Consumer Mood Monitor UK

Fieldwork: October 2025
RED C

Methodology & sample

METHODOLOGY

Online Survey among a Nat Rep sample of n=2,071 UK adults

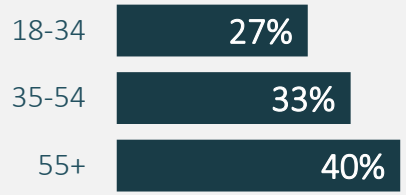
Fieldwork: 8th to 10th October

Wave #5 (started in November 2023). Previous wave conducted in April 2025

Conducted in partnership with .YONDER

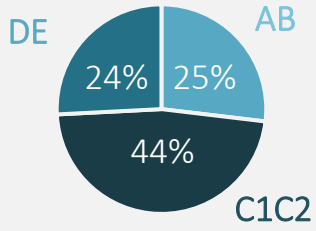
SAMPLE

Age

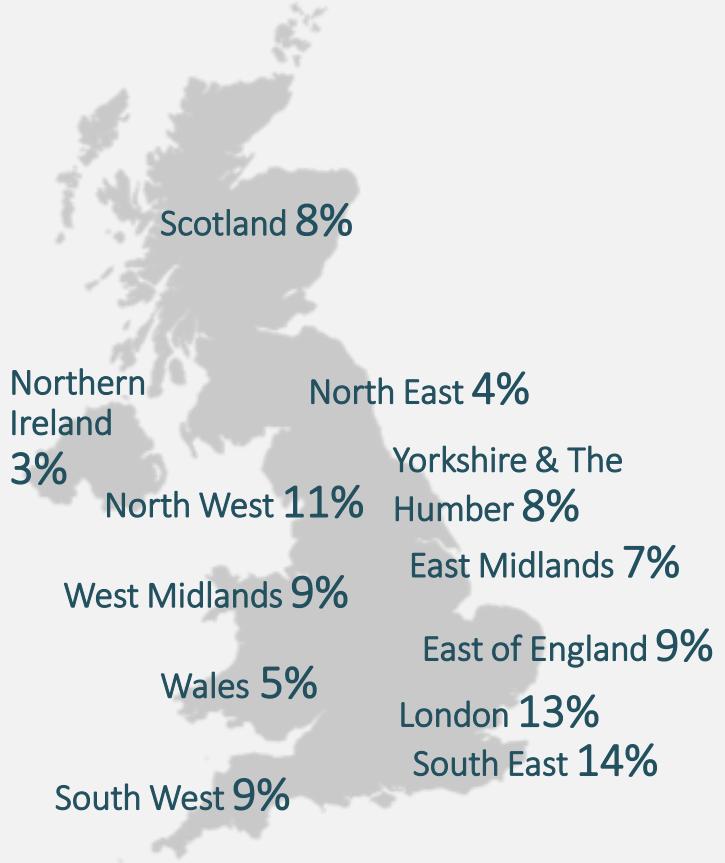


Gender

Occupation



Region



Cast your mind back to April 2025 — a time when uncertainty loomed large and economic upheaval dominated national headlines

Trump rips up rulebook on trade and businesses are left reeling

UK economic growth to be slower than forecast due to tariffs, say economists

'Good chance' Reeves will have to raise taxes in autumn budget, thinktank says – as it happened

Could Trump's tariffs tip the world into recession?

UK growth forecasts hit by Trump's tariffs

Low growth and rising prices - it's looking gloomy for the UK

UK inflation rate: How quickly are prices rising?

Winter fuel payment cuts may force 100,000 pensioners 'below poverty line'

Source: Various news outlets Q1 25

Consumer mood has eased after a turbulent and uncertain start to the year.

Here are the key takeouts from our latest survey wave…

Consumer Mood Monitor - 5 Key Points (Wave 5)

1

Consumer confidence improves, but fragility remains: Consumer mood has eased since April 2025, supported by stable interest rates. However, cost of living concerns – especially groceries, energy and housing - remain dominant

2

Financial wellbeing & emotional coping: 45% expect their financial wellbeing to worsen, yet 52% feel confident in managing unexpected challenges. Emotional coping includes small affordable treats and entertainment as stress relief

3

Taking control: Over a third of people are taking control, either cancelling or delaying plans or looking for alternatives/switches amid persistent cost-of-living challenges

4

People are being more proactive in managing their money. Consumers are following budgets, cutting back and even taking on side hustles to make ends meet

5

Spending shifts towards essentials: Households anticipate higher spending on groceries and energy, whilst discretionary categories like holidays and entertainment remain flat or decline

Consumer pulse on the economy: The next 6 months

Consumer confidence has improved — but the upcoming budget will test resilience

UK households boost savings as economic uncertainty prevails

Consumer confidence reaches highest point of year despite 'clouds on horizon'

UK retail shares fall amid fears of squeeze in consumer spending

UK inflation holds steady at 3.8% as fuel prices offset falling air fares

Budget 2025: Rachel Reeves signals tax rises and warns 'each of us must do our bit'

Consumer confidence recovers to highest level since October budget

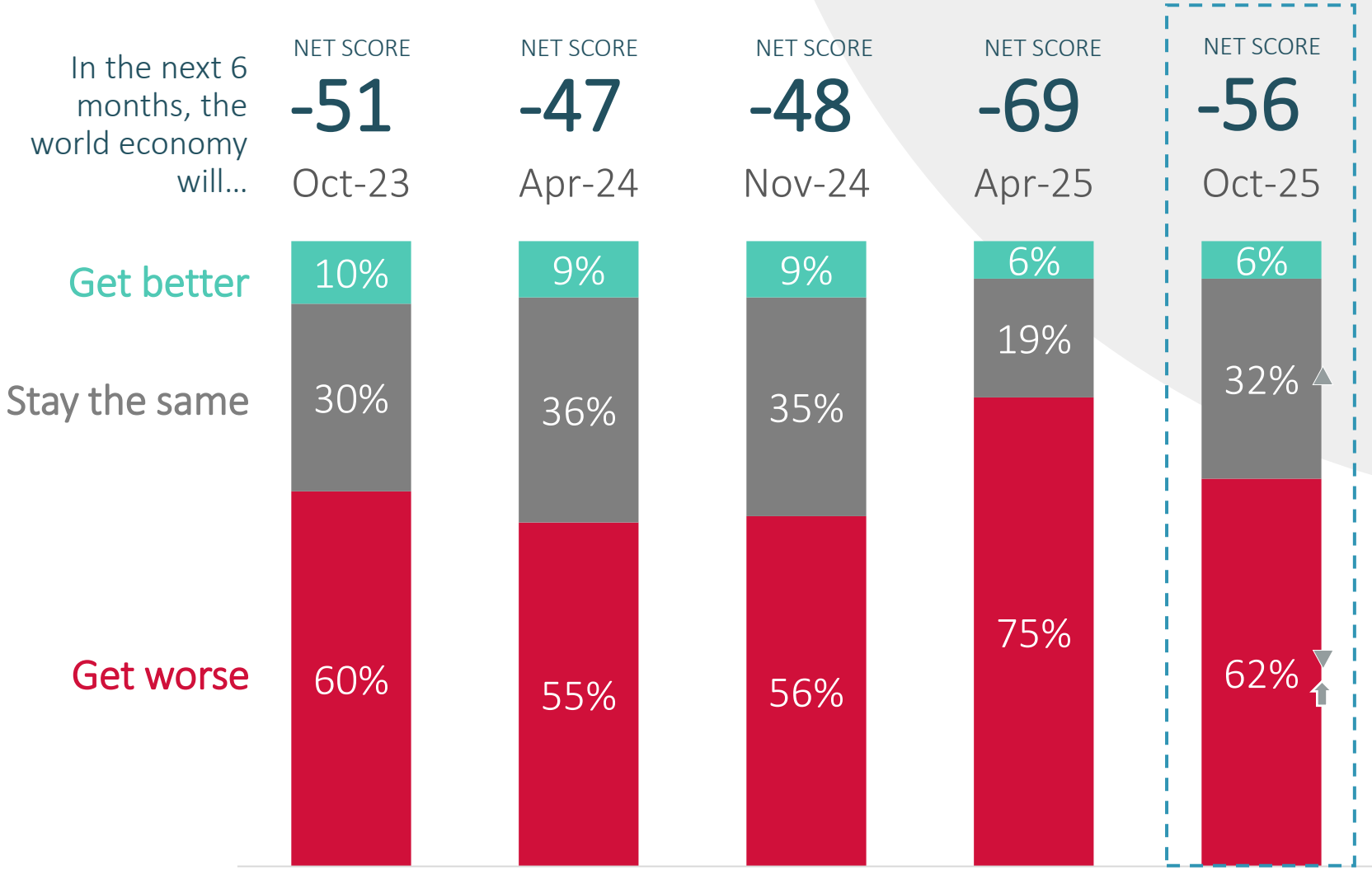
Source: Various news outlets Q4 2025

Poor global outlook due to US President's handling of the USA economy. **UK prospects are likely to worsen, but depends on next budget…**

- Male, 70s

Outlook for the world economy is more optimistic than start of the year

Scores are more in line with previous waves however there is a significant uplift in those expecting the world economy to get worse compared to the previous year

