



**More in
Common**

August 2022

Britons, climate and the cost of living crisis



More in Common Briefing

Overview - Towards Autumn and Winter 2022 (1)

- **One in three Britons say they are struggling to cope or are not coping at all with rising prices** – these feelings are even higher among Loyal Nationals and Disengaged Battlers
- **Widespread feeling (74%) that too little is being done to deal with rising prices**
- **Britons are deeply pessimistic about the timescale of the crisis** – a plurality say they ‘don’t know if this crisis will ever end’
- **Two thirds of Britons expect to have to cut down on their home heating this winter.**
- **Britons hold energy companies and Russia responsible for rising prices** – dependence on fossil fuel ranks much lower as a cause of this crisis for the public
- **More Brits think this crisis is as a result of choices by the UK government (48%)** than those who think its down to forces out of the government’s control (38%) – this change is reflected in focus groups where an initial appreciation of the global nature of these economic challenges has been swapped, with many, for an increasing frustration that the government do not have a grip on the situation

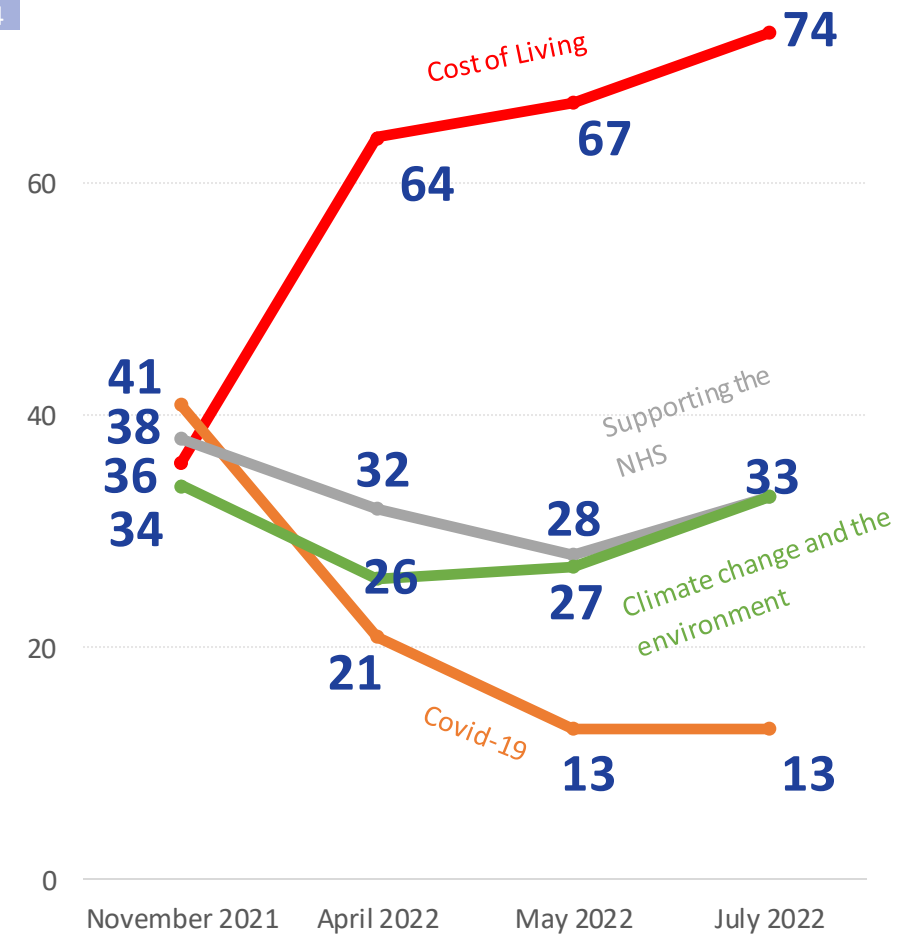
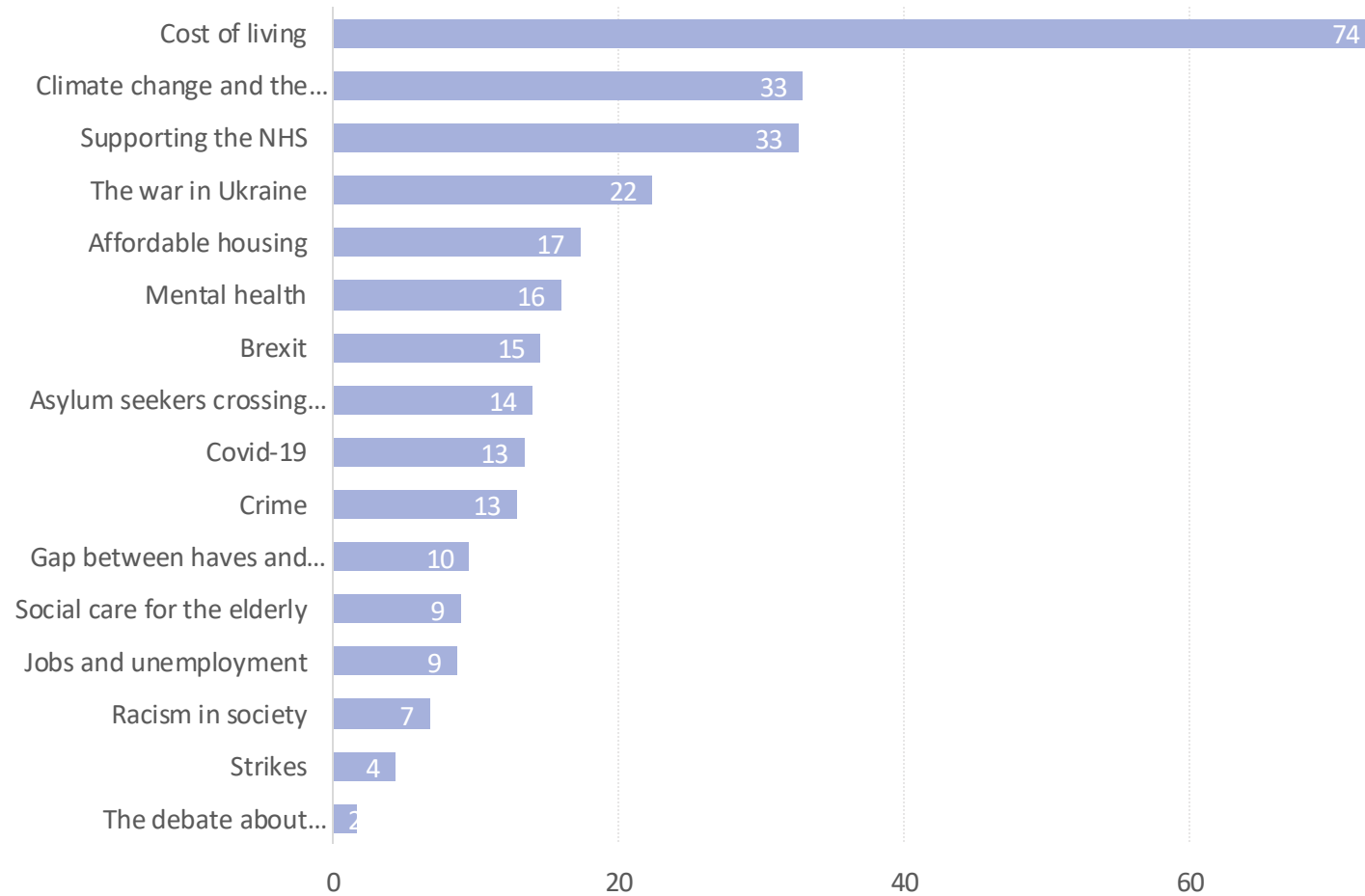
Overview - Towards Autumn and Winter 2022 (2)

- **Britons are more likely to want support targeted to those most in need, rather than given to everyone equally** – but Conservative leaning segments (like Backbone Conservatives and Disengaged Traditionalists) are more likely to lean towards universal rather than targeted support
- **Cutting VAT and accelerate development on insulation and renewables are seen as the most common-sensical solutions to rising energy prices** – and all these actions are between three and five times more popular than drilling oil in the North Sea, importing more oil and gas or fracking more
- **Most (60%) are willing to pay higher bills now for the guarantee of lower bills in the future** – but only 40% are prepared to pay higher bills to speed up our transition to net zero
- **If the new PM backs down on the UK's commitment to reach net zero, they will risk losing more support in Blue Wall areas.** Scrapping net zero is the no. 1 reason that Established Liberals (typical blue wall voter) say would stop them voting Tory at next election

Britons' top issues



Cost of living is the top issue for every segment and rose 38 points since the end of November 2021. Climate change and the NHS have remained consistently high concerns in a highly volatile political environment.



In your opinion, which are the most IMPORTANT issues facing the country today? Select the top 3 [July 2022]

The segments' top issues – July 2022



Cost of living is now the top issue for every segment. Climate change and the environment is in the top three issues for five of the segments



**Progressive
Activists**

Cost of living

74%

Climate change and
the environment

51%

Supporting the NHS

36%



**Civic
Pragmatists**

Cost of living

76%

Climate change and
the environment

41%

Supporting the NHS

35%



**Disengaged
Battlers**

Cost of living

79%

Supporting the NHS

31%

Climate change and
the environment

27%



**Established
Liberals**

Cost of living

68%

Climate change and
the environment

38%

The war in Ukraine

30%



**Loyal
Nationals**

Cost of living

69%

Supporting the NHS

31%

Asylum seekers
crossing the
channel

24%



**Disengaged
Traditionalists**

Cost of living

72%

Supporting the NHS

34%

Asylum seekers
crossing the
channel

26%



**Backbone
Conservatives**

Cost of living

65%

Asylum seekers
crossing the
channel

30%

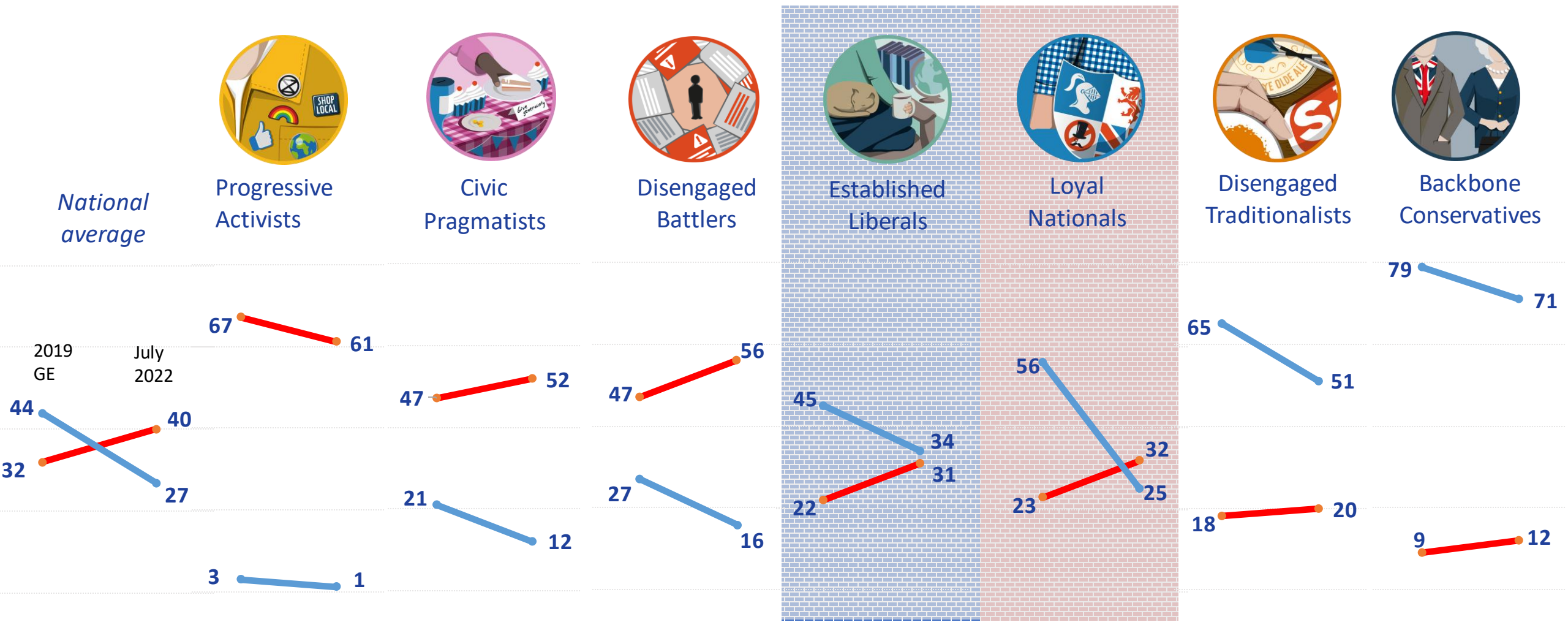
Climate change and
the environment

30%

In your opinion, which are the most IMPORTANT issues facing the country today? Select the top 3.

