INSIGHT HUB BULLETIN #31

What Is Working? Strengthening Communities, Building Resilience and Sharing Solutions

SOURCE: Data taken from Hub Survey 31 collected from August-Sept 2026

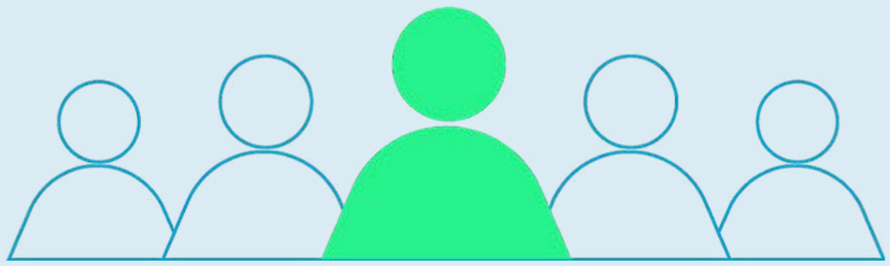
DATA DISCLAIMER PLEASE NOTE: The data in this bulletin is based on the responses from organisations who participated in the survey. The sample group is small and therefore the results shown in this report may contain bias and should be used as indicative only. Please contact the Hub team for any validation and verification required.

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INTRODUCTION

While there are clear areas of strength, this survey shows that organisations are working under significant pressure. The wider environment has become increasingly challenging, with changes in policy, public attitudes, funding and housing affecting organisations and the people they support.



Executive Summary

What is helping organisations respond?

Despite a challenging environment, organisations continue to find ways to support refugees, people seeking asylum and migrants.

60%
say partnership working has improved over the past year.

80%
describe organisations in their area as fairly or very well connected.

FOUR WAYS ORGANISATIONS ARE FINDING STRENGTH

01 Partnerships and public sector relationships

Partnership working is a key strength, with public-sector partnerships among the areas most commonly strengthened.

02 Community solidarity and local connection

Local connections, community events, volunteering, arts, culture and sport are helping build positive relationships.

03 Committed people and lived experience

Committed staff, volunteers and lived experience are helping organisations build resilience.

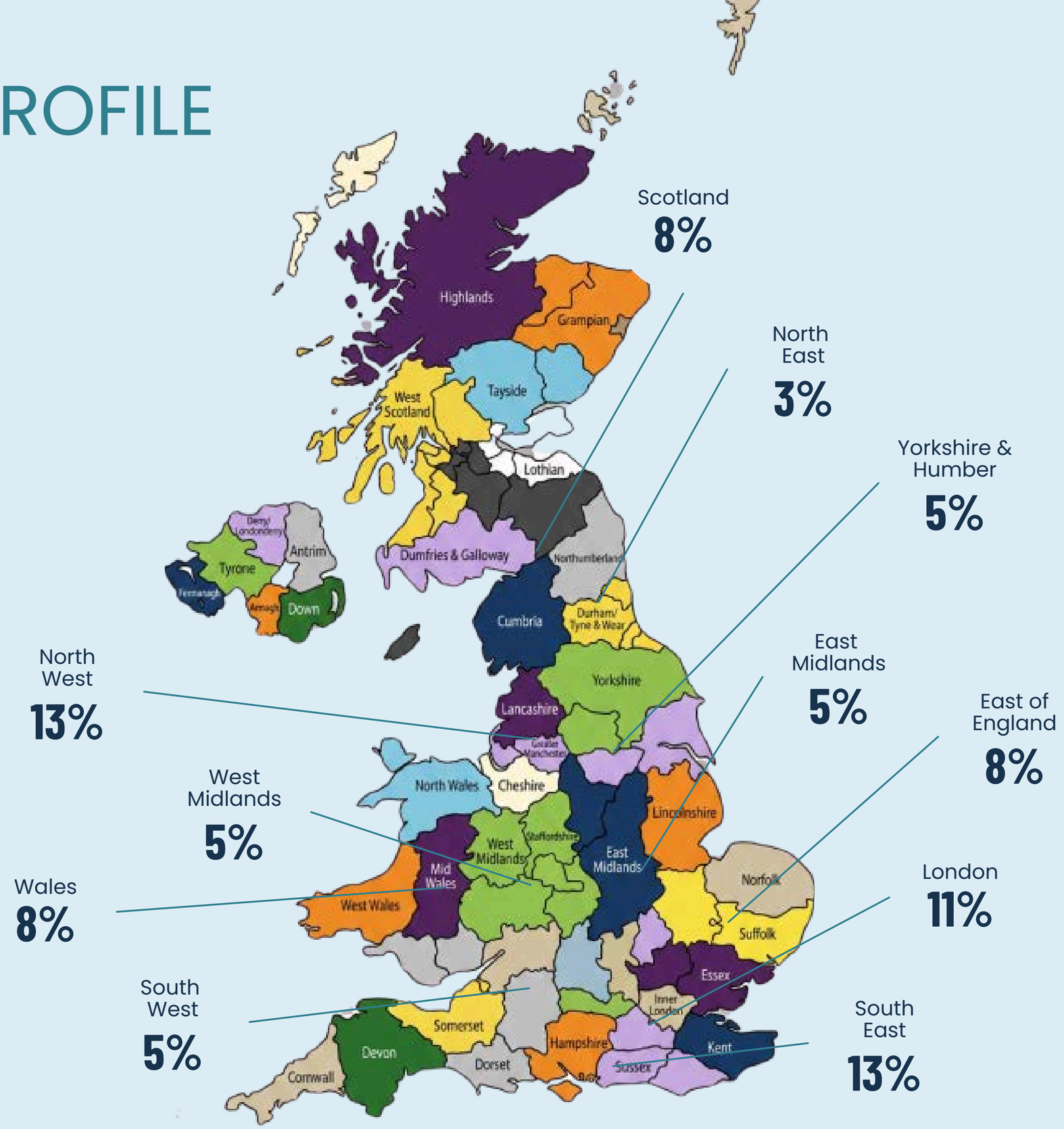
04 Adaptation and staff wellbeing

Organisations are adapting and finding practical solutions, with staff wellbeing among the areas most commonly strengthened.

