

Students and health

Belong report April 2025



By Cibyl & Wonkhe

Survey information

The data here is derived from student polling undertaken during February and March 2025 by Wonkhe and Cibyl as part of Belong.

The survey was distributed via WonkheSUs subscriber students' unions that have opted to take part in Belong, comprising students from 88 HE providers across the UK.

1,055 students gave responses to this wave. The results are weighted to account for gender and level of study.

83 per cent of respondents were from the UK.

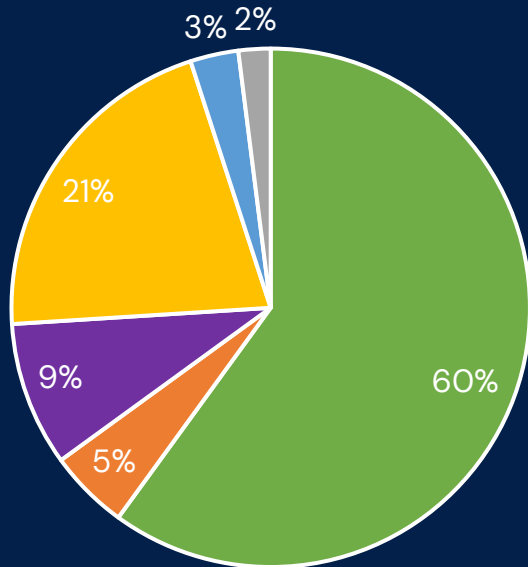
67 per cent identified themselves as heterosexual.

26 per cent declared they have a disability.

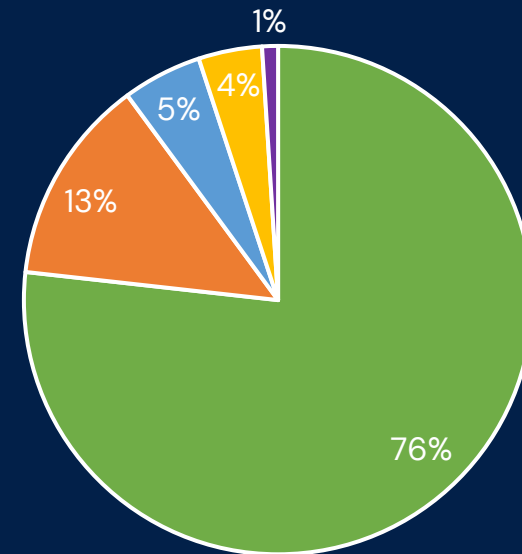


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Demographics: ethnicity and age



Ethnicity



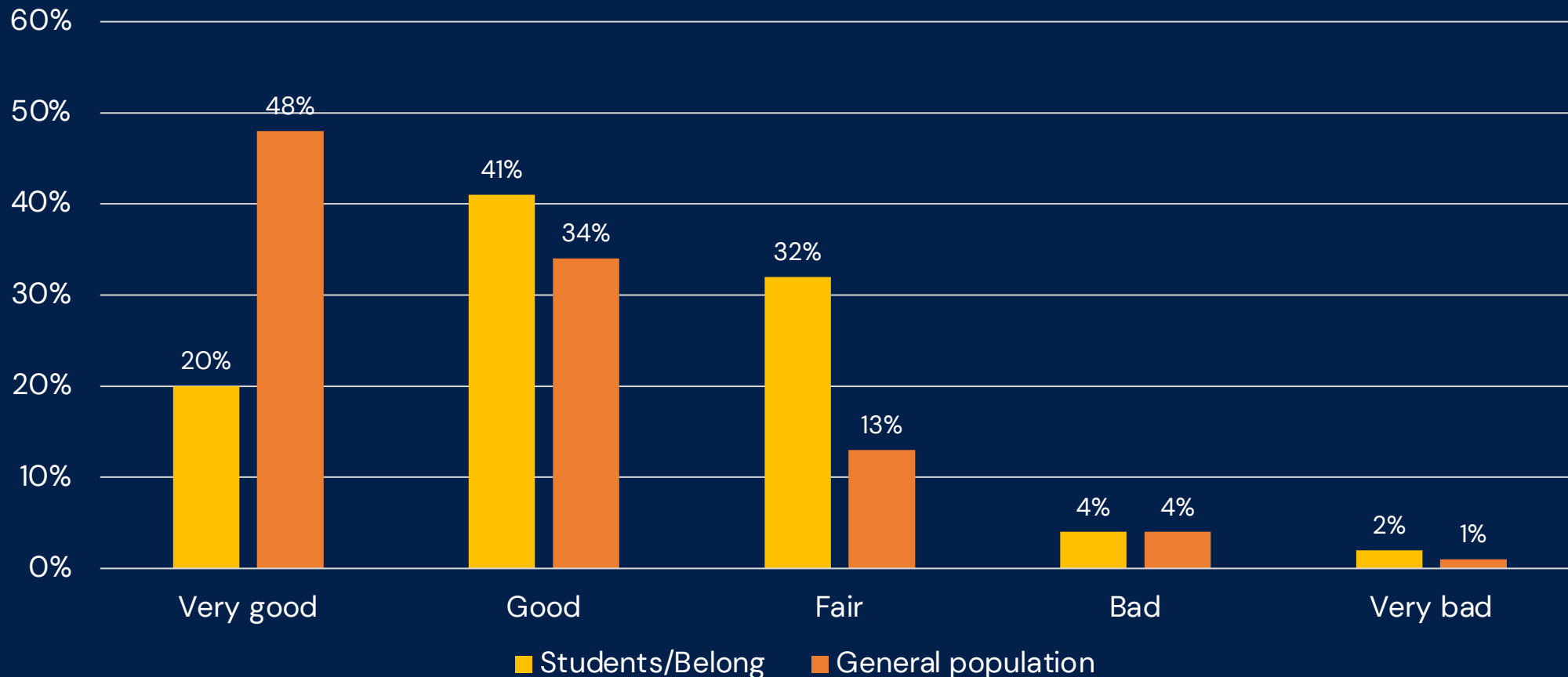
Age



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Students self-report good health at lower rates than the general population

In general, how is your health?



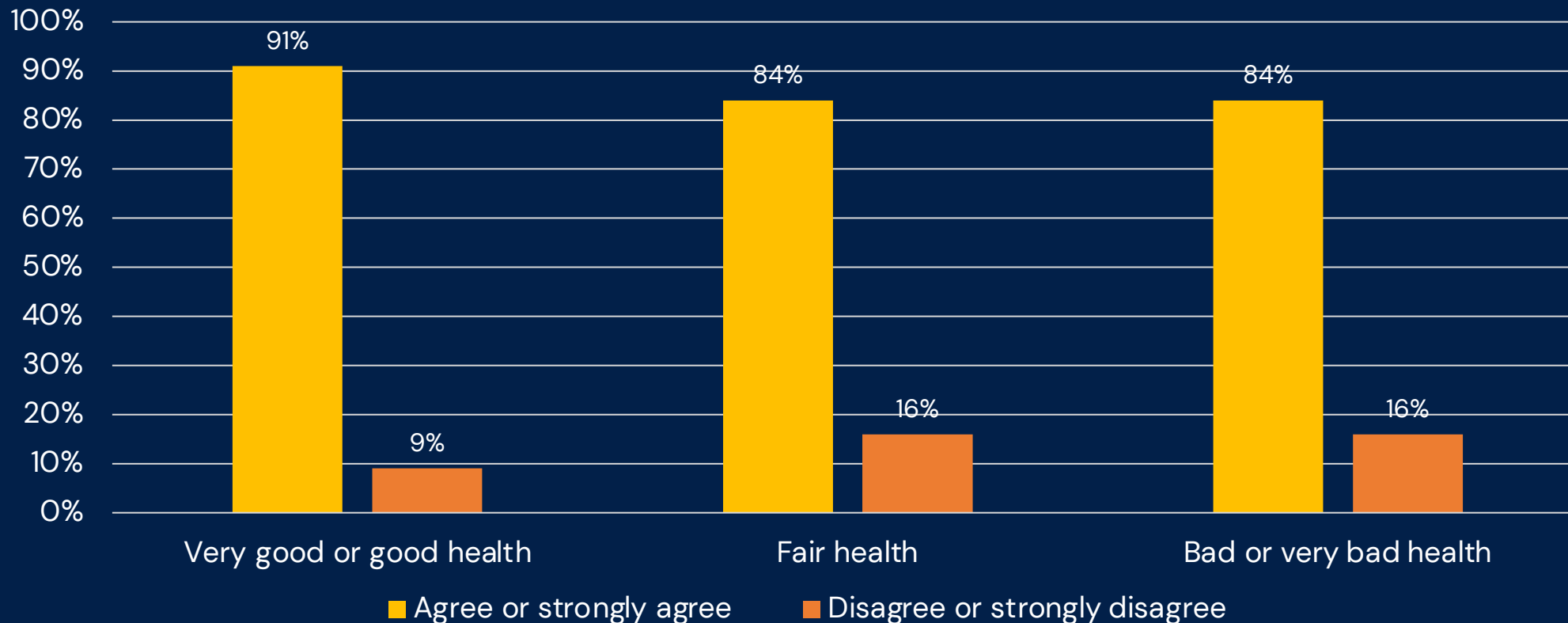
General population data from 2021 Census ons.gov.uk/census



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Health correlates modestly with perception of teaching quality

How good are staff at explaining things and making the subject engaging? / How often is the course intellectually stimulating, challenging you to do your best work?*

