



Consultation on Taxi Licensing Policy

Full results summary

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Survey background



- Southampton City Council undertook a public consultation on proposals for the Taxi Licensing Policy in Southampton.
- The consultation took place for **12** weeks between **December 29th 2022** and **March 22nd 2023**.
- The aim of this consultation was to:
 - Communicate the proposals for Taxi Licencing.
 - Ensure any resident, business or stakeholder who wished to comment on the proposals had the opportunity to do so, enabling them to raise any impacts the proposals may have.
 - Allow participants to propose alternative suggestions for consideration.
- This report summarises the aims, principles, methodology and results of the public consultation. It provides a summary of the consultation responses both for the consideration of decision makers and any interested individuals and stakeholders.
- It is important to be mindful that a consultation is not a vote, it is an opportunity for stakeholders to express their views, concerns and alternatives to a proposal. Equally, responses from the consultation should be considered in full before any final decisions are made. This report outlines in detail the representations made during the consultation period so that decision makers can consider what has been said alongside other information.



Southampton City Council is committed to consultations of the highest standard, which are meaningful and comply with *The Gunning Principles (considered to be the legal standard for consultations)*:

1. Proposals are still at a formative stage (a final decision has not yet been made)
2. There is sufficient information put forward in the proposals to allow 'intelligent consideration'
3. There is adequate time for consideration and response
4. Conscientious consideration must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made



New Conversations 2.0
LGA guide to engagement



Rules: The Gunning Principles

They were coined by Stephen Sedley QC in a court case in 1985 relating to a school closure consultation (R v London Borough of Brent ex parte Gunning). Prior to this, very little consideration had been given to the laws of consultation. Sedley defined that a consultation is only legitimate when these four principles are met:

- 1. proposals are still at a formative stage**
A final decision has not yet been made, or predetermined, by the decision makers
- 2. there is sufficient information to give 'intelligent consideration'**
The information provided must relate to the consultation and must be available, accessible, and easily interpretable for consultees to provide an informed response
- 3. there is adequate time for consideration and response**
There must be sufficient opportunity for consultees to participate in the consultation. There is no set timeframe for consultation,¹ despite the widely accepted twelve-week consultation period, as the length of time given for consultee to respond can vary depending on the subject and extent of impact of the consultation
- 4. 'conscientious consideration' must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made**
Decision-makers should be able to provide evidence that they took consultation responses into account

These principles were reinforced in 2001 in the 'Coughlan Case (R v North and East Devon Health Authority ex parte Coughlan²)', which involved a health authority closure and confirmed that they applied to all consultations, and then in a Supreme Court case in 2014 (R ex parte Moseley v LB Haringey³), which endorsed the legal standing of the four principles. Since then, the Gunning Principles have formed a strong legal foundation from which the legitimacy of public consultations is assessed, and are frequently referred to as a legal basis for judicial review decisions.⁴

¹ In some local authorities, their local voluntary Compact agreement with the third sector may specify the length of time they are required to consult for. However, in many cases, the Compact is either inactive or has been cancelled so the consultation timeframe is open to debate

² BAILII, [England and Wales Court of Appeal \(Civil Decision\) Decisions](#), Accessed: 13 December 2016.

³ BAILII, [United Kingdom Supreme Court](#), Accessed: 13 December 2016

⁴ The information used to produce this document has been taken from the Law of Consultation training course provided by The Consultation Institute



- The agreed approach for this consultation was to use a questionnaire as the main route for feedback. Questionnaires enable an appropriate amount of explanatory and supporting information to be included in a structured questionnaire, helping to ensure respondents are aware of the background and detail of the proposals.
- Respondents could also write letters or emails to provide feedback on the proposals. Emails or letters from stakeholders that contained consultation feedback were collated and analysed as a part of the overall consultation.
- All questionnaire and email results have been analysed and presented in graphs within this report. Respondents were given opportunities throughout the questionnaire to provide written feedback on the proposals. In addition anyone could provide feedback in letters and emails. All written responses and questionnaire comments have been read and then assigned to categories based upon similar sentiment or theme.



The proposed draft policy provides information about the licensing of hackney carriages, private hire vehicles, their drivers and operators at Southampton City Council. It sets out the requirements for the different categories of taxi licences and how the taxi licensing regime is enforced.

In 2021, we consulted about disclosure and barring checks, taxi cameras and vehicle livery. Following that, the decision was made to require drivers to obtain 6 monthly enhanced DBS checks and retain the requirement to have approved taxi cameras fitted. It was also decided that door signage to include operator details was retained, but it was agreed that this matter would be reviewed after a year. As a result, we now have a number of further proposed changes that we would like to consult on.

In addition to consultation feedback, any actions recommended by the Department for Transport Best Practice Guidance will also be considered.



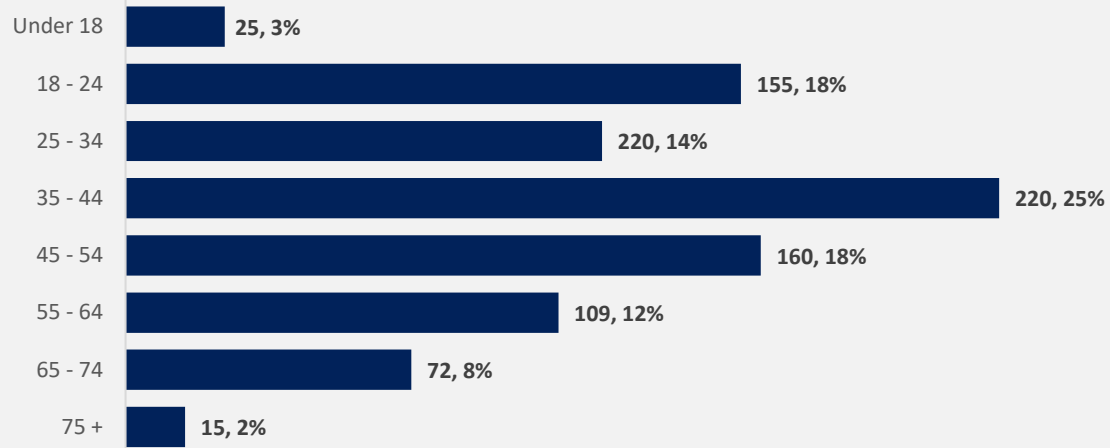
Overall respondents



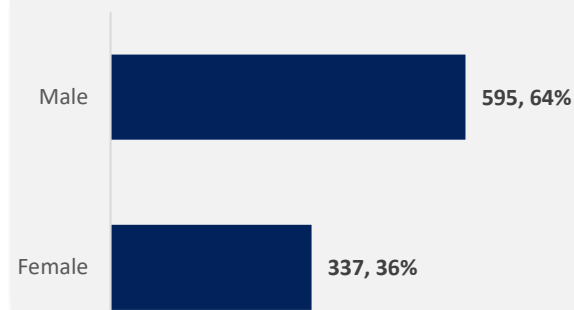
Who were the respondents?

Overall, there were **1015** separate responses to the consultation. Of this **1000**, **201** were paper questionnaire responses, **799** were online questionnaire responses and **15** email submissions. The following page includes demographic breakdowns of the questionnaire respondents labelled as count and percentage.

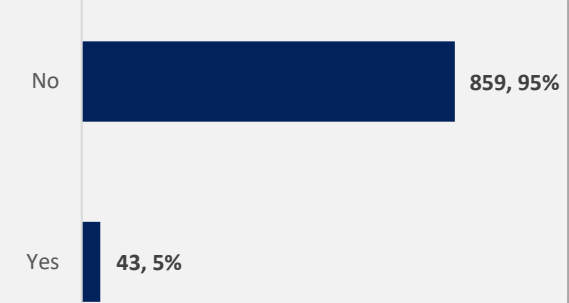
Age:



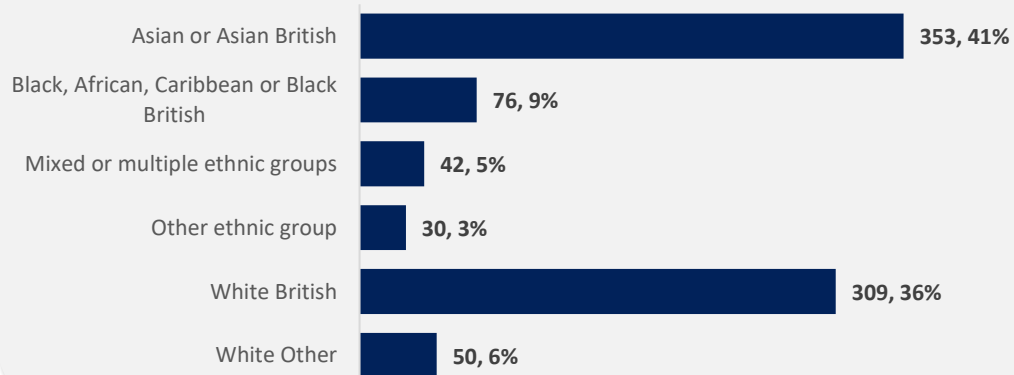
Sex:



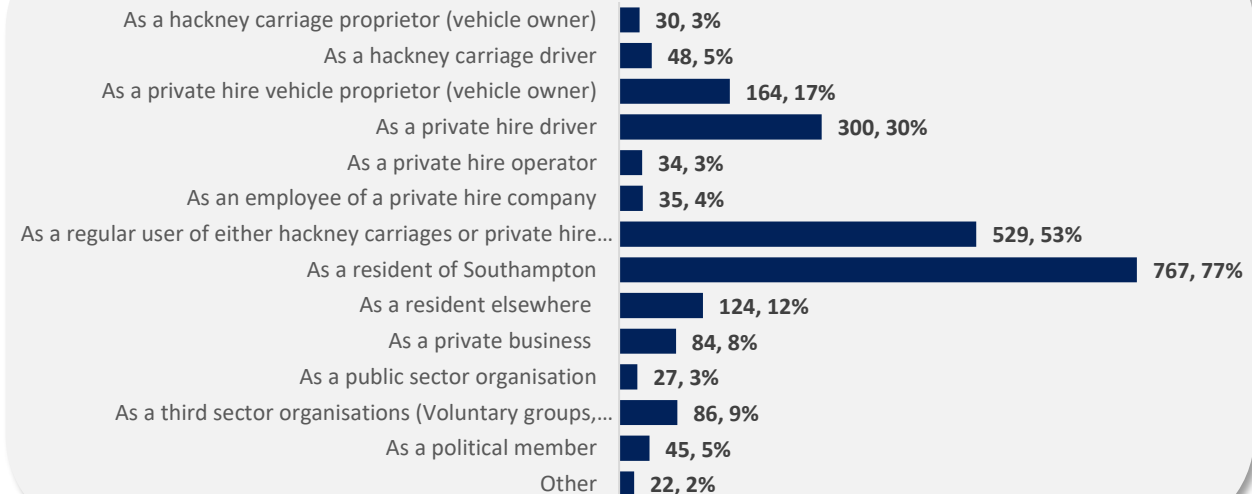
Disability:



Ethnicity:



Interest in the survey:





Proposals



Proposals

Proposal 1. Southampton City Council is proposing to remove the requirement in Private Hire Vehicles to display the name and contact details of the operator of the vehicle.

The removal of the requirement to display an operator on the door sticker will allow drivers to work for more than one operator at the same time. The proposal is to retain door stickers but remove the requirement to display operator details.

One risk of this proposal is that there is an increased chance some trips may be left without a vehicle, in the case that drivers are more selective. To address this risk, alongside proposal 1, should it be adopted, the council proposes to add in new conditions to both vehicle and operator licences.

Proposal 2. If the requirement to display operator details is removed, the council would propose adding in that once a hiring has been accepted, it must be completed unless there is good cause not to.

Proposal 3. In addition to Proposal 2, if the requirement to display operator details is removed, we propose that operators must have a policy on how these incidents will be addressed and reported to the licensing authority.

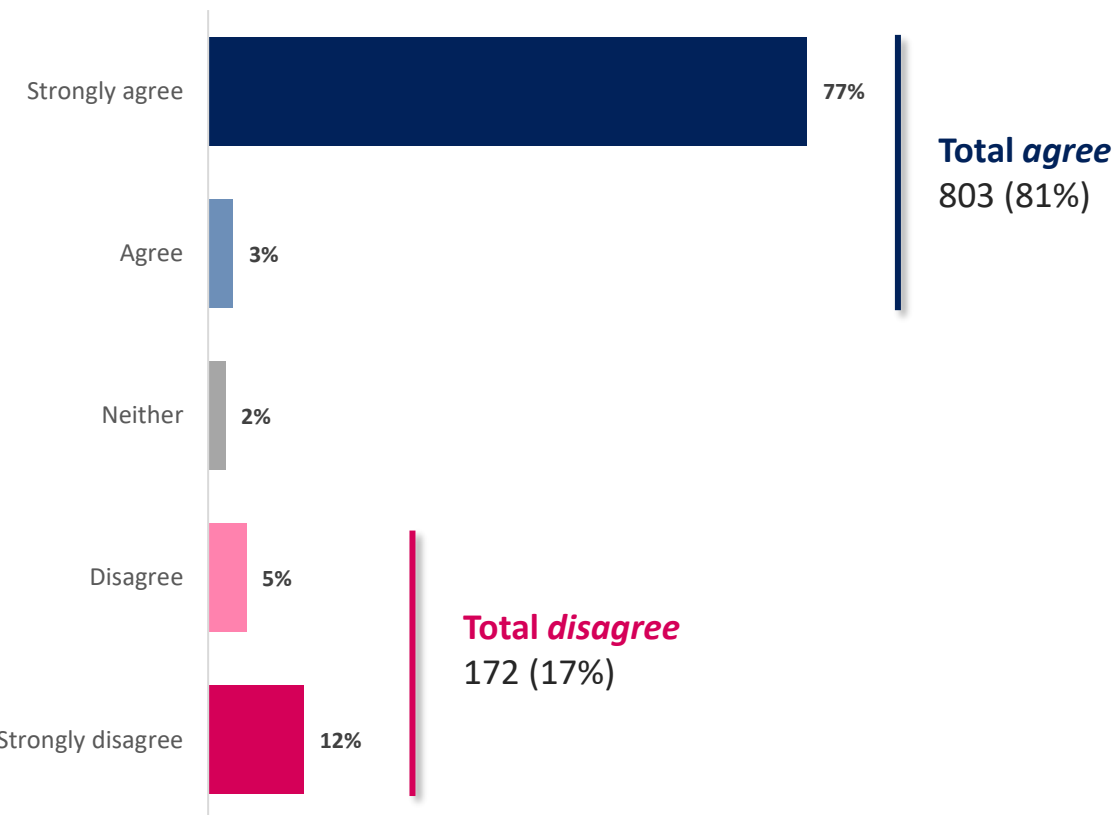
Proposal 4. We propose adding in a condition where operators must notify the Licencing Authority of incidents or complaints made against drivers and operators. Adding this in formalises reporting regimes and ensures that reports are made from all operators to assist with public protection.