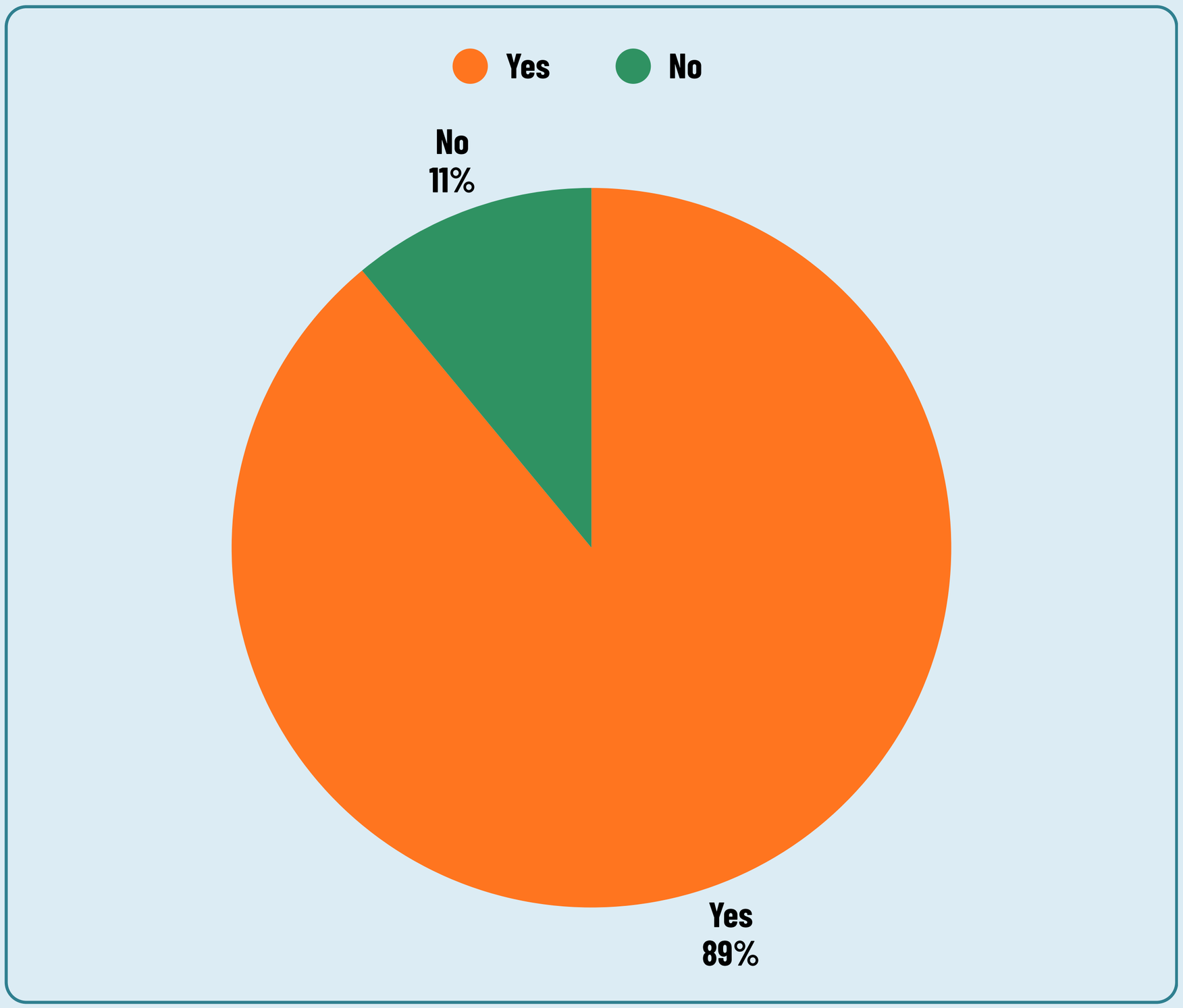
Connected communities and stronger partnerships are helping organisations face the future with confidence.

ORGANISATION PROFILE

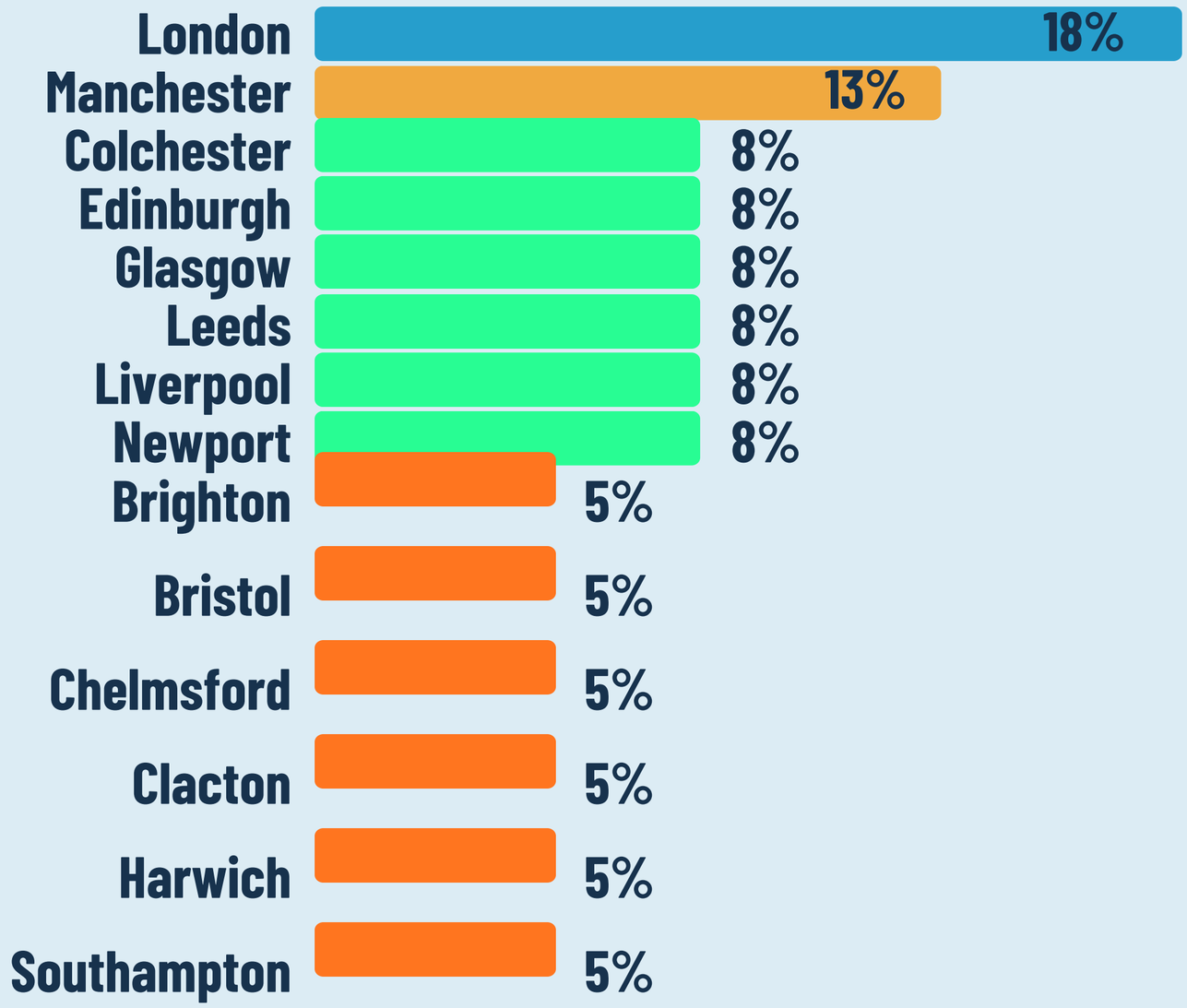
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RESPONSES



