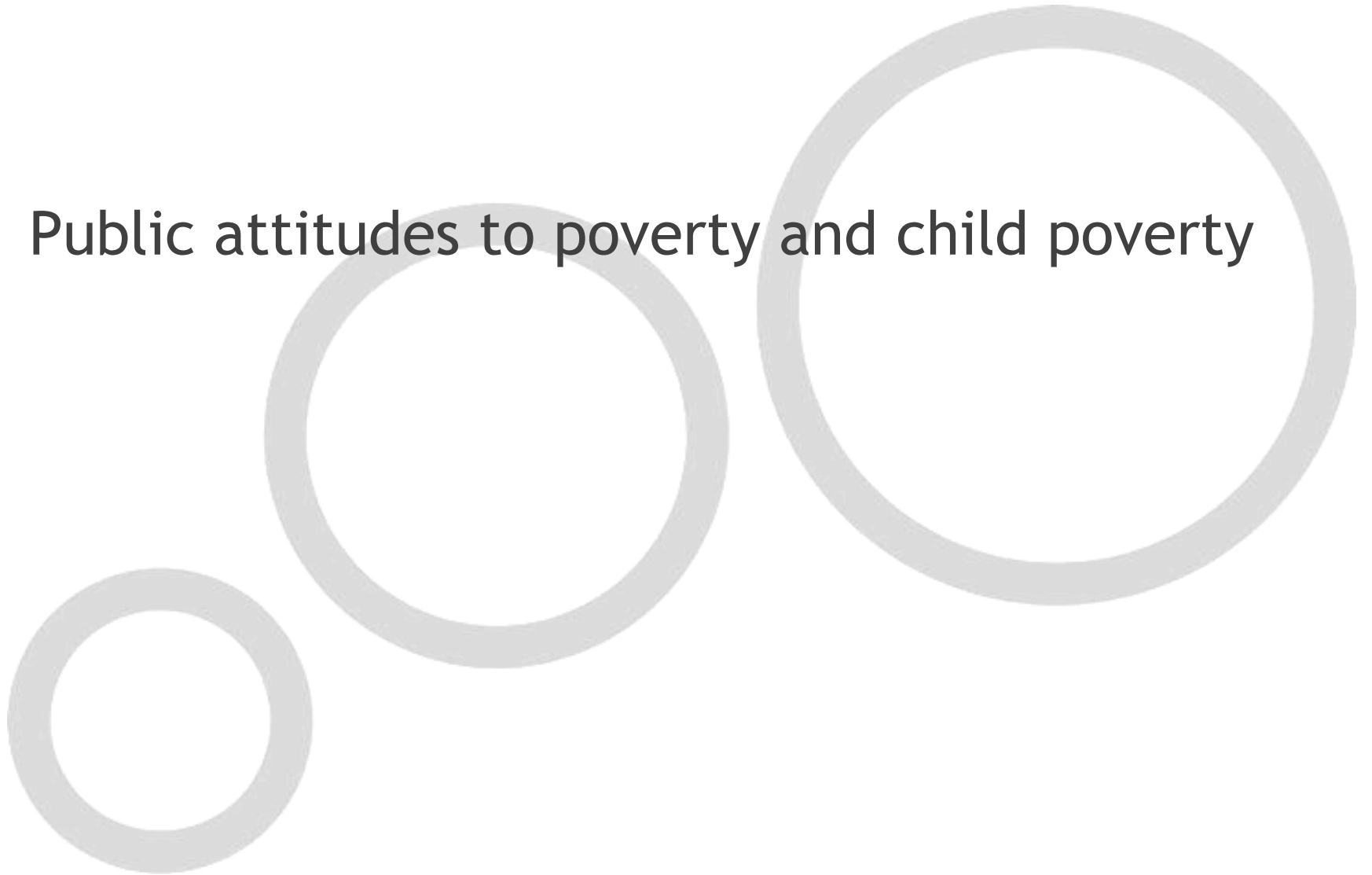


Public attitudes to poverty and child poverty



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Poverty in the UK

Context

Importance

Attitudes to people in poverty

People are hunkered down and focusing on the aspects of life that they can control

Britain

“I Just feel like I’ve got no way of affecting what goes on out there - especially now that it’s all about Europe...”

14%

Optimistic

Where I live & work

“I am definitely working harder - I need the company to do well, and I need to keep my job”

34%

Optimistic

“Shopping in a few different places, getting coupons, that sort of thing”

“I think I’m just focusing on how much I spend, what I buy, making things last longer.”

“We’ve been doing a lot more simple cheap treats with the kids”

52%

Optimistic

Me & my family

Economic concerns are a lens for everything right now

Thinking about the next two or three years, how worried are you that people like you will...