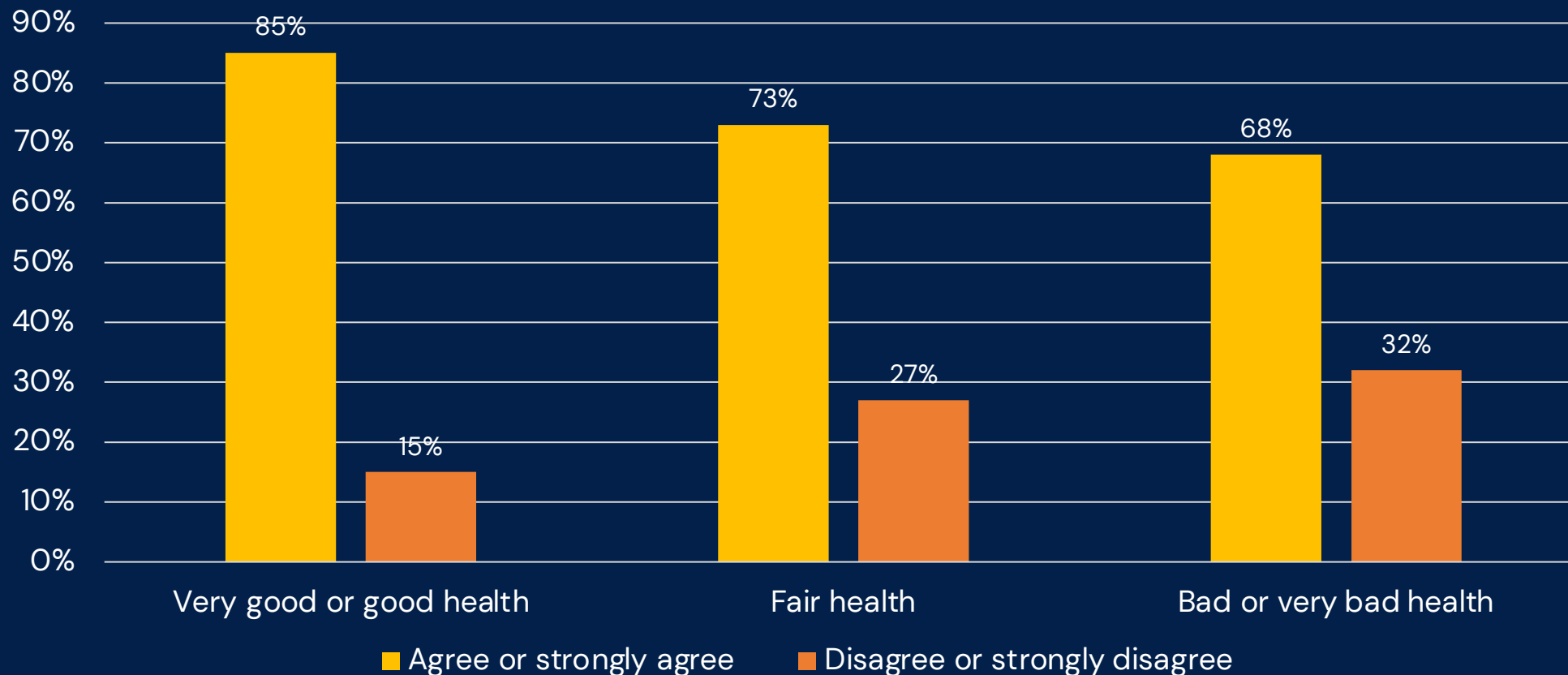


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* The responses on teaching quality are taken as an average of the response to the two questions.

Health correlates with feeling part of a community of staff and students

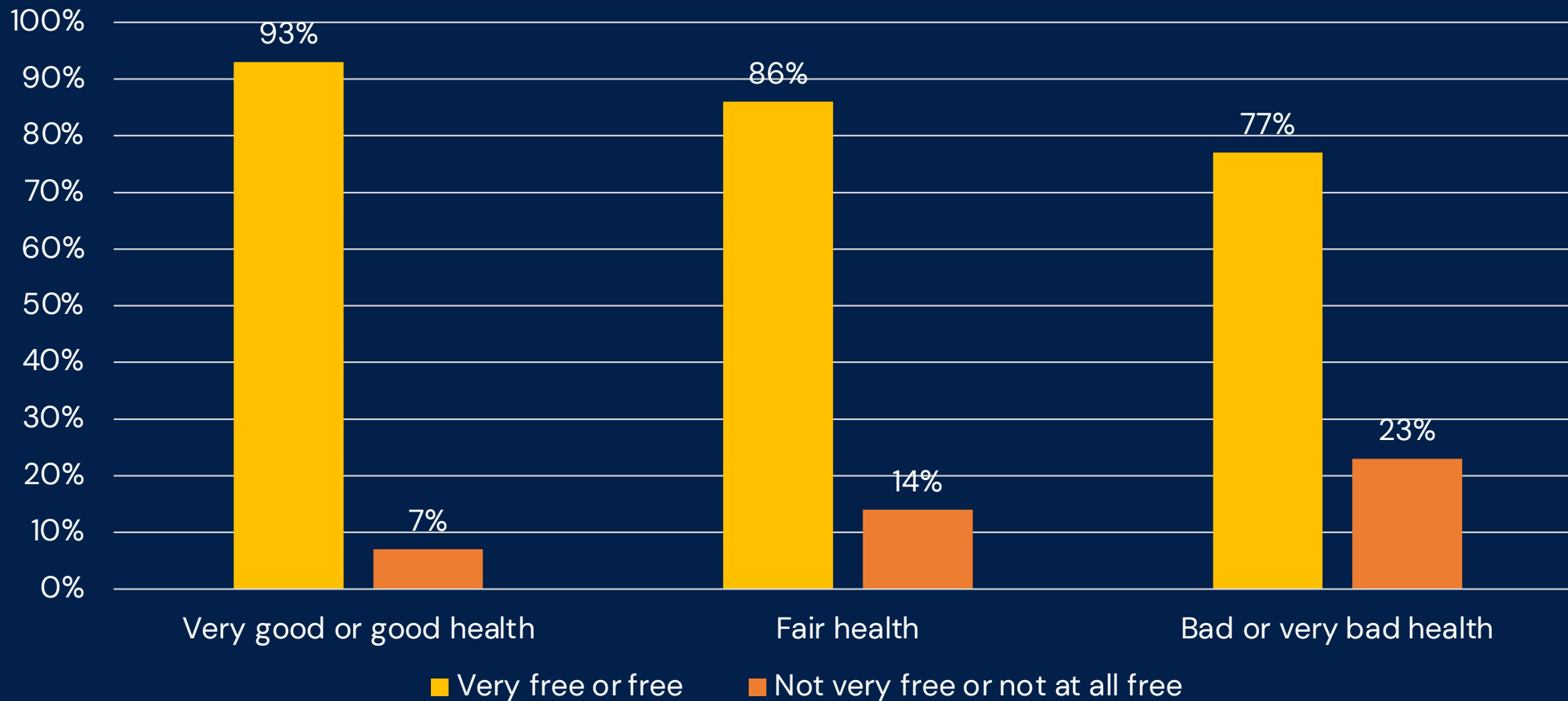
I feel part of a community of staff and students



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Health correlates with sense of freedom to speak

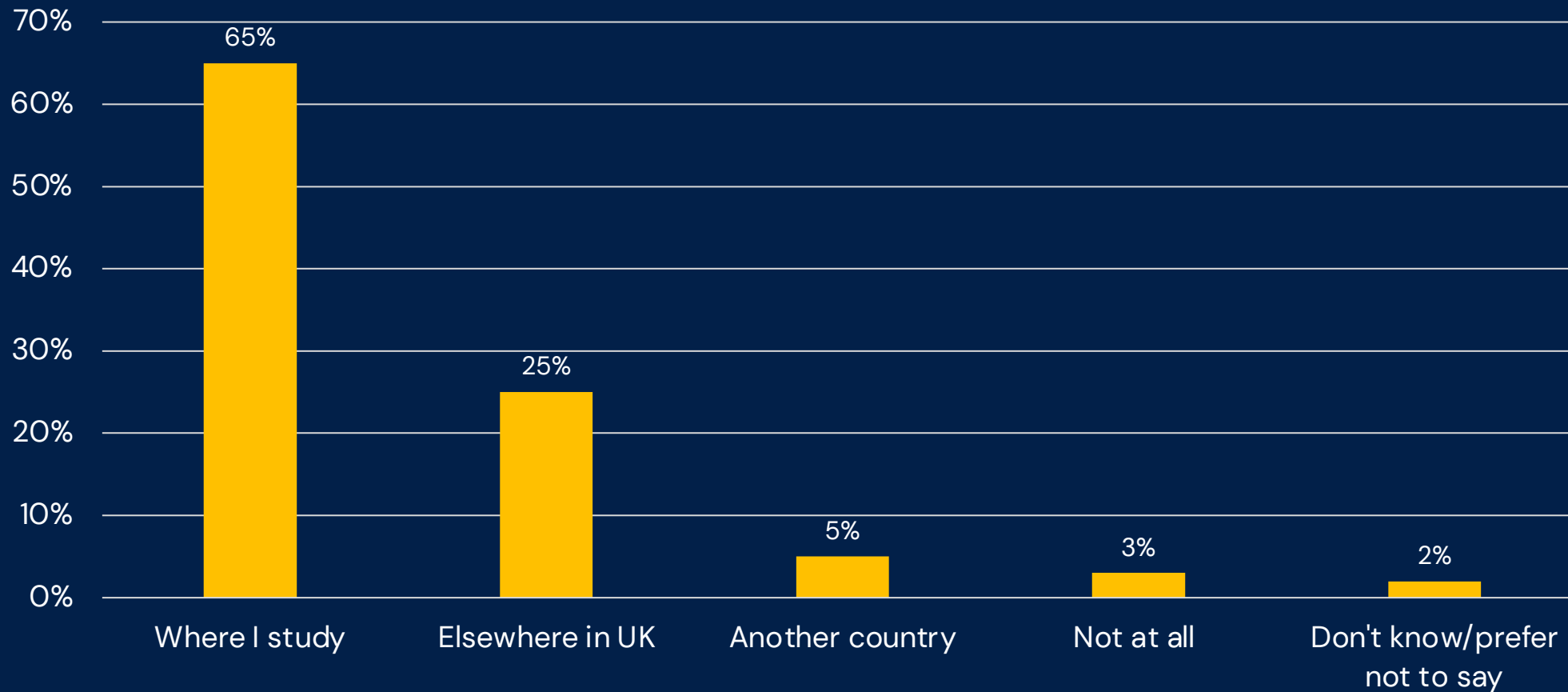
"During your studies, how free did you feel to express your ideas, opinions, and beliefs?"



