

YouGov[®]

July 2021

Age friendly employer engagement:
The broad picture

 **Centre for
Ageing Better**

Introduction

- The Centre for Ageing Better commissioned YouGov to conduct a multi-stage research project exploring the topic of age inclusivity in the workplace. The research has three key aims and objectives:
 - 1) Understand current employer awareness and understanding of AFE/age inclusivity in the workplace;
 - 2) Understand employers' priorities and motivations for change in this context;
 - 3) Understand how to effectively change employer's behaviour to encourage AFE/age inclusivity in the workplace.
- This report is designed to focus on a broad picture of the state of age inclusive employment across the labour market in England.
- As part of the first stage of research, two online text-based focus groups were conducted in January 2021 with senior decision-makers in organisations across England to explore the topic area and build an understanding of employers' current frame of mind.
- Following this, a large-scale survey of 2,247 senior decision makers in organisations across England was carried out. Fieldwork was conducted online between 27th April and 22nd May 2021. The results have been weighted and are representative of employment in England by organisation size, sector, industry and region.
- As part of the quantitative stage of research, YouGov also conducted a Key Driver Analysis to assess what drives employers' likelihood to implement or develop age inclusive policies. Key Driver Analysis is designed to identify the strongest predictors of a dependent variable (in this case likelihood to introduce / develop age inclusive policies) by assessing the simultaneous effect of many independent variables (e.g. perceived benefits of age inclusivity). To accomplish the Key Driver Analysis, YouGov ran linear regressions on the weighted data.
- All respondents to the focus groups and survey were recruited through YouGov's proprietary online panel.

Qualitative research: online focus groups

Setting the scene: age inclusivity in the workplace

Focus groups: Method and sample

2 x 90 minute online focus groups were conducted in January 2021 with senior staff members recruited off of the YouGov panel. All were incentivised for their time in line with MRS guidelines.

Groups included a mix of participant demographics – age, gender, ethnicity and region of the UK.

9 respondents

- All senior decision makers in SMEs
- Mix of sector
- Mix of industry
- Mix of office and non office-based roles
- Record view on diversity and inclusion in workplace.

12 respondents

- All senior decision makers in large organisations
- Mix of sector
- Mix of industry
- Mix of office and non office-based roles
- Record view on diversity and inclusion in workplace

Diversity and inclusion – how does age fit?

- Age was spontaneously mentioned more so by those working at larger organisations, and less so by SMEs;
- Those in larger organisations spoke more confidently about the full landscape of diversity issues;
- SMEs appeared to be slightly more resistant towards the diversity agenda, with some feeling it can be tokenistic, especially if working in a small organisation where the overall ‘fit’ of the person is more highly valued;
- There was greater awareness from those working in larger organisations about the interplay between protected characteristics, too;
- Across groups there were comments that age is less of a priority than other diversity issues, with many feeling that their organisation has adequate age diversity or speaking of this diversity coming about naturally – however, those at larger organisations did seem to feel more under scrutiny on diversity issues across the board.

None. We don't do woke. We don't do diversity - we don't look at what the people are or are not. It's about equality of opportunity not outcome.

Group 1 - SME

We closely monitor our diversity and inclusivity but try to create a workplace where everyone can thrive, be treated equally in terms of opportunity and pay, recognition etc.

Group 2 - Larger



Stereotypes and age discrimination

- Both groups implied that older candidates have higher salary expectations and are harder to 'fit' within existing structures, which can influence hiring decisions;
- Some said that older candidates can be stereotyped as having a better work ethic than younger employees and are seen as having important experience – of the workplace environment more generally, but also a solid understanding of a company's ethos and ways of working if they have been employed for a long time. This experience is seen as valuable in terms of setting an example for new starters. However, it can mean a lack of flexibility in the face of change;
- By virtue of this experience, many also commented that older workers are in management positions. An important distinction here is between physical and non-physical roles – in the former, older workers may be subject to discrimination due to stereotypes of age and strength / stamina when it comes to physical tasks;
- Respondents across both groups commented that age discrimination can also be seen in being passed over for promotion. In the second group (larger organisations) it was mentioned that this may be a particular issue for women of a certain age who may be looking to start a family;
- Overall, however, respondents seemed to see age discrimination as a possibility at both ends of the scale – younger workers face stereotypes and discrimination just as older workers do. Younger workers are sometimes seen as lacking in skills and experience and can be less mature in their outlook and behaviour.



Younger people sometimes precluded from some opportunities for lack of experience. Some older members of the workforce are deemed "low potential" and therefore not given opportunities.

What is done well and what needs to improve?

- Across groups, there was recognition that an age diverse workforce can be beneficial, noting that a variety of perspectives, skills and experiences is valuable;
- Again, those in larger organisations spoke more about having policies and initiatives in place to promote age diversity when compared to those in SMEs. Some spoke of tracking this specifically, however of these, few felt there was any indication that it should be made a priority;
- Having said this, many across groups said they would be keen to understand more about age diversity either from an individual standpoint or in terms of company-wide actions;
- For some, the topic could cover many things, so pinning down specific topics or knowledge gaps is hard to do, and many were open to a range of support initiatives;
- Some suggest that peer learning could be valuable – demonstrating best practice in organisations similar to their own, in addition to more standardised opportunities for learning about age diversity and age discrimination more generally. Kitemarks and pledges were also felt to be an effective way to drive and evidence age friendly work practices;
- Ultimately, there is a feeling that while everyone has a responsibility to ensure a diverse and inclusive workplace, initiatives need to be driven by senior leadership, L&D teams, who set the tone, with monitoring down to HR.



Monitoring is HR. But deciding whether on it's importance, relevance, or priority level is much broader.

Group 1 - SMEs

I don't feel it has ever come up as an issue but HR and senior managers would drive change. But all are welcome to voice opinions.

Group 2 - Larger

Messages tested in the focus groups

Message 1

Being age-friendly is the fair thing to do...

- Age discrimination is illegal under the Equality Act (2010)
- The State Pension age has now reached 66 for men and women – so we all need workplaces which support us to work for longer
- There are almost 1 million people age 50-69 not in work who would like to be
- A third of over 50s believe they have been turned down to a job due to their age
- All of us are ageing, working for an organisation that is age inclusive will be good for me in the future as I get older.

Message 2

The older workforce is the workforce...

- Nearly 1 in 3 workers in the UK is age 50 or older, and this proportion is set to continue growing. Meanwhile, the number of workers under 30 is falling
- With immigration falling, we need to make the most of the workforce we have
- Older workers bring experience.

Message 3

Older workers are good for business...

- Research shows that a firm that has a 10% higher share of workers aged 50 and over than the average firm is 1.1% more productive.
- Research shows that older workers generate 'spillover effects', improving the productivity of younger workers. These spillover effects have their roots in older workers' lower job turnover, their greater management experience and their greater general work experience.
- Older consumers spend 54p in every £1 in the UK, by 2040 this is predicted to be 63p in every £1. A workforce who reflect our customers could have business benefits.

Message testing

Message 1

FAIRNESS

When reviewing the **fairness** messages – the SMEs tended to prefer C which talked about individual preference and desire, whereas the ‘Larger’ group tended to prefer E which was about identification with an age-friendly organisation.

Message 2

OLDER WORKFORCE

On the **older workforce is the workforce** message – the SMEs gravitated towards A with its message around the proportion of older workers growing, though both groups had some doubts about the number of younger workers falling (it may be that ‘proportion’ here would have different results), and the decrease in immigration.

Message 3

GOOD FOR BUSINESS

On the **older workers are good for business** messages – all participants were torn between liking the messages being backed up by evidence and statistics, and concerns that this type of language could be divisive, or even discriminatory towards younger workers.

- Looking at the messaging in the round, the SMEs tended to prefer messages such as 1c or 1d which outline the damage of age discrimination and the fact that there are older people out there being denied opportunities (as opposed to other messages that they felt were ‘pitting’ the old against the young);
- And in reflecting on what they had been discussing it was the larger organisations that seemed to have had their eyes opened by a conversation that they had not ever had before – backed up by some arresting statistics. It was they that talked about becoming more sensitive to this issue going forward, and their appetite for accreditation, much more than the SMEs.

Quantitative research: online survey

Contextualising diversity and inclusion within the workplace

Delivering for their customers/users is identified by two fifths of employers as the top priority for their organisation. Comparatively, 4% cite being an inclusive organisation as their number one priority

Top priority for organisation (% ranked first)



Public and voluntary sector employers are more likely than private sector employers to rank being an inclusive organisation as their top priority.

Organisations that have a relationship with a union are significantly more likely to prioritise being an inclusive organisation (7%) than those who do not (3%).

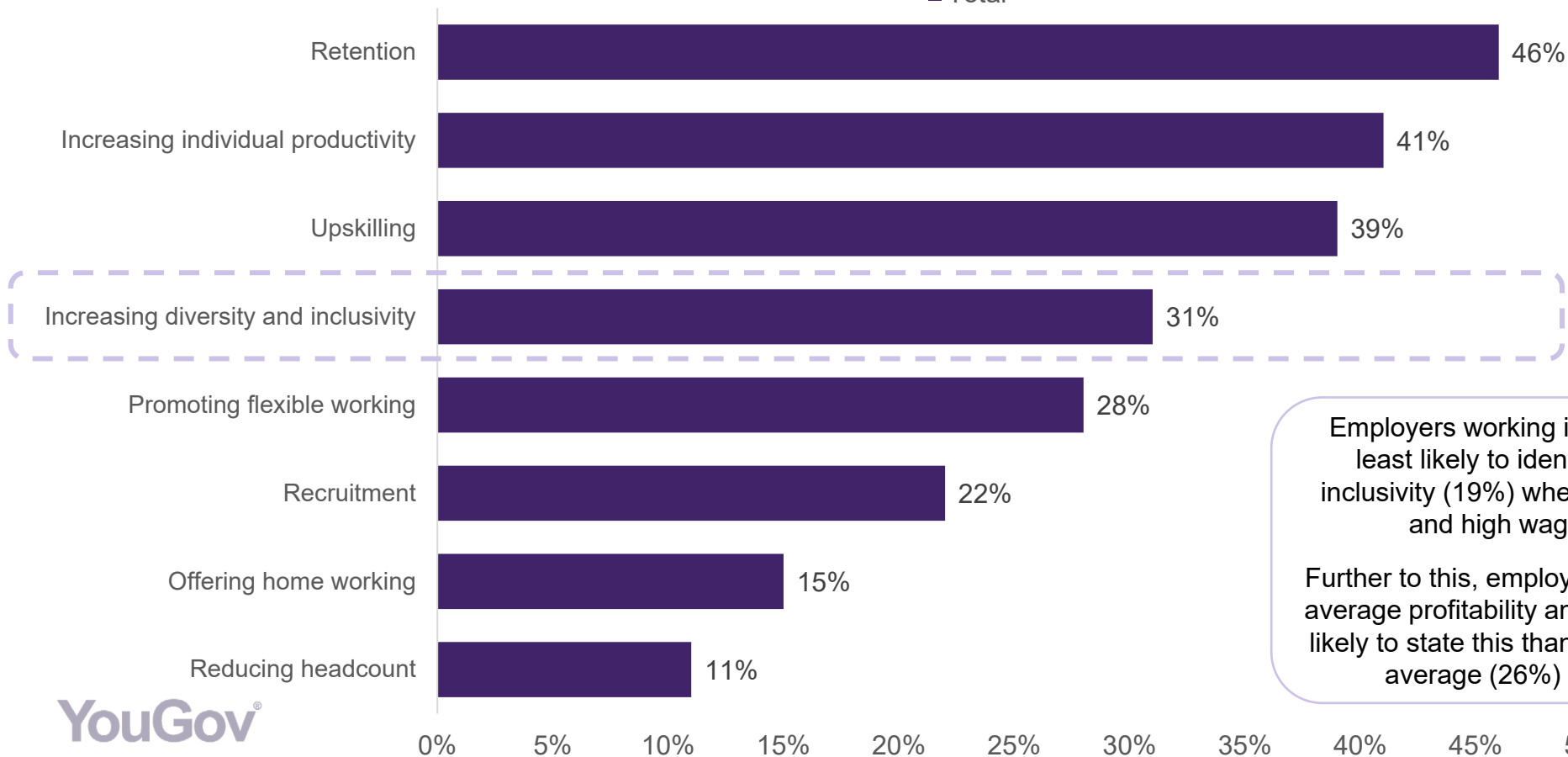
Staff wellbeing is more likely to be identified by those who are from a high (10%) or medium wage (9%) organisation compared to a low wage organisation (5%).

Priority ranked first

When thinking about their workforce, increasing diversity and inclusivity is stated as a priority for three in ten employers

Top priorities for workforce

■ Total

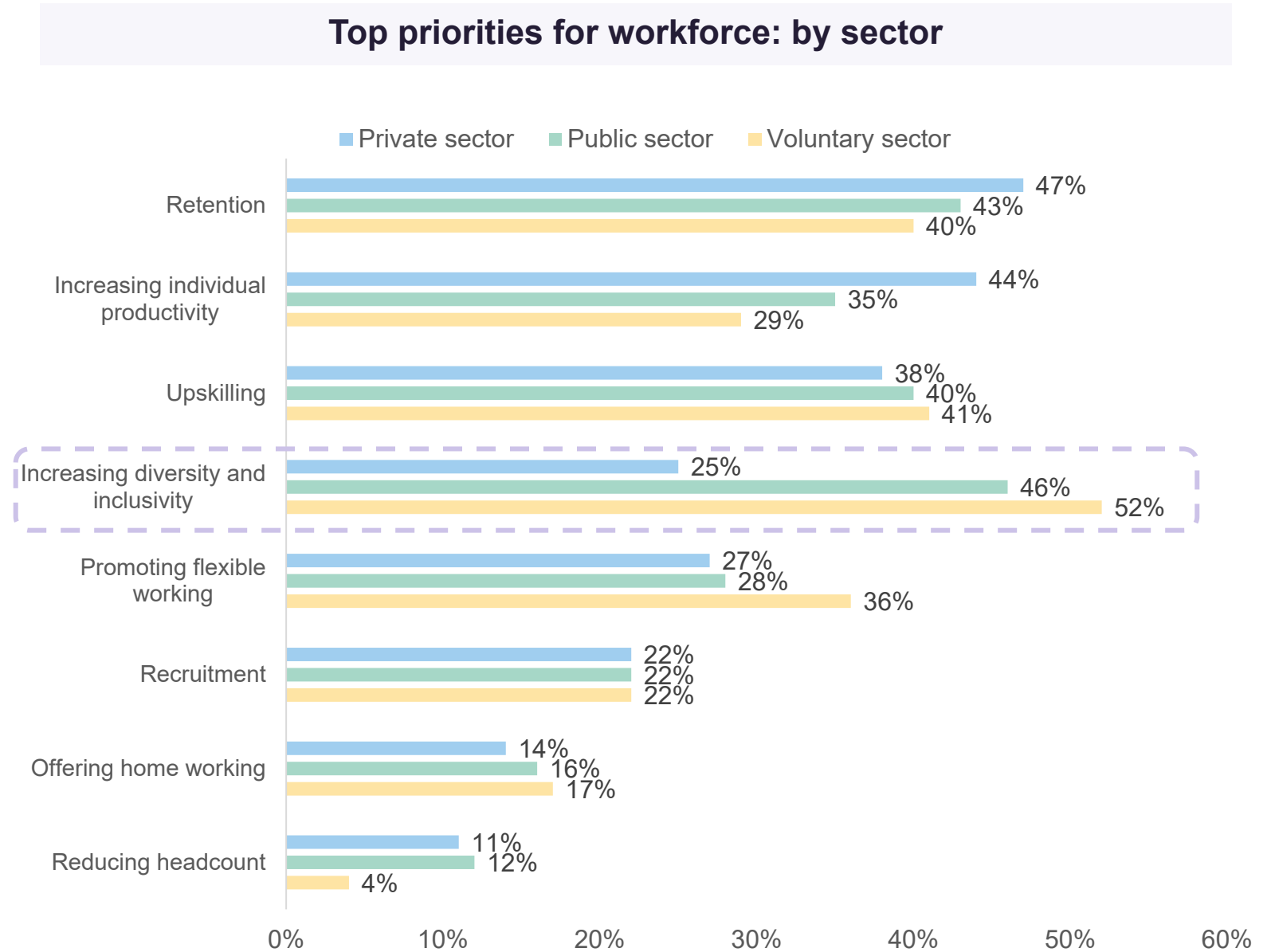


Larger organisations with 250+ employees are more likely to identify increasing diversity and inclusivity as a priority (45%) than those with 2-249 employees (17%).

Employers working in low wage organisations are least likely to identify increasing diversity and inclusivity (19%) when compared to medium (33%) and high wage organisations (37%).

Further to this, employers in organisations with above average profitability and performance (35%) are more likely to state this than those who rate themselves as average (26%) or below average (22%).

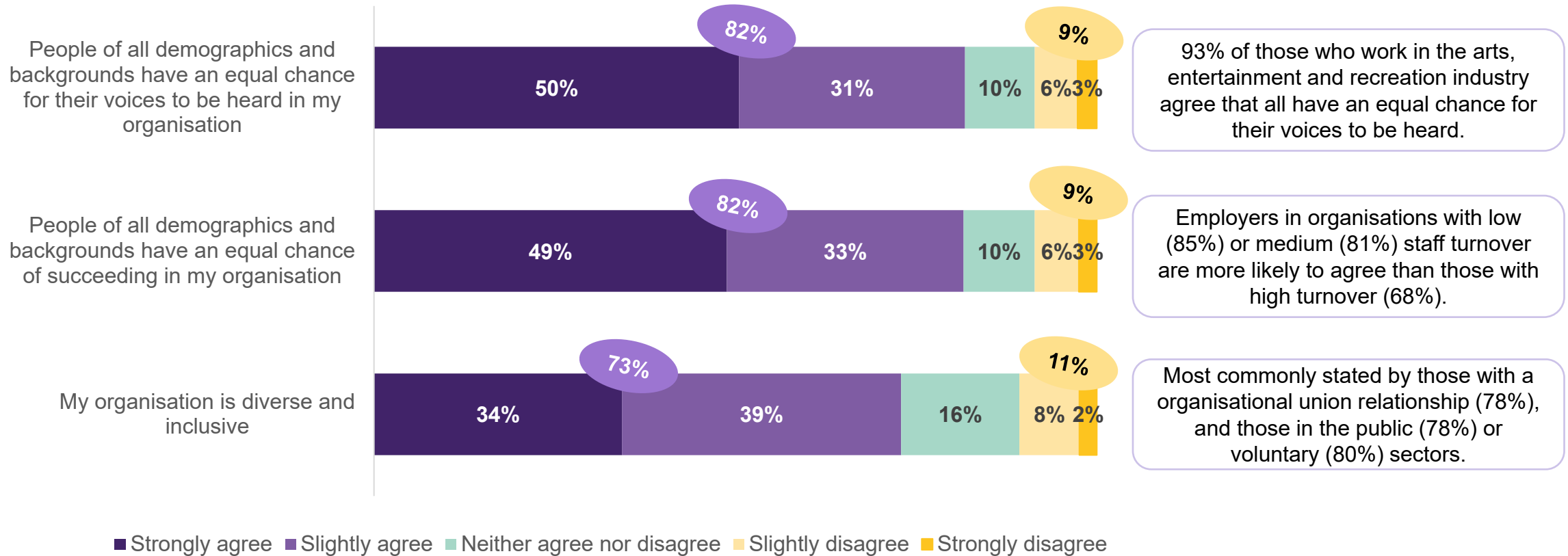
Public and voluntary sector employers drive the selection of ‘increasing diversity and inclusivity’ as a priority, while private sector are more likely to identify ‘increasing individual productivity’ than the other sectors



P2a. Thinking specifically about your workforce, which, if any, of the following would you say are priorities for your organisation? (Please select up to 3).
 Base: All employers (private sector n=1,589; public sector n=352; voluntary sector n=276)

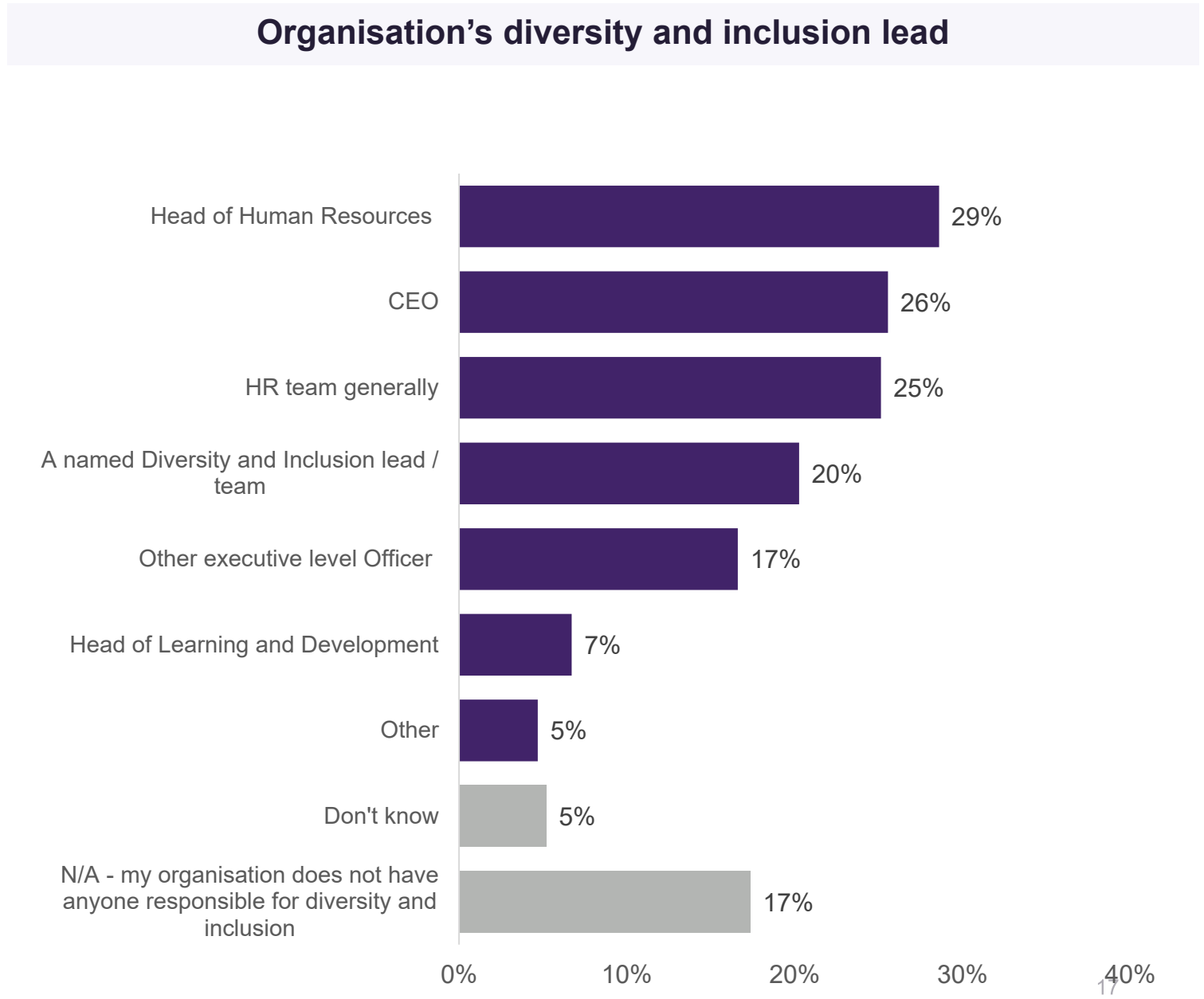
Despite it not being a top priority, the majority of employers have a favourable opinion of inclusivity and diversity in their organisation

Workforce agreement



One fifth of employers report that their organisation has a *named* Diversity and Inclusion lead/team

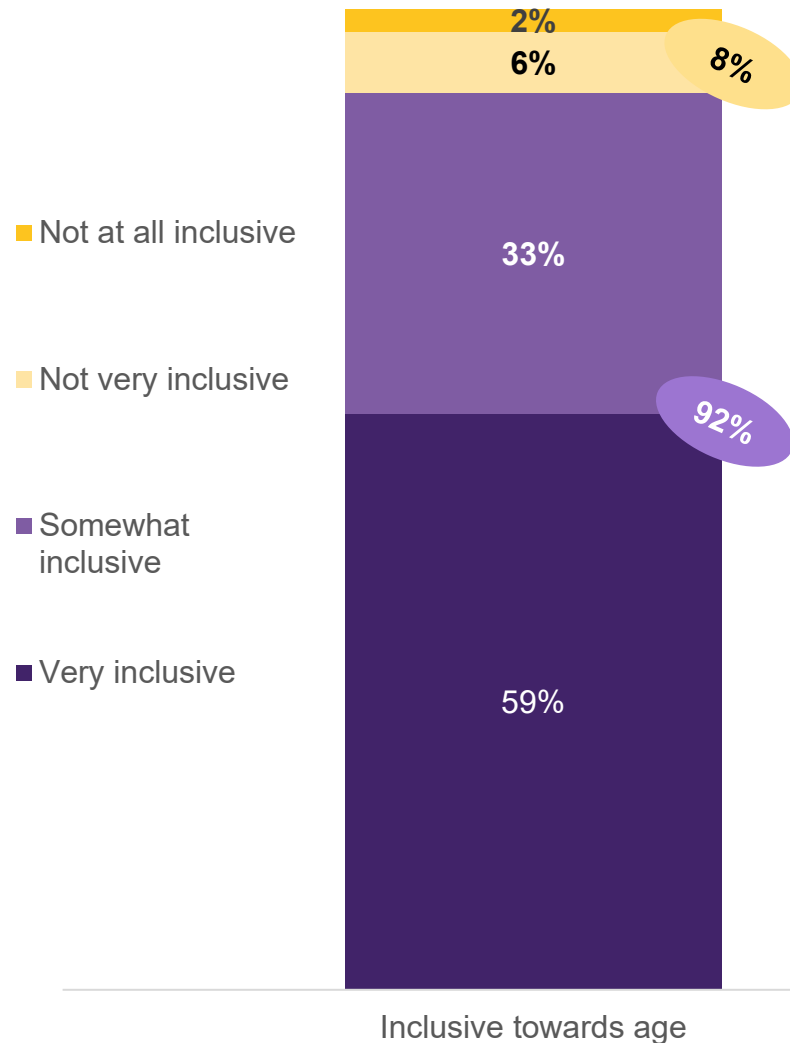
Those in the private sector are more likely to report that their organisation does not have anyone responsible for diversity and inclusion (22%)



111. Who, if anyone, at your organisation takes the lead for diversity and inclusion? Please select all that apply.
Base: All employers (Total n=2,247)

Although the vast majority of employers state that their organisation is at least somewhat inclusive towards age, approximately one in ten say it is not

Inclusion of protected characteristics: Age



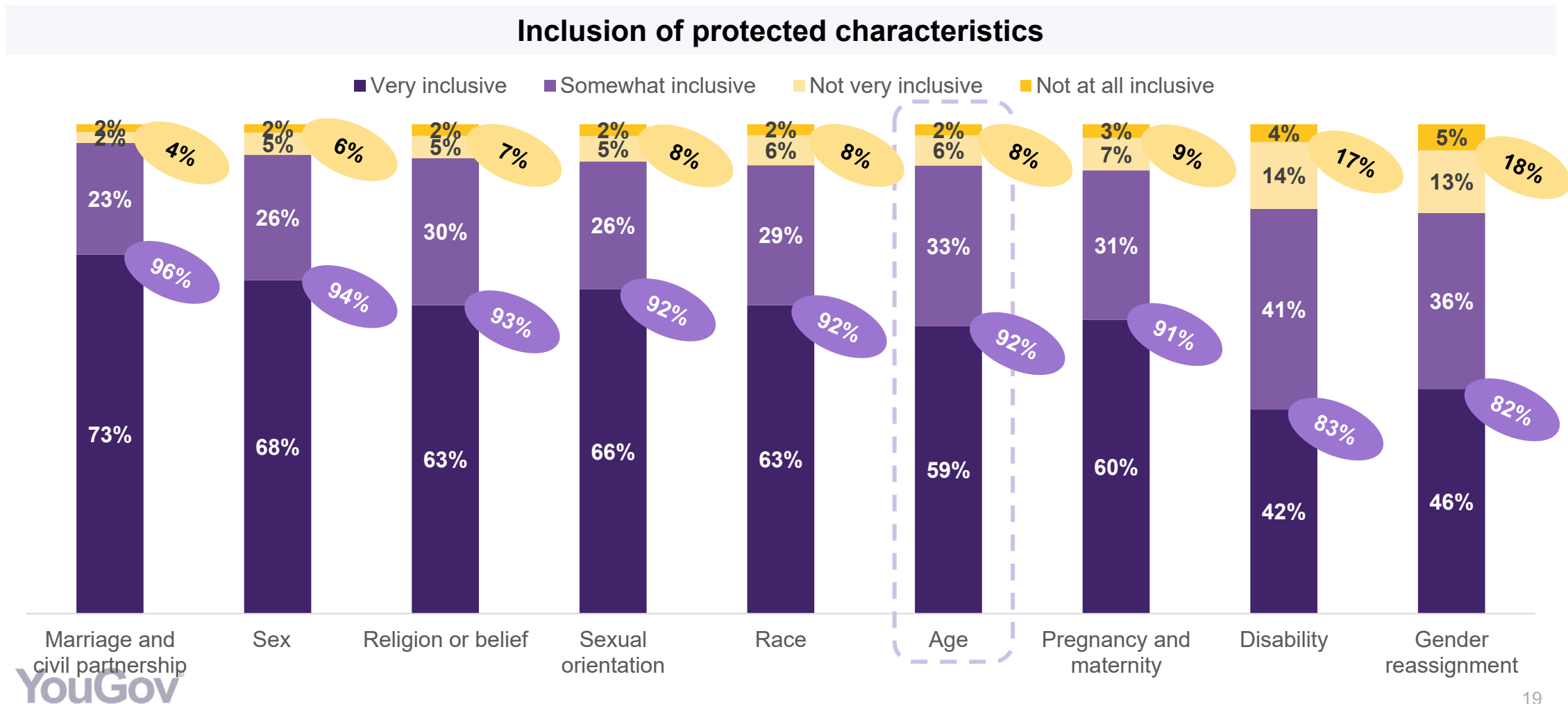
Employers in organisations of 2-249 employees are slightly more likely to report that they are inclusive towards age (94%) than those in organisations of 250+ (89%).

Employers who report that their organisation's product or service offered is of a premium quality are slightly more likely to state they are inclusive (93%) when compared to those with a standard or basic offering (89%).

Those with a high staff turnover are most likely to report they are *not* inclusive (19%) compared to 9% of those with a medium turnover and 5% with a low turnover.

Unlike other protected characteristics (gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, religion, pregnancy and maternity), there is no relationship between union membership and increased inclusion of age.

Employers are more likely to describe their organisation as being inclusive towards age than towards disability and gender reassignment. However, inclusivity towards marriage and civil partnership tops the list

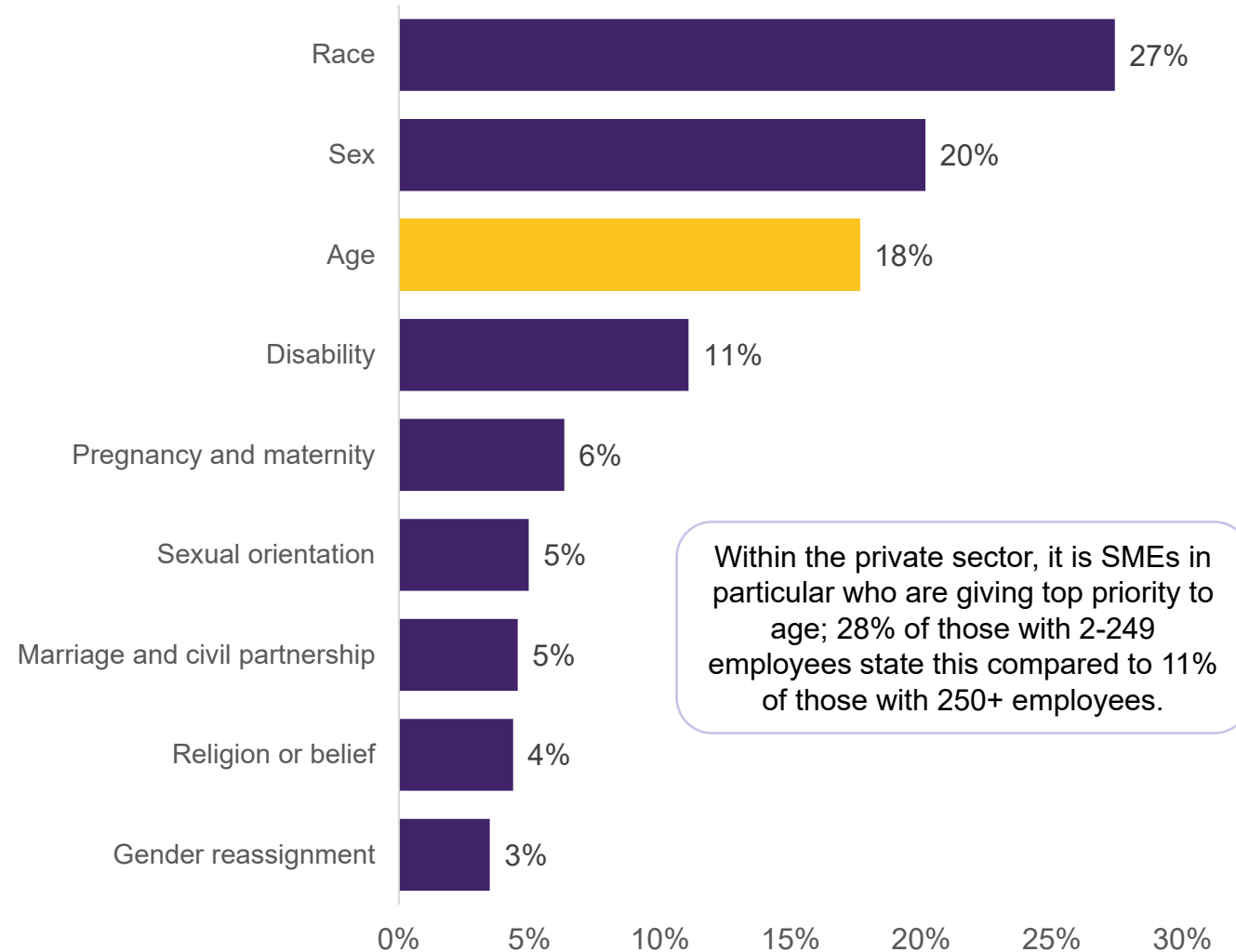


P4. How inclusive, if at all, would you describe your organisation as being towards following protected characteristics?
 Base: All employers (Total n=2,247)

Although less of a priority than race, employers are prioritising age as a protected characteristic for improving inclusivity above most others

Private sector organisations (20%) are twice as likely as public (10%) and voluntary (9%) sector organisations to rank age as their top priority. Notably, this is *not* the case when it comes to most other protected characteristics.

