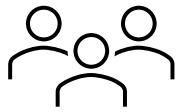


Higher Education: Who goes? Who pays? Who benefits?



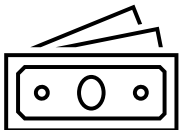
3 Key Questions



Do the public still think a significant proportion of young people should go on to university and obtain a degree?

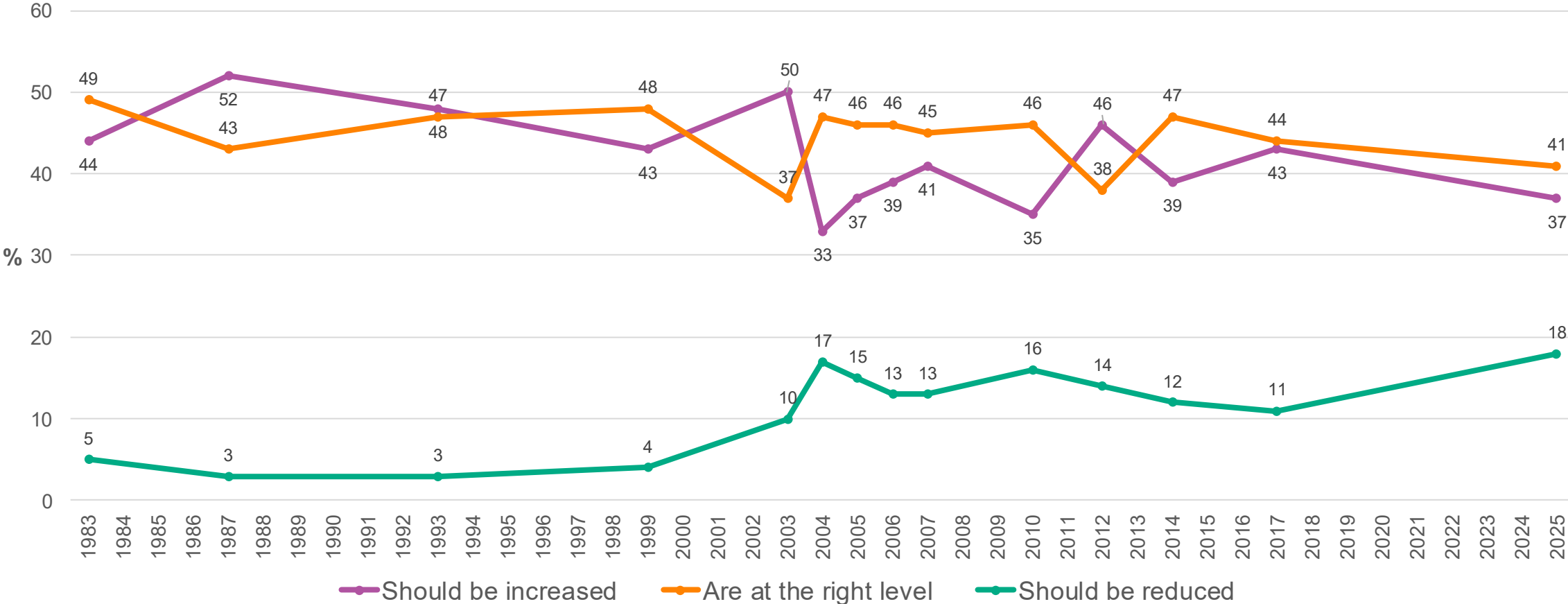


Do the public still perceive a university education to be beneficial to graduates?



Do the public still think that students should pay (and what would be a fair price)?