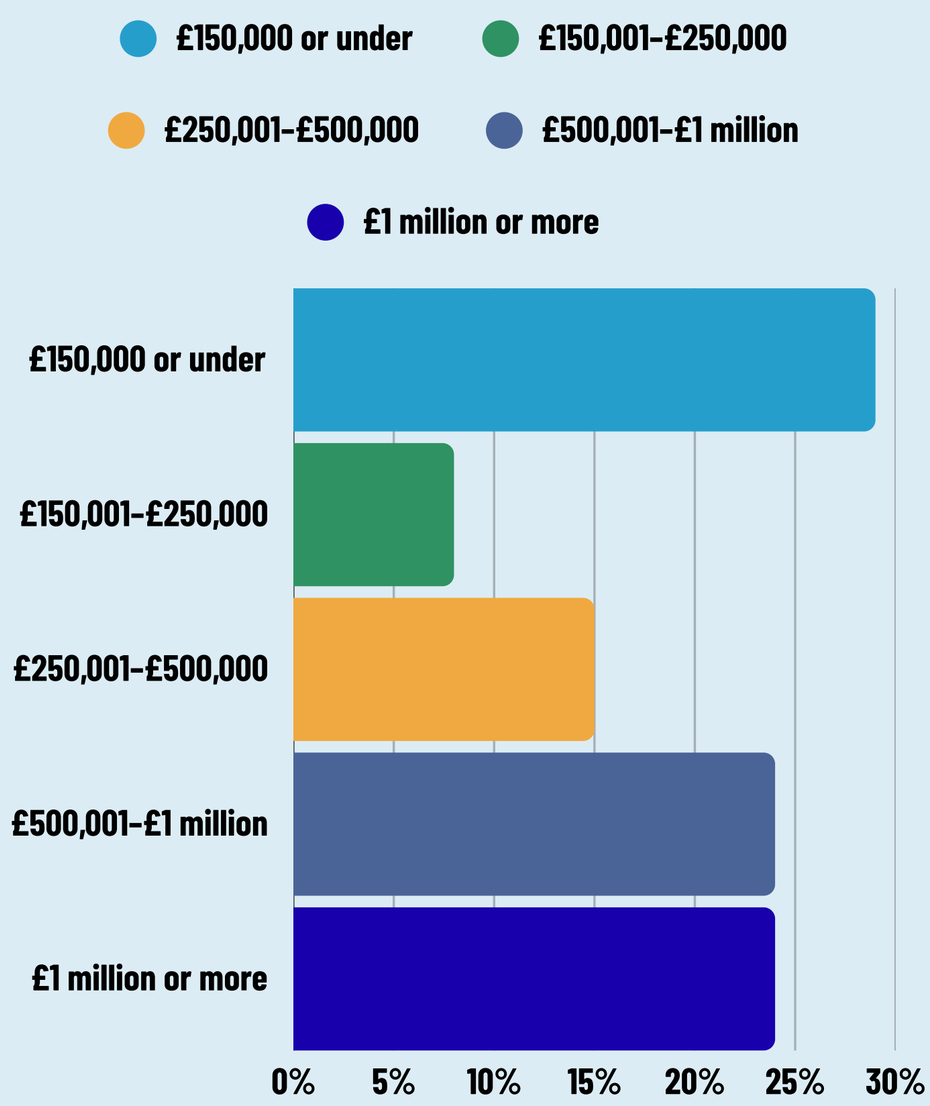
Is your organisation a third/ voluntary/non-profit sector?



In which city(s) and town(s) is your service based?

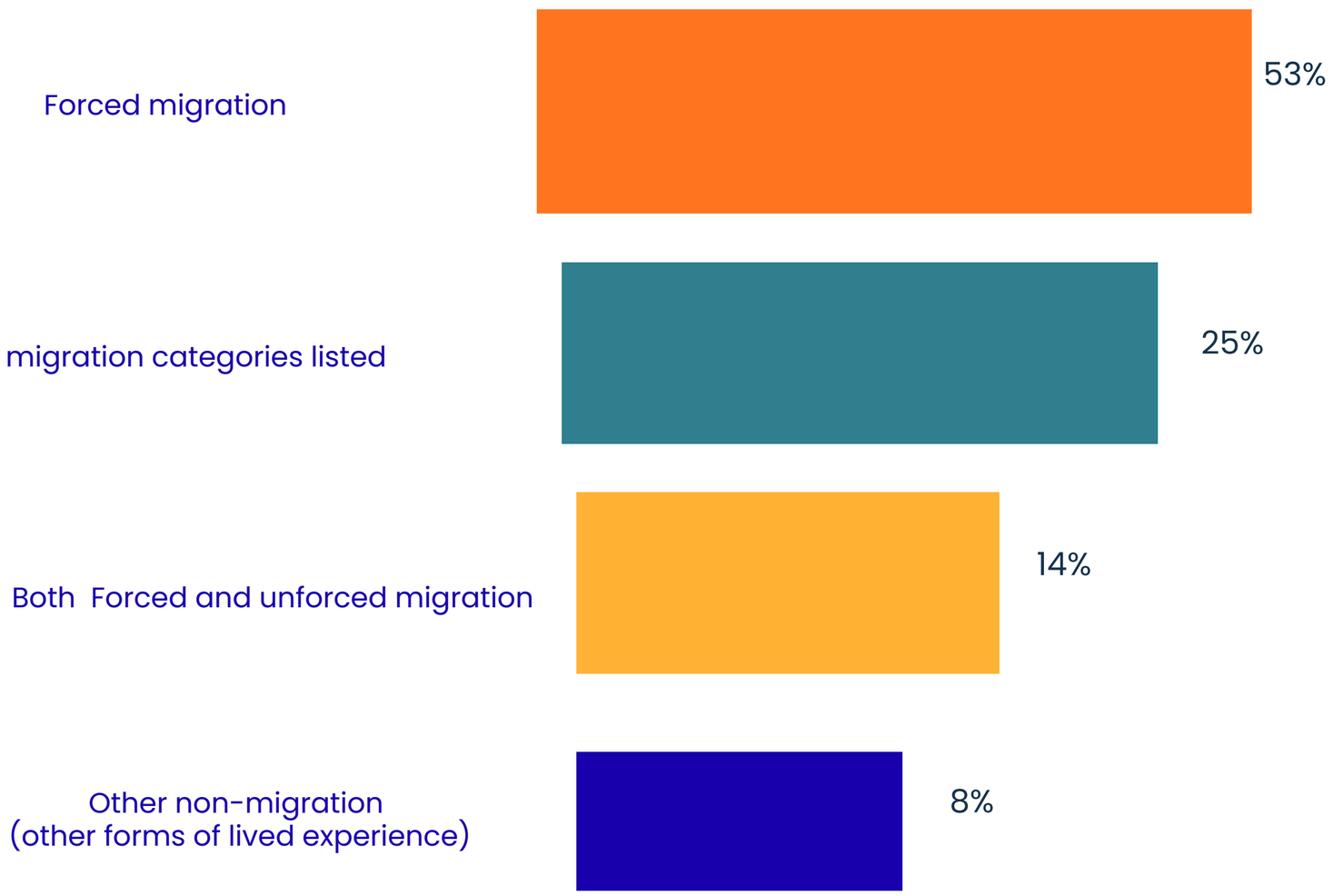


What is your organisation's annual turnover?

