

Comms Brexit Campaign

December 2018

NUS Insight

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Summary of findings

Key Findings

Brexit and the 2016 Referendum:

- Just over half of respondents (54%) said they disagreed that the decision to leave the EU was the result of a democratic process which accurately reflected the views of the public. 4 in 10, however, agree with this statement (40%).
- Almost half of respondents (45%) voted to remain in the 2016 Brexit referendum. 1 in 5 (20%) voted to leave. A similar proportion (22%) weren't old enough to vote and 12% didn't vote at all.
- Of those not old enough to vote in the 2016 referendum 3 in 4 (73%) said they would have voted to remain, a fifth (22%) would have voted to leave.
- The main reasons for respondents saying they voted to remain was because they felt we are stronger being part of the EU and it benefits the country to stay. There were also comments about how it was important to stay for economical and financial reasons, there would be better working opportunities and free movement across Europe.

Key Findings

Brexit and the 2016 Referendum:

- Amongst those voting to leave the key comments were around the need for Britain to govern itself. Other spontaneous comments about voting to leave the EU were focussed on immigration, better trading opportunities across the world and the lack of perceived benefits in staying.
- 6 in 10 respondents (61%) said they would like Brexit to be resolved by staying in the EU. 1 in 4 (24%) would like us to leave with a deal and a further 1 in 10 (9%) would like us to leave without a deal.
- 2 in 3 (66%) said that the public should be given a vote on the final deal for Brexit once it has been agreed. 1 in 4 (26%) disagreed with this and said there should not be a vote.
- Almost half (47%) believe the single biggest impact Brexit will have on them is the end of free movement from the EU. 3 in 10 (28%) feel that Britain no longer being in the Customs Union will impact them.

Key Findings

Brexit and the 2016 Referendum:

- Whilst Jeremy Corbyn/Keir Starmer were completely trusted by 1 in 8 respondents (13%) to resolve Brexit 4 in 10 (41%) said they were not at all trustworthy. Boris Johnson and Jacob Rees Mogg were the least trusted to resolve Brexit (71% saying they were not at all trustworthy).

Key Findings

Impact of Brexit on students:

- Few respondents (6%) believed that the final Brexit deal would deliver a good deal for students. 1 in 3 (34%) had no opinion either way with the remaining 60% feeling Brexit would not be good for students.
- For those who feel the final Brexit deal will deliver a good deal for students the main view was that the benefits would be economic or financial and focussed on the UK, bringing better opportunities.
- The final Brexit deal was not considered to be good for students because it was felt it would be the end of free movement and there would be a loss of funding and reduction in opportunities. It was also considered to be a bad deal for everyone, not just students.
- 2 in 3 respondents (66%) disagreed that students views had been listened to in the Brexit negotiations. Only 1 in 10 (9%) agreed that students were being listened to.

Key Findings

Impact of Brexit on students:

- For those agreeing that they were confident students voices were being heard the main reasons were that students aged over 18 are entitled to vote so were being listened to. There was also a view that the referendum was a democratic process so everyone was being listened to, including students.
- For those disagreeing that students voices were heard the main spontaneous comments focussed around the fact that many current students were ineligible to vote in 2016. There was also a strong feeling that no one ever listens to students as their opinions are not considered to be important.
- The main impacts being seen on campus are feelings of uncertainty about the future, fewer foreign students and hostility towards foreign nationals. However, for some there has been no impact on campus life.

Key Findings

Impact of People's Vote Campaign:

- Whilst 6 in 10 respondents (61%) agree that there should be a people's vote on the final Brexit deal almost 3 in 10 (28%) disagree this should happen. 1 in 10 (11%) are uncertain.
- Of those agreeing there should be a people's vote on the final Brexit deal comments were made about issues with the original vote/lack of information, people want a say in their future and may have changed their minds now they are clearer about what it all means.
- The main view of those saying we should not have a people's vote was that we have already had our say and we need to let the Government get on with sorting out the best deal for the public. It would be undemocratic to keep voting until we got a result we wanted.

Key Findings

Impact of People's Vote Campaign:

- 2 in 3 (66%) said they would vote to remain if there was a people's vote on the final Brexit deal (this rises to 92% amongst those who voted to remain in 2016). 12% of those who voted to leave in the original vote said they would now vote to remain. . Of those not old enough to vote in 2016 23% would vote leave and 64% would vote remain if there was a people's vote.
- 6% of respondents said they had attended the People's Vote and March for the Future in October.
- 1 in 3 (35%) said they were aware of the People's Vote and March and a further quarter (26%) were somewhat aware. 16% had only heard the name. 1 in 4 (24%) had never heard of it.
- Just over half (55%) disagree that following the march the Government will call a People's vote. 1 in 5, however, believe that they will.

Key Findings

Impact of People's Vote Campaign:

- 6 in 10 (62%) agree that Brexit policy would impact how they would vote in a General Election. A further 28% said it would have a slight impact on their voting intentions. 1 in 10 (10%) said that Brexit policy would have no impact on how they would vote.
- 1 in 3 respondents (35%) said they would vote Labour if there was a General Election in the near future. 18% would vote Conservative. 1 in 5 (21%), however, said they didn't know how they would vote.

Introduction

Introduction

Objective, methodology and survey details

Background:

This report presents the findings of a survey amongst HE and FE students about their views on Brexit and its impact on students.

A final sample of 2000 was achieved

Objectives:

- To find out students views on the 2016 Brexit Referendum and the negotiations so far.
- The research was undertaken to help inform NUS campaigns and press releases.

Prize draw of **£250** to encourage response

The survey was advertised via the NUS extra student database between October and December 2018

The survey **took approximately 10-15 minutes** to complete

Introduction

Significant differences

Within the report, a number of questions have been broken down by demographic and compared with others in their demographic grouping. 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 will be highlighted in an orange box throughout the report

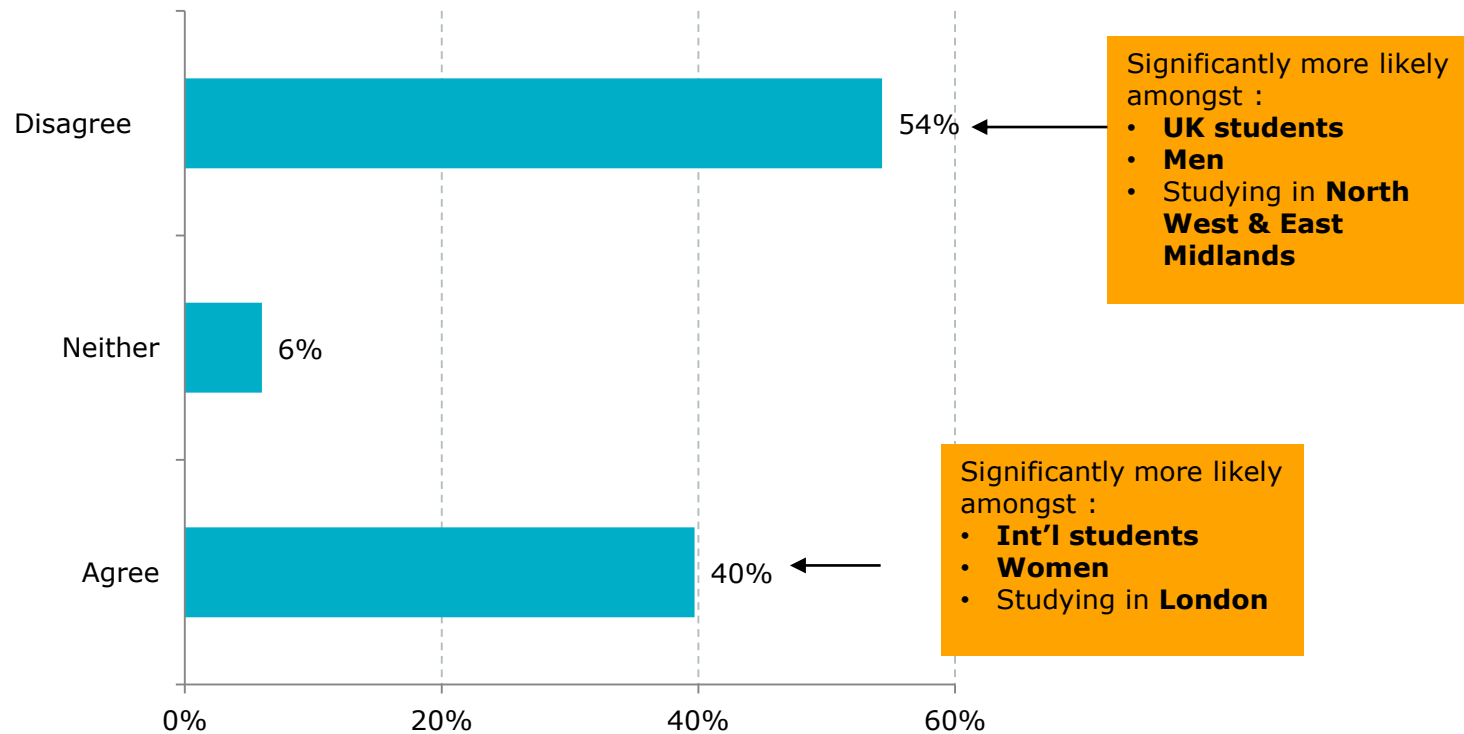


Findings

Brexit and the 2016 Referendum

Just over half of respondents (54%) said they disagreed that the decision to leave the EU was the result of a democratic process which accurately reflected the views of the public. 4 in 10, however, agree with this statement (40%).

“The decision to leave the EU was the result of a democratic voting process which accurately measured the views of the British public.”

