

Boater reputation survey 2020

April 2020

Contents

- 1. Summary**
- 2. Approach**
- 3. Sample characteristics**
- 4. KPIs**
- 5. Overall upkeep**
- 6. Customer service**
- 7. Perceptions of the Trust**
- 8. Demographics**
- 9. Wellbeing**

Summary

Summary

The findings show that boater satisfaction has steadied to around 60%, whilst perception of overall upkeep of the waterways and boaters likely to advocate for the Trust have both improved slightly on 2019 figures, although still below the highs achieved in 2017.

The KPI of overall satisfaction has dropped to 60% (from 61% in 2019 and 70% in 2018).

Analysis of the free text comments suggests these issues which may explain the drop in boater satisfaction;

- The perception that the Trust is moving away from boating towards wellbeing. Frequent comments refer to the money spent on improving facilities for cyclists and other towpath users to the detriment of boater facilities, and the management of waterways.
- Concern that the Trust is not investing in planned maintenance. Unplanned stoppages and failed assets are referenced by many as an indication that the Trust is not carrying out day to day and pro-active maintenance. It was felt that improvements could have been made regarding dredging and vegetation management.

The overall sample size and response group is slightly lower than last year but not significantly, so we do not believe that the drop in satisfaction is related to this.

However, the survey was sent out just before the coronavirus lockdown was implemented. Reminders to complete surveys were not sent, and other communications were deemed more pressing and relevant. This may have had some impact on the number and nature of responses received as those with a strong views are more likely to respond immediately whereas those with less strong views who might have responded if they had been reminded, may not have completed the survey this year.

Approach

1. Method:

An online survey, based on the reputational aspects of the previous boater reputation survey was the primary method of data collection.

The survey was distributed to random sample of approximately a third of all licence holders.

Those for whom the Trust held an email address were sent a link to the online survey through a personal email. The emails included a unique URL for each respondents

Boaters for whom the Trusts doesn't hold an email address were sent a link to the survey either through a:

- Text message including link to online survey, if the Trust held a mobile number
- Letter including link to online survey but with paper version of the survey

2. Dates:

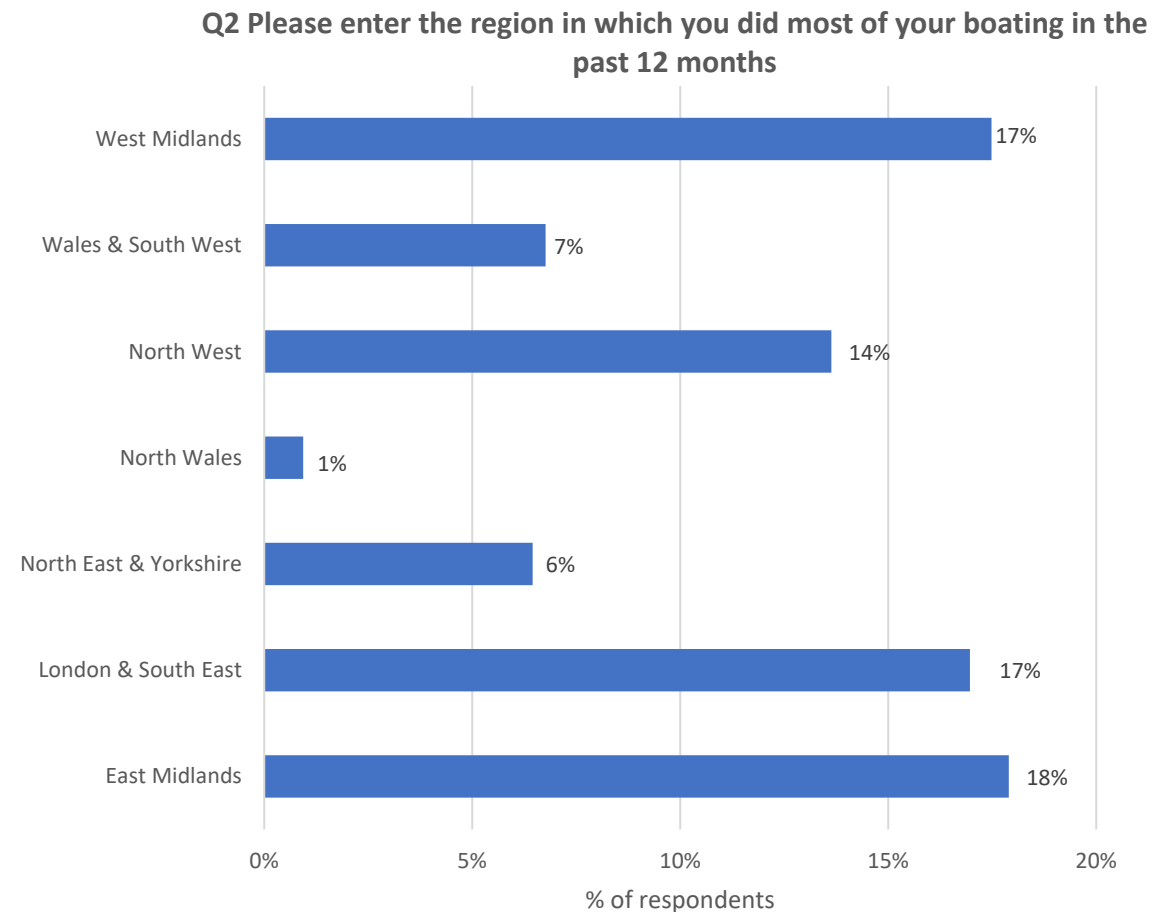
Online survey ran from 4th March to 1st April , 2020

3.	Channel	Sample size	Response	Response rate
	Core online survey sent by email	8358	949	11.4%
	Text message	696	11	1.6%
	Letter	201	1	0.5%
	Total	9255	961	10.4%

Sample characteristics

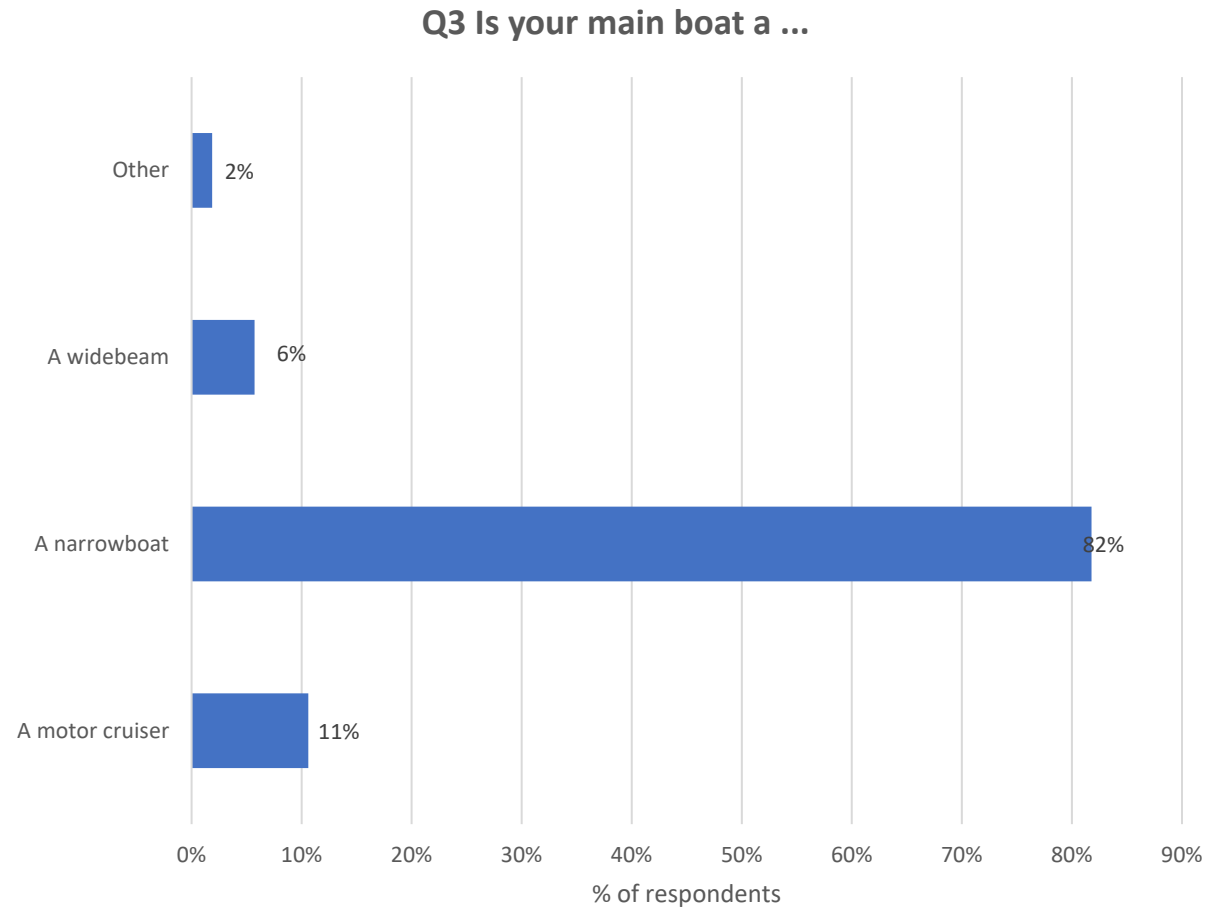
Region

- Respondents were asked where they had done most of the boating in the past 12 months. The regional spread is shown in the chart.
- Most responses were received from boaters in the West and East Midlands and London & South East. There was a low response from boaters in Wales and South West (65) and from Yorkshire and North East (62). Only 9 respondents boated solely in North Wales
- 20% of respondents reported to have boated in more than one region.



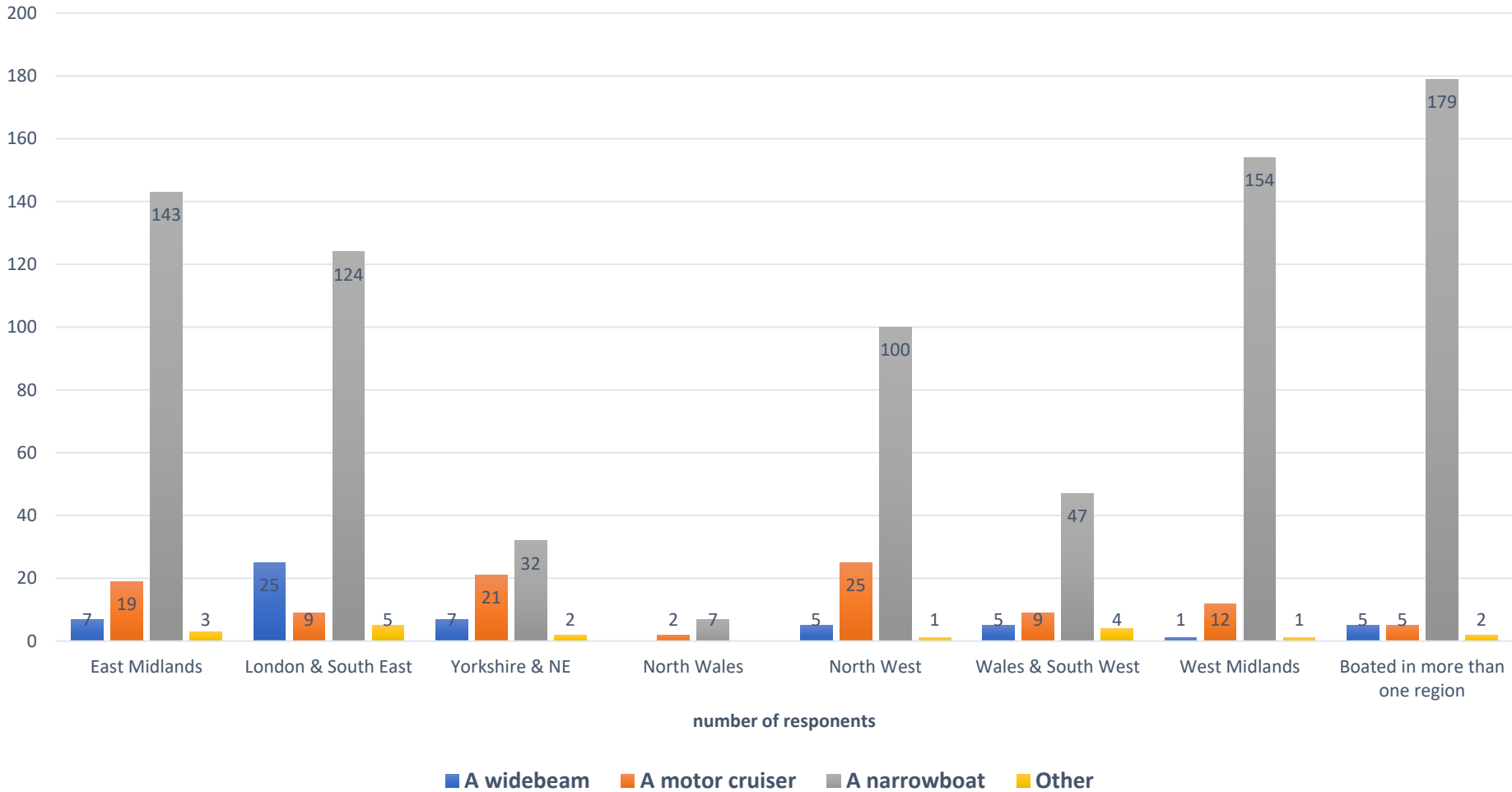
Type of boat

- The overwhelming proportion of respondents owned a narrowboat. The split is similar to 2019 when 80% owned a narrowboat and 8% a wide beam.



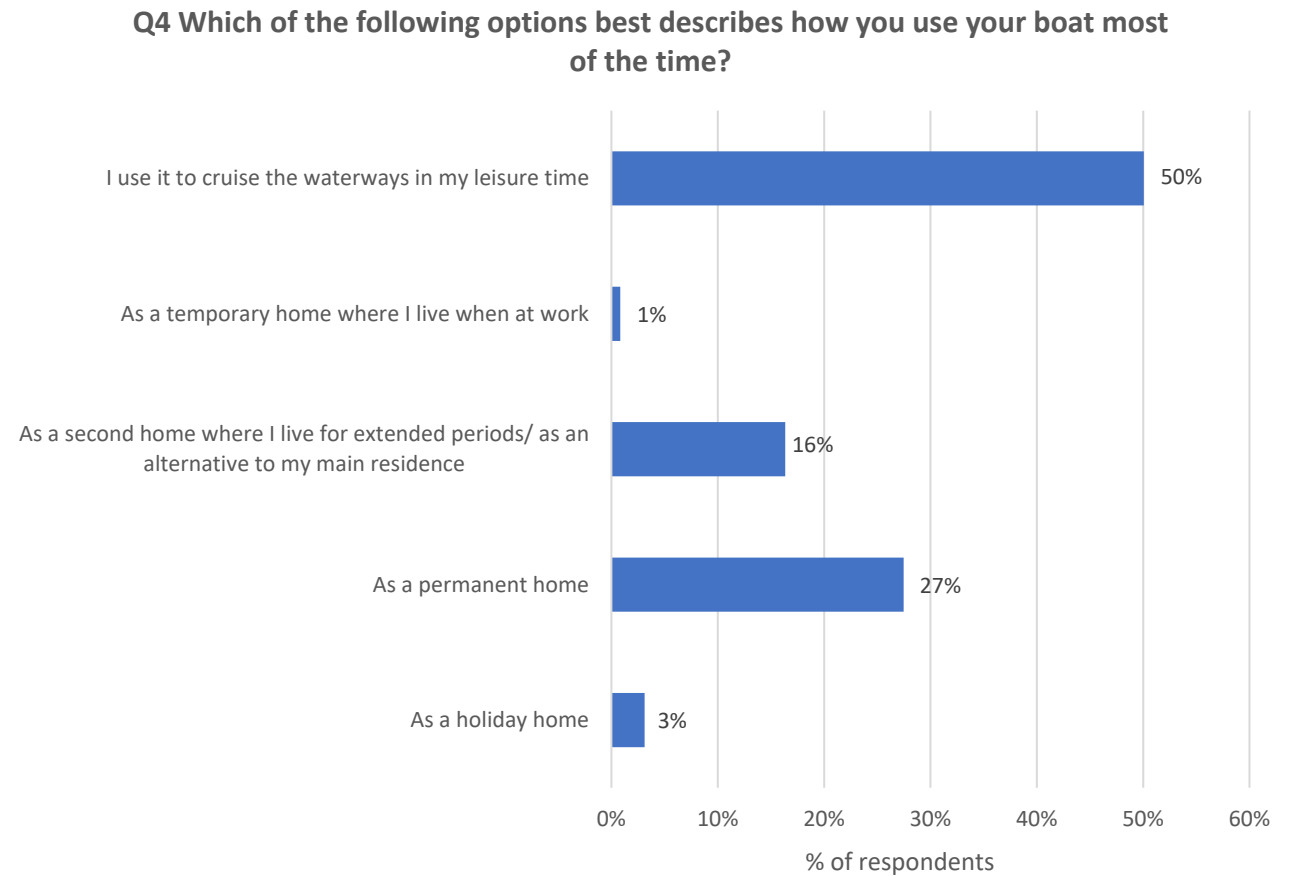
Boat type per Region

Breakdown of boat type per region



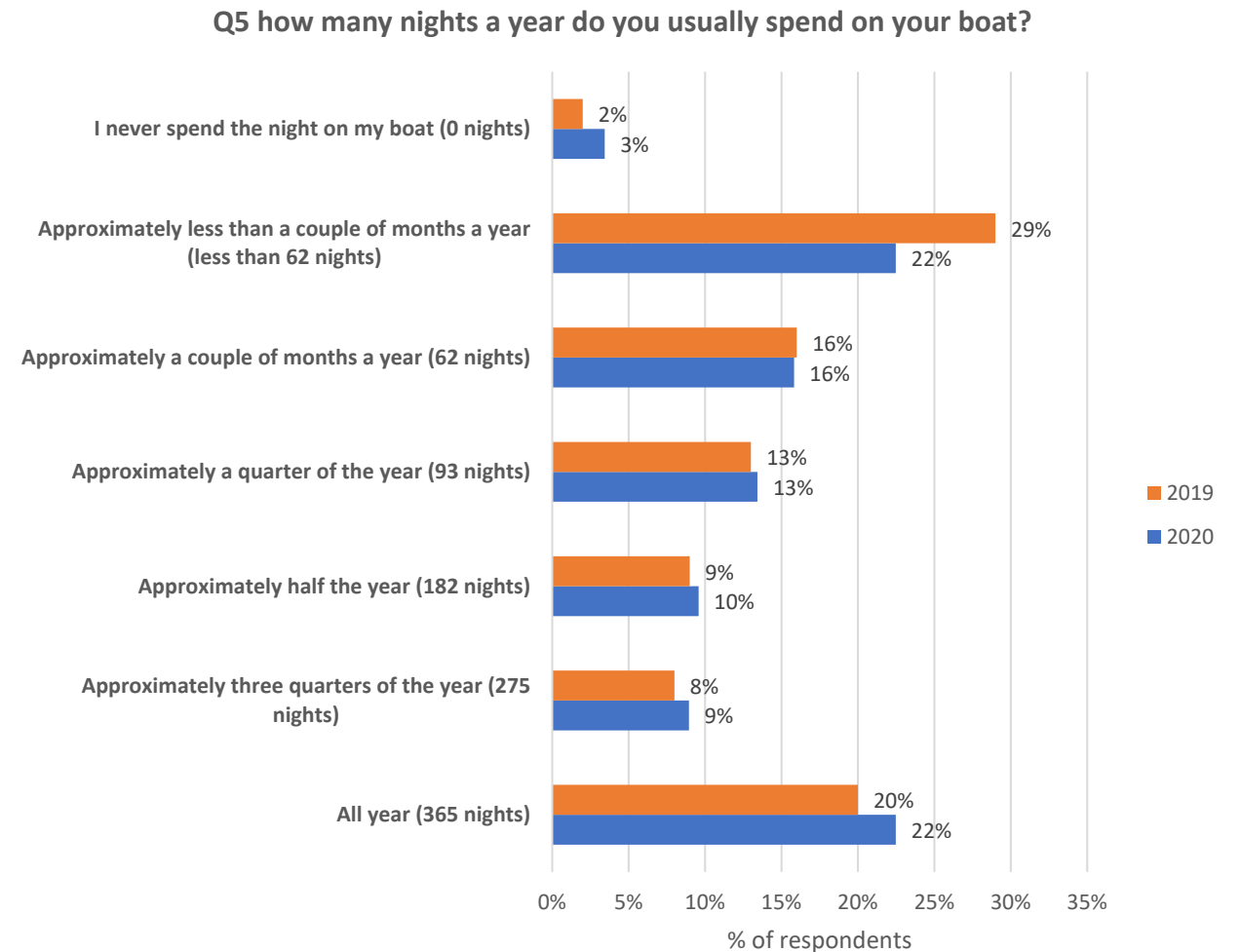
Boat Use

Half the respondents use the boat for leisure purposes, whilst just over a quarter reside on their boat