Proposal 5. Currently, the policy notes that the operator must notify the Licensing Authority of commencement or termination of vehicles operated by them. We propose to add a condition requiring operators to report drivers as well vehicles that work on their platform.



Proposal 1 – Removing the requirement in Private Hire Vehicle conditions to display the name and contact details of the operator of the vehicle

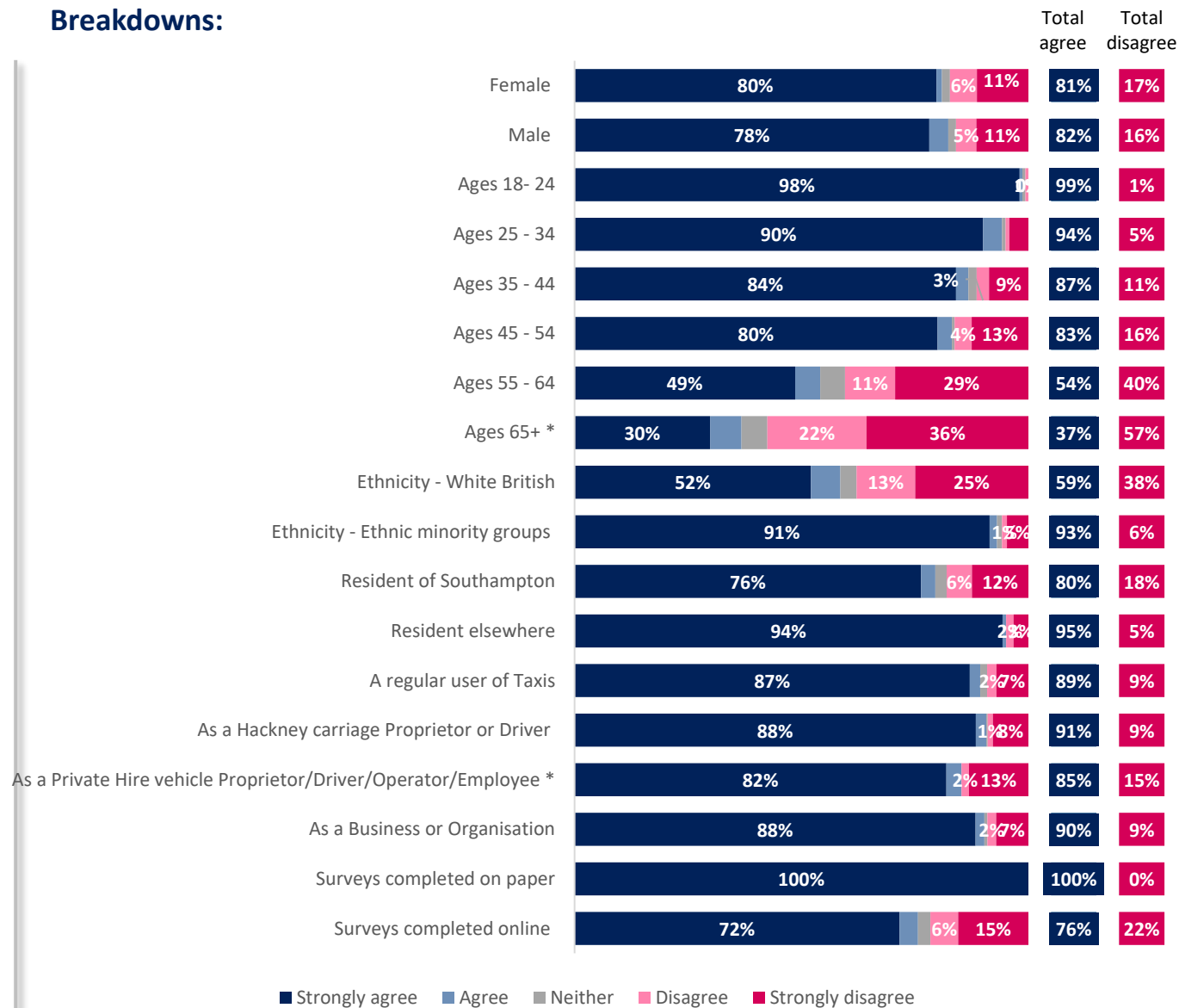
Total respondents: **997**



Key points:

- Respondents were **in favour** of removing the requirement to display name and contact details for Private hire vehicle operators with **80% agreeing** to this proposal.
- Those aged between **18-24 had the highest agreement (99%)** with Proposal 1 while those **aged 65+ showed the highest disagreement 57%)**.

Breakdowns:



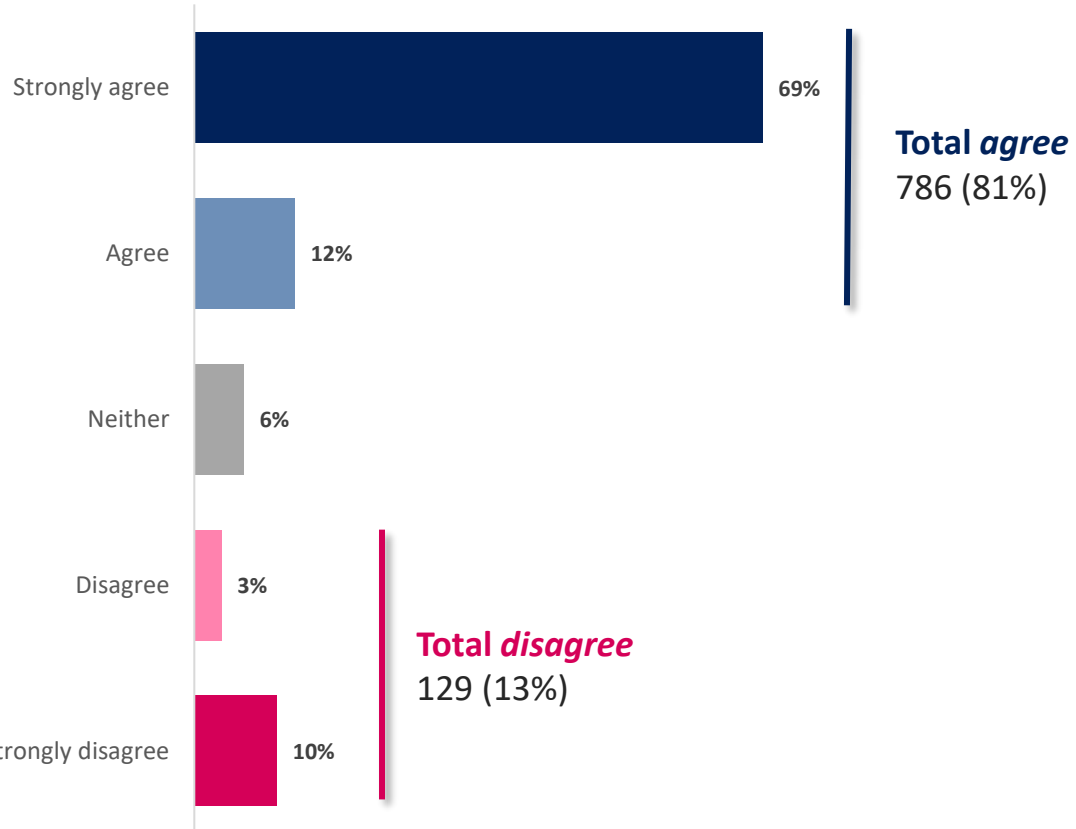
**Sample size –fewer than 50 respondents *Sample size –fewer than 100 respondents



Proposal 2 - Adding in the condition that the driver will complete that hiring unless there is good cause not to and reporting these reasons to the operator

*Proposal 2 will only happen if Proposal 1 goes ahead.

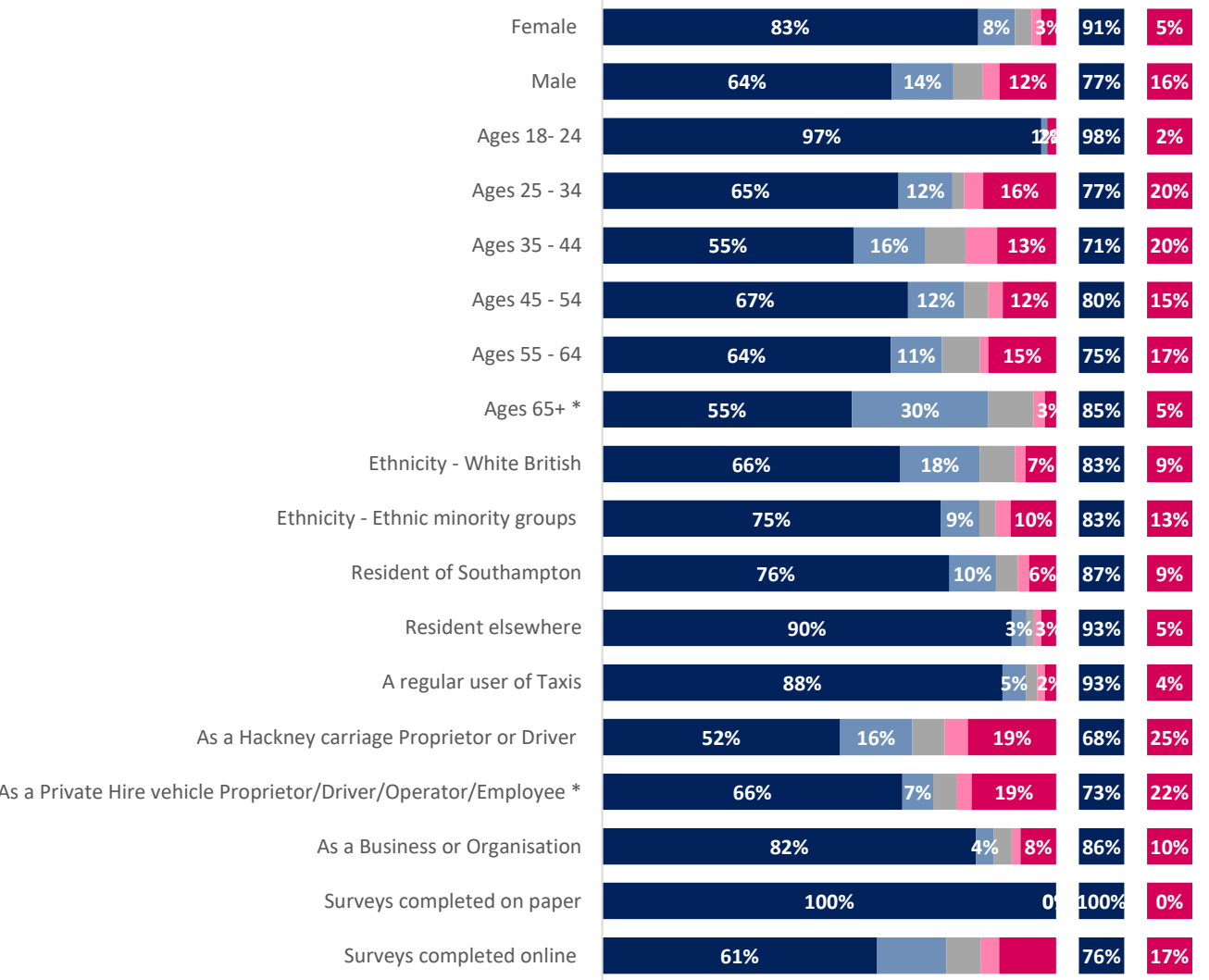
Total respondents: **973**



Key points:

- Furthermore, **more** respondents were also **in agreement** with Proposal 2 (**81%**).
- Those who responded **as a Hackney carriage proprietor or driver** were the **most in disagreement** with the Proposal (**25%**).

Breakdowns:



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

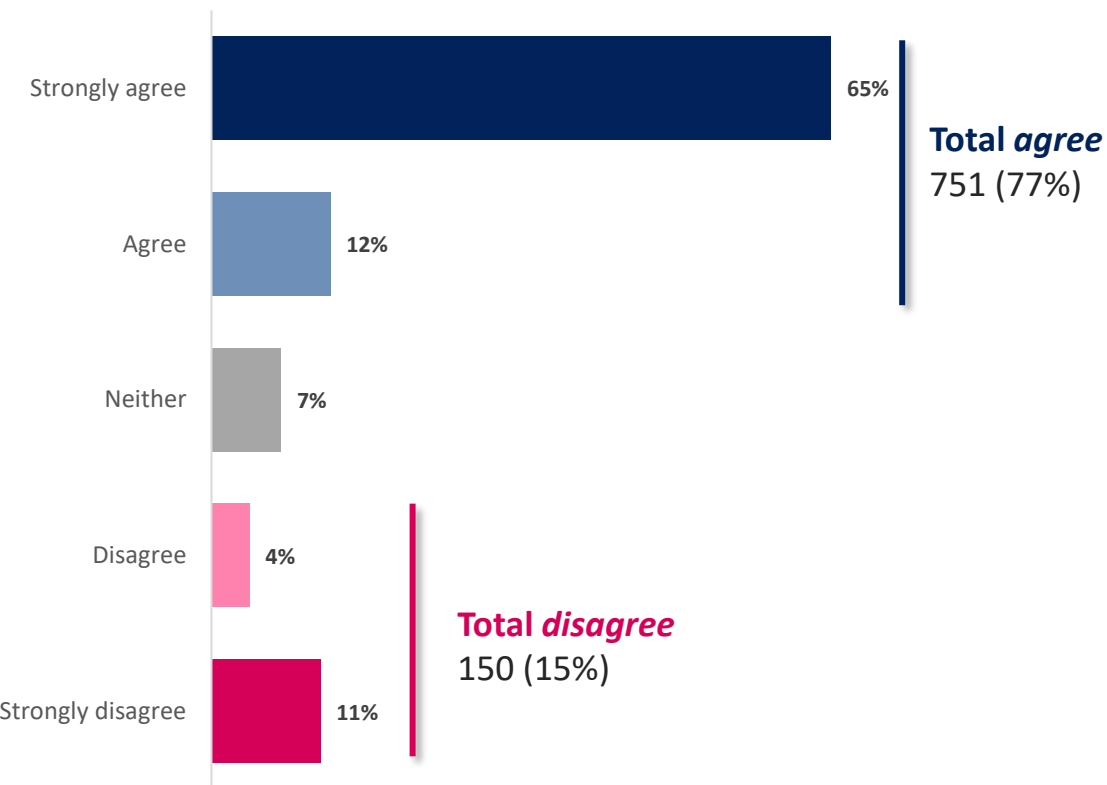
**Sample size –fewer than 50 respondents *Sample size –fewer than 100 respondents



Proposal 3 – Adding in the condition for operators to have a policy on reviewing and reporting cancelled jobs

*Proposal 3 will only happen if Proposal 1 goes ahead.

