

British Social Attitudes 43: First Look

12th February 2026



The British Social Attitudes Survey

- Annual, nationally representative survey of adults in the UK
- Run continuously by NatCen since 1983
- BSA: First Look is the first of four publications planned for this year
- Questions have been selected for inclusion in the report where:
 - a) There is an existing, long time-series of BSA data
 - b) The topic is of immediate policy relevance

BSA 2025 - Methodology

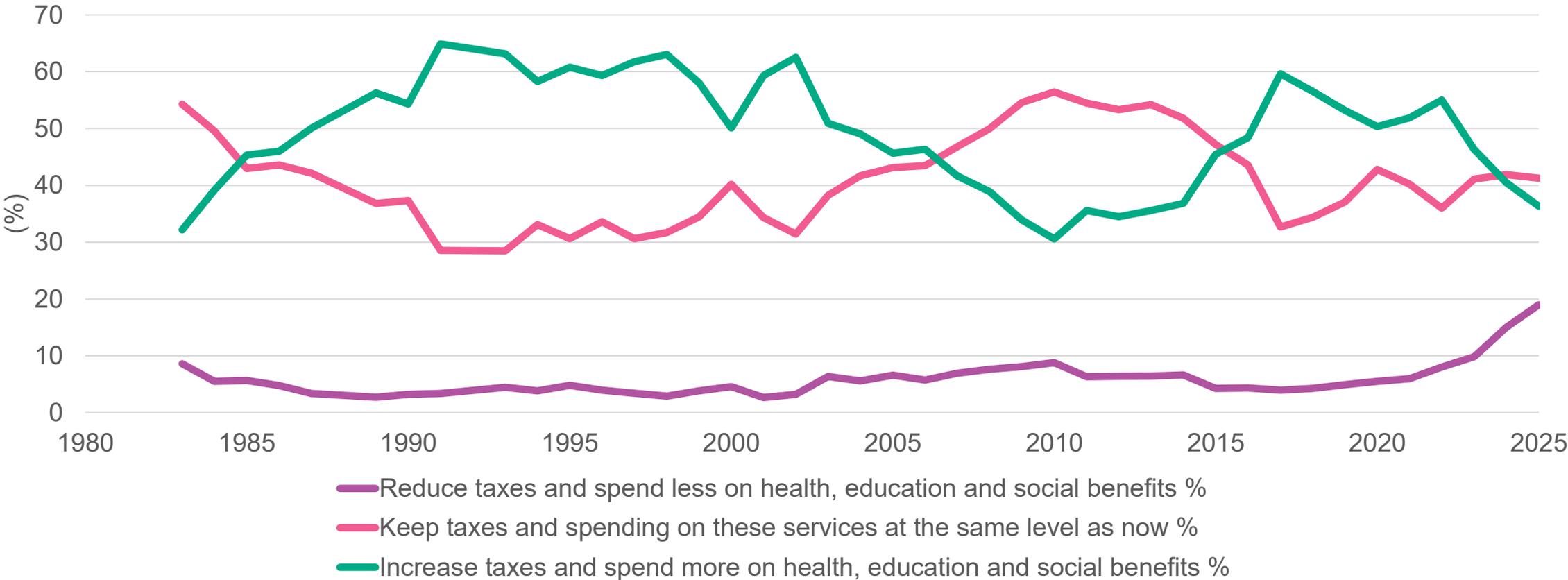
- Data in the First Look report was collected as part of BSA 2025
- Fieldwork Dates: 26th August 2025 – 6th October 2025
- Push-to-web design, with a telephone option for those unwilling / unable to take part online
- UK addresses randomly sampled from the PostCode Address File (PAF)
- 2 adults (16+) per household could take part in the survey
- Response Rates: Household: 15.6%; Individual: 11.6%

Attitudes towards taxation and spending

Suppose the government had to choose between the following three options. Which do you think it should choose?