Priority for improving inclusivity (% ranked first)

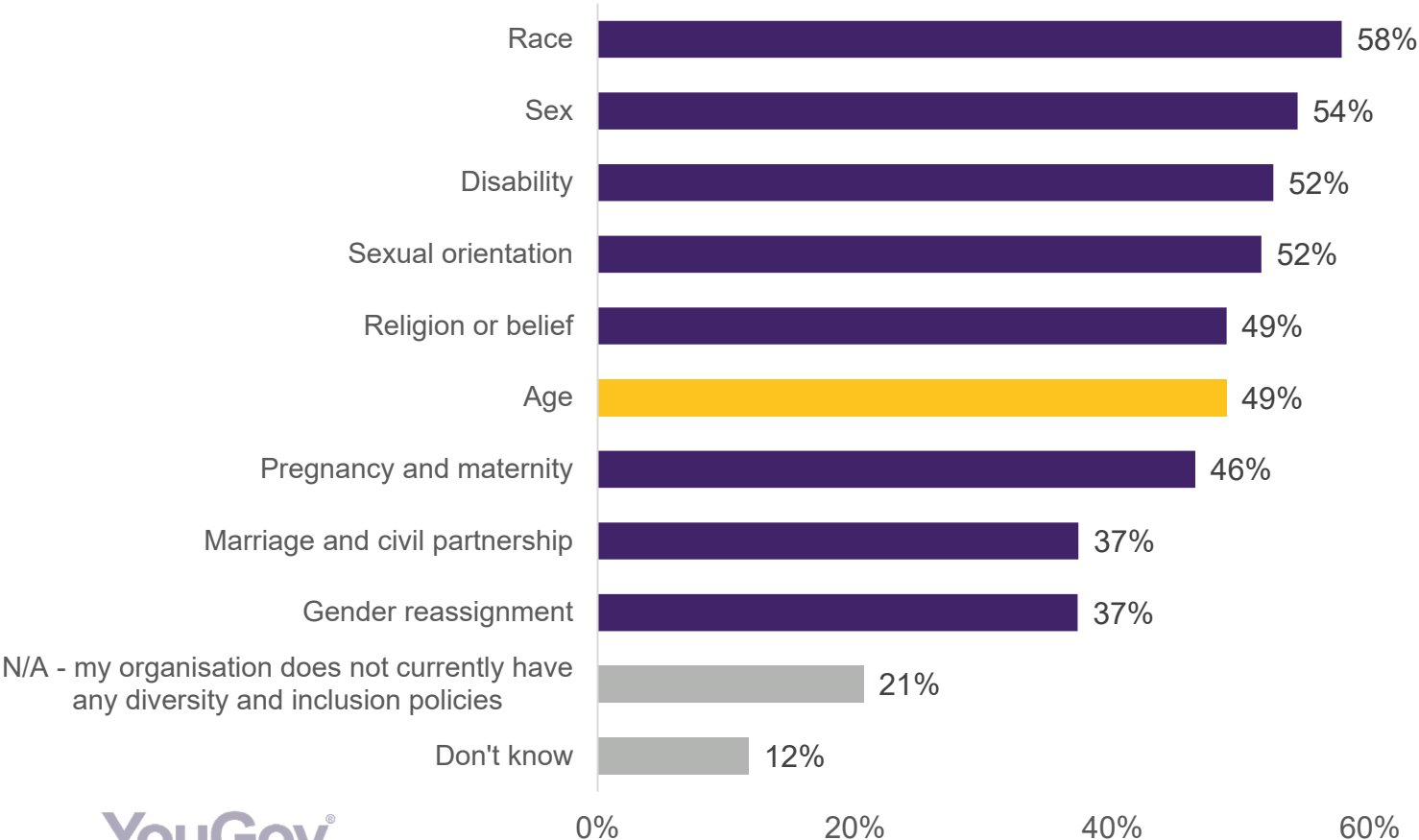


Within the private sector, it is SMEs in particular who are giving top priority to age; 28% of those with 2-249 employees state this compared to 11% of those with 250+ employees.

P5. To the best of your knowledge, please rank the following protected characteristics in order of priority for improving inclusivity within your organisation, where '1' is the highest priority and '9' is the lowest priority..
Base: All employers (Total n=2,247)

Roughly half of employers report that age is currently being covered by a D&I policy, a similar proportion to several other characteristics. Findings indicate that many organisations have combined policies for multiple protected characteristics, although race has the highest coverage

Protected characteristics covered in diversity and inclusion policies



69%

Have a combined policy for multiple protected characteristics

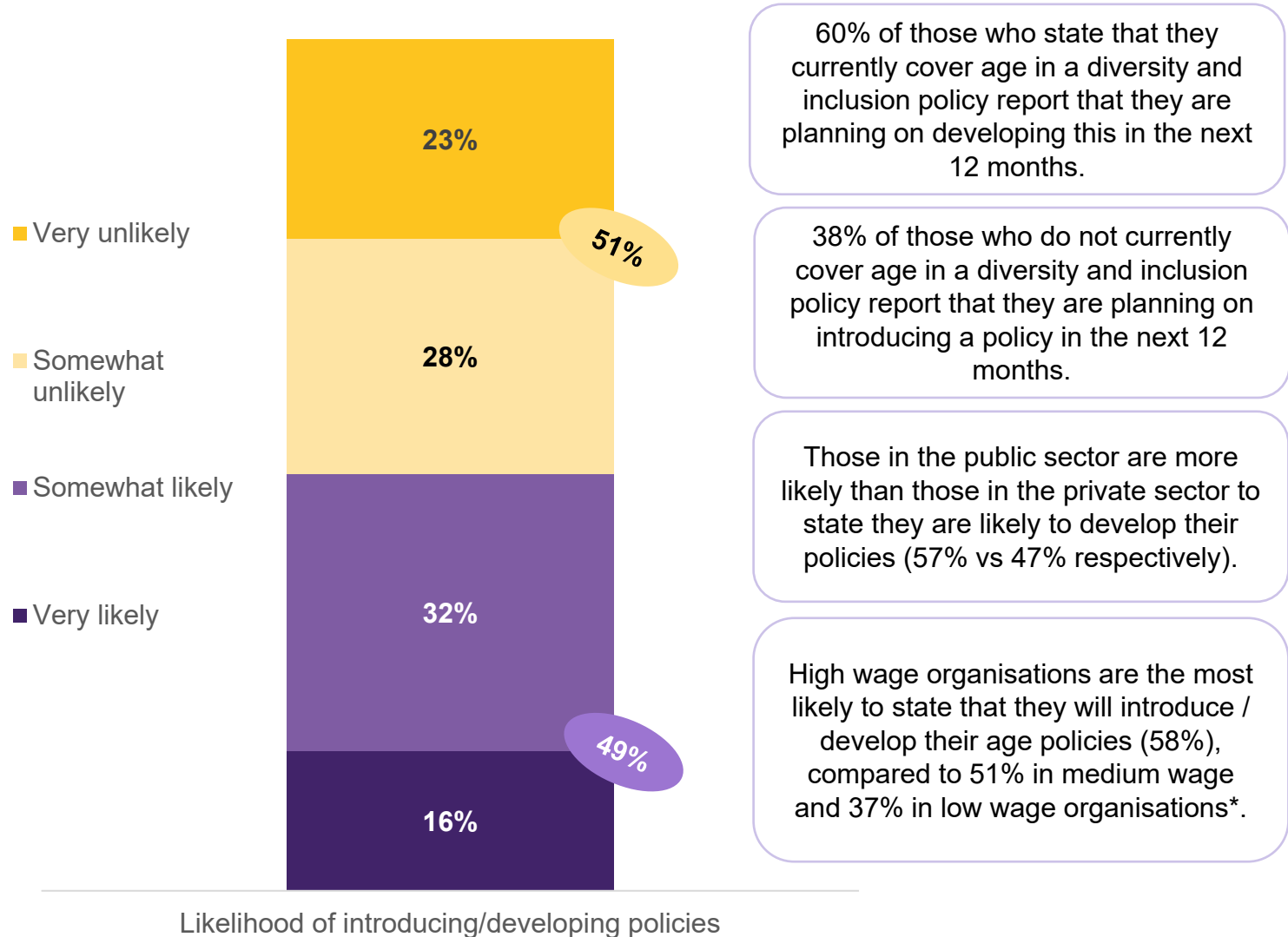
25%

Have individual policies for multiple protected characteristics

Two thirds (64%) of employers in the public and voluntary sectors state that age is covered in their diversity and inclusion policies, compared to just over two fifths (44%) of those in the private sector

There is an even split between the proportion of organisations in England that are likely versus unlikely to introduce or develop policies relating to age in the next 12 months

Likelihood of introducing / developing policies in next 12 months: Age



60% of those who state that they currently cover age in a diversity and inclusion policy report that they are planning on developing this in the next 12 months.

38% of those who do not currently cover age in a diversity and inclusion policy report that they are planning on introducing a policy in the next 12 months.

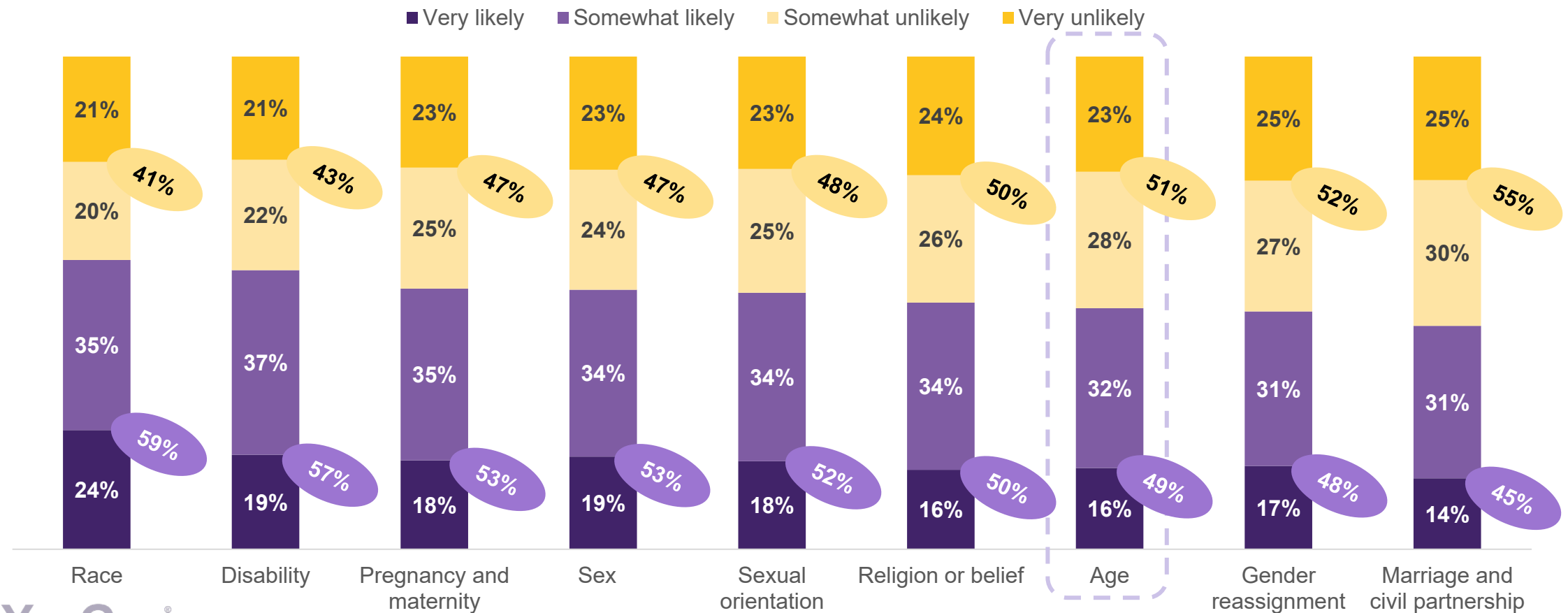
Those in the public sector are more likely than those in the private sector to state they are likely to develop their policies (57% vs 47% respectively).

High wage organisations are the most likely to state that they will introduce / develop their age policies (58%), compared to 51% in medium wage and 37% in low wage organisations*.

17. To the best of your knowledge, in the next 12 months, how likely or unlikely is your organisation to introduce / develop policies which cover the following protected characteristics? These could be individual dedicated policies or elements of a combined policy. Please select all that apply.
 Base: All employers (Total n=2,247)
 *wage level ascertained by self reporting as either 'high', 'medium' or 'low'

Despite age being ranked as one of the top priorities for improving inclusivity, it does not stand out against other protected characteristics when it comes to likelihood of policies being introduced/developed

Likelihood of introducing / developing policies in next 12 months



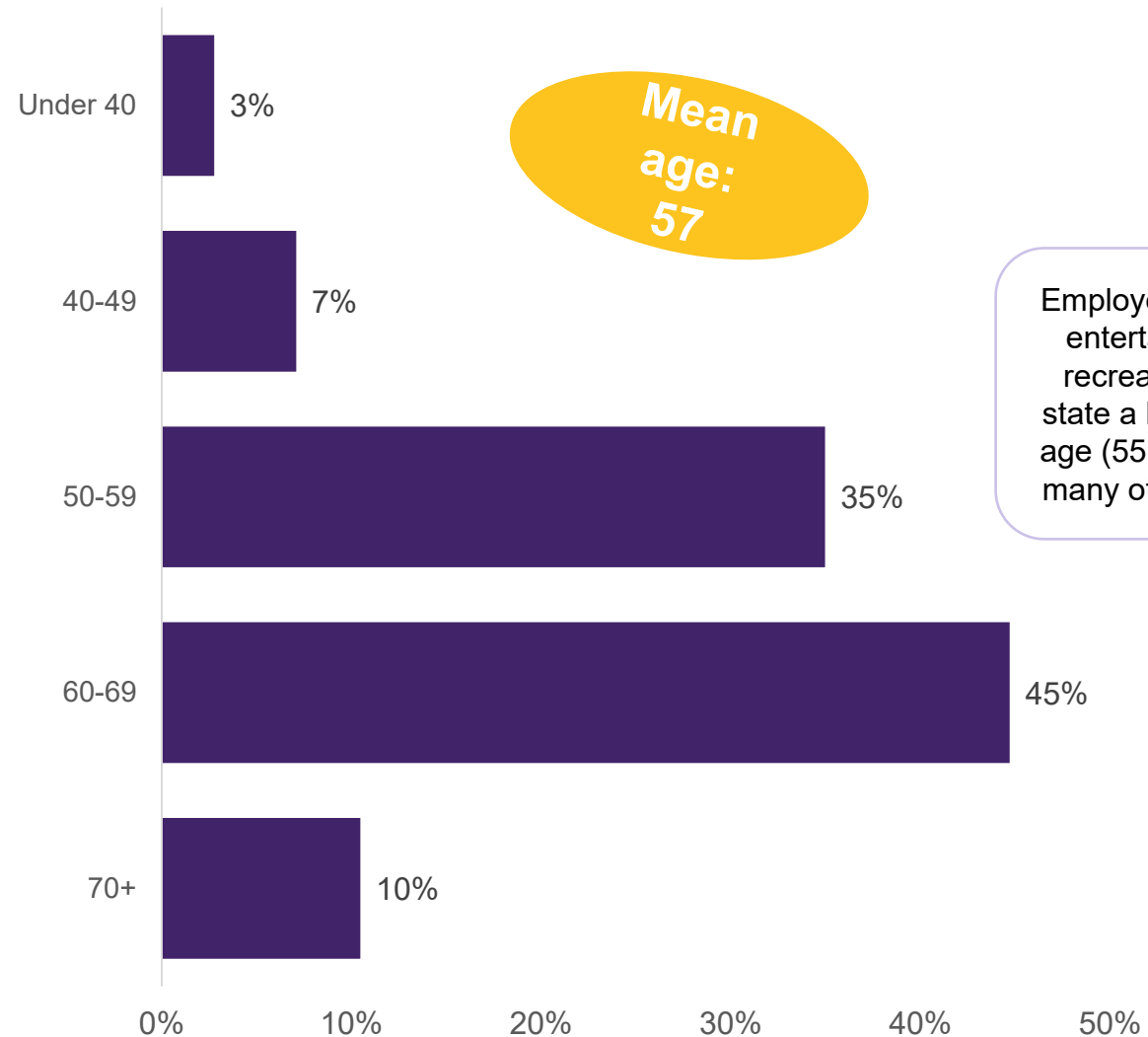
Attitudes towards older workers

On average, employers would categorise someone as an 'older worker' from the age of 57

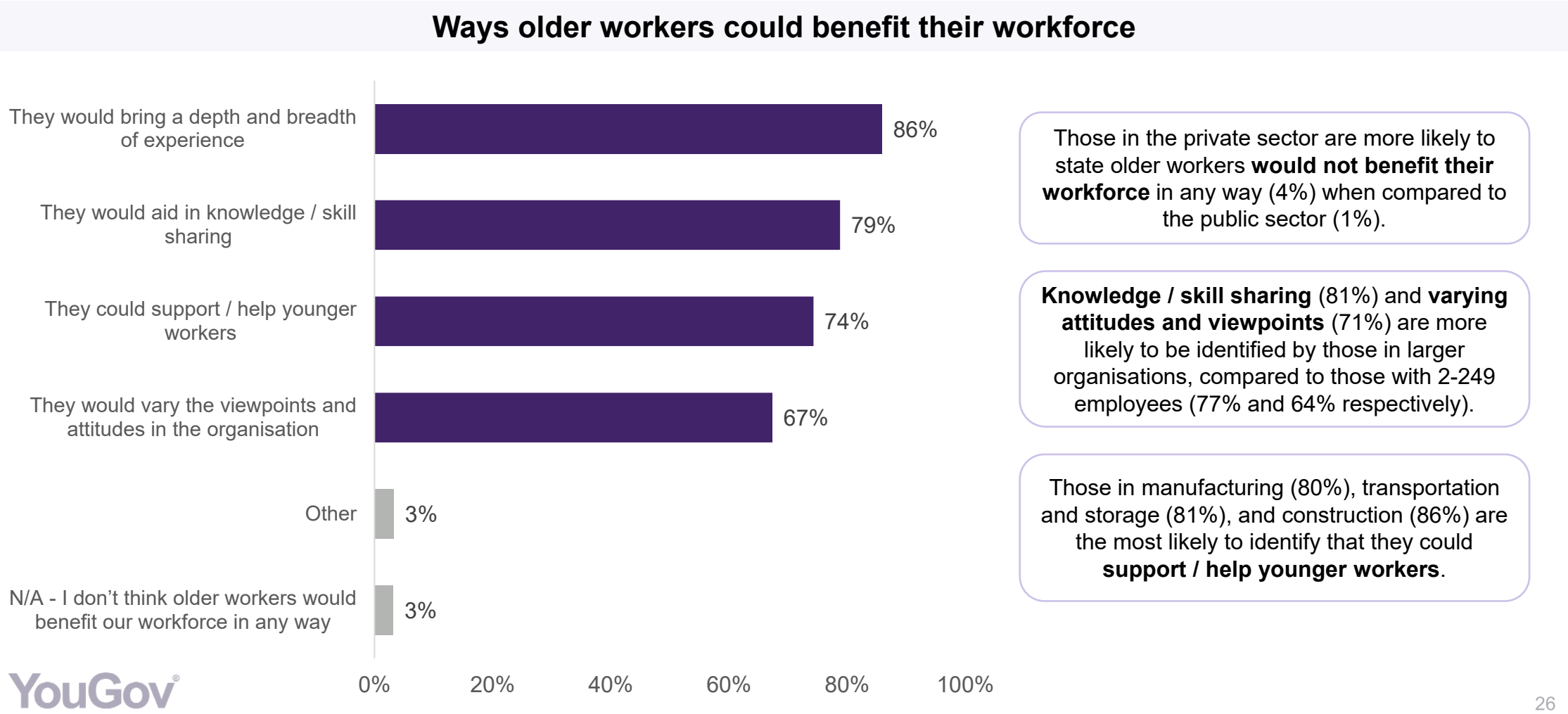
Groups more likely to state an older age:

- Smaller organisations (58) vs larger organisations (56);
- Low wage organisations (59) vs medium (57) and high (56) wage
- Those with a low staff turnover (59) vs medium (56) and high (55)
- Those with no union relationship (58) vs those with (57)

What constitutes an older worker in their organisation



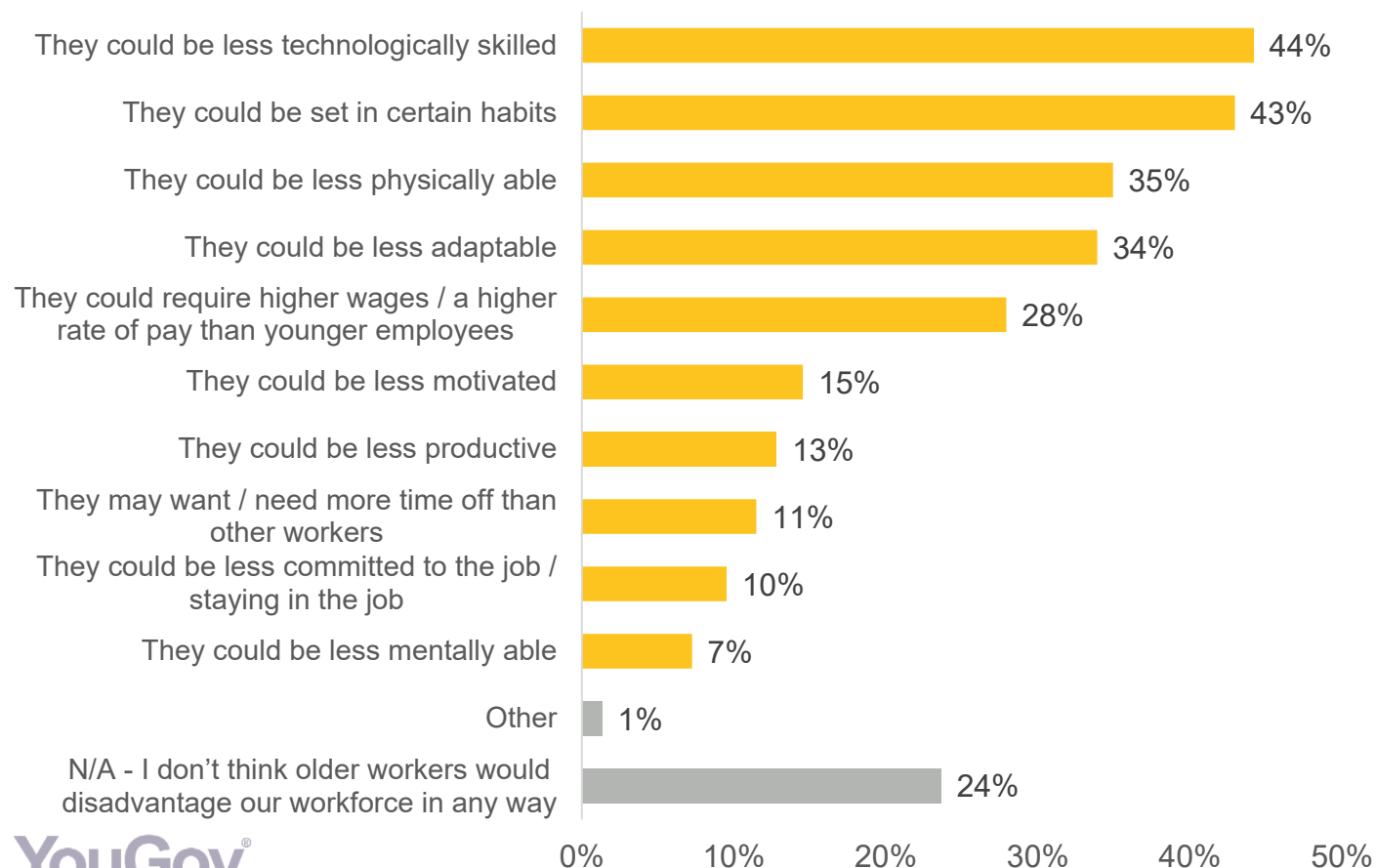
Employers recognise a range of ways in which older workers could benefit their workforce, with their experience topping the list



AW3a. In which, if any, of the following ways do you think older workers could benefit your workforce? Please select all that apply.
 Base: All employers (n=2,247)

The main perceived disadvantages of employing older workers are related to their technological skills and pre-established habits. Interestingly, retention, motivation and the potential need to be off work are not seen as important issues

Ways older workers could disadvantage their workforce



Those in the voluntary sector are least likely to feel that older workers would be **less motivated** (9%) when compared to the private (15%) and public (16%) sectors, or that they could **require higher wages / rate of pay** (22% compared to 28% and 31% respectively).

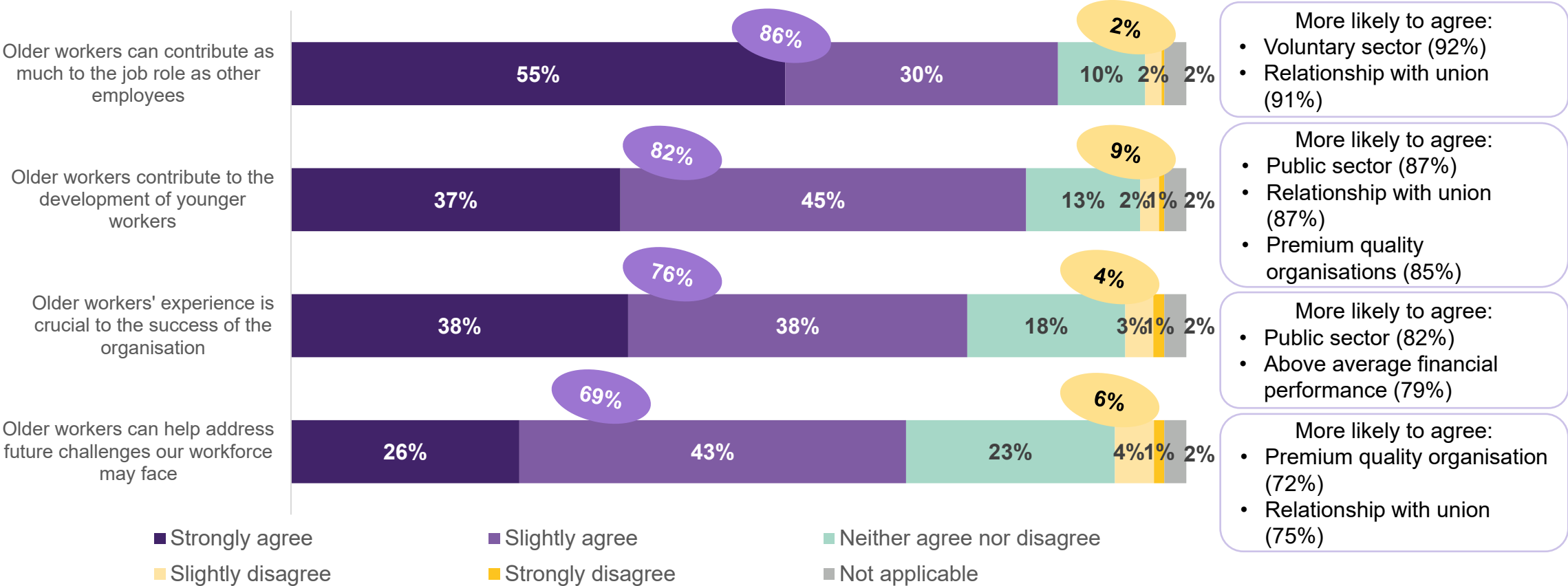
Those in wholesale and retail (47%), manufacturing (46%), construction (45%) and hospitality and recreation (43%) are most likely to state they could be **less physically able**.

Those from low wage organisations are more likely to state they could be **less technologically skilled** (47%) compared to high wage organisations (40%)

Those with high staff turnover are more likely to identify that they **may want more time off** (17%) than those in low turnover organisations (10%)

The vast majority of employers are in agreement that older workers make a strong contribution where they work, although a slightly smaller majority feel they can support with addressing future challenges

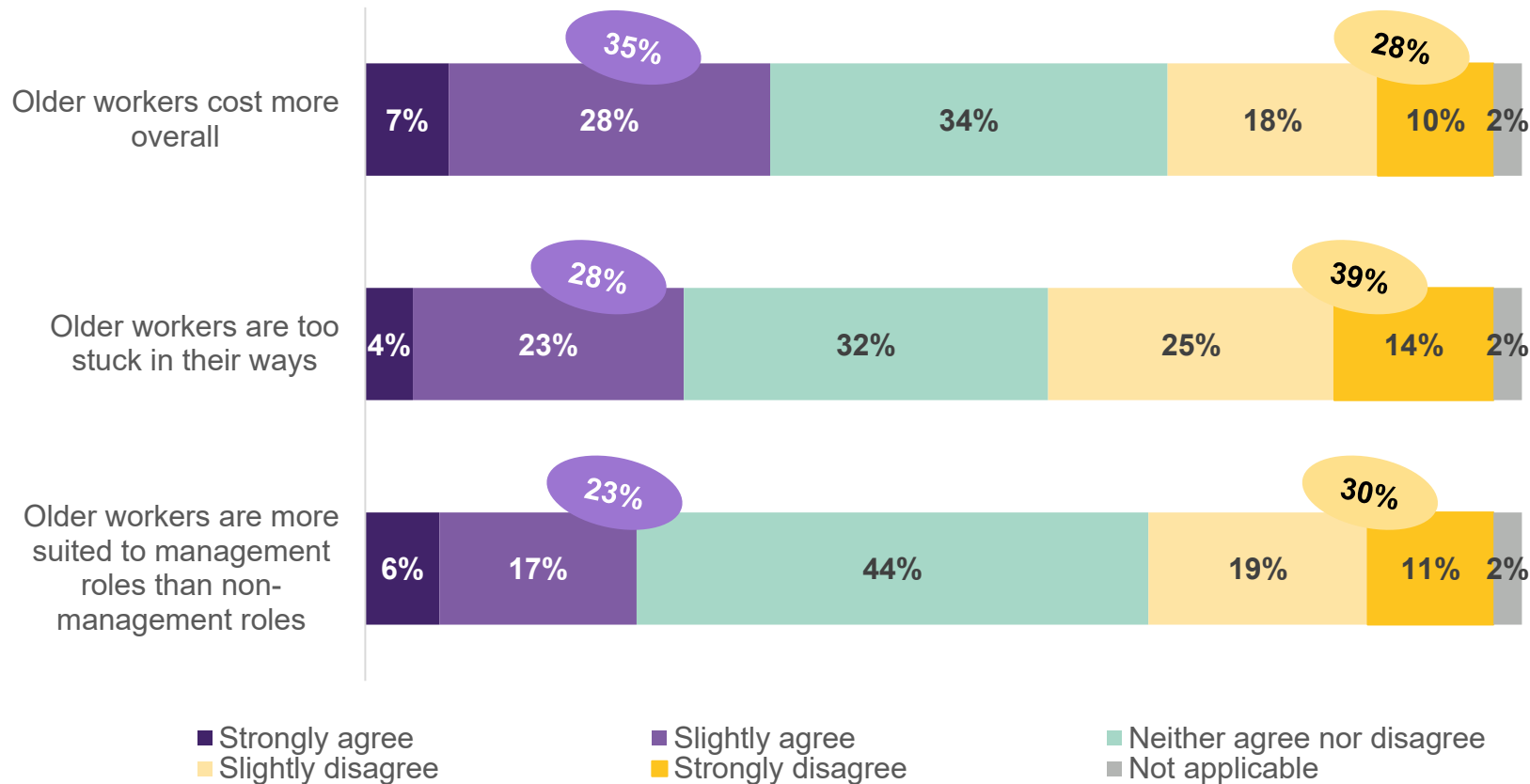
Older worker agreement (1/2)



AW4. Thinking about your organisation, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 Base: All employers (Total n=2,247)

Employers are more likely to *disagree* than to agree that older workers are too stuck in their ways

Older worker agreement (2/2)



- More likely to agree:
- Public sector (46%)
 - High wage organisation (45%)
 - Those with a high /medium turnover (40%)

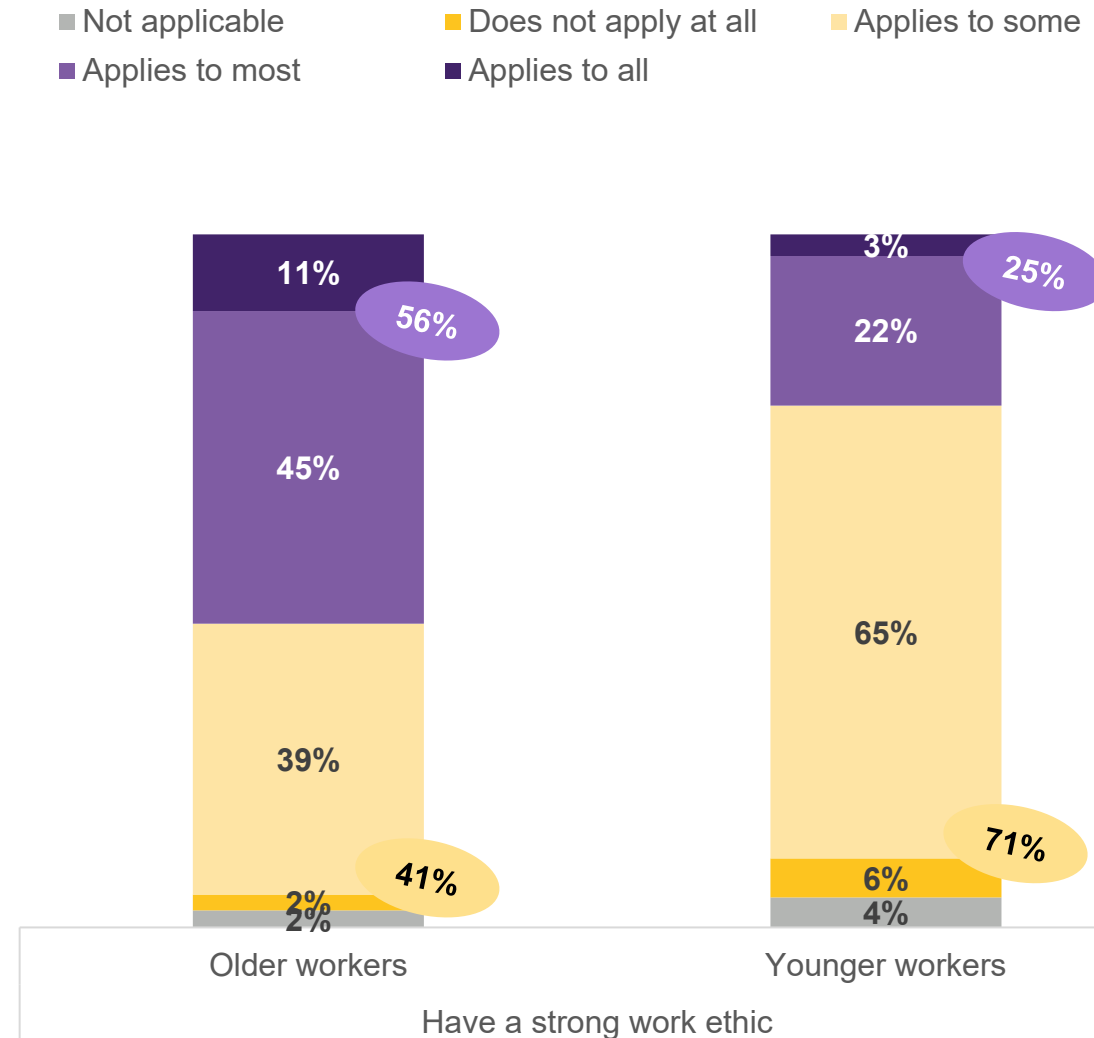
- More likely to agree:
- Primary and utilities* industry (36%)
 - Standard or basic quality organisations (33%)
 - Large organisations (250+) (30%)

- More likely to agree:
- Information and communication industry (38%)
 - High wage organisation (33%)
 - Private sector (26%)
 - Those with above average financial performance (25%)

Employers are more than twice as likely to feel that most older workers in their organisation have a strong work ethic than most younger workers

Employers who currently cover age in a diversity and inclusion policy are more likely to feel that this statement applies to all/most older workers (59%) when compared to those who do not cover age (54%).

