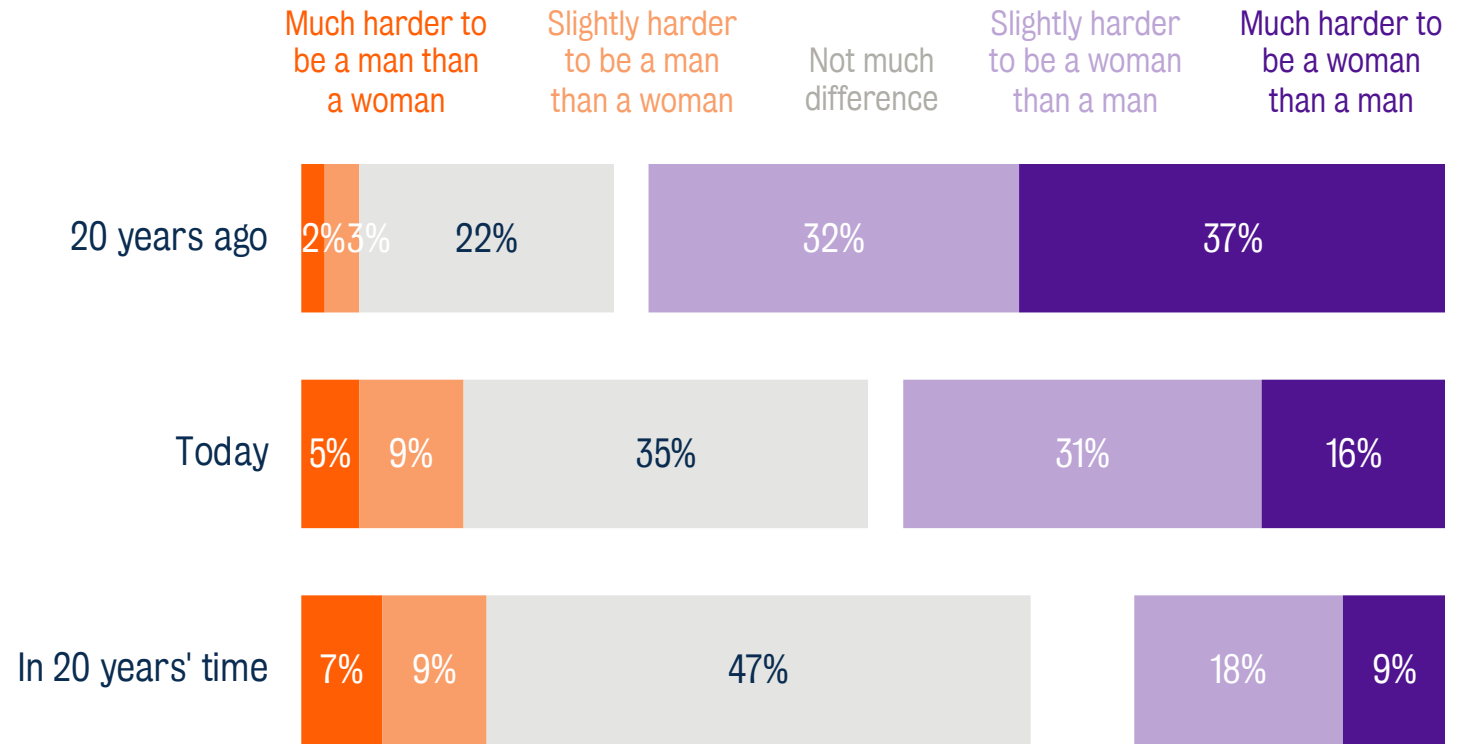
Around half the public think it's harder to be a woman than a man today, while one in seven say the reverse

69% of people say it was harder to be a woman than a man 20 years ago, while 48% say the same about the present day. Fewer still – 27% – think this will be the case in 20 years' time.

Adding to the sense that things will get better for women, 47% say there won't be much difference between women's and men's experiences in two decades' time, compared with 35% who think there's not much difference today.

Meanwhile, one in seven (14%) say it's harder to be a man than a woman today – and this changes little when people think ahead to the future (17%).

When thinking about society in Britain, do you think 20 years ago/today/in 20 years' time it was/is/will be harder to be a man, or harder to be a woman, or was/is/will there be not much difference?



One in five men overall say it's harder to be a man than a woman today, while the biggest gender gap in views is among the young

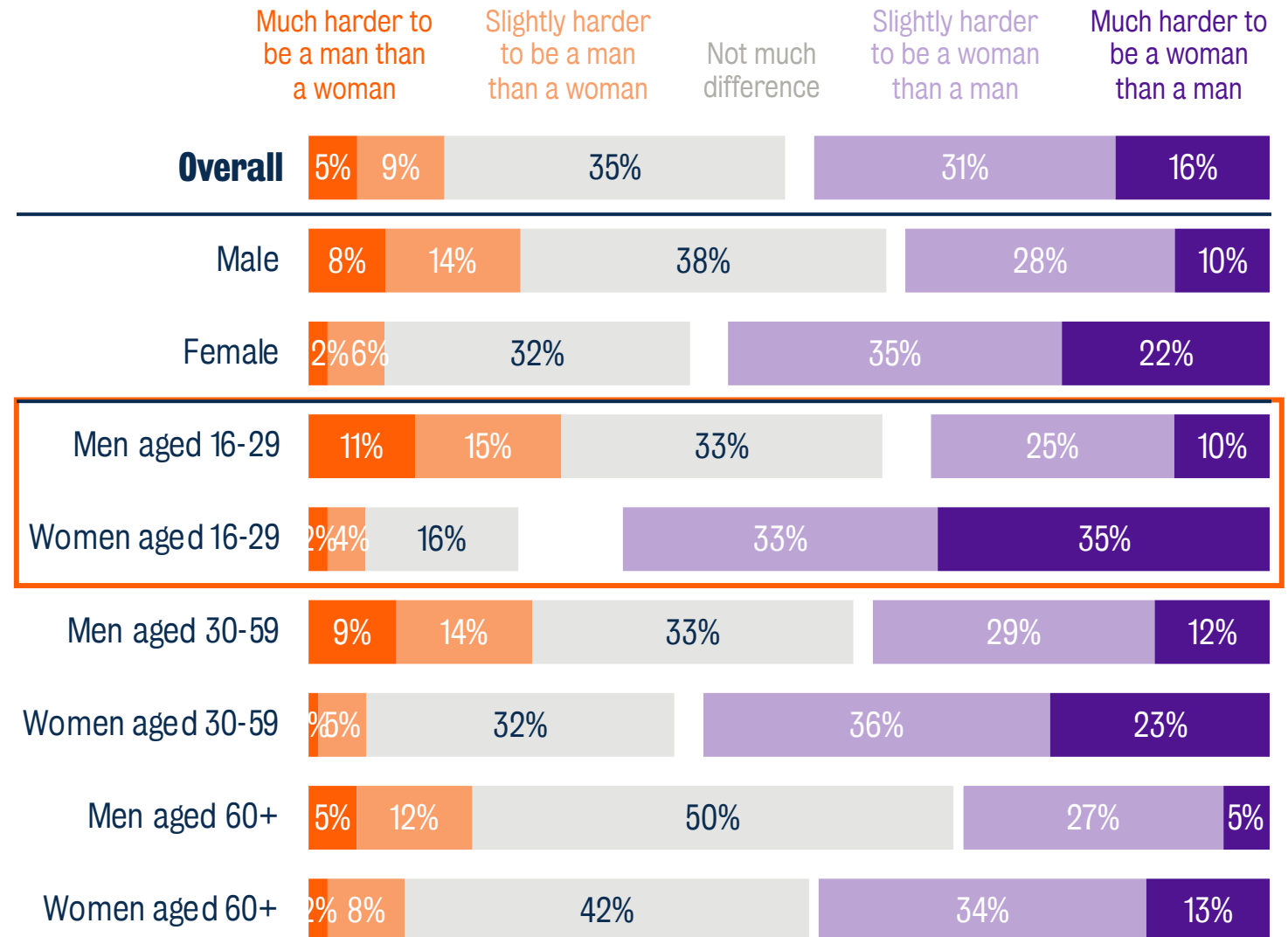
One in five (22%) men think it's harder to be a man than a woman today – although men are still nearly twice as likely to say women have it harder (38%).

Looking at views by age as well as gender shows young women are especially likely to say it is harder to be a woman. 68% feel this way, including 35% who think it is *much* harder. Young men (35%) are around half as likely to feel it is harder to be a woman than a man.

And among men aged 16 to 59, around a quarter think men have it tougher – higher than the 17% of men aged 60+ who feel this way.

Older people of both genders are more inclined to say there is not much difference between women's and men's experiences – although older women are still most likely to feel it is harder for women.

When thinking about society in Britain, do you think today it is harder to be a man, or harder to be a woman, or is there not much difference?

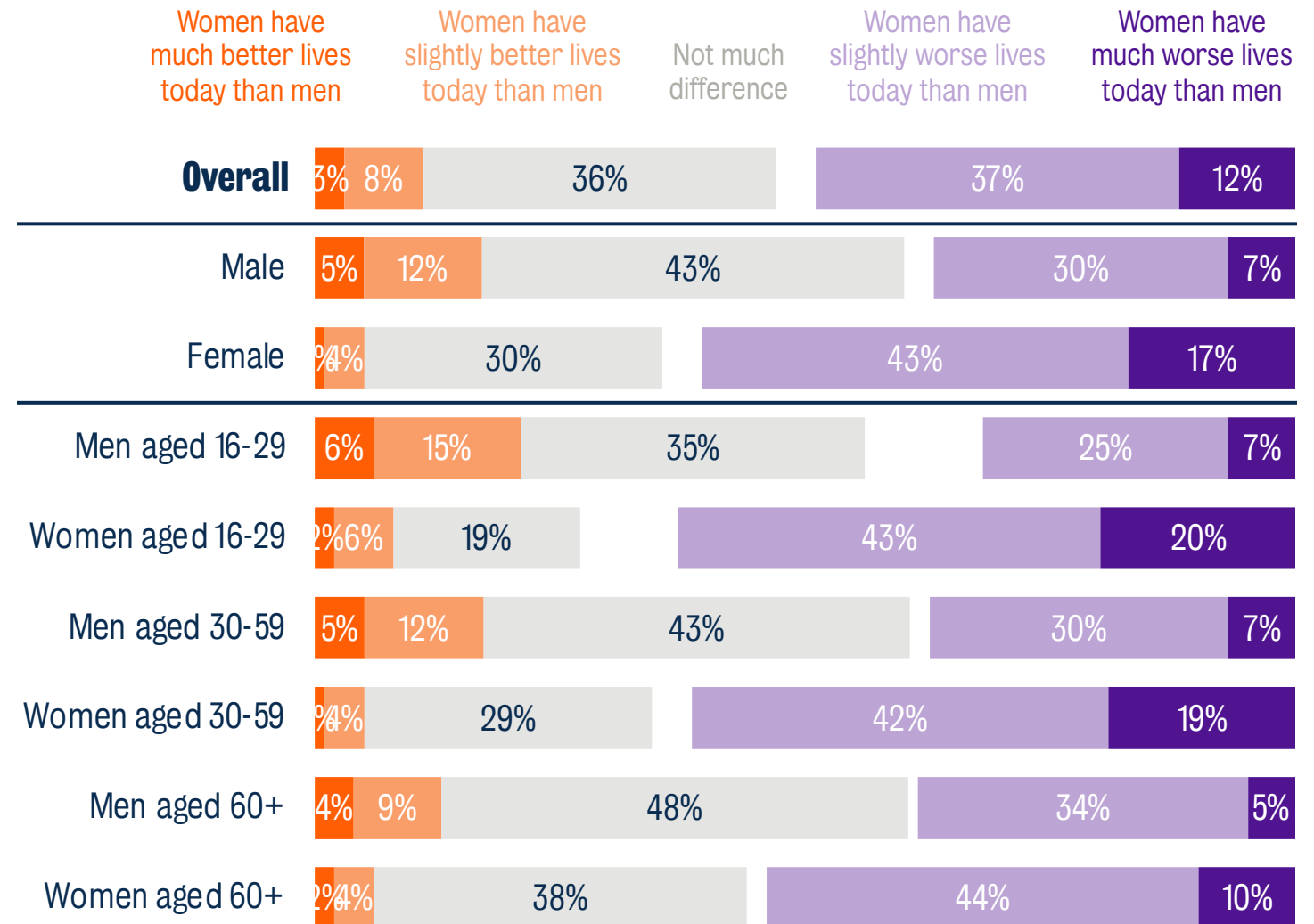


One in nine people – and one in six men – say women have better lives today than men

Half the public (49%) think women have worse lives than men, while one in nine (11%) think women have better lives. A third (36%) think there is not much difference.

And there is a clear gender divide in opinion, with men (17%) around three times as likely as women (6%) to think women have better lives, and men aged 16 to 59 (19%) more likely to hold this view than older men (12%).

Thinking about life outcomes generally (eg work, money, family responsibilities, relationships, safety, health, etc), do women in the UK generally have better or worse lives today than men, or is there not much difference?

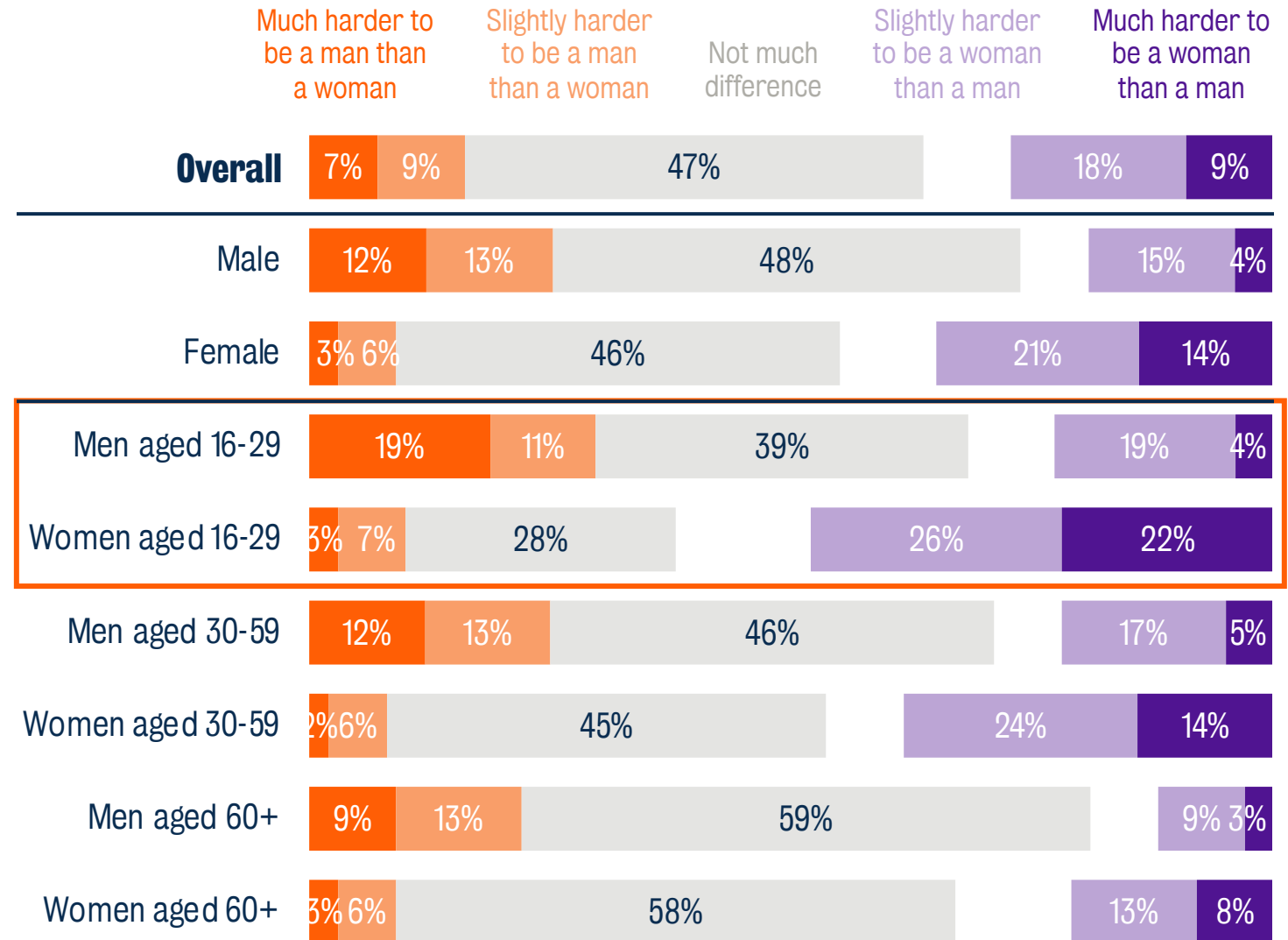


Three in 10 young men think it'll be harder to be a man than a woman in 20 years' time

Men aged 16 to 29 are most likely to believe that in 20 years' time it will be harder to be a man than a woman: 30% of this group feel this way, including 19% who think it'll be *much* harder to be a man.

