

Community Pulse, Scotland

Understanding our members'
world – March 2022

Executive Summary

30
responses

The Community Pulse is a longitudinal study of Spoted members on the sustainability, needs, and ambitions of community groups throughout the UK. It aims to inform the sport for development sector about the issues and opportunities facing community sports groups, as well as increasing awareness of funding and resources available for such organisations. It also seeks to help stakeholders make more-informed decisions in relation to grassroots community sport in the UK.

This report provides an analysis of responses from respondents in Scotland. Between **21–28 March 2022, 30 survey responses** were received from groups in Spoted’s network in Scotland. **13 responses (43%) were from groups in the bottom 30% areas of multiple deprivation.** This research builds on Community Pulse consultations throughout 2020 and 2021.

Spoted and its network

Spoted is the UK’s largest network of community groups supporting half a million young people to overcome barriers to reach their full potential. Our role is to empower the local heroes running these groups by providing much needed professional expertise, resources and operational support, free of charge, to help their group survive and young people thrive.

Spoted’s groups work within complex local contexts, often tackling some of society’s biggest challenges. 47% of our groups in the UK are located in the lowest 30% areas of multiple deprivation, and many are volunteer-led and operating on limited budgets – 34% reported an annual turnover of less than £10,000 in the latest UK Pulse.

Key Findings

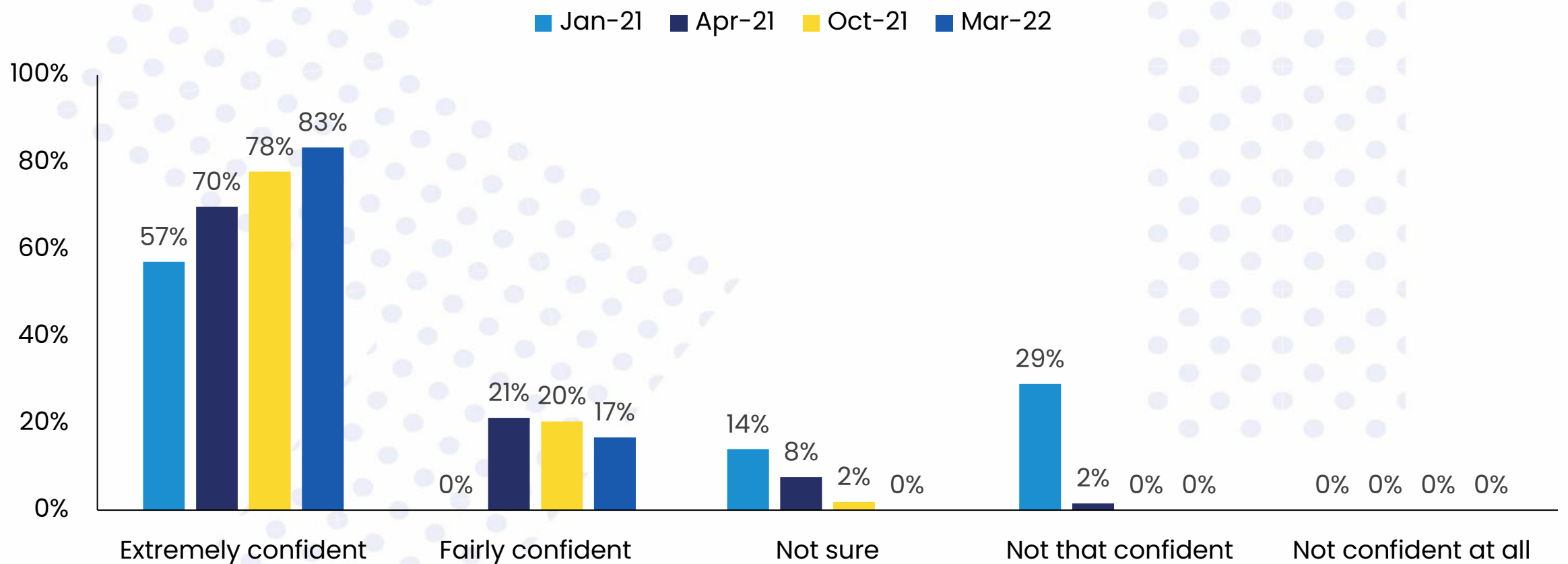
- **Confidence in organisational survival is high** – all respondents are extremely or fairly confident in their group’s survival in the next six months, including 83% being extremely confident.
- **Health and wellbeing is the most common sport for development focus for groups in the year ahead** – 53% of groups have designated this as their focus (more than twice the number compared to the next most cited focus of inequality in sports provision).
- **Securing funding and planning for the future are groups’ top priorities for the next six months** – 77% of respondents cited these as priorities, with engaging new participants also high on groups’ agendas.
- **A lack of opportunities/activities for young people was identified by group leaders as the most significant challenge young people are facing in communities** – 37% of respondents designated these as the most significant issue. This is higher than UK-wide responses, in which 13% of groups reported this as the main issue.
- **Respondents reported lower scores for their young people’s mental health compared to their own and that of their group’s volunteers/staff** – an average of 6.3 (out of 10) for young people compared with 7.9 and 7.0 for respondents and volunteers/staff respectively.
- **Three-quarters of groups have participation levels below capacity and there are indications that participation has not recovered to pre-Covid 19 levels** – 75% of groups are running below capacity, of which nearly two-thirds (65%) report levels being reduced from pre-pandemic levels.
- **Groups are most confident in their knowledge of the challenges facing, and their support for, women and girls** – 80% are fairly or extremely confident of their knowledge of these issues and 87% are fairly or extremely confident in supporting women and girls.
- **Groups are least confident in their knowledge of issues facing young people in the LGBTQ+ community and their support for young people with disabilities** – there are also higher levels of uncertainty among groups around how to support young people in these areas.
- **Concern about the impact of cost of living increases on young people is very high** – 89% of respondents are extremely or fairly concerned about the impact on their young people.
- **41% of respondents reported their groups has made a change to their organisation in response to cost of living increases** – the most frequent has been to reduce membership fees for their young people (50%).
- **Groups are mostly connected to other local community organisations/sport groups** – 100% of respondents reported some form of connection to these types of external organisations.

Survival and turnover

Survival

Confidence in organisational survival has increased slightly from October 2021, with all respondents now having confidence that their organisation will survive in the next six months - 83% of groups are extremely confident in this regard.