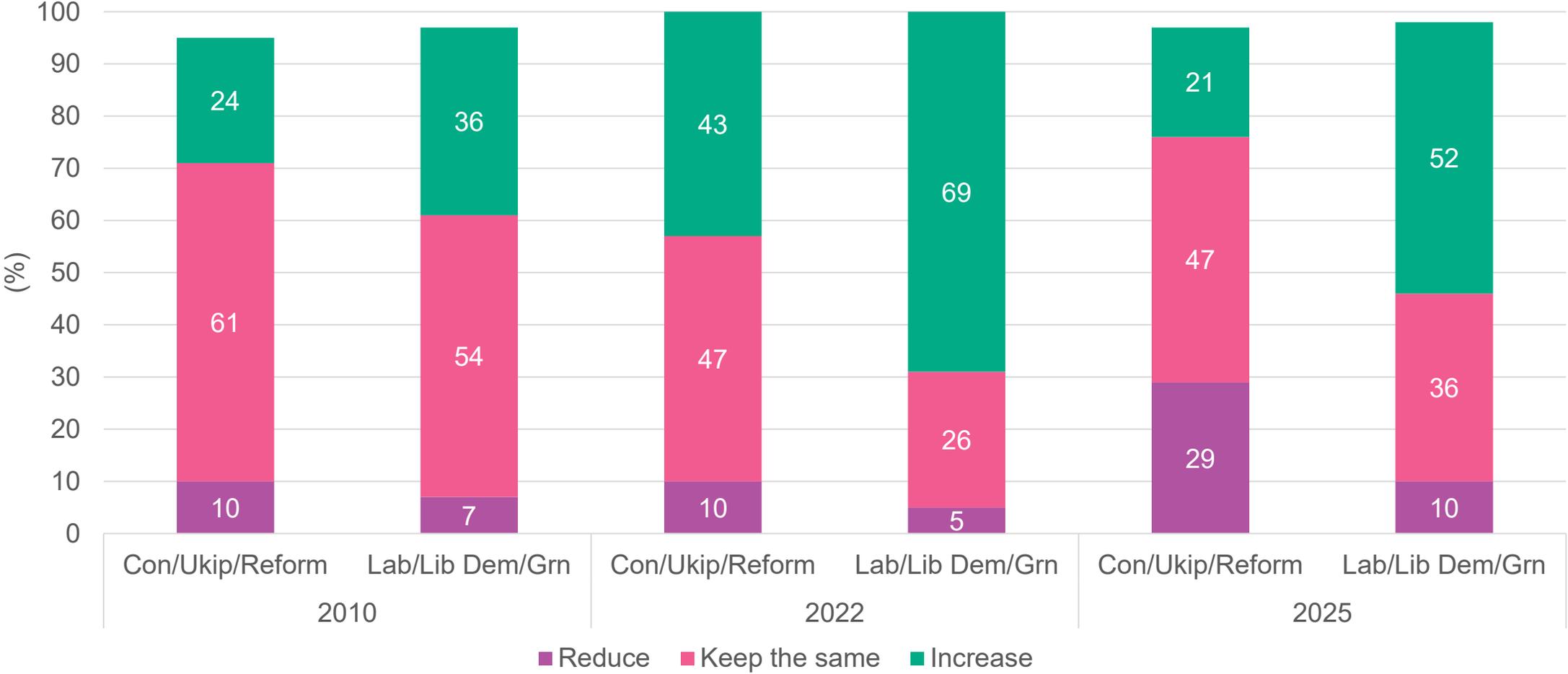
- Reduce taxes and spend less on health, education and social benefits
- Keep taxes and spending on these services at the same level as now
- Increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits

Attitudes towards taxation and spending (1983 – 2025)



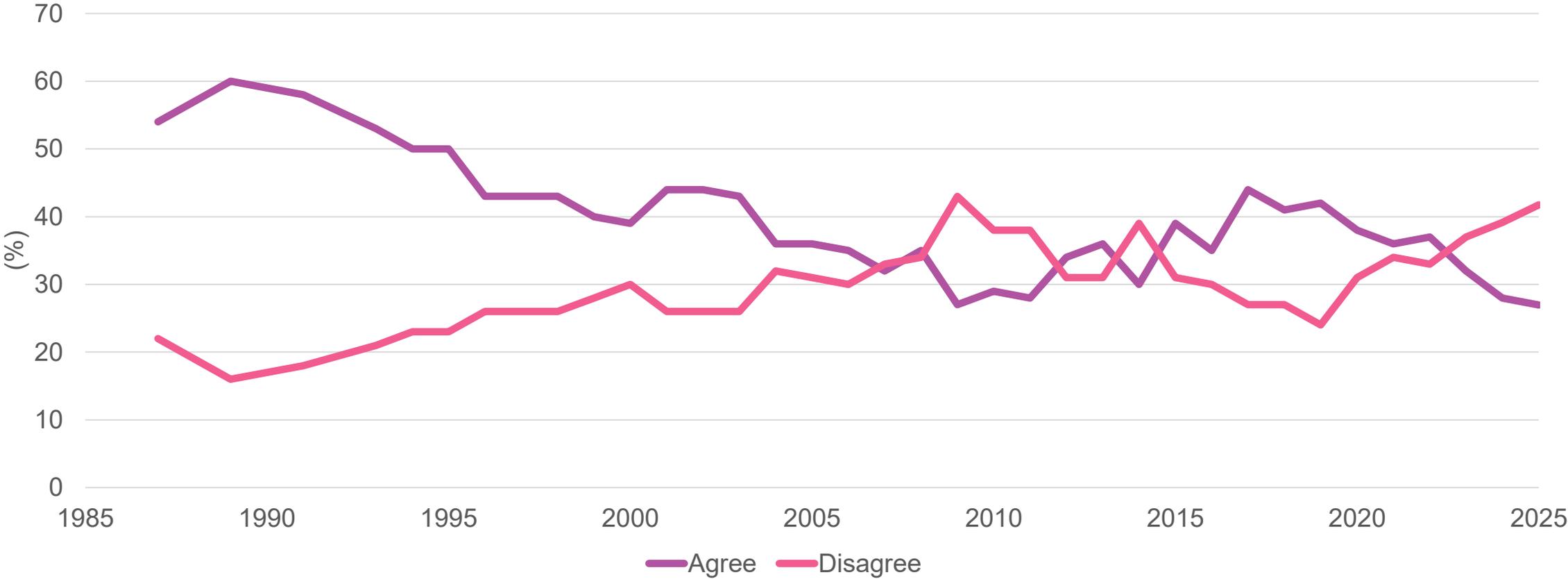
Source: British Social Attitudes; 2022: NatCen Panel (fieldwork conducted Jan 2023). BSA used face-to-face interviewing until 2019, and the current push-to web design from 2020 onwards