Not have enough money to live comfortably

65%

Suffer directly from cuts in public services

66%

Lose their job/ have difficulty finding work

59%

Lose their home

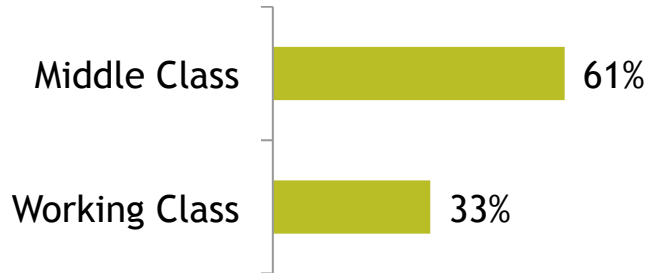
42%

60%

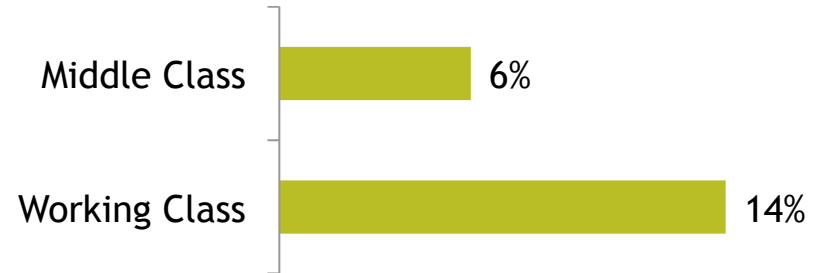
“the cuts are having an impact on my own life”

People who see themselves as “working class” are almost all living hand-to-mouth

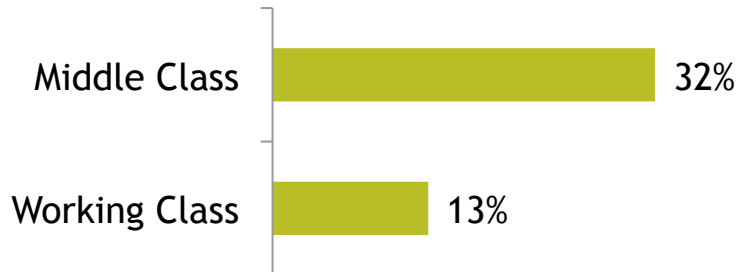
% who say ‘I have savings which are equal to or greater than one month of my salary’



% who have defaulted on a loan/mortgage in the last 2 years



% who say ‘I have enough savings to feel secure about my future’

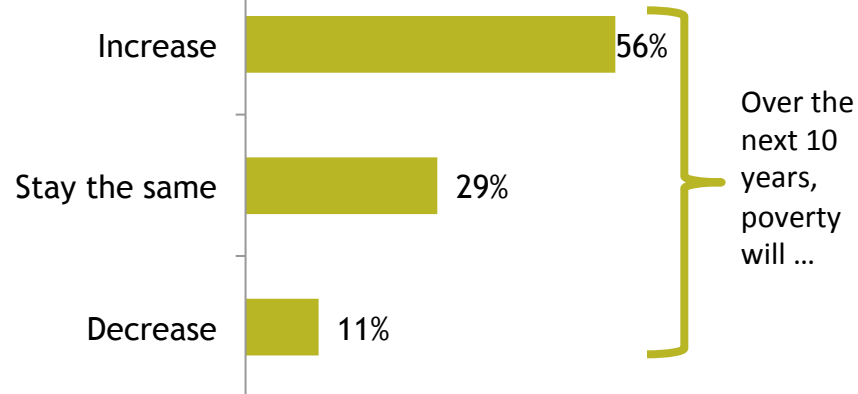
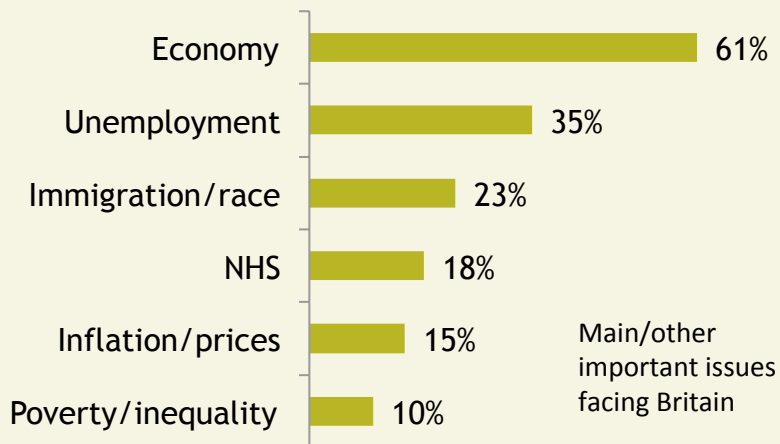
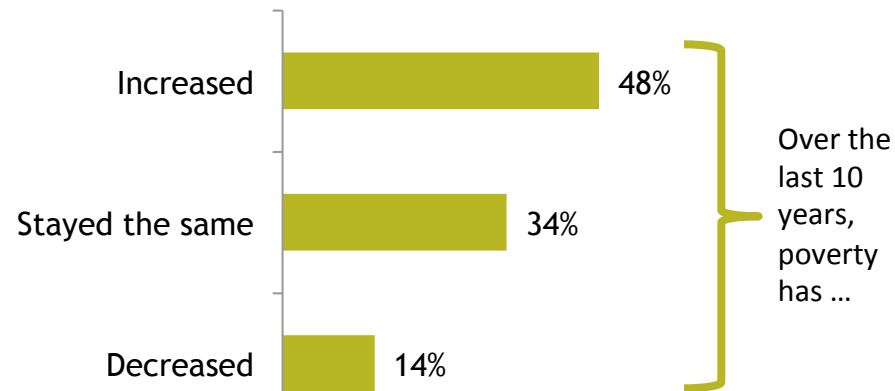
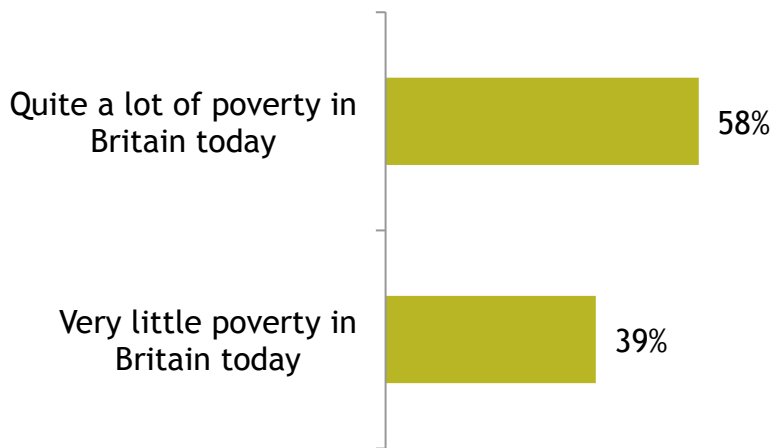


