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Indeed

Election Employment Research 2017

Report from an online survey of 2008 GB adults and two focus groups with employed people eligible to vote

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Contents

01

**Background,
methodology and
key findings**

02

Working lives

03

The bigger picture

04

**Work and the
General Election
2017**

1

Methodology and key findings

Our approach: overview

- We conducted a mixed methodology study, starting with a national poll to deliver robust statistics on public perceptions of employment-related issues ahead of the 2017 General Election, followed by two focus groups in different locations to explore experiences of specific groups in detail.

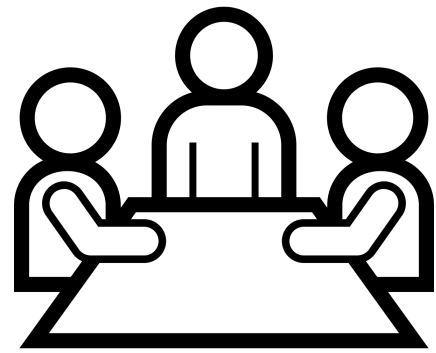


Our approach: quantitative survey



- Our quantitative survey was conducted online from 12th to 14th May 2017
- The survey was conducted among 2,008 British adults aged 18 years and older, and the data were weighted to be nationally representative
- Margin of error is +/- 3%
- In this report, we will be referring to the following audiences:
 - **General public** (sample size of 2,008): all respondents who took part in the survey
 - **Working people** (sample size of 1,020): all respondents who work
 - **Under / self employed** (sample size of 233): all respondents who work on either temporary part time contracts, zero hour contracts, no contract and self-employed. We differentiate these from fully employed people, which include people on permanent full time (sample size of 574) or part time contracts (sample size of 196)
 - **Likely voters** (sample size of 1,677): all respondents who are likely to vote. This was determined on the basis of respondents answering 8-10 to the following question: *“Thinking about the upcoming General Election on the 8th June 2017, how likely are you to vote? Please answer using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is absolutely certain not to vote and 10 is absolutely certain to vote.”*

Our approach: qualitative focus groups



- We conducted 2 focus groups in London and Manchester on 18th May 2017, each lasting 90 minutes
 - **One group of “under-employed” people:** 10 participants in London recruited to be working on temporary, part-time contracts, zero hour contracts, no contract or self-employed (same as quantitative survey “under / self employed” subcategory)
 - **One group of “fully employed” people:** 9 participants in Manchester who were recruited to be on permanent, full-time contracts
 - **Demographics:** all participants were recruited to be a cross-section of mixed men and women, aged 25 – 55 years old, B C1 C1 socio-economic grades, minimum of 2 people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds

Key findings

1

Work-related issues are very important to working adults – these emerge spontaneously as key concerns when talking about day-to-day worries.

2

However, work-related issues are rarely listed as a political concern – partly because of a perceived lack of differentiation between the parties and partly because many policies do not seem to directly address their concerns.

3

Controlling immigration more tightly, increasing the minimum wage and tackling youth unemployment are seen as the key political priorities for supporting working people in the UK.

4

The “gig economy” has low resonance among the general public – and, once explained, the under- or self-employed are less concerned about zero hours contracts than those in full-time employment.

5

Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn are equally trusted to support working people in the UK.

2 Working lives

In the focus groups, work and work-related issues emerged as an important and front-of-mind issue

- Asked to list the top concerns in their own lives, our focus group participants spontaneously raised employment and work
 - Almost all participants mentioned **earnings** as a particular concern
- Under-employed people in London placed emphasis on having a **better job security** and a **predictable income**
 - Freelance and self employed workers described “the fear” of not knowing where money will come from in the next few months. But some felt they were now used to this.
- Fully employed people in Manchester were more worried about having a **poor work-life balance** and **retirement age** being too late
 - They were also particularly concerned about constant **pressure and stress** in the workplace tiring them out

*“I wrote down that I would like to be better at spending money, being able to save more.”
(London, under-employed)*

*“I would like to have more financial stability – in the sense of having enough money consistently because the kinds of jobs I do are contract to contract so you have to keep planning in advance.”
(London, under-employed)*

*“Spend more time or have more spare time with my family and available time. So just with a view to being able to do more.”
(Manchester, fully employed)*

Working people defined a “good job” on two levels

- In both groups, people discussed different aspects of a “good job”:

Functional aspects of a good job

- Stability
- Predictable income sufficient to pay the bills at the end of the month,
- Facilitating a comfortable lifestyle
- Good work-life balance

These were considered to be “basics”, which any good job should meet (although that was not the case for everyone’s jobs in the groups)

Fulfilling aspects of a good job

- Enjoying your job
- Fulfilment through meaningful work
- Having good colleagues

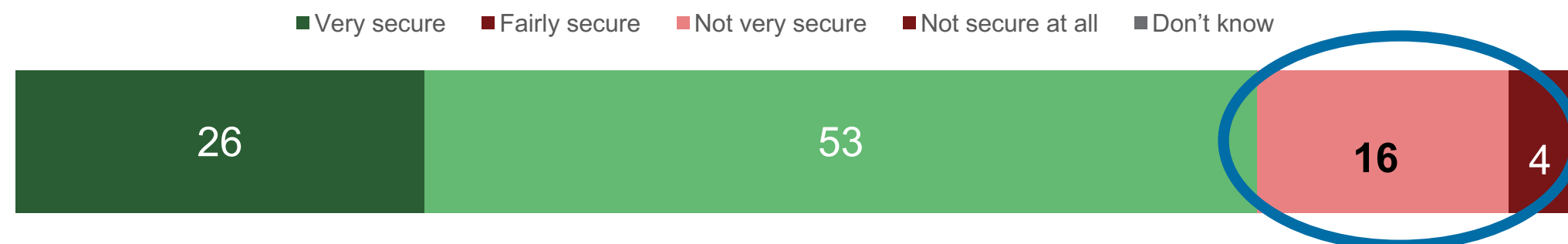
These were seen as secondary needs and making a job more than a source of income, and becoming a contributor to personal wellbeing