Attitudes towards taxation and spending by party political support (2010 – 2025)



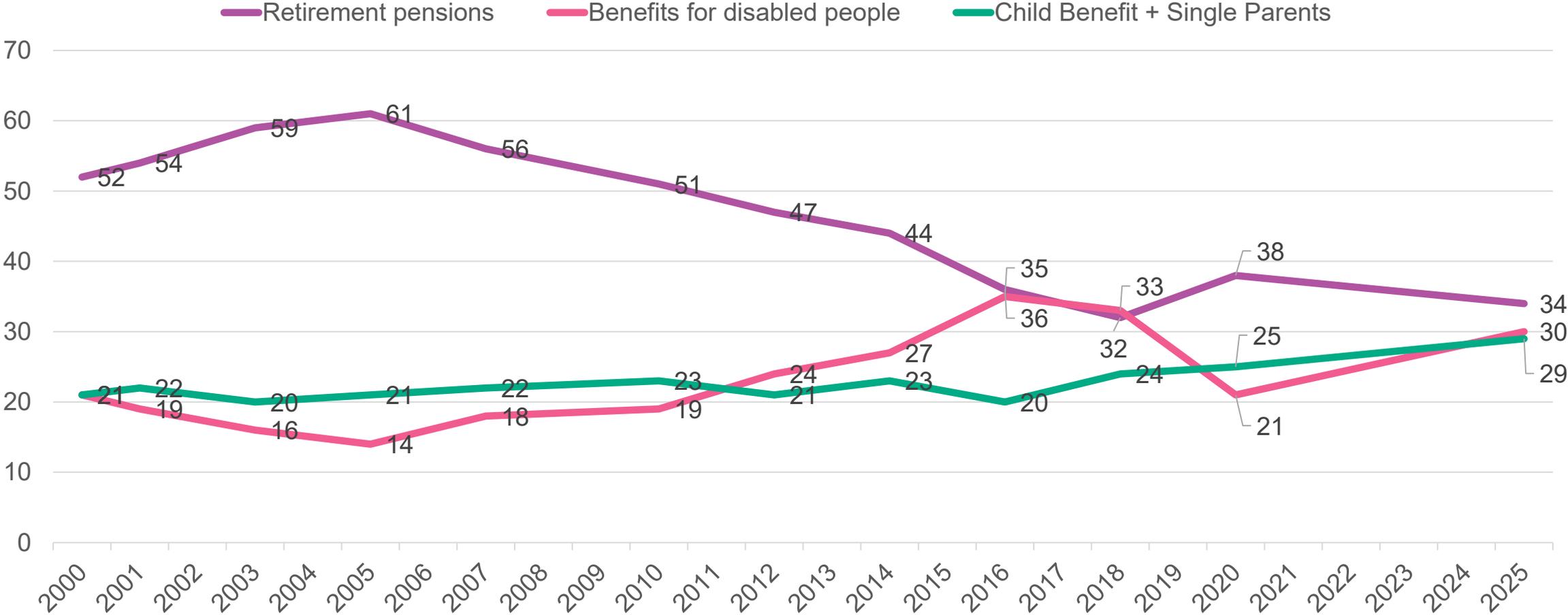
Source: BSA; The figure for Conservative/UKIP/Reform in 2010 includes a small number of respondents who at that time were identifying as supporters of the British National Party (BNP).

