
COVID-19 Community Survey - Report



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Introduction

The challenging impacts of COVID-19 have been felt right across the globe and Wyndham is no exception. With more than 2,200 people testing positive to the Coronavirus in Wyndham since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, it is vital that Council plays a central role in supporting our community through future planning as well as relief and recovery from this emergency.

As we move towards COVID Normal, Council is embarking on the development of a number of strategic documents, including the Wyndham City Pandemic Recovery Plan, to outline the short to medium term assistance needed to not only rebuild but to build back better.

In November 2020, Council undertook a COVID-19 Community Survey to learn more about the impacts of this public health emergency on the Wyndham community. The purpose of the survey was to assist Council to understand how our community has been impacted by the pandemic and what services are important to them as we move into the recovery phase.

Wyndham's COVID-19 Community survey opened on Tuesday 10 November and closed on Wednesday 25 November 2020. A representative sample of 746 residents participated either via a telephone survey, an online survey via a panel of research participants or via a link distributed on Wyndham's Community Engagement Platform, [The Loop](#).

This valuable engagement assisted Council in understanding the sentiment and experiences of different sectors, helping to guide key areas of focus through recovery.

The information provided will help inform the development of a number of key strategic documents and service plans that are currently being prepared by Council. These include, but are not limited to, the Wyndham City Pandemic Recovery Plan, Council Plan 2021-25, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and the City Resilience Strategy.

Findings Summary

The full report of the COVID-19 Community Survey results is attached and provides a significant snapshot of how our community has been impacted by the pandemic and what services are important to them as we move into the recovery phase. These are point in time findings and represent community sentiments in November 2020. Some high level key insights include:

- Community attitudes towards COVID-19 centre around three themes: staying healthy and safe, making plans and living life and finances and the economy. Across Wyndham, attitudes towards finances and the economy are consistent, but in some areas, plans are being made at the expense of health and safety. In other areas, plans to re-engage with the community may be conservative due to health and safety concerns. Despite the negatives of COVID-19, Wyndham residents also saw a number of positive changes they would like to endure in the long term.
- Wyndham residents see there are two sides to COVID-19 recovery that require re-engaging the community. These include focusing on people and sectors that may have been negatively impacted during the pandemic and returning to business as usual by delivering infrastructure development and community maintenance services. The results showed that

the most important ways the council can re-engage the community require both support for vulnerable people and support for local businesses.

- A number of barriers exist that impact how residents access a range of services. These include financial barriers, psychological distress and concerns about health and safety. Overall, there is a readiness to re-engage with the community, although some areas are more focused on health and safety concerns than others and therefore may be more selective about how they re-engage.

Conclusion and Next Steps


The results and feedback collected via the COVID-19 Community Survey will be used to help inform the development of a number of key Council documents and service plans going forward. These include the Wyndham City Pandemic Recovery Plan, Council Plan 2021-25, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and the City Resilience Strategy.

The Wyndham City Pandemic Recovery Plan is the first of these documents to be developed highlighting short-term actions required by Council to rebuild as we emerge from COVID-19. These include:

- **Reactivation and Revitalisation of Public Space:** providing a series of free activations for our residents, and supporting community groups and businesses to operate from local parks and open spaces.
- **Public Health and Wellbeing:** a number of initiatives that aim to protect the health and wellbeing of our residents, including expanded support services (counselling), continuing to provide services or connect residents to services, and continuing strong partnerships with local GPs and the broader health sector.
- **Creative Precincts and Cultural Development:** ways in which we are supporting the arts sector following a year which ground the industry to a halt. A range of art and entertainment offerings, including hosting the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's first performance post COVID, a series of pop up arts and theatre offerings, and a number of public art initiatives to strengthen a sense of place.
- **Community Resilience:** Continuing a number of initiatives and programs established through 2020 that empower our diverse community and build resilience. Examples include the health champion and bicultural worker programs, in which members of our community are positioned as strong leaders.
- **Rebuilding Our Economy:** Supporting local businesses to bounce back following the impacts of COVID-19. Some key initiatives include a fast tracked permit system for outdoor dining, the establishment of parklets (outdoor pop up dining spaces), and the construction of two new small business hubs which provide a physical space for small businesses to connect, operate from, and meet at.
- **High Risk Industry Engagement:** Continuing our partnerships with the State Government around high risk industries, working alongside DHHS and DJPR to identify high-risk cohorts of our local workforce and facilitate any support or testing initiatives as required.

- New Visitor Economy: Working with our local tourism precinct to position Wyndham as a destination of choice for those looking to travel from across Victoria or interstate. Actions include marketing campaigns, sponsorship packages, and partnerships with neighbouring municipalities.

Council will continue to monitor and review a range of feedback received from community members, local businesses and other stakeholders to help guide our key areas of focus through recovery.

An aerial photograph of a river landscape. The river flows from the top center towards the bottom right, curving around a large, tree-covered island. The banks are lined with dense green trees and vegetation. In the background, there are agricultural fields in shades of green and brown, and a small cluster of buildings. The sky is clear and blue. A white text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

COVID-19 Community Survey - Report

March 2021

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The Situation

COVID-19 has had a major impact on the Victorian economy. As a diverse and growing area, Wyndham has seen its own particular set of impacts. Measuring these impacts has been difficult as few datasets exist to inform Council in an up-to-date way of how the community continues to be impacted.

The Complication

COVID-19 has impacted Council's services as well. The working from home arrangement and the set of restrictions Greater Melbourne has been under since March have meant that Council has had to adapt its delivery of service as well as restrict access to existing community infrastructure.

The Implication

Council now has the opportunity to devise a strategy towards COVID-19 recovery that revolves around customer purpose.

To assist Wyndham City Council in informing the delivery of services in the COVID-19 recovery period, Council wishes to understand how COVID-19 has impacted the community, and what the community's priorities are when it comes to Council's service offering.

The key objectives of the project are to conduct a survey of Wyndham residents in order to:

1. Assess the community's readiness to go to indoor and outdoor spaces, and to attend events/gatherings following the easing of restrictions towards the end of November
2. Identify acute, mid and long term community needs for Council to use as evidence base for service response and staging
3. Identify barriers to accessing services
4. Determine the extent to which services that have been delivered online should continue to be delivered online post easing of restrictions

The evidence gathered and outcomes of the project should support the implementation and delivery of Council's COVID-19 recovery staging, and should ensure Council can understand different demographic groups' needs and priorities, as well as how needs and priorities may differ by area.

Research overview

- Survey of n=746 adults (aged 18 years+) living in Wyndham City
- Data collected via online and telephone interviews
- Surveys available in six languages
- Data weighted to reflect the age, gender and location of respondents

Sample sizes by region and data collection method

Region	Telephone respondents	Online panel respondents	Online community network respondents	Total
Werribee	77	50	35	162
Wyndham Vale and Manor Lakes	90	26	15	131
Hoppers Crossing	69	39	19	127
Point Cook and Williams Landing	53	58	19	130
Tarneit and Truganina	78	19	18	115
Little River and Werribee South	67	1	13	81
Total	434	193	119	746

Key insights

Residents are ready to use community spaces but they are weighing social needs with safety needs

- 98% of residents want to participate in some kind of activity once restrictions ease:
 - More than 75% will visit the main street
 - 70% will use parks and public spaces
 - 57% will participate in family and kids activities indoors
- Residents of Tarneit and Truganina put 'living life' ahead of safety concerns and are interested in engaging with the community in a larger number of ways
- In other areas where safety is more important than social needs, re-engagement needs vary by location but are still high

The most important ways the council can re-engage the community require both support for vulnerable people and support for local businesses