Nights spent on the boat

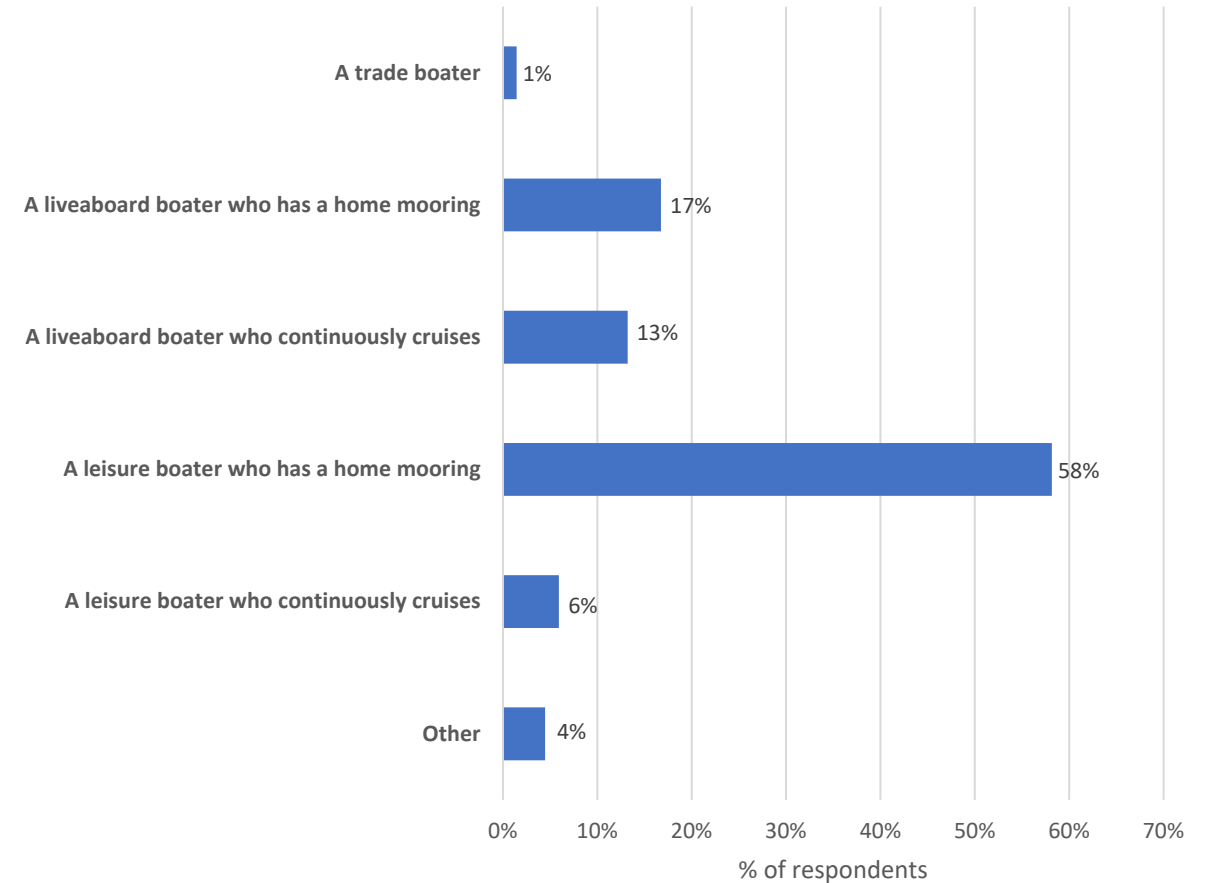
- There is a slight change on 2019 when respondents were asked about the number of nights spent on the boat. Whilst 41% spent the night on their boat a couple of months a year or less, the same amount now spent the night on their boat more than half the year.



Type of boater

- 30% of the sample said they lived on their boat, either on a mooring or as a continuous cruiser, up just 2% on 2019.
- Note – Business Boats are not included in this survey, so boaters that self-identify as trade boaters are not formally registered a business boats.

Q6 Please select (from the list below) the one which best describes you

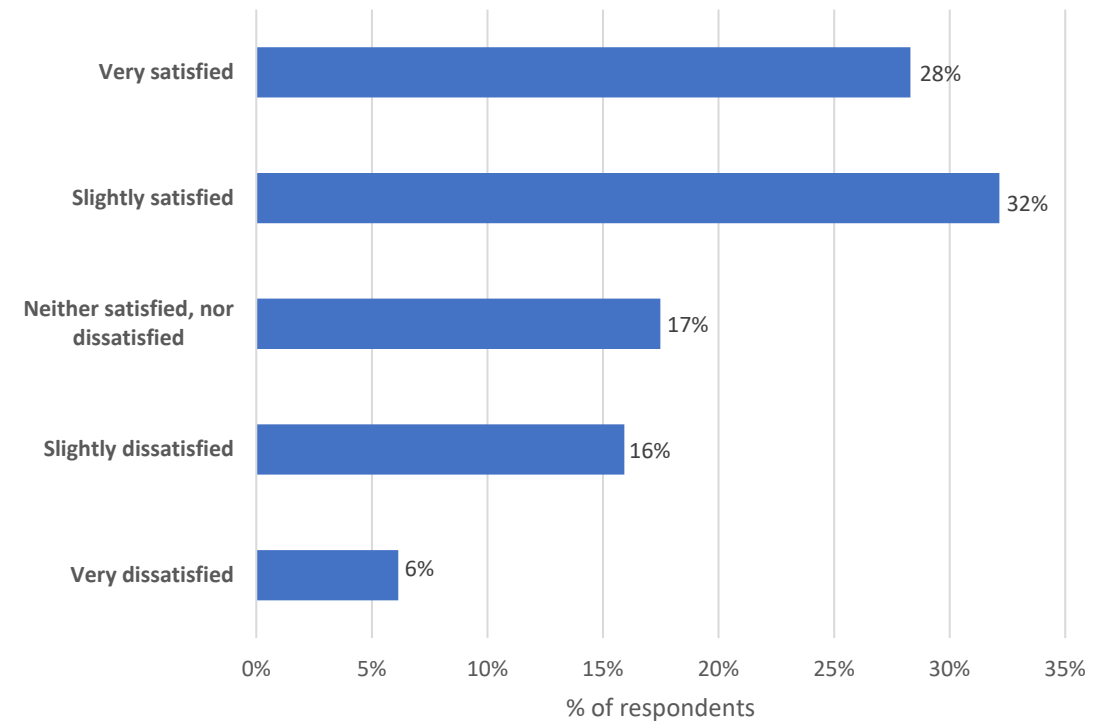


KPIs

Overall satisfaction

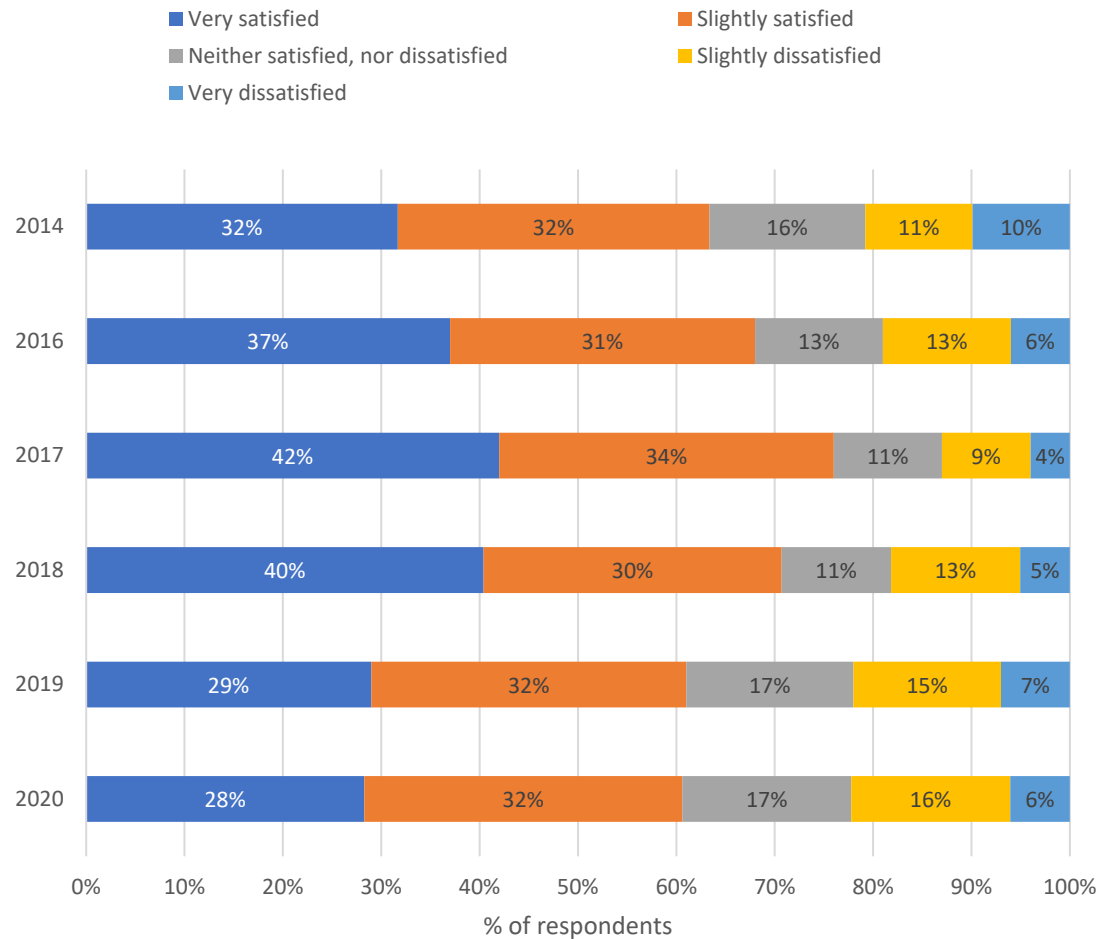
- Overall satisfaction has dropped from a high point in 2017, but remained virtually identical to 2019. In 2020, only 60% of respondents agreed they were satisfied with their experience compared to 76% in 2017.
- There is little difference in satisfaction between the regions, apart from the North East, where it was a little lower.
- Those with a narrowboat are more satisfied than either those with wide beams or motor cruisers, as was the case in 2019.

Q13 Thinking about your boating on the Canal & River Trust's canals and rivers over the past year, overall, how satisfied were you with your experience?

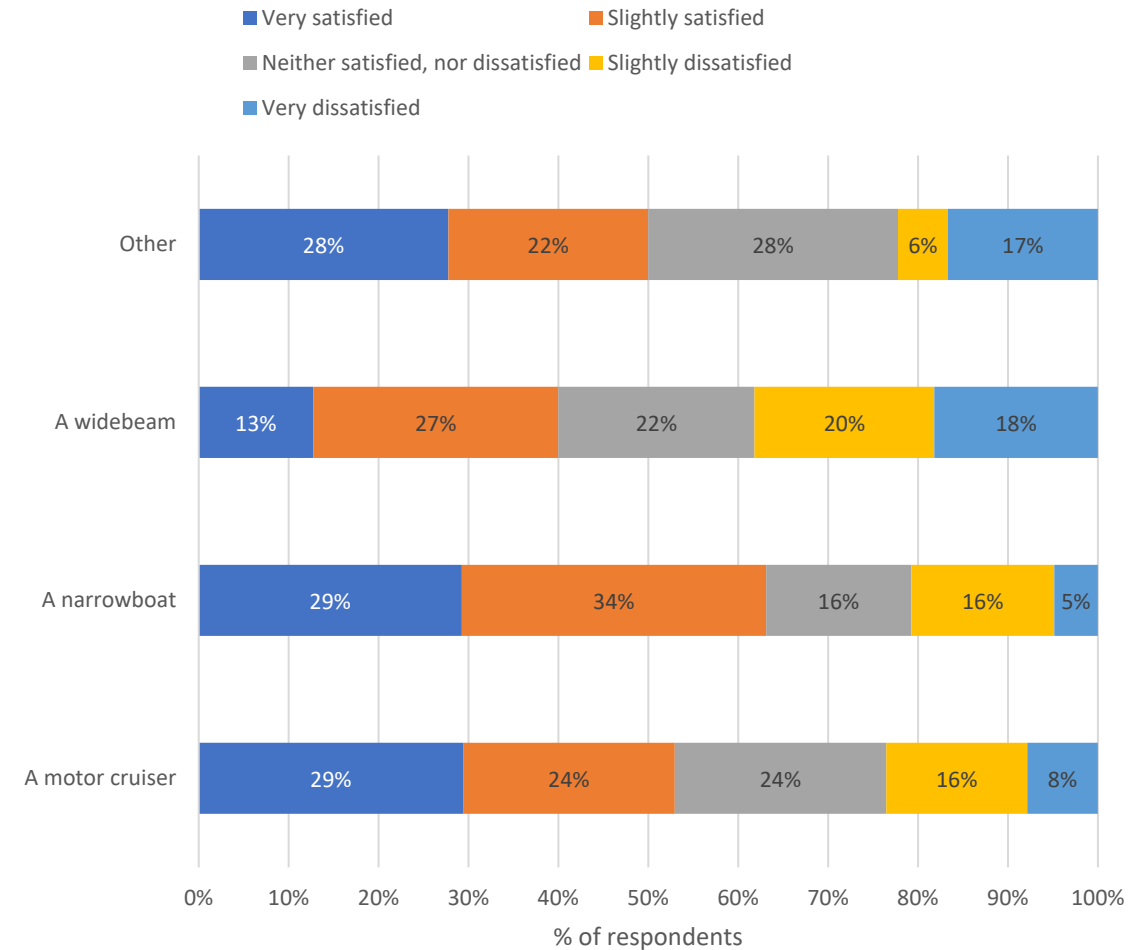


Overall satisfaction

Q13 Thinking about your boating on the Canal & River Trust's canals and rivers over the past year, overall, how satisfied were you with your experience?

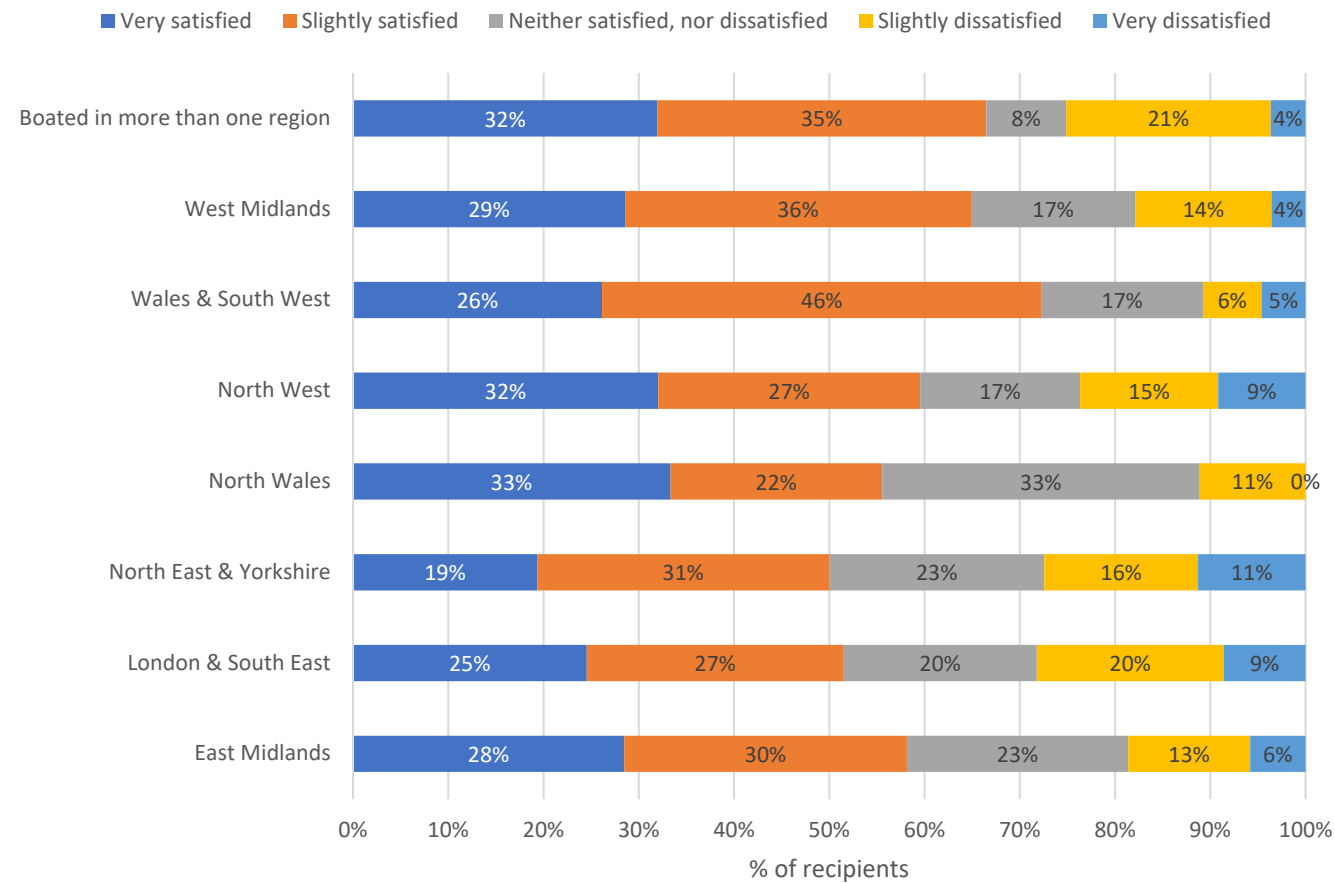


Q13 Thinking about your boating on the Canal & River Trust's canals and rivers over the past year, overall, how satisfied were you with your experience?



Overall satisfaction

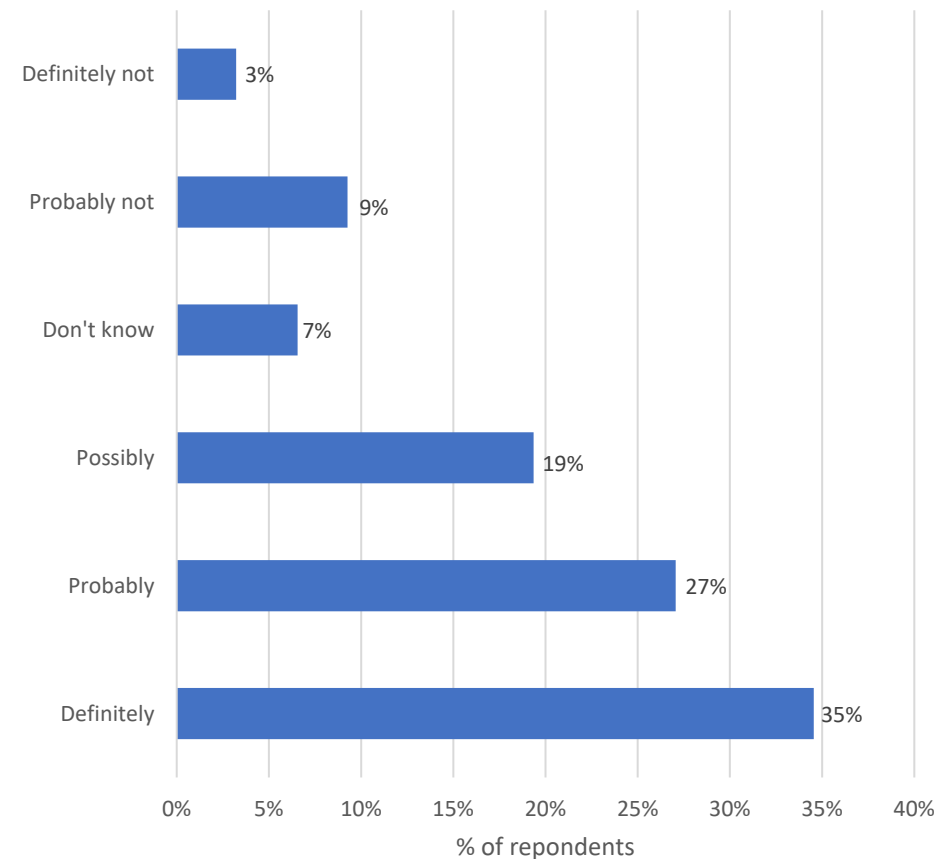
Q13 Thinking about your boating on the Canal & River Trust's canals and rivers over the past year, overall, how satisfied were you with your experience?