'The government should spend more money on welfare benefits for the poor, even if it leads to higher taxes'



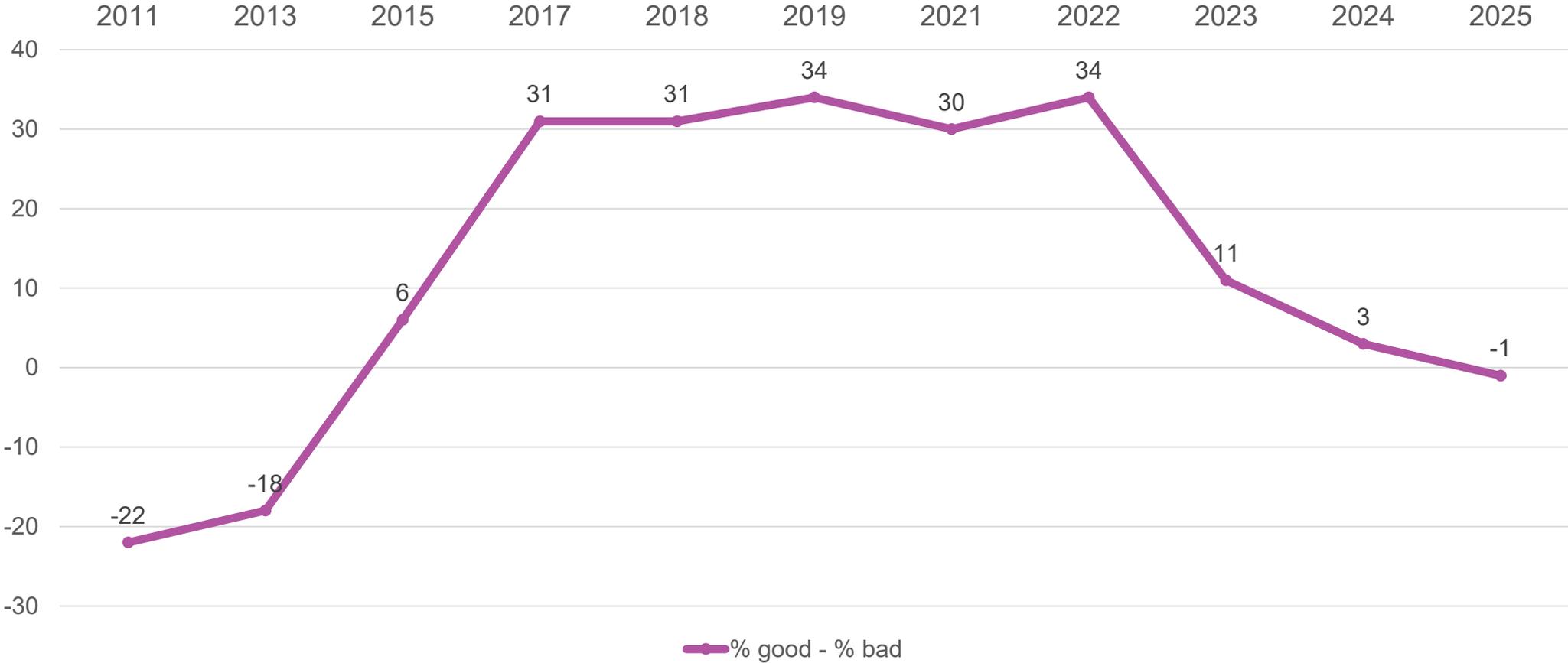
Source: BSA; BSA used face-to-face interviewing until 2019, and the current push-to web design from 2020 onwards

Thinking now only of the government’s spending on social benefits, which, if any of the following would be your highest priority for extra spending?