- In addition Wyndham residents would like to see some of the changes experienced during the pandemic endure in the long term.
- These reflect the need for both re-engagement and business-as-usual practices:
 - Greater focus on social distancing and sanitising
 - Efficiently executed roadworks and infrastructure projects
 - Greater community spirit and togetherness
 - Greater use of outdoor spaces
 - Improved traffic flow (less congestion)
 - Clean and well kept green spaces

Financial challenges, psychological distress and concerns about health and safety all act as barriers to accessing services

- Those most concerned about health and safety are ready to re-engage with the community but are more selective about how they engage
- The cost of re-engaging with a range of services will be a challenge because 41% of residents reported a reduction in household income since the beginning of the pandemic
- The prevalence of depression and/or anxiety is seen as the social issue that has increased most during the pandemic and in general, mental health is seen as key challenge for Wyndham City in the future

There is not a strong need to increase the online delivery of services

- Although use of the internet has increased since the beginning of the pandemic, the desire for face-to-face engagement is preferred overall
- Users of customer service desks and employment pathways were most open to online service delivery, although these residents were more likely to be engaging with these programs online already

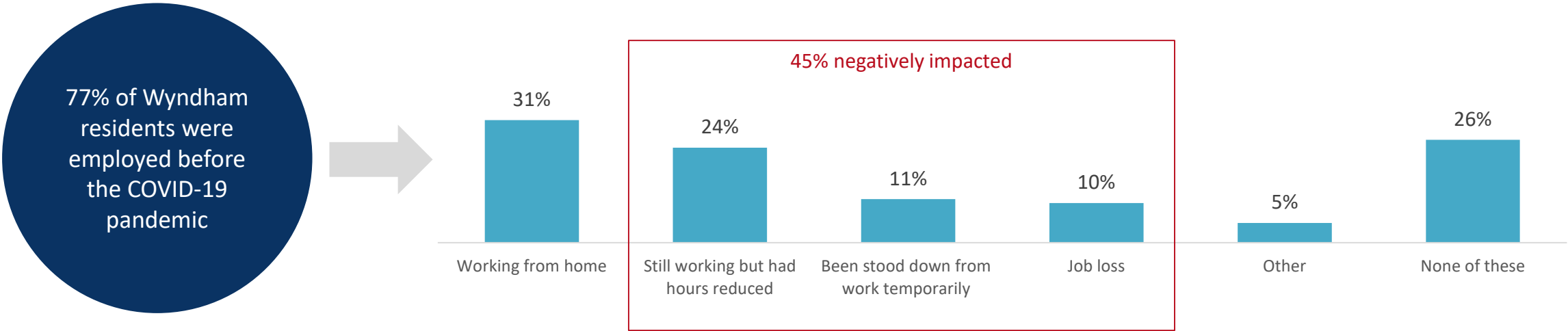


Employment, employment changes and attitudes

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Nearly half of those in paid employment before the COVID-19 pandemic have been negatively impacted with a reduction or loss of income

Impact of COVID-19 on employment

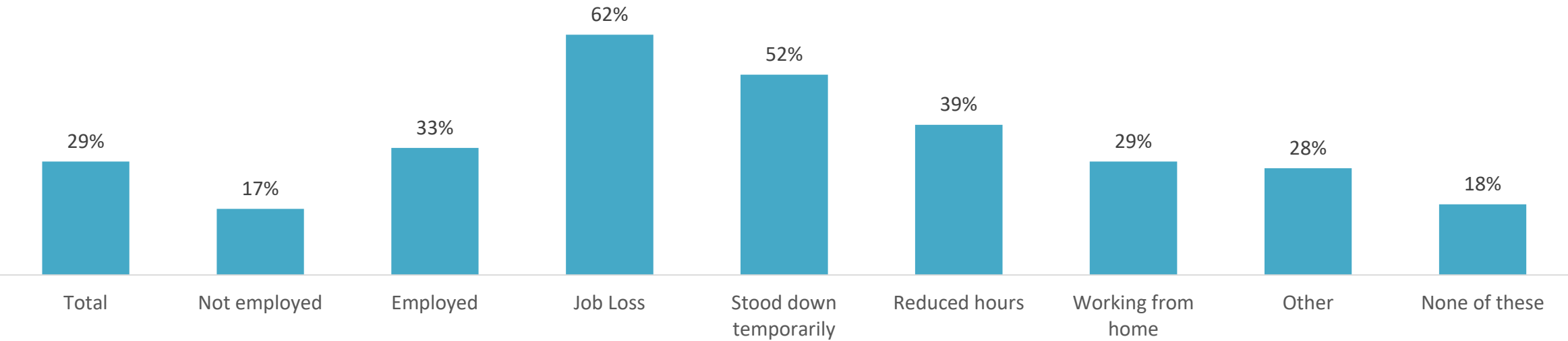


Base. Total (n=746); In paid employment before the COVID-19 pandemic (n=512)

Source. A1a Which of the following describe your employment status **before** the COVID-19 pandemic? A3a Has your usual employment been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in any of the following ways?

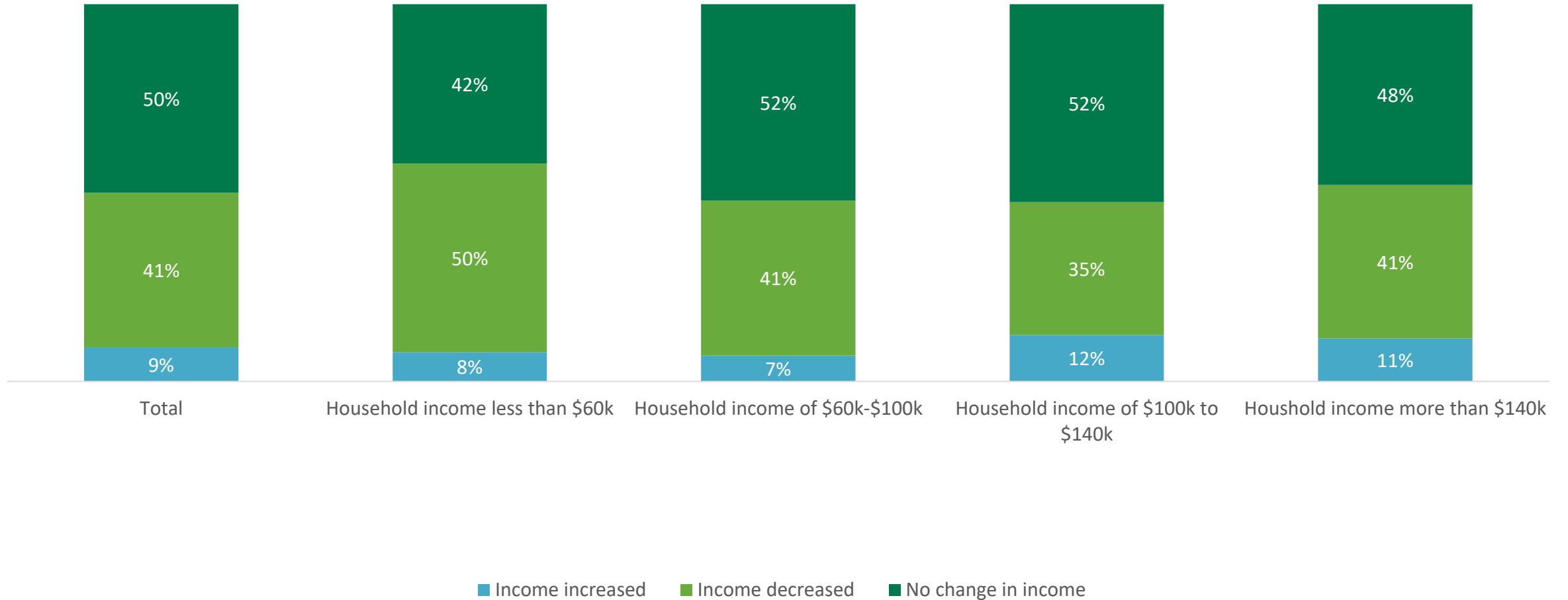
Those employed before the pandemic were more likely to start paid work during the pandemic, particularly if they had lost their original job, were stood down or had reduced hours

