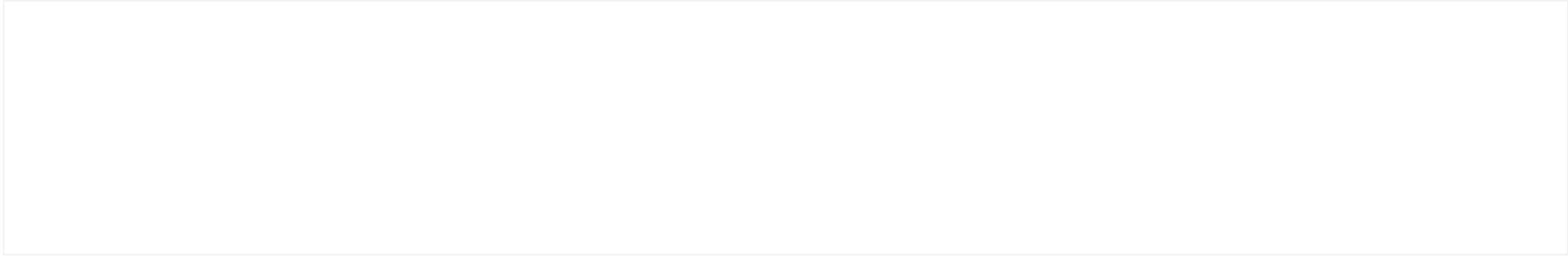


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Sustainable Food Survey 2016



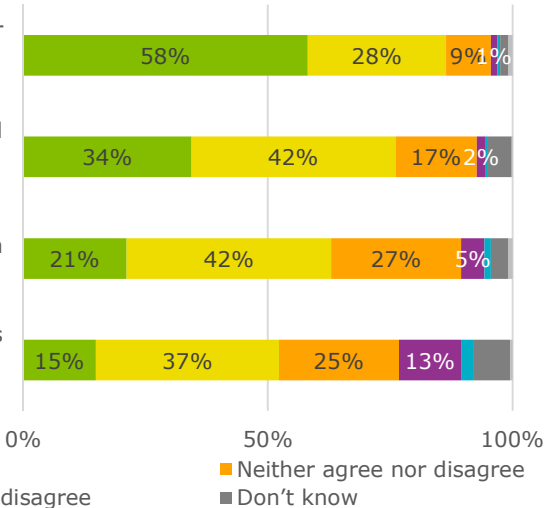
Summary

A national online survey looking at attitudes, awareness and behaviours linked to sustainable food issues was completed by over 3000 students studying in further and higher education across the UK. The research was completed in September 2016 as part of NUS' Student Eats which helps students to develop their own growing sites and food enterprises, embedding sustainable food production across campuses, curriculums and communities.

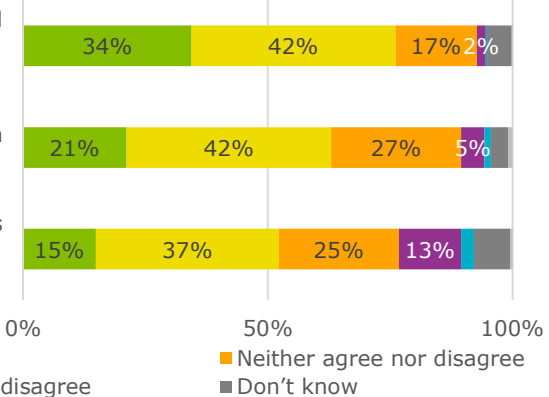
Food purchasing

- Over half of respondents (54%) of respondents are responsible for buying all their own food
- The vast majority (87%) of respondents report that they use supermarkets in a town/village to do their food shopping at least once a month
- Price (78%) and location/convenience (73%) are the two main factors which influence where respondents decide to do their food shopping.
- Food to cook or prepare at home represents the biggest weekly spend for respondents with approximately two fifths (39%) spending £31 or more on average per week.
- Price is also reported as the strongest influence on what food respondents buy with 85% saying they consider this when buying food.

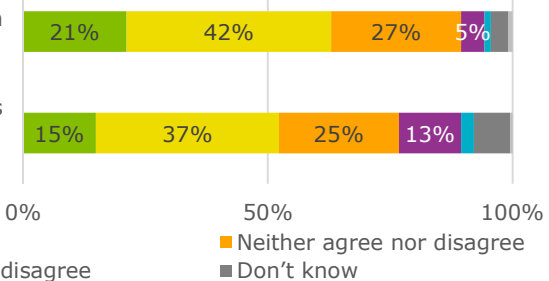
I think it's important that animals bred for food are treated as humanely as possible (n=3265)



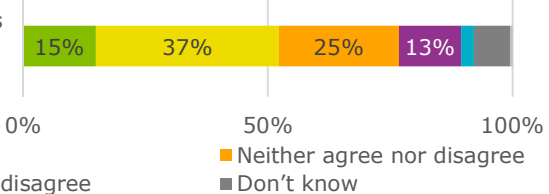
It's better for the environment to eat local fruit and vegetables grown in season (n=3264)



Where possible I try to support British producers (n=3262)



I have a good understanding of the issues surrounding buying local / seasonal produce (n=3257)



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Sustainable food and food poverty

- Almost two fifths of respondents say they make a conscious effort to buy Fairtrade products (38%) and a third say they try to buy food that is in season in the UK (34%).
- Respondents perceive locally produced food / food products to be a way of purchasing food that is as fresh as possible (42%) and also a way of supporting the local economy (34%), however only around a quarter say that these products are worth paying a bit extra for (23%).
- Only 6% of respondents say that how animals are reared is not important to them.
- 76% agree that it's better for the environment to eat local fruit and vegetables grown in season.
- 52% agree that they have a good understanding of the issues surrounding buying local and seasonal produce.
- 25% have been hungry but did not eat because of a lack of money or other resources in the last 12 months.

Introduction

Research objectives and methodology

Objectives

Student Eats puts sustainable food at the heart of universities and colleges across the UK. We work with students to develop their own growing sites and food enterprises, embedding sustainable food production across campuses, curriculums and communities.

Together, we produce loads of low-carbon, fresh, healthy food on campuses across the country. With more and more students growing their own food, we make a hugely positive impact on campus life – across enterprise, community, wellbeing, education and sustainability.

This survey gathered data on student attitudes, awareness and behaviours linked to sustainable food issues.

Methodology

The online survey was promoted to NUS' database of NUS Extra cardholders in September 2016. The survey took approximately 5 minutes to complete and was incentivised with a cash prize draw. 3274 respondents completed the survey.

Within the report, a number of questions have been broken down for particular types of respondents. Where there are any statistically significant differences between answers, they are reported where applicable and to large enough base size ($n > 30$) and are valid at confidence level of 99%.

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The respondents...



70%

are in higher education

28%

are in further education



44%



55%



78%

are from the UK

11%

are from within the EU

10%

are from outside the EU



27%

live with their parents

23%

live in private rented accommodation

22%

live in self-catered halls of residence

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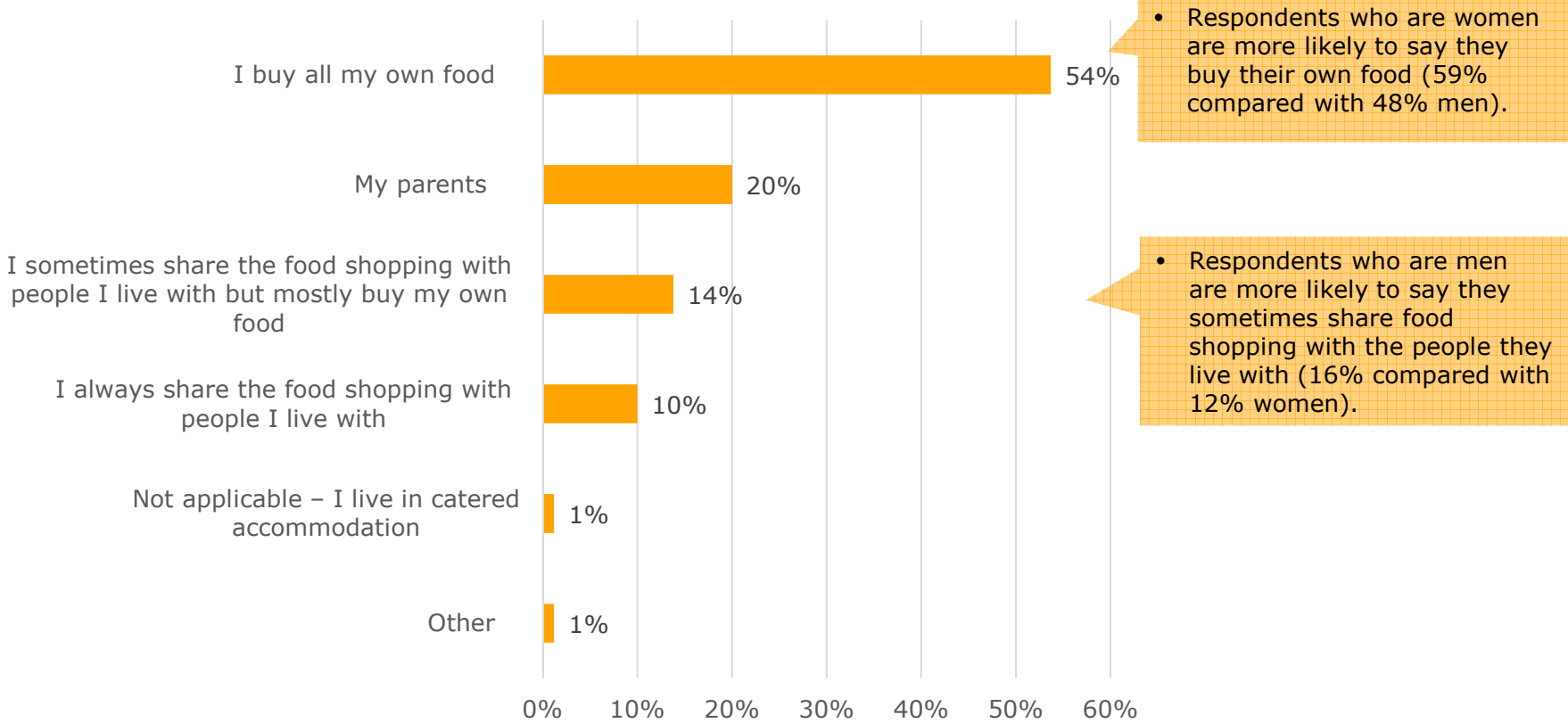
Full demographic data can be found in the Annex at the end of this report
Image credit: Globe icon - Yu Luck @ Noun project