Propensity to recommend

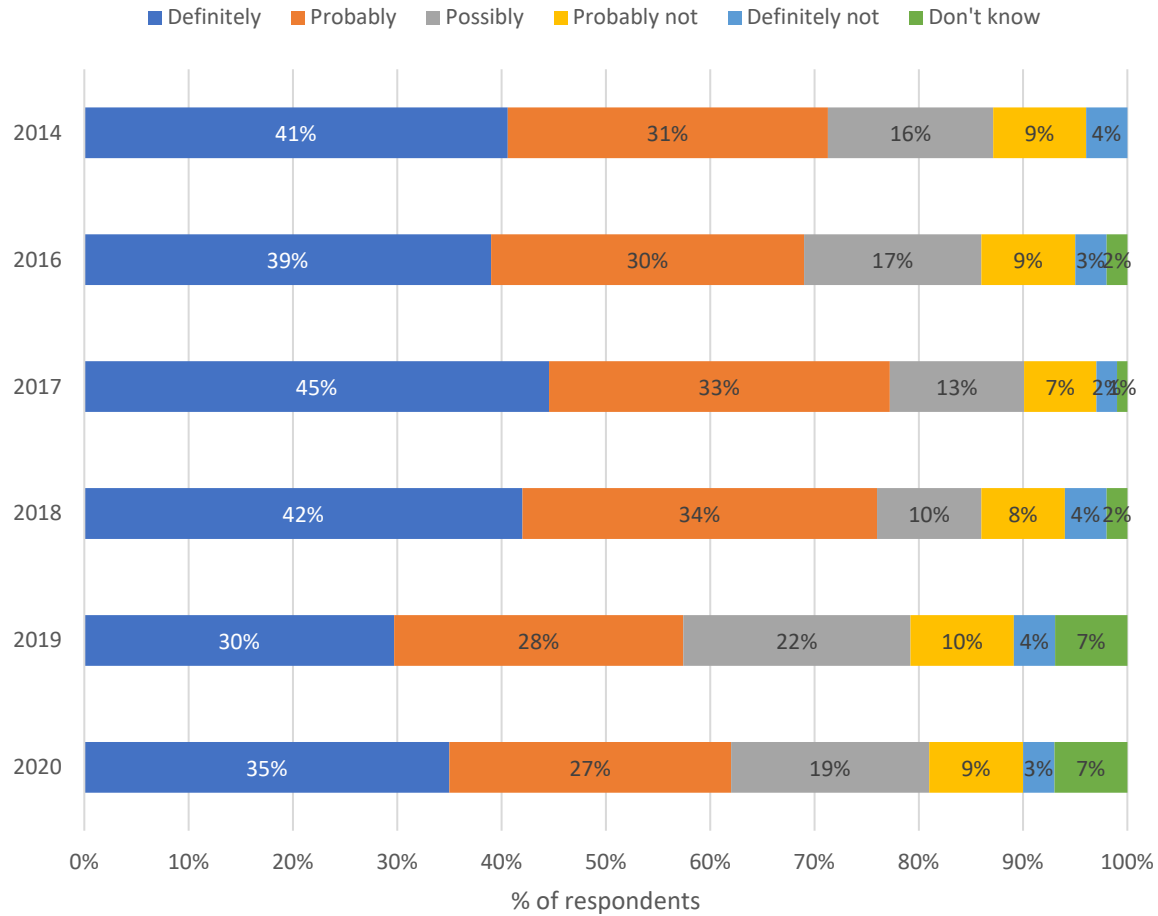
- There was an upturn in the propensity to recommend in 2020, with 62% saying they would definitely or probably recommend the waterways in their area to other boaters, 4% up on 2019, but still a long way below the high of 78% in 2017.
- There is little variation between regions, most notable is the lower score in Yorkshire & NE.
- Those with narrowboats are much more likely to recommend the local waterways to other boaters than either those with wide beams or motor cruisers.

Q14 How likely are you to recommend the Canal & River Trust waterway to other boaters?

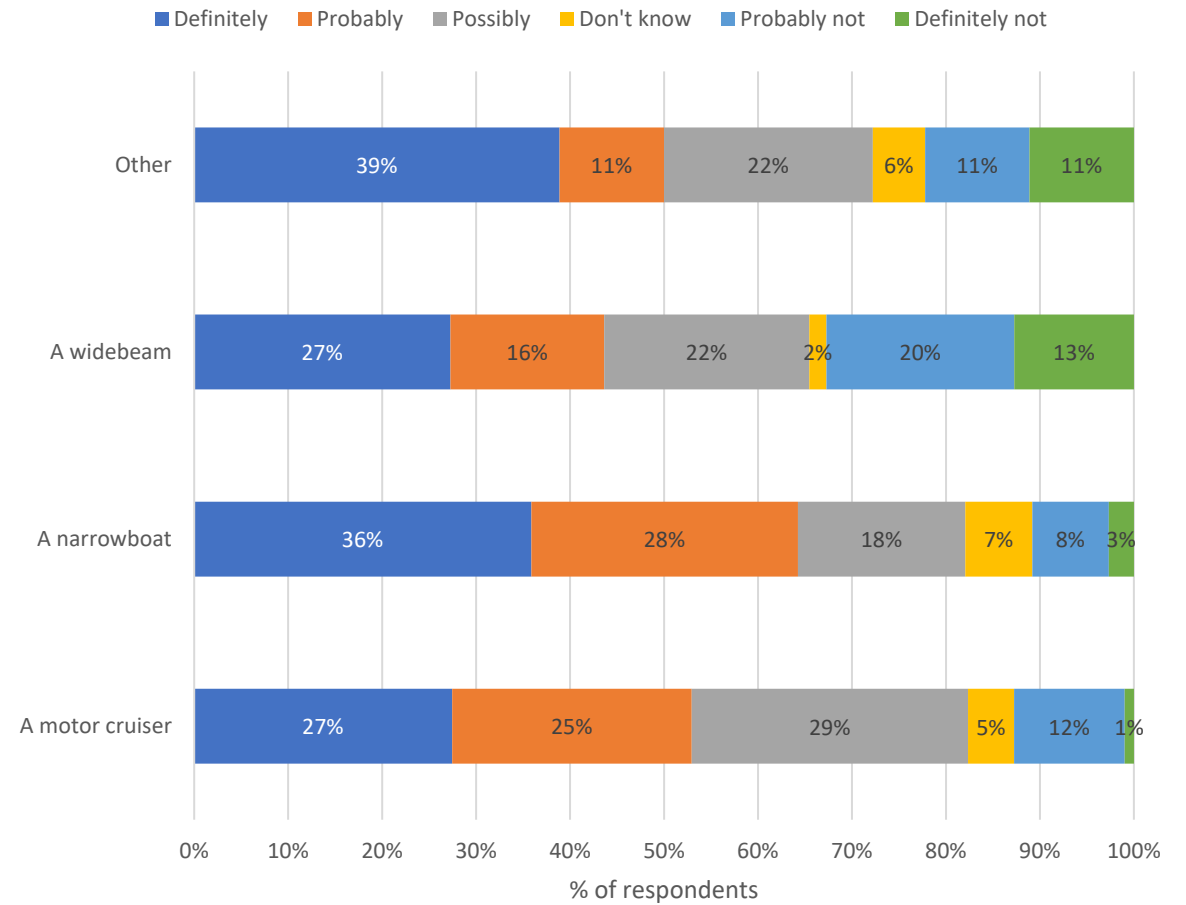


Propensity to recommend

Q14 How likely are you to recommend the Canal & River Trust waterway to other boaters?

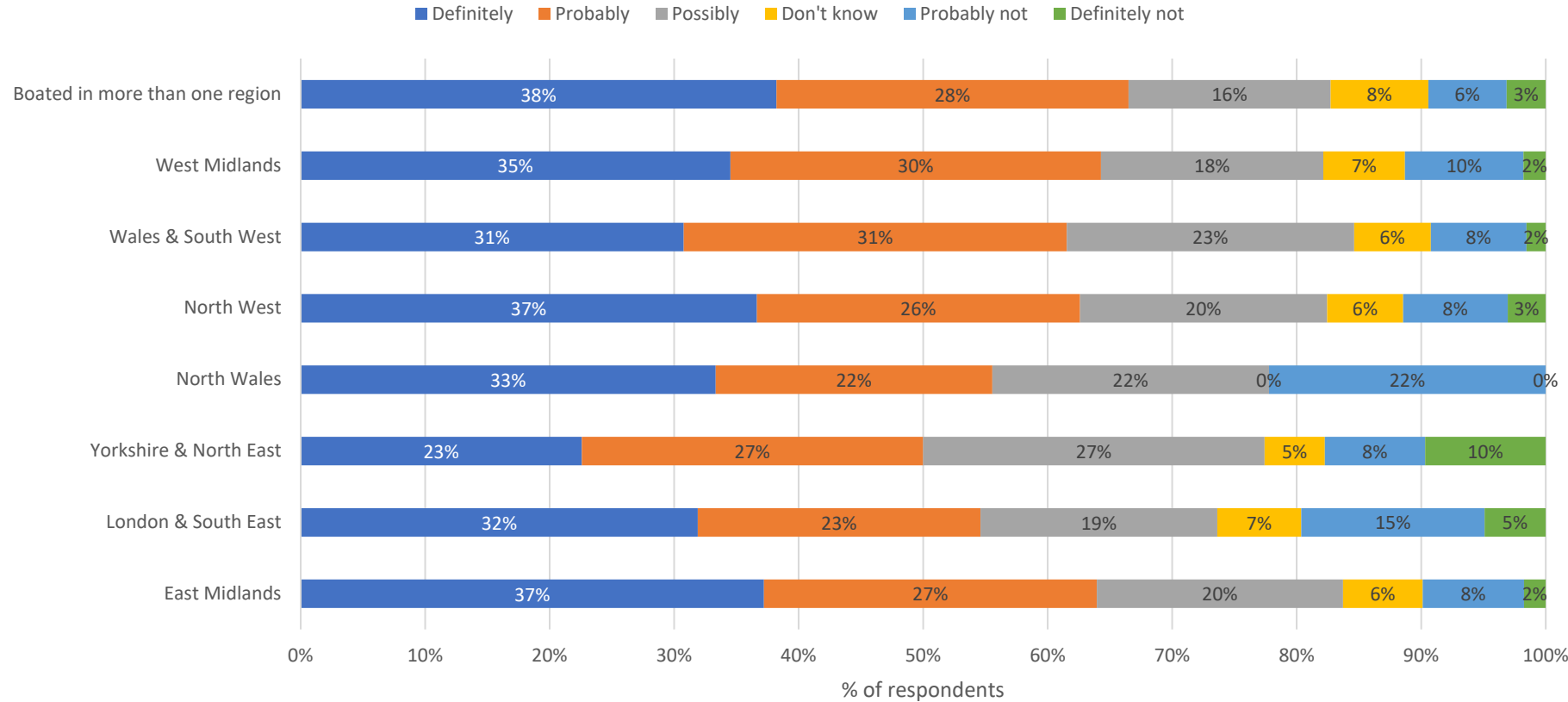


Q14 How likely are you to recommend the Canal & River Trust waterway to other boaters?



Propensity to recommend

Q14 How likely are you to recommend the Canal & River Trust waterway to other boaters?

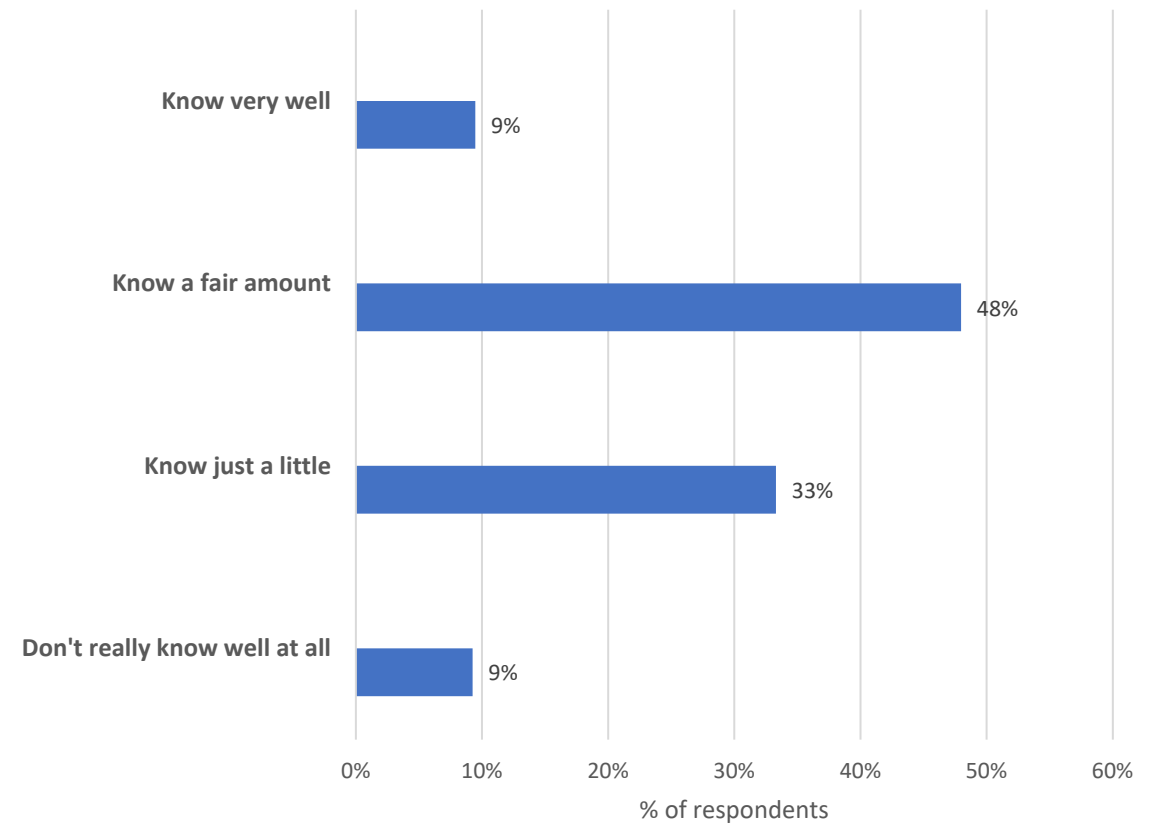


Base: All respondents (2020 = 961)

Familiarity

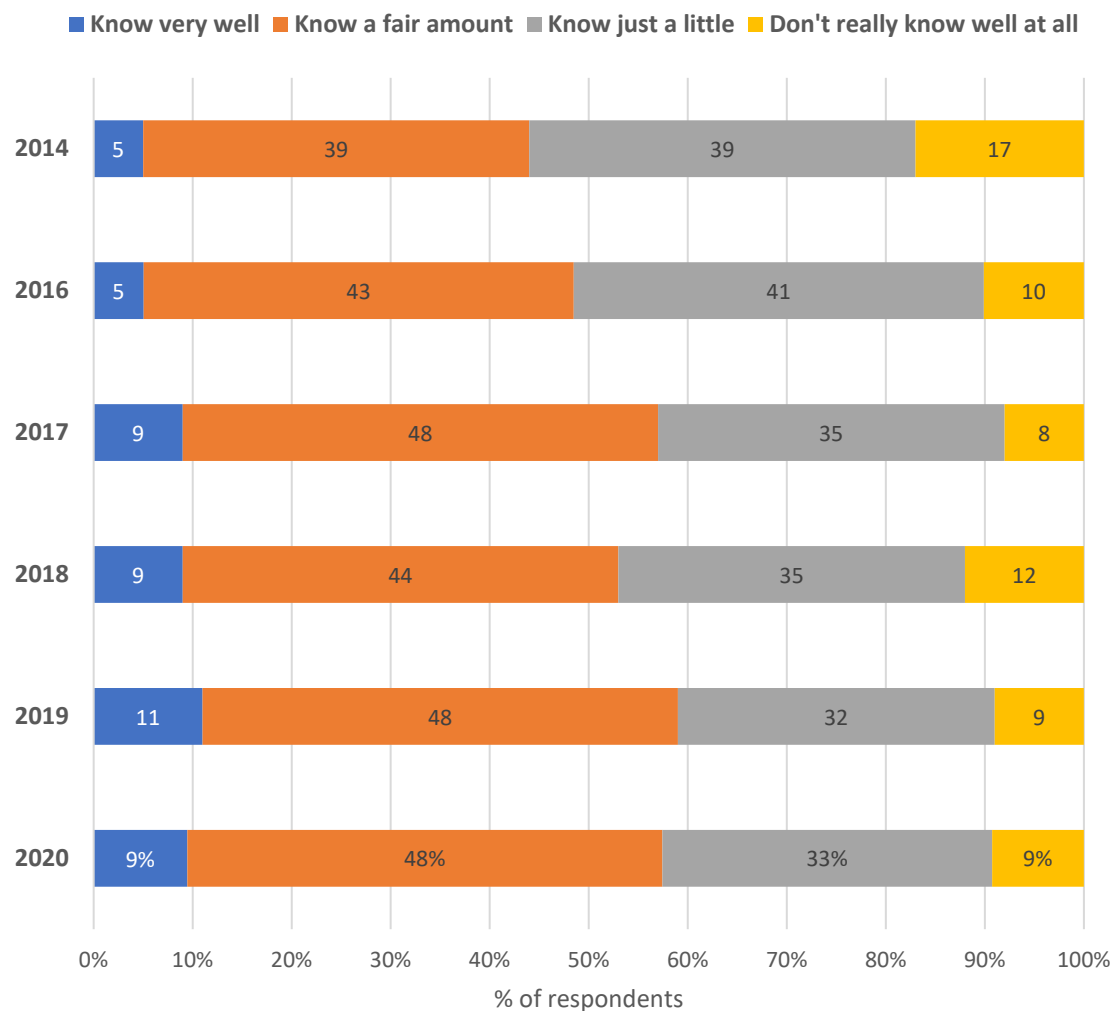
- Familiarity with the Trust shows virtually no difference to 2019 with 57% of respondents said they know either a fair amount or a lot about the Trust.
- There is little variation between most regions, with the east of the country lagging slightly behind the west in familiarity

Q7 How well do you feel you know the Canal & River Trust as an organisation i.e. not its waterways?