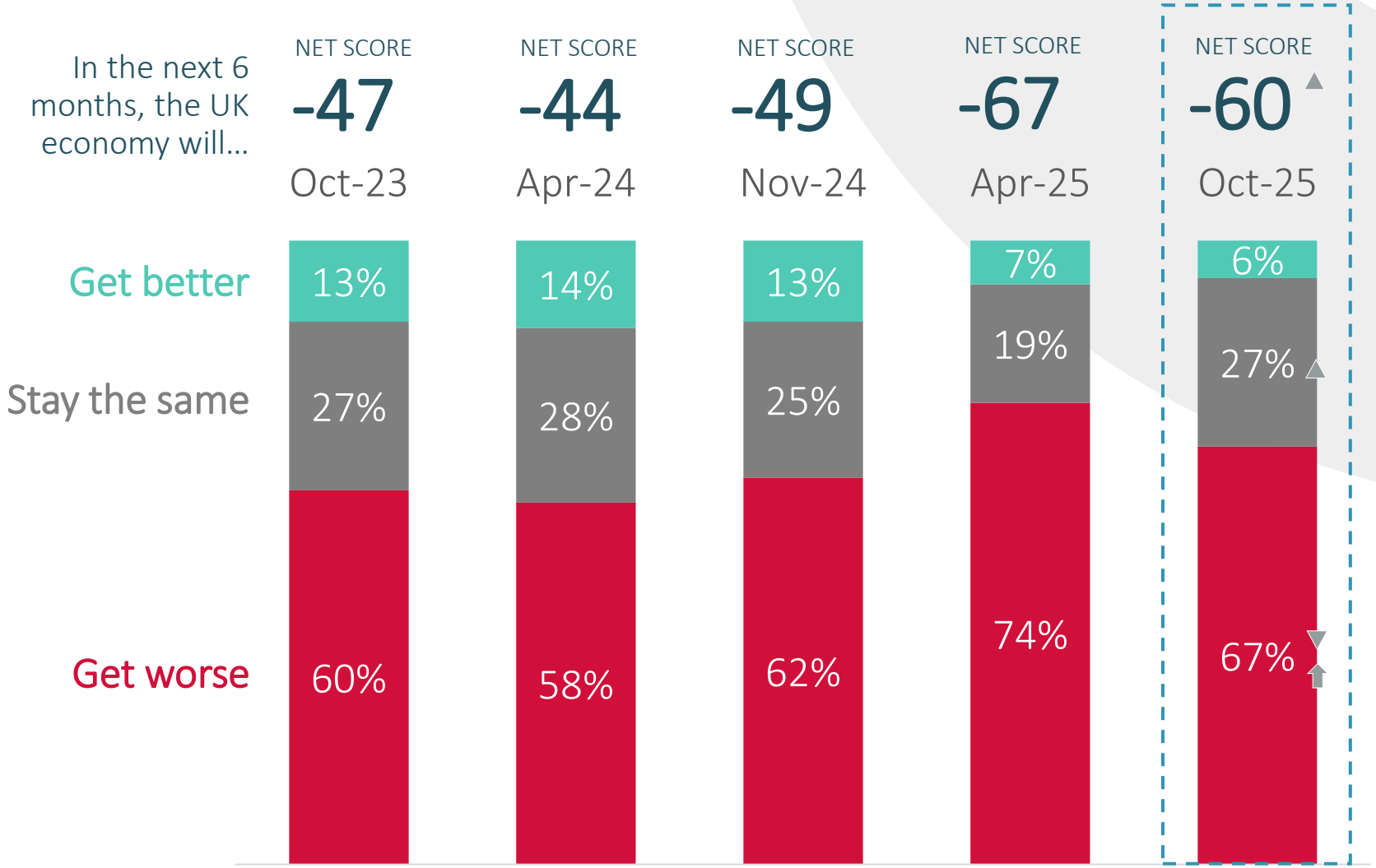


Q1. How do you think the following aspects of the economy will fare in the next 6 months?
Base: Total sample Oct 23 (n=2095), Apr 24 (n=2066), Nov 24 (n=2101) Apr 25 (n=2071), Oct 25 (n=2077)

▲▼ Significance tested at 95% vs April 25
⇅ Significance tested at 95% vs Nov 24

Outlook for UK economy in the next 6 months is a bit brighter after a difficult start to the year

Expectations for the UK economy improve across all demographic except those aged 35-44



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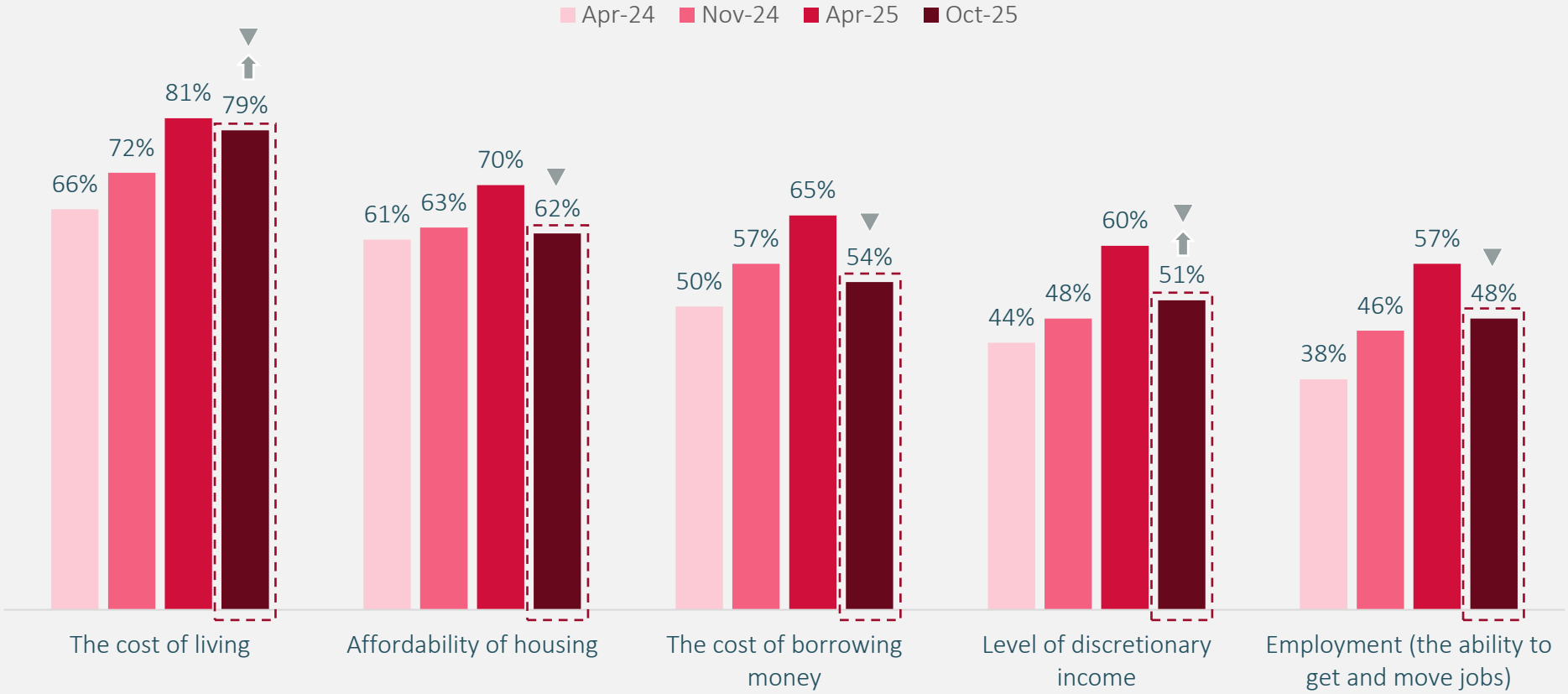
Significance tested at 95% vs April 25
Significance tested at 95% vs Nov 24

In everyday life, resilience has quietly replaced optimism for UK consumers…

A return to 2024 sentiment, but wallet worries still persist

Consumer sentiment has improved since April 25 – yet cost of living and housing affordability remain top anxieties

Agreement economy will get worse in N6M



Q1. How do you think the following aspects of the economy will fare in the next 6 months?
Do you think it will get... Base: Apr 24/Nov 24/Apr 25/Oct 25: Total (n=2066/2101/2071/2077)

▲▼ Significance tested at 95% vs April 25 ⬆⬇ Significance tested at 95% vs Nov 24