Research Findings

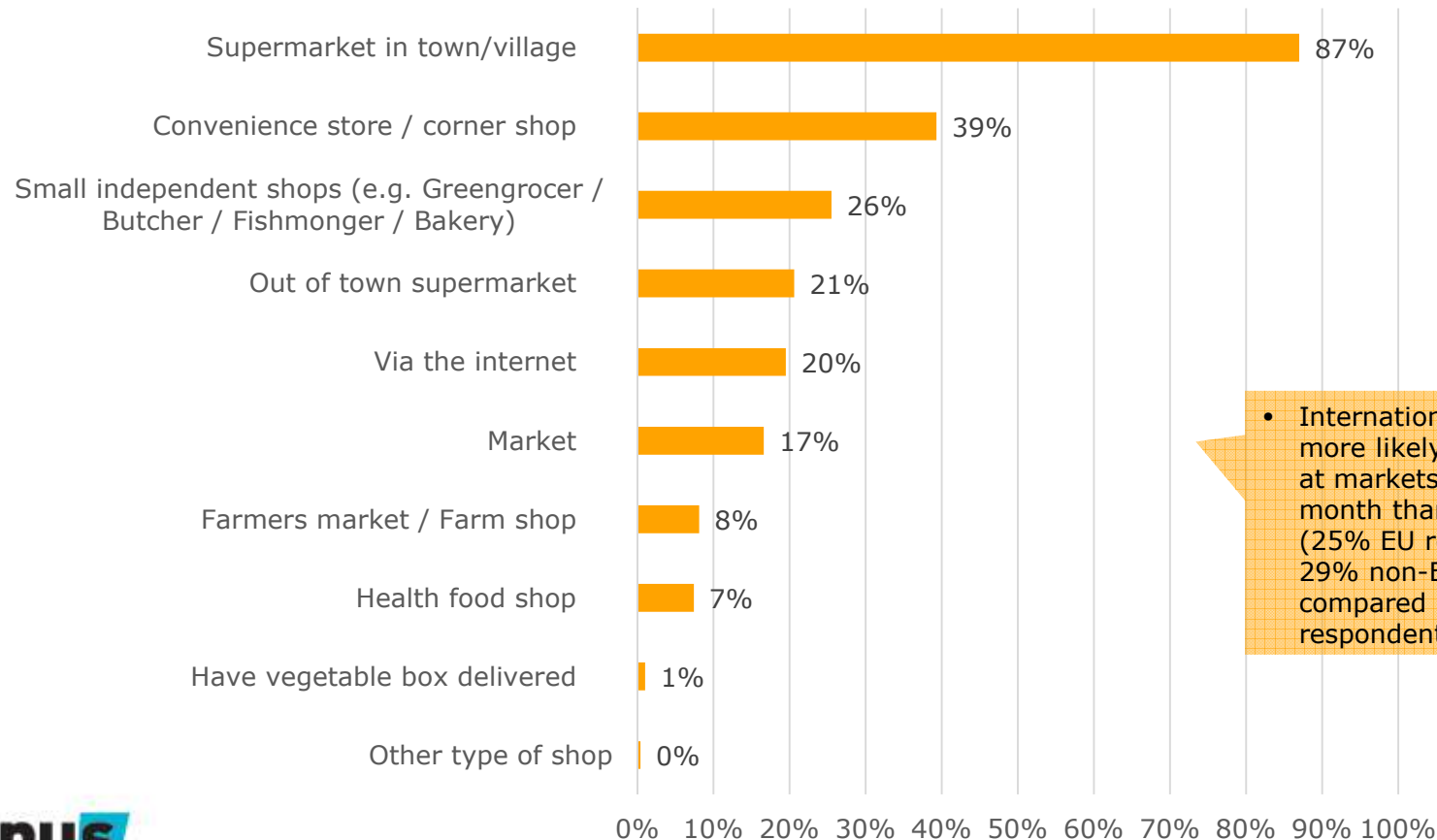
Food purchasing

Over half of respondents say they are responsible for doing the main food shopping where they live (54%). A fifth of respondents say their parents are responsible for food shopping.



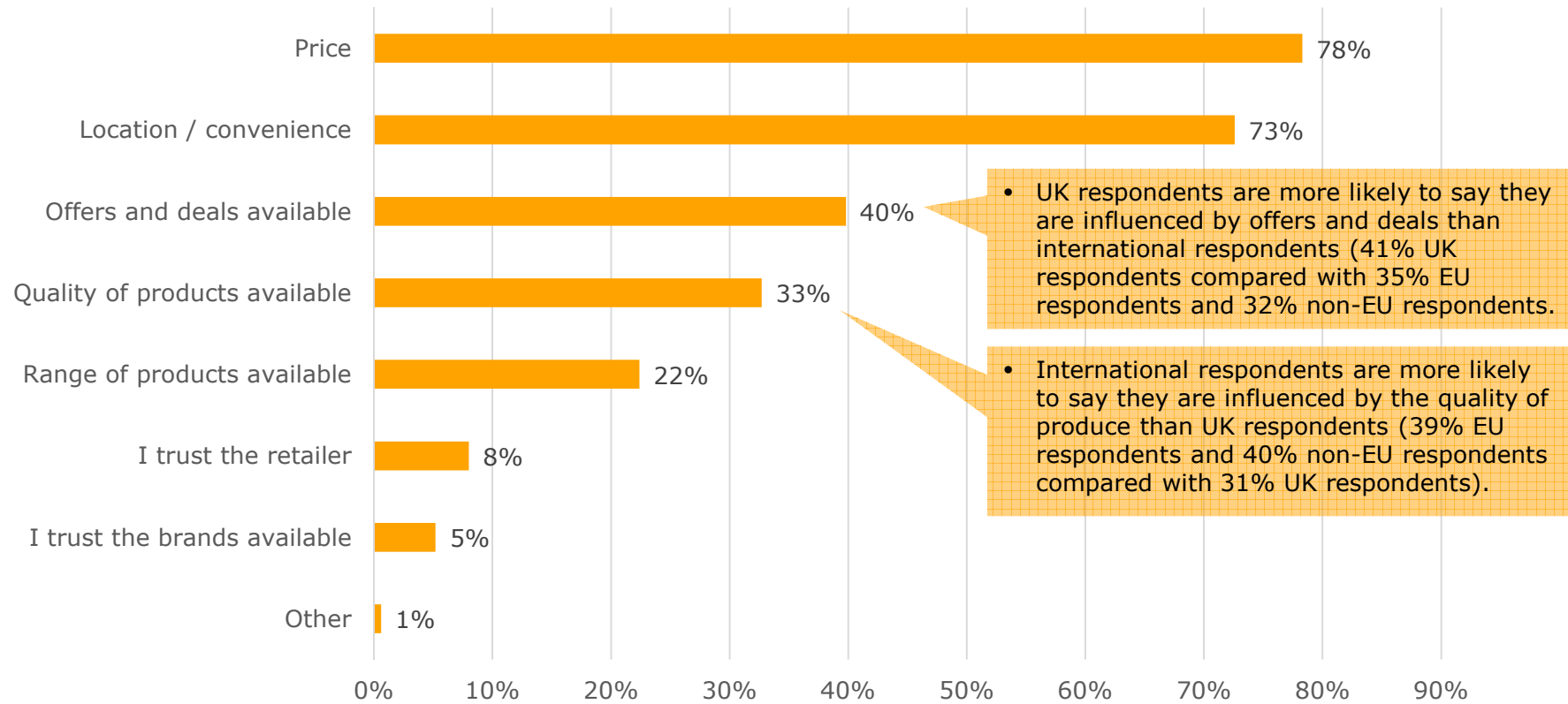
Q. Who is responsible for doing the main food shopping where you live?
(Base: 3274 Balance: No response)

The vast majority (87%) of respondents report that they use supermarkets in a town/village to do their food shopping at least once a month. Two fifths (39%) use convenience stores and a quarter (26%) use small independent shops for their food shopping at least once a month.