On the other hand, among women, it is the youngest group who are most likely to say it'll be harder to be a woman than a man two decades from now, with nearly half (48%) feeling this way.

When thinking about society in Britain, do you think in 20 years' time it will be harder to be a man, or harder to be a woman, or will there be not much difference?

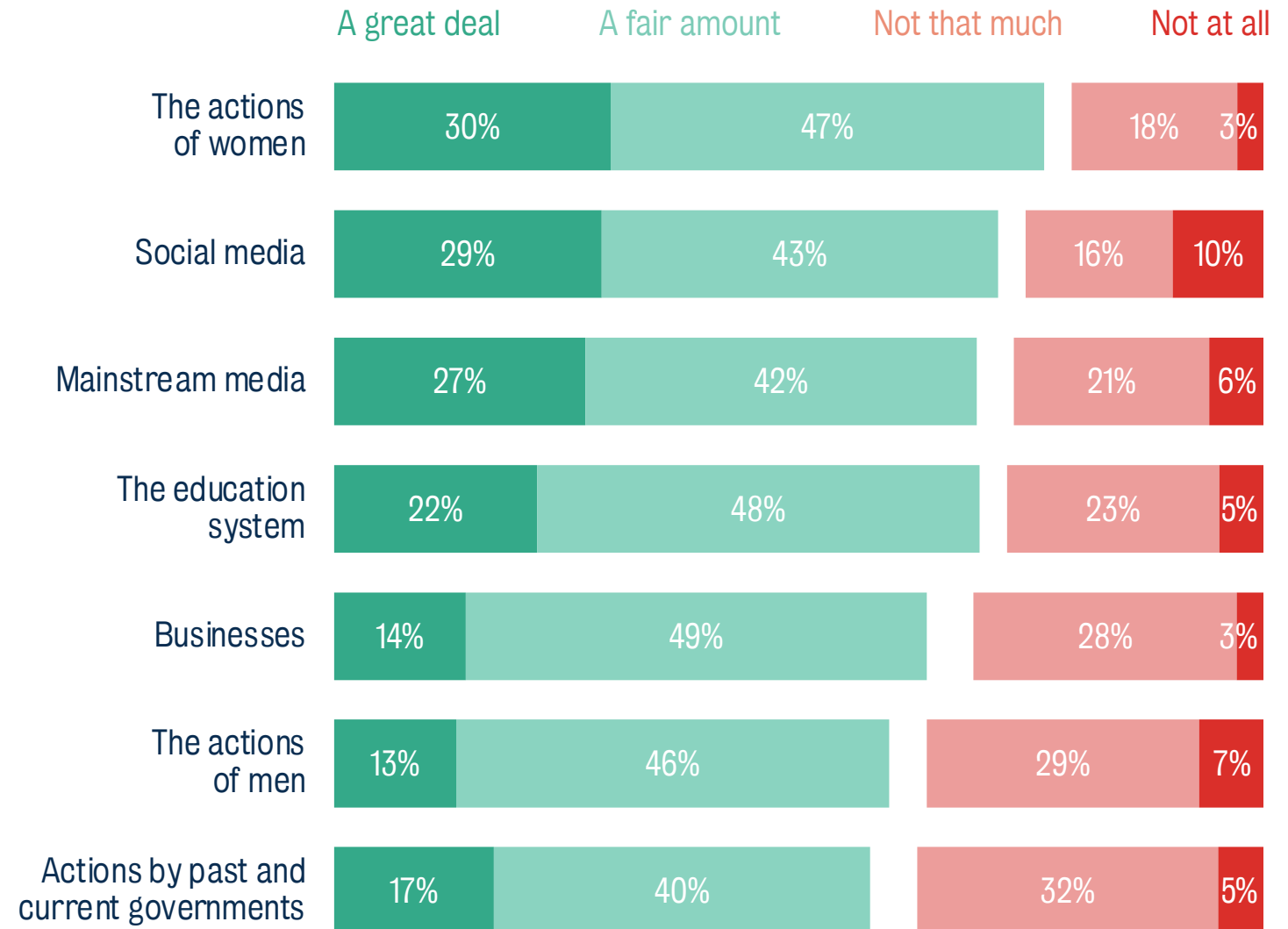


Among those who think women have a better life than men, three in five say the actions of men have been a contributing factor

59% of this group say the actions of men have contributed a great deal or fair amount to women having a better life than men, while 77% say the same about the actions of women.

High proportions also say that institutions such as the education system, as well as social media and mainstream media, have contributed at least a fair amount to women having a better life than men.

To what extent, if at all, do you think each of the following have contributed to women having a better life than men?

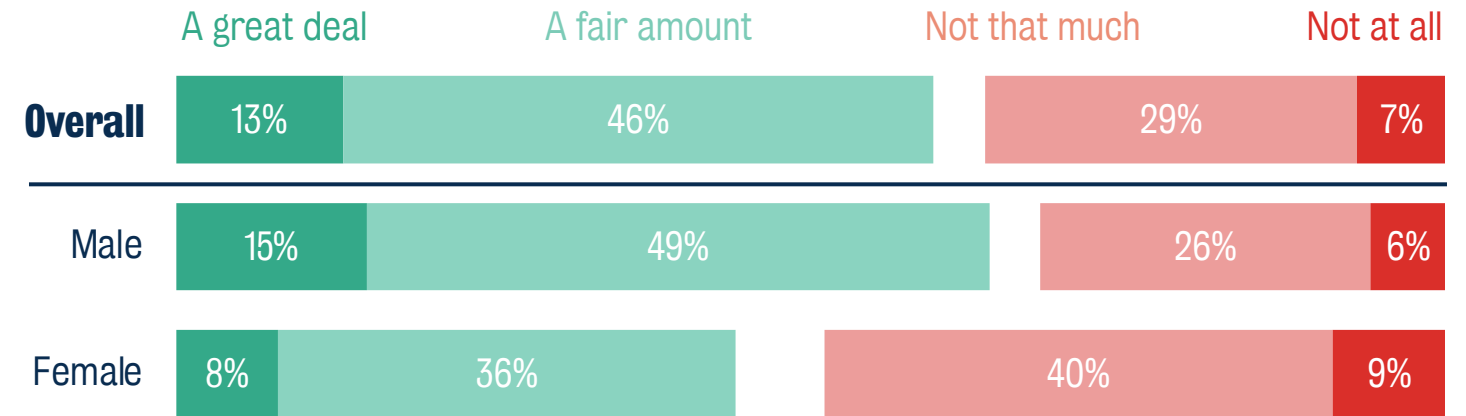


Views differ by gender on the role that men have played in making women's lives better than men

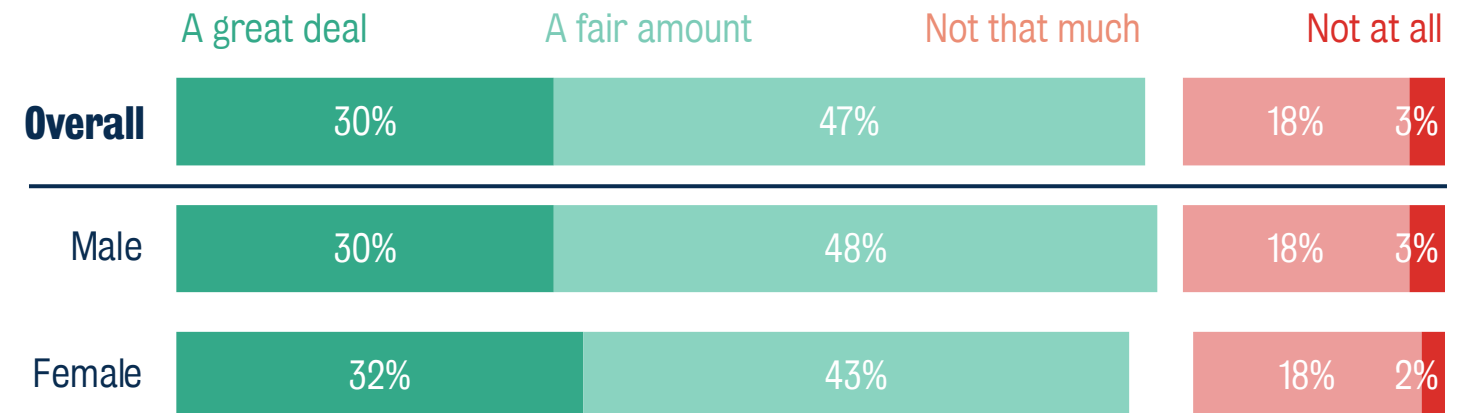
Among those who think women have better lives today than men, two-thirds (64%) of men say men's actions have contributed to this – much higher than the 44% of women in this group who feel the same.

However, men in this group are still more likely to say it is the actions of women, rather than the actions of men, that have contributed to women having a better life than men.

To what extent, if at all, do you think the actions of men have contributed to women having a better life than men?



To what extent, if at all, do you think the actions of women have contributed to women having a better life than men?

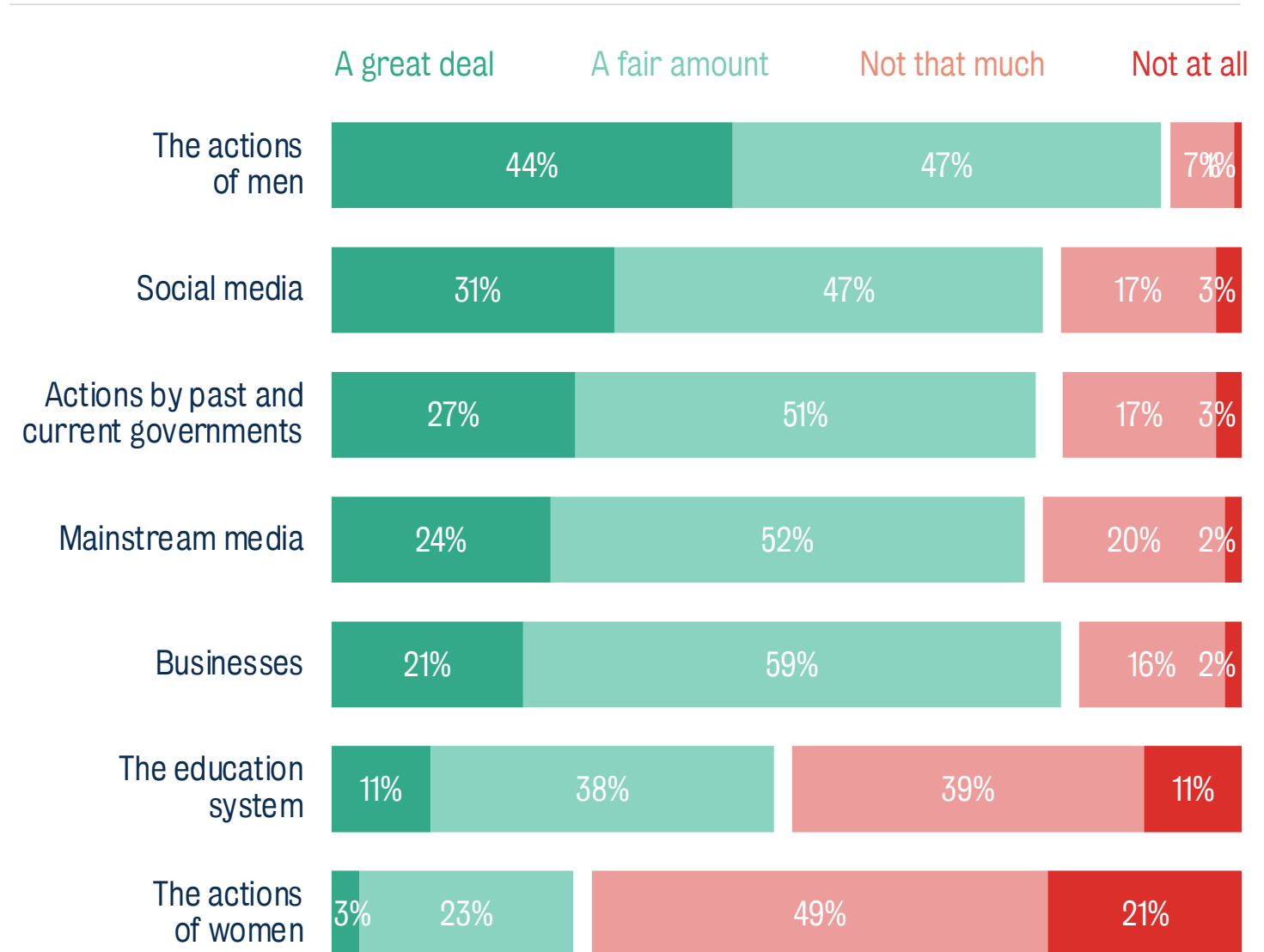


Among those who think women have a worse life than men, the actions of men are seen as the top cause of this

91% of those who think women have a worse life than men say the actions of men have contributed a great deal or fair amount to this situation – the top cause selected. By contrast, a far smaller proportion – 27% – say the actions of women have been a contributing factor.

Overall, there is little difference in views by gender on whether the actions of women or men have contributed to women having a worse life. Yet there are variations in strength of feeling on this issue when gender and age are considered together: 69% of women aged 16 to 29 who feel this way think men’s actions have contributed a *great deal* to women having a worse life – far higher than men aged 16 to 59, who are next most likely to feel this strongly (49%).