Changing voting intention – 2019 GE to July 2022

Comparing VI from July 2022 with the voting record of segments at the last General election shows the challenge facing the new PM in rebuilding the Tory base



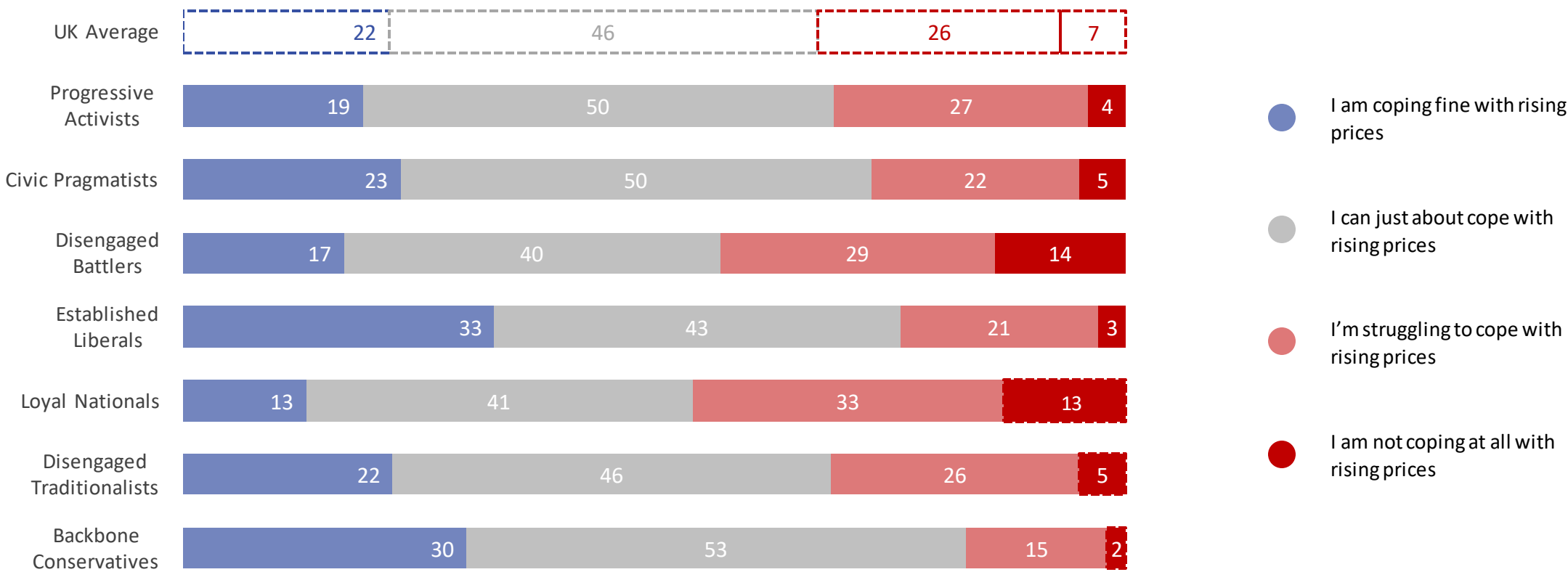
Only those who said they voted shown [February 2020]
“And, if a general election was called tomorrow, which party would you vote for?” [“Don’t knows’ and ‘Would not vote’ excluded] [July 2022]

How Britons are coping with rising prices



One in three Britons say they are struggling to cope or are not coping at all with rising prices – but these feelings are even higher among Loyal Nationals and Disengaged Battlers

Which of the following best describes the effects that rising prices for things like food and energy have had on your life over the last few weeks?



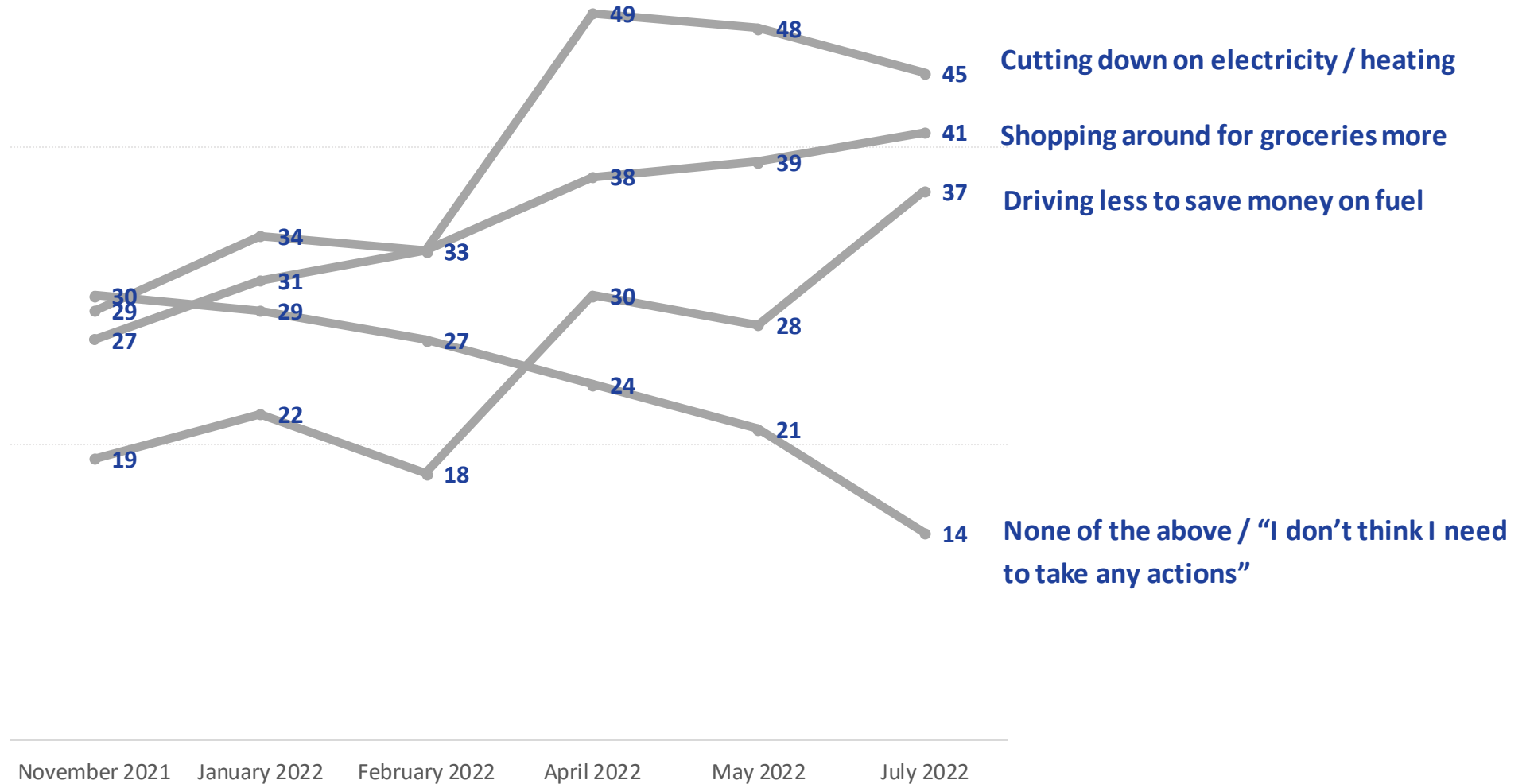
Which of the following best describes the effects that rising prices for things like food and energy have had on your life over the last few weeks? [July 2022]

Many Brits are tightening their belts to deal with rising prices



Since the start of winter, Britons have increasingly felt the rising cost of living particularly in the cost of energy, groceries and fuel. Those saying they haven't been affected at all has more than halved since November

Which of the following actions have you taken in recent months to deal with the rising cost of living, if any?

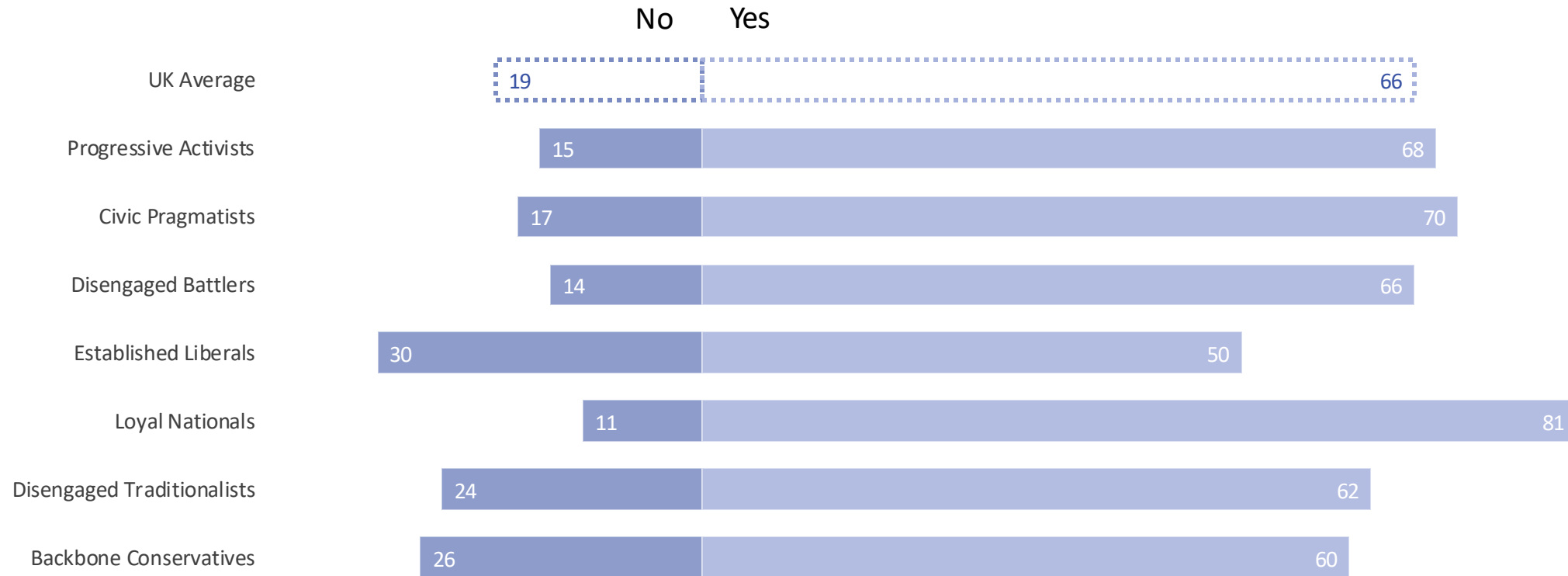


Reducing heating this winter



Two thirds of Britons expect to have to cut down on their home heating this winter. Loyal Nationals and Established Liberals (the two flanks of the Conservative coalition) have the highest and lowest expectations to cut down on their heating this winter

Thinking about this coming winter, do you expect to have to cut down on your home heating because of high energy prices?