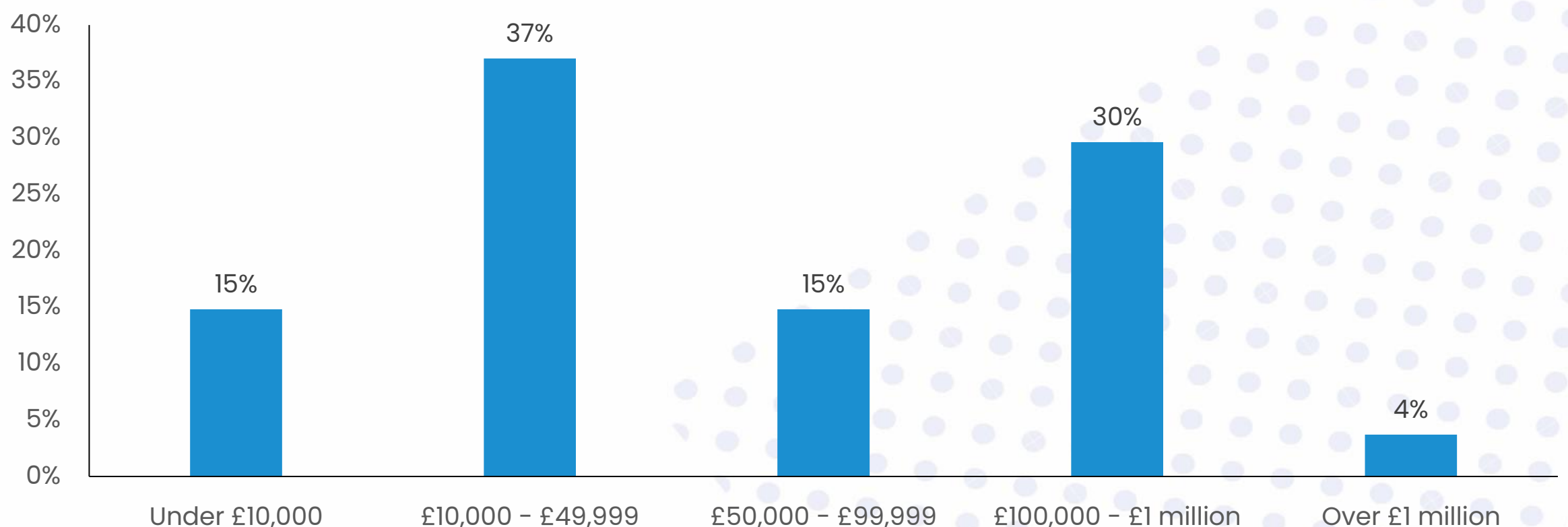
Confidence in organisational survival in the next six months



Turnover

Just over half (52%) of groups responding to Pulse operated on an annual turnover of less than £50,000 for the 2021-2022 financial year. Most (37%) have a turnover of between £10,000 and £49,999.

Annual turnover for the current financial year (2021-2022)

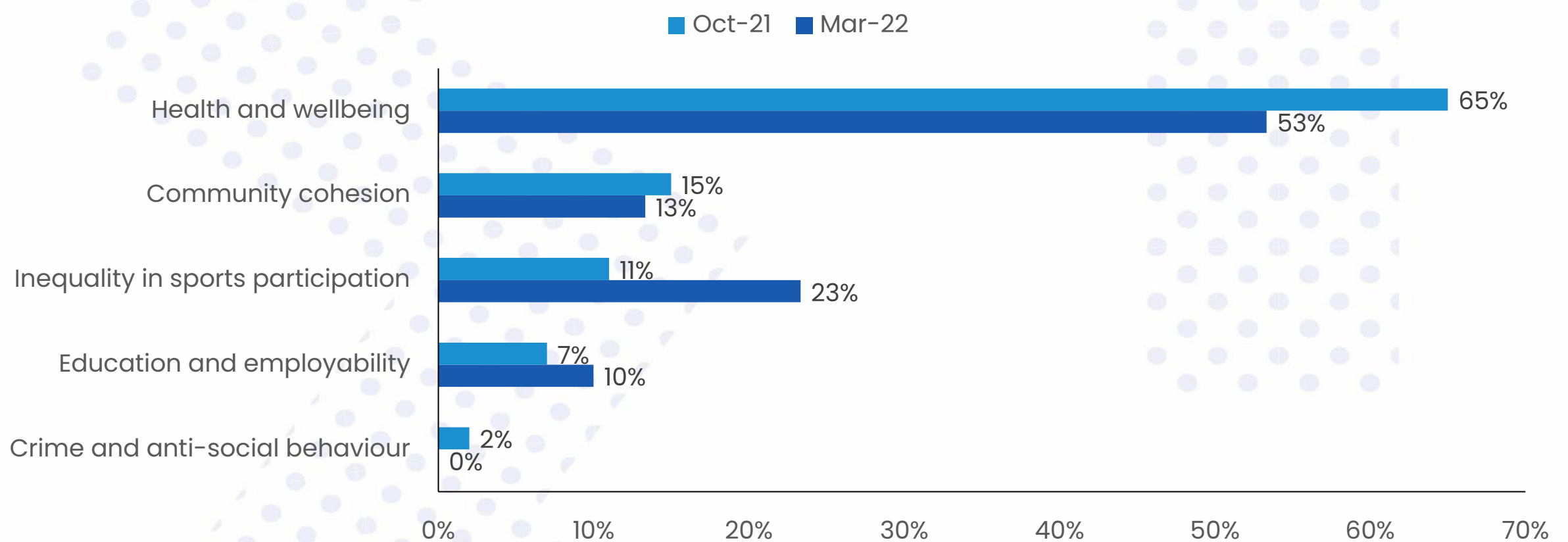


Sport for development focus and organisational priorities

Sport for development focus for the next year

Health and wellbeing (53%) remains the most reported sport for development focus among groups for the year ahead. The next most common primary focus is inequality in sports participation (23%), followed by community cohesion (13%).

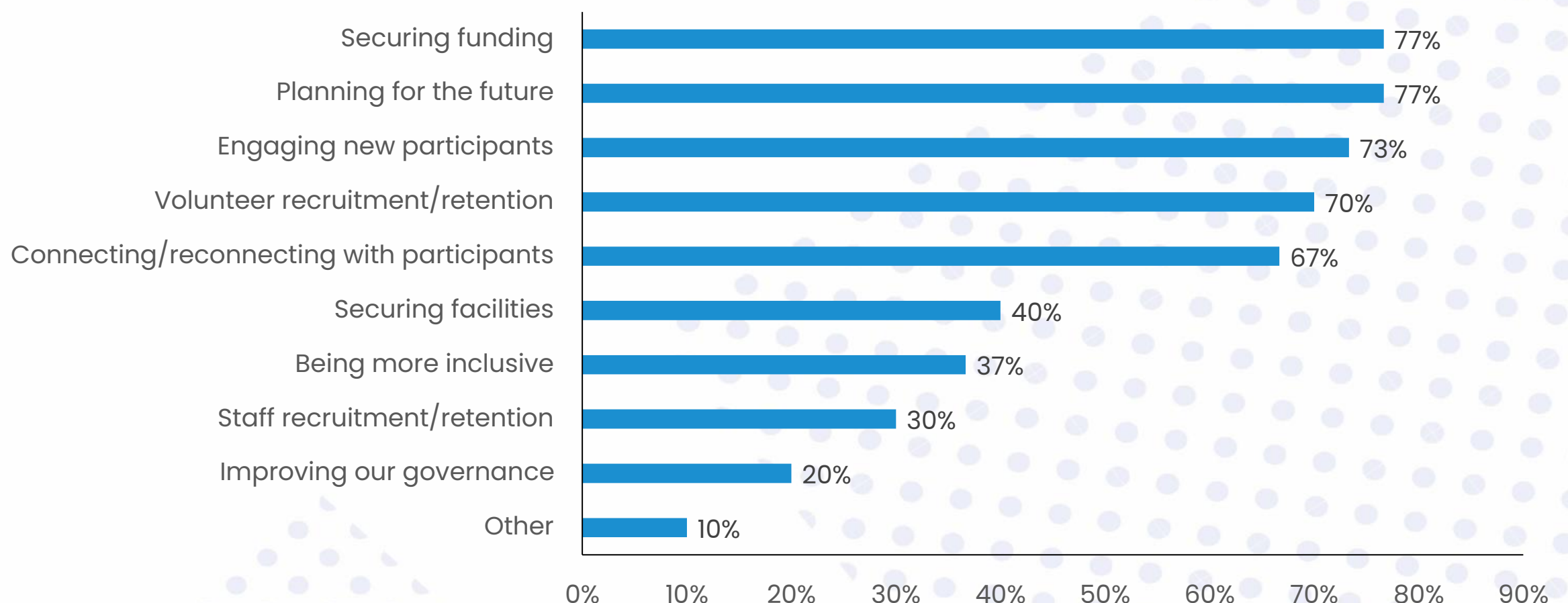
Sport for development primary focus for the next year



Top priorities over the next six months

The most common priorities for the next six months for groups are securing funding (77%) and planning for the future (77%). Engaging new participants was the third most-cited priority for groups (73%). Volunteer recruitment/retention (70%) and connecting/reconnecting with participants (67%) were also priorities for the majority of groups.