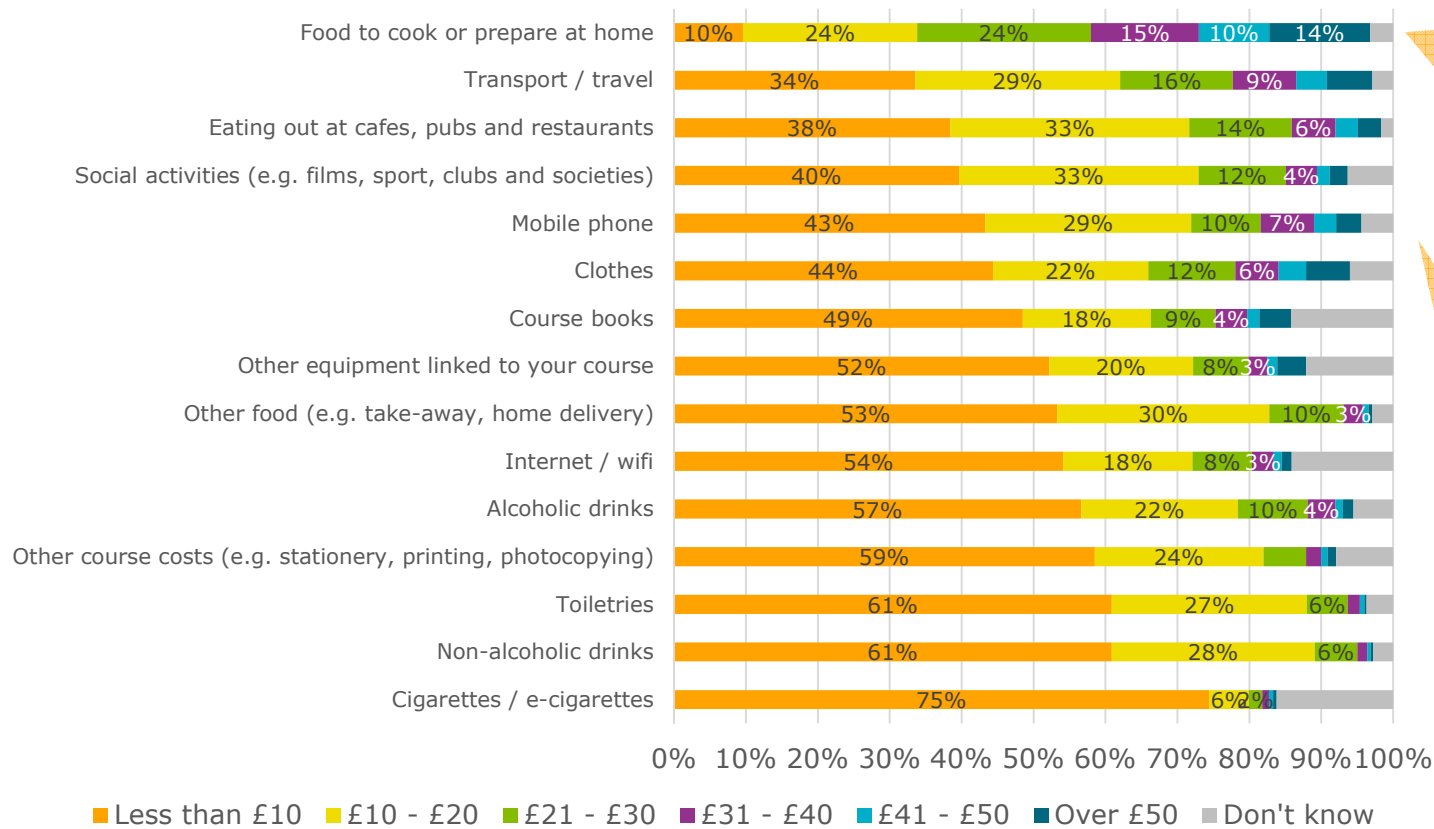


• International respondents are more likely to say they shop at markets at least once a month than UK respondents (25% EU respondents and 29% non-EU respondents compared with 14% UK respondents).

Price (78%) and location/convenience (73%) are the two main factors which influence where respondents decide to do their food shopping. The offers and deals available (again linked to price) influence where two fifths (40%) of respondents do their food shopping.



Food to cook or prepare at home represents the biggest weekly spend for respondents, relative to other items, with approximately two fifths (39%) spending £31 or more on average per week. Toiletries, non-alcoholic drinks and cigarettes represent the lowest weekly spend on average (61%, 61% and 75% spending less than £10 per week).



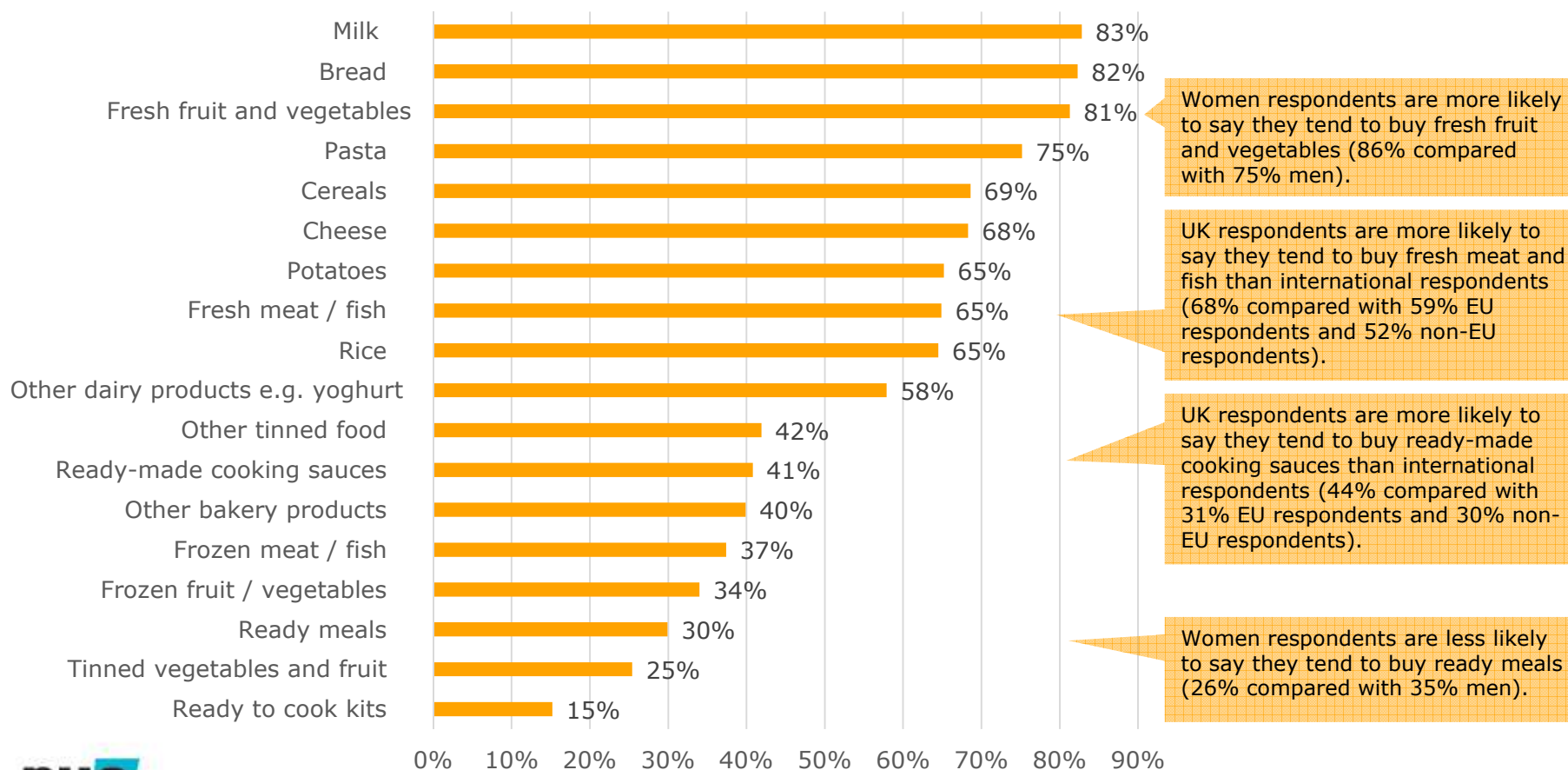
- Respondents who are women are more likely to say they spend over £50 on average per week on food to cook or prepare at home (16% compared with 11% men).

- International respondents are less likely to say they spend over £50 on average per week on food to cook or prepare at home compared with UK respondents (9% EU respondents and 6% non-EU respondents compared with 16% UK respondents).