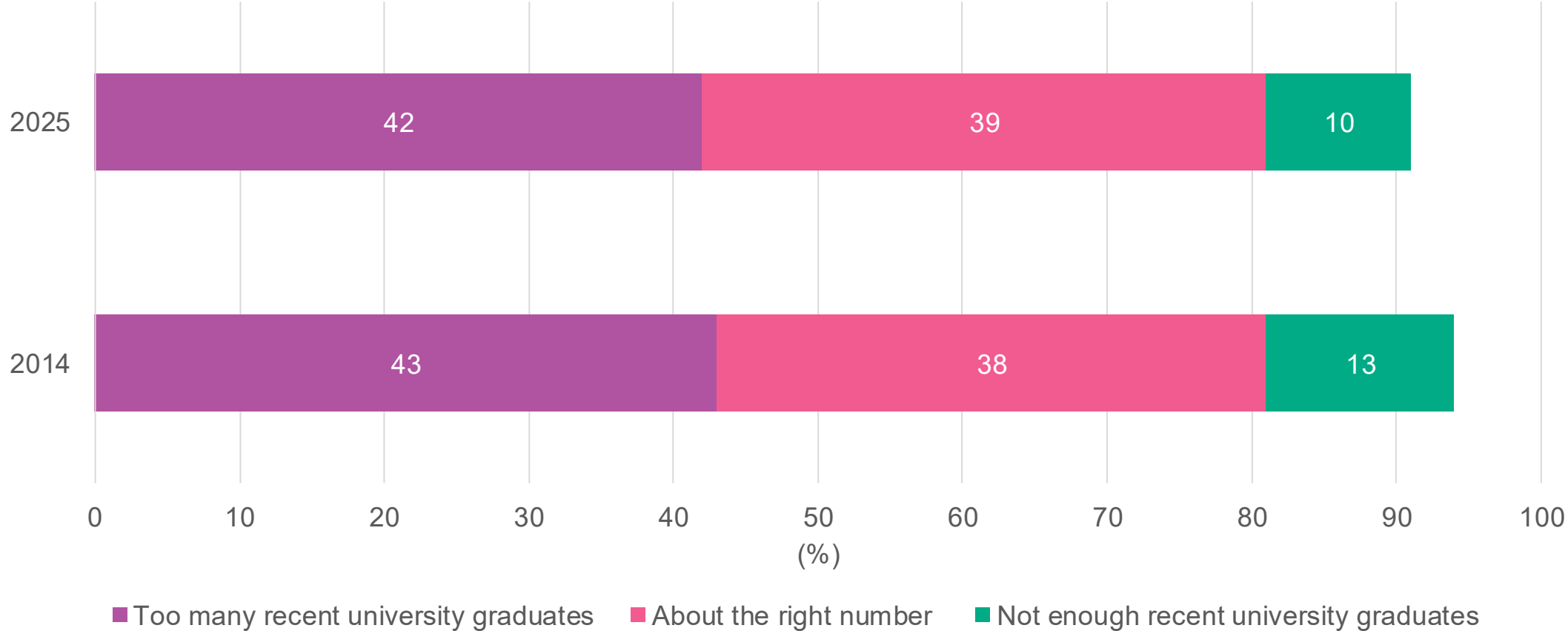
Opportunities for young people to go on to higher education...



British Social Attitudes Surveys (England only, 1983 - 2025)

Unweighted bases for 2025: 850

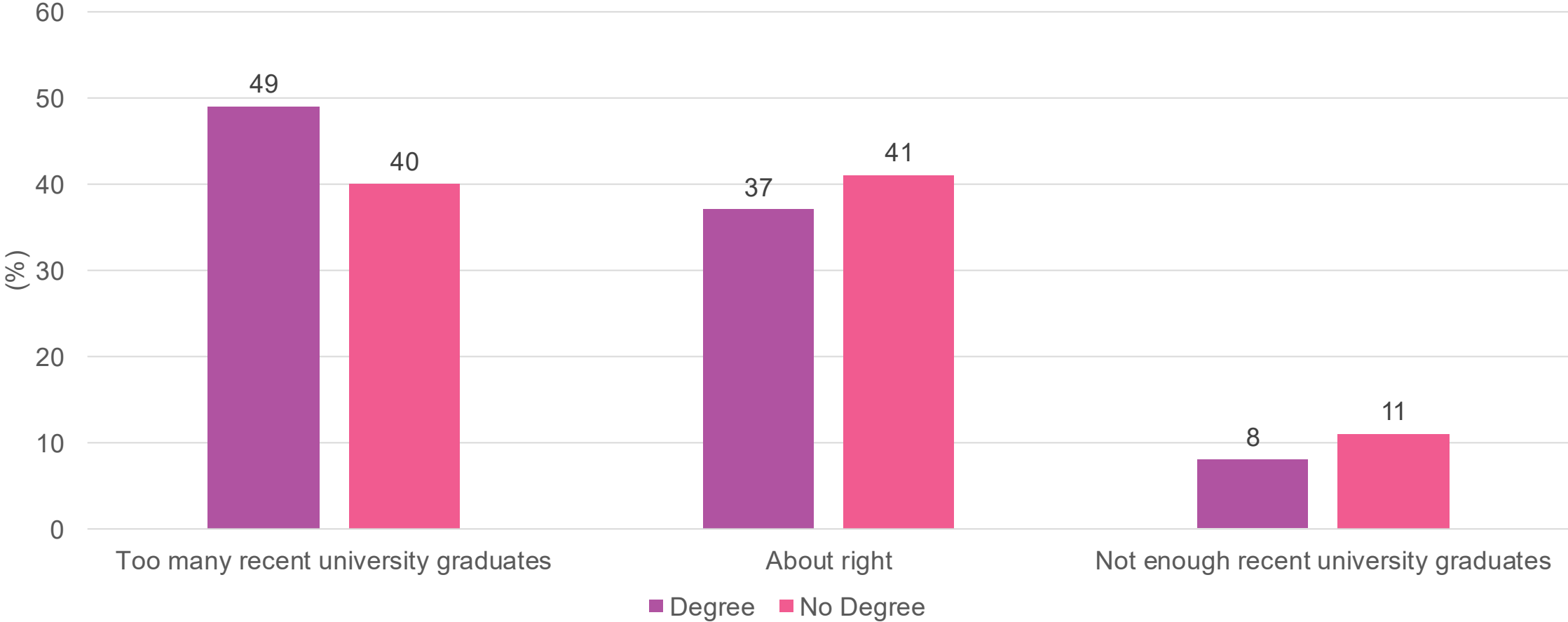
Thinking about the size of the current British job market, would you say there are...