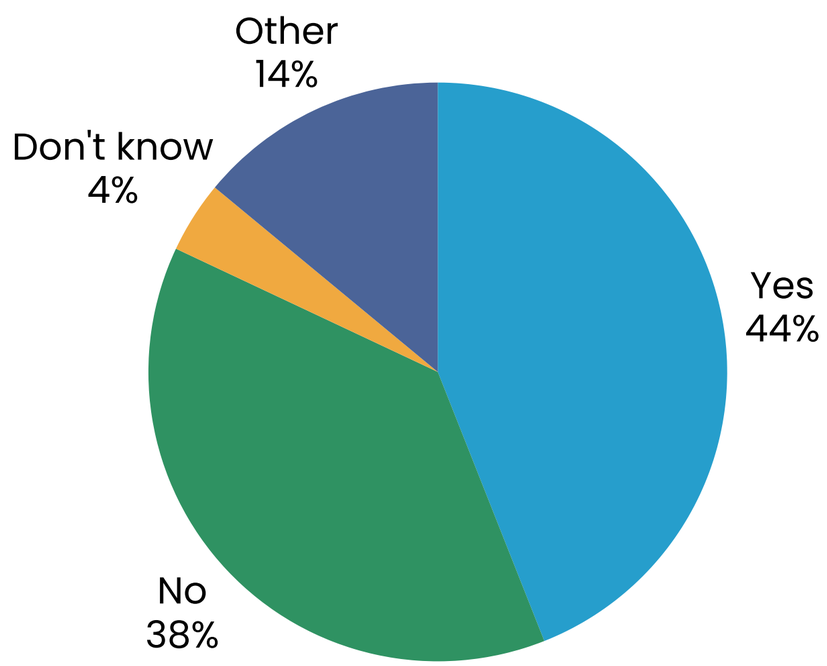


Lived Experience in your organisation

Which type of lived experience does your organisation relate to?



Do you consider your organisation to be led by people with lived experience of migration (forced or unforced)?



For a more detailed look at lived experience participation and support, see the final section of this bulletin.

What Is Working?

Partnerships



68%

Partnership working



66%

Staff skills and wellbeing



45%

Volunteer capacity

" We are part of a number of alliances/focus groups/task projects and we work together, communicate better and know that we can refer and get advice from others."

Relationships and people are helping organisations respond to a difficult environment.

WHAT MAKES PARTNERSHIPS WORK?

1



TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS

between organisations

2



COMPLEMENTARY SKILLS

that organisations bring to their partnerships

3



STRONG LOCAL LEADERSHIP

4



OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE

information and resources

> Ongoing relationship over several years, getting to know new staff.

MANCHESTER

> We have much less time to 'cultivate' networks. We have reduced our collaborations to a lesser focus, no frills, no chatter, just business of helping people.

GREATER LONDON

> LA has also been less supportive when it comes to funding opportunities. But they are developing a community cohesion strategy and have been very engaged with our network over the consultation for that.

LIVERPOOL CITY

Resilience: What is making organisations stronger?

Resilience is being built through relationships, staff support, partnership and learning

32%

said their organisation had become stronger.

50%

strengthened partnership between organisations.

47%

strengthened staff wellbeing.

42%

strengthened public sector partnerships.

39%

strengthened training.

> *"We have a good relationship with the local police community liaison team who respond quickly if we inform them of any concerns."*

BUT RESILIENCE HAS LIMITS !

39%

said their organisation had become weaker

29%

said their organisation was about the same

74%

Funding worsened

69%

Housing/accommodation worsened

54%

Demand worsened

“Lack of funding and time to think about anything except the person in need who is standing in front of you!”

Liverpool City

COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS CAN MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE

60%

have seen local communities, or leaders acting to strengthen cohesion, reduce misinformation & hostility

> "People responding positively to events where refugees and asylum seekers take part and make a real contribution has helped grow our sphere of influence."

Evesham and Pershore, Worcestershire

WHAT SUPPORTS STRONG COMMUNITY REALTIONSHIPS?

47% Strong partnerships between organisations

39% Local authority support

34% Staff expertise & commitment

29% Community volunteers

18% Lived experience leadership

18% Faith organisations

> "What has worked especially well for us is sharing positive individual stories to reframe the narrative on our client group."

COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS REMAIN MIXED

64%

described relationships between local communities and refugees/asylum seekers as mixed or varying.

30%

described relationships as generally positive, with some challenges.

What can get in the way?

- Community tensions
- Misinformation & hostility
- Protests & intimidation
- Security concerns
- Limited capacity to engage communities

SAFETY AND COMMUNICATION

63% believe refugees/asylum seekers feel very unsafe in their local community

49% were aware of security incidents affecting refugees/asylum seekers, their organisation or services

"We have a WhatApp group for service users and we post on that about possible incidents - it is a closed group. We do not post on any public sites to keep our staff safe."

