The public, politicians, the media and drugs

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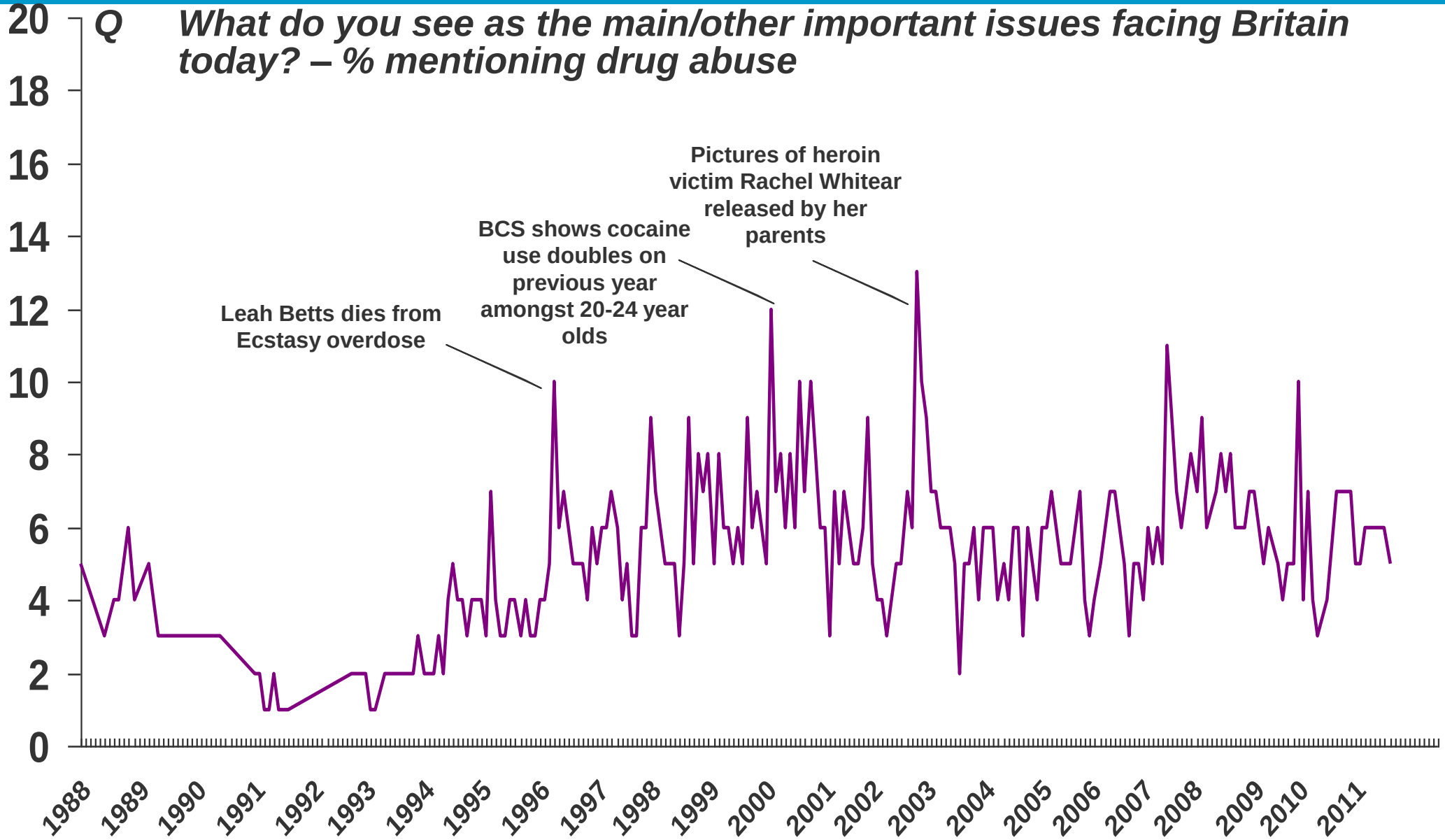
It's the young we worry about…