British Social Attitudes Surveys (England only, 2014 and 2025)

Unweighted bases for 2014 = 1626; 2025 = 850.

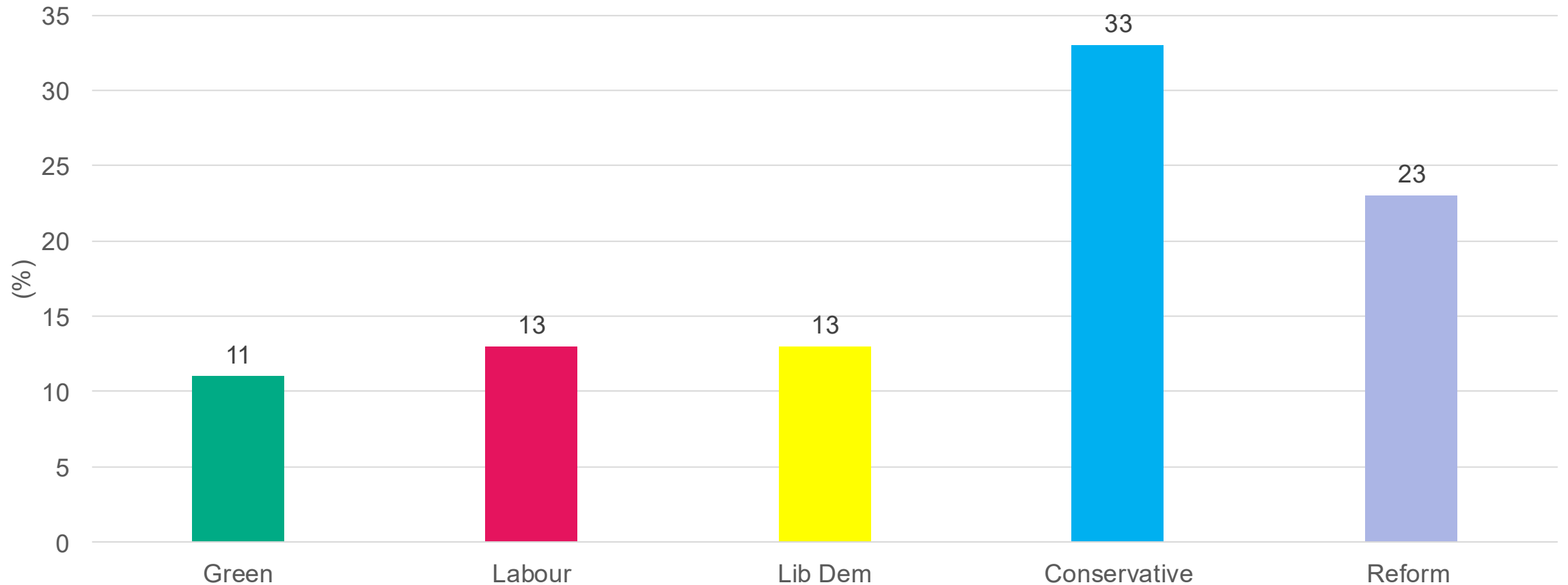
Thinking about the size of the current British job market, would you say there are...