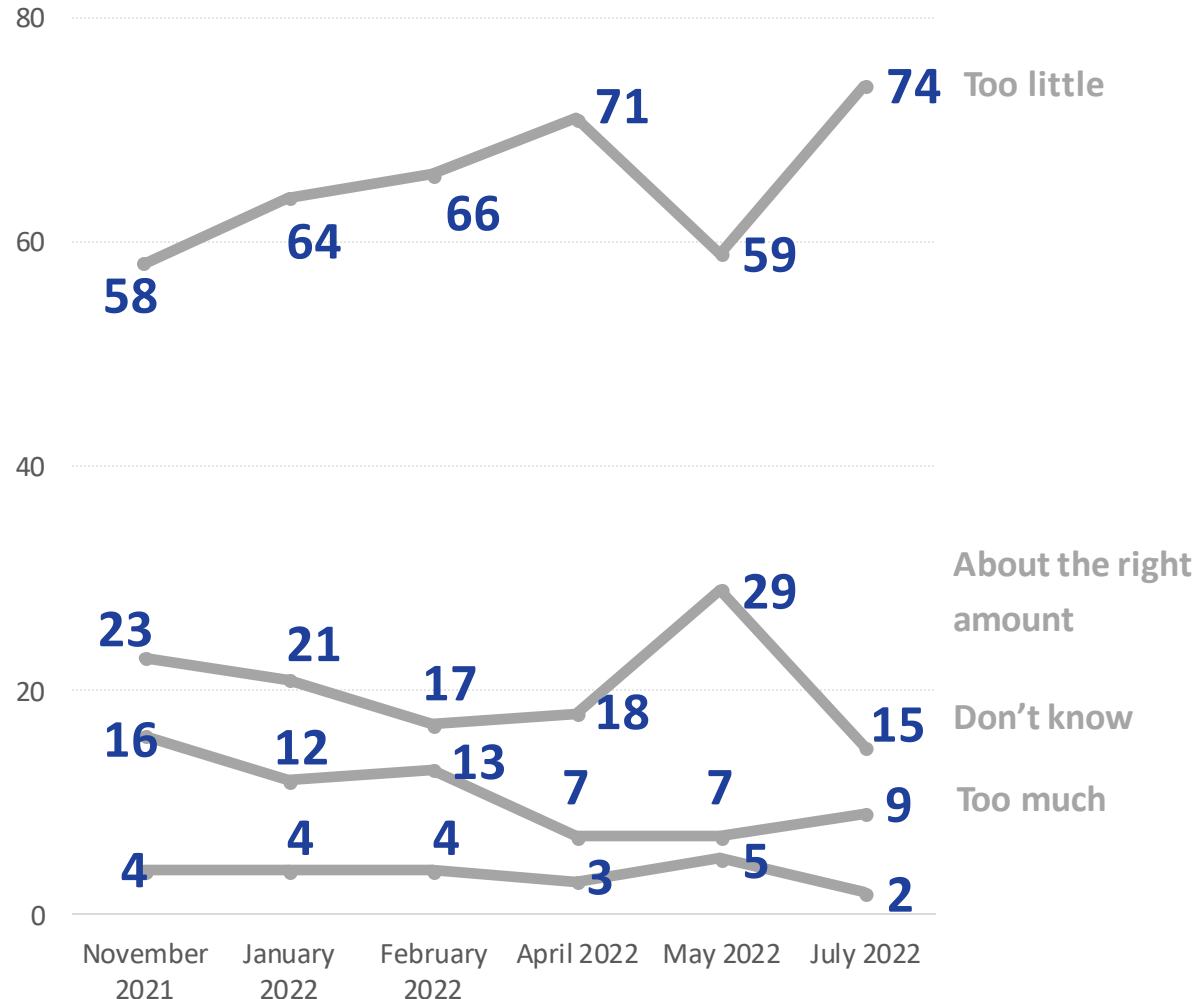
Thinking about this coming winter, do you expect to have to cut down on your home heating because of high energy prices? [15% 'Don't know' not shown] [July 2022]

Most Brits feel that government is doing too little



The feeling that the 'too little' was being done on the cost of living has grown significantly over the course of 2022. There was a slight dip in May (when the government announced their cost of living support package), but this proved only temporary. Britons' self-reported financial situations have also clearly worsened.

Thinking about Britain today, do you feel that too little, too much or the right amount is being done to help people cope with the rising cost of living?



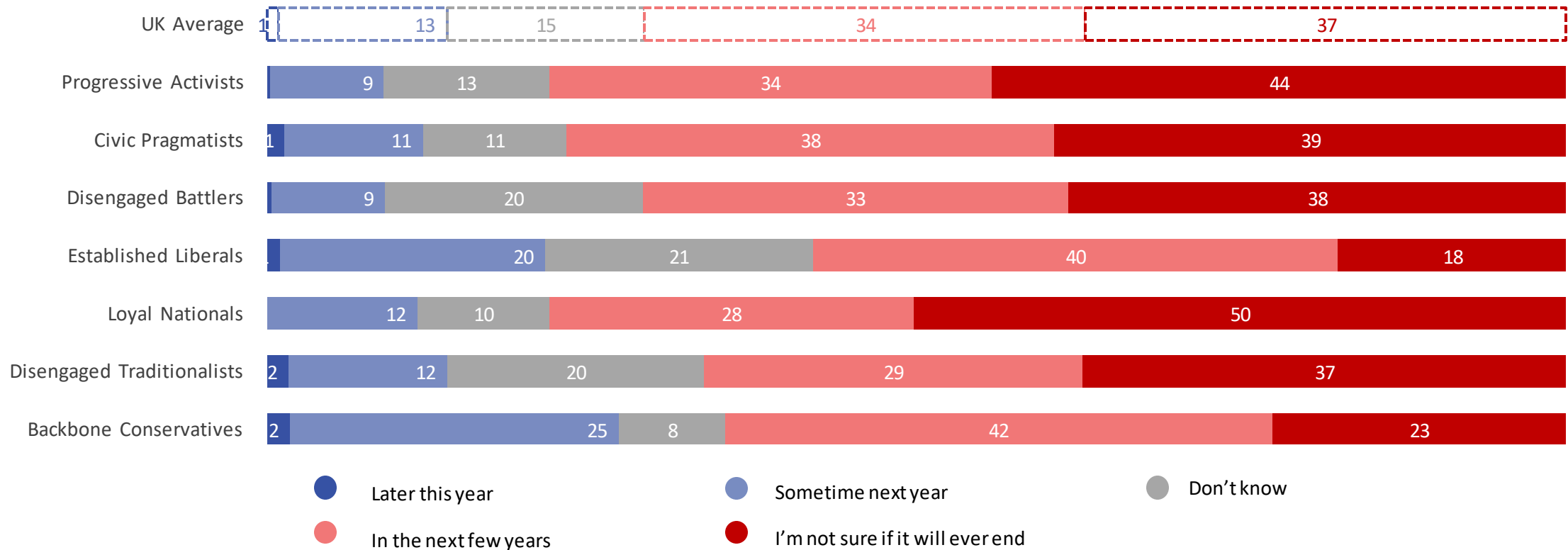
- Those saying they feel 'financially comfortable' has decreased, from 53% in November, to 46% in April, to 38% in July
- Those saying they 'often have to go without essentials like food and heating' has almost **doubled**, from 2.6% in November to 4.5% in July

Most Britons are preparing for a long crisis ahead



Britons are deeply pessimistic on when this cost of living crisis will end. A plurality say they don't know if the cost of living crisis will ever end, including a majority of Loyal Nationals

While economic conditions are difficult to predict, when do you expect the cost of living crisis to end?