% who say ‘It would be a big financial problem for me if I had to replace a large item’

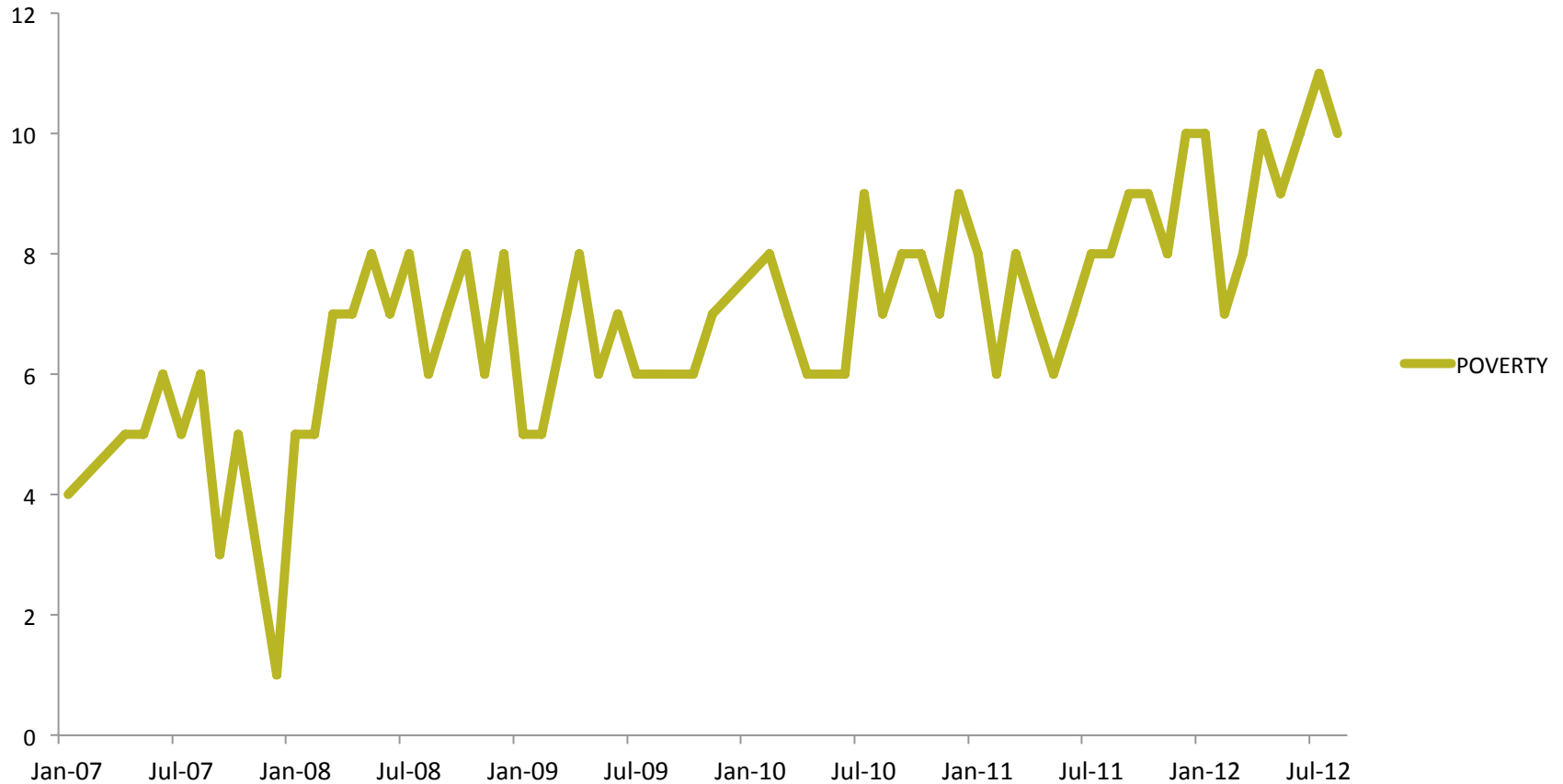


47% of ‘working class’ identifiers have a household income under £20k. 62% have household incomes under £28k (‘middle class’ identifiers = 22% and 34% respectively)

