Association of Chairs

Survey and attitudinal segmentation of chairs to help support and improve EDI practices on charity boards

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The research

- 301 respondents completed the survey in September and October 2024

- The first section of this report is the overall findings of this survey

- In the second section, an **attitudinal segmentation** was carried out – this is a way of looking at groups in a set of data: not by demographics but by attitude

  - Unlike with demographics where the key variables are often few and obvious (e.g., age or gender), with an attitudinal segmentation the key variables are not obvious

  - The attitudinal segmentation finds out which variables are important in showing how people differ and how they can be clustered into segments/groups

  - In this segmentation we identified four different types of members

  The segmentation is based on the following questions:

  - ❖ Success: "Looking at the list below please indicate the success your board has had in addressing these areas of diversity and inclusion. This is just about the trustee board, not any staff you may have For each area indicate on a scale from 1 (no success at all) to 10."

  - ❖ Confidence: "How confident or unsure do you feel about the following specific areas of EDI when it comes to your board?"

  - ❖ Support: "What are the best types of support that would help you and your board with EDI? Please indicate how useful you think any of these measures might be."
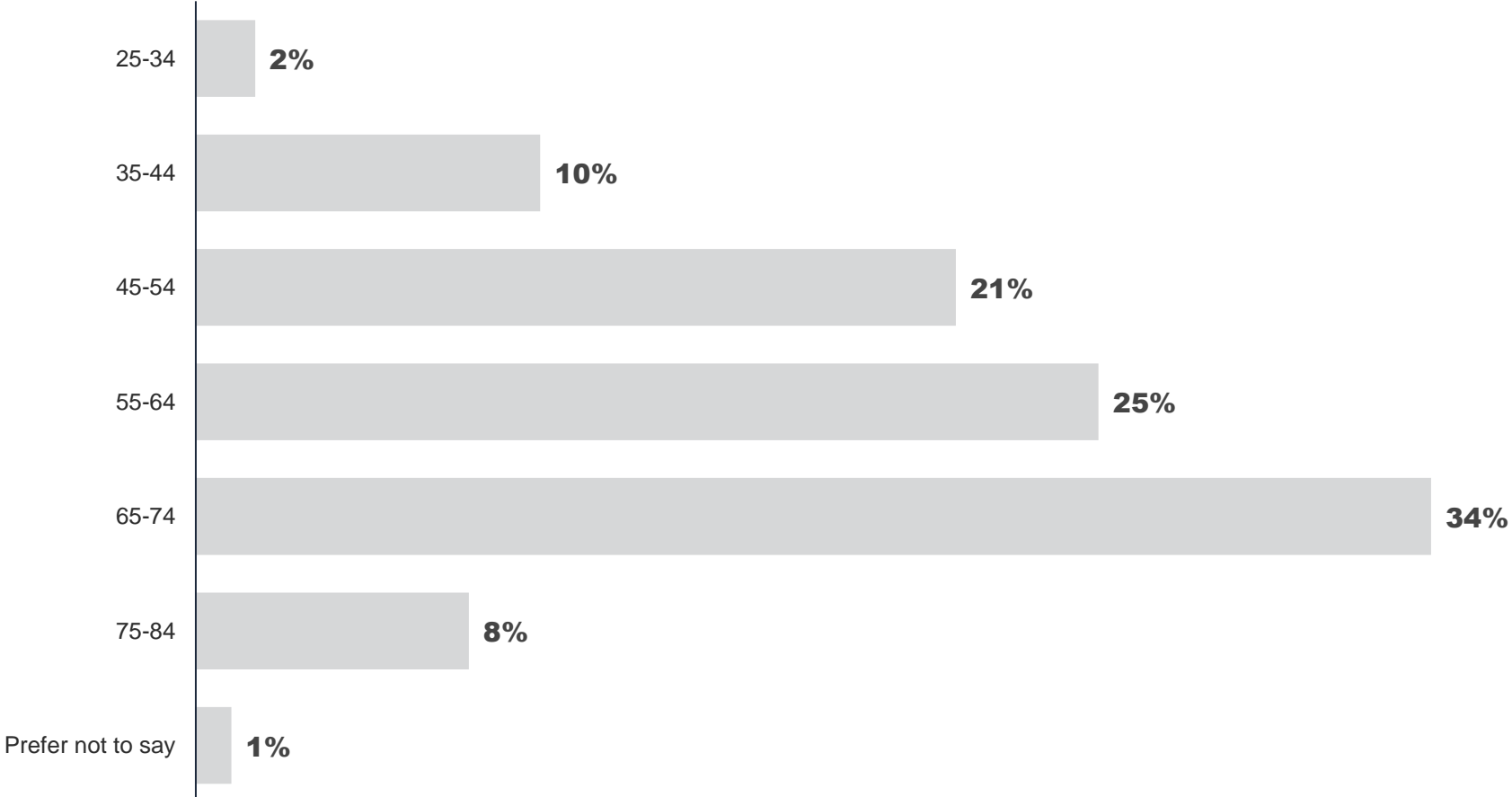
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Topline results

Views on EDI among Association of Chairs members

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Age

"How old are you?"

Age	%
25-34	2%
35-44	10%
45-54	21%
55-64	25%
65-74	34%
75-84	8%
Prefer not to say	1%

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Gender

Female **62%**

Male **36%**

In another way (Please specify) **1%**

Prefer not to say **1%**

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Sexual Orientation

"How would you describe your sexual orientation?"

Heterosexual or straight — **82%**

Gay or lesbian — **8%**

Prefer not to say — **6%**

Bisexual — **3%**

Sexual identify not listed (please specify) — **1%**

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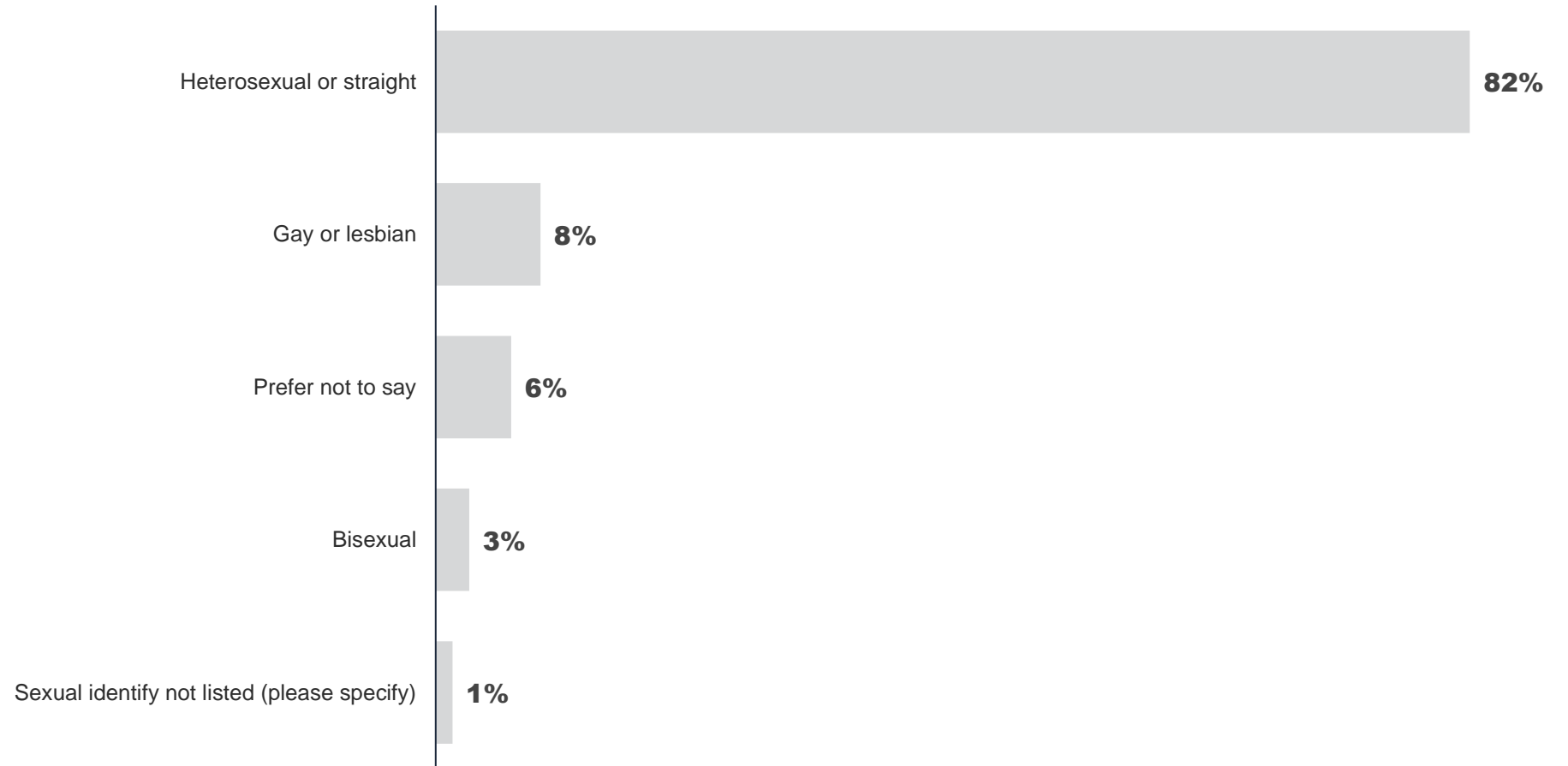
Education Level

"What is the highest level of formal education you have?"
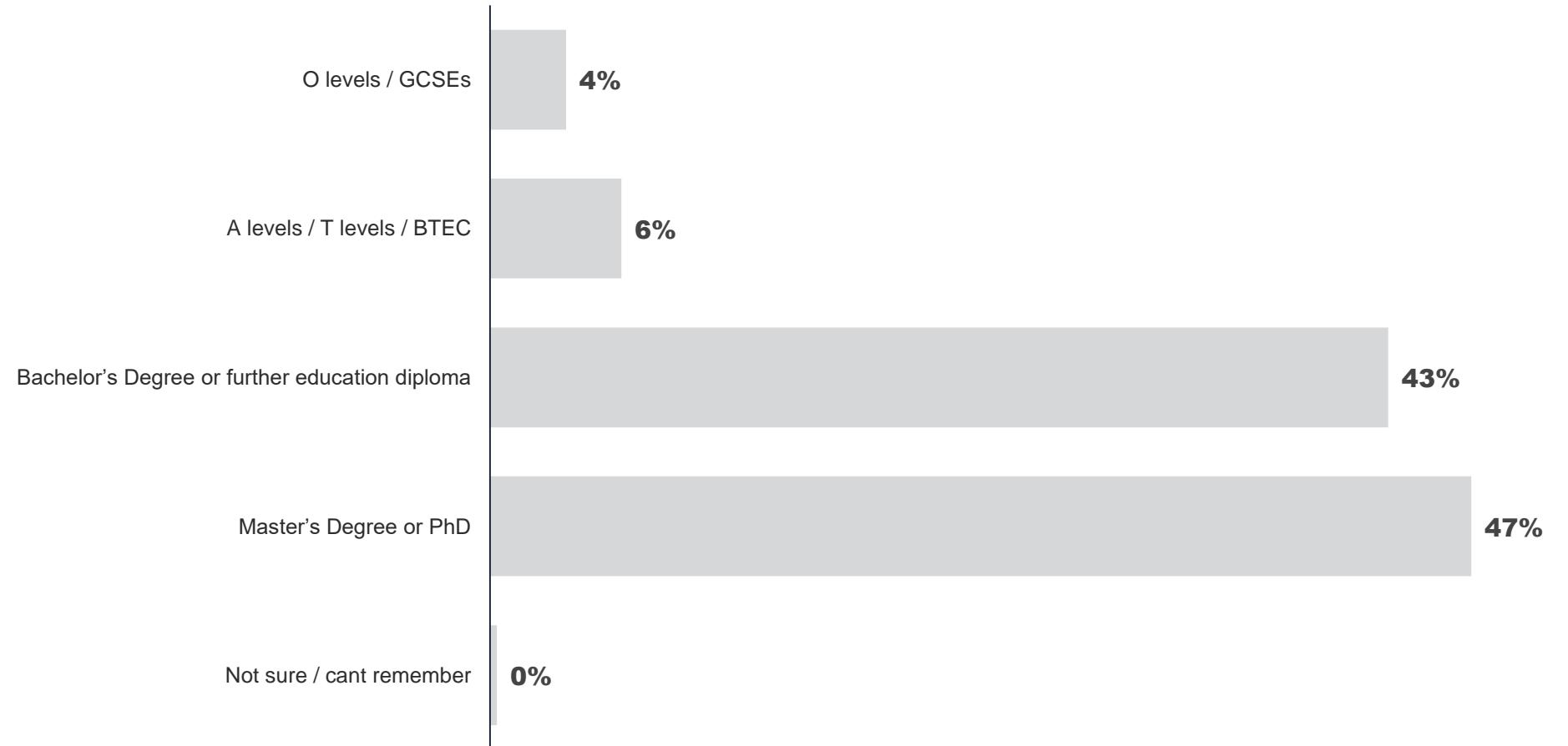
Education Level	Percentage
O levels / GCSEs	4%
A levels / T levels / BTEC	6%
Bachelor's Degree or further education diploma	43%
Master's Degree or PhD	47%
Not sure / cant remember	0%