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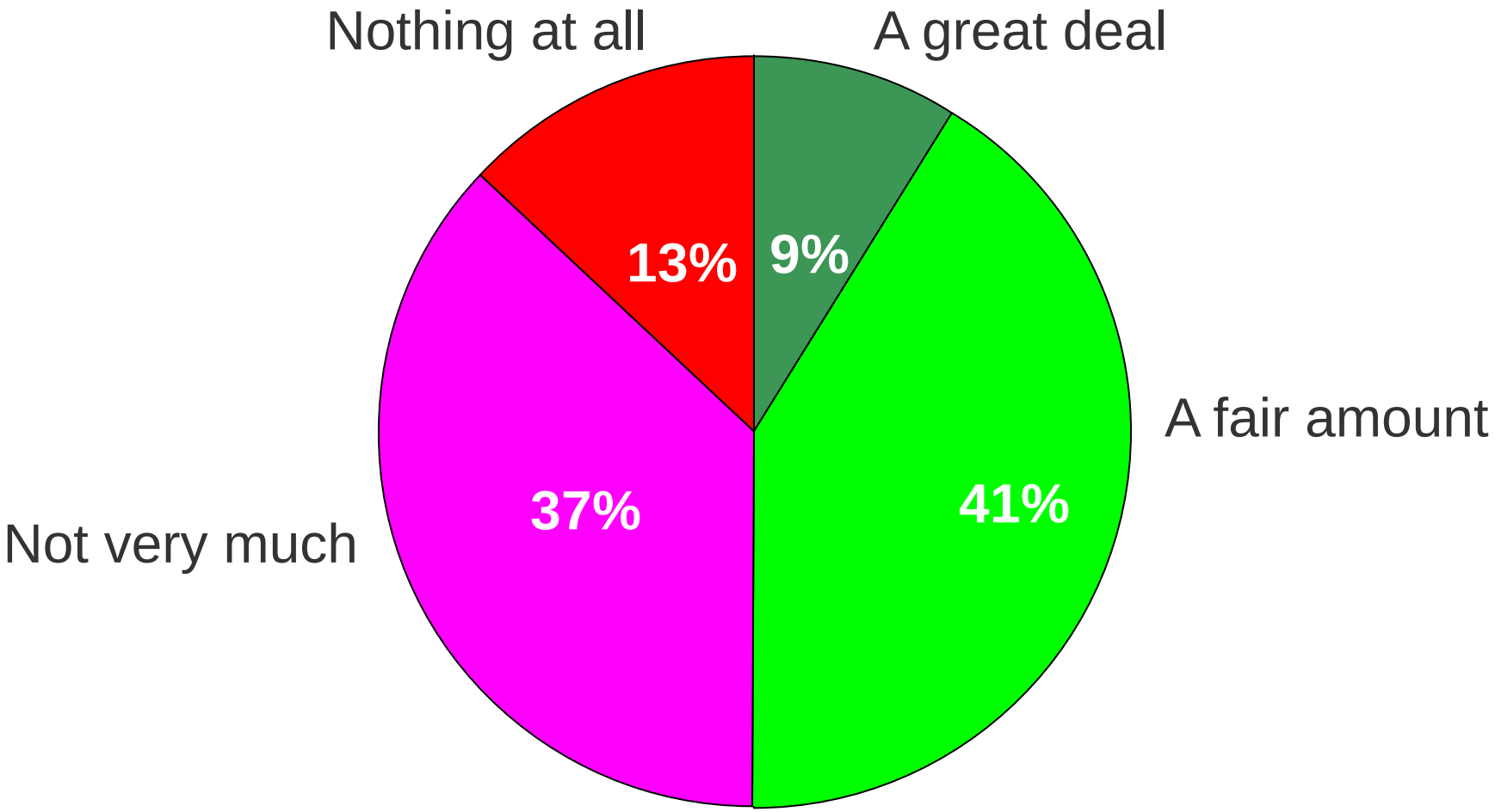
Half of the public know little – one in ten a lot!

How much would you say you know about illegal drugs?