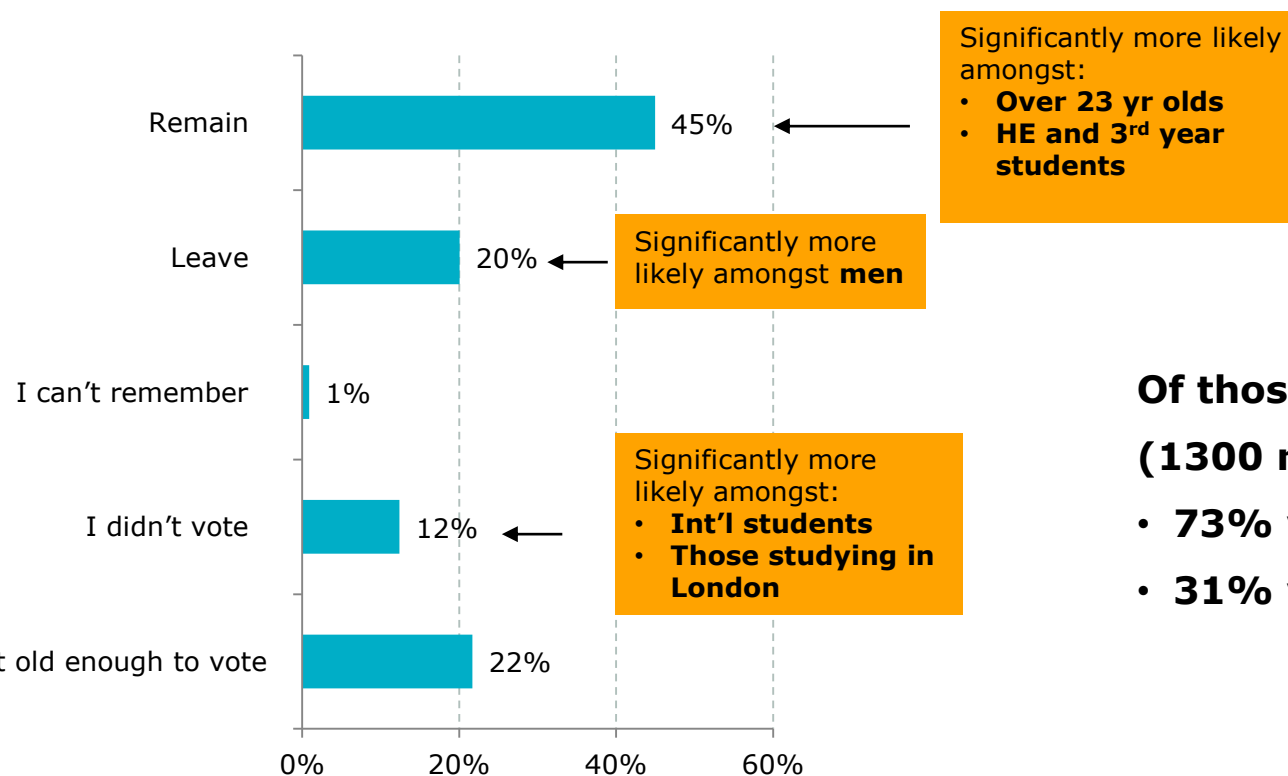


Base: 2000 respondents.

B1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
“The decision to leave the EU was the result of a democratic voting process which accurately measured the views of the British public.”

Almost half of respondents (45%) voted to remain in the 2016 Brexit referendum. 1 in 5 (20%) voted to leave. A similar proportion (22%) weren't old enough to vote and 12% didn't vote at all (potentially owing to the fact that international students may not have been studying in the UK at the time).

Voting in Brexit referendum 2016



**Of those actually voting
(1300 respondents):**

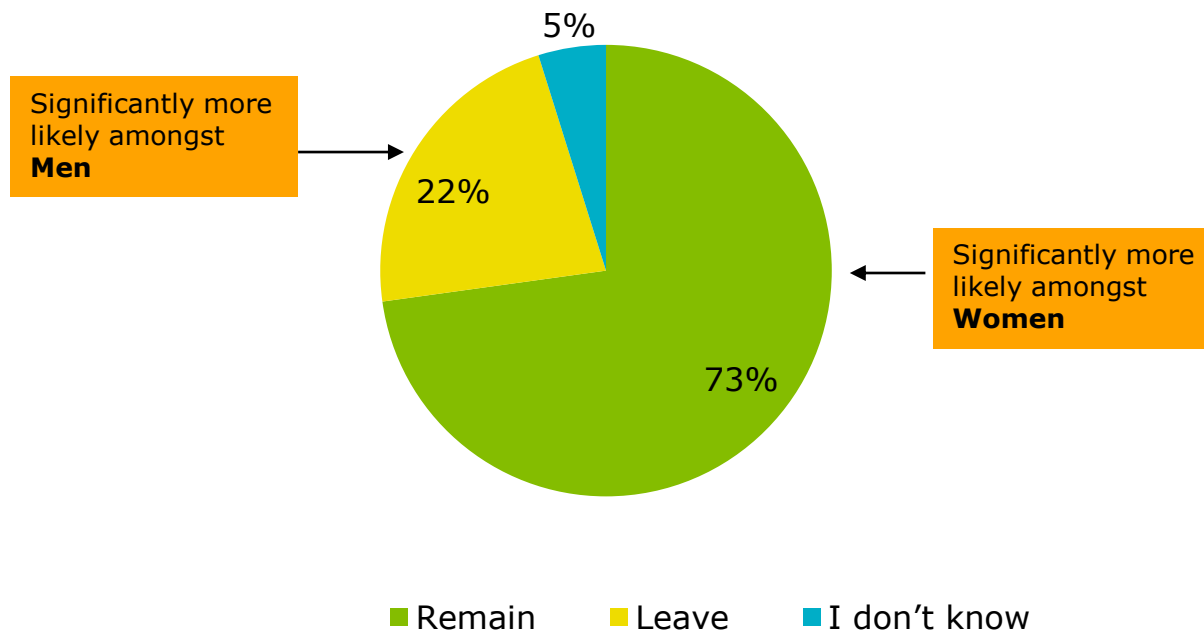
- **73% voted remain**
- **31% voted leave**

Base: 2000 respondents.

B2. How did you vote in the Brexit referendum in 2016?

Of those not old enough to vote in the 2016 referendum 3 in 4 (73%) said they would have voted to remain, a fifth (22%) would have voted to leave.

Voting intentions of those who weren't old enough



Base: 434 respondents Balance: Those who were old enough to vote

B3. If you had been old enough to vote, can you tell us how you would have voted?

The main reasons for respondents saying they voted to remain was because they felt we are stronger being part of the EU and it benefits the country to stay. There were also comments about how it was important to stay for economical and financial reasons, there would be better working opportunities and free movement across Europe.

Reasons for voting REMAIN

Main themes

- **We're stronger together**
- **Beneficial being part of the EU**
- **Economical/financial reasons**
- **Working opportunities/rights**
- **Free movement**

"We are **stronger** as part of a union and have **more chance of changing** things that are not popular from the inside. We have so **many freedoms** we take for granted."

Male, 18-22, HE

"Thought it was better to be in Europe and have the **benefits** than leave Europe and have less opportunities."

Female, 23-29, HE

"The world is a better place when we **work together**. The EU provides **opportunities to live, work and travel** freely with in the Union."

Male, 30-39, Post Grad

"Because we will be in a **weaker economic** position by **leaving** the EU"

Female, 50-59, Post Grad

Amongst those voting to leave the key comments were around the need for Britain to govern itself. Other spontaneous comments about voting to leave the EU were focussed on immigration, better trading opportunities across the world and the lack of perceived benefits in staying.

Reasons for voting LEAVE

Main themes

- **We need to govern ourselves**
- **Immigration reasons**
- **Better trade across the world**
- **No perceived benefits in staying**

*"To re-establish Britain's **self determination and sovereignty**. And **curb** uncontrolled **immigration**."*

Male, 50-59, HE

*"**Britain** is perfectly capable of **making decisions and rules**, and **trading with other countries**, without having to be hand-held by the EU."*

Female, no age given, FE

*"I believe that the UK will be **better off without** many of the **restrictions** that the EU place upon the country."*

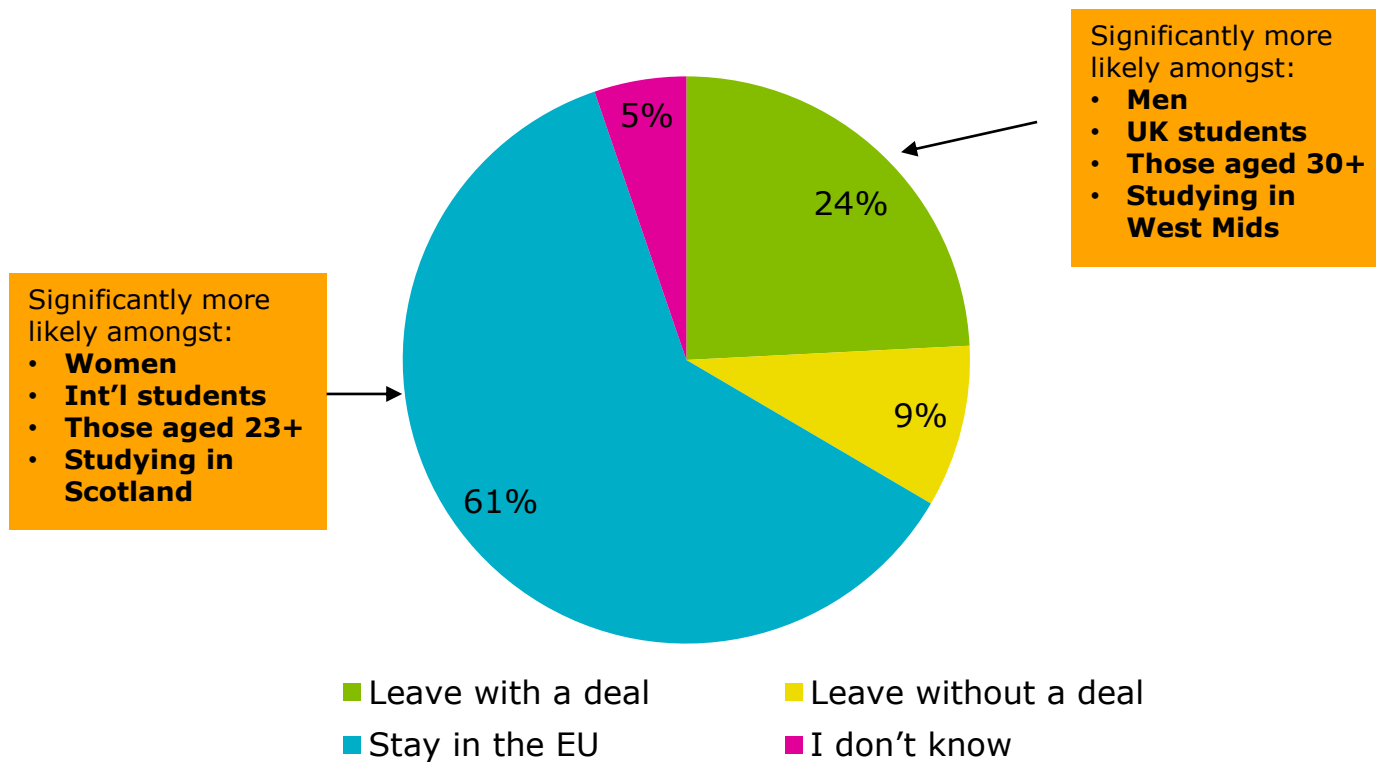
Prefer not to say, 18-22, HE

*"To have a **free market with the world** not just Europe."*

Male, 23-29, HE

6 in 10 respondents (61%) said they would like Brexit to be resolved by staying in the EU. 1 in 4 (24%) would like us to leave with a deal and a further 1 in 10 (9%) would like us to leave without a deal.