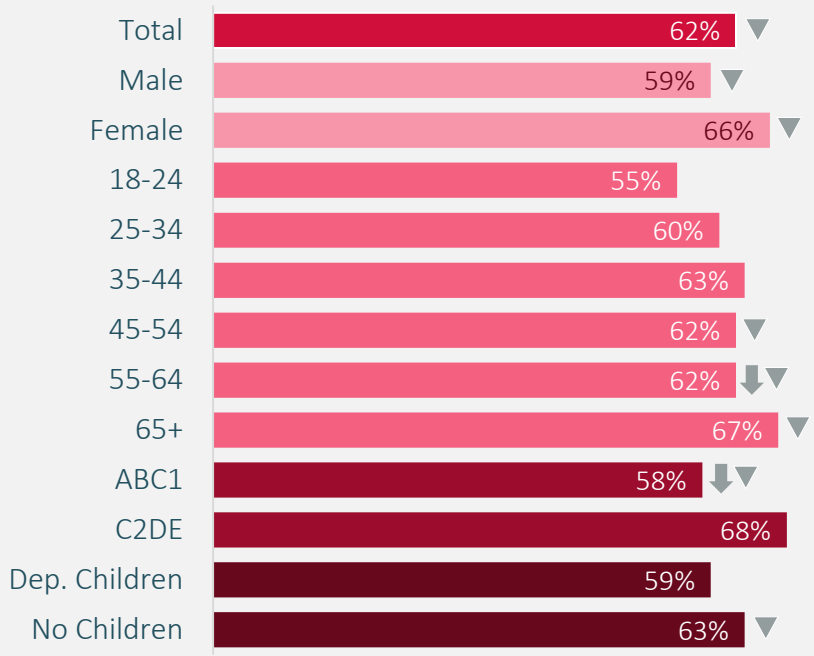
Concerns persist over housing and borrowing costs

Although sentiment has eased, most still expect it to worsen especially females, 65+, and C2DE groups

How aspects of the economy will fare in N6M

% who believe it will get **worse**

Affordability of Housing



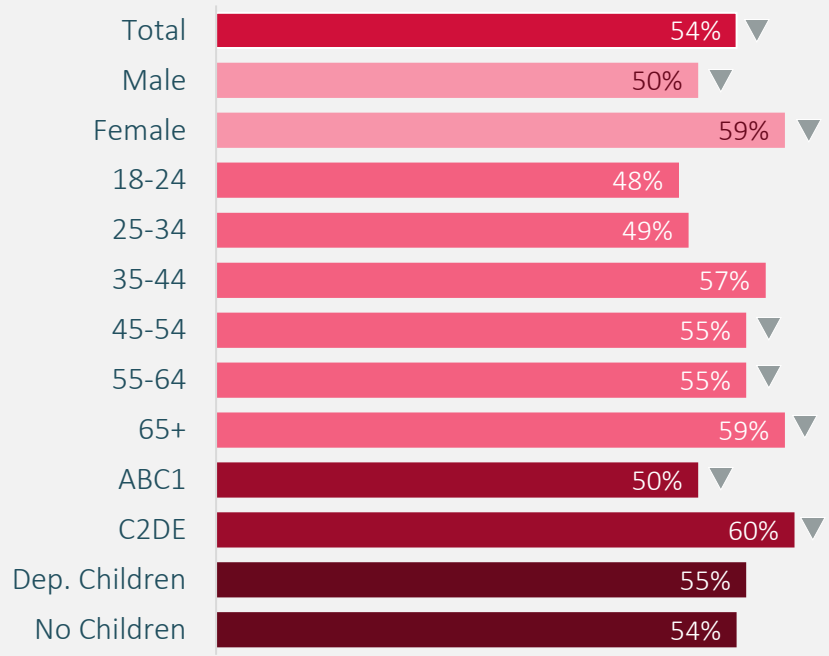
NET SCORE

-58

+7 since Apr 2025

+1 since Nov 2024

Cost of borrowing money



NET SCORE

-47

+10 since Apr 2025

+1 since Nov 2024

Q1. How do you think the following aspects of the economy will fare in the next 6 months?
Base Oct 25: Total (n=2077) M (n=1053), F (n=1020), 18-24 (n=208), 25-34 (n=377), 35-44 (n=310), 45-54 (n=314), 55-64 (n=347), 65+ (n=521), ABC1 (n=1121), C2DE (n=956), Any child (n=501), No child (n=1568)

▲▼ Significance tested at 95% vs April 25 ⇑⇓ Significance tested at 95% vs Nov 24

The Cost of Living Crisis remains central to national conversation

Reeves could make the cost of living crisis even worse

Britain is in a fresh cost-of-living crisis

'Vicious cycle': the UK's struggle with soaring food prices

Bank of England governor says UK 'not out of the woods' on inflation, after leaving interest rates on hold – as it happened

Egg and butter prices drive up UK food inflation as households feel squeeze

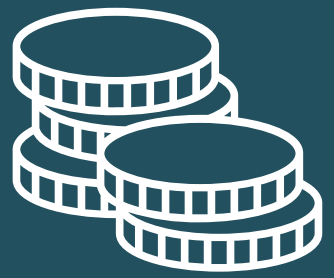
UK faces highest inflation in G7 this year and next, IMF warns

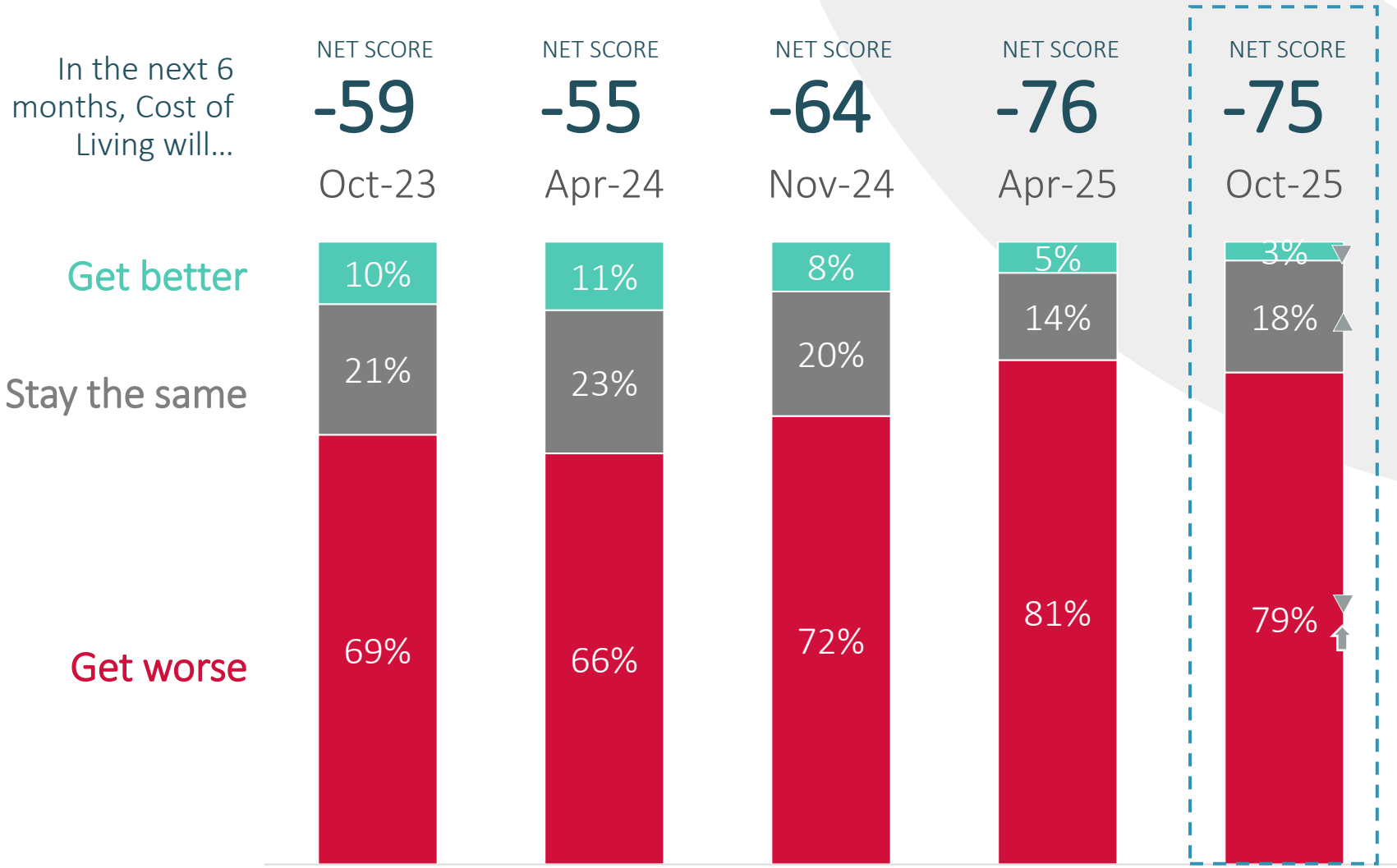
Source: Various news outlets Q4 2025

The cost of living continues to rise, which will make it harder to ensure my financial wellbeing remains stable

- Female, 30s

It’s personal: many fear the cost of living will worsen in the next 6 months





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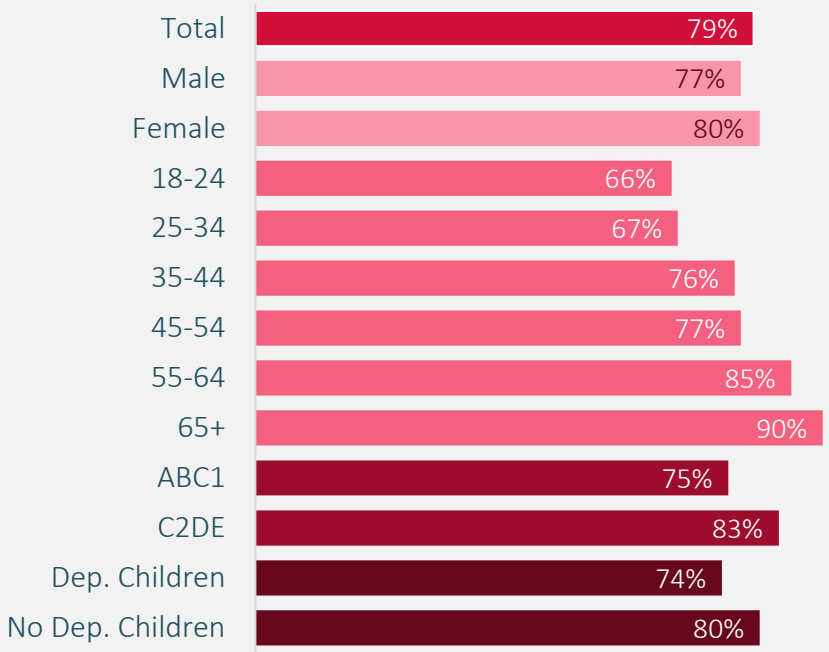
Significance tested at 95% vs April 25
Significance tested at 95% vs Nov 24