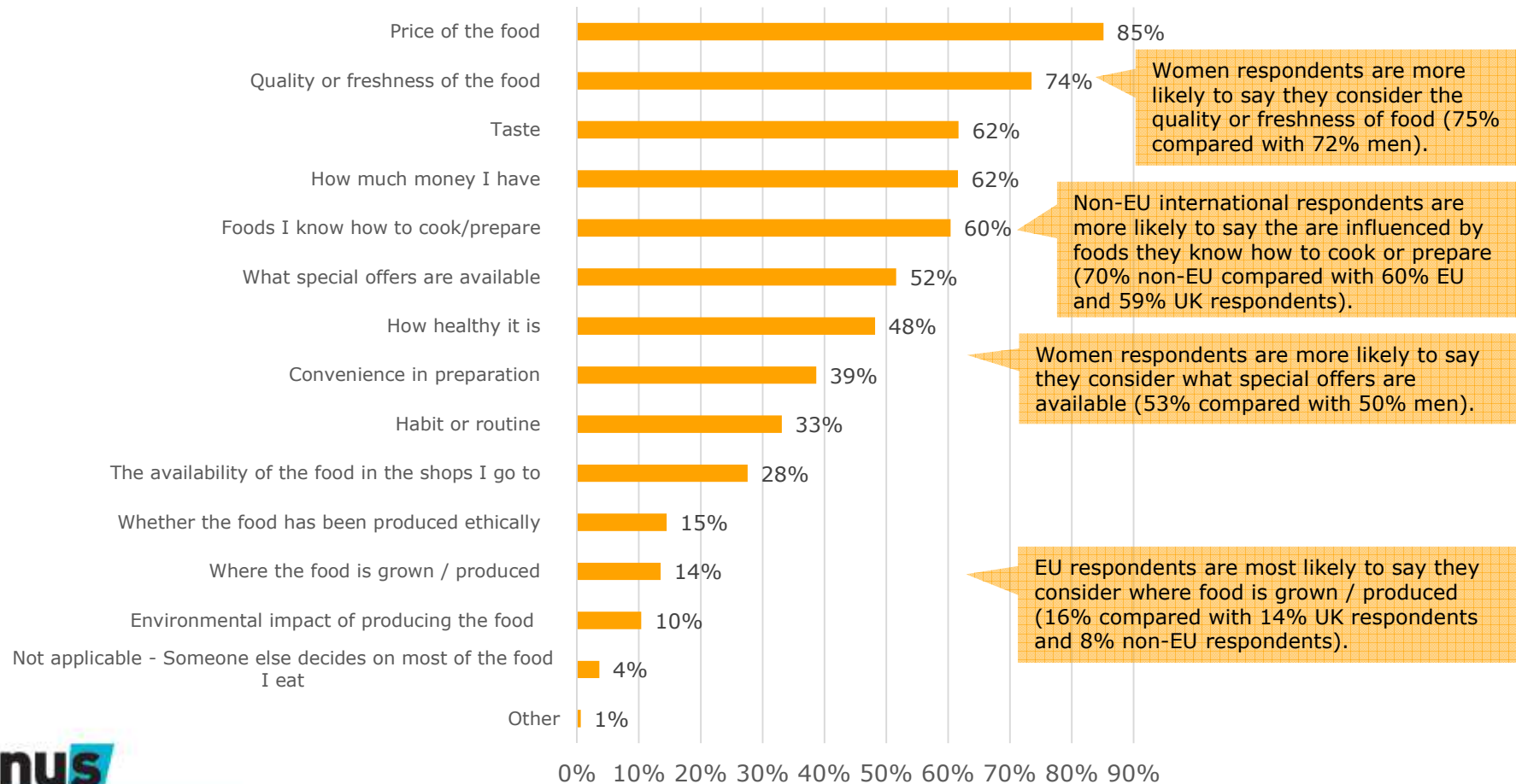


Q. Now thinking about what you spend your money on, how much is your weekly average spend on the following items:
 (Base: c. 3240 Balance: No response)

Milk (83%), bread (82%) and fresh fruit and vegetables (81%) are the most commonly reported food items that respondents tend to buy. Prepared food, such as ready meals, tinned vegetables and fruit and 'ready to cook' kits are less likely to be purchased by respondents (20%, 25% and 5% respectively).



As well as influencing where respondents do their shopping, price is also reported as the strongest influence on what food respondents buy (85% say they consider this when buying food). Quality/freshness (74%) and taste (62%) are also important considerations, however very few respondents report considering the environmental impact of their food (10%).



Q. What factors do you take into consideration when buying food?
 (Base: 3270 Balance: No response)



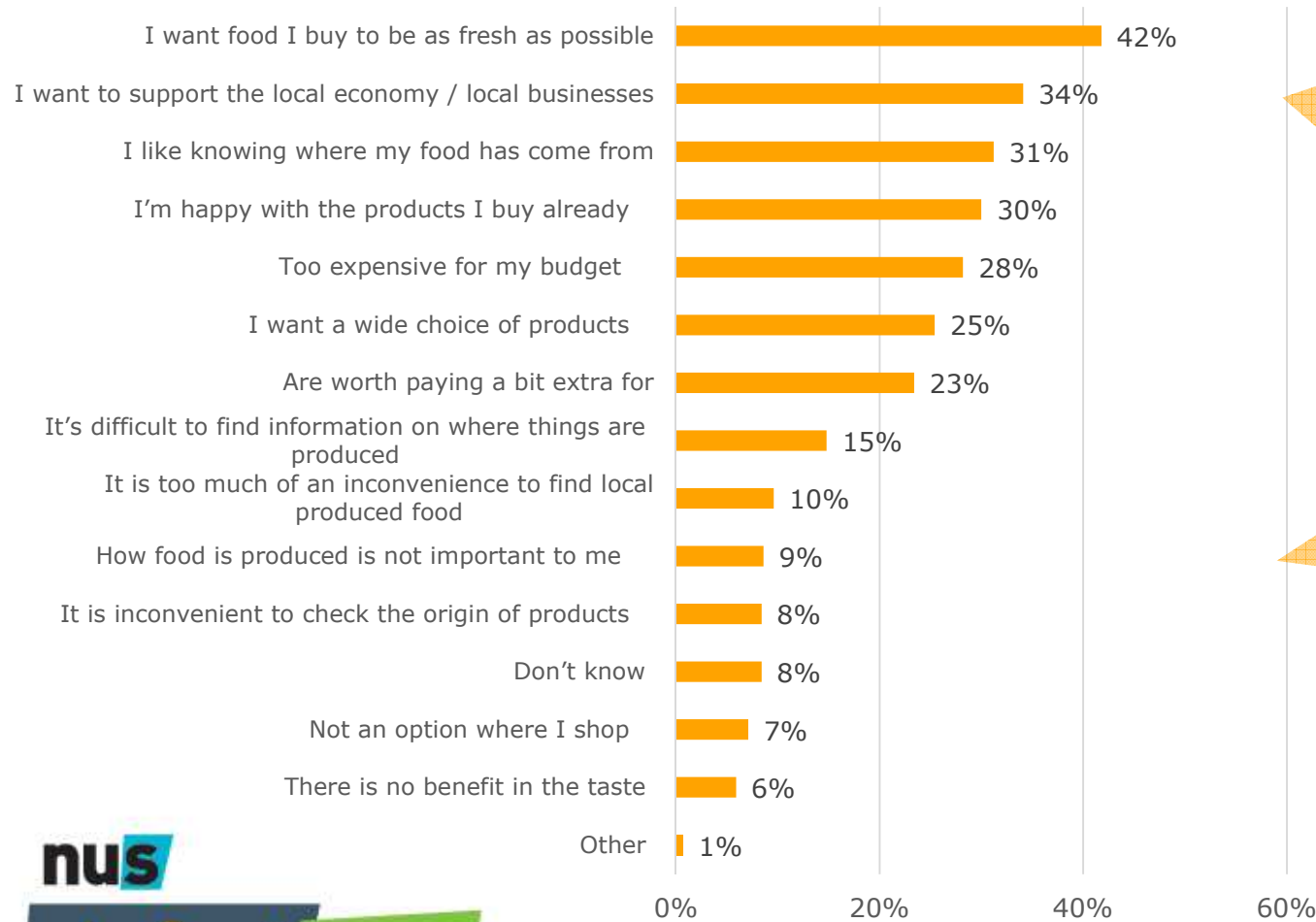
Research Findings
Sustainable food habits
and attitudes

Almost two fifths of respondents say they make a conscious effort to buy Fairtrade products (38%) and a third say they try to buy food that is in season in the UK (34%). A third of respondents report that they do not make a conscious effort to buy food with any of the environmental or ethical accreditations or characteristics (32%).



Q. Which, if any, of these do you make a conscious effort to buy?
(Base: 3223 Balance: No response)

Respondents perceive locally produced food / food products to be a way of purchasing food that is as fresh as possible (42%) and also a way of supporting the local economy (34%), however only around a quarter say that these products are worth paying a bit extra for (23%).