To what extent, if at all, do you think each of the following have contributed to women having a worse life than men?





Feminism and equal opportunities

Note: some aggregate figures described in text differ from charts due to rounding

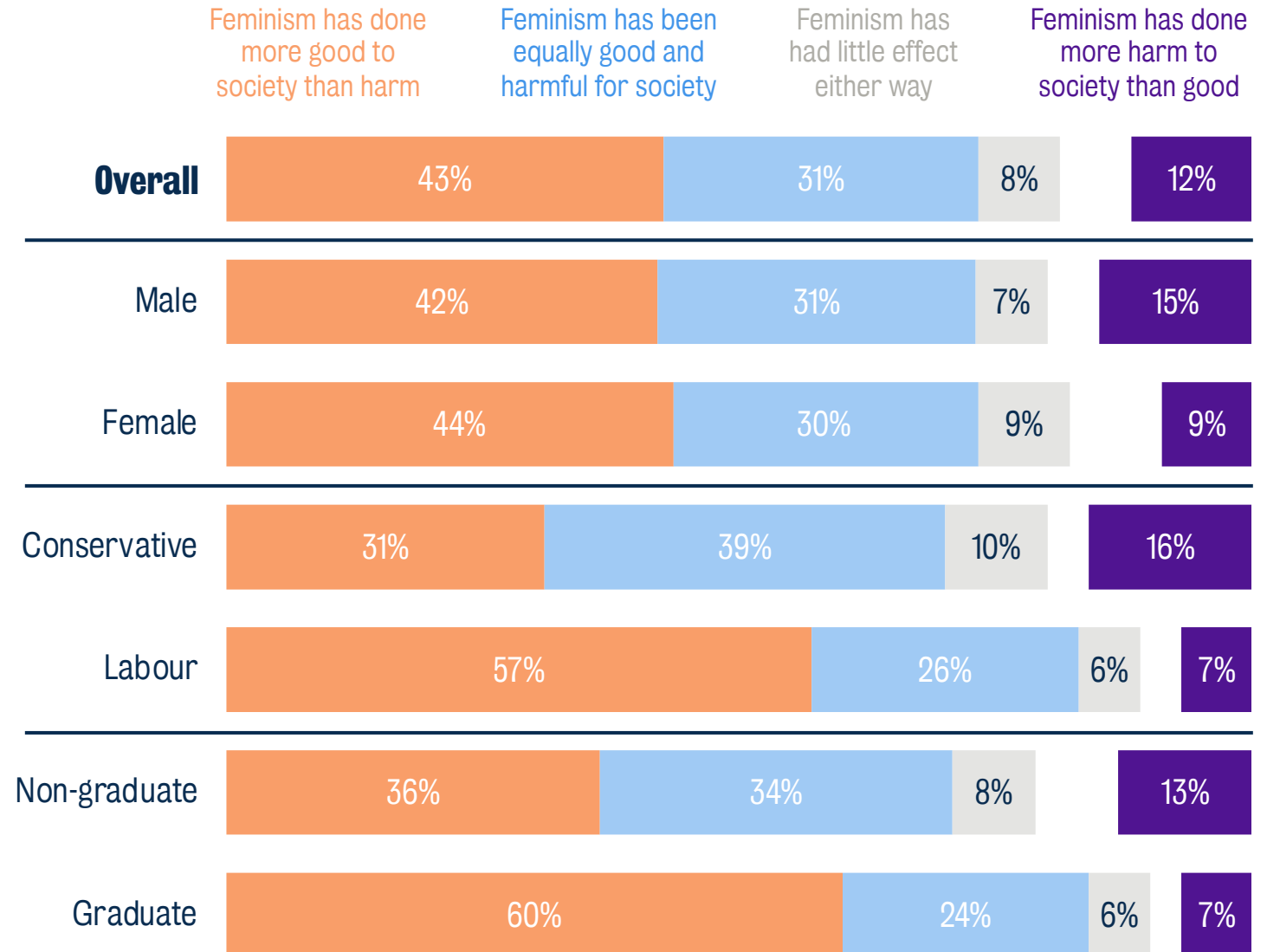
Two in five say feminism has done more good than harm – but a similar proportion feel it has also had some negative impact

43% of the public say feminism has done more good to society than harm – the most common response given. But 43% also feel it has had some negative impact, saying it has been equally good and harmful (31%) or has done more harm than good (12%).

Views on this question vary little by gender, although men (15%) are more likely than women (9%) to think feminism has on balance been a negative influence.

There are bigger divides by politics and level of education. For example, 36% of non-graduates think feminism has done more good than harm – far below the 60% of graduates who feel this way.

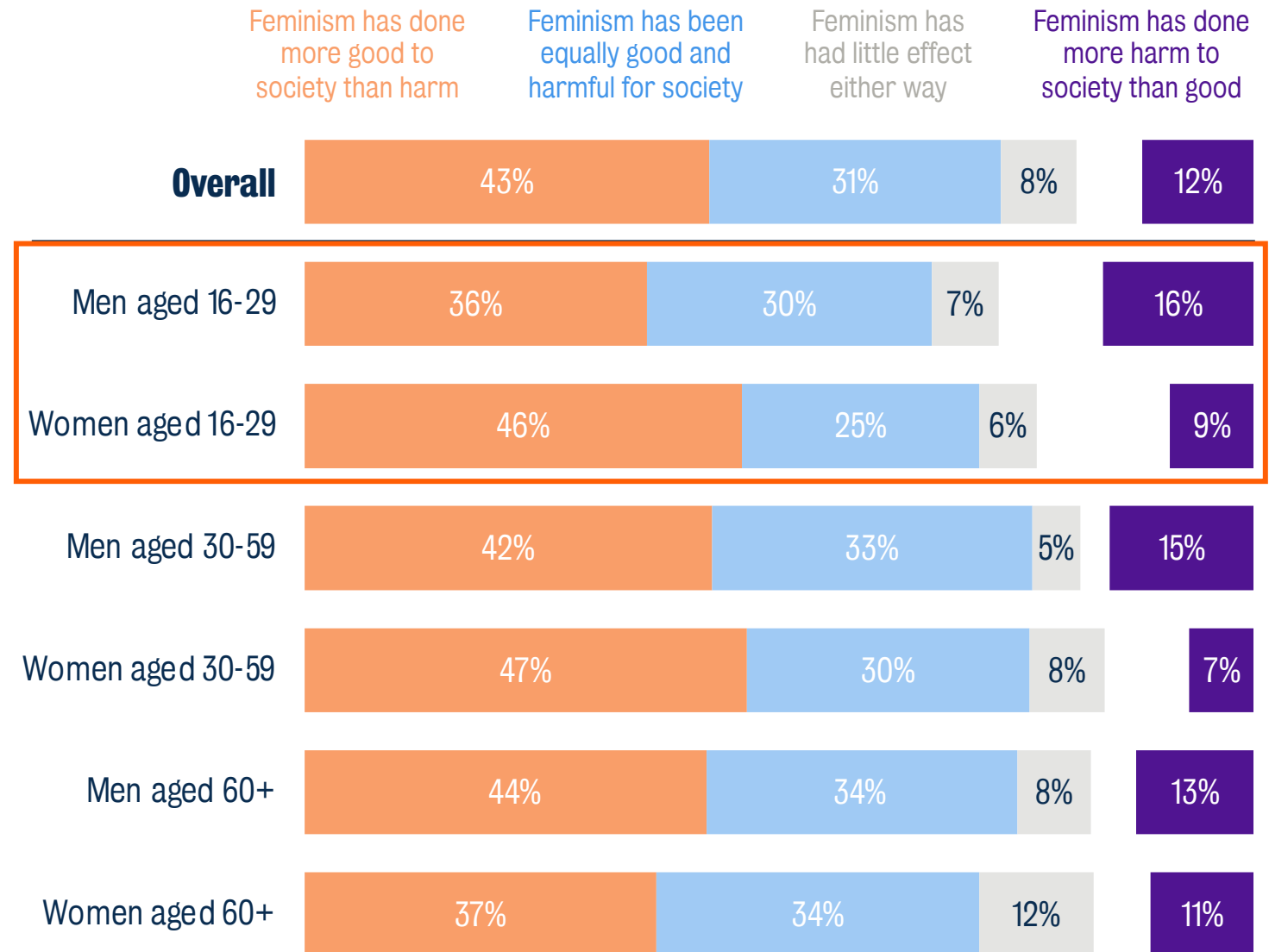
Which of the following comes closest to your view about the overall impact of feminism on British society?



Young men are notably less positive than young women about the impact of feminism

46% of women aged 16 to 29 think feminism has done more good to society than harm – 10 percentage points higher than the share of men of the same age who feel this way. And among this age group, one in six (16%) men say feminism has done more harm than good, compared with one in 11 (9%) women.

Which of the following comes closest to your view about the overall impact of feminism on British society?



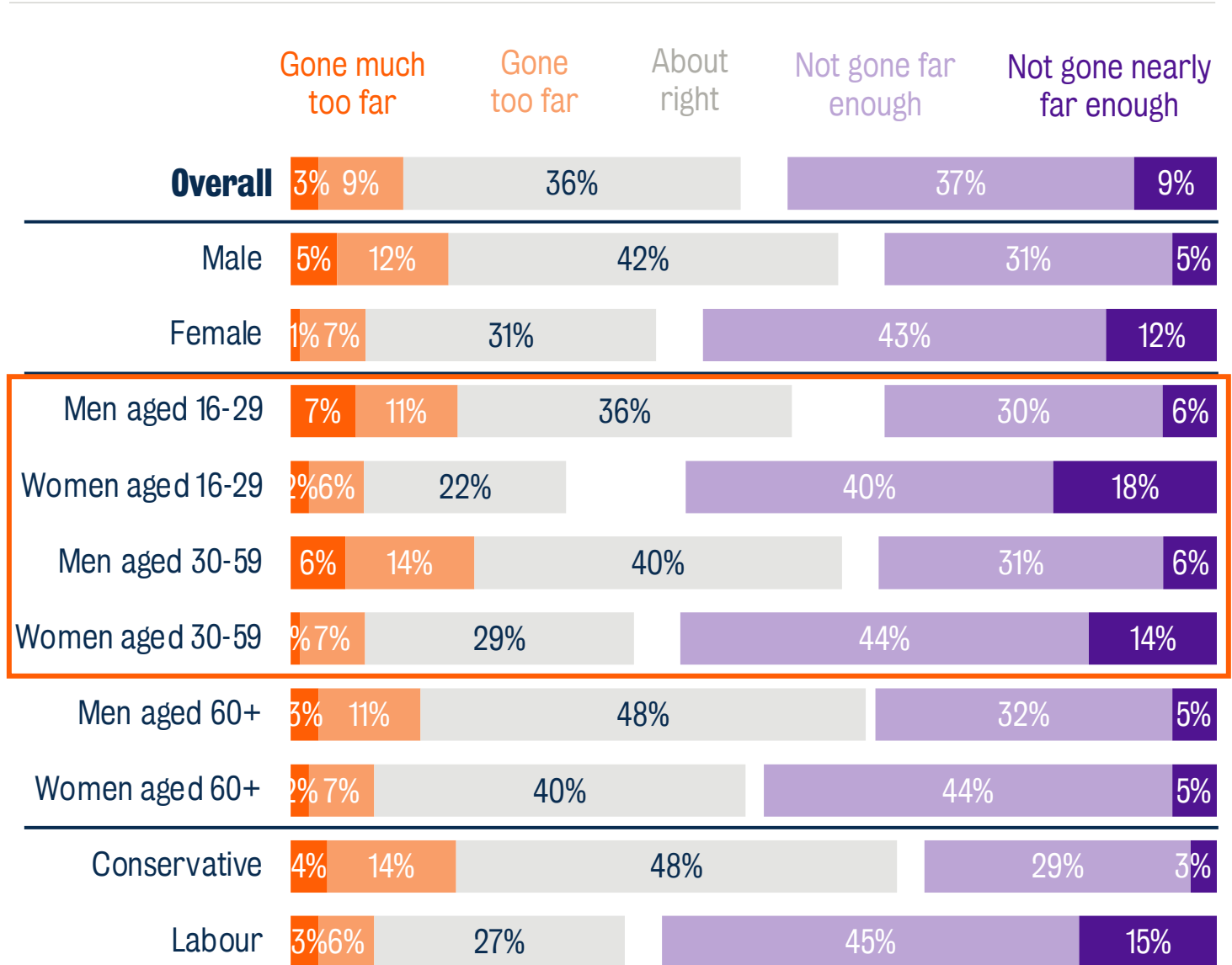
One in eight people say equal opportunities for women have gone too far, with men more likely to hold this view and the greatest gender divides in opinion seen among those under 60

13% of the UK public overall say attempts to give equal opportunities to women have gone too far – but a much greater share, 46%, say they’ve not gone far enough. A third (36%) say these attempts have made about the right amount of progress already.

Views vary by both gender and political affiliation: men (17%) are around twice as likely as women (8%) to say efforts to support women’s equality have gone too far, as are 2019 Conservative voters (18%) compared with their Labour counterparts (9%).

The biggest gender divide in views is seen among those under 60, where women are 22 percentage points more likely than men to say attempts to give women equal opportunities have not gone far enough, and men are around 10 points more likely than women to say they’ve gone too far.

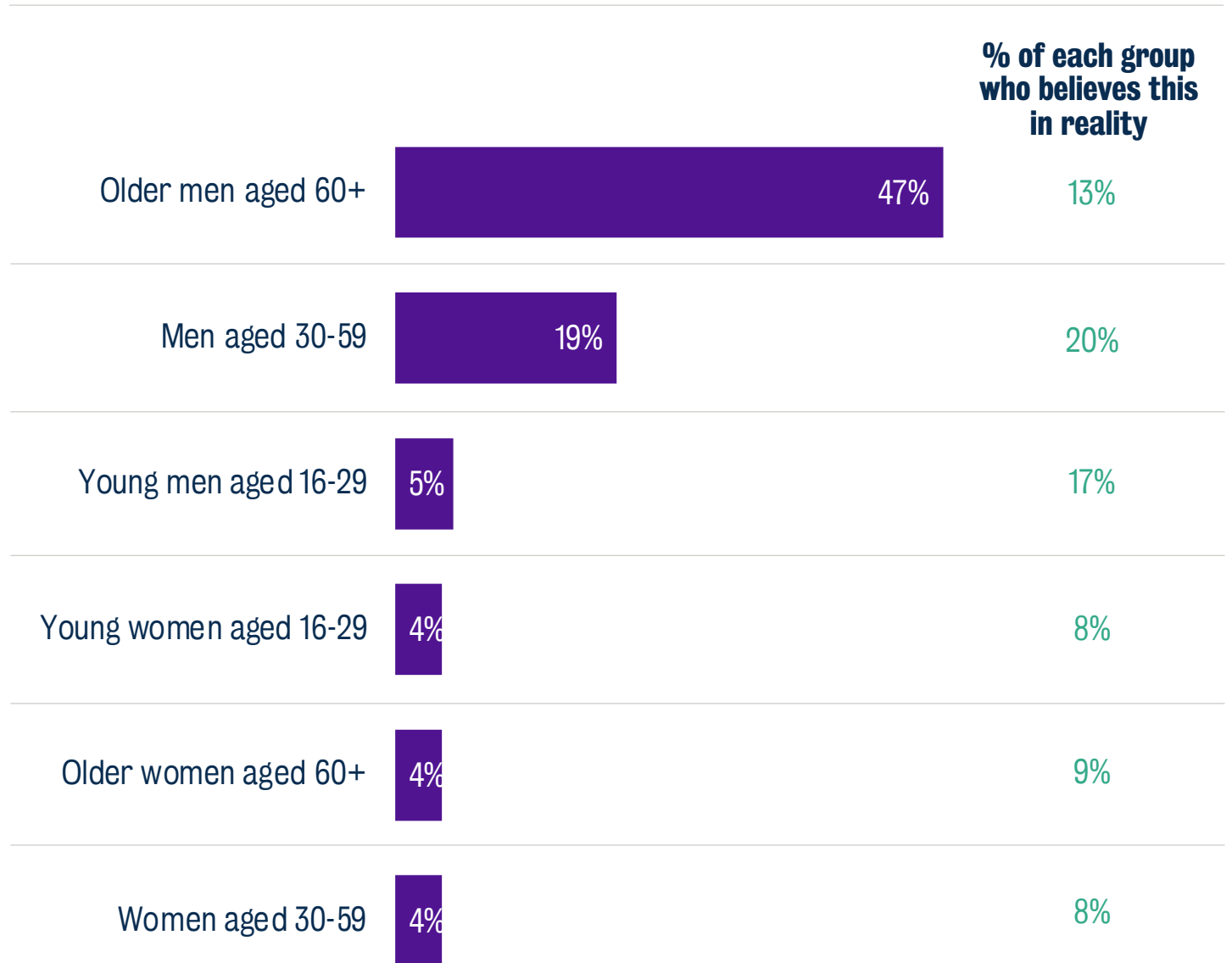
In the UK, do you think attempts to give equal opportunities have gone too far or not gone far enough for women, or about right?