British Social Attitudes Surveys (England only, 2025)

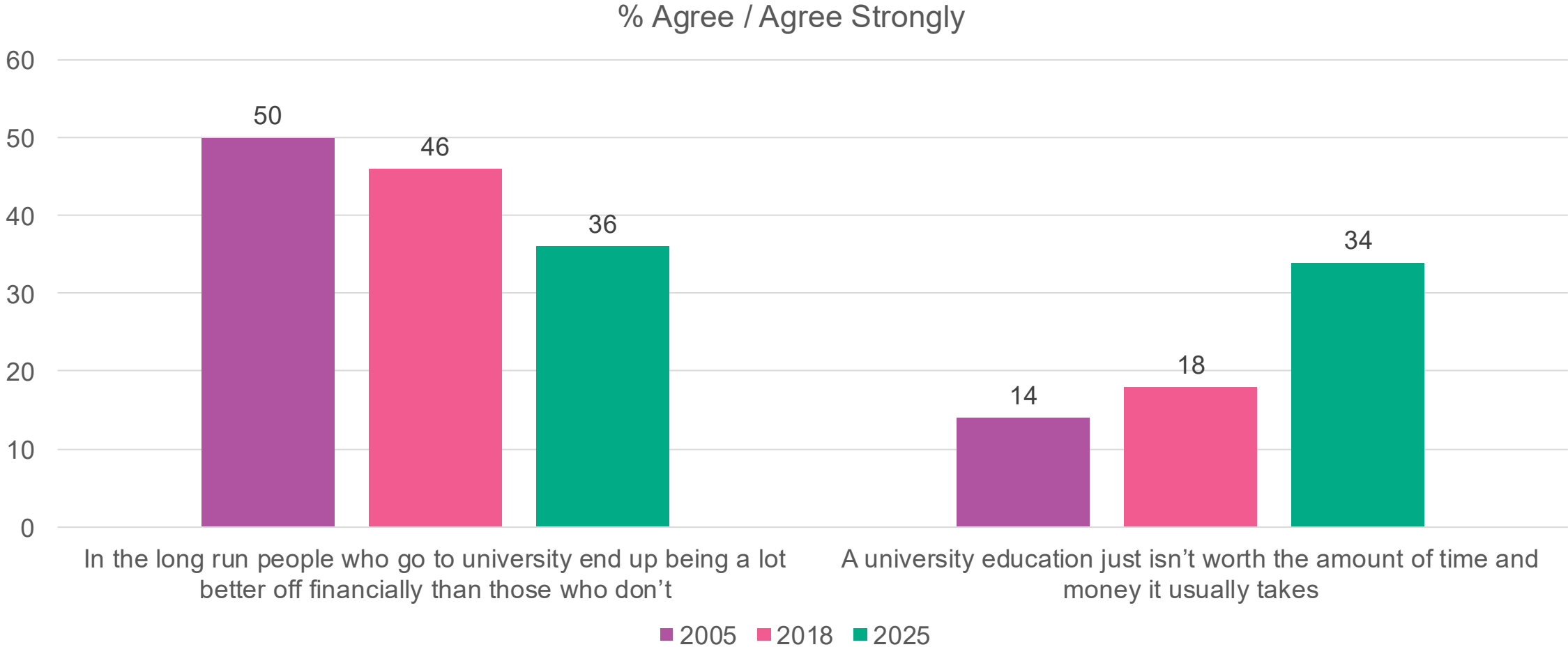
Unweighted bases for Degree = 358, No Degree = 466

% who feel opportunities for young people in Britain to go on to higher education should be reduced 'a lot' or 'a little'



British Social Attitudes 2025. Base Sizes: Conservatives: 137; Reform: 147; Labour: 215; Lib Dems: 95; Greens: 71