Feelings about how Brexit should be resolved

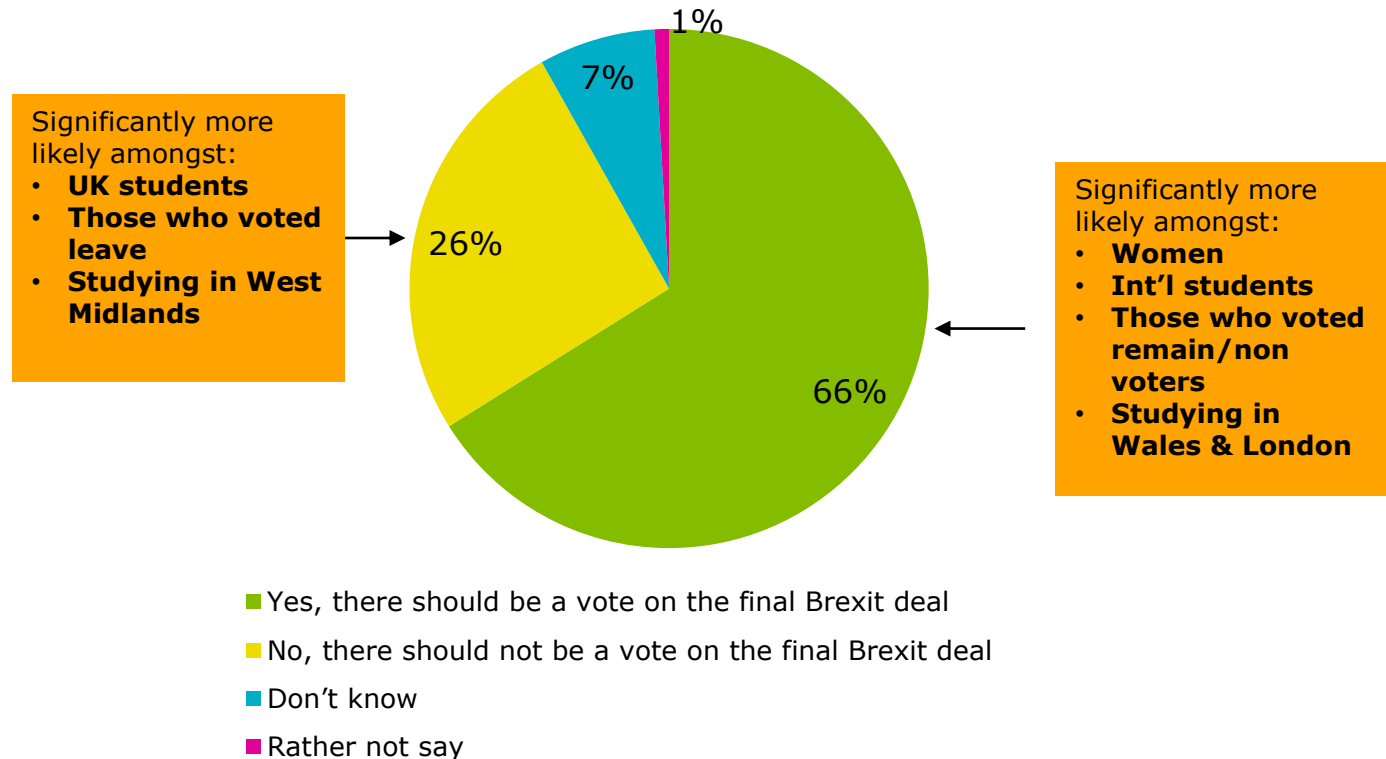


Base: 2000 respondents.

B5. Which of the following best describes how you would like Brexit to be resolved?

2 in 3 (66%) said that the public should be given a vote on the final deal for Brexit once it has been agreed. 1 in 4 (26%) disagreed with this and said there should not be a vote.

Thoughts about the public being given a vote on the final deal for Britain's exit from the EU

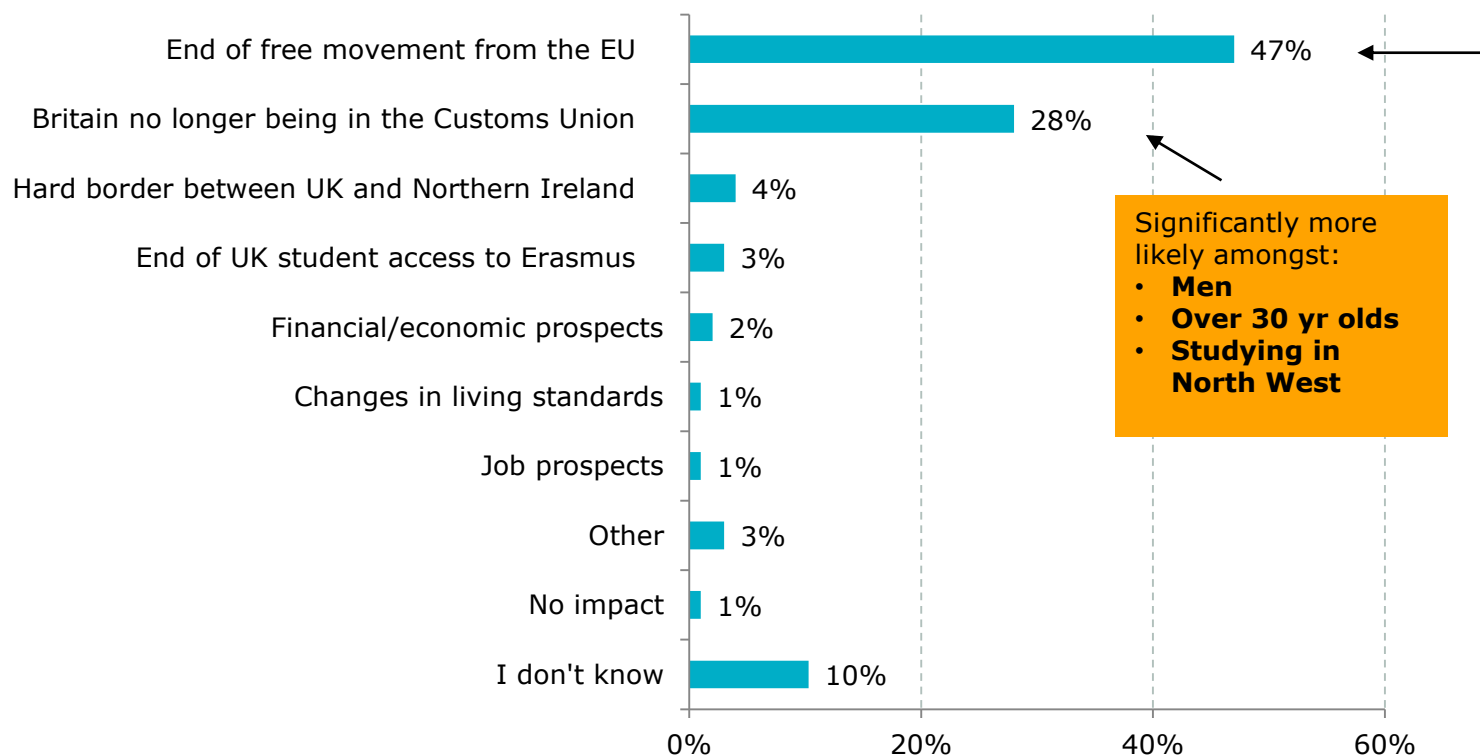


Base: 2000 respondents.

B6. 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?

Almost half (47%) believe the single biggest impact Brexit will have on them is the end of free movement from the EU. 3 in 10 (28%) feel that Britain no longer being in the Customs Union will impact them.

Single biggest impact Brexit will have on your life



Significantly more likely amongst:

- **Women**
- **17 and 23-29 yr olds**
- **Int'l students**
- **Studying in East of England**

Significantly more likely amongst:

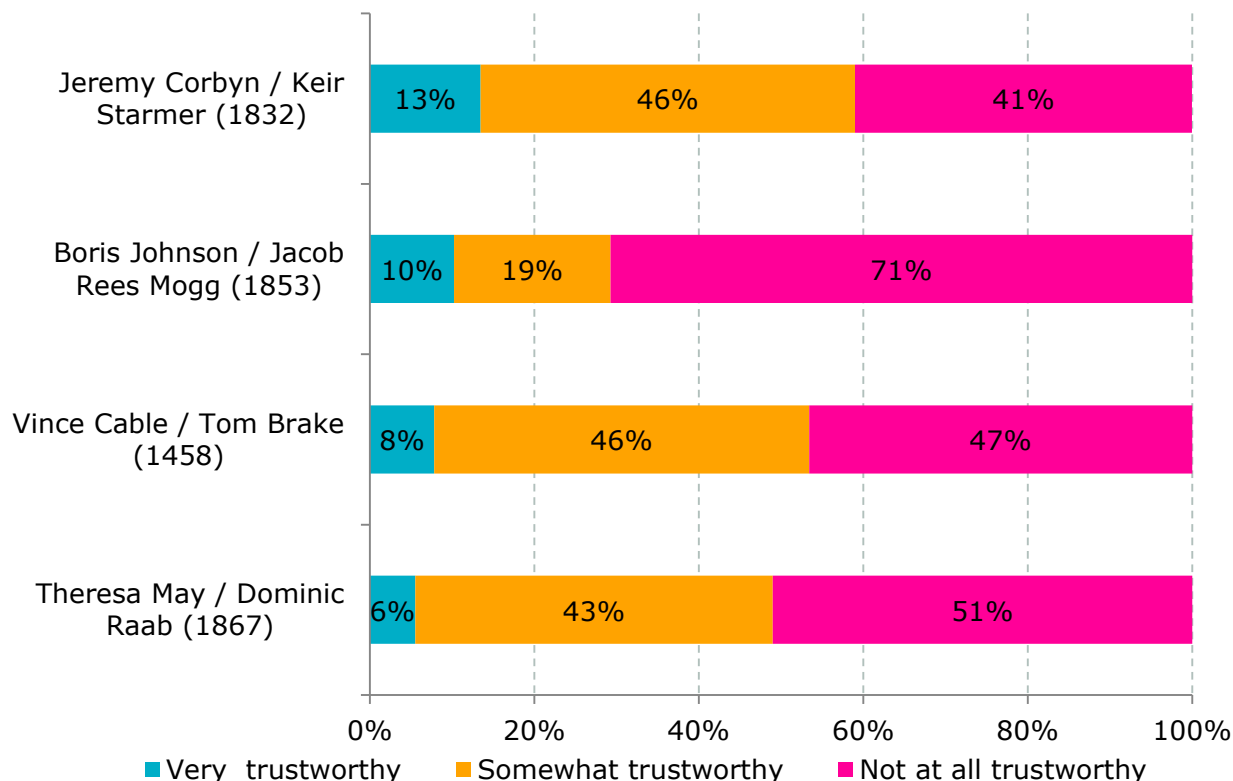
- **Men**
- **Over 30 yr olds**
- **Studying in North West**