Fieldwork: 18-23 October 2007 Base: 2,044 British adults

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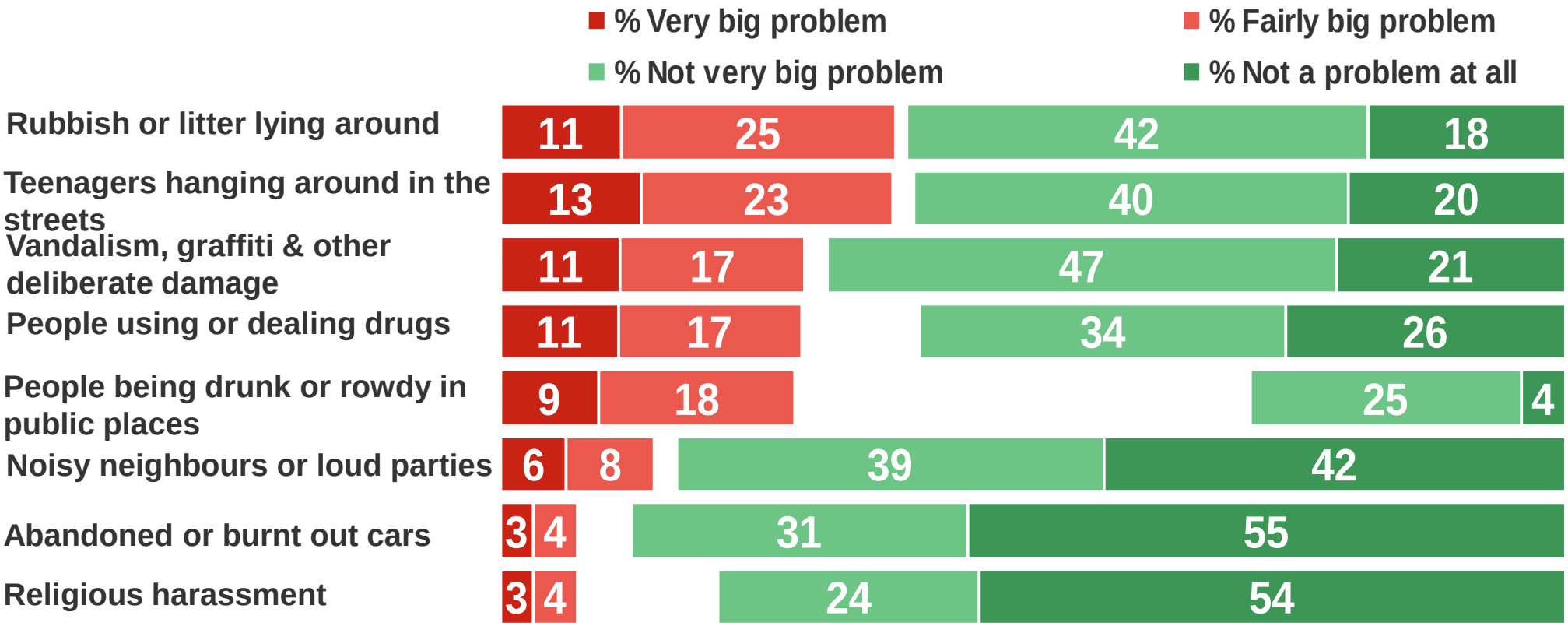
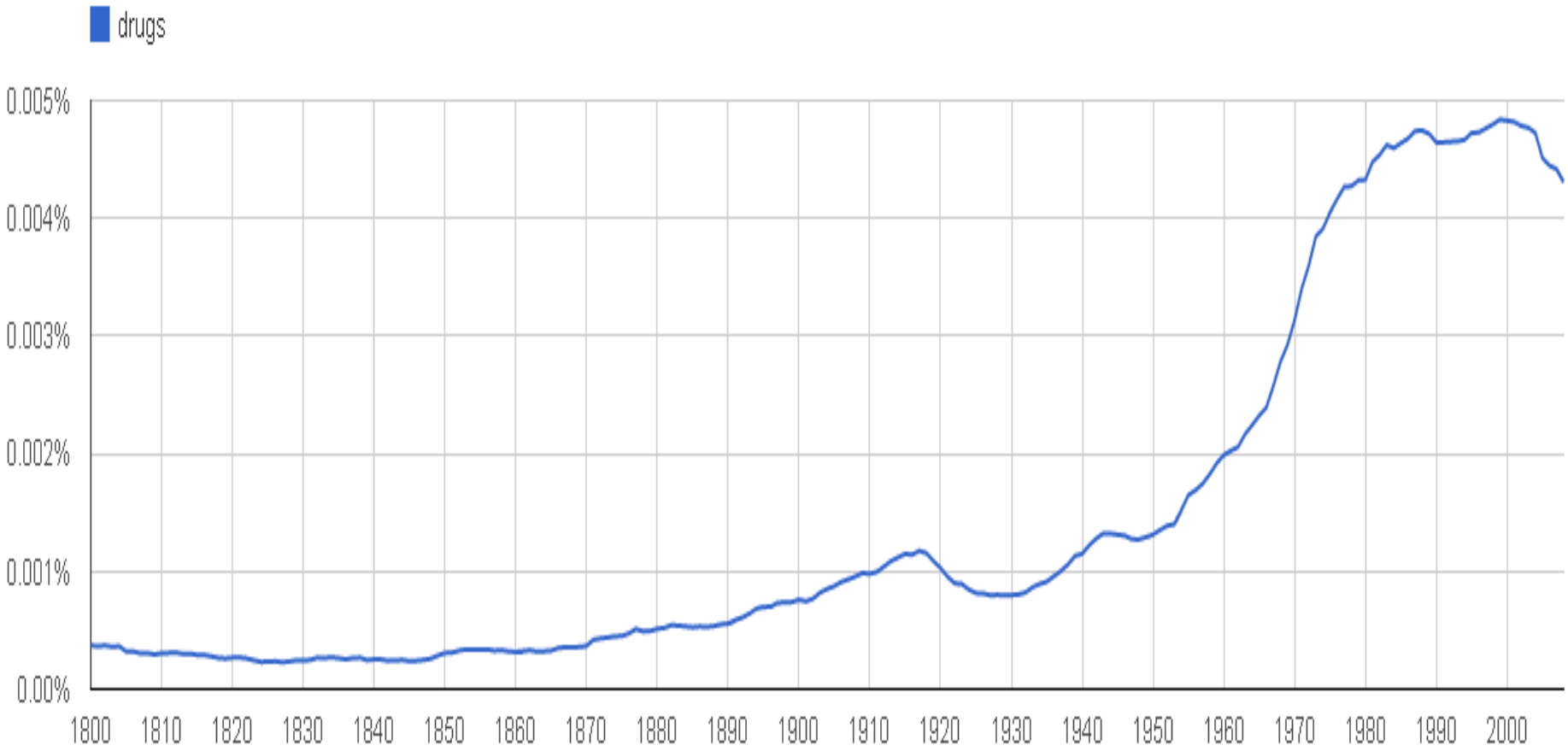
Concern about drugs in context…