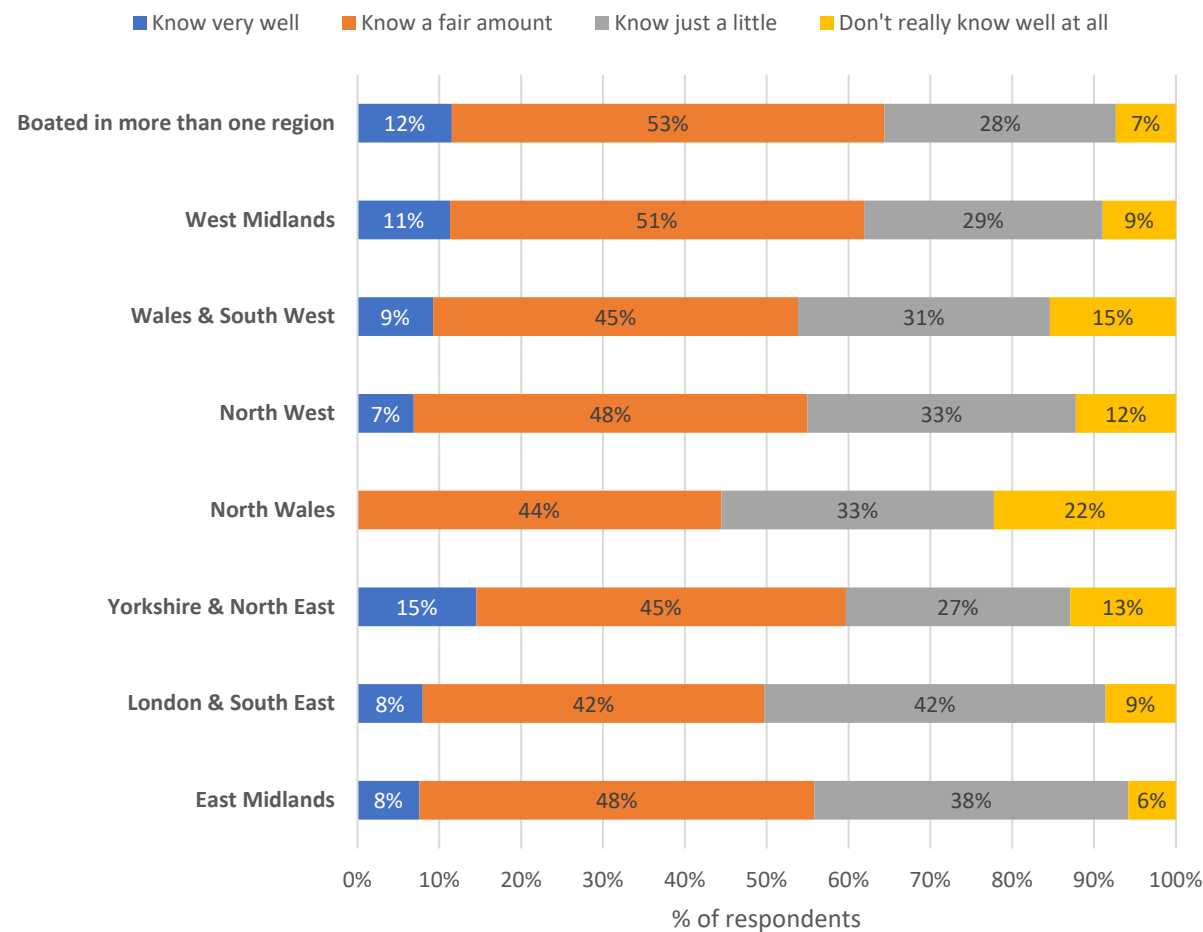


Familiarity

Q7 How well do you feel you know the Canal & River Trust as an organisation i.e. not its waterways?



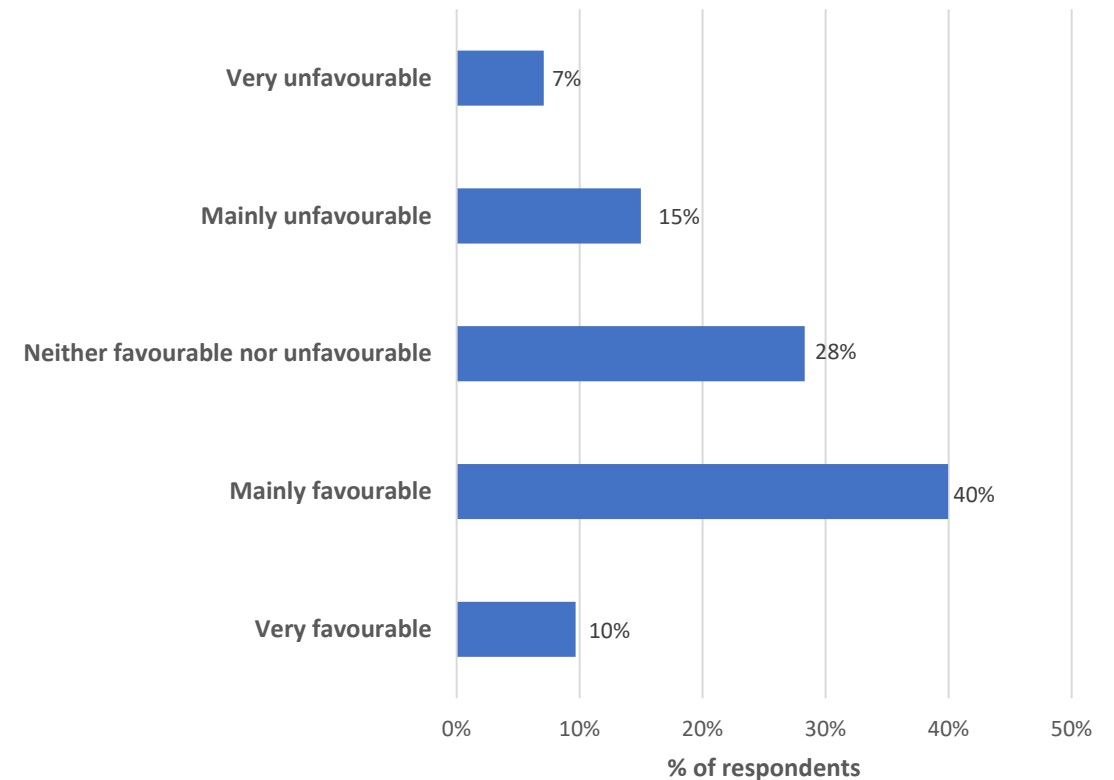
Q7 How well do you feel you know the Canal & River Trust as an organisation i.e. not its waterways?



Favourability

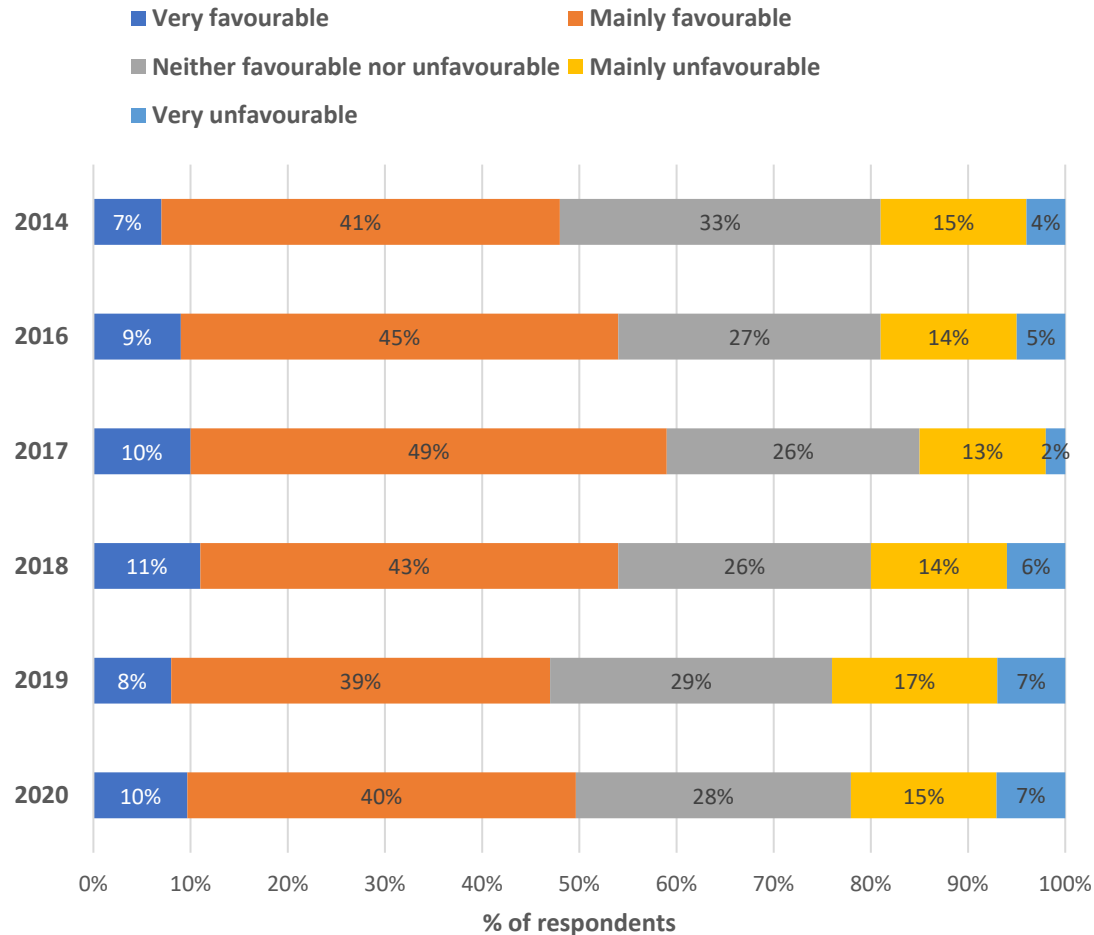
- The overall impression of the Trust has improved slightly on the 47% figure of 2019, with 50% saying their impression was favourable or very favourable, but this is still well below the high of 59% in 2017.
- Yorkshire and the NE, and London & SE stand out with slightly lower favourable scores compared to other regions.

Q8 How favourable or unfavourable is your overall opinion or impression of the Canal & River Trust?

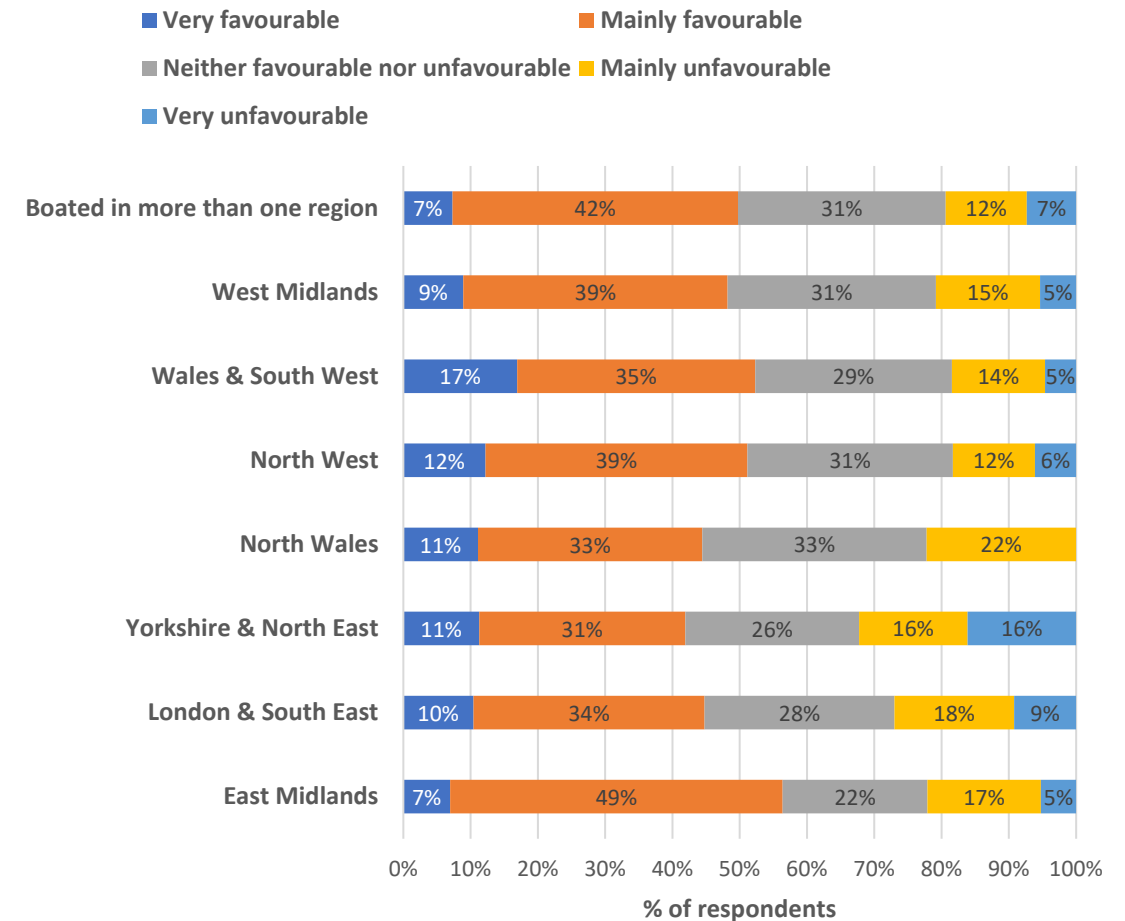


Favourability

Q8 How favourable or unfavourable is your overall opinion or impression of the Canal & River Trust?



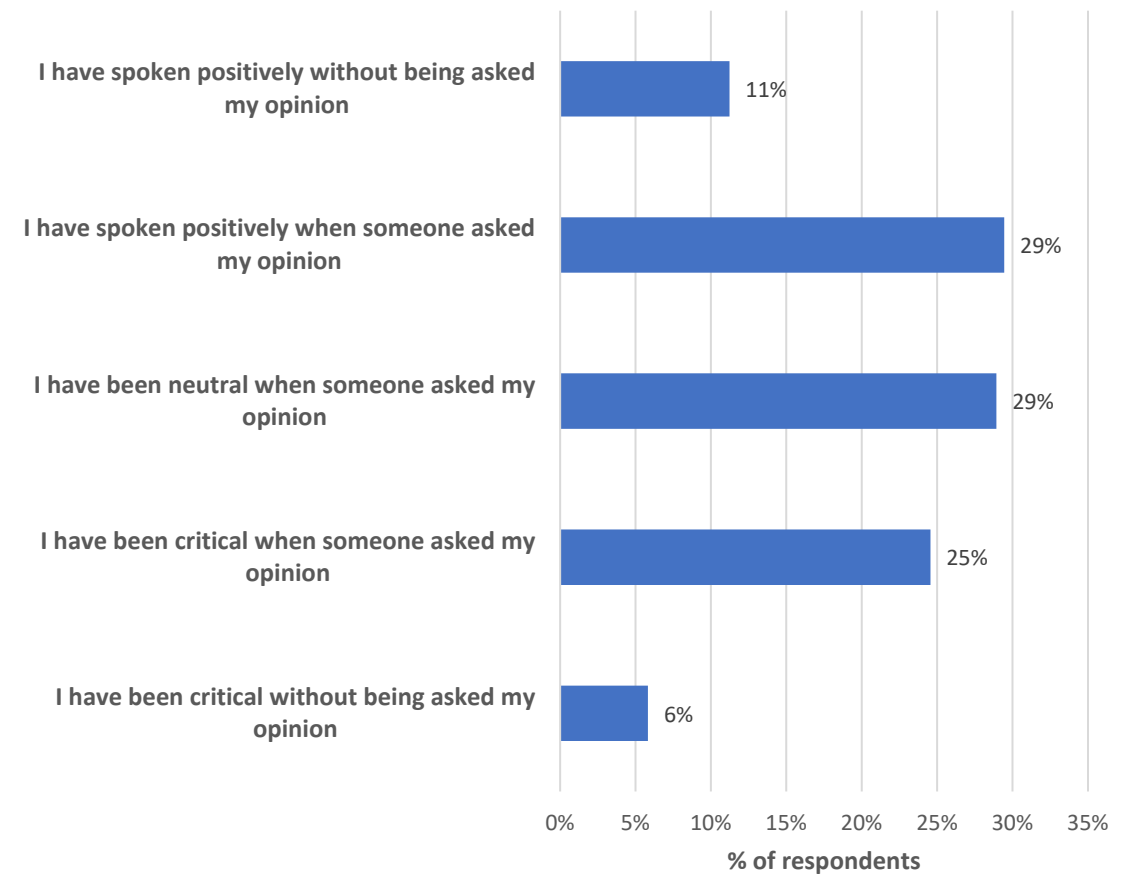
Q8 How favourable or unfavourable is your overall opinion or impression of the Canal & River Trust?



Advocacy – the Trust

- The question differed to the one asked in 2019, from the hypothetical ‘to what extent would you...’ to the factual ‘to what extent have you ...’ Only 40% said they had spoken positively about the Trust in 2020, compared to 42% in 2019 who said they would do. Advocacy has fallen gradually since 2017.
- Respondents from London & SE and Yorkshire and the NE were the least likely to be advocates for the Trust.
- Whilst there is little difference between those with narrowboats and motor-cruisers, those with widebeams appear much less likely to be advocates.

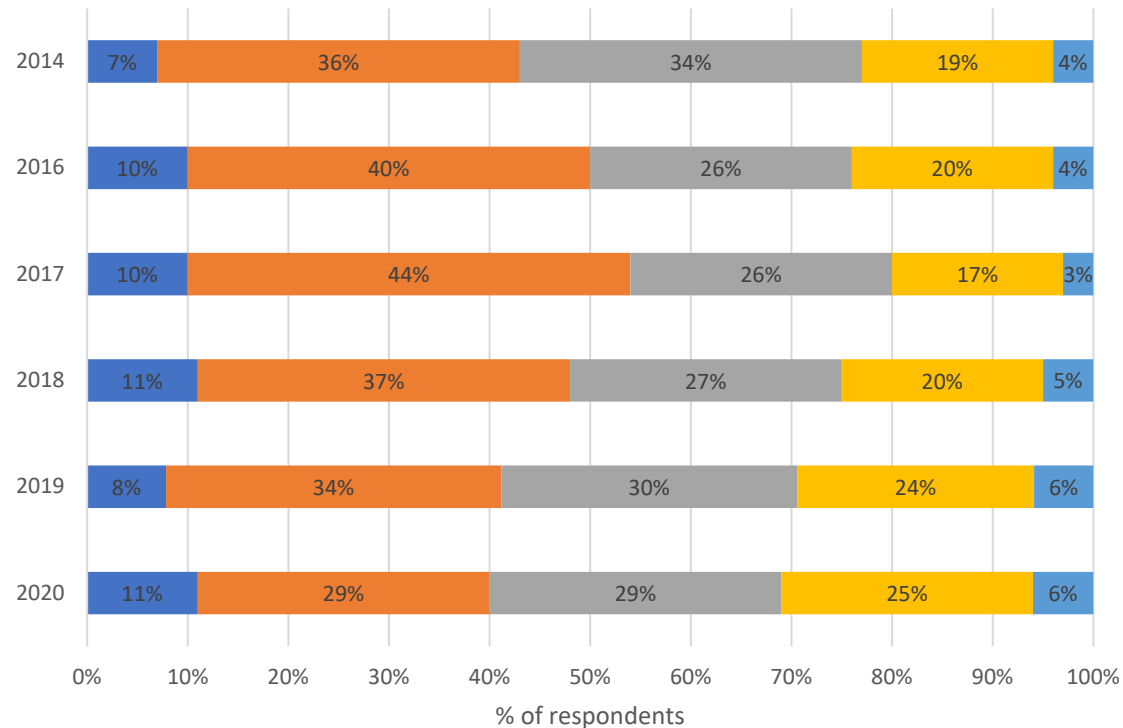
Q9 To what extent have you spoken positively or critically about the Canal & River Trust?



Advocacy – the Trust

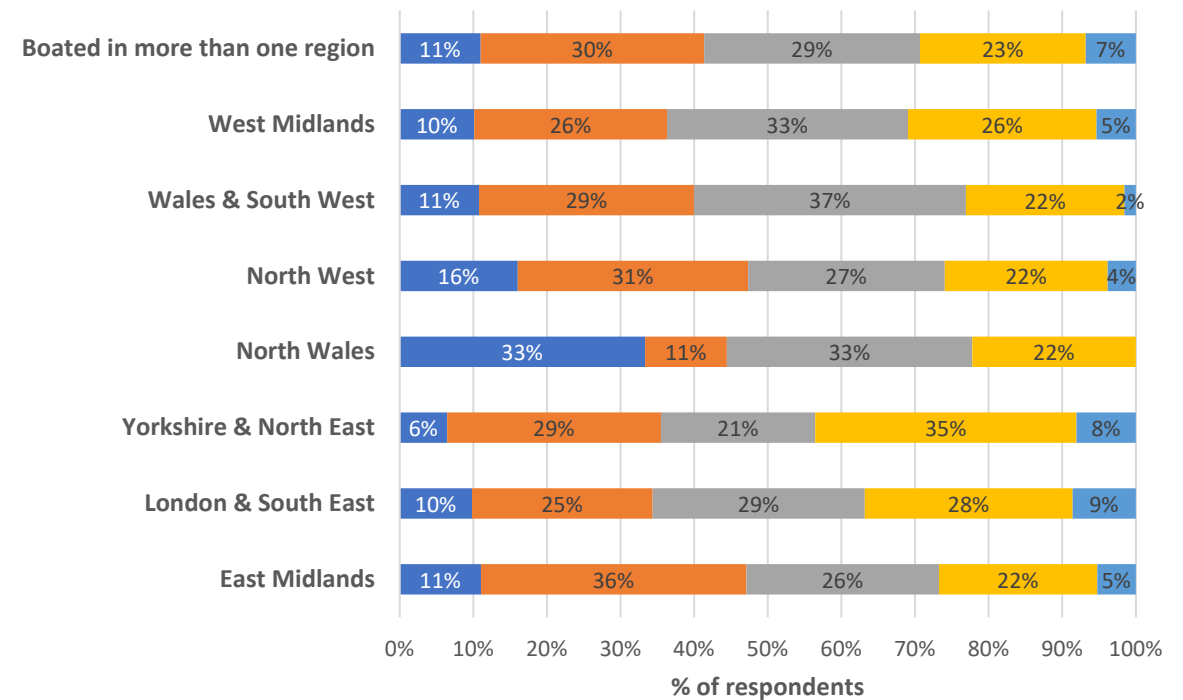
Q9 To what extent have you spoken positively or critically about the Canal & River Trust?

