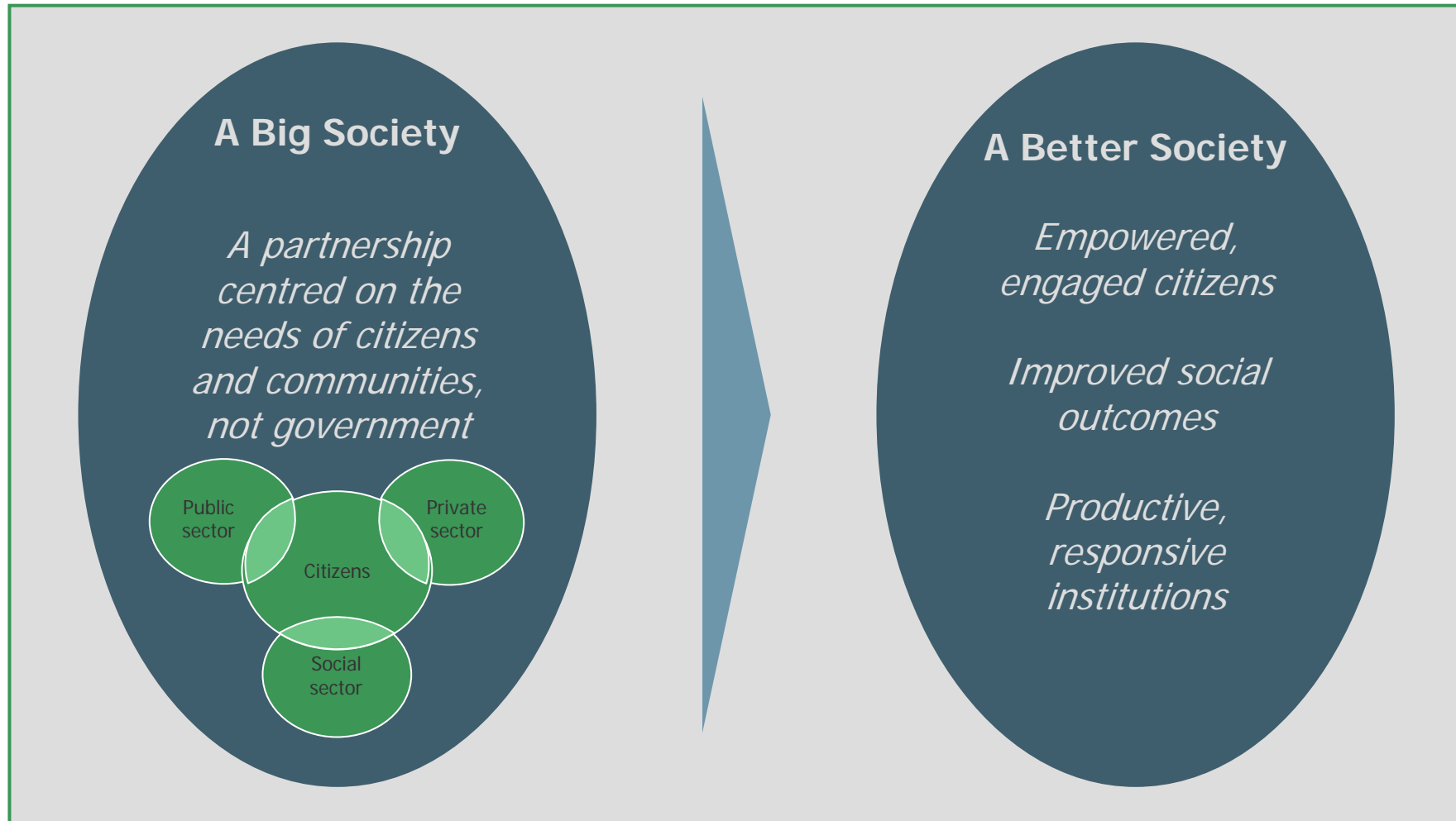




# Big Society – just what does it mean?

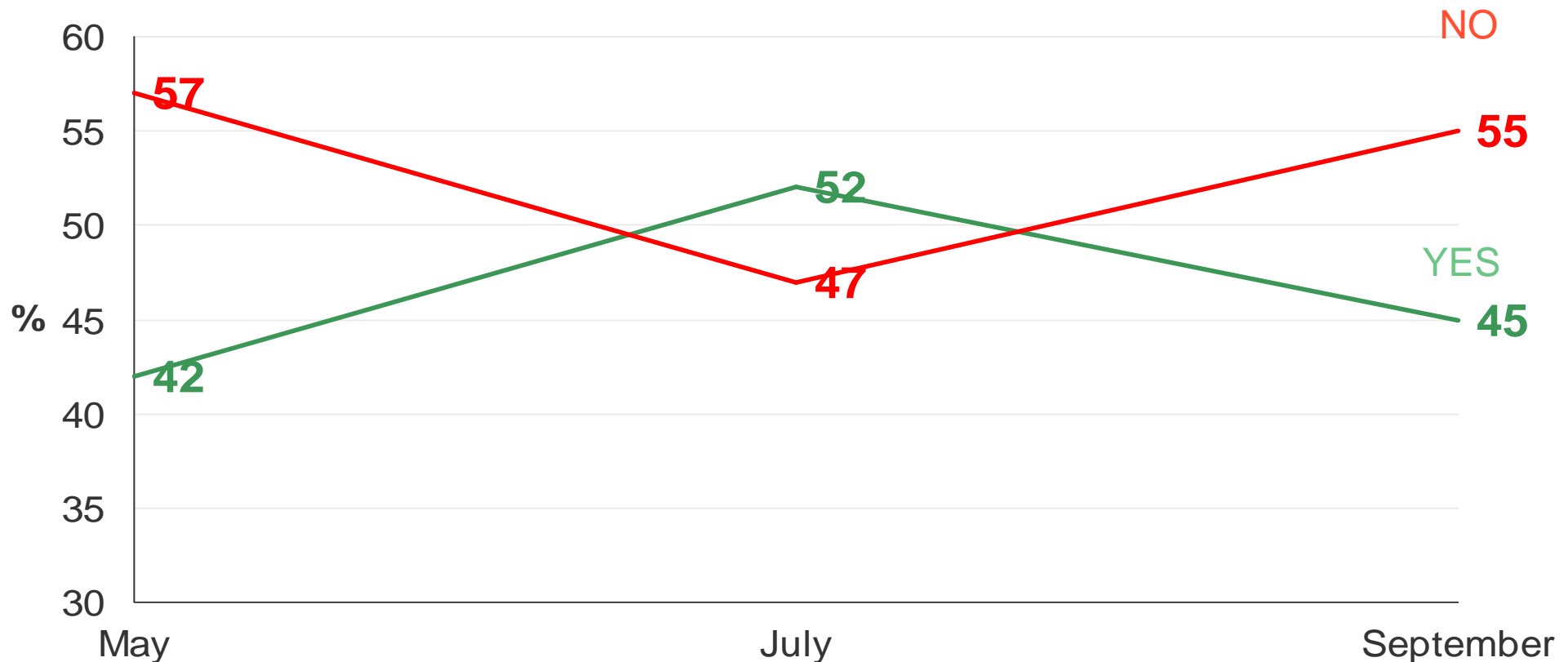
**December 2010**

# The Big Society – the aspiration



# Around half have heard of it....

*Recently David Cameron and the Conservative Party talked about their plans to create a “Big Society” in Britain. Do you remember hearing anything about this, or not?*



Base: 1,002 British adults 16+. Fieldwork dates: 13<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2010; 1,009 British adults 18+. Fieldwork dates: 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> July 2010; and 1,004 British adults 18+. Fieldwork dates: 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> September 2010 Source: Ipsos MORI

# Positive comments about Big Society

The idea is to replace professional management with citizen management

They want to give local people the chance to be more actively involved and to give them greater responsibility for their own community

Just people taking more responsibility for themselves and stopping the government meddling in this

It is all about kind of a collective coming together and looking after each other rather than expecting the government to do it all

It's about getting people to work together in the community

Making a fairer Britain and making everyone more equal

Base: Adults who remember hearing about 'Big Society' in Great Britain aged 16+.

Fieldwork dates: 13-19 May 2010

# Challenging comments about Big Society

They tried to explain but it's too complicated. It's very vague. What do they mean, 'the big society'?