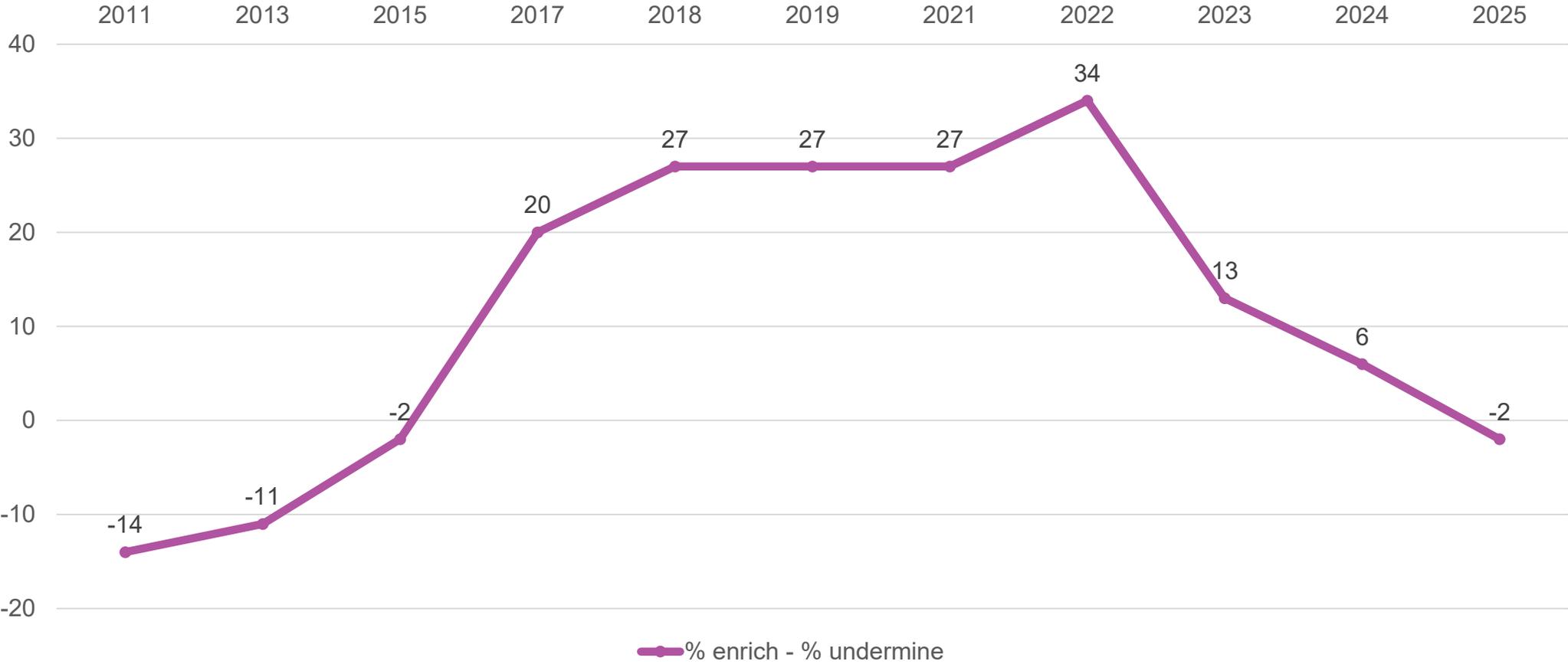


Source: BSA; BSA used face-to-face interviewing until 2019, and the current push-to web design from 2020 onwards