- There were no particular mentions of future security or the impacts of trends such as globalisation or automation, and even when prompted the public did not consider these to be concerns for their working lives

Around 1 in 5 working people in the UK feel insecure in their jobs – including a third of those in the under- / self-employed group

Perceived security of employment situation at the current time:

Working people



20% of people working in the UK do not feel secure (not very secure and not secure at all) about their employment situation at the current time

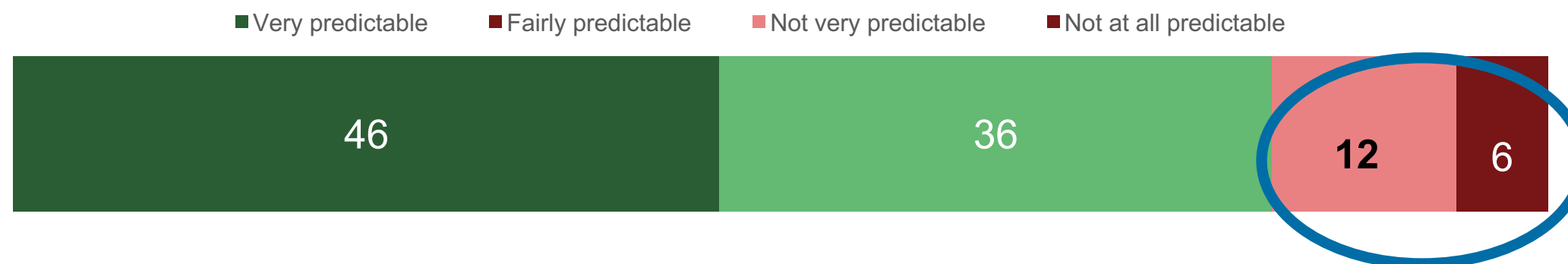
More than a third (37%) of the under- or self-employed say they do not feel secure (not very secure and not secure at all).

This compares to:

- 15% of those who have permanent, full-time contracts;
- 15% of people with permanent, part-time contracts

Perceived predictability of working hours and days:

Working people



18% of people working in the UK say they do not have predictable working hours and days (not very predictable and not at all predictable)

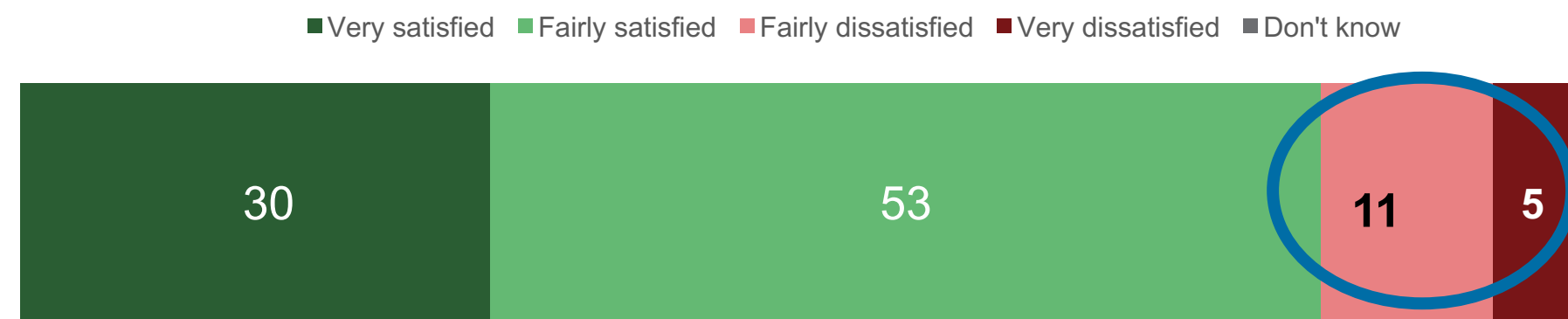
Two fifths (40%) of the under- or self-employed say that they do not have predictable working patterns.

This compares to:

- 13% of those who have permanent, full-time contracts
- 10% of people with permanent, part-time contracts

Despite this, under- / self-employed workers are as satisfied with their jobs overall as those on permanent contracts

Level of satisfaction with main job: **Working people**



83% of people working in the UK are satisfied (very satisfied or fairly satisfied) with their main job

Under-employed people are equally as satisfied with their main job as fully employed people.

- 87% of under / self employed people are satisfied (either very satisfied or fairly satisfied).
- This compares to 89% of those on permanent, part-time contracts and 80% on permanent, full-time contracts.

People on permanent, full-time contracts are almost twice as likely as under / self employed people and permanent, part time people to be dissatisfied with their main job.

- 20% of those on permanent, full-time contracts to be dissatisfied.
- This compares to 12% of the under- or self-employed and 11% of those on permanent, part-time contracts.