Top priorities over the next six months

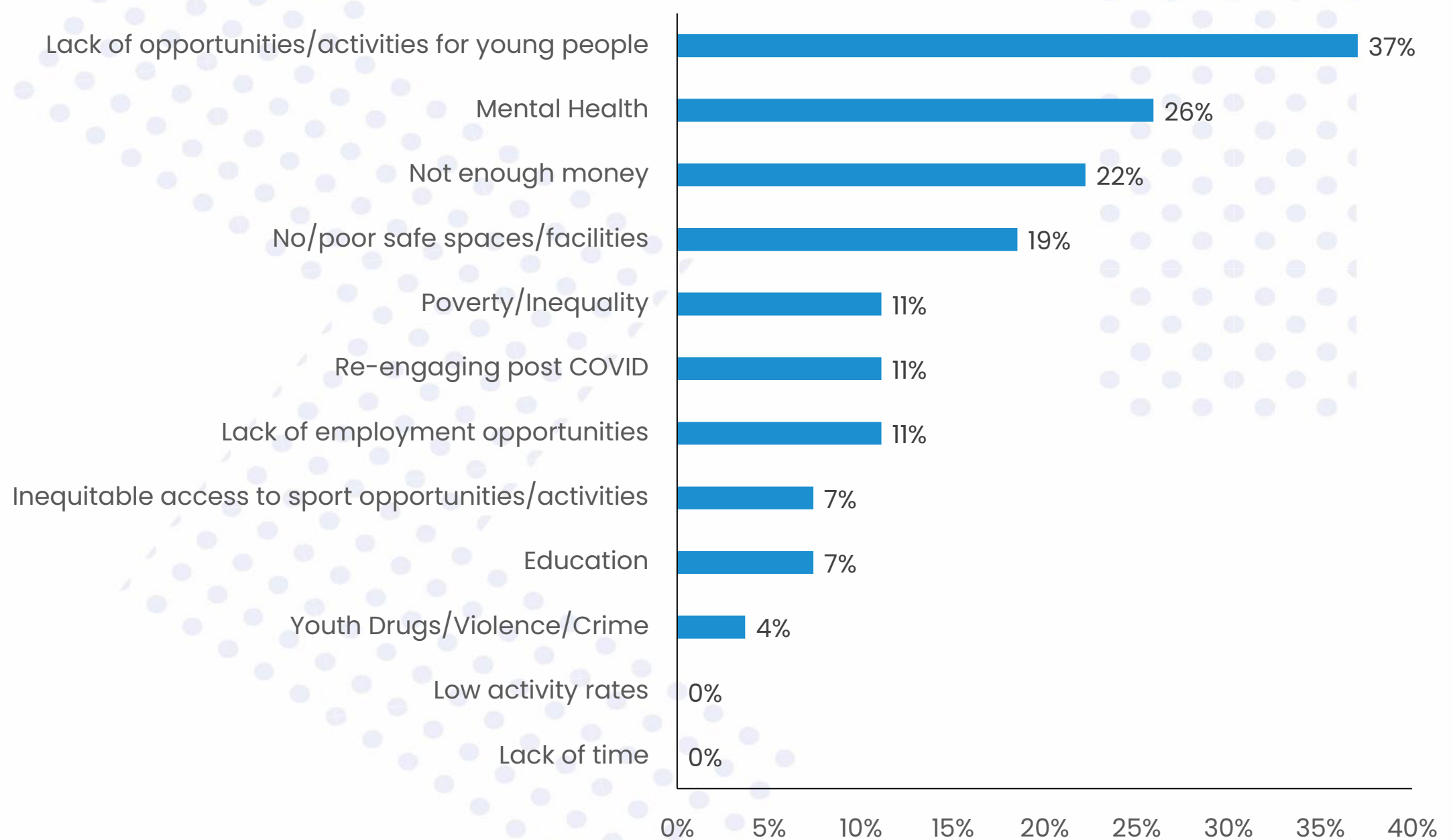


Community challenges

A lack of opportunities/activities for young people is the most significant challenge that groups report young people are facing in their communities (37%). Concern mental health(26%) was also identified as a key issue.

This focus on a lack of opportunities/activities for young people is higher than our UK-wide analysis, where 13% of groups reported this as the most significant challenge facing their young people.

Key challenges young people are facing in members' communities at this time



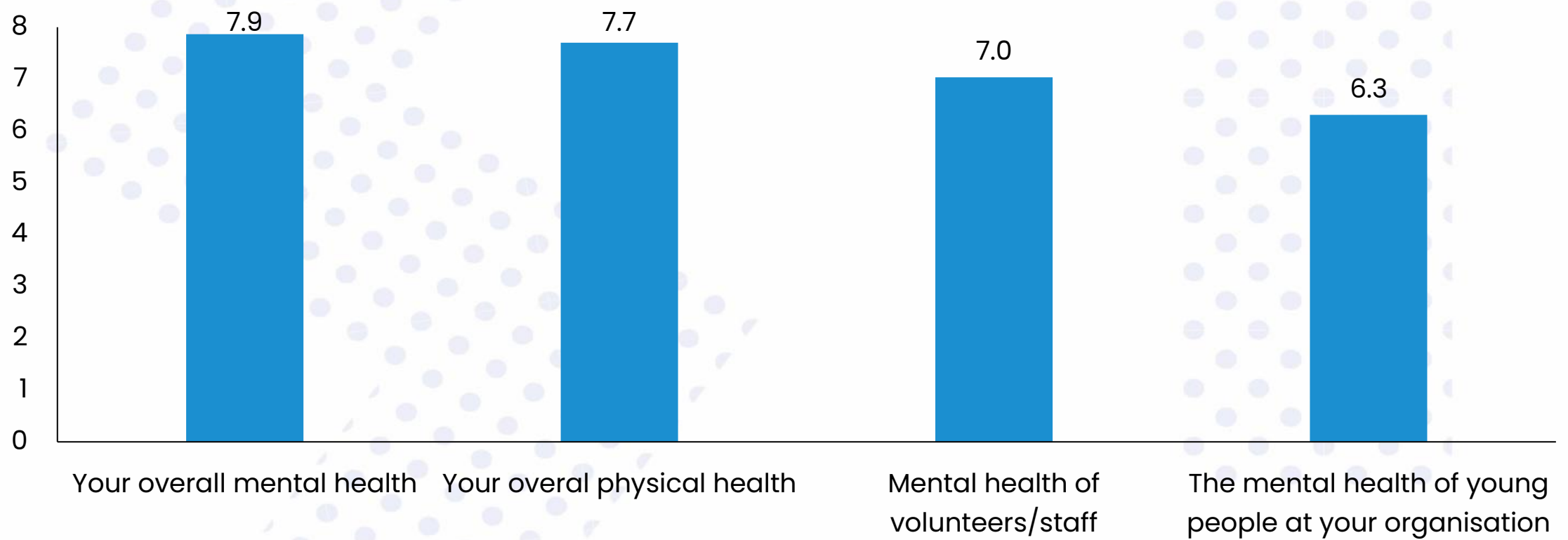
- 'Lack of opportunity and participation for children and adults with additional support needs. There is lack of interest/ desire to promote sessions for ASN groups.' – survey respondent
- 'Other disabled groups have closed and they [young people] have become more isolated.' – survey respondent
- 'Cost of activities and the timing of activities due to lack of facilities.' – survey respondent
- 'Increased levels of anxiety, lower motivation, and concerns for their future.' – survey respondent
- 'Lack of opportunities, money, lack of facilities, and employment opportunities that sustain personal growth.' – survey respondent

Health

Physical and mental health

Respondents reported lower scores for their young people's mental health compared to their own and that of their group's volunteers/staff – an average of 6.3 (out of 10) for young people compared with 7.9 and 7.0 for respondents and volunteers/staff respectively).