Net Perceptions of Economic Consequences of Migrants 2011-25

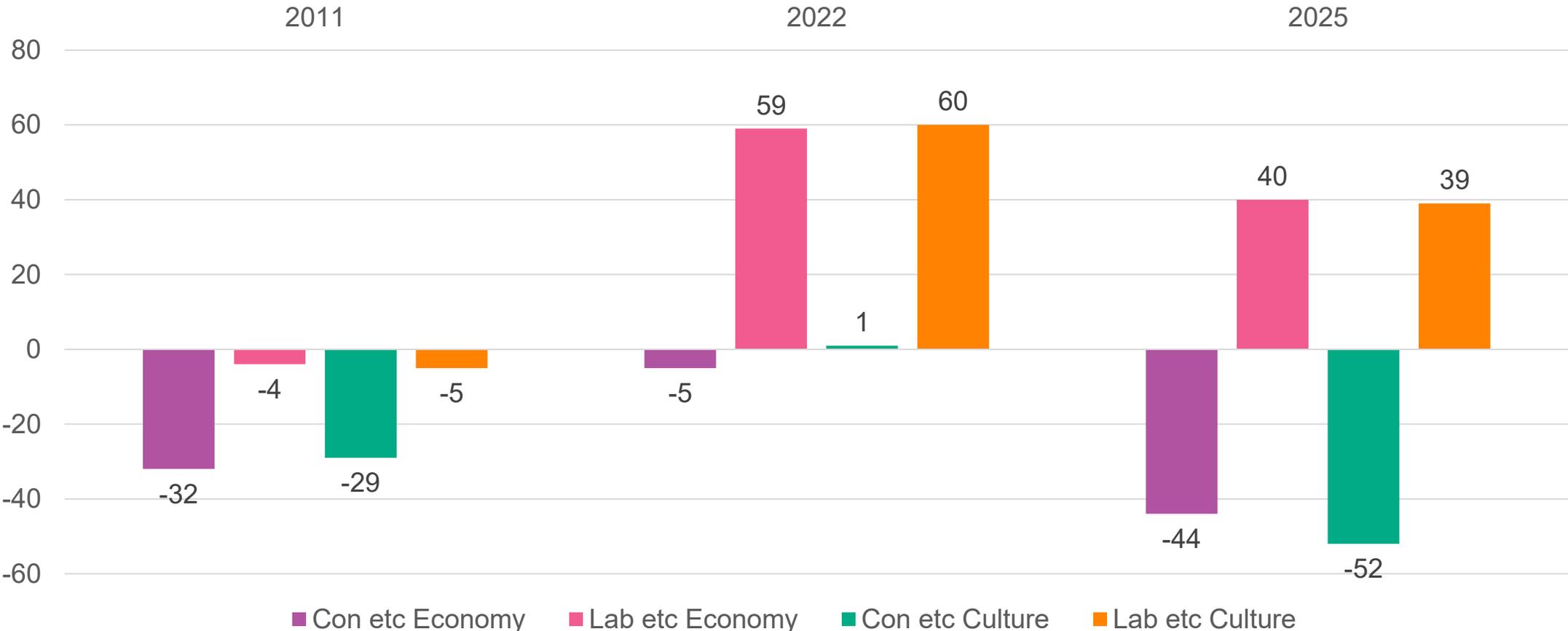


Net Perceptions of Cultural Consequences of Migrants 2011-25



Source: British Social Attitudes

The Widened Political Gap on Immigration



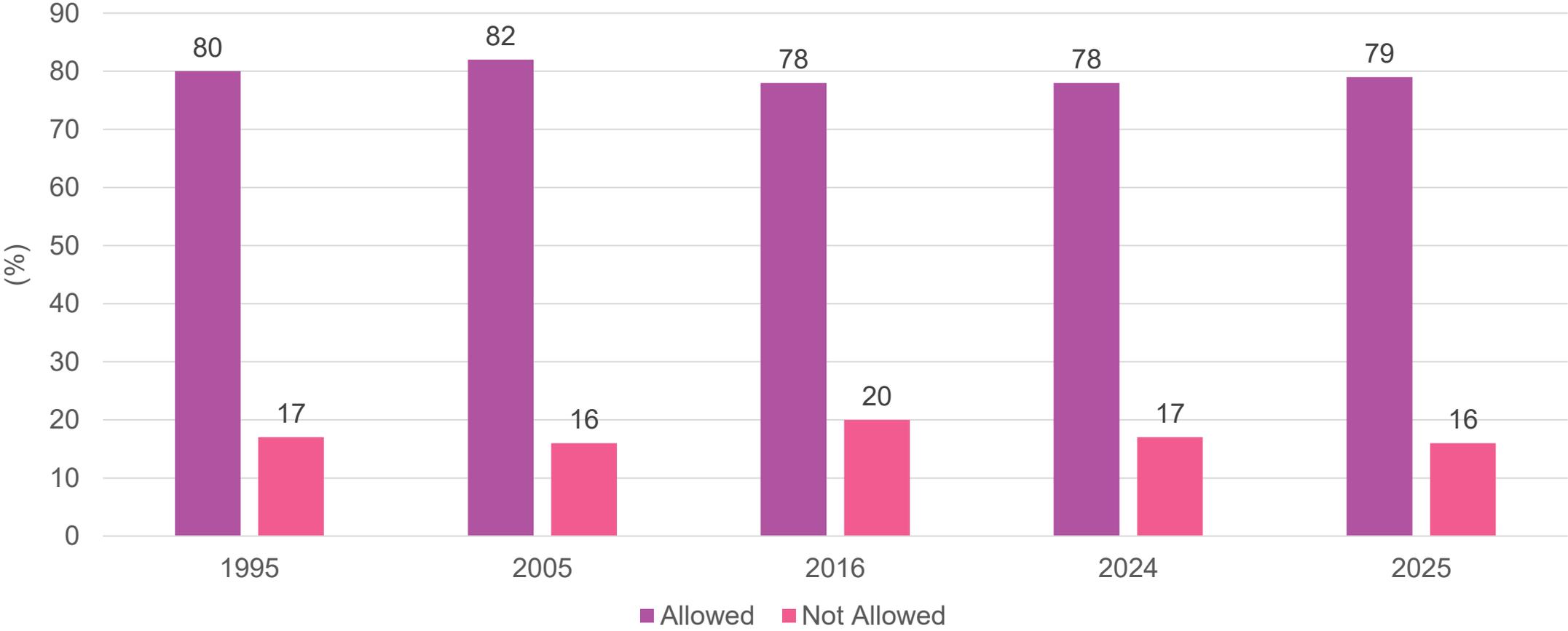
Con etc = Conservative/Ukip/Reform supporters; Lab etc = Labour/Liberal Democrat/Green supporter