Communication channels used by organisations

WhatsApp	Email	Face-to-face	Local voluntary sector networks
58%	45%	37%	37%

The Role of Lived Experience in What Works

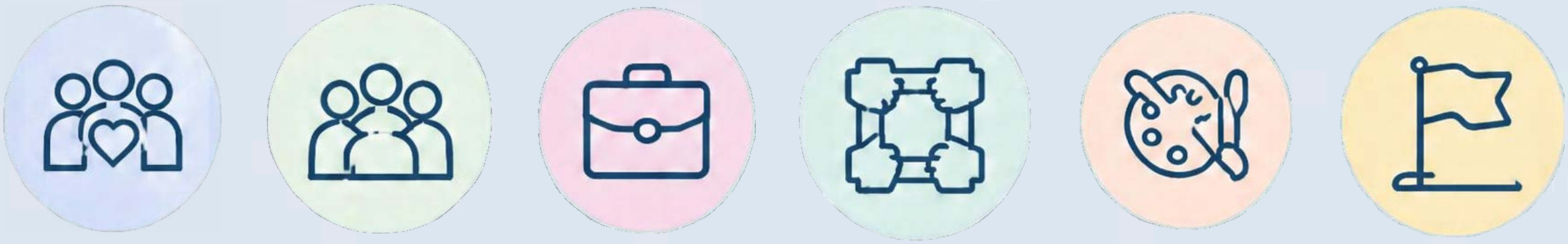
39%

said people with lived experience shape their work

24%

Improved involvement of people with lived experience in leadership

Examples of participation

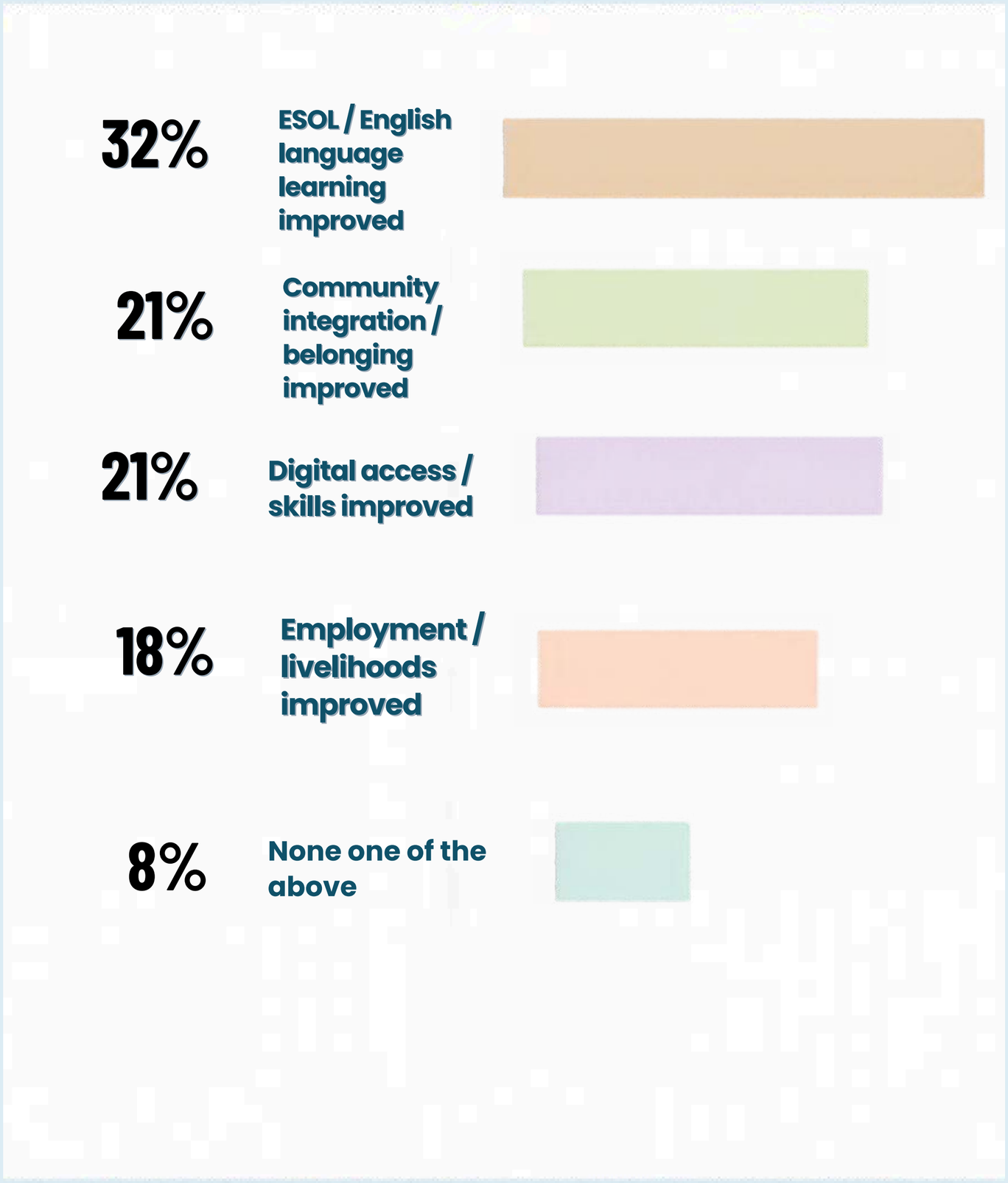


Volunteering | Community activities | Employment | Co-production | Arts and culture | Refugee-led initiatives

"Lived experience volunteers supported move-on accommodation for new refugees. We have Bike repair activity for the community run by refugees"

Where are organisations seeing positive changes?

Positive change is happening, but it is uneven across communities and areas of work



What appears to help?

47% strong partnerships

39% local authority support

34% staff expertise/ commitment

29% community volunteers

A connected sector with limited capacity for collective working

Organisations value networks, but time, funding and capacity make them difficult to sustain

80% described the sector in their area as fairly or very well connected.

60% said collective working was about the same as last year.

33% said collective working had increased.

“ It’s a resource issue from our perspective. We would love to convene or bring together organisations sharing the same values, but we are fully stretched delivering our services to increasing numbers of people over a much wider area”

What is making things harder?



94% immigration/asylum policy worsened



94% public attitudes worsened



74% funding worsened



69% housing/accommodation worsened



54% reported demand had worsened.

> *Uncertain times, with the government and main political parties taking a hardline approach to regular and irregular immigration. Asylum seekers continue to be demonised and opposed with every new immigration law and rule, without any corresponding fairness.*
>
> Dudley, Sandwell and Birmingham

PRACTICE THAT COULD BE REPLICATED

Strong partnerships

Share expertise, resources, referrals and practical support.

Refugee participation

Create opportunities for refugees and people seeking asylum to contribute.

Practical support

Small practical interventions can make a significant difference.

Positive stories

Visible participation and positive storytelling can challenge negative narratives.

Long-term relationships

Trust, continuity and local knowledge take time to build.

Lived experience and co-production

Involve people with lived experience in shaping work.

"Replicable practice can be built through Partnerships and focus groups with refugees and people seeking asylum."

Halifax and Calderdale

What have we learned?