Older and C2DE groups feel the pinch most sharply

Expectations for Cost of Living in N6M
% who believe it will get **worse**



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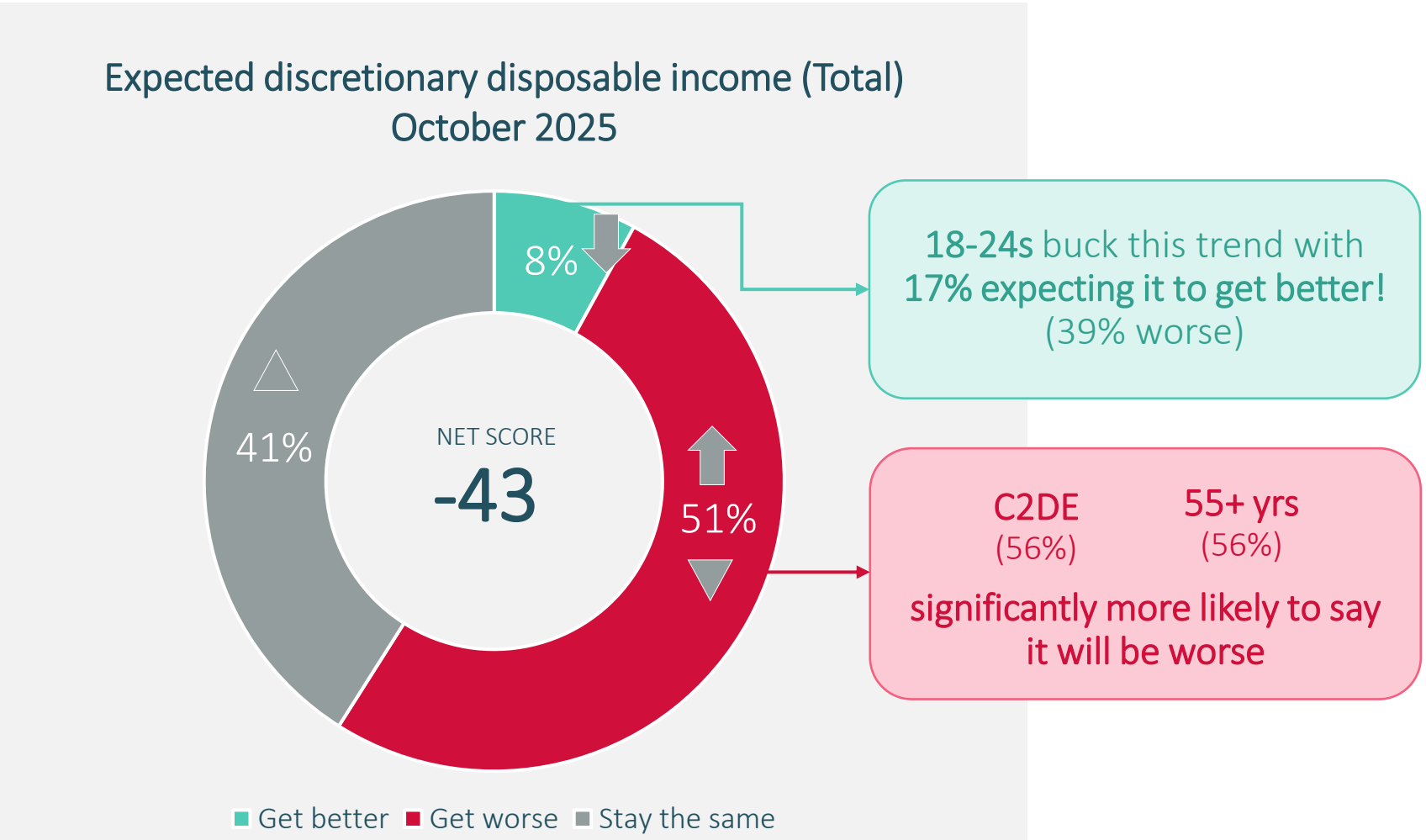
▲▼ Significance tested at 95% vs April 25 ⇅ Significance tested at 95% vs Nov 24

1 in 2 expect less disposable income, but the outlook is less bleak than before



18-24s buck this trend with **17% expecting it to get better!** (39% worse)

C2DE (56%) 55+ yrs (56%)

significantly more likely to say it will be worse

Q1. How do you think the following aspects of the economy will fare in the next 6 months?
Base: Total sample Oct 25 (n=2077)

▲▼ Significance tested at 95% vs April 25

⬆⬇ Significance tested at 95% vs Nov 24

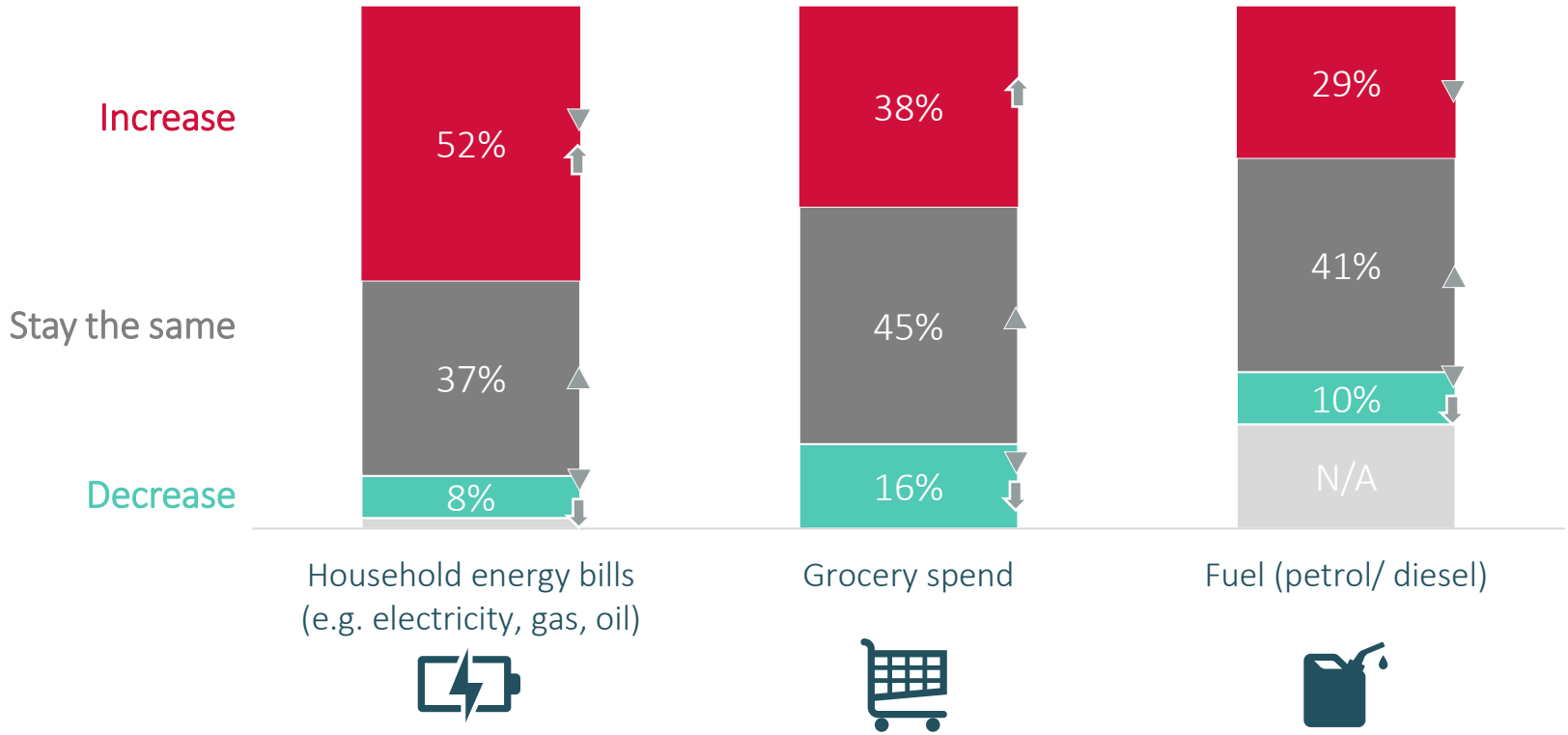
Economic strain still looms: The next 6 months