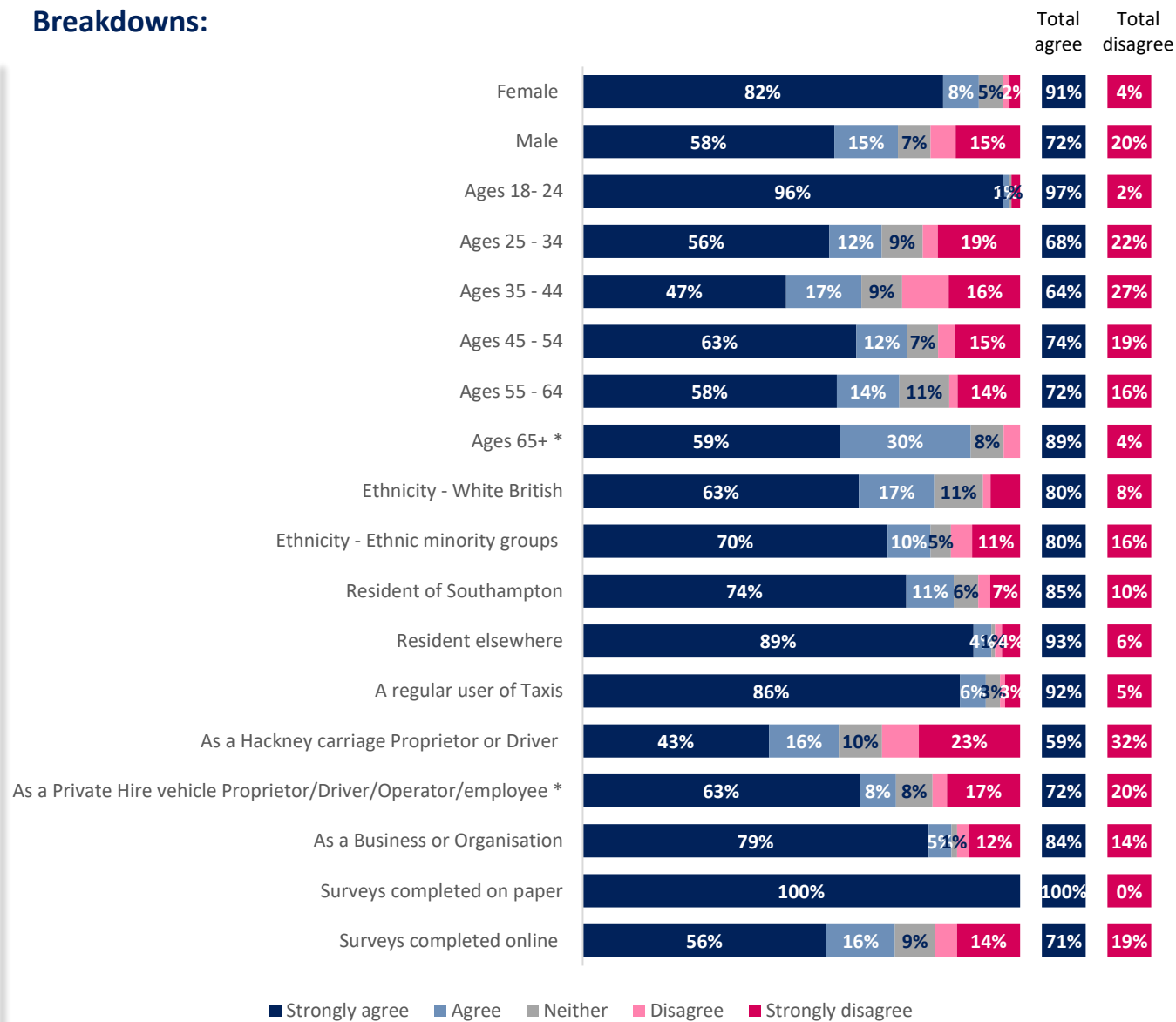
Total respondents: 972



Key points:

- **77%** of respondents **agreed** with Proposal 3, while **15% disagreed**.
- Those aged between **18 – 24** had the **highest agreement with Proposal 3 (97%)** while **Hackney carriage Proprietor/Drivers** showed the **largest disagreement rate at (32%)**.

Breakdowns:

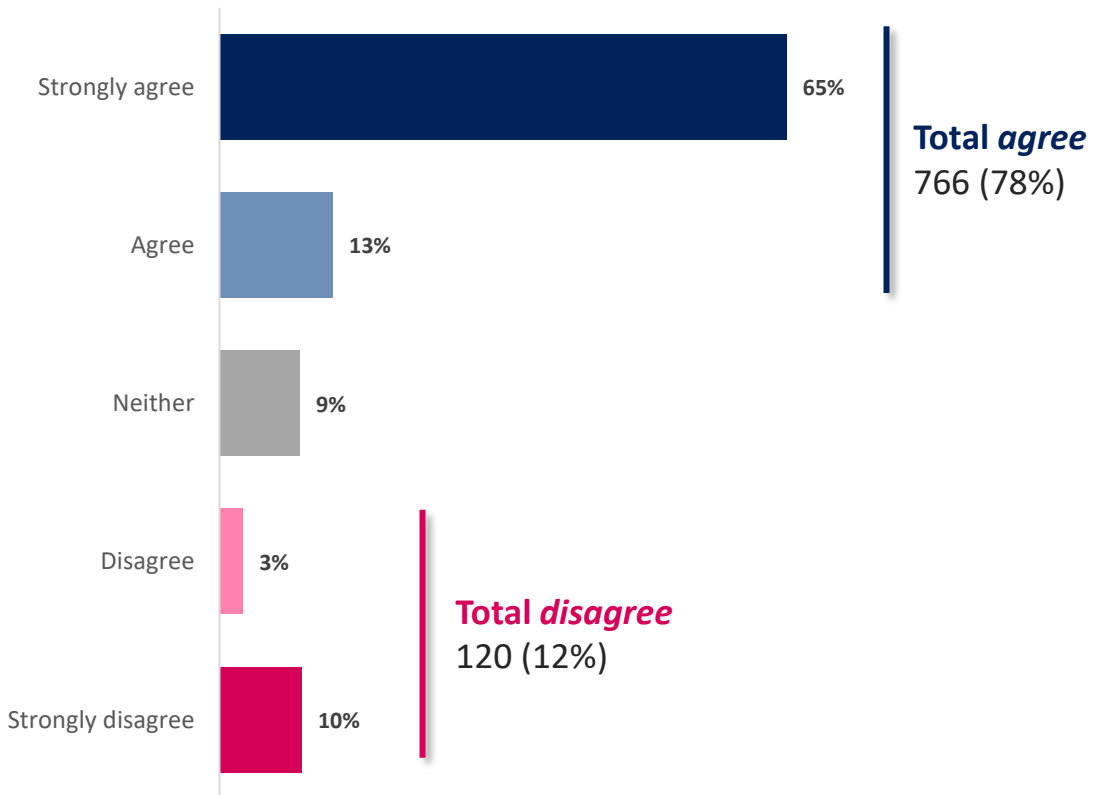


**Sample size –fewer than 50 respondents *Sample size –fewer than 100 respondents



Proposal 4 – Adding in and formalising reporting regimes into operator conditions

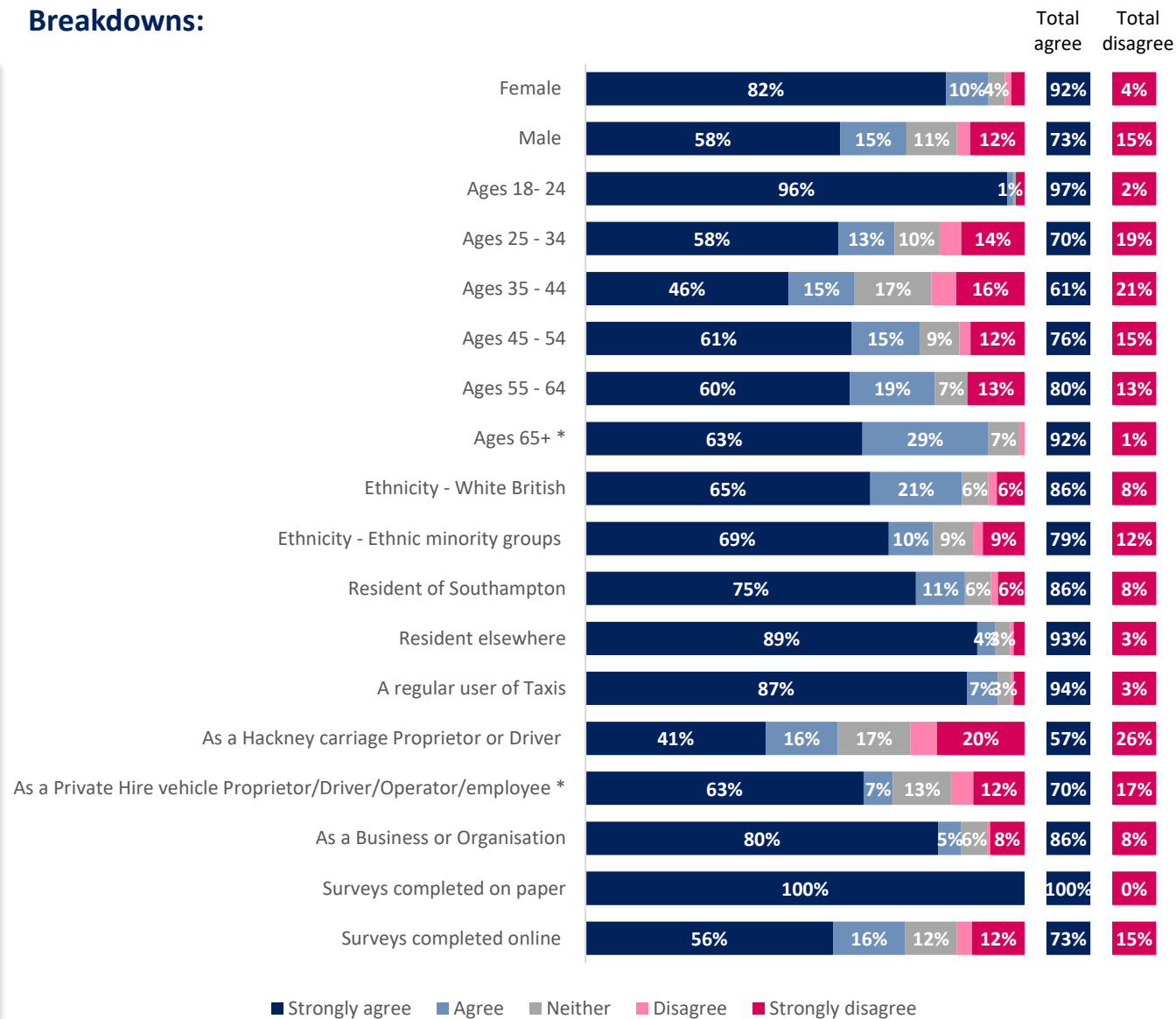
Total respondents: **977**



Key points:

- **78%** of respondents **agreed** with Proposal 4, again those **aged 18 – 24** showed the **highest agreement rate (97%)**.
- **Hackney carriage Proprietor/Drivers** showed the **largest disagreement rate** for the adding in and formalising reporting regimes into operator conditions Proposal (**26%**).

Breakdowns:

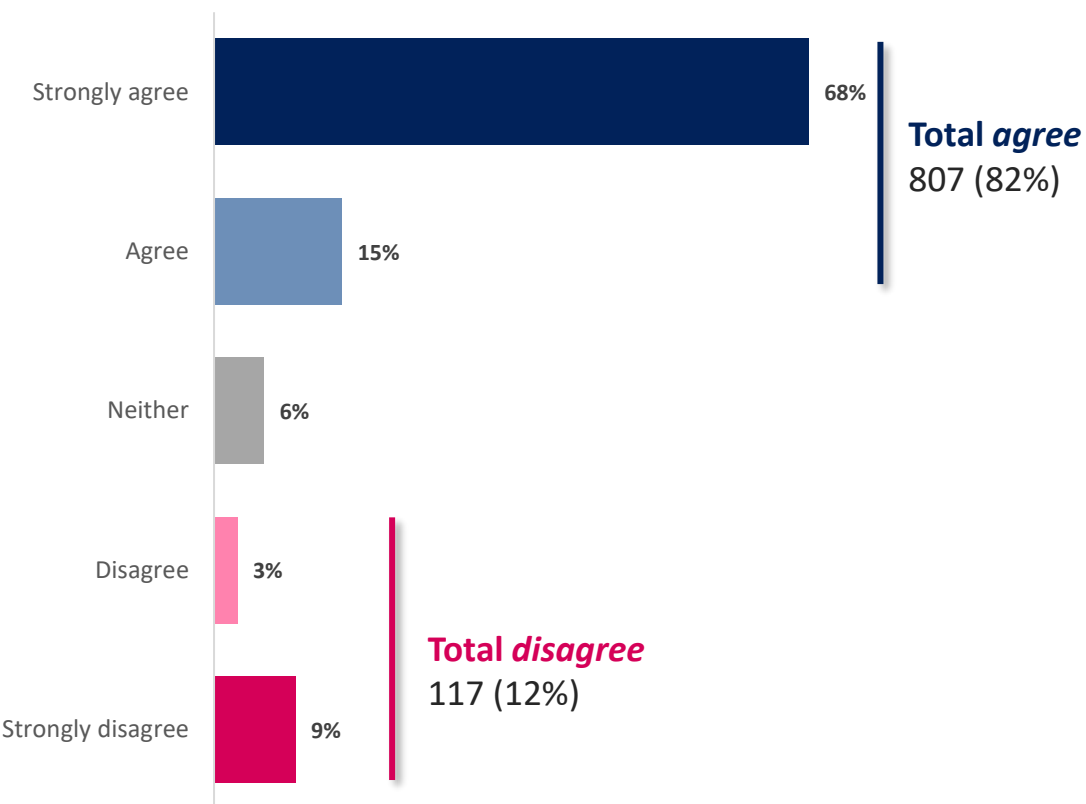


**Sample size –fewer than 50 respondents *Sample size –fewer than 100 respondents



Proposal 5 – Adding in the condition for operators to report vehicles and drivers that work on their platform, to the satisfaction of the Council.