Respondents' rating (scale: of 0 – 10, where 0 is not at all good and 10 is excellent)

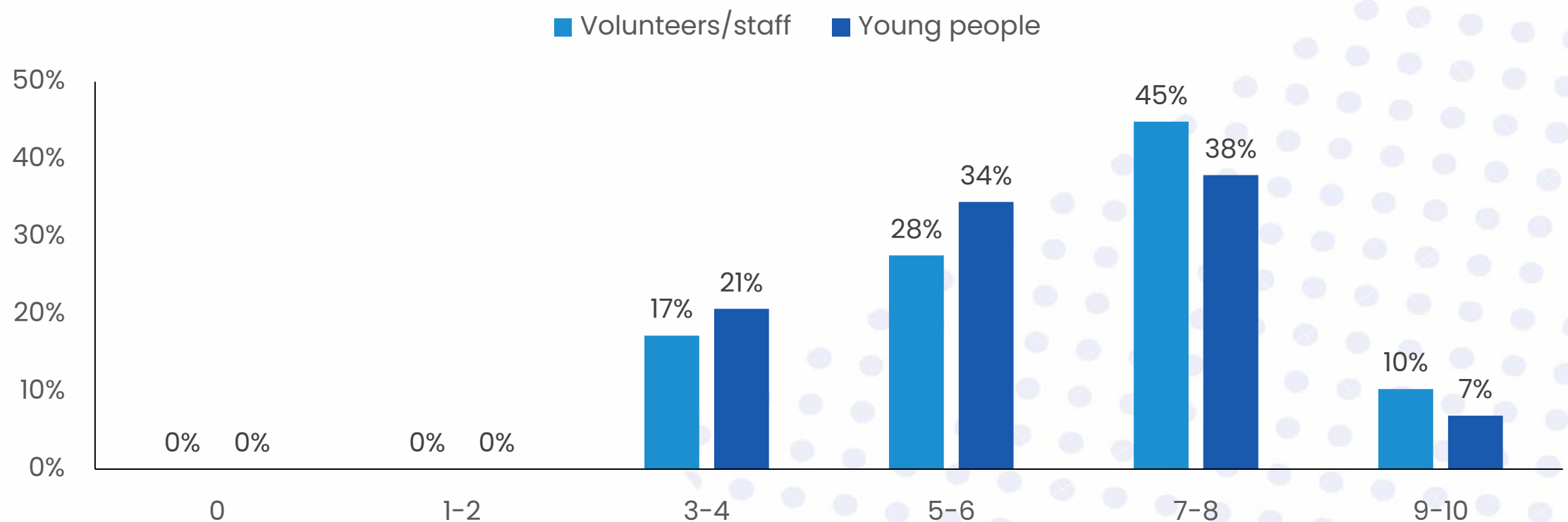


Capacity to support mental health

About half of groups (55%) reported a score of 7 or above for their capacity to support the mental health of their volunteers/staff.

Confidence in capacity to support their young people was lower among respondents, with the majority (55%) indicated a score of 3-6 on this issue.

Respondents' rating (scale: of 0 – 10, where 0 is not at all good and 10 is excellent)



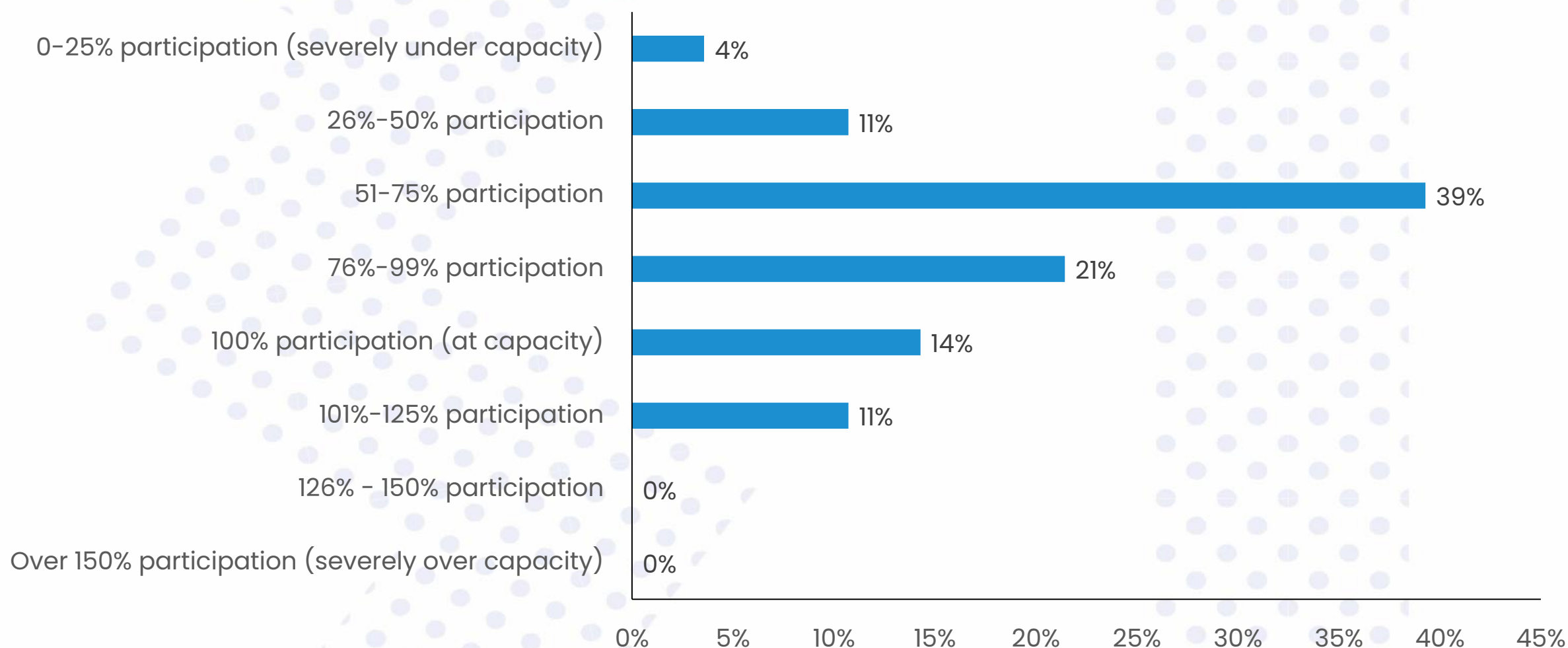
Participation and capacity

Current participation levels

A large majority of groups (75%) have participation levels below capacity, with most (39%) seeing participation levels of 51-75% of their capacity.

Three respondents (11%) reported being oversubscribed, with participation levels above their organisational capacity.