It favours those in society who have nothing better to do with their time, i.e. the rich upper class of Berkshire

I think that it is a pipe dream. Society has been torn down and it will take a long time to get back

It is spin talk and waffle, because they won't actually do anything

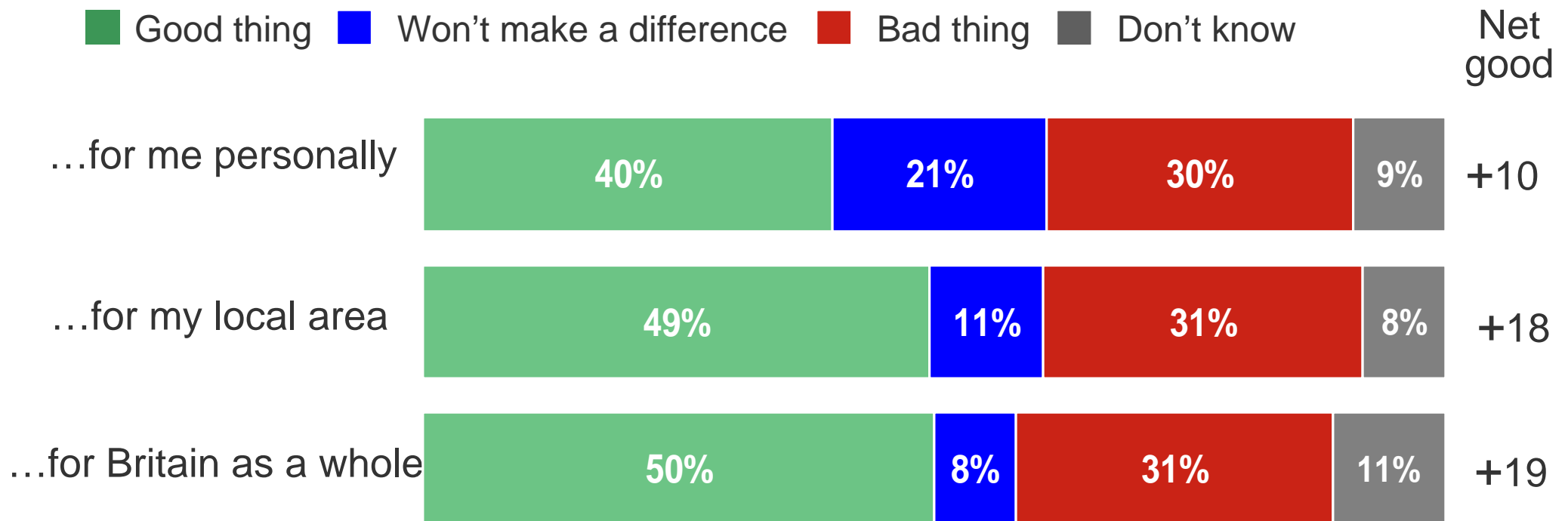
I don't think that most people want to get involved. In fact, I know this

Base: Adults who remember hearing about 'Big Society' in Great Britain aged 16+.

Fieldwork dates: 13-19 May 2010

# Half see it as a good thing for their local area and the country – fewer think good for them personally

The government's plans for creating a Big Society involve giving responsibility/ providing support [SPLIT SAMPLE] to individuals like you to help themselves and their communities, rather than relying on services provided by the local authority or the government. Do you think the government's plans for a Big Society are a good thing or a bad thing...



Base: 1,009 British adults, 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> July 2010

Ipsos MORI

Source: Ipsos MORI/Reuters Political Monitor



- **Mutuals**
- **Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise sector**
- **Different roles for each partner**
- **Citizens**

# Mutuals

***“We will support the creation and expansion of mutuals, co-operatives, charities and social enterprises, and enable these groups to have much greater involvement in the running of public services.”***

**Coalition agreement (May 2010)**

# Mutuals and cooperatives

- Every Government Department will put in place a far reaching right for public sector workers to take over the running of their services.
- Prisons, Sure Start Children's Centres, NHS and the civil service are just some of the services in which professionals could soon take power from Whitehall bosses and have the freedom to do things better.

Source: Cabinet Office, 17 November 2010

Ipsos MORI

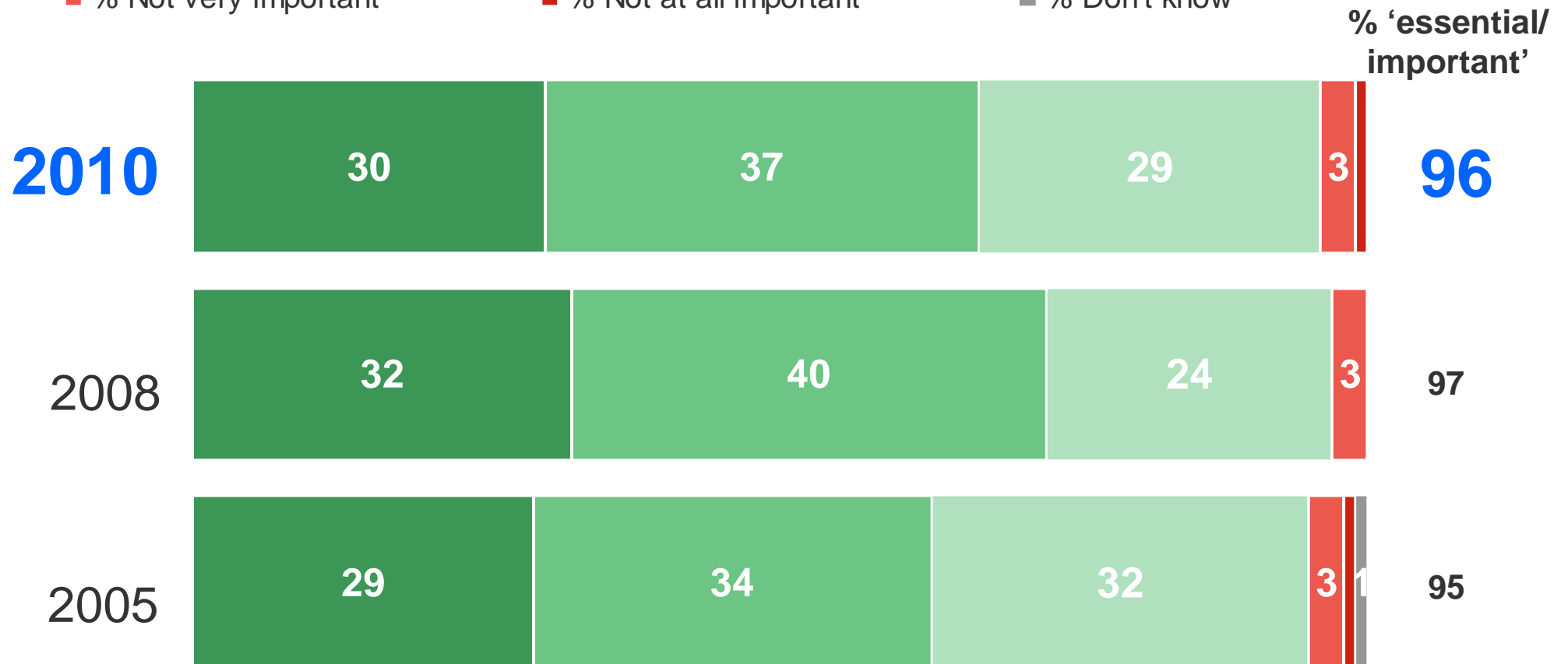


# **Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector**

# Charities play an important role in society

Overall, how important a role do you think charities play in society today?

- % Essential\*
- % Very important
- % Fairly important+
- % Not very important
- % Not at all important
- % Don't know



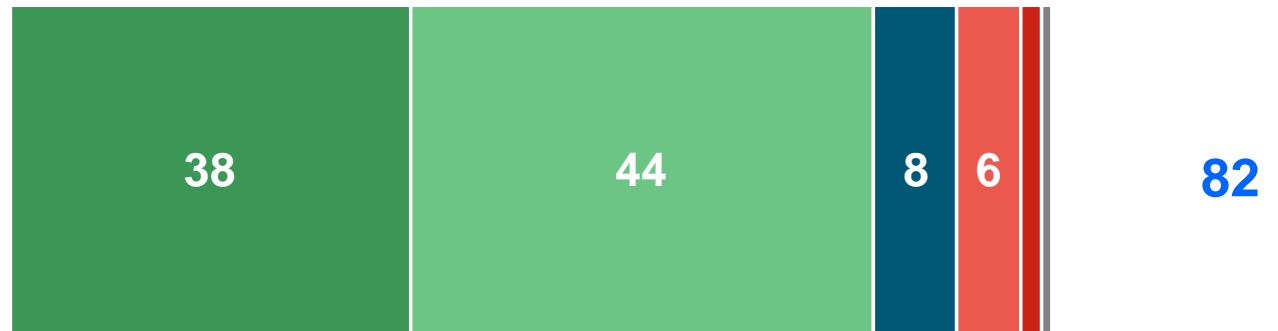
Base: All respondents 2010 (1,150), 2008 (1,008) and 2003 (1,001)

# ... offer something unique and innovative ...

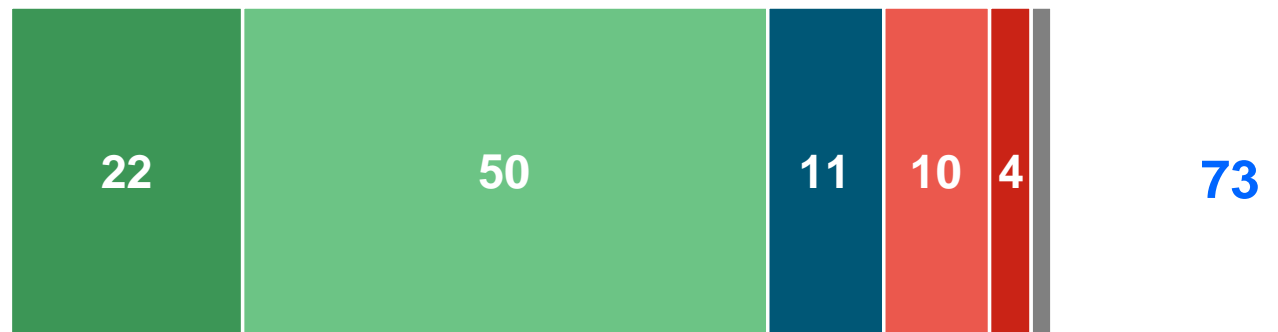
Thinking about charities in general, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Is that strongly or tend to agree/disagree?