- I have spoken positively without being asked my opinion
- I have spoken positively when someone asked my opinion
- I have been neutral when someone asked my opinion
- I have been critical when someone asked my opinion
- I have been critical without being asked my opinion



Q9 To what extent have you spoken positively or critically about the Canal & River Trust?

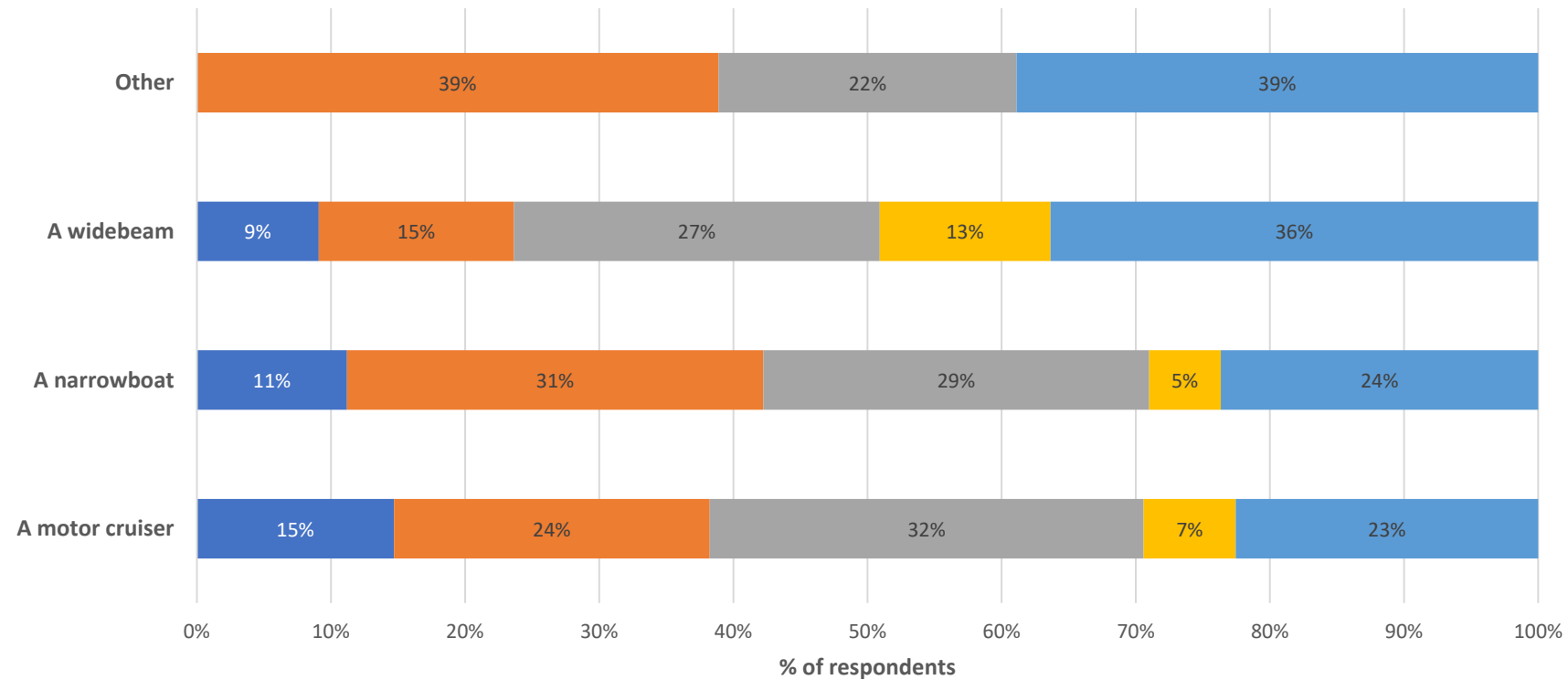
- I have spoken positively without being asked my opinion
- I have spoken positively when someone asked my opinion
- I have been neutral when someone asked my opinion
- I have been critical when someone asked my opinion
- I have been critical without being asked my opinion



Advocacy – the Trust

Q9 To what extent have you spoken positively or critically about the Canal & River Trust?

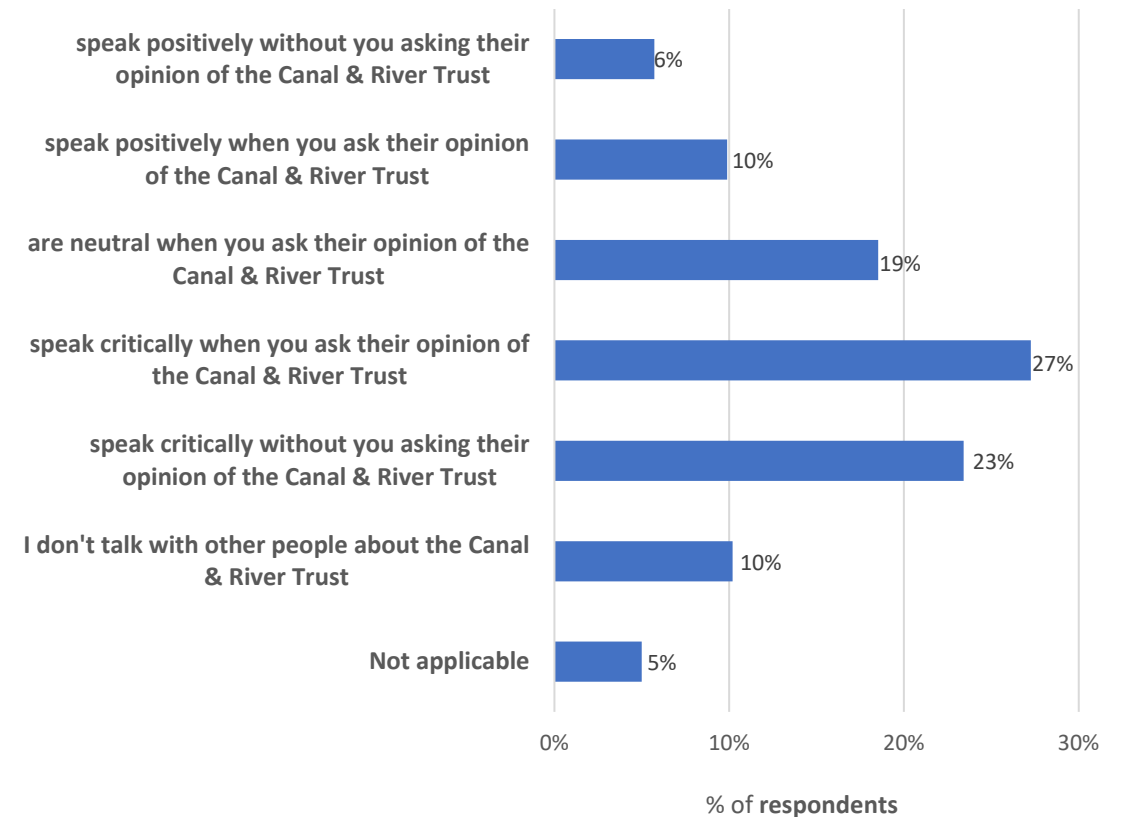
- I have spoken positively without being asked my opinion
- I have spoken positively when someone asked my opinion
- I have been neutral when someone asked my opinion
- I have been critical without being asked my opinion
- I have been critical when someone asked my opinion



Advocacy – conversation

- When asked about the conversations they have with other boaters it is clear that the overwhelming tone is negative with 50% saying they hear other people being critical of the Trust and only 16% saying they hear people being positive.

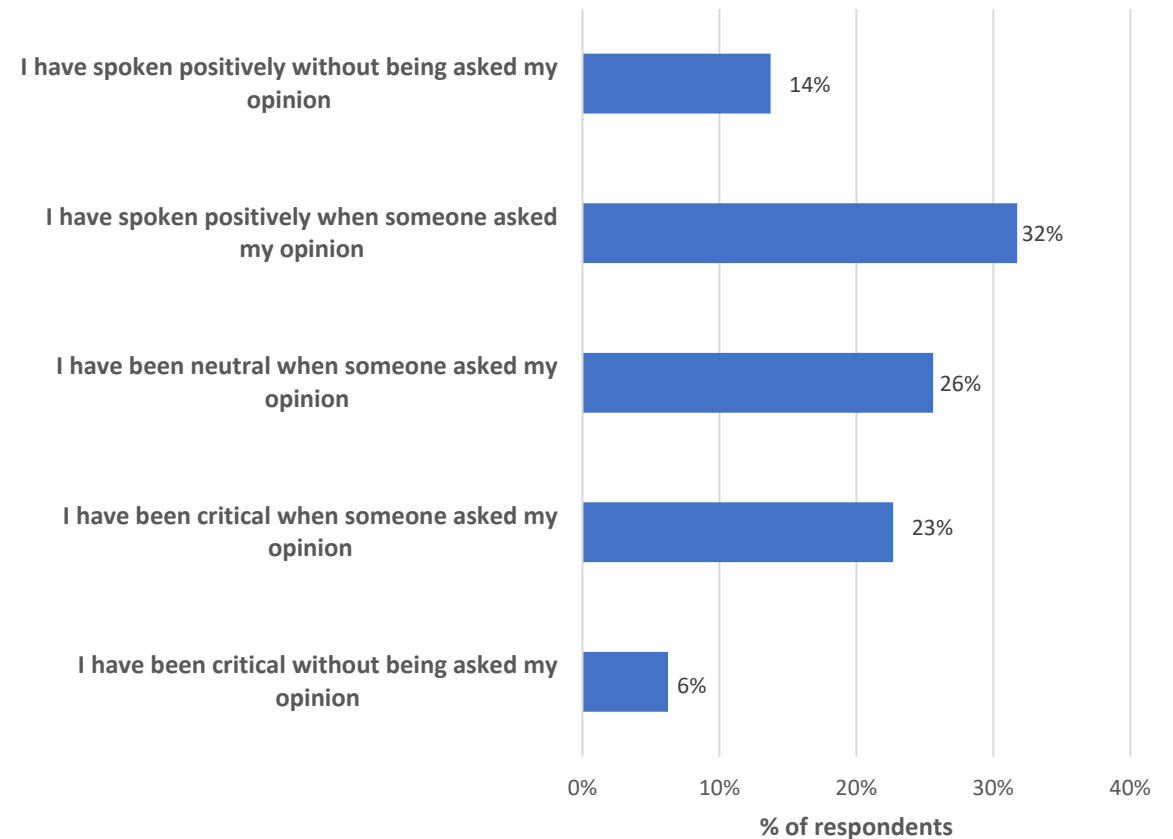
Q10 Thinking about occasions when you have talked with other people about the Canal & River Trust, do people mainly...



Advocacy – the waterways

- The tone changes when asking respondents about their advocacy for the waterways themselves – 46% say they would be advocates for the waterways and only 29% say they would be critical, which has not changed from 2019

Q11 To what extent have you spoken positively or critically about the waterways the Canal & River Trust look after?

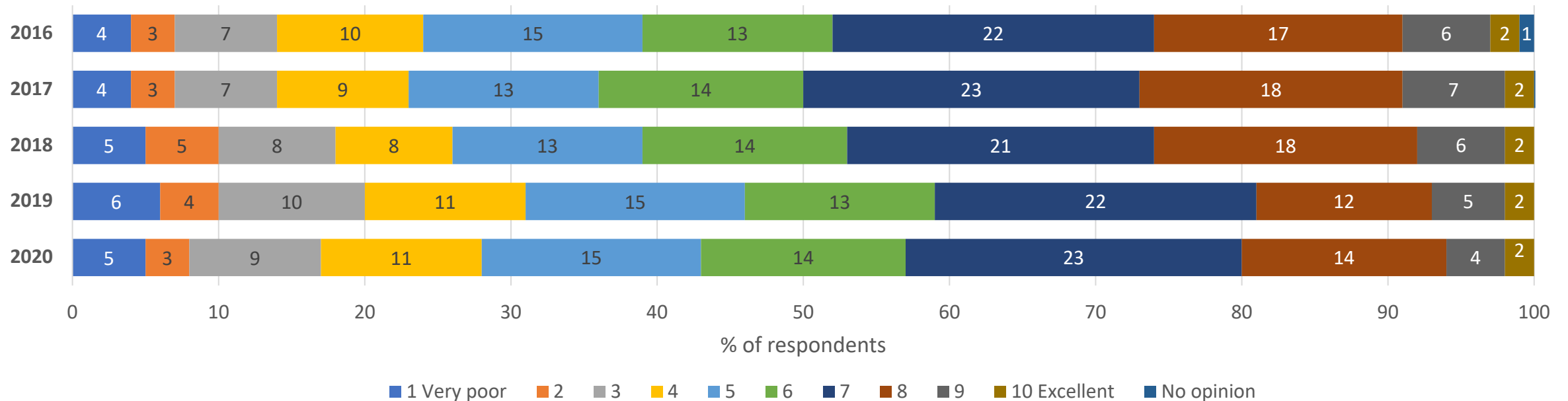


Overall upkeep

Overall upkeep

- A more operational measure, included in the survey for consistency, is perceptions of overall upkeep. This has been measured on a 10-point scale for the past five years (before then it was measured on a 5-point scale so not comparable).
- Like the reputational measures reported in the earlier slides, perceptions of overall upkeep have seen a decline since 2017. In 2020 only 20% gave a score of 8 or more out of 10, compared to 2017 when this stood at 27%. Conversely, in 2017 only 23% gave a score of 4 or less but this was 28% in 2019. Both scores are slightly better than 2019.

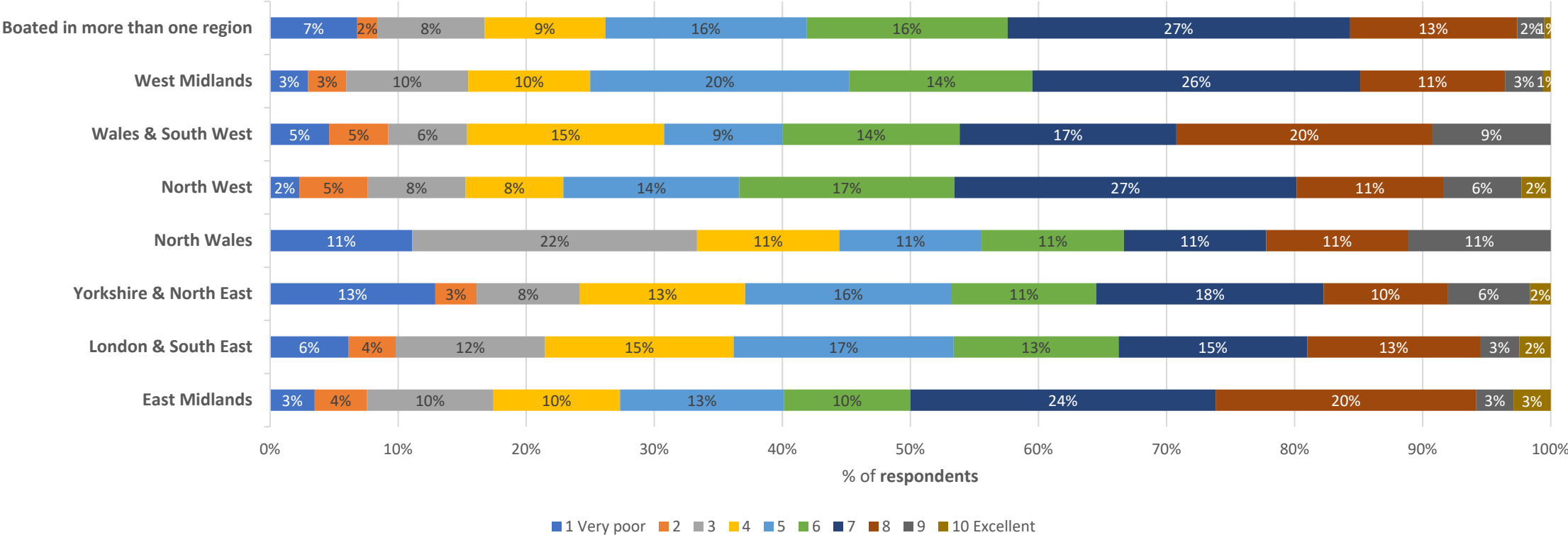
Q12 Please indicate, using the scale provided, how you rate the overall upkeep of the Canal & River Trust's waterways



Overall Upkeep

- Wales and SW and East Midlands received the greatest percentage of scores of 8 or more out of 10. Yorkshire & NE received a fairly high percentage of poor scores (1 or 2 out of 10) as did London & SE and those who had boated in more than one region.

Q12 Please indicate, using the scale provided, how you rate the overall upkeep of the Canal & River Trust's waterways



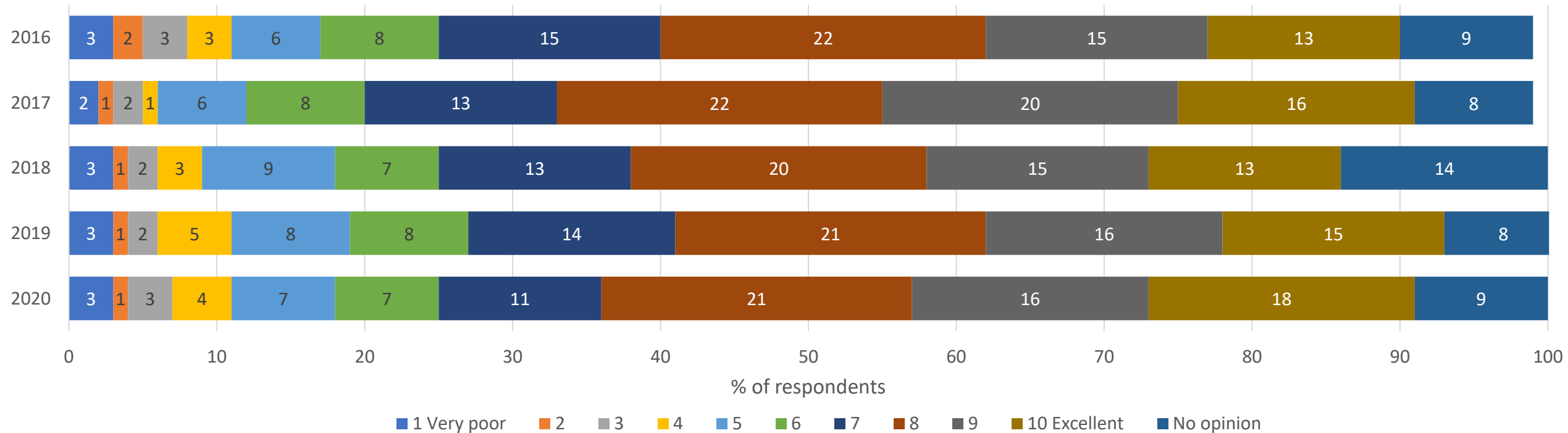
Base: All respondents (2020 = 961)

Customer service

Customer service

- Respondents were asked to rate overall customer service as well as specific aspects of their interactions with Trust staff and volunteers.
- Overall, perceptions of customer service are fairly positive with 55% of respondents giving a score of 8 or more out of 10, and only 11% giving a score of 4 or less out of 10.
- Perceptions of overall customer service have improved over the past 2 years. 2017 again emerges as the high point, with 58% giving score of 8 or more out 10 (2020 is the highest score since 2017).