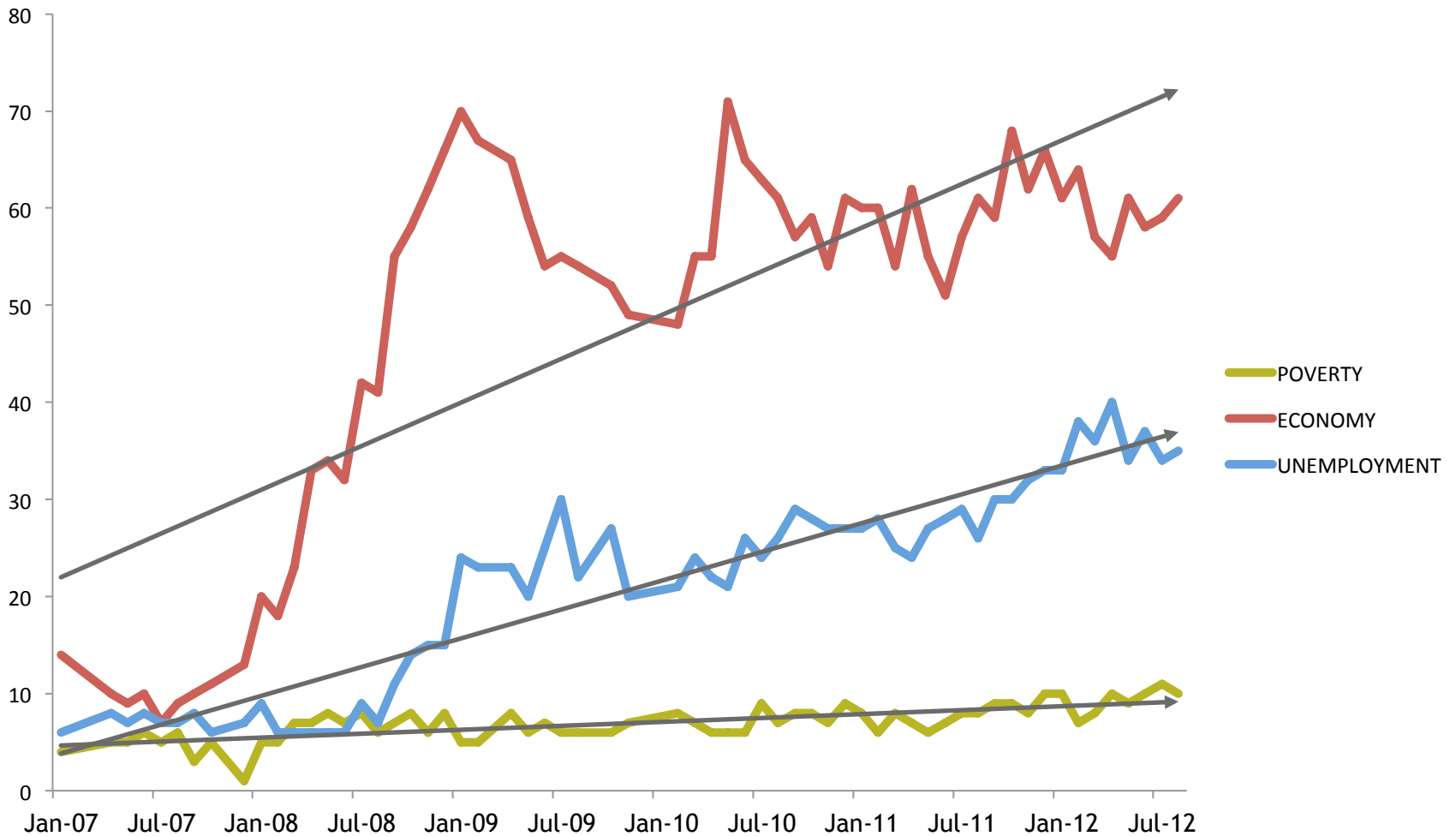
Most of the public think there is definitely poverty in the UK today - but it's not a 'top issue' in itself



The view that poverty is one of the main issues facing Britain is on the rise ...