Commenced paid work since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic



41% of Wyndham residents and 50% of those with lower household incomes reported a decrease in household income since the beginning of the pandemic

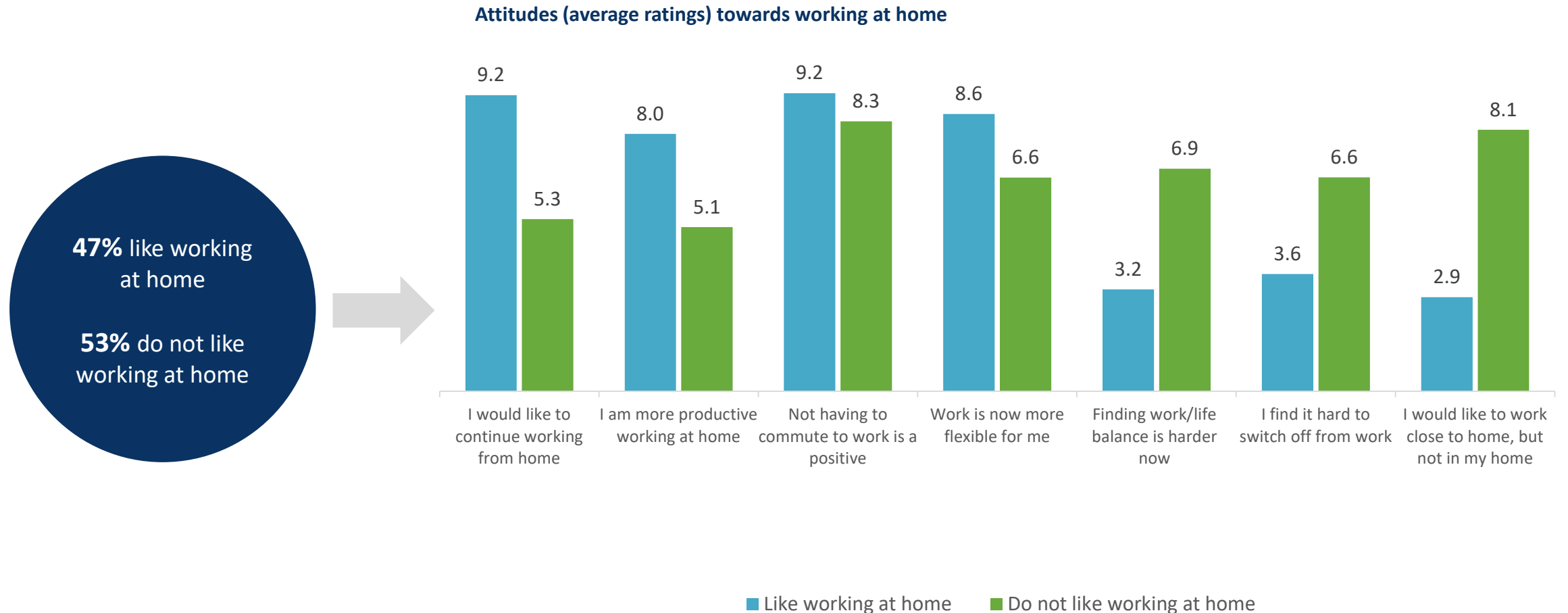
Change in household income since the beginning of the pandemic



Base. Total (n=746)

Source. Z1 What is your usual household annual income from all sources before tax? Z3 Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, has your household income changed?

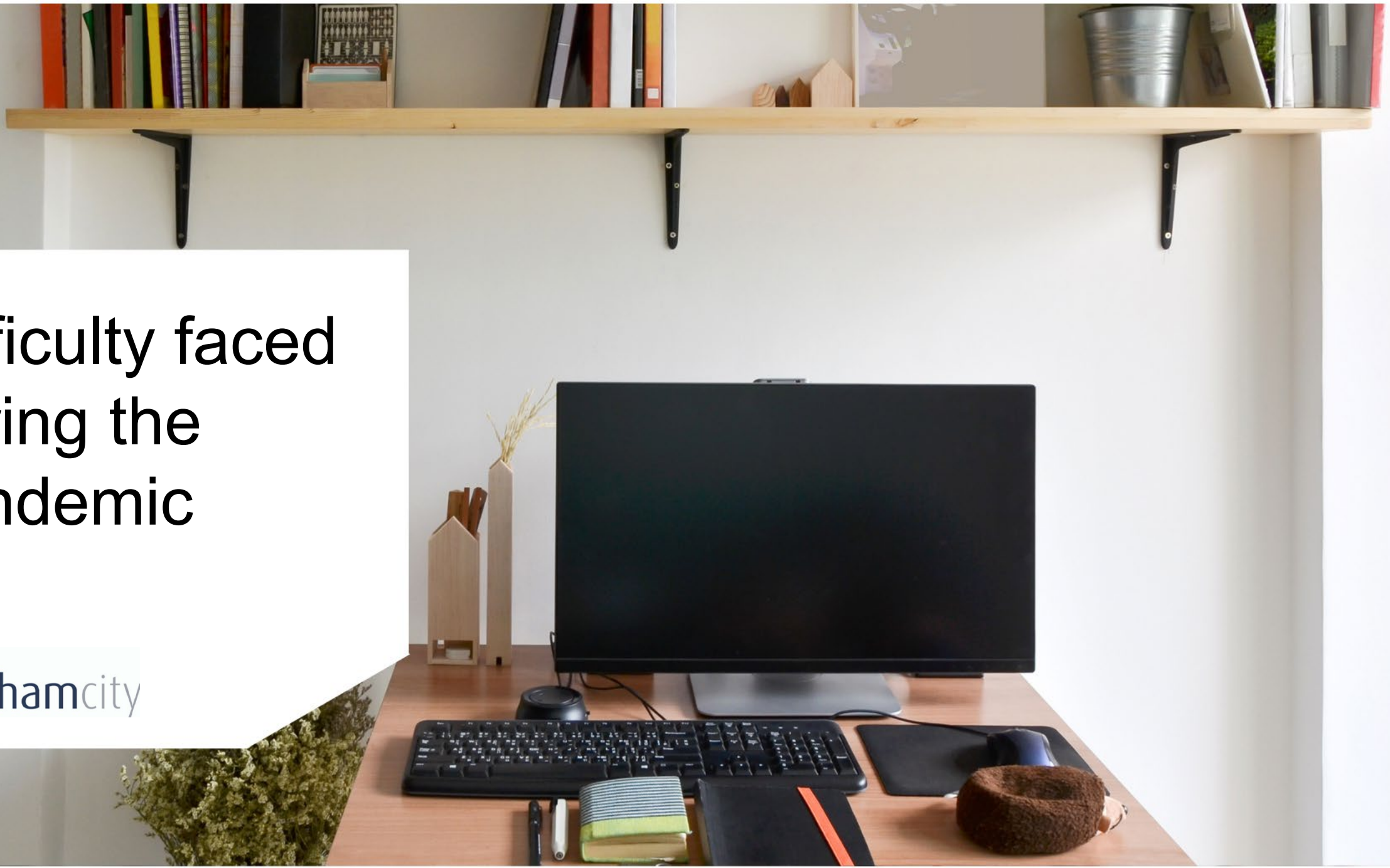
Not having to commute is a benefit regardless of whether working at home is seen as a positive or a negative



Base. Working at home since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (n=169)
Source. A8 To what extent do you agree with the following statements about working from home?