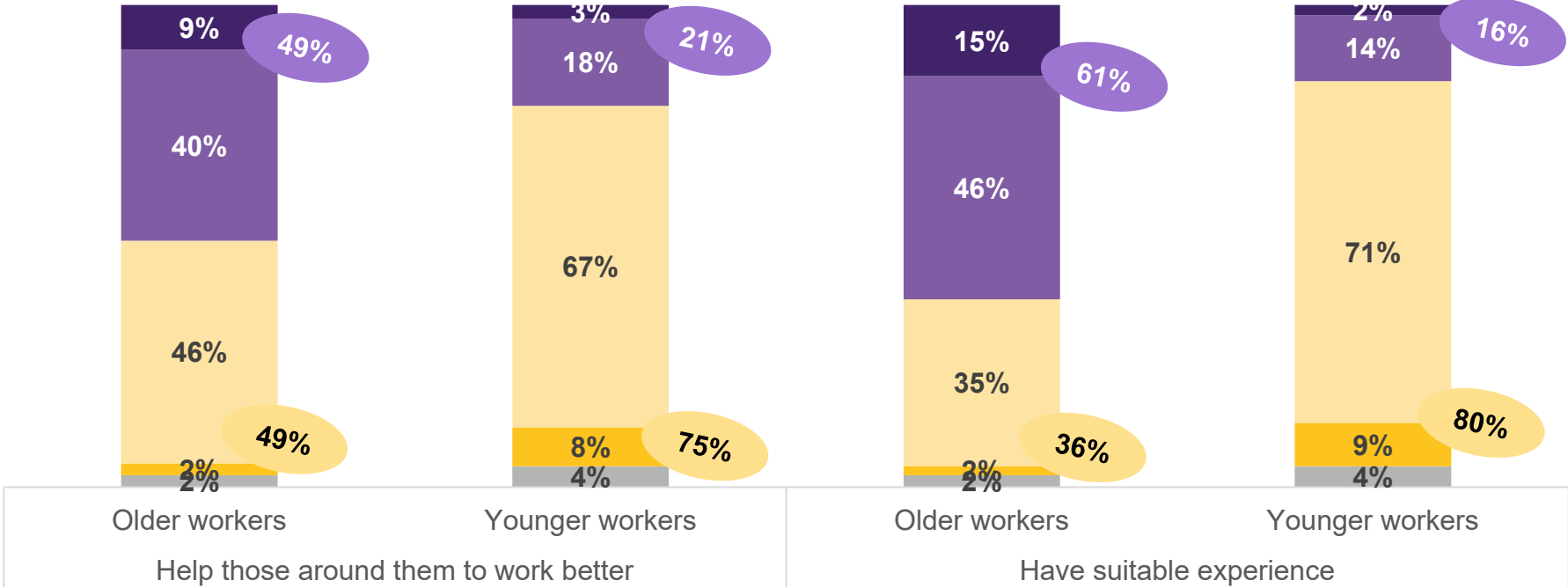
Attributes of older and younger workers (1/4)



In comparison with younger workers, employers are drastically more likely to believe that older workers in their organisation have suitable experience and help those around them to work better

Attributes of older and younger workers (2/4)

■ Not applicable ■ Does not apply at all ■ Applies to some ■ Applies to most ■ Applies to all

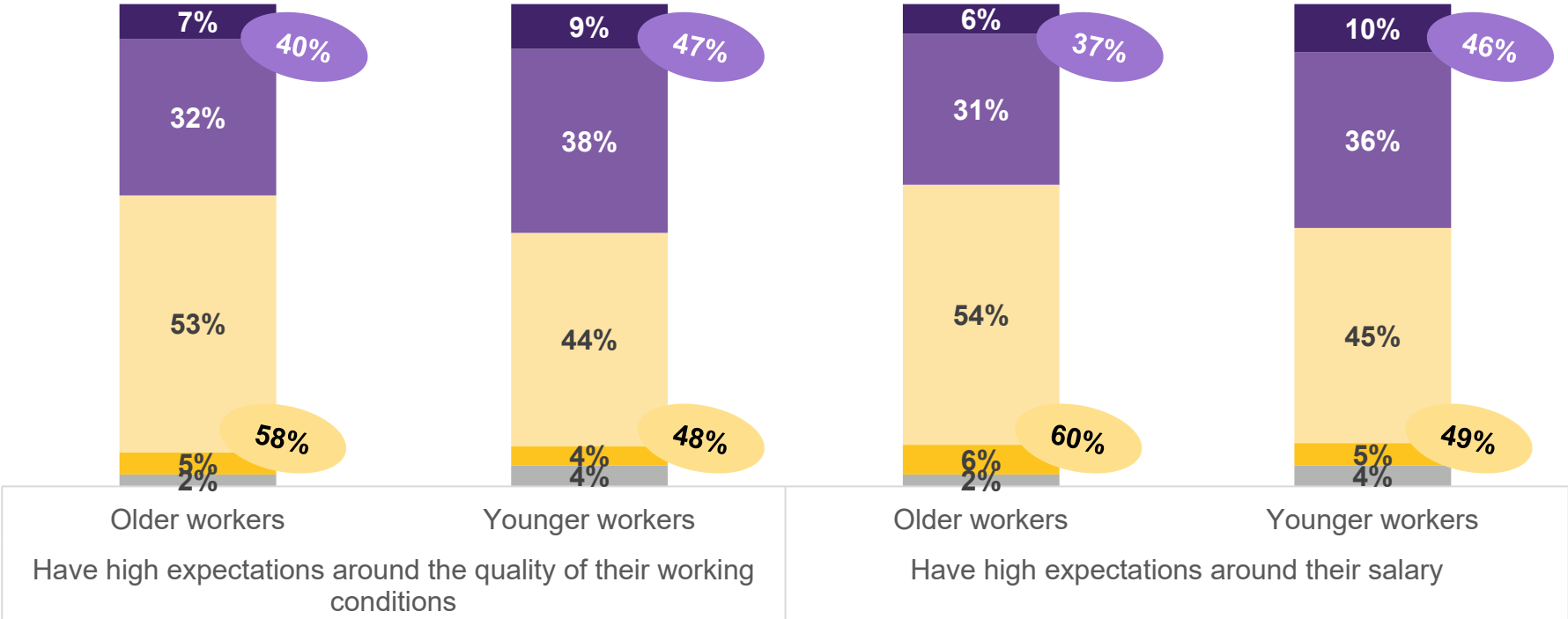


Employers in the retail/motor repair (52%) and support service activities (49%) industries are less likely than those in several others to feel that all or most older workers in their organisation have suitable experience

Employers more often believe that younger workers in their organisation have high expectations for their salary and quality of working conditions than older workers

Attributes of older and younger workers (3/4)

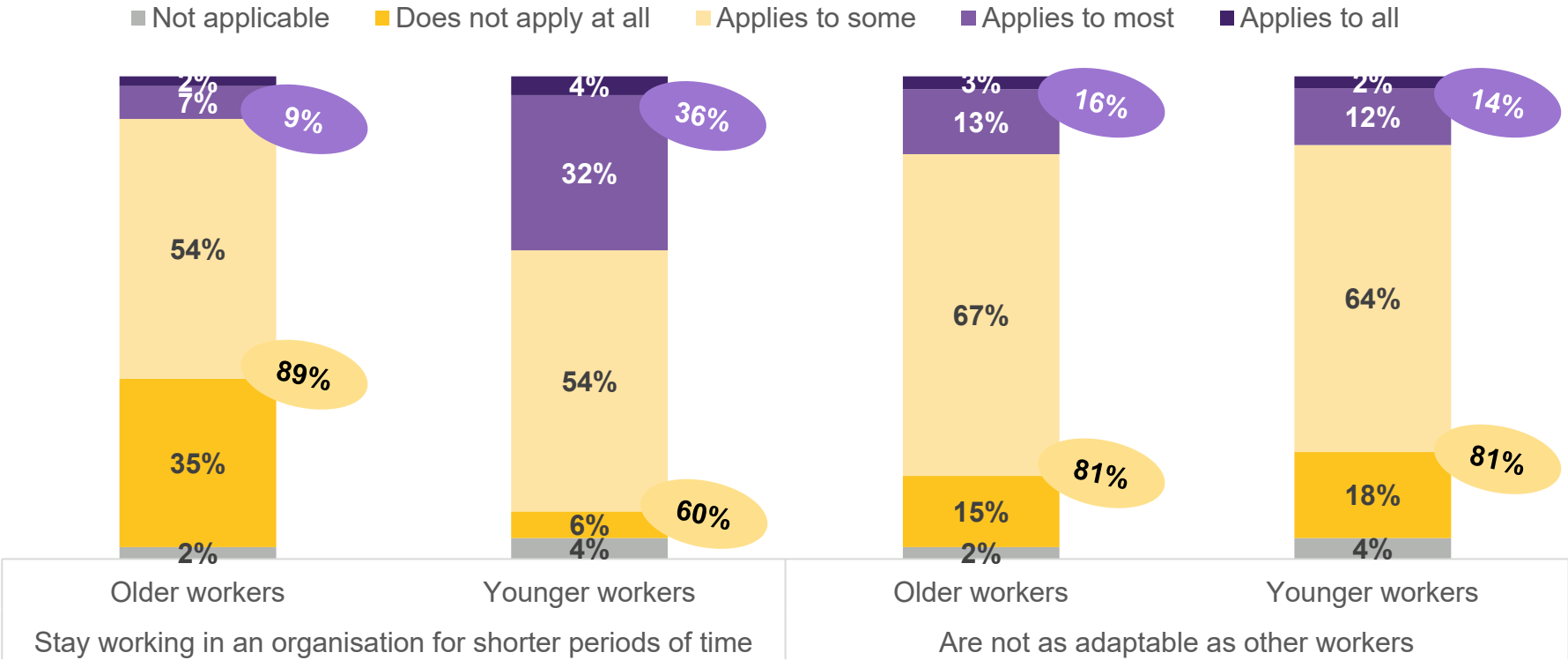
■ Not applicable ■ Does not apply at all ■ Applies to some ■ Applies to most ■ Applies to all



Employers based in London (43%) are more likely than those in most other English regions to believe that all or most older workers in their organisation have high salary expectations

Employers are much more likely to think that younger workers stay in an organisation for shorter periods of time in comparison with older workers

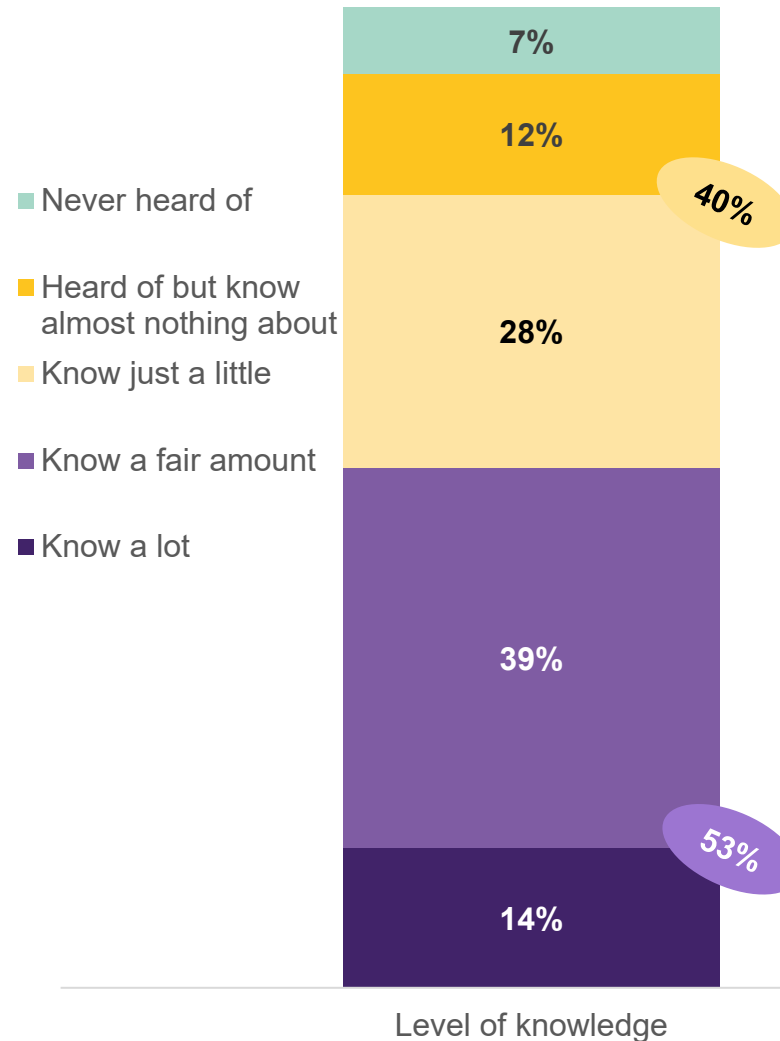
Attributes of older and younger workers (4/4)



Perceptions and behaviours around age inclusivity in the workplace

Roughly one in two employers in England say they know a lot or a fair amount about age inclusivity in the workplace, leaving many who know just a little or nothing at all about it

Self-reported knowledge of age inclusivity in the workplace



Employers in the public (59%) and voluntary (61%) sectors are more likely to say that they have a fair amount or a lot of knowledge than those in the private sector (51%)

Those in the information and communication industry (23%) are more likely than employers in many other industries to say they **know a lot** about age inclusivity in the workplace

High wage employers (20%) are much more likely to say they **know a lot** than medium (14%) and low wage (12%) employers

Employers with low staff turnover (18%) are much more likely to say they **know a lot** about age inclusivity in the workplace than those with medium (12%) or high (11%) turnover

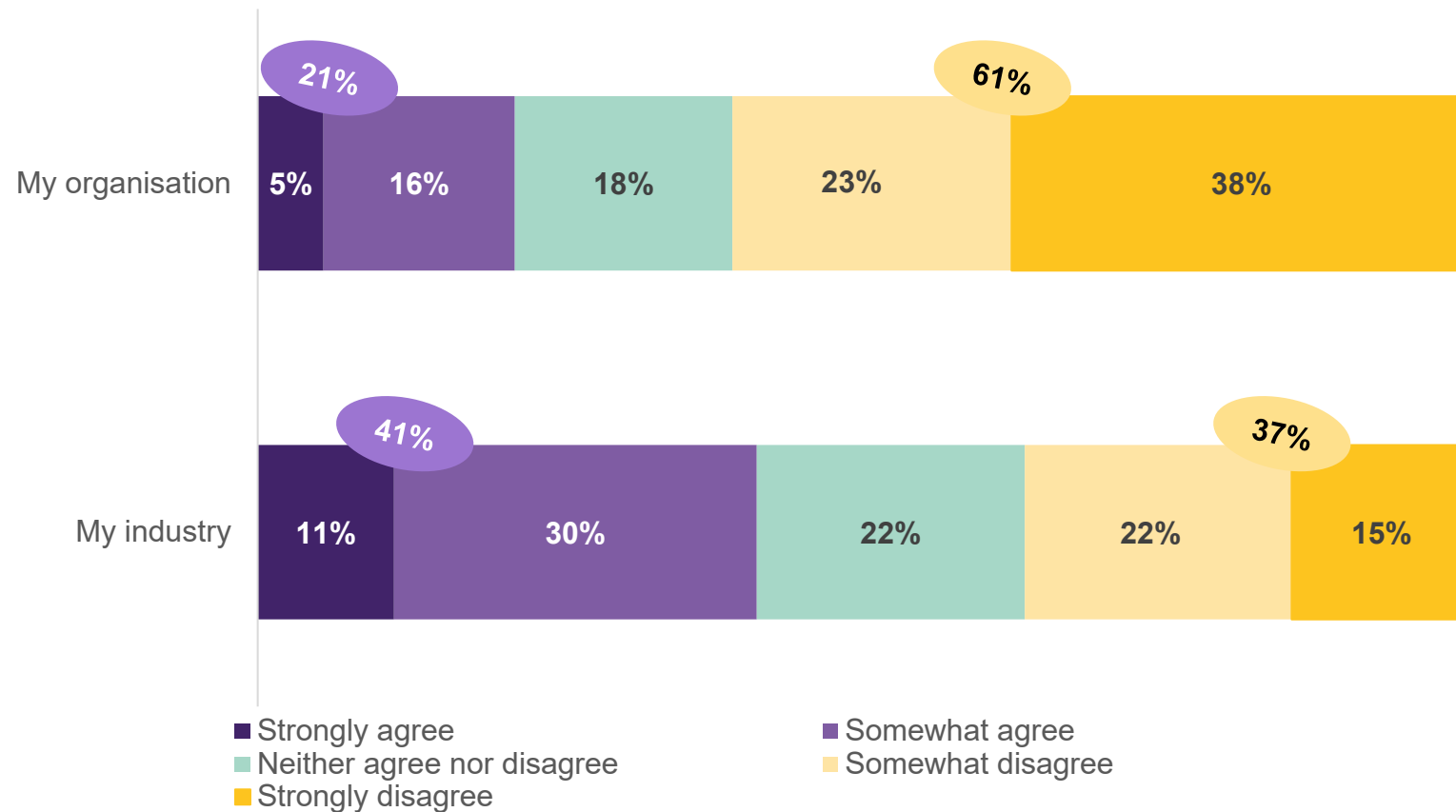
AW1. How much, if anything, would you say you know about age-inclusivity* in the workplace?

Base: All employers (Total n=2,247)

*Age-inclusivity was defined as: An environment in which all employees are treated fairly and respectfully, regardless of age, and have equal access to opportunities and resources

Employers are twice as likely to think that age discrimination occurs in their industry than in their own organisation

Perception of whether age discrimination occurs in...



Large employers with 250+ employees (30%) are more than twice as likely as smaller organisations (13%) to think that age discrimination occurs in their organisation

Those working in financial and insurance activities (32%) are more likely than employers in many other industries to think that age discrimination occurs in their organisation

One in four employers (26%) think that age discrimination is more likely to happen to **older workers than younger workers** in their organisation, while a slightly higher proportion (31%) think it is *less* likely to happen to older workers. However, the balance shifts when thinking about their industry as a whole; 42% think that age discrimination is *more* likely to happen to older workers than younger workers in their industry, compared with 21% who think it is *less* likely to happen to them.

When it comes to perceptions of issues faced by older workers, employers are much more likely to think they happen in the country in general than in their own organisation or industry

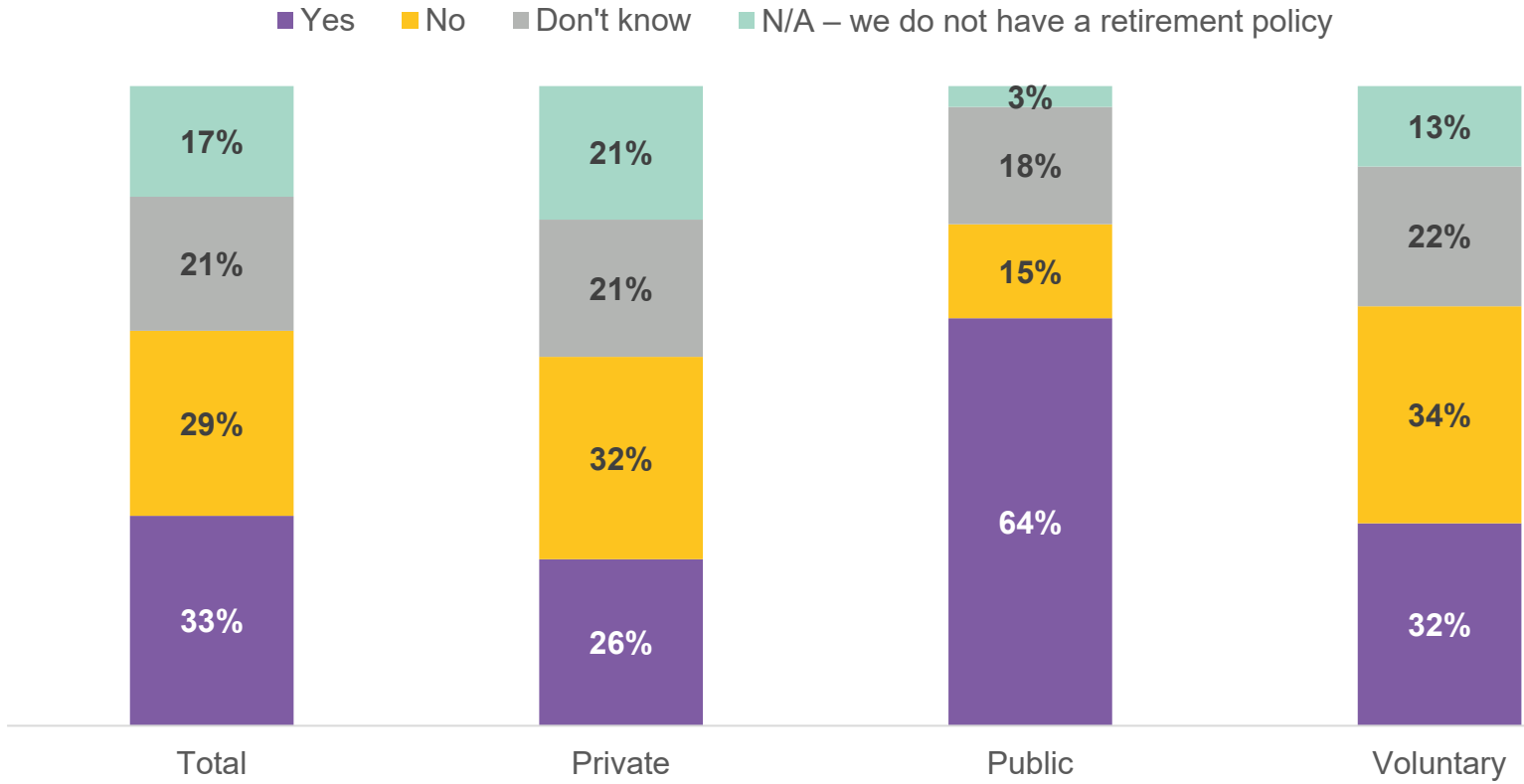
Perceptions of key issues faced by older workers



AW8. Which, if any, of the following do you think are key issues faced by older workers...
Base: All employers (Total n=2,247)

A third of employers in England report that their organisation offers support to employees on their retirement policy – a figure which doubles within the public sector

Whether organisation offers guidance/support about their retirement policy



Average employee age when retirement guidance is offered: **57 years**

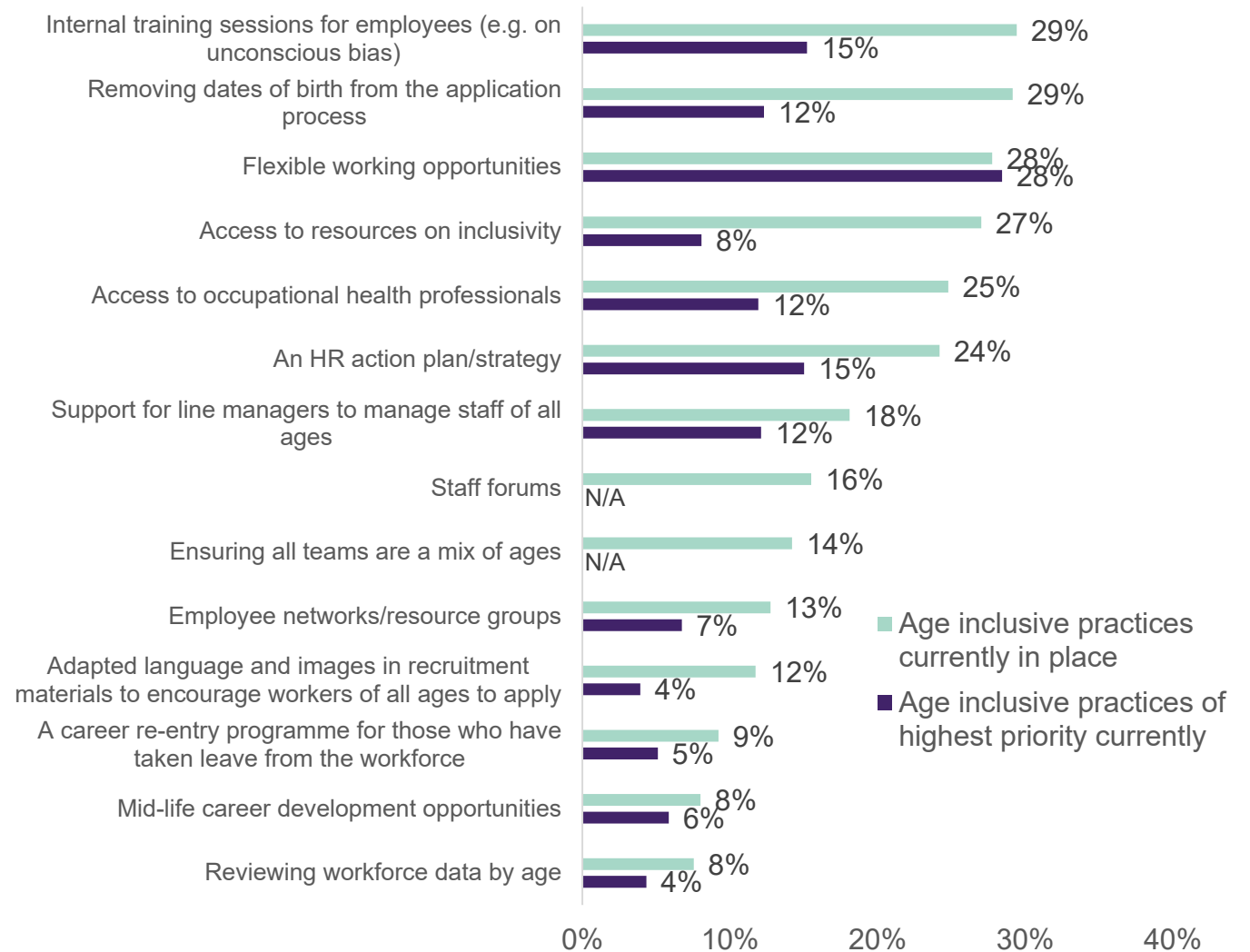
Large organisations with 250+ employees (45%) are more than twice as likely as small/medium organisations (20%) to offer guidance and support around their retirement policy. This remains the case when looking specifically at large versus small/medium organisations within the private sector (37% vs. 17%).

Employers in the entertainment and hospitality industry (16%) are among those least likely to offer retirement guidance, and also among those *most* likely to not have a retirement policy at all

While a variety of age inclusive practices are currently in use, the clear top priority is flexible working

Employers in the public (80%) and voluntary (77%) sectors are much more likely to have at least one of these practices in place than those in the private sector (56%). Further, there are no initiatives on the list that private sector employers are more likely to prioritise than their public sector counterparts.

Age inclusive practices currently in place / of highest priority

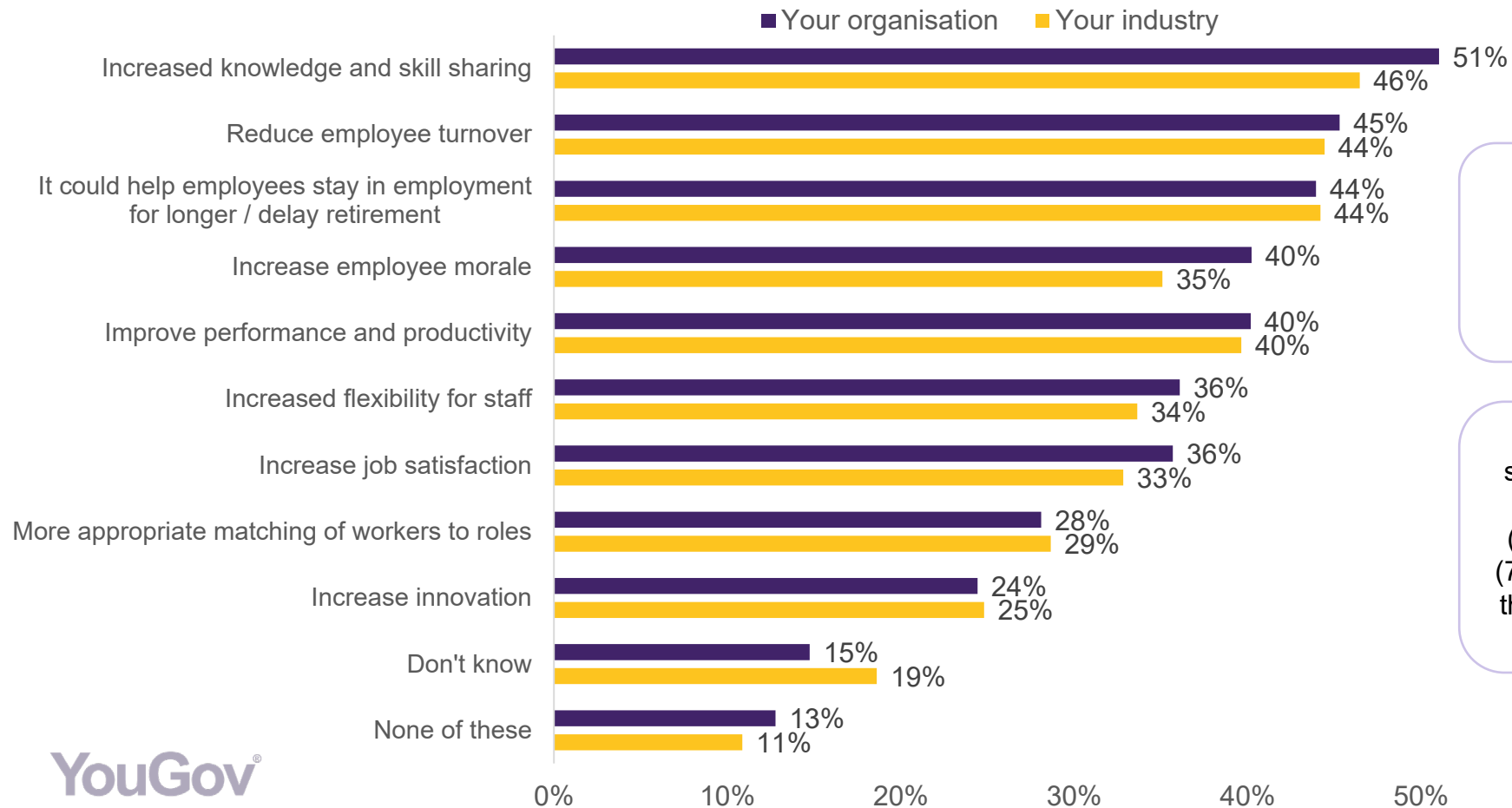


AI1. Which, if any, of the following practices / initiatives around age-inclusivity are currently in place in your organisation? Please select all that apply.
 AI3a. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following age inclusive practices / initiatives, if any, are of highest priority for your organisation currently? Please select up to three.
 Base: All employers (Total n=2,247)

Age friendly employment: motivators and barriers

The top perceived benefit of age inclusivity when thinking about both their organisation and the wider industry is increased knowledge and skill sharing. Innovation is less often seen to be a benefit

Perceived benefits of age inclusivity for their organisation / industry

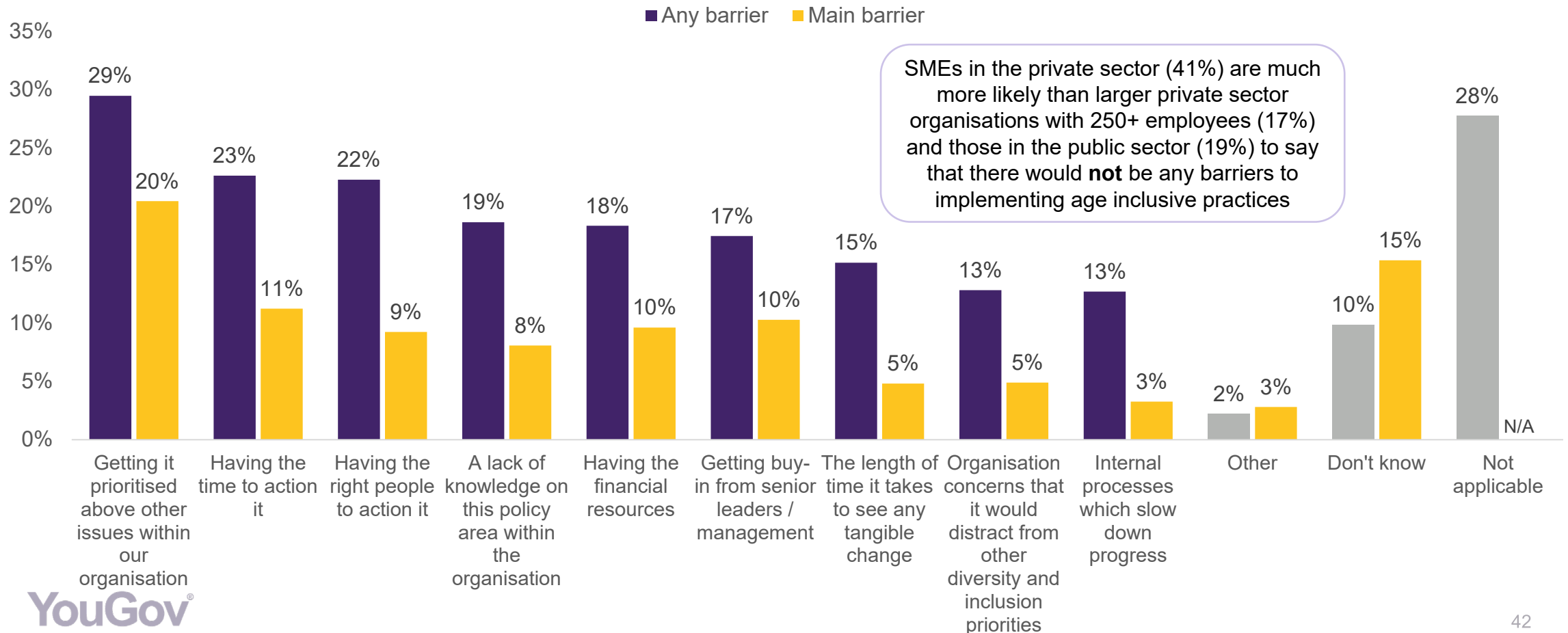


Employers are more likely to state **'increased employee morale'** and **'increased knowledge and skill sharing'** when thinking about their organisation than their industry

Those in the public and voluntary sector are more likely to identify any benefit for both their organisation (82%; 79% respectively) or industry (77%; 76% respectively) compared to the private sector (70% organisation; 69% industry)

