
Britons and Refugees

What do the public really think?

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More in Common



**More in
Common**

What do the public really think about refugees?

More in Common Webinar Agenda

1. More in Common's lens on British society
 2. Public's starting points on refugees
 3. Starting points on Rwanda policy
 4. Potential of people-led and community-led welcome
 5. Building public support for a fair and humane refugee system
-

More in Common's lens on British society today

Progressive Activists



Civic Pragmatists



Disengaged Battlers



Established Liberals



Loyal Nationals



Disengaged Traditionalists



Backbone Conservatives



...a group for whom politics is an important part of their identity and who seek to correct longstanding injustices

...a group that cares about others, at home or abroad. They wish for less conflict and more compromise

... a group that are just getting by. They blame the system for its unfairness, but not other people

...a group that has done well and means well towards others, but also sees a lot of good in the status quo

...a patriotic group, who worry that our way of life is threatened and also feel our society has become more unfair

...a group that values a well-ordered society and prides in hard work. They want strong leadership that keeps people in line

... a group who are proud of their country, optimistic about Britain's future outside of Europe, and who keenly follow the news

Segments at the General Election

How the segments changed their votes between the 2017 and 2019 General Elections, Labour and Conservative



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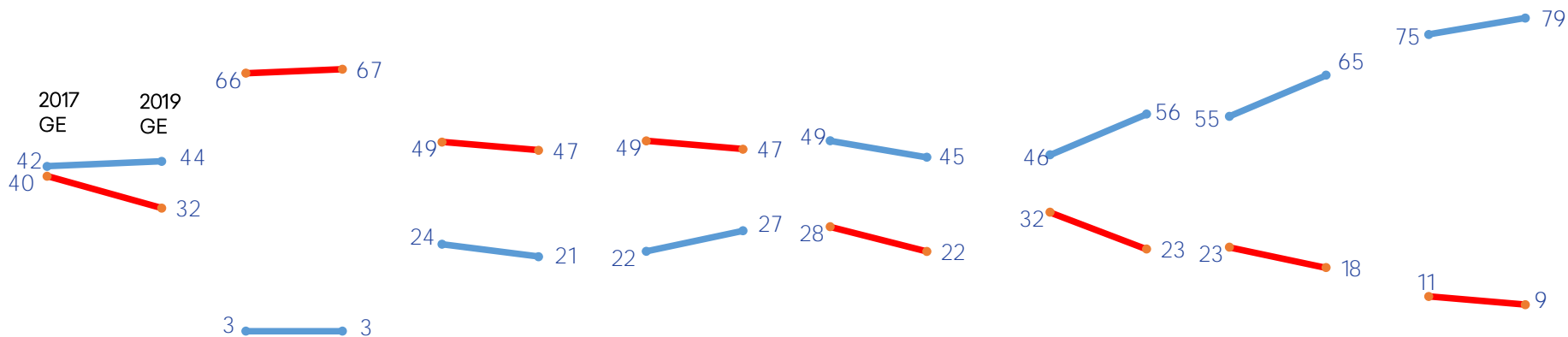


Disengaged Traditionalists



Backbone Conservatives

National average



Only those who said they voted shown [February 2020]

Labour Conservatives

Changing voting intention – 2019 GE to April 2023



How the segments changed their voting intention since the last General Election. Established Liberals and Loyal Nationals are good proxies of 'Blue Wall' and 'Red Wall' voters respectively



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Loyal Nationals

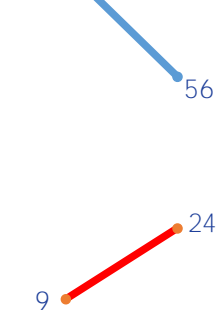
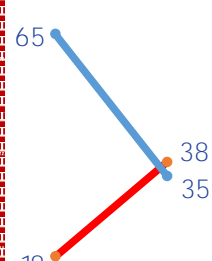
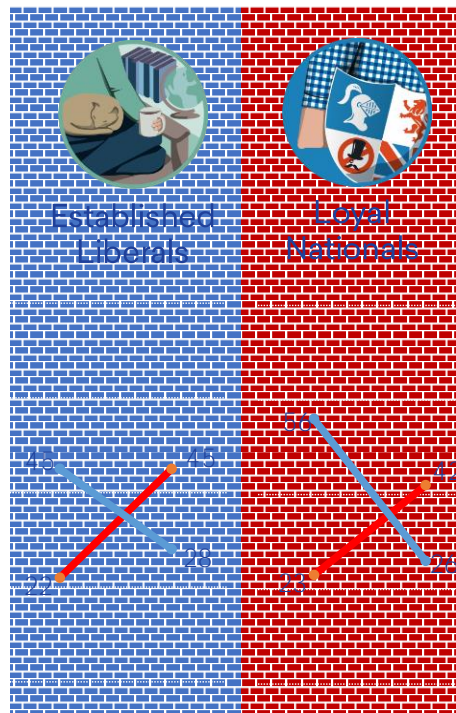
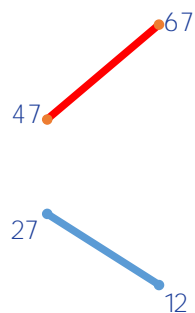
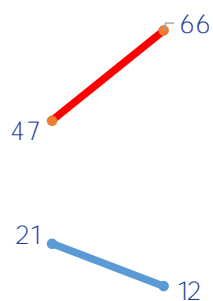
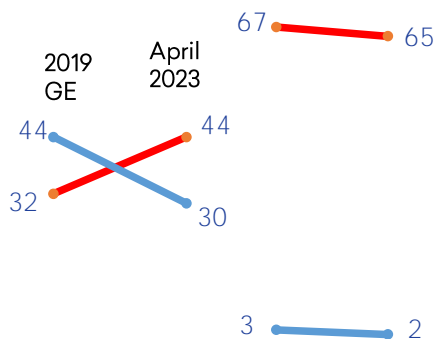


Disengaged Traditionalists



Backbone Conservatives

National average



Only those who said they voted shown [February 2020]

"And, if a general election was called tomorrow, which party would you vote for?" ["Don't knows" and "Would not vote" excluded] [only those who said 7-10 likelihood to vote included] [April 2023]

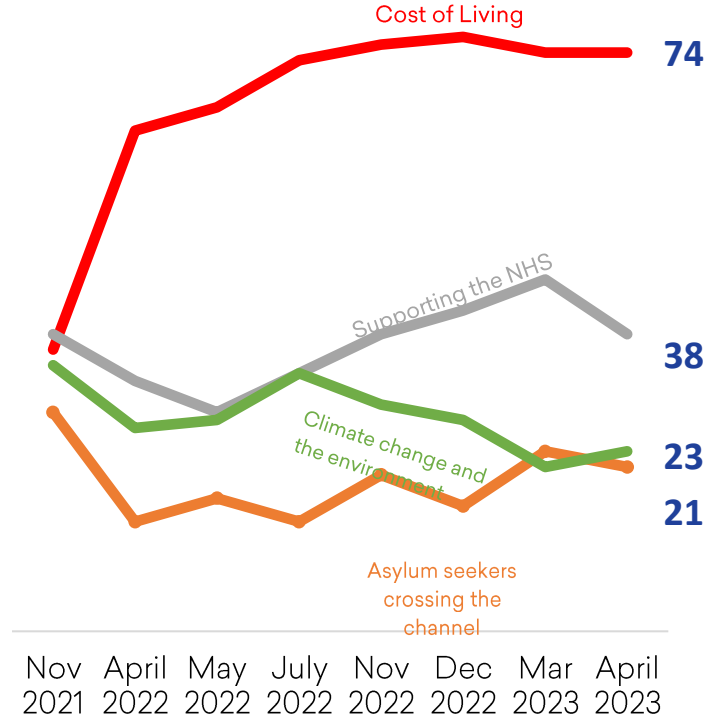
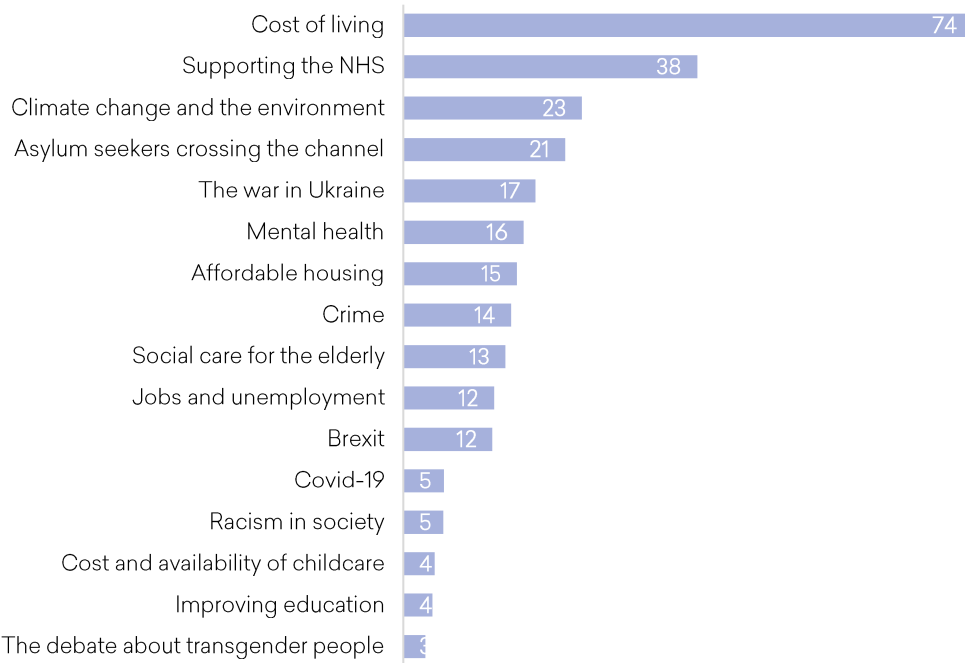
Labour Conservatives