% of groups by current participation rates compared to organisational capacity

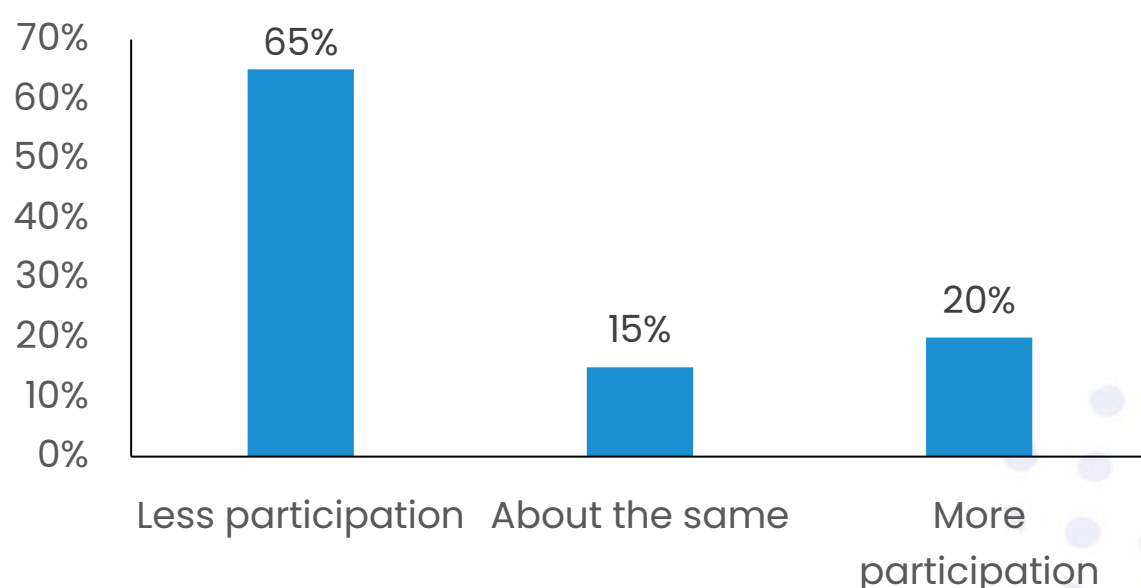


Participation levels compared to pre-Covid

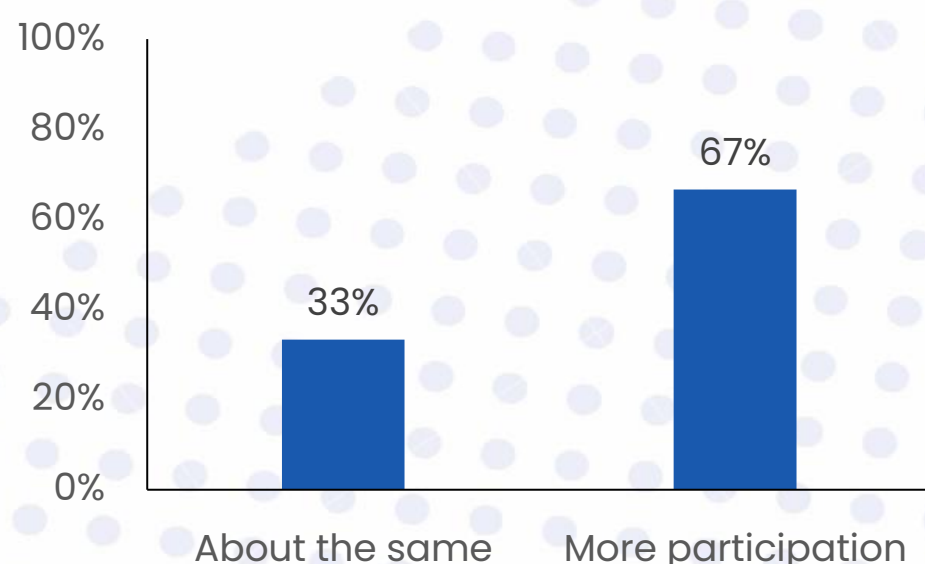
Nearly two-thirds (65%) of groups that currently have participation levels below capacity report participation is lower than before the pandemic, indicating participation levels are yet to fully recover from before the pandemic.

For the three groups who are currently seeing participation levels above their capacity, **two reported that participation is now higher than before the pandemic, with one saying it is about the same.**

Groups with current participation below capacity



Groups with current participation above capacity

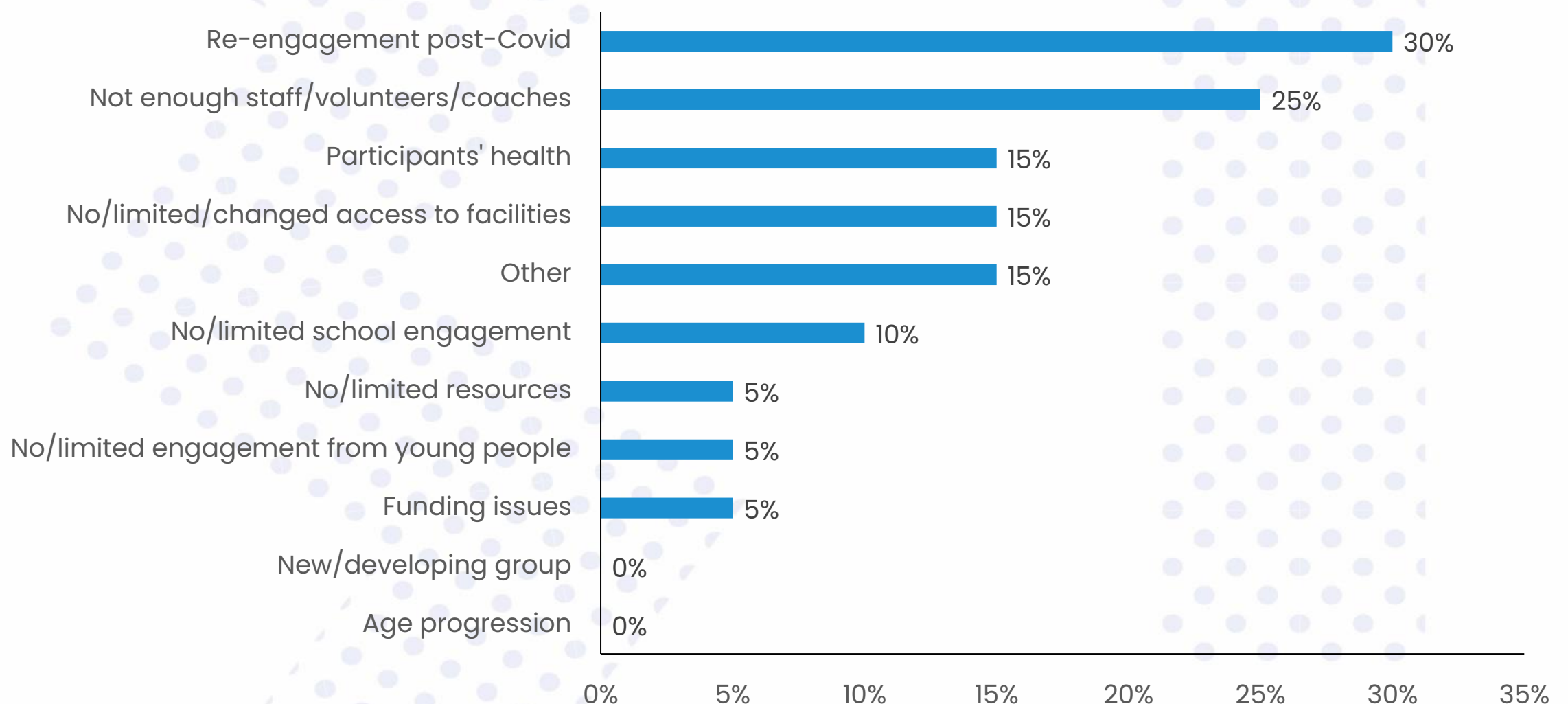


Participation and capacity

Why are participation levels down?