Base: 2000 respondents.

B7. Which of the following best describes what you think will be the single biggest impact Brexit will have on your life?

Whilst Jeremy Corbyn/Keir Starmer were completely trusted by 1 in 8 respondents (13%) to resolve Brexit 4 in 10 (41%) said they were not at all trustworthy. Boris Johnson and Jacob Rees Mogg were the least trusted to resolve Brexit (71% saying they were not at all trustworthy).

Trust to resolve Brexit



Jeremy Corbyn/Keir Starmer are least trusted by:

- **Men**
- **Studying in Scotland**

Boris Johnson/Jacob Rees Mogg are least trusted by:

- **Women**
- **Over 30yr olds**
- **Int'l students**
- **HE students**
- **Studying in Scotland**

Vince Cable/Tom Brake are least trusted by:

- **23-29 yr olds**

Theresa May/Dominic Raab are least trusted by:

- **23-29 yr olds**
- **Those with a disability**
- **Studying in Wales & Scotland**

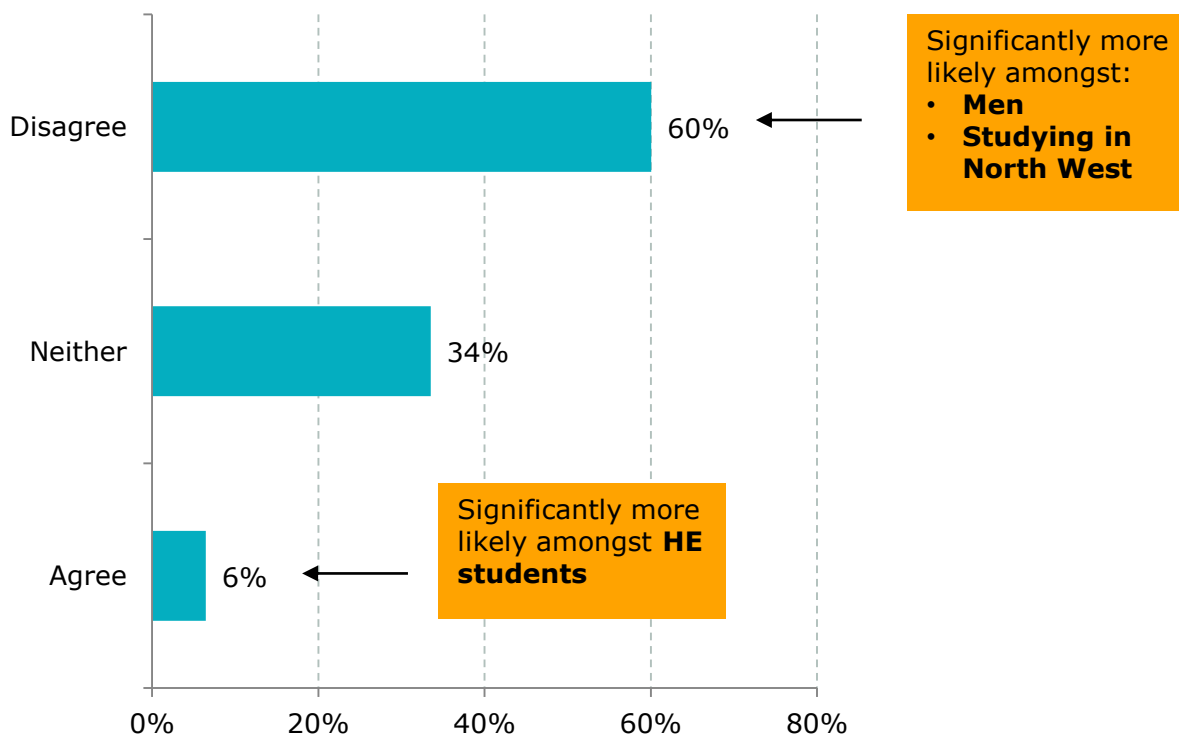
Base: (in brackets). Balance: no response

B8. To what extent would you trust the following to resolve Brexit?

Impact of Brexit on students

Few respondents (6%) believed that the final Brexit deal would deliver a good deal for students. 1 in 3 (34%) had no opinion either way with the remaining 60% feeling Brexit would not be good for students.

“Based on the current negotiations, the final Brexit deal will deliver a good deal for students”



Base: 2000 respondents.

C1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“Based on the current negotiations, the final Brexit deal will deliver a good deal for students”

For those who feel the final Brexit deal will deliver a good deal for students the main view was that the benefits would be economic or financial and focussed on the UK, bringing better opportunities.

Reasons for feeling that the final Brexit deal will deliver a good deal for students

Main themes

- **Economic/financial reasons**
- **Need to focus on the UK**
- **Won't see much difference**
- **Better opportunities**

"More money for funding for us students."

Male, 23-29, Apprentice

"Better investments from other countries through new deals and stronger relationships."

Male, 17, Apprentice

"Too many EU students who take loans and don't pay them back"

Female, 20-21, HE

"British student studying in Britain, degree is still worth the same as it was it. It makes no difference."

Male, 18-22, HE

The final Brexit deal was not considered to be good for students because it was felt it would be the end of free movement and there would be a loss of funding and reduction in opportunities. It was also considered to be a bad deal for everyone, not just students.

Reasons for feeling that the final Brexit deal won't deliver a good deal for students

Main themes

- **End of free movement**
- **Not a good deal for anyone**
- **Loss of funding/resource issues**
- **Reduced opportunities**

"Students will **not be able to study in other European** countries. Neither will they be able to **secure jobs in the EU.**"

Male, 40-49, FE

"**No free movement**, no inter-railing, no exchange programme, **no opportunities.**"

Male, 30-39, Post Grad

"Our university **fees will go up**, and without the **freedom of movement** our ability to get into universities within the EU will increasingly become more **difficult and impractical.**"

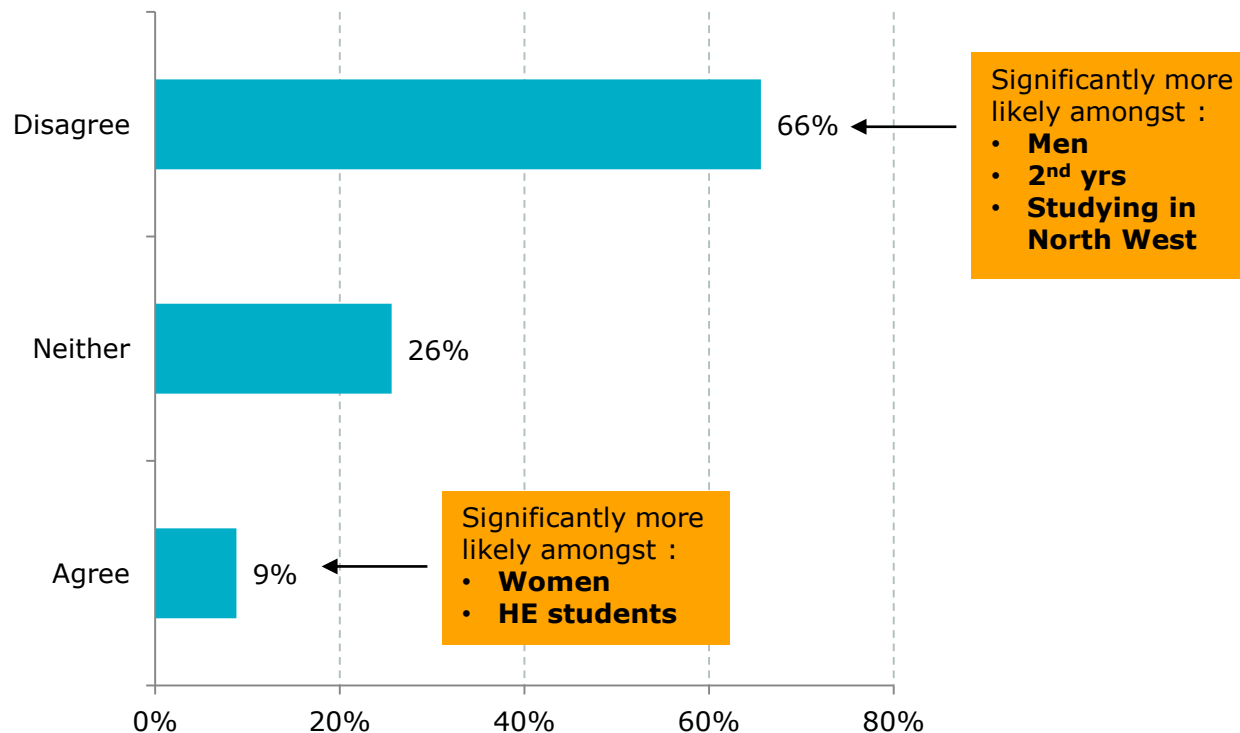
Female, 17, HE

"End of the easy opportunity to study and live abroad - **end of Erasmus.**"

Female, 18-22, FE

2 in 3 respondents (66%) disagreed with the statement that students views had not been listened to in the Brexit negotiations. Only 1 in 10 (9%) agreed that students were being listened to.