Britons' top issues



Cost of living is the overwhelming top issue. The NHS has been a growing concern for the past year. Asylum seekers as a top issue often fluctuates

In your opinion, which are the most IMPORTANT issues facing the country today? Select the top 3



Top issues by segment – April 2023



It is striking that every segment has the same first and second top issue – the cost of living and NHS. Channel crossings remains an important top issue for three right-leaning segments.



Progressive Activists



Civic Pragmatist



Disengaged Battlers



Established Liberals



Loyal Nationals



Disengaged Traditionalists



Backbone Conservatives

Progressive Activists	Civic Pragmatist	Disengaged Battlers	Established Liberals	Loyal Nationals	Disengaged Traditionalists	Backbone Conservatives
Cost of living	Cost of living	Cost of living	Cost of living	Cost of living	Cost of living	Cost of living
73%	78%	84%	68%	75%	74%	74%
Supporting the NHS	Supporting the NHS	Supporting the NHS	Supporting the NHS	Supporting the NHS	Supporting the NHS	Supporting the NHS
49%	50%	44%	31%	39%	33%	34%
Climate change and the environment	Climate change and the environment	Mental health	Climate change and the environment	Asylum seekers crossing the channel	Asylum seekers crossing the channel	Asylum seekers crossing the channel
42%	31%	18%	30%	29%	26%	32%

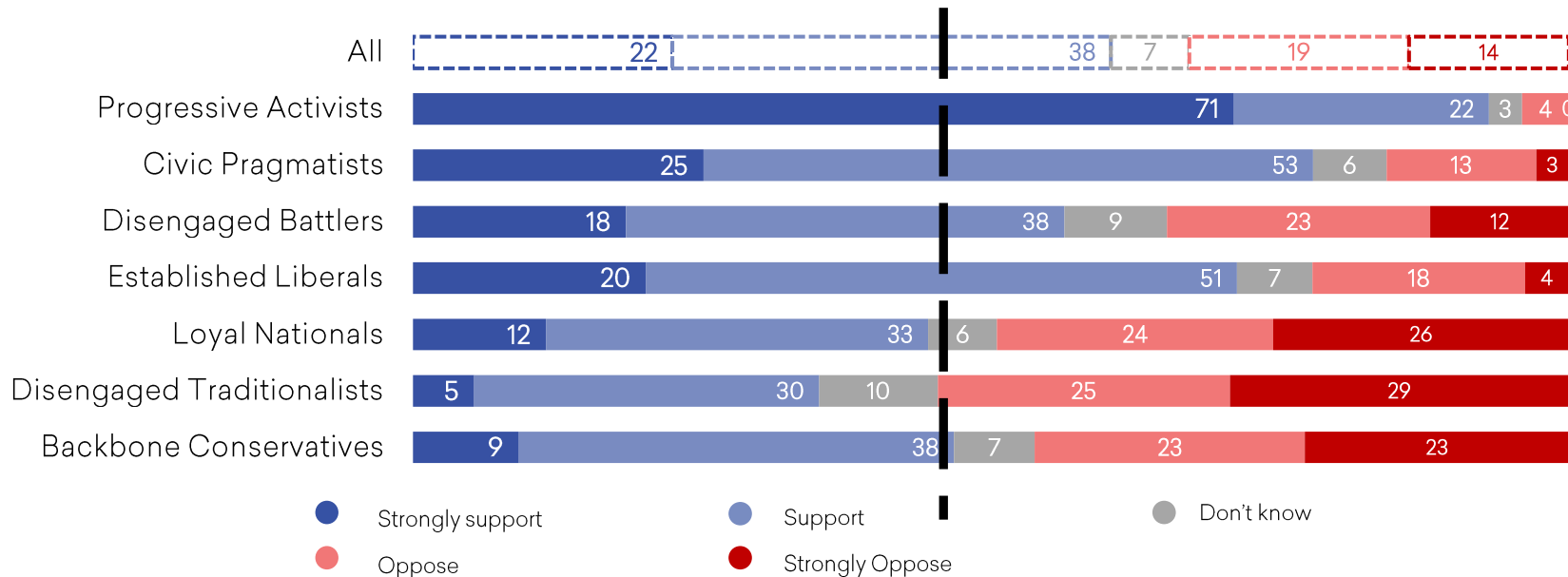
Public's general starting points on refugees

Britons believe we should do our bit to welcome refugees



A clear majority of Britons think the UK should take in refugees, but in the three socially conservative segments, they are evenly split

In general, do you support or oppose the UK taking in refugees?

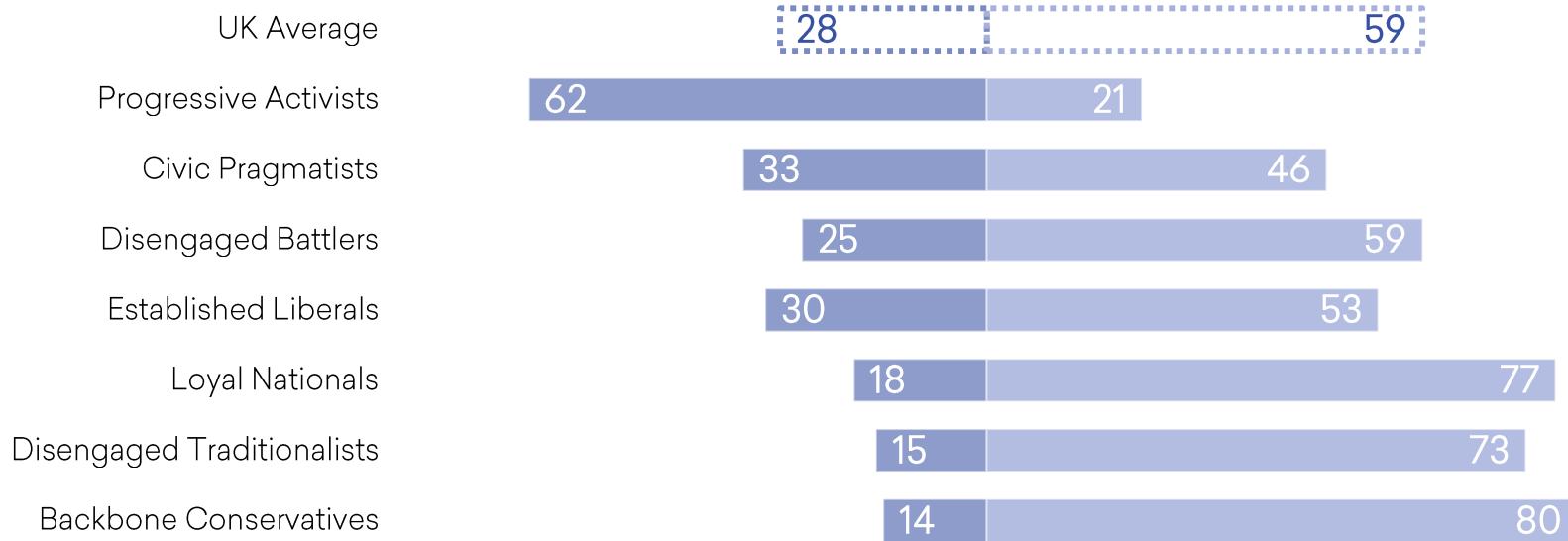


...but the public want an approach to asylum and refugee policy that is controlled and orderly



More than twice as many Britons think there be a limit on how many people can apply for asylum to the UK than those who think there should be no limit.