The most commonly perceived barrier to implementing age inclusive practices in their organisation is getting it prioritised above other issues, although this is much less of a concern for SMEs in the private sector

Barriers to implementing age inclusive practices in organisation



Public sector employers are more likely than those in the private or voluntary sectors to identify the length of time it takes to see any tangible change as the main barrier

Main barrier to implementing age inclusive practices in organisation – compared to average

Size

- Large organisations are more likely to identify: **getting it prioritised** (24%), **organisation concerns that it would distract from other D&I priorities** (6%) and **the length of time it takes to see tangible change** (6%)
- Smaller organisations are more likely to identify: **having the time to action it** (15%), **having the financial resources** (12%), and **having the right people to action it** (11%)

Turnover and Performance

- Those with high staff turnover are more likely to identify **getting buy in from senior leaders / management** (18%)
- Those with low staff turnover are more likely to identify **having the time to action it** (14%)
- Those with above average performance are more likely to identify **getting it prioritised** (23%) and **getting buy in from senior leaders / management** (12%)
- Those with below average performance are more likely to identify **having the financial resources** (19%)

Industry

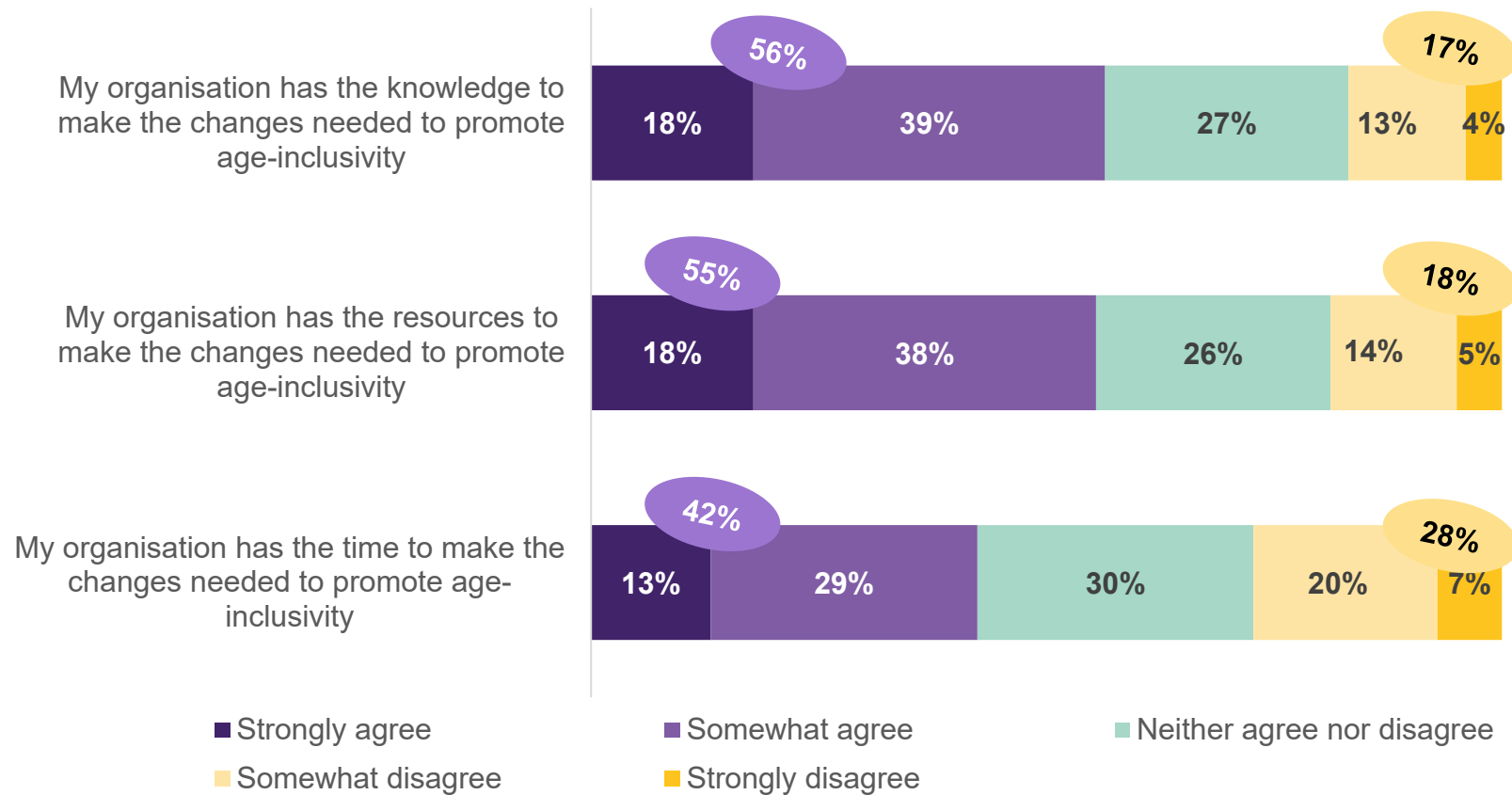
- Those in IT (20%) and wholesale and retail (15%) are more likely to identify **having the time to action it**
- Those in manufacturing are more likely to identify **having the right people to action it** (15%)
- Those in hospitality are more likely to identify **a lack of knowledge on the area** (13%)
- Those in professional activities are more likely to identify **concerns that it would distract from other D&I priorities** (9%)

Sector

- Public sector employers are more likely to identify the **length of time it takes to see any tangible change** (9%) or **having the financial resources** to do it (13%)
- Voluntary sector employers are more likely to identify **getting it prioritised** (28%)
- Private sector employers are not more likely to identify any barrier, but are less likely to identify **length of time it takes to see any tangible change** (4%)

A lack of time appears to be a bigger barrier to making the changes needed to promote age inclusivity than a lack of knowledge or resources

Age inclusivity and the organisation (1/2)



Large organisations are significantly more likely to agree with all statements than smaller organisations:

- Knowledge: 65% vs 48%
- Resources: 68% vs 43%
- Time: 51% vs 34%

Those with high staff turnover are more likely to disagree that they have the knowledge and time (both 25%).

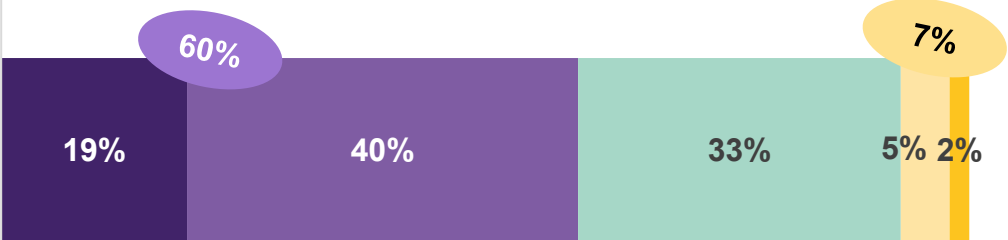
Those with below average financial performance are more likely to disagree with all statements:

- Knowledge: 31%
- Resources: 40%
- Time: 44%

The dominant opinion among employers is that introducing age inclusive practices could have a positive effect on other D&I priorities in their organisation

Age inclusivity and the organisation (2/2)

Introducing age inclusive practices could have a positive effect on other diversity and inclusion priorities in my organisation



Three quarters (73%) of those who said increasing diversity and inclusion in their workforce was a priority agree that age inclusive practices could have a positive effect. Comparatively, 15% of this audience agree that it could have a negative effect.

Introducing age inclusive practices could have a negative effect on other diversity and inclusion priorities in my organisation



One third (36%) of those who do not currently cover any protected characteristics in a diversity and inclusion policy agree that introducing age inclusive practices could have a positive effect.

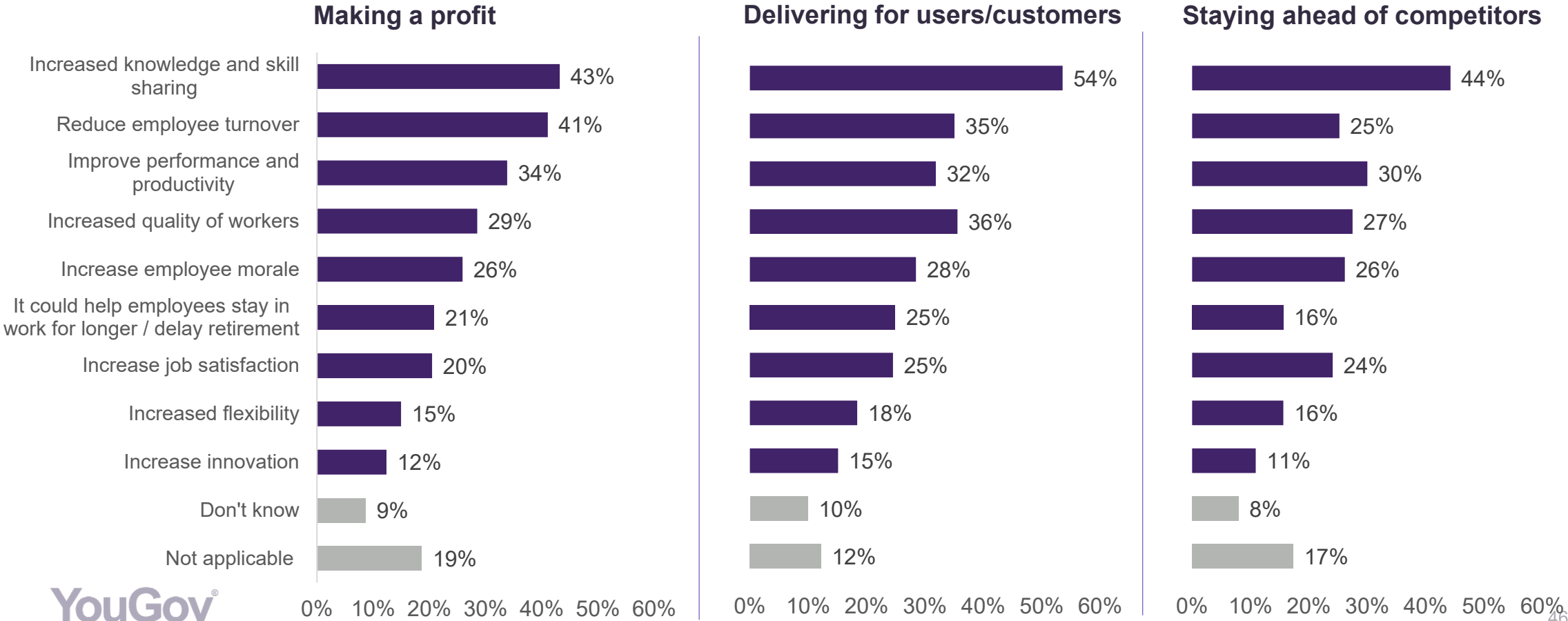
- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree



AI5a. To the best of your knowledge, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?
Base: All employers (Total n=2,247)

Increased knowledge and skill sharing is perceived to be the top potential outcome of employing older workers that would support organisations in achieving their objectives to deliver for users/customers and stay ahead of competitors

How employing older workers could support their organisation in achieving its top priority (1/3)



A19. You indicated that the top priority for your organisation is X. Do you feel that any of the following potential outcomes for employing older workers would support you in achieving this priority?.

Base: All employers (making a profit n=648; delivering for users/customers n=863; staying ahead of competitors n=74)

For employers whose organisation's top priority is the wellbeing of its staff, older workers increasing morale and job satisfaction are equally important potential outcomes that could help them meet their objective

How employing older workers could support their organisation in achieving its top priority (2/3)

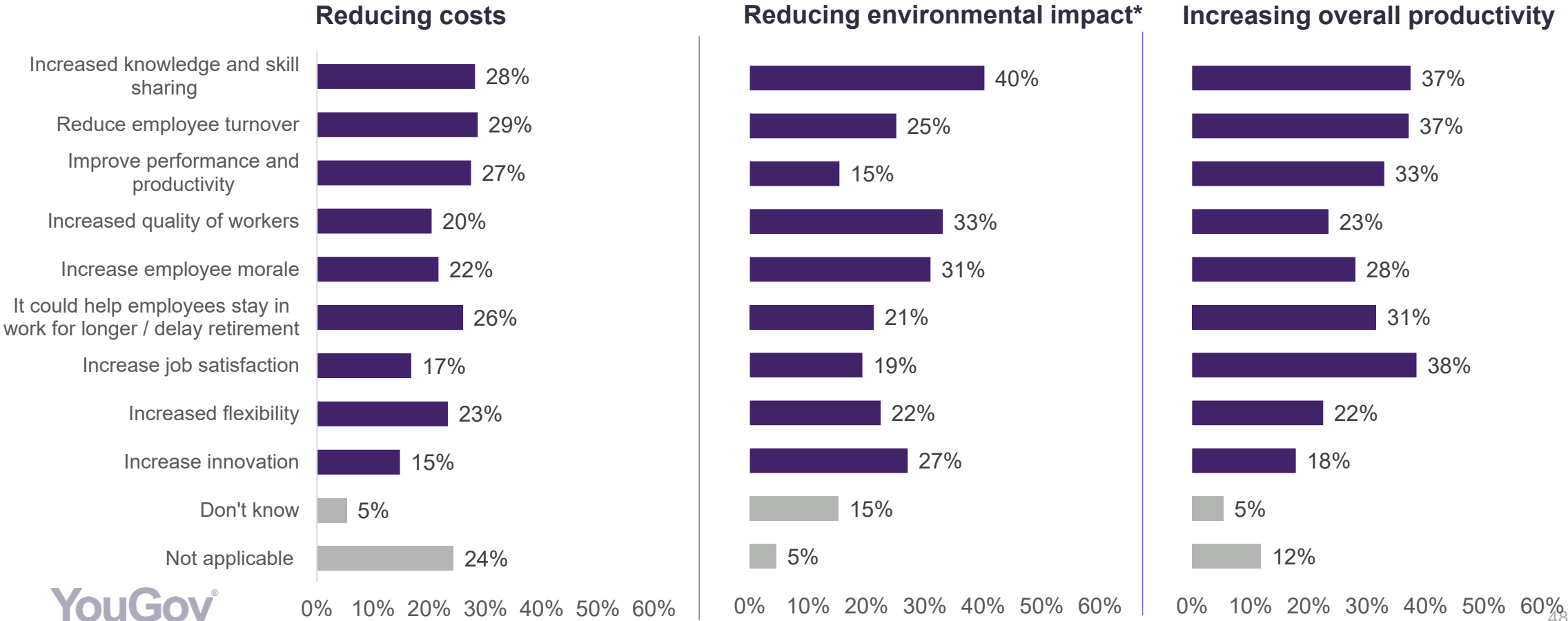


A19. You indicated that the top priority for your organisation is X. Do you feel that any of the following potential outcomes for employing older workers would support you in achieving this priority?.

Base: All employers (the wellbeing of our staff n=180; our organisational reputation/ brand n=179; being an inclusive organisation n=92)

Among employers whose organisation's top priority is increasing overall productivity, the possibility of older workers boosting job satisfaction is just as important as their knowledge and skill sharing

How employing older workers could support their organisation in achieving its top priority (3/3)



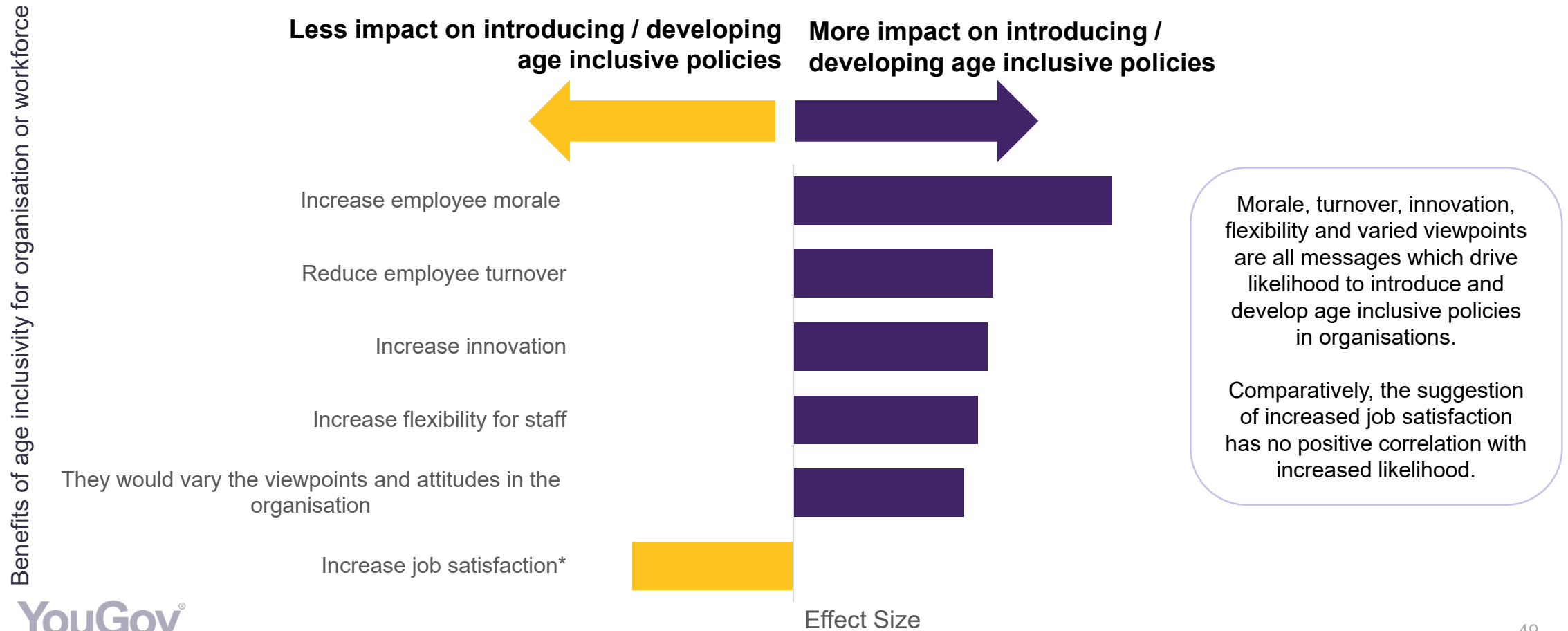
A19. You indicated that the top priority for your organisation is X. Do you feel that any of the following potential outcomes for employing older workers would support you in achieving this priority?.

Base: All employers (reducing costs n=70; reducing environmental impact n=33; increasing overall productivity n=78)

*low base size – indicative only

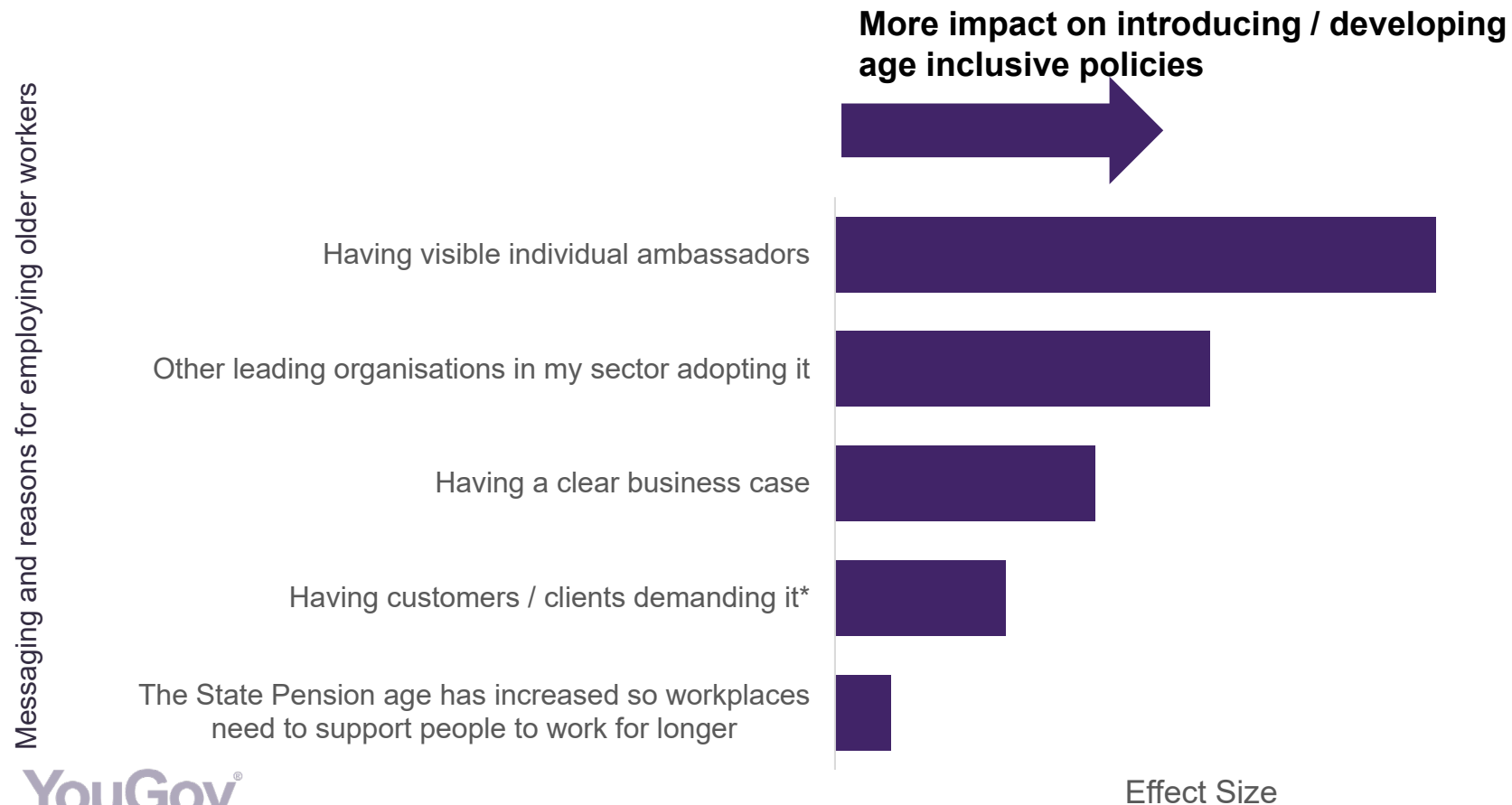
When looking at the benefits of employing older workers, the key drivers influencing likelihood to develop policies for age inclusive practices tend to revolve around tangible impact for the organisation

Key Driver Analysis: Benefits



Having visible individual ambassadors would be a key driving factor for employers to introduce/develop age inclusive policies

Key Driver Analysis: Messaging and reasons for uptake



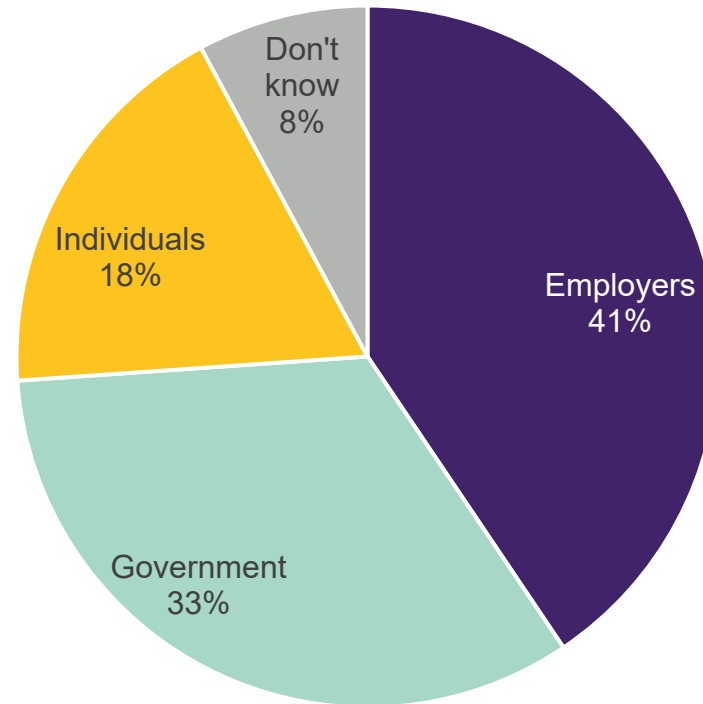
Key drivers of developing age inclusive policies could include seeing other organisations in the same sector adopting it, having visible individual ambassadors and having a clear business case outlined.

Messaging that the 'state pension age has increased so workplaces need to support people for longer' was the only message that drove likelihood out of all those tested, including: 'Age discrimination is illegal under the Equality Act', 'The average age of the workforce and population is getting older' and 'Older workers bring experience to a workplace'.

Messaging for change

Employers most commonly believed that they should have primary responsibility for ensuring it is possible to work for longer, although a significant proportion also place principal ownership on the government

Who should have the most responsibility for ensuring it is possible to work longer

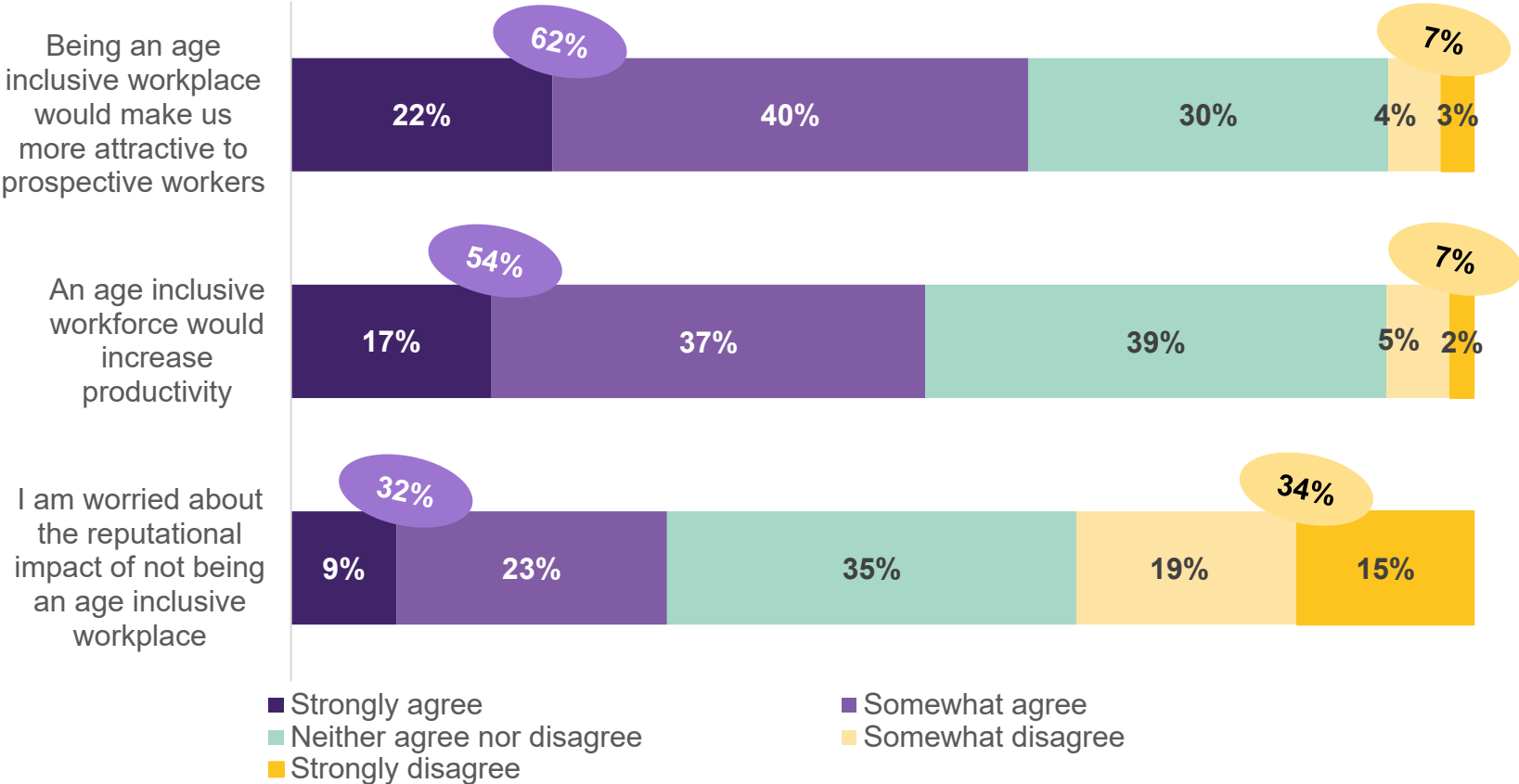


Although those in all three sectors are just as likely to place the responsibility on employers (41% private; 40% public; 41% voluntary), within the public and voluntary sectors there are equivalent proportions who think the responsibility should sit with the government (41% public; 39% voluntary). Meanwhile, a lower proportion of private sector employers think primary ownership lies with the government (31%) and instead a higher proportion think it rests with individuals (20% compared with 12% in the public sector and 14% in the voluntary sector).

AI10a. As a society we will have longer working lives. Which, if any, of the following groups do you think have the most responsibility for ensuring it is possible to work for longer? (Please select the option which best applies).
Base: All employers (Total n=2,247)

An organisation's reputation could be an important motivator; one in three employers would be worried about the reputational impact of not being seen as an age inclusive workplace

Perceptions related to being an age inclusive employer



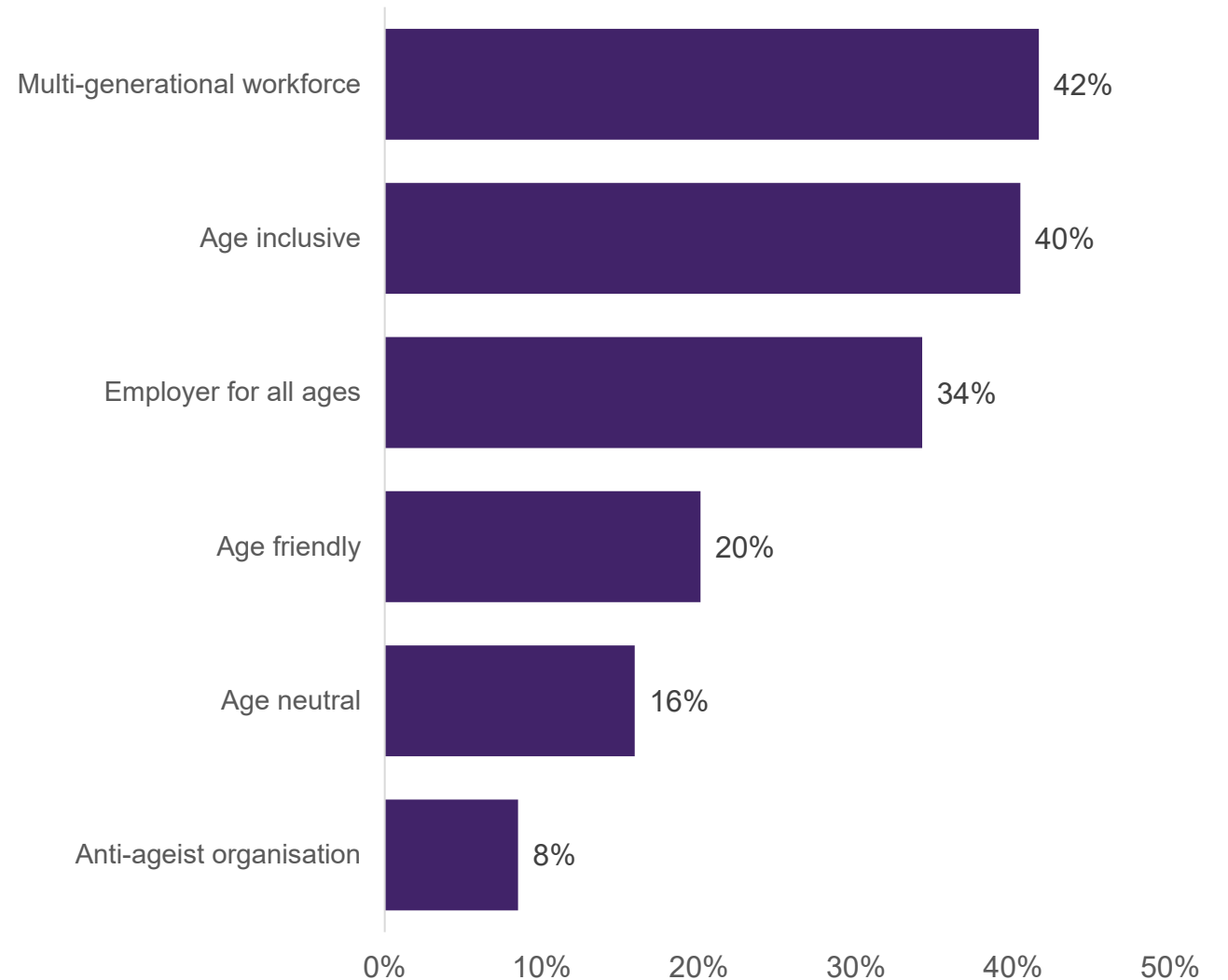
Employers in large private sector organisations with 250+ employees (68%) are more likely than those in SMEs (52%) to feel that being an age inclusive workplace would make them attractive to prospective workers. They are also much more likely than SMEs to be worried about the reputational impact of not being seen this way (42% compared with 22%).

Employers in the manufacturing (61%) and financial and insurance (62%) industries are more likely than those in some others to believe that an age inclusive workforce would increase productivity.

The terms that employers think best describe an organisation that supports diversity and inclusion for all ages are ‘multi-generational workforce’ and ‘age inclusive’

‘Age inclusive’ is especially favoured in the public and voluntary sectors (48% for both), while private sector employers express a bit more of a preference for ‘age neutral’ than the other sectors (17% compared with 13% and 9% respectively).

