



national union of **students**

Student Opinion: An Environment Act for the UK

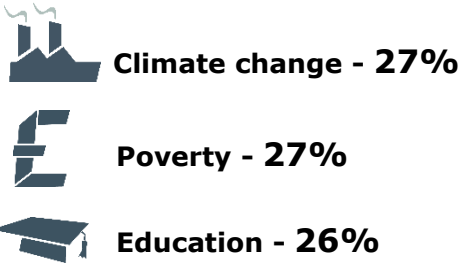
October 2018

Summary

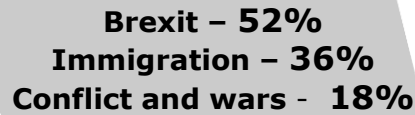
Student Opinion | An Environment Act for the UK

In October 2018, NUS asked over 2500 students what they thought about issues related to the protection of the environment, through laws and policy and through their own personal action. Here's what they told us...

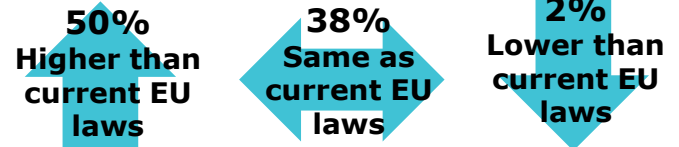
Issues senior politicians are not discussing enough are...



Issues senior politicians are discussing too much are...



When the UK leaves the EU it should pass environmental laws that provide levels of protection that are...



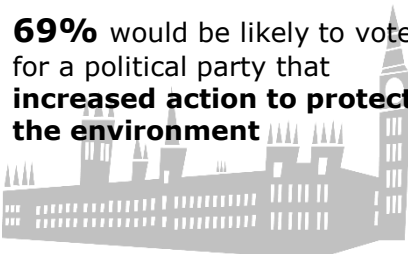
Most important issues which could be tackled by any new environmental protection laws that may be introduced in the UK after Brexit include...



Most common actions to help protect the environment are...



69% would be likely to vote for a political party that **increased action to protect the environment**



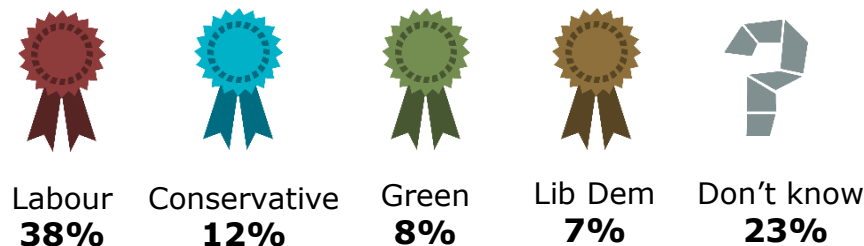
71% think the public should get a final vote on the Brexit deal



69% say there should be **more opportunities** for people like them to take action **to help protect the environment**

12% say they are part of a **club or group that helps the environment** outside formal education

If a general election were to be held tomorrow, respondents would vote...



Research objectives and methodology

Introduction

Objective, methodology and survey details

This report presents the findings of a survey amongst HE and FE students studying in the UK to understand their views on issues related environmental policy to inform NUS' work in this area.

The online survey was advertised via the NUS Extra / TOTUM student discount cardholder database as a survey about topical issues in the UK to avoid bias towards respondents with strong pro or anti-environmental attitudes and beliefs.

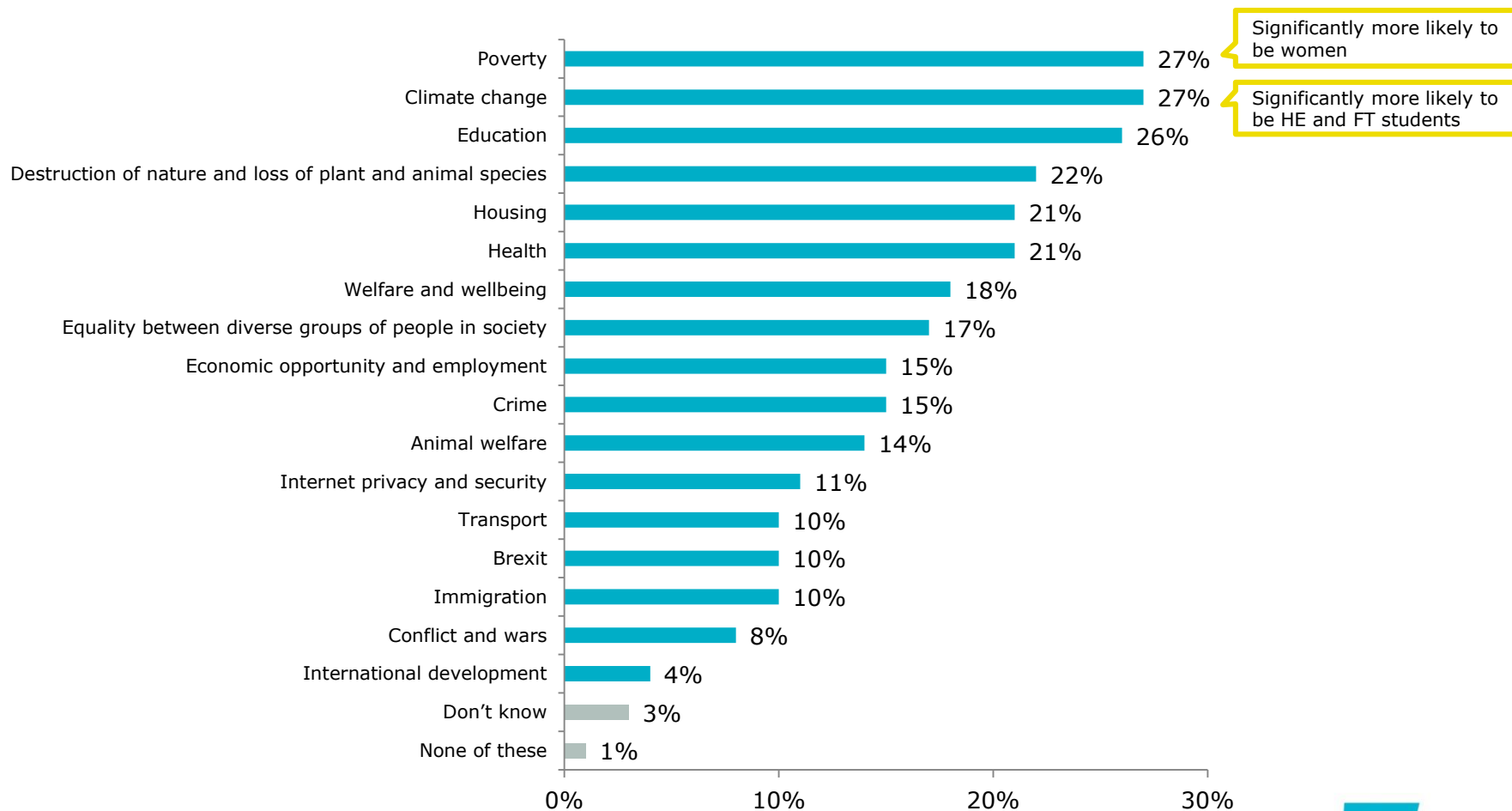
A final sample of 2534 was achieved in October 2018, with respondents offered entry to a prize draw to win £150. The survey took approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Within the report, a number of questions have been cross-tabulated with other questions in order to understand how responses vary according to survey participants with different characteristics or views. Where there are any statistical significant differences between answers, they are reported where applicable and to large enough base size ($n > 30$) and are valid at confidence level of 99%. They are highlighted in speech bubbles throughout the report , for example:



Environment and politics

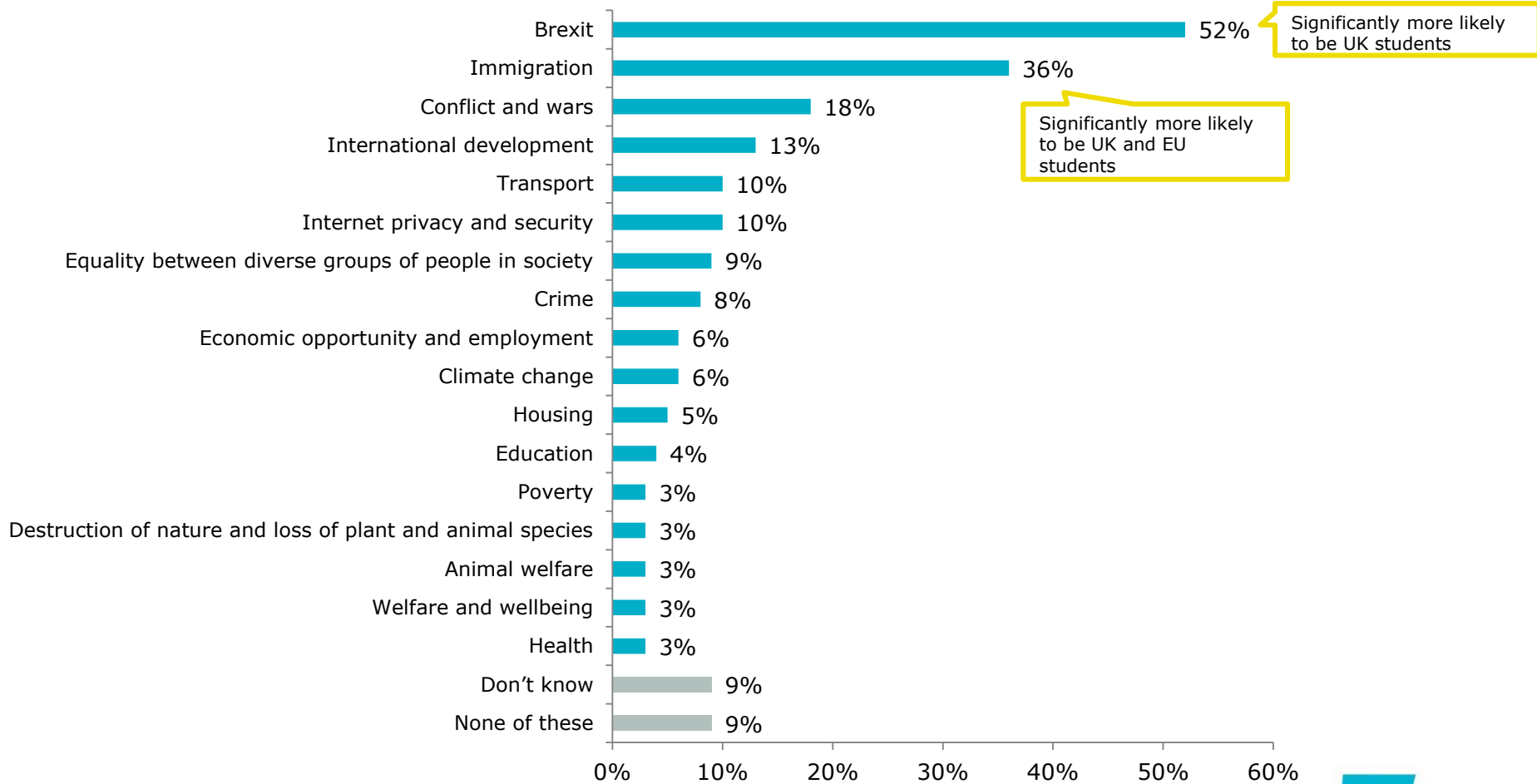
The three issues that respondents were most likely to say that politicians did not discuss enough were poverty (27%), climate change (27%) and education (26%).



Base: 2528 respondents. Balance: no response

B1. Here are some issues that may concern different people. Which issues, if any, do you think senior politicians are not discussing enough, and should discuss more?