There should not be a limit on how many people can apply for asylum in the UK The UK should limit the number of people who can apply for asylum to the UK, to keep numbers low



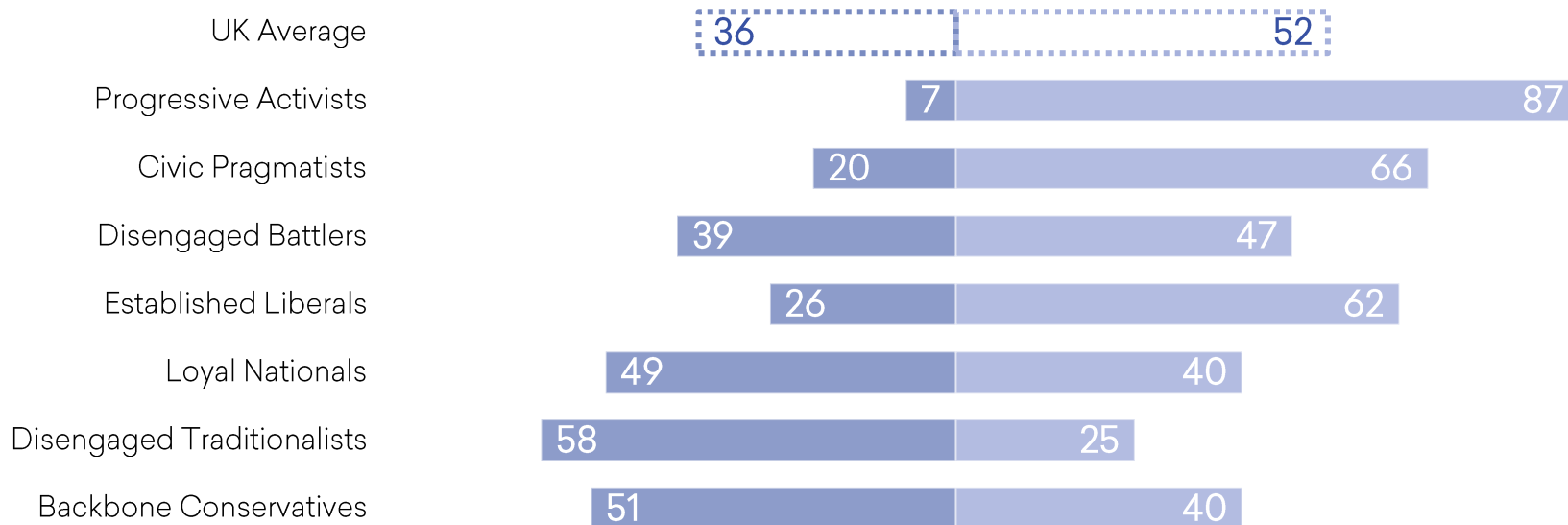
Public support giving a fair hearing for genuine refugees



A majority of Britons think that those who cross the channel to get into the UK should be allowed to claim asylum if they are found to be genuine refugees

Nobody who crosses the channel to get into the UK should be allowed to claim asylum, even if they are genuine refugees

People who cross the channel to get into the UK should be allowed to claim asylum if they are found to be genuine refugees



From this...



to this...



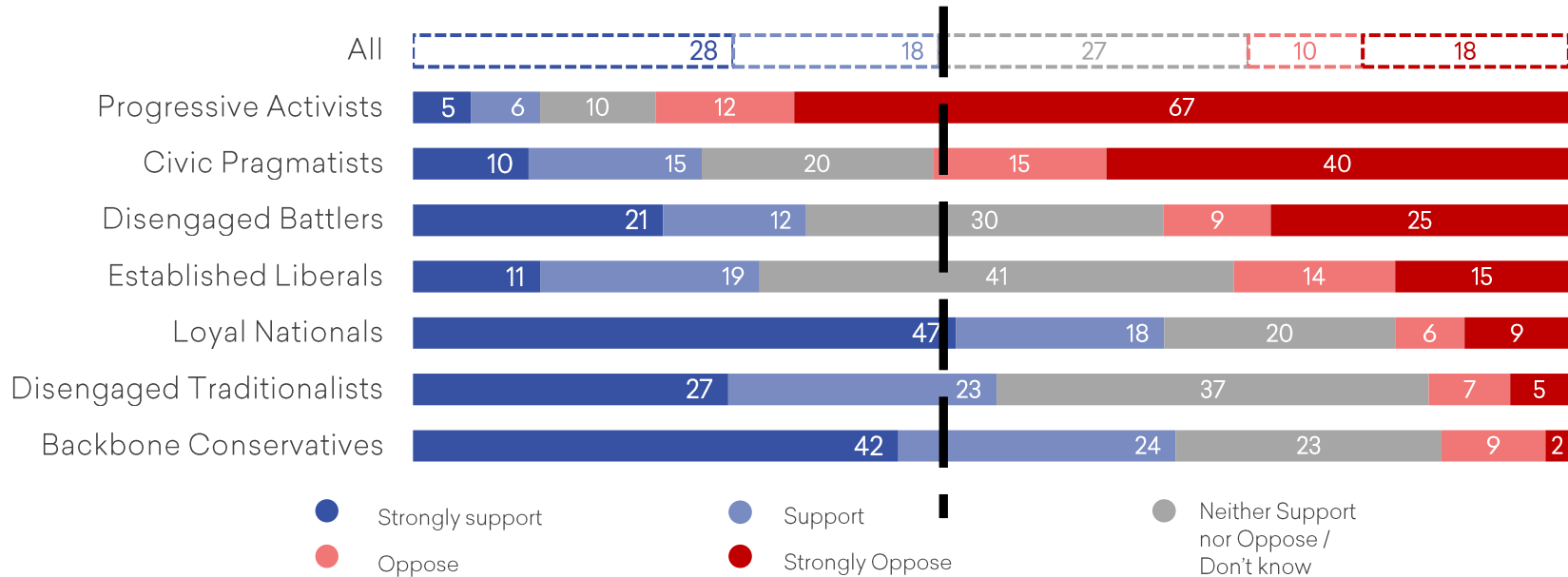
Public's starting points on the Rwanda policy

More support than oppose the Rwanda policy



Our polling from this month finds more support than oppose the government's Rwanda policy (46 to 27 per cent), but no support in any poll has reached a majority. Progressive Activists are outliers in their strong opposition.

The Government has introduced a policy, where some people who have crossed the channel to claim asylum will be sent to Rwanda where their asylum claim will be heard. Do you support or oppose this proposal?