For groups reporting lower levels of participation than before the pandemic, **re-engaging after the pandemic (30%)** was cited as the most common reason for reduced numbers. Groups also raised concerns about not having enough staff/volunteers/coaches as a reason for reduced participation levels (25%).

Reasons for participation below pre-Covid levels



- 'We're aiming to grow numbers for children aged 4-9 years of age. However, we lack the volunteer numbers to fully commit to this so will have to manage the growth slowly.' – survey respondent
- 'Access to facilities & cost of facility hire. No access to local schools where we would have recruited through partnership events.' – survey respondent
- 'Loss of coaching resource and number of young people in our schools programmes.' – survey respondent
- 'Until recently the weather has been against playing outside. Also, we have little choice over the hours during which we have access to the courts, as we are based at a school. The school keeps changing the locks on the courts, making access difficult.' – survey respondent
- 'Post covid reluctance for children and parents to return.' – survey respondent

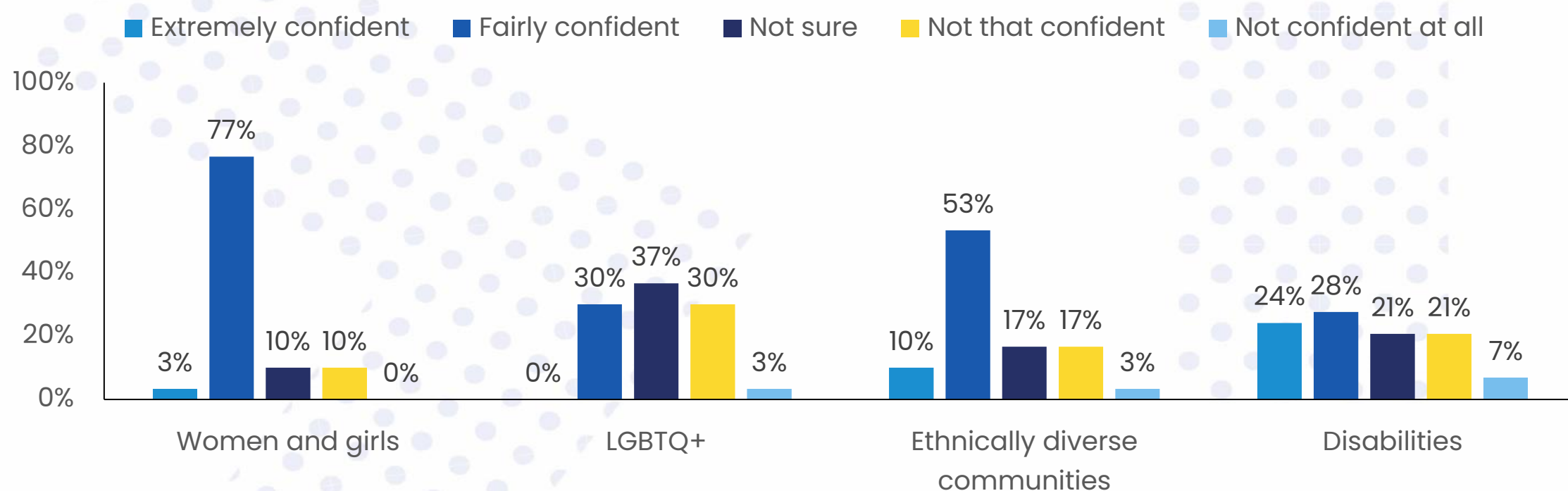
Tackling inequalities

Knowledge of challenges facing young people

When thinking about tackling inequalities, groups are **most confident in their knowledge of the challenges facing women and girls** (80% are extremely or fairly confident in this area).

Confidence is **lowest with regard to knowledge of LGBTQ+ issues**: 33% of groups are not that confident, or not confident at all in their knowledge of the challenges in this area. There is a higher proportion of groups that are not sure about their knowledge of LGBTQ+ issues (37%).

Group confidence in their knowledge of challenges facing young people

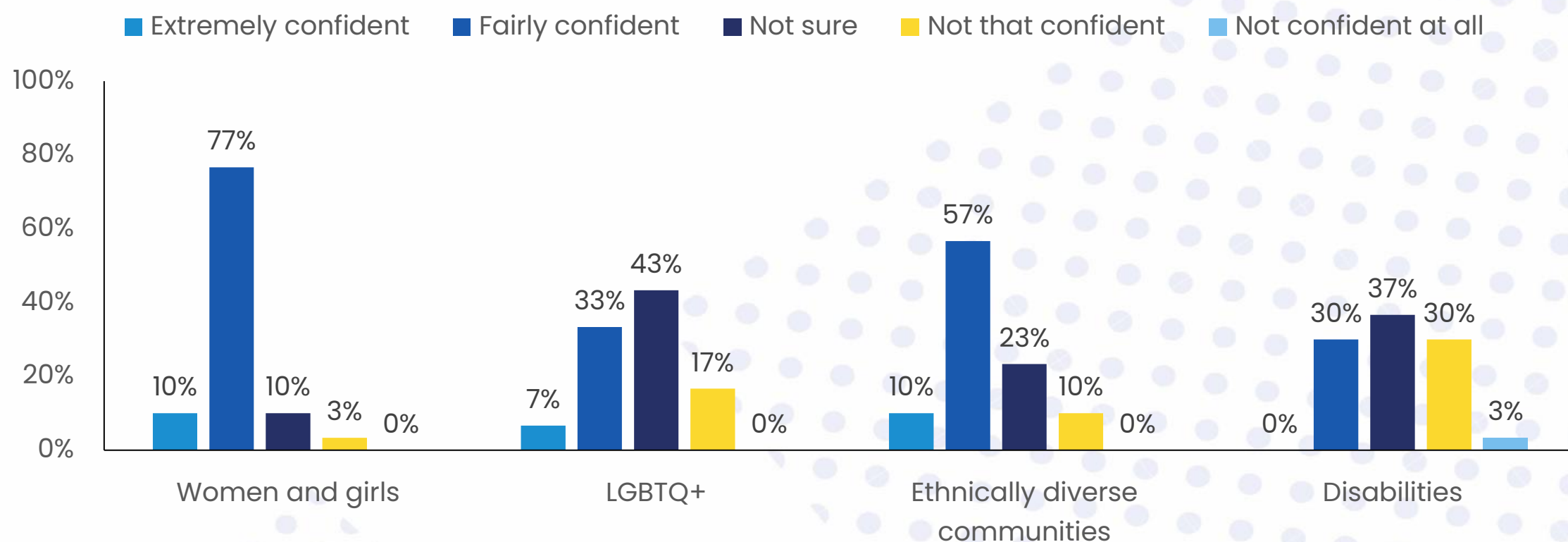


Support for young people in these areas

Groups are **most confident in supporting women and girls**, with 87% being extremely or fairly confident in this area. Groups were **least confident in supporting young people in the area of disabilities** (33% being not that confident or not confident at all).

A majority of respondents were not sure in their confidence in supporting young people around LGBTQ+ issues (43%) and those with disabilities (37%).