The cost of living will increase a lot, particularly **bills, groceries and everyday living,** and **my earnings won't change to reflect this.** I don't think I will be able to spend on **going out for food or drinks or hobbies**

- Female, 30s

1 in 2 anticipate higher household energy cost, with concern rising WoW

Expected spend in N6M
Total sample



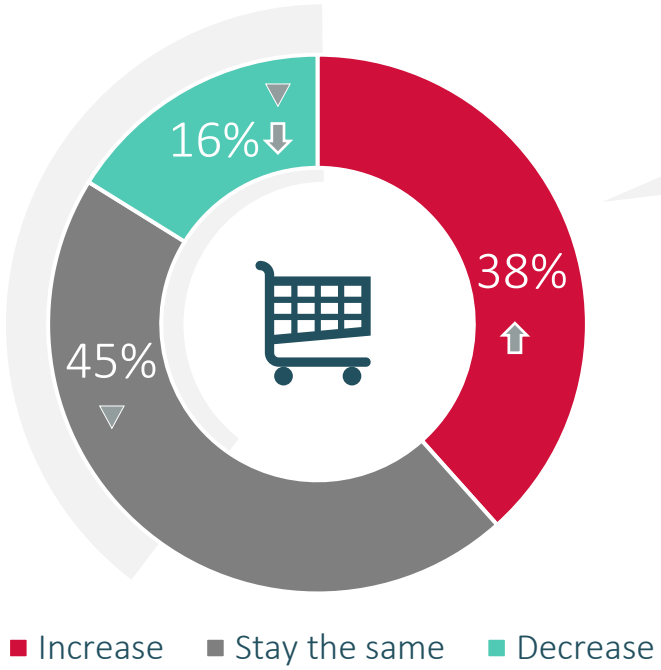
Q2. Thinking about the next 6 months, to what extent, if at all, do you expect to increase or decrease your spending on the following areas? Base: Total sample Oct 25 (n=2,077)

▲▼ Significance tested at 95% vs April 25 ⬆⬇ Significance tested at 95% vs Nov 24

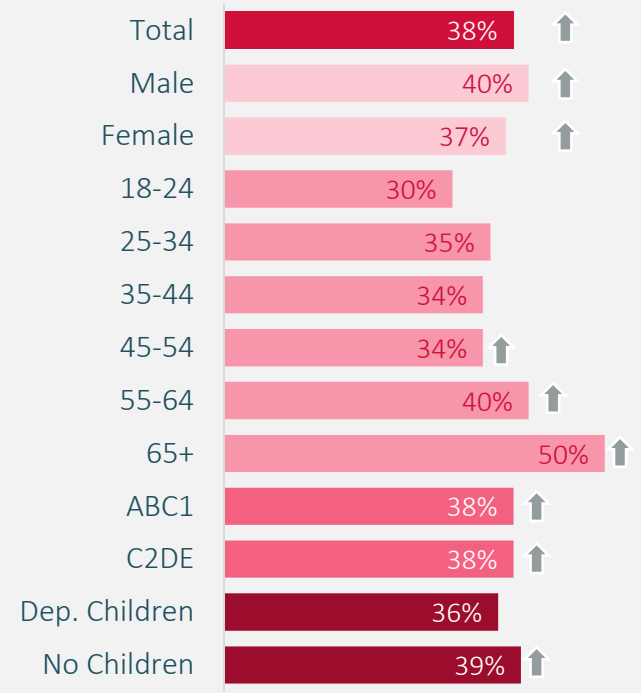
Inflation meets Christmas demand

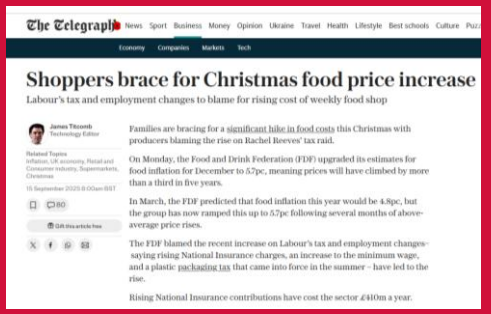
Consumers expect to spend more on groceries as food inflation bites and the festive period approaches

Expected grocery spend in N6M (Total) – Oct 25



% who expect spending to increase




The Telegraph

Shoppers brace for Christmas food price increase

Labour's tax and employment changes to blame for rising cost of weekly food shop

Families are bracing for a significant hike in food costs this Christmas with producers blaming the rise on Rachel Reeves' tax raid.

On Monday, the Food and Drink Federation (FDF) upgraded its estimates for food inflation for December to 5.7pc, meaning prices will have climbed by more than a third in five years.

In March, the FDF predicted that food inflation this year would be 4.8pc, but the group has now ramped this up to 5.7pc following several months of above-average price rises.

The FDF blamed the recent increase on Labour's tax and employment changes - saying rising National Insurance charges, an increase to the minimum wage, and a plastic packaging tax that came into force in the summer - have led to the rise.

Rising National Insurance contributions have cost the sector £410m a year.

Shoppers brace for Christmas food price increase

Source: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2025/09/15/shoppers-christmas-food-price-increase-labour-raid/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

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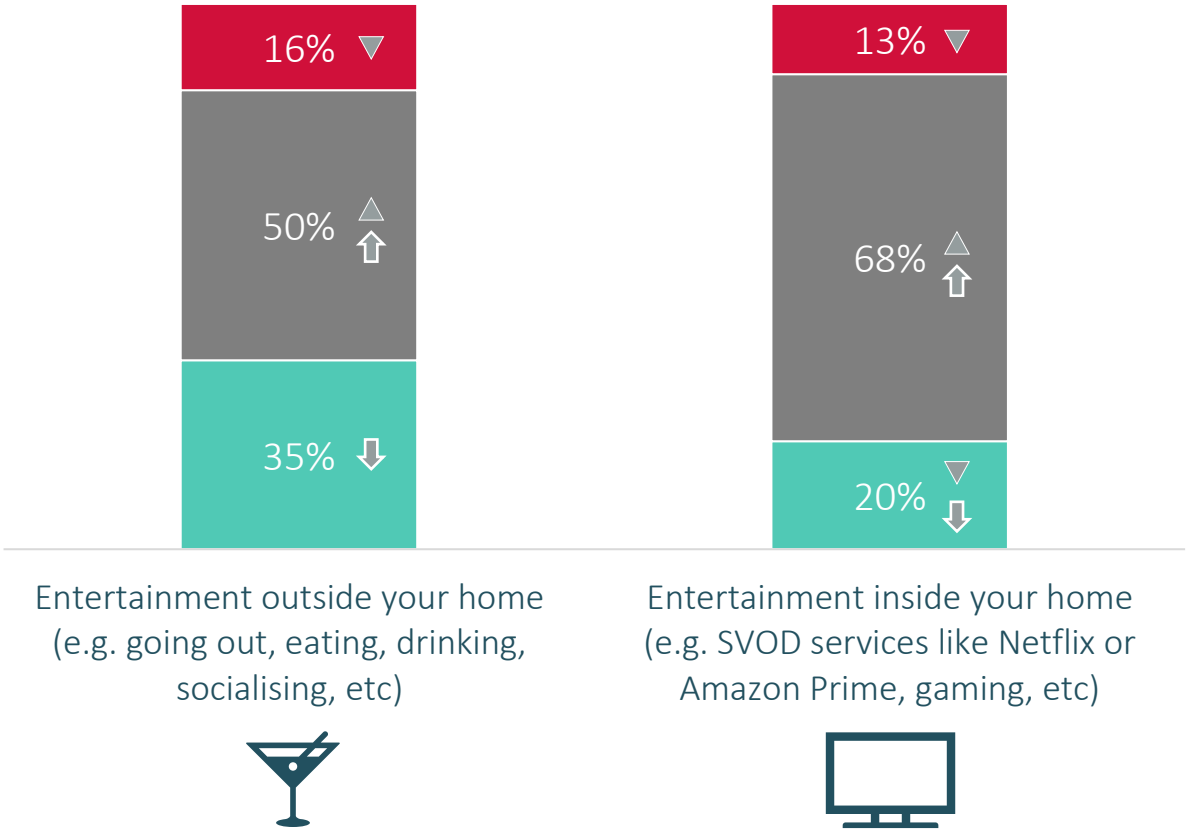
▲▼ Significance tested at 95% vs Nov 24 ⬆⬇ Significance tested at 95% vs April 24

Many expect entertainment spend to hold steady

Although more than a 1/3rd expect to reduce spending on holidays and short breaks, with similar declines for consumer goods & services