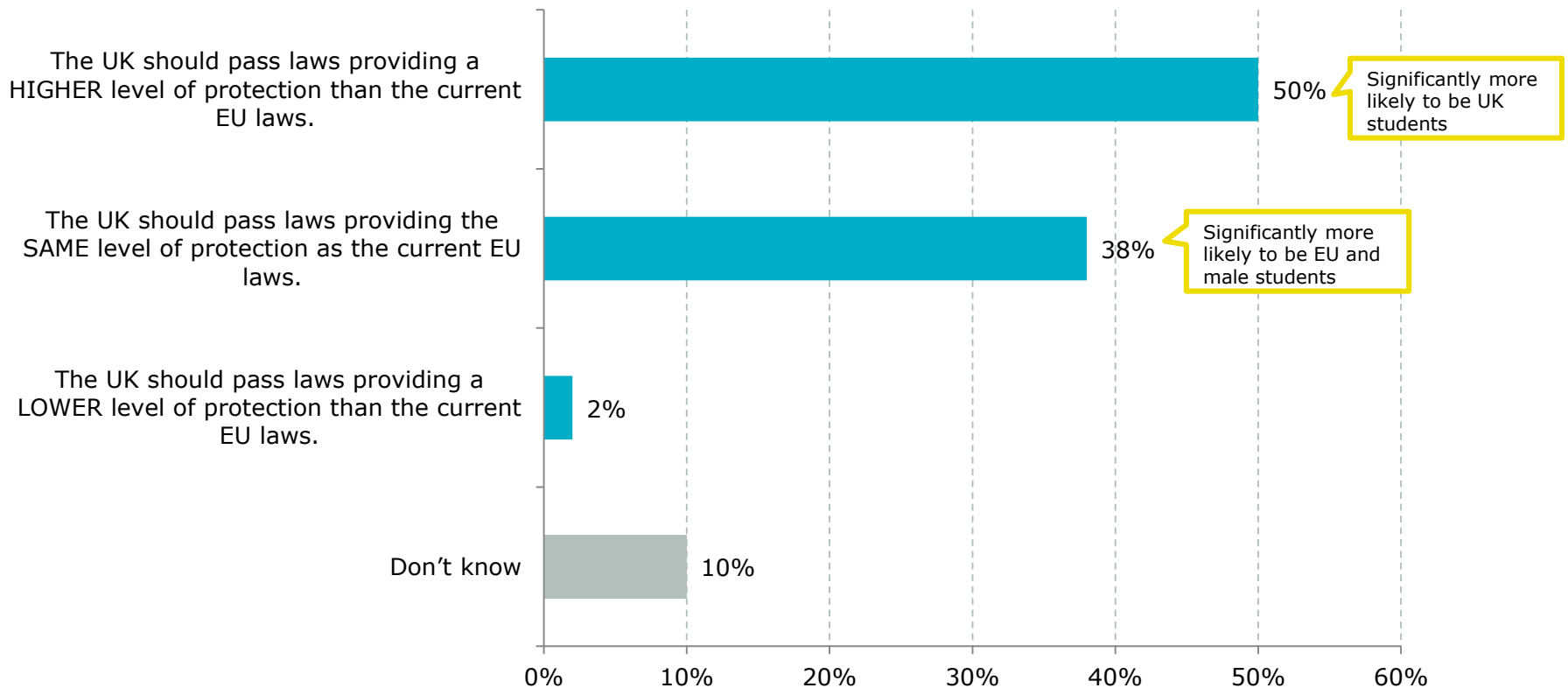
Over half of respondents felt that senior politicians are spending too much time discussing Brexit (52%). 1 in 3 (36%) say they are spending too much time talking about immigration.



Base: 2520 respondents. Balance: no response

B2. Thinking about the same issues... Which, if any, do you think senior politicians are discussing too much, and should spend less time discussing?

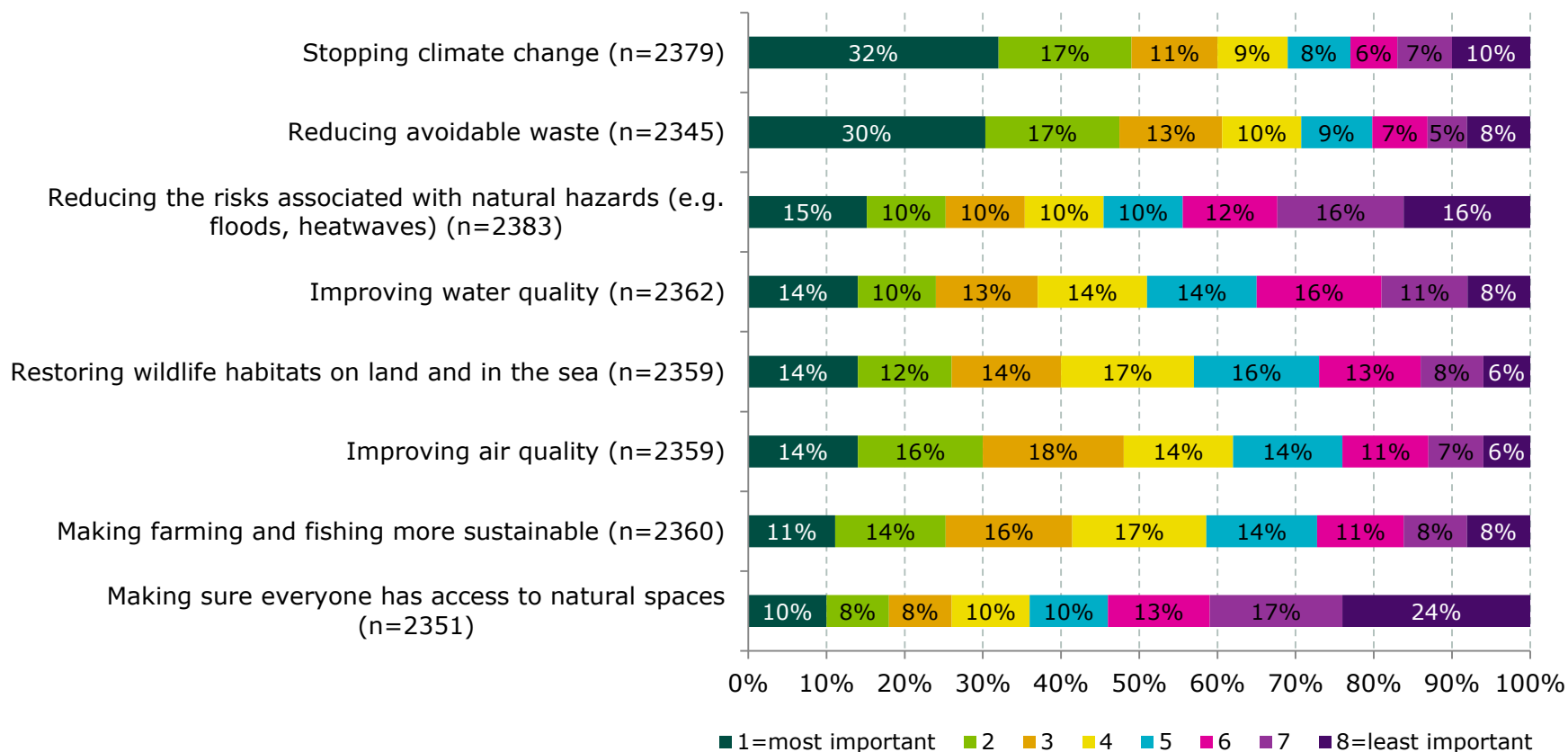
Half of respondents (50%) felt that the UK should pass laws providing a higher level of protection than the current EU laws. 4 in 10 (38%) felt the laws should be providing the same level of protection as the current laws.