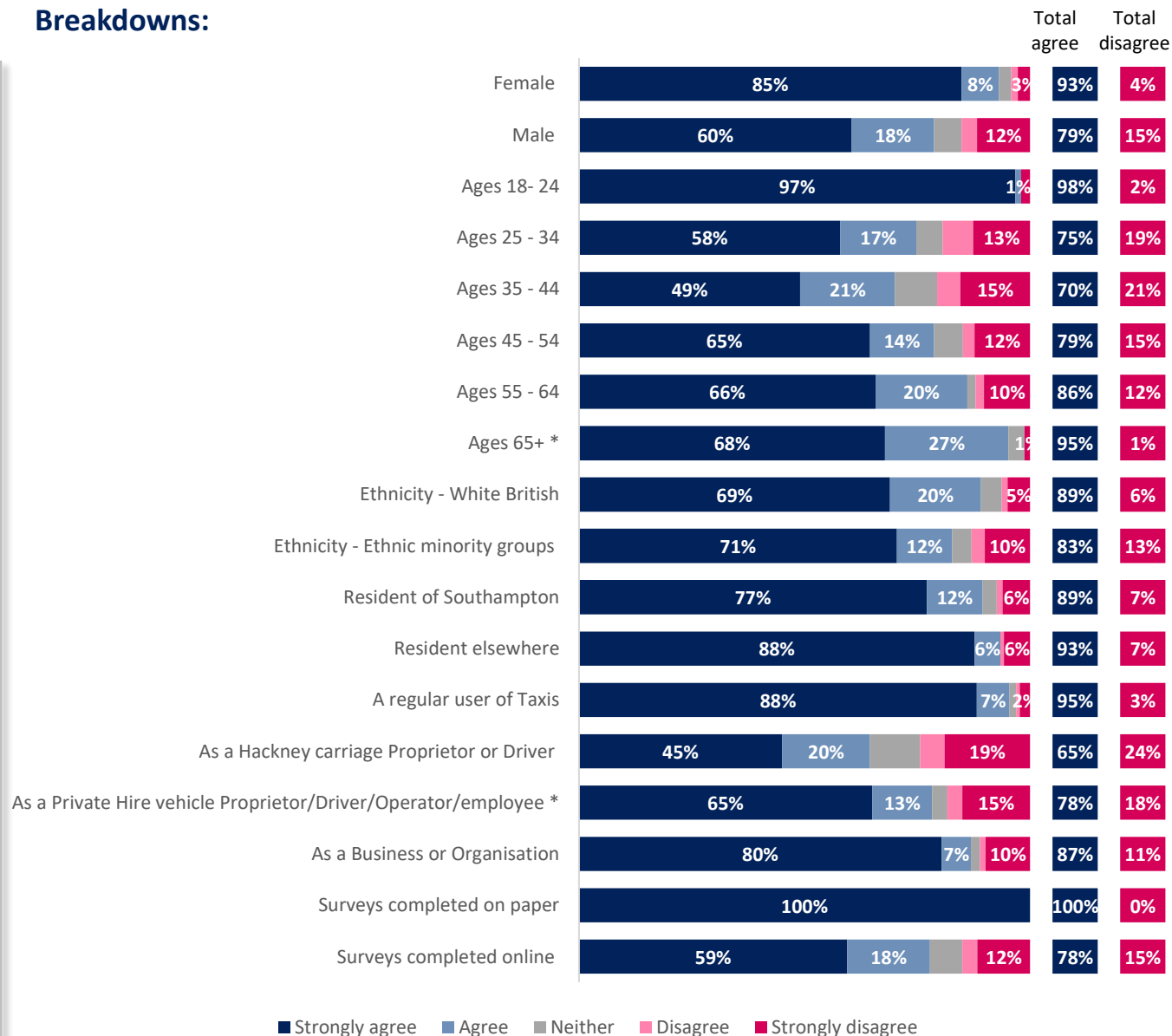
Total respondents: **990**



Key points:

- While **12%** of respondents **disagreed** with the final proposal, **82%** showed **agreement** with Proposal 5.
- Hackney carriage Proprietor/Drivers showed the **largest disagreement** for Proposal 5 (**24%**), followed by those **aged between 35 - 44 (21%)**.

Breakdowns:



**Sample size –fewer than 50 respondents *Sample size –fewer than 100 respondents

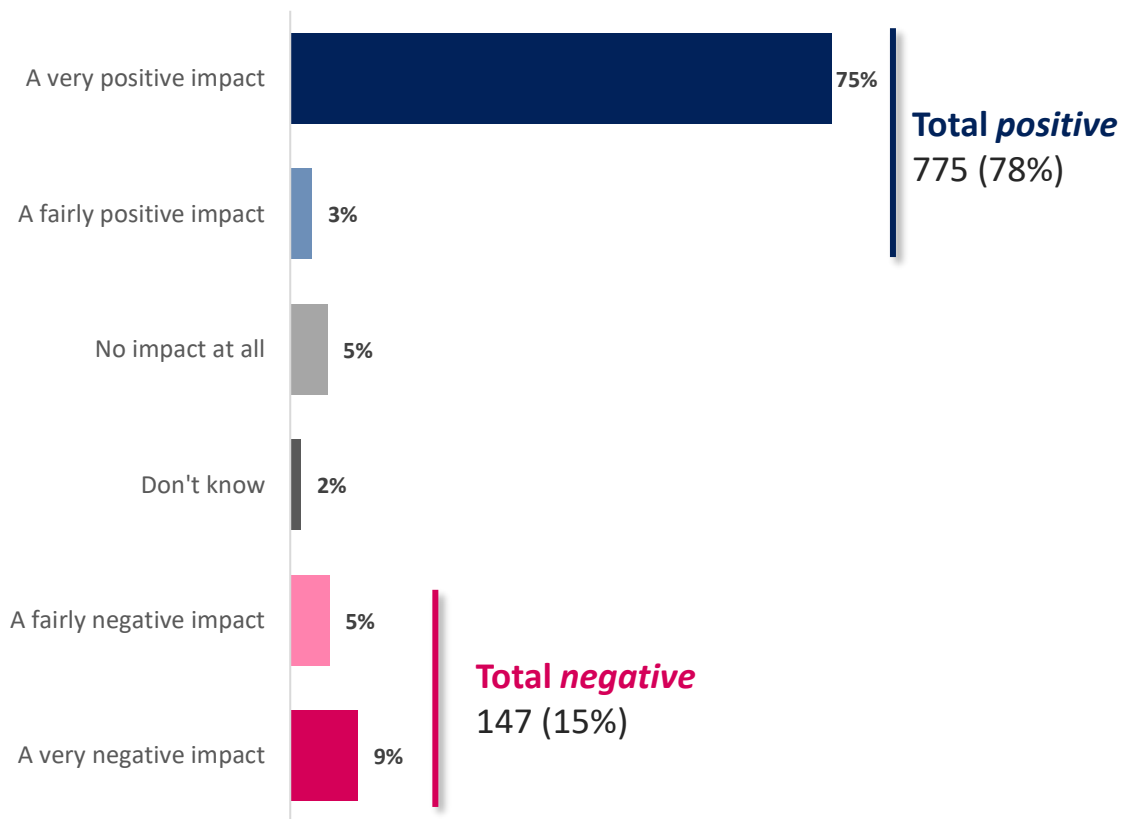


Impact of Proposals



Proposal 1 – Removing the requirement in Private Hire Vehicle conditions to display the name and contact details of the operator of the vehicle.

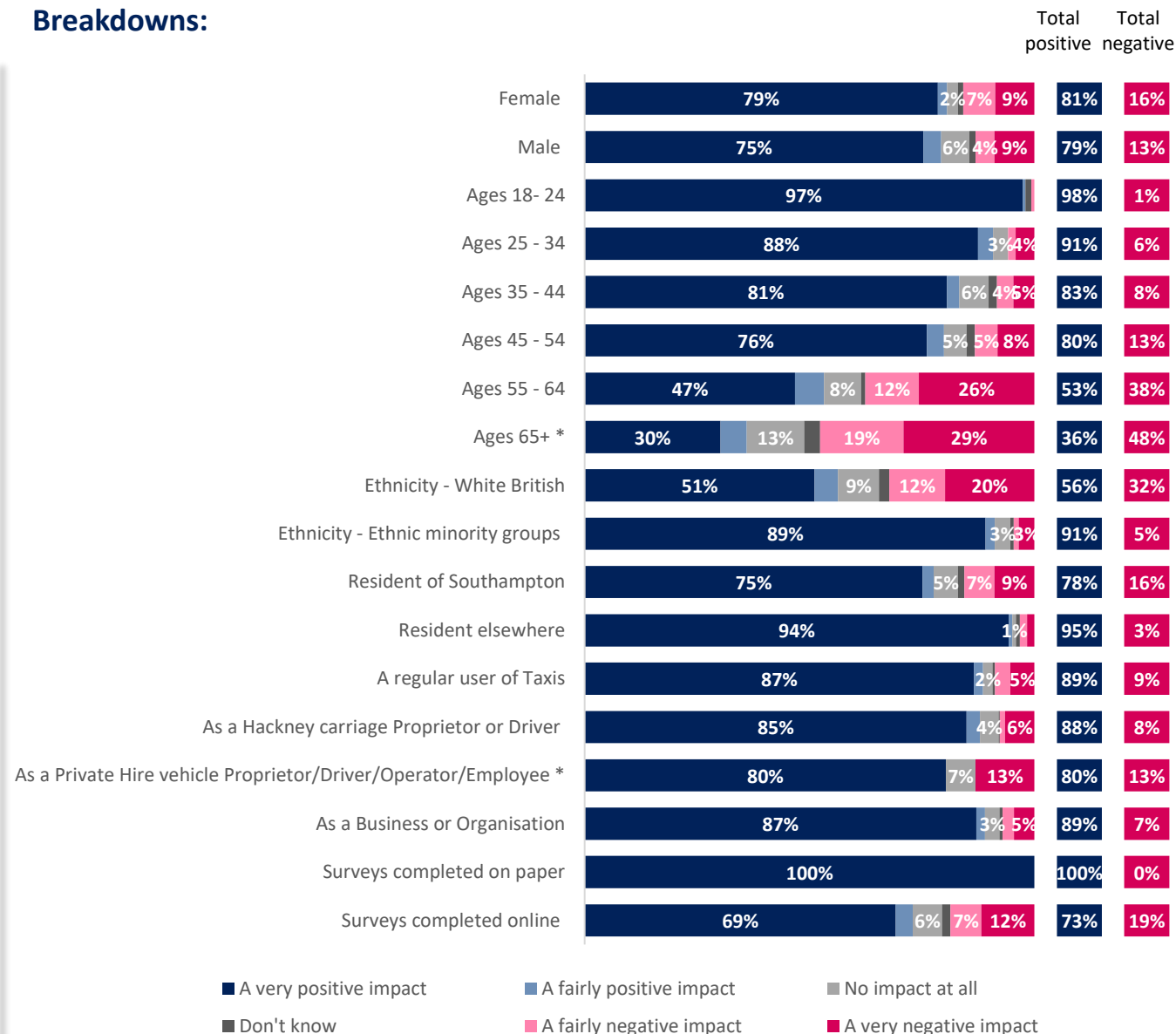
Total respondents: **988**



Key points:

- **15%** of respondents said that Proposal 1 would have a **negative impact** on them, while **78%** said it would have a **positive impact**.
- Those **aged 65+** had the **highest percentage for negative impact (38%)**, while those **aged 18 – 24** had just **1% negative impact**, closely followed by **Ethnic minority groups at 5%**.

Breakdowns:



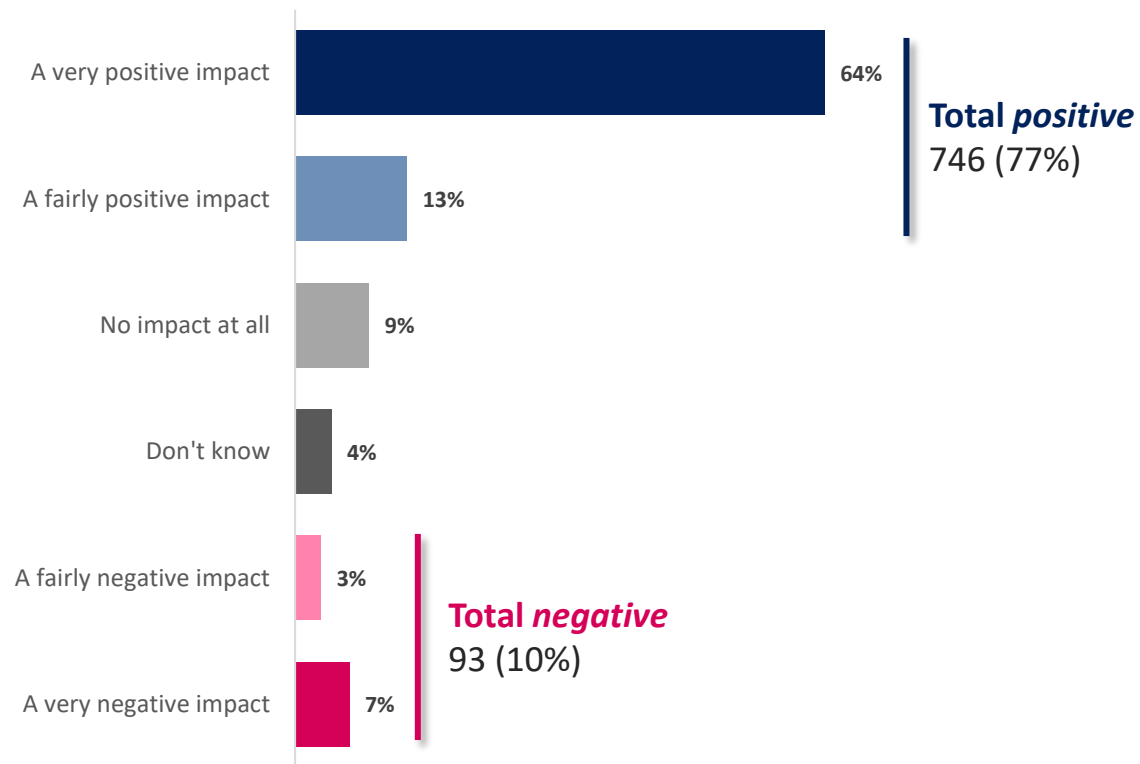
**Sample size –fewer than 50 respondents *Sample size –fewer than 100 respondents



Proposal 2 – Adding in the condition that the driver will complete that hiring unless there is good cause not to and reporting these reasons to the operator

*Proposal 2 will only happen if Proposal 1 goes ahead.