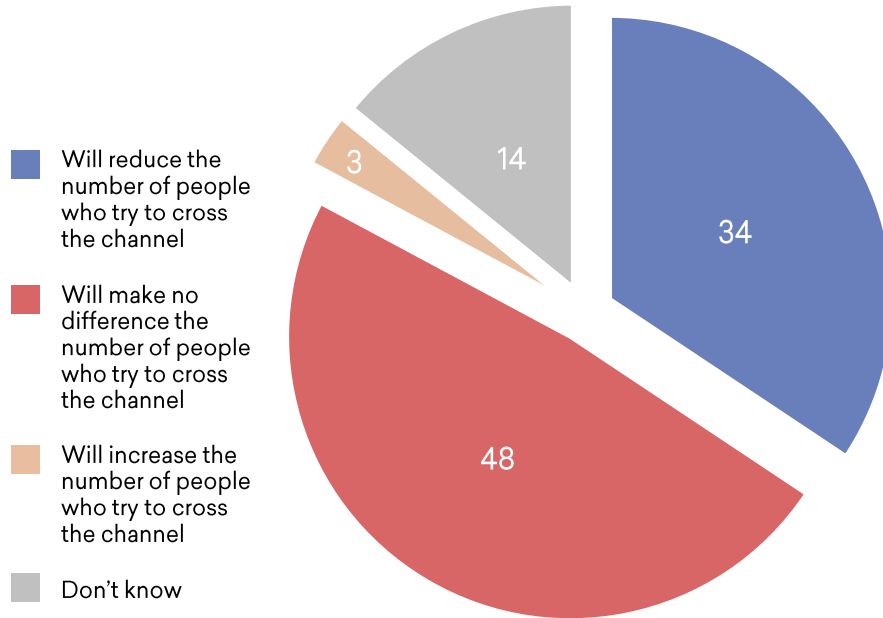


The Government has introduced a policy, where some people who have crossed the channel to claim asylum will be sent to Rwanda where their asylum claim will be heard. Do you support or oppose this proposal? [April 2023]

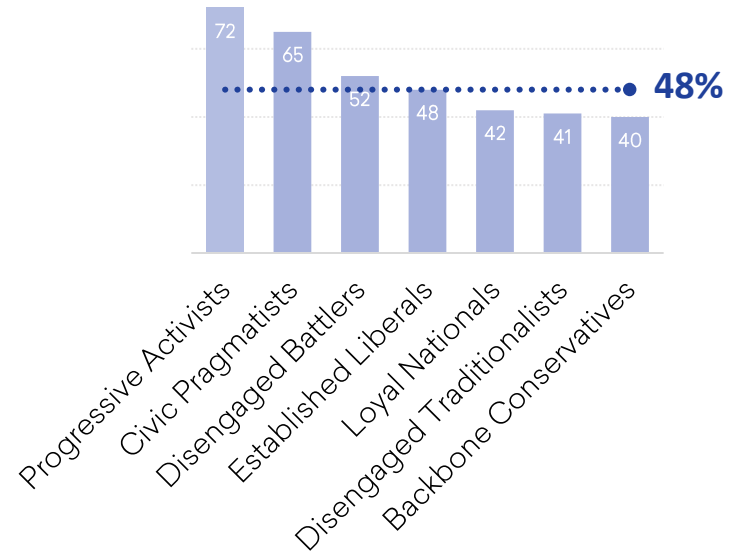
The public think the Rwanda policy won't reduce crossings



A clear majority of Britons don't think the government's Rwanda policy will reduce the number of people crossing the Channel. This includes majorities among the three socially conservative segments, who think the Rwanda policy will make no difference, notwithstanding their support in the abstract



The threat of being deported to Rwanda will make no difference the number of people who try to cross the channel

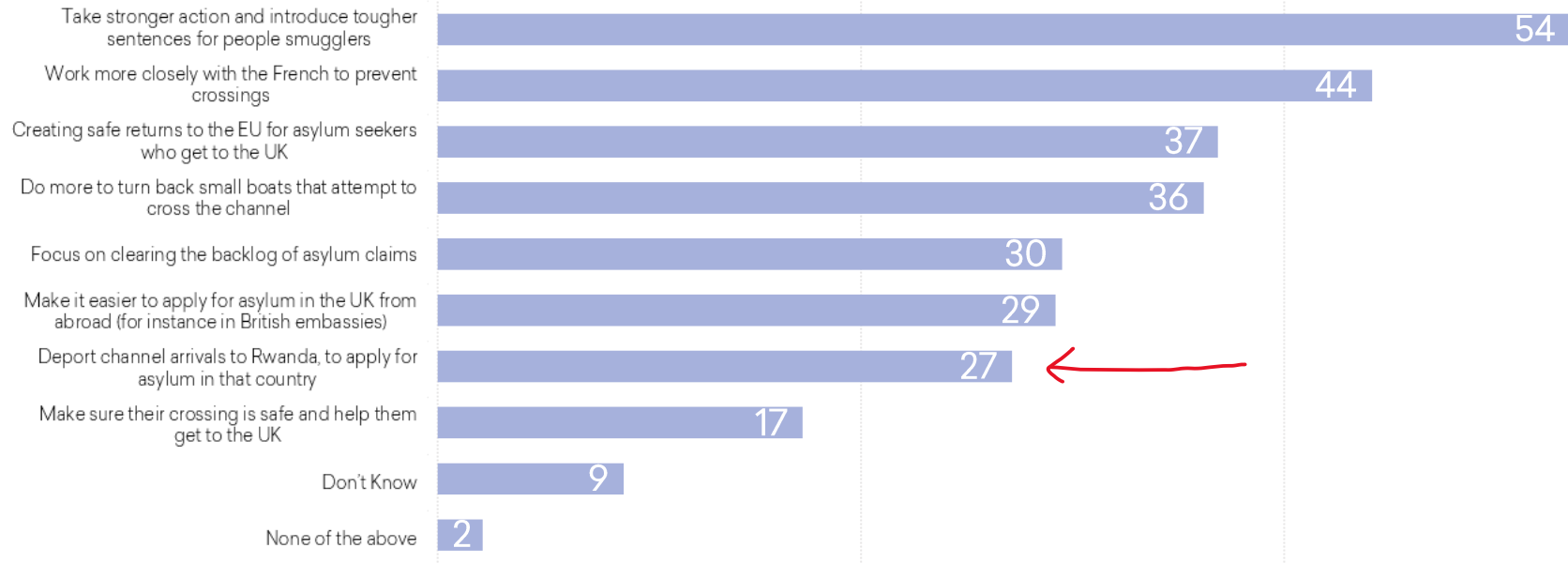


The Rwanda policy is far less popular than other policy options



The public want to see greater enforcement against the perpetrators of people smuggling, deporting arrivals to Rwanda is one of the least popular options.

Which of the following, if any, do you think the government should do in response to asylum seekers crossing the Channel in small boats? Select any which apply



Which of the following, if any, do you think the government should do in response to asylum seekers crossing the Channel in small boats? Select any which apply [some options abbreviated to fit on page] [July 2022]

The public want a series of exemptions to be made to the 'ban' on claiming asylum if you arrive by crossing the channel

Around half the public want exemptions for:

Genuine refugees

Victims of modern slavery

Children

Women fleeing persecution

Those fleeing war/conflict

People who worked for UK in Afghanistan

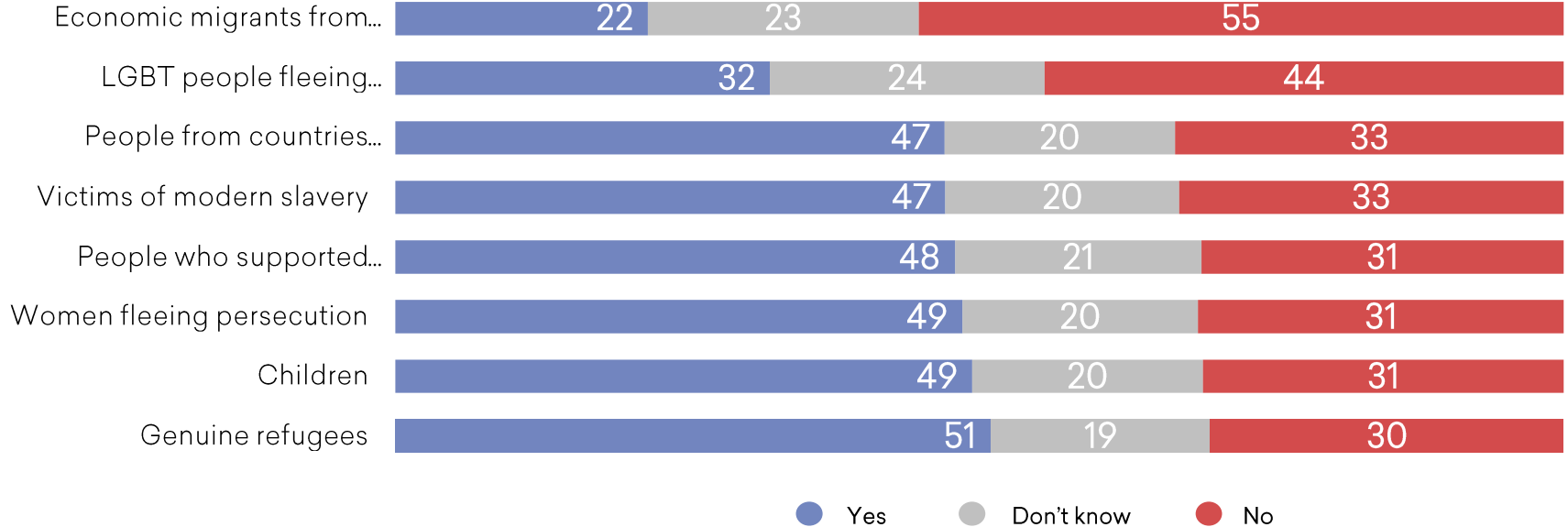
But not for economic migrants or LGBT people in countries where it is illegal to be gay