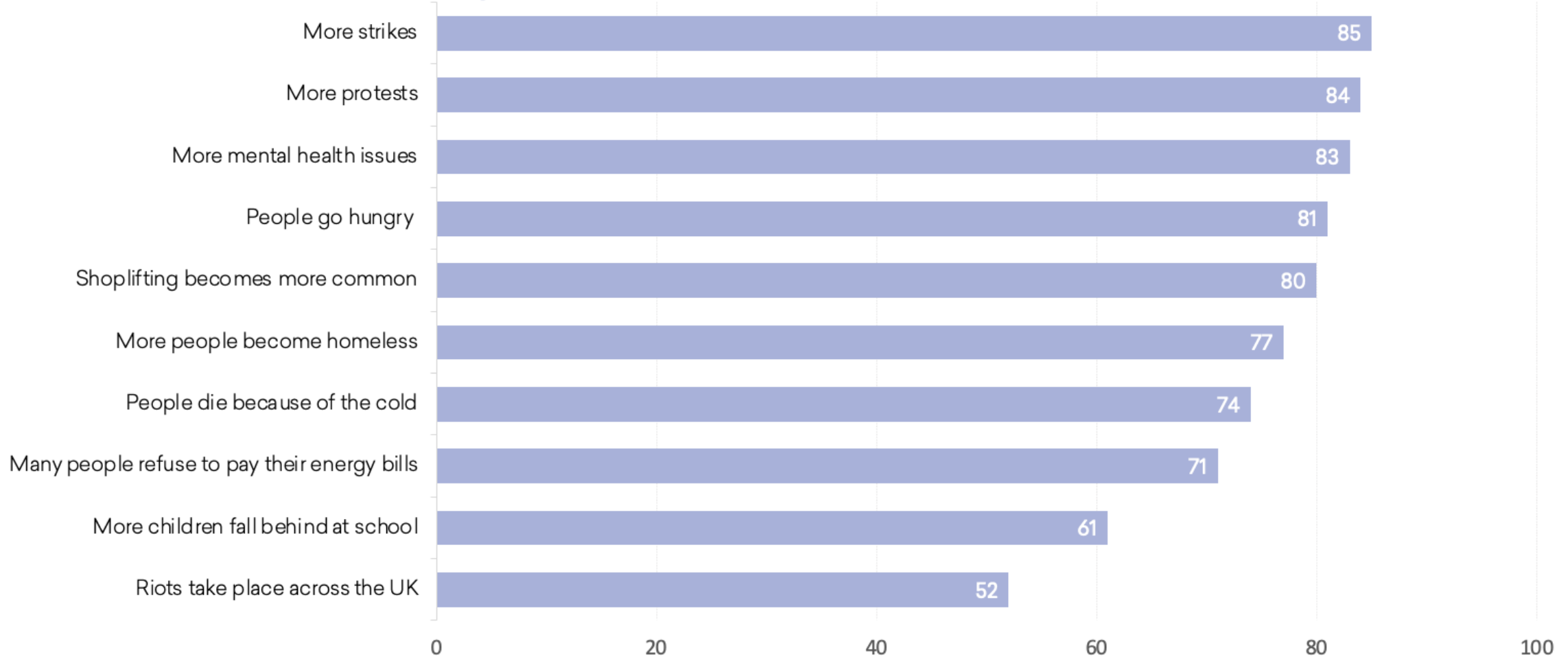


Most Brits anticipate a winter of social unrest

Overwhelming majorities of Britons expect significant social unrest this winter



Expectations of social unrest this winter



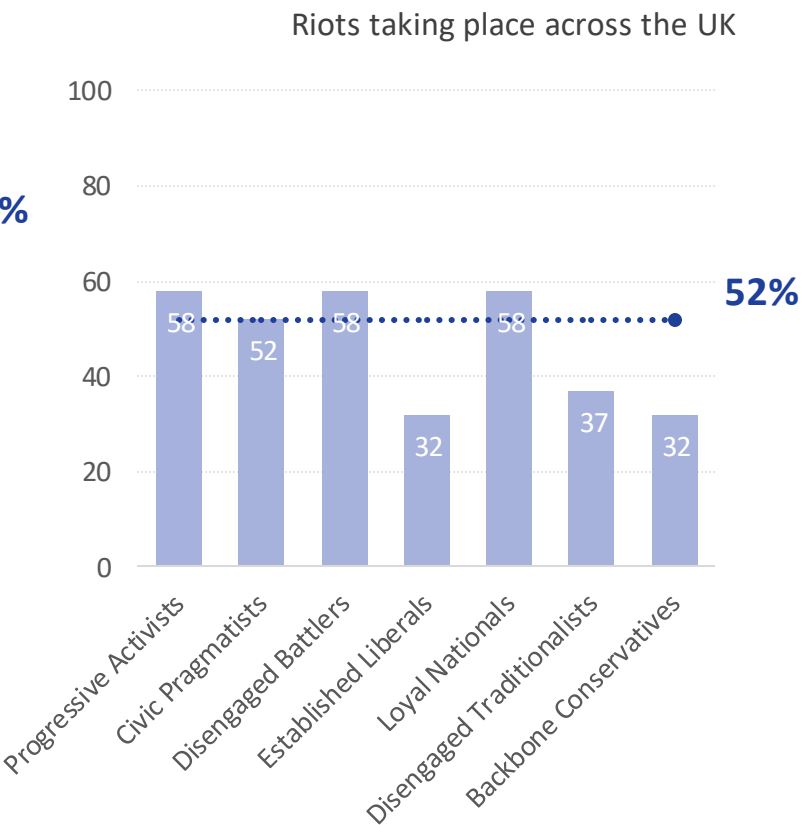
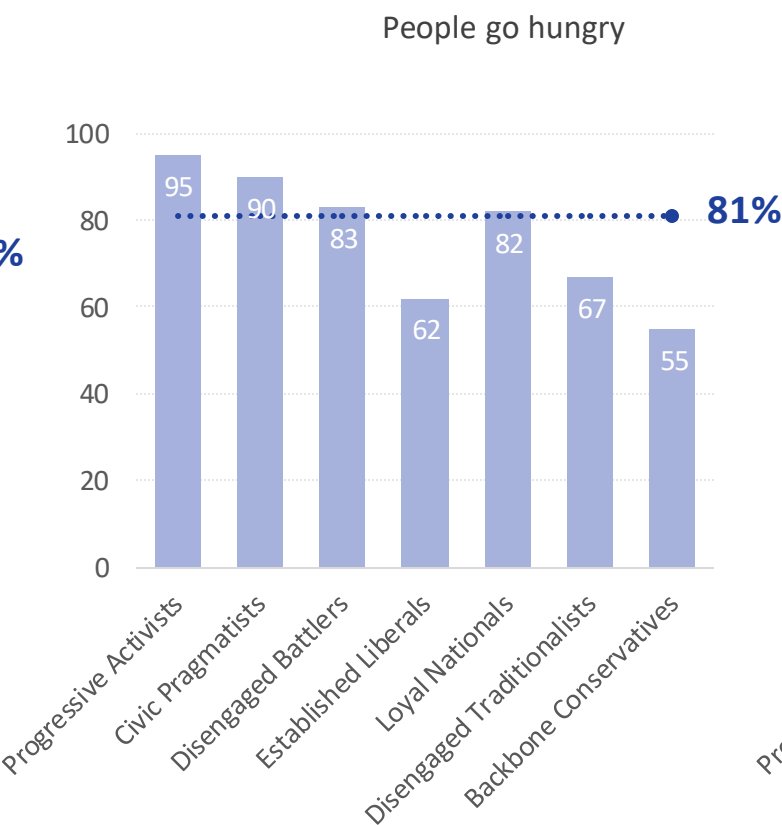
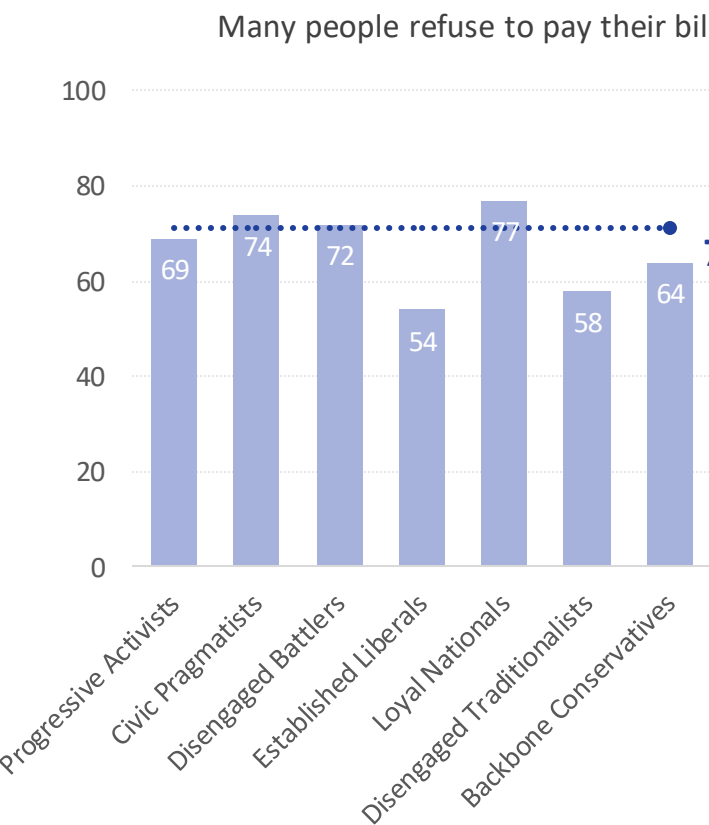
For each of the following, please indicate if it is something you expect or do not expect to happen this winter as a result of rising bills? Selected response: I expect it to happen July 2022

Expectations of social unrest by segment



Established Liberals and Disengaged Traditionalists are less likely to anticipate several forms of social unrest than other segments

Expectations of social unrest this winter

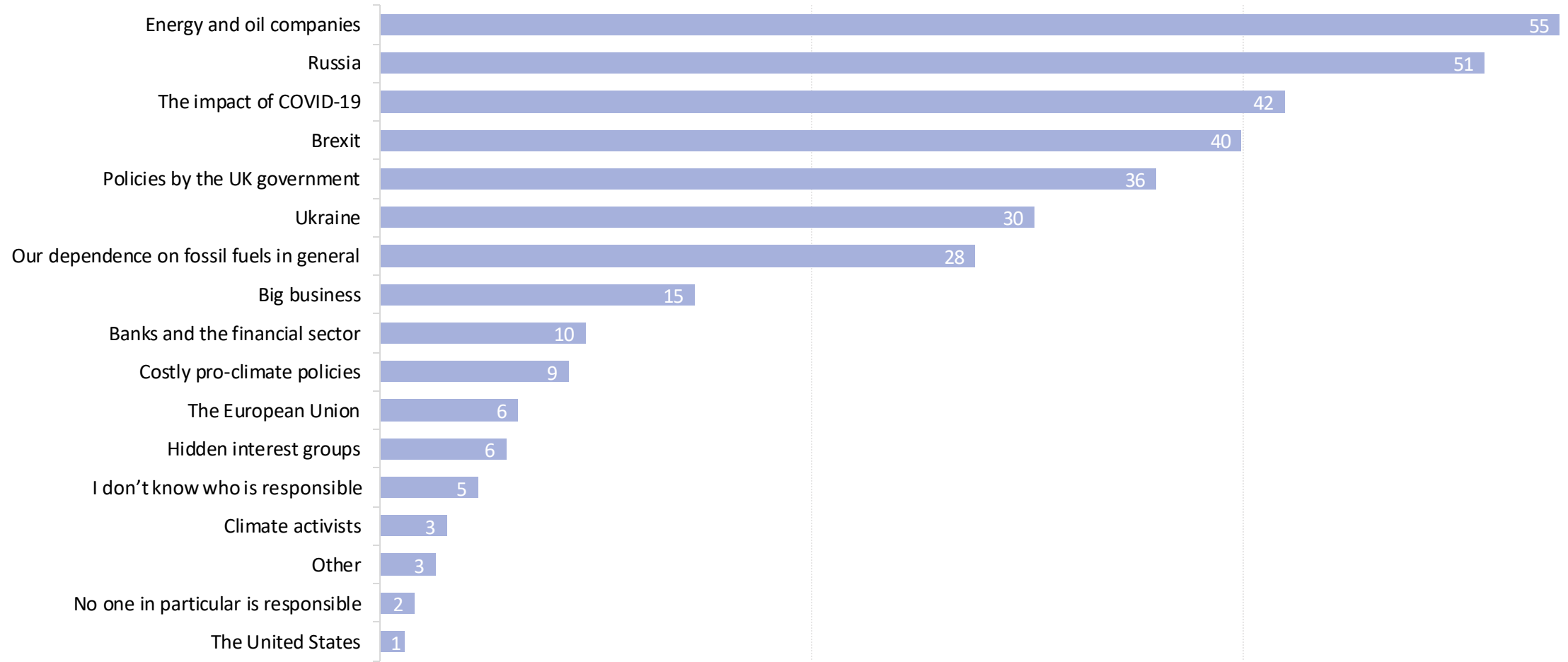


For each of the following, please indicate if it is something you expect or do not expect to happen this winter as a result of rising bills? Selected response: I expect it to happen July 2022

Who/what's to blame for rising prices?



Energy/oil companies and Russia are who Britons blame the most for rising prices. The impact of Covid, Brexit, and UK government policy follow closely behind



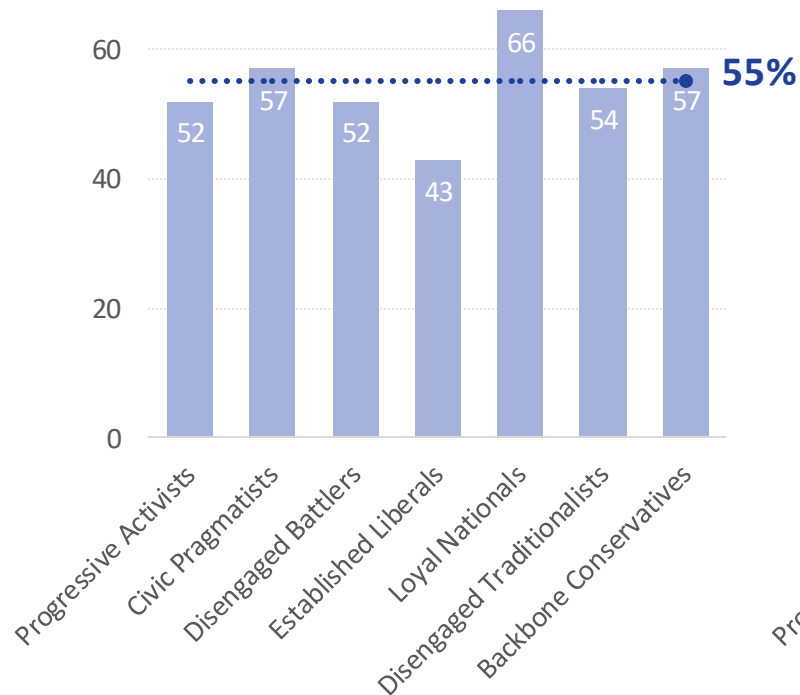
Many Brits agree on who/what's to blame for rising prices



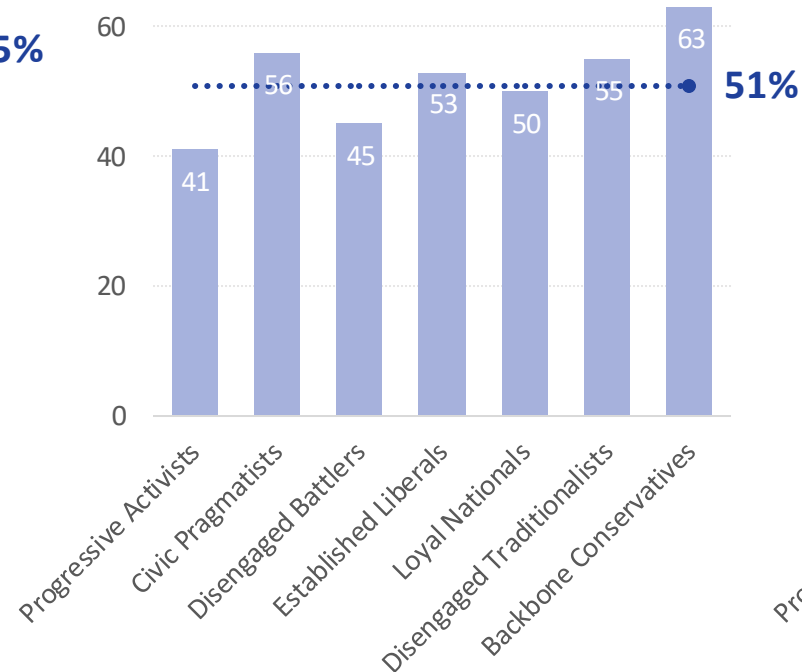
On the top 3 responses – energy/oil companies, Russia, and impact of Covid-19 – there was little segment differentiation, suggesting agreement across society and political divides