Expected spend in N6M

Total Sample



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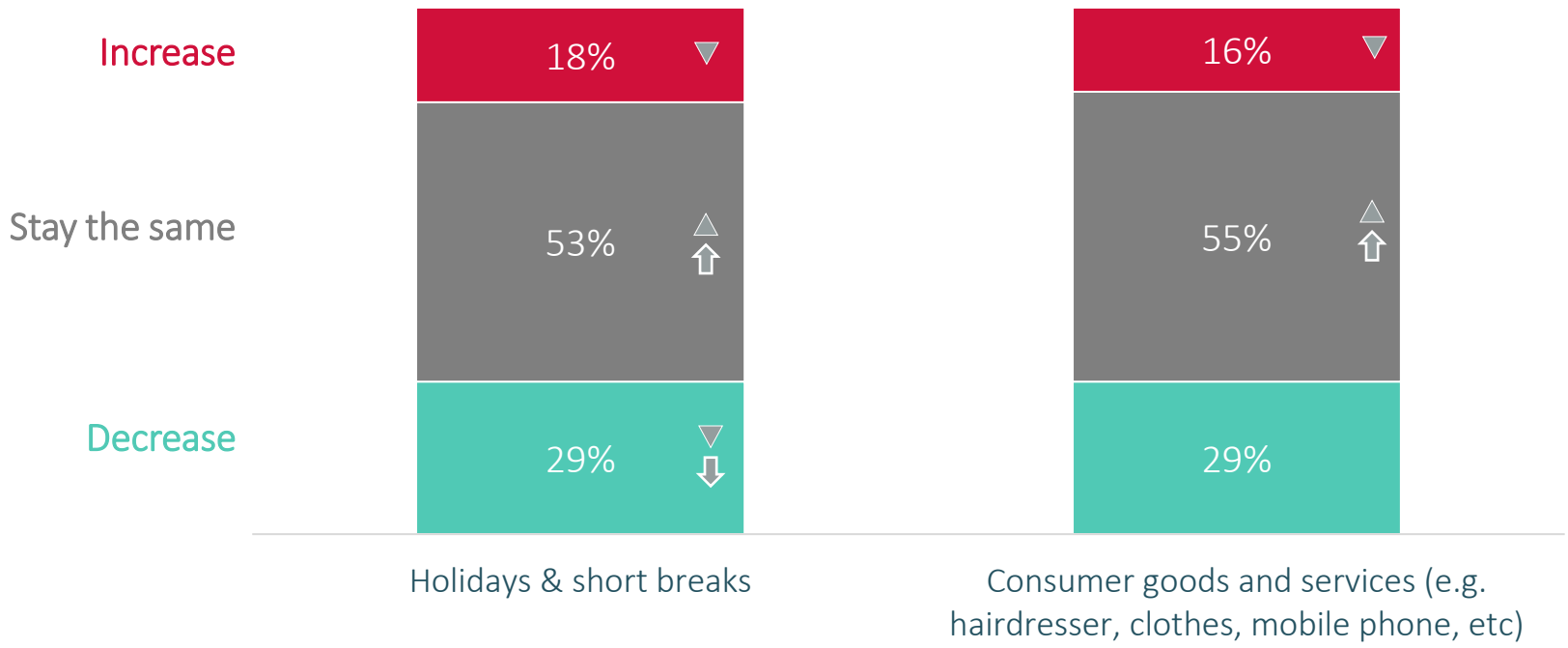
A steady outlook for holidays and goods spend

Although nearly 3 in 10 expect to reduce spending on holidays and short breaks, with similar declines for consumer goods

Expected spend in N6M
Total Sample



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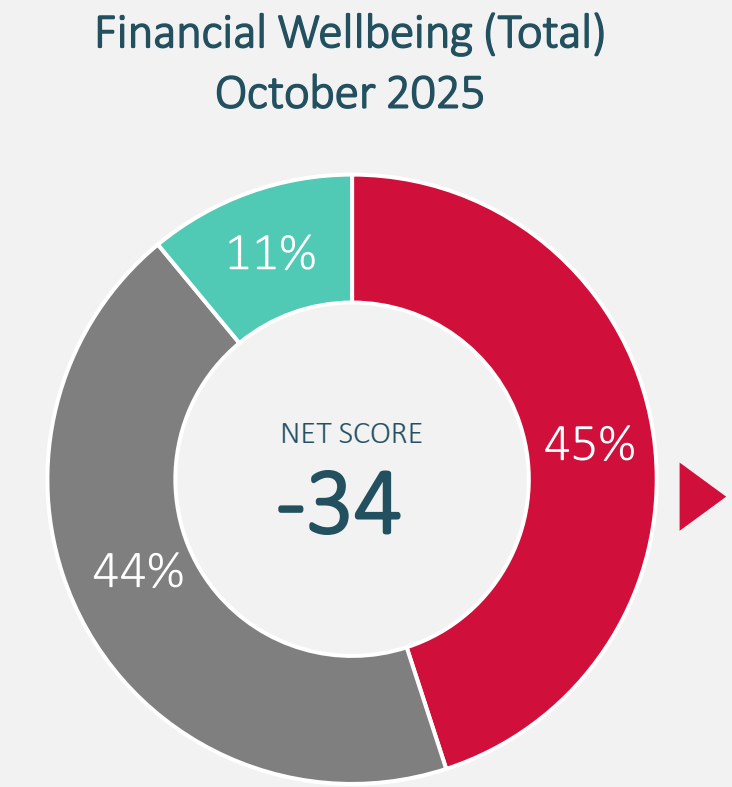
Financial Wellbeing

"Financial wellbeing is about **feeling secure and in control**. It's about making the most of your money from day to day, **dealing with the unexpected**, and being on track for **a healthy financial future**. In short: **financially resilient, confident and empowered**"

Source: Money and Pensions Service
https://maps.org.uk/en/our-work/uk-strategy-for-financial-wellbeing/what-is-financial-wellbeing

Most consumers expect their financial wellbeing to stay the same or get worse



Females (49%)

45+ (48%)

Widowed/ divorced/ separated (57%)

significantly more likely to say get worse

Q1. How do you think the following aspects of the economy will fare in the next 6 months?
Base: Oct 25 (n=2077)

11% Expect their financial wellbeing to fare slightly or much **BETTER** in the coming six months → Notably higher for men, 18-34s. ABC1s, full time students and singles

Why do some people expect their financial wellbeing to IMPROVE over the next six months?

% of those that expect their financial wellbeing to fare slightly or much better in coming six months (n=228)

38%
New jobs, pay rises and promotions

19%
Decreased outgoings

8%
Optimistic outlook for the future

8%
Money from pension

> I am making **changes to my life…**the most prominent being that I'm **changing my job to one that has a better compensation and salary package**
> - Female, 20s

> Because, having gone through a horrendously expensive summer/autumn, my wife and I have agreed to **instigate some economies in our life**
> - Male, 70s

> I've **recently paid off some debts** so now the money I make can be put to things I find more directly useful, like savings and investments…**So I will definitely have more of a safety net in my finances**
> - Male, 20s

Q3. Why do you believe your own financial wellbeing will fare better in the coming six months? (N=228)

44% Expect their financial wellbeing to fare **THE SAME** in the coming six months → Notably higher for AB social grade

Why do some people expect their financial wellbeing to STAY THE SAME over the next six months?

% of those that expect their financial wellbeing to fare the same in coming six months (n=924)

46%
No significant upcoming financial changes

24%
Steady/ increased income in line with inflation

18%
Good planning/ management

8%
Cost of living negates any increase

> I can't see it getting better but at the same time I can't see it getting much worse so probably the same. Yes, certain items might increase in price but I'm sure I'll find ways to cut in other areas. **It's bad but it's what you have to do**
> - Male, 20s

> I hope to earn a little more, **but with the increase in the cost of living, from food to gas and electricity prices increasing, then any gain in income will be levelled**. I should fare ok though with careful budgeting and a cut back on some spending
> - Female, 40s

> I just can't see it moving in any direction right now. **If I earn more there's more to pay**
> - Male, 40s

Q3. Why do you believe your own financial wellbeing will fare the same in the coming six months? (N=924)

45% Expect their financial wellbeing to fare slightly or much **WORSE** in the coming six months

Notably higher for women, 45+, C2DEs and those who are widowed/divorced/ separated

Why do some people expect their financial wellbeing to DECLINE over the next six months?

% of those that expect their financial wellbeing to fare slightly or much worse in coming six months (n=924)

61%
Cost of living

24%
Static incomes

18%
Increased bills

10%
Government policies/ upcoming budget

> Because of the cost of living, all our wages goes into bills and grocery shopping. **We barely do anything anymore that's fun**
> - Female, 40s

> The **prices of everyday living expenses, such food, fuel etc, are increasing at a steep rate**, but our household income is staying **static**
> - Male, 50s

> Due to the **autumn budget** when I think taxes will rise and the increase in the cost of living and inflation
> - Female, 60s

Q3. Why do you believe your own financial wellbeing will fare worse in the coming six months? (N=924)