Support for exemptions to Rwanda policy



For most potential categories of refugee, there is support among the public for there to be exemptions to the Rwanda policy

The government has said that those who cross the channel illegally will never be allowed to claim asylum in the UK. Do you think that an exemption should be made to allow people in the following groups to claim asylum in the U.K. they cross the channel?

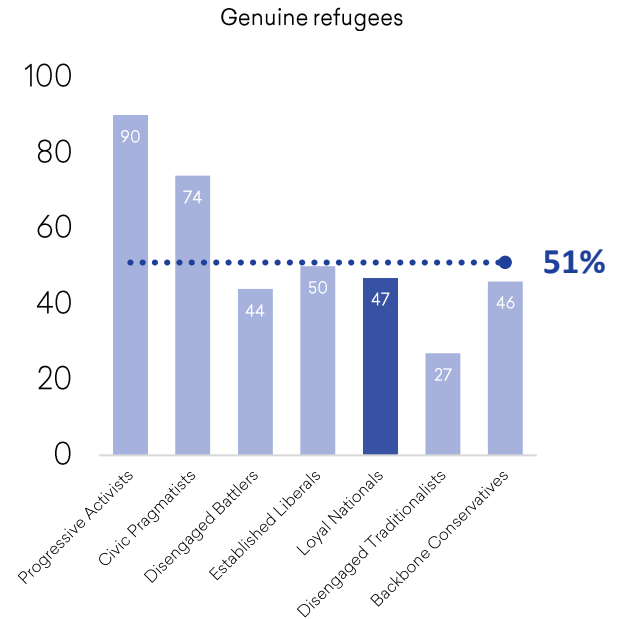
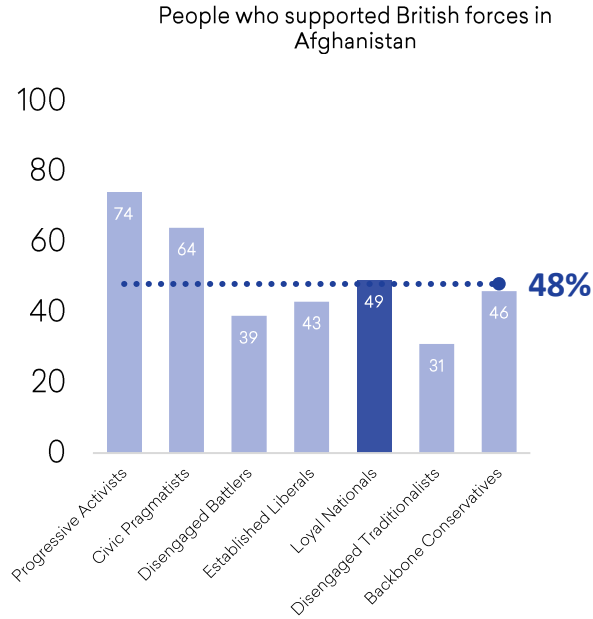
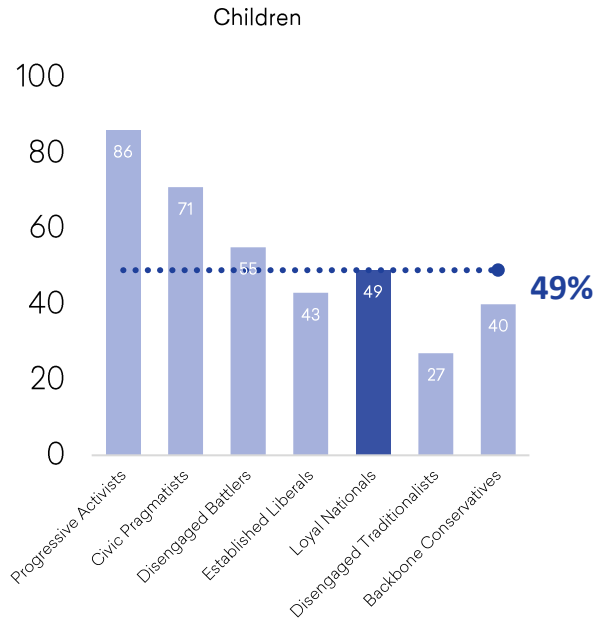


Support for exemptions – by segment



While support for exemptions is highest among more progressive groups, the key swing group of typical Red wall voters (Loyal Nationals) has almost majority support for exemptions for children, Afghans who worked with Britain and genuine refugees.

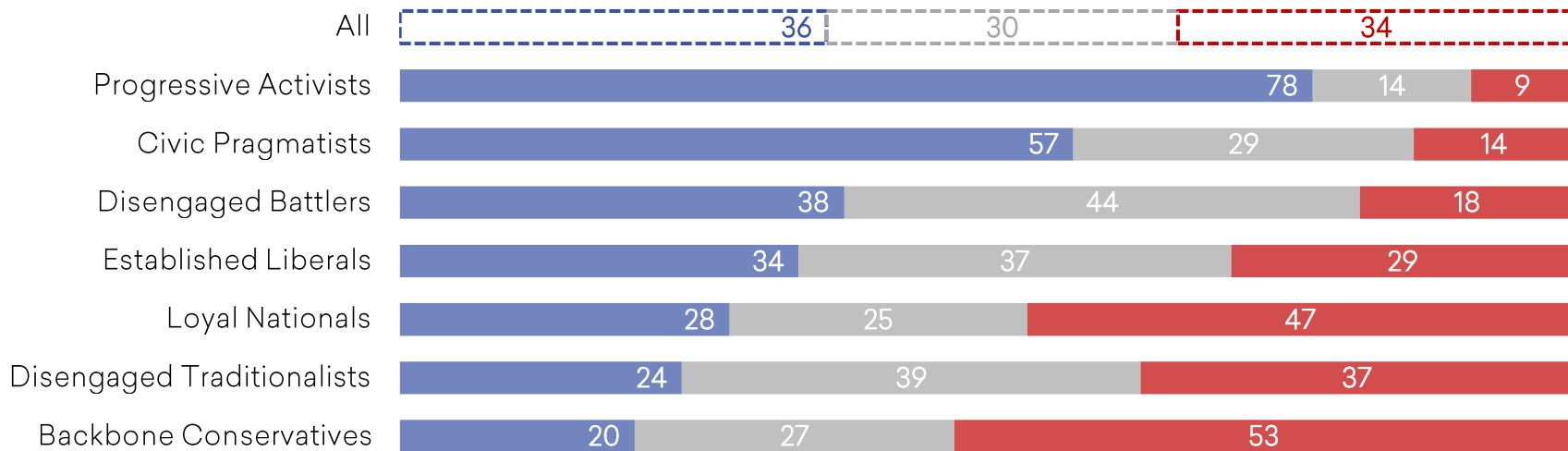
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The public are fairly split on whether leaving ECHR is price worth paying to stop the boats



Which of the following comes closest to your view?