By Cibyl & Wonkhe

Most students are registered with a doctor

Are you currently registered with a doctor/GP?



By Cibyl & Wonkhe

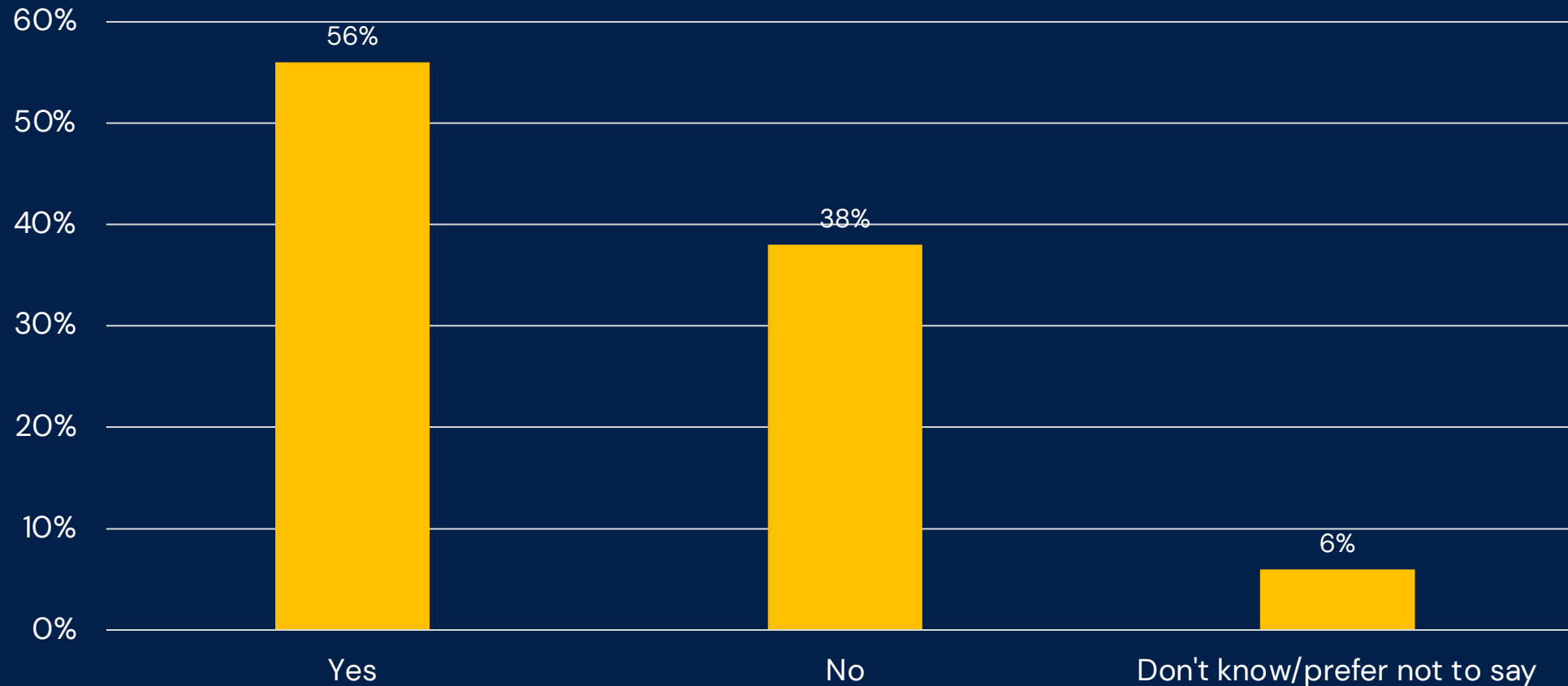
Much fewer are registered with a dentist



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Just over half have had a dental check in the last 12 months

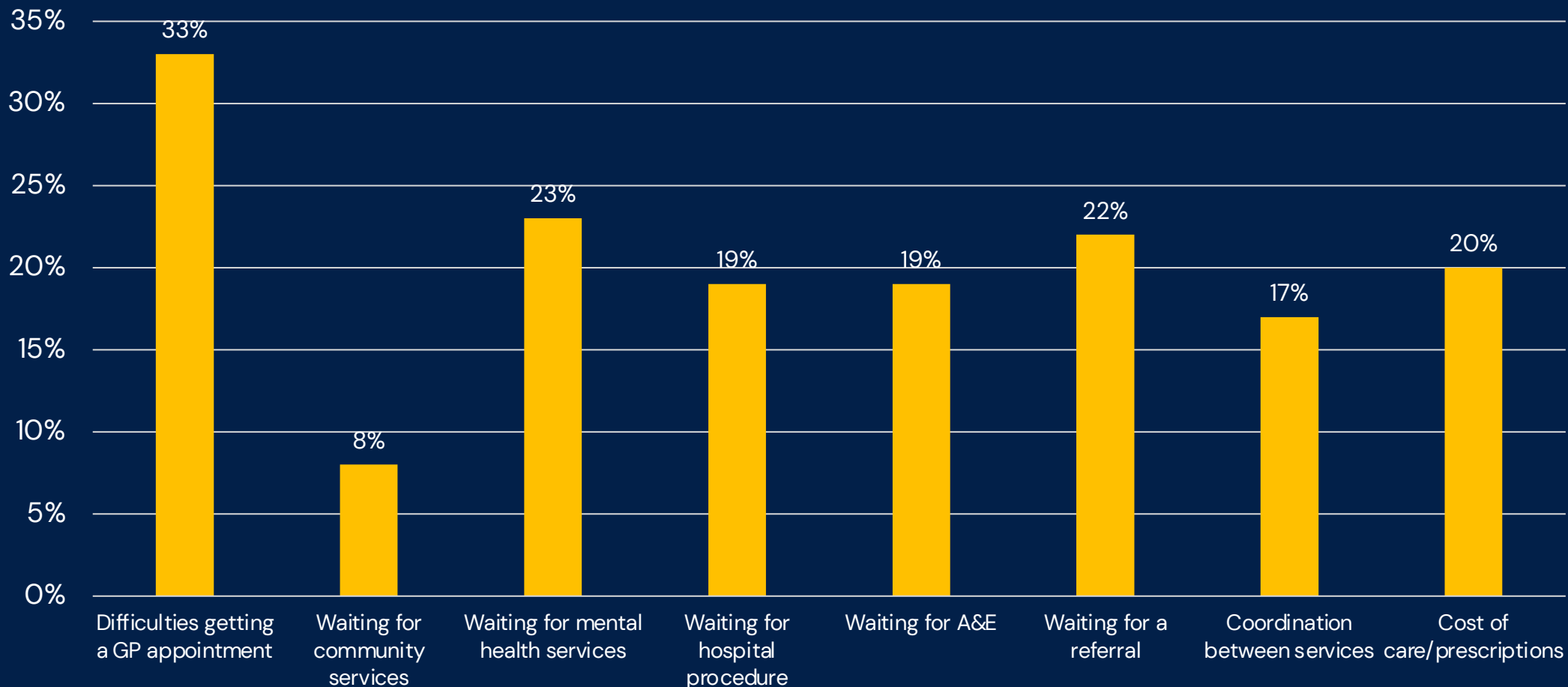
Have you had a dental check up in the past 12 months?