Relationships are one of the sector's strongest assets

Organisations are adapting — but resilience has limits

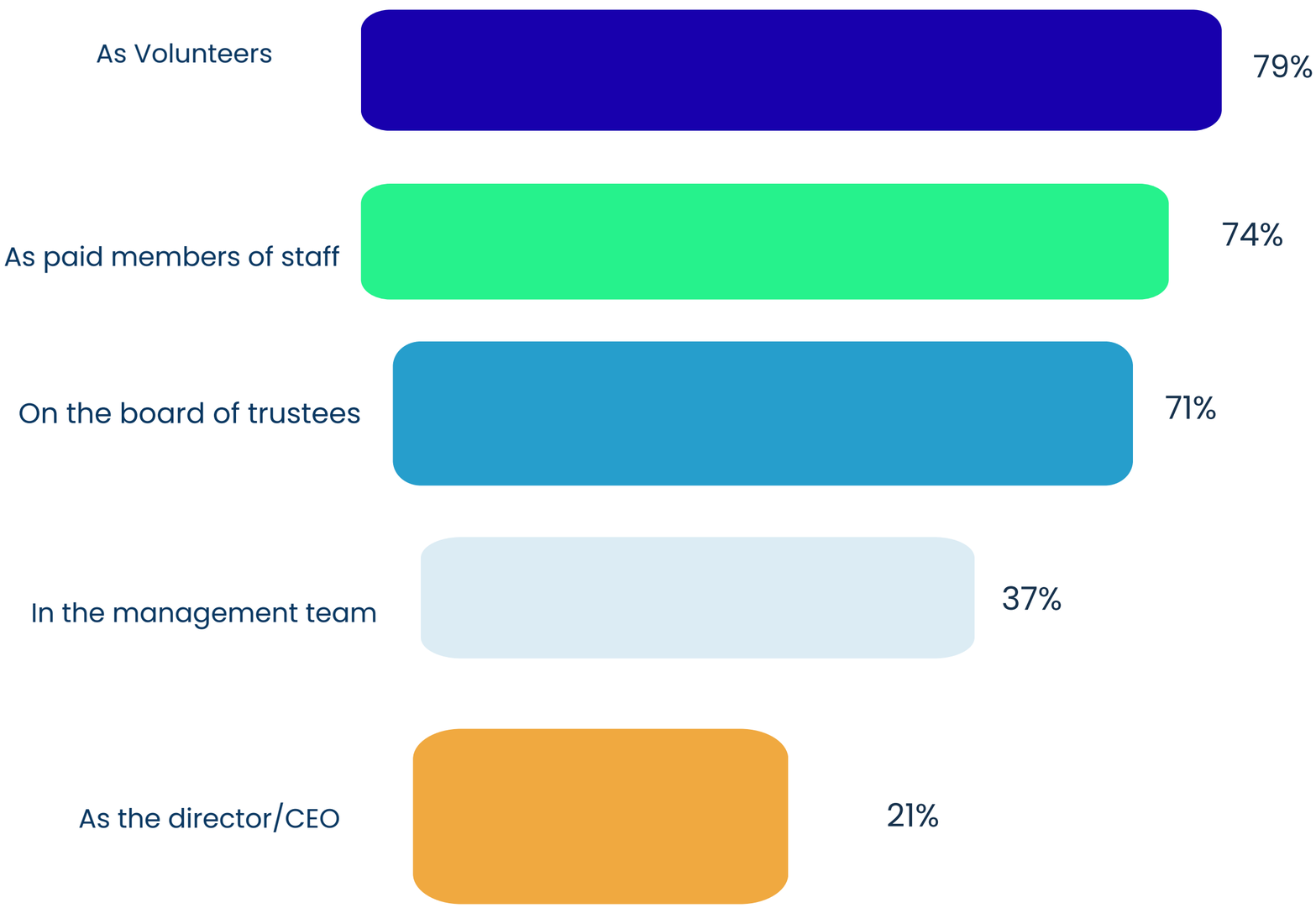
Local community action can make a tangible difference

Lived experience and participation are increasingly important, although this is not yet consistent everywhere

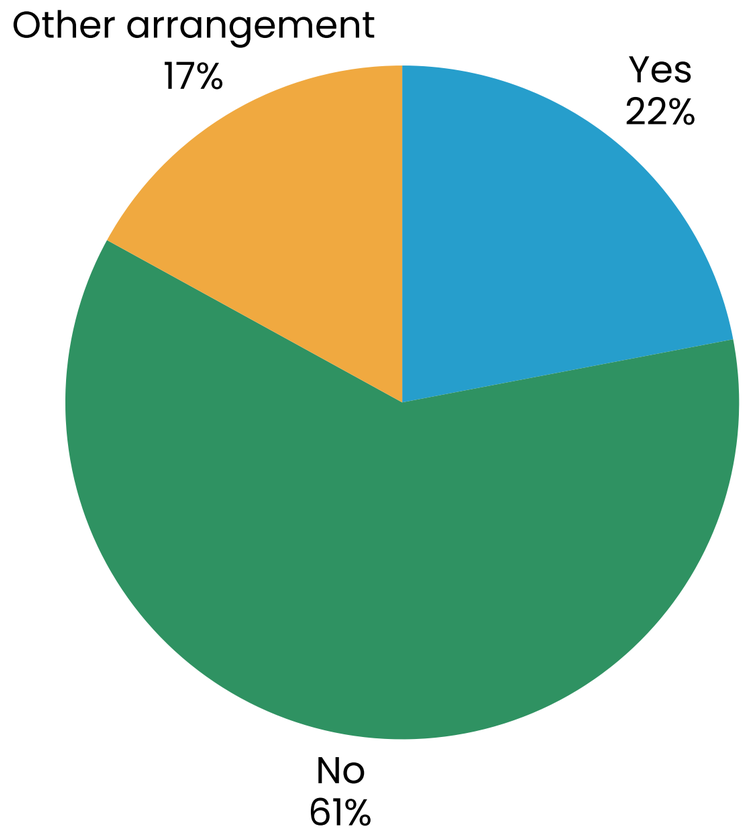
Collective working is valuable, but time, funding and capacity make it difficult to sustain