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Education Type

State school(s) — **72%**

Private school(s) — **18%**

A mixture of state and private schools — **7%**

Mind your own business — **2%**

Not sure / can't remember — **1%**

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Housing background

Owner-occupied **81%**

State or housing association rented **12%**

Private rented **6%**

Not sure / can't remember **2%**

Source: Bespoke survey | Base: 304 respondents 16+, UK

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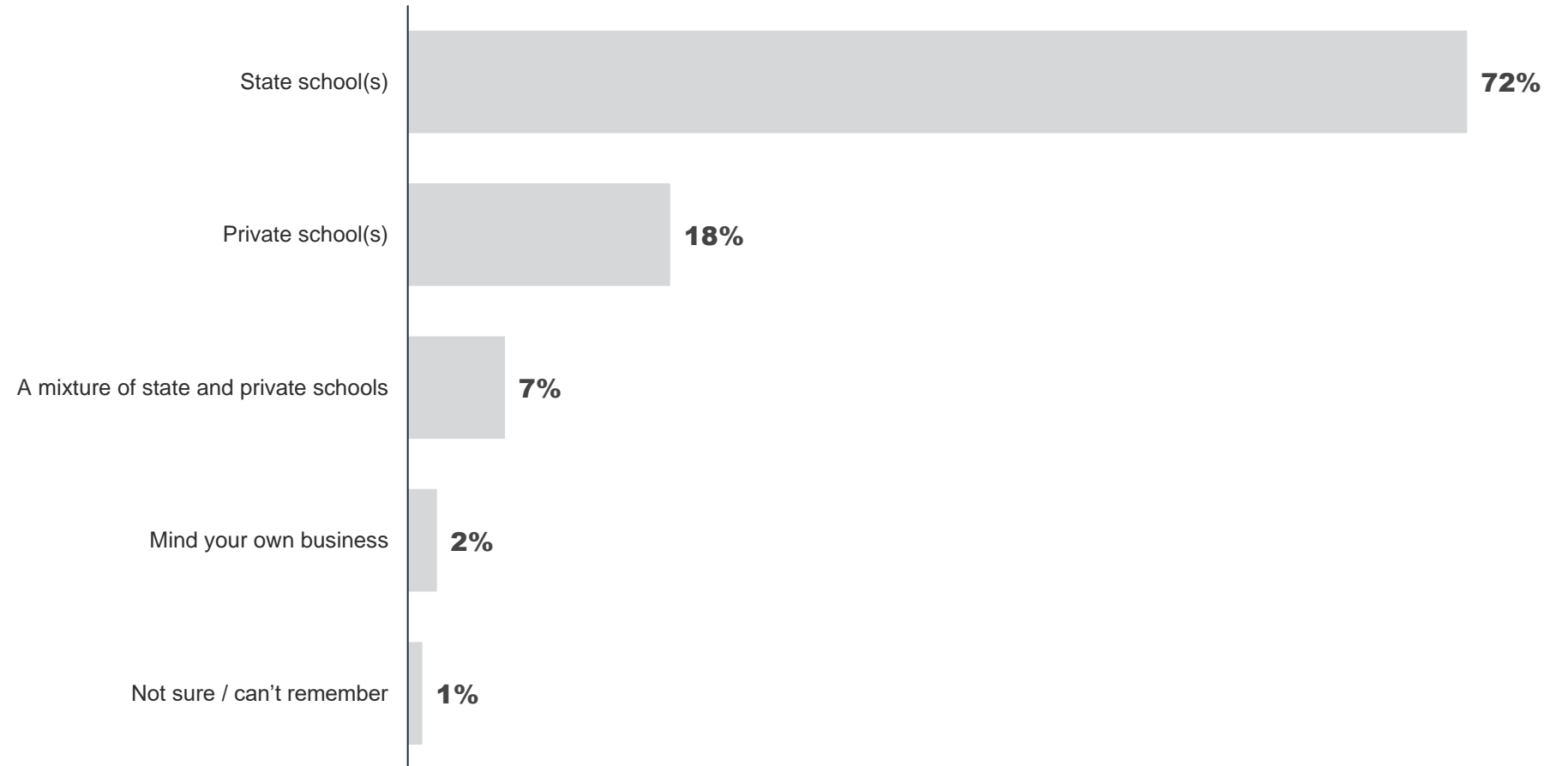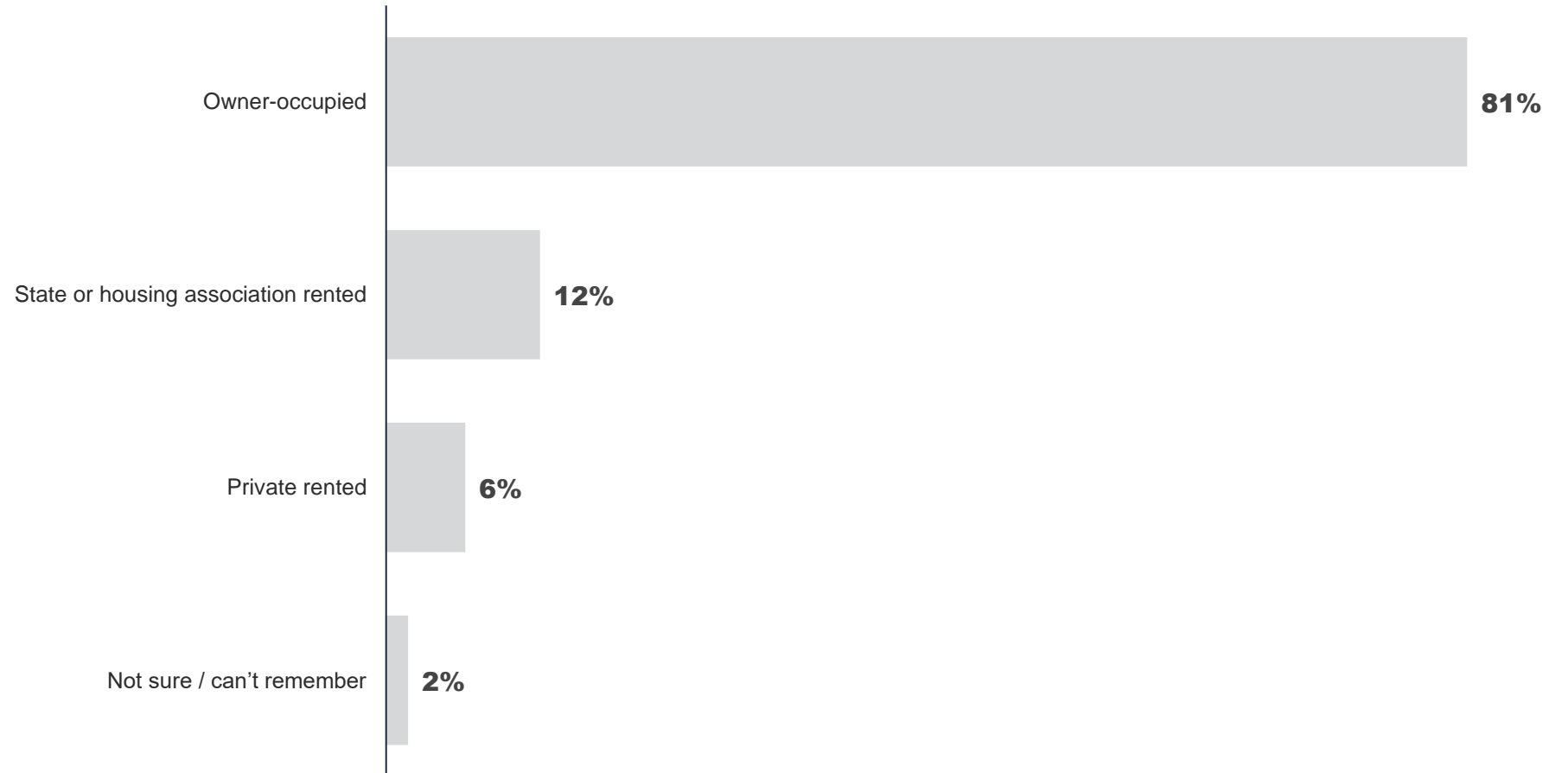
Ethnicity

"What is your ethnic group? Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background"

Ethnic group	%
White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	82%
Another White background (Please specify)	6%
Indian	3%
Black Caribbean	2%
White and Black Caribbean	2%
White Irish	1%
Pakistani	1%
Black African	1%
Another Mixed/Multiple ethnic background (Please specify)	0%
Bangladeshi	0%
Another Asian background (Please specify)	0%
Arab / British	0%
Latin American	0%
Prefer not to say	1%