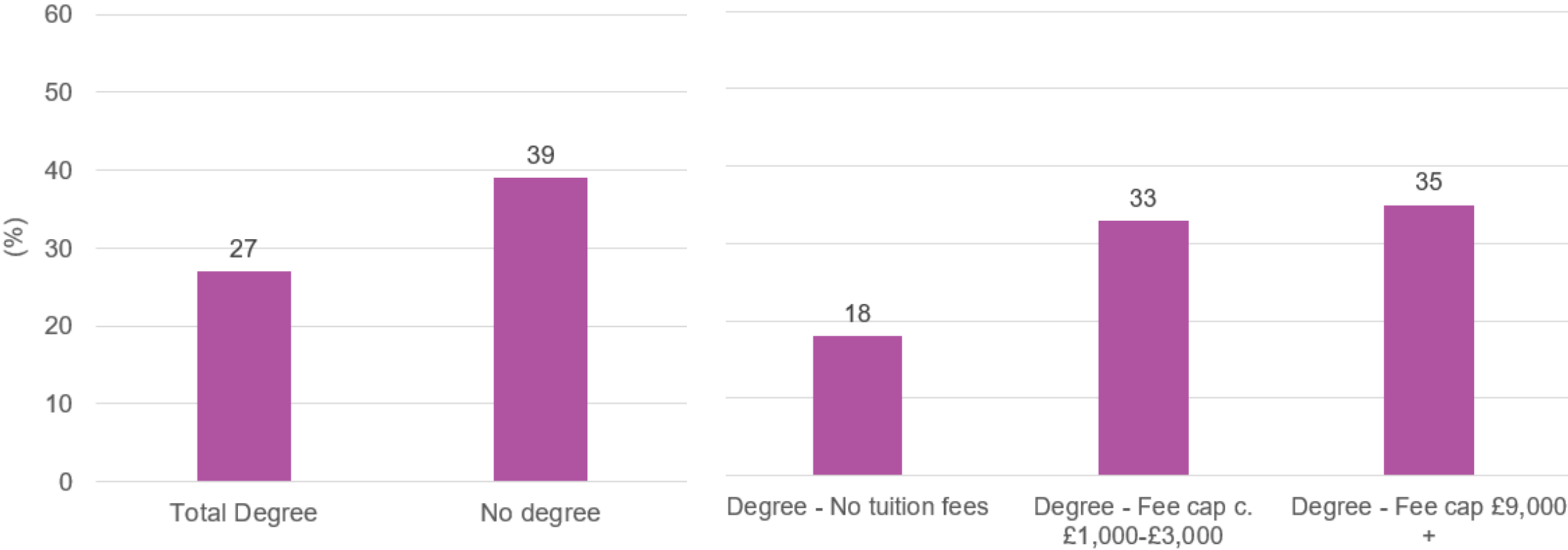
Is a university education worthwhile?



British Social Attitudes Surveys (England only, 2005 - 2025)

Unweighted bases: 2005 = 1518; 2018 = 1966; 2025 = 850

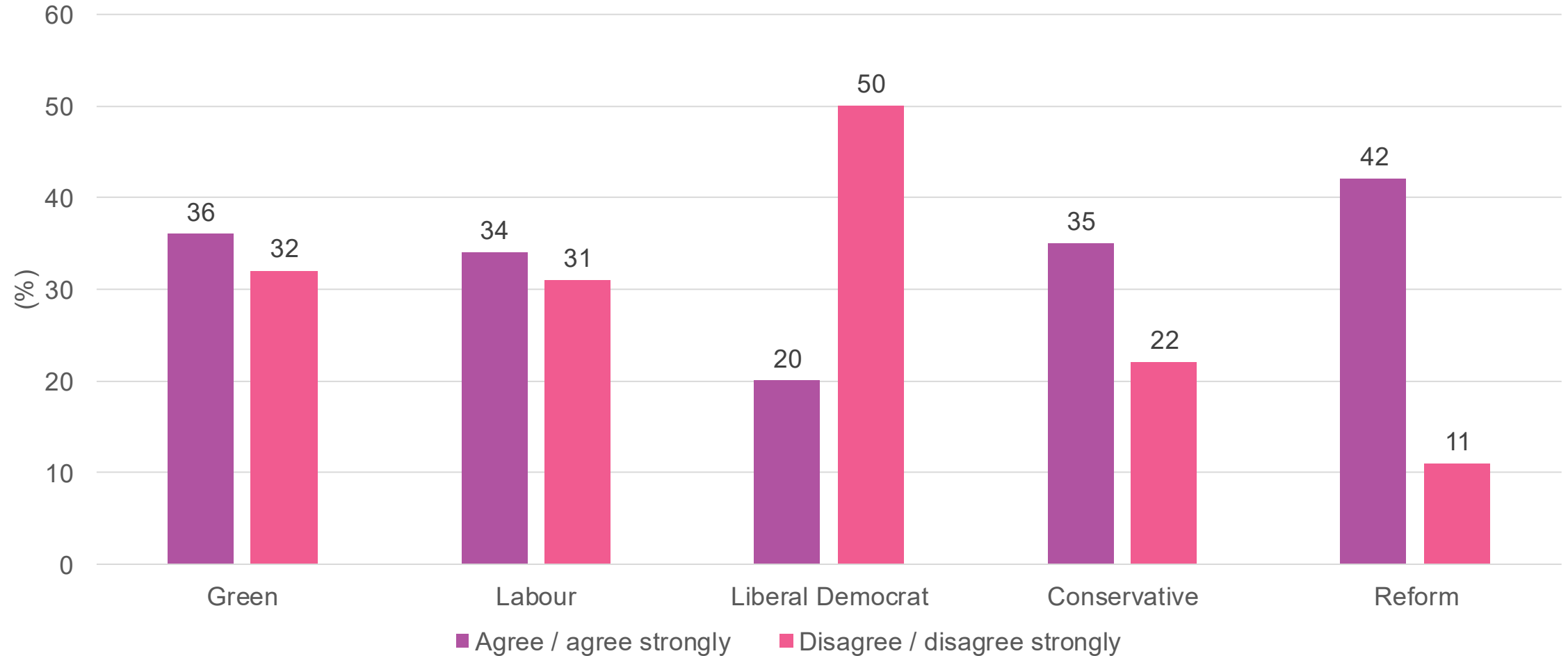
% agree 'a university education isn't worth the amount of time and money it usually takes'