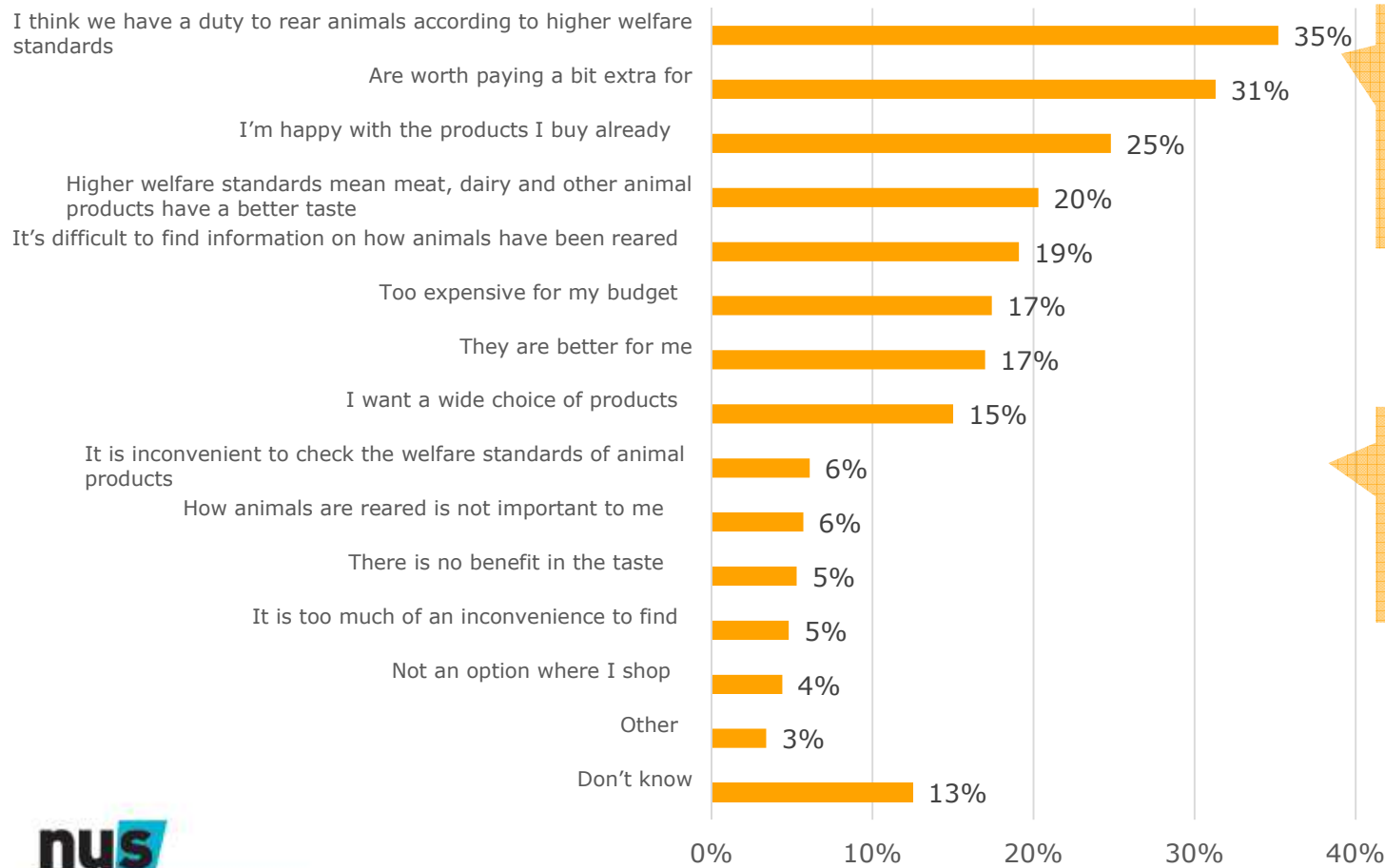
UK respondents are most likely to say they want to support the local economy / businesses through locally produced food (36% compared with 28% EU respondents and non-EU respondents).

Non-EU international respondents are more likely to say how food is produced is not important compared with UK respondents (12% compared with 8%).



Q. Which, if any, of these statements matches how you think about buying locally produced food / food products?
 (Base: 3266 Balance: No response)

When thinking about higher welfare meat and animal products, only 6% of respondents say that how animals are reared is not important to them and around a third (31%) report that higher welfare products are worth paying extra for.



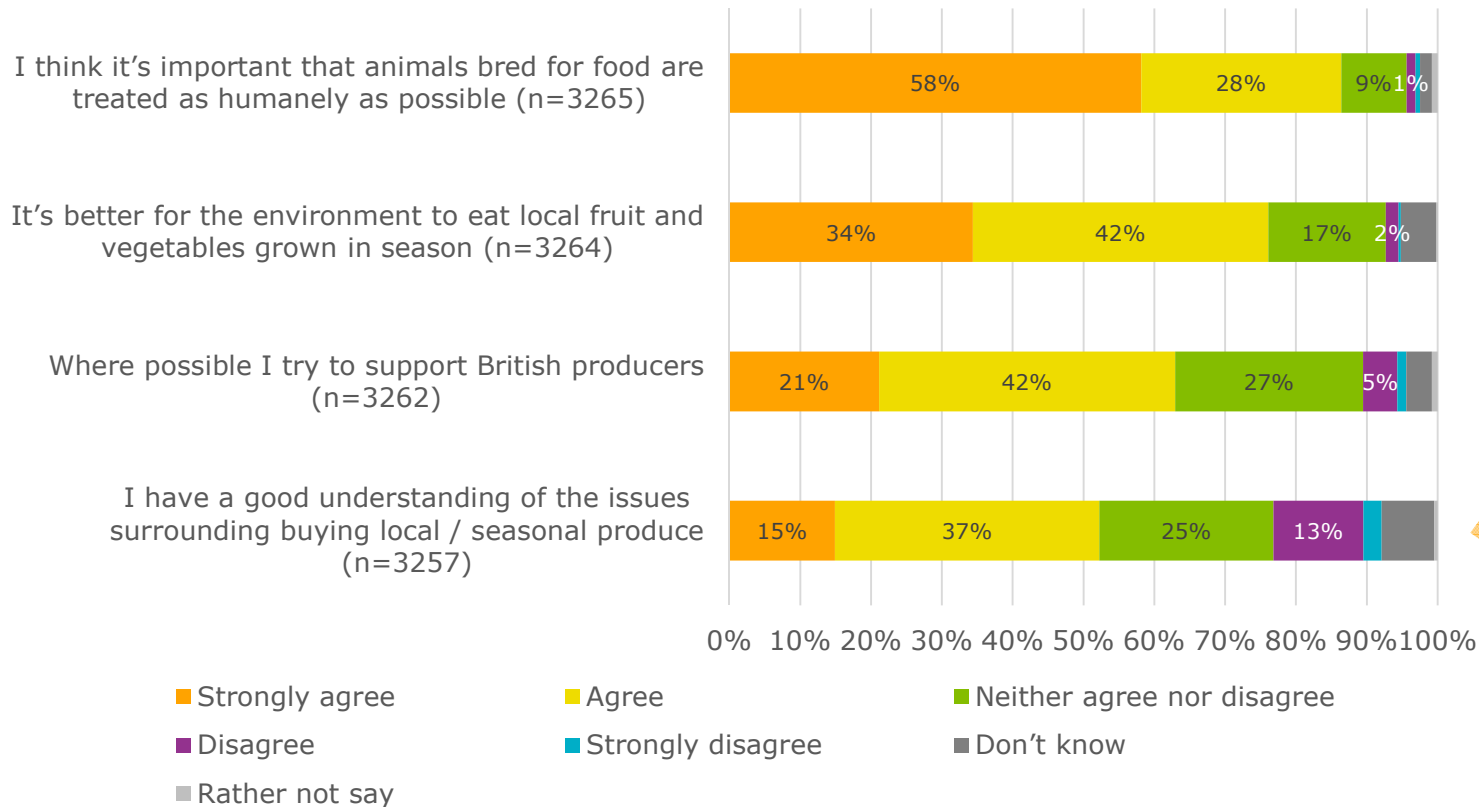
UK respondents are most likely to say they think we have a duty to rear animals according to higher welfare standards (38% compared with 28% EU respondents and 20% non-EU respondents).

Non-EU respondents are most likely to say its inconvenient to check the welfare standards of animal products (12% compared with 5% EU and UK respondents).



Q. Which, if any, of these statements matches how you think about buying meat, dairy and other animal products (e.g. eggs) that have higher welfare standards?
 Please select all that apply
 (Base: 3250 Balance: No response)

The majority of respondents agree to some extent (86%) that it is important to treat animals bred for food humanely. There is also strong agreement that it is better for the environment to eat locally grown fruit and vegetables that are in season (76%), however just half (52%) of respondents say they have a good understanding of the issues surrounding buying local / seasonal produce.



UK respondents are most likely to agree that they have a good understanding of the issues surrounding local and seasonal produce (54% compared with 46% EU respondents and 44% non-EU respondents).