Base: 2528 respondents. Balance: no response

B3. Many issues related to protecting the environment in the UK are currently covered by European Union laws and regulations. When the UK leaves the EU, these laws and regulations will no longer apply, and the UK will have its own environmental protection laws. Do you think...

The issues that are of most importance when considering which ones could be tackled by any new environmental protection laws that may be introduced are stopping climate change (mentioned as being most important by 32% of respondents) and reducing avoidable waste (30% rate this their number 1 issue).



Base: in brackets. Balance: no response

B4. Here are a list of issues which could be tackled by any new environmental protection laws that may be introduced in the UK. Which are the most and least important (where 1 is most important and 8 is least important)

A range of environmental issues were spontaneously mentioned as other issues which should be considered when introducing new environmental protection laws when the UK leaves the EU including protection of wildlife, reducing reliance on plastics and protecting and improving access to natural areas. The most commonly referenced themes are identified in the table below.

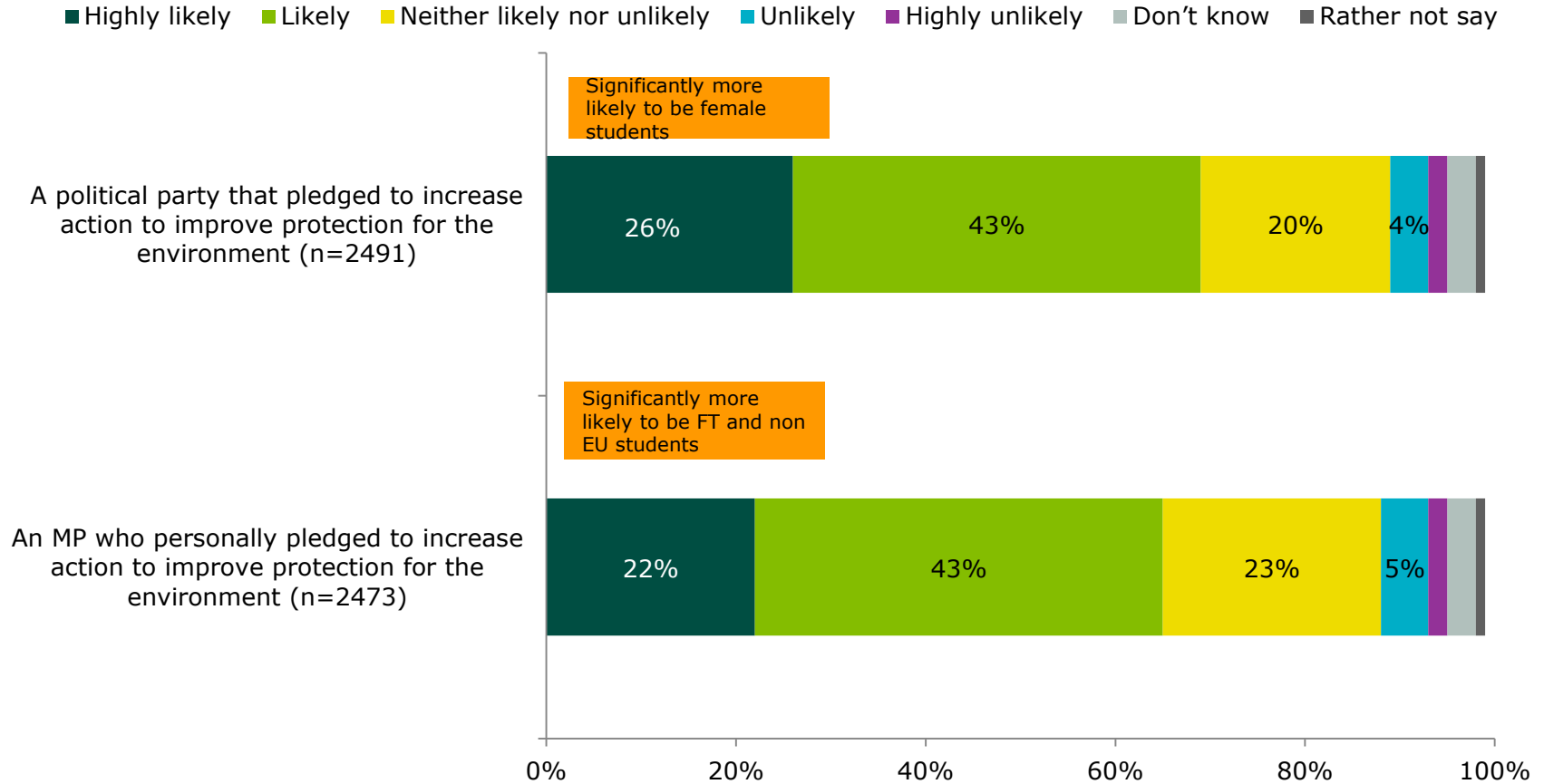
Theme	Number of responses	Examples
Protecting animals and wildlife	81	"Wildlife should also be considered a environmental problem because animals are losing their place to live. Animals are a crucial component to living sustainably and should be protected at all costs. Take a look at most animals/insects and notice the large amount of endangered and threatened species."
Use of plastics / packaging	61	"Stopping plastic carrier bags and changing plastic bottles to cardboard like cartons of juice are contained in and stopping the amount of plastic that is used for an unnecessary reasons."
Protecting and improving access to natural areas	56	"Companies building on brown field sites should be more encouraged rather than building on green field sites which in turn destroys habitats or farmers field and overall contributes to global warming."
Pollution (air, land, water)	52	"Air pollution should be a concern as the air we breath can be very dangerous to ones health."
Alternative energy sources to fossil fuels	49	"Ban fracking and phase out the use of fossil fuels."
Changing food production and diets	45	"Economical and environmentally friendly farming methods with stacking farms including more influence on a vegetable heavy diet- as a nation I think that we eat far too much red meat."