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Students' difficulties accessing health services

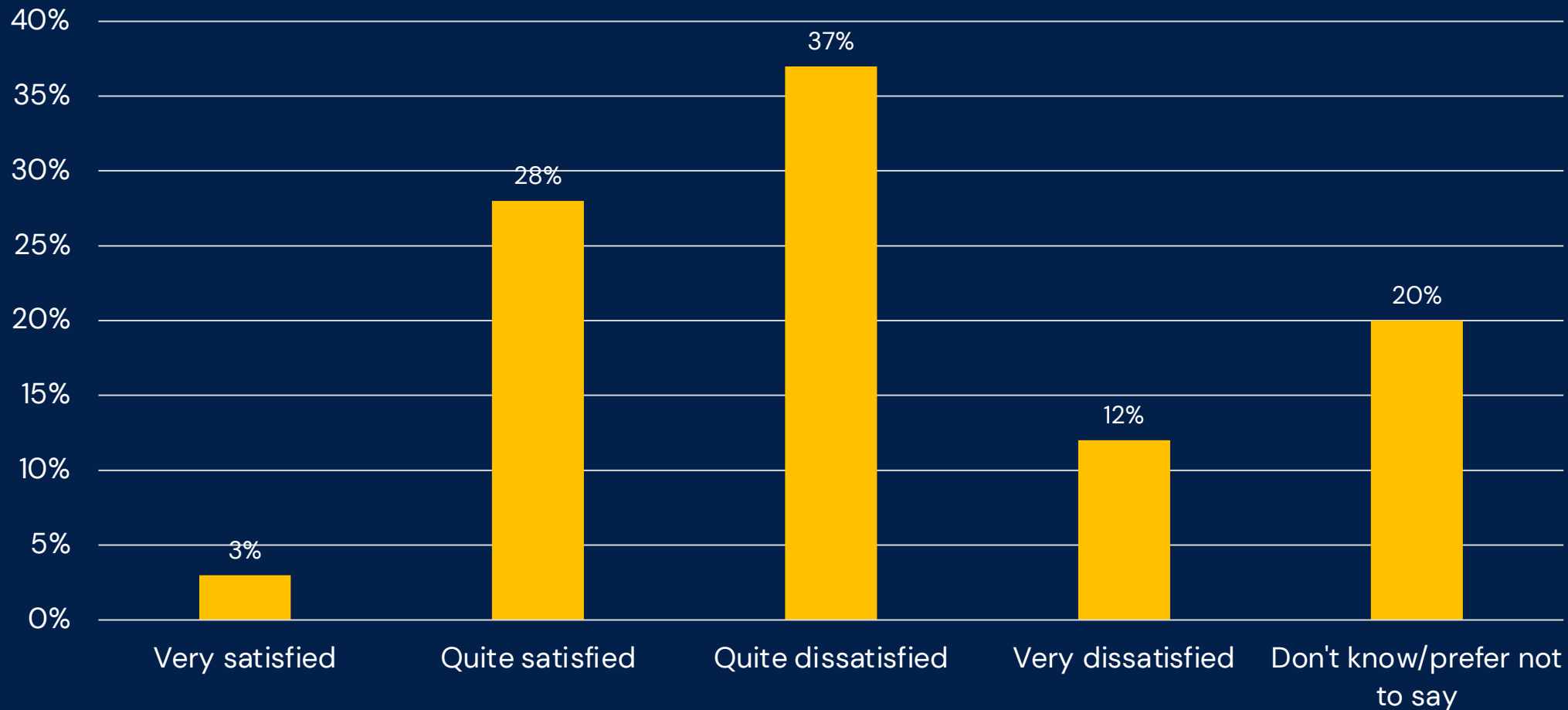
Which of the following challenges have you personally experienced while at university?



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Half are dissatisfied with the NHS

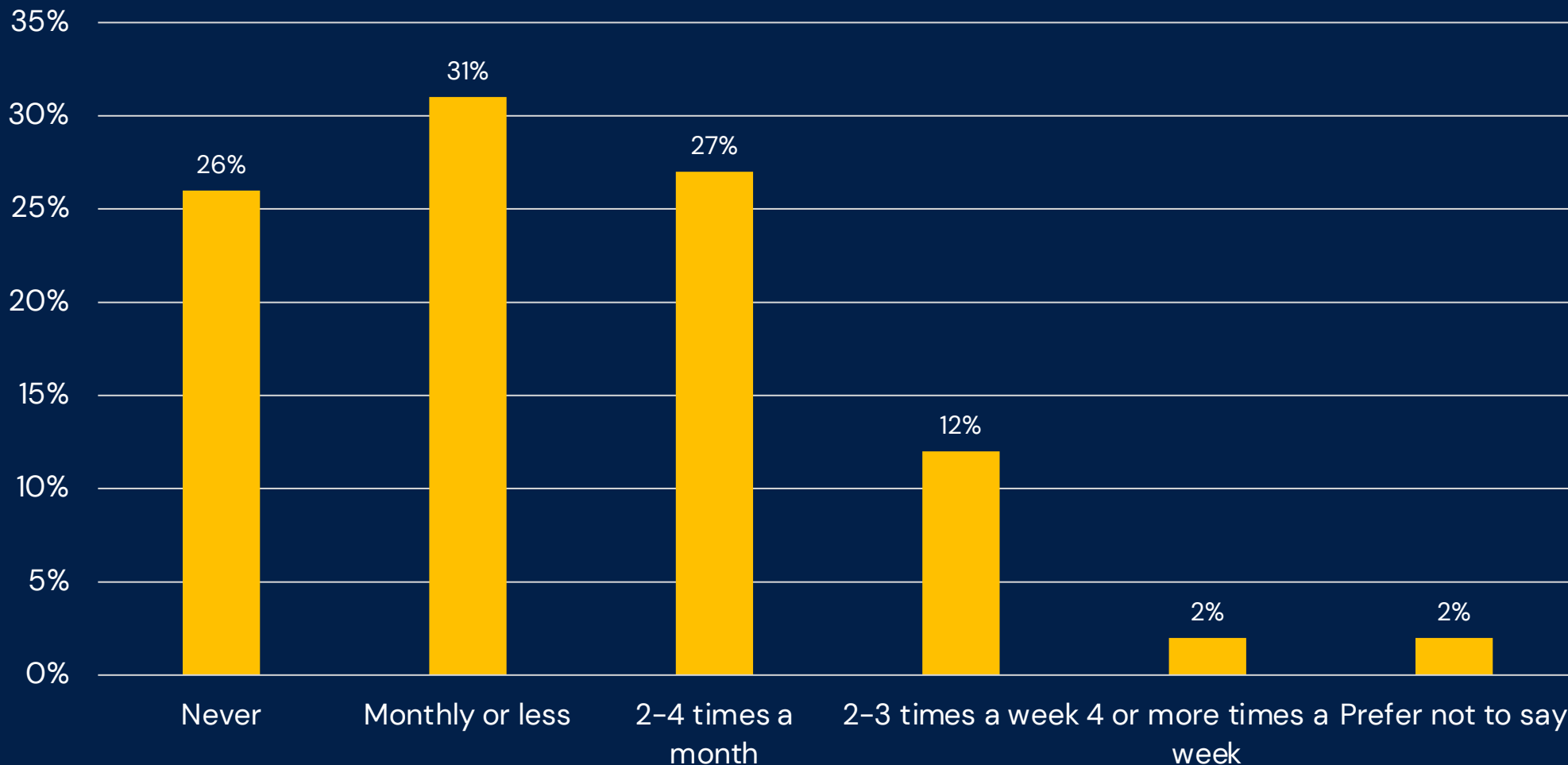
How satisfied are you with the way the NHS runs nowadays?



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More than half rarely or never drink alcohol

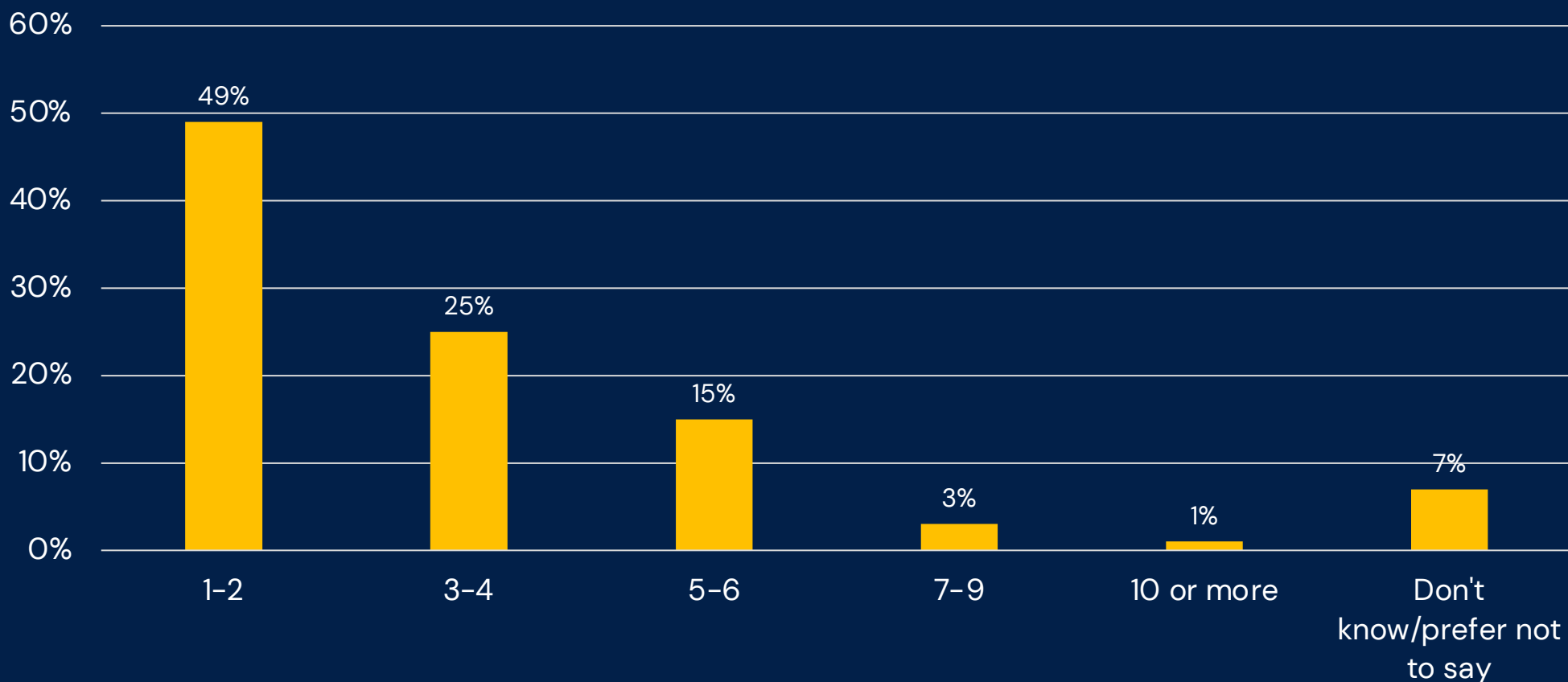
How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?