People with experience of temporary and zero-hour contracts were less negative about them than those without that experience

- Those on permanent contracts (in the Manchester group) were the most negative about zero hour contracts
 - The issue was raised spontaneously, and the concept itself was universally seen negatively
- For some on zero hour contracts (in London), the instability and uncertainty can be a real drawback:
 - In particular, those whose main 'career' depended on these types of contract, or those whose lifestage required a more predictable and stable income (for example participants who were the main earner for a family with children)
- For others, however, a zero hours contract fitted well with their lifestage and lifestyle
 - In particular those who were studying and working at the same time, and those who worked more than one job, found the mutual flexibility beneficial
 - One single parent in the group also found that the zero hours contract offered flexibility to cope with childcare issues

*"Oh, that's terrible. They should scrap them."
(Manchester, fully employed)*

*"I like it because I can choose my hours and decide when to go see my friends. It works for me but I can see why it wouldn't work for somebody else."
(London, under-employed)*

*"I find it very frustrating, you can't plan ahead, or save for a house or even a holiday."
(London, under-employed)*

Almost no one in either group had heard the term “gig economy”, including people working in jobs typical of this sector

- Participants did not recognise the term “gig economy”, including some very “switched on” participants
- After giving an explanation of the term, fully employed people in Manchester found it difficult to assess the concept, seeing it as just another type of power imbalance between employers and employees
- Under-employed in London recognised themselves in the types of jobs included in the definition of “gig economy” but did not seem to feel strongly about it either
 - Some of them who had been freelancers for a long time thought it was just a new term for an existing working arrangement
 - They did not necessarily feel like technology-enabled companies like Uber or Deliveroo differed much from other ad hoc employers

*“I’ve seen the Uber drivers and the deliveries but I don’t know much about ‘the gig economy’.”
(Manchester, fully employed)*

*“Of course I’d love to have more protection, but I just don’t see how it would happen with my type of work [freelance].”
(London, under-employed)*

3

The bigger picture

The public is almost equally split between optimism and pessimism about the UK economy

Attitudes towards UK economy: **General public**



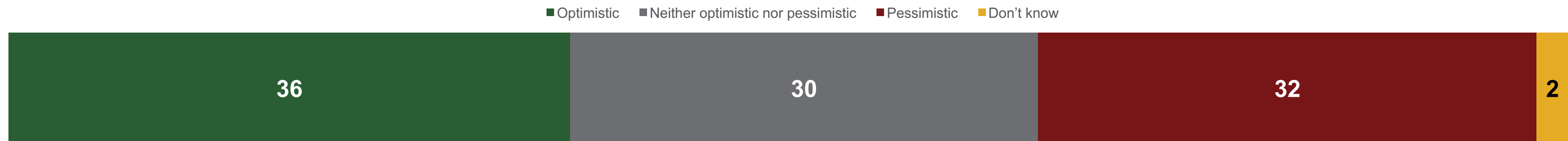
- In the focus groups, the economy of the country was not mentioned spontaneously
 - Rather concerns focus on closely related issues: Brexit, the NHS and cuts in general
- In London, participants also brought up the need for more equality in the country
 - Although this was as much about social/cultural equality (race, religion, gender, sexuality, etc.), as about economic equality

"If I could change one thing about the country it would be staying in the EU..."
(London, under-employed)

"When I hear the wages they get paid (NHS employees) I kind of feel guilty for the job I do almost and the wage I get paid."
(Manchester, fully employed)

Optimism outweighs pessimism when people consider their local economy

Attitudes towards the economy of their city or region: **General public**



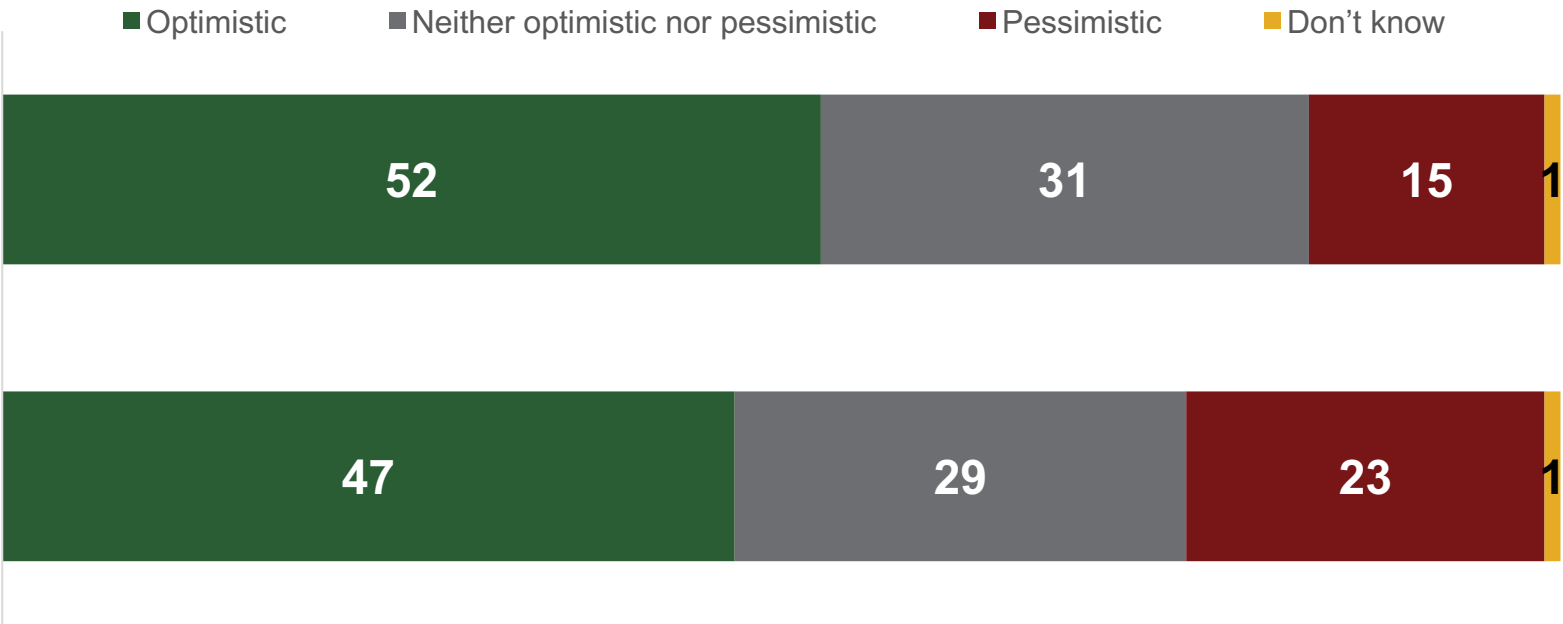
- In the focus groups, participants seemed slightly more optimistic about their city / region than the country. However, concerns remained:
 - In Manchester, fully employed participants brought up transport as well as local job opportunities
 - In London there was particular concern about the lack of affordable housing, alongside the recent rise in crime in certain areas
 - Both groups were concerned about a disregard for local shops and small businesses in their area, often struggling against increasing competition