British Social Attitudes Surveys (England only, 2005 - 2025)

Unweighted bases: Total Degree = 358; No degree = 466 No tuition fees = 168; Fee cap £1 - £3k = 118; Fee cap £9k+ = 71
Cohorts defined as follows: 'No tuition fees': aged 46 and over, 'Fee cap £1k-£3k': ages 32-45; 'Fee cap £9k +': ages 16 - 31.

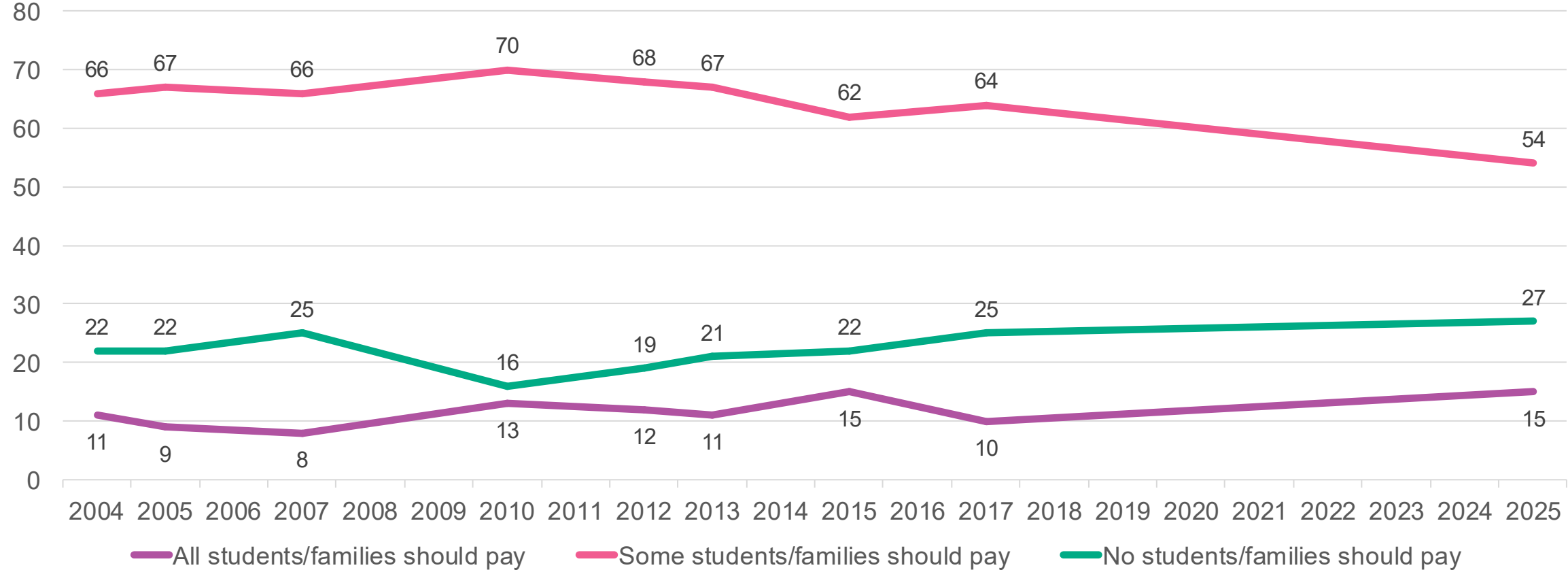
A university education 'isn't worth the time and effort' – by party support