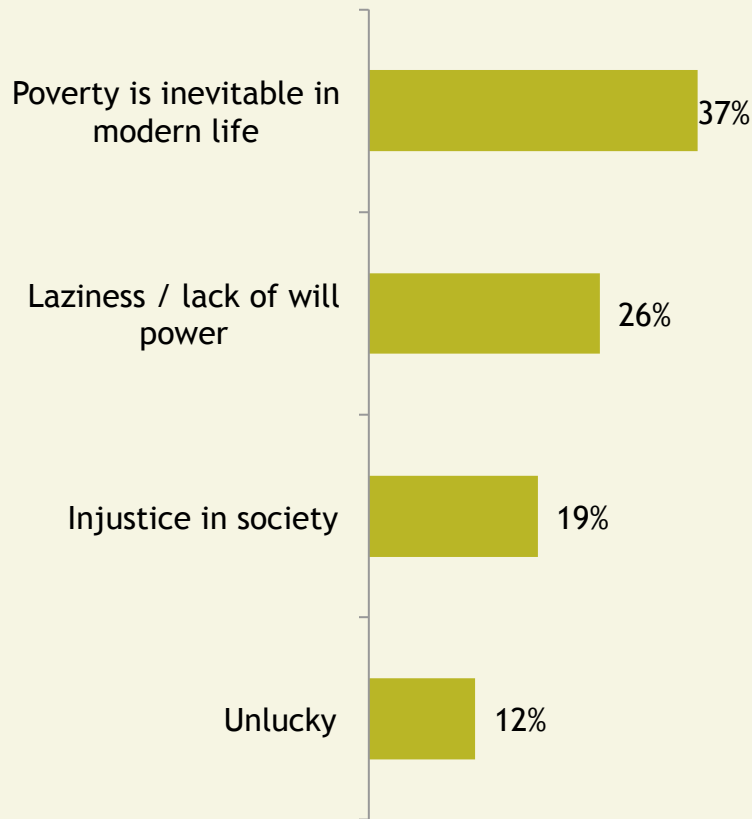


... but nowhere near as steep as other economic concerns

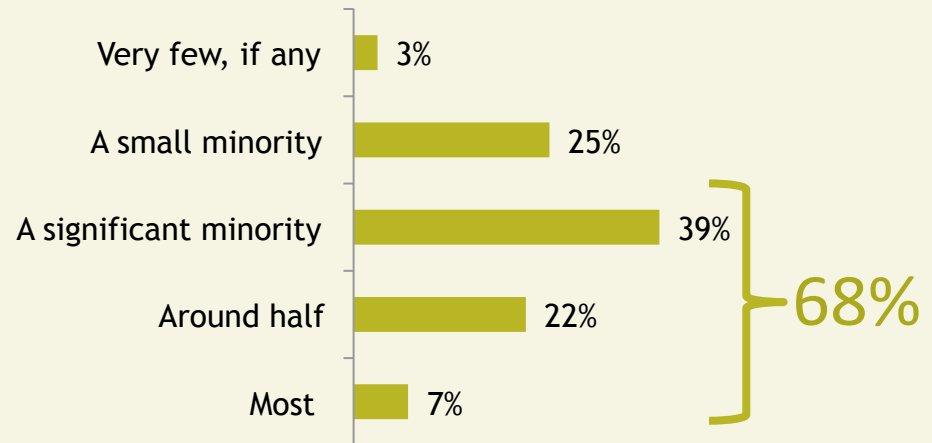


For many in the UK, poverty is a matter of desert, not unfairness

Why do people live in need?



How many welfare recipients are “scroungers” who lie about their circumstances or deliberately refuse to take work?



If someone is not ill and they've been unemployed for more than a year, it's probably because they're not trying hard enough to find work

48% Agree **28%** Disagree

Fairness is about the undeserving getting too much (not the deserving getting too little)

69%

“Britain’s welfare system has created a culture of dependency, whereby many people, and often whole families, get used to living off state benefits...”

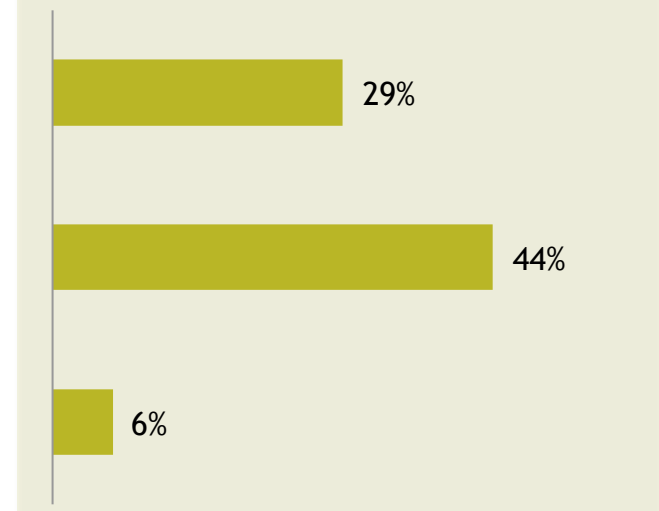
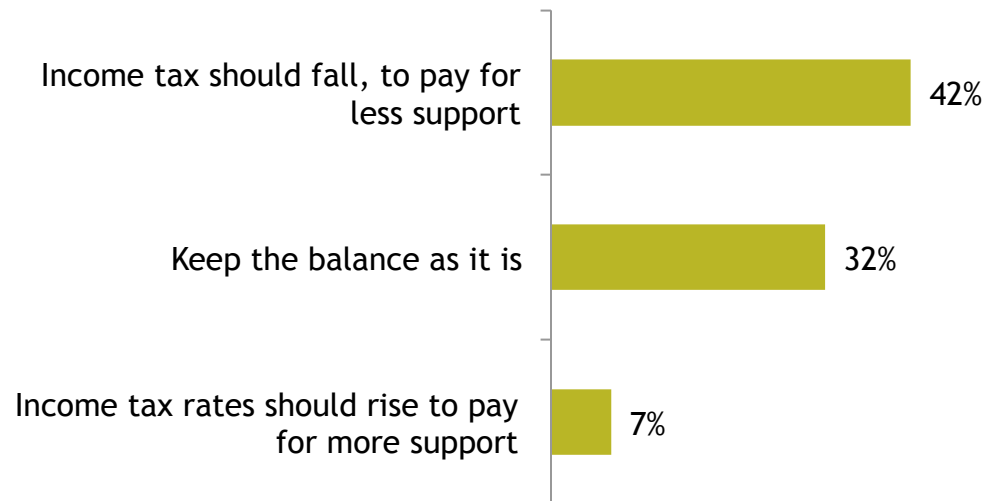
“The government pays out too much in benefits; welfare levels overall should be reduced”