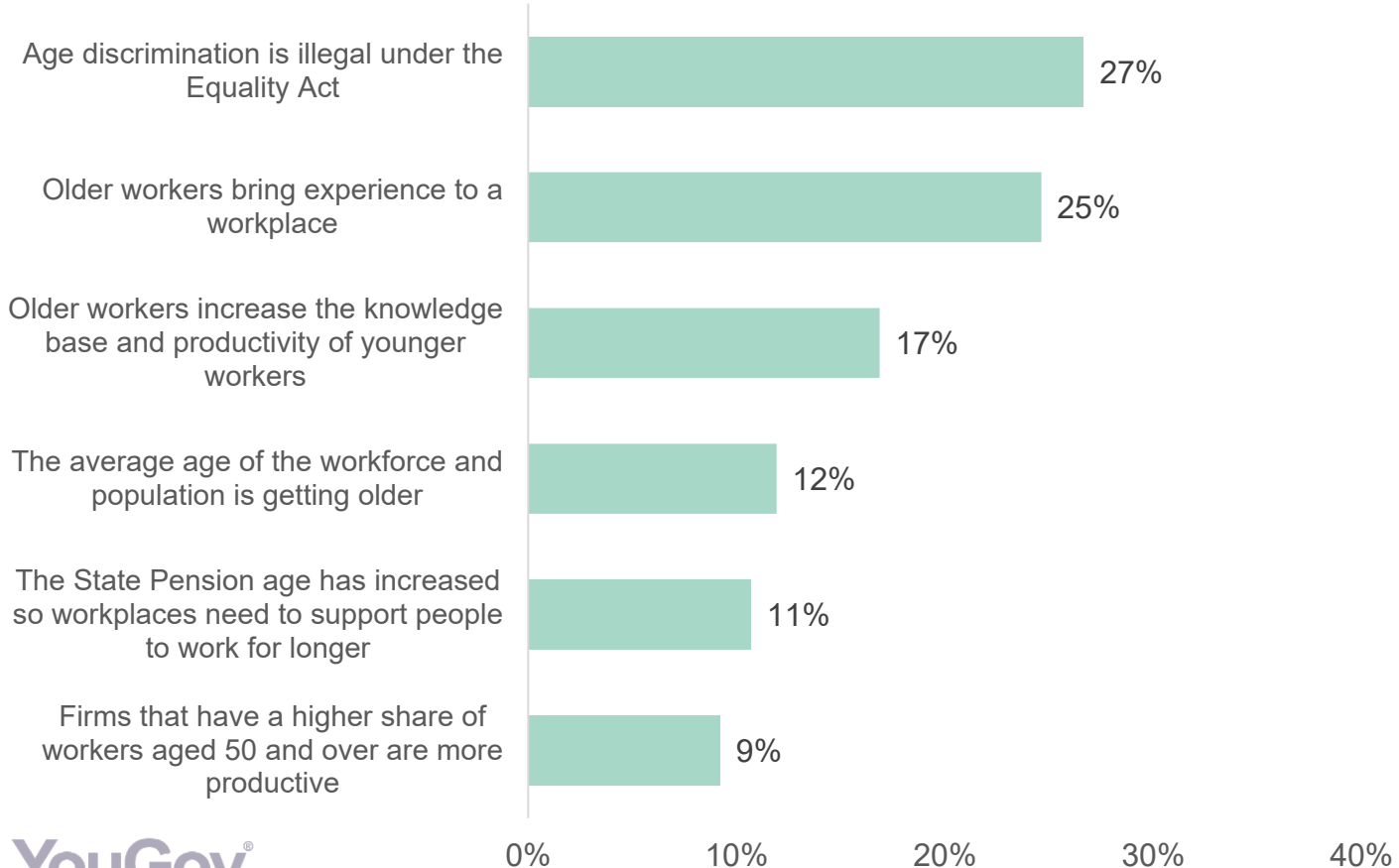
Preferred terms describing an organisation that supports diversity and inclusion for all ages



M3a. Listed below are a range of phrases which could be used to describe the following: "Organisations that support diversity and inclusion for all ages with well-managed multigenerational teams. Where employers act to support workers over the age of 50 to be in better work for longer". Which, if any, of the following do you think best describe the type of organisation defined above? (Please select a maximum of 3)
Base: All employers (Total n=2,247)

The two messages ranked as having the ability to be most effective in convincing their organisation to be age inclusive are that age discrimination is illegal under the Equality Act and that older workers bring experience to a workplace

Perceived most effective reason to convince their organisation to be age inclusive (% ranked first)



Within the private sector, employers in large organisations with 250+ employees (30%) are more likely than those in SMEs (21%) to see messaging about the illegality of age discrimination under the Equality Act as being most effective. Meanwhile, SMEs (29%) are more likely than large private sector employers (18%) to rank the message about older workers bringing experience to a workplace as most effective.

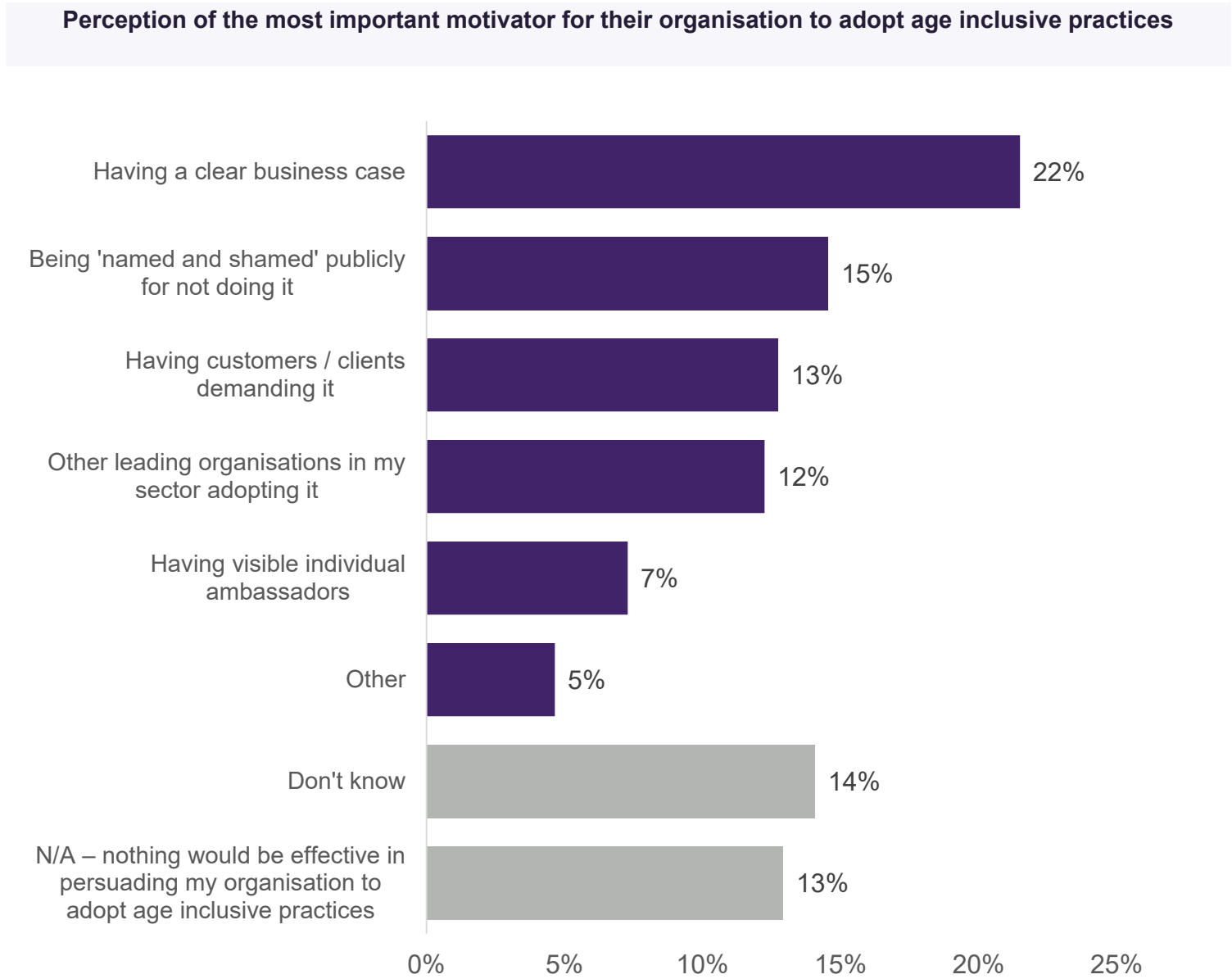
The message stating “The State Pension age has increased so workplaces need to support people to work for longer” is ranked higher by employers in the retail/motor repair industry (15%) than in some others.



M5. Please look at the below reasons for being an age inclusive workplace. Please rank these reasons in order of effectiveness in convincing your organisation to be an age inclusive workplace, with '1' being most effective and '6' being least effective.
 Base: All employers (Total n=2,247)

Employers most often say that having a clear business case would be the most important factor in persuading their organisation to adopt age inclusive practices

In the public sector employers are more often persuaded by the suggestion of being 'named and shamed' than by having a business case

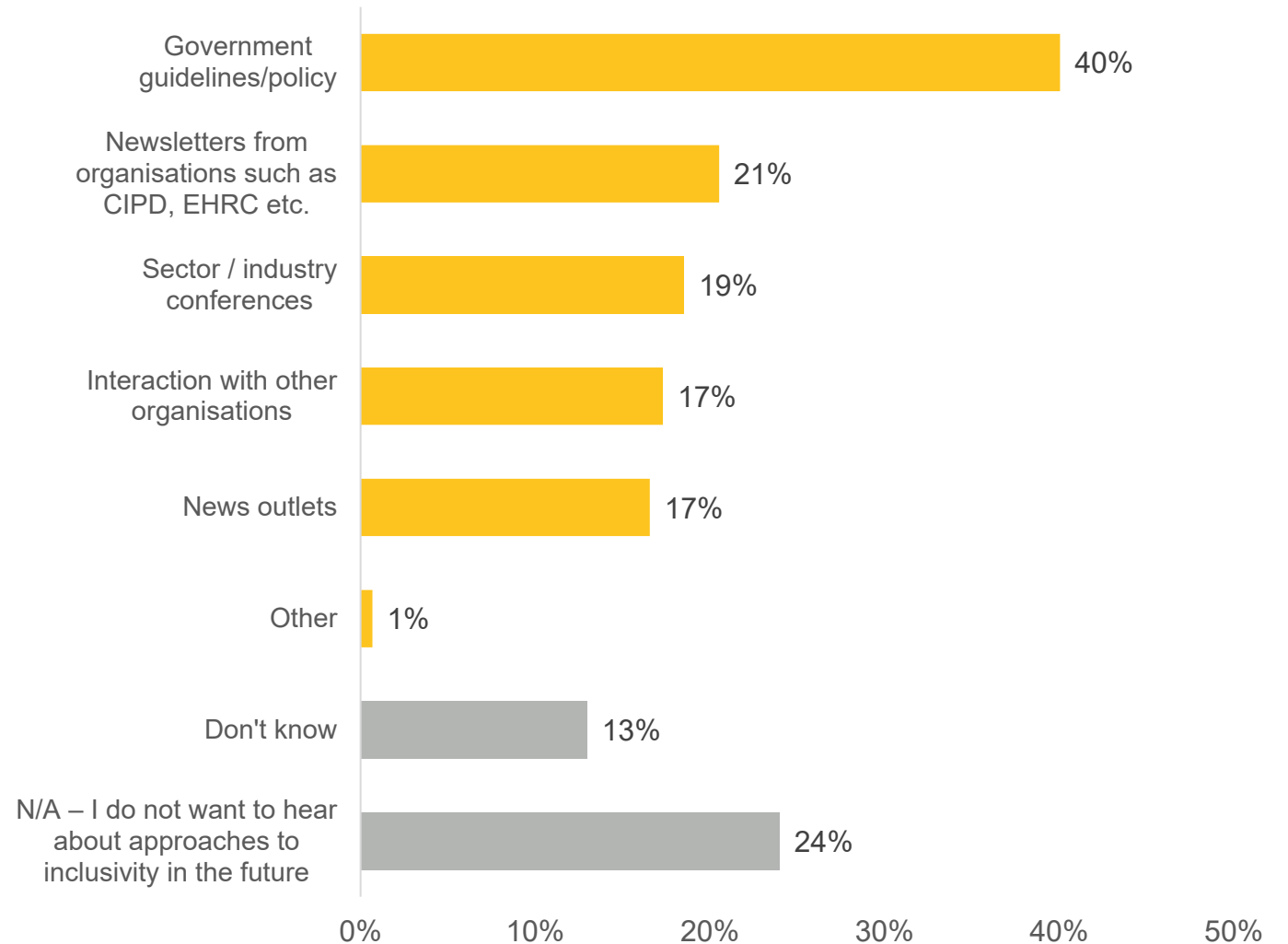


M6. Which, if any, of the following would be most likely to persuade your organisation to adopt age inclusive practices?
Base: All employers (Total n=2,247)

Employers would most want to hear about approaches to inclusivity in the future through government guidelines and policy, which is especially the case in the public sector

Among private sector employers, one in four (26%) say they do not want to hear about approaches to inclusivity in the future

Ways employers would like to hear about approaches to inclusivity in the future



M8. In which, if any, of the following ways would you like to hear about approaches to inclusivity in the future?
Base: All employers (Total n=2,247)

Thank you for your attention!

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August 2021

Age friendly employer engagement: Segmentation Deep Dive

 **Centre for
Ageing Better**

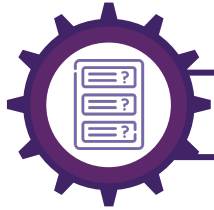
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- Evangelists summary
- Sceptics summary
- Meritocrats summary
- Detractors summary
- Qualitative Conclusions



Background and methodology

Background



Quantitative Stage

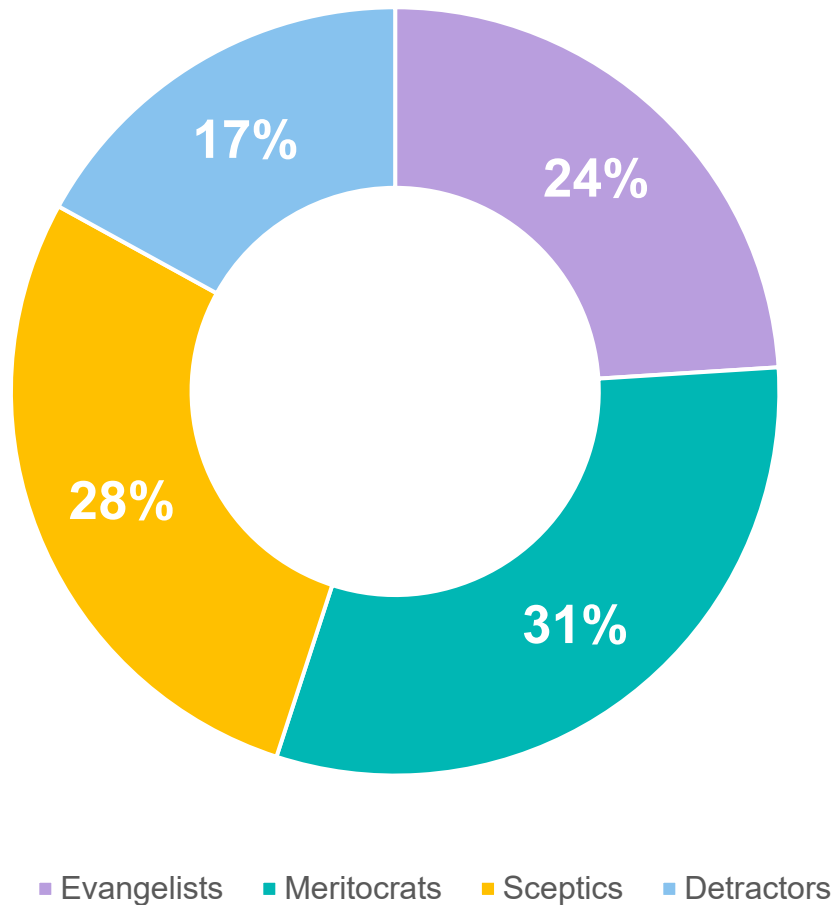
- An online survey was developed in conjunction with The Centre for Ageing Better and was carried out among a sample of employers between 27th April and 22nd May 2021.
- A total sample of 2,247 senior decision makers in England was achieved.
- The results have been weighted and are representative of employment in England by organisation size, sector, industry and region.
- The attitudinal segmentation analysis was designed to identify subsets of the sample based on their shared attitudes and perceptions.
- The segmentation for this research was carried out using perceptions explored in the survey, such as the value of employing older workers and the benefits they bring to a workforce.
- To accomplish the segmentation analysis, YouGov first conducted factor analysis to group the questions into similar areas and reduce the number of variables, followed by cluster analysis to look for patterns and establish the segments.



Qualitative Stage

- After reflecting on the quantitative research, we conducted 26 interviews over Zoom. We spoke with a minimum of six people per segment.
- Participants were from a range of organisations across the UK, with a mix of sector and size (including those from more physical and more non-physical labour).
- All participants had a managerial role in their organisation.
- Fieldwork was conducted between 5th July and 28th July 2021.
- The qualitative discussion guide explored how diversity and discrimination are viewed within their organisation, before discussing how age is viewed as a barrier or an enabler.
- Furthermore, we explored how to take the age discrimination agenda forward, particularly looking at how to communicate age friendly work practices and evaluating different suggestions.

Segmentation



Evangelists

These organisations support older workers; they're very positive and see the wider benefits to their organisation, industry and sector. They are more likely to agree older workers contribute to the development of younger workers, can address future challenges and help those around them to work better. They value older workers' experience and see it as crucial to the success of the organisation.

Meritocrats

These organisations support the inclusion of older workers but their opinions are not deeply ingrained; instead older workers are seen more as a 'nice to have'. They understand older workers' contribution is equal to other workers and they see benefits in employing them for their experience, work ethic and contribution. Understanding of the business need for age inclusion is limited.

Sceptics

These organisations are more likely to doubt the value in employing older workers and less likely to see the benefits or business need to employ them. They are more likely to report age discrimination occurs in their industry and state that this is more common among older workers than younger workers.

Detractors

These organisations discourage the employment of older workers, with increased beliefs that older workers are stuck in their ways or not as adaptable. There is agreement that they are more suited to management roles than any others. Concurrently, they are less likely to perceive any benefits from employing older workers and see them as less useful to the organisation.

Summary of findings

Summary of key findings



Variation exists

- Although segments have similar values, attitudes and opinions can vary
- Individual knowledge and acceptance of age discrimination policies differs – engagement is inconsistent across and within segments
- The implementation of age discrimination policies varies across segments – some organisations will have more in place than others, however; this doesn't always correlate with good practice
- Context is key – the context in which the business operates often shapes the formation of age discrimination policies, as opposed to more broad attitudes towards older workers

Sector is key

- Age friendly practices are often shaped by the sector in which the organisation operates in – particular sector needs have an influence over the develop of business polices:
 - For example, certain sectors may have more older clients (e.g. within Evangelists), therefore age friendly practices are more top-of-mind, which are reflected in their internal policies
 - Sectors that require physical labour (e.g. within the Detractors) may place less emphasis on age discrimination policies as they believe a younger workforce is more appropriate for the needs of their companies

Segments are not indicative of their overall attitudes

- Overall attitudes towards diversity and inclusion do not always correlate to the segments – many organisations within the 'least age friendly' segments invest to improve their D&I policies, however age discrimination can often get overlooked:
 - Many see hiring young and diverse staff as a priority – it's seen as a way to invest in the future of their organisation. Older staff are often overlooked and seen as a lower priority and not a key business need
 - Age discrimination policies are not top-of-mind as they don't hold the same importance of other D&I initiatives

Age has to compete with other D&I issues

- Diversity and inclusion agendas that focus on gender and ethnicity are often seen to be at odds with retaining older staff who are often white and male – age discrimination policies become more difficult to form and put in place
- There is a need to incorporate age within a wider D&I framework:
 - Many see age discrimination as low priority
 - Some see it as going against their wider equality and diversity agenda
- Age discrimination is a nuanced and competing issue, which can discourage engagement with it at an organisational level

Typical Evangelists case study - Judith, East of England



Context

Chief executive of a social enterprise helping older and disabled people with around 270 employees with a very flexible working structure

Has witnessed age discrimination in the past but strives to make sure it isn't present in her organisation. She thinks it's more prevalent but less obvious than other forms of discrimination in the working world.



Barriers and enablers

Age is viewed very positively – 60% of her workforce are over 50 and 25% over 65. Plus lots of young employees – they have a very open employment policy

The main drawback is that, if someone is trying to be semi-retired they may be off on holiday for three months and it does affect their function



Current practices

They are able to attract an older workforce as the work is quite flexible and can suit those who have retired & do not want to work full time. They will let them move roles within the organisation if they need to.

They tend to keep the older employees rather than the younger ones as the younger ones get restless. They have a 'people and culture committee' – though they haven't looked to getting accreditation as it's too time consuming



Communication

Because they look after older people they don't think of our workforce as old – they use the term 'older old' for clients (average age 87) so this provides a different context. They will never use the term elderly or senior to describe employees.

They are an exemplary employer in terms of age friendly practice – and for intergenerational co-operation. She realises they need to shout louder about their good work!

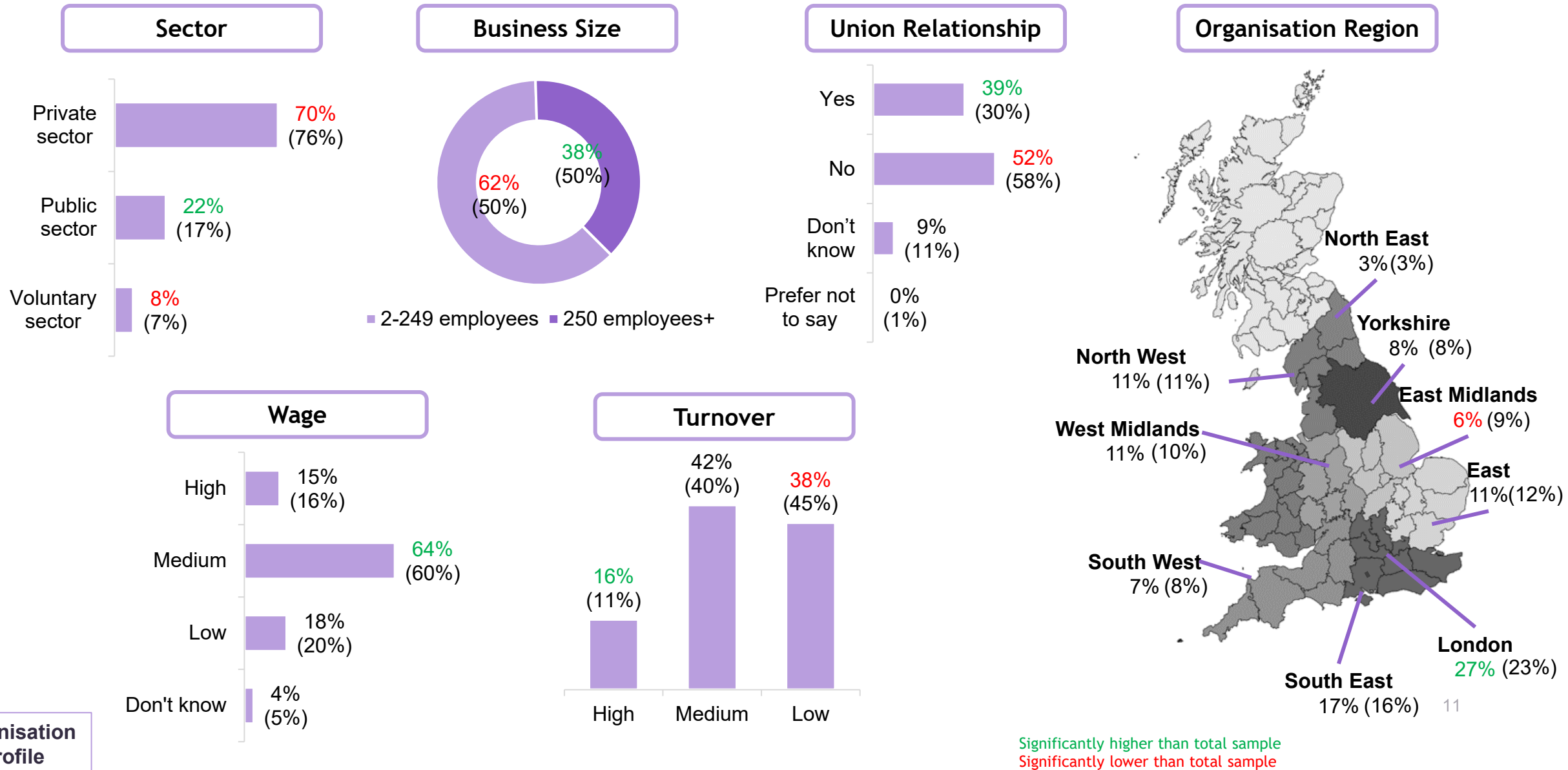


We have really strong values and culture – younger people helping older people carry things etc with the older ones sharing their expertise and wisdom



We have found there is a natural desire to pass on wisdom and our older clients love our younger team members and relish interaction with younger team members

Evangelists tend to be larger, public sector organisations and are more likely than average to have a organisational relationship with a union



Evangelists are more likely than average to report that they are inclusive to a range of characteristics, although this does not include age. They are more likely to state that increasing D&I is a priority and have an increased likelihood of developing age related policies.

41% (31%)

State that increasing diversity and inclusivity is a workforce priority

79% (73%)

Agree their organisation is diverse and inclusive

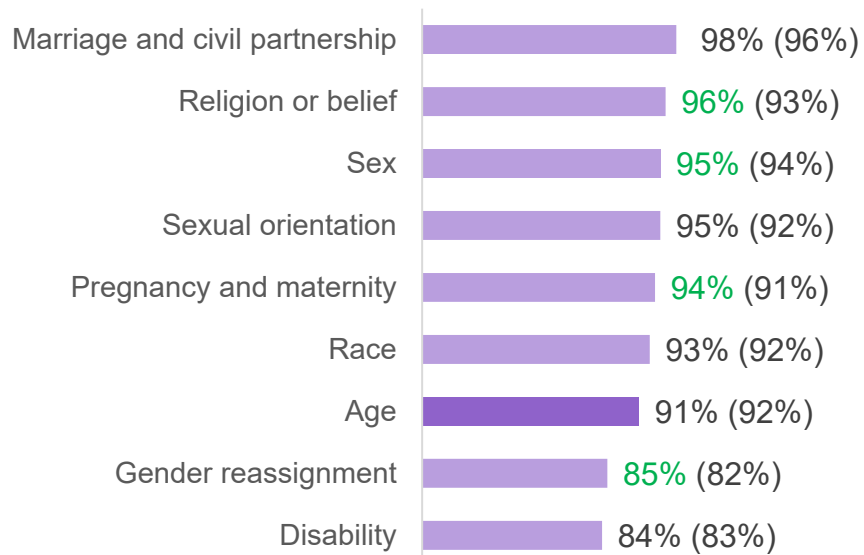
82% (82%)

Agree people have an equal chance of succeeding in their organisation

83% (82%)

Agree people have an equal chance for their voice to be heard in their organisation

Perception of being Inclusive of Protected Characteristics



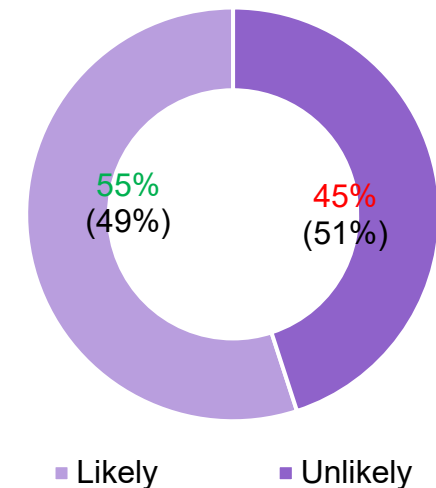
Organisational Policies

79% (68%)
Cover protected characteristics in a D&I policy

60% (49%)
Cover age in a D&I policy

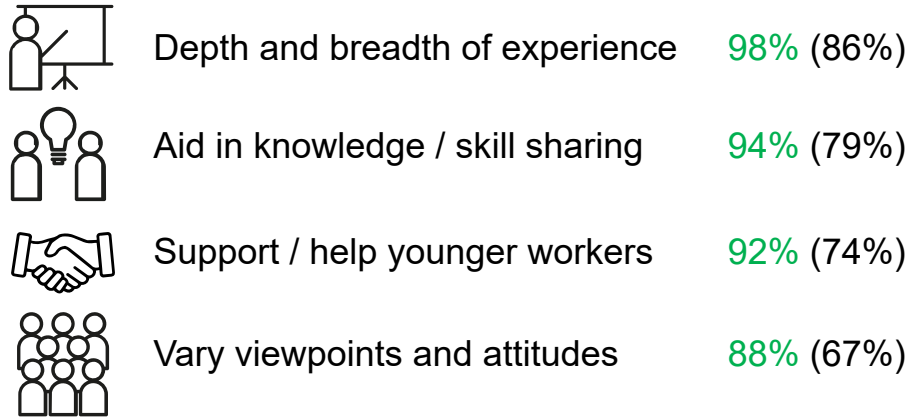
67% (69%)
Have a combined D&I policy

Likelihood to Develop Age Policies

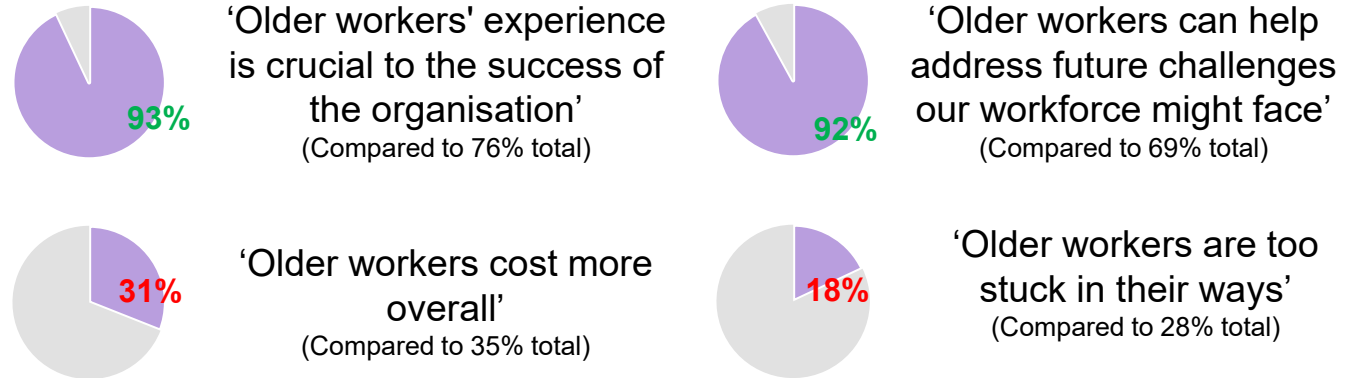


This segment identify numerous benefits to employing older workers and are more likely to identify them as crucial to their organisation.

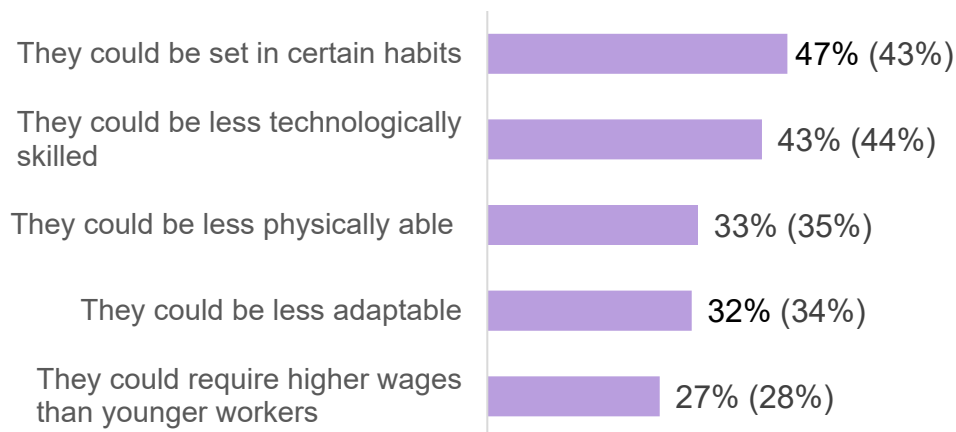
Benefits of older workers to workforce



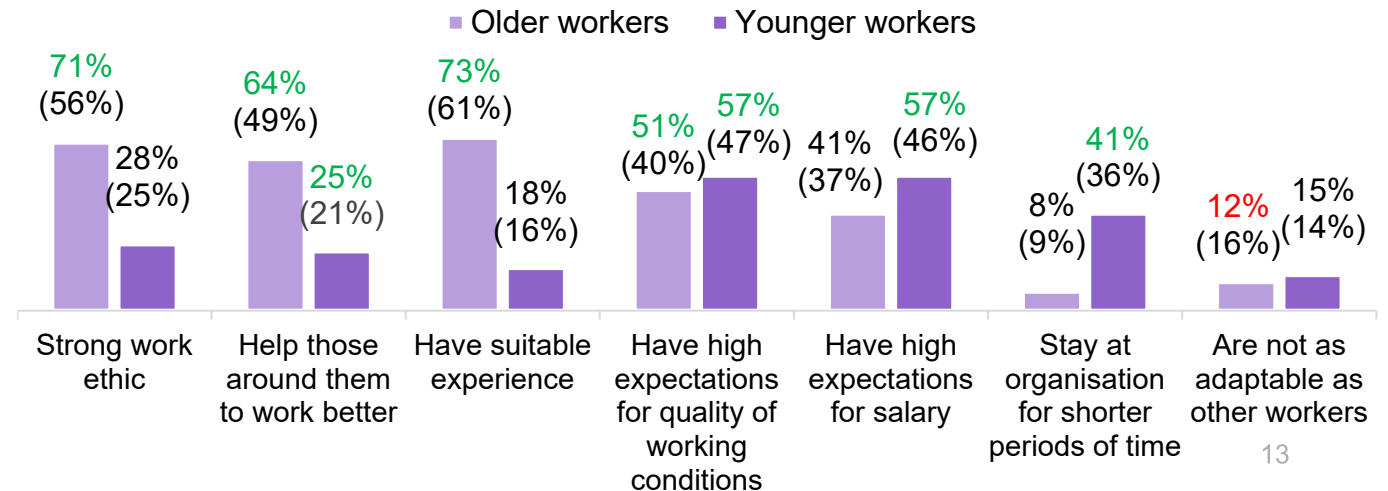
Agreement on older workers



Disadvantages of older workers to workforce (Top 5)



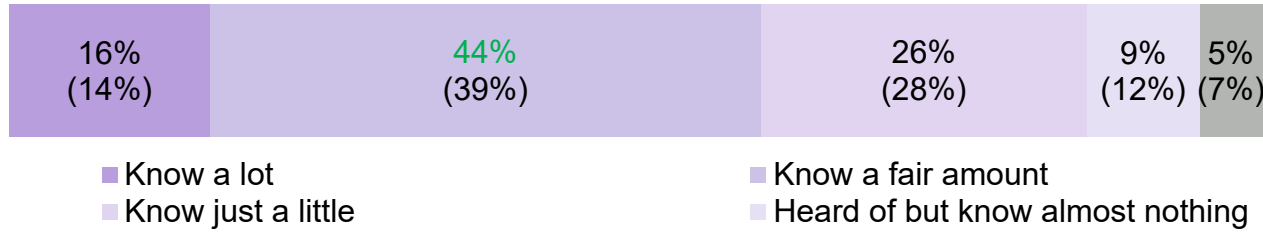
Attributes of older and younger workers (Applies to most / all)



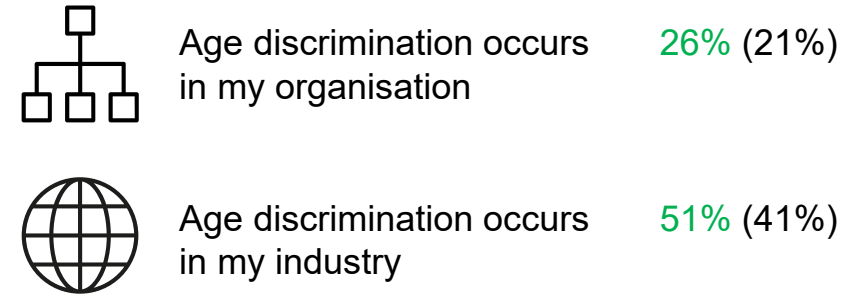
Significantly higher than total sample
Significantly lower than total sample

Evangelists are more likely to identify age discrimination in their workplace and industry, and more commonly identify the key issues faced by older workers. However, they have an increased likelihood of having age inclusive practices in place.