● Leaving the European Court of Human Rights would **NOT be a price worth paying** even if it meant we could not implement the Government's plan to deport asylum seekers who cross the channel illegally to Rwanda

● Don't know

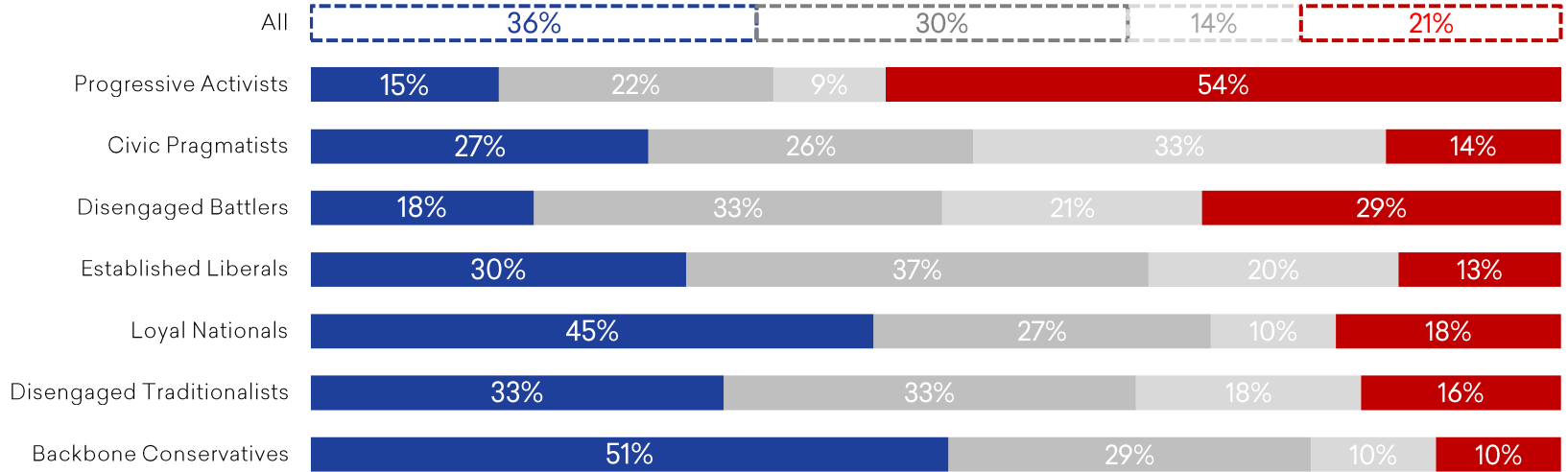
● Leaving the European Court of Human Rights **would be a price worth paying** if it enabled us to implement the Government's plan to deport asylum seekers who cross the channel illegally to Rwanda



More likely to think using barges to accommodate refugees is a good than bad idea

The government is exploring housing those who are in the process of having their asylum claims assessed on barges off the British coastline, in order to reduce costs. Do you think this is a good or bad idea?

● Good idea ● Neither good nor bad idea ● Don't know ● Bad idea





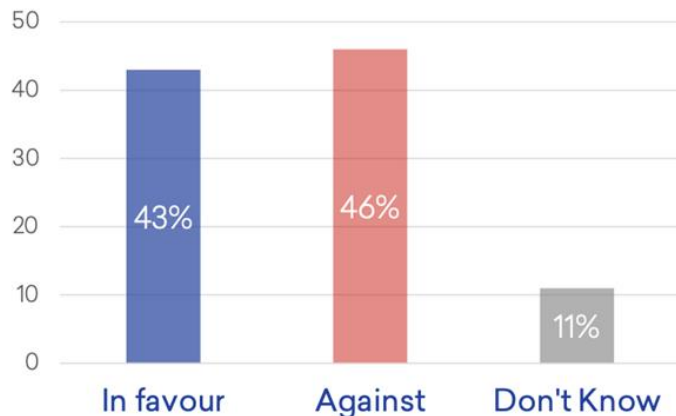
**The potential of people-led
and community-led refugee
welcome**

Strong support for refugee sponsorship in UK

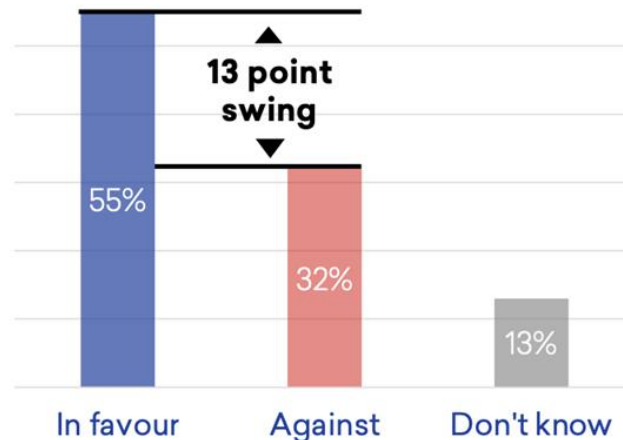


Using split sample A/B testing, we found framing accepting more refugees through a community sponsorship lens leads to a large drop in opposition to accepting refugees

**Accepting more refugees
(Without community sponsorship)**



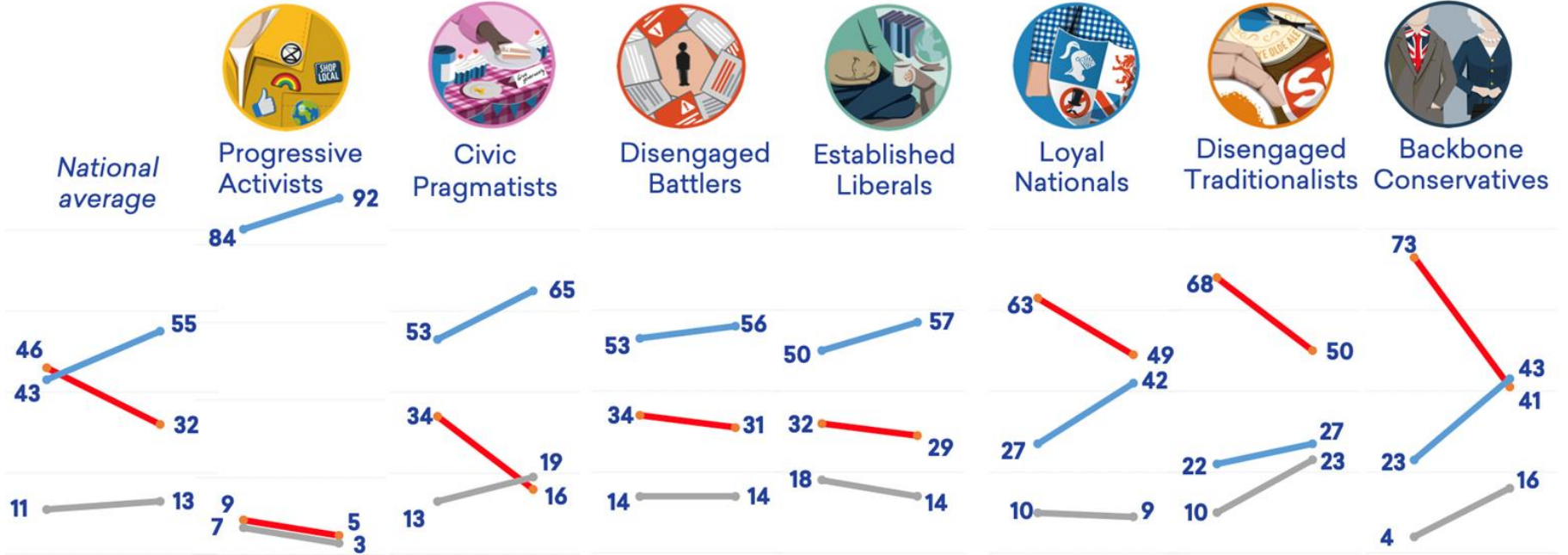
**Accepting more refugees
(With community sponsorship)**