Please state how much of a problem each of the following is in your local area



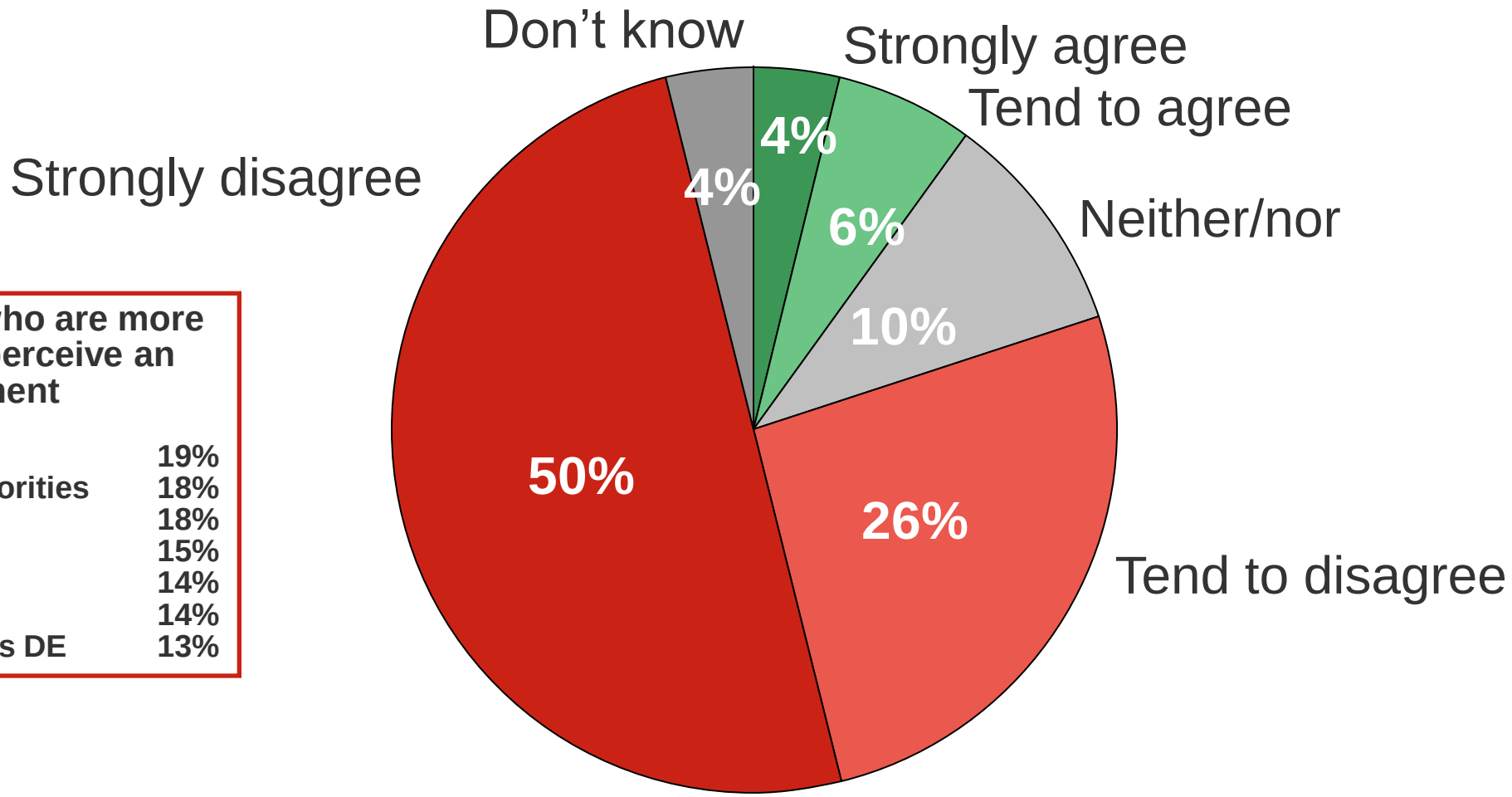
Source: Ipsos MORI Real Trends, self-completion and online. Base: 2,019 British adults 16+, 9th May – 5th June 2008

Rise in books about drugs



Public not perceiving an improvement

Illegal drugs are less of a problem now than ten years ago



Groups who are more likely to perceive an improvement

Wales	19%
Ethnic minorities	18%
London	18%
Single	15%
16-24 yrs	14%
25-34 yrs	14%
Social class DE	13%

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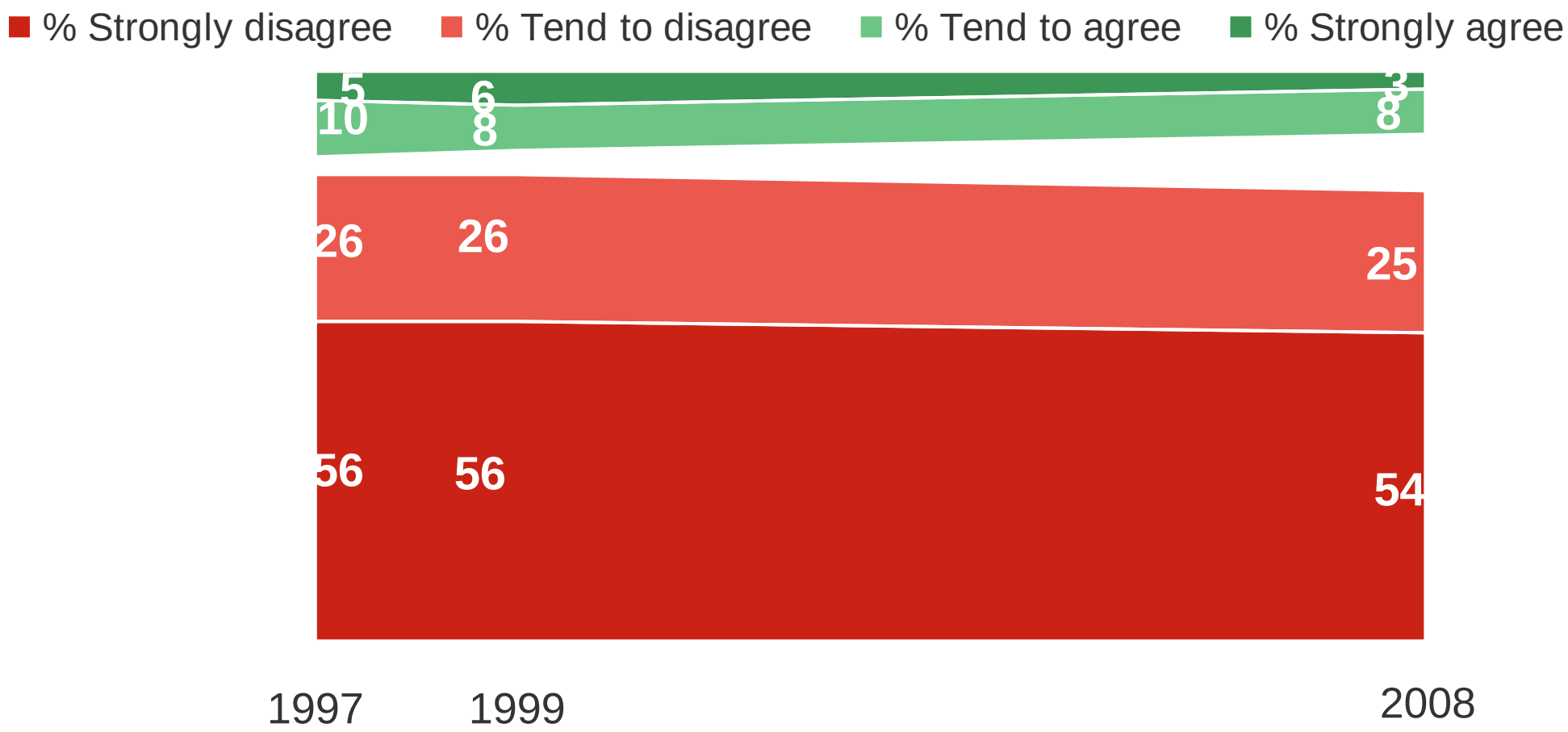
Fieldwork: 18-23 October 20011 Base: 2,044 British adults