*"I'm from Colne... so there's not much opportunity there. I've moved to Manchester and the opportunities are miles better, the wages are a lot higher, it's easier to get jobs with higher wages."
(Manchester, fully employed)*

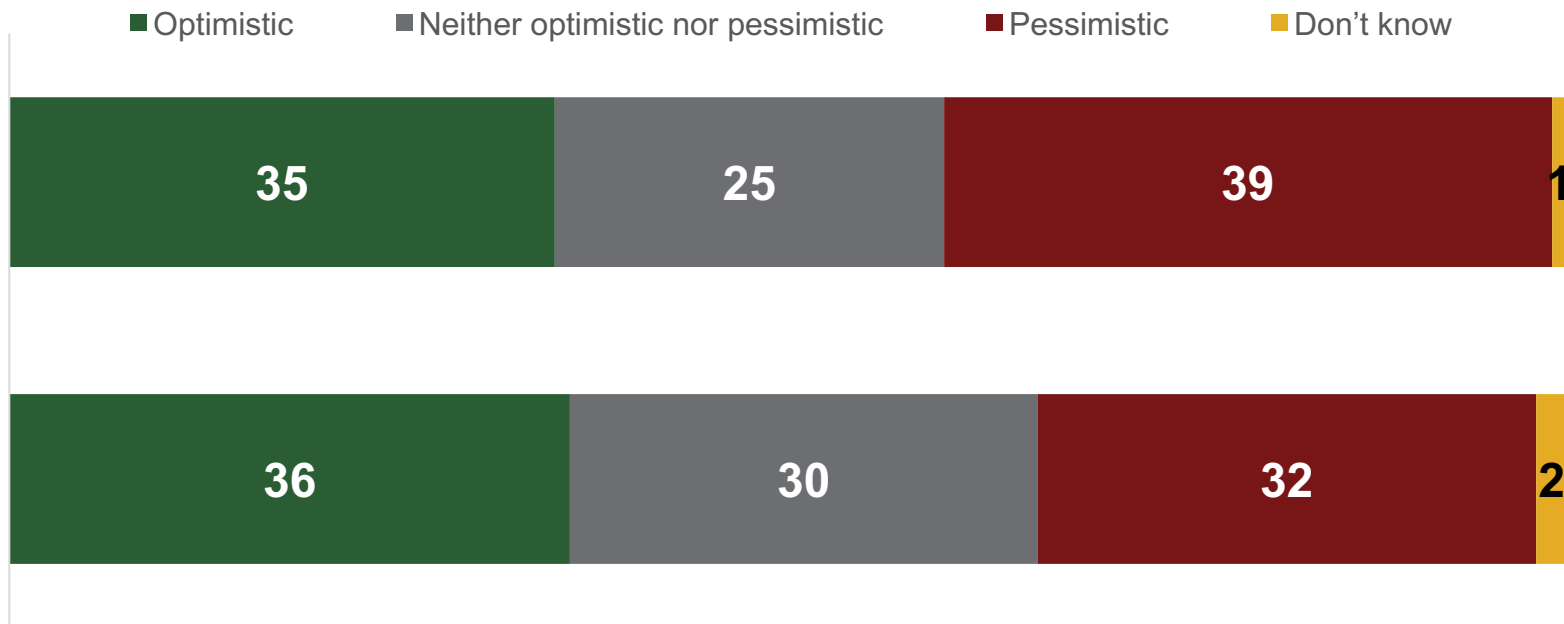
*"It would be good to have more affordable housing and to help people get on the property ladder."
(London, under-employed)*

Overall the public are more optimistic about issues close to them than those that are more geographically removed