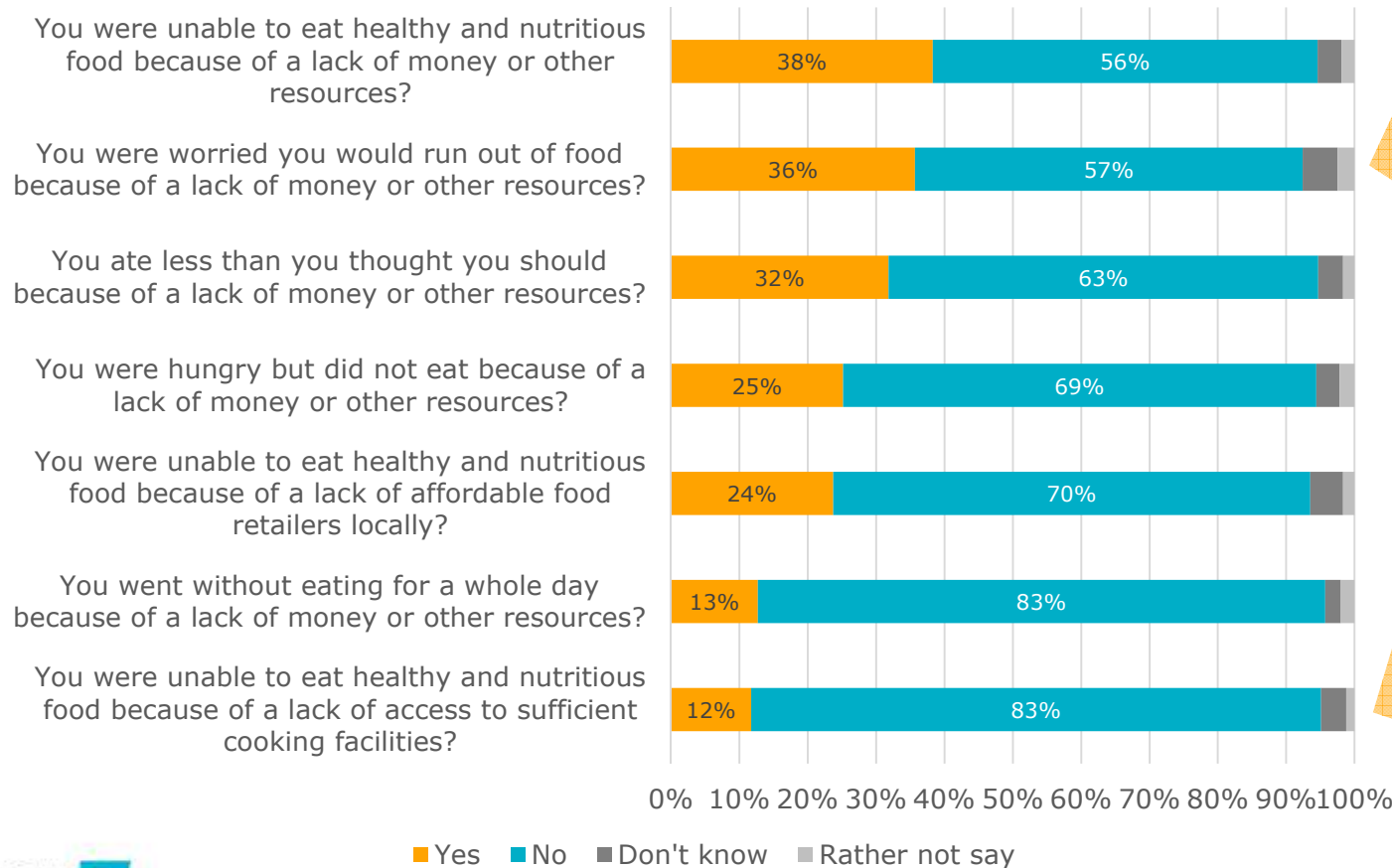


Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 Please select one for each option
 (Base: in brackets Balance: No response)



Research Findings
Students and Food
Poverty

38% of respondents report being unable to eat healthy and nutritious food in the last 12 months due to a lack of money or other resources, and a similar proportion (36%) have been worried they would run out of food for the same reason. A quarter report having been hungry but did not eat because of a lack of money or other resources and 13% say they have gone a whole day without eating for this reason.



UK respondents are most likely to say they have been worried they would run out of food because of a lack of money or other resources in the last 12 months (37% compared with 31% EU and non-EU respondents).

International respondents are more likely to say they have been unable to eat healthy and nutritious food because of a lack of access to sufficient cooking facilities in the last 12 months (25% non-EU and 17% EU respondents compared 9% UK respondents).

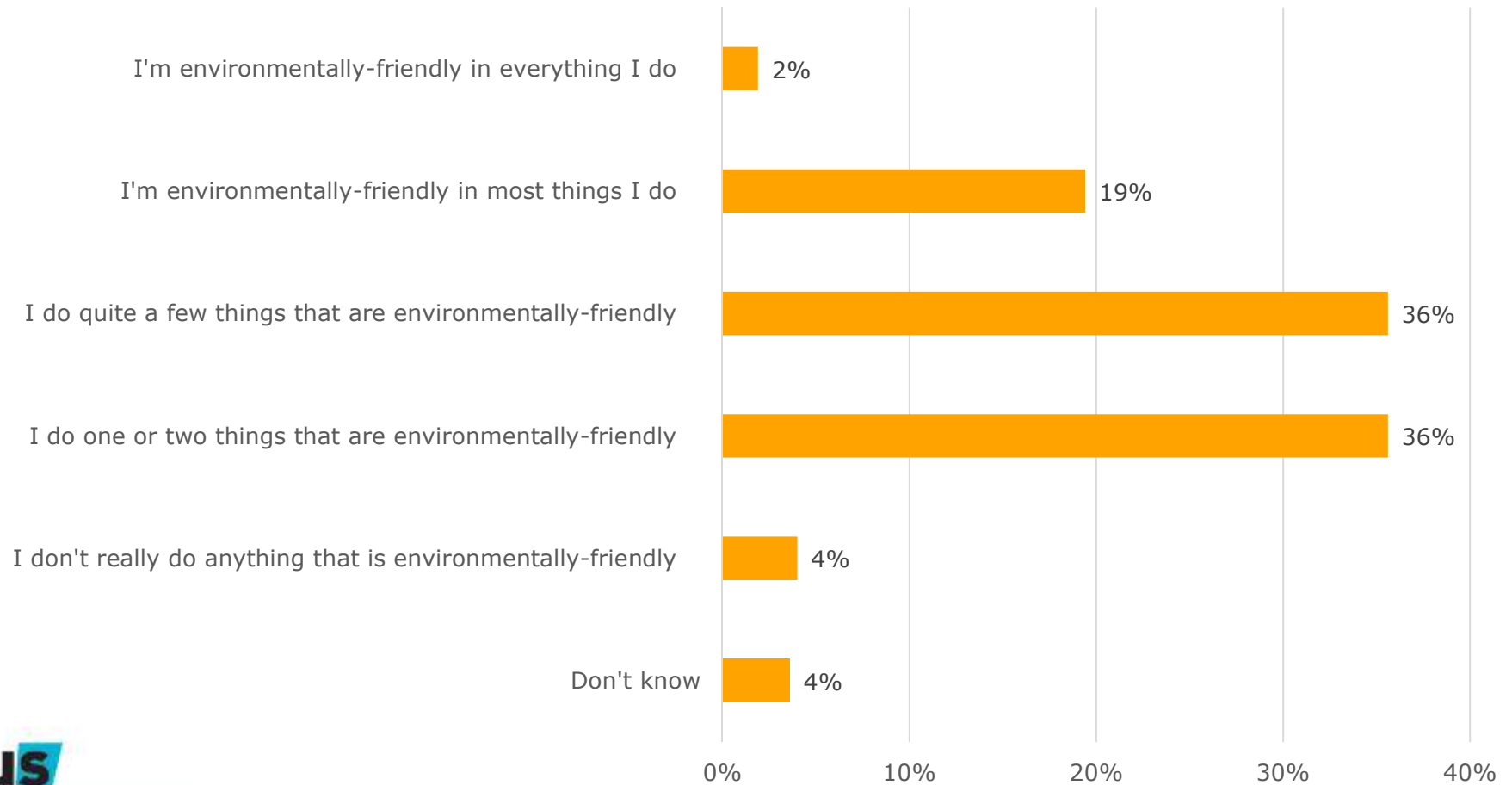


Q. Now we'd like to ask some questions about your food consumption in the last 12 months.
During the last 12 months, was there a time when:
Please pick one for each statement
(Base: c. 3260 Balance: No response)



Research Findings
Pro-environmental
attitudes and
behaviours

The majority of respondents report doing at least one or two things that are environmentally-friendly (93%). 4% say they don't really do anything to help the environment.