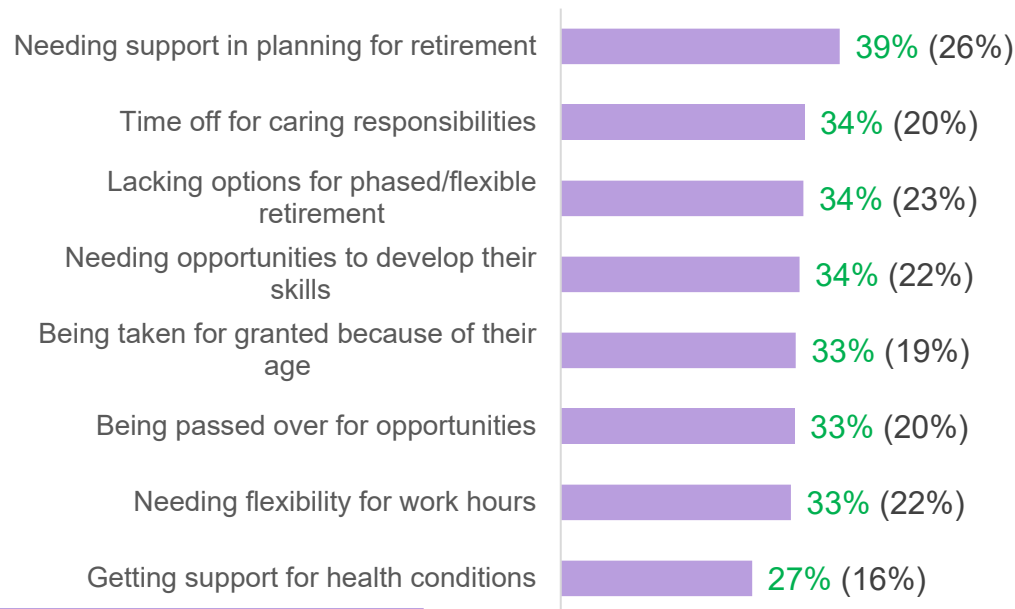
Knowledge of Age Inclusivity



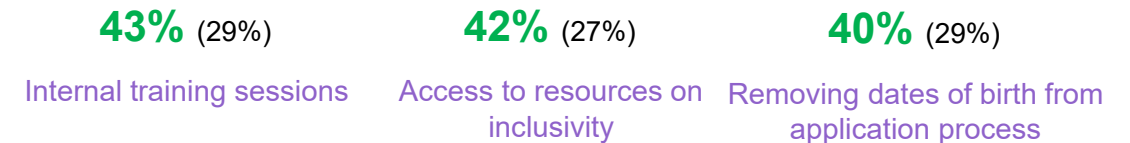
Prevalence of Age Discrimination



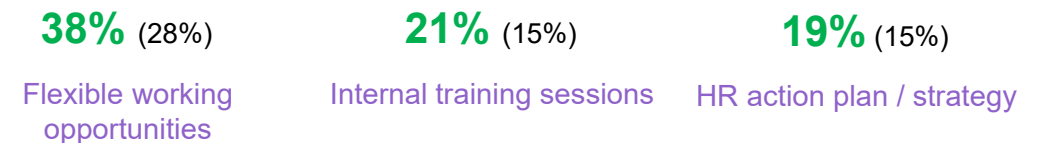
Key Issues Faced by Older Workers in Organisation



Practices Currently in Place (Top 3)



Inclusive Practice Priorities (Top 3)



Evangelists are more likely to feel well placed to introduce age inclusive practices to their organisation, although they more readily identify barriers to doing so.

70% (56%)

My organisation has the knowledge to make the changes to promote age inclusivity

57% (42%)

My organisation has the time to make the changes to promote age inclusivity

72% (55%)

My organisation has the resources to make the changes to promote age inclusivity

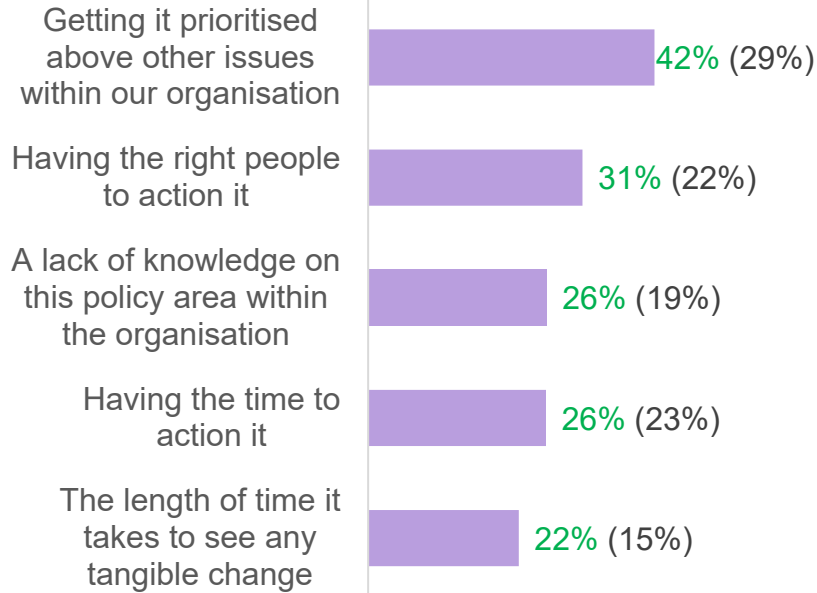
10% (15%)

Introducing age inclusivity could have a negative effect on other D&I priorities

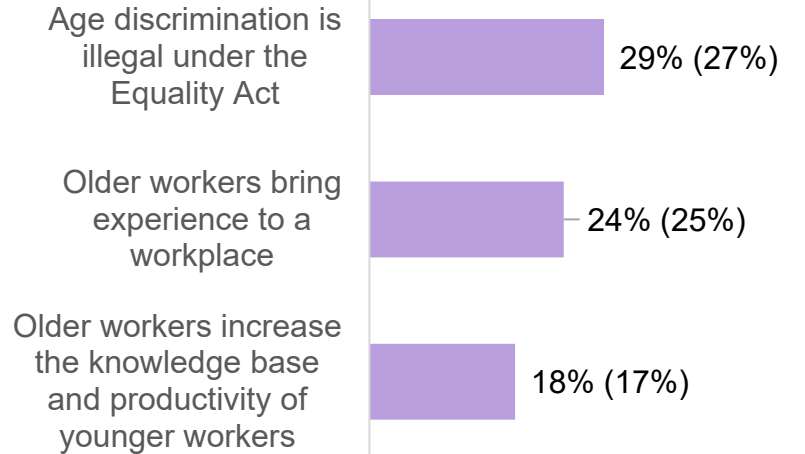
87% (60%)

Introducing age inclusivity could have a positive effect on other D&I priorities

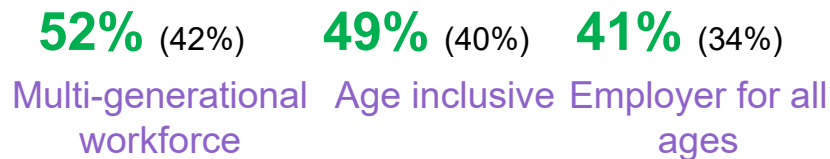
Barriers to Implementing Age Inclusive Practices in Organisation (Top 5)



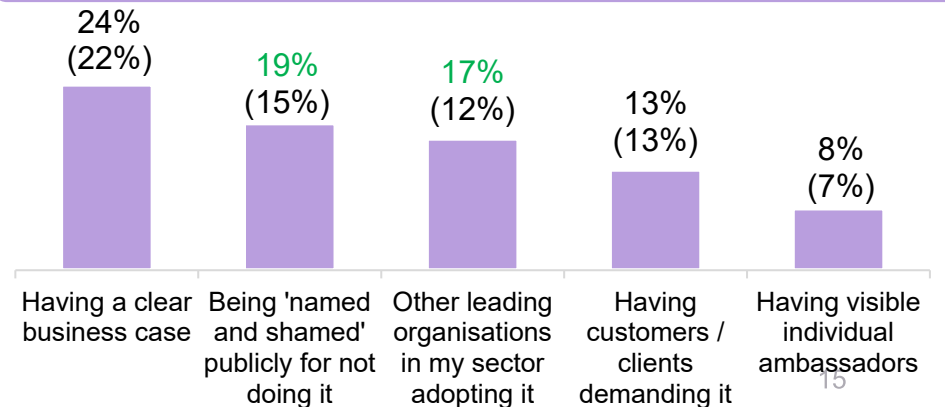
Messaging for Age Inclusivity - Ranked First (Top 3)



Language to Describe Age Inclusivity (Top 3)



Persuading Organisation to Adopt Inclusive Practices



Significantly higher than total sample
Significantly lower than total sample

The qualitative interviews showed that this segment are on board with age equality, though they may not have specific policies in place

What does age discrimination mean to them...

This segment feels that age discrimination is less likely to be tolerated in their organisation than in others. There is the sense that, at an organisational level, discrimination of any form would not be tolerated.

On an individual level there was more variation – and many were just as likely to talk about discriminating against younger people.

...current practices to stop age discrimination

Many have well established diversity and inclusion policies drawn up by HR professionals, and they are constantly made aware of these practices.

However, despite age being a protected characteristic, for many there is no specific company wide anti-age discrimination policy, simply initiatives to encourage the retention of older staff

.... Roles and responsibilities

Varies by the size of the business, with smaller firms less likely to have fully fledged HR departments and relying on board members to make decisions.

Where HR departments are involved, policies and practices can seemingly be instigated at any level – and equality and diversity champions across the business might be involved too.

“Because we are a CQC regulated service they expect us to have equality and diversity high on our agenda as well. There are a whole range of policies and procedures - it's up to us as managers to implement this in the meetings, we have logs that we keep in order to evidence all the things we do around equality and diversity. Age isn't always as high up the agenda as other forms of discrimination - there is definitely a push on the gender piece and encouraging males into the organisation and a push on ethnicity but it's important to push age up there. ”

Knowledge and co-operation are among the major benefits of retaining older staff

This segment tended to fall into two categories – those for whom any form of discrimination is expressly forbidden, and those for whom there is a perceived benefit from retaining older staff for as long as possible. In the case of the latter, there are two elements to this – the accumulated knowledge and the sense of intergenerational co-operation



Benefits of age diversity

- For those we interviewed in this segment, the importance of retaining older staff was important, though it was less about their age and more about the knowledge and experience that they had built up over the years. Many provided a key role in upskilling junior members of staff.
- Above and beyond this was the feeling that age diversity was beneficial for its own sake – allowing people of different ages to co-operate and learn from each other.

“I’m pleased that we have a good balance and we have integrated older and younger members of the workforce together and I think they have complemented each other. The knowledge and experience is hard to teach in terms of the subtle upskilling - and I’m really keen to retain that and capture from that background.”

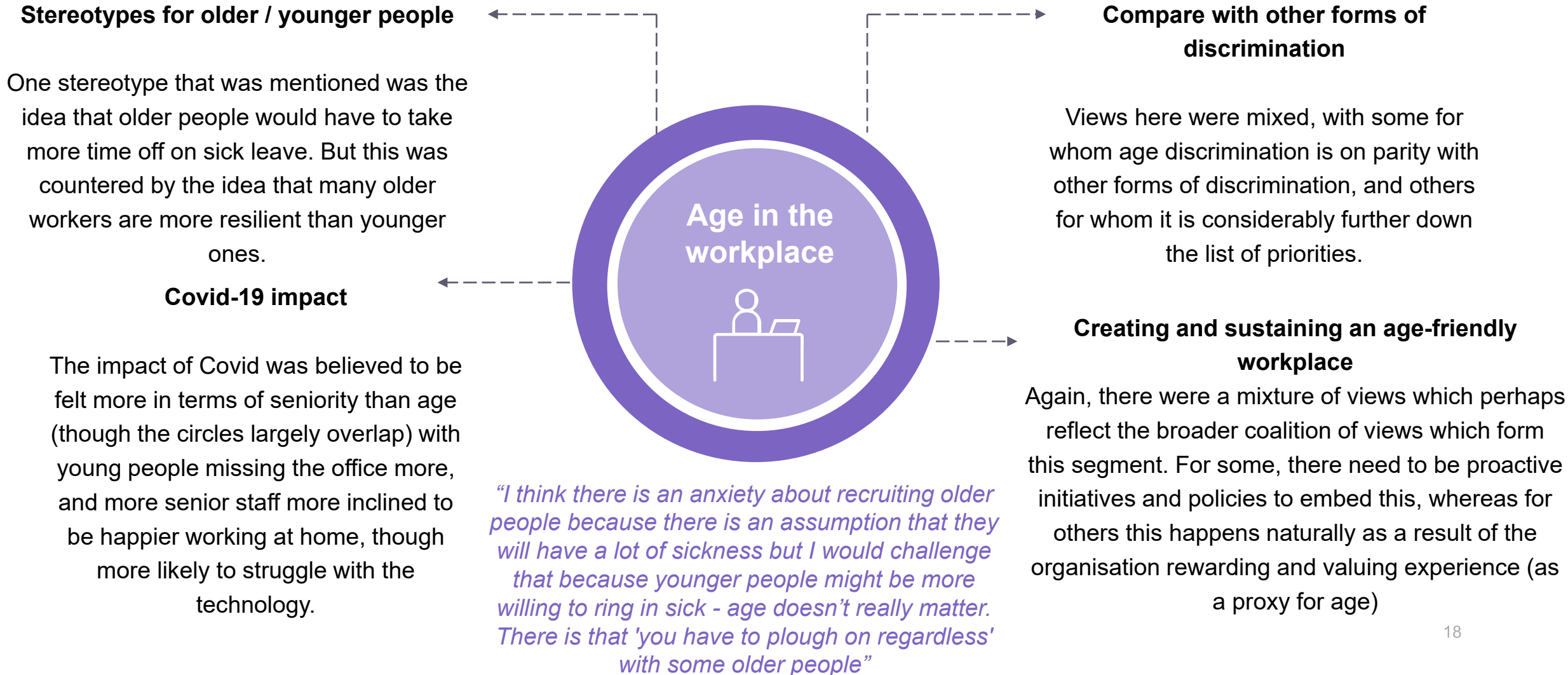


Drawbacks of age diversity

- However, the drawback to age diversity, expressed by some in this segment along with the others, was the sense that older employees are far better at teaching than learning.
- Many are perceived as ‘stuck in their ways’ and reluctant to learn new skills or techniques, which means that employers are reluctant to hire them (despite many claiming not to discriminate).

“Sharing experience and knowledge - it’s the culture. If you have a diverse workforce, it’s a company that you would want to work for. You want to be able to see the progression.”

Other Evangelist views are more nuanced – and not dissimilar to those in other segments



Straightforward language is encouraged

Importance of language

- Generally, in this segment, participants seemed to prefer the use of the word 'older'.
- The word 'experienced' was acceptable to many, reflecting the fact that older employees' experience carries enormous value. However it was less acceptable as a euphemism – the point was that they felt that 'older' could still be used if necessary.
- Age discrimination is a term that is preferred to ageism – age discrimination is more commonly used in the work place and therefore ageism seems a little antiquated. Many in this segment are happy to address discrimination 'head on'.



“The older I become the more infuriated I become with the suggestion that age is any indicator of deterioration - we work with people who are very frail and you can counter frailty. The suggestion that they are needy and that they have lost their value is shocking - older people still want to give.”

“Just because they're older doesn't mean they senior or experienced. Would just say older - its more factual.”

And they are keen to receive recognition for their work in this area



Supporting / encouraging businesses

- Generally there seemed to be more appetite from those in this segment for accreditations such as those listed.
- Many already pursue these sorts of accreditations – and there was the sense that they are the ‘entry drug’ for many organisations in this segment to get on board with age friendly practices.

“We do like getting prizes if they are easy to get - if there was a kite mark for it we would be up for that. We like ACAS for HR stuff so if there was somewhere we could go to plagiarise documents and download them easily that would be useful to us.”

“It’s always good to make a pledge - make yourself a target”

Typical Sceptics case study - James, hospitality



Context

James works in hospitality, his business is part of a larger retail restaurant business. The business has challenges around discipline and technology.

Their current priority is to drive their costs down, therefore they hire younger people who have a reduced minimum wage.



Barriers and enablers

Older people are preferred by many customers as they offer advice and take care of customers and teach younger staff members.

However there is a perception that older people 'shuffle around' - generally they are perceived to be 'slow' and 'can't deal with any technology'.



Current practices

Date of birth is removed from CVs however the age of the person applying is easy to work out based on their experience and education history.

The business currently advertises jobs on social media which means that younger people tend to be more likely to apply.



Communication

Language was not felt to be particularly important, though 'experienced' was considered to be the most complimentary term.

James felt that he needed to follow management policy around policy for age. He mentioned that B&Q had a policy which looked to recruit older people, but that this would be hard to replicate.

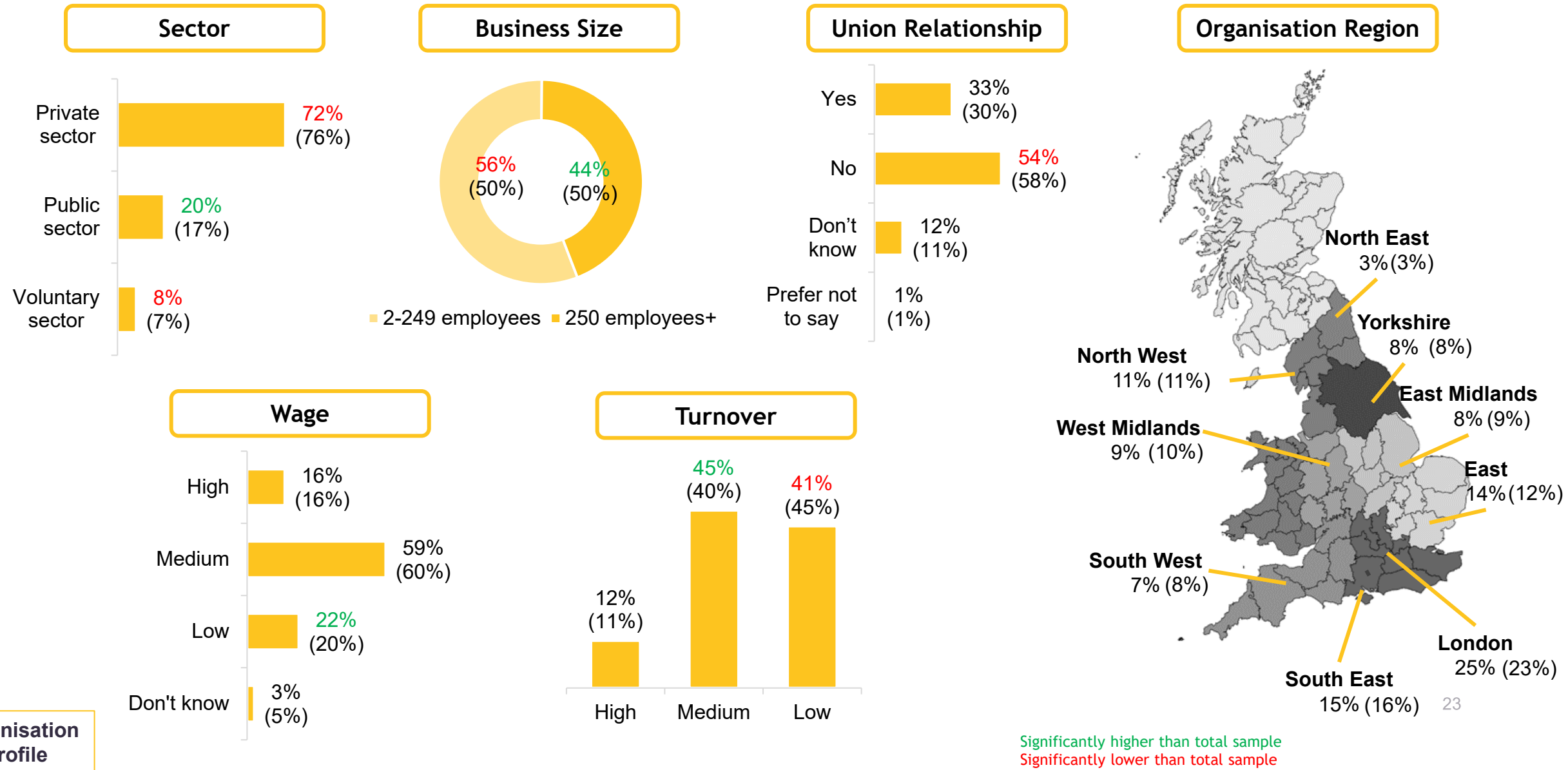


At the moment we are just chasing our tails to make sure we are profitable

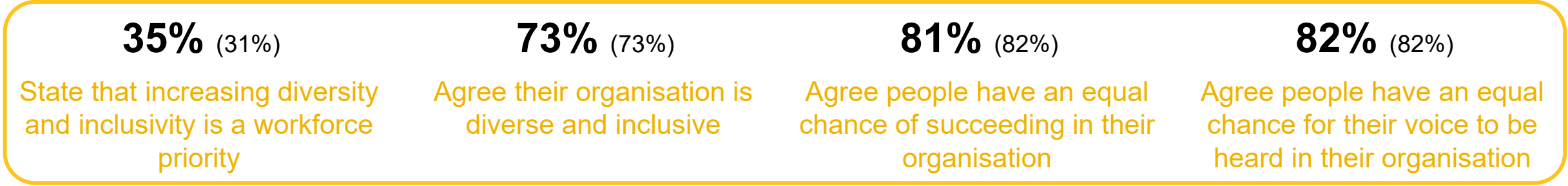


I think age discrimination is more nuanced and not as obvious... ageism is not as deliberate... just creeps in.

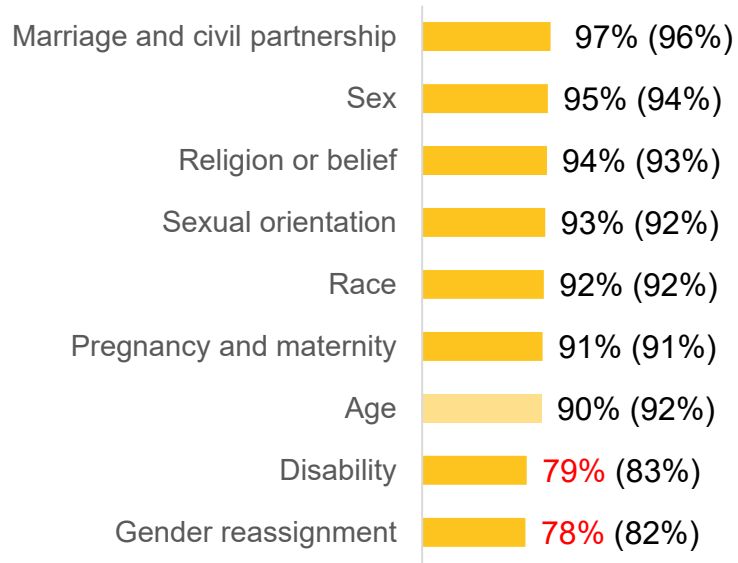
Like Evangelists, Sceptics are more likely than average to be public sector. However, they are more likely to be low wage organisations with a medium turnover.



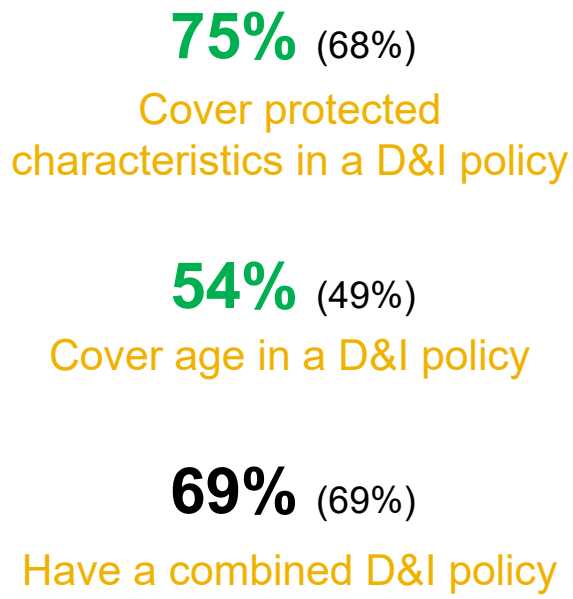
When thinking about D&I in the workplace, Sceptics are generally in line with average. Although, they are more likely to have D&I policies in place for protected characteristics, including age



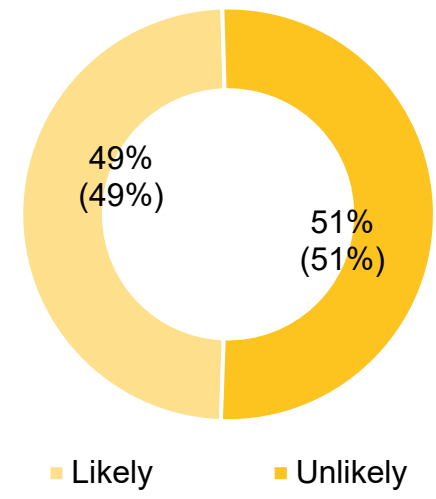
Perception of being Inclusive of Protected Characteristics



Organisational Policies

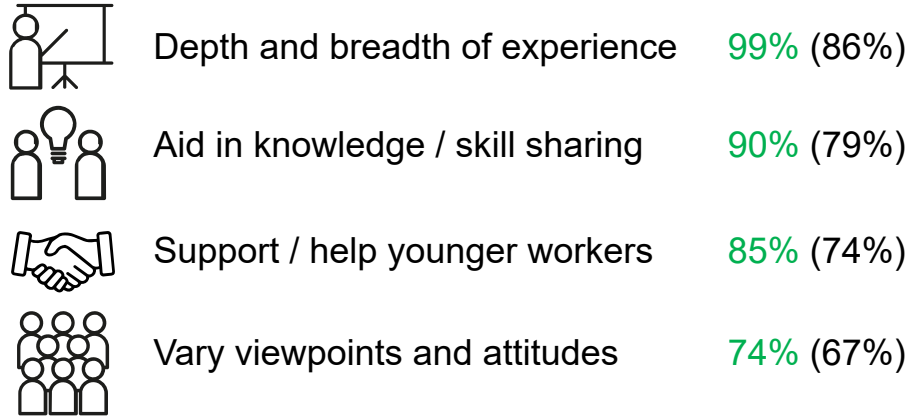


Likelihood to Develop Age Policies

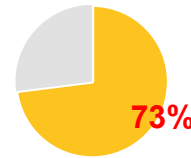


Despite identifying some benefits to older workers, Sceptics are more likely to be sceptical of the business need for them. They also more readily identify disadvantages

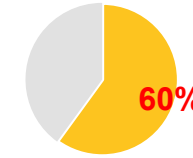
Benefits of older workers to workforce



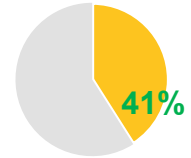
Agreement on older workers



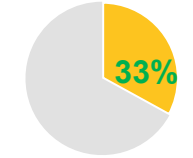
'Older workers' experience is crucial to the success of the organisation'
(Compared to 76% total)



'Older workers can help address future challenges our workforce might face'
(Compared to 69% total)



'Older workers cost more overall'
(Compared to 35% total)

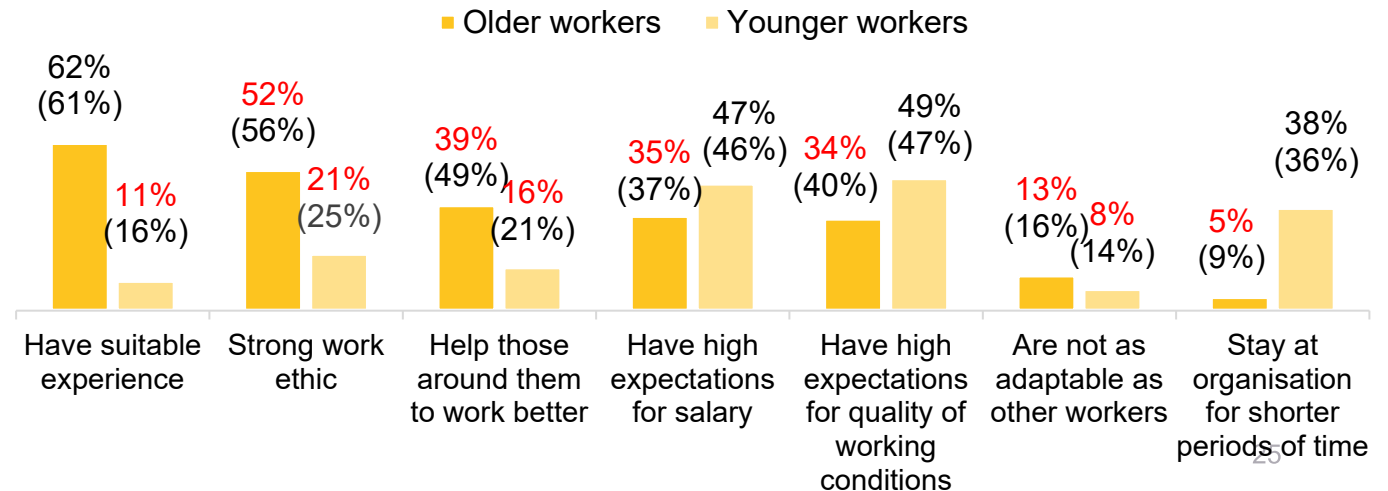


'Older workers are too stuck in their ways'
(Compared to 28% total)

Disadvantages of older workers to workforce (Top 5)



Attributes of older and younger workers (Applies to most / all)



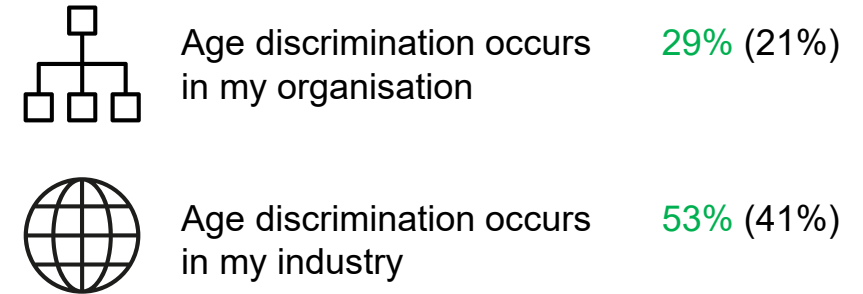
Significantly higher than total sample
Significantly lower than total sample

Sceptics are more likely to identify that age discrimination occurs in their organisation and industry and they are aware of key issues faced by older workers. However, they are more likely to report they know little about age inclusivity

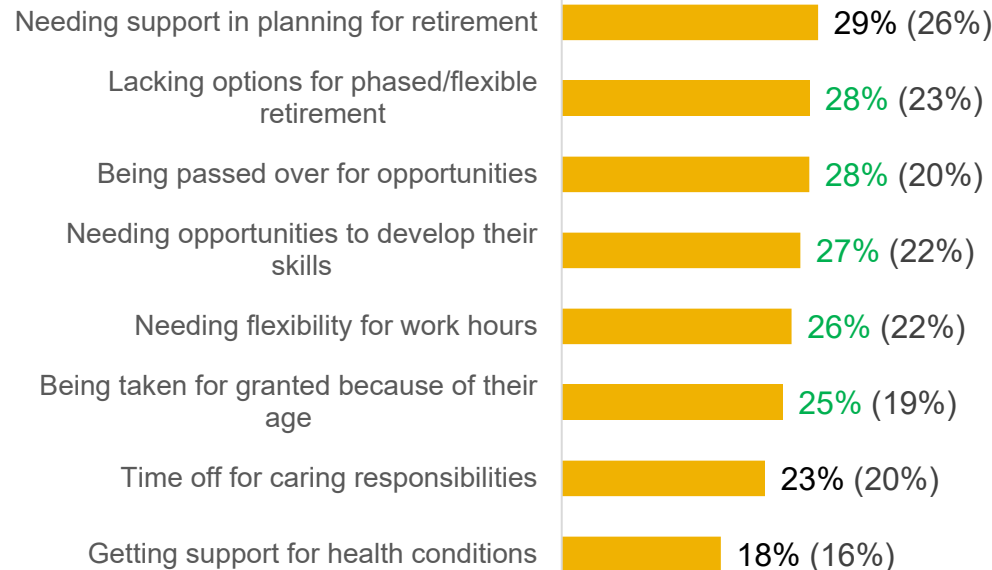
Knowledge of Age Inclusivity



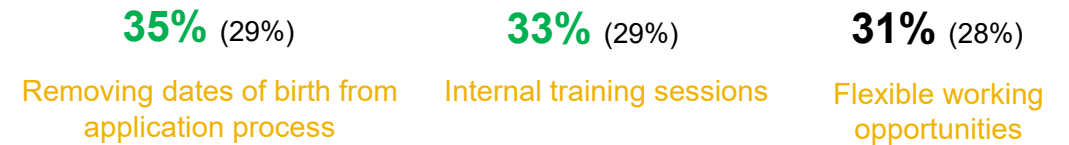
Prevalence of Age Discrimination



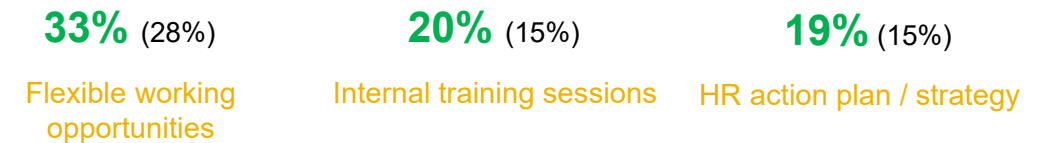
Key Issues Faced by Older Workers in Organisation



Practices Currently in Place (Top 3)



Inclusive Practice Priorities (Top 3)



Sceptics are more likely to identify barriers to age inclusivity in their organisation, however they are more likely to state being 'named and shamed' would persuade their organisation to adopt the practices

53% (56%)

My organisation has the knowledge to make the changes to promote age inclusivity

42% (42%)

My organisation has the time to make the changes to promote age inclusivity

54% (55%)

My organisation has the resources to make the changes to promote age inclusivity

12% (15%)

Introducing age inclusivity could have a negative effect on other D&I priorities

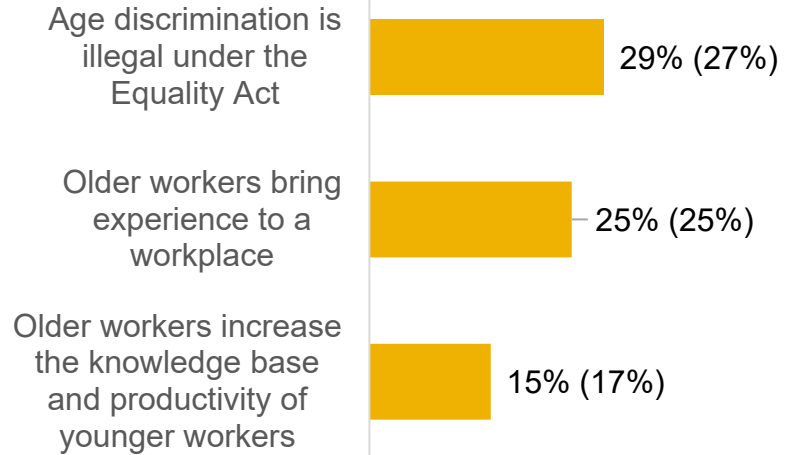
64% (60%)

Introducing age inclusivity could have a positive effect on other D&I priorities

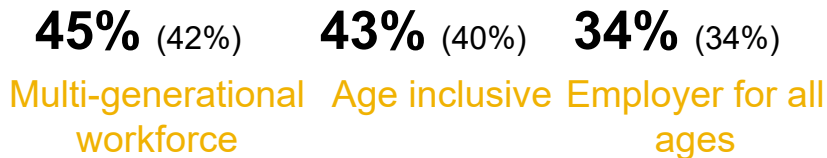
Barriers to Implementing Age Inclusive Practices in Organisation (Top 5)



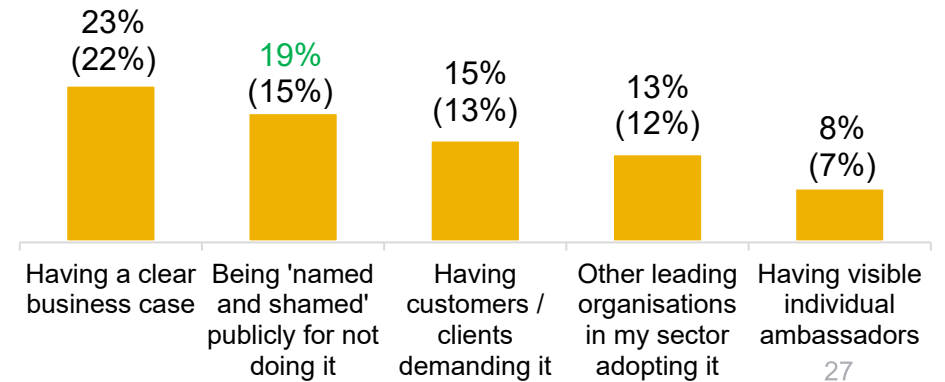
Messaging for Age Inclusivity - Ranked First (Top 3)



Language to Describe Age Inclusivity (Top 3)



Persuading Organisation to Adopt Inclusive Practices



Significantly higher than total sample
Significantly lower than total sample

The qualitative research found that Sceptics tend to be passive around age related issues in the workplace

What does age discrimination mean to them...