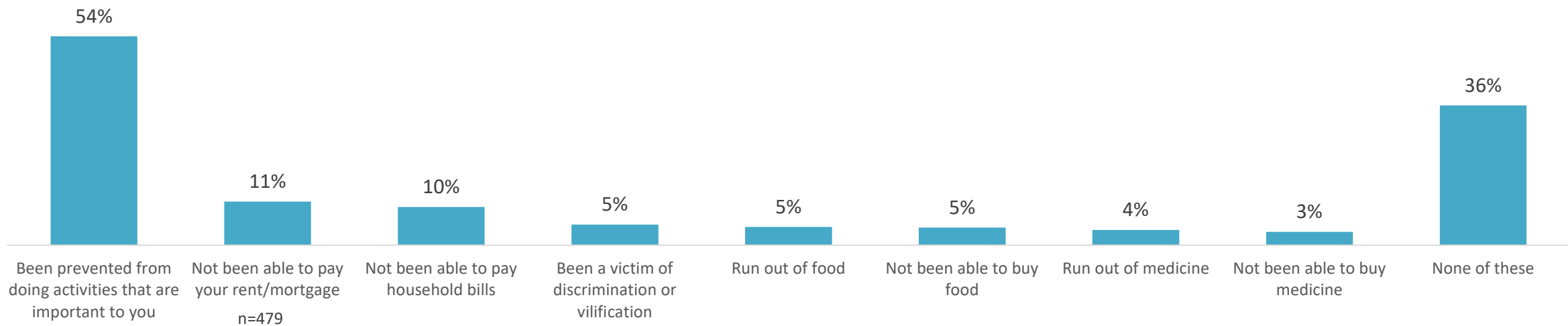
Difficulty faced during the pandemic

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One third of Wyndham residents were not faced with any negative experiences during the pandemic, but more than half were prevented from doing activities that were important to them

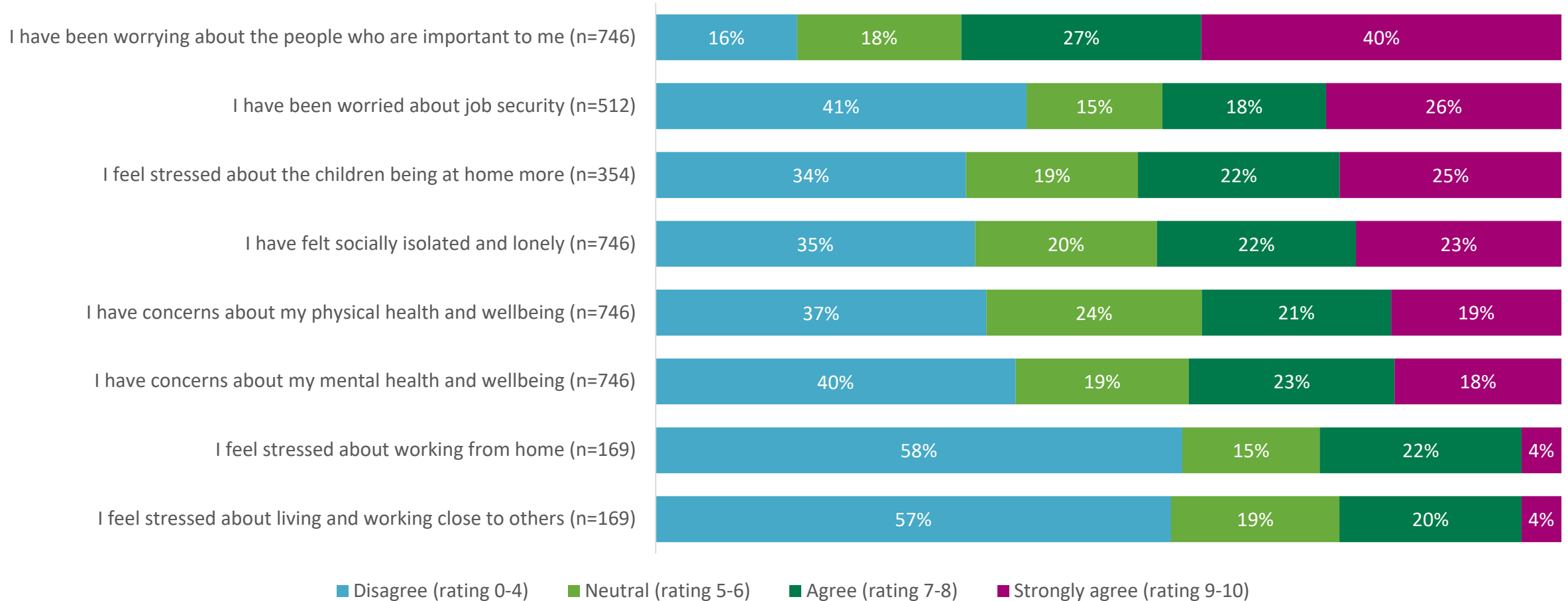
Experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic



Base. Total (n=746)
Source. A10 Have you experienced any of the following during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The main concern of Wyndham residents during the pandemic was the wellbeing of others who are important to them

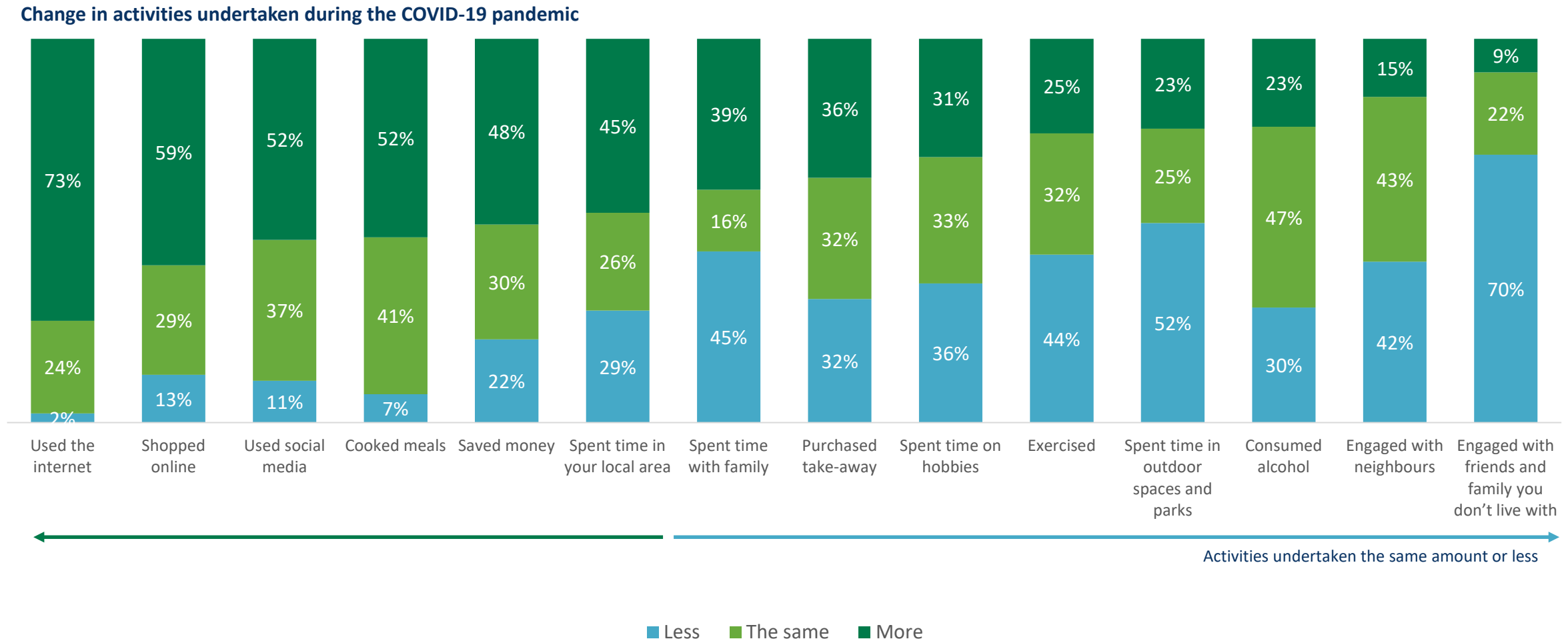
Attitudes towards the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic



Base. Total (n=746)

Source. A11 To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic?