74%

For each of these groups please say whether ...

Unemployed people ...

Single parents who have never married ...

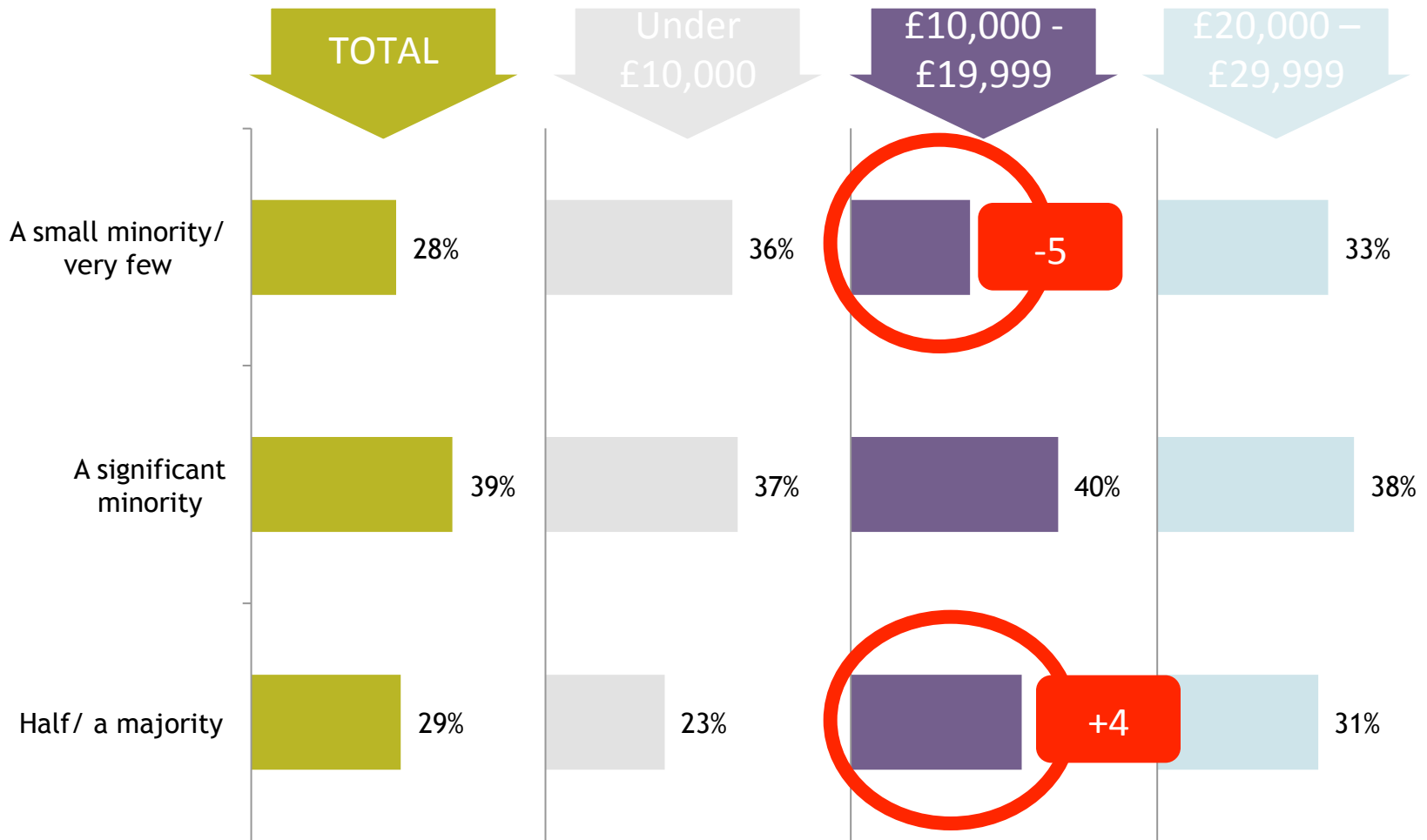


Feeling the pinch (or being worse off) doesn't necessarily build empathy ...