The public think the oldest group of men are most likely to believe equal opportunities for women have gone too far – but it is actually men aged 30 to 59 men who are more likely to feel this way

47% of the public think older men aged 60+ are most likely to believe attempts to give women equal opportunities have gone too far – the top answer given. But in reality, 20% of men aged 30 to 59 hold this view, compared with 13% of men aged 60+.

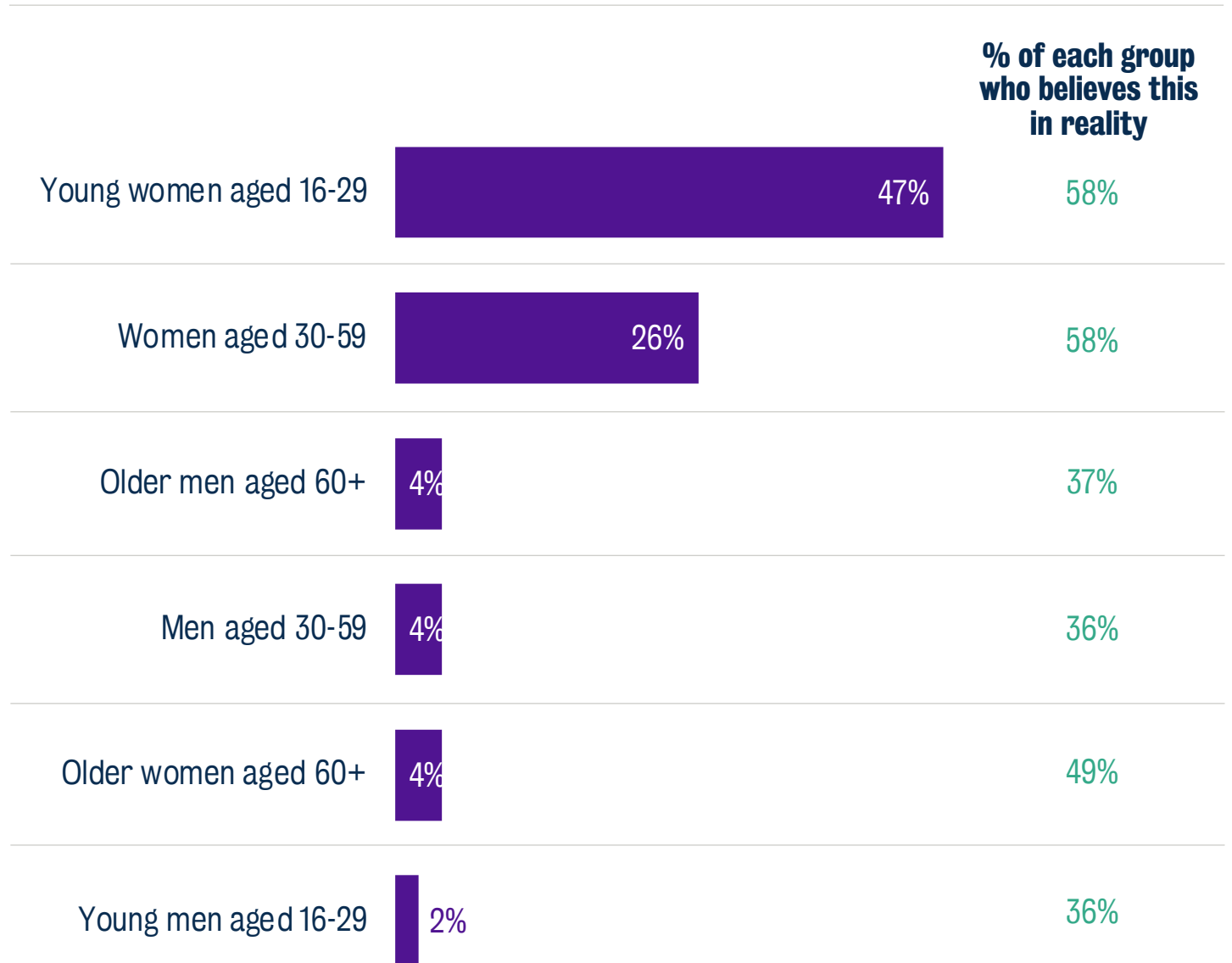
Which of the following groups do you think is most likely to believe attempts to give women equal opportunities have gone too far?



But the public are more accurate when it comes to guessing the group most likely to believe women's equality has not gone far enough

The public correctly identify young women aged 16 to 29 as most likely to believe that attempts to give women equal opportunities have not gone far enough – although women aged 30 to 59 have the same likelihood of holding this view.

Which of the following groups do you think is most likely to believe attempts to give women equal opportunities have not gone far enough?

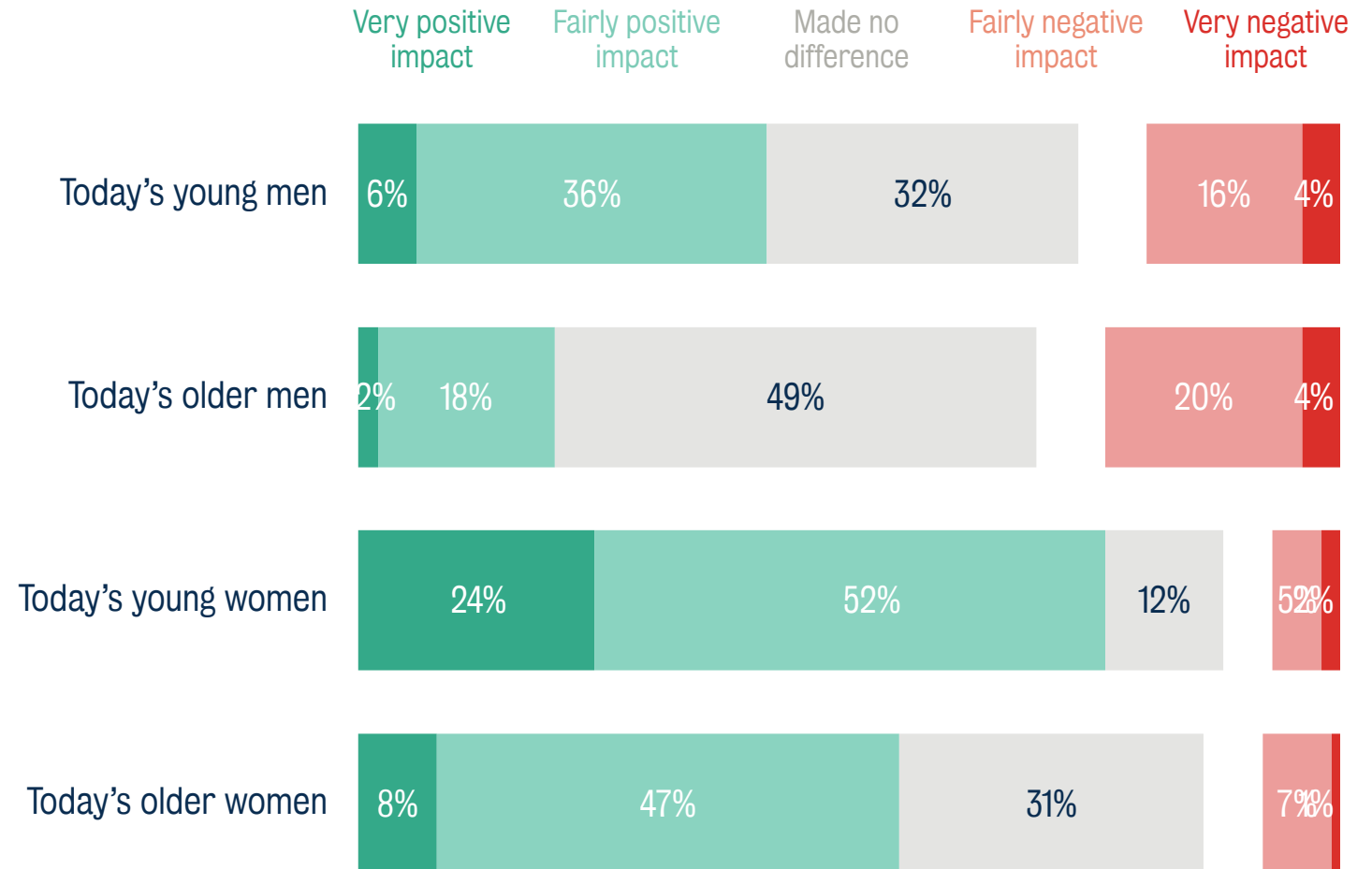


The public are twice as likely to say young men rather than older men have been positively affected by efforts to promote women's equality

42% think moves to promote equal rights for women in the last few decades have had a positive impact on today's young men – double the proportion who say today's older men have been positively impacted (20%).

And at least a fifth of the public think efforts to advance women's rights have had a negative impact on both groups of men.

Do you think moves to promote equal rights for women in the last few decades have had a positive or negative impact on each of the following, or have they made no difference?





Search

Key figures in the debate

Note: some aggregate figures described in text differ from charts due to rounding

A majority of the public say they've heard at least a fair amount about Andrew Tate (the British-American influencer and self-proclaimed misogynist*), with awareness varying hugely by age

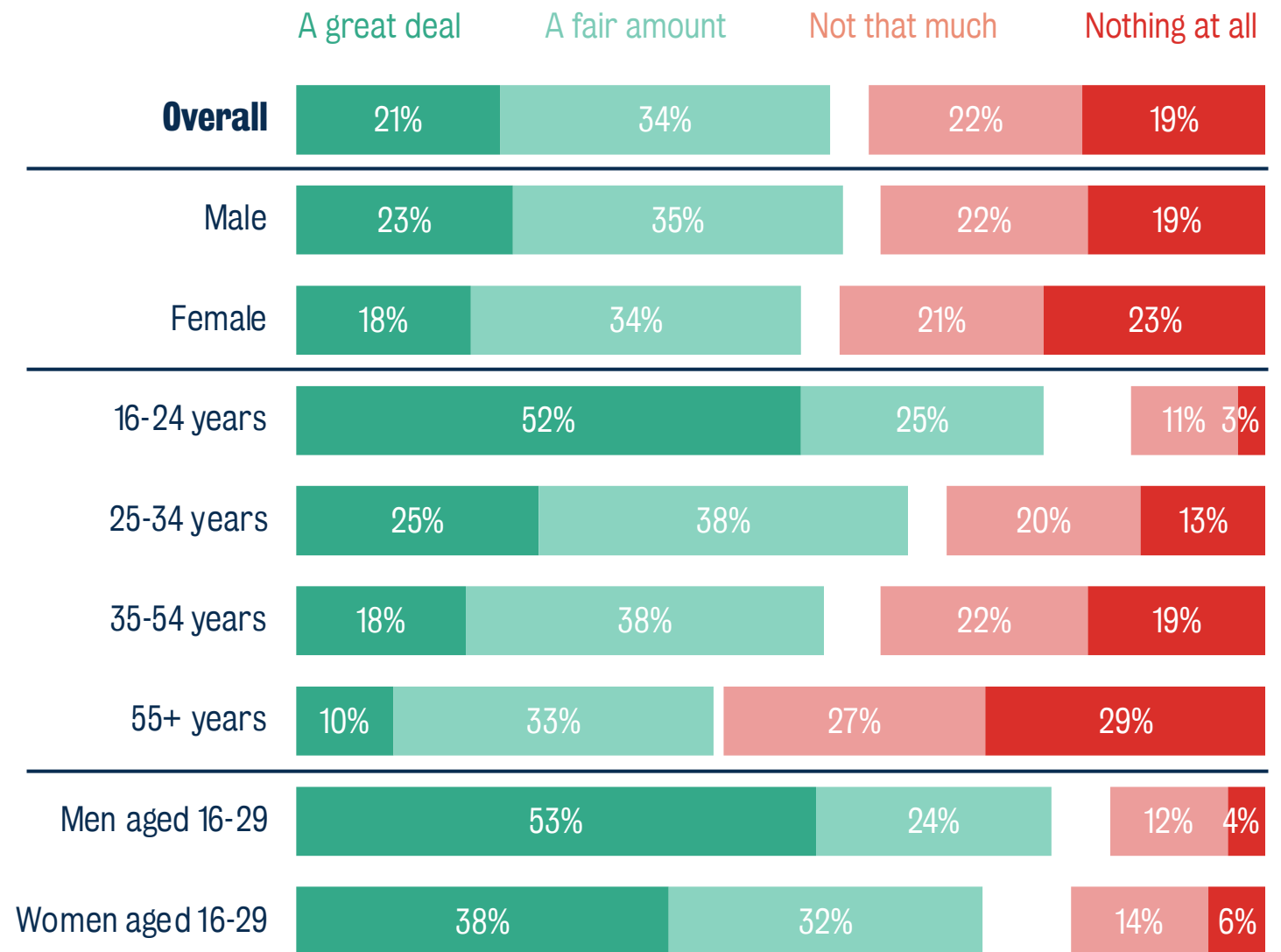
55% of people report hearing a great deal or fair amount about Andrew Tate, while 41% say they've not heard that much or haven't heard anything at all about him.

Overall awareness differs little according to gender, although young men are much more likely than young women to say they've heard a great deal about Tate.

There are bigger differences by age. For example, 16- to 24-year-olds (52%) are twice as likely as 25- to 34-year-olds (25%) to say they've heard a great deal about him.

* Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-64125045>

How much, if anything, have you heard about each of the following people? Andrew Tate



Only a small proportion of those who have heard of Andrew Tate say they have a favourable opinion of him – though a much larger share of young men and those from ethnic minority backgrounds* have a positive view

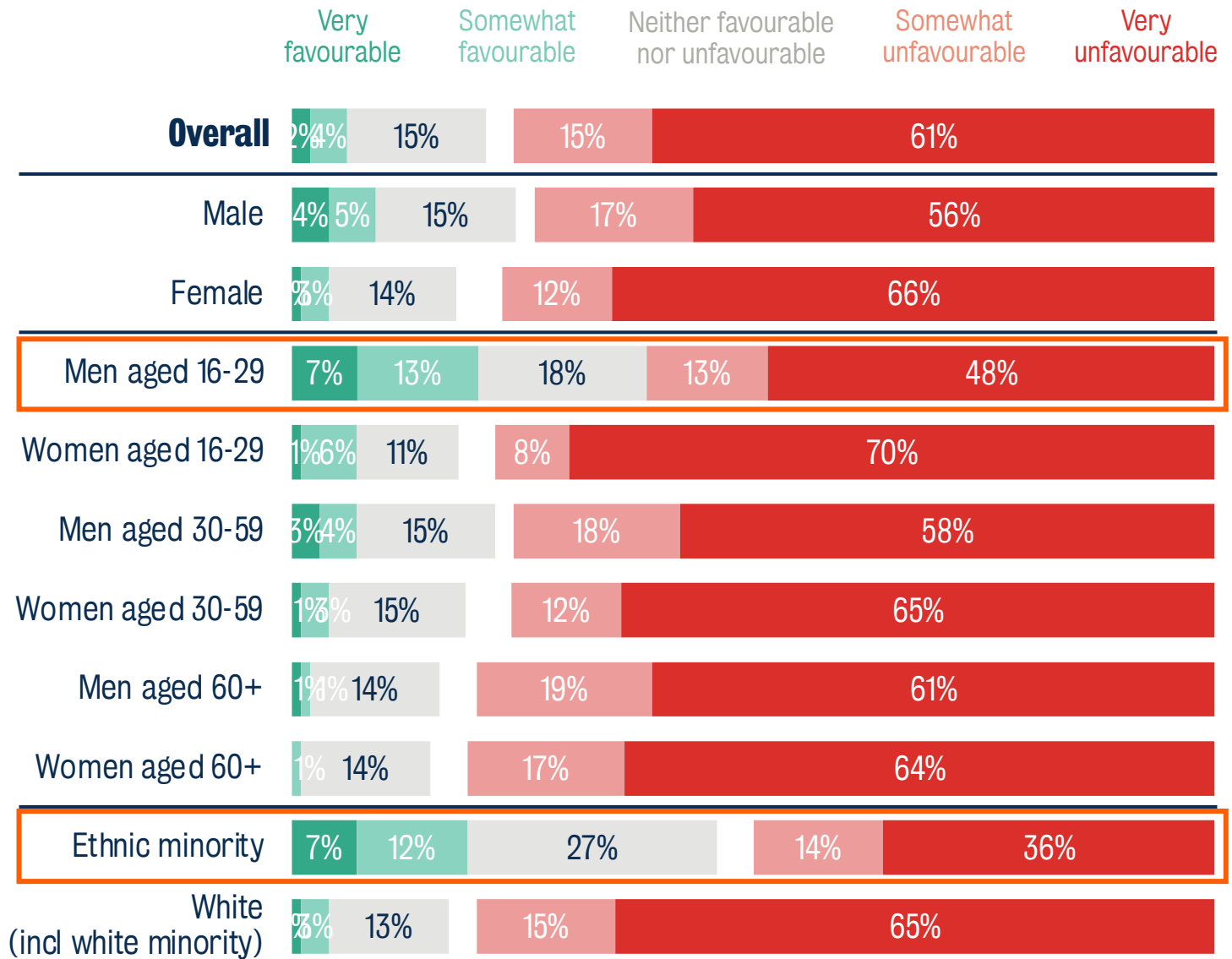
6% of people who have heard of Andrew Tate say they have a favourable view of him, while 76% have an unfavourable view.

Younger age groups are more likely to have a positive perception of Tate (although most are still negative), particularly young men: one in five (21%) men aged 16 to 29 who have heard of him say they have a positive view – three times the share of women in this age group who say the same (7%).

And people from ethnic minority backgrounds (19%) are around five times as likely as those from white ethnic backgrounds (including white minorities) (4%) to have a favourable view of Tate.

*This definition of ethnic minorities excludes white minorities, who are included in the “white ethnic background” figures.

Do you have a favourable or unfavourable view of the following people? Andrew Tate

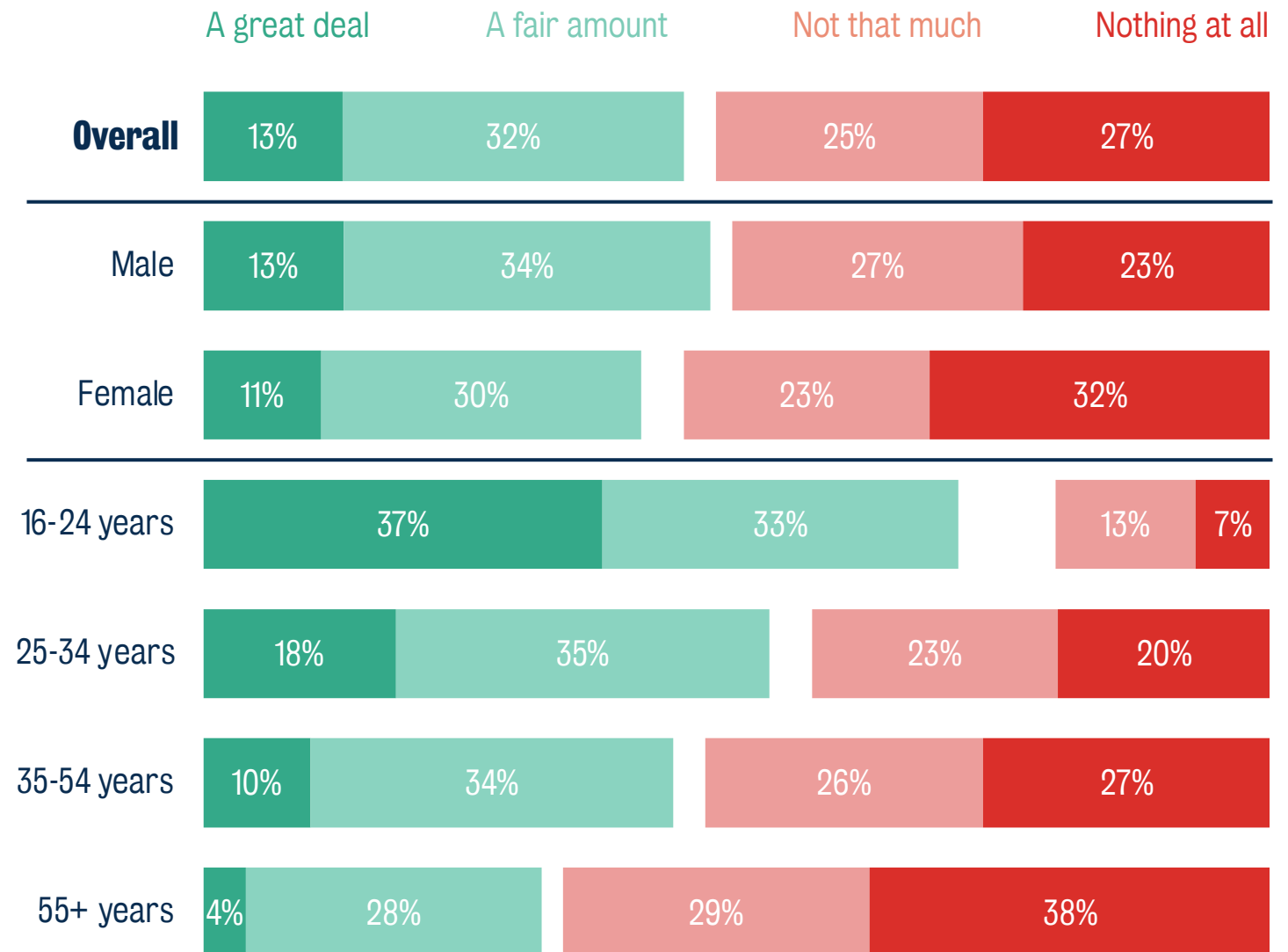


The public are relatively split when it comes to whether they've heard about Andrew Tate's statements on men and women, and there are large differences in awareness by age

52% of the public say they've not heard that much or haven't heard anything at all about Andrew Tate's comments about men and women, compared with 44% who say they've heard a great deal or fair amount about them.

While awareness differs little by gender, there is greater variation by age, with 16- to 24-year-olds the group where most say they have heard at least a fair amount about Tate's statements (71%).

How much, if anything, have you heard about Andrew Tate's statements about men and women?

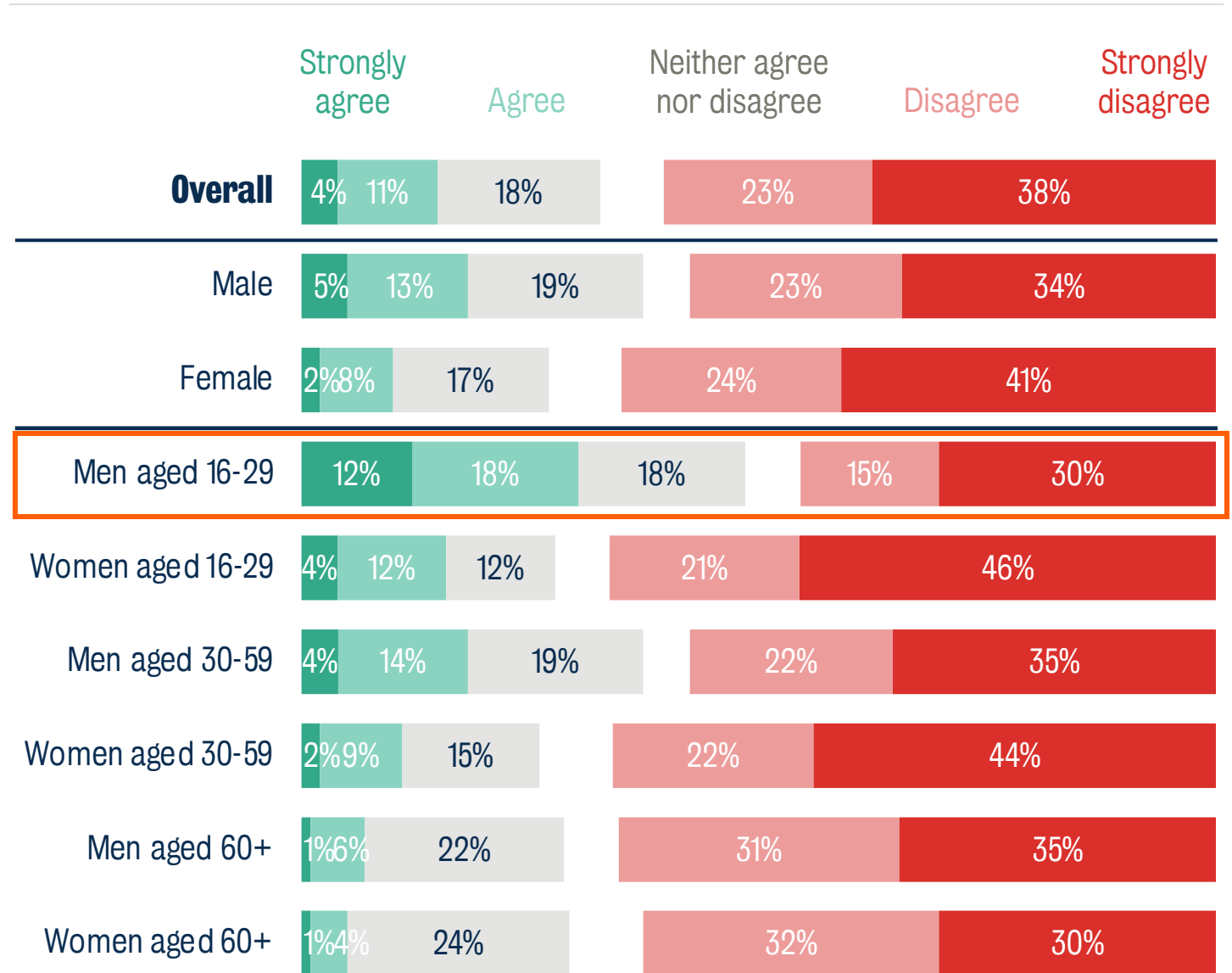


Among those who say they have heard about Andrew Tate's statements on men and women, one in seven agree he raises important points, increasing to three in 10 young men

A majority (61%) of this group disagree that Andrew Tate raises a number of important points about real threats to male identity and gender roles, while 14% agree.

Agreement with this view is higher among men (18%) and younger age groups who report having heard about Tate's statements, with men aged 16 to 29 most likely to hold this opinion (30%).

From what you know or have heard, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Andrew Tate raises a number of important points about real threats to male identity and gender roles

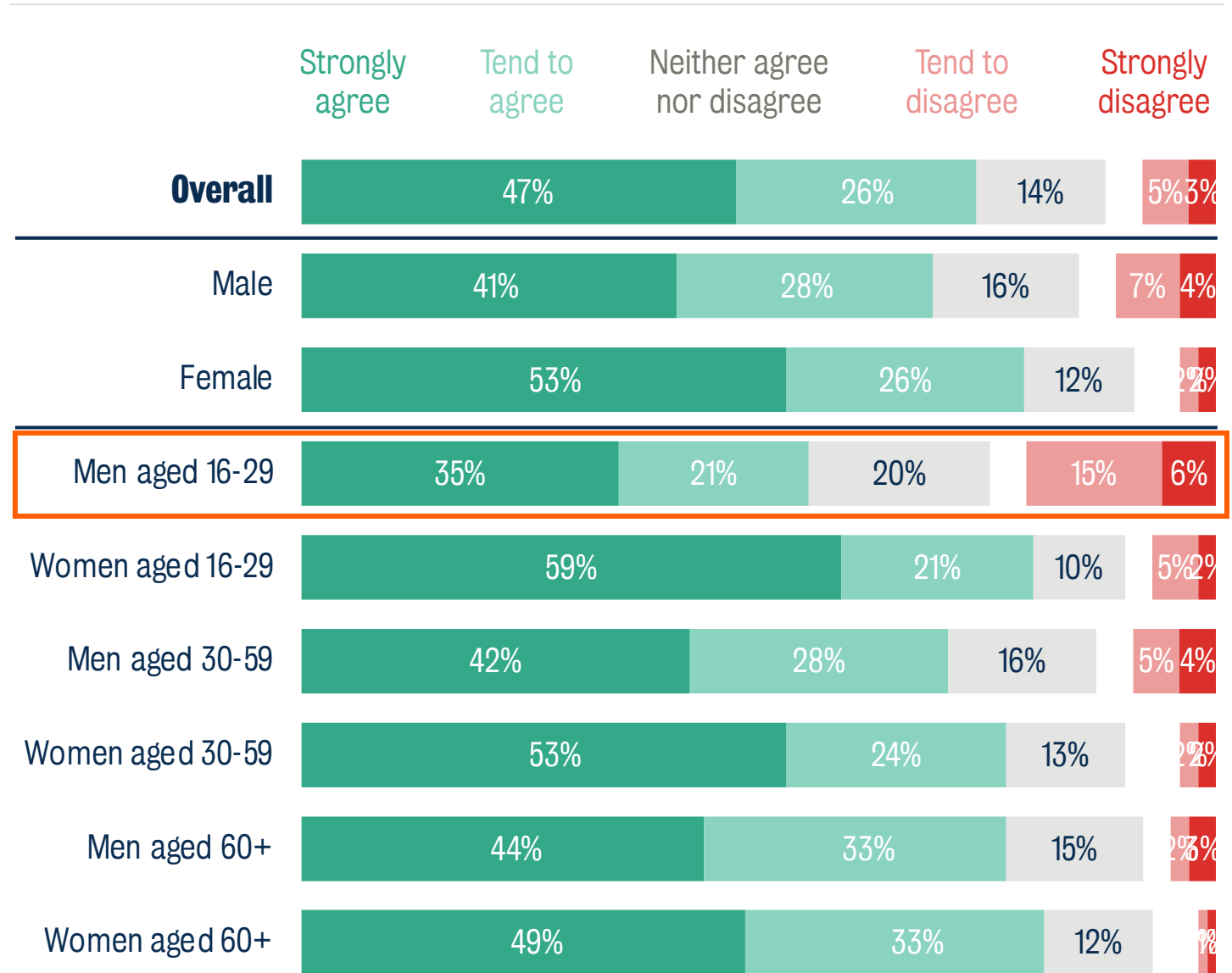


Majorities of those who say they've heard of Tate's statements find his views on men and women offensive – but one in five young men who are aware of them do not

Among those who say they have heard about Andrew Tate's statements on men and women, three-quarters (74%) agree that they personally find his views offensive.