Who or what do you believe is responsible for rising prices? Select up to 4

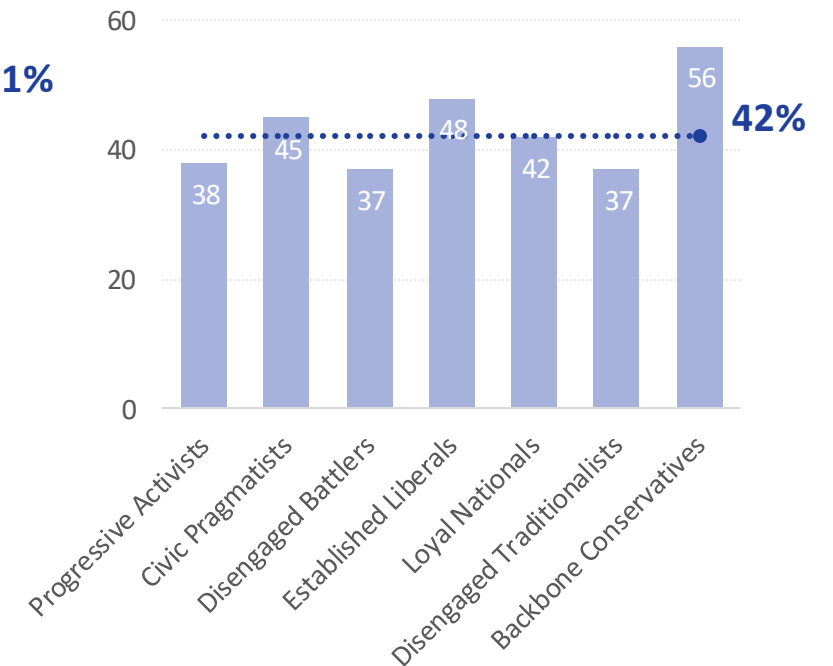
Energy and oil companies



Russia



The impact of Covid-19



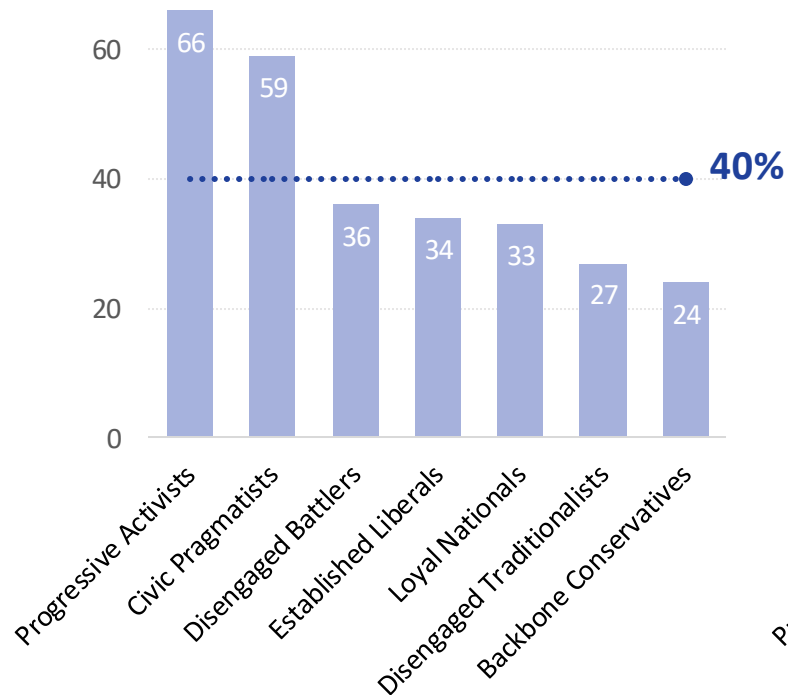
But on other issues, there is less consensus on what to blame



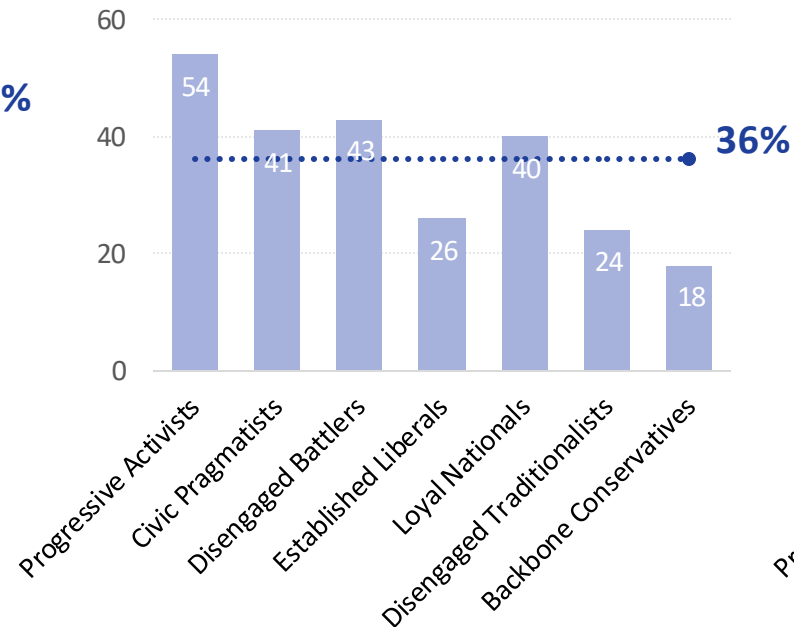
On some options, there is less consensus among the segments. What is practically interesting is that ‘our dependence on fossil fuels’ is only the 7th most blamed person/factor – and there are clear differences between Progressive Activists and many other segments

Who or what do you believe is responsible for rising prices? Select up to 4

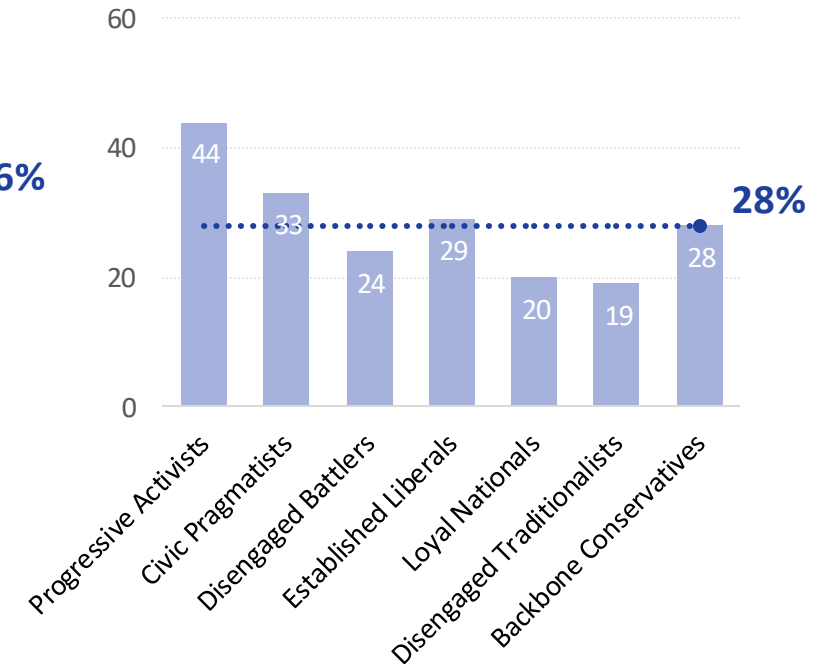
Brexit



Policies by the UK government



Our dependence on fossil fuels in general

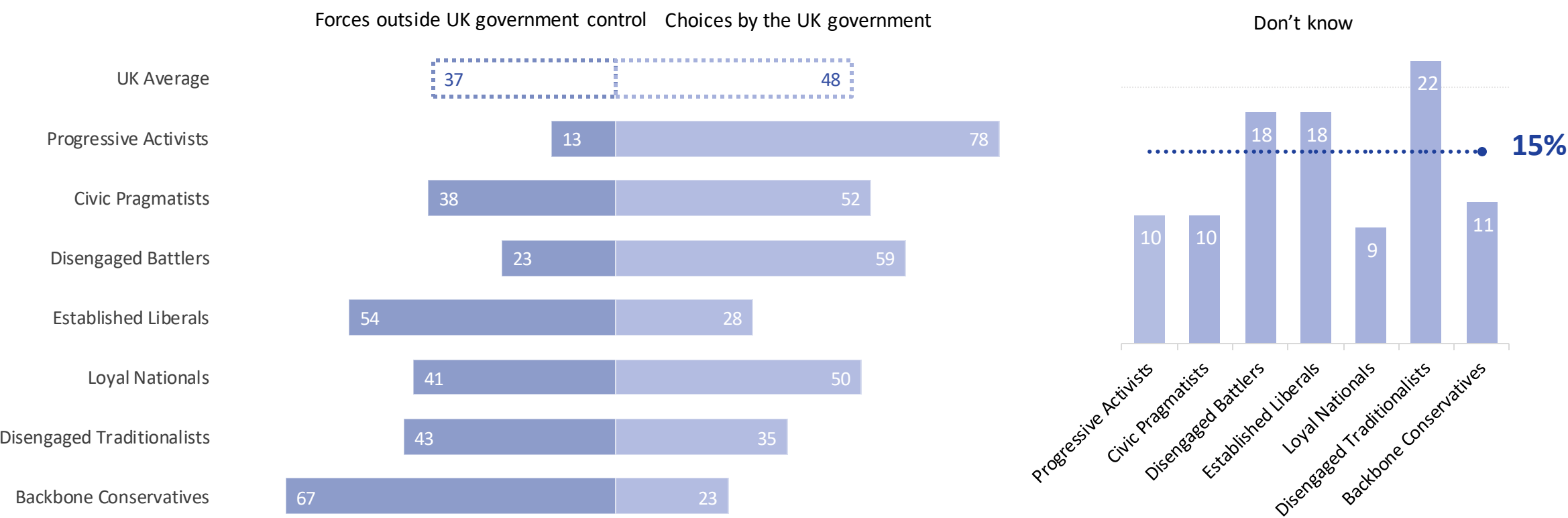


Brits are more likely to think rising prices come from choices made by UK government



More think the current cost of living crisis was caused by choices by the UK government, rather than forces outside their control – including Loyal Nationals

Which of the following best describes your view? The current cost of living situation is mostly the result of...



Which of the following best describes your view? The current cost of living situation is mostly the result of... [July 2022]

Brits see this as a problem for the government to fix

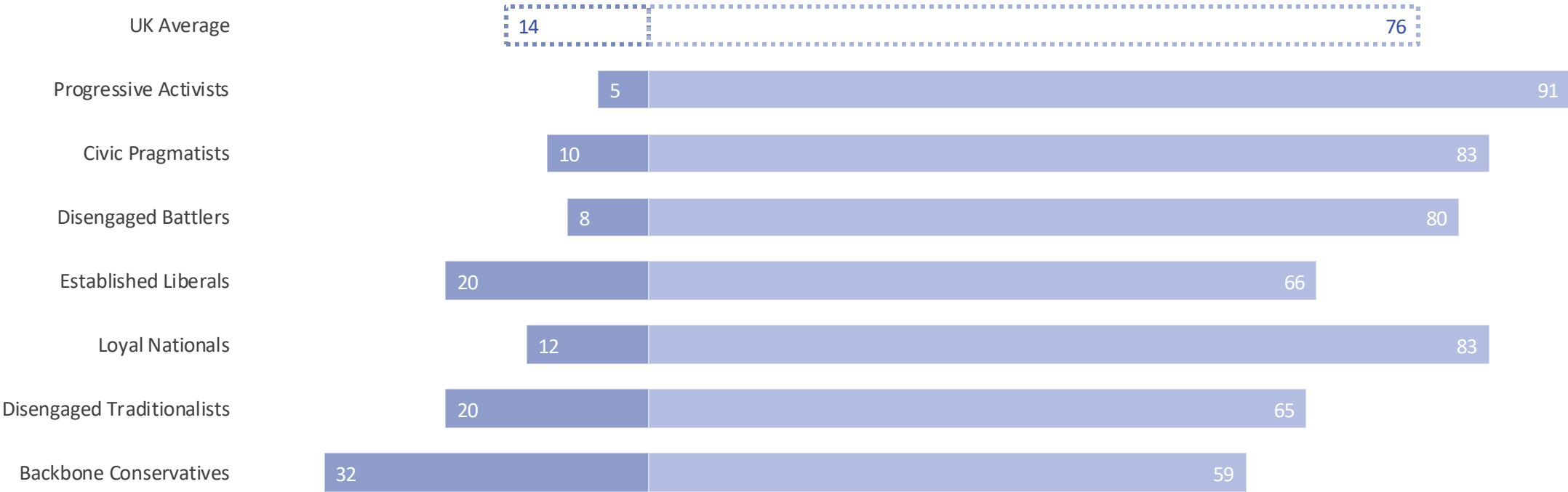


While the public are more evenly divided on whether the current cost of living crisis is caused by government or not, when it comes to energy bills, nearly all agree that it's the government's job to solve it

Who is more responsible for reducing energy bills this winter?