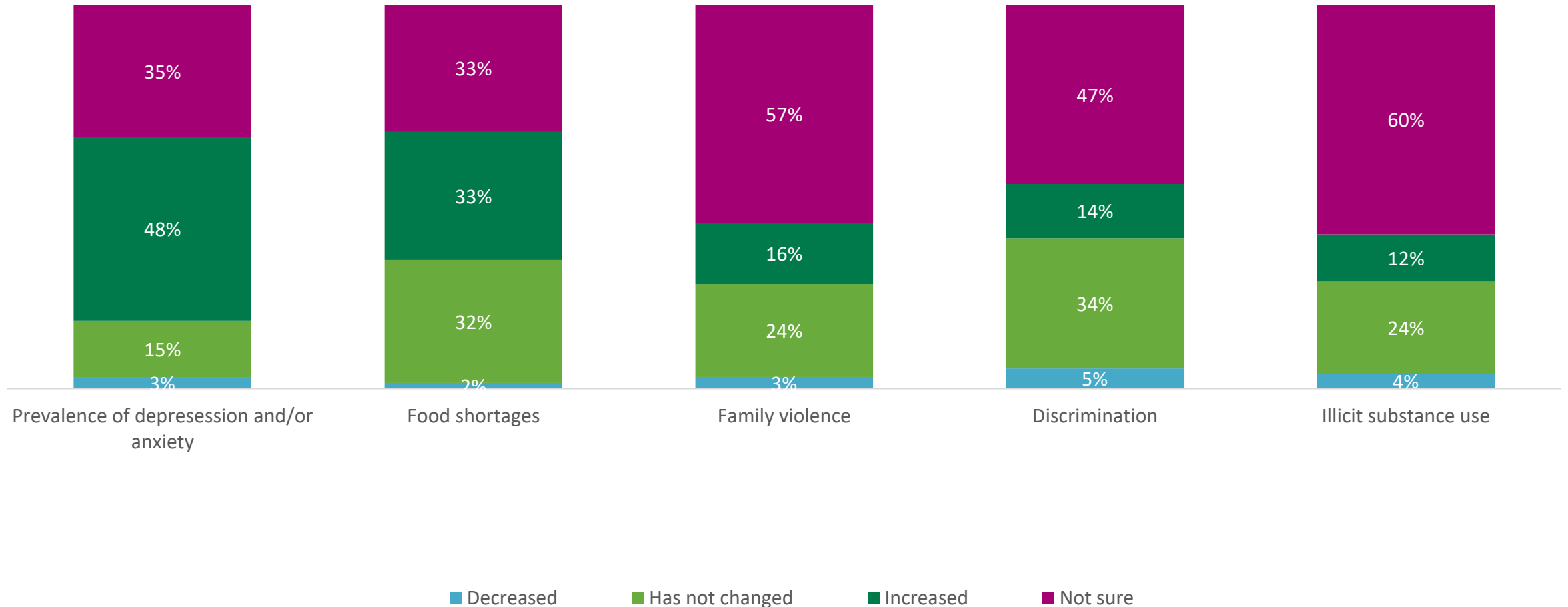
Online activities were much more common during the pandemic while exercise and engagement with others were less common



Base. Total (n=746)
Source. A12 Have you done more, less or the same amount of the following activities during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Almost half of Wyndham residents believed that more people were suffering from depression and/or anxiety during the pandemic, but there was less clarity on other issues

Change in social issues during the COVID-19 pandemic



Base. Total (n=746)

Source. A13 In your neighbourhood, are you aware of any changes in the following during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Attitudes towards COVID-19 centre around three themes

Staying healthy and safe

- Wearing face masks is important for stopping the spread of COVID-19
- I will only feel safe once there is a COVID-19 vaccine
- I want as much information about COVID-19 and its impacts as possible
- I will continue to practice social distancing even when the rules are relaxed
- Social distancing must become the “new normal” for all Australians
- Using hand sanitiser and washing hands regularly is important for stopping the spread of COVID-19
- As a nation, staying healthy should be our top priority

38% strongly agree with attitudes about staying healthy and safe

Making plans and living life

- I am enjoying some of the ways life has changed since lock down began
- I want life to go back exactly the way it was before the COVID-19 pandemic
- I’m not making any plans for the rest of 2020 – I’m looking forward to 2021
- Spending time face to face with other people is important to me

34% strongly agree with attitudes about making plans and living life

Finances and the economy

- I am focussed on budgeting for the long term
- As a nation, the economy should be our top priority
- Buying Australian made products is more important than ever
- I’m not worried about money and I buy what I want

29% strongly agree with attitudes about finances and the economy

Simply using hand sanitiser is seen as an important way to stop the spread of COVID-19

Attitudes towards staying healthy and safe

Using hand sanitiser and washing hands regularly is important for stopping the spread of COVID-19



As a nation, staying healthy should be our top priority



Wearing face masks is important for stopping the spread of COVID-19



I will continue to practice social distancing even when the rules are relaxed



I want as much information about COVID-19 and its impacts as possible



Social distancing must become the “new normal” for all Australians



I will only feel safe once there is a COVID-19 vaccine



■ Disagree (rating 0-4)

■ Neutral (rating 5-6)

■ Agree (rating 7-8)

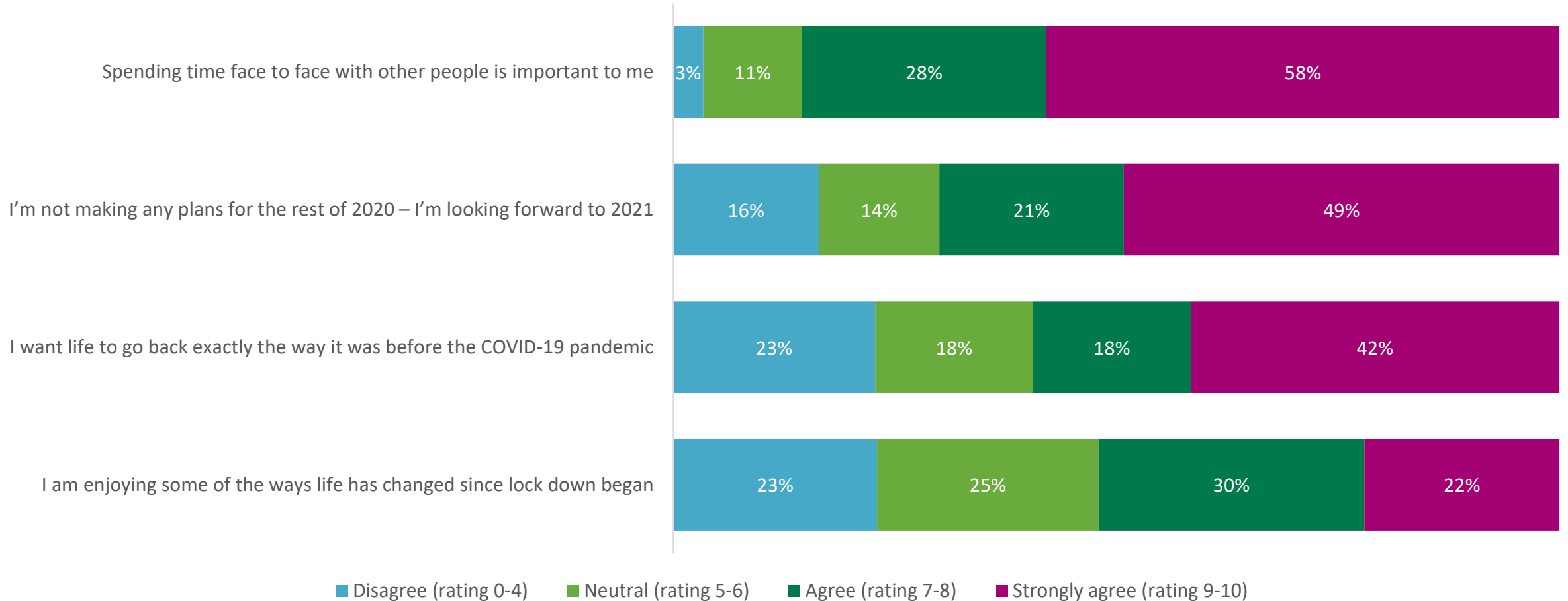
■ Strongly agree (rating 9-10)