Base: 500 responses have been coded. Balance: No response

B5. What other issues linked to protecting the environment should be included in any new environmental protection laws introduced in the UK after leaving the EU?

Voting intentions and preferences

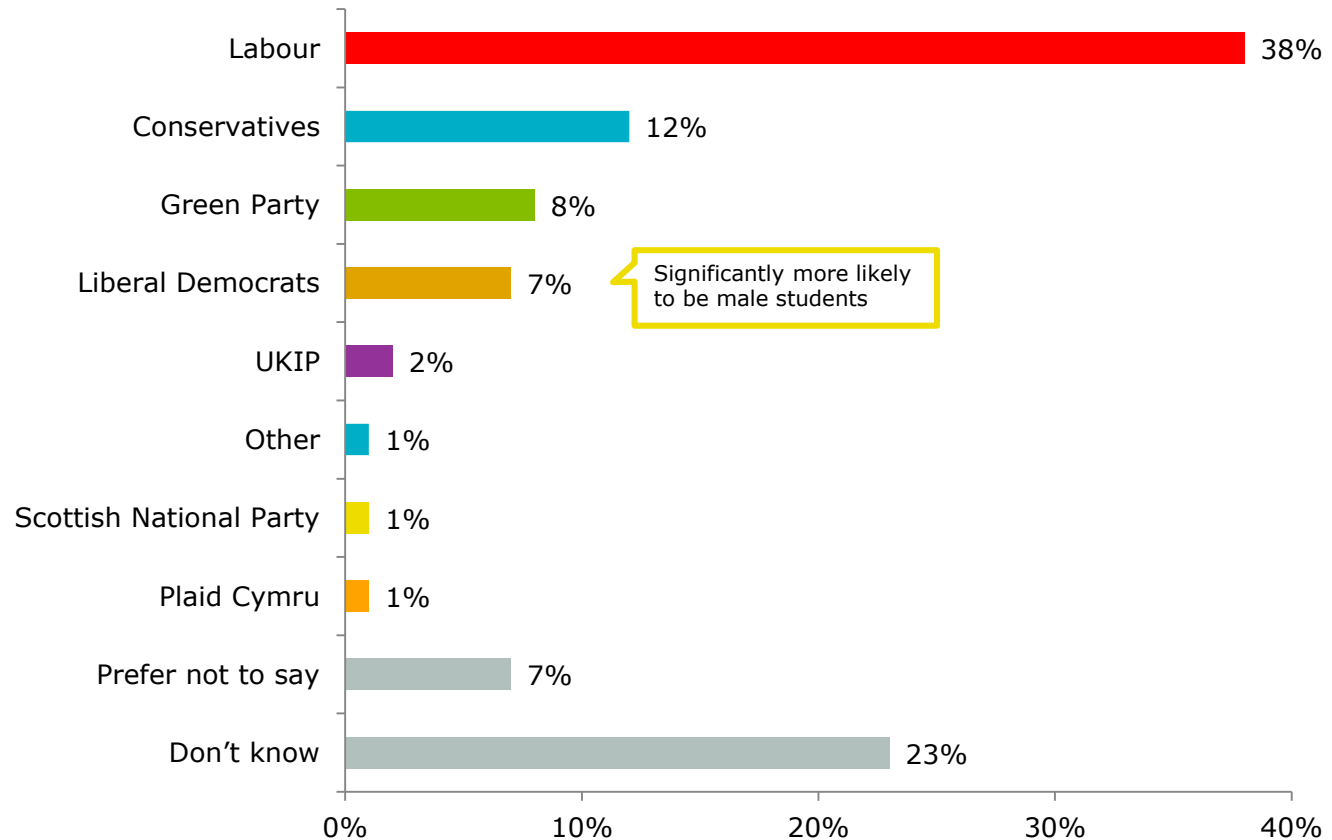
Over 2 in 3 (69%) respondents say they would be highly or very likely to vote for a political party that pledged to increase action to improve protection for the environment. A similar proportion (65%) would vote for an MP who personally pledged to increase action to improve protection for the environment.