Little change in longer term attitudes

Everyone should try banned drugs at least once in their lives



Base: 2,019 British adults, 9 May-5 June 2008

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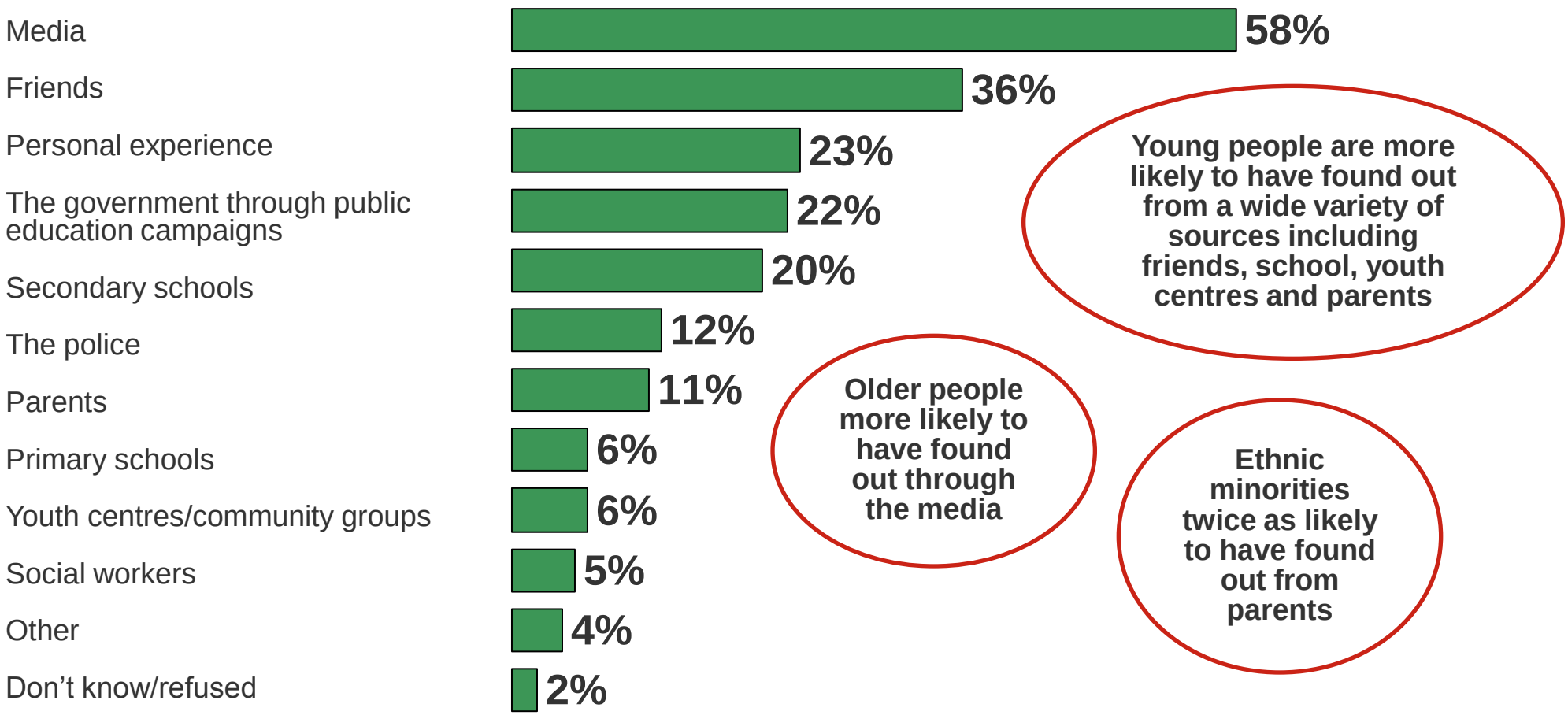
How do we make up our minds about drugs?