"I feel confident that the voices and interests of students like me have been reflected in the Brexit negotiations and decision making"



Base: 2000 respondents.

C3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
"I feel confident that the voices and interests of students like me have been reflected in the Brexit negotiations and decision making"

For those agreeing that they were confident students' voices were being heard the main reasons were that students aged over 18 are entitled to vote so were being listened to. There was also a view that the referendum was a democratic process so everyone was being listened to, including students.

Reasons for agreement with statement: "I feel confident that the voices and interests of students like me have been reflected in the Brexit negotiations and decision making"

Main themes

- **Students had a vote so were listened to**
- **Government was listening to everybody**
- **Students are the future**

*"We **all had a chance to vote**, to voice our decisions. I am happy that the government are able to make decisions based **on everyone's views**."*

Female, 18-22, FE

*"We **are the future**, and those going into further education will be the future. If they want a strong and educated 'workforce' they **have to take students into account**"*

Female, 18-22, HE

*"Because **students, just like everyone else** who was eligible at the time, **had their voices heard** in the 2016 referendum vote."*

Male, 18-22, FE

For those disagreeing that students voices were heard the main spontaneous comments focussed around the fact that many current students were ineligible to vote in 2016. There was also a strong feeling that no one ever listens to students as their opinions are not important.

Reasons for disagreement with statement: "I feel confident that the voices and interests of students like me have been reflected in the Brexit negotiations and decision making"

Main themes

- **Many students were too young to vote**
- **No one ever listens to students**
- **Student opinions are not important**
- **Negotiations only reflect the Governments views**

*"**students** like me' are such a **small minority** I would be surprised if they were represented."*

Male, 18-22, HE

*"A large proportion of current students were **not able to vote** at the time so their interests would not have been recognised. However **students over 18** were given opportunity to vote so therefore had the **same voice as any other person.**"*

Male, 18-22, HE

*"I have seen **nothing to suggest that students** have been even talked about."*

Male, 18-22, HE

*"Decision making is currently based on party politics, and **not focussed on the needs of people.**"*

Female, 60+, FE

The main impacts being seen on campus are feelings of uncertainty about the future, fewer foreign students and hostility towards foreign nationals. However, for some there has been no impact on campus life.

Feelings about possible impact of Brexit already felt on student campus

Main themes

- **Uncertainty**
- **Fewer foreign students**
- **Hostility/arguments**
- **No difference seen**

*"**Hostility** towards foreign nationals. **Anxiety** about the future, in terms of work and living."*

Female, 18-22, FE

*"**Uncertainty** everywhere. **Concerns** over the job market after graduation. Fear of committing to a chose path. Feelings of **non-Brits being unwelcome** in the UK."*

Non-binary, 40-49, Other

*"**Racial tension. Insecurity** among international students. **Uncertainty** about funding sources."*

Male, 40-49, FE

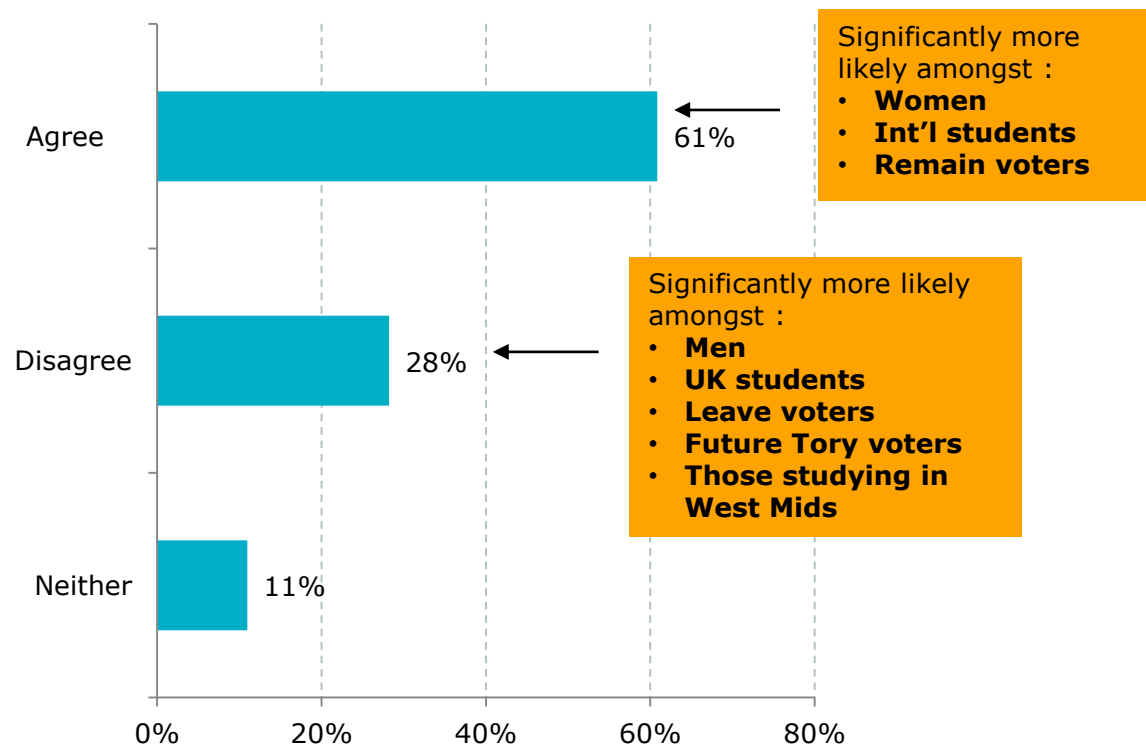
*"**Less EU students, worried** current EU student. Staff and student worried they will **miss on funding / research opportunities**."*

Female, 40-49, HE

Impact of People's Vote Campaign

Whilst 6 in 10 respondents (61%) agree that there should be a people's vote on the final Brexit deal almost 3 in 10 (28%) disagree this should happen. 1 in 10 (11%) are uncertain.

Should there be a people's vote on the final Brexit deal



Base: 2000 respondents.

D1. To what extent do you agree, if at all, that there should be a people's vote on the final Brexit deal?

Of those agreeing there should be a people's vote on the final Brexit deal comments were made about issues with the original vote/lack of information, people want a say in their future and may have changed their minds now they are clearer about what it all means.

Why there should be a people's vote on the final Brexit deal

Main themes

- **There were issues with the original vote**
- **People want a say in their future**
- **People have changed their mind**

*"Because we **never discussed conditions** and the **initial vote had no details.**"*

Female, 30-39, HE

*"There should be a final vote because **people could change their opinions** or more people may feel that they should have voted."*

Female, 17, FE

*"There was so much **incorrect information** around the referendum, I think it only right that people be given the opportunity to have a say on this as it will **affect all of us so significantly.** That's democracy."*

Male, 40-49, FE

*"The **final Brexit deal** was **not what people voted on** at the beginning. As a democracy, there should be a vote as to whether we agree with the terms made."*

Female, 18-22, Apprentice

The main view of those saying we should not have a people's vote was that we have already had our say and we need to let the Government get on with sorting out the best deal for the public. It would be undemocratic to keep voting until we got a result we wanted.

Why there shouldn't be a people's vote on the final Brexit deal

Main themes

- **We've already voted/had our say**
- **Need to let the Government get on with it**
- **Undemocratic**
- **Unfair/controversial**

*"Vote has already been made. **Politicians** are supposedly public servants to **execute in our best interests**"*

Male, no other demographics

*"The **people of the UK** have **made their choice** via the original referendum and it's now up to the Brexit negotiators to put through the best deal for the people that they can."*

Male, 17, FE

*"We had a '**people's vote**' in 2016, there is no need to undermine democracy because a faction of society cannot and will not **respect democracy.**"*

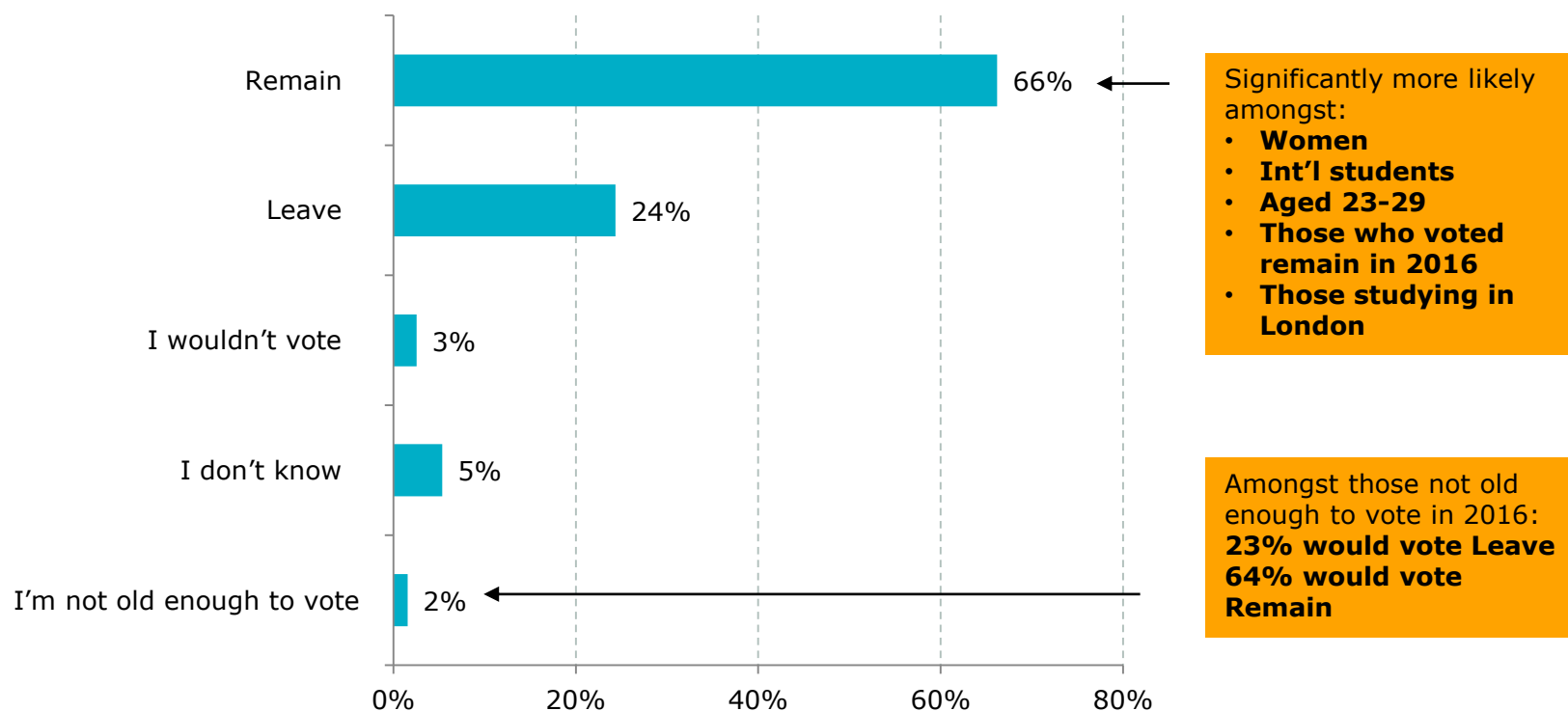
Male, 50-59, Other

*"I think it would set a **dangerous precedent** for **overturning** the outcome of **democratic processes.**"*