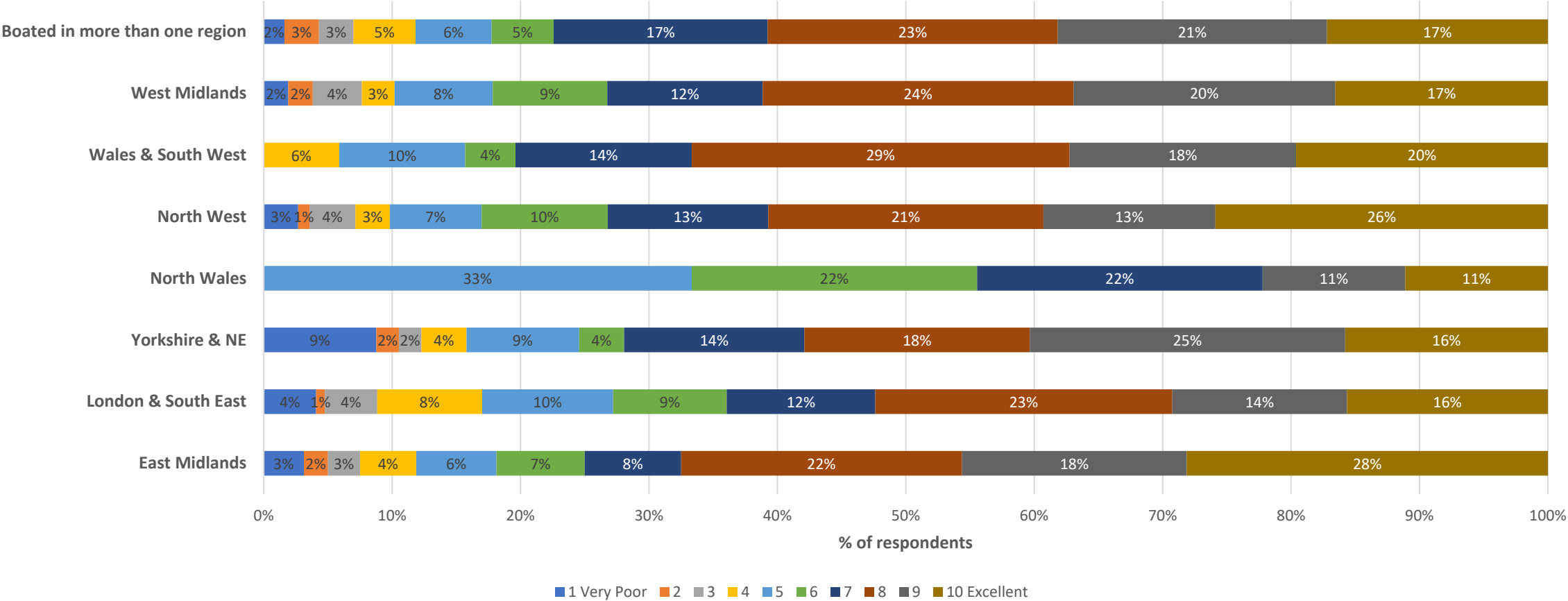
Q19 Overall, as a boater, how would you rate the customer service you have received from the Canal & River Trust staff and volunteers over the past year?



Customer Service

- Of those that had an opinion, East Midlands scored customer service highest with 68% , with London and SE, and Yorkshire and NE again rating customer service lowest.

Q19 Overall, as a boater, how would you rate the customer service you have received from the Canal & River Trust?

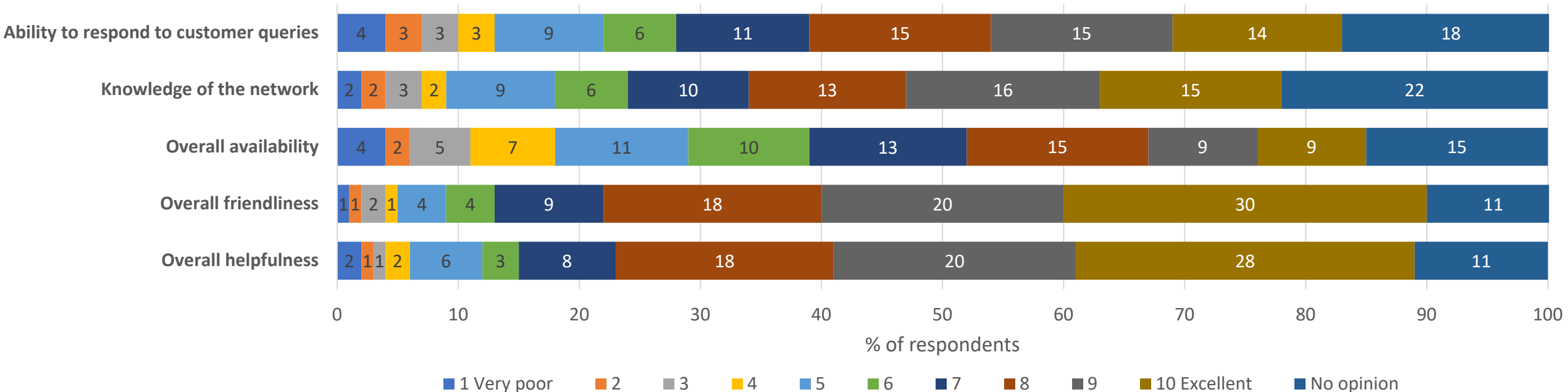


Base: All respondents (2020 = 961)

Canal & River Trust Staff

- Availability of staff is still an issue with boaters, but it has improved from 27% in 2019 to 33% of respondents scoring it 8 or higher. It is clear that when boaters interact with staff they are generally pleased with the service they receive.

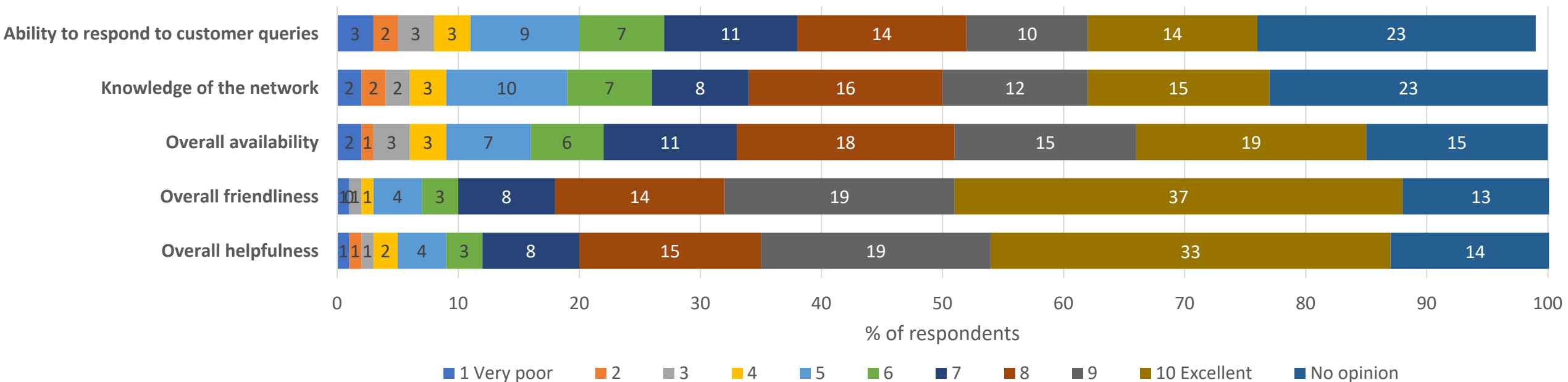
Q15 Thinking about the Canal & River Trust staff you see out and about on the waterways, how do you rate them for...



Canal & River Trust Volunteers

- Friendliness and helpfulness score well with about two thirds scoring 8 or more out of 10. Conversely, availability, knowledge of the network and ability to respond to queries score less well with just over a third giving a score of 8 or more out of 10, but around 15% giving a score of 4 or less out of 10.

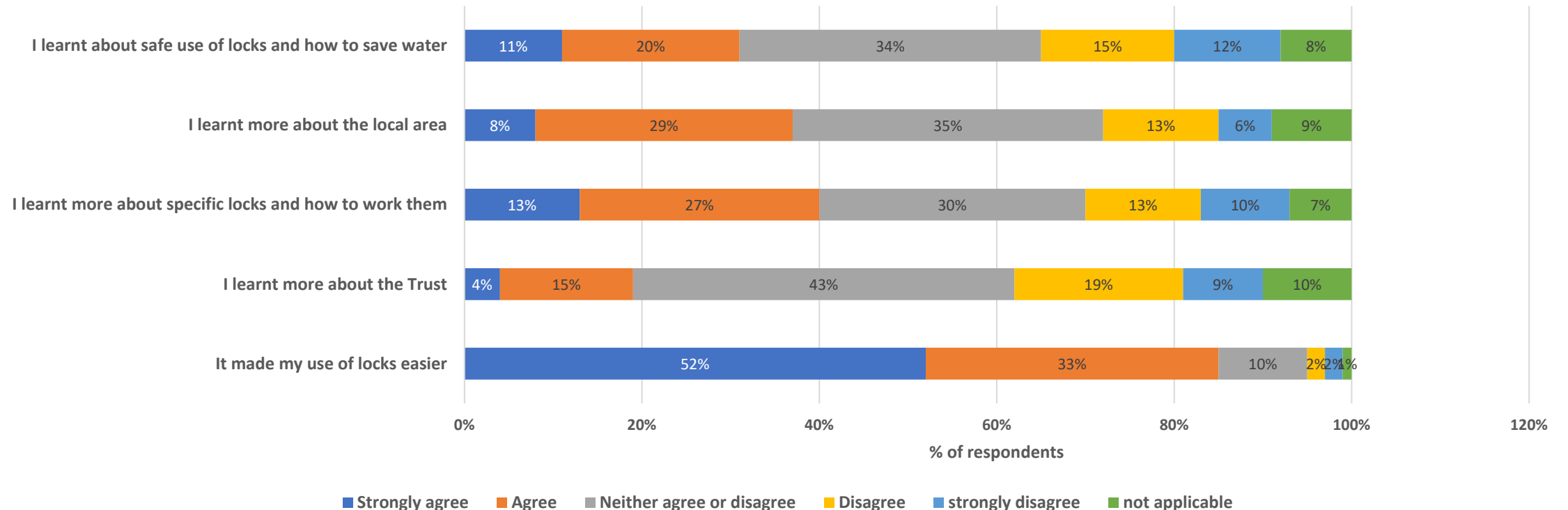
Q16 Thinking about the Canal & River Trust volunteers you see out and about on the waterways, how do you rate them for...



Canal & River Trust Volunteer Lock Keepers

- 81% of respondents had encountered volunteer lock keepers. Of those respondents who had encountered volunteers, 85% agreed that it made the use of locks much easier. The results suggest that around a third boaters learnt about water usage, local area and about specific locks, with 19% learning a little more about the Trust.

Q18 Following your encounter with volunteer lock keepers, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements

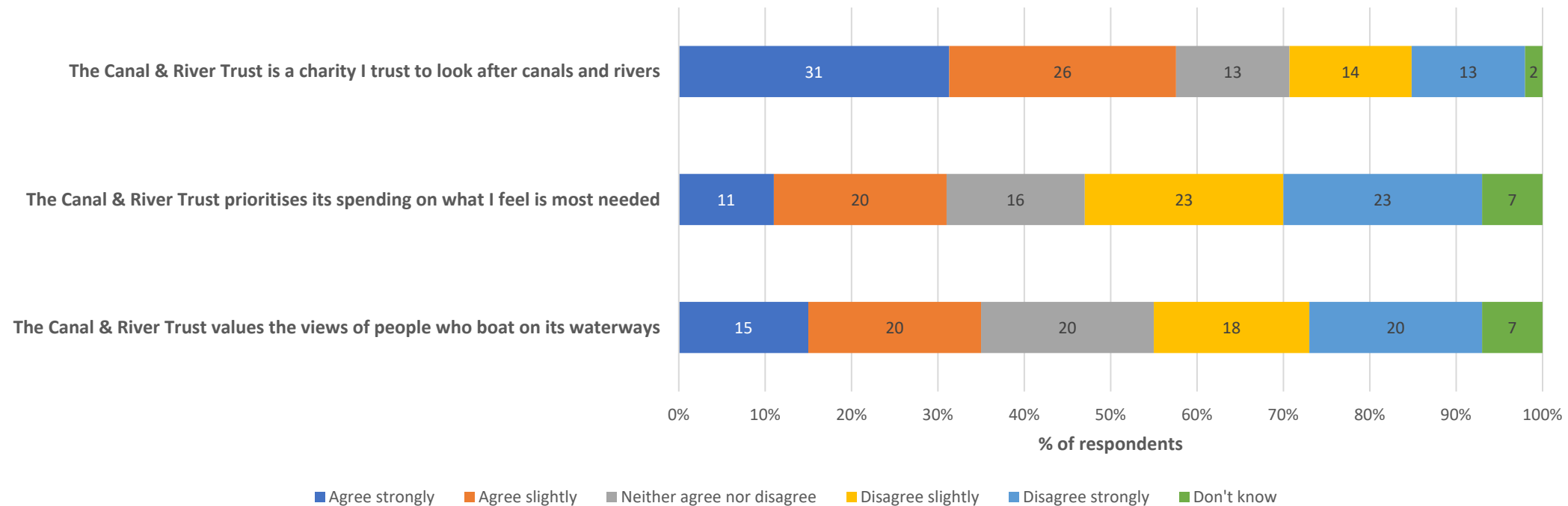


Perceptions of the Trust

Perceptions of the Trust

- Respondents were presented with three statements about the characteristics of the Trust and asked the extent to which they agree or disagree.
- Whilst over half of respondents (57%) agreed that the Canal & River Trust is a charity they trust to look after the waterways less than a third believed the Trust prioritises its spending on the areas where they believe it is most needed (31%). Slightly more believe that the Trust values the views of boaters, up 3% on 2019 to 35%.

Q20 Here are some things that other boaters have said about the Canal & River Trust. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement?



Perceptions of the Trust

- **The Canal & River Trust is a charity that I trust to look after our canals and rivers** (statement change)
- After a steady decline over a few years in agreement with statement that the Trust is trusted to look after the waterways, this has now steadied out. Although the statement has changed slightly since last year it is unlikely that this has made a fundamental difference to the underlying trend. Just over half (57%) currently agree compared to 56% in 2019 and 65% in 2017. This is matched by a subsequent increase in the disagreement scores, from 18% in 2017 to 27% in 2020 – suggesting a change rather than just a softening in attitudes.
- Trust in the Trust only differs by 10% across all regions, and appears to be greatest in Wales and SW (EM last year), and weakest in WM.
- Boaters with wide beams were less likely to trust the Trust than other boaters.

The Canal & River Trust is a charity that I trust to look after our canals and rivers (statement change)

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2014
Agree	57%	56%	62%	65%	63%	58%
Neutral	15%	15%	14%	16%	17%	21%
Disagree	27%	26%	22%	18%	20%	21%

Perceptions of the Trust

The Canal & River Trust is a charity that I trust to look after our canals and rivers

	All	NW	Y&NE	N Wales	EM	W&SW	WM	L&SE	> 1 region
Agree	57%	59%	55%	44%	61%	63%	54%	58%	58%
Neutral	15%	15%	21%	33%	13%	15%	20%	15%	15%
Disagree	27%	26%	24%	22%	26%	22%	26%	28%	28%

The Canal & River Trust is a charity that I trust to look after our canals and rivers

	All	Narrowboat	Wide-beam	Motor-cruiser	Other
Agree	57%	58%	36%	63%	56%
Neutral	15%	16%	16%	17%	22%
Disagree	27%	27%	47%	21%	22%

Perceptions of the Trust

- **The Canal & River Trust prioritises its spending on what I feel is most needed**
- Since 2016 there has been a decline in agreement that the Trust prioritises its spending in the areas where boaters believe it is most needed, but this decline has steadied in 2020. Most notable is the increase in the disagreement scores from 33% in 2017 and 37% in 2018 to 46% in 2019 and 2020. Many of the comments given during the survey relate to this – either spending money on non-boating waterway users, unnecessary rebranding, not prioritising maintenance properly so it ends up costing more, not scheduling work properly e.g. grass cutting in the winter.
- Disagreement with the statement is greatest in Yorkshire & NE, with over half (52%) saying they disagree that the Trust prioritises its spending in the areas they believe most important, closely followed by London & SE (51%) and West Midlands (50%).
- Boaters with wide beams are most likely to disagree – 71% disagree with the statement and just 11% agree.

The Canal & River Trust prioritises its spending on what I feel is most needed.

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2014
Agree	31%	31%	38%	37%	40%	30%
Neutral	23%	16%	18%	29%	25%	31%
Disagree	46%	46%	37%	33%	34%	41%

Perceptions of the Trust

The Canal & River Trust prioritises its spending on what I feel is most needed.

	All	NW	Y&NE	N Wales	EM	W&SW	WM	L&SE	> 1 region
Agree	31%	40%	26%	22%	35%	35%	32%	26%	27%
Neutral	23%	26%	23%	11%	26%	28%	18%	23%	21%
Disagree	46%	34%	52%	67%	38%	37%	50%	51%	52%

The Canal & River Trust prioritises its spending on what I feel is most needed.

	All	Narrowboat	Wide-beam	Motor-cruiser	Other
Agree	31%	31%	11%	41%	28%
Neutral	16%	12%	18%	27%	28%
Disagree	46%	46%	71%	31%	44%

Perceptions of the Trust

- **The Canal & River values the views of the people who boat on its waterways**
- There was a slight increase in the number of people who agreed with this statement, compared with 2019. However, at 35% it falls far short of the number who agreed in 2018. Those that disagreed also dropped, down 7% on the 2019 figure of 43%.
- Wales & SW were most positive, with Y&NE the least positive.
- Widebeam owners again were least likely to agree that the Trust values the views of the people who boat on its waterways (18%).

The Canal & River Trust values the views of the people who boat on its waterways

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Agree	35%	32%	46%	24%	28%	28%
Neutral	27%	20%	16%	25%	21%	22%
Disagree	38%	43%	32%	24%	28%	28%

Perceptions of the Trust

The Canal & River Trust values the views of the people who boat on its waterways

	All	NW	N Wales	Y&NE	EM	W&SW	WM	L&SE	> 1 region
Agree	35%	42%	22%	32%	37%	51%	31%	34%	32%
Neutral	27%	27%	11%	24%	29%	12%	32%	27%	23%
Disagree	38%	31%	67%	44%	34%	26%	38%	39%	45%

The Canal & River Trust values the views of the people who boat on its waterways

	All	Narrowboat	Wide-beam	Motor-cruiser	Other
Agree	35%	36%	16%	41%	33%
Neutral	27%	26%	22%	29%	39%
Disagree	38%	37%	62%	29%	28%

What do boaters think about the Trust?

- The survey begins asking boaters an open question about what they currently think about the Trust. This was positioned at the start of the survey, like in previous years, as it gives respondents an opportunity to voice any immediate issues that may otherwise distort their responses to later questions. Responses cover the organisation itself as well the operational management of the waterways and can help explain trends emerging through the quantitative sections of the questionnaire.
- The performance across virtually all the quantitative questions has flattened out, and the qualitative feedback does not seem to be any more negative or vociferous than in previous years. Perhaps one overwhelming theme emerging is the feeling that boaters are being side-lined in favour of other waterway users, in particular cyclists, who come in for a huge amount of negative comment. This is exacerbated by the **perceived** decline of boater services, lack of maintenance, and money spent on 'unnecessary' TV ads and rebranding. It is also worth noting that the sample composition is fairly consistent with previous years suggesting this has not artificially distorted any trends.
- The main themes emerging that are likely to have contributed negative aspects of the overall perceptions, include:
 - Poor maintenance, reactive rather than proactive and failure to account/prioritise of boater's needs
 - Lack of confidence in senior management
 - Lack of support for Trust's wellbeing vision
 - Lack of support for the rebrand
 - Lack and neglect of boater services
- Many boaters thought the Trust did a good job with limited resources, and volunteers came in for a lot of praise. The final slide highlights some of the positives identified by boaters.

Maintenance

There were a number of elements around the maintenance theme that could have contributed to current perceptions:

- Overall upkeep is perceived by some to have declined, with the waterways now in a worse state than people can remember
- Maintenance is perceived to be reactive, once problems occur, rather than proactive scheduled repair. Whilst many suggest the Trust handles major incidents very well there is a belief that maintenance should be improved to prevent major problems occurring
- Believed to be too great a reliance on contractors and inadequate input from Trust staff, who are perceived to be the experts and more passionate about the waterways than contractors
- Failure to take account of the needs of boaters with maintenance prioritised for the benefit of towpath users instead
- Whilst there does seem to be an acceptance amongst many respondents that funding is limited there is a common belief that the Trust is not prioritising maintenance properly and comments suggest this belief has been strengthened further by the re-brand, logo and TV ads
- Although there were minimal comments about licence fees being too high, there were many comments relating to the idea that the income the Trust receives from licences should be better invested in maintenance
- Two areas were repeatedly mentioned as being particularly poor: the Grand Union Leicester Line, the Oxford Canal. Many suggested resources were more likely spent on the southern canals than those in the north

Maintenance

Example quotes to illustrate the points around maintenance include:

“There seems to be no proactive planning to avoid disasters, only a reactive sticking plaster approach”

“You have a reactive mentality ruling, dealing with issues after they've arisen rather than a proactive attitude that would identify problems before they became serious.”