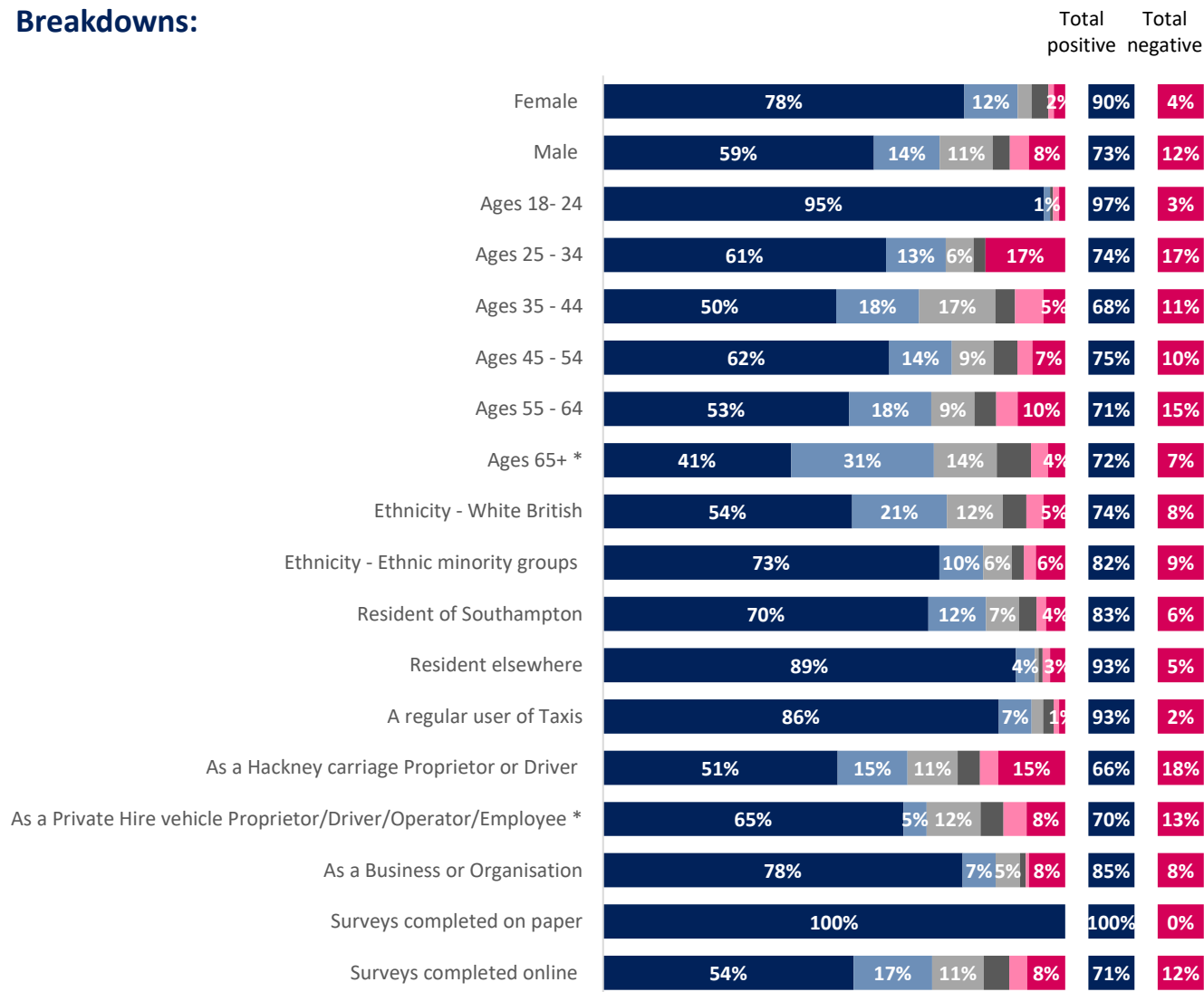
Total respondents: 967



Key points:

- Just **10%** found Proposal 2 would have a **negative impact**, with **77%** a **positive impact**.
- **Ages between 55-64 (15%)** and **Hackney carriage Proprietors/Drivers (18%)** shared that Proposal 2 would have a **larger negative impact** on them compared with other breakdowns.

Breakdowns:



■ A very positive impact ■ A fairly positive impact ■ No impact at all
 ■ Don't know ■ A fairly negative impact ■ A very negative impact

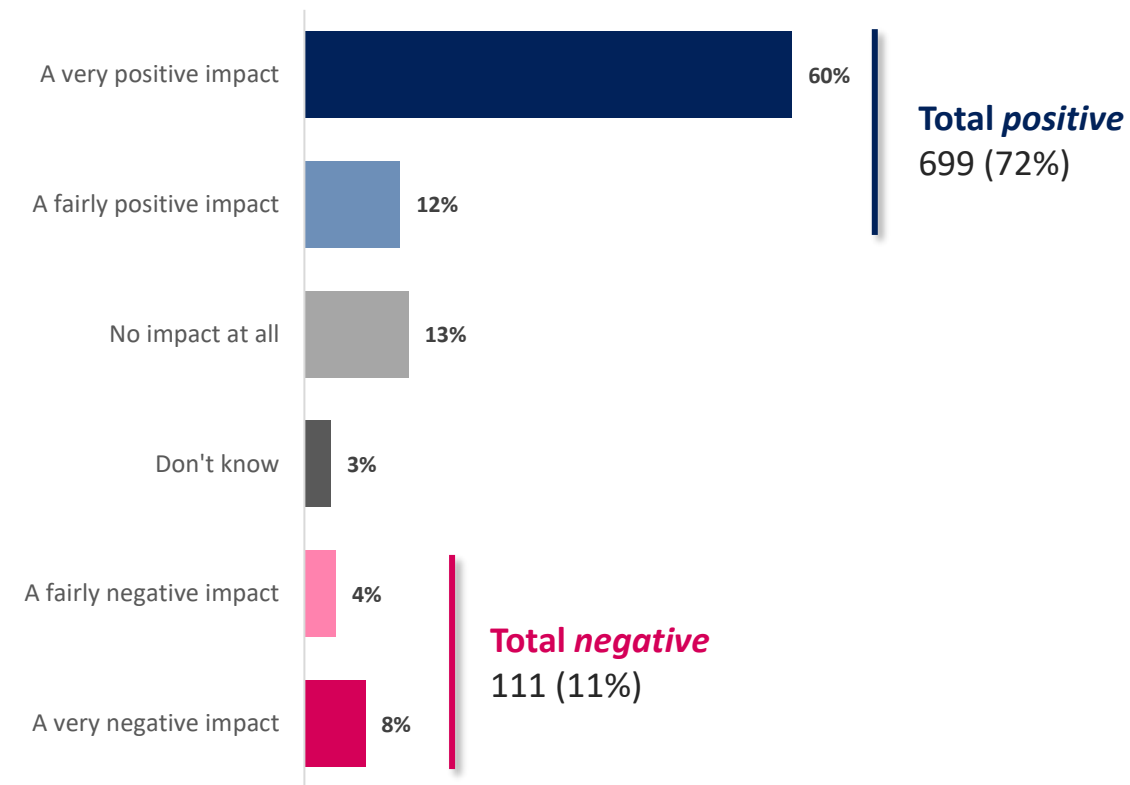
**Sample size –fewer than 50 respondents *Sample size –fewer than 100 respondents



Proposal 3 - Adding in the condition for operators to have a policy on reviewing and reporting cancelled jobs.

*Proposal 3 will only happen if Proposal 1 goes ahead.

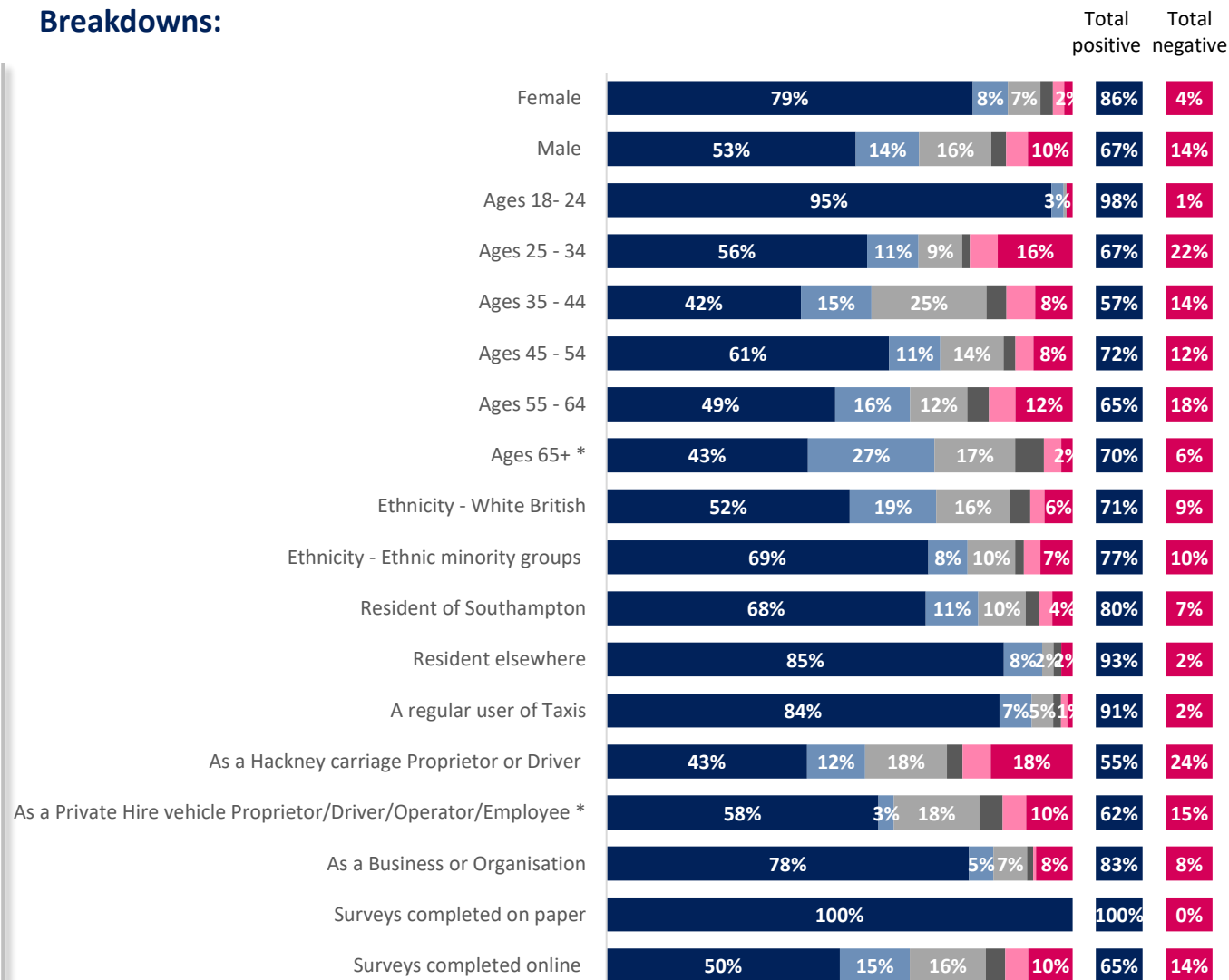
Total respondents: **967**



Key points:

- While **72%** would find Proposal 3 to have a **positive impact on themselves** and **11% a negative impact**, **13%** said that it would have **no impact at all**, making this one of the highest no impact proposals.
- Having said that, those aged between **25-34 (22%)** and **Hackney carriage Proprietors/Drivers (24%)** shared it would have the **most negative impact** on them.

Breakdowns:



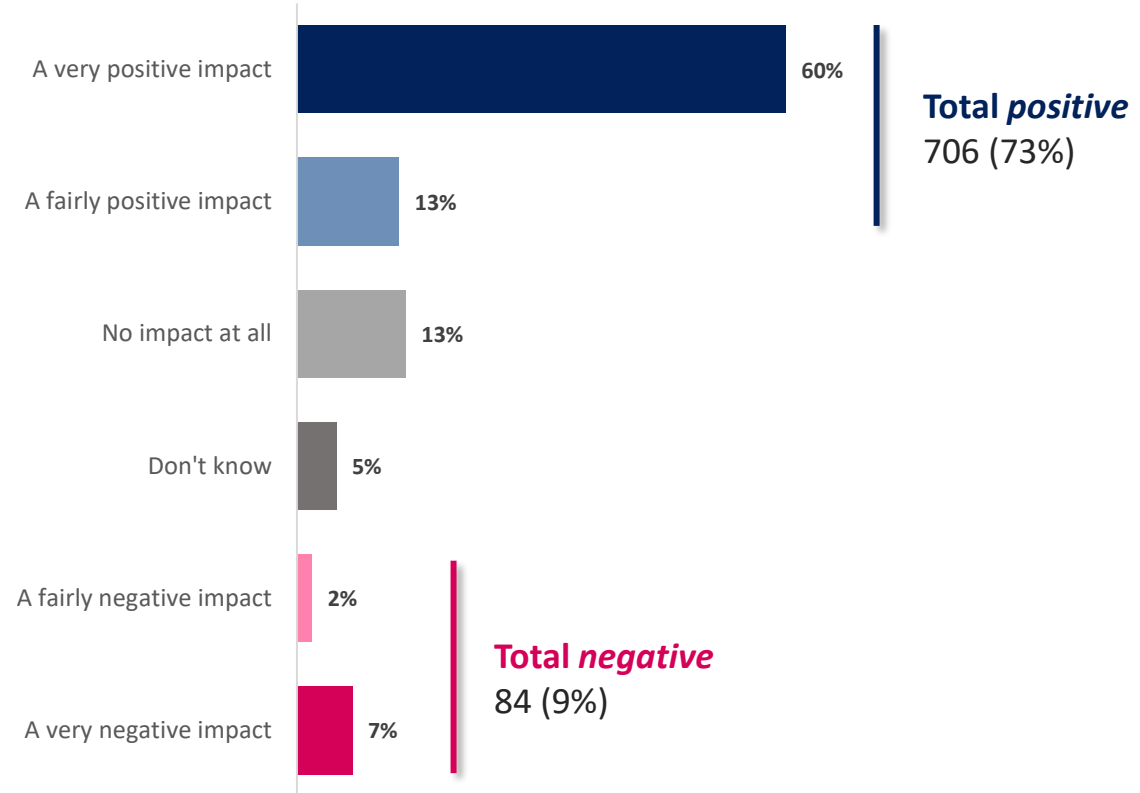
■ A very positive impact
 ■ A fairly positive impact
 ■ No impact at all
■ Don't know
 ■ A fairly negative impact
 ■ A very negative impact

**Sample size –fewer than 50 respondents *Sample size –fewer than 100 respondents



Proposal 4 – Adding in and formalising reporting regimes into operator conditions