Male, 18-22, HE

2 in 3 (66%) said they would vote to remain if there was a people's vote on the final Brexit deal (this rises to 92% amongst those who voted to remain in 2016). 12% of those who voted to leave in the original vote said they would now vote to remain. Of those not old enough to vote in 2016 23% would vote leave and 64% would vote remain if there was a people's vote.

Thoughts if there was a people's vote on the final Brexit deal

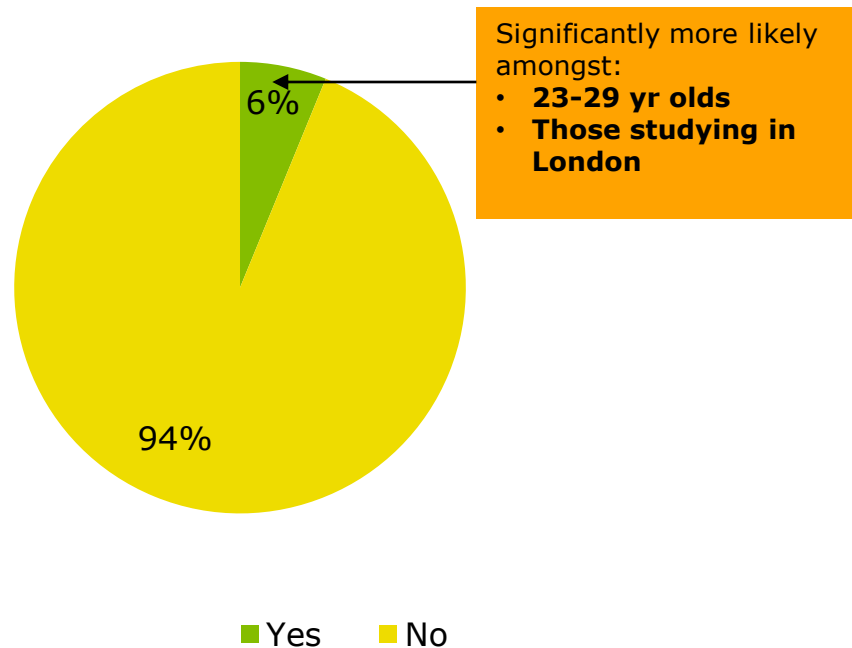


Base: 2000 respondents.

D3. Which of the following would you opt for if there was a people's vote on the final Brexit deal?

6% of respondents said they had attended the People's Vote and March for the Future in October.

Attendance at the People's Vote and Independent March for the Future

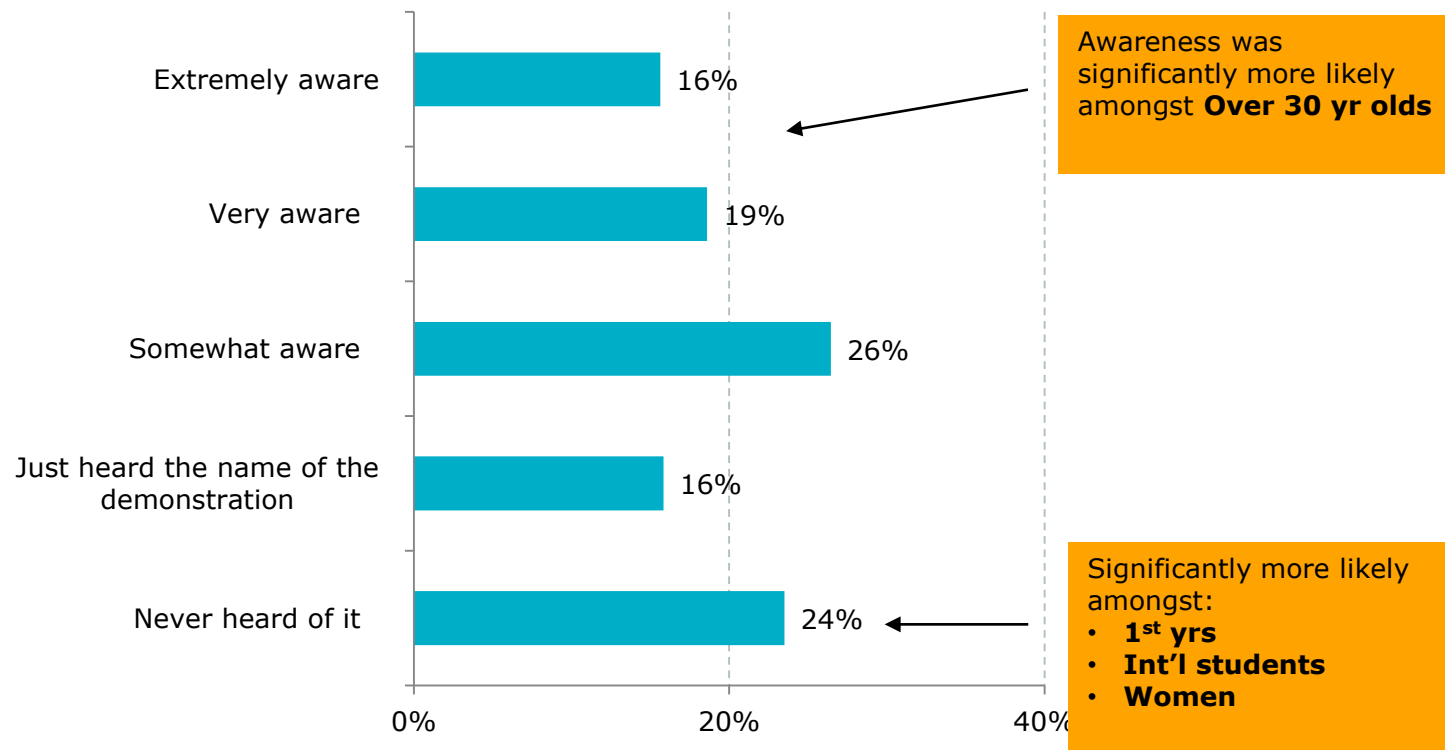


Base: 2000 respondents

D4. Did you attend the People's Vote and Independent March for the Future on Saturday 20th October in London?

1 in 3 (35%) said they were aware of the People's Vote and March and a further quarter (26%) were somewhat aware. 16% had only heard the name. 1 in 4 (24%) had never heard of it.

Awareness of the People's Vote and Independent March for the Future

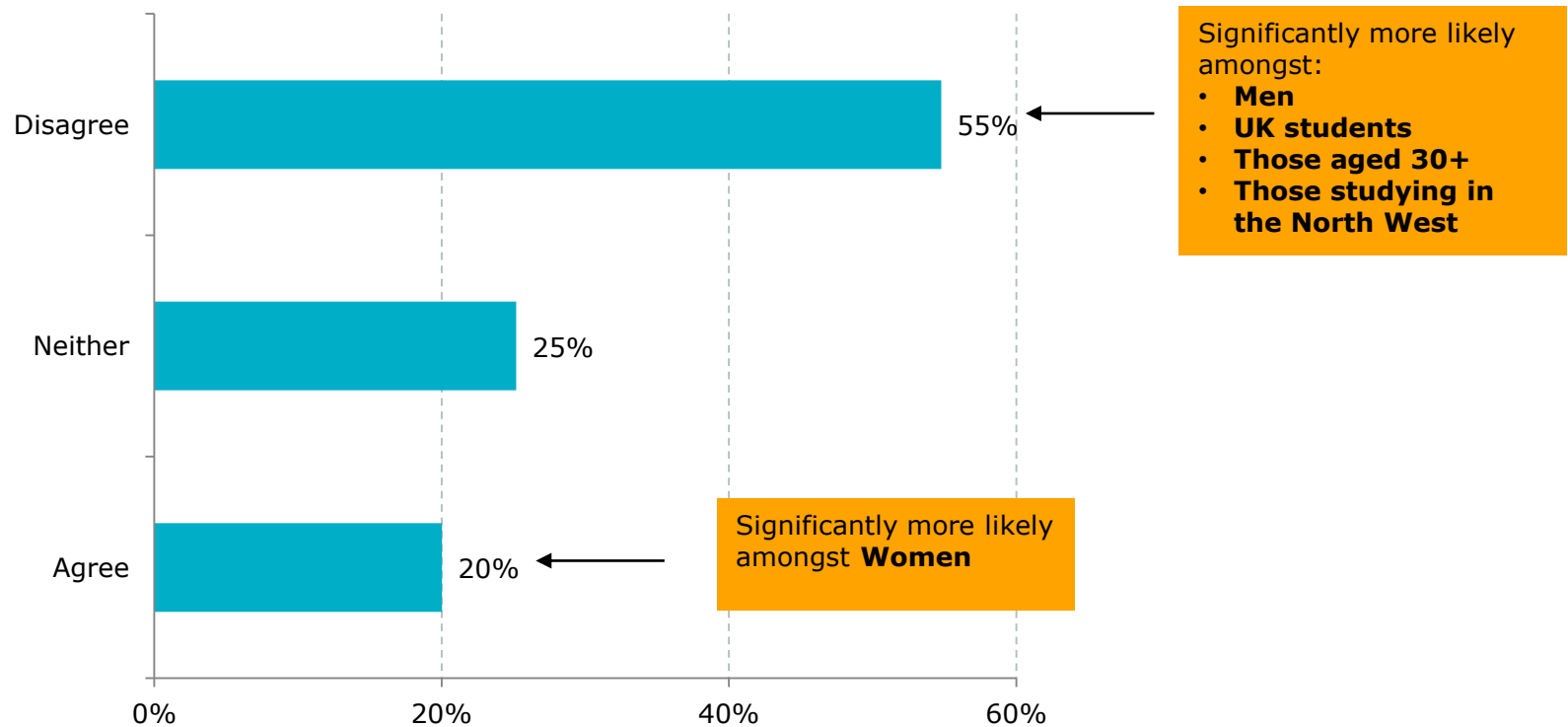


Base: 1876 respondents. Balance: Those who attended the march

D5. To what extent were you aware of the People's Vote and Independent March for the Future?