Base: in brackets. Balance: no response

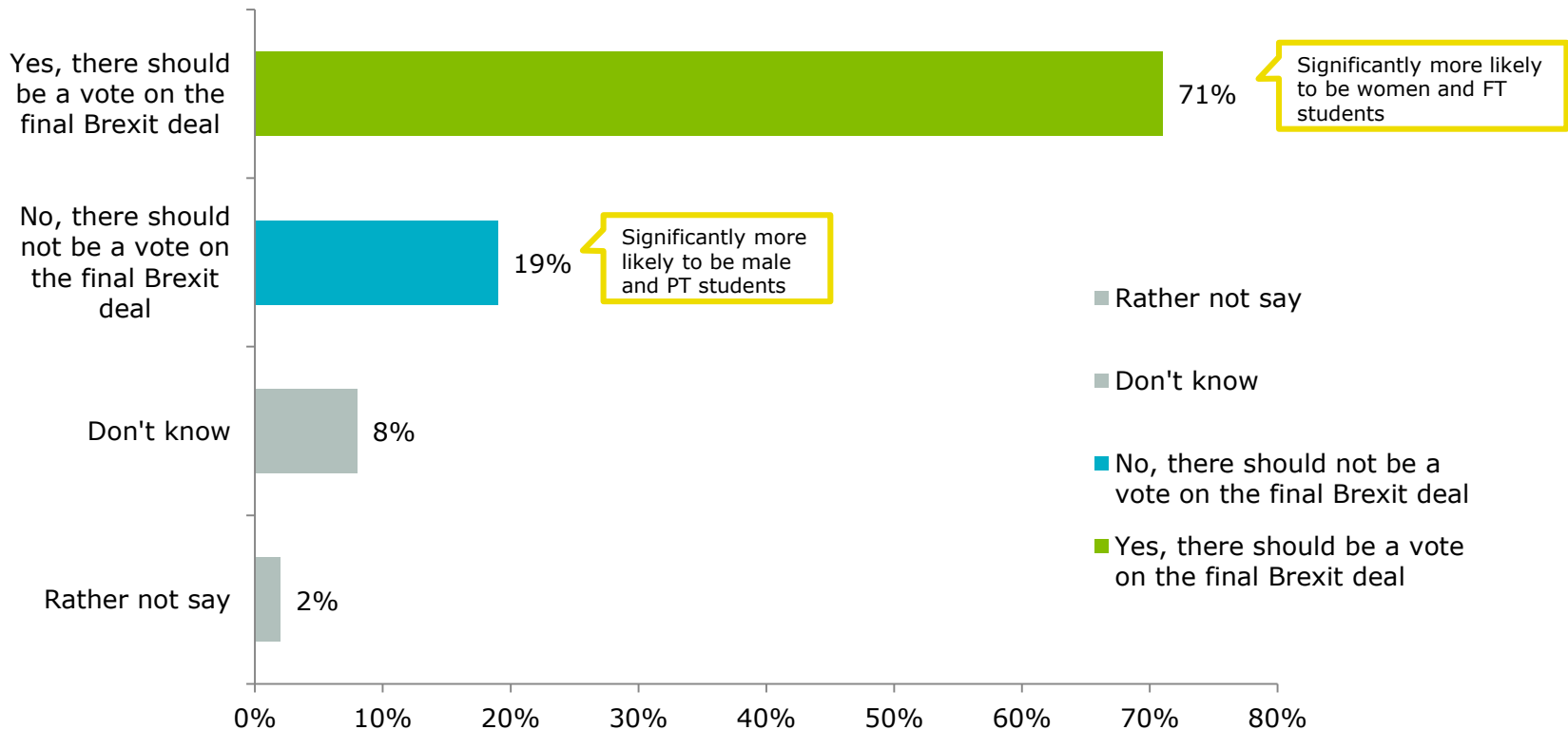
C1. Please tell us how likely, or unlikely, you would be to vote for the following options:

Almost 4 in 10 (38%) said they would vote Labour if a general election were held tomorrow. 12% would vote Conservative. However, a quarter (23%) are uncertain who they would vote for.



Base: 2523 respondents. Balance: no response

Almost three quarters (71%) agreed that there should be a vote on the final Brexit deal. 20% however, said they should not be a vote on the final Brexit deal.

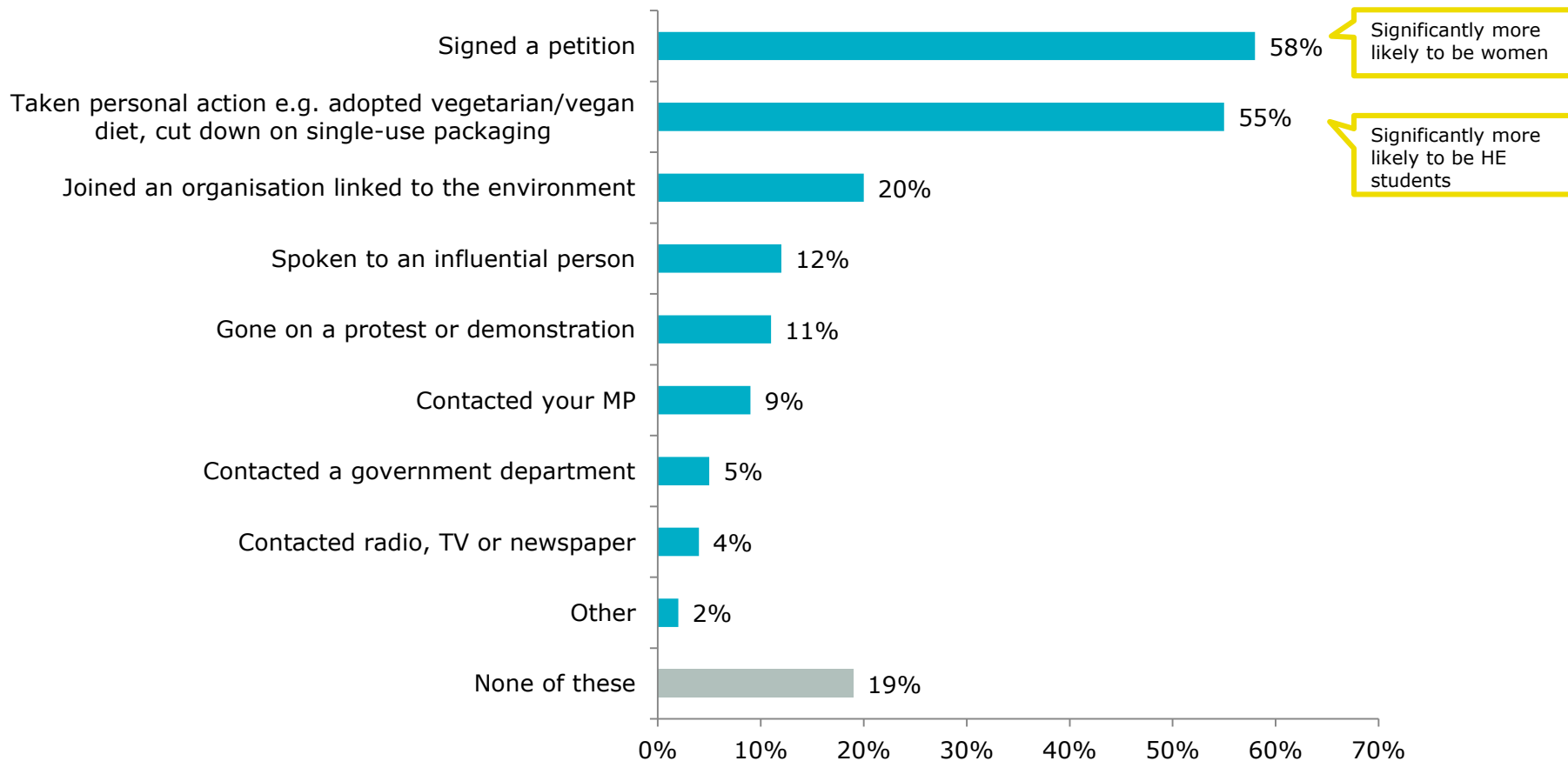


Base: 2522 respondents. Balance: no response

C3. Do you think the public should or should not be given a vote on the final deal for Britain's exit from the EU once it has been agreed?