■ % Strongly agree      ■ % Tend to agree      ■ % Neither / nor      % Agree  
■ % Tend to disagree      ■ % Strongly disagree      ■ % Don't know

**Charities provide society with something unique**



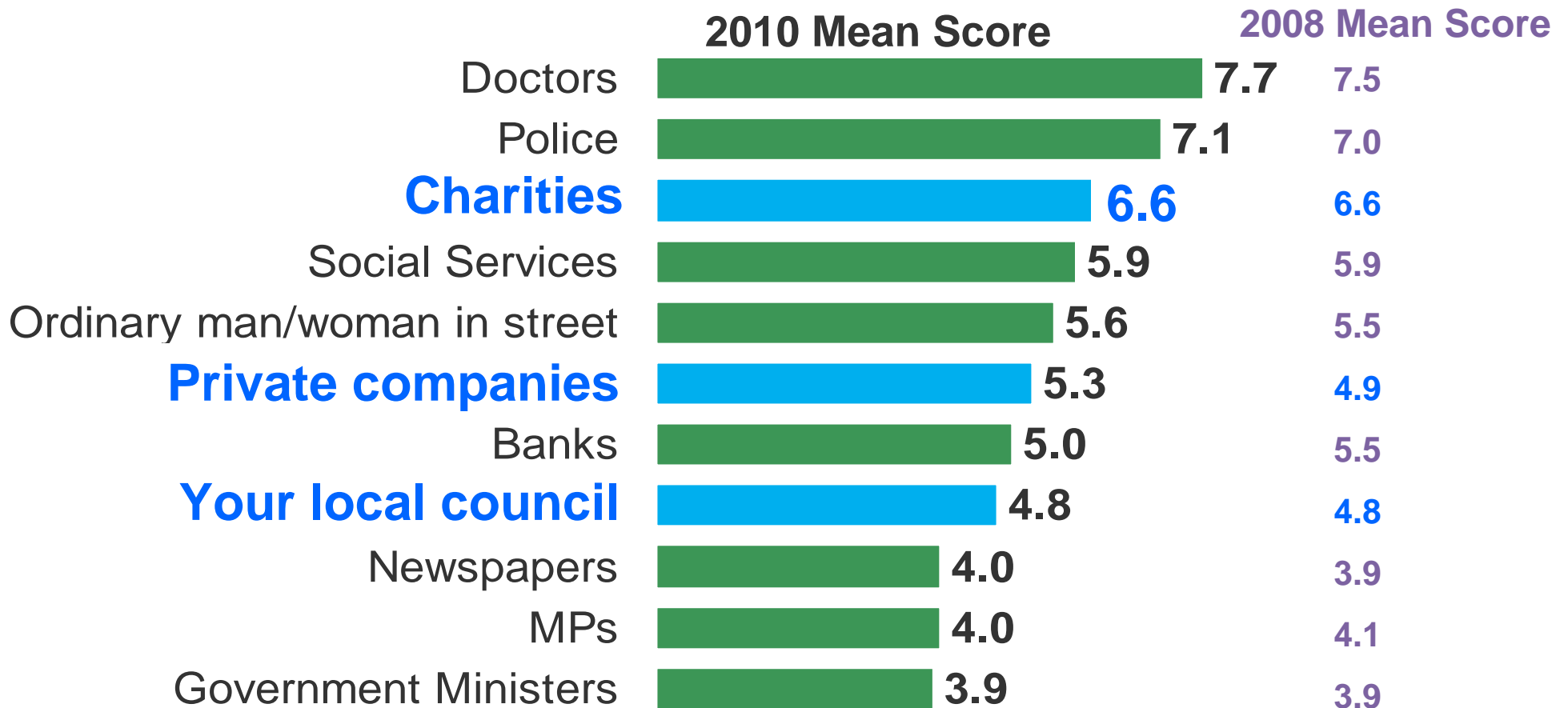
**Charities are effective at bringing about social change**



Base: 1,150 British adults, 7th – 17th May 2010

# ... and are trusted

I'm going to read out some different types of organisations and professions. On a scale of 0-10 where 10 means you trust them completely and 0 means you don't trust them at all, please tell me how much trust and confidence you have in each?



Base: 1,150 British adults, 7<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> May 2010, 2008 (1,008)

Ipsos MORI

Source: Ipsos MORI



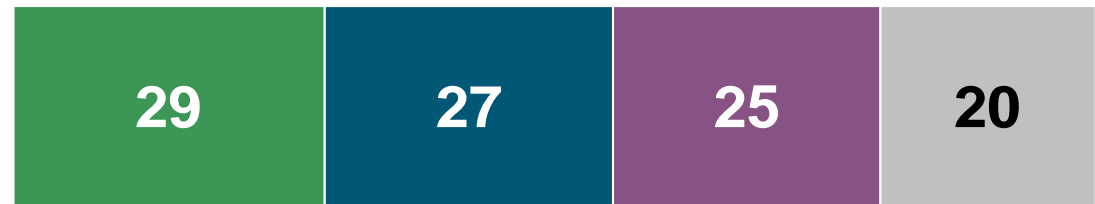
# Different roles for partners

# All seen as quality and professional

Some charities and some private companies receive funding from government to provide certain public services, such as healthcare services, care for the elderly, services for disabled people etc. Other public services are provided directly by public authorities such as the NHS or local councils. **Of these three types of service provider, which one do you think would be BEST at...**

■ % Charities / NFP orgs ■ % Private companies ■ % Public authorities ■ % Don't know

**Providing the best quality of service for the money**



**Providing a professional and reliable service**



Base: 1,001 British adults, 20-26 November 2009

Ipsos MORI

Source: Ipsos MORI



# VCSE caring and responsive

Some charities and some private companies receive funding from government to provide certain public services, such as healthcare services, care for the elderly, services for disabled people etc. Other public services are provided directly by public authorities such as the NHS or local councils. **Of these three types of service provider, which one do you think would be BEST at...**

■ % Charities / NFP orgs ■ % Private companies ■ % Public authorities ■ % Don't know

**Providing a caring and compassionate service**



**Understanding what service users need**



Base: 1,001 British adults, 20-26 November 2009

Ipsos MORI

Source: Ipsos MORI



# Mixed views of partners' roles/capabilities

- Private sector seen as efficient by some
  - But concerns about the impact of the profit motive
- Low awareness and misunderstanding of charitable sector role
  - Do they have the right skills?
  - Can volunteers really provide services?

*With the best will in the world, a voluntary person is not as skilful at the job as someone who was employed and paid to do the job, we would hope anyway.*

Male, 65+, Kent

*A lot of services would obviously be better if there was competition...but there has got to be certain services that are provided no matter what and don't work for a profit, they have a conscience.*

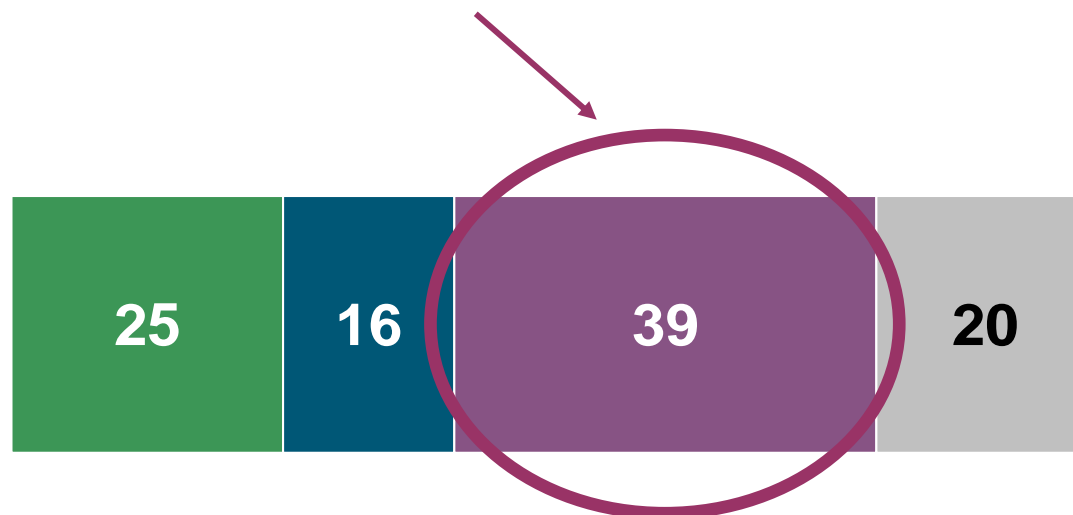
Female, 16-24, London

# Public sector provide context

Some charities and some private companies receive funding from government to provide certain public services, such as healthcare services, care for the elderly, services for disabled people etc. Other public services are provided directly by public authorities such as the NHS or local councils. **Of these three types of service provider, which one do you think would be BEST at...**

■ % Charities / NFP orgs ■ % Private companies ■ % Public authorities ■ % Don't know