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Disability

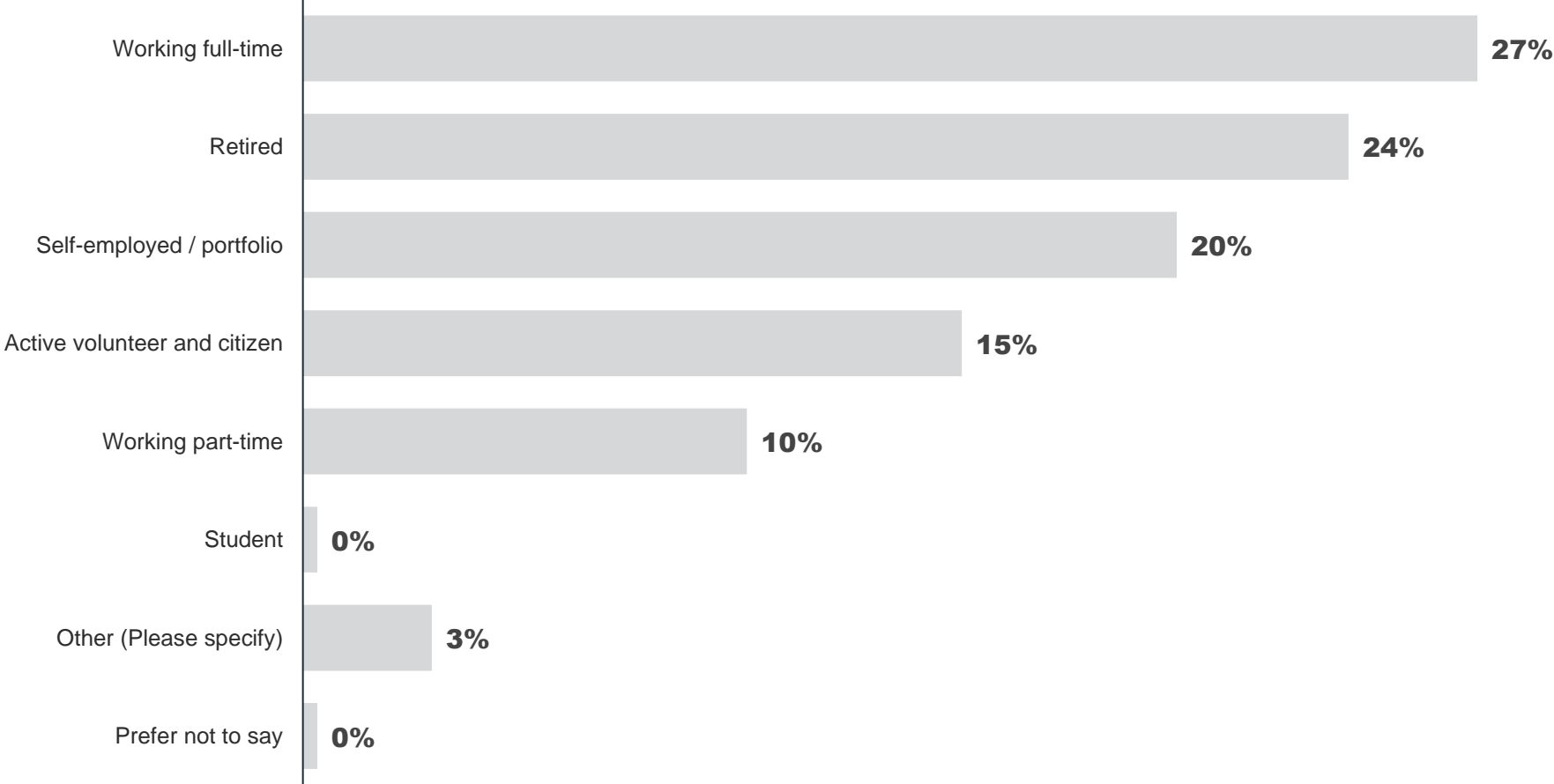"Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?"

Yes, limited a lot — **4%**

Yes, limited a little — **20%**

No — **76%**

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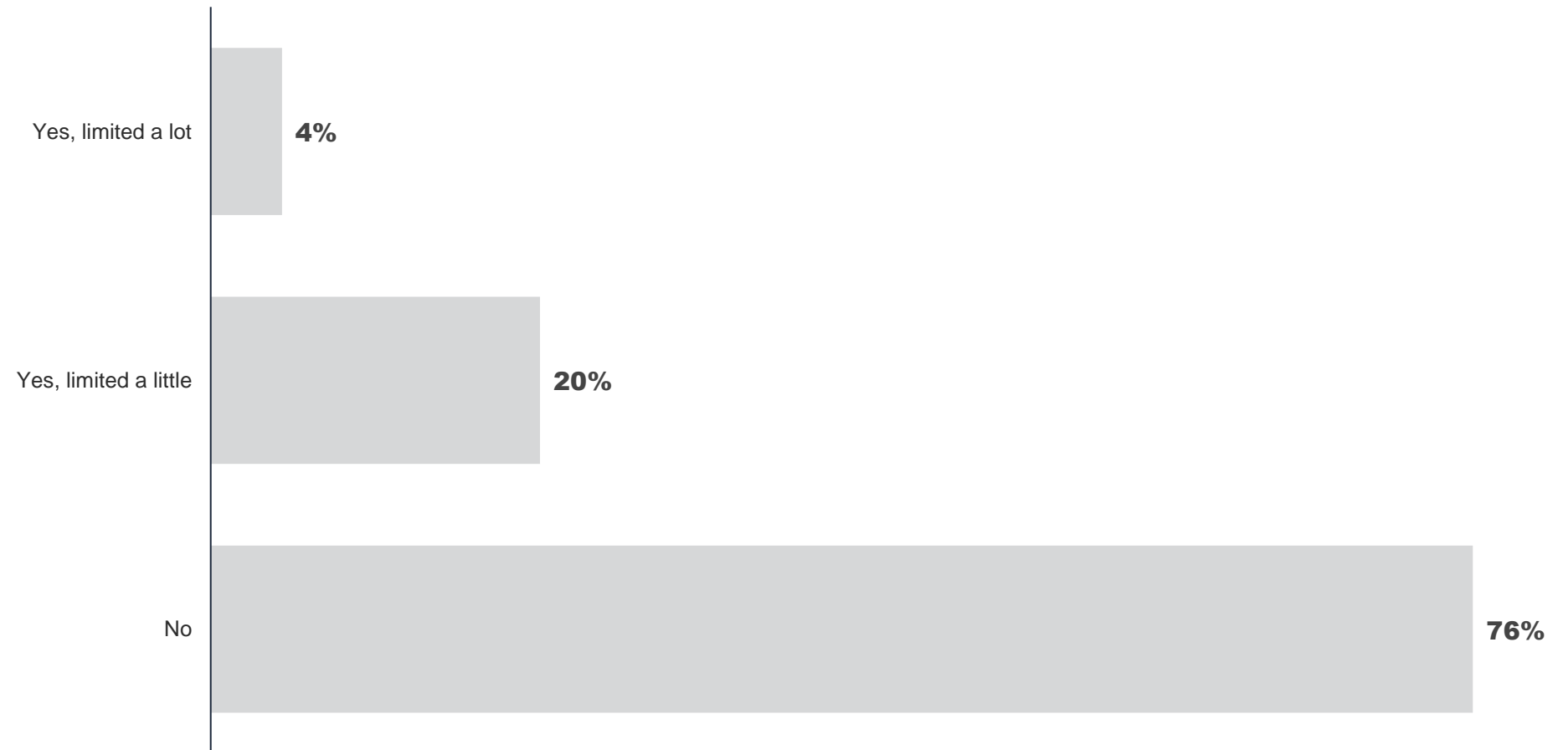
Working status

"How would you describe your working status?"

Working status	Percentage
Working full-time	27%
Retired	24%
Self-employed / portfolio	20%
Active volunteer and citizen	15%
Working part-time	10%
Student	0%
Other (Please specify)	3%
Prefer not to say	0%

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Region

Region	Percentage
London	21%
South East	18%
Yorkshire / Humberside	11%
South West	11%
North West	7%
East of England	7%
West Midlands	6%
North East	5%
East Midlands	4%
Wales	4%
Scotland	3%
Overseas/ Other	2%
Prefer not to say	1%

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Social media

"Which social media do you use on a regular basis? Tick all that apply"

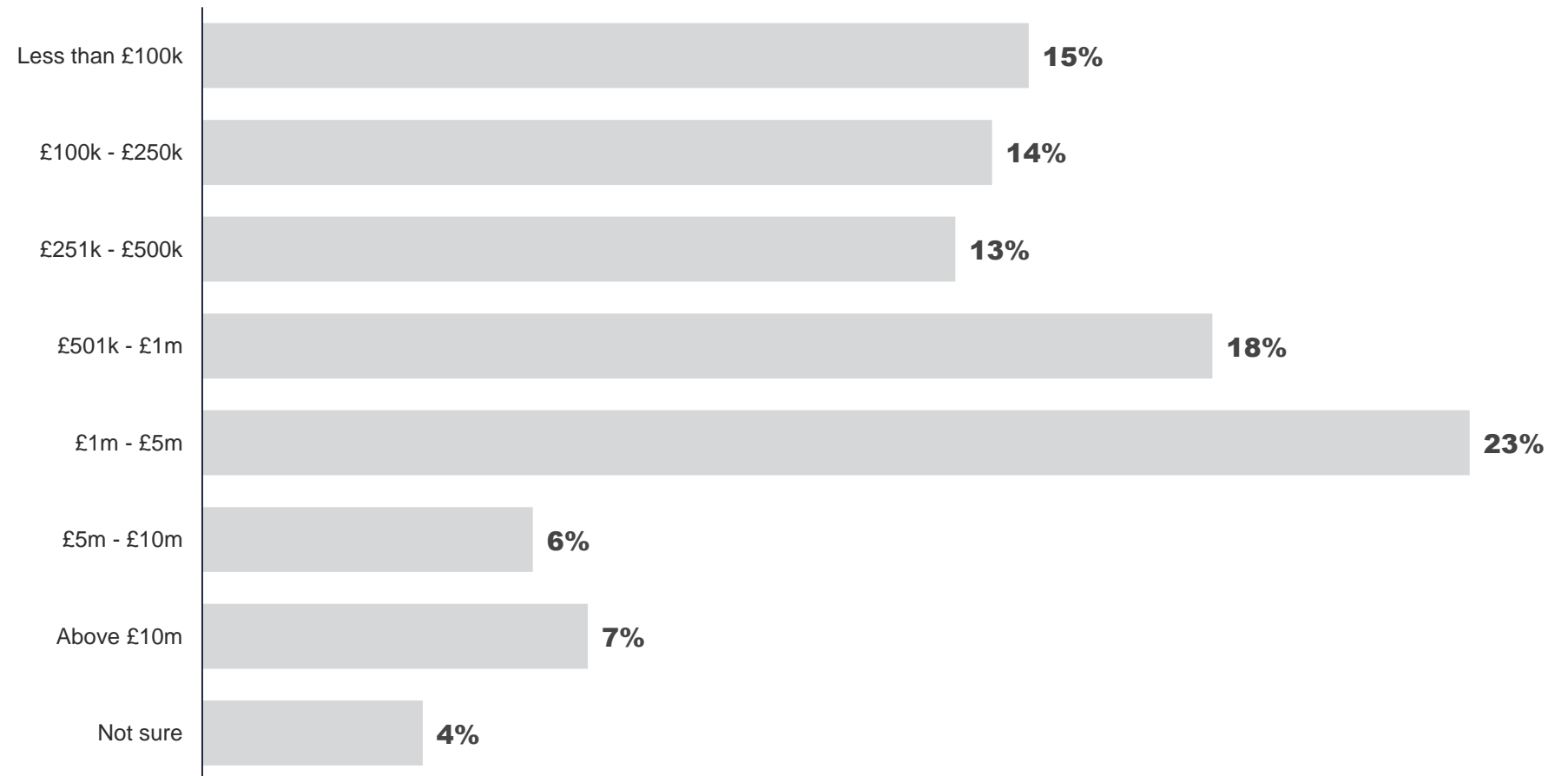|	
WhatsApp	80%
LinkedIn	67%
Facebook	50%
Instagram	31%
Twitter (Now X)	24%
TikTok	6%
Threads	4%
Prefer not to say	1%
None of the above	6%