How many welfare recipients are “scroungers” who lie about their circumstances or deliberately refuse to take work? (by combined household income)

... especially for those close to the cliff edge



How many welfare recipients are “scroungers” who lie about their circumstances or deliberately refuse to take work? (by combined household income)

In our focus groups, even the poorest often refer to another, 'lower', class ...

“That’s: ‘I’m pregnant, I’m getting a house for nothing. I’ve got four kids and no old man”

“They’re not working class, because they don’t bloody work”

“The thing is, we pay for these people”

... people who don’t work and, more importantly, “don’t want to work”

No matter where in the social scale people are, they are anxious to differentiate themselves from “the scrounger”...

“[they] would know more about the benefits system than all of us put together”

“I’ve worked most of my life - she’s never done a day’s work in hers”

“That’s not working class, that’s a job”

... none more so than those who are themselves out of work or reliant on benefits

*“I may be out of work, but I want to work, I’m looking hard for work ... and **that’s** the difference”*



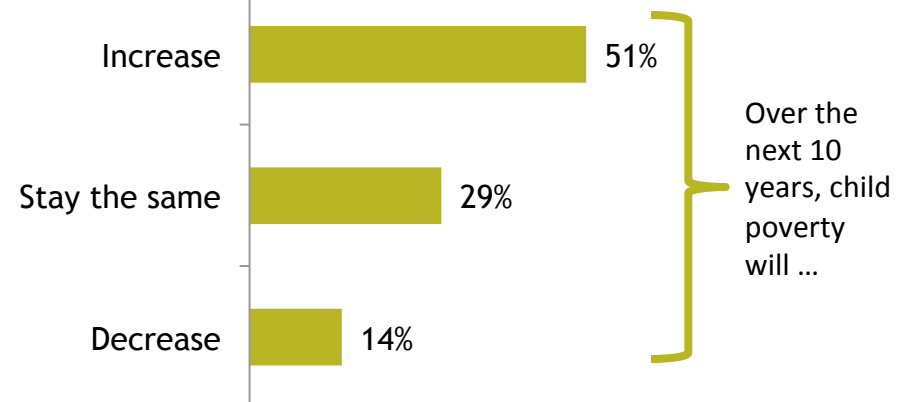
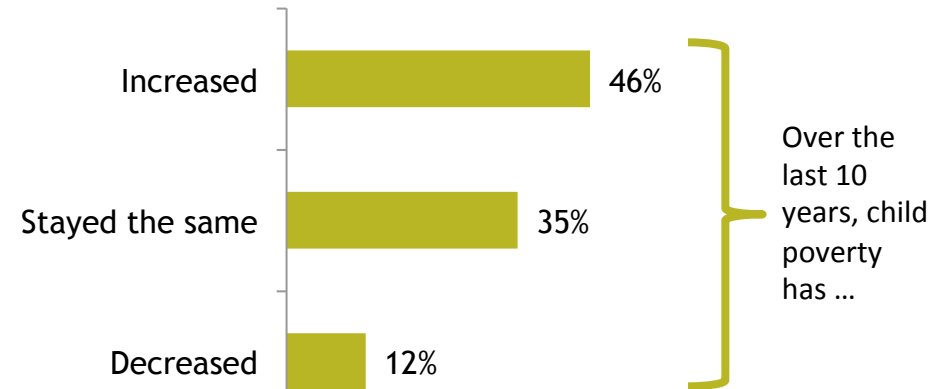
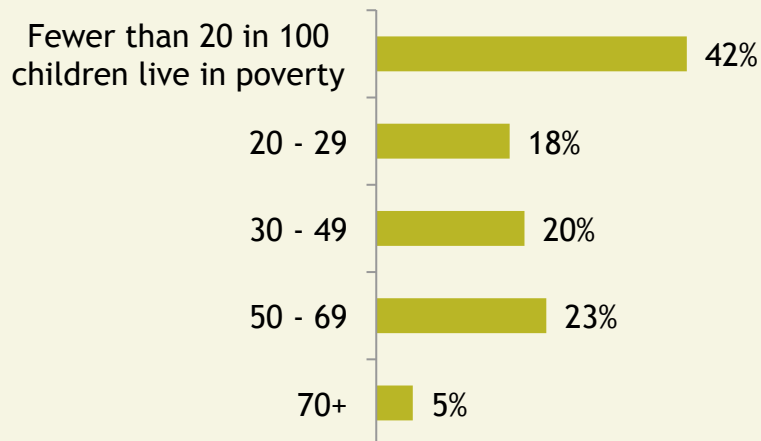
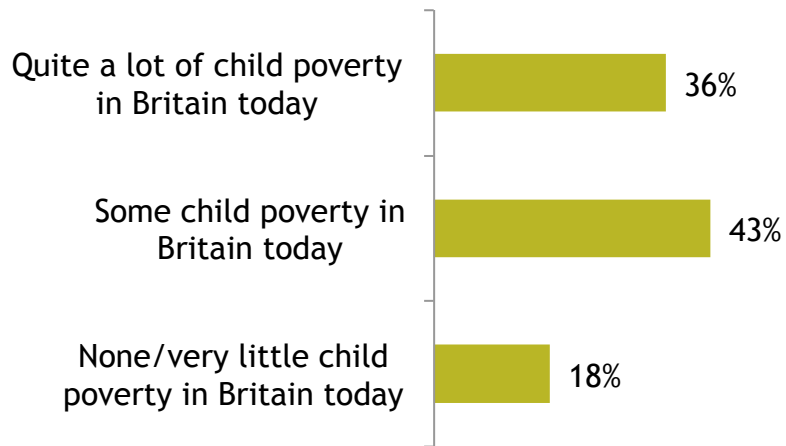
So what about child poverty?