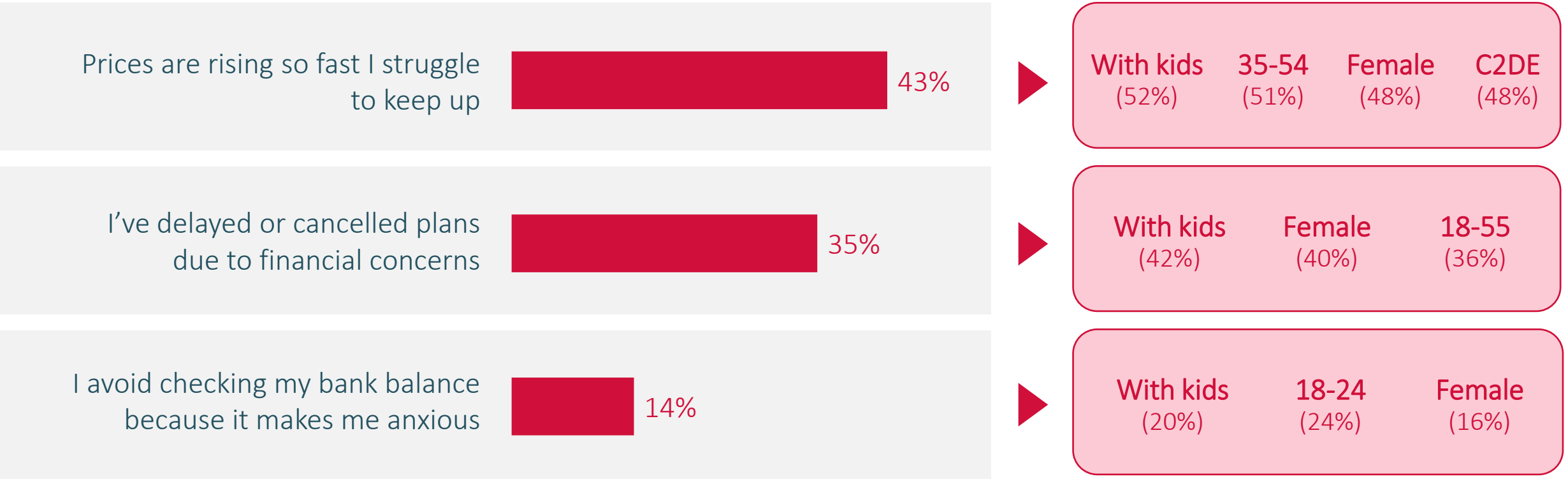
Financial habits and coping strategies

We're going to **eat out less, spend less on clothes, spend less on our garden and be less extravagant on food**. We'll see how it goes!

- Male, 70s

Many are feeling the squeeze with rising costs impacting plans

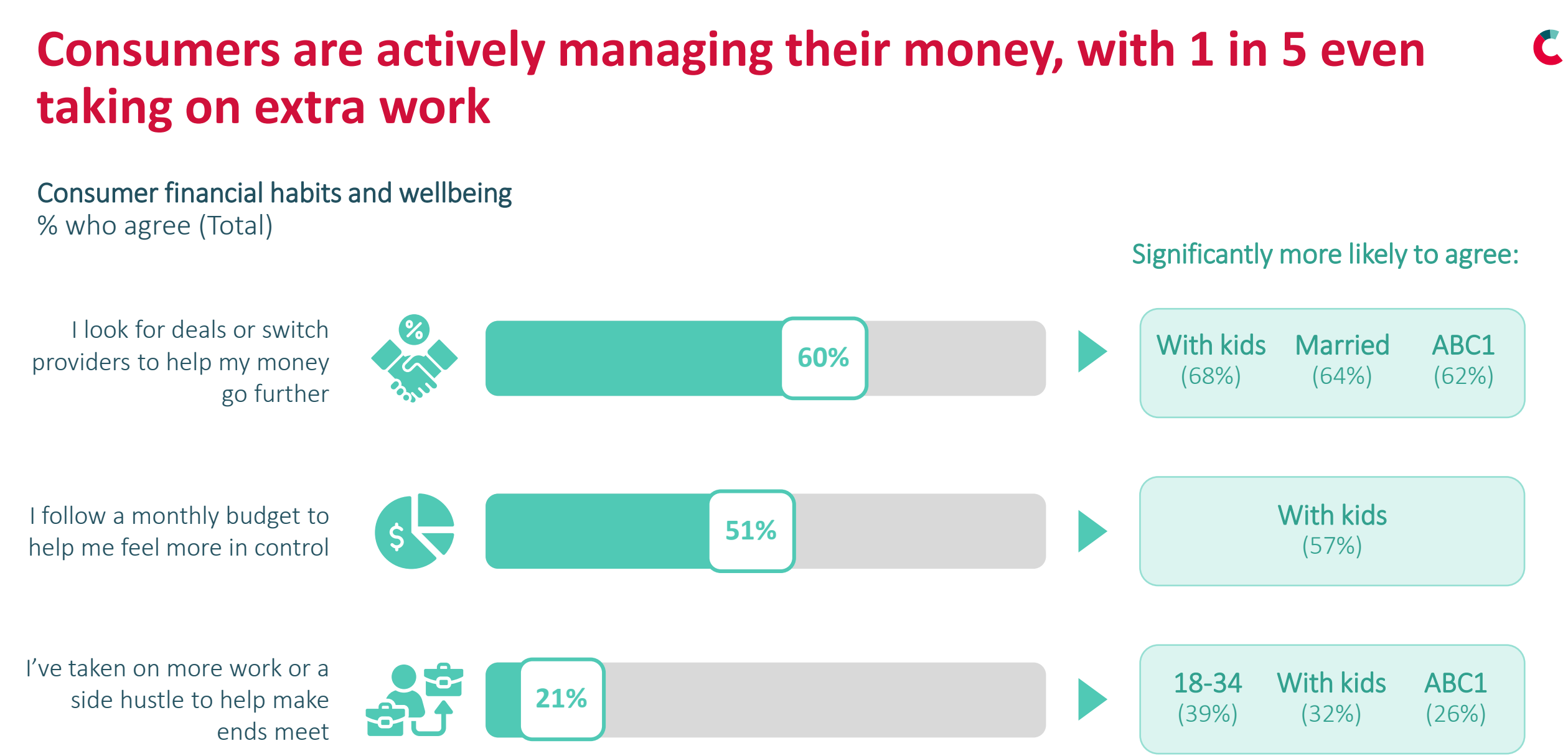
Consumer financial habits and wellbeing
% who agree (Total)



Q4. Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements about your financial habits and wellbeing: Base: Oct 25 (n=2077)

Consumers are actively managing their money, with 1 in 5 even taking on extra work

Consumer financial habits and wellbeing
% who agree (Total)



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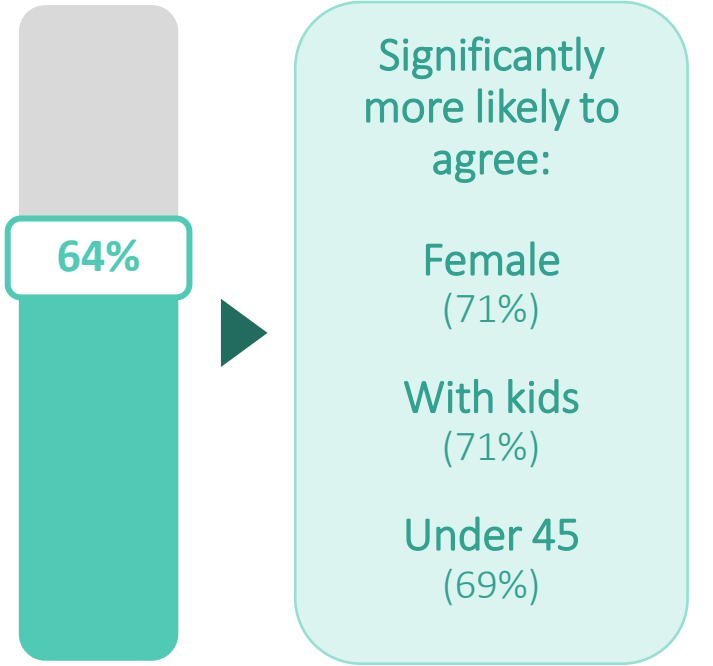
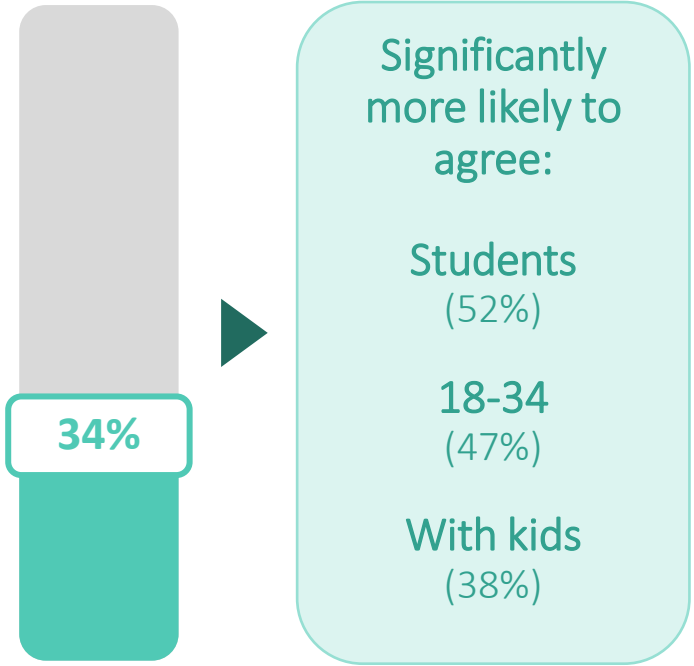
Consumers are finding emotional outlets and small joys to stay afloat

Consumer financial habits and wellbeing
% who agree (Total)