Base. Total (respondents randomly answered 10 of 15 statements (average sample size per statement n=497)

Source. B3 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Twice as many people want life to go back to the way it was before COVID-19 than are enjoying the changes to life

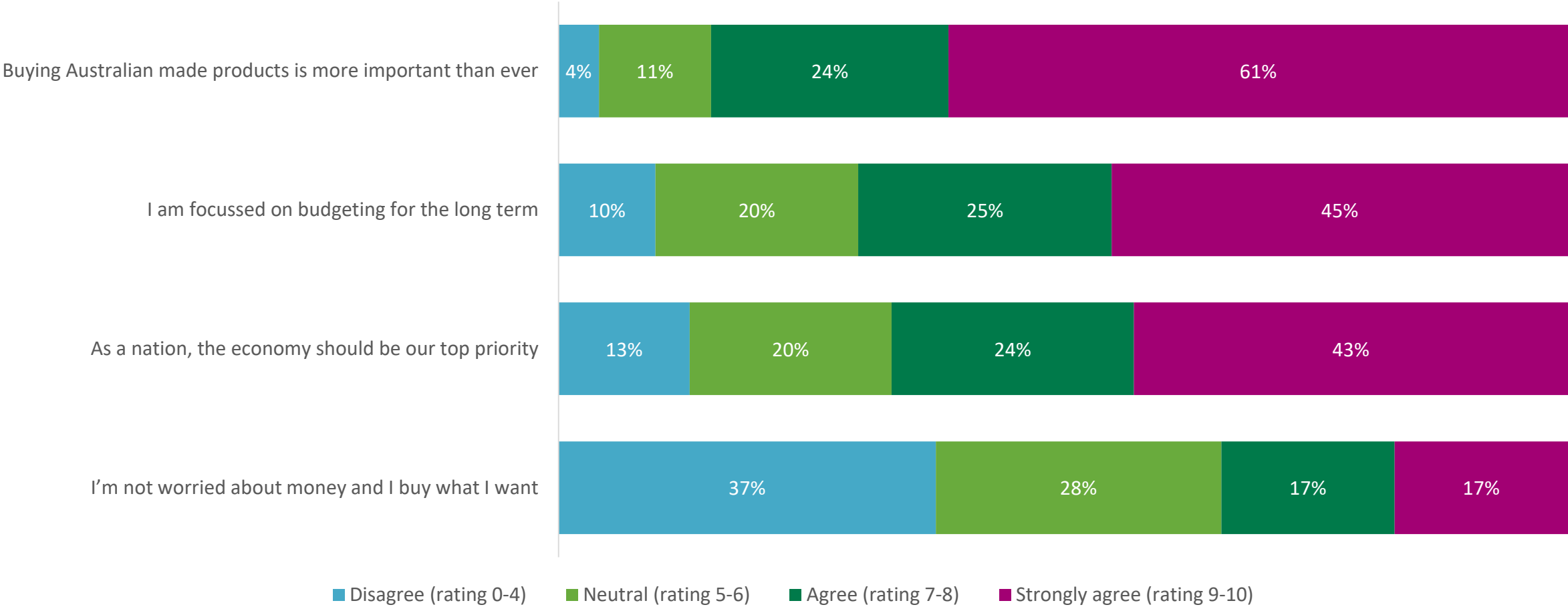
Attitudes towards making plans and living life




Base. Total (respondents randomly answered 10 of 15 statements (average sample size per statement n=497)
Source. B3 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Less than 20% of Wyndham residents are not worried about money and more than 60% are focussed on buying Australian made to assist economic recovery

Attitudes towards finances and the economy



Base. Total (respondents randomly answered 10 of 15 statements (average sample size per statement n=497)
Source. B3 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

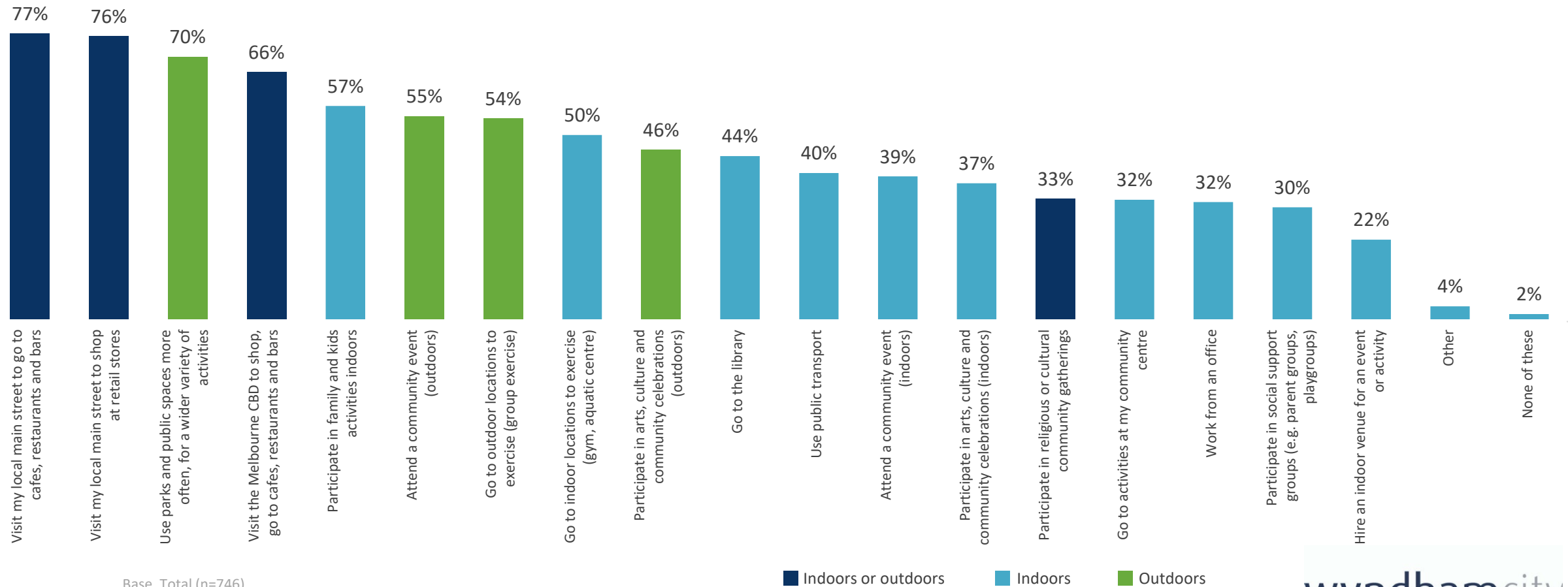


Attitudes towards COVID-19 and plans for when restrictions ease

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98% of residents are planning to participate in at least one activity once restrictions ease, with more than three quarters planning to stay local and visit the main street