Individuals themselves by taking actions like wearing extra layers, installing energy efficient appliances, and using energy at off peak times

Government making policy decisions to reduce price cap for bill payers, regulate energy companies and invest in cheaper energy sources



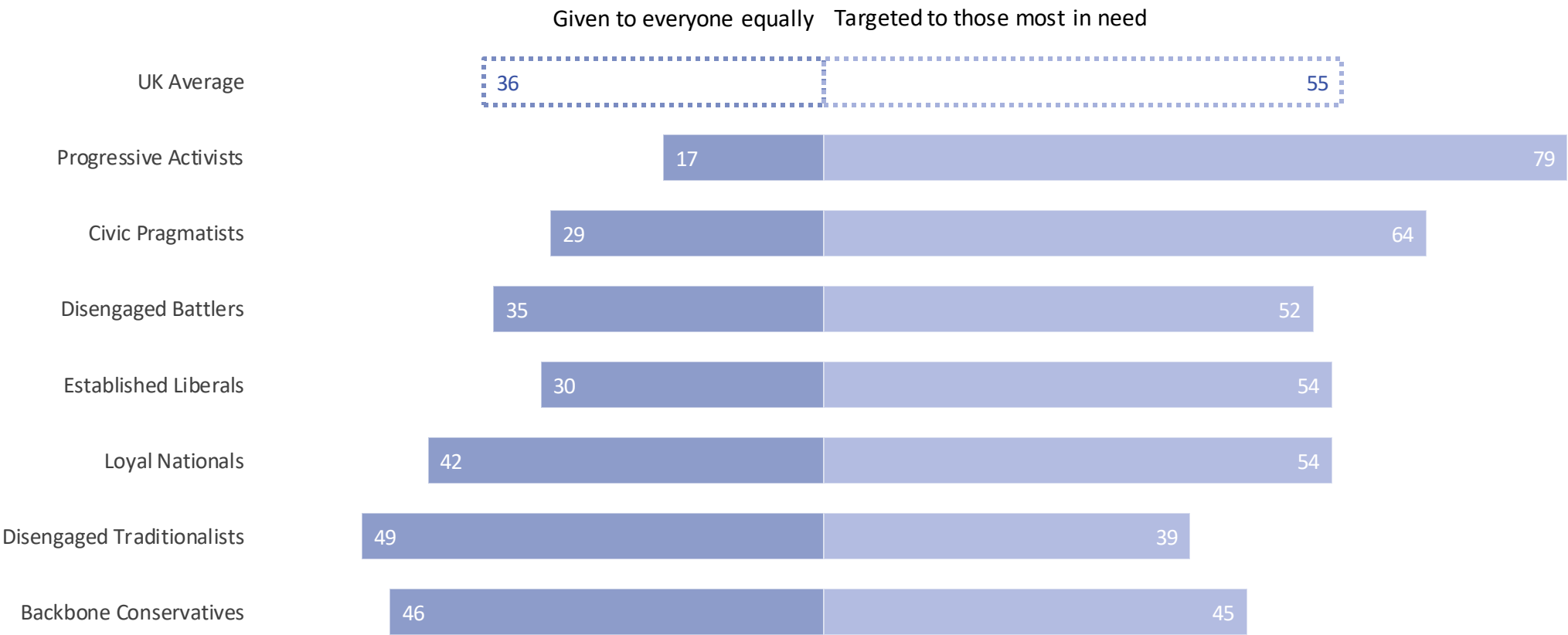
Who is more responsible for reducing energy bills this winter? [10% 'Don't know' not shown] [July 2022]

Solutions – targeted versus for everyone?



A majority of Britons think cost of living support should be targeted to those most in need, rather than given to everyone equally – but Conservative segments are more likely than average to look for blanket/universal support

In dealing with the rising cost of living, should the government’s support be...?



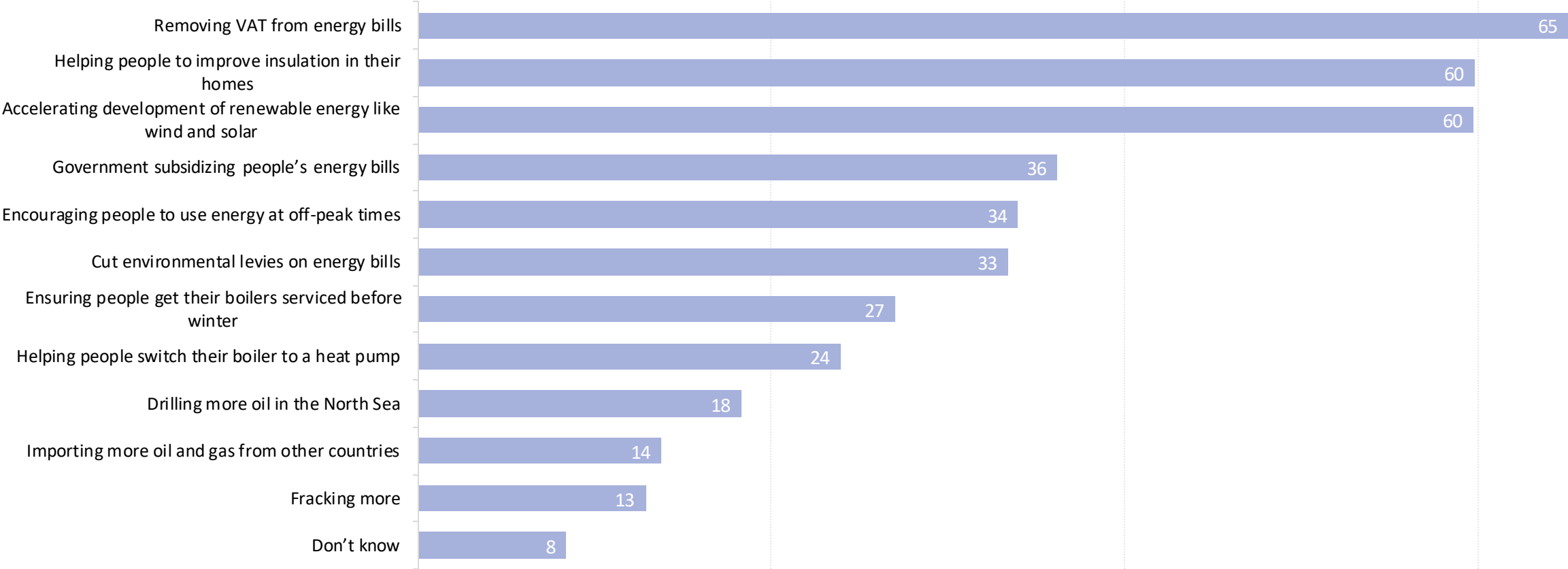
In dealing with the rising cost of living, should the government’s support be...? [10% ‘Don’t know’ not shown] [July 2022]

Common sense solutions?



A clear majority of Britons think removing VAT from energy bills, helping people improve insulation in their homes, and accelerating development of renewable energy, are the best ‘common sense’ approaches to reducing energy bills this winter

Which of the following options do you think are common sense approaches to reducing energy bills this winter? Select all that apply.



Which of the following options do you think are common sense approaches to reducing energy bills this winter? Select all that apply [July 2022]

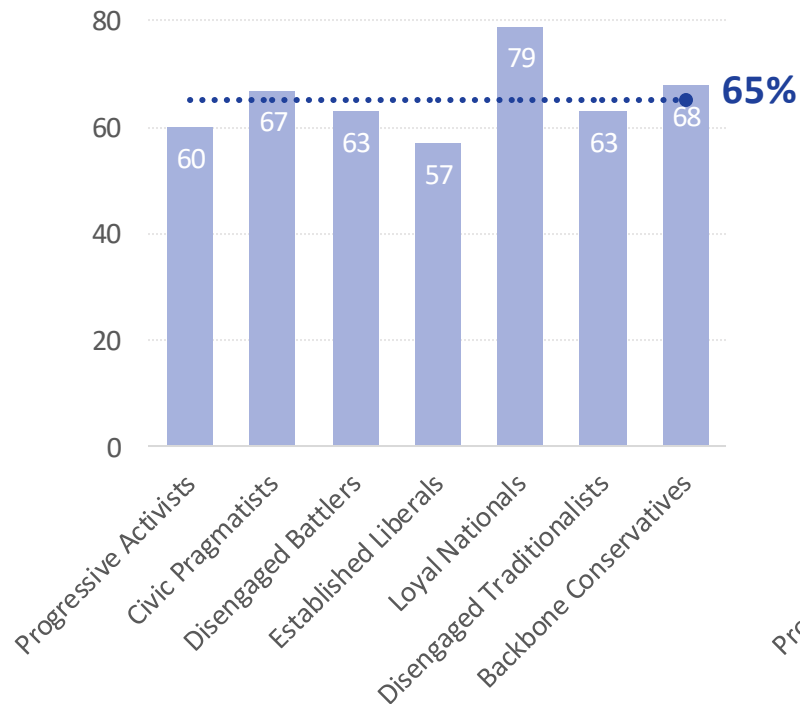
Popular solutions – by segment



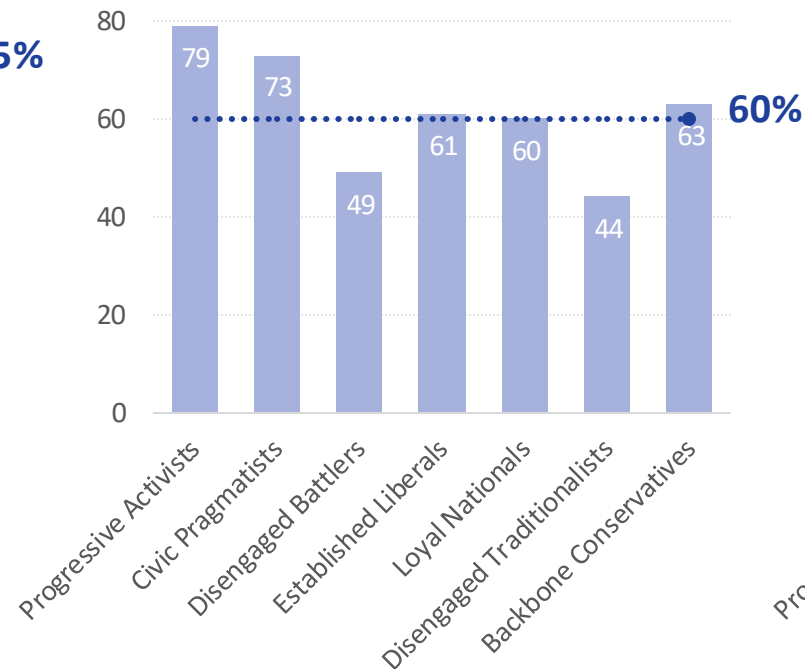
Removing VAT from energy bills and rolling out insulation and renewables are popular across segments – but support is lower among disengaged segments

Which of the following options do you think are common sense approaches to reducing energy bills this winter? Select all that apply.