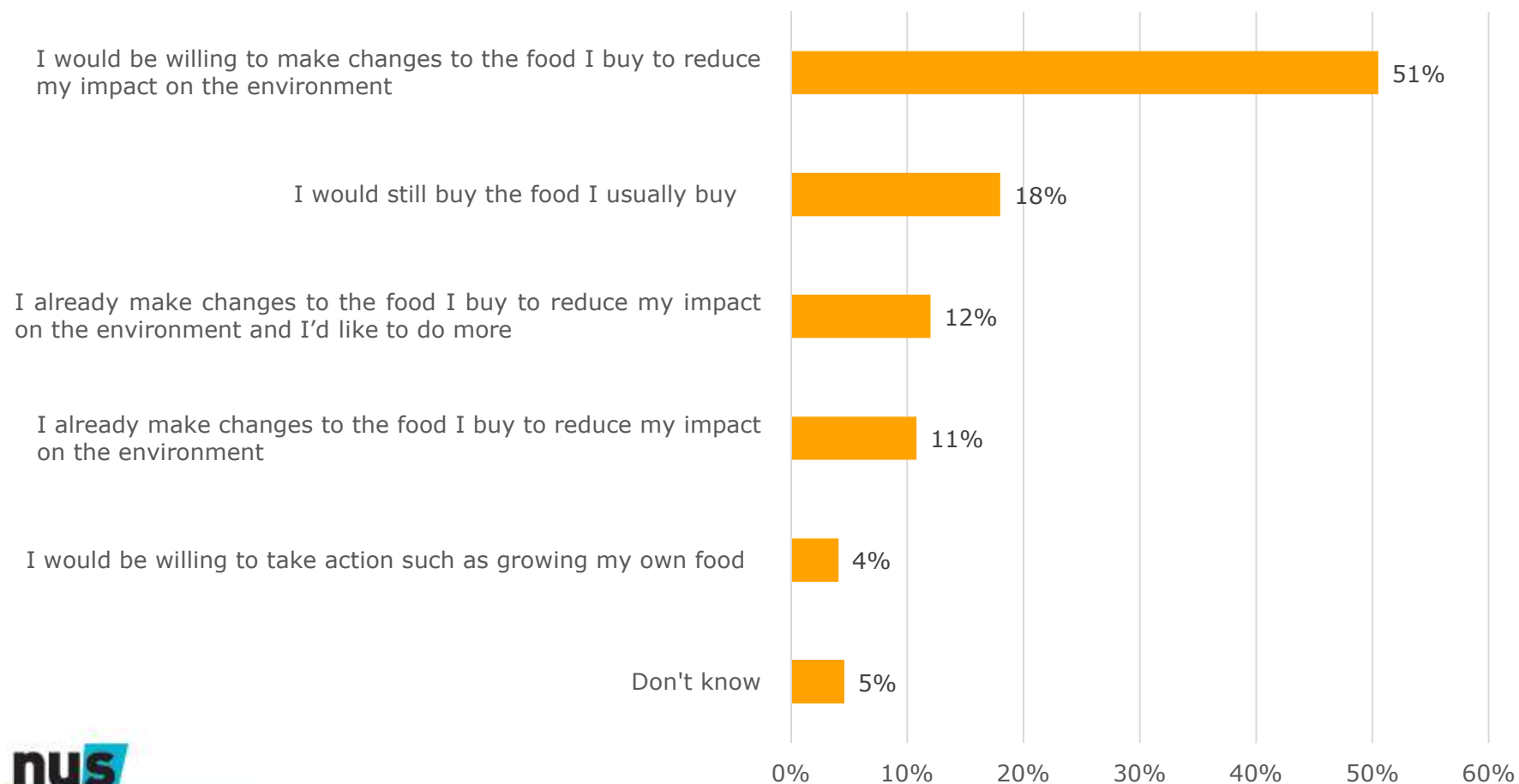


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Q. Which of the following statements best describes you?
Please pick one
(Base: 3265 Balance: No response)

Half of respondents (51%) say they would be willing to make changes to the food they buy to reduce their impact on the environment if they knew more about the subject.

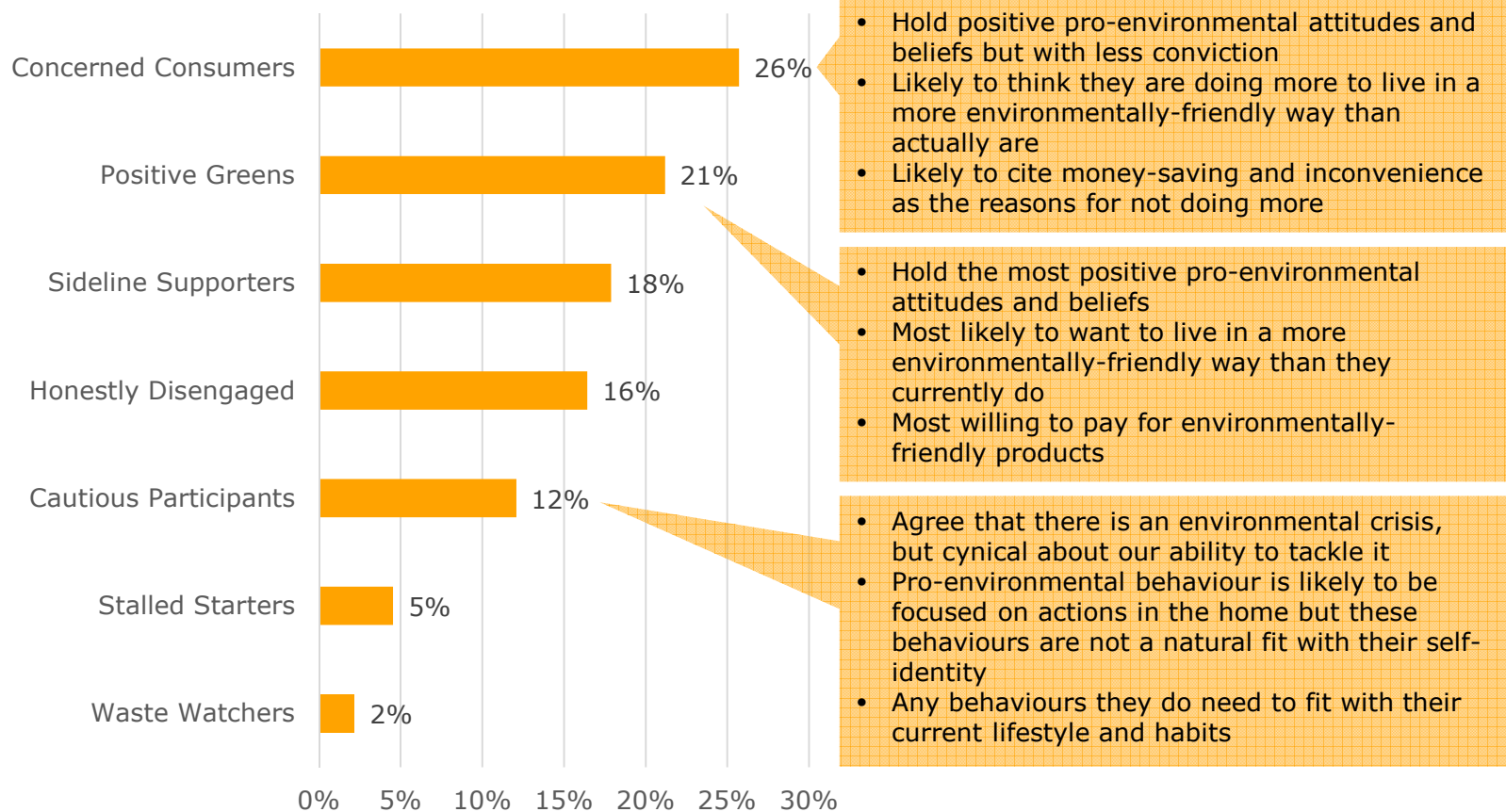


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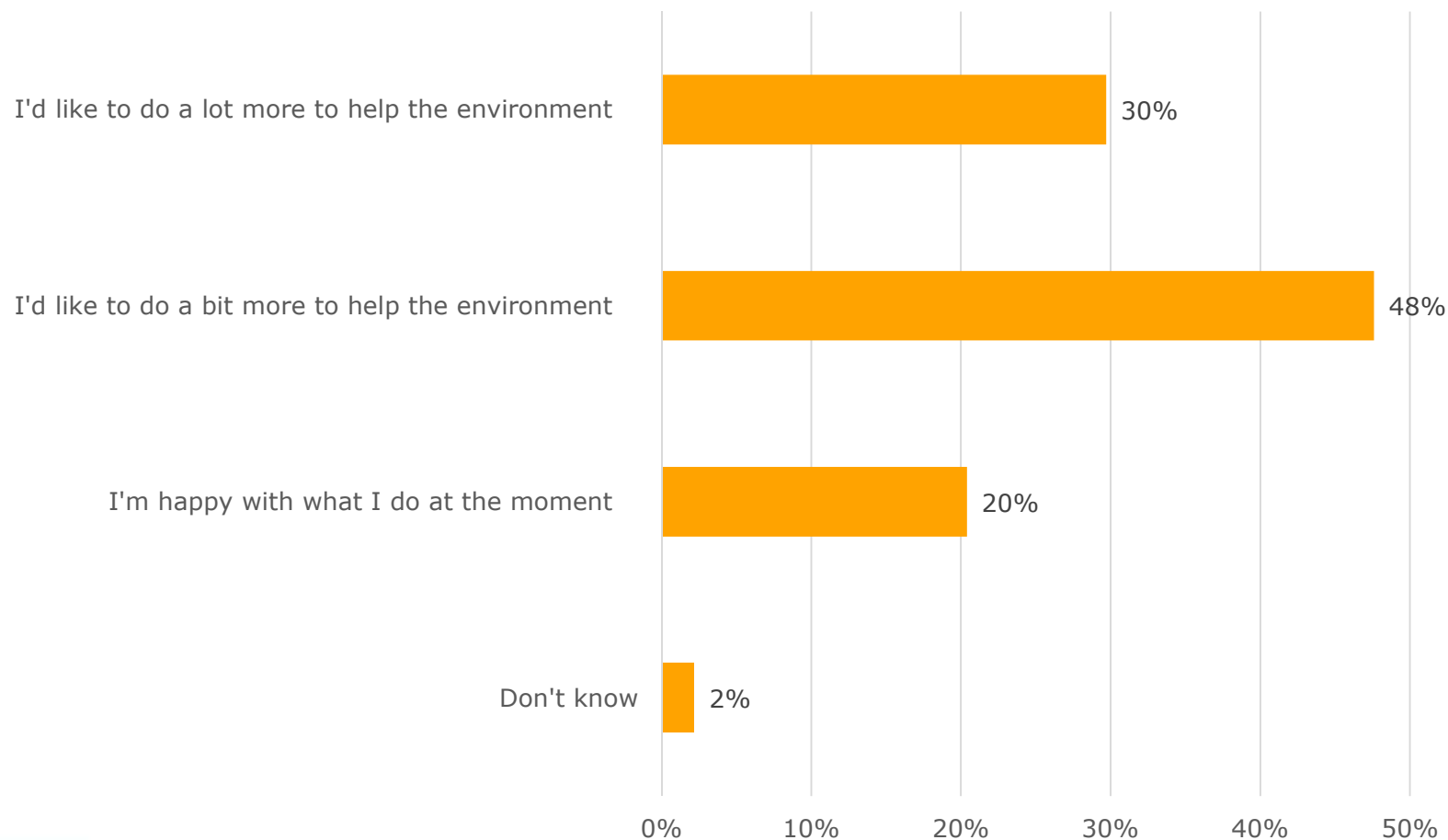
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Q. Please read the statement below and tell us which of the options best applies to you. If I had a better understanding of the environmental impacts of how food is produced... Please select one only (Base: 3254 Balance: No response)

Using a segmentation model of environmental attitudes and behaviours, a quarter (26%) of respondents are categorised as Concerned Consumers. This group hold broad pro-environmental concerns but not as strongly as Positive Greens, who make up 21% of survey respondents.