Attitudes towards their employer and sector:
Working people



Attitudes towards UK economy and economy of city / region: **General public**

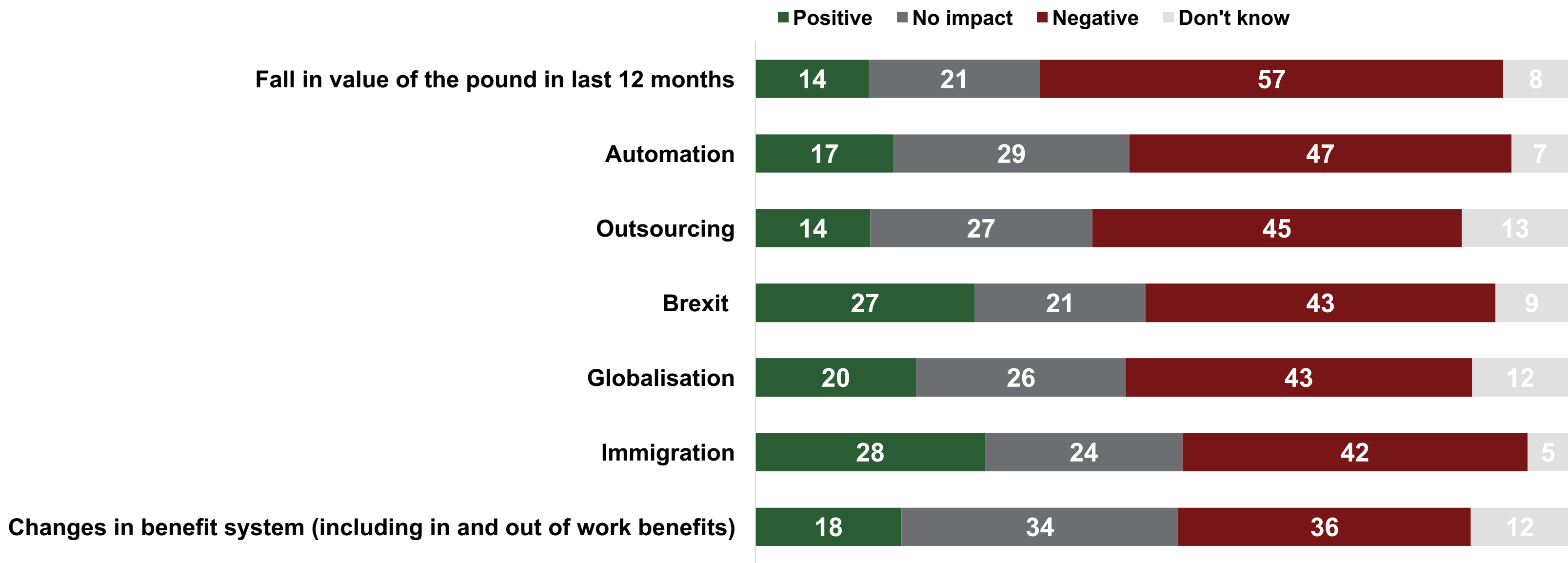


This finding was echoed in the focus groups, where participants tended to mention negative aspects of issues from which they were more distanced – such as the NHS, the state of the UK economy and Brexit – and were relatively unlikely to do this for issues which were more immediate.

Q7. How optimistic or pessimistic are you currently feeling about each of the following? The company you work for. The sector you work in. Base: All respondents who work. 1020
Q7. How optimistic or pessimistic are you currently feeling about each of the following? The UK economy. The economy of your city / region. Base: All respondents. 2008.

Most of the broad trends that we tested are felt to have a negative impact on individuals' current work situation

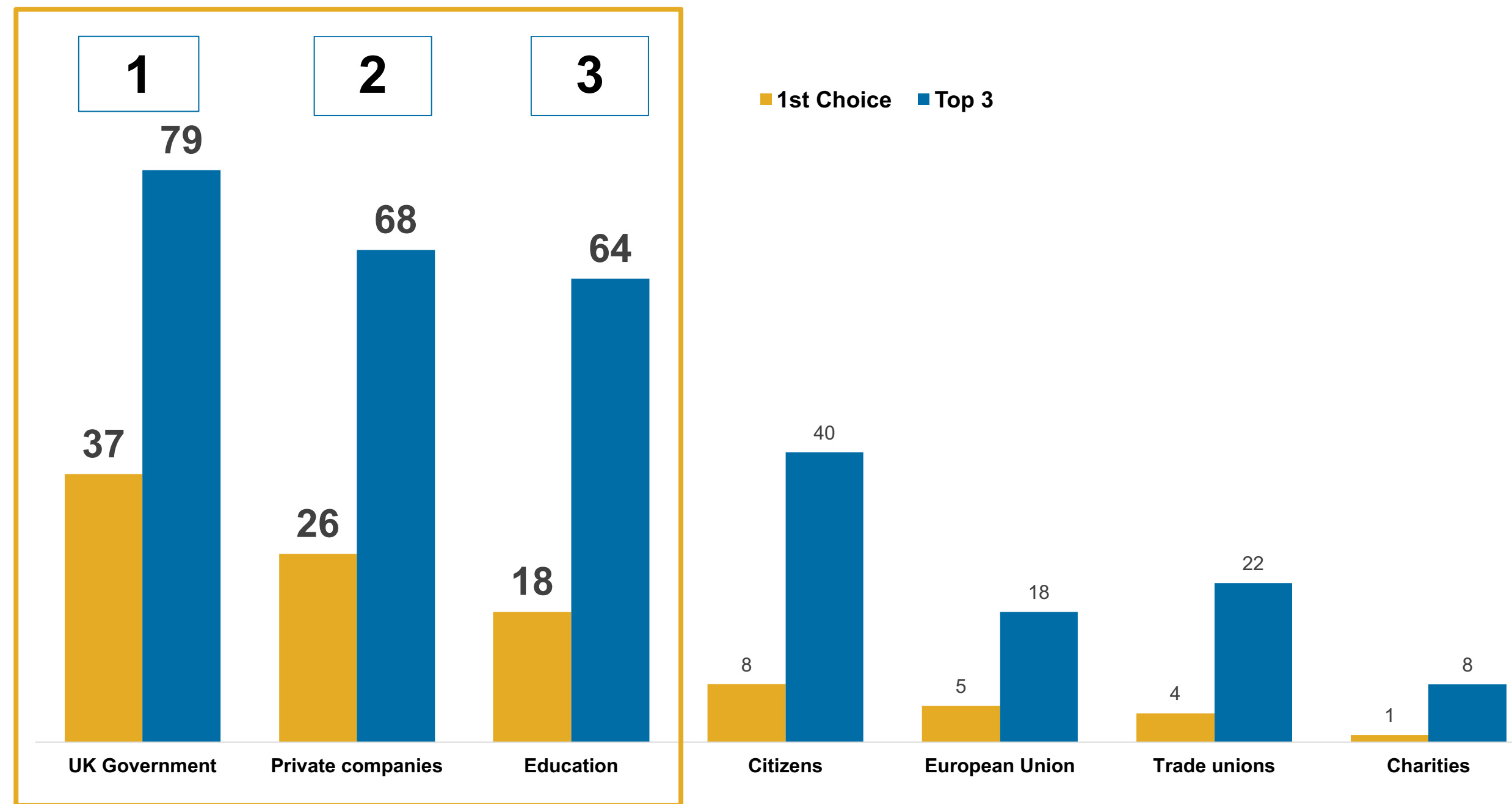
Perceived impact of factors on current work situation or prospects: **General public**