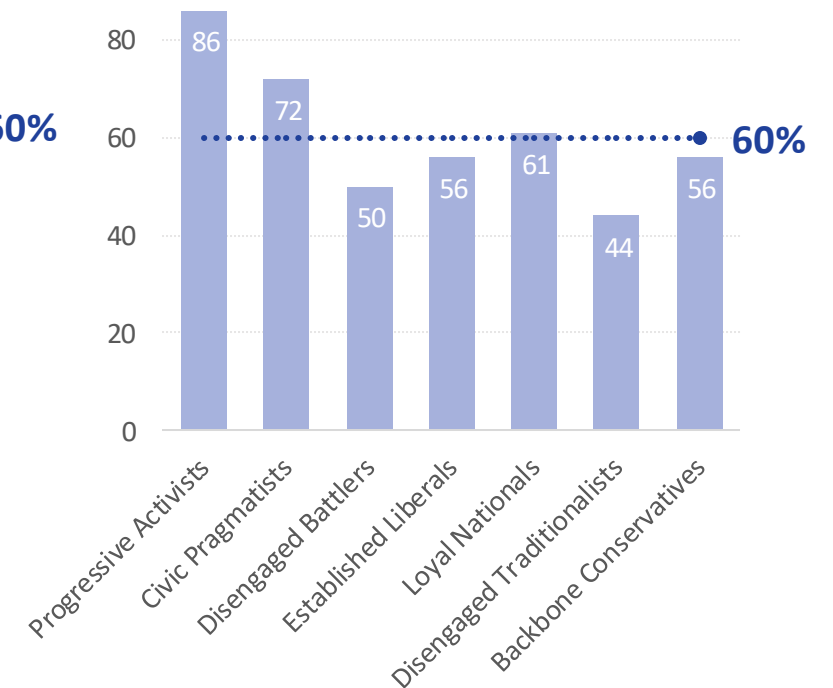
Remove VAT from energy bills



Helping people to improve insulation in their homes



Accelerating development of renewable energy like wind and solar



Which of the following options do you think are common sense approaches to reducing energy bills this winter? Select all that apply [July 2022]

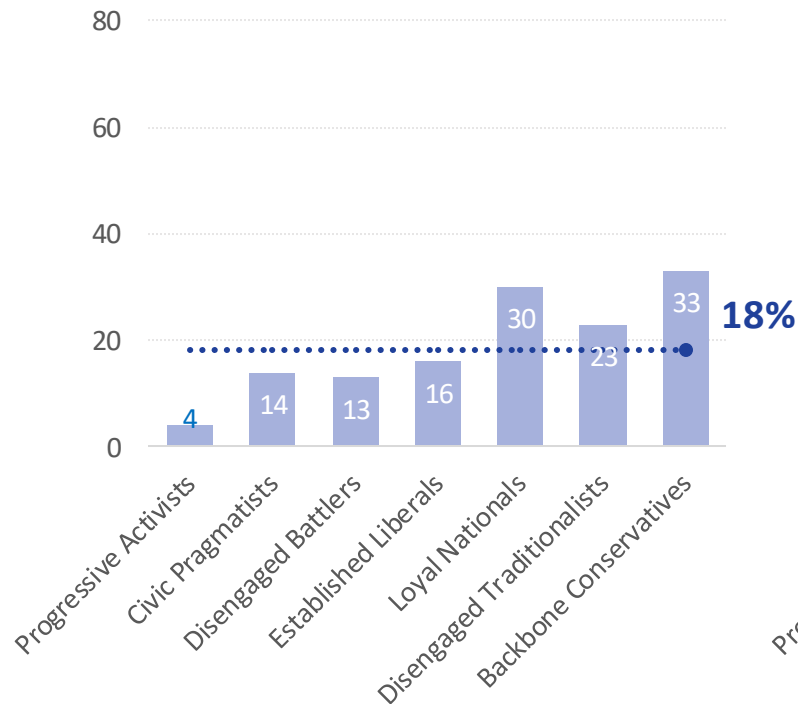
Unpopular solutions – by segment



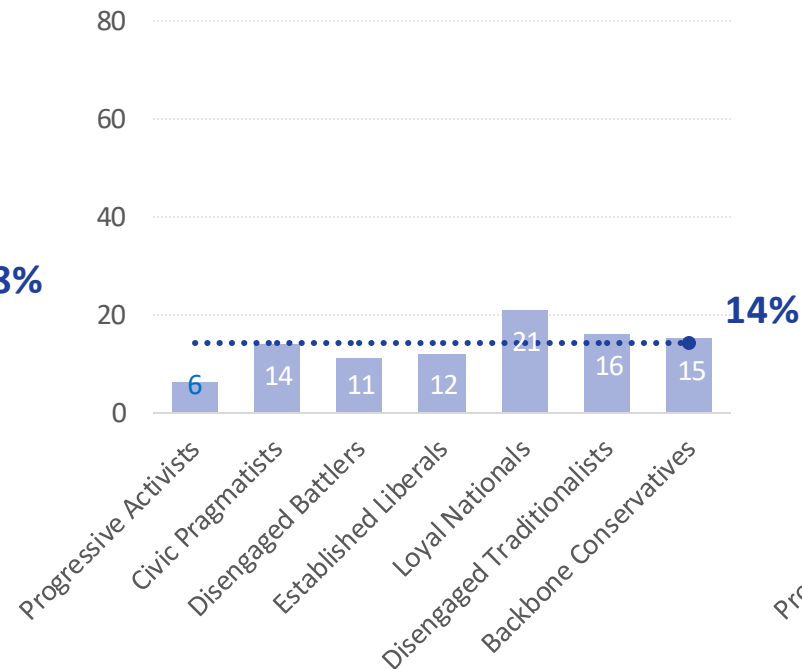
Drilling in the North Sea, importing oil and gas and fracking more are between three and five times **LESS popular** than accelerating investment in renewables, rolling out insulation or cutting VAT on energy bills

Which of the following options do you think are common sense approaches to reducing energy bills this winter? Select all that apply.

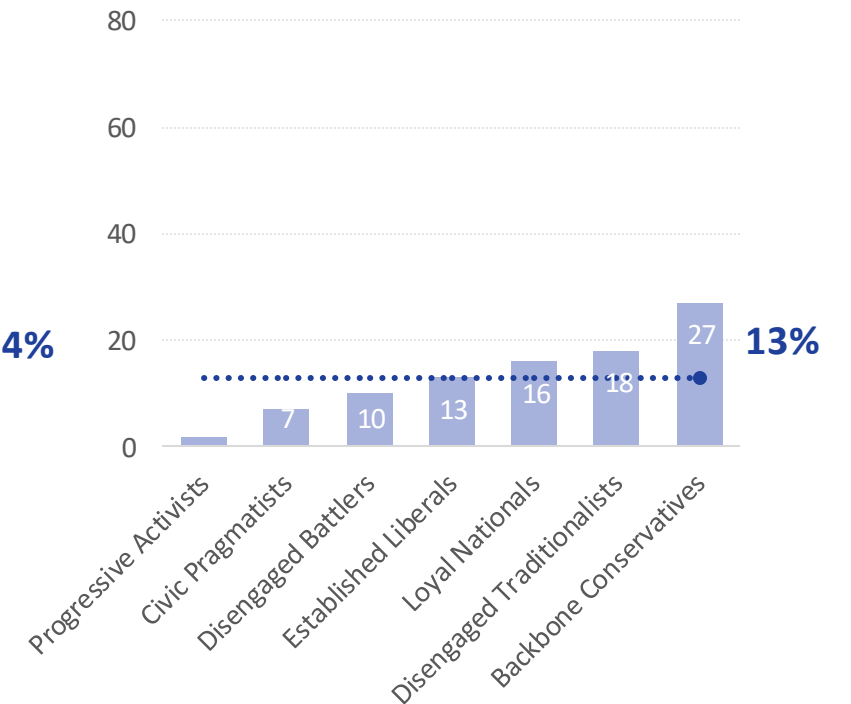
Drilling more oil in the North Sea



Importing more oil and gas from other countries



Fracking more



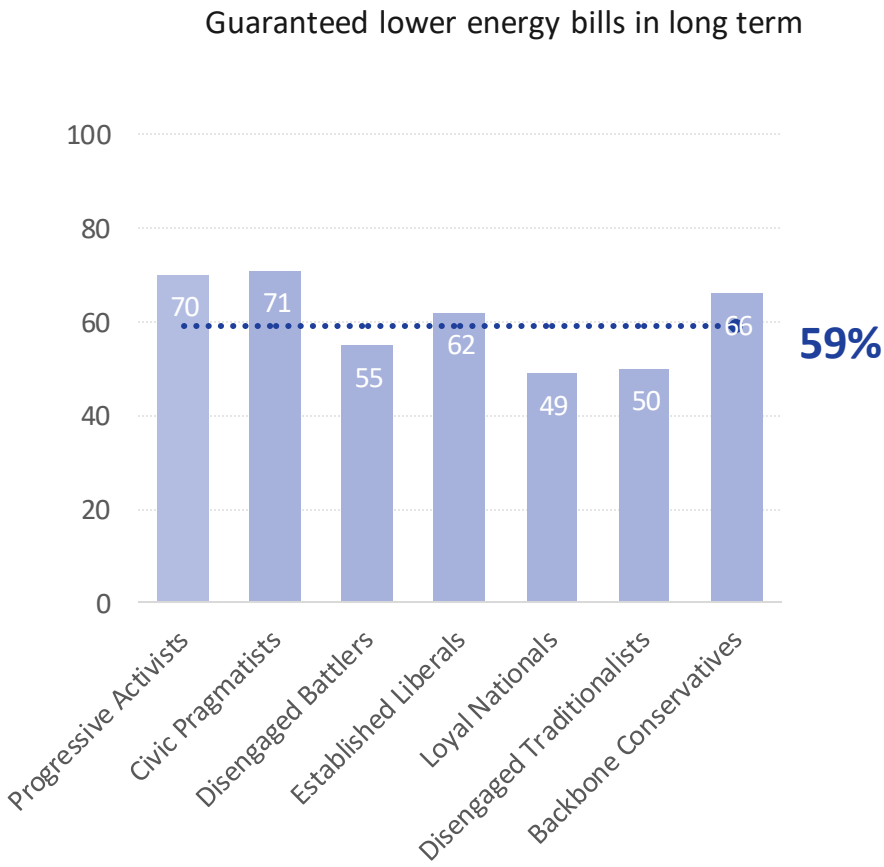
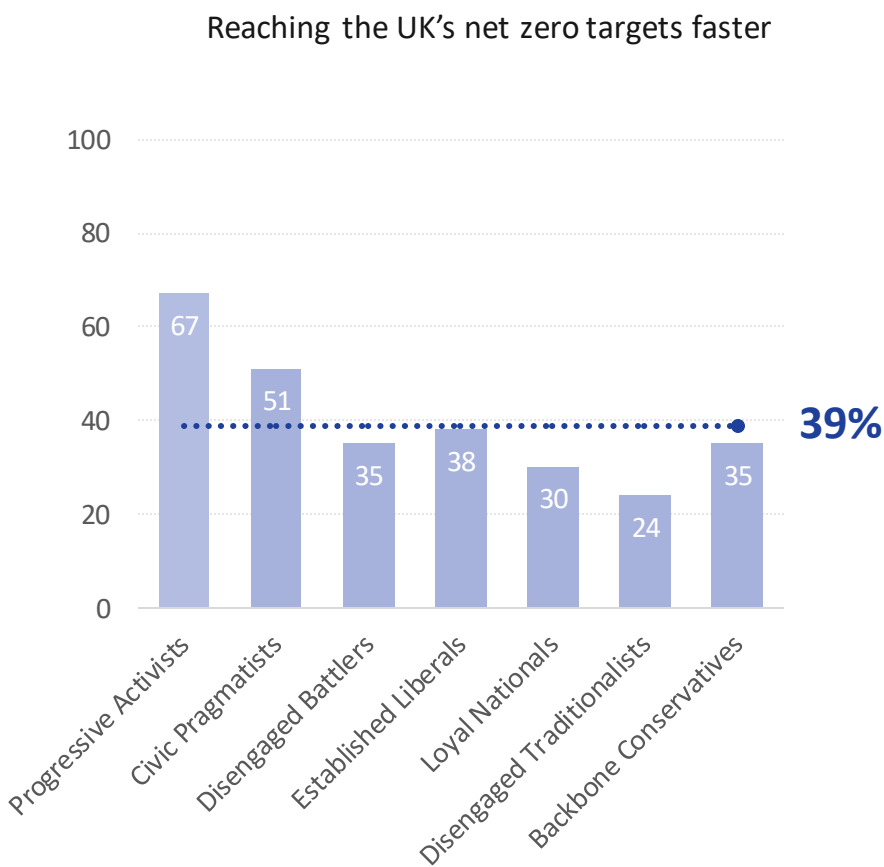
Which of the following options do you think are common sense approaches to reducing energy bills this winter? Select all that apply [July 2022]

Willingness to pay higher bills



More Britons are willing to accept further energy bill rises if it means that energy bills will go down in the medium/long term – but fewer are willing to accept higher bills to reach net zero faster

To what extent would you be willing, if at all, to accept a further rise in energy prices for the next year if it meant...?