Just 8% disagree, but young men aged 16 to 29 are around twice as likely to feel this way, with one in five (20%) disagreeing with this perception of Tate's views.

From what you know or have heard, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
I personally find Andrew Tate's views on men and women offensive

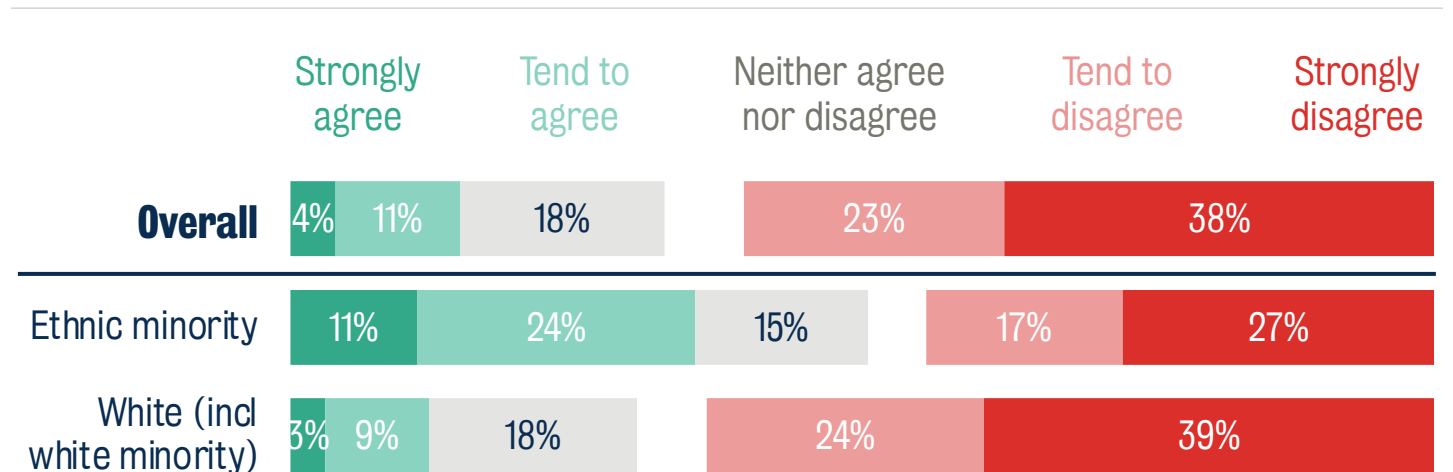


People belonging to ethnic minorities* are more likely than those from a white ethnic background to agree Andrew Tate raises important points about gender, and are less likely to find his views offensive – though most still do not approve of them

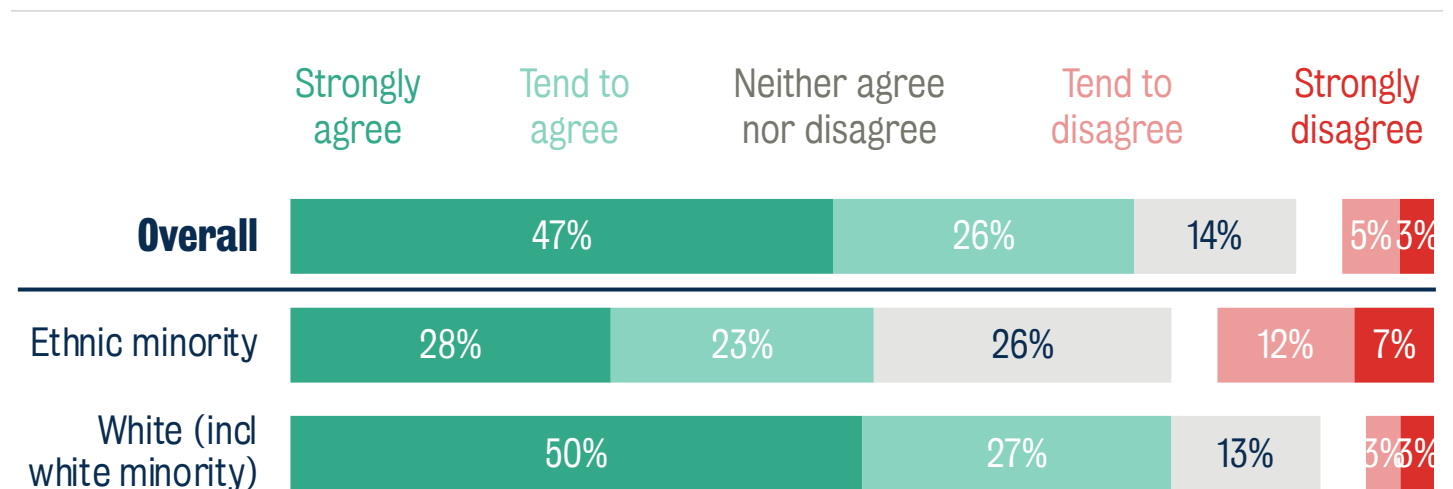
One in three (35%) people from an ethnic minority background who have heard of his views feel Tate raises a number of important points about real threats to male identity and gender roles. This compares with one in nine (11%) among those from a white ethnic background (including white minorities). Similarly, the former (19%) are around three times as likely as the latter (6%) to disagree that Tate’s views on men and women are offensive.

*This definition of ethnic minorities excludes white minorities, who are included in the “white ethnic background” figures.

From what you know or have heard, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Andrew Tate raises a number of important points about real threats to male identity and gender roles



From what you know or have heard, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
I personally find Andrew Tate’s views on men and women offensive

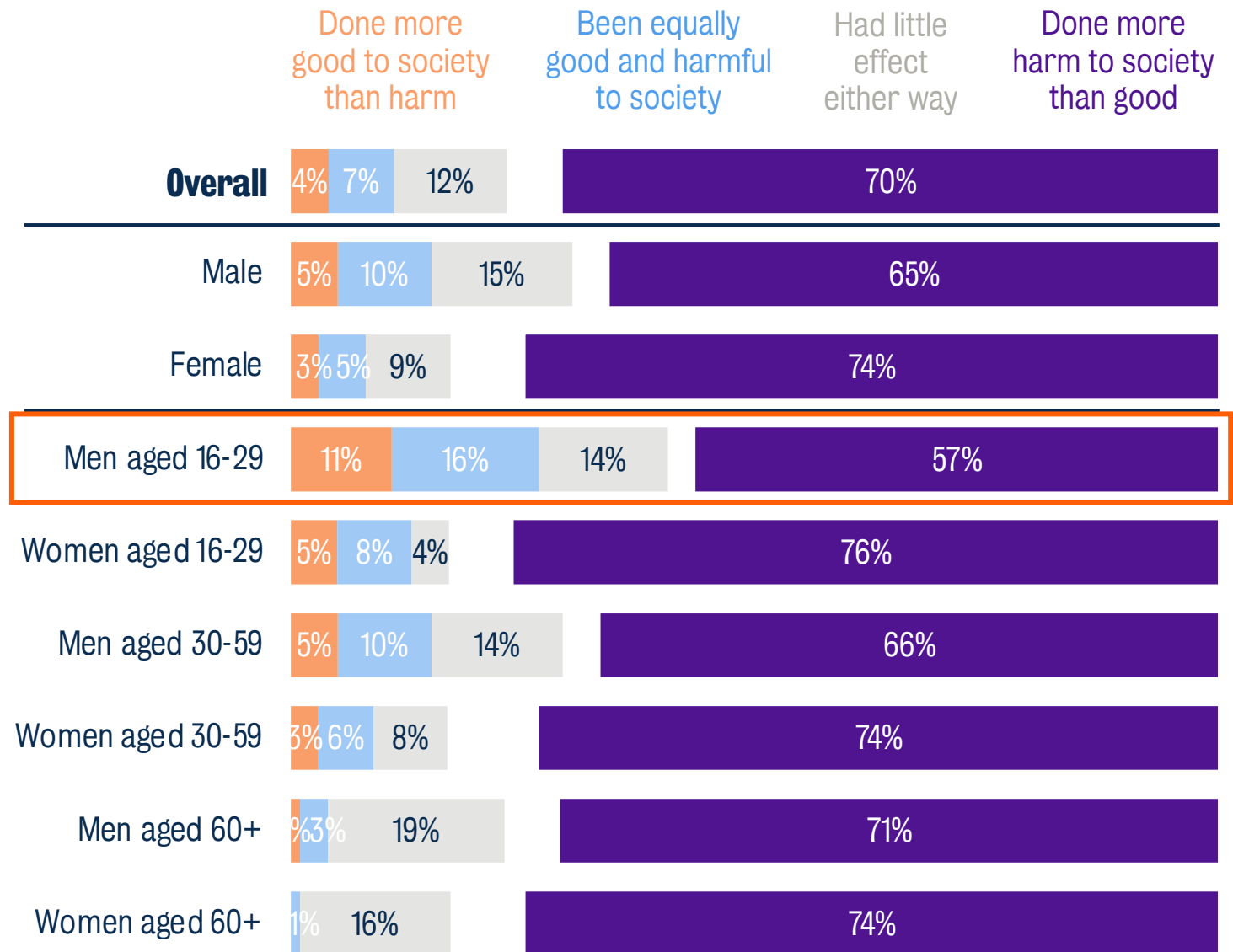


Very few people who are aware of Andrew Tate's statements about men and women think they have done more good to British society than harm, though young men are more likely to feel this way

Just 4% of those who are aware of Tate's statements say they have done greater good than harm, rising to 11% – or one in nine – men aged 16 to 29.

But even among this group, a majority of 57% nonetheless feel Tate's comments are on balance more harmful than helpful – although this is still the only age category where there is a considerable gender divide in opinion, with young women 19 percentage points more likely than young men to see Tate's statements as causing more harm than good.

Which of the following comes closest to your view about the overall impact of Andrew Tate's statements about men and women on British society?

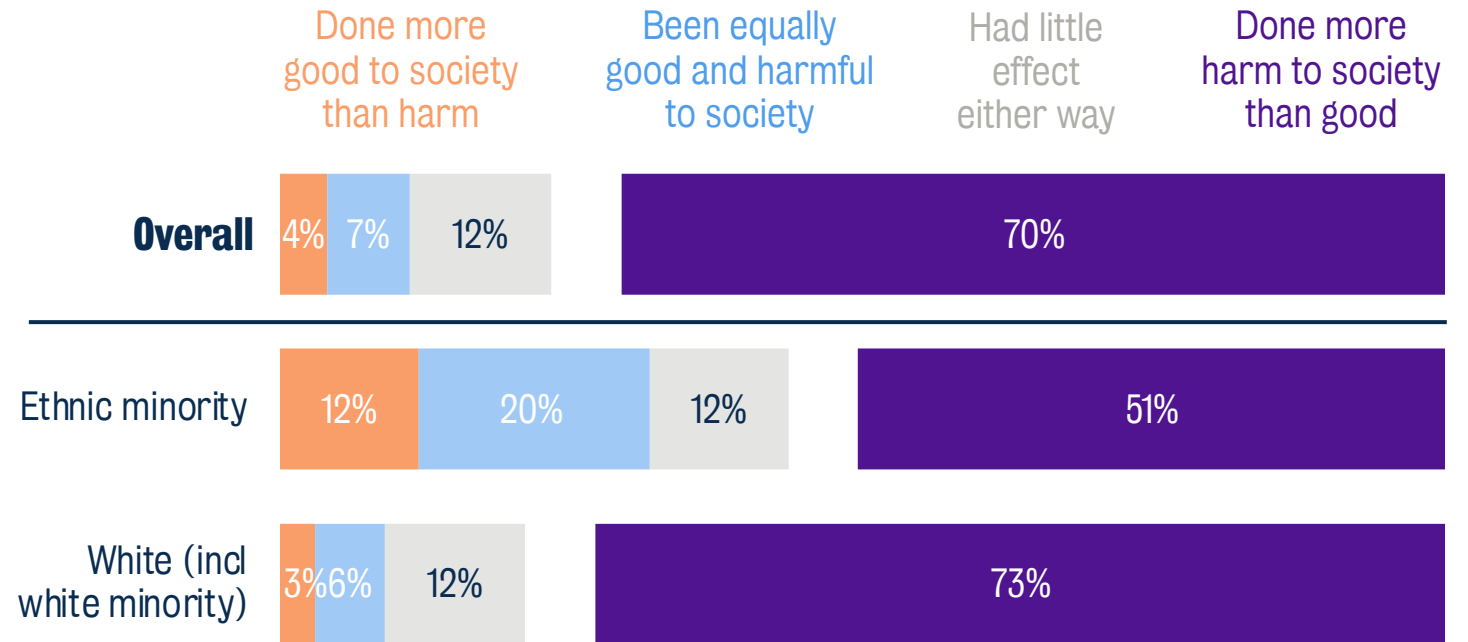


There is a clear ethnic difference in views on the impact of Andrew Tate's statements on British society

One in eight (12%) people from ethnic minorities* who have heard of Andrew Tate's statements about men and women think they have done more good to society than harm, compared with 3% of people from a white ethnic background (including white minorities) who feel this way. The former are also more likely than the latter to say the impact of these statements has been equally good and harmful, and much less likely to say they have done more harm than good – although this is still the most common position.

*This definition of ethnic minorities excludes white minorities, who are included in the “white ethnic background” figures.