The role of media and friends....

Q You said you know at least something about illegal drugs, how did you find out about them?

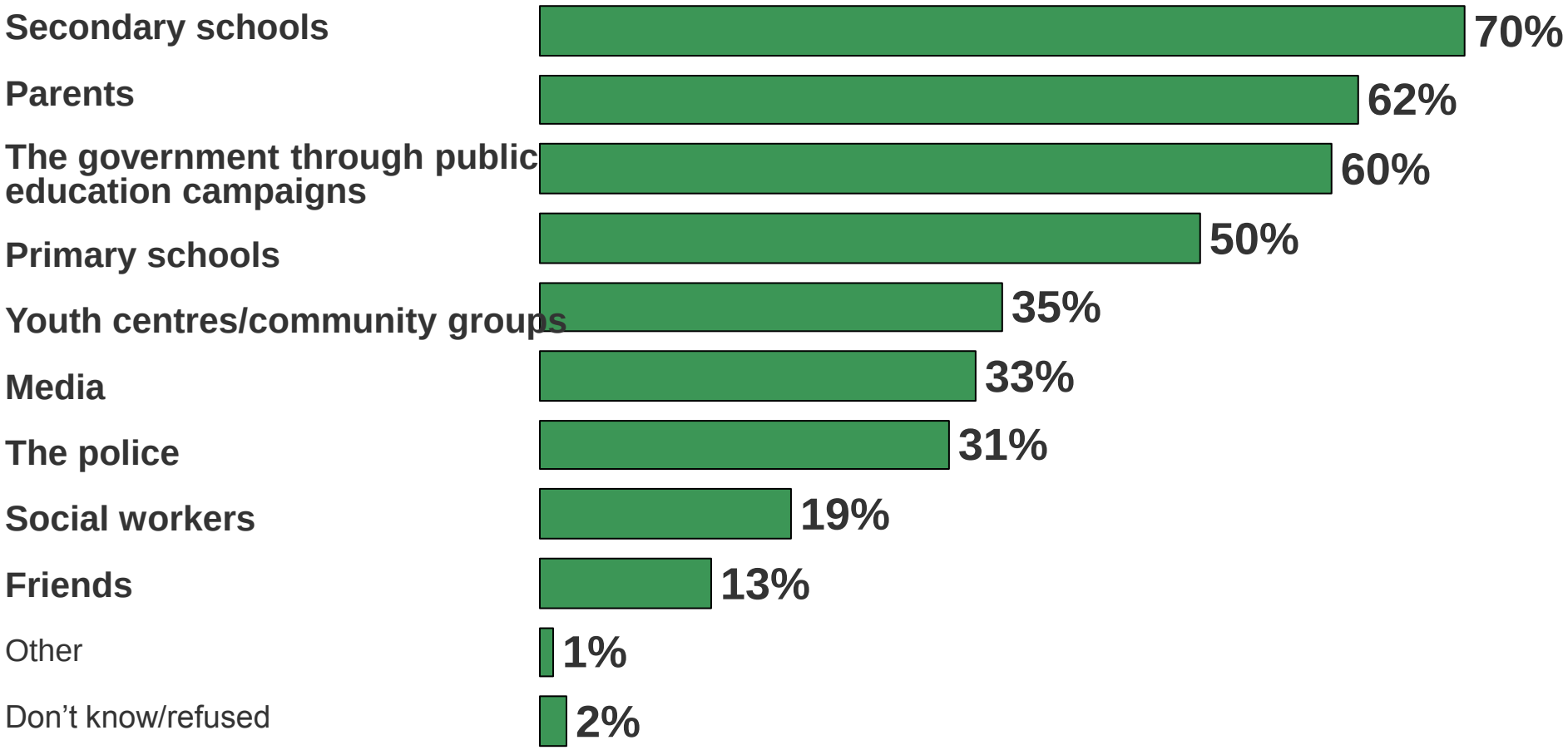


Fieldwork: 18-23 October 2007 Base: all who know at least something about illegal drugs (1,729).

And what would work in communicating?

… most think secondary schools, parents and the government should be responsible

Q Who should be responsible for providing drug education in the UK?