The challenge facing the Tories on the cost of living – Red Wall (Loyal Nationals) vs Blue Wall (Established Liberals)

Loyal Nationals

- Most likely to say 'I'm not sure this crisis will ever end'
- Most worried about social unrest
- Least likely to say 'I'm coping fine with rising prices'
- Least likely to expect they'll cut down on their home heating this winter
- Hold energy/oil companies most responsible for rising bills
- Most likely to strongly support reducing VAT on food and energy bills

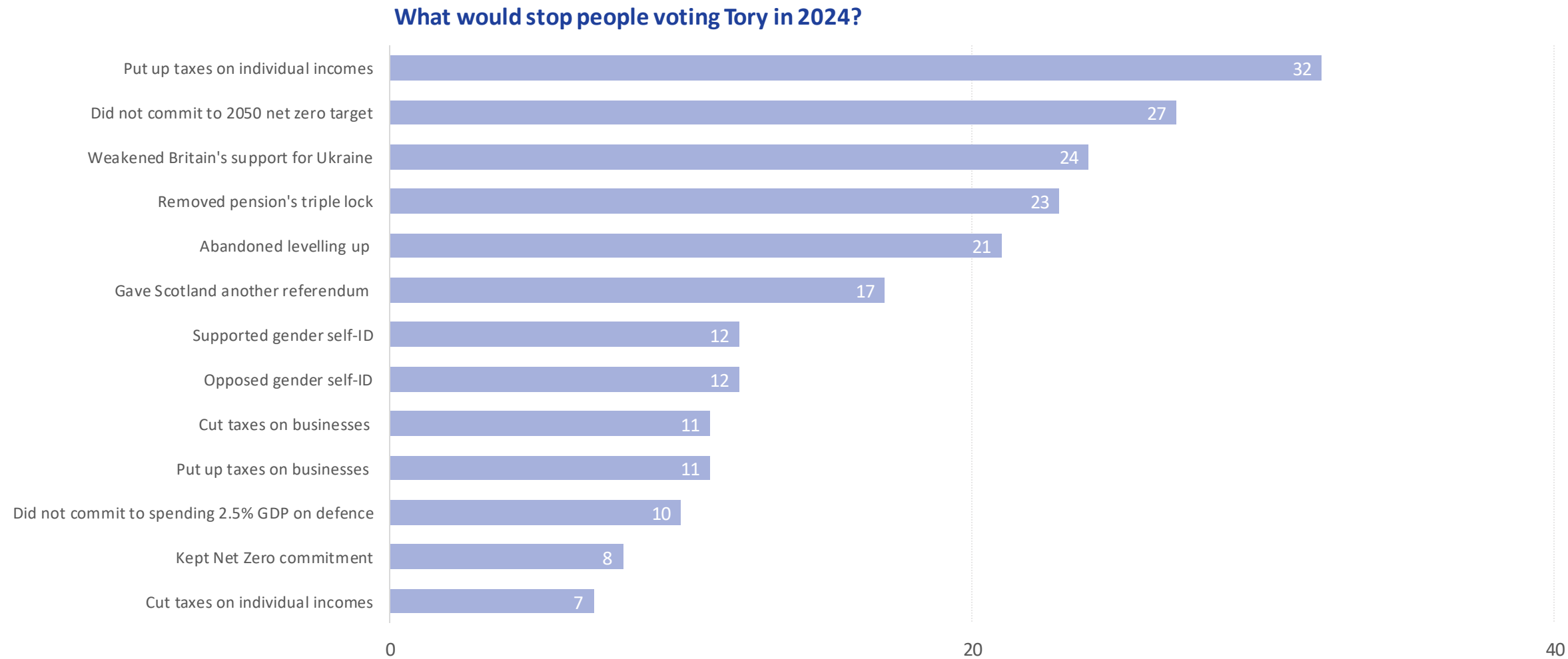
Established Liberals

- Least likely to say 'I'm not sure this crisis will ever end'
- Least worried about social unrest
- Most likely to say 'I'm coping fine with rising prices'
- Most likely to expect they'll cut down on their home heating this winter
- Hold Russia most responsible for rising bills
- Least likely to support reducing VAT on food and energy bills

What would stop people voting Tory in 2024?



Tax increases, dropping net zero and weakening support for Ukraine would turn voters off the Tories at the next election



Which of the following, if any, would mean you would definitely NOT vote for the Conservative Party in a future election? Select any which apply. (Answers abbreviated for graph. If a new leader would....

What would stop Tory voters voting Tory in 2024?



Scrapping the UK's commitment to reach net zero by 2050 will have significant electoral consequences in Blue Wall areas who put scrapping the target as the top reason that would stop them voting Tory at the next election



Established
Liberals

Scrapping commitment to net zero by 2050
25%
Weakening Britain's support for Ukraine
24%
Putting up taxes on individual's incomes
22%



Loyal
Nationals

Putting up taxes on individual's incomes
36%
Removing pension's triple lock
29%
Weakening Britain's support for Ukraine
24%



Disengaged
Traditionalists

Putting up taxes on individual's incomes
26%
Giving Scotland another independence referendum
25%
Removing pension's triple lock
22%



Backbone
Conservatives

Putting up taxes on individual's incomes
29%
Giving Scotland another independence referendum
25%
Weakening Britain's support for Ukraine
24%

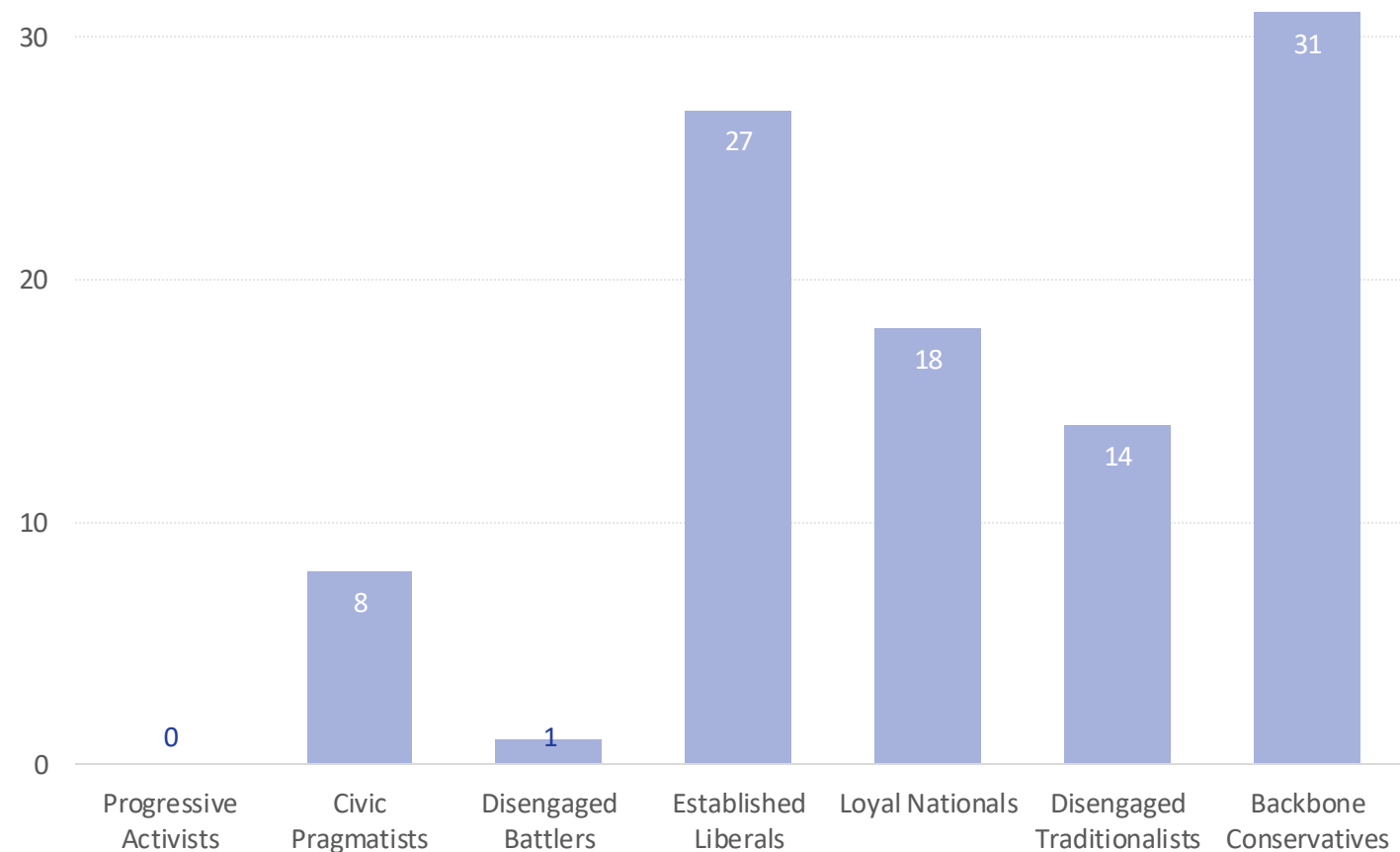
Which of the following, if any, would mean you would definitely NOT vote for the Conservative Party in a future election? Select any which apply. (Answers abbreviated for graph. If a new leader would....)

The segments of Conservative Party members



Conservative Party members are most likely to be from the Backbone Conservative or Established Liberal segment

The segments of Conservative Party members



Are you a member of any political party? (Selected: Conservative Party). Source: More in Common, February 2020. N=10,000

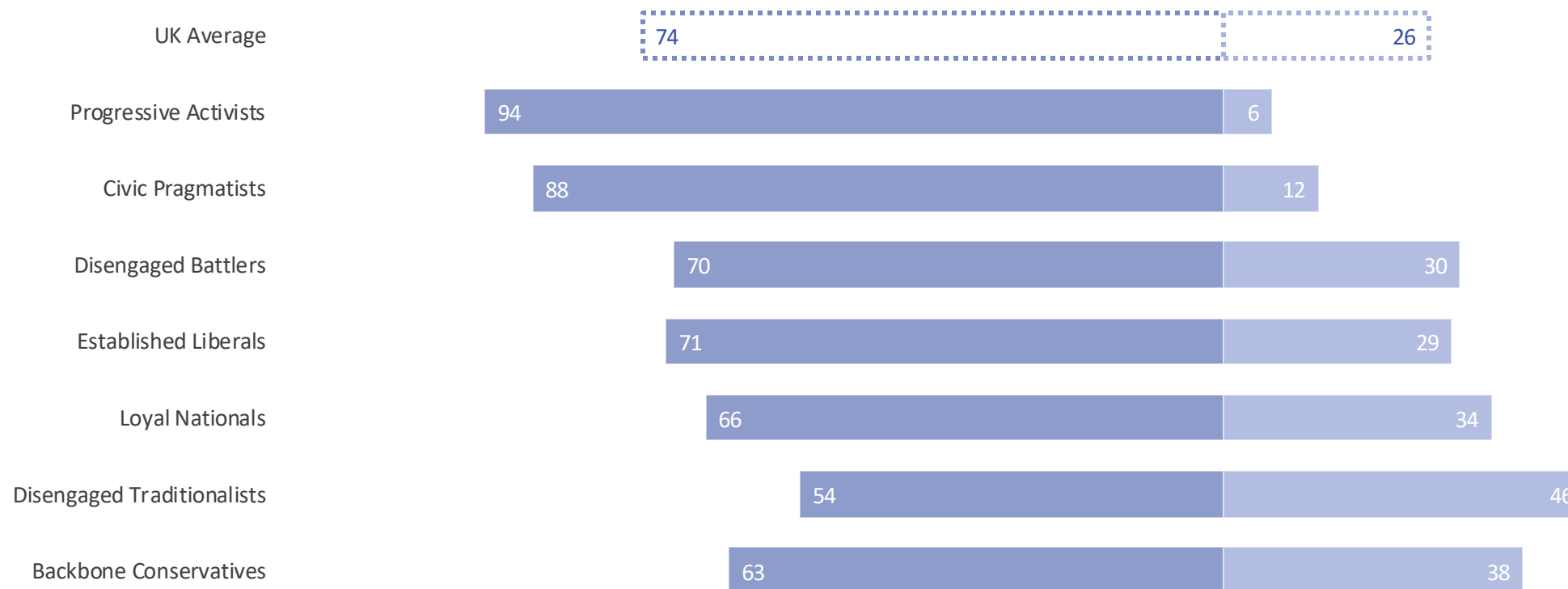
Tories and Net Zero



There is strong majority support (including majorities in each segment) for the new PM setting out a plan to reach net zero by 2050, over getting rid of the target

The new leader of the Conservative party should keep the target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to removing as much as we're producing by 2050 and set out a plan to get there

The new leader of the Conservative party should get rid of the target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by removing as much as we're producing by 2050



Which of the following statements do you most agree with? (Don't knows excluded)



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