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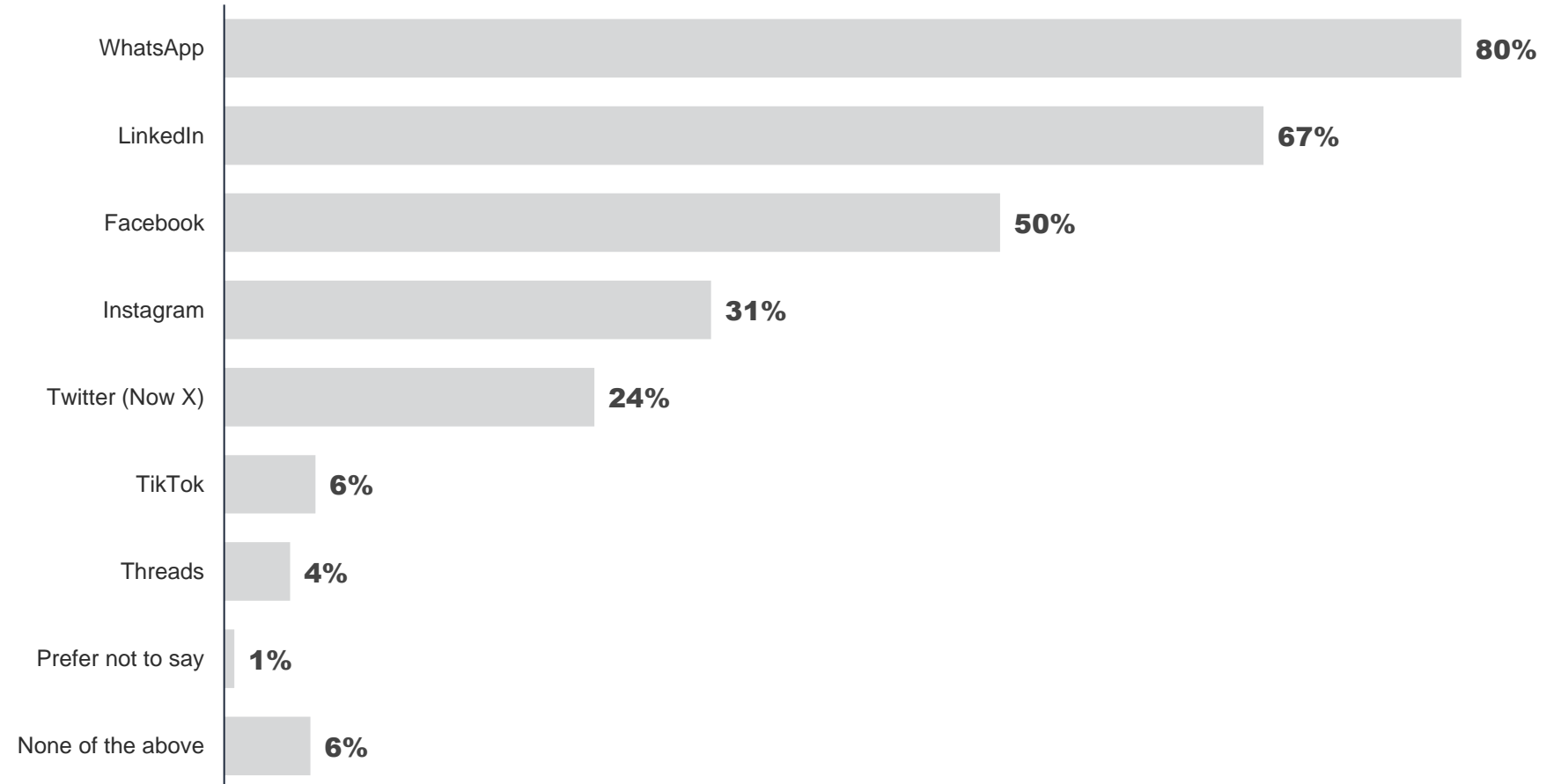
Sector

"Which sector does your organisation primarily operate in? Please select the most relevant option from the list below"

Sector	%
Health / medical including cancer & mental health	18%
Children & young people	13%
Arts, Museums & Heritage	10%
Community / school / education	8%
Disability	8%
Homelessness & social welfare including refugees	5%
Infrastructure	5%
Older people	4%
Grant-maker, funder	4%
Environment	3%
Faith / religious	2%
Overseas aid and development	2%
Animals	1%
Rescue services	0%
Other (Please specify)	14%
Hard to categorise	3%

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Organisational income

"What is your organisation's total annual income (approximately)?"

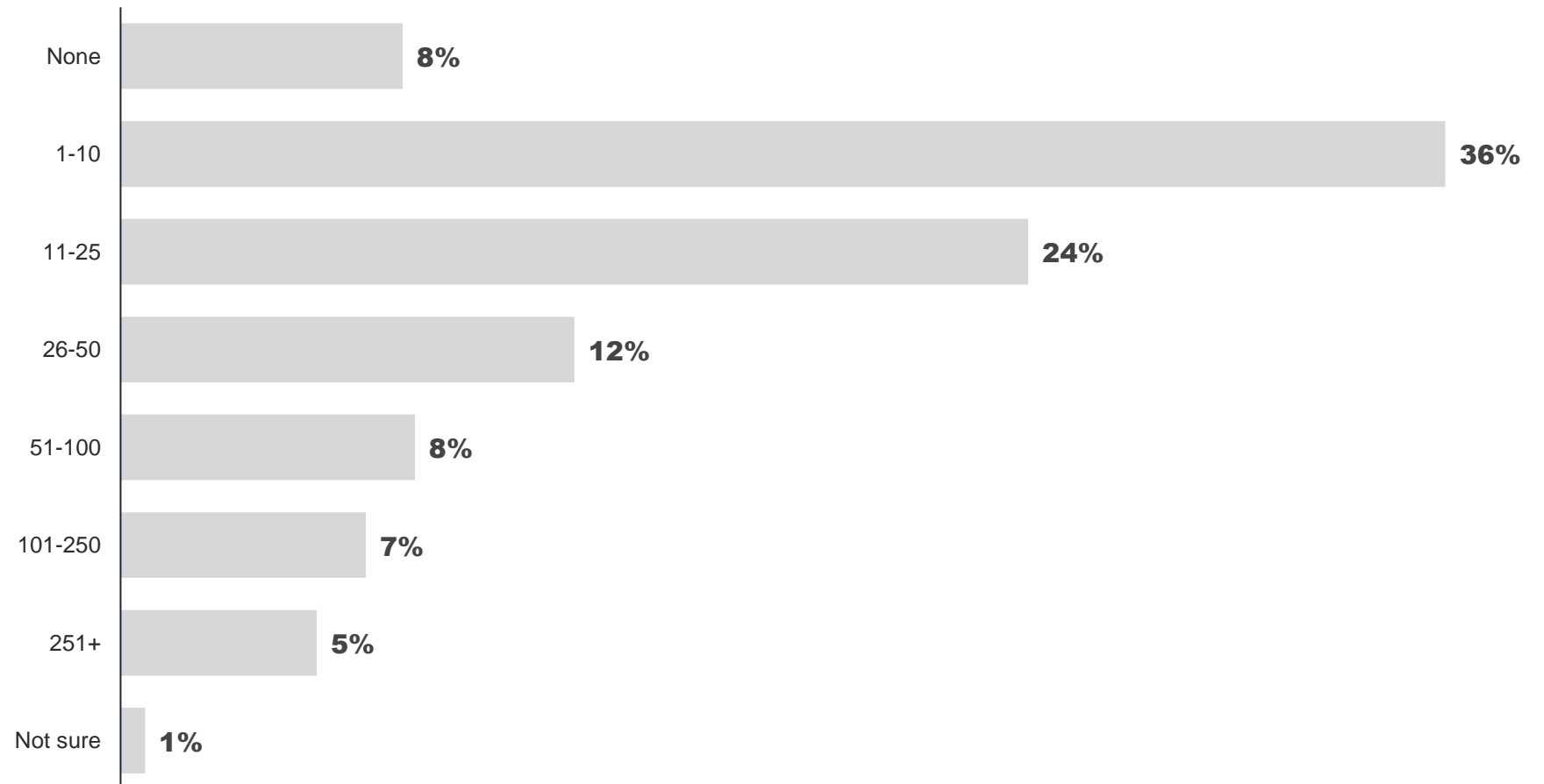| Income band	Percentage
Less than £100k	15%
£100k - £250k	14%
£251k - £500k	13%
£501k - £1m	18%
£1m - £5m	23%
£5m - £10m	6%
Above £10m	7%
Not sure	4%

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Region of operation

"In which region/country does your organisation primarily operate? Please tick the option that best applies"