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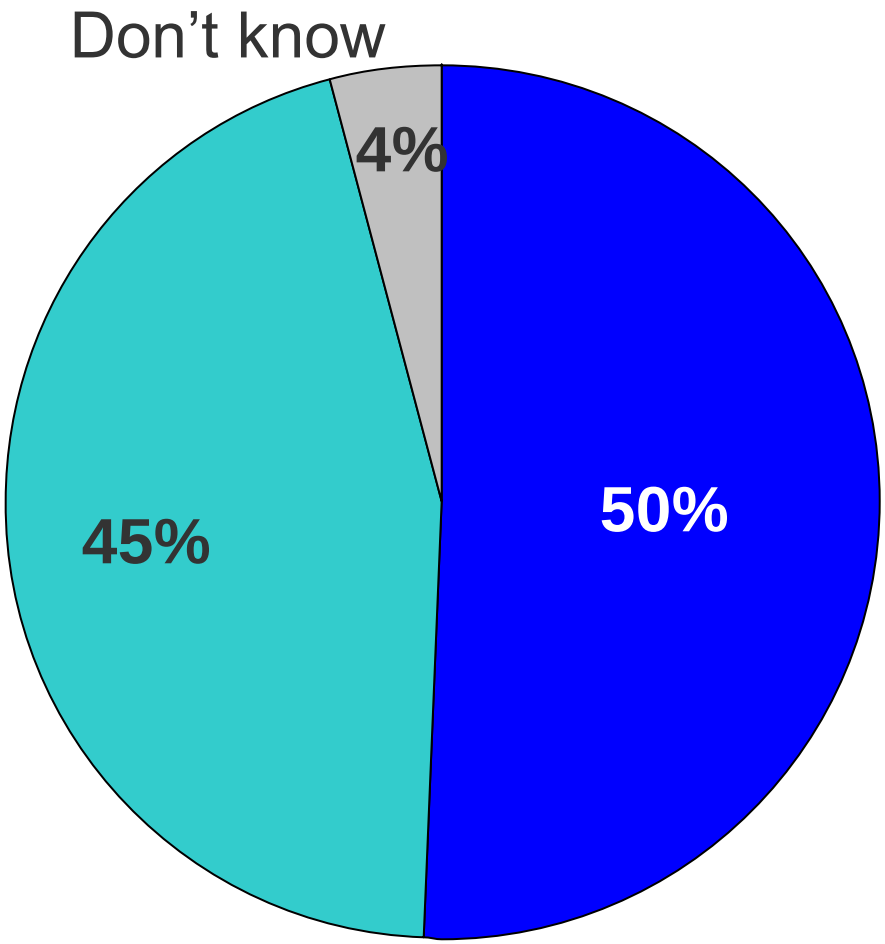
Mixed views about which messages should be given

Q6 Which of the following statements best represents your view?



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Fieldwork: 18-23 October 2007 Base: 2,044 British adults

Getting the point across

Does this ever work?

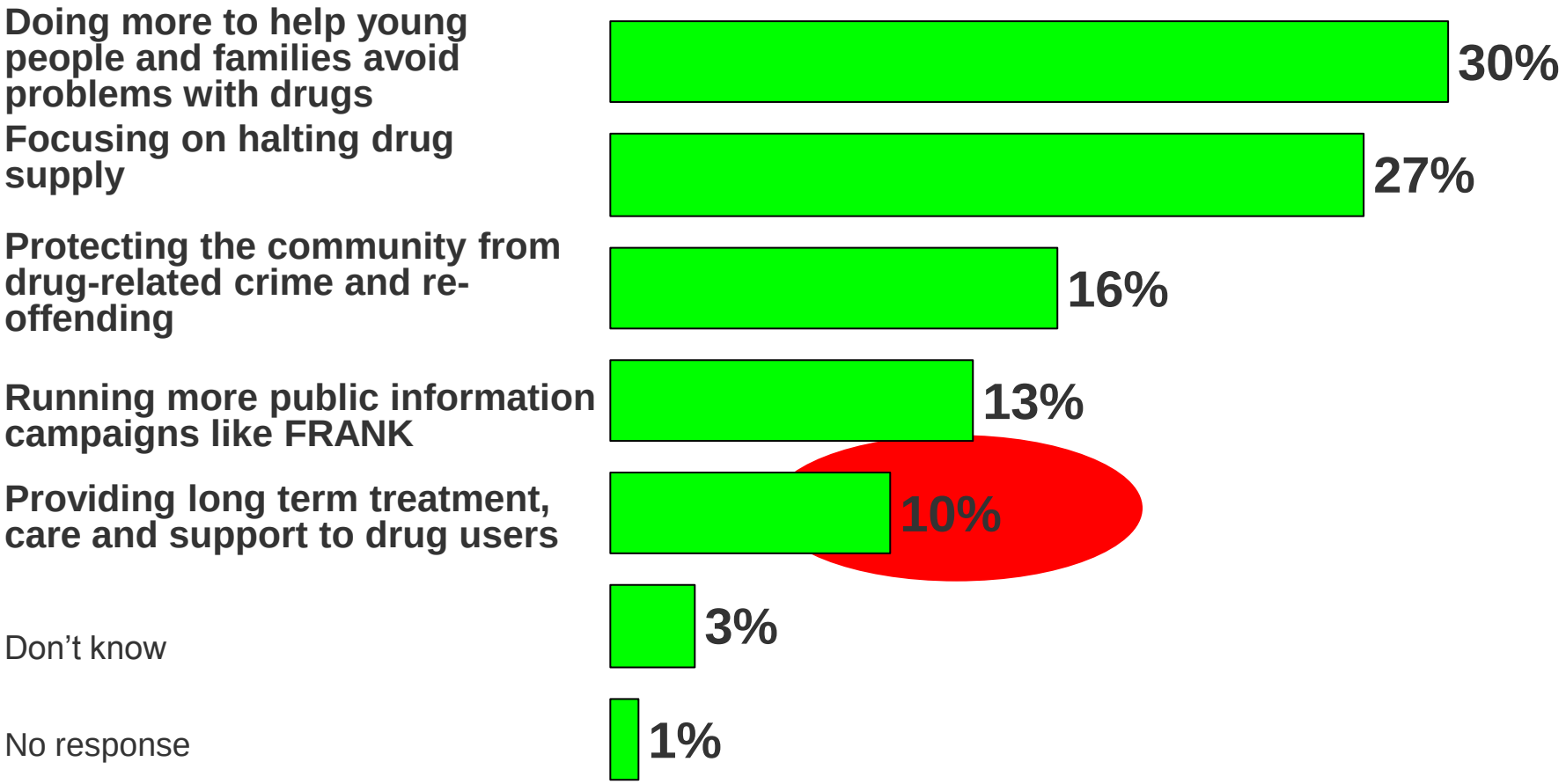
What they really want…

- Greater sophistication
- Shock pictures…

- The truth – peers and ‘negative’ role models

Dealing with supply side seen as key

Q The government has the following aims for the new drug strategy. Please rank the three you personally consider to be most important where 1 is the most important and 3 is the third most important



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(Most important aim only) Fieldwork: 18-23 October 2007 Base: 2,044 British adults

But when we talked to experts....