“They are not spending enough on routine maintenance. As a result there are an increasing number of failures. There is also too much reliance on contractors, many of whom have no real experience of the issues involved in repairing/maintaining canal structures. When contractors are used, there is often too little monitoring of standards and performance.”

“priority of towpath improvement over dredging or cutting back the overhang (trees/bushes) which do limit mooring and have resulted in scratches to paintwork”

“The northern canals are neglected. We have no water as no dredging is ever done, but we have nice shiny pointless signs, such as the "CRT flower bed" sign over a flower bed”

“lack of funding for maintenance staff which on the south Oxford canal has resulted in some very dilapidated locks and lift bridges rendering them unsafe and unreliable.”

“boaters are frequently told that they are important yet locks are poorly maintained - no grease, paddles broken for years, only people seen working are generally volunteers with CRT staff drinking tea in their vans”

“Far too many unplanned stoppages often caused by lack of preventative maintenance”

“The Leicester section between Foxton and Kilby Bridge is almost unnavigable due to overgrown weeds across the canal”

Maintenance – Failure to prioritise boaters

“I think the CRT are taking quite a few wrong turns at the moment. Spending money on re branding and associated costs, expensive and pointless tv advertising, employing people to try and coerce people to give money and doing this at a loss for many years. Meanwhile boaters facilities are in a shocking state quite often and non existent in many places. Towpaths are in a shocking state of repair unless they are part of a cycle network”

“CRT has been totally diverted from its duty of caring for, maintaining, and looking after its canals and rivers. The emphasis is now totally on walkers and cyclists, as well as the usual fishermen/women.”

“I feel the trust is moving away from boating and more towards well-being. I can see how boating facilities have been going down hill over the past few years some mornings I've been left in a bad state of repair but towpaths have been upgraded to the benefit of cyclists”

“I am becoming increasingly disillusioned, boaters are frequently told that they are important yet locks are poorly maintained - no grease, paddles broken for years, only people seen working are generally volunteers with CRT staff drinking tea in their vans (1 per person). I was one of those who sang the praises of CRT but it's nigh on impossible to do so these days.”

Management

- **Many of the comments suggest that a segment of boaters have little confidence in senior management at the Trust.**
- **Maintenance of the waterways is often behind this and a perceived failure to manage resources and ensure the waterways are properly maintained.**
- **There is also a general perception that many senior management do not understand the waterways or boaters and therefore do not have the knowledge or expertise to manage properly.**
- **A minority believe the Trust lacks leadership and vision, although more likely, as voiced by a greater proportion, they simply don't believe in the vision the Trust has adopted.**

“...the present CRT management and policies are dangerous and inadequate for maintenance and preservation of the waterways and CRT's activities in "well being", towing path cycleways and artworks are all irrelevant to their statutory duties and should be prohibited forthwith.”

“I have no confidence in the leadership of the C&RT, am certain that they lie and twist statistics and are failing in their duty to maintain the canal network”

“...with inept management & leadership running all the way to the top . Richard Parry & the directors are only interested in promoting the Canal & River Trust. Everything is about branding & promoting CRT.”

“not enough of the senior people are boaters themselves and don't really understand how boating works and what boaters need”

“the CRT is making money to pay its growing top level staff and not making life and condition better for the boaters.”

“the new logo is representative of CRT management - it represents the broken wheel of poor CRT management”

Rebrand and Wellbeing

- **The rebrand and new logo are still causing lots of comments and is a major cause of dissatisfaction amongst boat owners. The majority related to three main themes:**
 - 1. Inefficient - The money could have been better spent elsewhere. This includes the costs of developing the new brand and logo and the subsequent cost implications of rolling out the brand to new signage etc.**
 - 2. Failure to resonate - Boaters don't believe in the brand vision based around wellbeing, they think there are other aspects of the waterways that are more important.**
 - 3. Alienation – the new brand is perceived to relate to towpath users more than boaters leading to perceived alienation, and heightening the feelings of inefficiency and waste.**

“I feel too much money and commitment being spent on pedestrians/cyclists instead of boaters who make the contribution in their licence fees! We are going through shallow silted up canals and the money is being spent on the tow paths so that cyclists can tear up and down at dangerous speeds!!”

“finance seems to be directed, in a disproportionate way, to improving facilities for cyclists, dog owners, canoeists, and ramblers”

“The last few years have seen more in the way of decline with the exception of towpaths in popular or urban areas where the paths have been ‘improved’ enabling cyclists to use them at dangerous speeds”

“It was a huge improvement on BW but now seems to be heading backwards. Stupid logo change is symptomatic of squandering money and the focus appears to be on non-boat users. Too many heavy handed volunteers trying to get passers by to join is giving the Trust a bad name.”

“Too focused on attracting visitors to their property and not sufficiently interested in the welfare of the boaters”

“I think there was no need at all to re brand the CRT logo of the bridge and swan to the 'toilet seat'. I feel this was a total waste of time, effort, resources and money and has achieved absolutely nothing.”

“the CRT are taking quite a few wrong turns at the moment. Spending money on re branding and associated costs, expensive and pointless tv advertising, employing people to try and coerce people to give money and doing this at a loss for many years. Meanwhile boaters facilities are in a shocking state quite often and non existent in many places. Towpaths are in a shocking state of repair unless they are part of a cycle network”

“ the new bright blue and white signage is misplaced and not at all in keeping with a 200 year old structure”

Boater Services

Many boaters expressed deep dissatisfaction with the state of the facilities provided by the Trust

- **One recurrent theme was the lack of recycling opportunities**
- **Another was the information provided about services**
- **And others about the general deterioration of services**

“My big complaint is the lack of effort CRT puts into recycling”

“unhappy about the lack of provision for recycling on the waterways. A vast amount of plastic, glass, card etc is going to landfill. It is high time CRT did more to protect the environment.”

“The information provided about service points needs to be updated as several water points are listed but in reality they have been decommissioned”

“the online map showing services is often not up to date. Facilities are often falling apart, handles ready to fall off.”

“the number of facilities (Elsan, etc) that are closed on arrival. The amount of rubbish that is accumulating at disposal points also concerning.”

“you could really improve your ratings by paying better attention to things like Elsan Points, rubbish disposal, recycling, slow water points”

“often skips are overflowing at services, sad we can’t recycle plastic”

“Water pressure is low most of the taps to fill up water tanks and facilities such as elsan points often dirty & unhygienic.”

Communication

- **Communication was mentioned frequently, and the experiences were varied, but the majority were positive:**

“My local canal officer has been extremely helpful”

“impressed by the volunteers,”

“The staff I have met, so far, have been friendly and helpful”

“I find "Boaters Update" very informative”

“bank site staff helpful and knowledgeable”

- **Although some thought there was room for improvement**

“As with all organisations there is the potential for improvement, success is rated on how well it listens and responds. Past experience is that CRT is not that responsive”

“you may wish to look at the Broads Authority who have a much better customer relationship and attitude.”

“communication for us could be better, particularly via the website.”

“...customer service staff who though polite don't always seem to grasp boaty things.”

“I seriously resent being badgered almost every day on the towpath to become a 'Friend'. You have really got this wrong.”

Support for the Trust

- **Not all the comments made by boaters were negative. The main areas receiving positive comments related to:**
- **The Trust is doing as good a job as possible with limited resources.**

“the single biggest problem facing the CRT is funding which looks likely to be an ongoing problem due to the current and future requirements of an aging infrastructure coupled with the effects of climate change adding to the burden”

“They are being asked to do much for a fragile system with limited resources.”

“Doing a good job despite lack of funding, constant criticism and mounting bureaucracy. Majority of the waterway is maintained to a usable standard.”

- **Qualified praise for the Trust**

“I love the brilliant work the trust does but to be honest as a boater I am frustrated with the lack of care of my local waterways. Overhanging trees have made some areas almost unpassable, the amount of rubbish in the canal is dangerous. There are plenty of boaters about not paying their licenses”

“the CRT do a magnificent job and their attention to detail seems good despite the huge amount of things they are tasked to look after. Yes it would be nicer to see more dredging in some places and nicer to have more overgrowth cut back but generally it is done if things are too bad.”

“Good communication with monthly newsletters etc; an organisation that cares about waterways & boating; important maintenance & emergency repair are done quickly but many waterways are neglected, locks difficult to operate”

Support for the Trust

And lots of unqualified praise:

“I think that CRT are doing a great job in trying to maintain our waterways to a suitable standard, often against historical, environmental and weather pressures. The organisation always seems to be professional and has a "get on with it" approach that means that stoppages are often short and dealt with quickly. Volunteers are great always helpful and keen to offer advice. I think we get good value from CRT licence fees.”

“Nothing but praise for the leeway given to my partner and I as we had struggled very much in the past with moving and trying to comply. A very compassionate and human side has been shown to us both we feel very fortunate our lives have been turned around. I have nothing but praise for all the CRT do long may it continue.”

“My wife & I both feel that C&RT do a marvellous job keeping a 200 year transport system going, we think that C& RT are much friendlier and more approachable than the previous British Waterways. Having a group of enthusiastic volunteers is a great and worthwhile addition to help boaters on there way.”

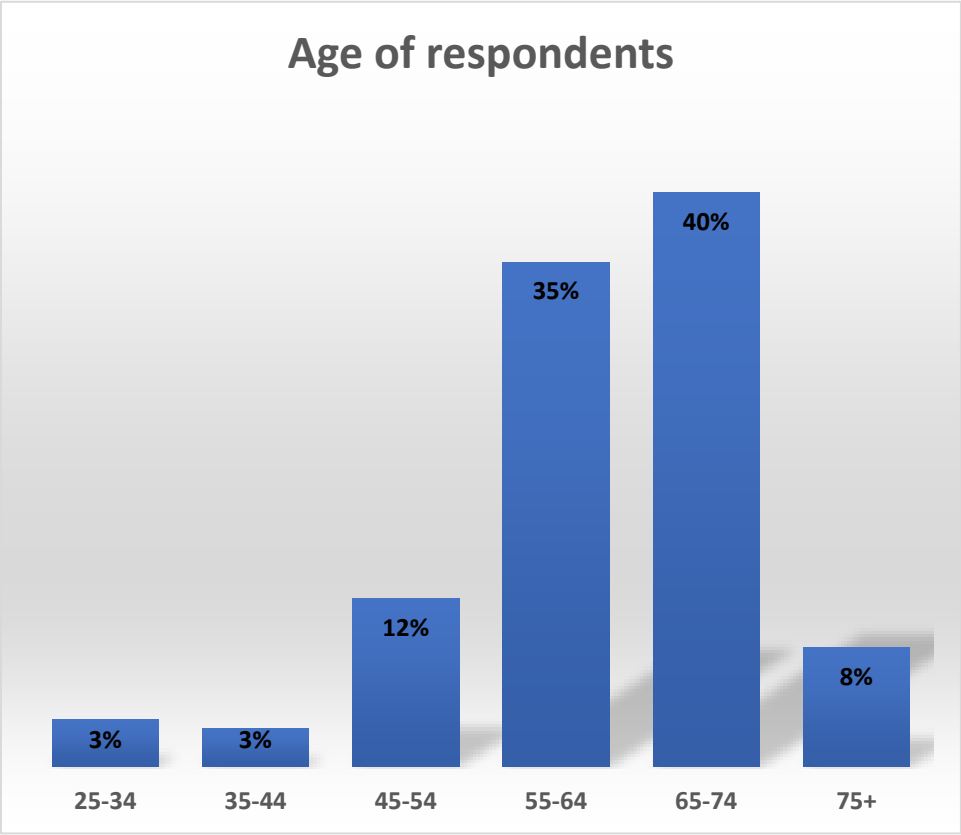
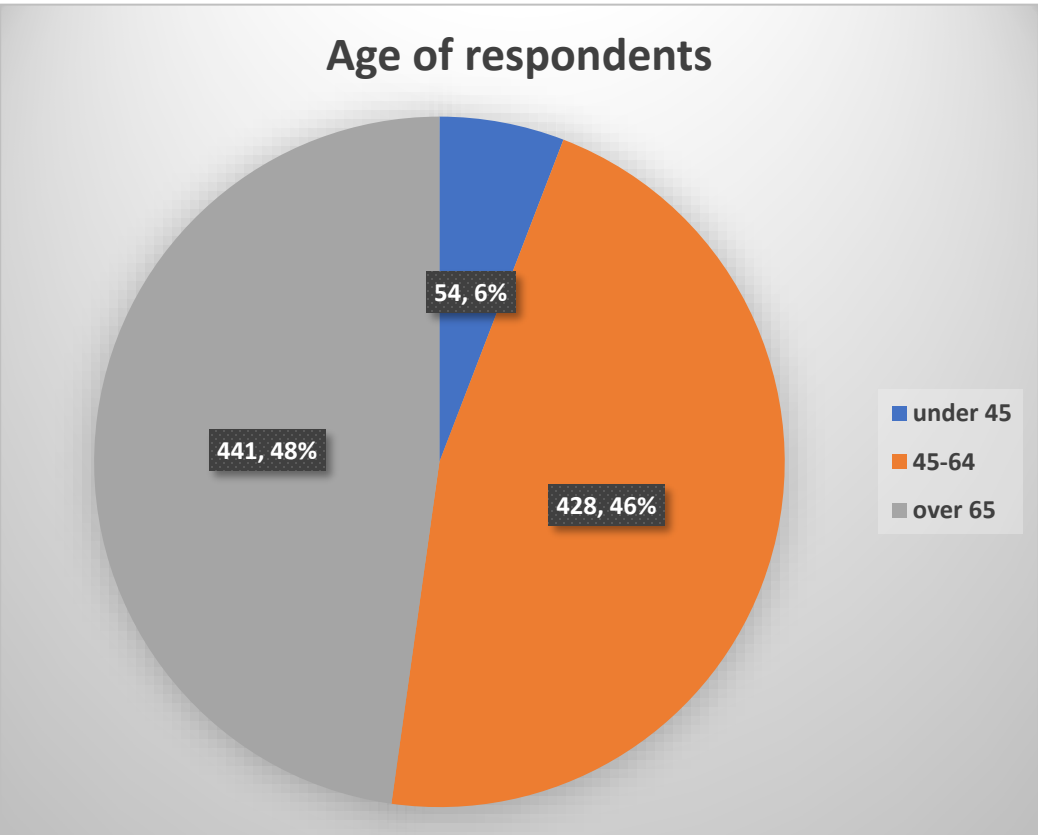
“Impressed, the waterways are a credit to you folk, always had an awesome experience when dealing with you, keep it up.”

“Relative to BW (as was) you are more inclusive. Your attitude towards the average boater allows for OUR concerns to have more influence in your plans. And you smile more often.”

Demographics

Age

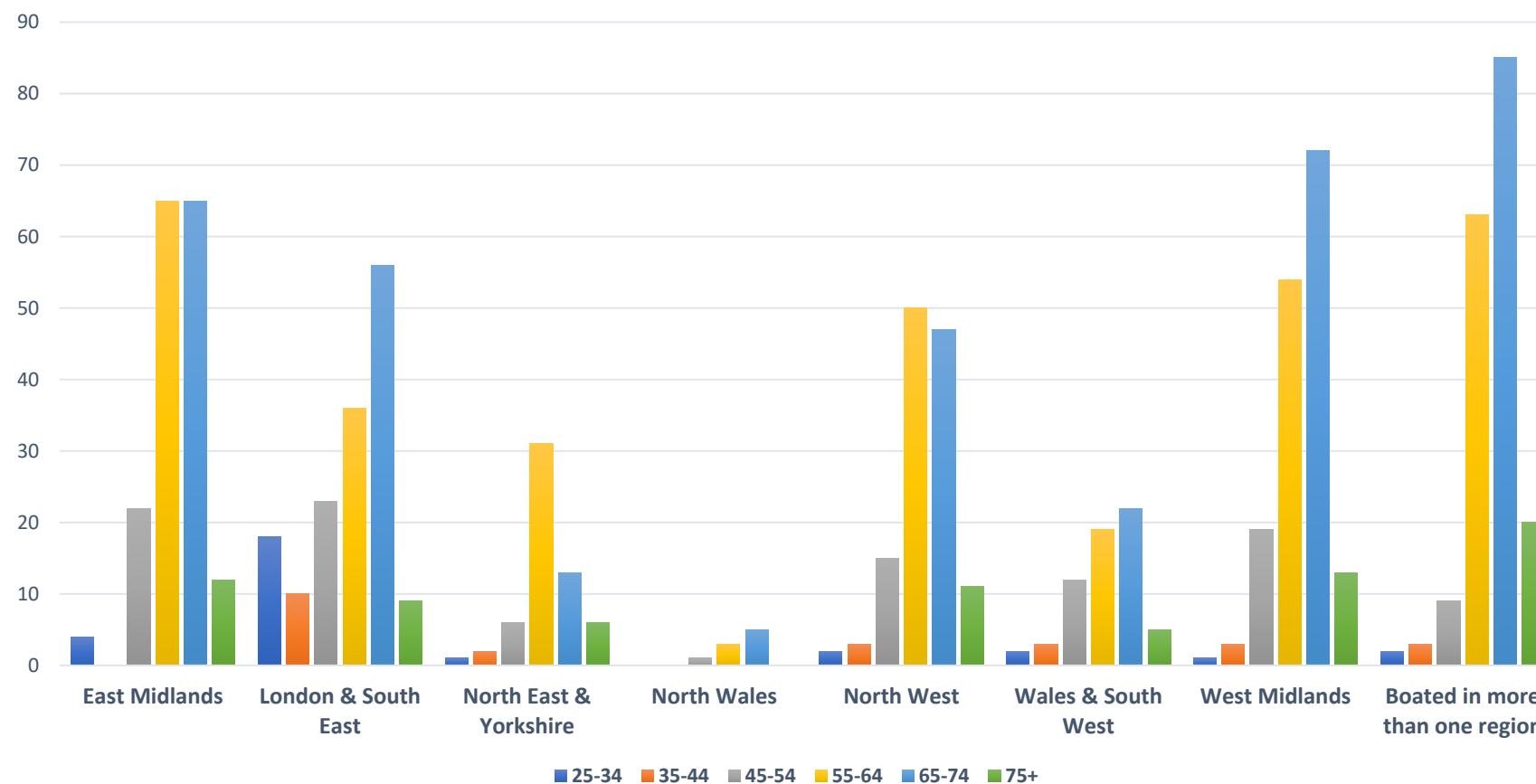
The age of respondents was skewed to people over the age of 55. Only 6% of respondents were under 44, with the highest proportion in the 65 – 74 age group. There were no responses from anyone under the age of 25.