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Those that do drink mostly do it in moderation

How many drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?*

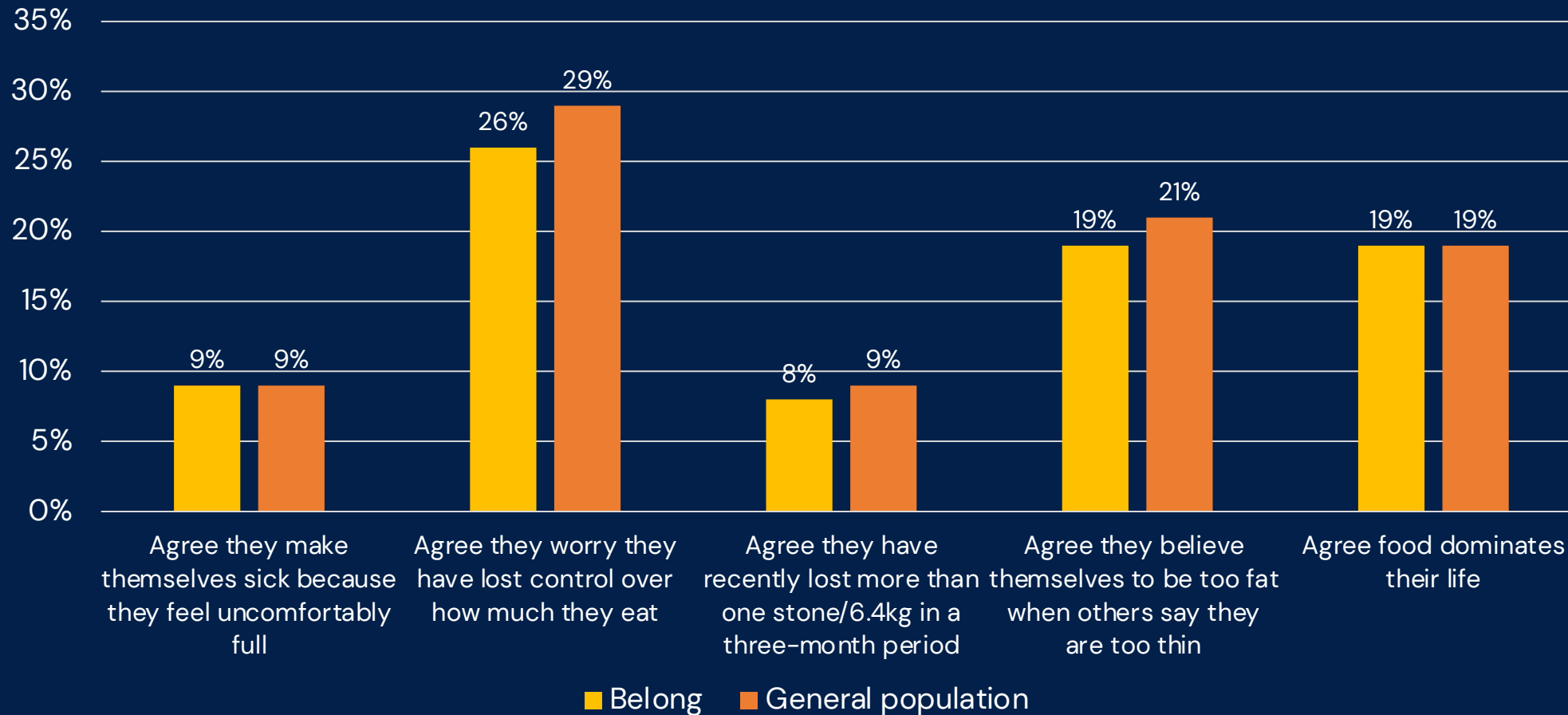


* For responses to this question only those who indicated they drink are included



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Nearly half show signs of disordered eating or issues with food or body image

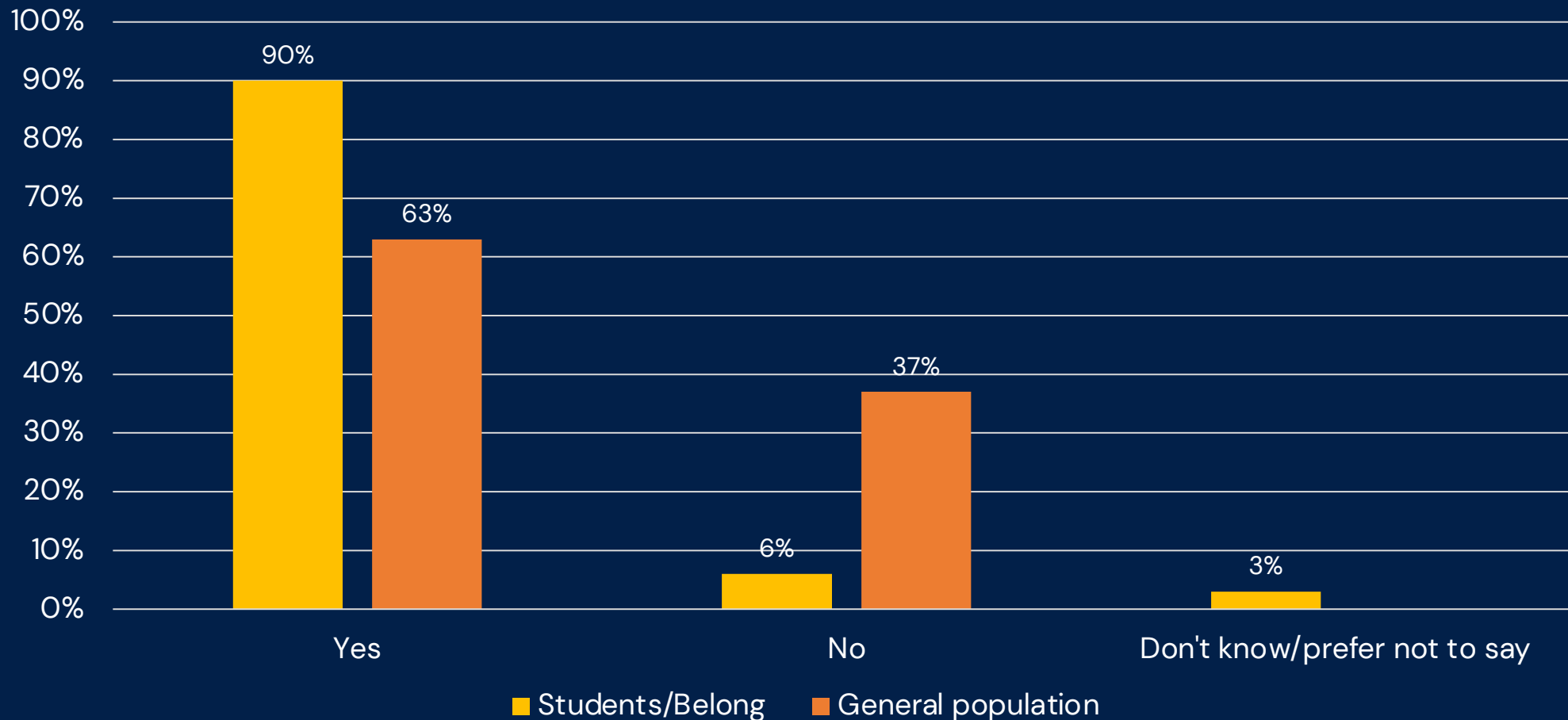


General population data from 2021 Census ons.gov.uk/census | These questions comprise the SCOFF questionnaire which is a tool for screening for possible eating disorders. Agreeing with two or more of these indicators suggests the respondent may be at risk.