"There are different opinions on the UK's policy on refugees. In general, do you support or oppose the UK accepting more refugees?" vs "There are different opinions on the UK's policy on refugees. One approach is allowing refugees to settle in the UK through 'community sponsorship'. This policy allows ordinary Britons together with their churches, community groups and schools to volunteer to sponsor refugees by doing things like helping them find a job, learn English and generally settle into their community. Under these conditions, would you support or oppose the UK accepting more refugees?" [November 2022]

People-led refugee welcome increases support among key groups

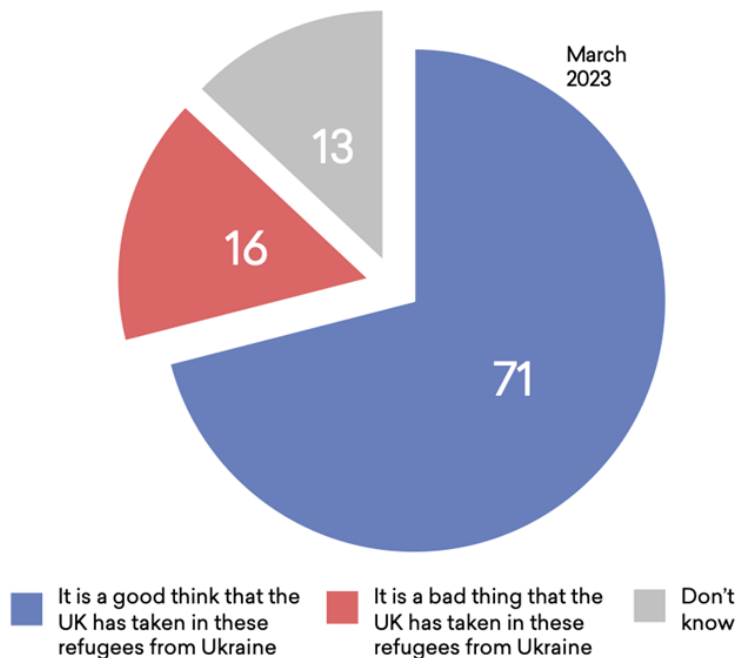
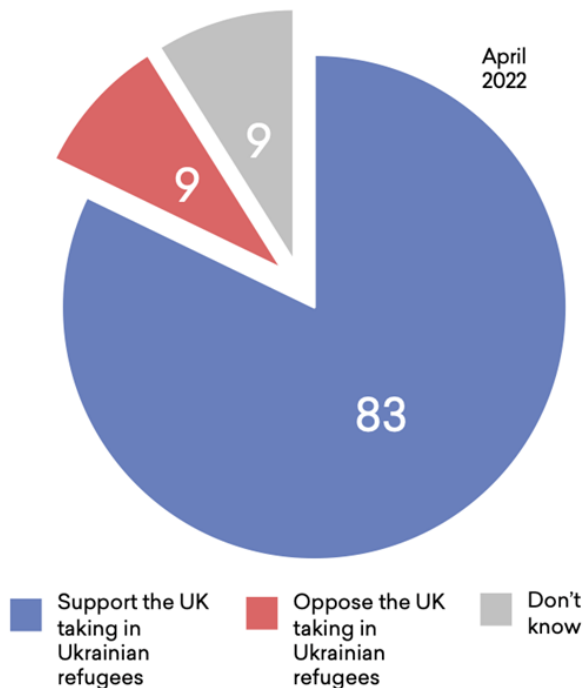
This increase in support is most stark among the more socially conservative segments. Backbone Conservative's views switch from overwhelming 73-23 opposition to narrow 43-41 support



■ Support ■ Oppose ■ Don't know

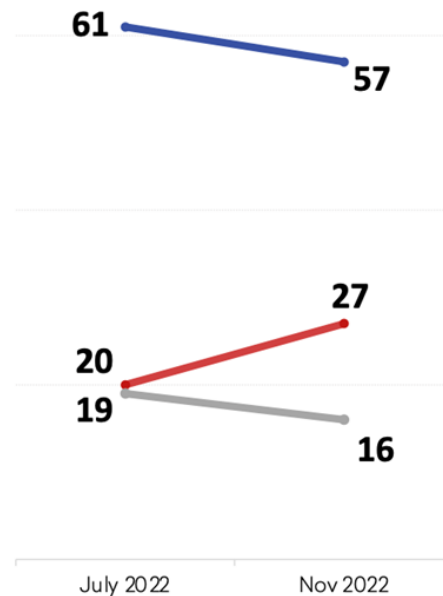
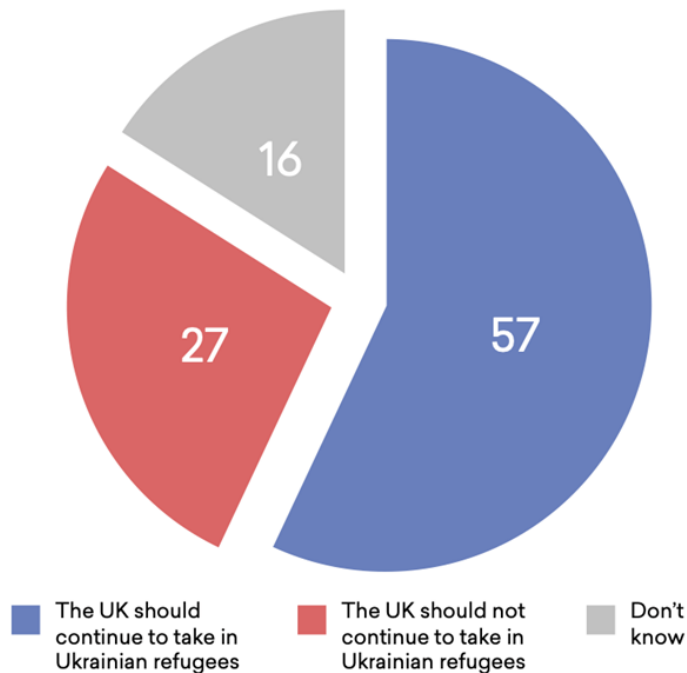
Britons think welcoming Ukrainians has been positive

Immediately after the invasion, eight in ten people supported taking in Ukrainian refugees. Today over seven in ten say it is a good thing that the UK has taken in 150,000+ refugees



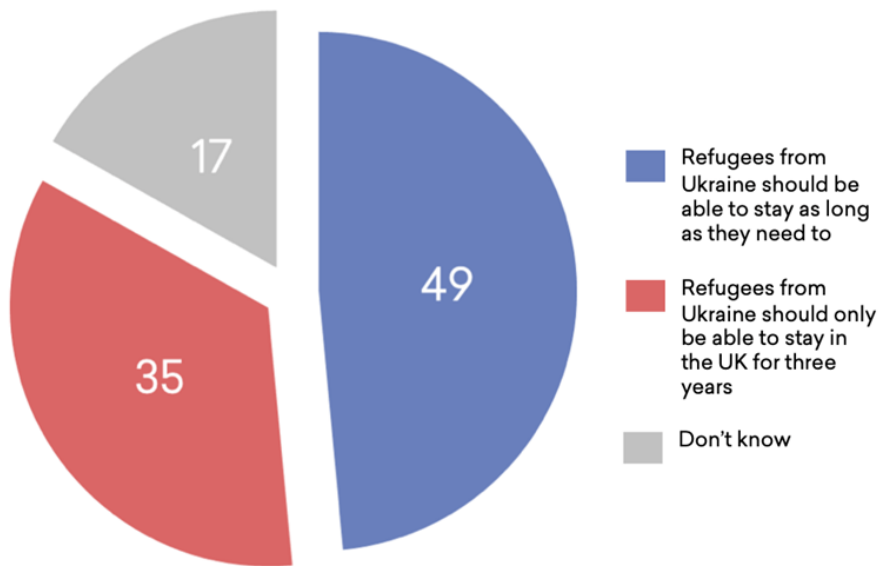
Strong support remains for welcoming Ukrainian refugees

Almost six in ten Britons think the UK should continue to welcome Ukrainian refugees – this has stayed relatively consistent over the past year