Activities most want to do once restrictions ease

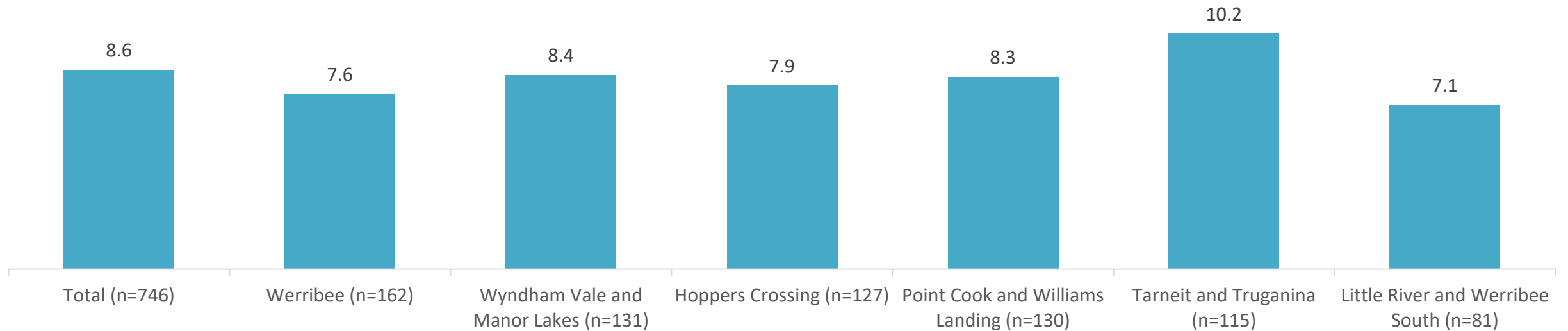


Base. Total (n=746)

Source. B2a Which of the following will you do once restrictions have eased?

Residents of Tarneit and Truganina are interested in engaging with the community in a larger number of ways once restrictions ease

Average number of activities most want to do once restrictions ease by region



Base. Total (n=746)

Source. B2a Which of the following will you do once restrictions have eased?

Wyndham residents see there are two sides to COVID recovery

Re-engaging the community

- Supporting the local arts and culture sector
- Delivering community programs and events
- Opening and maintaining public facilities such as libraries and community centres so they are COVID-safe
- Delivering support for vulnerable people and those in need
- Activities that support local businesses and stimulate the local economy
- Clear communication on changes to services and social distancing requirements
- Leading effective public health adaptations (social distancing, sanitisers etc) and supporting businesses and community groups to do the same

56% believe that re-engaging the community is very important

Business as usual

- Delivering planning and building approval services
- Animal management services
- Maintenance of local roads
- Delivering customer service
- Waste management services
- Local law enforcement

50% believe that business as usual is very important

Base. Total (n=746)

Source. C4 How important are the following ways Council can support communities during recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic?

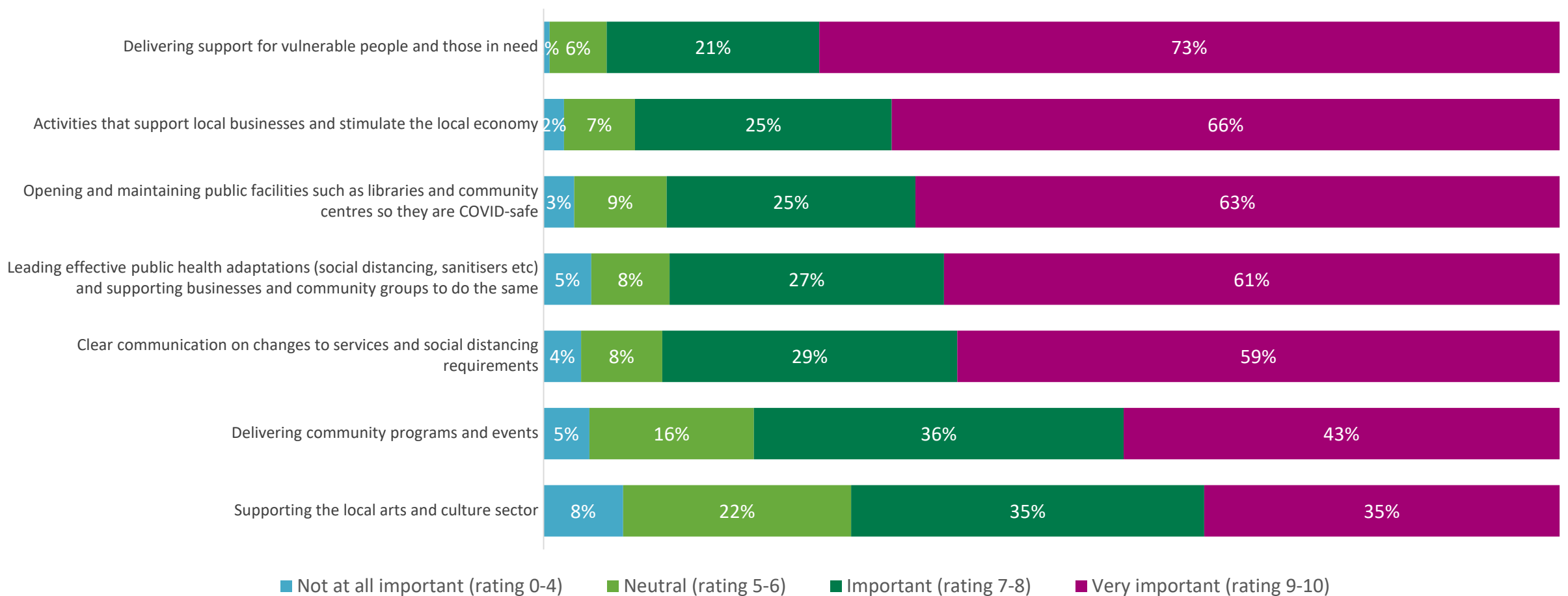
A photograph of a woman with dark hair and sunglasses, smiling broadly and placing her hand on the shoulder of an older man with grey hair. The man is wearing a grey and white striped polo shirt. They are outdoors, with a blurred background of greenery and a red wall. The woman is wearing a blue lanyard with a badge.

Community needs for council services

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The most important ways the council can re-engage the community require both support for vulnerable people and support for local businesses