Additional context: lived experience participation and support

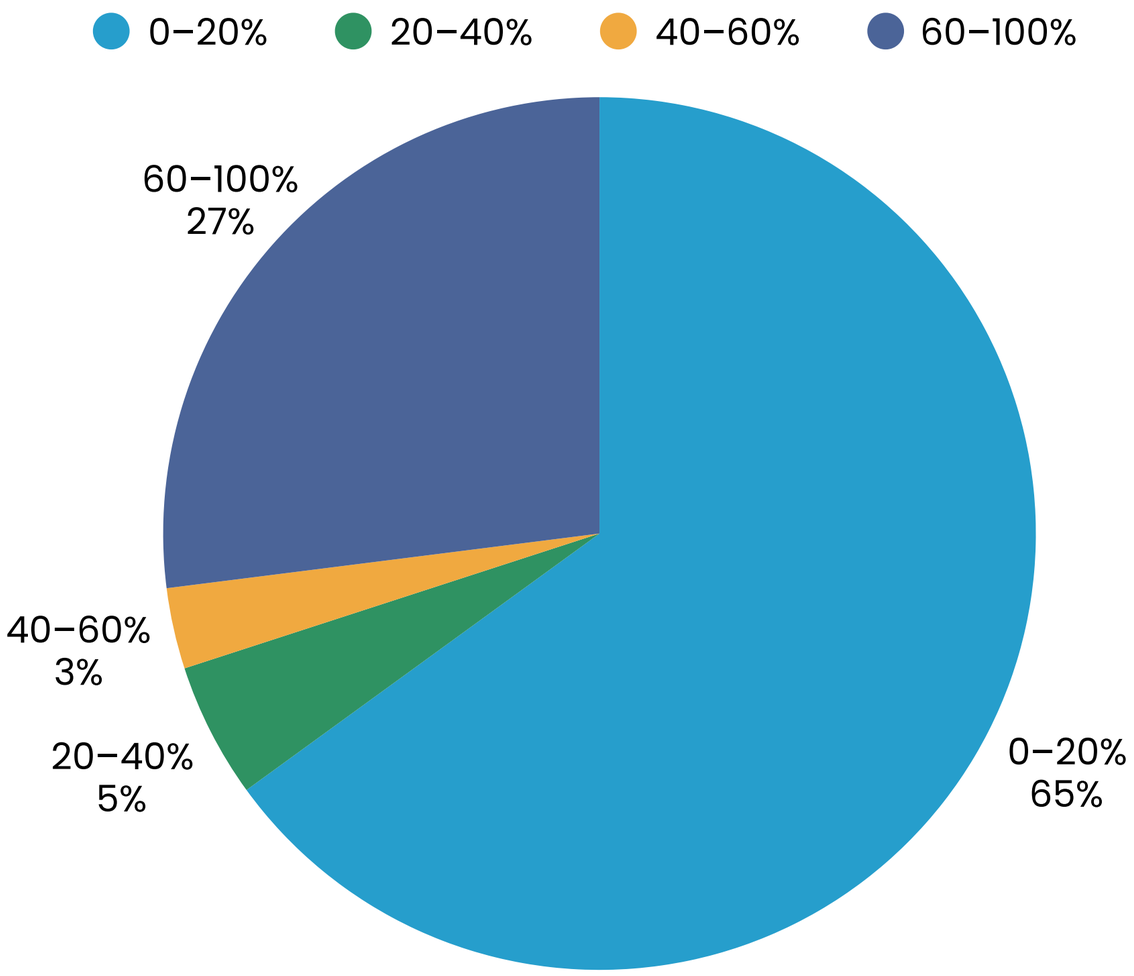
What roles do people with lived experience hold in your organisation?



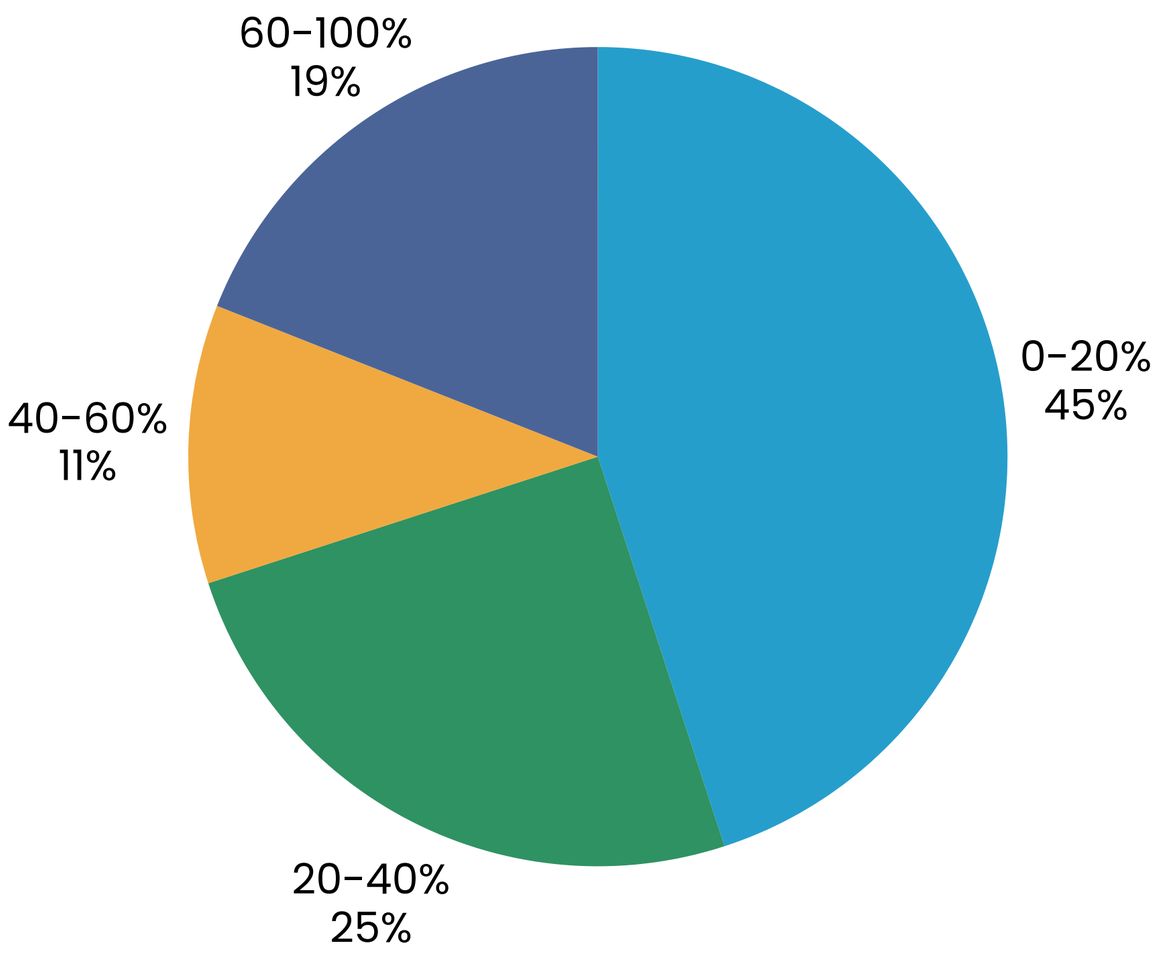
Does your CEO have lived experience?