Deciding exactly what type of service should be provided



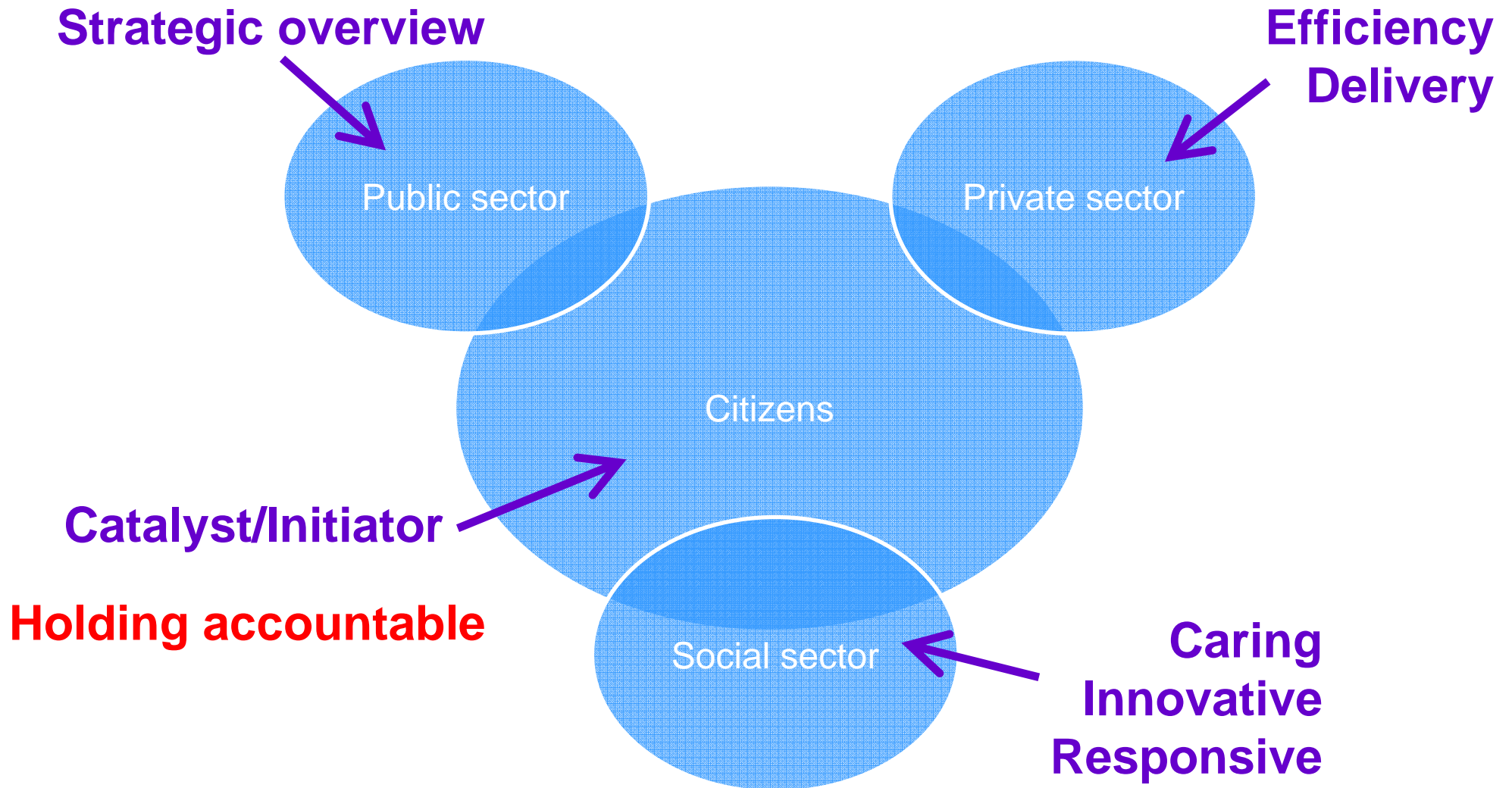
Base: 1,001 British adults, 20-26 November 2009

Ipsos MORI

Source: Ipsos MORI



# Lord Wei updated



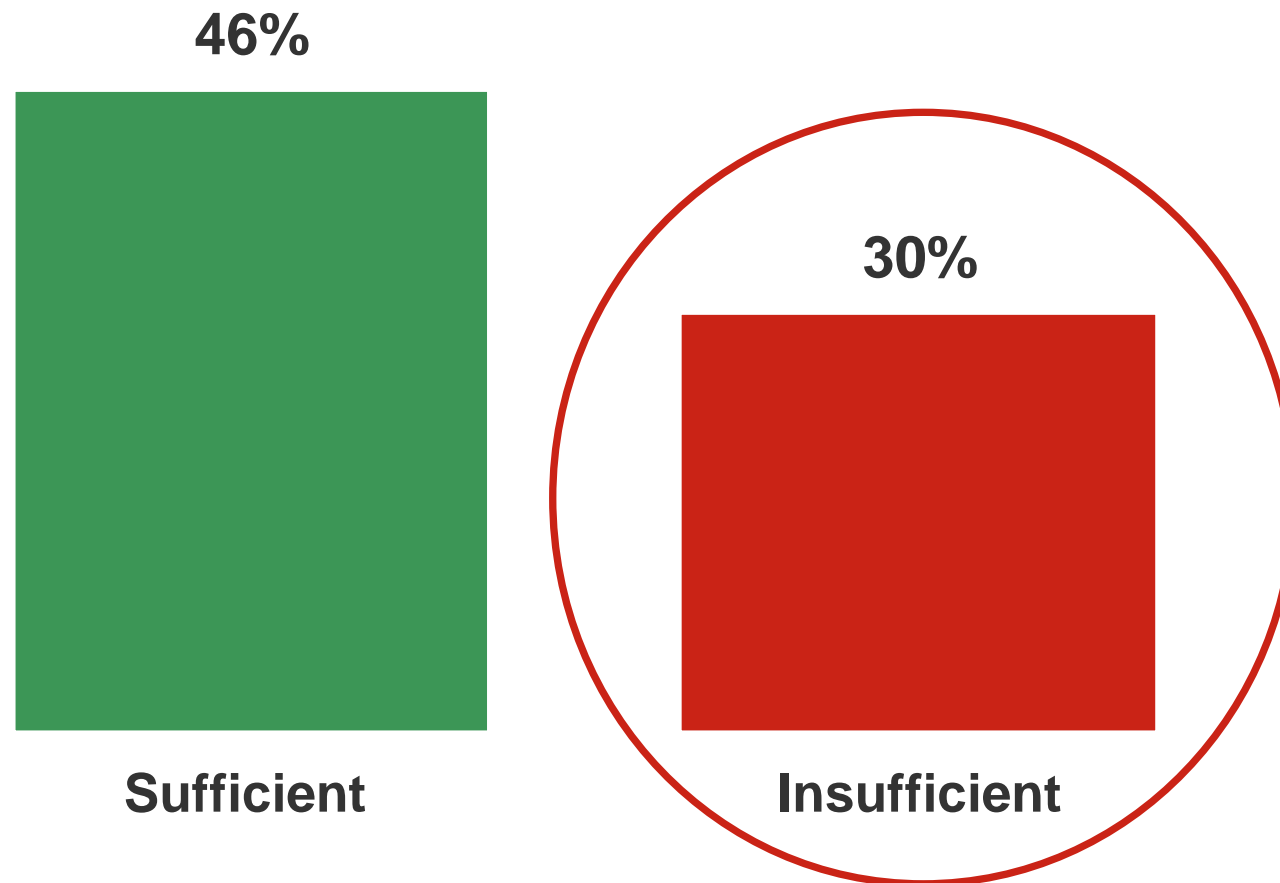
**Citizens**

***“We will take a range of measures to encourage volunteering and involvement in social action, including launching a national day to celebrate and encourage social action.”***

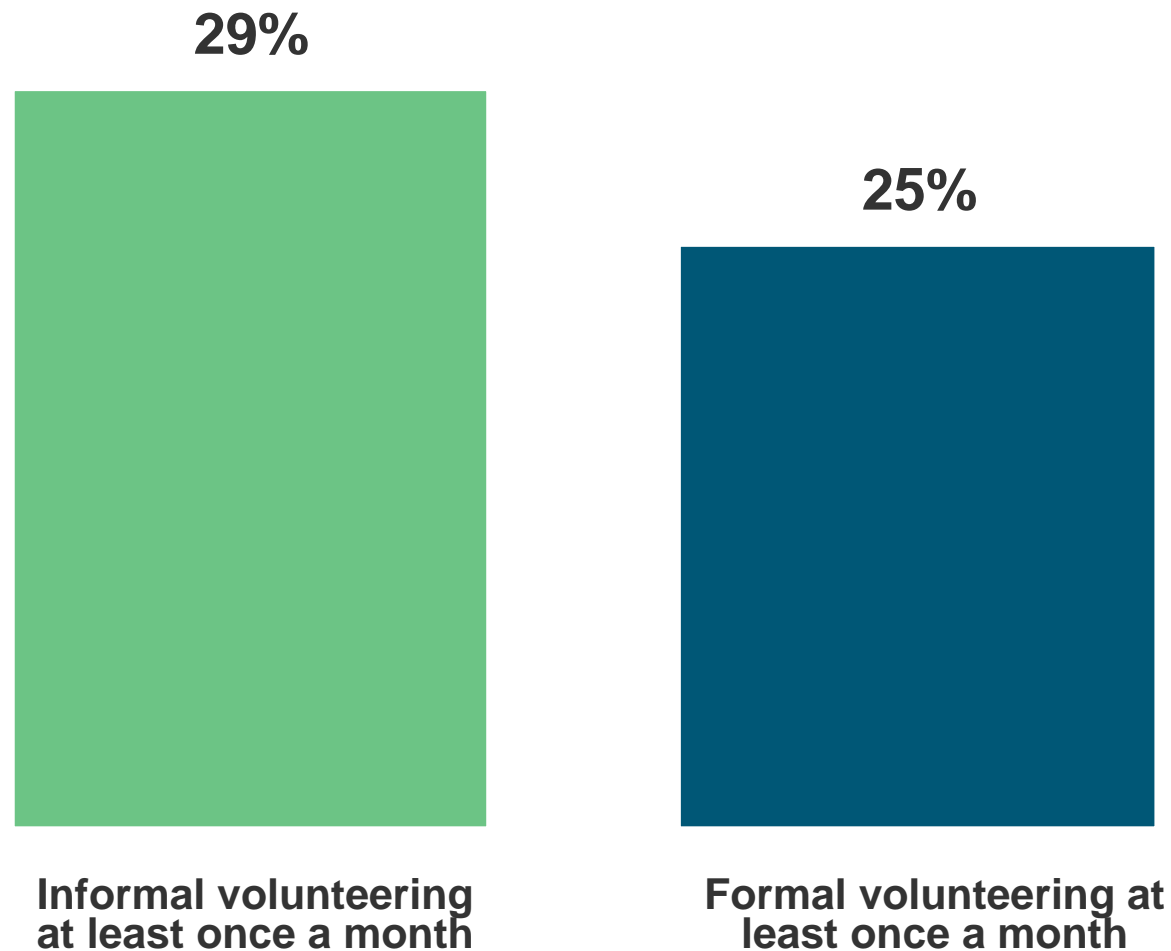
**Coalition agreement (May 2010)**

# There is a shortage of volunteers

*Over the last 12 months has your organisation had sufficient of insufficient of volunteers to meet its main objectives?*