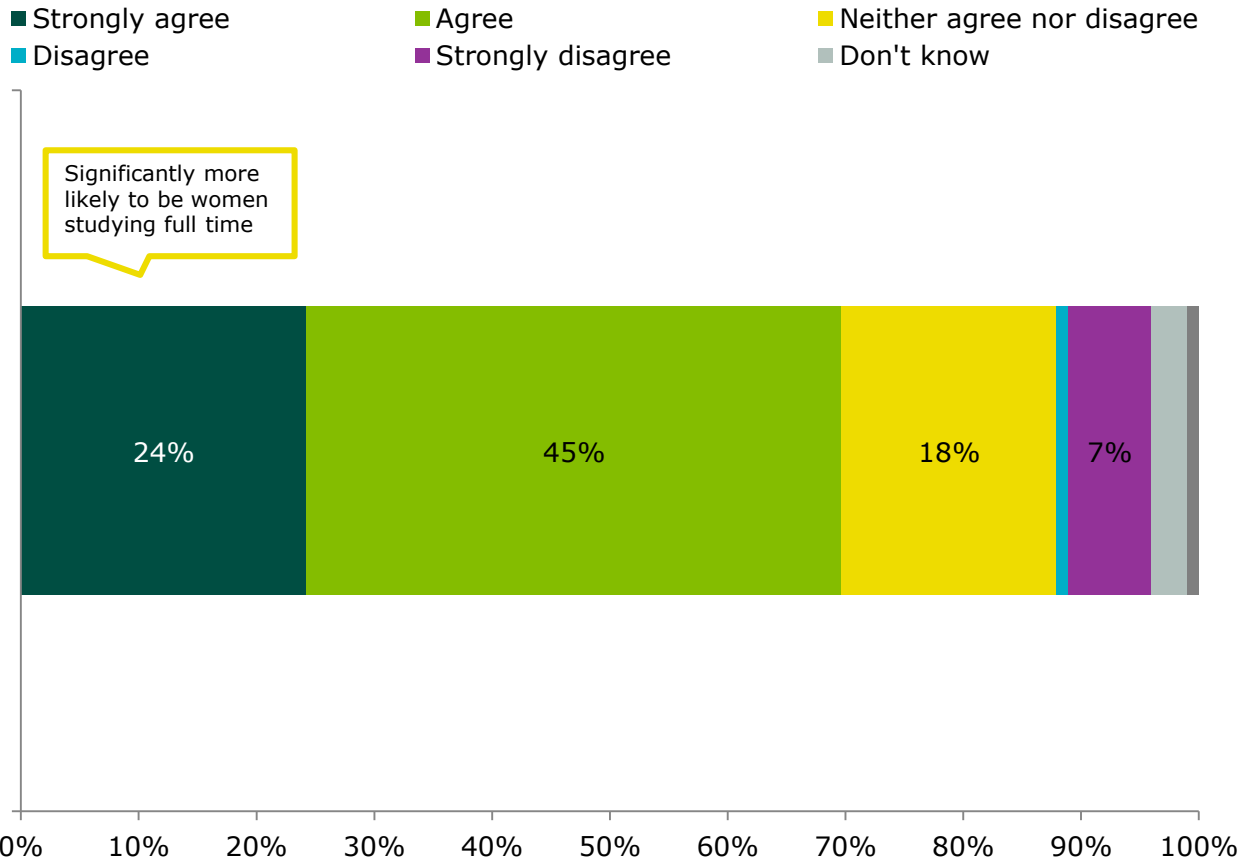
Environmental engagement

Almost 6 in 10 respondents say they had signed a petition to try and help protect the environment (58%), a similar proportion (55%) had taken personal action (e.g. adopting a vegetarian/vegan diet, or cutting down on single-use packaging).



Base: 2523 respondents. Balance: no response

7 in 10 (69%) agreed that there should be more opportunities to take action to help protect the environment.