This segment is often managing other business challenges so age related problems don't tend to be prioritised.

Some participants in this segments commented that age discrimination is not as obvious as other forms of discrimination and is a more 'nuanced' issue.

...current practices to stop age discrimination

Current practices to reduce discrimination includes removing date of birth from CV, (however, this is often redundant as time finished school or university tends to indicate the age of the person applying).

Discrimination can happen with younger employees, particularly with women (who are expected to become pregnant).

.... Roles and responsibilities

Both policy and action comes from senior management. However diversity and inclusion tend to be a human resources function. Overall, employees tend to follow their manager's lead.

Those from smaller businesses commented that they often do not have HR and so are managing people related issues without training, alongside managing other business challenges.

"We have a range of staff networks e.g., disabled, carers, LGBTQ, but not one for supporting older people."

"Ageism is not deliberate, it just creeps in."

Age implies life experience which can be share with other employees, however participants were concerned about ‘older people keeping up’



Benefits of age / age diversity

- Older people offer (life) experience and confidence in their roles, they also share their knowledge and skills with younger employees.
- Reverse mentoring can also occur, providing a two way benefit: older and younger people are able to challenge each others perspectives e.g. with LGBT issues.
- This segment commented that it is important to have a mix of ages and therefore a balance of views. Age diversity within a customer facing business also allows staff to empathise with a broader range of customers.

“It’s important that you are able to reflect your community”

“If a person is very old then they are very steadfast in their beliefs then they are not open to change in a learning role”



Drawbacks of age / age diversity

- There is a perception that older employees can’t keep up with the pace of some roles.
- Some also struggle with technology and learning new skills.
- Others are reluctant to hire older staff because they are concerned they won’t be ‘adaptable’ and that they struggle to be ‘on their feet all day’.

“It’s about also having the energy, as you get older you find it harder to kneel down with the children on the carpet. It’s a practical level about where roles sit.”

Addressing age related issues in the workplace does not tend to be a priority for this segment

Stereotypes for older / younger people
Younger people need more 'hand holding' whereas older people have 'less stamina' to manage physically demanding tasks. Older people can also be 'resistant to change'.

Covid-19 impact
Businesses are managing different challenges related to their sector, meaning that they need to prioritise staying afloat and cutting down on staff.



Compare with other forms of discrimination
Participants commented that there is no room for any type of discrimination in the workplace, but ethnicity is viewed as more important at the current time. Age is not generally viewed as a priority when it comes to diversity and inclusion.

Creating an age-friendly workplace
'Age friendly' means that workplaces must be sensitive to illness e.g. must be 'dementia and disability friendly'. As well as this they must be flexible around employee needs.

"At the moment our priority is to survive the summer... so it's short term planning and strategy"

"Age discrimination happens more but is not talked about. Maybe harder to prove than race or gender discrimination"

This segment did not have strong views on the type of language to use when discussing age in the workplace

Importance of language

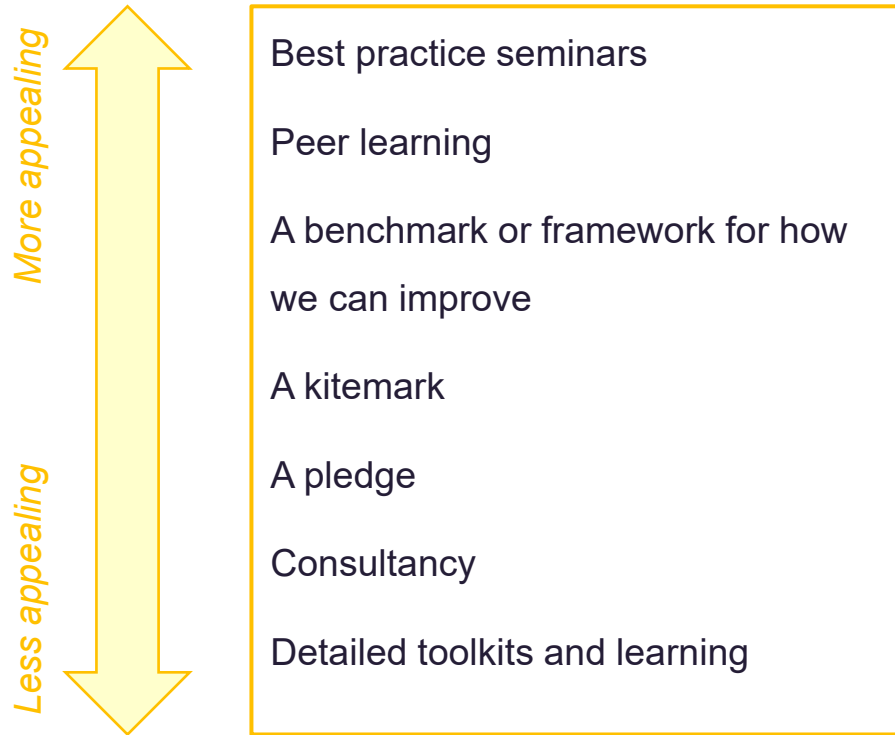
- Most participants felt that using the term 'experienced' was the least likely to cause offense. However 'older' does tend to be used in more informal spaces.
- The term 'senior' was felt to imply a level of seniority within the organisation rather than age.
- Some participants were aware of the term 'age discrimination' but this wasn't a term which they used frequently, as they felt this type of discrimination was rare within their organisations.



“I think experienced is better, rather than using the word 'older' - isn't that discriminatory? I'm not looking for older people as much as experienced. We'd even say 'calm' or 'level-headed’”.

“Language must be positive... and it needs to reflect people needing different things in their lives whether 24 or 74”

Any future actions must be convincing and engaging for senior management and staff



“Seminars are better than consulting or a toolkit as are dedicated time and space... Need to know what we are not doing and why we need to do it”

Supporting / encouraging businesses

- Most are interested in learning more about age discrimination and how it could impact staff, as well as understanding ‘what is important to younger vs older members of staff’ and accommodate to these needs.
- Due to the nature and pressure of their businesses, this segment want and need ‘quick wins’, straightforward tools which can be easily enacted.
- Any actions must be practical and engaging. Peer learning and seminars were felt to be appealing as they encourage conversation and debate around age discrimination.

“Need knowledge education, positive examples, case studies and have champions talking about experiences rather than advocates. This should be a priority overall as we are an ageing population and workforce.”

Typical Meritocrats case study - Matt, pharmaceuticals



Context

Matt works in pharmaceuticals with a mixed team, though they tend to be younger and more technologically advanced.

His business are always looking out for new talent but do not tend to think about age during recruitment.



Barriers and enablers

Matt was concerned that those who are older might be 'set in their ways' and find it hard to learn new things in a rapidly moving working environment.

He had some concerns about older and younger staff getting along with each other but overall felt that having older members of staff might increase retention.



Current practices

The business has an employee survey but do not ask any specific questions about age.

He commented that creating an age-friendly workplace is a collective mission which comes from the top but must be implemented by all members of staff.



Communication

Matt felt that language is important and can lead to unconscious bias if not used appropriately.

He felt that kitemarks are not a strong enough pledge. Any actions need to be customised to the business and its specific needs.

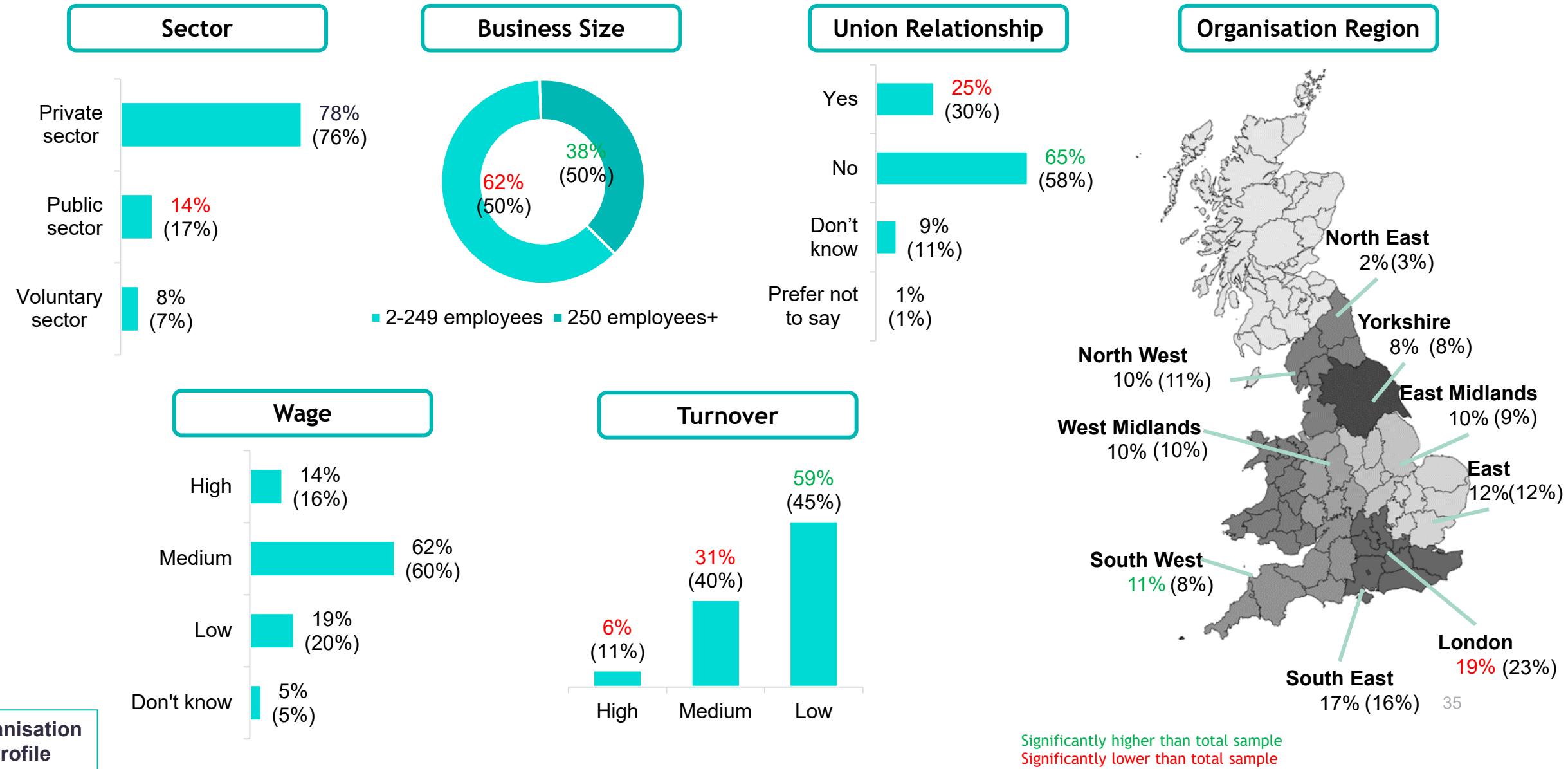


We are very much keen for people, whatever their age and experience, if they do a good job they get rewarded... Age is just a number, its about attitude and behaviour



Everybody should be responsible for it, esp as we are so small - ultimate responsibility is with the board but HR plays a part in implementation

Meritocrats tend to represent a small or medium-sized organisation with low employee turnover



Meritocrats display an increased likelihood of believing that their organisation is inclusive of various protected characteristics, including age, but are less likely than average across the labour market to cover them in a formal policy

27% (31%)

State that increasing diversity and inclusivity is a workforce priority

75% (73%)

Agree their organisation is diverse and inclusive

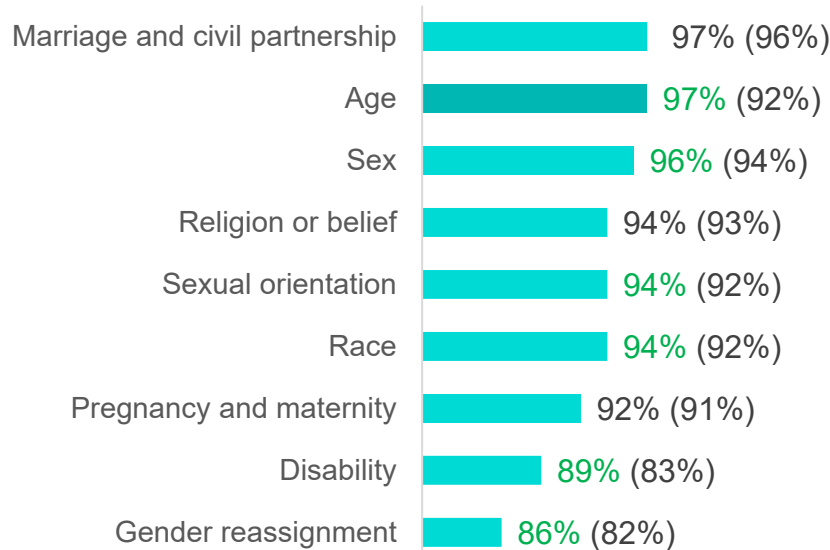
89% (82%)

Agree people have an equal chance of succeeding in their organisation

87% (82%)

Agree people have an equal chance for their voice to be heard in their organisation

Perception of being Inclusive of Protected Characteristics



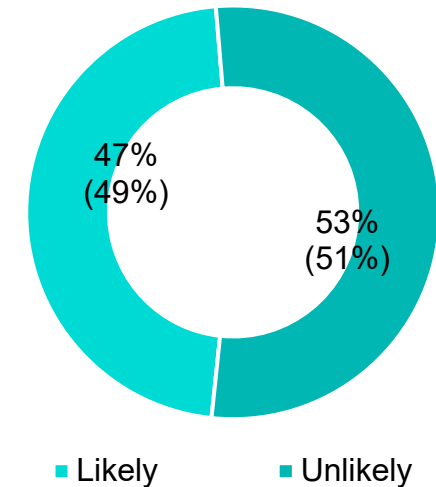
Organisational Policies

60% (68%)
Cover protected characteristics in a D&I policy

48% (49%)
Cover age in a D&I policy

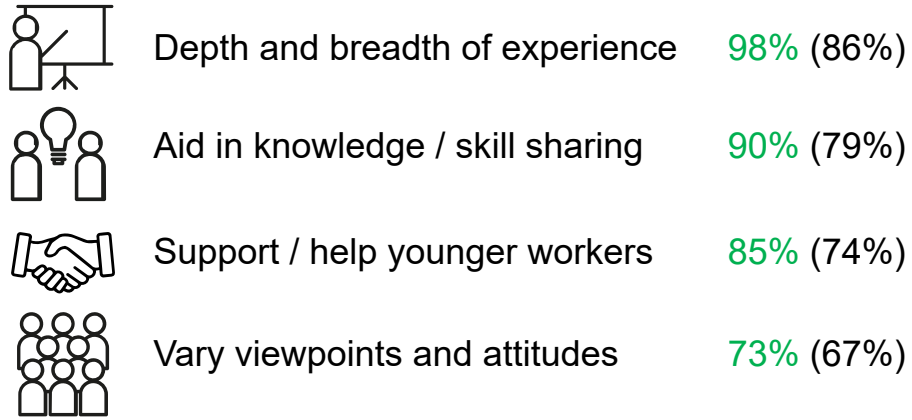
73% (69%)
Have a combined D&I policy

Likelihood to Develop Age Policies

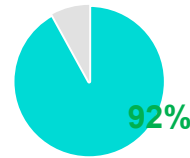


Meritocrats consistently express higher than average recognition of the benefits of employing older workers, and are less likely to identify disadvantages

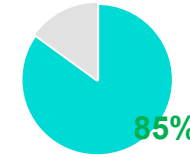
Benefits of older workers to workforce



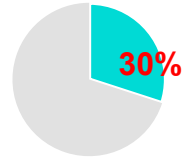
Agreement on older workers



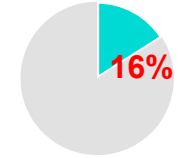
'Older workers' experience is crucial to the success of the organisation'
(Compared to 76% total)



'Older workers can help address future challenges our workforce might face'
(Compared to 69% total)



'Older workers cost more overall'
(Compared to 35% total)

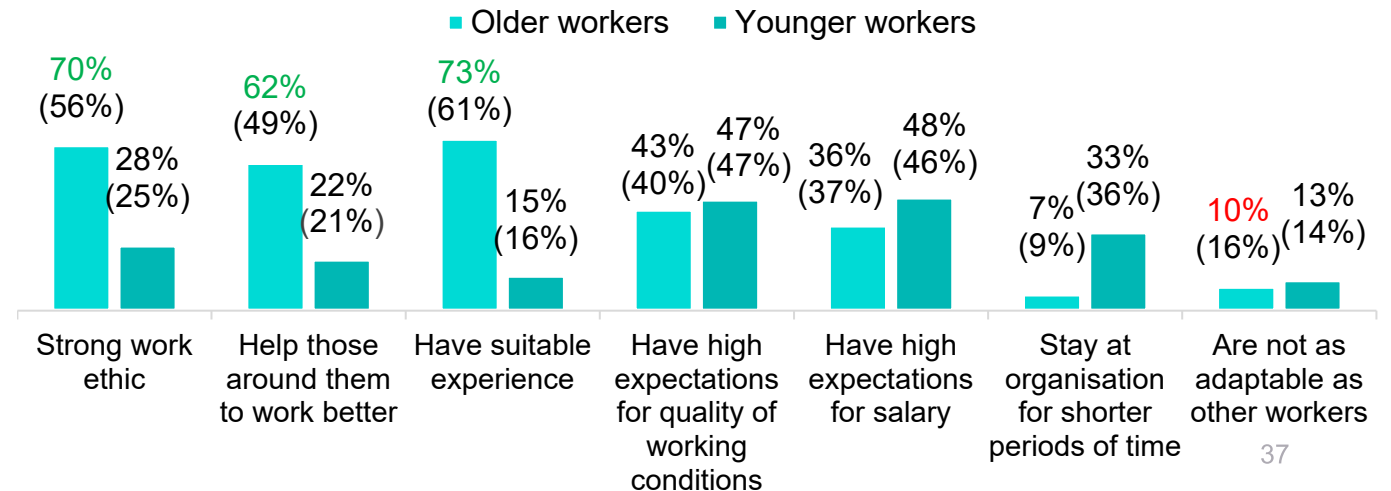


'Older workers are too stuck in their ways'
(Compared to 28% total)

Disadvantages of older workers to workforce (Top 5)



Attributes of older and younger workers (Applies to most / all)



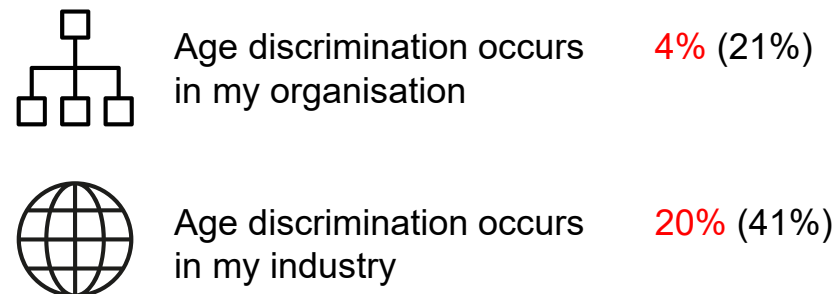
Significantly higher than total sample
Significantly lower than total sample

Meritocrats are much less likely than average to express an awareness of any potential challenges faced by older workers in their organisation and more widely

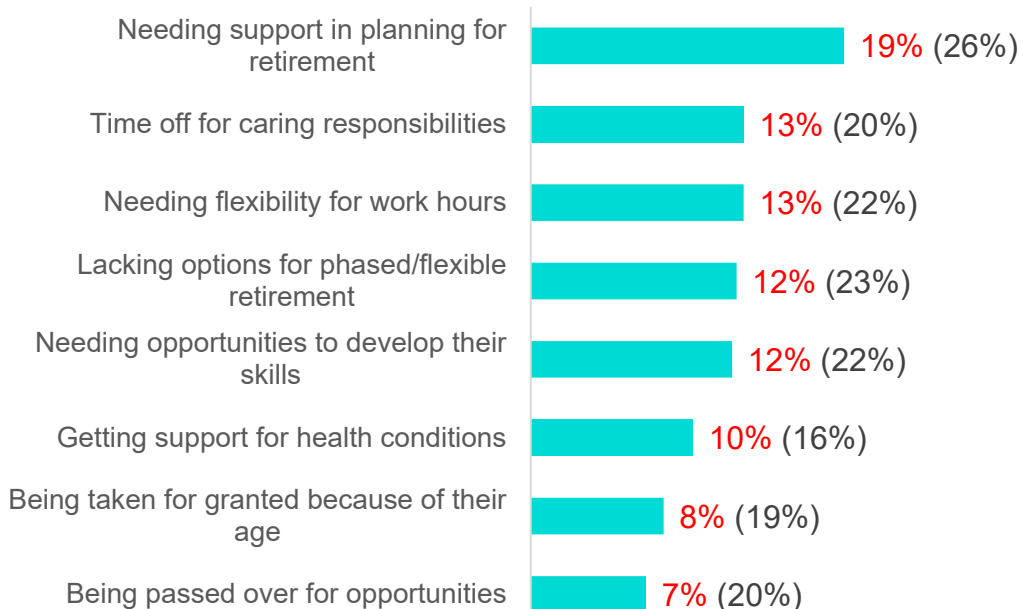
Knowledge of Age Inclusivity



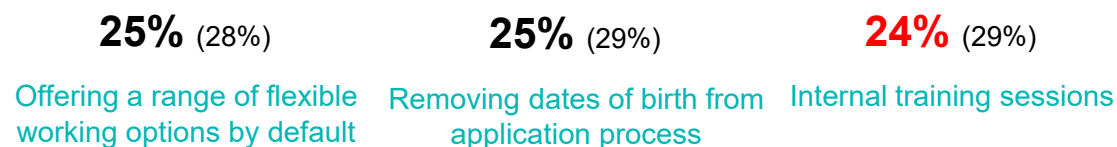
Prevalence of Age Discrimination



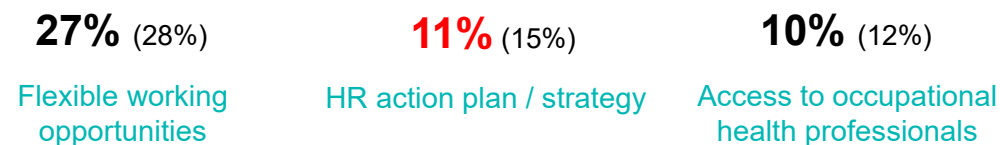
Key Issues Faced by Older Workers in Organisation



Practices Currently in Place (Top 3)



Inclusive Practice Priorities (Top 3)



Age Inclusivity in the Workplace

Significantly higher than total sample
Significantly lower than total sample

Meritocrats are slightly less likely than average to feel their organisation has the time or resources needed to make changes to promote inclusivity, while reported knowledge is not any more of a barrier than in the labour market as a whole

55% (56%)

My organisation has the knowledge to make the changes to promote age inclusivity

37% (42%)

My organisation has the time to make the changes to promote age inclusivity

50% (55%)

My organisation has the resources to make the changes to promote age inclusivity

9% (15%)

Introducing age inclusivity could have a negative effect on other D&I priorities

50% (60%)

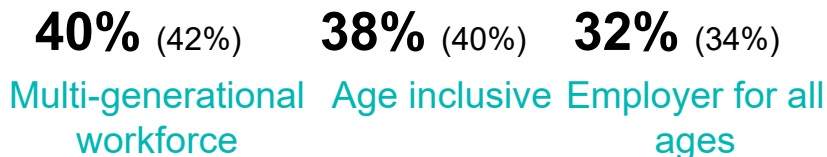
Introducing age inclusivity could have a positive effect on other D&I priorities

Motivations, Barriers and Messaging

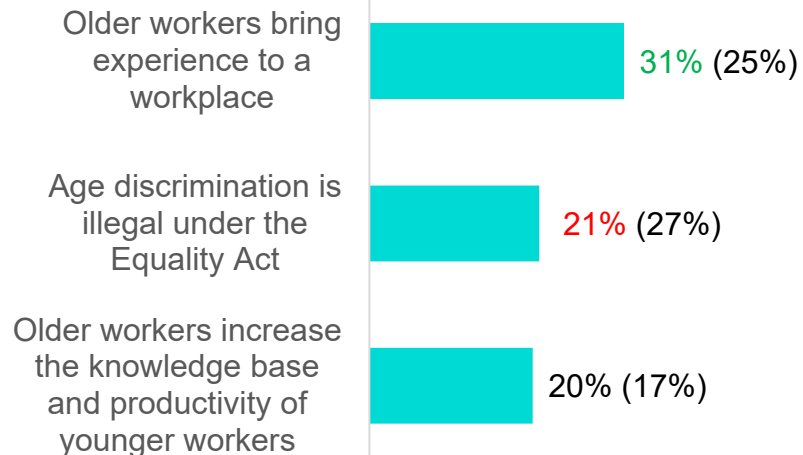
Barriers to Implementing Age Inclusive Practices in Organisation (Top 5)



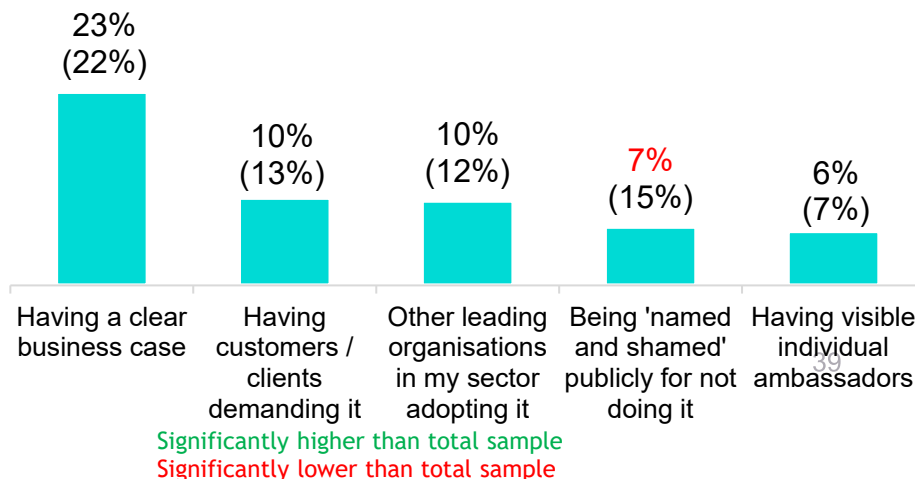
Language to Describe Age Inclusivity (Top 3)



Messaging for Age Inclusivity - Ranked First (Top 3)



Persuading Organisation to Adopt Inclusive Practices



Meritocrats organisations seem to have a meritocratic attitude

What does age discrimination mean to them...

Most feel that they have a good mix of age in their organisation. However they often feel that issues around age don't fit within their orbit.

Some commented that age discrimination can have more of an impact on younger people as assumptions are made about their abilities and experience.

"They don't discriminate in the slightest - just need to fill the roles... I've had no experience of age discrimination whatsoever."

...current practices to stop age discrimination

Participants from the Meritocrats felt that every employee should be seen as an individual. In the recruitment process, skills and fit with culture are more important than age. Furthermore, all activities in the workplace should be inclusive.

Employees often hear about the role via word of mouth, which means that there is less diversity in terms of the types of applicants that come through

"Never ask how old a person is for recruiting. It's about fit with the team, do they bring something to the team we don't have. About experience, skillset, fit and personality to get an eclectic team"

.... Roles and responsibilities

Everyone has the responsibility to enact change. If there are targets then managers must try to meet them. Human resources have some responsibility in the recruitment process.

However senior management have the ultimate responsibility, and they need everyone's roles clear.

Age diversity allows for skill sharing however there is potential for tension between older and younger staff



Benefits of age / age diversity

- Older people can pass along skills and knowledge, and they have a more of a relaxed attitude when working under pressure.
- Good to have age diversity as there are different 'pinch points' according to age e.g. attending university, pregnancy and illness in later life.
- Age diversity also allows individuals to share different opinions and viewpoints – therefore it is important to have some shared interests to increase motivation.

“Older seen as more difficult and set in ways. Younger don't know how to knuckle down and concentrate”

“Everyone is set a target based on skill and knowledge level not by age, this levels things out, and reduces animosity between age groups”

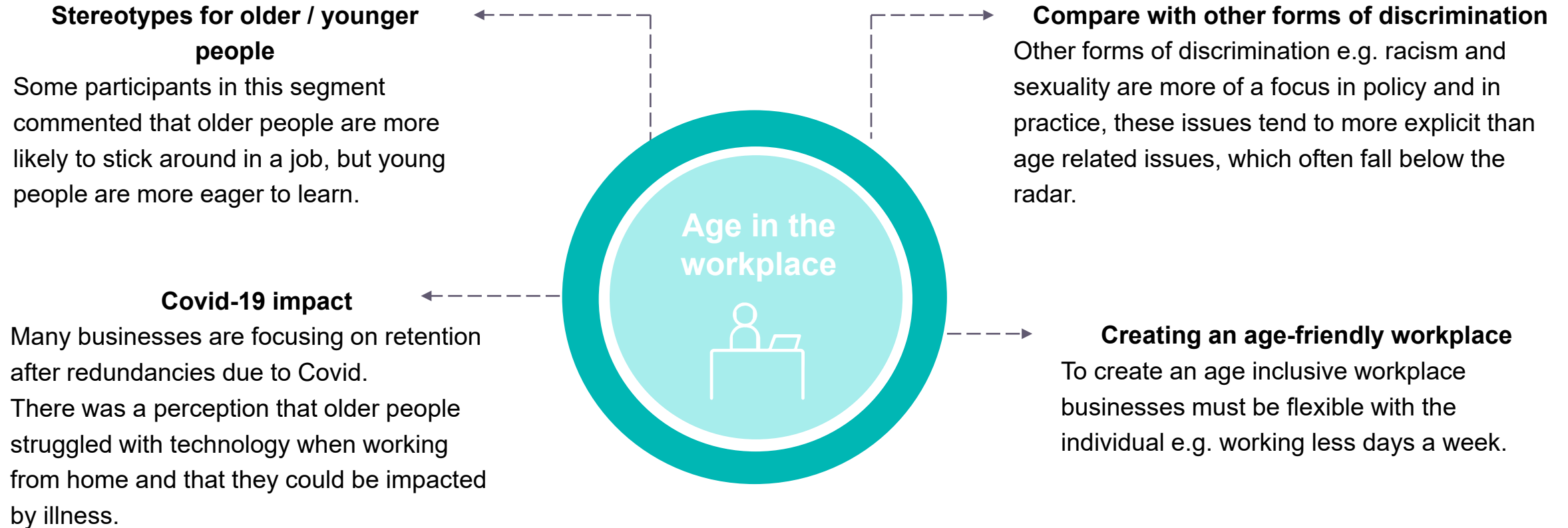


Drawbacks of age / age diversity

- There is a perception that older people are more expensive due to payment into pensions.
- Whereas younger people tend to be more hungry for progress and promotion, and are often happier to work longer hours.
- Participants commented that there can be tensions between older and younger staff around ways of working and that they prefer to have staff who match / mirror their clientele.

“If you bring in people who are more experienced they're very set in their ways”

Hiring older staff is not actively prioritised in their business



“We are very much keen for people, whatever their age and experience, if they do a good job they get rewarded.”

“Age is the hidden one, especially in big corporates... but awareness and education around gender equality, mental health, BLM are more important”

This segment emphasised the impact of language when speaking about age in the workplace

Importance of language

- Language is increasingly more important for this segment, and getting language wrong can have negative consequences, therefore consistency in language is critical.
- Any words used need to have a positive implication / tone e.g. experienced. Using the word 'older' is technically more descriptive but has negative connotations around health.
- Participants in this segment also highlighted the fact that 'senior' implies a higher rank.
- The terms age discrimination and ageism are fairly clear to participants but don't tend to be used.



“Language is always important and plays into unconscious bias”

“They should share advice on language, when we put roles out they need to be written in a way which is inclusive... trying to find the right language is difficult”

This segment wanted to hear from other business' and learn how age diversity impacted them



Supporting / encouraging businesses

- This segment recruit staff based on their personal skillset and experience rather than age, as well as their potential for the future. Their current system works well therefore they don't feel necessarily feel motivated to make significant changes.
- Sharing best practice is attractive as it is practical and one can learn from businesses with similar challenges.
- Kitemarks, pledge and toolkits do not feel as engaging and could be easy to ignore.

“Best practice stood out for me - we could do more and learn more from experiences of others”

“Framework is a great starting point. As we grow we are trying to establish best practice for recruitment”

Typical Detractors case study - Samantha, arts/hospitality



Context

Samantha is a buying director for an organisation that is open to the public with on site hospitality

Her organisation employs those who work in catering as well as those who are experts in the arts. They had to make a number of redundancies due to covid.