Asking about Assisted Dying

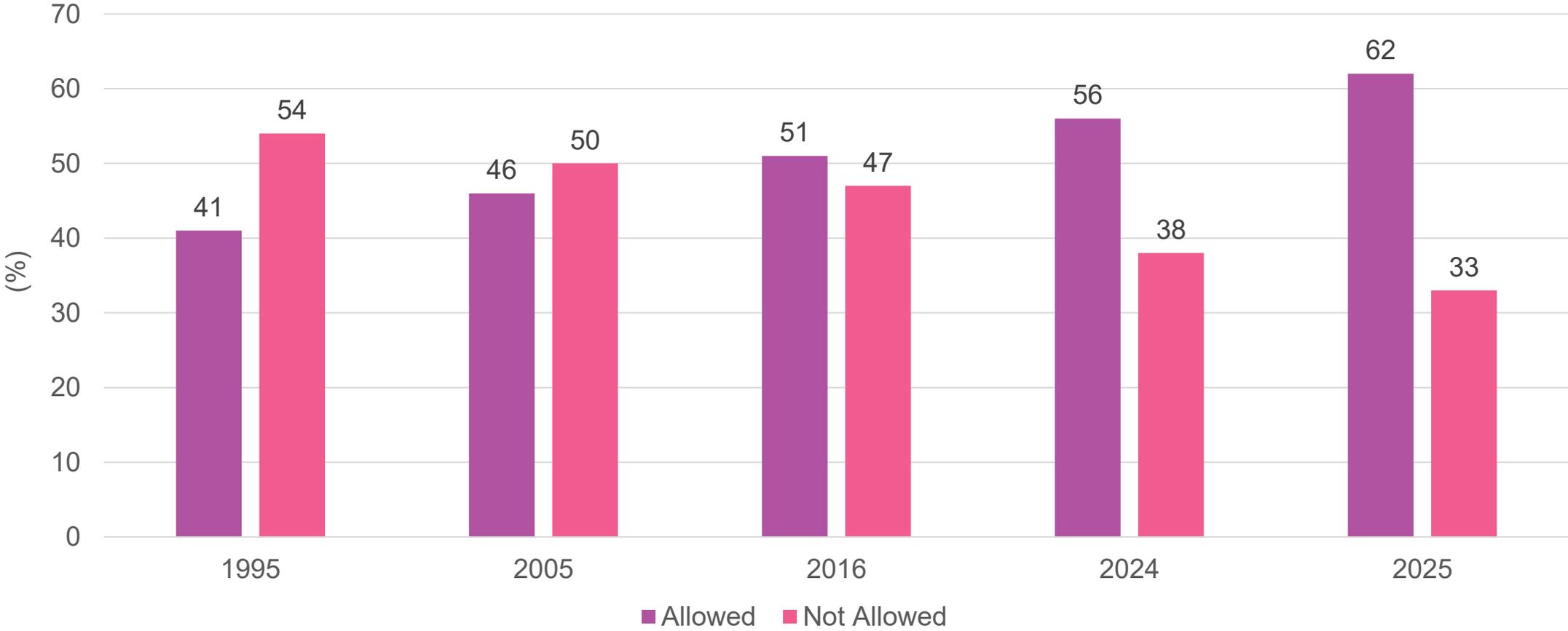
TERMINAL: *“First, a person with an incurable and painful illness, from which they are likely to die in the next few weeks or months – for example someone dying of cancer. Do you think that, if they ask for it, a doctor should ever be allowed by law to end their life, or not?”*

NON-TERMINAL: *“Next, a person with an incurable and painful illness, from which they will not die. Do you think that, if they ask for it, a doctor should ever be allowed by law to end their life, or not?”*

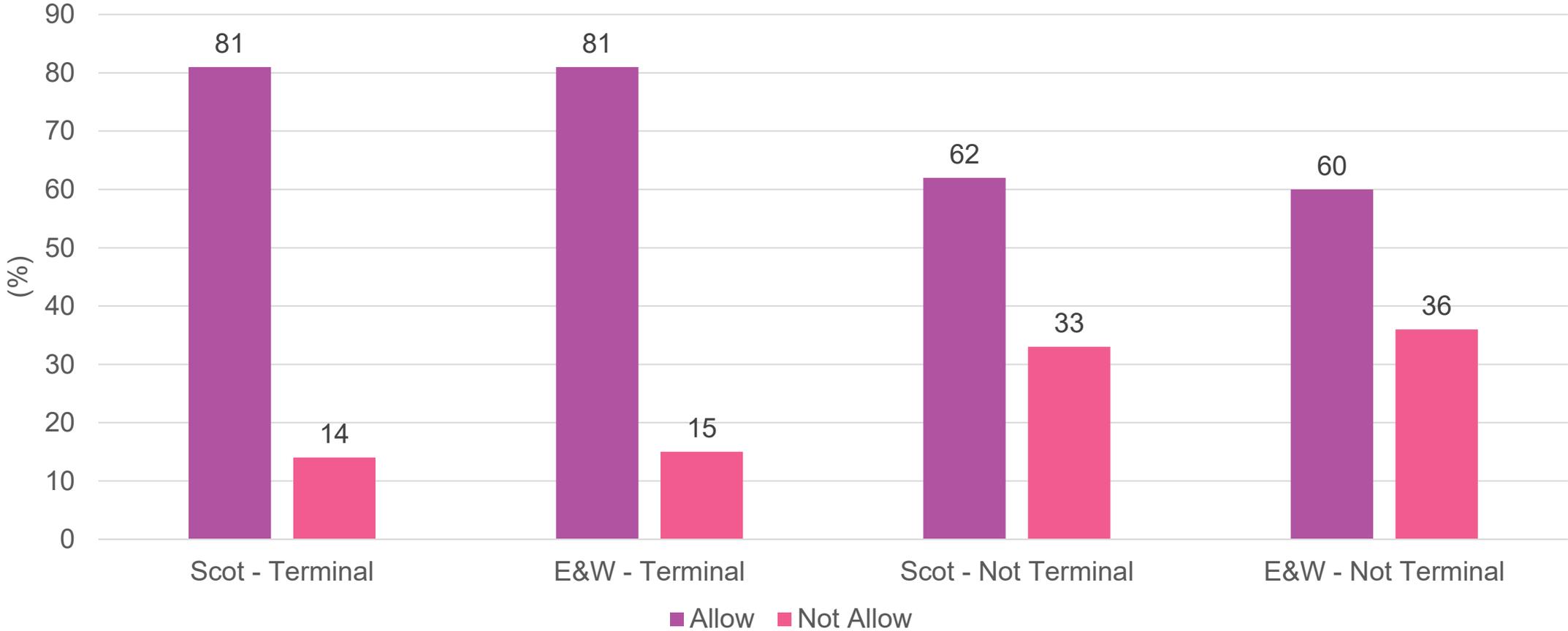
Responses to Terminal Scenario 1995-2025