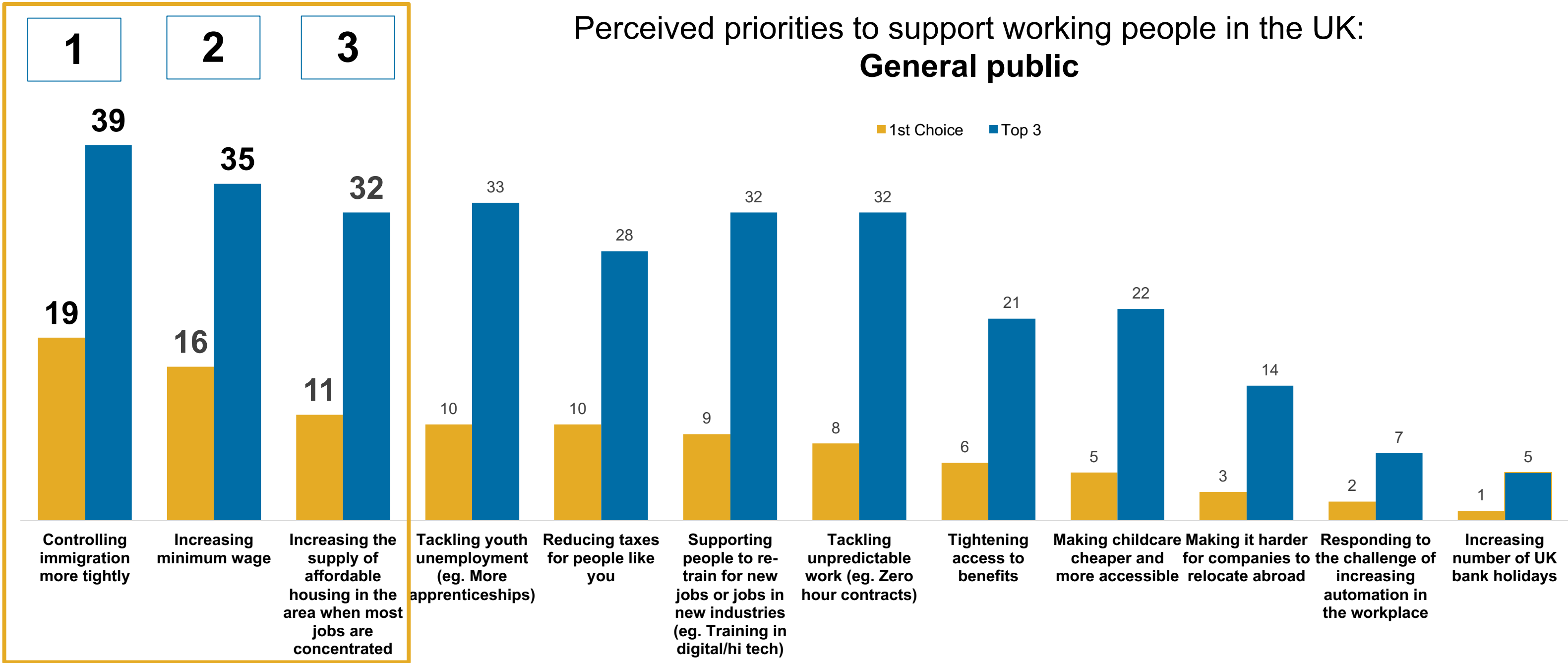
Q8. Below is a list of factors that some people think have an impact on jobs in the UK. For each option in the list below, please indicate whether you think that this is currently having a positive or a negative impact on your current work situation and prospects, or no impact at all. Base: All respondents. 2008

UK Government is felt to have the most impact in reducing unemployment, followed by private companies and education

Perceived impact of different groups in reducing unemployment in the UK: **General public**



Controlling immigration more tightly is seen as main priority for supporting working people in the UK