# One in four volunteer regularly

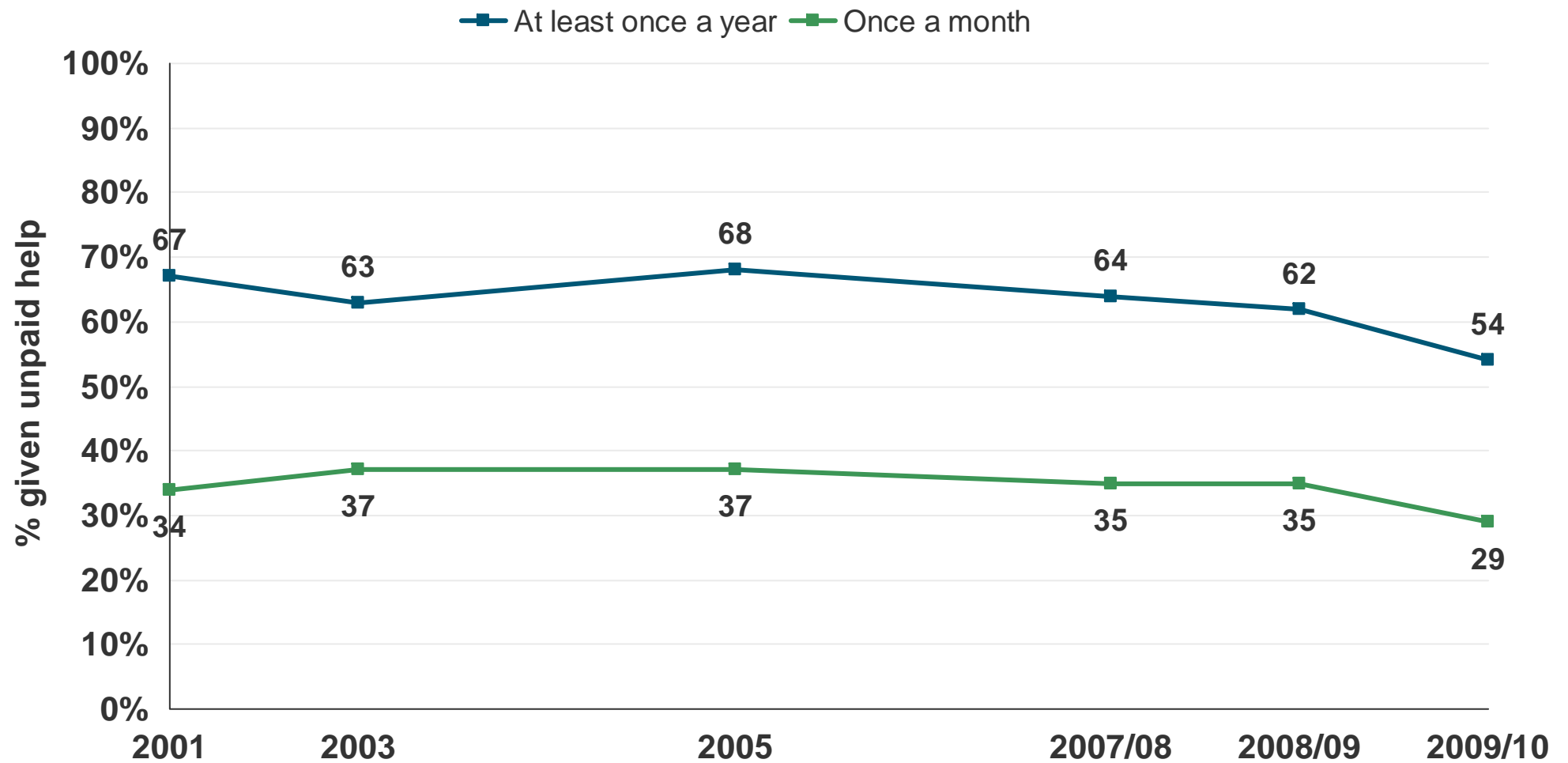


Base: All valid responses from core sample in England (~8,000 surveyed per wave)

Source: Citizenship Survey 2009/10

# Worryingly, levels of informal volunteering are down on previous years

*Proportion who have given any unpaid help to non-relatives in the last 12 months*



Base: All valid responses from core sample in England (~8,000 surveyed per wave)

Source: Citizenship Survey

# Which vision of Big Society?

It's the people on the ground in these communities who know best what needs to happen to really do something about the issues they care about

Nick Hurd, Minister for Civil Society, 12 November 2010

We are talking about helping people shopping, visiting them, helping them with the gardening, doing some mowing - helping people get on with their lives

Councillor, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, 17 November 2010

# Making a difference ...

## *Reason for volunteering*

% mentions

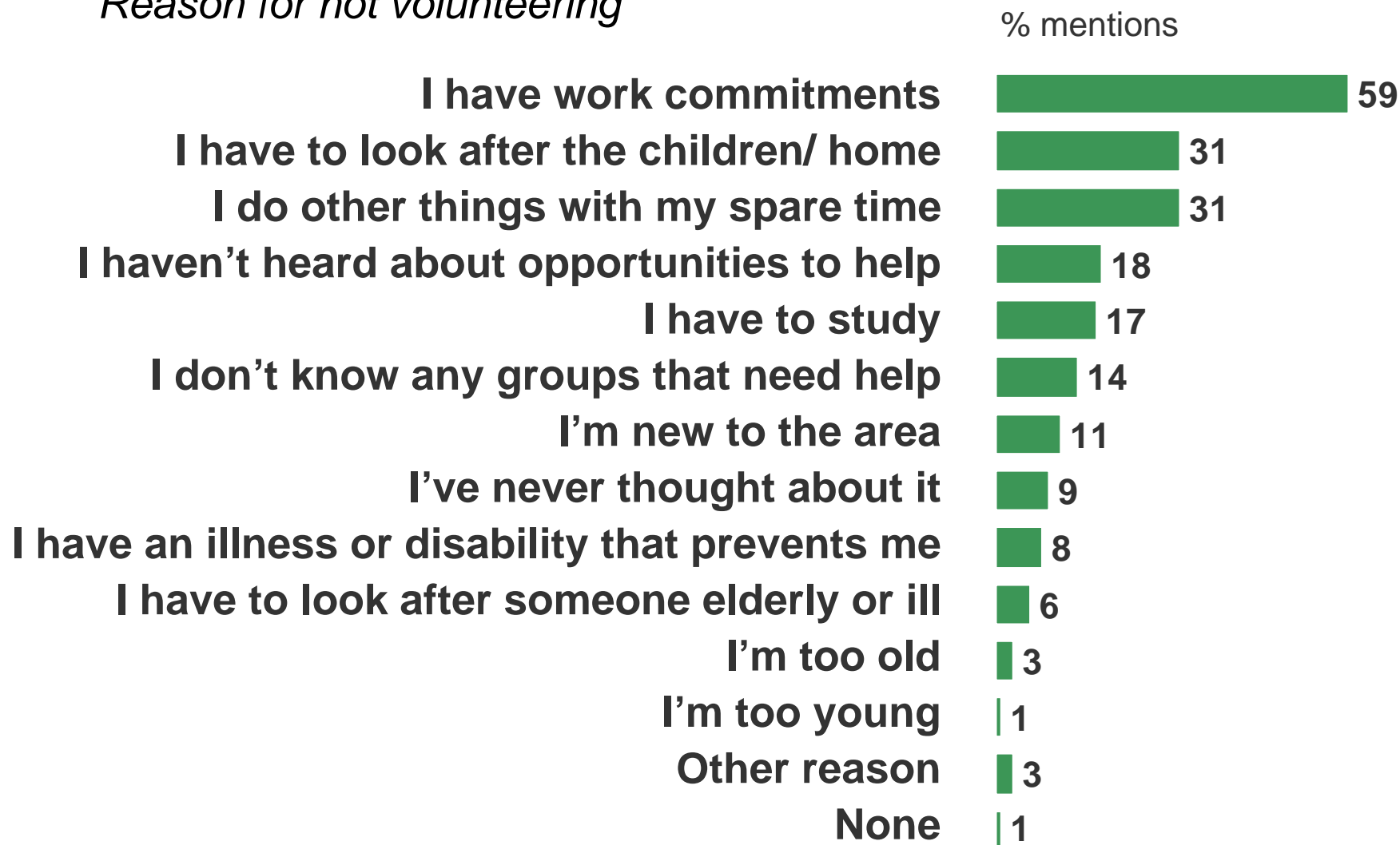


Base: All in England who participate in formal volunteering (5,229)