Awareness & recognition

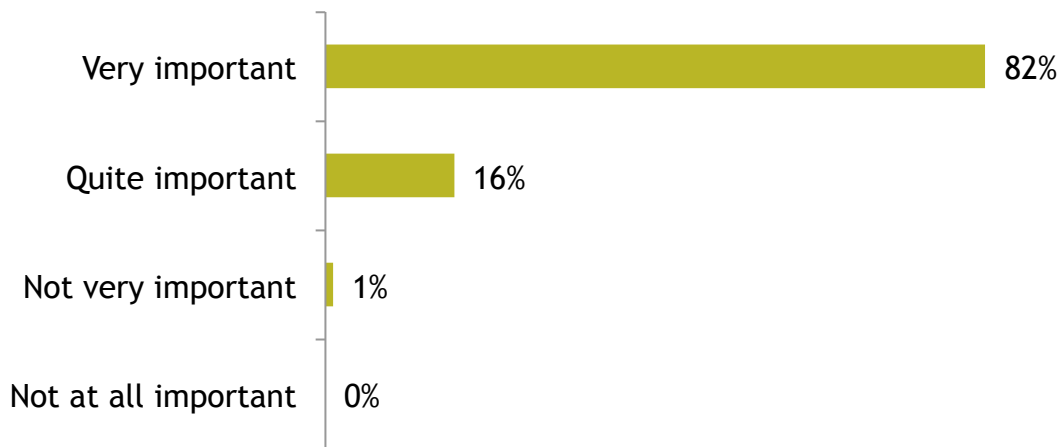
Importance

Attitudes to children in poverty and their families

The majority think there is at least some child poverty, and the assumption is it's getting worse

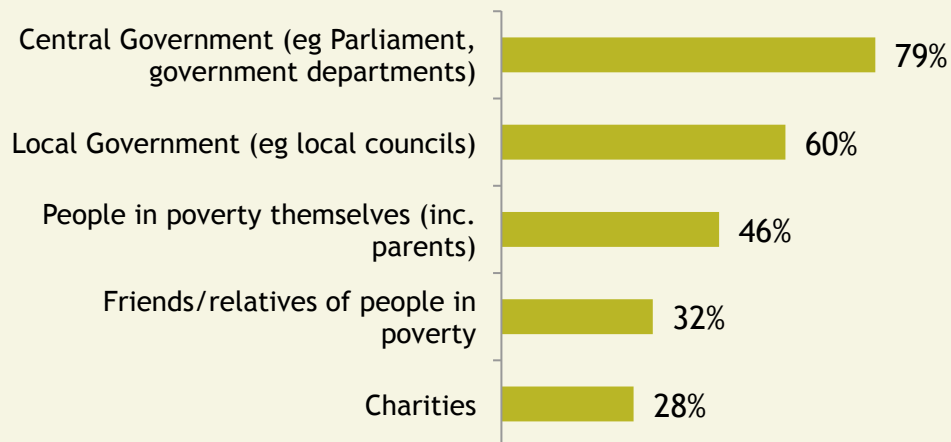


Considered on its own, child poverty is felt to be a very important issue (and one for the Government to resolve)



How important do you think it is to reduce child poverty in Britain?

Which of the following groups are responsible for reducing child poverty in Britain?



The causes of child poverty are all about characteristics of the parents



The public are in two minds about child poverty

Poorer parents are often given short shrift

- “Everyone’s struggling - if I can do it why can’t they?”
- Benefits are resented
 - Starting point is that ‘people in the middle are being taken for a ride’
- Sensitised to symbols of parents’ failings
 - “expensive brands” cigarettes, alcohol, etc, all demonstrate wrong priorities
- Unless faced with an innocent child, it’s hard to separate from the “indolent” parent

Children in poverty deserve compassion

- Children are innocents
 - Their parents’ choices shouldn’t impact their chances
- Aversion to ‘denying’ children support or opportunities
 - Language of denial avoids the “largesse” of benefits
- Deep empathy when thinking about their feelings for their own kids



Guidelines for campaigning and communicating

1

Children, not parents

Parents have made their choices, this is about innocent kids

2

Stories, not stats

The scroungers narrative is all about stories & symbols -respond in kind
Stats tend towards debates around the definition of poverty, etc...

3

Empathy trumps sympathy

Choose examples that everyone can identify with, not just feel sorry for

4

Focus on what's being denied, rather than support needs

It's important not to get trapped into a debate about benefits

5

Children, not teens

The older they get, the more responsible they are - rehabilitating young people in the public eye is for a different campaign!

... and if you can show a concrete benefit to people who aren't in poverty, that would really help