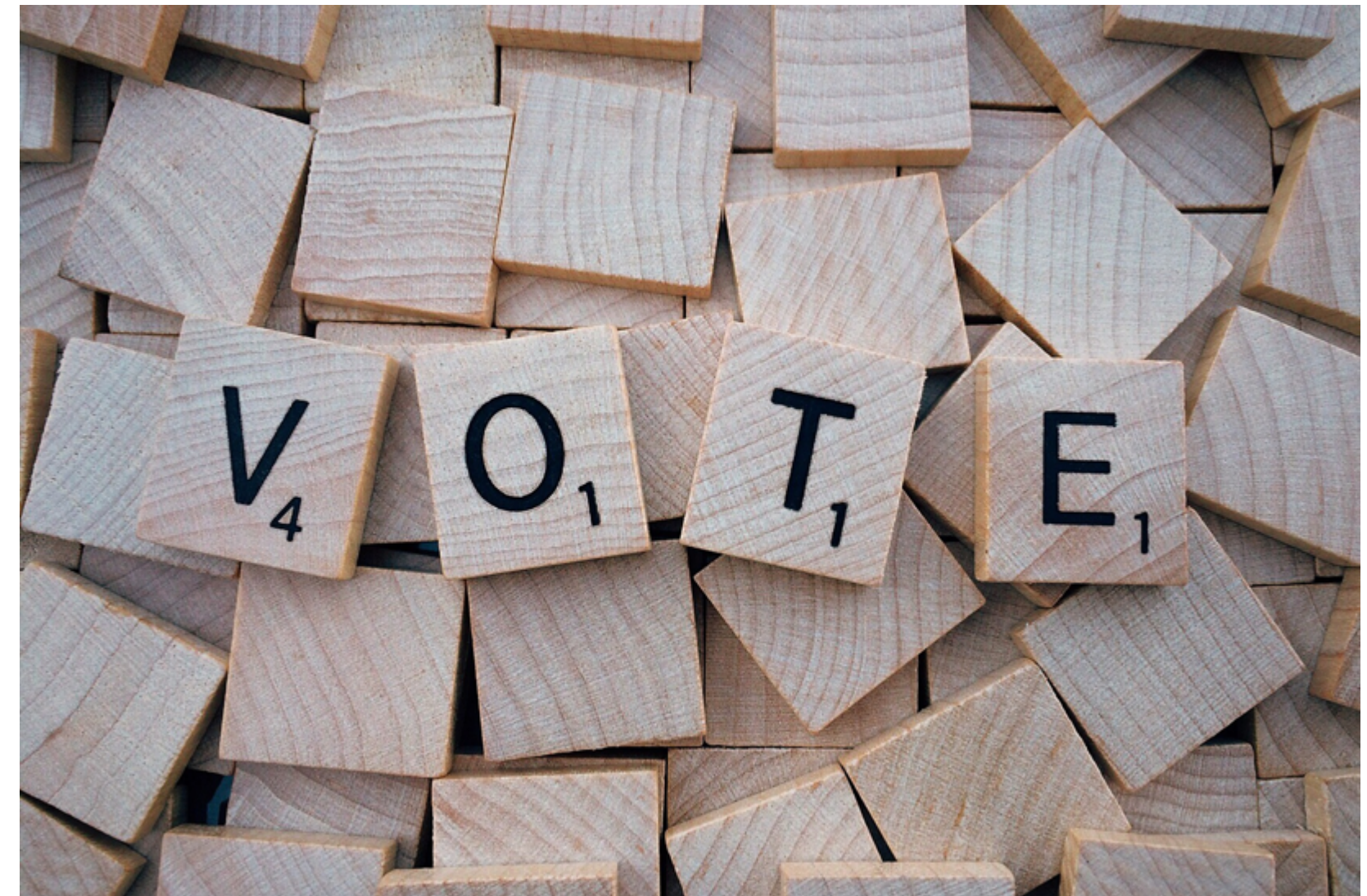
Q9. Thinking about how government could support working people in the UK, which of the following do you think should be considered as the main three priorities? Please select and rank your top 3 priorities.. Base: All respondents. 2008

4

Work and the General Election 2017

Exploring the General Election

- This section explores trust in party leaders to support working people in the UK.
- Given the party political nature of the issues, we will only be looking at the subcategory of “likely voters” (sample size: 1677) in this section.
- This was determined on the basis of respondents answering 8-10 to the following question: “*Thinking about the upcoming General Election on the 8th June 2017, how likely are you to vote? Please answer using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is absolutely certain not to vote and 10 is absolutely certain to vote.*”



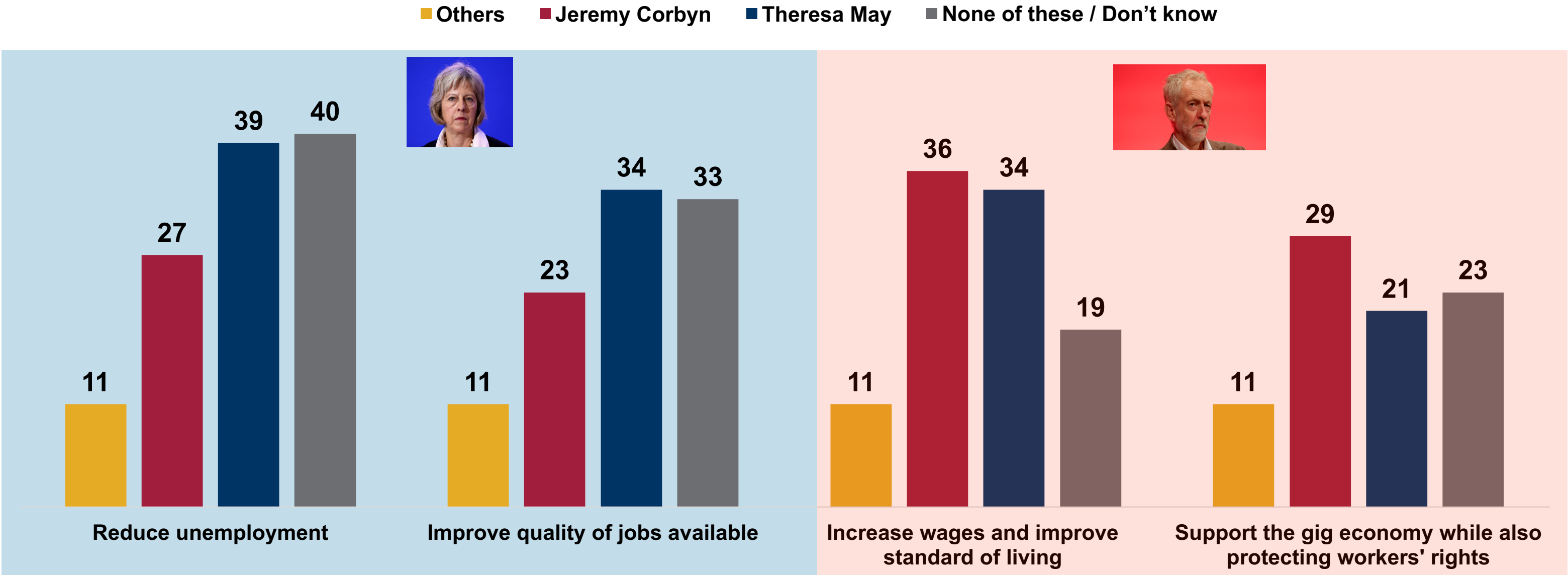
Corbyn and May are equally trusted to support working people

Proportion trusting each party leader to support working people in the UK: **Likely voters**