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Students report a higher rate of physical activity than the general population

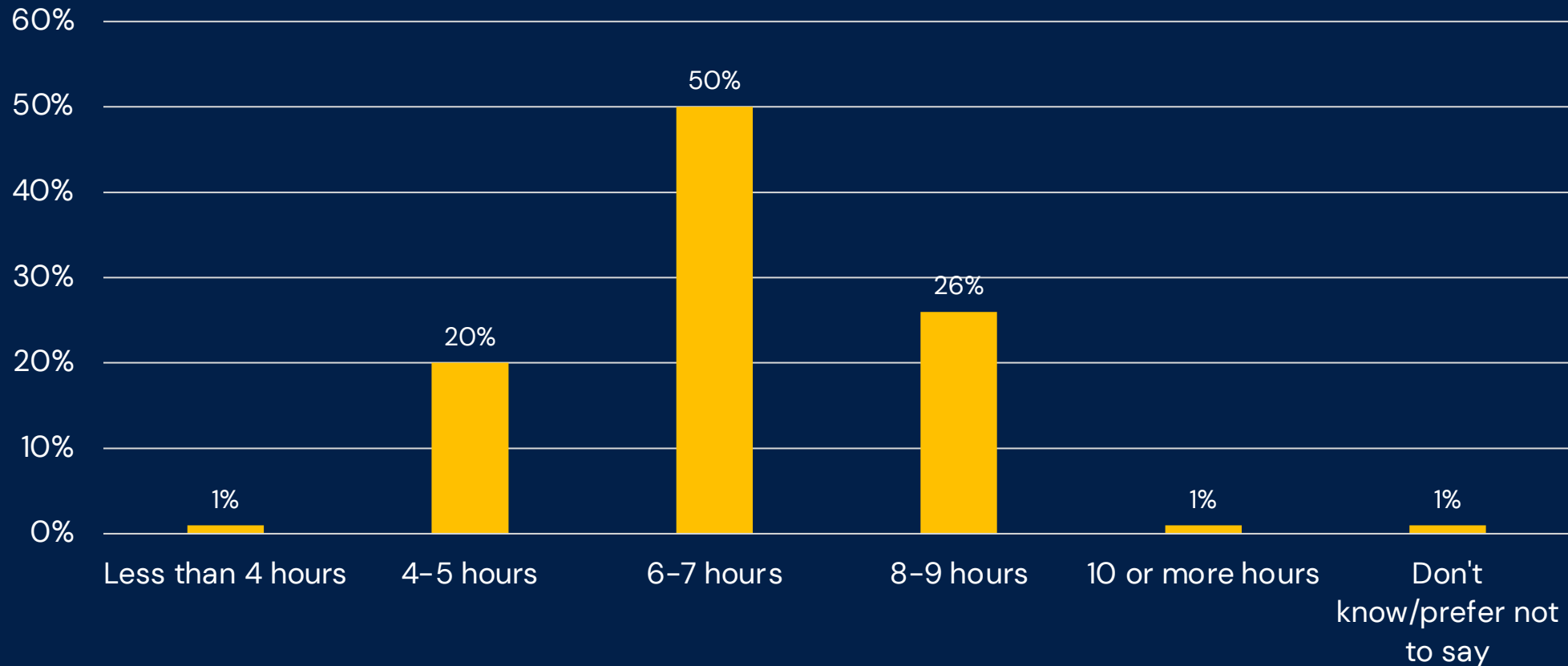
In the last four weeks, have you done any physical activity for at least ten minutes?



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Less than a third have eight or more hours' sleep a night

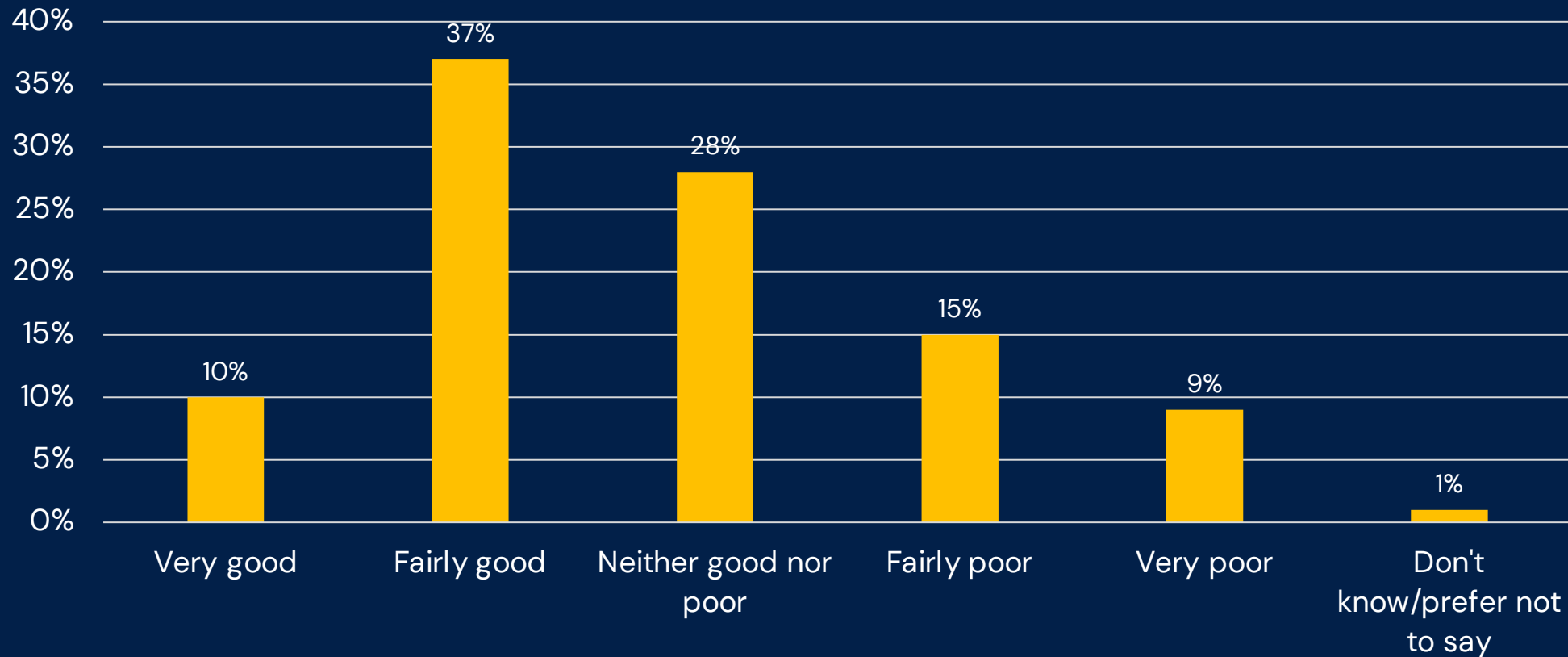
On an average night, how many hours of sleep do you usually get?



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Sleep quality is variable

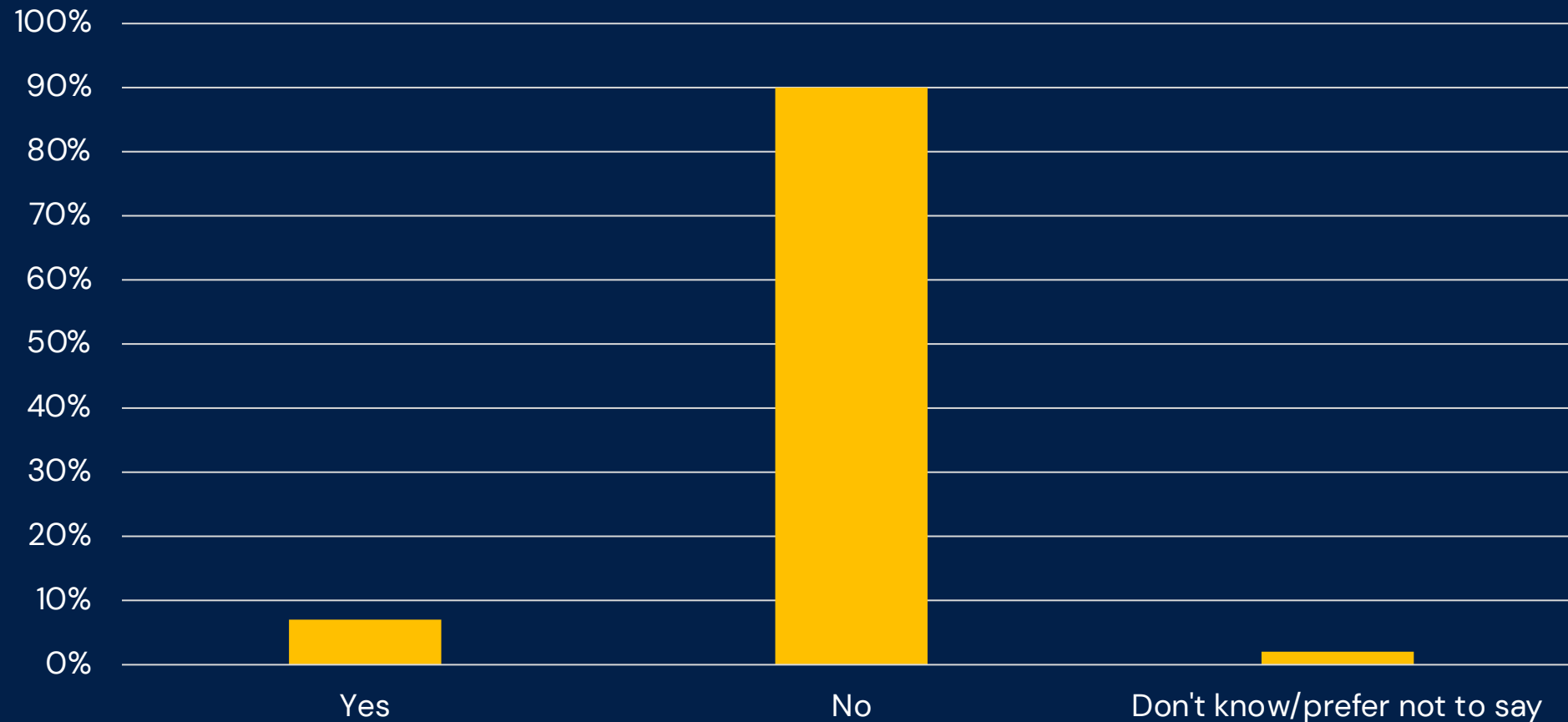
In general, how would you describe the quality of your sleep?