Responses to Non-Terminal Scenario 1995-2025

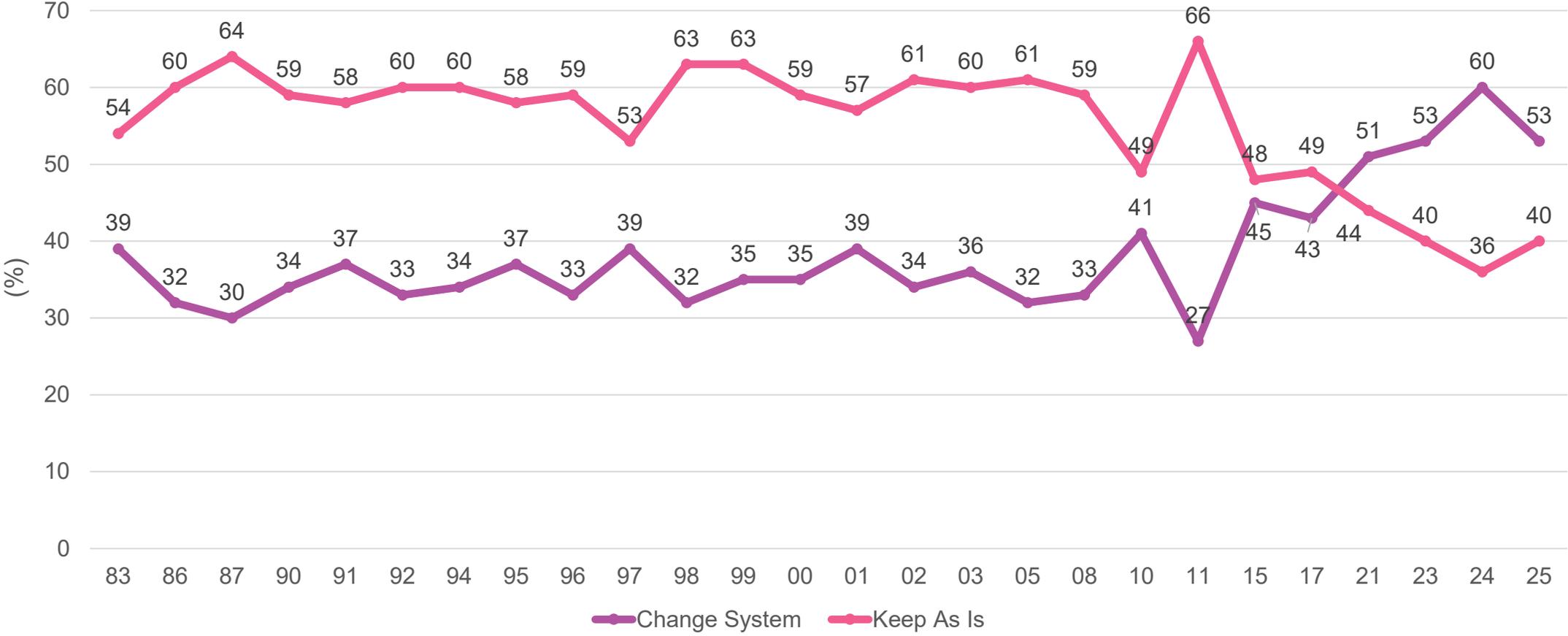


Comparing Scotland with England & Wales



Source: Scotland: Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2025 (N=1494)

Change Commons Electoral System or Keep As Is? 1983-2025



Source: British Social Attitudes except 83, 92: British Election Study.

Headlines

Reaction against recent trends on tax & spend, welfare, and immigration

Division and polarisation too

New questioning of first-past-the-post

But a seemingly settled view on assisted dying

Thank You

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