Which of the following comes closest to your view about the overall impact of Andrew Tate's statements about men and women on British society?

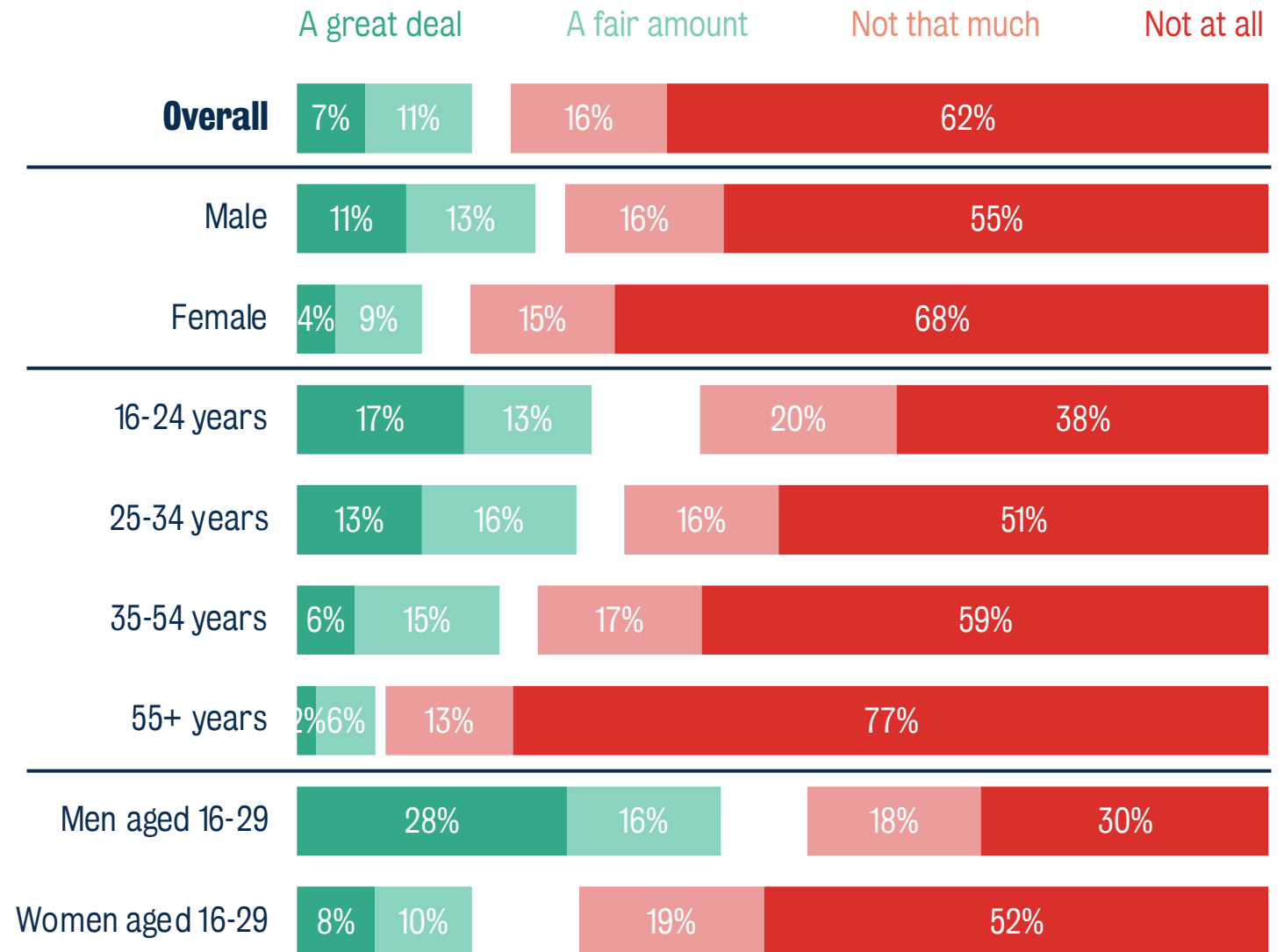


Young men are twice as likely as the public overall to say they've heard at least a fair amount about the Canadian academic Jordan Peterson, who has become a key figure in debates about masculinity and gender roles

Three-quarters (77%) of the public say they've not heard that much or haven't heard anything at all about Jordan Peterson, while one in five (19%) report hearing a great deal or fair amount about him.

Awareness of Peterson is particularly high among young men aged 16 to 29, two in five (43%) of whom say they've heard at least a fair amount about him.

How much, if anything, have you heard about each of the following people? Jordan Peterson



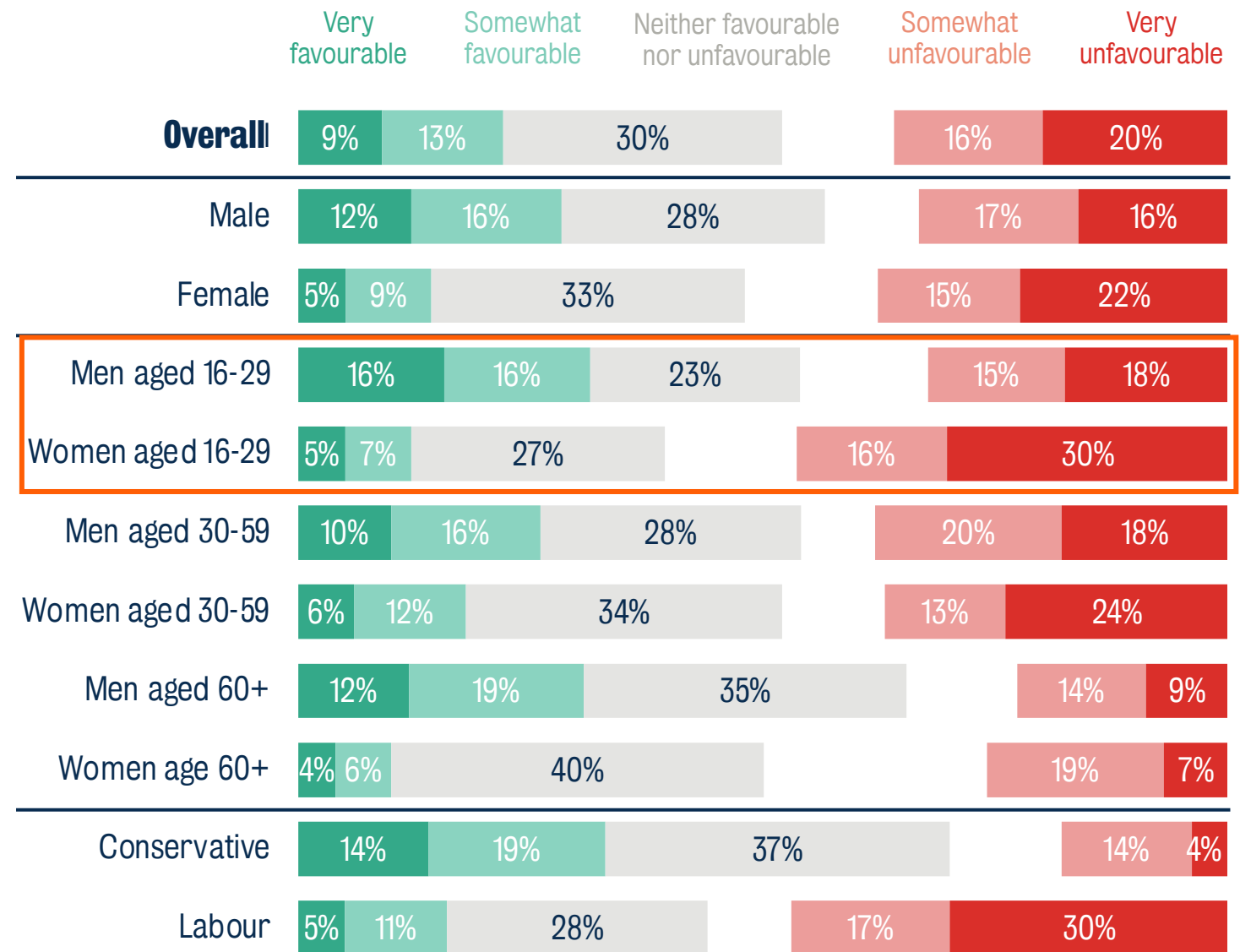
A third of young men and Conservative voters who say they are aware of Jordan Peterson have a favourable view of him

Overall among those who say they have heard of Jordan Peterson, views of him are more unfavourable (36%) than favourable (22%), but around half are either neutral or don't know.

More than a quarter (28%) of men who have heard of Peterson have a positive view of him, as do a third (32%) of young men aged 16 to 29 – although this latter group are just as likely to have a negative perception (32%). A similar proportion of older men aged 60+ who have heard of Peterson are also favourable (30%), but it is among the youngest group where there is the greatest gender divide: for those aged 16-29 there is an 18-percentage point gap in the share of women and men with a negative view of Peterson, whereas there is little difference on this measure among older age groups.

And there is a notable political divide in opinion, with one in three (33%) 2019 Conservative voters who are aware of Peterson viewing him in a positive light – roughly double the proportion of 2019 Labour voters (16%) who do the same.

Do you have a favourable or unfavourable view of the following people? Jordan Peterson



A man in a yellow shirt is seen from behind, carrying two young girls on his shoulders. They are in a field of red poppies. The background is a soft-focus landscape with trees and a blue sky. The text is overlaid on a purple banner.

Perceptions of behaviours and characteristics by gender

Note: some aggregate figures described in text differ from charts due to rounding

The public correctly identify some behaviours or characteristics that apply more to either women or men, including going to prison or earning a high income for men, and caring for family or being sexually assaulted for women. But large proportions wrongly understand the gender divide in others, such as being obese, feeling lonely or going to university

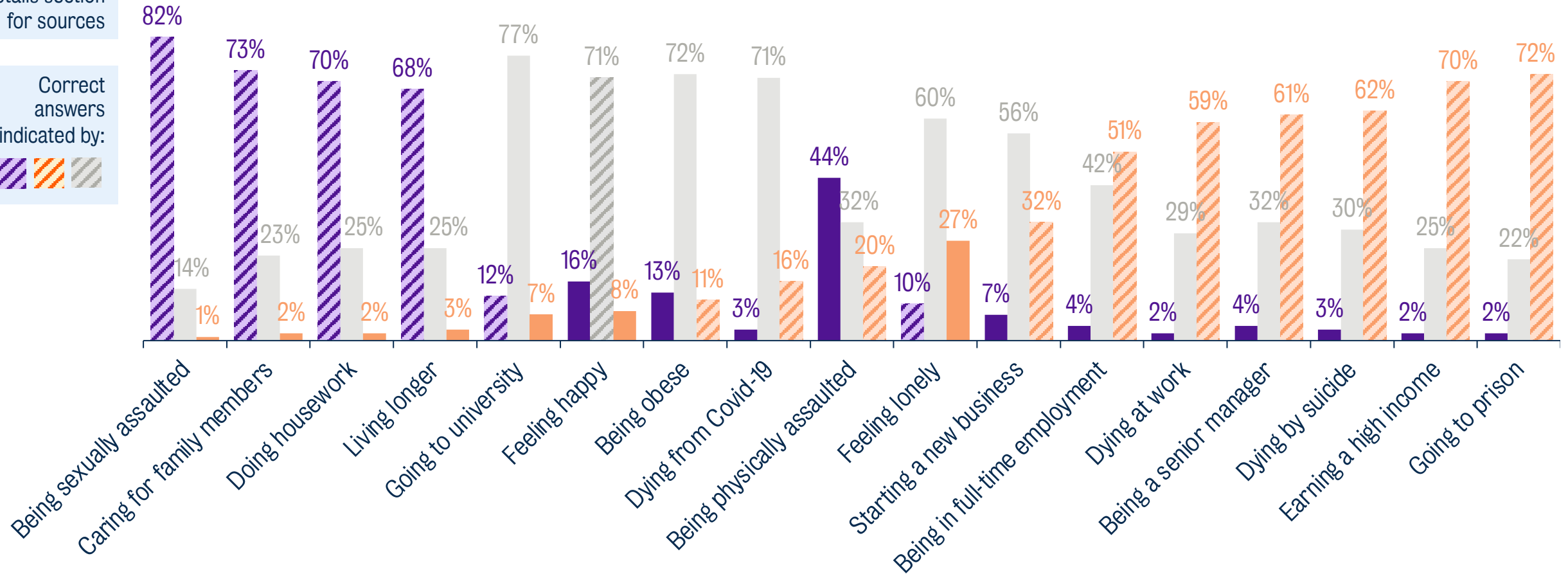
For each of the following behaviours and characteristics, do you think it is more likely to apply to men or more likely to apply to women in the UK, or both men and women equally?

See technical details section for sources

■ More likely to apply to women
 ■ Applies to both men and women equally
 ■ More likely to apply to men

Correct answers indicated by:

▨ ▨ ▨



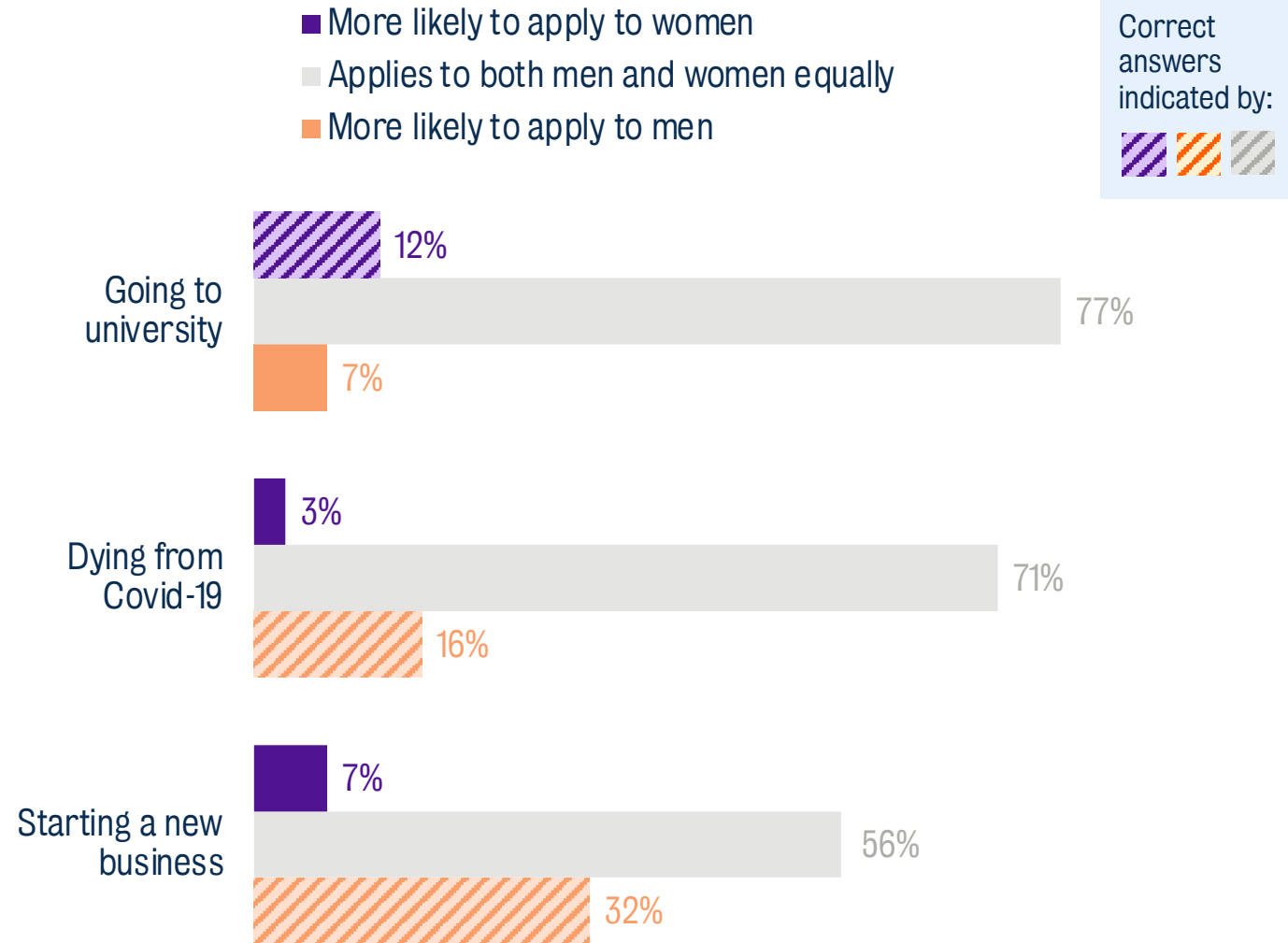
A majority of the public wrongly think going to university, dying from Covid and starting a new business are things that apply to men and women equally

Over half the public believe there is no gender divide in starting a new business, yet among working-age people, 15.1% of men are involved in “total early-stage entrepreneurial activity” – which includes the owning or running of any business that is less than three and a half years old – compared with 10.7% of women.