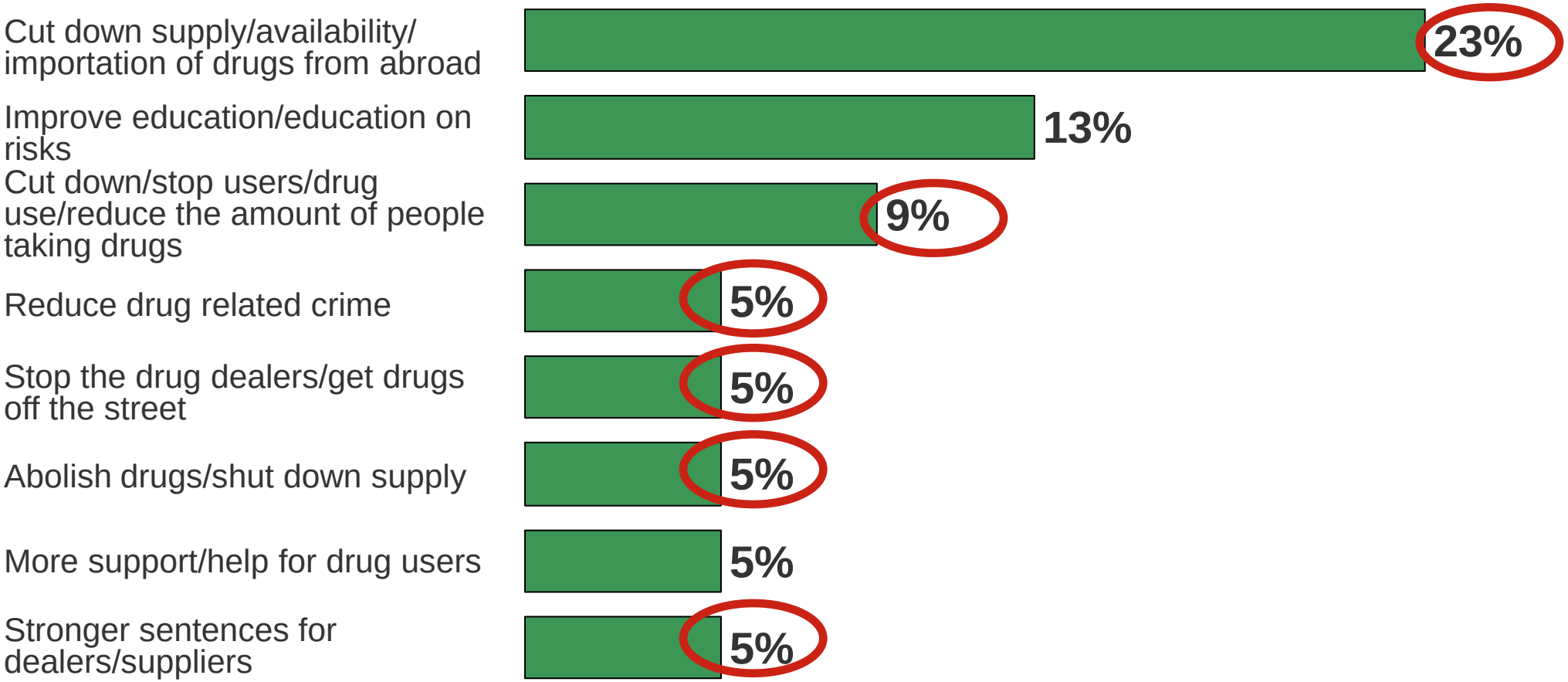
...mixed views about the level of resource which should be allocated to dealing with supply side issues

"*There is no evidence that what we do on the supply side has made any difference at all. You can't prove it either way because the measures don't exist, but nobody seriously stands up and says we've actually been effective. We therefore don't know whether the investment we're making in that delivers us good value for money or not.*"

National Stakeholder

Public want to see tougher enforcement…

Q8 What do you think is the most important thing for the next 10 year drug strategy to achieve?



In conclusion

- Public divided – big age/voting divide
- Media not always coherent...but very influential
- Need better intervention…
- But uninformed public may not be receptive
- Needs leadership...if you're brave

Thank you

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Attitudes towards Cannabis….

- Less than half know what the classification is
- Most favoured classification is A, then B, then C
- 58% would like to see upward shift
- But not harsher penalties (2 yr max sentence favoured)
- 80% willing to believe are mental health impacts of cannabis
- Three quarters think it contributes to crime or social disorder
- Mixed awareness means that communication important

Reaching young people

Q. What are the most effective ways of preventing and reducing the harms caused to young people and families by drugs?

"

Tolerance – as with Jews and Gypsys

"

The Universal Church of the Holy and Sacred Herb