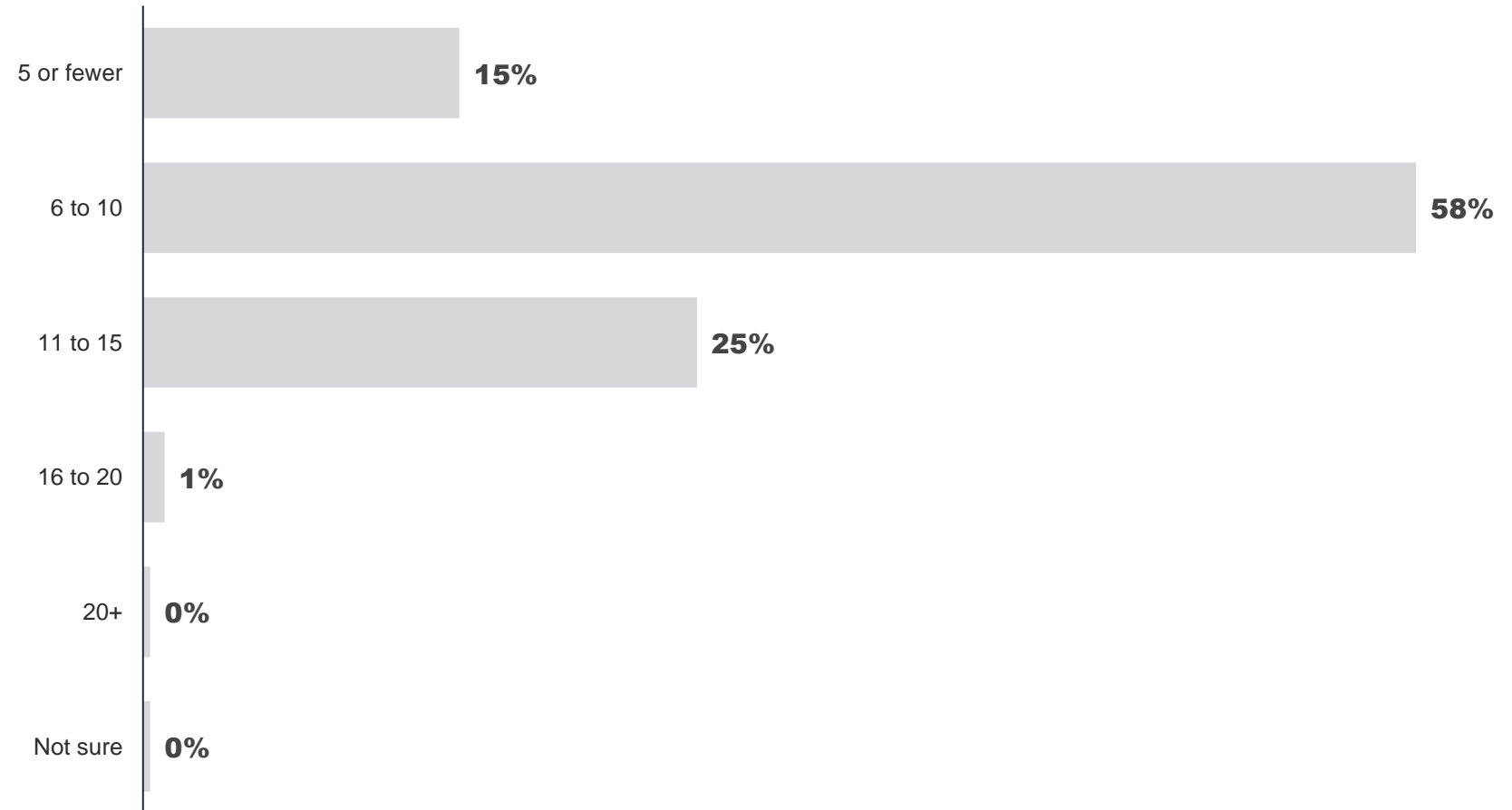England / England regions — 45%

A county /region/ area of the UK — 22%

UK wide — 21%

Wales — 3%

Scotland — 2%

Overseas — 2%

Other (Please specify) — 4%

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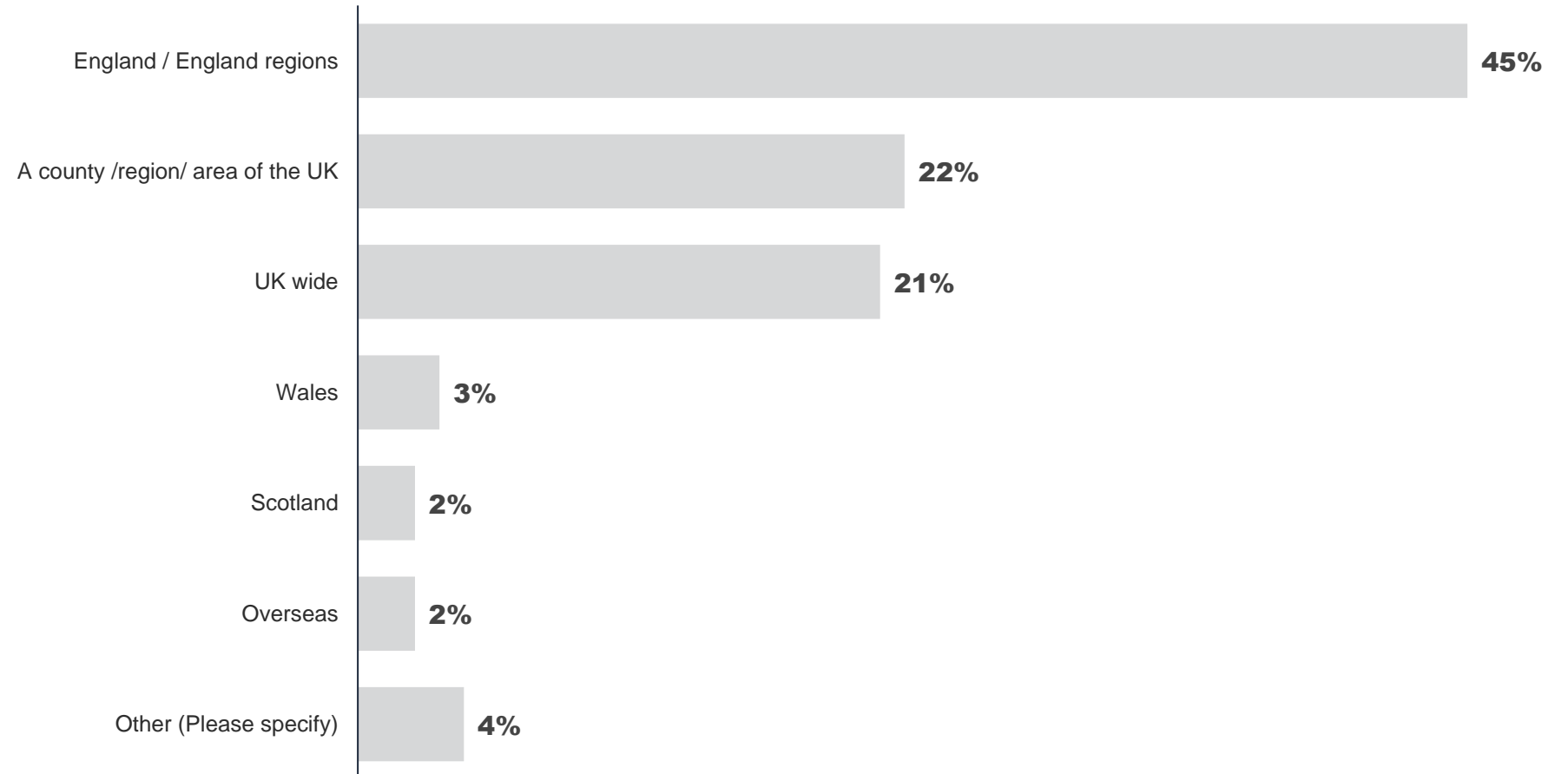
Staff numbers

"How many staff does your organisation have (roughly)? Please tick one"

Staff	Percentage
None	8%
1-10	36%
11-25	24%
26-50	12%
51-100	8%
101-250	7%
251+	5%
Not sure	1%

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Board size

"How many trustees does your board have?"

Response	Percentage
5 or fewer	15%
6 to 10	58%
11 to 15	25%
16 to 20	1%
20+	0%
Not sure	0%

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Volunteer numbers

Category	Percentage
None	16%
1-10	24%
11-25	15%
26-50	13%
51-100	9%
101-250	7%
251+	11%
Not sure	5%

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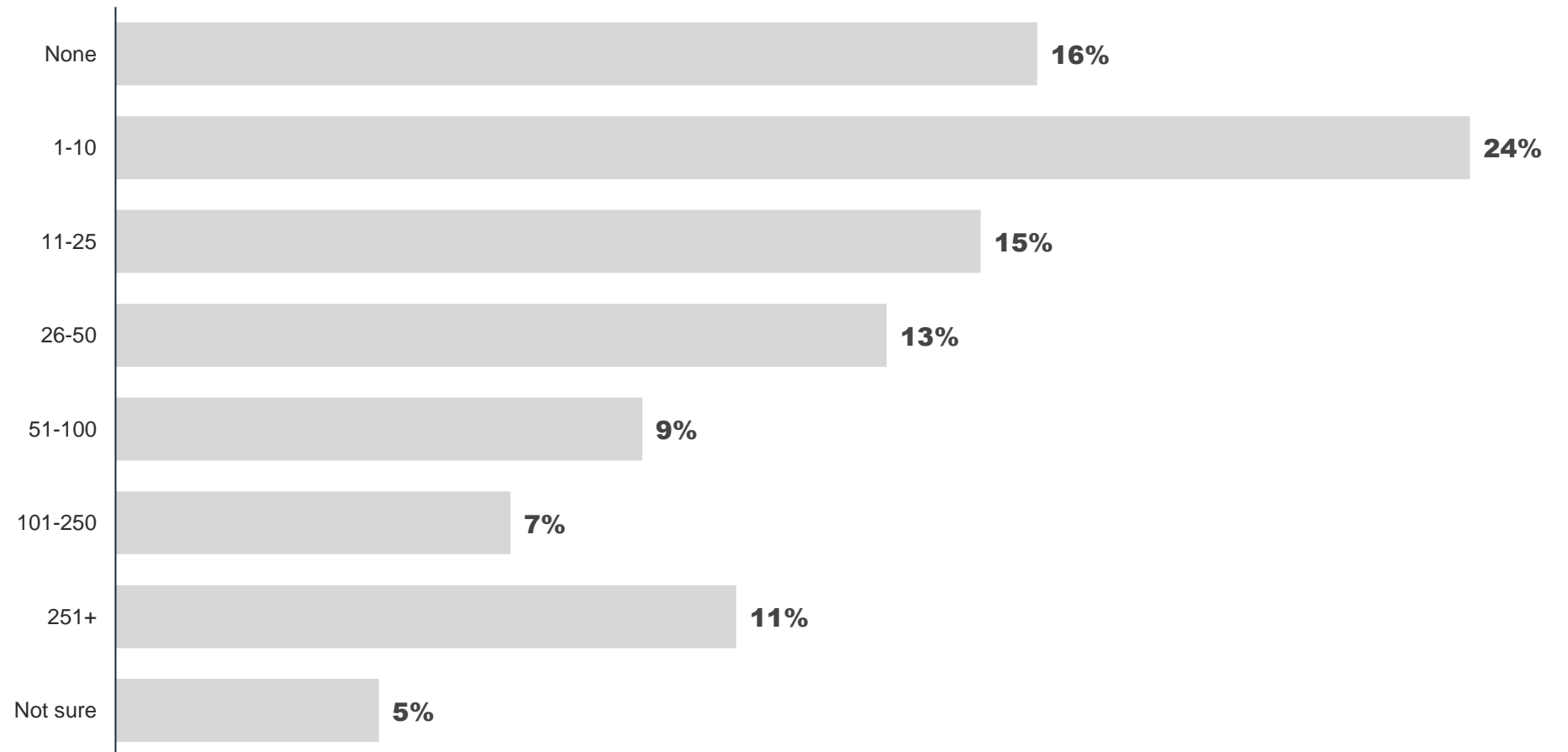
Organisation type

"Which description below best describes your organisation?"

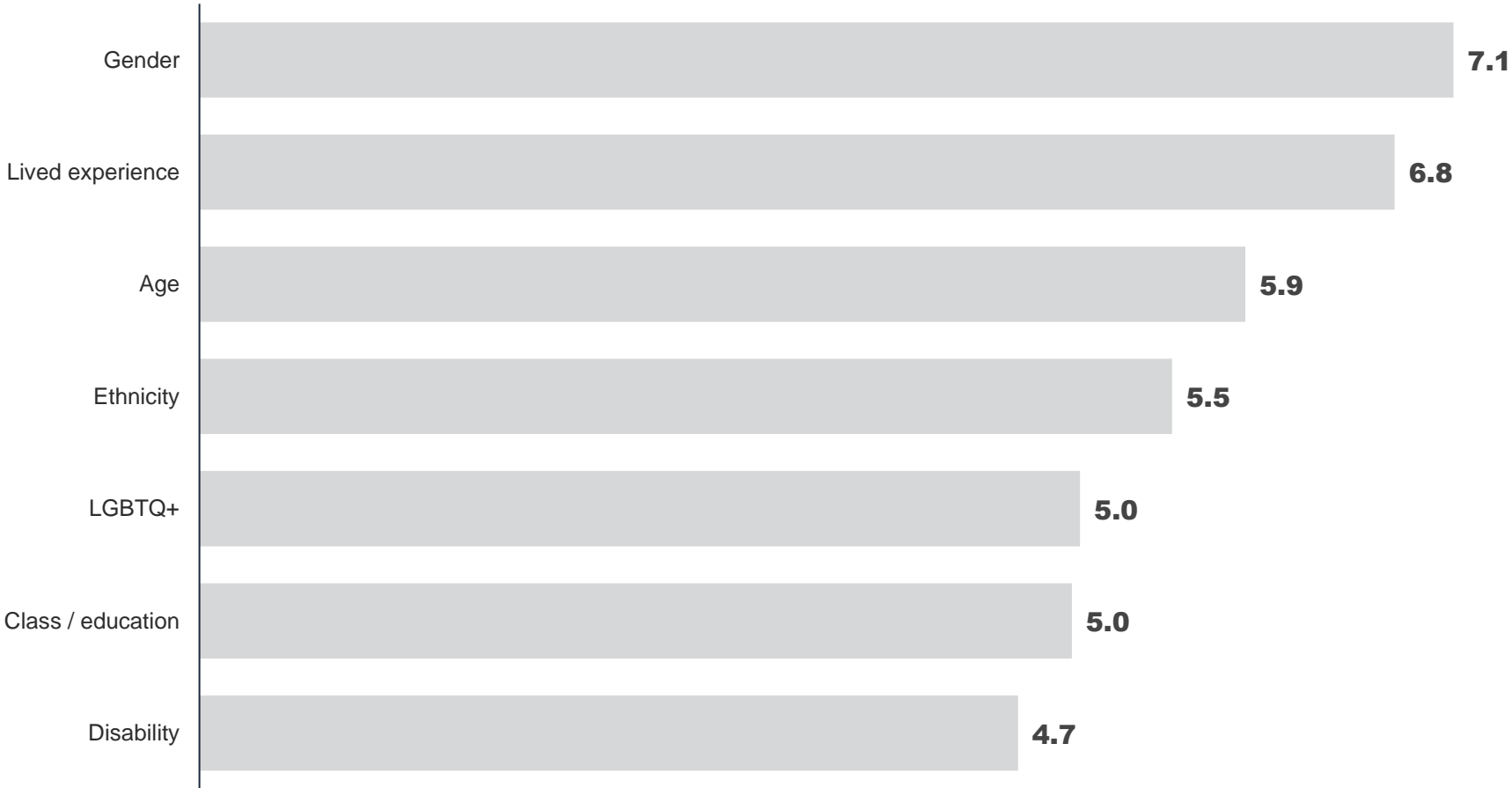| Organisation type	Percentage
Charity / Company limited by guarantee	56%
Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)	20%
Charitable Trust	15%
Community Interest Company	2%
Voluntary organisation	1%
Social enterprise	1%
Other (Please specify)	4%
Not sure	2%