Group confidence in how they feel supporting young people



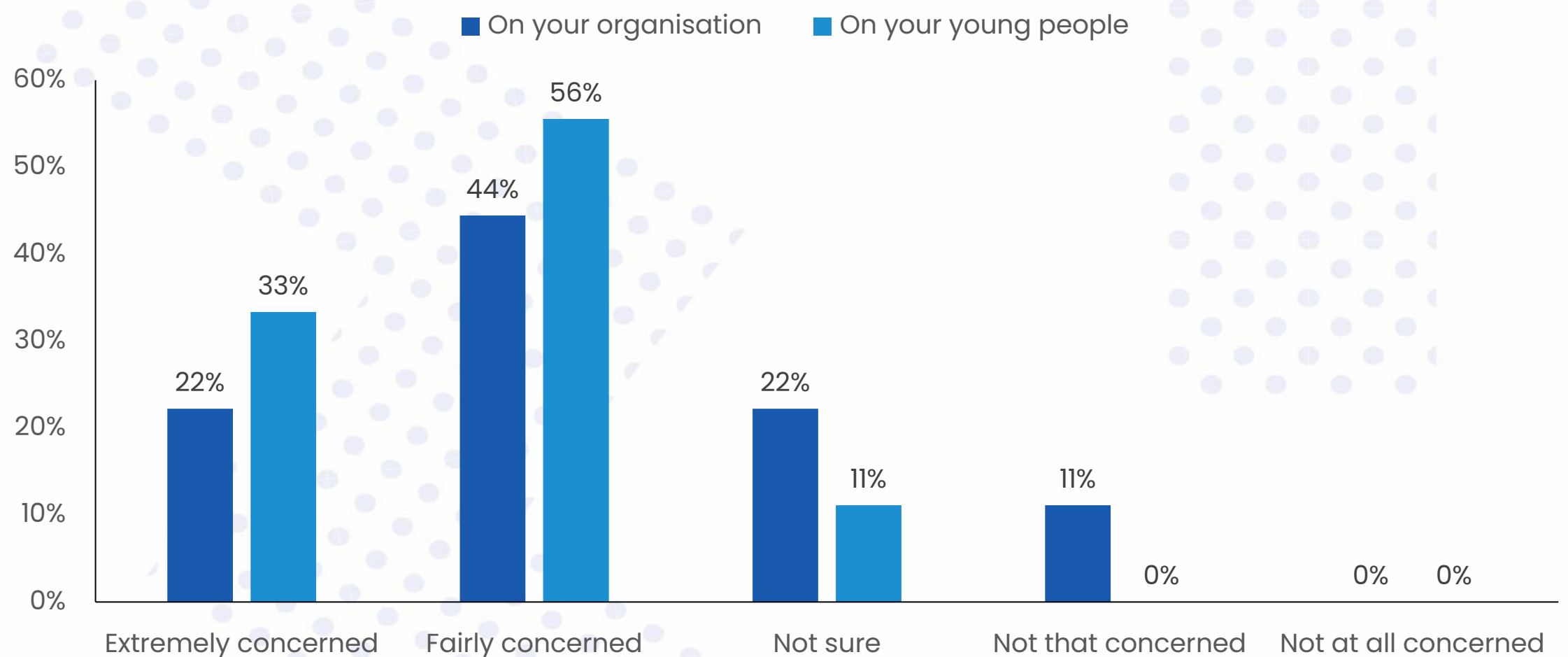
Cost of living increases

Impact on groups and their young people

There are high levels of concerns about the impact of cost of living increases on the young people groups engage with – 89% of respondents are extremely or fairly concerned in this regard.

Concern around the impact on groups is also high, but reduced compared to concern for young people – 66% of respondents have concerns about the impact on their group.

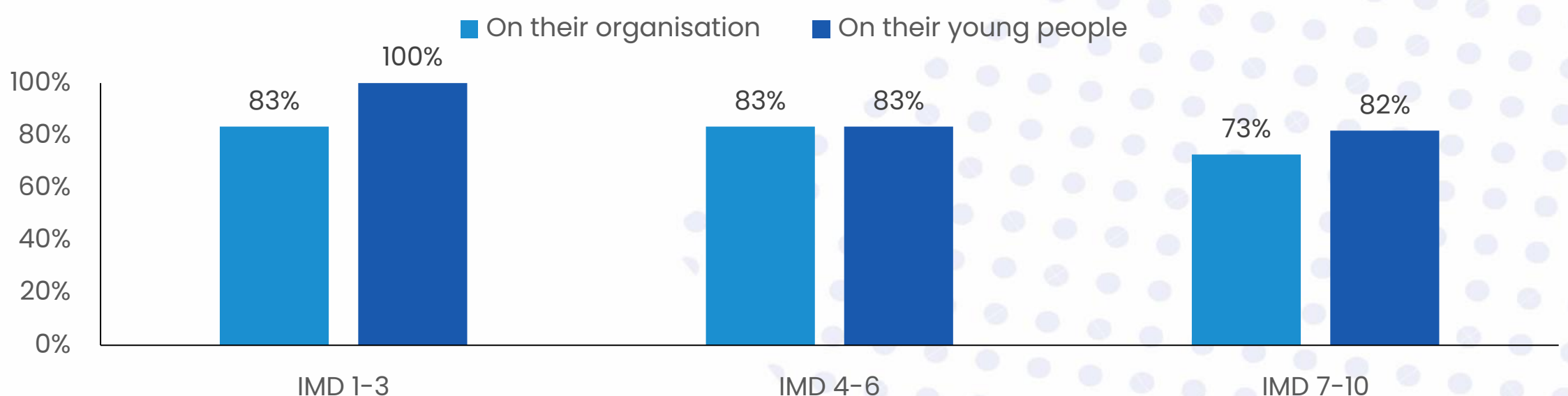
Concern about the impact of cost of living increases



Impact on groups and their young people by IMD

There are consistently high levels of concern about the impact of cost of living increases on organisations and young people across all areas of multiple deprivation.

Groups who are extremely/fairly concerned about the impact of cost of living increases by IMD (0-10)