British Social Attitudes Surveys (England only, 2025)

Unweighted bases: Conservative = 137; Reform = 147; Labour = 215; Lib Dem = 95; Green = 71

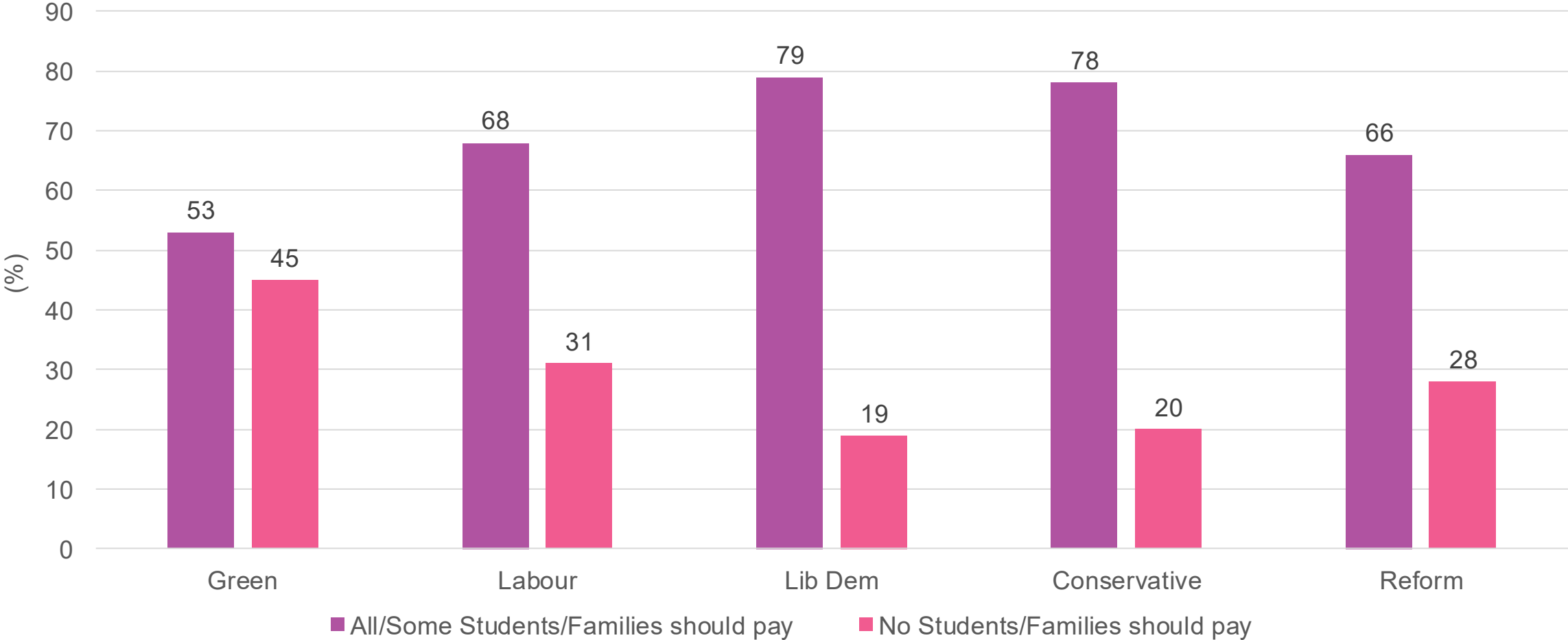
Attitudes towards what proportion of students or their families should contribute to tuition fees