Public confusion is also understandable on other behaviours or characteristics, where the percentage point difference between genders may not seem huge, but still translates into large numbers in population terms. For example, the latest data on university attendance shows 57% of higher education students in 2021/22 were female, while men made up 43%. However, more than three-quarters of the public wrongly believe going to university is something that applies to both men and women equally.

Similarly, official data indicates that since the start of the pandemic to the end of December 2022, 55.3% of Covid-19 deaths were among males, compared with 44.7% among females. Yet seven in 10 of the public believe men and women are equally likely to die from the virus.

For each of the following behaviours and characteristics, do you think it is more likely to apply to men or more likely to apply to women in the UK, or both men and women equally?

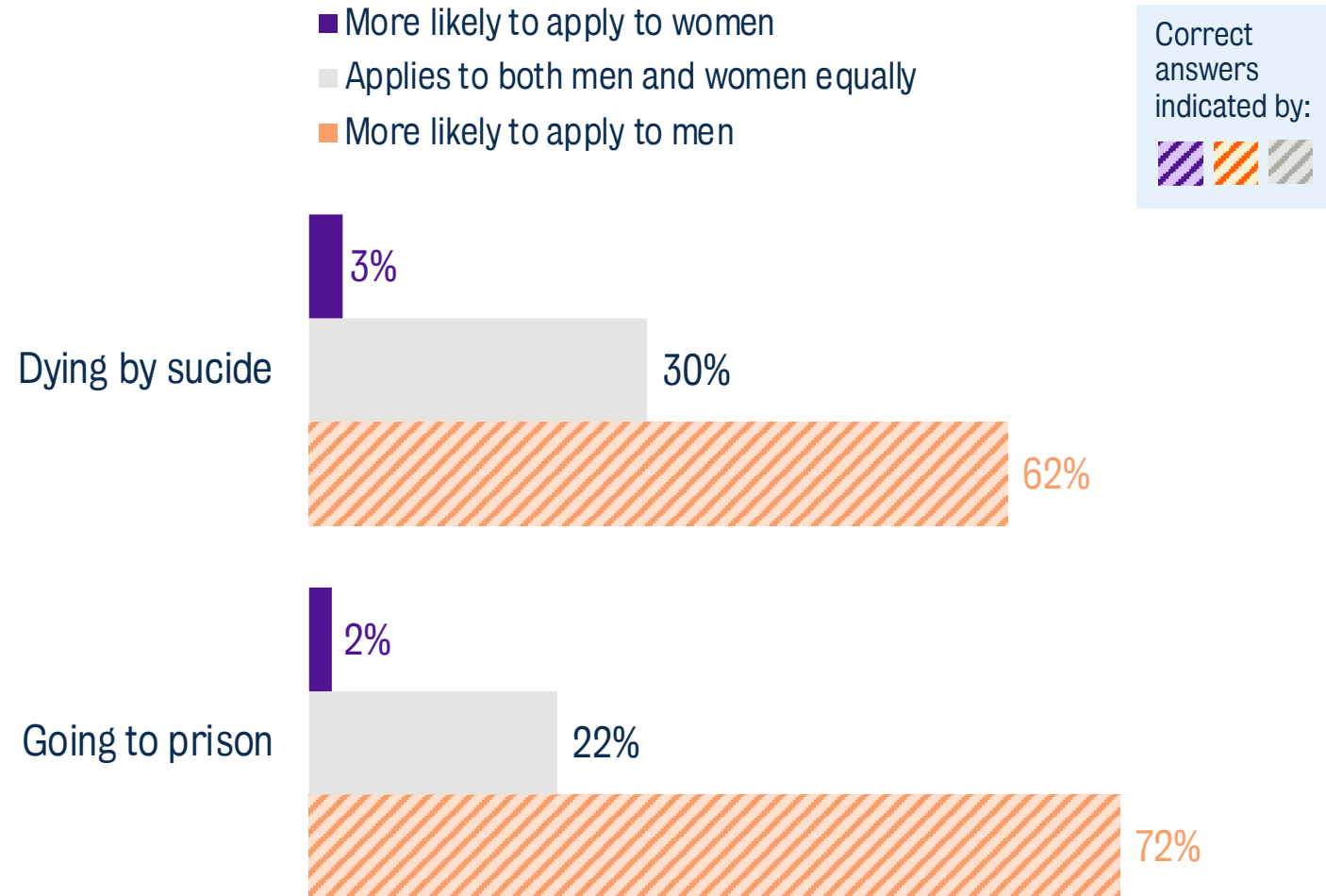


While most of the public correctly identify that men are more likely than women to die by suicide or go to prison, a notable minority think they apply to both genders equally

The latest available data for England and Wales suggests the male suicide rate is 16.4 per 100,000 people – roughly three times higher than the female suicide rate of 5.4 per 100,000. While a majority of the population accurately identify this gender divide, three in 10 (30%) mistakenly think this is something that affects both men and women equally.

Similarly, Ministry of Justice figures reveal that in 2022 96% of the prison population in England and Wales was male, yet nearly a quarter (22%) of the public incorrectly believe men and women are equally likely to go to prison, even though a large majority do get the answer right.

For each of the following behaviours and characteristics, do you think it is more likely to apply to men or more likely to apply to women in the UK, or both men and women equally?



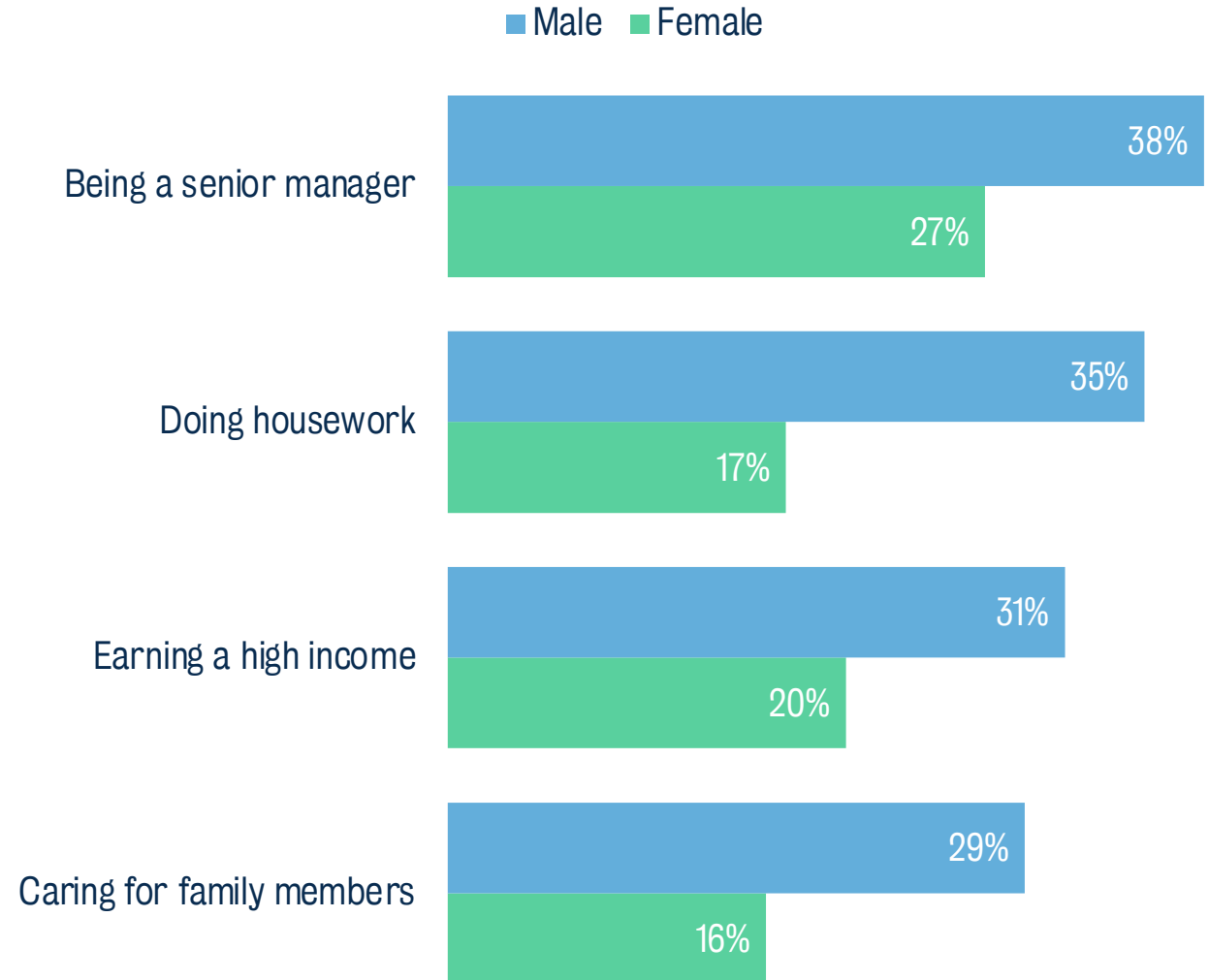
Men are more likely than women to think housework and care responsibilities are split equally

Men are around twice as likely as women to say doing housework and caring for family members are things that apply to both genders equally, despite evidence showing that in reality women do more of both on average.

A higher proportion of men also think there is no gender difference in likelihood of being a senior manager or earning a high income, yet research suggests these characteristics apply to men more than women in the UK.

However, despite this gender divide in perceptions, most men do correctly recognise that these behaviours or characteristics are more likely to apply to men than women.

% who think _____ applies equally to women and men



Technical details



Survey

Ipsos UK interviewed online a representative sample of 3,716 adults aged 16+ across the United Kingdom between 17 and 23 August 2023. This data has been collected by Ipsos’s UK KnowledgePanel, an online random probability panel which provides gold standard insights into the UK population, by providing bigger sample sizes via the most rigorous research methods. Data are weighted by age, gender, region, Index of Multiple Deprivation quintile, education, ethnicity and number of adults in the household in order to reflect the profile of the UK population. All polls are subject to a wide range of potential sources of error.

The Ipsos UK KnowledgePanel is the UK’s largest online random probability panel, providing total understanding of the UK public for businesses and organisations looking for cutting edge insight at the gold standard of online research methods. It is important because it includes both online and offline participants selected at random from every address in the UK, the first of its kind, with a single interface to eliminate modal effects and produce accurate data rapidly.

UK KnowledgePanel utilises a panel of 15,000+ participants to provide a new innovative tool for all those organisations who wish to garner greater insights into the behaviours, beliefs and attitudes of not just the UK population as a whole, but also into the specific communities which make up the UK’s diverse population.

Studies completed on UK KnowledgePanel will be fully representative of the UK population including the 4% of households who are considered “offline”. This is made possible by recruiting offline and supplying participants with a tablet, internet access and the tech support needed to get online. As a result of this approach the panel utilises a single online data collection method, with no differential mode effects – a pioneering advancement which enhances the ability to understand our society.

The UK KnowledgePanel builds on [work done](#) by Ipsos in the US on their own, which has been operating since 1999, utilising that experience and blending it with Ipsos’s own research and methodological expertise to produce a tool which delivers robust nationally representative data at speed. [Find out more.](#)

Subgroups

Variable	Base size
Gender	
Male	1,766
Female	1,904
Age	
16-24	359
25-34	806
35-54	811
55+	1,740
Age and gender combined	
Women aged 16-29	221
Men aged 16-29	410
Men aged 30-59	756
Women aged 30-59	887
Men aged 60+	789
Women aged 60+	607
Ethnicity	
White (incl white minority)	3,332
Non-white ethnic minority	329
2019 general election vote	
Conservative	1,014
Labour	897
2016 Brexit vote	
Leave	1,012
Remain	1,797
Education level	
Non-graduate	2,116
Graduate	1,567

Sources for realities on page 32

Behaviour/activity	Who is more likely	Source
Being sexually assaulted	Women	ONS, Sexual offences victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2022
Caring for family members	Women	House of Commons Briefing, Informal carers, 2023 / Government Equalities Office, Sharing of childcare and well-being outcomes: an empirical analysis, 2021, p. 16
Doing housework	Women	ONS, Time use in the UK: 23 September to 1 October 2023
Living longer	Women	ONS, National life tables – life expectancy in the UK: 2018 to 2020
Going to university	Women	HESA, Who's studying in HE?: Personal characteristics
Feeling happy	No difference	Quarterly personal well-being estimates – non-seasonally adjusted
Being obese	Men	House of Commons Library, Research Briefing, Obesity statistics, 2023
Dying from Covid-19	Men	UK Health Security Agency, COVID-19 confirmed deaths in England (to 31 December 2022): report
Being physically assaulted	Men	House of Lords Library, Trends in violent crime, 2023
Feeling lonely	Women	The State of Loneliness 2023: ONS data on loneliness in Britain June 2023, p. 5.
Starting a new business	Men	House of Commons Library, Women and the UK economy, 2023 p. 28
Being in full-time employment	Men	Gov.uk, Full time and part time employment, 2023
Dying at work	Men	Work Related Fatal Injuries in Great Britain. Health and Safety Executive, 2023, p. 12.
Being a senior manager	Men	Women in Business, Grant Thornton, 2022, p. 4.
Dying by suicide	Men	ONS, Suicides in England and Wales
Earning a high income	Men	Characteristics and Incomes of the Top 1%, Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2019, p. 10
Going to prison	Men	Statistics on Women and the Criminal Justice System, Ministry of Justice, p. 5, p. 6.



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