Source: Citizenship survey 2008/09

# ... or can't be bothered

## *Reason for not volunteering*



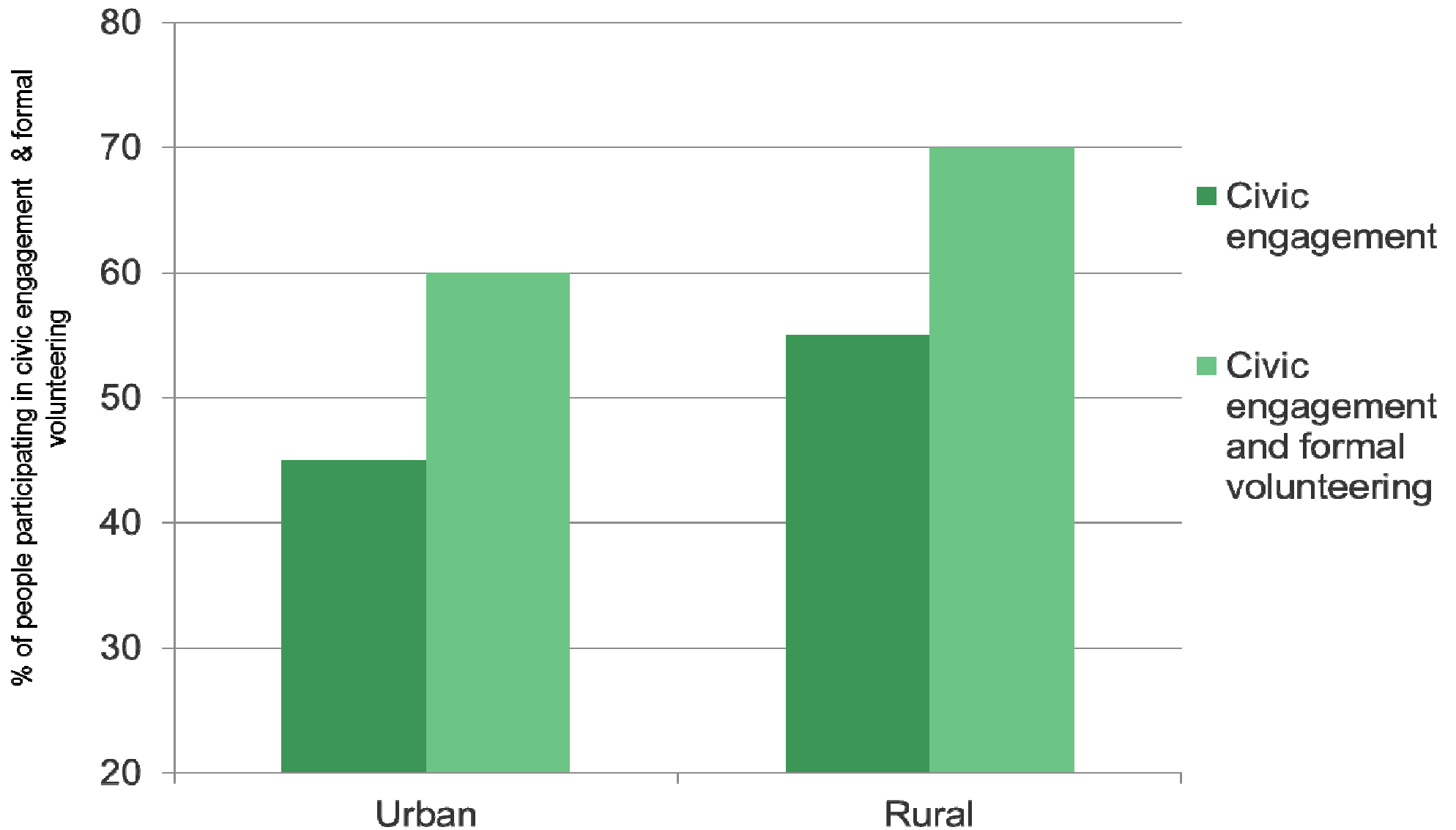
Base: All in England who volunteer infrequently or not at all (2,238)