Age

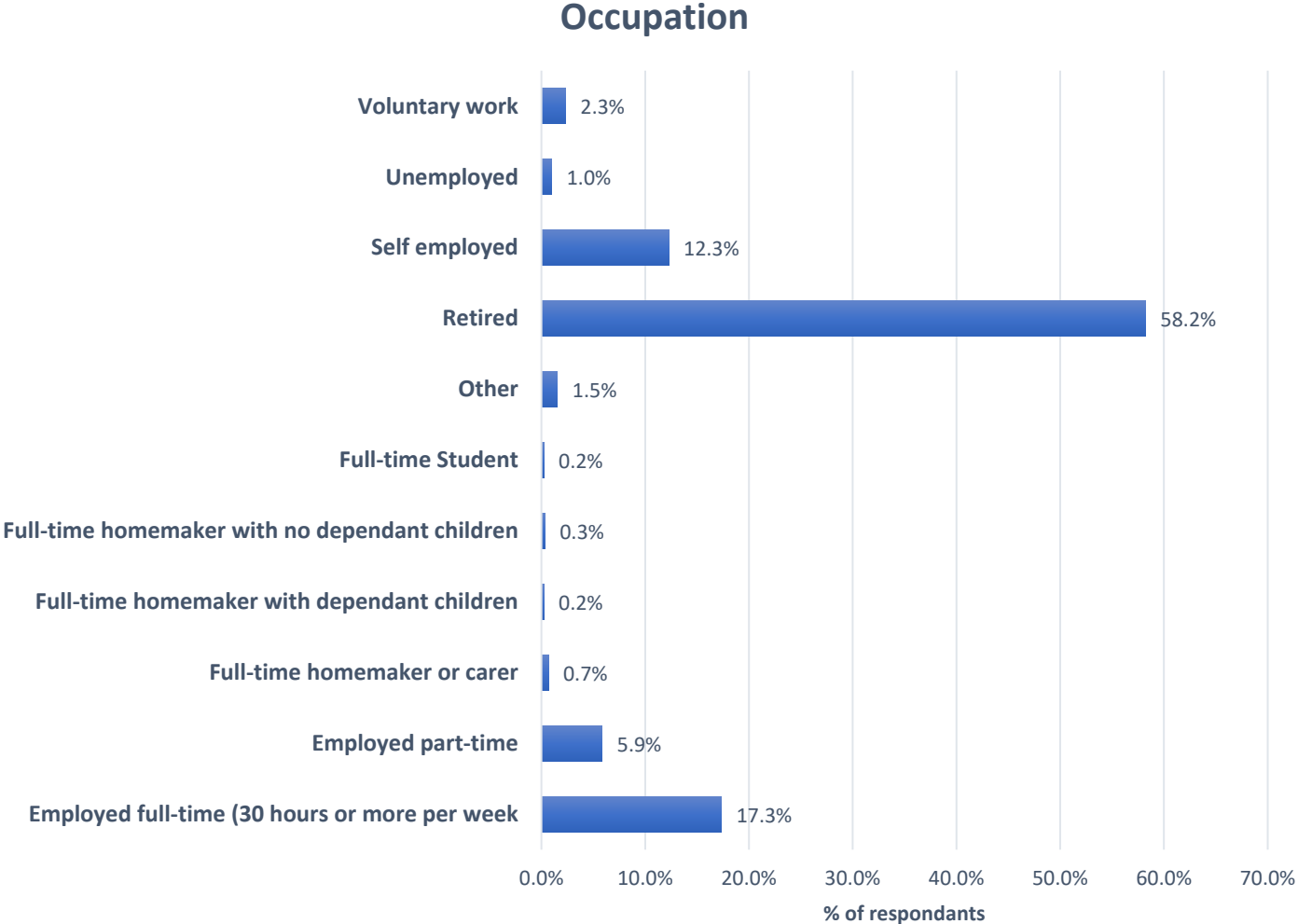
The East Midlands had the highest proportion of those aged 55 -64, with West Midlands having the highest number of those in the 65 -74 age group.

Age of respondents across region



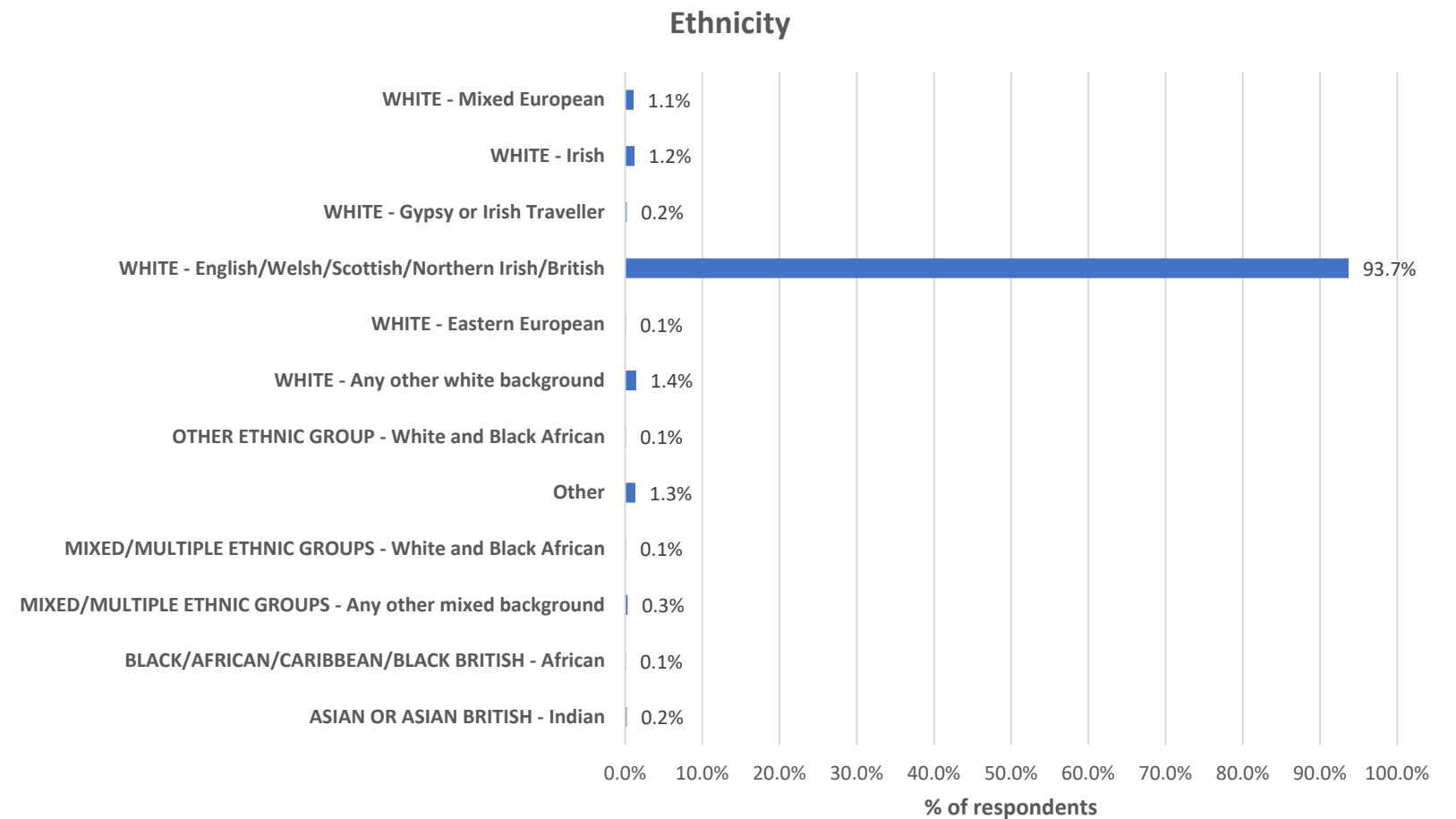
Occupation

The majority of respondents were retired (58.2%), with 30% being employed full time or self-employed.



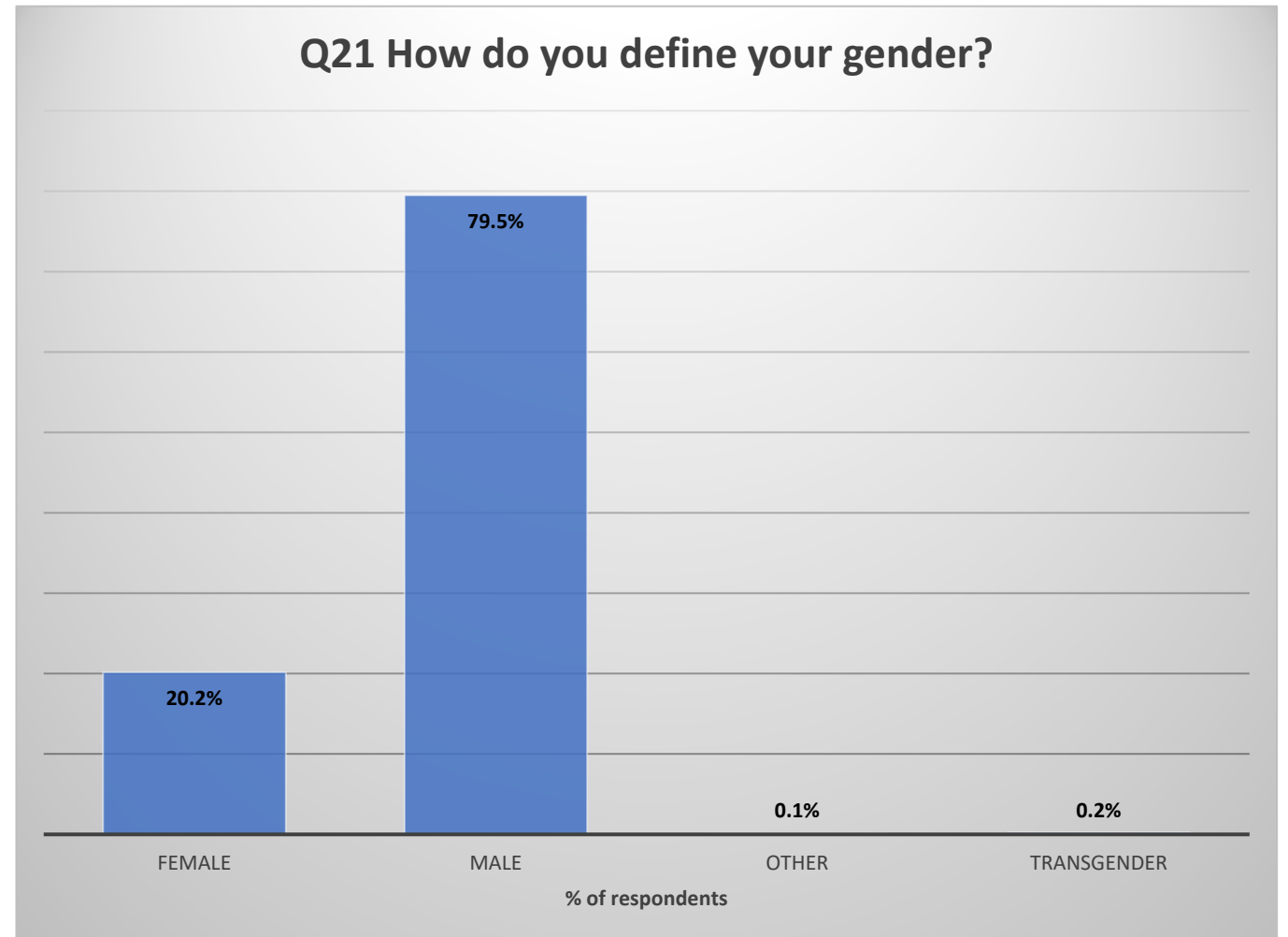
Ethnicity

The overwhelming majority of respondents considered themselves to be white, English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British.



Gender

Four times more people defining themselves as males responded to this question than females.

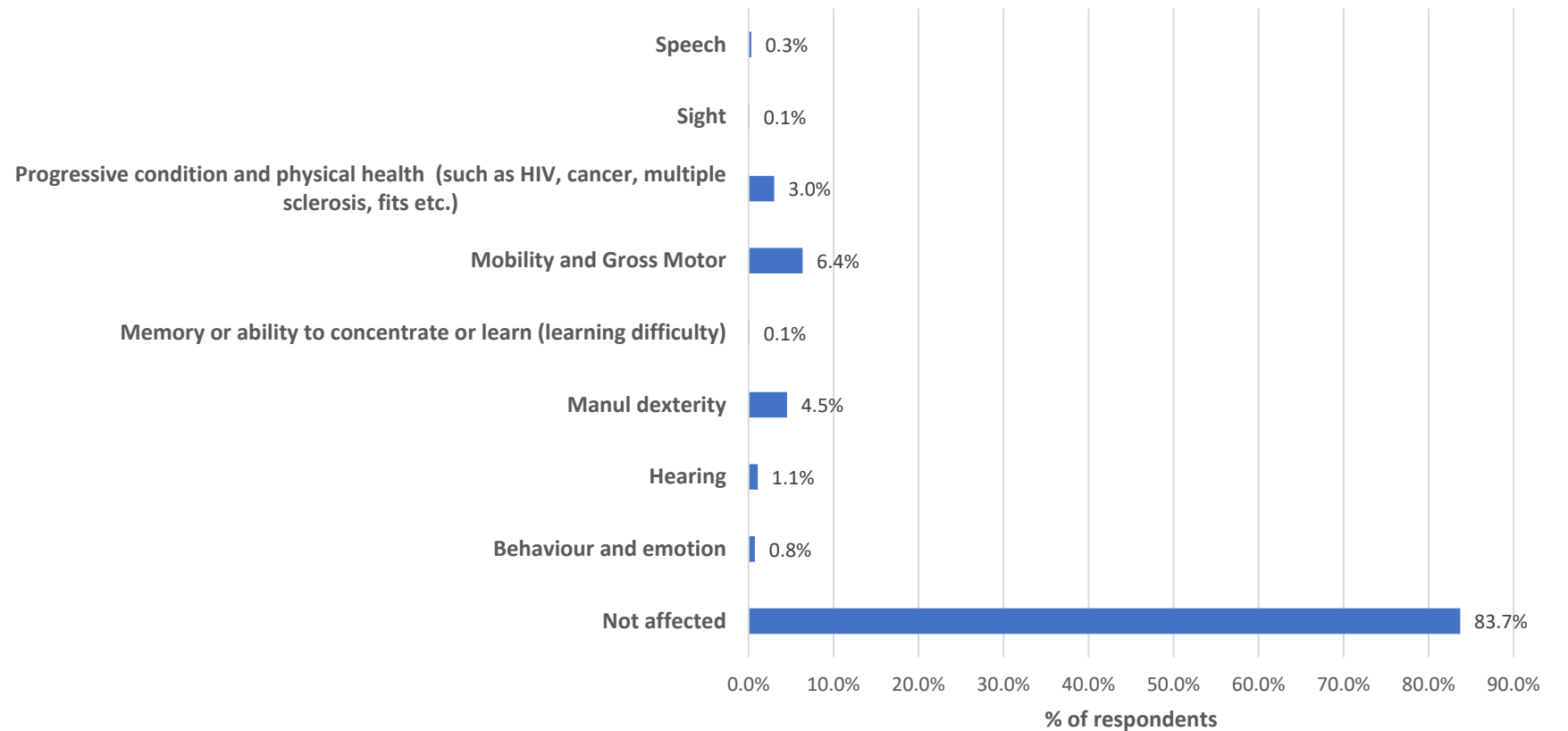


Wellbeing

Physical health disabilities

The majority of respondents were not affected by health problems or a disability that was likely to last/had lasted 12 months or more.

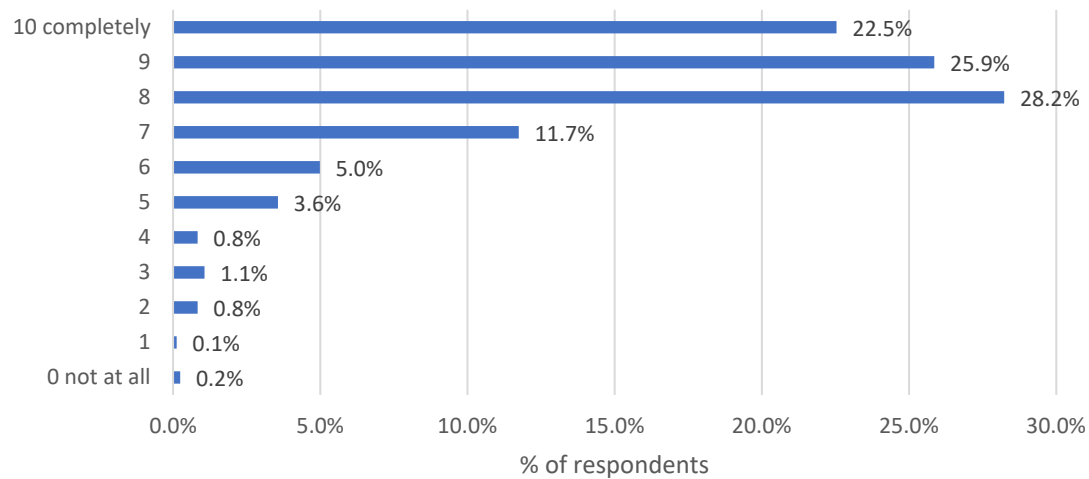
Q28 Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months



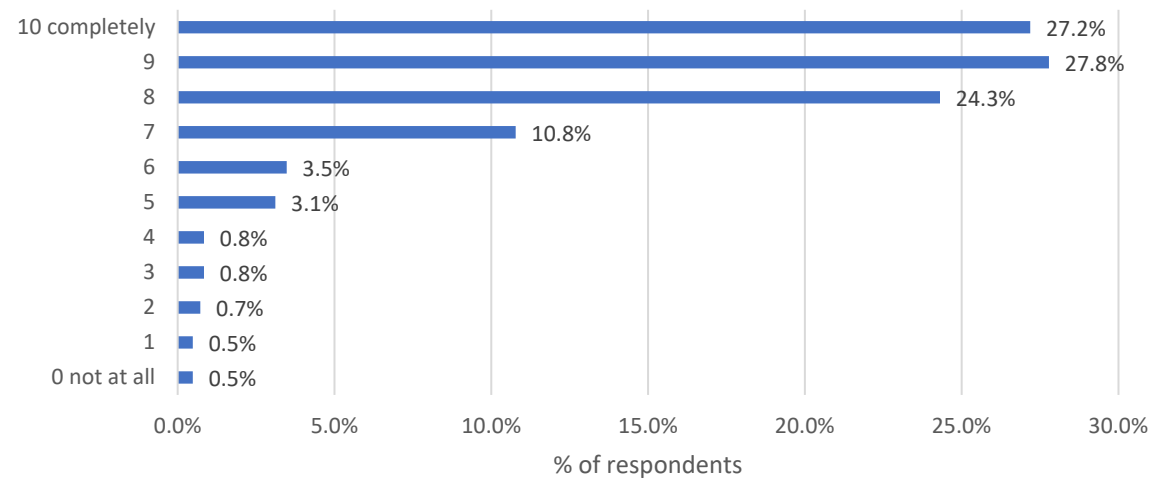
Satisfaction

The answer to these two questions was very positive, with 77% scoring question 29a with 8, 9 or 10, and 79% scoring question 29b with 8, 9 or 10. Only 1% were not satisfied with life (scoring 0, 1 or 2) and 2% feeling that the things they did with their life were not worthwhile.

Q29a Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?



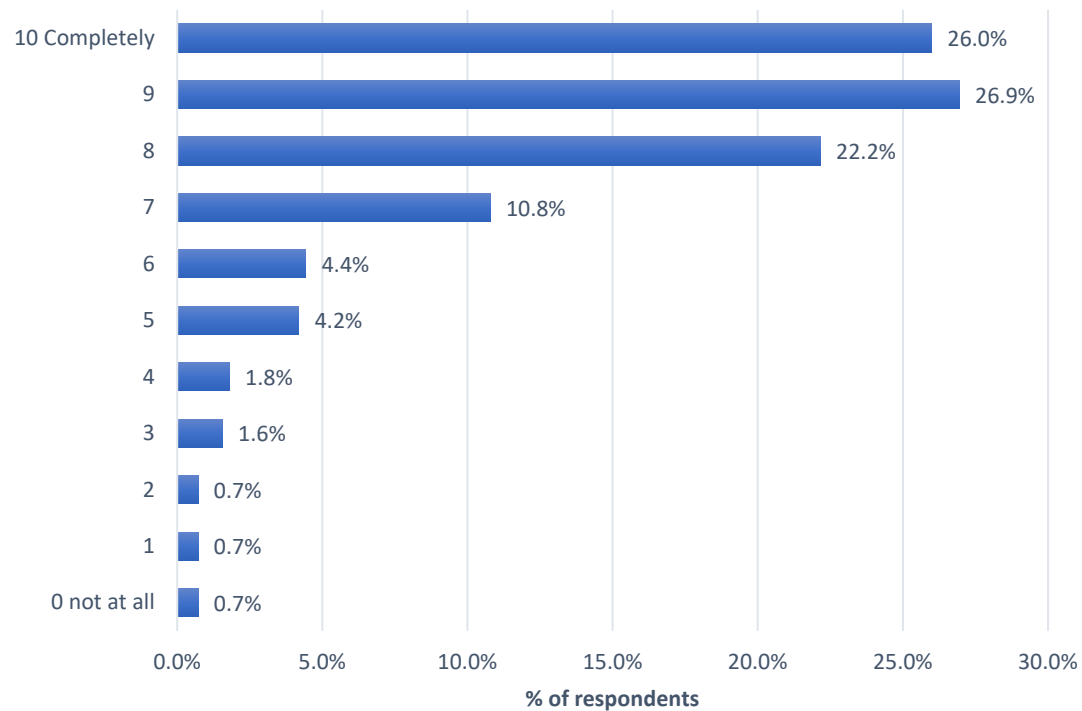
Q29b Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?



Mental wellbeing

Three quarters of boaters who responded to the survey and answered this question felt 'happy yesterday' (75% scoring 10, 9 or 8), with 66% not really feeling anxious 'yesterday'. 7% had felt a lot of anxiety, and 2% had not felt happy (scoring 0, 1 or 2).

Q29c Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?



Q30 How anxious did you feel yesterday?