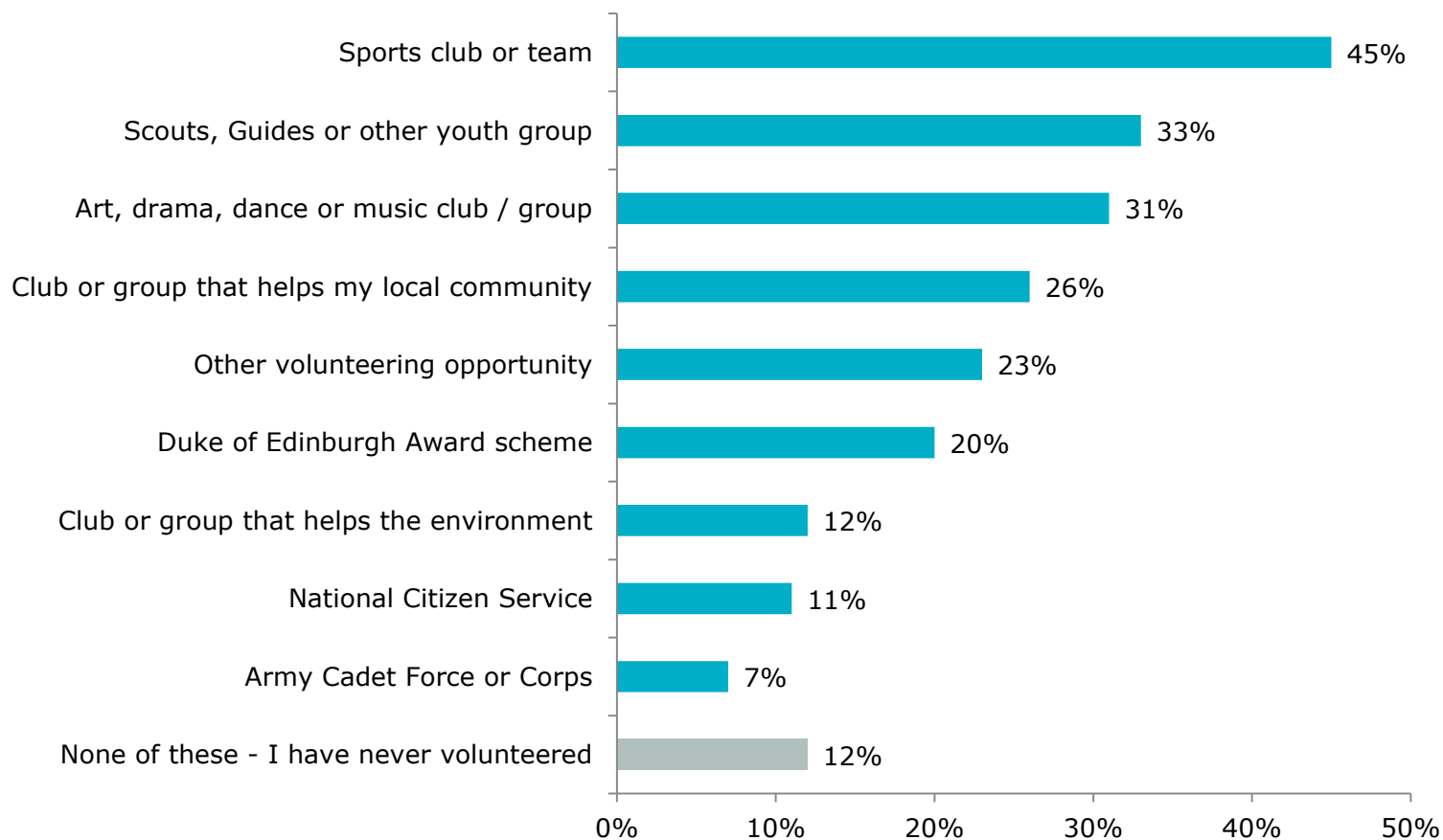


“There should be more opportunities for people like me to take action to help protect the environment.”

Base: 2521 respondents. Balance: no response

**D2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
“There should be more opportunities for people like me to take action to help protect the environment.”**

1 in 8 (12%) respondents say they do not participate in any volunteering activities. Of those who do the most popular activities are sports clubs or teams (45%), Scouts, Guides or other youth groups (33%) and art, drama, dance or music club/groups (31%).



Base: 2512 respondents. Balance: no response

D3. What volunteering activities, if any, have you ever taken part in?

Please think only about volunteering you have completed outside of formal school, college or university hours

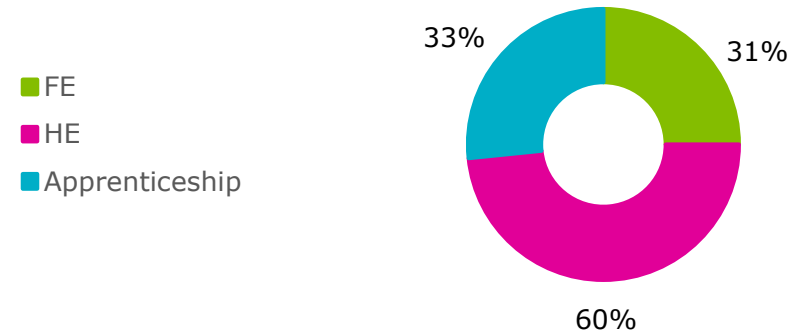
Demographics

Key demographics & characteristics

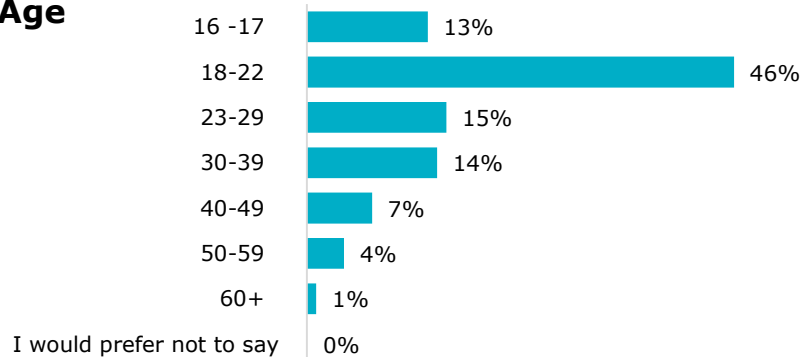
Gender



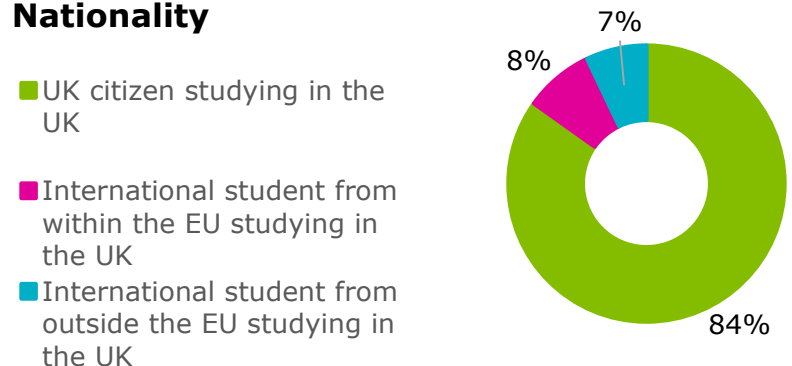
Level of study



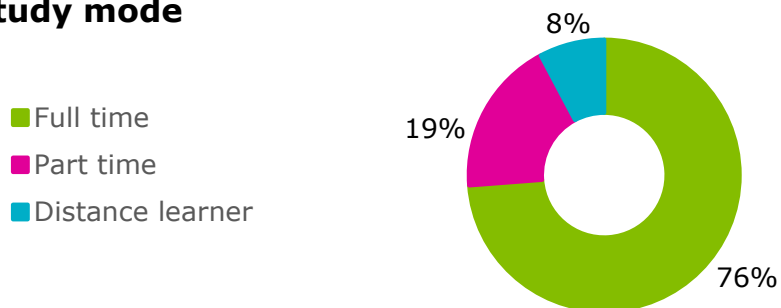
Age



Nationality



Study mode



Key demographics & characteristics: Study location

Region	Percentage
North East	4%
North West	10%
Yorkshire and the Humber	8%
East Midlands	7%
West Midlands	10%
London	17%
East of England	4%
South West	15%
South East	15%
Scotland	3%
Wales	6%
Northern Ireland	0%



Student Opinion: Environment Act