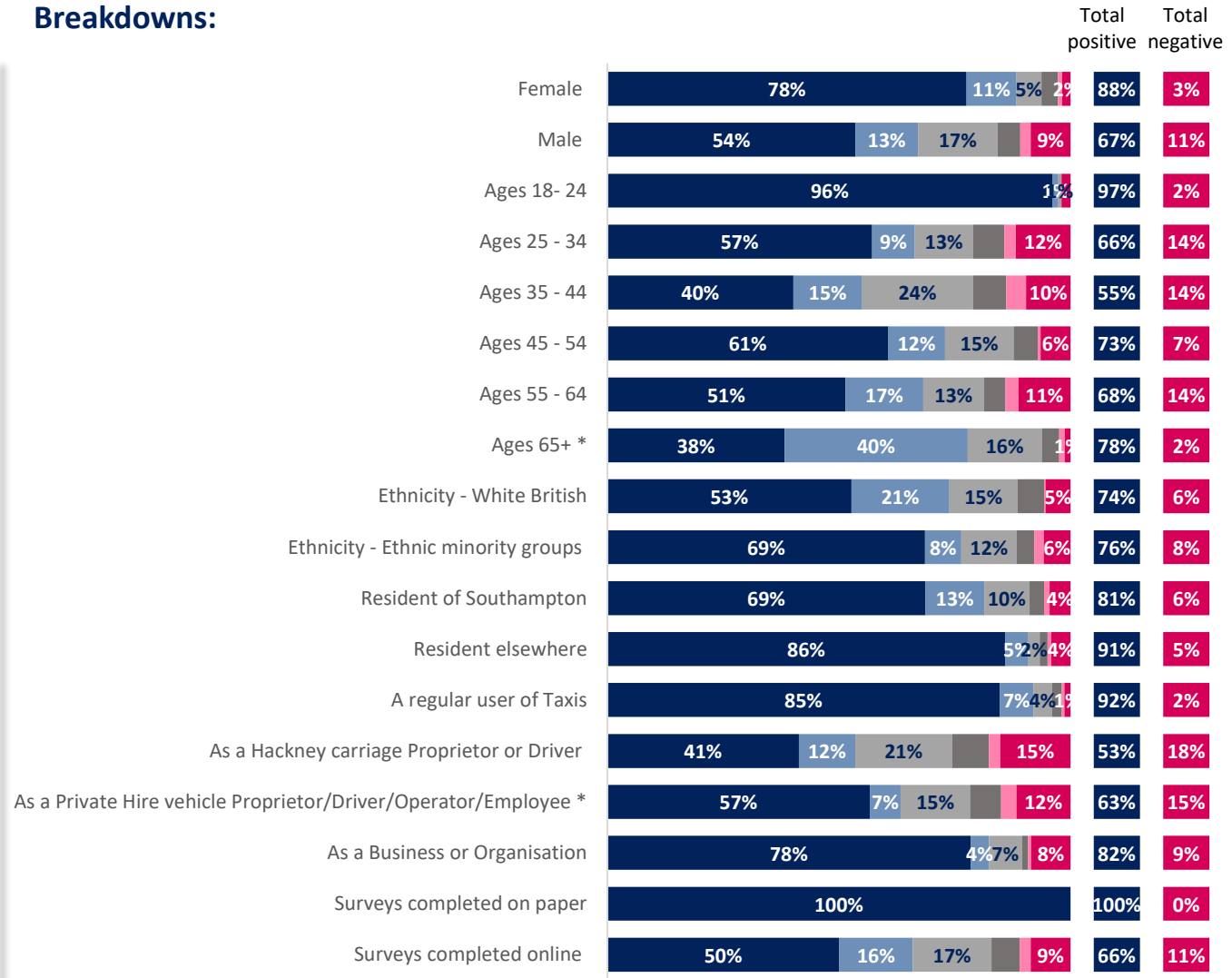
Total respondents: **967**



Key points:

- **Proposal 4** had the **highest percentage** for **positive impact** from respondents (**84%**).
- As well as **Proposal 3**, **13%** of respondents also said **Proposal 4** would have **no any impact all**.
- **18%** of **Hackney carriage Proprietor/Drivers** said Proposal 4 would have a **negative impact**.

Breakdowns:

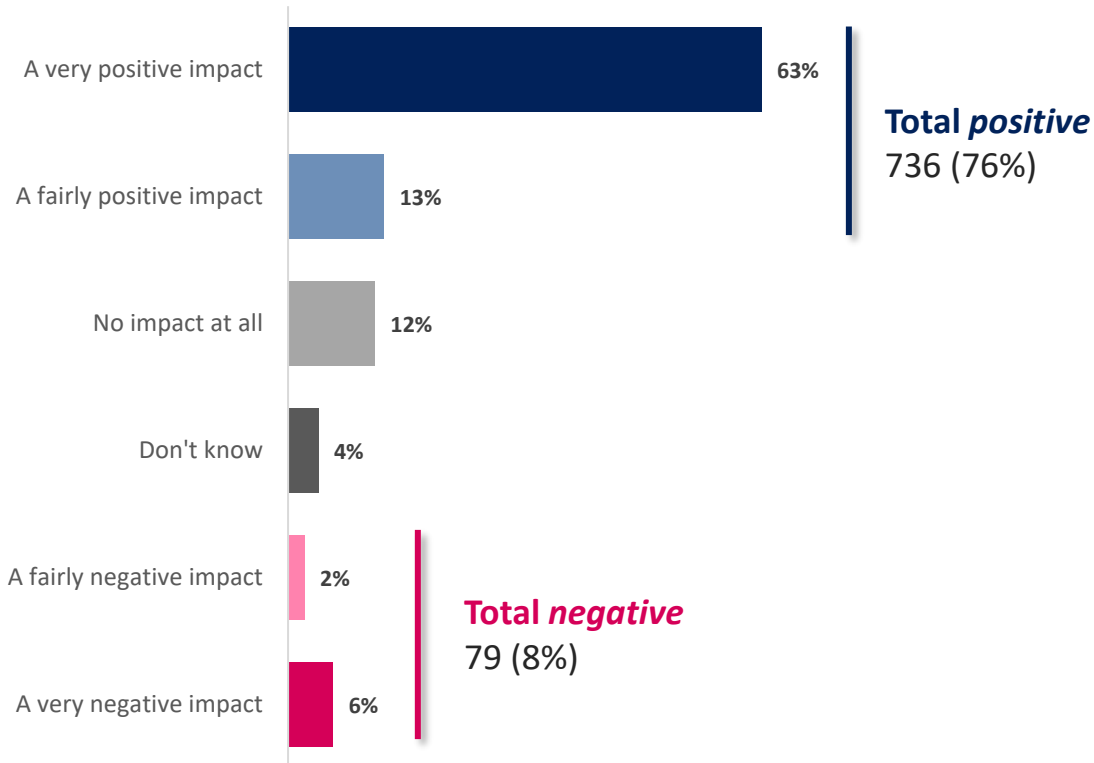


**Sample size –fewer than 50 respondents *Sample size –fewer than 100 respondents



Proposal 5 – Adding in the condition for operators to report vehicles and drivers that work on their platform, to the satisfaction of the Council

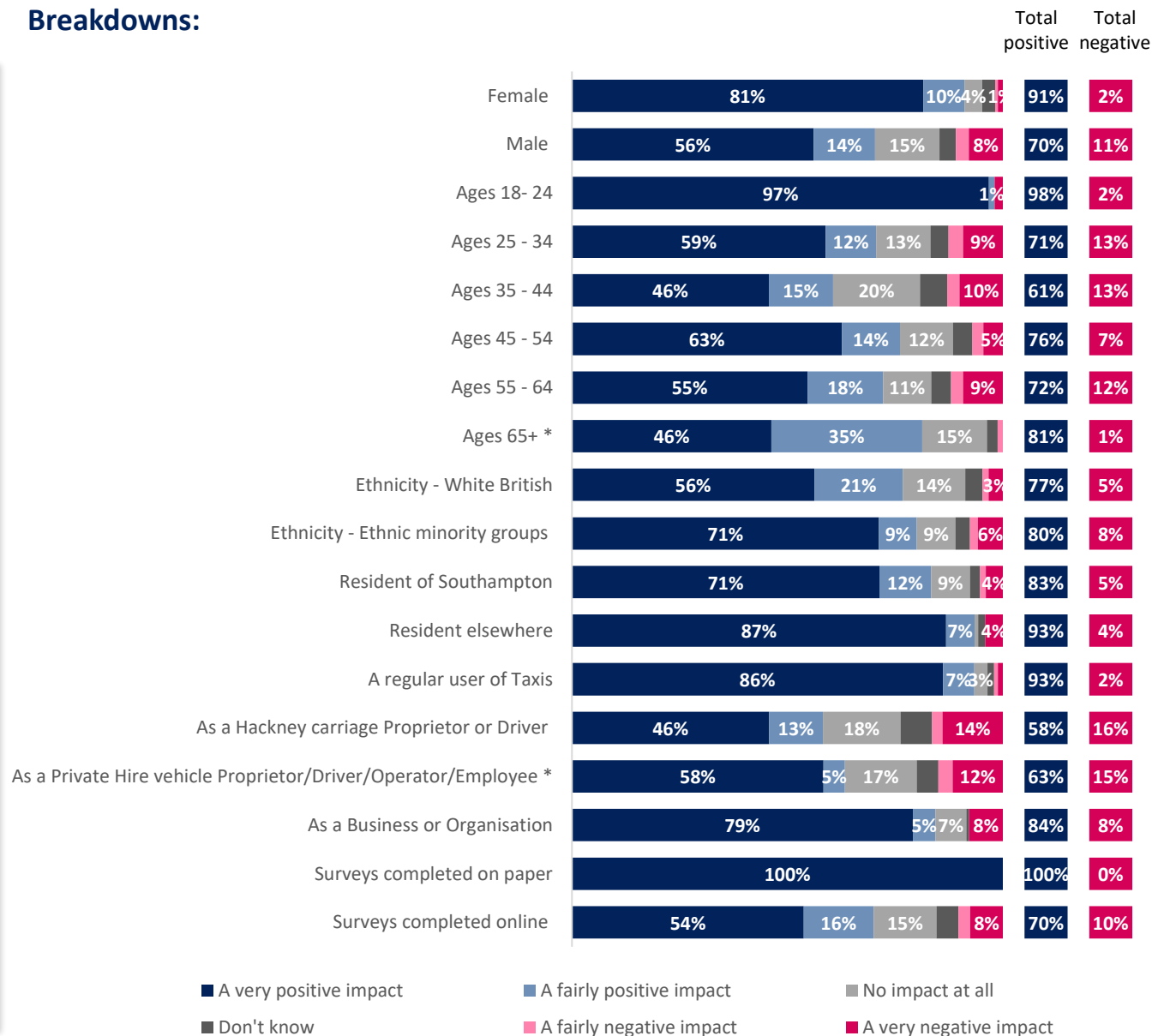
Total respondents: **966**



Key points:

- Proposal 5 saw **76% of respondents** saying there would be a **positive impact**.
- **Hackney carriage Proprietor/Drivers (16%)** and **Private Hire vehicle Proprietor/Driver/Operator/Employee (15%)** were the **highest breakdowns** to express **negative impact** regarding Proposal 5.

Breakdowns:



**Sample size –fewer than 50 respondents *Sample size –fewer than 100 respondents

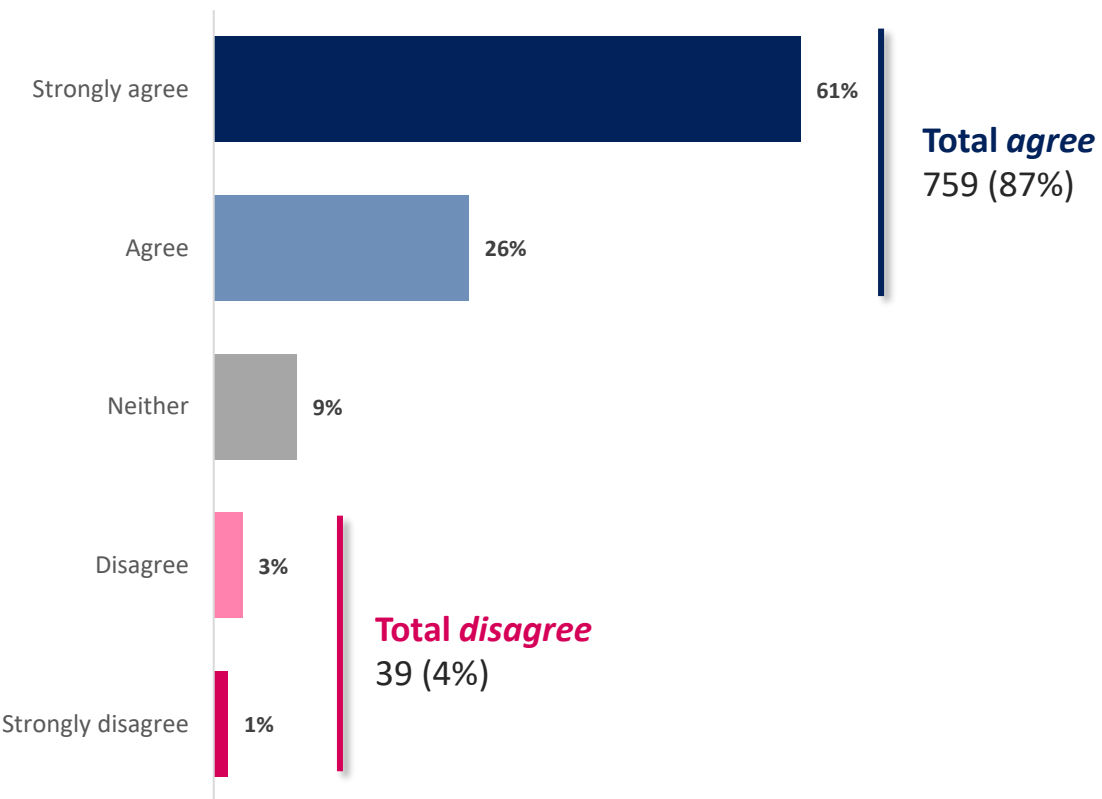


Overall Policy



The draft strategy is easy to understand

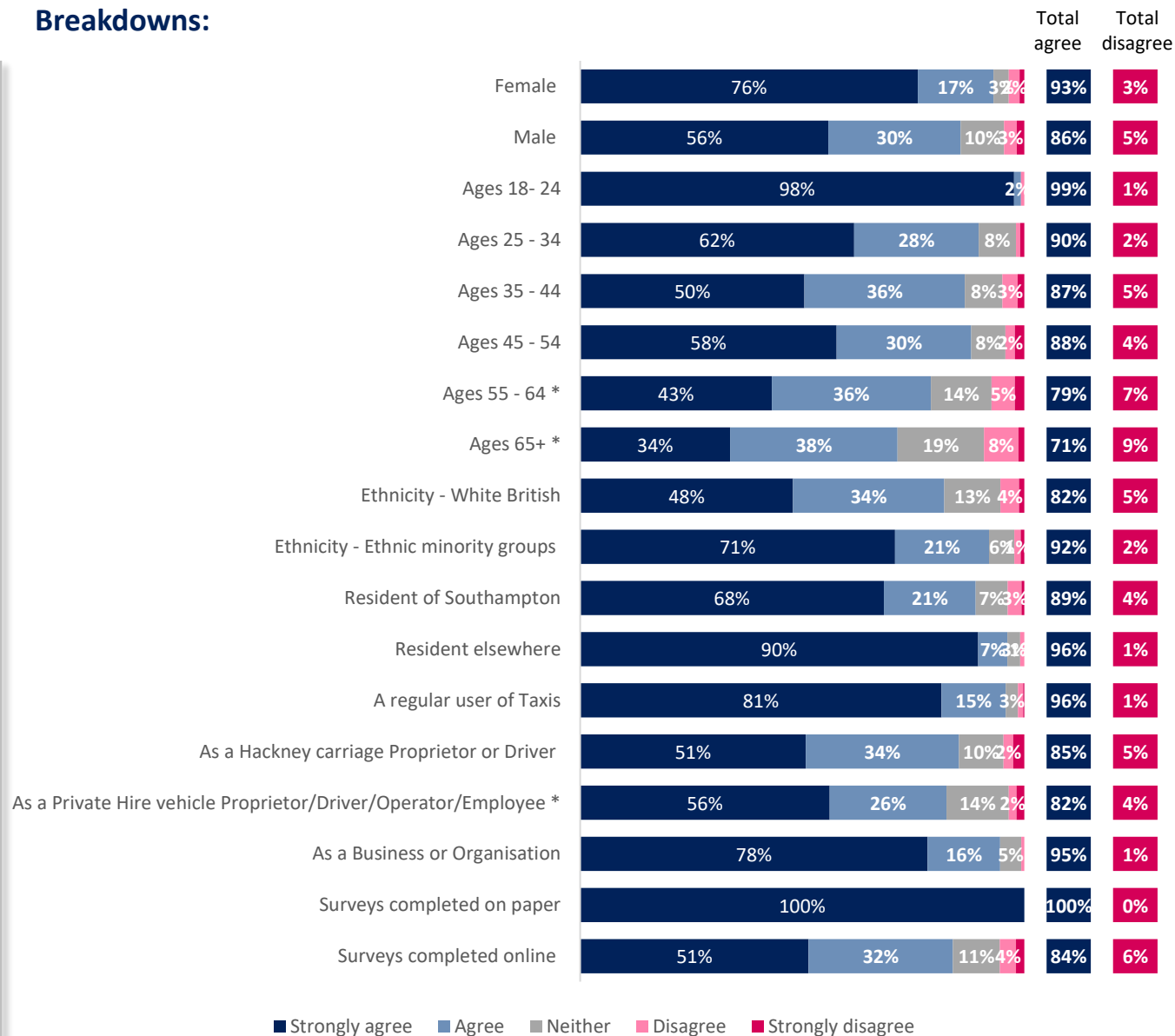
Total respondents: **873**



Key points:

- **87%** of respondents **agreed** that the draft strategy is easy to understand.
- **White British (5%)** and **Hackney carriage Proprietor/Drivers (5%)** held the highest percentages in disagreement for understanding the strategy.

Breakdowns:

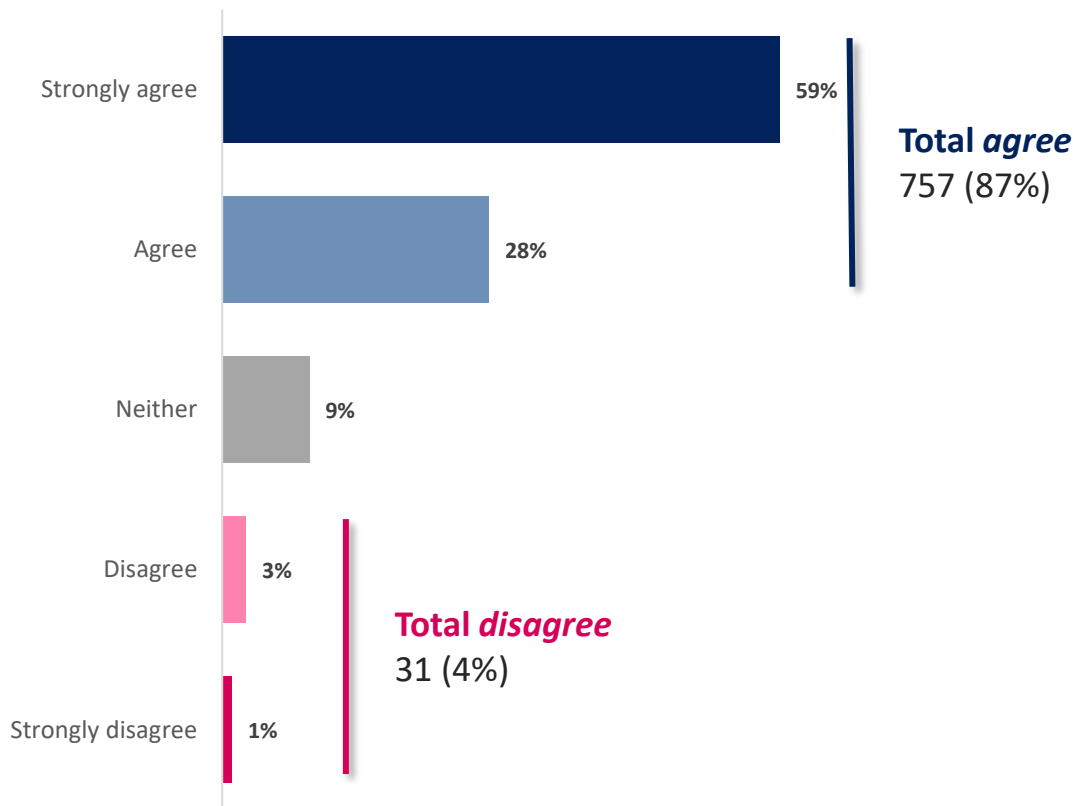


**Sample size –fewer than 50 respondents *Sample size –fewer than 100 respondents



The draft strategy provides sufficient information

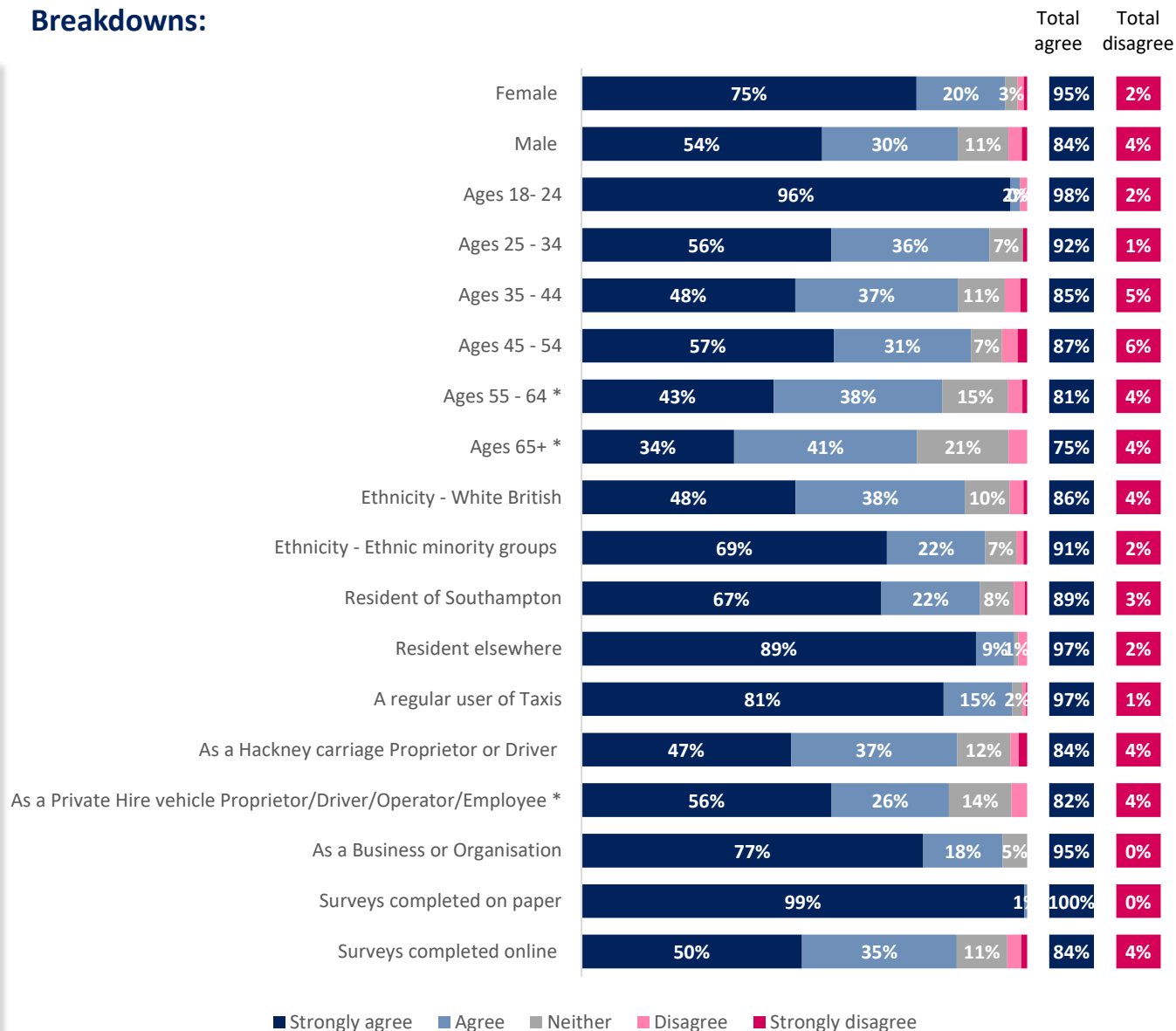
Total respondents: **868**



Key points:

- **87%** of respondents also **agreed** that the draft strategy provides sufficient information.
- Those **aged between 45 – 54 (6%)** held the **highest percentages** in disagreement.

Breakdowns:

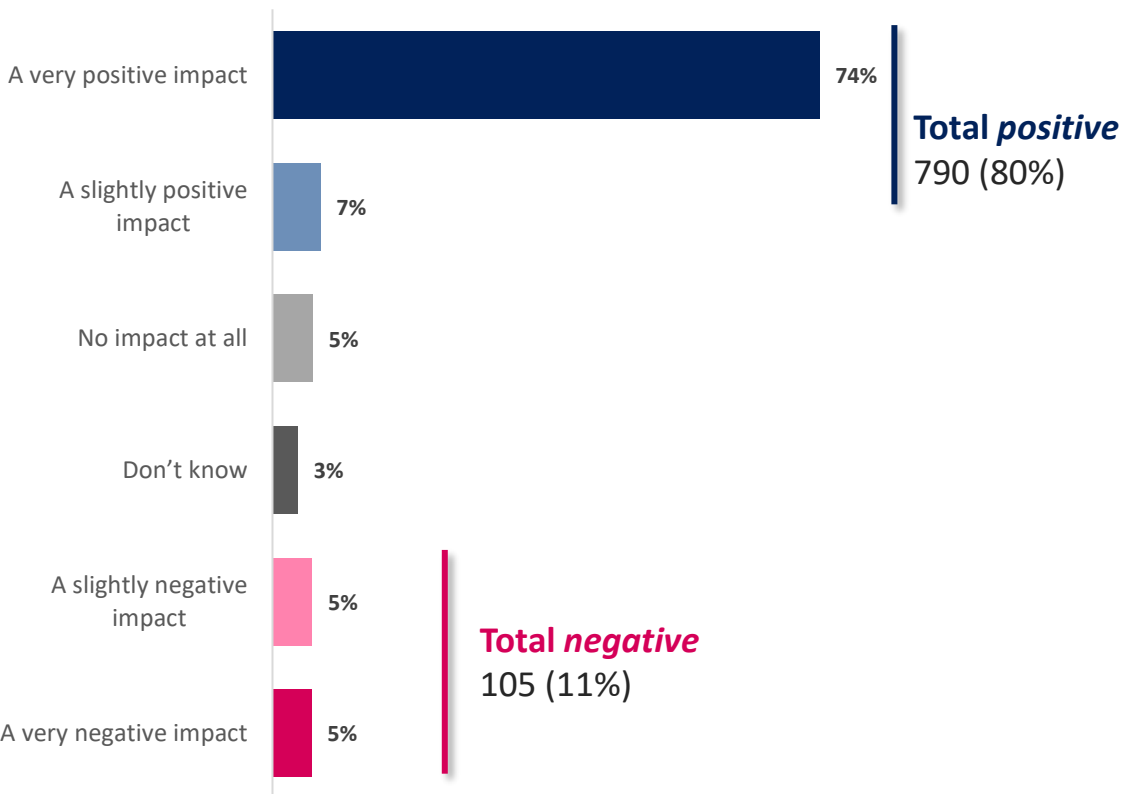


**Sample size –fewer than 50 respondents *Sample size –fewer than 100 respondents



Impact of draft policy on you, your family, your business or the wider community

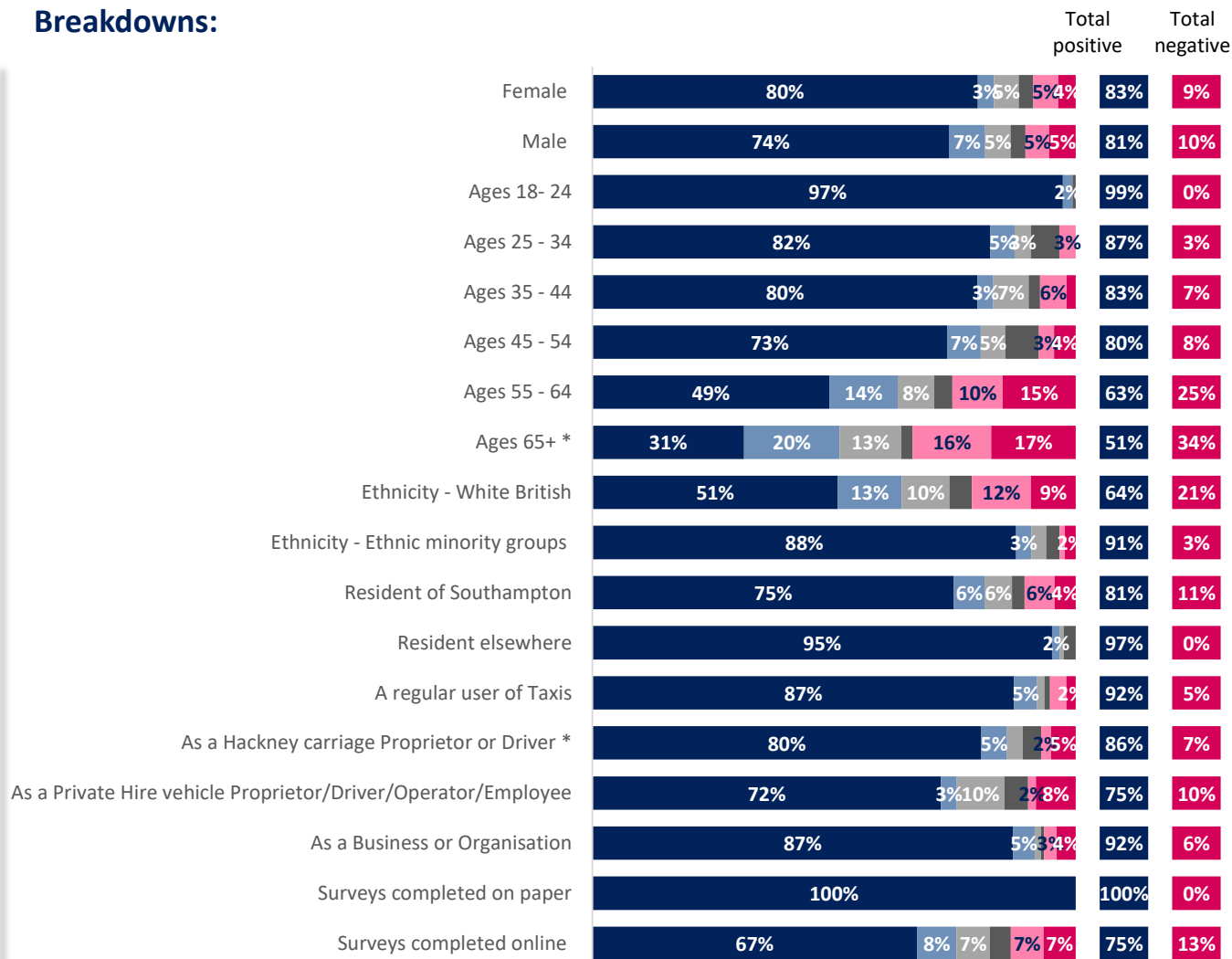
Total respondents: **983**



Key points:

- **80%** of respondents believed the proposed draft policy would have a **positive impact** on themselves, their family, their businesses or the wider community.
- Although those **aged 65+** showed the highest concern for the draft policy having the **most negative impact at 34%**.

Breakdowns:



■ A very positive impact
 ■ A slightly positive impact
 ■ No impact at all
■ Don't know
 ■ A slightly negative impact
 ■ A very negative impact

**Sample size –fewer than 50 respondents *Sample size –fewer than 100 respondents

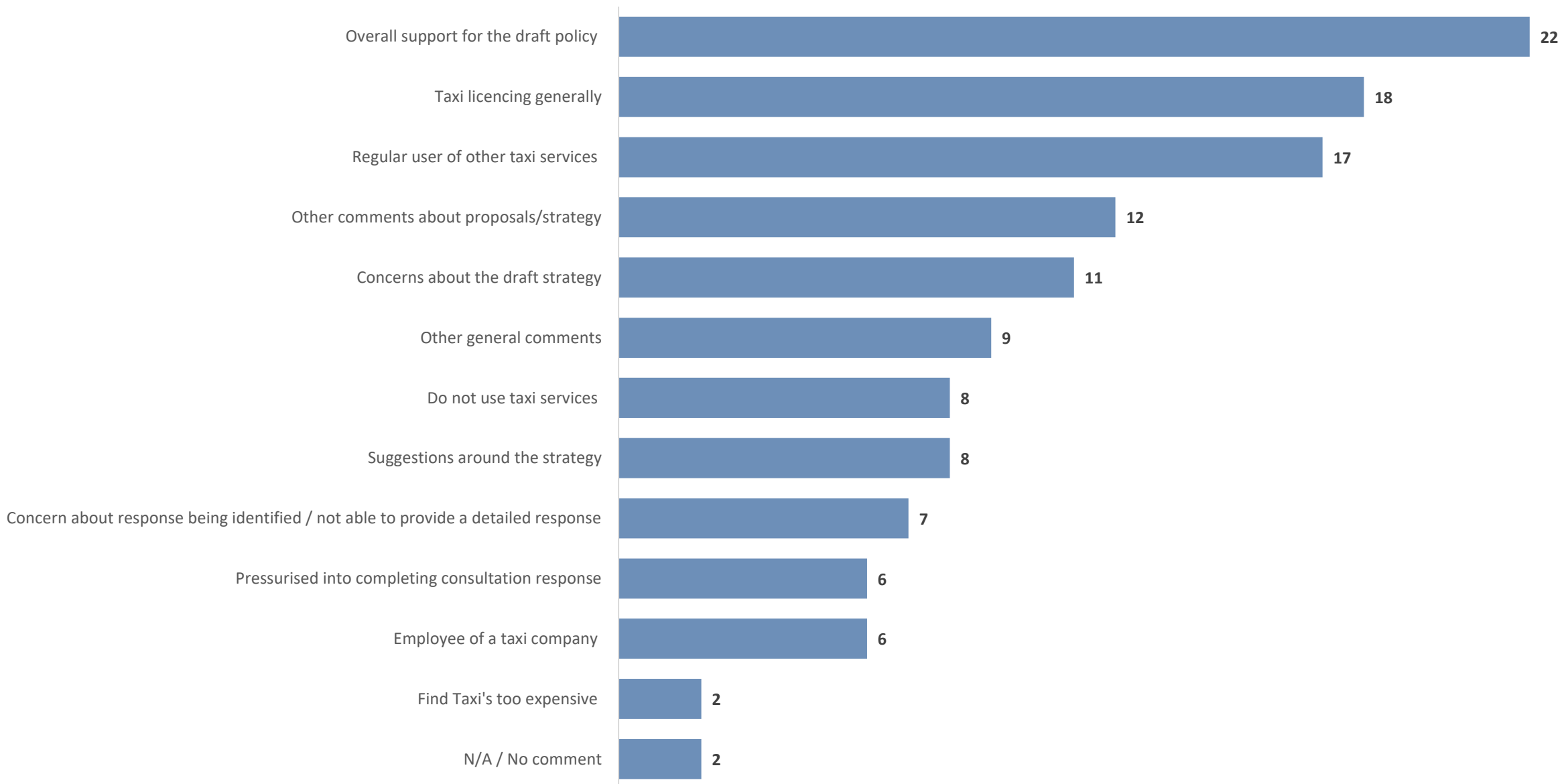


Free text analysis



Broad comments about proposed strategy and Taxi Licensing

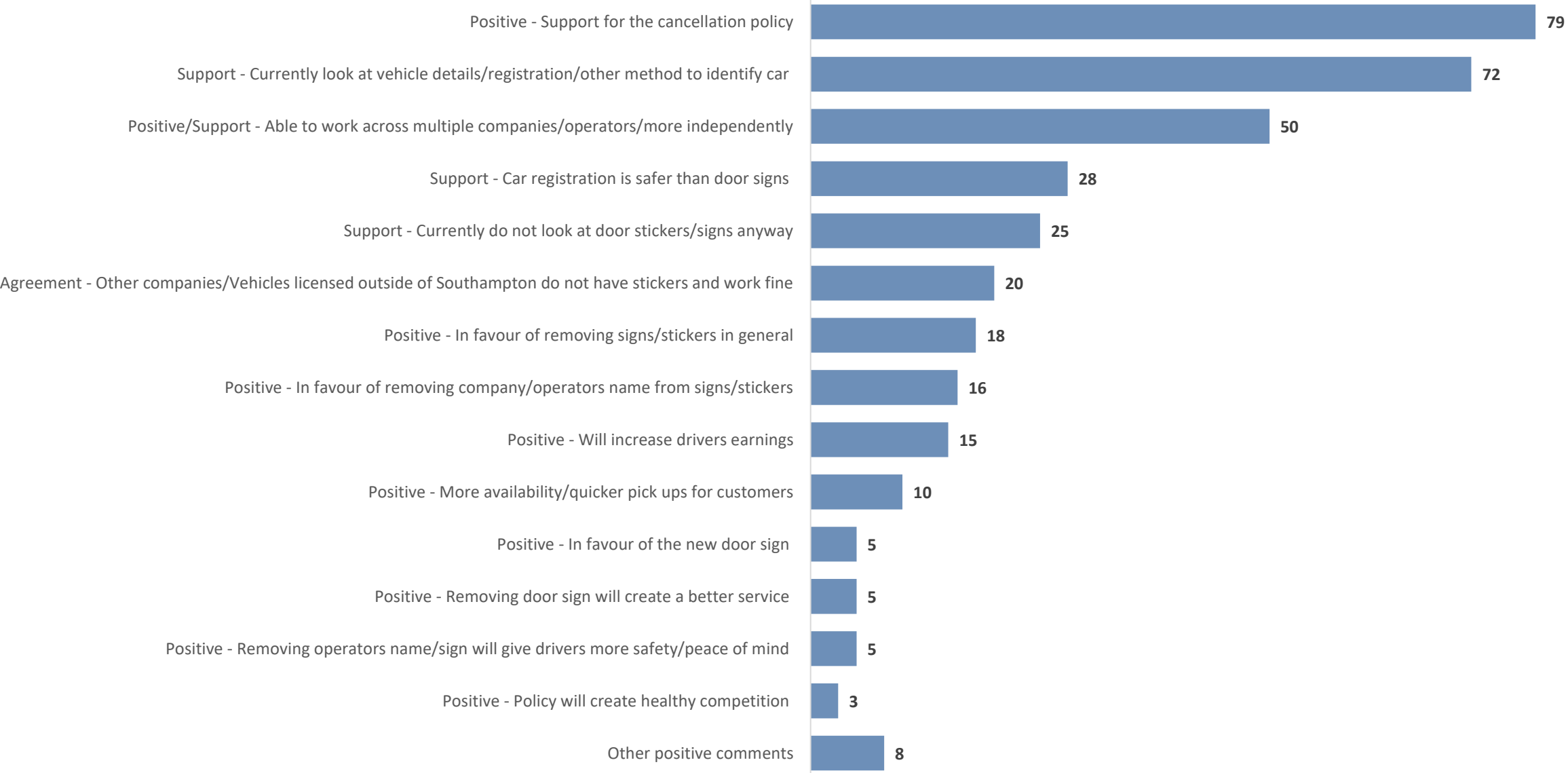
The following graph shows the total number of respondents that made this point in a comment.





Positive comments about proposals

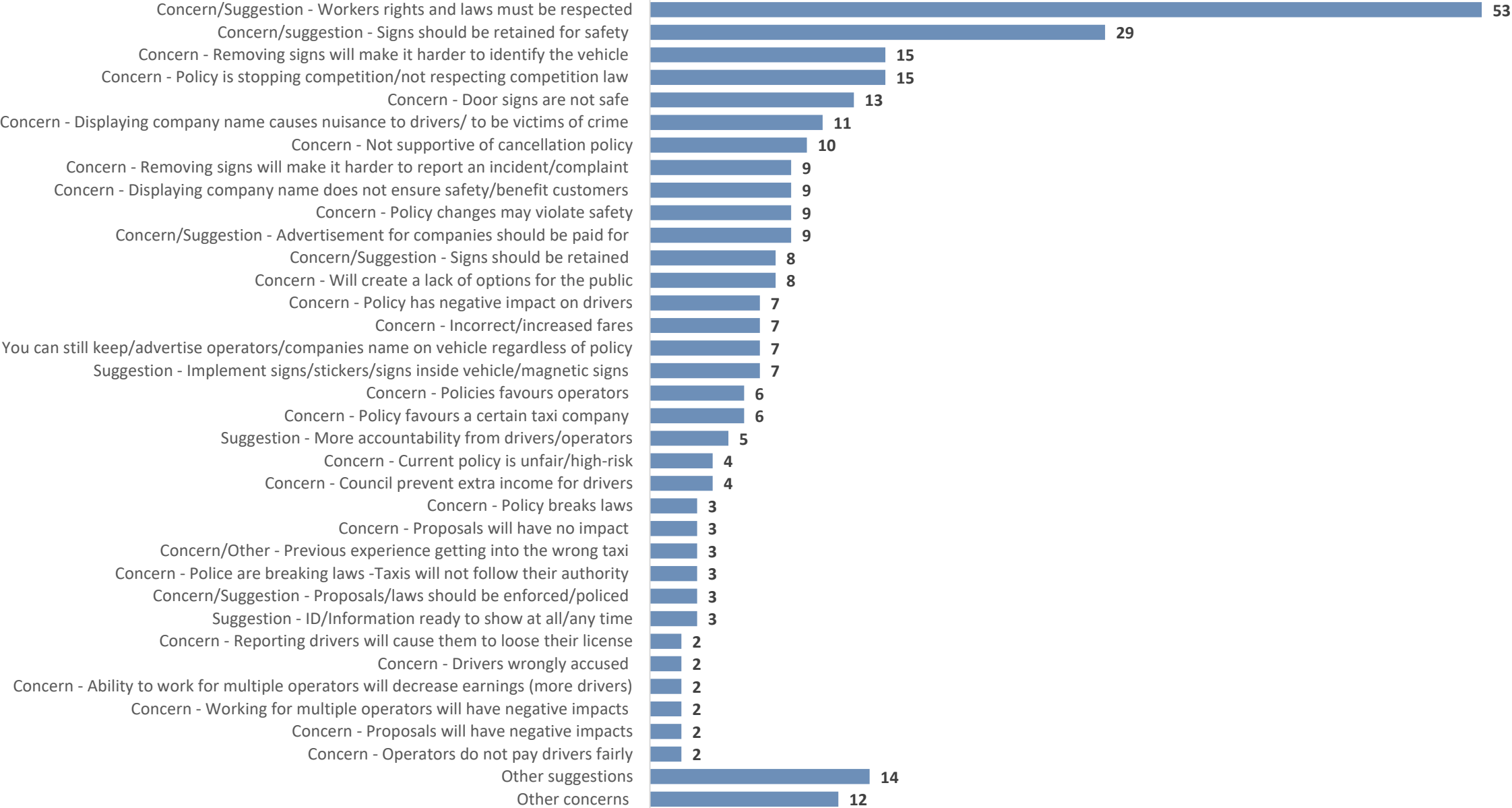
The following graph shows the total number of respondents that made this point in a comment.





Concerns and suggestions about proposals

The following graph shows the total number of respondents that made this point in a comment.





Understanding the policy

The following graph shows the total number of respondents that made this point in a comment.