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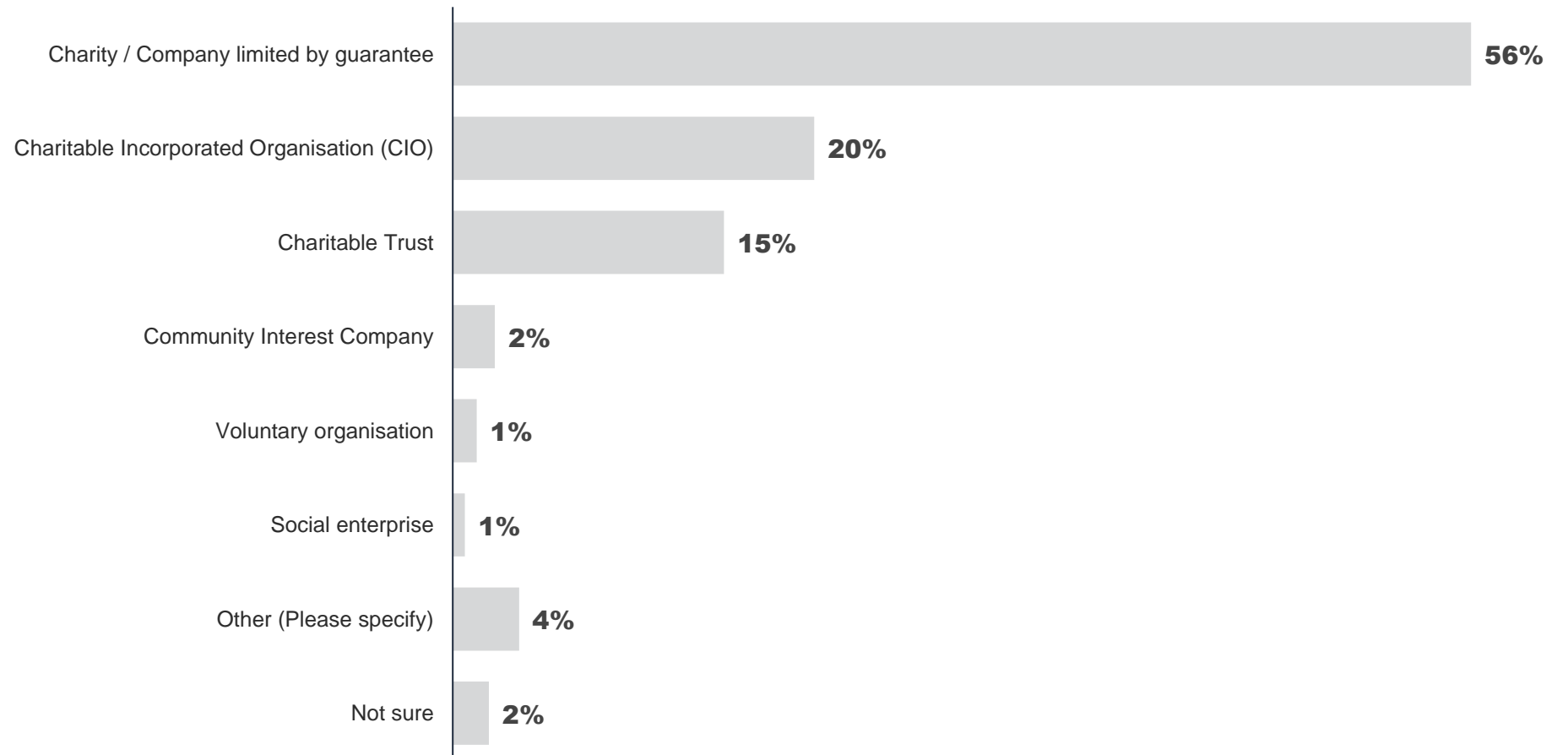
Priority areas

"Looking at the list below please indicate the priority your board has placed on addressing these areas of diversity and inclusion. This is just about the trustee board not any staff you may have. For each area indicate on a scale from 1 (no priority at all) to 10."

5.4

Area	Score
Lived experience	7.1
Ethnicity	6.4
Gender	6.1
Age	5.5
Disability	5.4
LGBTQ+	4.6
Class / education	4.6

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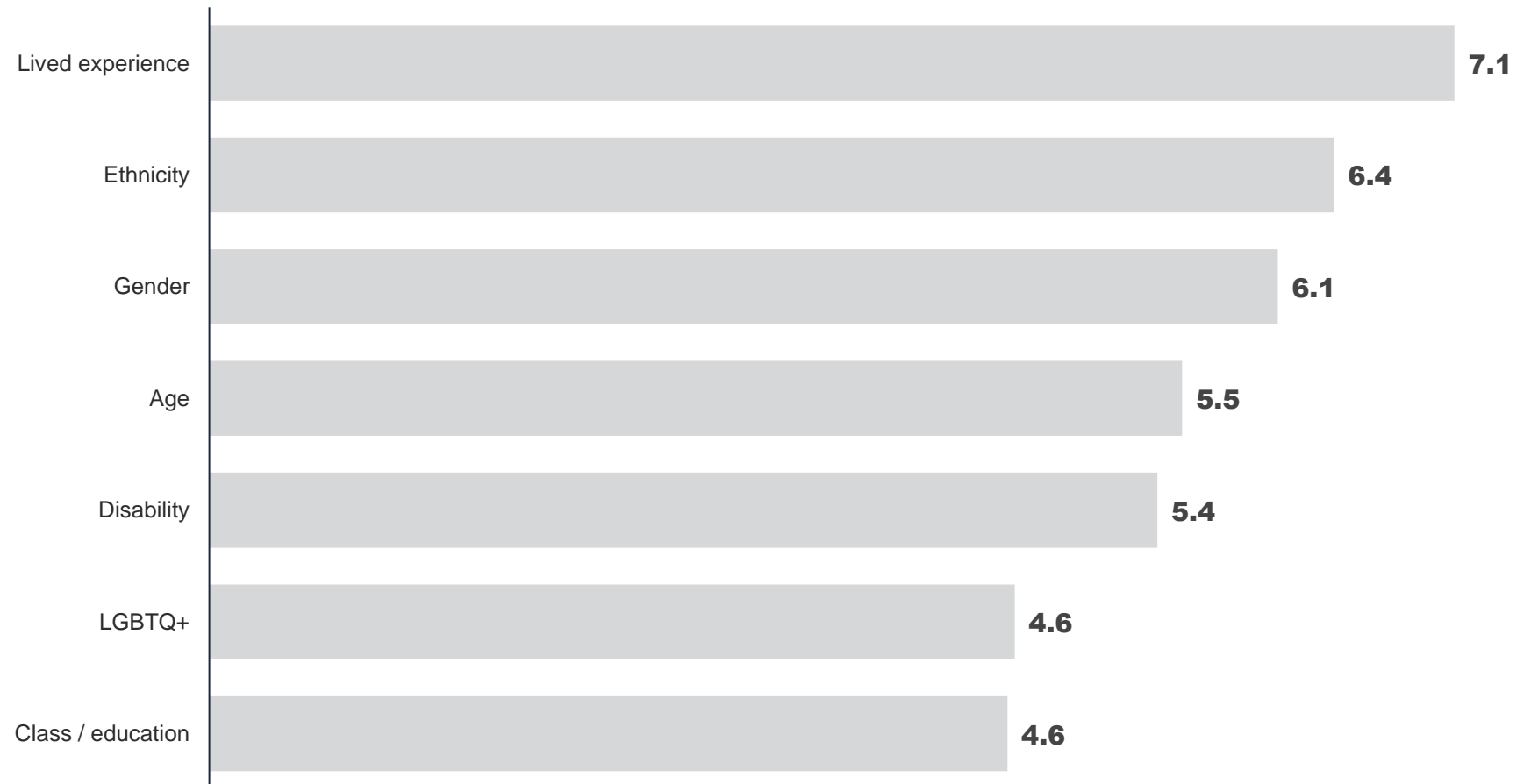
Areas of success

"Looking at the list below please indicate the success your board has had in addressing these areas of diversity and inclusion. This is just about the trustee board not any staff you may have. For each area indicate on a scale from 1 (no success at all) to 10."
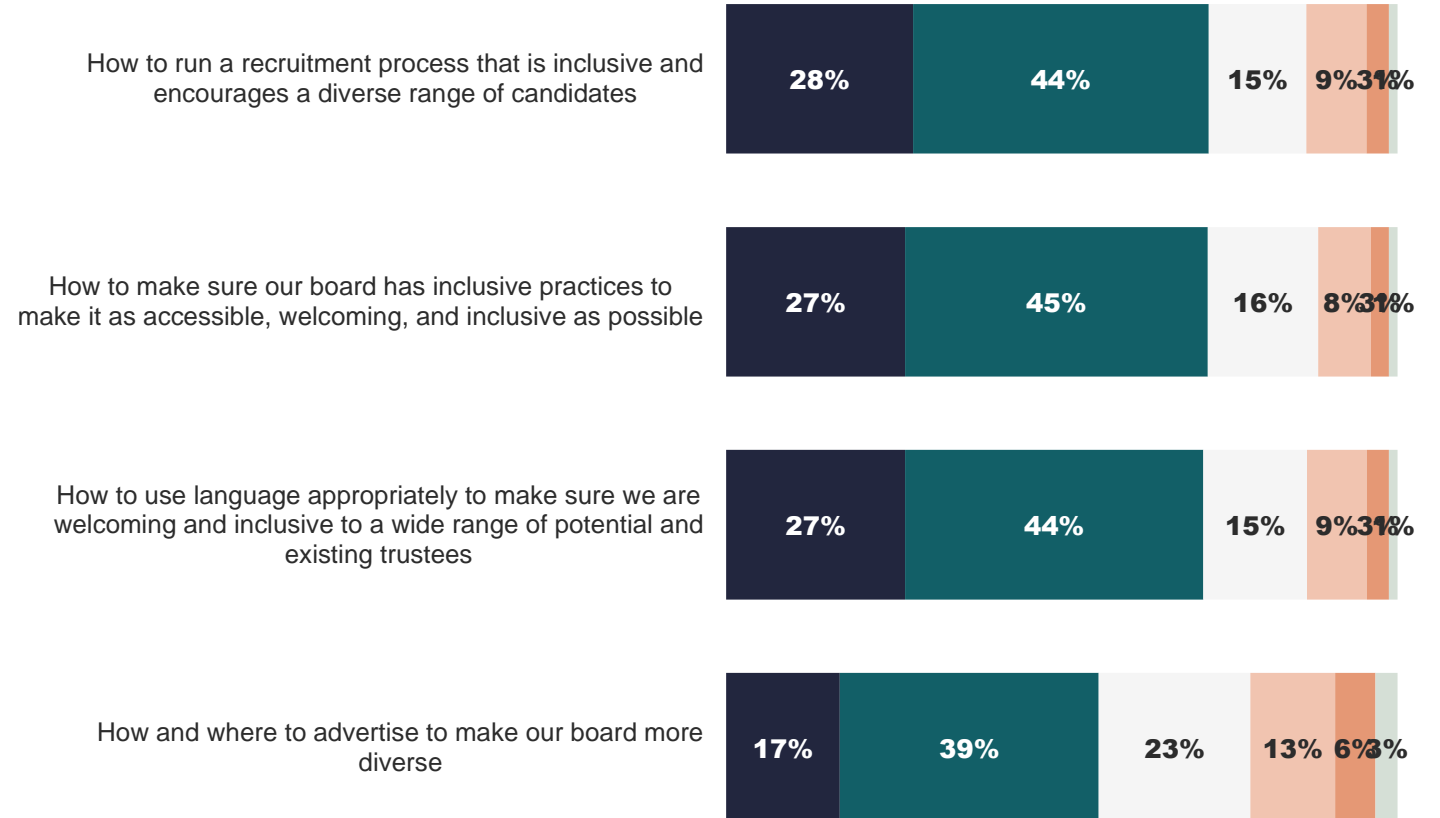
Area	Score
Gender	7.1
Lived experience	6.8
Age	5.9
Ethnicity	5.5
LGBTQ+	5.0
Class / education	5.0
Disability	4.7