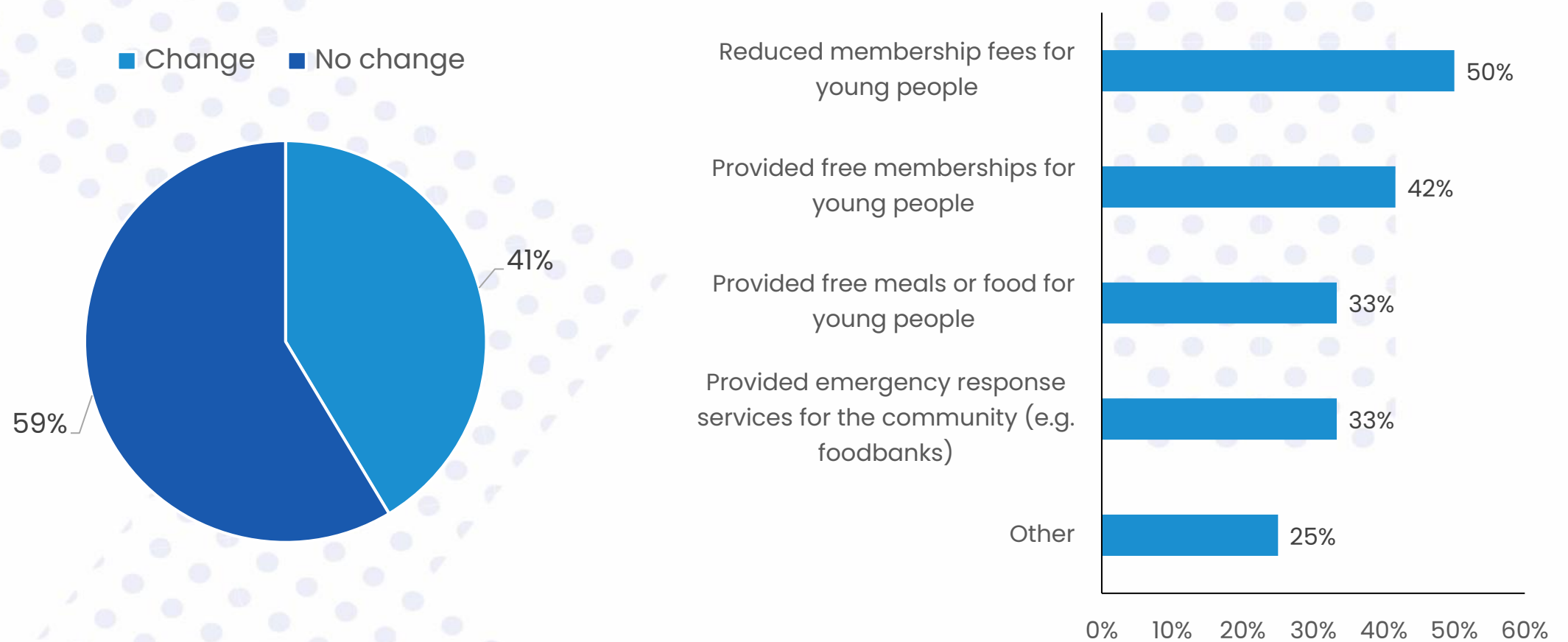
Cost of living increases

Groups' responses to the increases

59% of respondents noted that they have not made a change to their organisation in response to the cost of living increase. However, several respondents pointed out their provision is already low-cost or free for participants and that they are maintaining this in the face of cost of living increases.

Where changes were made, the most frequently made change has been to **reduce membership fees for young people (50%)**.

Changes made in response to cost of living increases

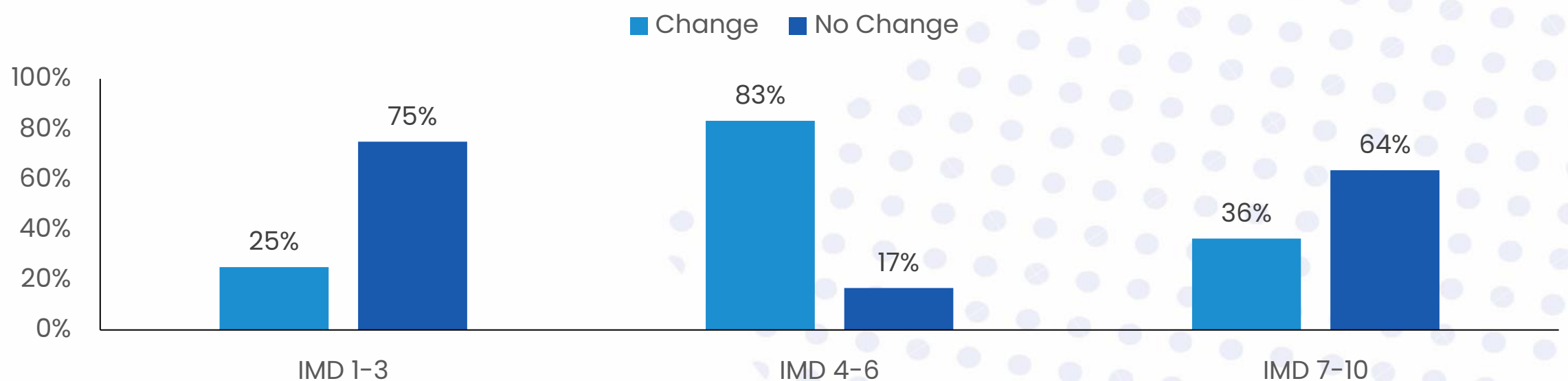


Groups' responses to the increases by IMD

Groups were more likely to have made changes in response to cost of living increases if based in the 4-6 deciles of multiple deprivation. 83% of groups in these areas have made a change.

However, a number of groups based in the IMD 1-3 range reported that while they have not made a change, their existing services are low-cost or free and that they are maintaining this approach.

Changes made in response to cost of living increases (by IMD)

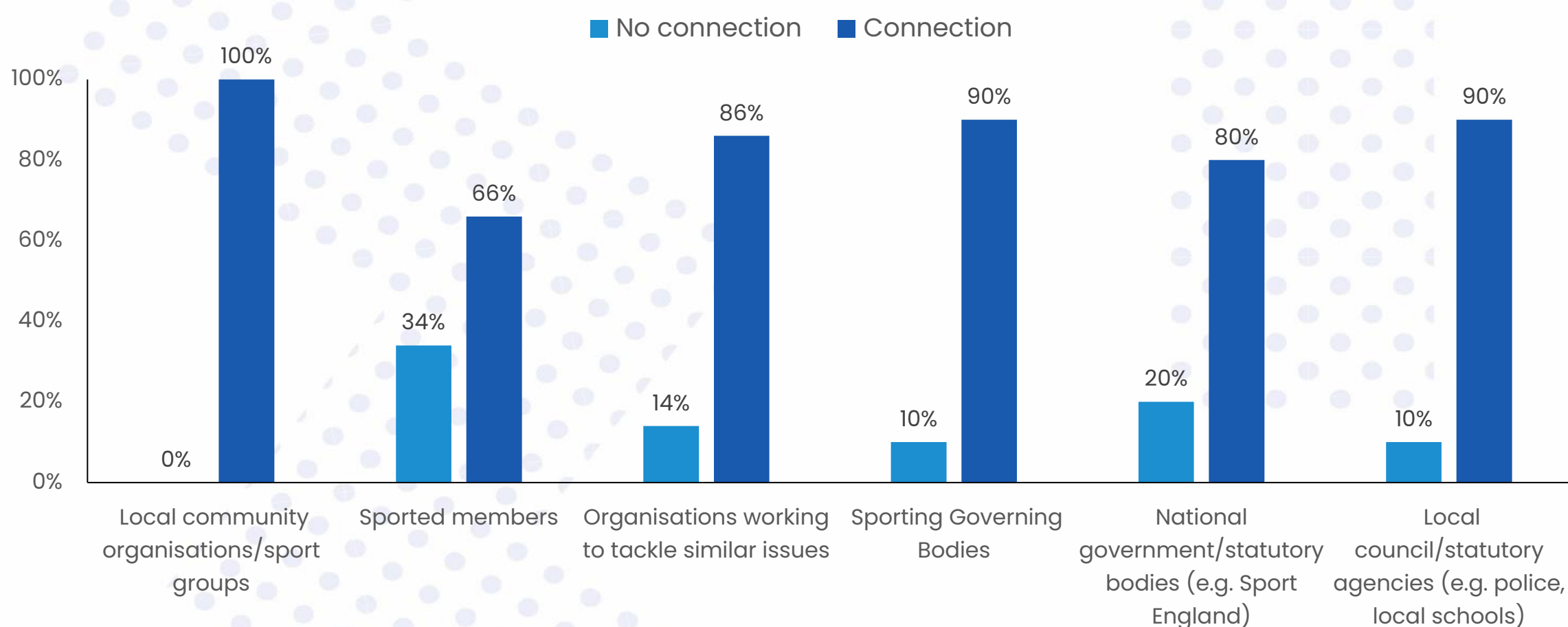


Connected communities

Groups' connections to other organisations

Groups report high degrees of connection with other organisations and agencies, **with the most frequent being local community organisations/sport groups (100%), followed by sporting governing bodies (90%) and local councils/statutory agencies (90%).**

Connection to other organisations



Where groups report a connection to another organisation, **active collaboration occurs most frequently with local community organisations/sport groups (31%), closely followed by sporting governing bodies (30%).**

Extent of connections to other organisations