Barriers and enablers

She feels that older staff are mainly in managerial positions and therefore protected from the risk of redundancies – it is younger people who have to bear the brunt

She also feels that nepotism at the managerial level and a 'closed' pool of senior leaders in the industry is far more of a threat than age discrimination



Current practices

Very few – she is unaware of any policies or practices that relate specifically to age discrimination, despite having a very clued up HR department who are hot on this agenda

However Samantha sees herself at 'odds' with her organisation – she personally values the expertise and calmness that older employees have (she is over 50 herself)



Communication

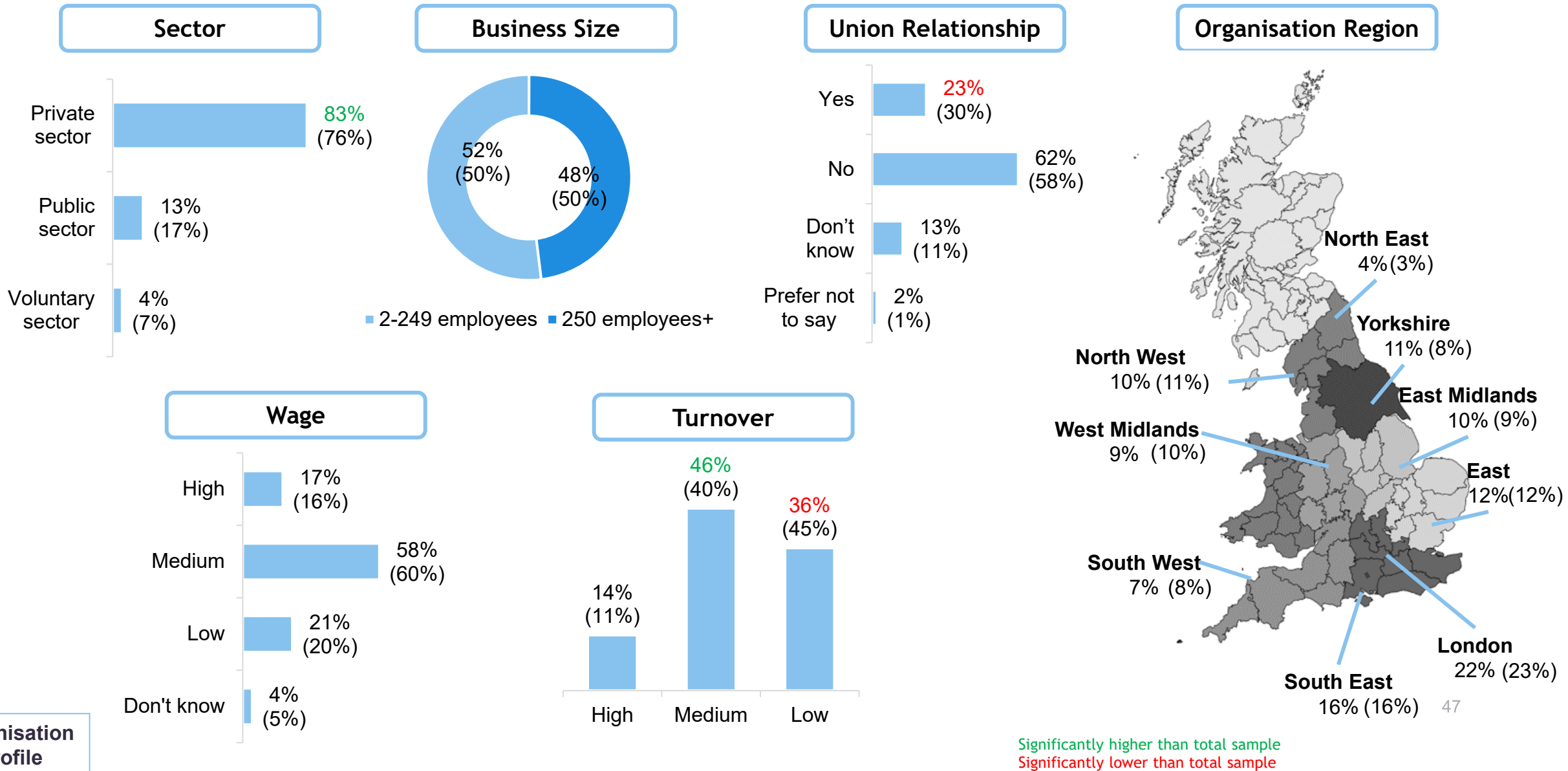
Again, very little. Her organisation does not communicate on this issue despite frequent diversity and inclusion drives

She is most attracted to the idea of peer to peer learning – she feels that it sounds much less condescending than the other initiatives



Our organisation is “bang on it” and has dealt with everything else apart from age

Detractors more often than average represents a private sector organisation with medium levels of staff turnover



Detractors tend to place less importance than average on diversity and inclusion across the board, but their reported likelihood to develop age inclusive policies within the next year is more or less in line with the labour market as a whole

22% (31%)

State that increasing diversity and inclusivity is a workforce priority

66% (73%)

Agree their organisation is diverse and inclusive

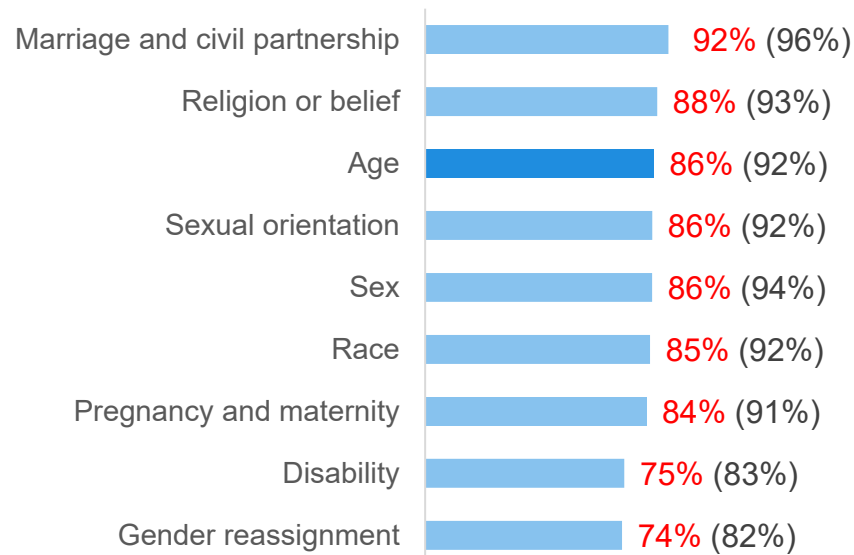
75% (82%)

Agree people have an equal chance of succeeding in their organisation

76% (82%)

Agree people have an equal chance for their voice to be heard in their organisation

Perception of being Inclusive of Protected Characteristics



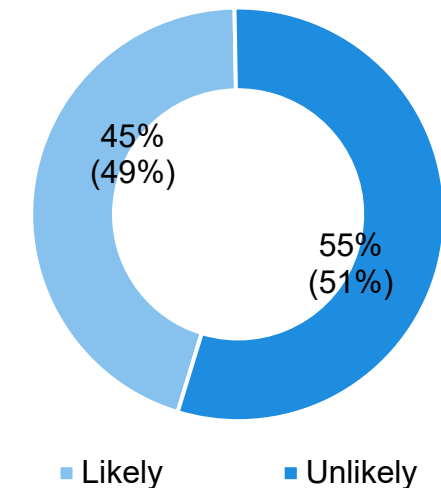
Organisational Policies

61% (68%)
Cover protected characteristics in a D&I policy

35% (49%)
Cover age in a D&I policy

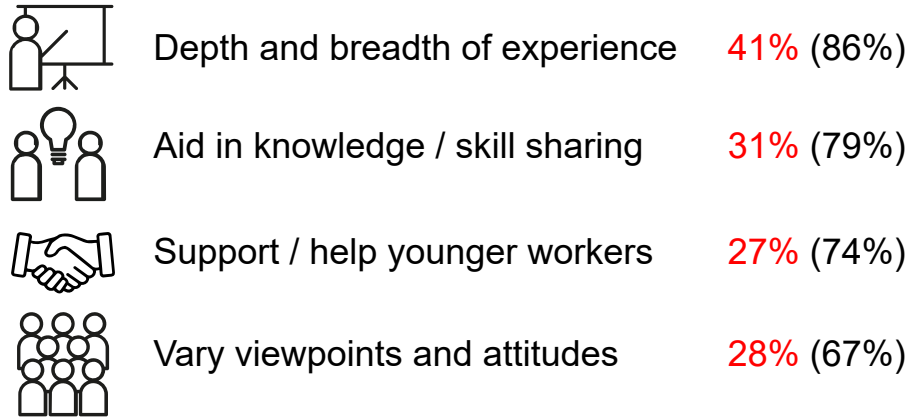
62% (69%)
Have a combined D&I policy

Likelihood to Develop Age Policies

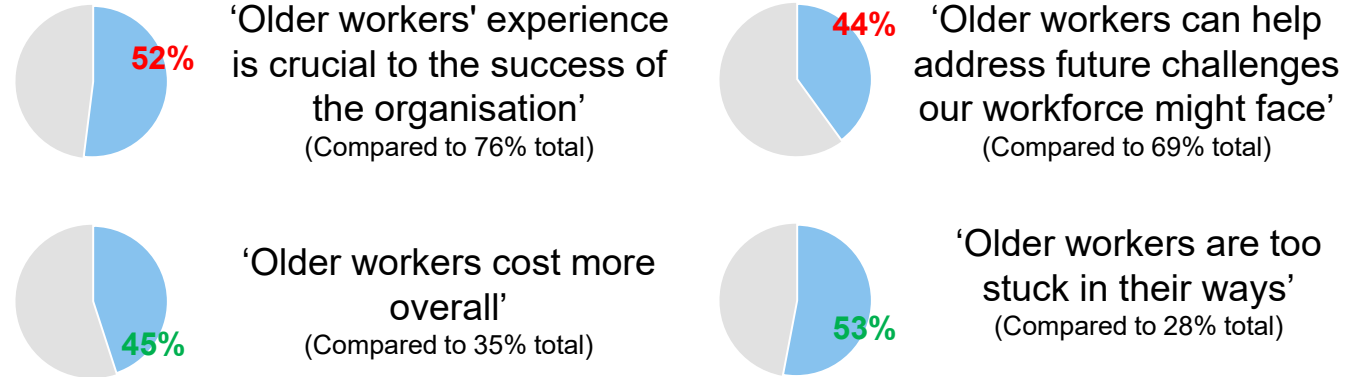


Detractors are less likely to recognise benefits of employing older workers, and have heightened perceptions of them being less adaptable and more expensive

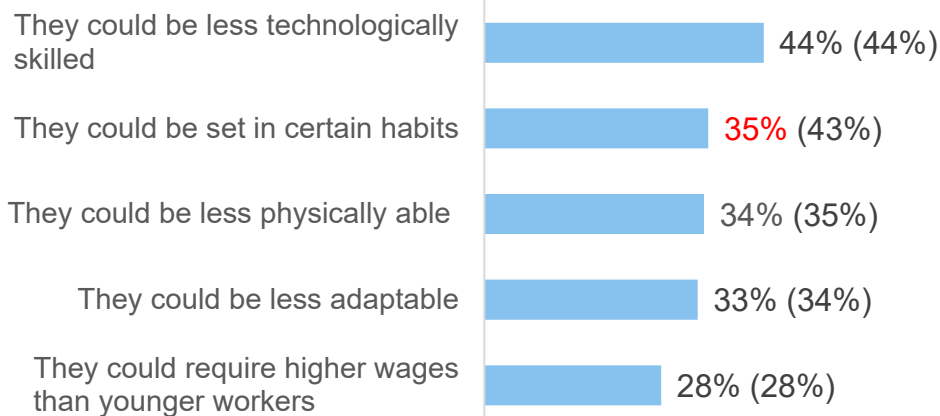
Benefits of older workers to workforce



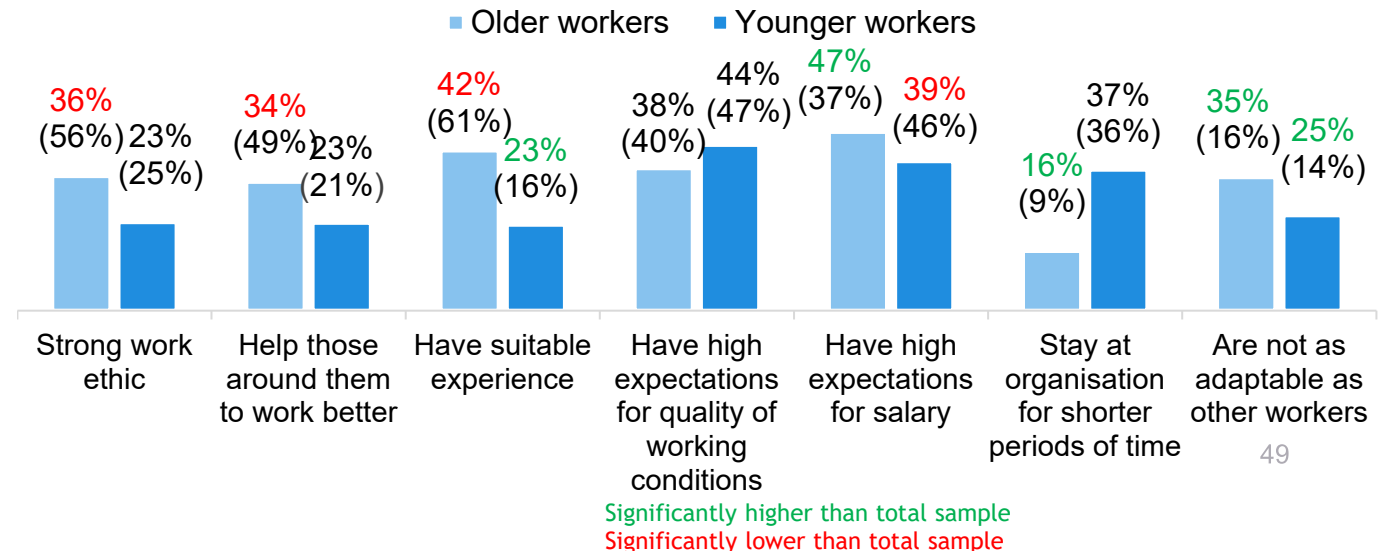
Agreement on older workers



Disadvantages of older workers to workforce (Top 5)



Attributes of older and younger workers (Applies to most / all)

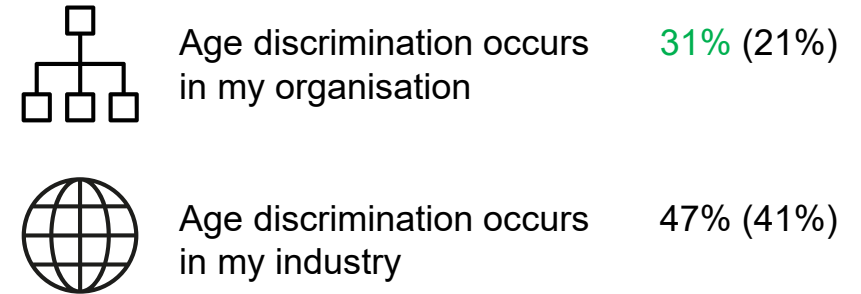


Detractors often acknowledge that age discrimination occurs in their organisation and report lower levels of implementation of age inclusive practices than average

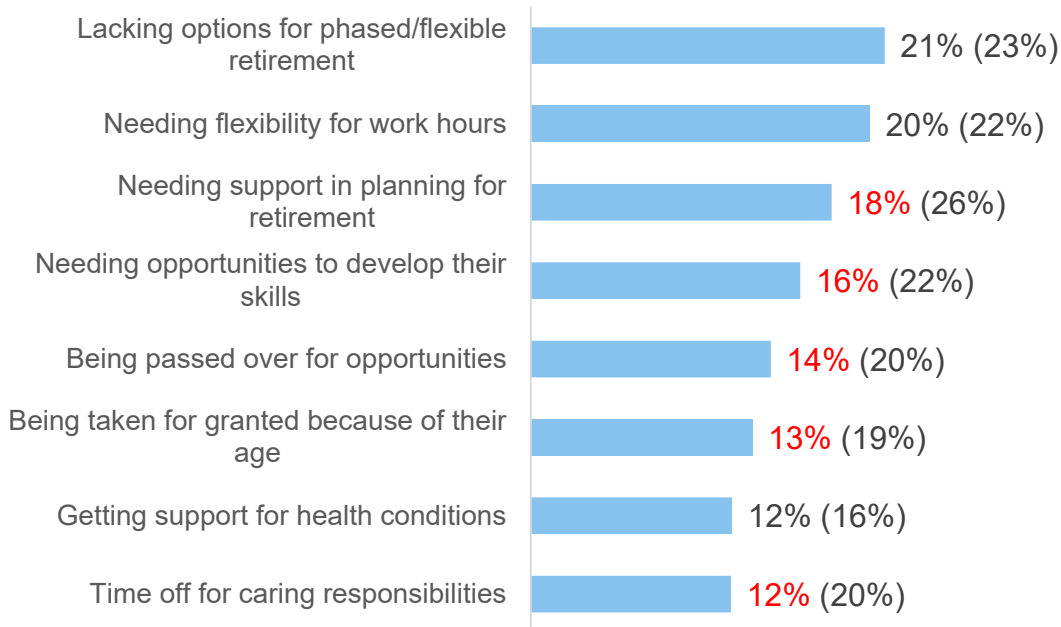
Knowledge of Age Inclusivity



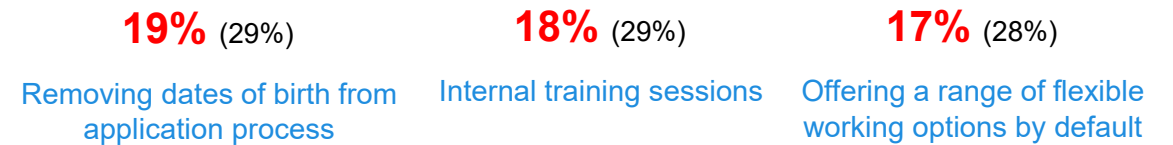
Prevalence of Age Discrimination



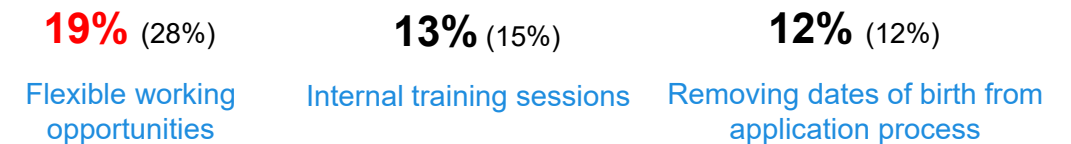
Key Issues Faced by Older Workers in Organisation



Practices Currently in Place (Top 3)



Inclusive Practice Priorities (Top 3)



Detractors are more likely than average to believe that introducing age inclusivity could have a negative effect on other D&I policies in their organisation. However, they identify messaging about workplaces needing to support people to work for longer as a way of convincing their organisation to be age inclusive

52% (56%)

My organisation has the knowledge to make the changes to promote age inclusivity

37% (42%)

My organisation has the time to make the changes to promote age inclusivity

52% (55%)

My organisation has the resources to make the changes to promote age inclusivity

33% (15%)

Introducing age inclusivity could have a negative effect on other D&I priorities

42% (60%)

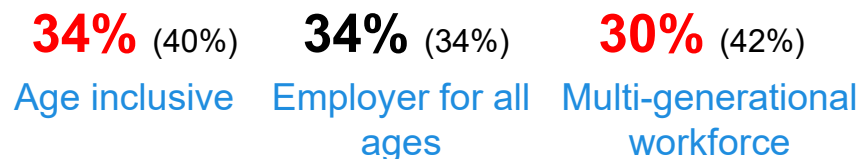
Introducing age inclusivity could have a positive effect on other D&I priorities

Motivations, Barriers and Messaging

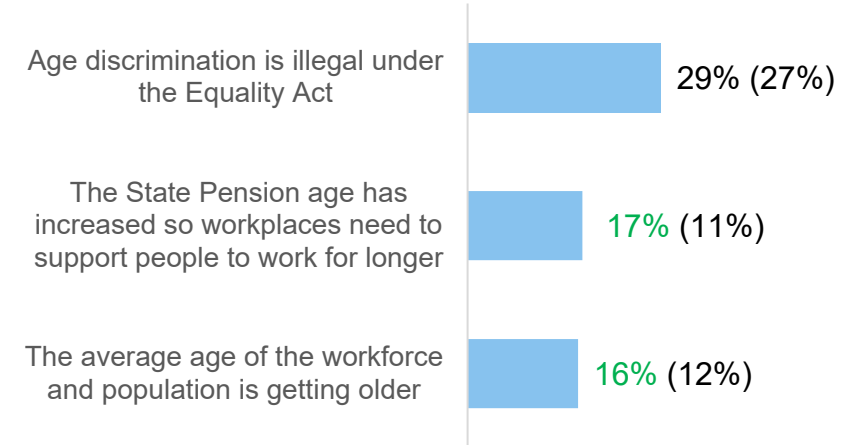
Barriers to Implementing Age Inclusive Practices in Organisation (Top 5)



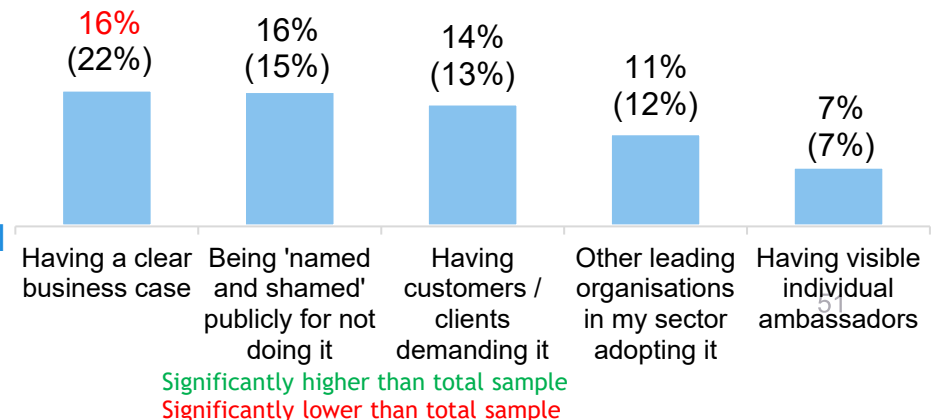
Language to Describe Age Inclusivity (Top 3)



Messaging for Age Inclusivity - Ranked First (Top 3)



Persuading Organisation to Adopt Inclusive Practices



Age discrimination is low priority for those in this segment as they often do not feel the need to proactively encourage older staff to stay

What does age discrimination mean to them...

For those we talked to in this segment, age discrimination is simply a low priority in terms of other forms of discrimination.

On the whole those we spoke to were often those who were concerned about discrimination generally, but had a sense that concentrating on age discrimination might interfere with a focus on other sorts of discrimination

“There are no age inclusive initiatives, no need as it is an inclusive business for all. Staff would question an age incentive – creates concerns when there isn’t an issue.”

...current practices to stop age discrimination

Few practices are in place to prevent age discrimination – in many cases even to monitor it. The perception amongst those we spoke to was that their organisations do not see age as a priority in the wider context of other forms of discrimination. Indeed one thought having such a conversation would be “challenging”.

“I think HR would feel uncomfortable with directives or communications around age discrimination as that could be challenging”

.... Roles and responsibilities

Much of this was discussed in the hypothetical – like other segments, there are HR and senior leadership teams that would deal with age discrimination if it was perceived to be a priority. But again, many do have embedded practices and policies in place to address other types of discrimination

The drawbacks of having an older workforce are often at front of mind

There were a mixture of views in the qualitative interviews as to whether or not age was seen as help or a hindrance. For most of those we spoke to, age was associated with more experience, which allowed employees to perform their role to the best of their ability. However, encouraging an older workforce was felt to have a negative impact on other protected characteristics.



Benefits of age diversity

- Many have older workforces already and feel that much value is gained by having older, experienced staff – mostly in leadership positions.

“Slightly older people don’t wish to change. We’ve just changed to an academy and there are new things to do within their role – some are a bit reluctant - old way of working.”

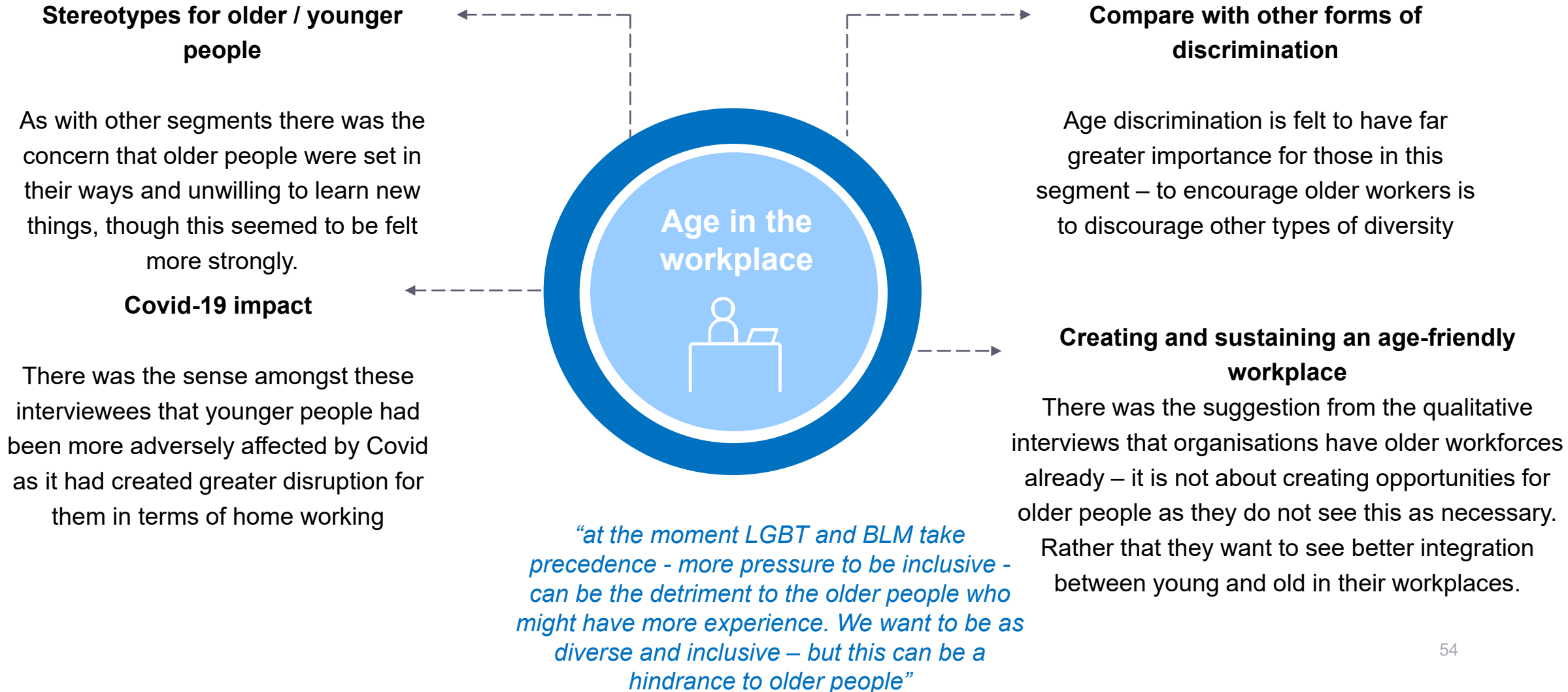


Drawbacks of age diversity

- However there is also a sense from these interviews that older staff are taking up many of the opportunities that are therefore inaccessible to younger members of staff.
- There was the sense too that they are costly, and, as with the Meritocrats, this creates enmity between younger and older members of staff
- And, reflecting the quantitative findings, there is a feeling that older workers are inflexible, and often close minded in their approach

“I would definitely say we’re not an ageist organisation but on the retail side we are definitely looking for a younger employee because older people are set in their ways and not looking to learn.”

For many, the priority is scaling back the number of older people in their workforce



Thoughts on language were broadly similar to those in other segments

Importance of language

- The qualitative interviews did not reveal any major differences between this segment and others in terms of the importance of euphemistic language
- For one, it was fine and unproblematic to use 'older' as it was a statement of fact.
- There was a sense, however, that the term 'age discrimination' is avoided where possible – both because it is a low priority, and perhaps the sense that those in this segment need to 'tread carefully' around their older workforce.



“We are all open, we all know how old we are, no-one has an issue with this. May use the term ‘youngsters’ in a friendly manner”

“No discussions per se around age. We use veiled terms such as experience or track record.”

And there was some appetite for recognition – despite a lack of desire to make changes



Supporting / encouraging businesses

- Like those in other segments, some of the qualitative interviewees felt that accreditations would be popular both to individual employees and their organisations, but not necessarily that this would do enough to foster a greater emphasis on age equality in their workplace.
- Generally there seemed to be more suspicion and cynicism towards the actual difference that these initiatives would make to their workplace and to the employment market more broadly.

“that’s a good suite of tools - the standard is the pledge and the kitemark - getting recognition. The Same goes for benchmark and toolkit - getting that guidance elsewhere, get best practice, this is what our company is doing. All of that is valuable ”

Cross-segment comparison

Using Evangelists as a point of comparison for attitudes and behaviours towards age inclusive working, most other segments sit significantly below this group when looking across a range of variables, particularly: covering age in a D&I policy, thinking the introduction of age inclusivity could have a positive effect, and agreement that older workers could help their organisation face future challenges.

Diversity and Inclusion Within the Workplace

Evangelists Meritocrats Sceptics Detractors

Perceive their organisation to be inclusive towards age	91%	97%	90%	86%
Cover age in a D&I policy	60%	48%	54%	35%
Likelihood to develop age policies	55%	47%	49%	45%

Attitudes to Older Workers

Evangelists Meritocrats Sceptics Detractors

Older workers can contribute as much to the job role as other employees	99%	99%	88%	69%
Older workers' experience is crucial to the success of the org.	93%	92%	73%	52%
Older workers can help address future challenges	92%	85%	60%	44%

Age Inclusivity in the Workplace

Evangelists Meritocrats Sceptics Detractors

Knowledge of age inclusivity (know a lot/a fair amount)	60%	56%	50%	47%
Age discrimination occurs in my organisation	26%	4%	29%	31%
Any age inclusive practices currently in place	77%	53%	71%	52%

Motivations, Barriers and Messaging

Evangelists Meritocrats Sceptics Detractors

Introducing age inclusivity could have a positive effect on other D&I priorities	87%	50%	64%	42%
Introducing age inclusivity could have a negative effect on other D&I priorities	10%	9%	12%	33%

Significantly higher than Evangelists
Significantly lower than Evangelists

Conclusions from the qualitative interviews

Key takeouts – what the qualitative interviews tell us



Variation exists

There was a large amount of attitudinal variation within the interviews in each segment. Often the employee we spoke to was at odds with their company's policy in relation to age discrimination. Many have policies in place but poor practice and many are the opposite, having few policies but good practice. The segments incorporate a broad range of attitudes and the context in which the business operates often defines their policies, as opposed to a more general attitude to older workers

Sector is key

Very often it is the sector in which the organisation operates that defines their age friendly practice. Two interviewees in Evangelists provided care to the oldest old, therefore had ingrained policies in place to employ older workers to match the ages of their clientele. And some manufacturing companies were Detractors due to the physical nature of the work. Others, including engineering firms, had age-friendly workplaces due to the need to retain accumulated knowledge and skills

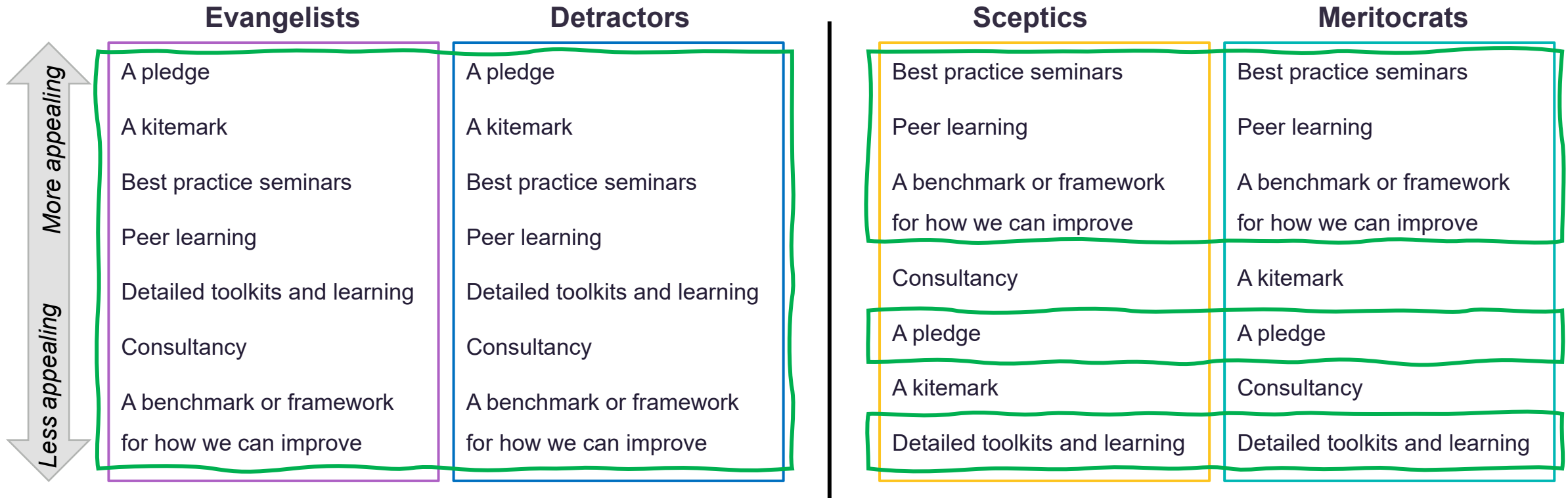
Segments are not indicative of their overall attitudes

It should not be assumed that those in Meritocrats or Detractors have poor or less well established attitudes to, and processes around diversity and inclusion – often the opposite is true. The more that HR organisations invest in D&I this often seems to be at the expense of age friendliness. Many see hiring younger staff as a much greater priority for their business and that the older staff they have are a burden that they need to offload

Age has to compete with other D&I issues

Put simply, organisations seem to feel that a diversity agenda that focuses on gender and ethnicity is at odds with retaining older staff who tend to be white and male. The need to incorporate age within a wider D&I framework is key – many simply see it as, at best, a low priority, and at worst, one that goes against their wider equality and diversity agenda

The appeal of particular age-friendly work practices varies, however preference is consistent across some of the segments



For **Evangelists and 4**, the appeal of particular age-friendly practices is ordered in the exact same way, with pledges, kitemarks and best practice seminars being most appealing.

Sceptics and 3 have very similar views to each other on the appeal of the age-friendly practices, yet rank them differently to Evangelists and 4. Best practice seminars, peer learning and benchmarks / frameworks for improvement are most attractive.