Just over half (55%) disagree that following the march the Government will call a People's vote. 1 in 5 (20%), however, believe that they will.

"Following 'The People's Vote' march, I think it's more likely the Government will call a People's Vote."



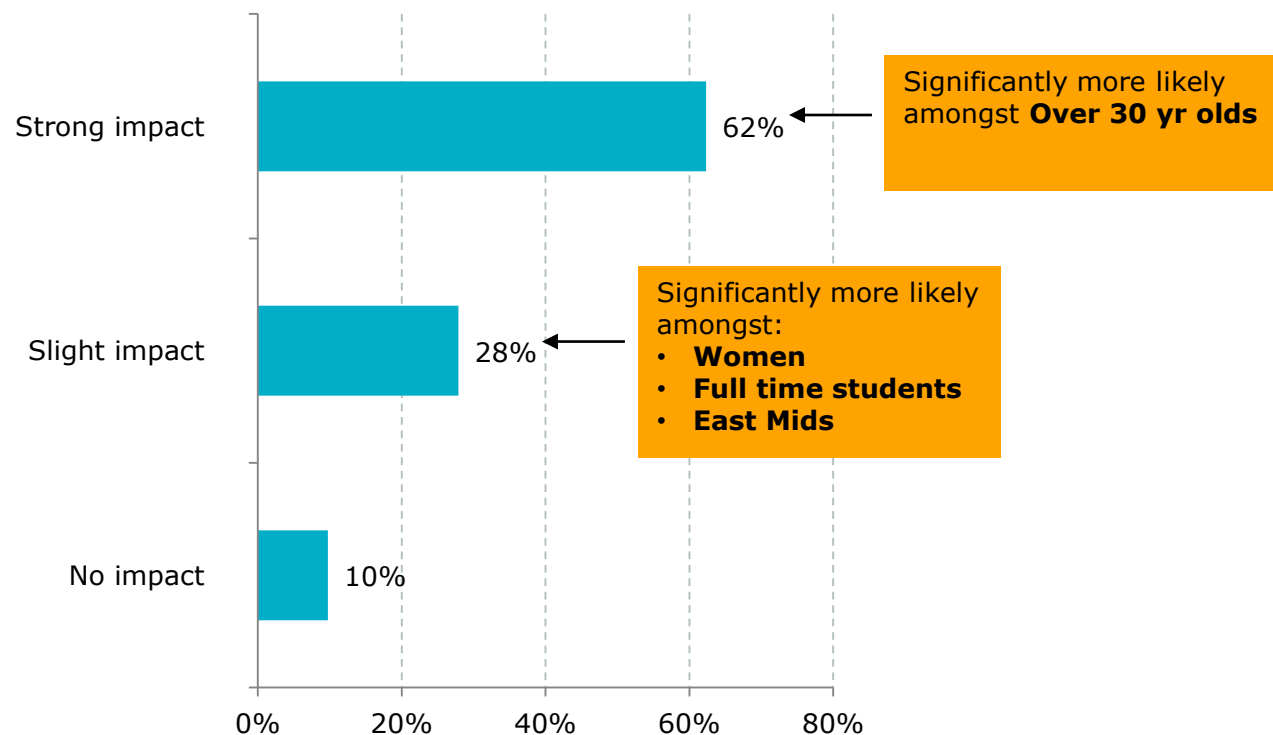
Base: 1258 respondents. Balance: those who didn't attend the march, those who weren't aware of it

D6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

"Following 'The People's Vote' march, I think it's more likely the Government will call a People's Vote."

6 in 10 (62%) agree that Brexit policy would impact how they would vote in a General Election. A further 28% said it would have a slight impact on their voting intentions. 1 in 10 (10%) said that Brexit policy would have no impact on how they would vote.

Impact of Brexit policy on who you would be likely to vote for if there was a General Election

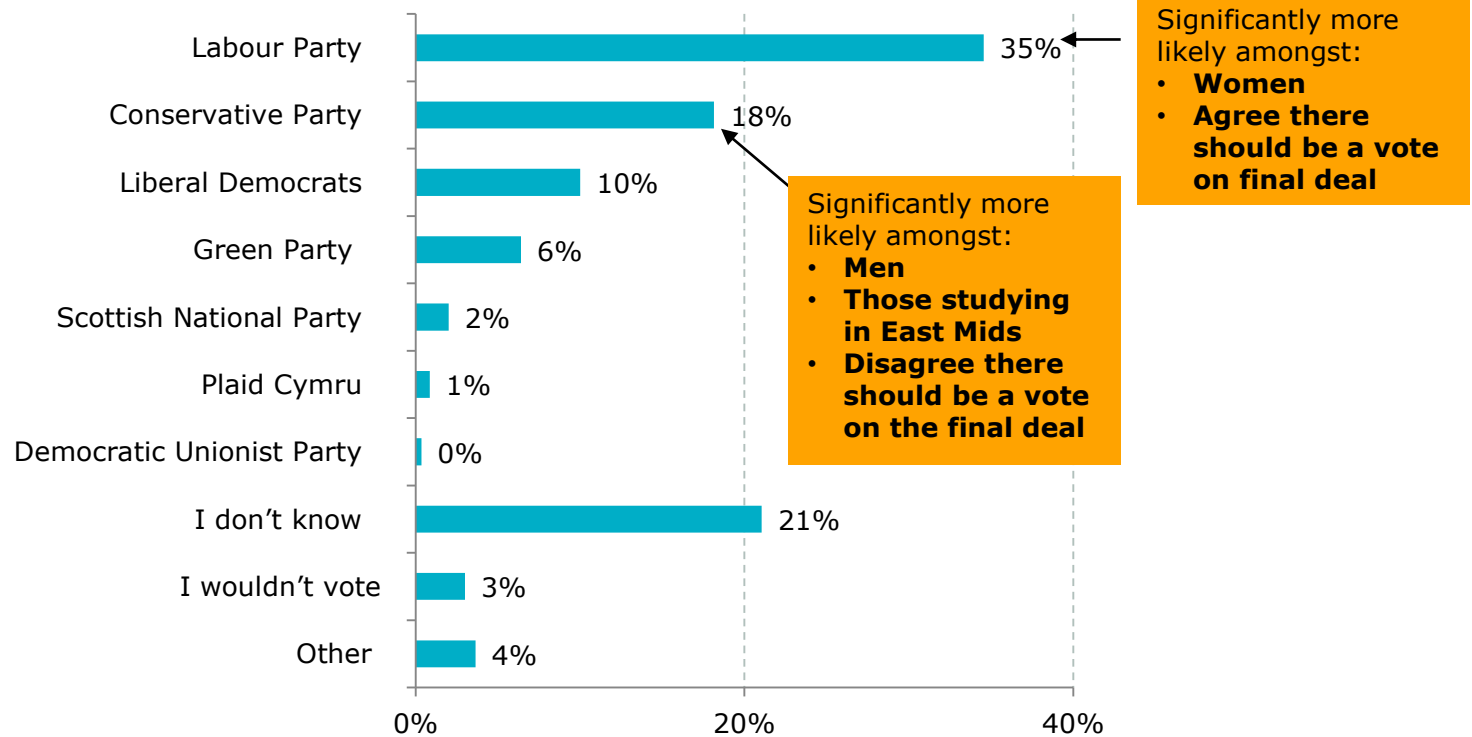


Base: 2000 respondents.

D9. In the event of a General Election, how much of an impact does Brexit policy have on who you would be likely to vote for?

1 in 3 respondents (35%) said they would vote Labour if there was a General Election in the near future. 18% would vote Conservative. 1 in 5 (21%), however, said they didn't know how they would vote.

Voting choice if there was a General Election



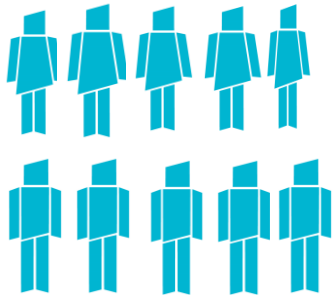
Base: 2000 respondents.

D10. And in the event of an imminent General Election, who would you be likely to vote for?