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Self-reported illegal drug use is low

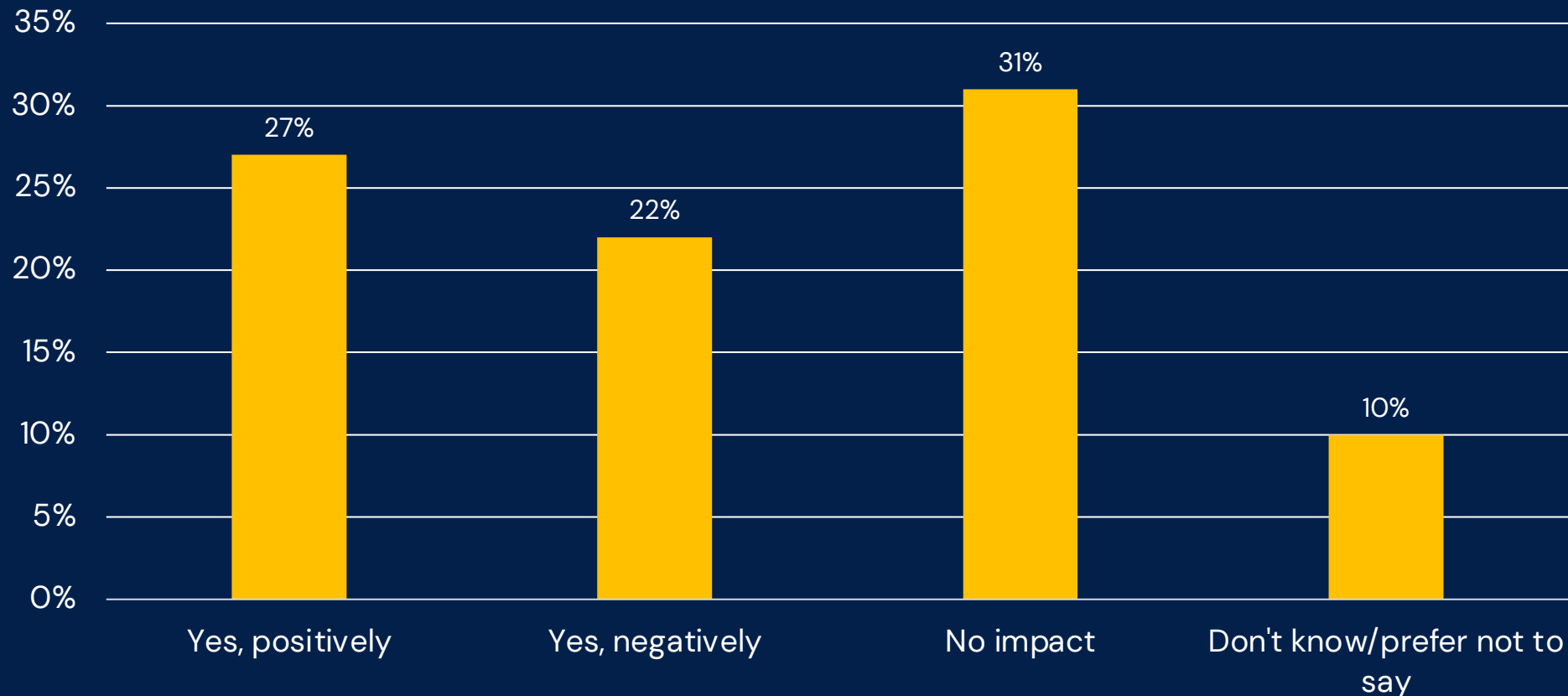
In the last 30 days have you used illegal drugs or misused prescription drugs for recreational purposes?



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22 per cent report their housing situation negatively impacts their health

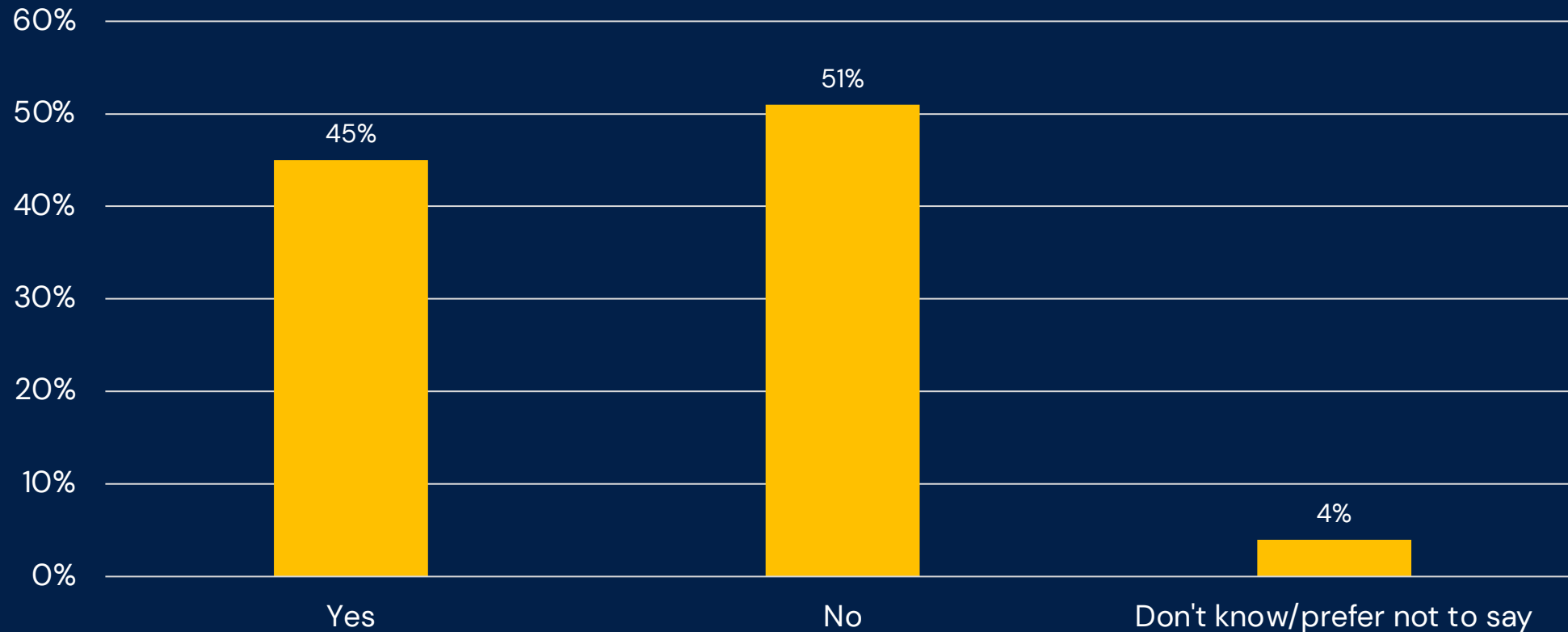
Do you believe your housing situation impacts your physical or mental health?



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For those that menstruate*, 45 per cent report symptoms that affect their daily life

Do you experience any symptoms that significantly impact your daily life related to your menstrual cycle (e.g., pain, irregular periods)?



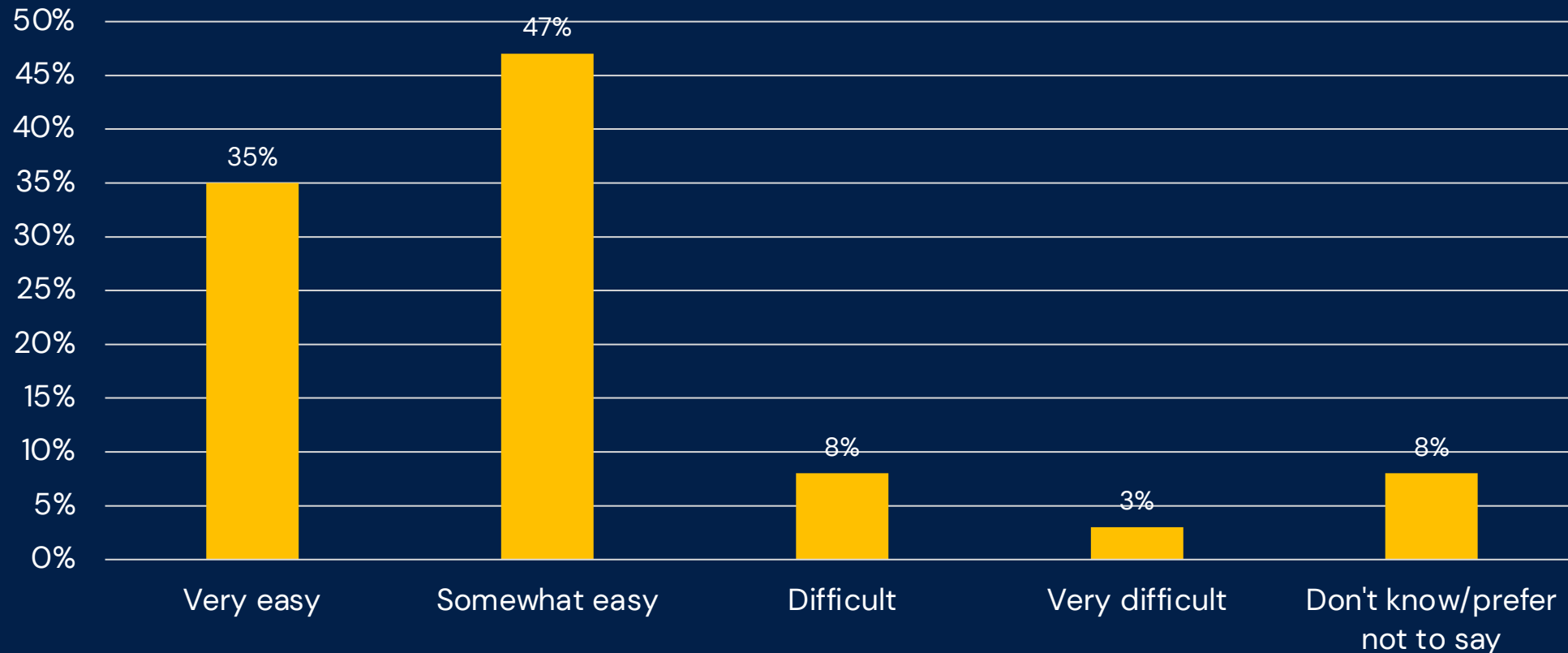
*For responses to this question n=680



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For those that menstruate*, one in ten find it difficult to afford menstrual products