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Confidence around EDI
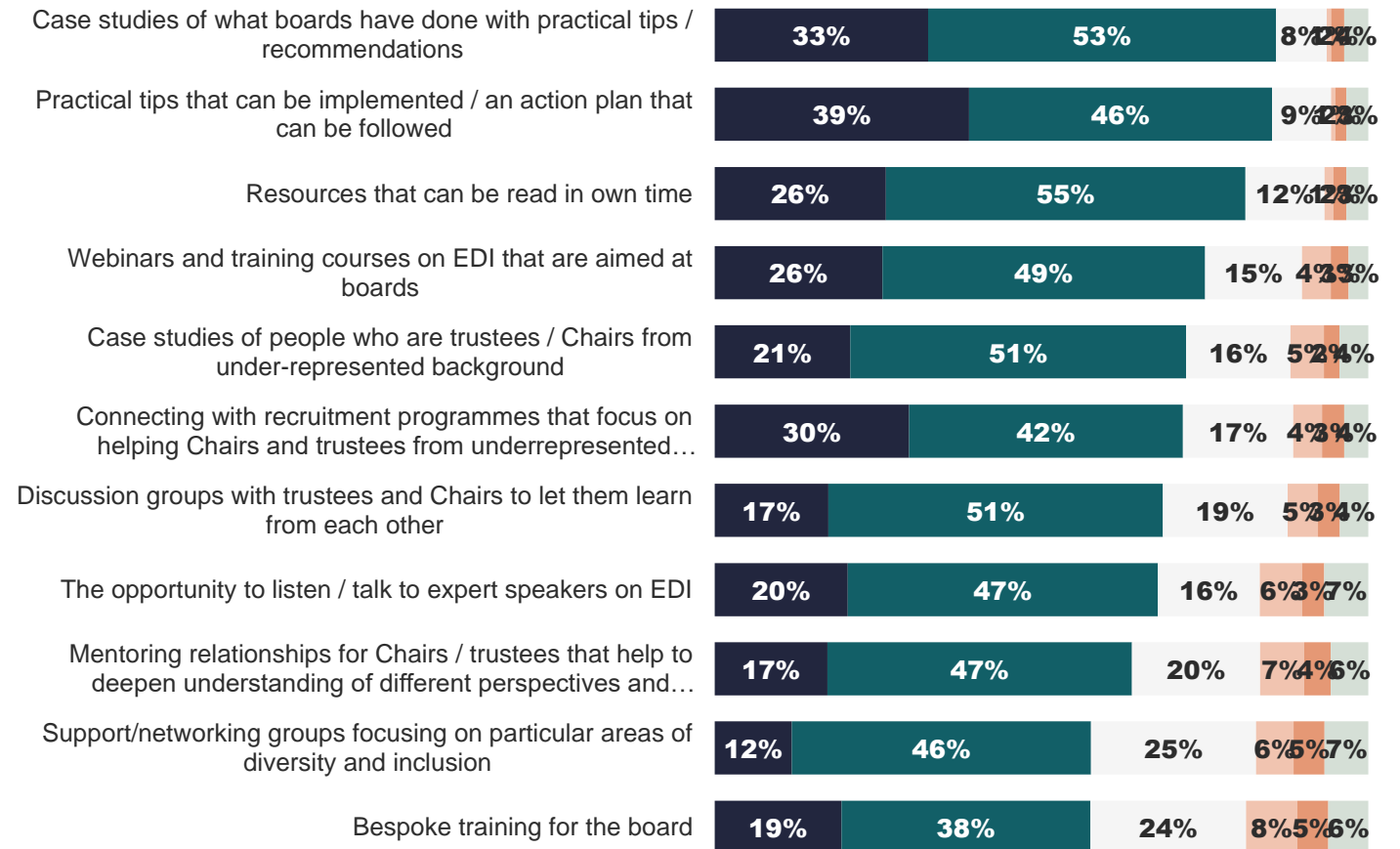
■ Very confident
■ Somewhat confident
☐ Neither unsure nor confident
■ Somewhat unsure
■ Very unsure
■ Not sure / Dont know

How to run a recruitment process that is inclusive and encourages a diverse range of candidates

| 28% | 44% | 15% | 9% | 3% | 1% |

How to make sure our board has inclusive practices to make it as accessible, welcoming, and inclusive as possible

| 27% | 45% | 16% | 8% | 3% | 1% |

How to use language appropriately to make sure we are welcoming and inclusive to a wide range of potential and existing trustees

| 27% | 44% | 15% | 9% | 3% | 1% |

How and where to advertise to make our board more diverse

| 17% | 39% | 23% | 13% | 6% | 3% |

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Types of EDI support

Legend:
- ■ Very useful
- ■ Useful
- □ Neither useful nor not useful
- ■ Not very useful
- ■ Not at all useful
- ■ Not sure

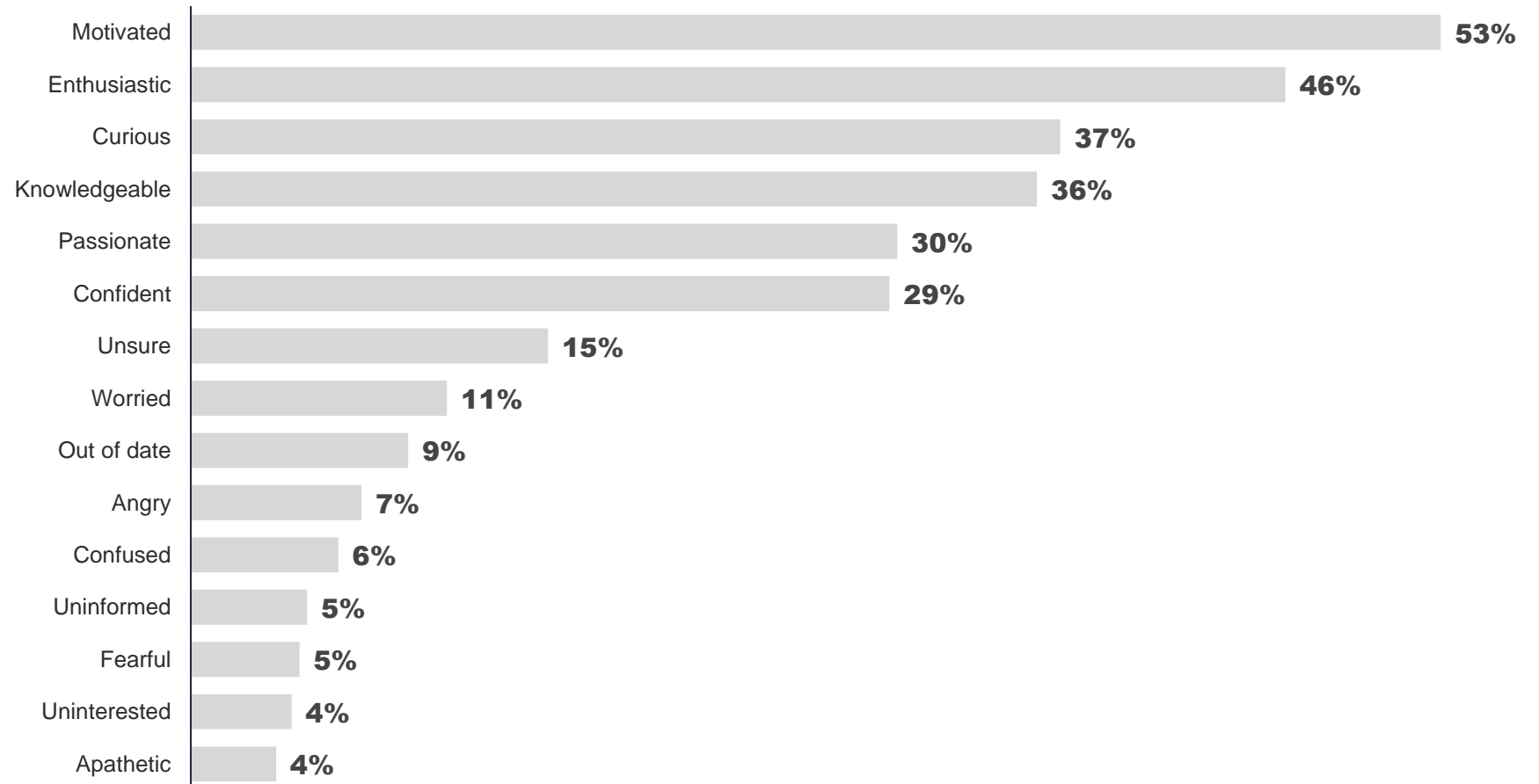| Support type	Very useful	Useful	Neither	Not very useful	Not at all useful	Not sure
Case studies of what boards have done with practical tips / recommendations	33%	53%	8%			
Practical tips that can be implemented / an action plan that can be followed	39%	46%	9%			
Resources that can be read in own time	26%	55%	12%			
Webinars and training courses on EDI that are aimed at boards	26%	49%	15%	4%		
Case studies of people who are trustees / Chairs from under-represented background	21%	51%	16%	5%		
Connecting with recruitment programmes that focus on helping Chairs and trustees from underrepresented…	30%	42%	17%	4%		
Discussion groups with trustees and Chairs to let them learn from each other	17%	51%	19%	5%		
The opportunity to listen / talk to expert speakers on EDI	20%	47%	16%	6%	3%	7%
Mentoring relationships for Chairs / trustees that help to deepen understanding of different perspectives and…	17%	47%	20%	7%	4%	6%
Support/networking groups focusing on particular areas of diversity and inclusion	12%	46%	25%	6%	5%	7%
Bespoke training for the board	19%	38%	24%	8%	5%	6%

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Personal view of EDI

"With regards to equity, diversity and inclusion generally, which of the following statements best sums up how you feel?"

I know some things, but there are areas I would like to improve on and deepen my understanding — **59%**

I feel very knowledgeable, well informed, and confident speaking with others about this — **29%**

I don't feel confident about EDI – I feel unsure about quite a lot of things and worried about offending people or saying the wrong thing — **6%**

EDI is not a priority or interest for me — **4%**

I am new to concepts like EDI and I don't know much / anything about it — **1%**

Not sure / Can't decide — **1%**

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Emotional response to EDI

"How do you feel about EDI personally? Please pick any that apply."