Demographics

Key demographics & characteristics

Gender



Women **45%**

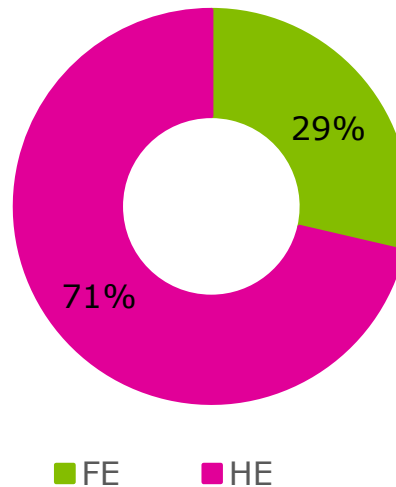
Men **50%**

Age

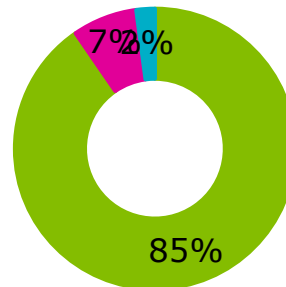
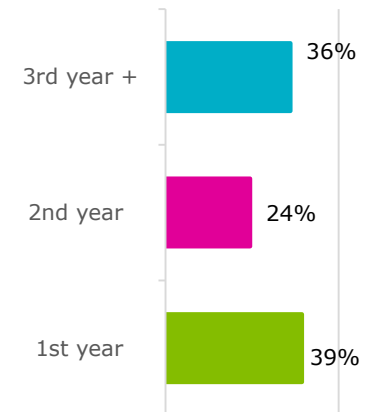


Full time: 58%
Part time: 26%
Distance learner: 17%
Other: 5%

Level of study



Year of study – Undergraduate HE



■ I am a UK citizen studying in the UK

■ I am an international student from within the EU studying in the UK

■ I am an international student from outside the EU studying in the UK

Key demographics & characteristics

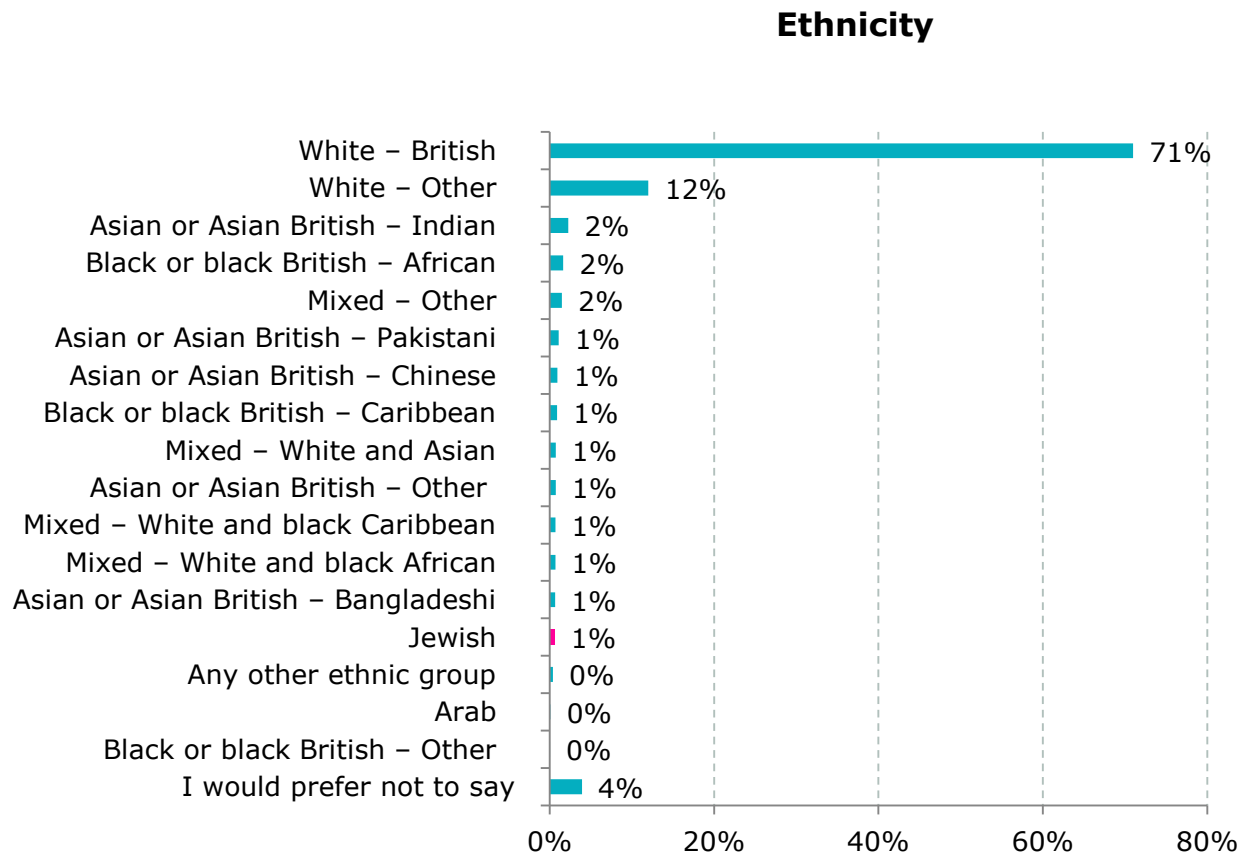
Region	Percentage
North East	4%
North West	9%
Yorkshire and the Humber	9%
East Midlands	8%
West Midlands	10%
London	15%
East of England	6%
South West	14%
South East	15%
Scotland	5%
Wales	5%
Northern Ireland	0.7%



Base: 2000 respondents.

A3. In which region do you study?

Key demographics & characteristics

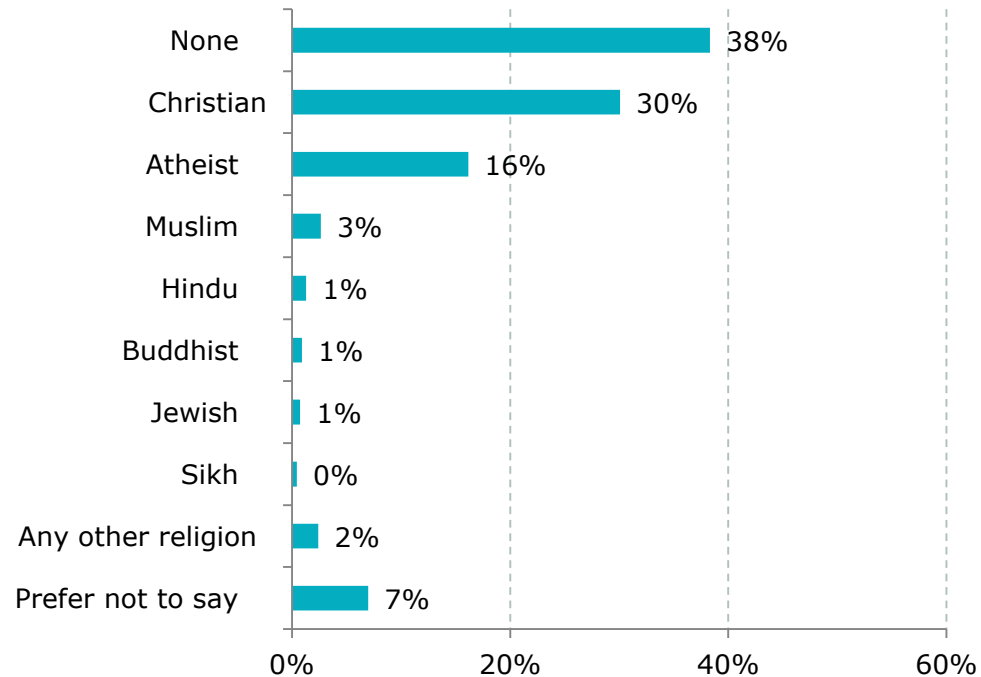


Base: 1999 respondents. Balance : no response

E7. Which of the following best describes your ethnic group?

Key demographics & characteristics

Religion, faith or belief

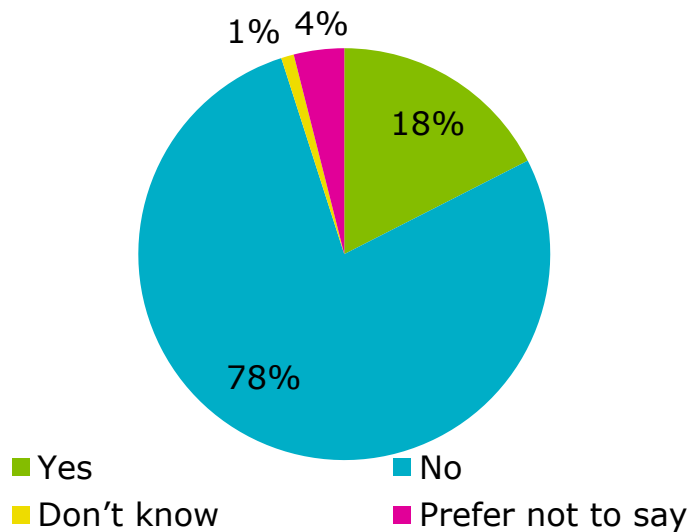


Base: 2000 respondents.

K12. What is your religion, faith or belief?

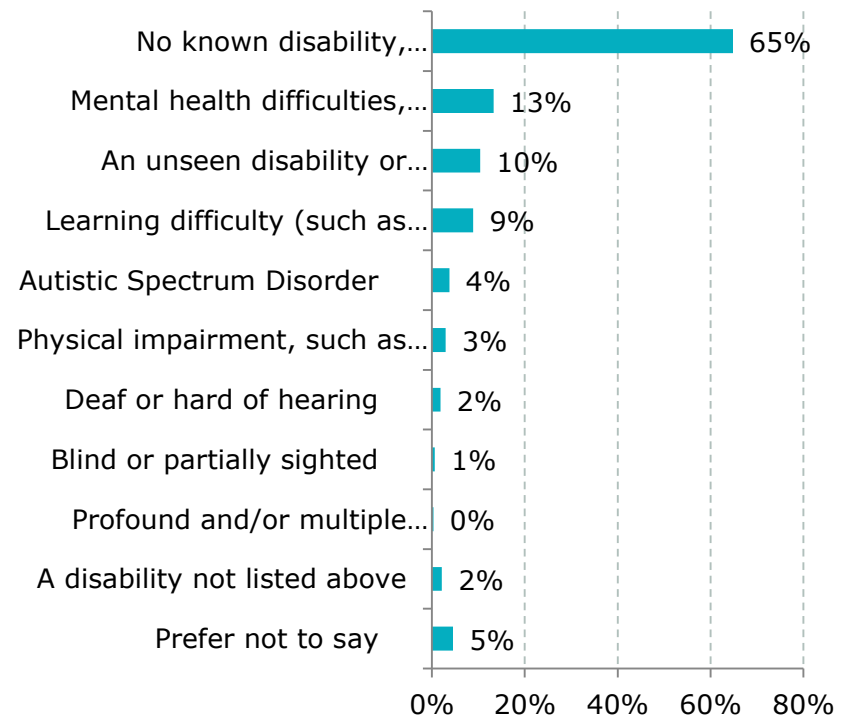
Key demographics & characteristics

Learning disability, other disability, impairment or long-term health condition



Base: 2000 respondents.

E9. Do you consider yourself to have a specific learning disability, other disability, impairment or long-term health condition?



Base: 1350 respondents. Balance: no response

E10. Please describe your disability, impairment or long-term health

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December 2018

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