If applicable, how easy is it for you to access/afford products related to your menstrual cycle?



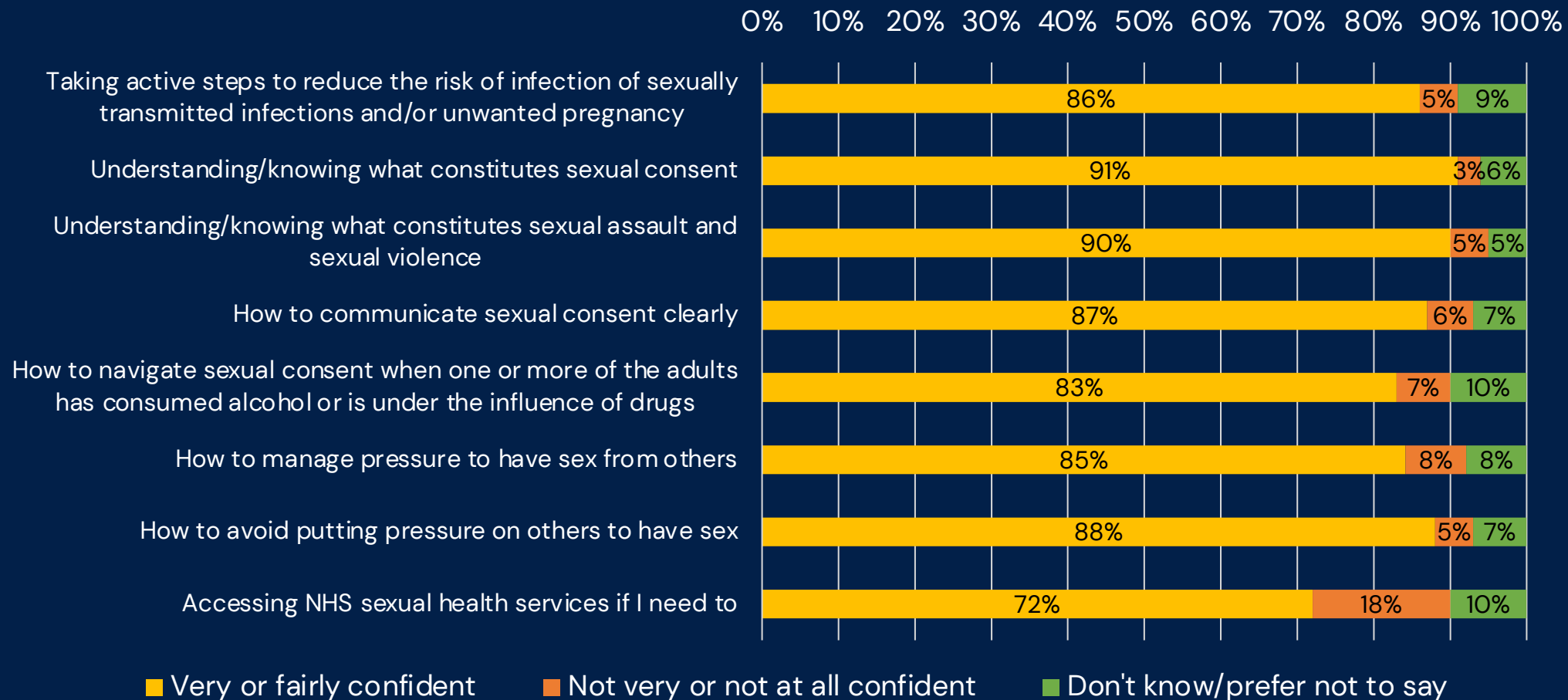
*For responses to this question n=680



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The majority are confident about sex

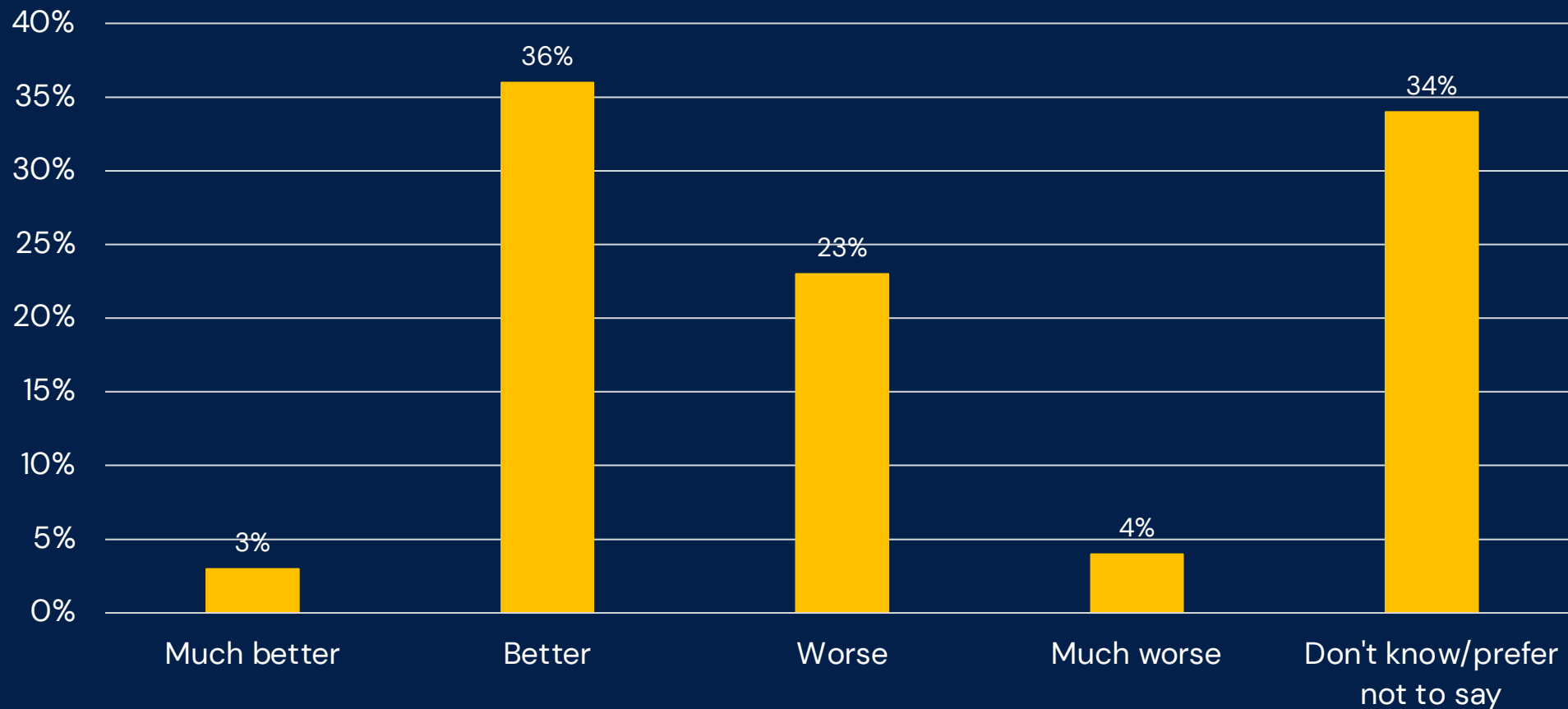
Thinking about sexual health, how confident would you say you are in each of the following areas?



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Over a third say their health has improved since coming to university

How much has your health changed since being at university?



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What students would change

- Mental health services are a top priority – alongside better alignment between those services and wider learning environment
- Reducing financial barriers to health and wellbeing
- Improved access to NHS services
- Widely accessible sexual and menstrual health products and resources
- Better information and outreach on health
- Culture change in favour of improved wellbeing

[Read the full report of our findings on Wonkhe here.](#)



By Cibyl & Wonkhe



Work with us

The Belong project

- For SUs
- Partnership model
- Invite students to survey, receive insights

The Cibyl Mental Health Study

- For any HEI team working to improve students' mental health
- Surveying, reporting, and insight on your students

The UK Graduate Study

- Partnership model with careers services
- Careers services distribute surveys, receive insights from Cibyl

Email: cibyl@groupgti.com



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