Ipsos MORI

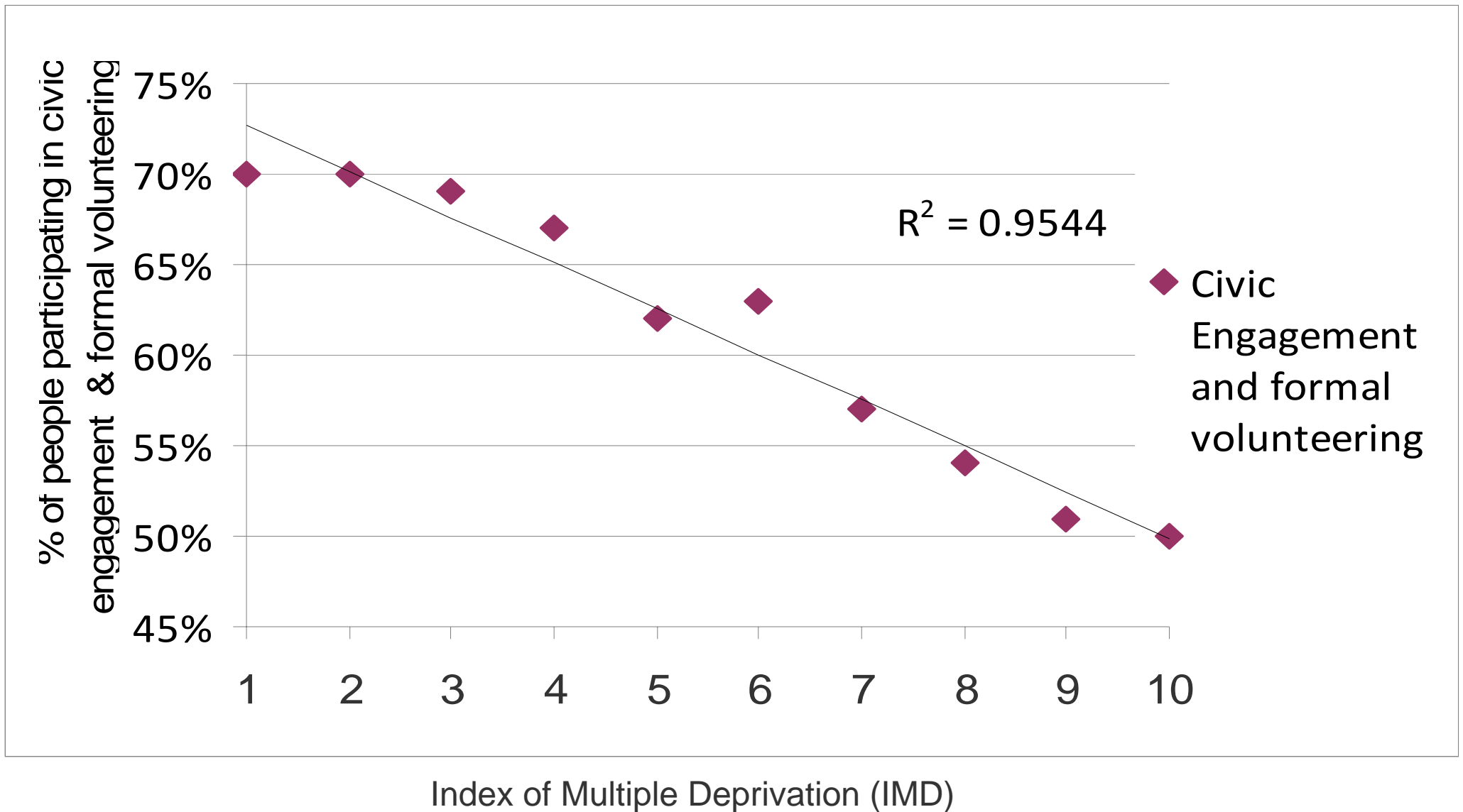
Source: Citizenship survey 2008/09



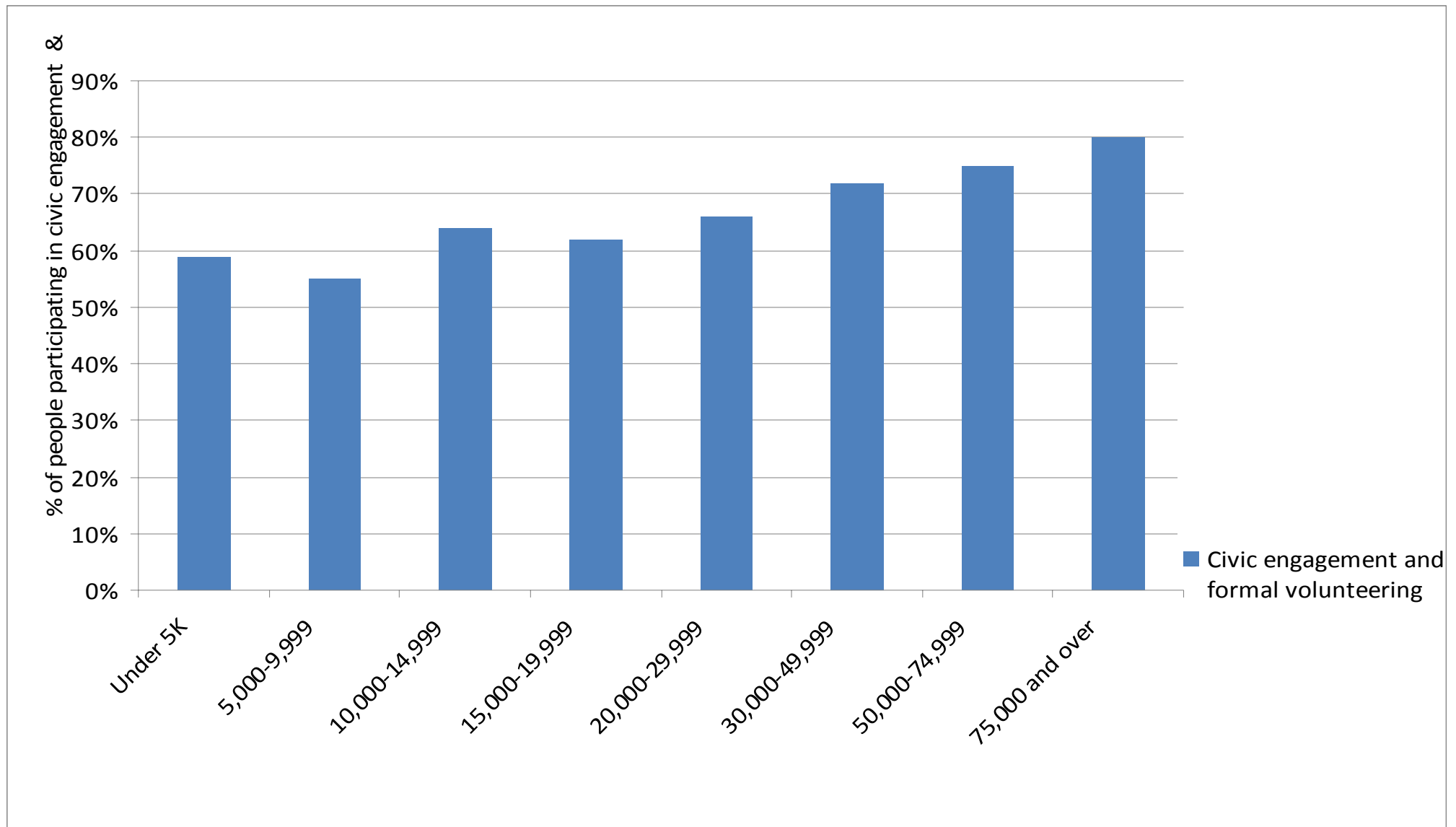
# Rural areas have more engaged communities



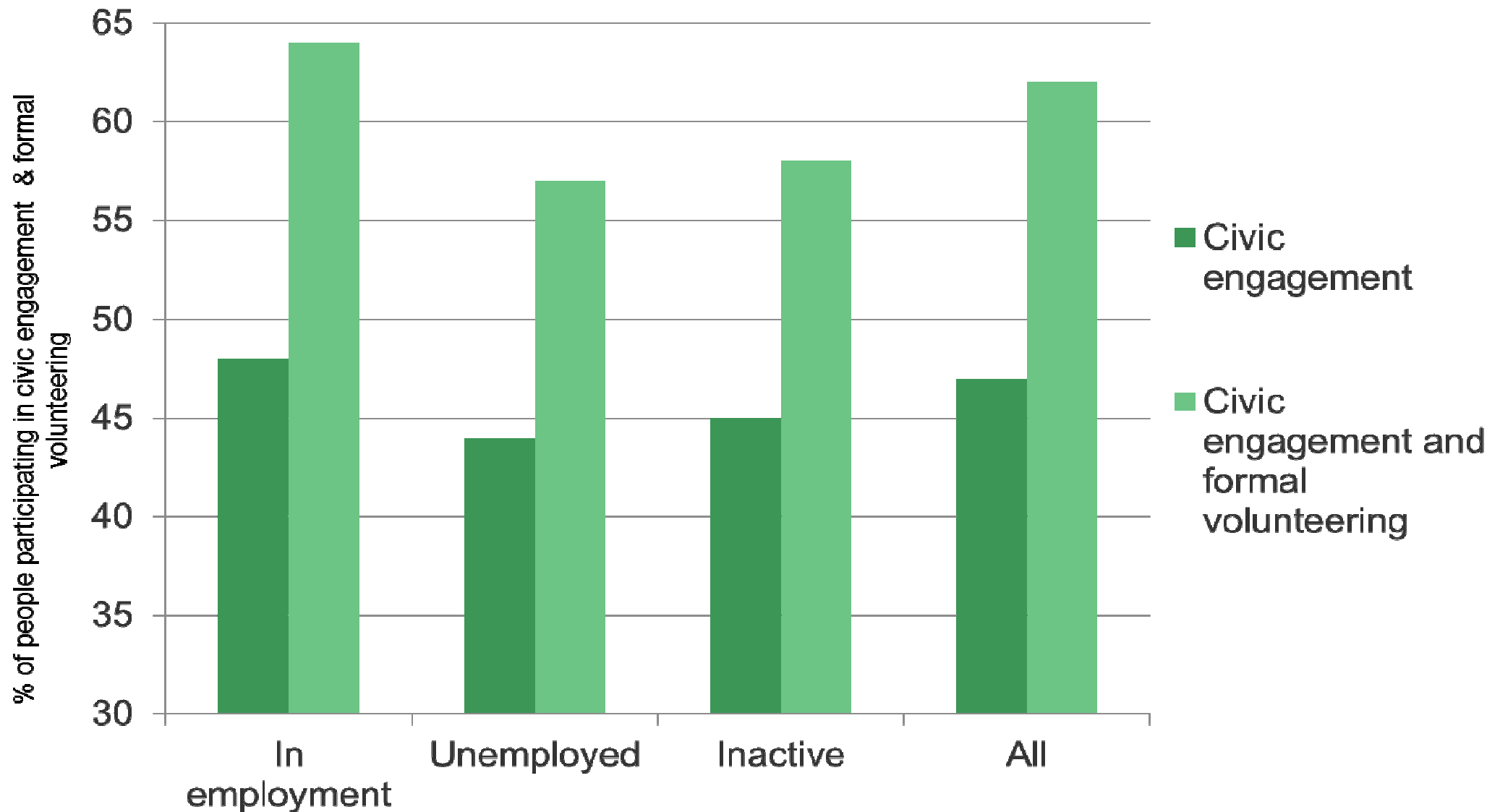
# People are less likely to participate in civic engagement and formal volunteering in deprived areas