Emotion	Percentage
Motivated	53%
Enthusiastic	46%
Curious	37%
Knowledgeable	36%
Passionate	30%
Confident	29%
Unsure	15%
Worried	11%
Out of date	9%
Angry	7%
Confused	6%
Uninformed	5%
Fearful	5%
Uninterested	4%
Apathetic	4%

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Barriers to inclusion experience

Your wider personal or professional life outside of your charity board experience

| 28% | 22% | 17% | 17% | 14% 1% |

■ Yes definitely
■ Yes occasionally
□ Yes a little bit
■ Not really
■ Not at all
■ Not sure / Don't know
■ Prefer not to say
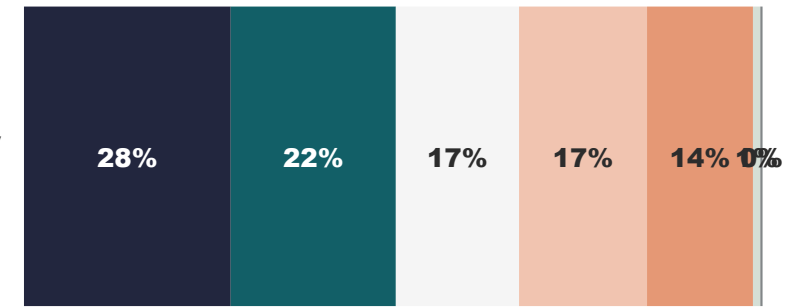
Being on a trustee on charity boards

| 14% | 15% | 11% | 26% | 30% | 3% |

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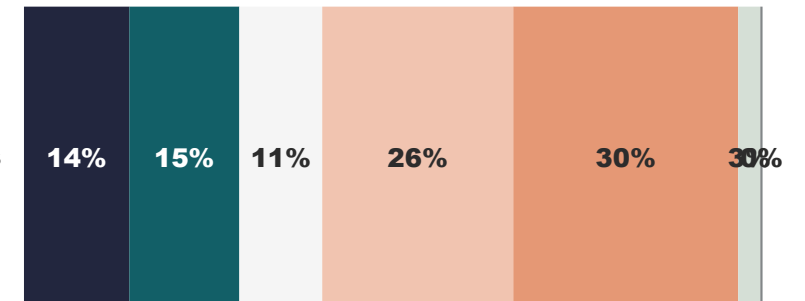
02

Segmentation results

Four different kinds of respondents to the survey

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We identified four segments

Sceptics
13%

Learners
34%

Confident
22%

Super enthusiasts
31%

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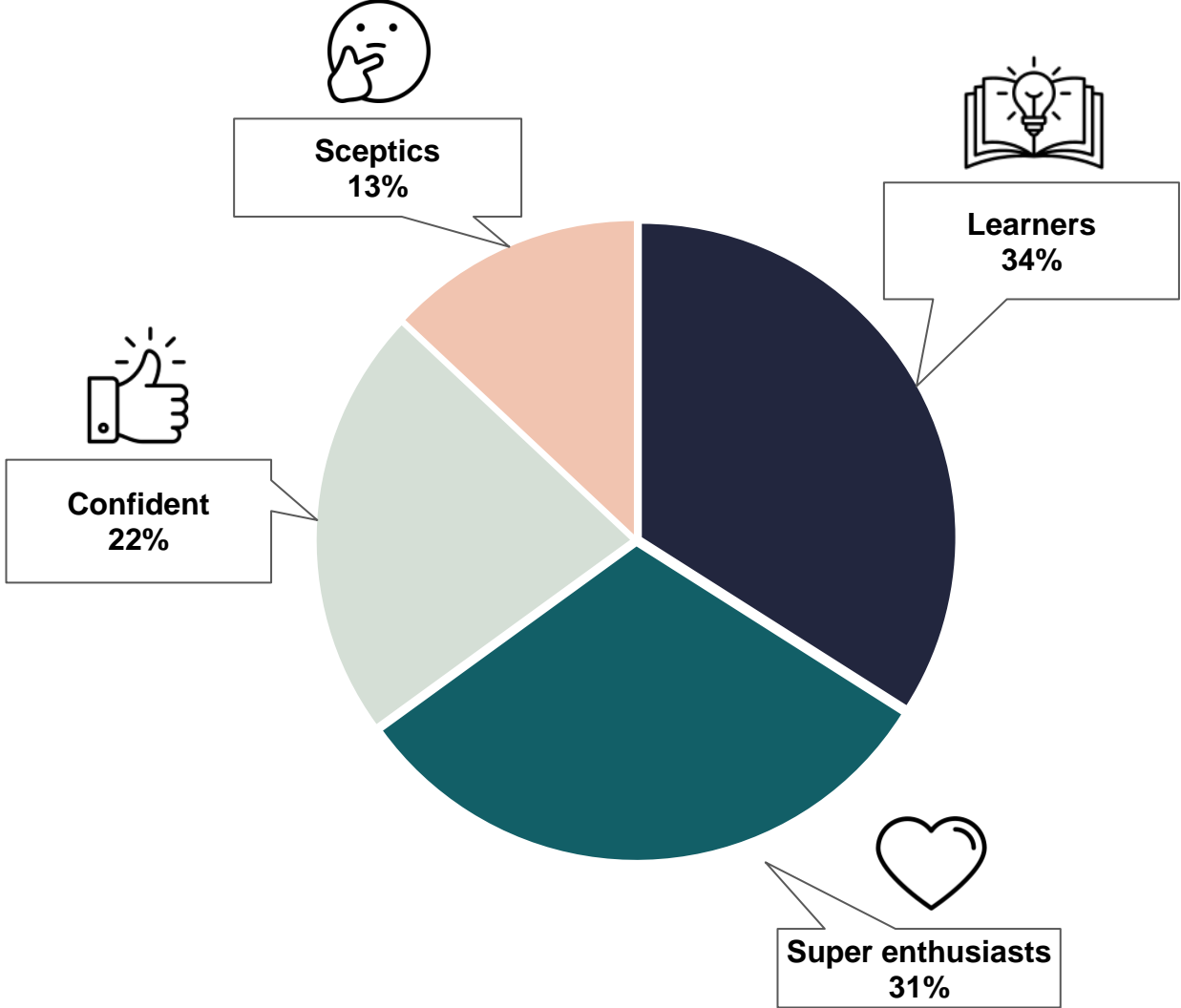
Learners

| Overview:
Size of segment: 34%

Demographics:
• 38% are under 54; 60% are over 55

Organisation
• 65% have annual income under £1m
• 33% operate in a specific county/region/area of the UK
• 40% have 1 to 10 trustees | Mindset:
• This group know some things about EDI, but there are areas they would like to improve on and deepen their understanding
• This group feels more unsure, out of date and uninformed about EDI than other segments and generally less confident about how to do EDI practices on their board
• However, they also feel more curious about EDI than other segments and are looking for lots of support to help their board with EDI

Board:
• The board has placed the most priority on addressing lived experience, and the least on LGBTQ+
• They don't feel like their board has had much success in addressing areas of diversity and inclusion |

Learners

75%

Say they know some things, but there are areas they would like to improve on and deepen their understanding

35%

Are confident with how to make sure the board has inclusive practices to make it as accessible, welcoming and inclusive as possible

96%

Would like case studies of what other boards have done with practical tips and recommendations

"

I have been leading on EDI for the board. I find that trustees and the CEO are very open to the idea. However, we're missing some practical guidance on how to do it.

"

Easy to focus on the simple to describe metrics e.g. age/ethnicity. Hard to focus on lived experience as we do not have a clear definition. Also, cannot find any training on EDI that is suitable for the board. It all seems to be a full day which is too much for us to ask our team to do annually.

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Super enthusiasts ♡

Overview:

Size of segment: 31%

Demographics:
- 42% are under 54; 57% are over 55
- Less likely to be retired
- 29% live in London

Organisation
- 29% have annual income £1m - £5m
- 63% have 6 to 10 trustees
- 61% are a Charity / Company limited by guarantee

Experience:
- This group is the most likely to have experienced barriers to inclusion in their wider personal or professional life outside of their charity board experience and being a trustee on charity boards

Mindset:
- This group feels the most knowledgeable about EDI. It is a mix of people who feel very knowledgeable, well informed and confident speaking with others about EDI or who know some things about EDI but there are areas where they would like to improve on and deepen their understanding
- They feel motivated, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, passionate and confident about EDI
- They are very confident about how to do EDI practices on their board, however, they are also very enthusiastic about all types of support to help their board with EDI

Board:
- This group feels their board has placed high priority on addressing all areas of diversity and inclusion
- They feel like their board has had a high level of success in addressing many areas of diversity and inclusion

Super enthusiasts ♡

60%
have experienced barriers to inclusion in their wider personal or professional life outside of their charity board experience

40%
have experienced barriers to inclusion being a trustee on charity boards

47%
Say they feel knowledgeable, well informed and confident speaking with others about EDI

" We analysed the sorts of diversity that we needed and then sought candidates from more diverse backgrounds…we now have 10 of 15 (66%) [people from diverse groups]

" This is a charity for disabled people that is run (trustee wise) by disabled people and that lived experience flows into the daily work of the organisation. Whilst not all staff have disabilities, they are acutely aware of the issues associated with it and other EDI issues, taking every opportunity to work with fellow EDI stakeholder organisations.

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Confident 👍

Overview:	Mindset:
Size of segment: 22%	• This group feels the second most knowledgeable about EDI, after the Super enthusiasts. It is a mix of people who feel very knowledgeable, well informed and confident speaking with others about EDI or who know some things about EDI but there are areas where they would like to improve on and deepen their understanding
Demographics:	• They are confident about EDI practices but feel less passionate, enthusiastic and curious about EDI than Learners and Super enthusiasts
• 17% are under 54; 82% are over 55	• This group is motivated but less likely to think the suggested support on EDI would be helpful to them
• 56% have Master's Degree/ PhD	• They are more interested in practical support e.g. case studies from other boards, action plan to follow, connecting with recruitment programmes. They are less interested in general information e.g. webinars and training courses, discussion groups, talks, networking groups
• 89% grew up in an owner–occupied house	
Organisation	
• 26% have annual income £1m - £5m	
• 59% operate across England/ England regions	
• 11% have over 250 staff	
• 65% are a Charity / Company limited by guarantee	
	Board:
Experience:	• This group feels their board has placed a fair amount of priority on addressing all areas of diversity and inclusion
• This group is the least likely to have experienced barriers to being a trustee on charity boards	• They feel like their board has had a fair level of success in addressing many areas of diversity and inclusion

Confident 👍

100%
Are confident with how to make sure the board has inclusive practices to make it as accessible, welcoming and inclusive as possible

over 78%
Would like case studies of what other boards have done, practical tips/ action plans and resources that can be read in their own time

> "
> We have adopted an EDI strategy and are conscious of it in all we do. Has been easier to diversify in terms of age and ethnicity than disability and lived experience (working with those who have serious or long term health conditions makes it difficult to engage with those groups as trustees, although we aim to make sure they are heard in other ways in the organisation)

> "
> In my Board role as Chair, we have struggled, not because of want of trying but when advertising and using search agents, they just don't present us with diverse candidates, other than gender diversity. This is a contrast to my day job as a CEO where we have been successful in diversifying the Board; The reason was that we were able to pay more for search agents who did a very good job and presented a number of appointable candidates and the majority diverse.

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Sceptics

Overview:

Size of segment: 13%

Demographics:
- 19% are under 54; 81% are over 55
- 55% are male
- 48% are retired

Organisation
- More likely to be a smaller organisation.
- 55% have annual income £500k or less
- 48% have 1 – 10 staff
- 28% have 5 or fewer trustees
- 33% are Charitable Trusts

Experience:
- This group is much less likely to have experienced barriers in their wider personal or professional life outside of their charity board experience

Mindset:
- This group is the most likely to feel like EDI is a not a priority or interest for them. They feel more uninterested and angry about EDI than other segments, and less motivated, enthusiastic, curious and passionate.
- This group is much less confident than Super enthusiasts and Confident about how to do EDI practices on their board. They're most confident about how to make sure our board has inclusive practices to make it as accessible, welcoming and inclusive as possible
- However, this group is generally less likely to want support to help their board with EDI

Board:
- They think that their board hasn't placed much priority on addressing any areas of diversity and inclusion
- Like the Learners, they don't feel like their board has had much success in addressing areas of diversity and inclusion.

Sceptics

23%
Say EDI is not a priority or interest for me

68%
Would like resources that can be read in their own time

> It is difficult to have a diverse board when the community you live in and serve do not have a diverse population. The board believe that a strong link to the local area is important to support a charity.

> Slow progress from recognising a need for diversity and inclusion. Other issues seem always to get in the way. Good intentions but poor implementation.

> We recruit people who have the skills to manage the charitable aims of the trust, and to no other purpose. We treat protected characteristics as exactly that - protected! In the spirit of the original aims of the Equalities Act we refuse to apply any form of discrimination based on protected characteristics, but will give all and any reasonable support to enable suitable candidates to do the job.

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