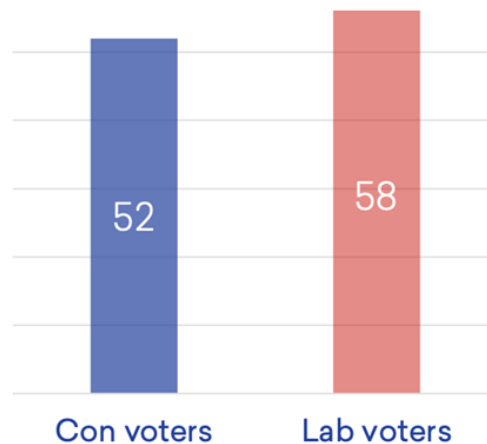


Support for Ukrainians for as long as they need it

More think that Ukrainians should be allowed to stay for as long as they need than those who think their should be a limit. Support doesn't vary across left-right lines



“Refugees from Ukraine should be able to stay as long as they need to”



Pride in the Homes for Ukraine scheme

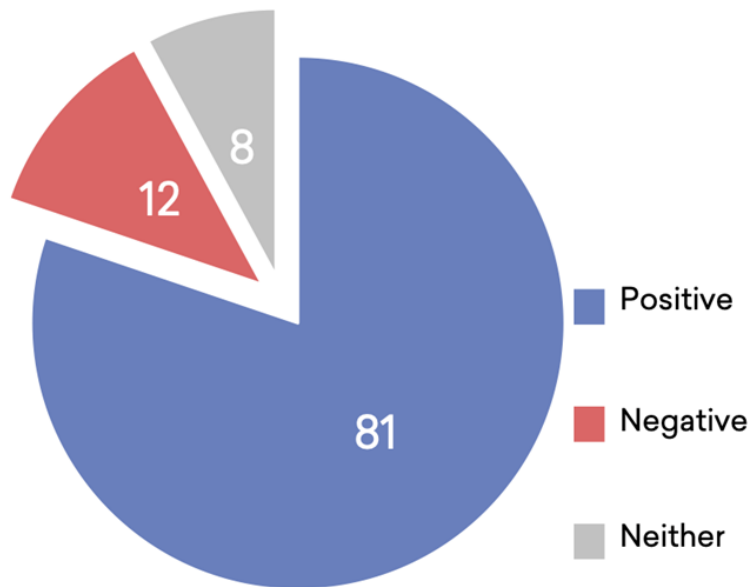
In focus groups we often hear unprompted stories of Ukrainian refugees being welcomed in their area – like Rosie from Wolverhampton talking about two young Ukrainian girls joining her theatre school



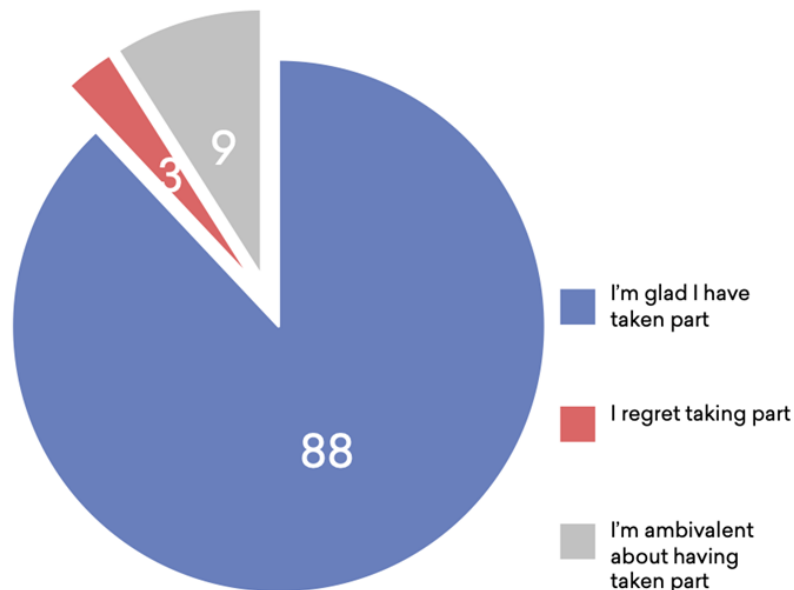
The Hosts' positive verdict

More than eight in ten hosts positively rate their overall experience of the scheme and say that they are glad they took part

What has been your overall experience of taking part in the scheme?



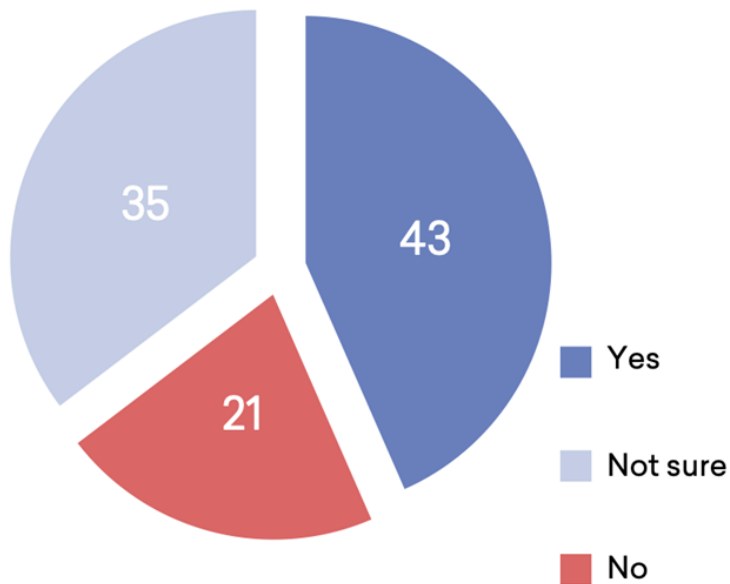
Knowing what you do now, which statement best describes your view?



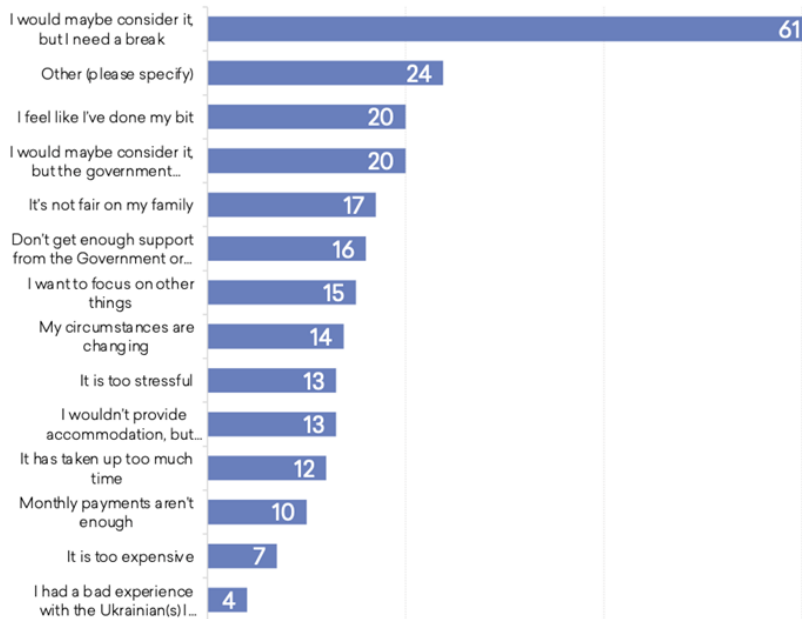
Almost one in two would host again

Almost half of hosts say they would consider hosting a Ukrainian refugee again. For the third who aren't sure, the main reason is "I would maybe consider it, but I need a break". Only one in five would not consider hosting again. Of those willing to host again, 70% would be open to hosting an Afghan family

Would you consider hosting Ukrainian refugees again in the future?



You said you are not sure about hosting again. Why is that? Select all that apply



Building public support for a fair and humane refugee system

How to build public support for fairer refugee system

Safe Routes needs to be more than a slogan and pass the public's sniff test

Tap into Britons' pride in our history of welcoming refugees and those in need

Talk about plans to deal with practical challenges of integration and welcoming

Talk about the role that communities play in welcoming refugees

Use welcomers as well as refugees as messengers

Adopt practical messaging rather than moral messaging

Use Homes for Ukraine as an example of a safer and more orderly

Use perpetrator-centric or criminal-centric frames as well as refugee-centric ones

Avoid fights about language



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