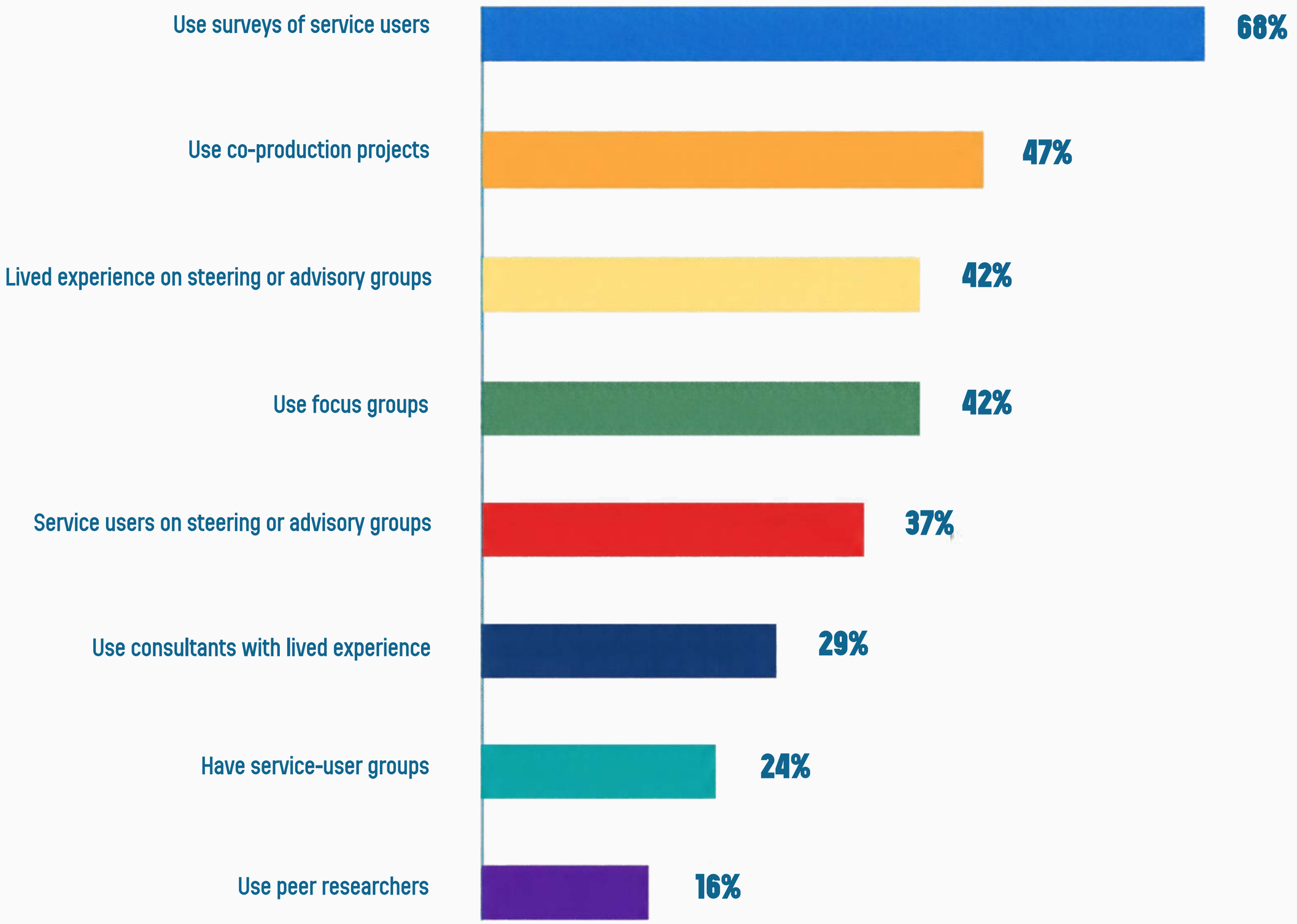
Approximately what percentage of your senior management have lived experience?



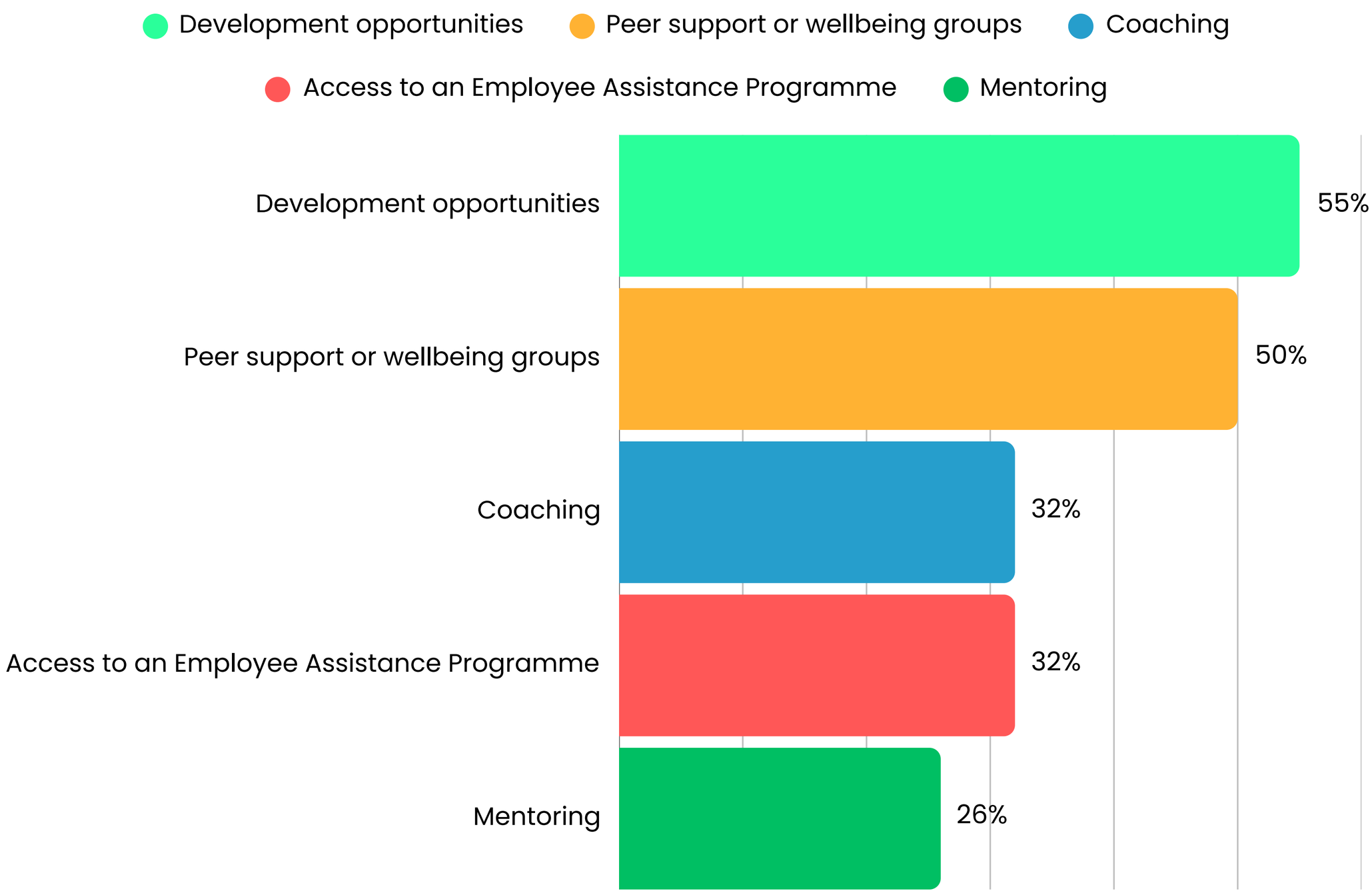
Approximately what percentage of your trustees have lived experience?



How else do people with lived experience / service users influence decision making in your organisation?



How do you support people with lived experience in your organisation?



REFUGEE ACTION

Insight to Action 25