May most trusted on unemployment and improving quality of jobs; Corbyn on increasing wages and supporting workers in gig economy

Proportion trusting most party leader for specific actions: **Likely voters**



May and Corbyn equally trusted on youth unemployment and reducing taxes for working people

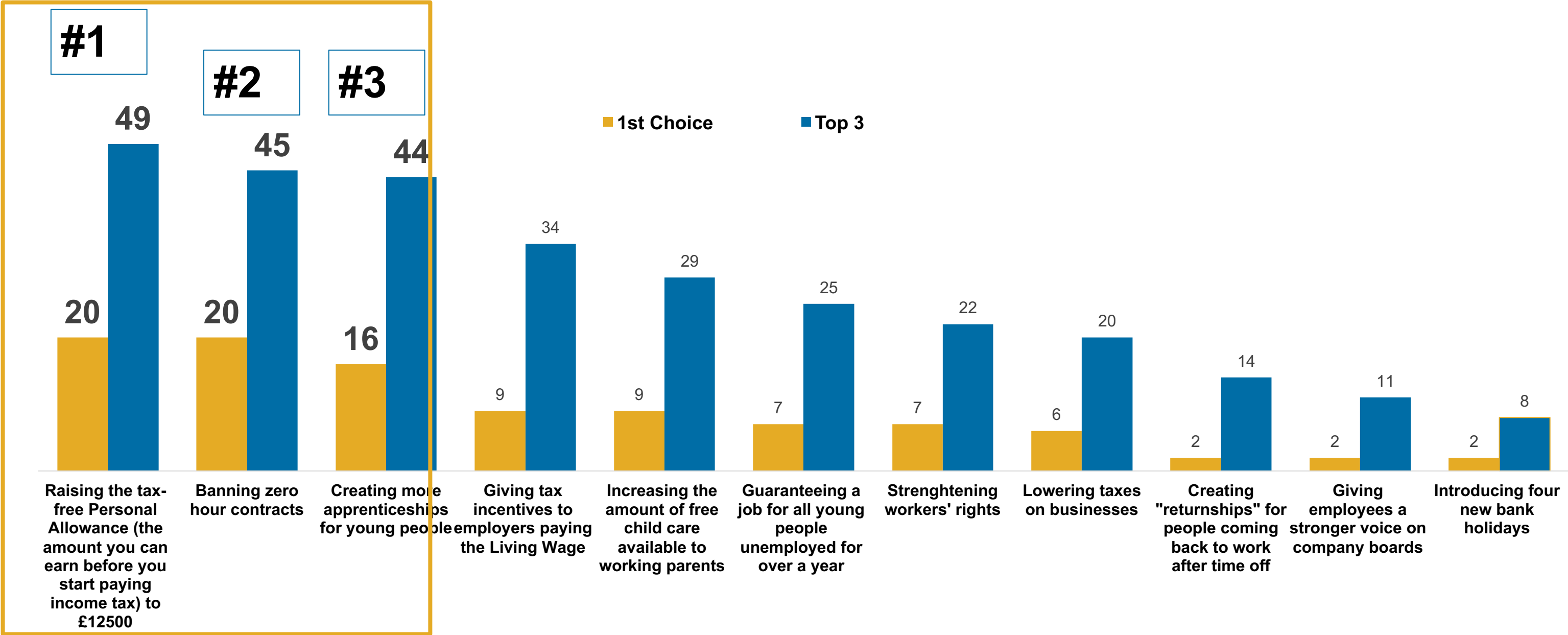
Trust to deliver...	Ranking of priorities		
Controlling immigration more tightly	#1	39%	9%
Increasing minimum wage	#2	22%	49%
Tackling youth unemployment	#3	32%	32%
Supporting people to re-train in new jobs or new industries	#4	35%	27%
Tackling unpredictable working hours	#5	19%	44%
Reducing taxes for people like you	#6	29%	29%

Q9. Thinking about how government could support working people in the UK, which of the following do you think should be considered as the main three priorities? Please select and rank your top 3 priorities. Base: All respondents likely to vote. 1677

Q11. Which of the following party leaders would you trust most to deliver each of the following? Base: All respondents likely to vote. 1677

Raising tax-free personal allowance, banning zero hour contracts and creating more apprenticeships are the preferred policies

Top 3 preferred policies to make the UK a good place to work and find a job: **Likely voters**



In both groups, there was a clear preference for “creating more apprenticeships for young people”

- Most people in the groups in Manchester and London prioritised “creating more apprenticeships for young people”
 - This reflected a theme that emerged at the beginning of the discussion around the need for young people to gain more practical skills and concerns around university debt being normalised in the country
- Groups reflected the poll with “raising the tax-free personal allowance” policy, ranked second in Manchester and third in London
- “Banning zero hour contracts” was not in the groups’ top three priorities

*“It’s important to be able to give them (young people) applicable and transferrable skills so they know what they’re doing and where they’re going.”
(London, under-employed)*

*“I’ve got two children that are coming up to teenagers (...) and unless they need to go to university for a specific job, I wouldn’t encourage them to go down that route because I don’t want them to be left with, is it £44,000 debt.”
(Manchester, fully employed)*

Although a central part of own lives, issues of work and employment feel less important for this election at other times

- Despite personal relevance of work-related issue for their own lives, participants did not feel like employment was the biggest issue in the UK for this election
- Generally they felt that other issues – in particular Brexit and cuts to public services – would have a greater impact on their vote
- Moreover there was a lack of perceived differentiation between parties' policies and a feeling these policies were not addressing their concerns

*"To be honest, these issues do affect me but they are probably not the biggest issues."
(London, under-employed)*

*"Personally not [that important], because rights to do with work I'm not particularly that bothered about compared to other issues, I'd say things like the EU are more important, the NHS is more important."
(Manchester, fully employed)*

Thank you

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