# People are more likely to participate in civic engagement and formal volunteering if they have a high income

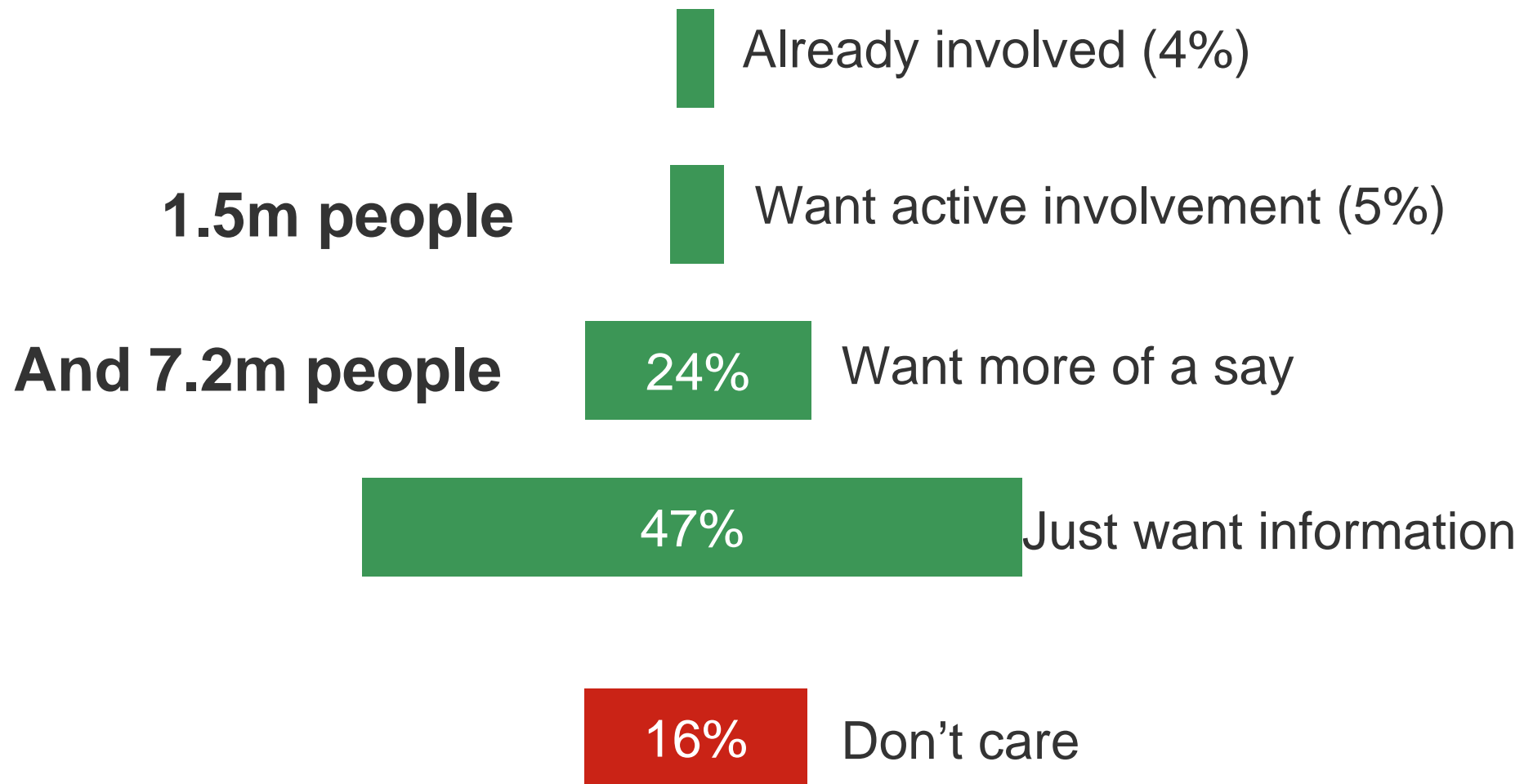


# The unemployed are the least likely to be currently engaged or volunteering: change rules?



# What's the score?

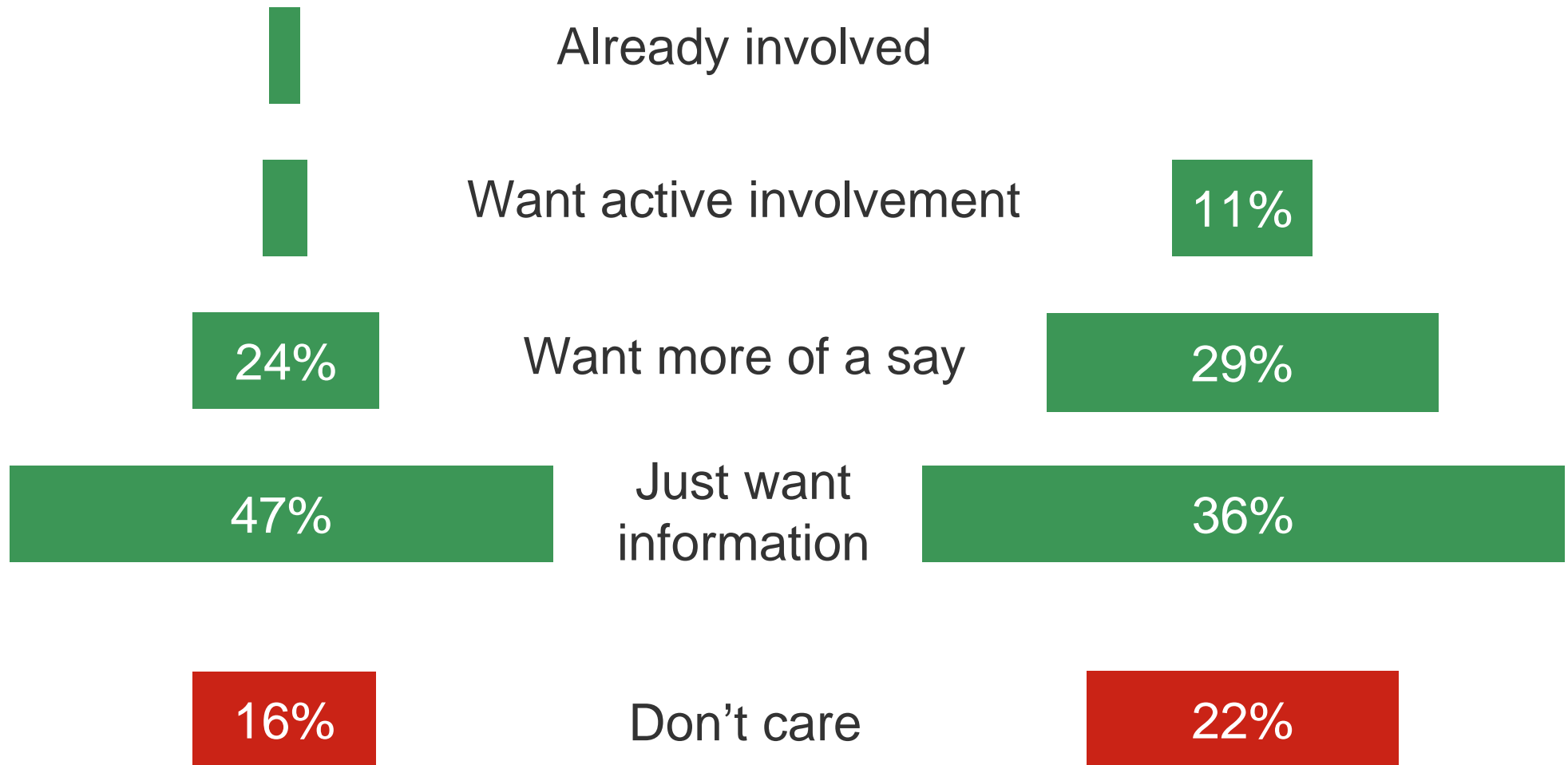
**Q** *Levels of involvement/interest in involvement in local services*



# Interest is issue dependent

Q *Levels of involvement/interest in involvement in local services*

Q *Levels of interest in involvement in decisions on cuts*



Most get involved to  
“stop” something  
happening ... how to build  
on this in a positive way  
in next few years?

We assess where the potential is to do more and how to encourage this

Potential to do more

High

High potential and willing

Enable

Engage

**Positive greens**

*I think it's important that I do as much as I can to limit my impact on the environment.*

18%

**Concerned consumers**

*I think I do more than a lot of people. Still, going away is important, I'd find that hard to give up..well I wouldn't, so carbon off-setting would make me feel better.*

14%

**Sideline supporters**

*I think climate change is a big problem for us. I know I don't think much about how much water or electricity I use, and I forget to turn things off..I'd like to do a bit more.*

14%

Willing to Act

High

**Cautious participants**

*I do a couple of things to help the environment. I'd really like to do more, well as long as I saw others were.*

14%

Encourage

Exemplify

Enable

**Stalled starters**

*I don't know much about climate change. I can't afford a car so I use public transport.. I'd like a car though.*

10%

Encourage

Enable

**Honestly disengaged**

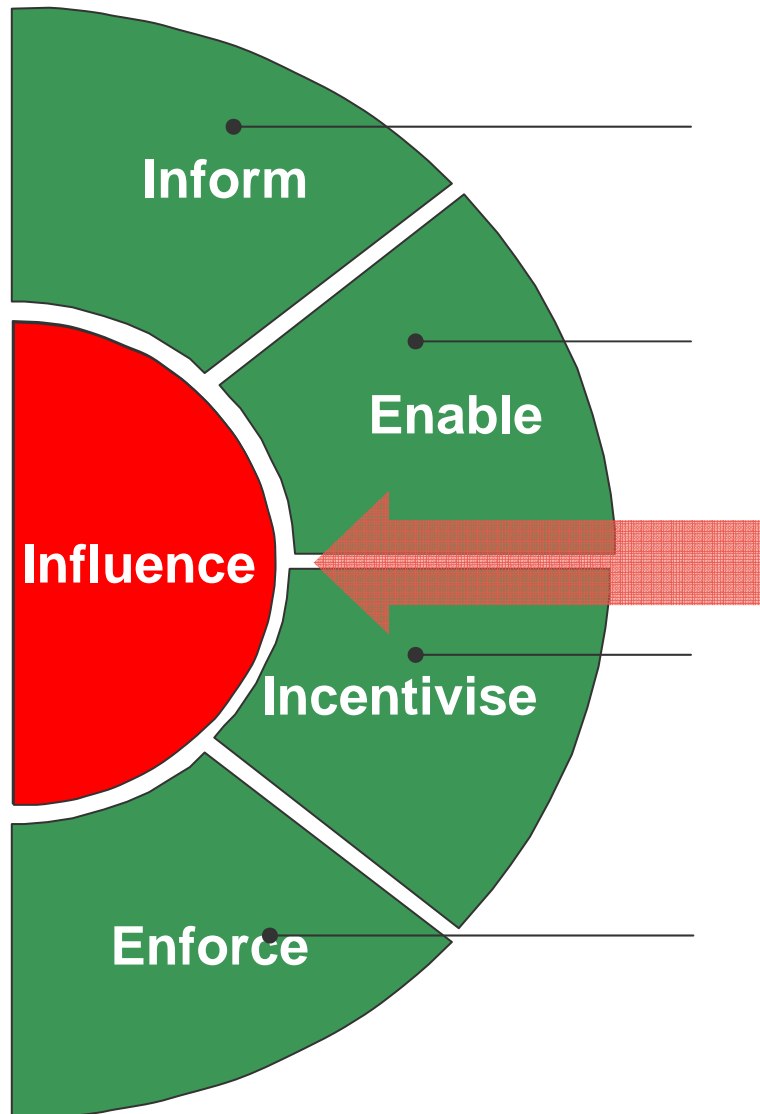
*Maybe there'll be an environmental disaster, maybe not. Makes no difference to me, I'm just living life the way I want to.*

18%

Low potential and unwilling

Low

# Changing behaviour



– Publicise perils of climate change for next generation

– Make energy saving easy

– Give them the tools

– Discounts on energy saving light bulbs

– Fines for not recycling

# Conclusions

# What does it mean for local government and VCSE?

- The Big Society placed great emphasis on community, voluntary and social enterprises. Now clear that the public sector has a central role to play in enabling and supporting Big Society
- Public see roles for private, public and VCSE sectors
- Public values the role that VCSE play in society - they are seen to be effective drivers of social change
- Greatest problems are:
  - Filling gaps in provision
  - Encouraging participation
  - How to measure success/impact
  - Learning lessons from all the Big Society experiments

# Thank you

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[www.ipsos-mori.com](http://www.ipsos-mori.com)

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