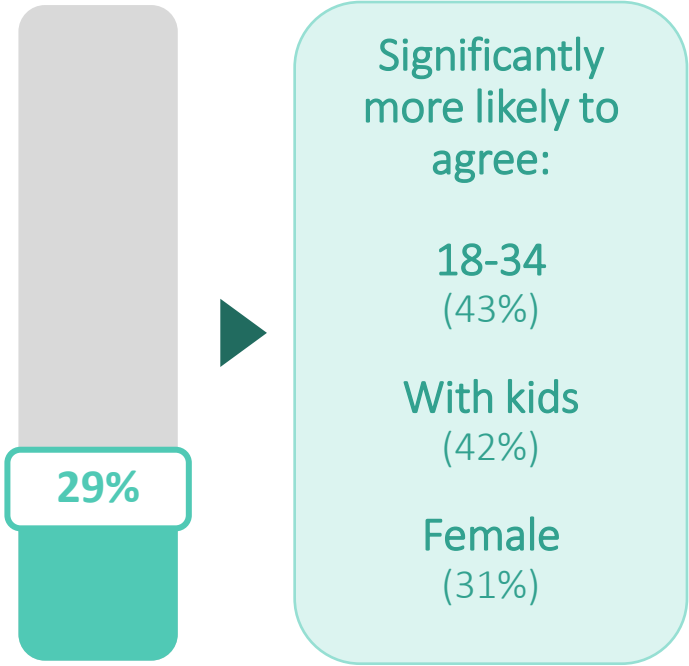
I look for small ways to treat myself/my family



I regularly talk to others about money



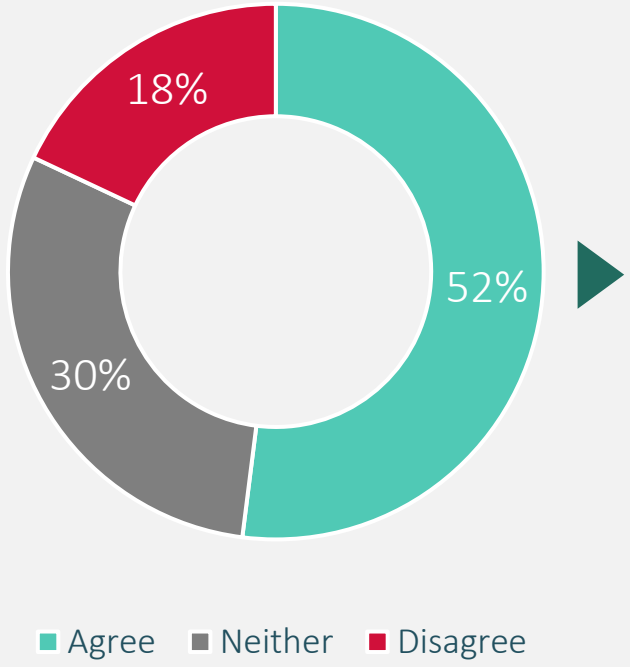
I use entertainment (e.g. TV, streaming, gaming, cinema) to escape financial stress



Q4. Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements about your financial habits and wellbeing: Base: Oct 25 (n=2077)

Despite financial challenges, over half feel confident in their ability to cope

"I feel confident in my ability to manage unexpected financial challenges" (Total)
October 2025



Married (60%)	Male (56%)	No kids (54%)

significantly more likely to agree

Q4. Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements about your financial habits and wellbeing: Base: Oct 25 (n=2077)

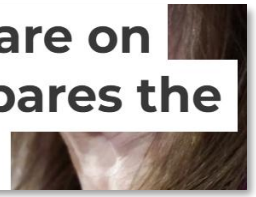
Looking ahead…

All eyes are on the November Budget

Tax rises and benefit cuts are on the horizon as Reeves prepares the UK for a bad-news budget

Britons braced for cuts and tax rises in Autumn Budget

Tax rises and benefit cuts are on the horizon as Reeves prepares the UK for a bad-news budget



Rachel Reeves 'set to make huge change to pensions' this month

State of Britain's public finances means writing is on the wall for tax rises

UK to cut tax-free cash savings allowance in November budget, Telegraph says

Budget 2025: Rachel Reeves signals tax rises and warns 'each of us must do our bit'

Source: Various news outlets Q4 2025

The impending Budget is on consumer's minds…

And is only met with pessimism, expecting it to worsen their financial wellbeing

I just feel that there is so much instability in the world at the moment. The UK doesn't seem to be faring too well...**I believe the upcoming budget will be yet another kick in the teeth for people like me**
- Female, 30s

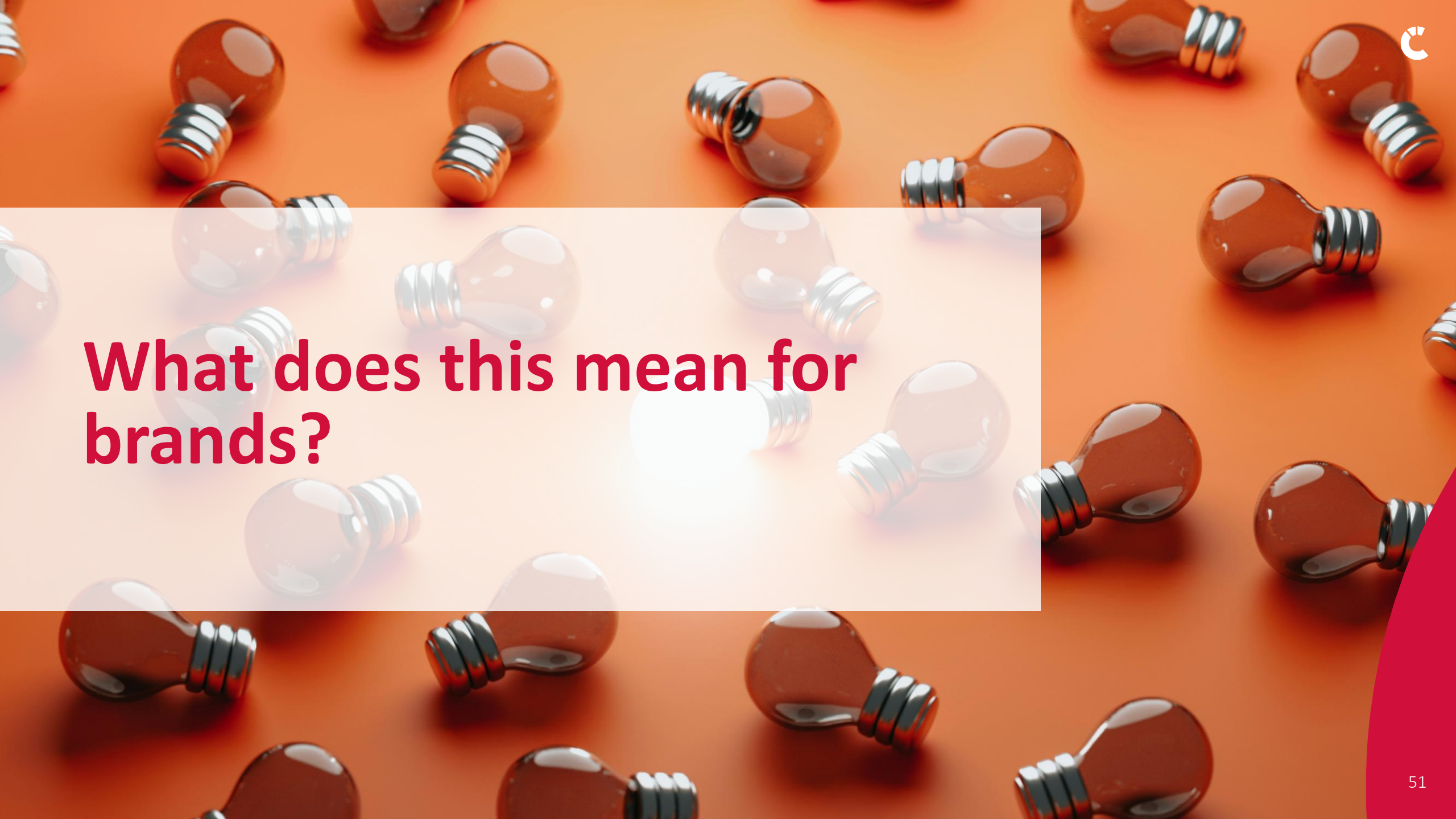
I think the **general cost of living crisis** - rising fuel bills etc - along with **likely tax increases** in the next budget will affect my financial wellbeing
- Male, 50s

Everything is going up. The most worrying thing for a pensioner is that **we are on a fixed income and I dread the next budget**
- Female, 70s

I fully expect the Government budget in November to impact me. **Energy costs are increasing. Food inflation is increasing**
- Male, 60s

I think my financial wellbeing will get worse due to the autumn budget when **I think taxes will rise,** and also the increase in the cost of living and inflation
- Female, 60s

Wages are still pretty stagnant, but prices are still rising - faster than wages. It also seems like tax brackets will be frozen in the next budget, which is effectively a tax rise
- Male, 40s



What does this mean for brands?

We watch the pennies and the pounds look after themselves

- Female, 50s

Driving Value & Trust is key

Value is King

Consumers are hyper-focused on stretching budgets. Brands should emphasise affordability, deals and value

Empathy Matters

Comms must be sensitive to financial stress, especially amongst older, female and C2DE groups

Small Joys

Affordable indulgences (e.g. low cost treats, entertainment) resonate strongly as consumers seek an emotional uplift

Trust & Support

Positioning around financial empowerment is important – help consumers to feel in control – this can build loyalty during difficult times

Photo by Hannah Busing on Unsplash

THANK YOU

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