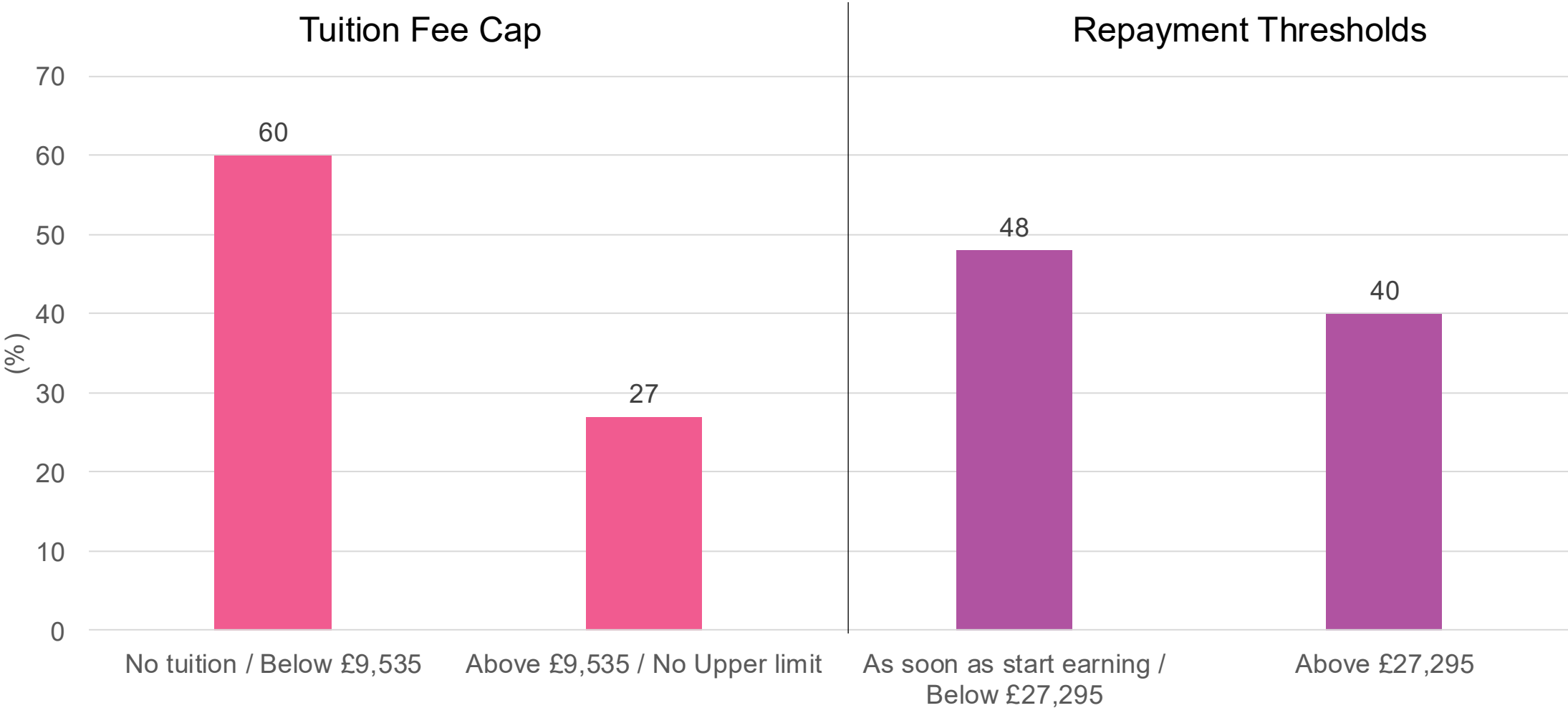
British Social Attitudes Surveys (England only, 2004 - 2025)

Unweighted bases: 2004 = 2690; 2005 = 1796; 2007 = 2626; 2010 = 913; 2012 = 1854; 2013 = 925; 2015 = 925; 2017 = 2617; 2025 = 850

Attitudes towards responsibility for paying tuition by political party support



Attitudes towards tuition fee cap and repayment thresholds



British Social Attitudes Surveys (2025 - England only)

Unweighted bases: 818

Conclusion

- There are some signs of a reaction against university expansion, but no clear trend
- Concerns on graduate oversupply have remained consistent, suggesting doubts about labour market alignment.
- Confidence in the financial benefits of a degree has fallen, while scepticism about its worth has increased.
- Attitudes vary by education, cohort, and political affiliation – particularly among younger, fee-paying graduates.
- Views on fees have polarised somewhat, and a majority support the cap being set lower than it is currently

Thank you

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