Important ways the Council can re-engage the community to recover from COVID-19

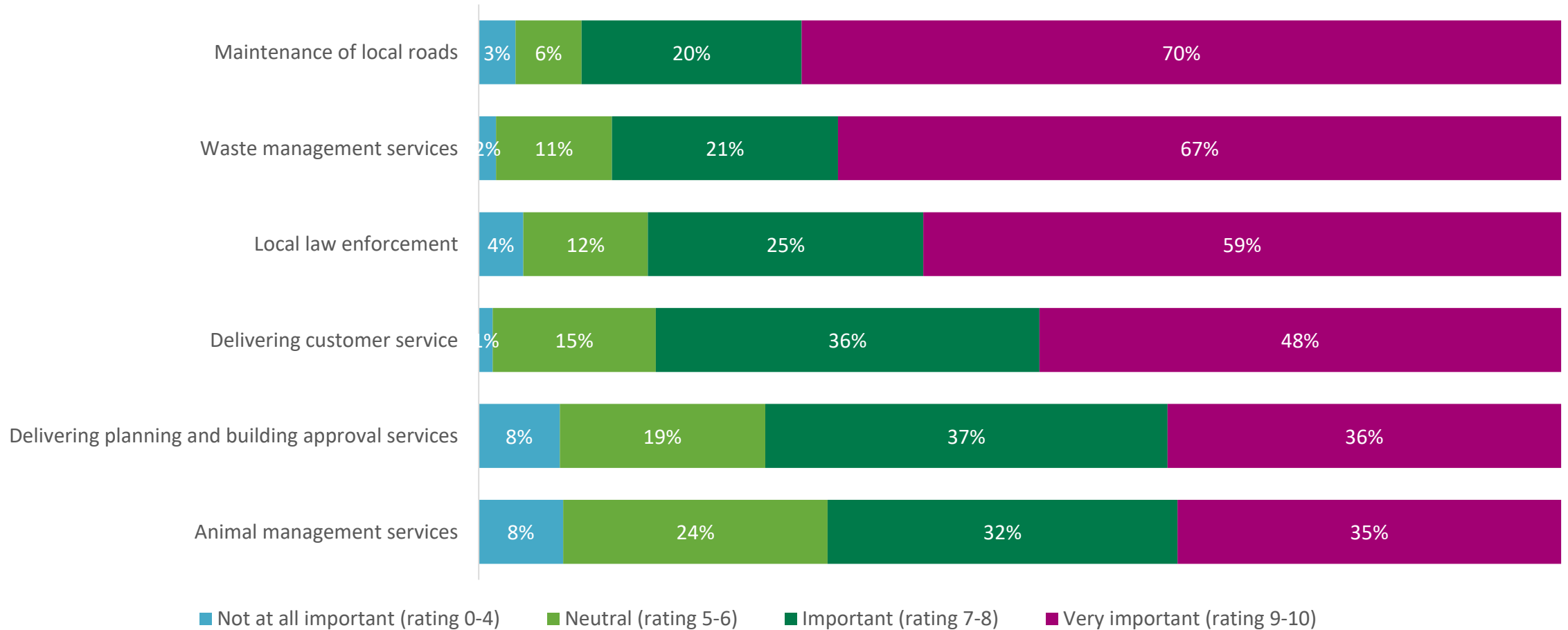


Base. Total (respondents randomly answered 9 of 13 statements (average sample size per statement n=516)

Source. C4 How important are the following ways Council can support communities during recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Even though services are key to recovery from COVID-19, maintenance of local roads and waste management services are seen to be important issues

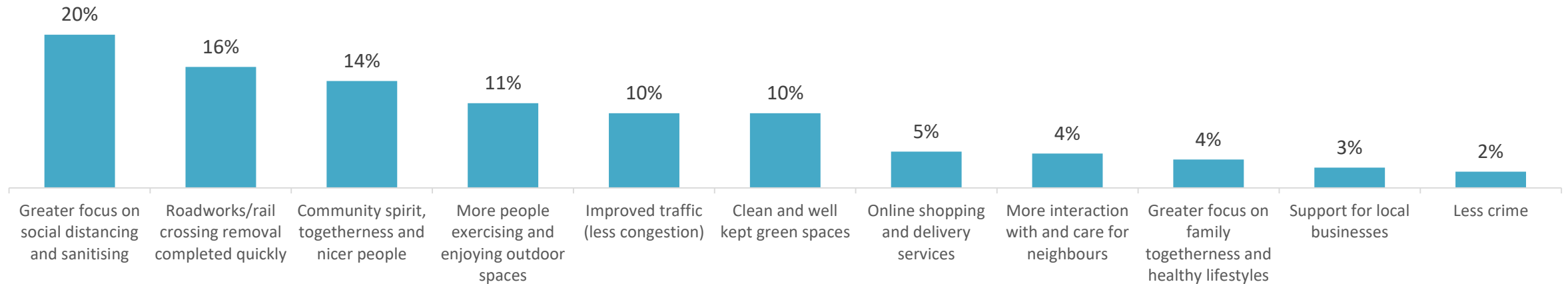
Important business as usual areas the Council can focus on to recover from COVID-19



Base. Total (n=746)
Source. C4 How important are the following ways Council can support communities during recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Positives coming out of COVID-19 include safety measures, efficiencies in infrastructure projects as well as community spirit

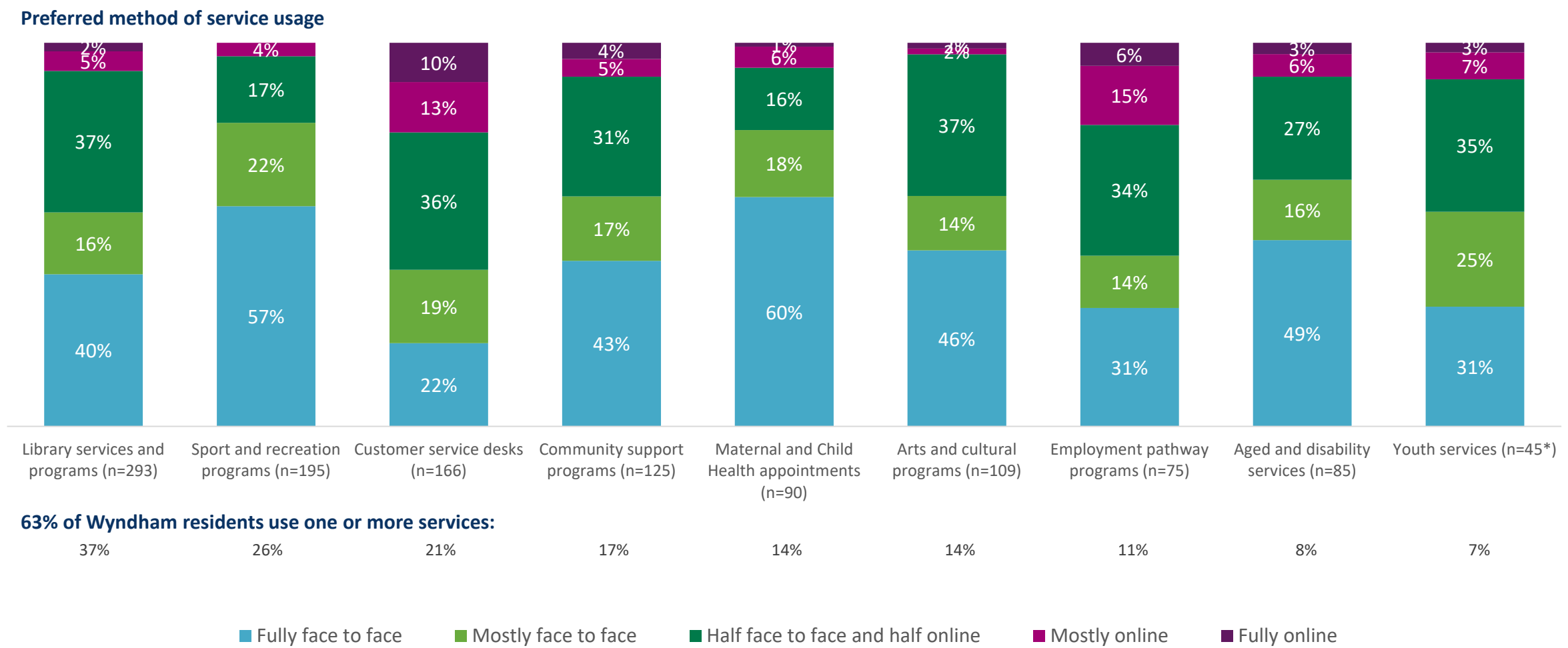
Would like to see these positive changes endure in the long term



Base. Could identify a positive change and responded to C4 (n=360)

Source. C5 What positive changes have you noticed in your area that you would like to see endure in the long term?

Face to face access to services is preferred overall, but online is most acceptable for accessing customer service desks and employment pathway programs





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