Over three quarters (78%) of respondents say they would like to do either a bit more, or a lot more to help the environment.



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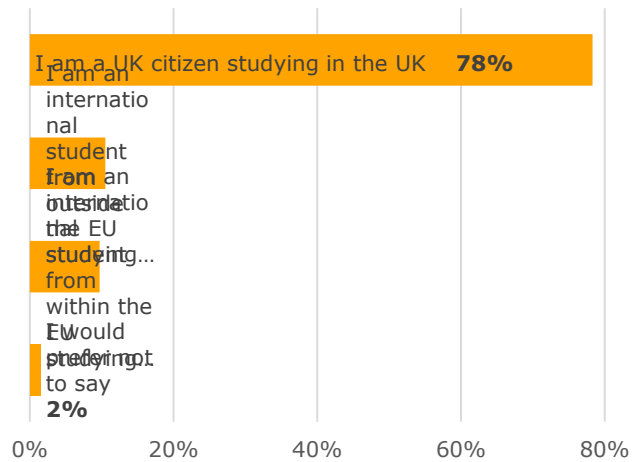
Q. Which of these best describes how you feel about your current lifestyle and the environment?
Please select one only
(Base: 3258 Balance: No response)



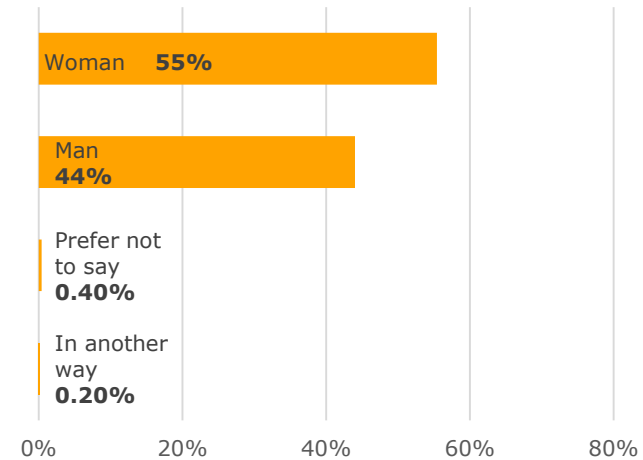
Annex
Full Demographics

Respondent demographics

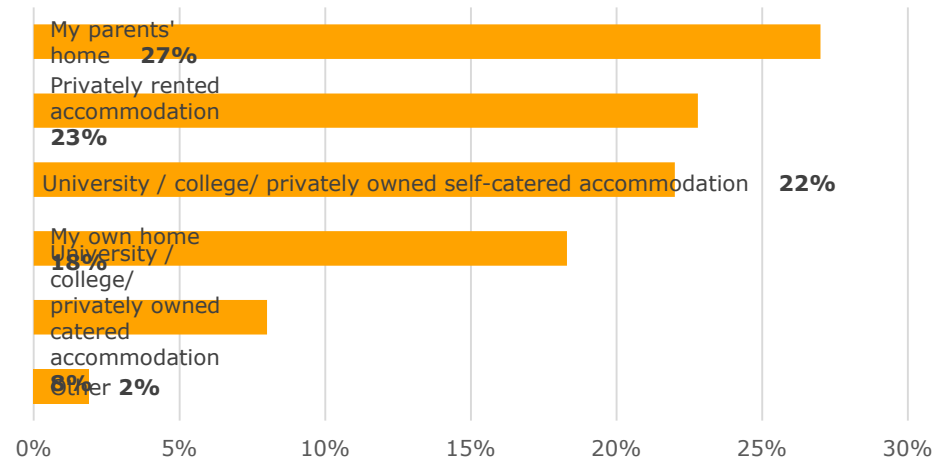
Nationality



Gender

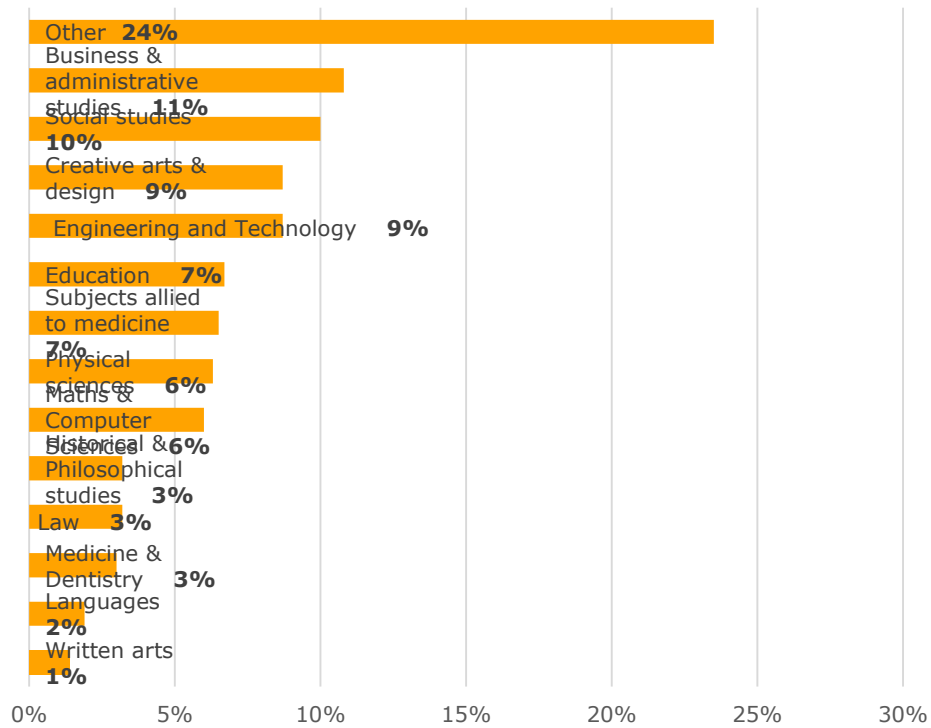


Accommodation type

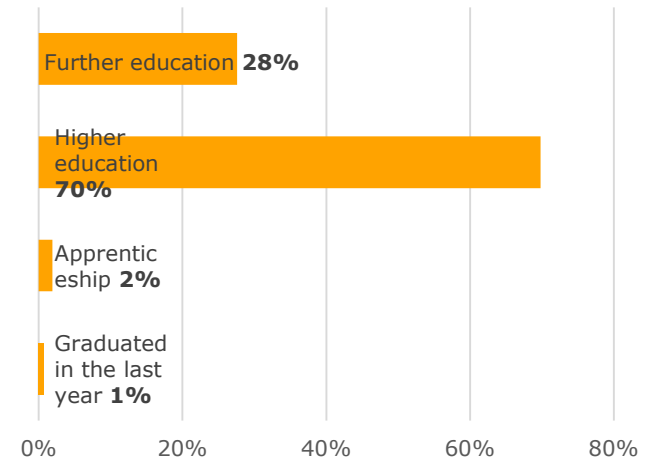


Respondent demographics

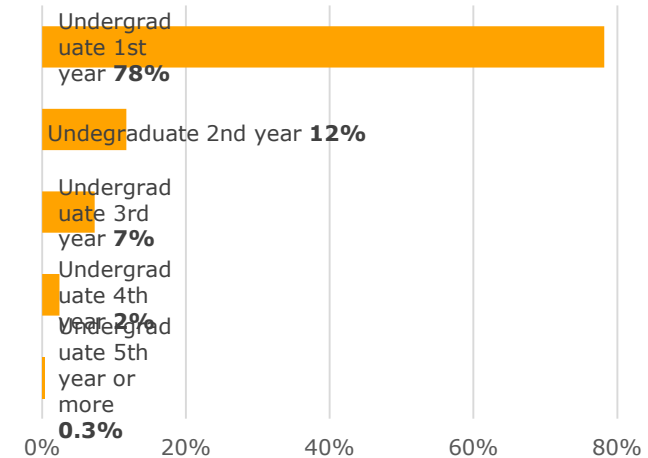
Subject (all)



Level of study



Year of study (HE)



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