



Cambridgeshire County Council Quality of Life Survey

Final Headline Report

September 2023



Thinks
Insight & Strategy

The overall story in a slide:

Overall, residents have good quality lives in Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire residents report **strongly across a range of quality of life (QoL) metrics.**

72% report high or very high levels of **happiness**, over half have **no health concerns**, 84% report **feeling safe** in their area, 75% **feel they belong** in Cambridgeshire and 77% **say it's a good place to raise children.**

However, it's not a perfect picture for everyone...

Some groups are more likely to have **more negative scores across key QoL metrics:** younger people, renters, disabled residents, ethnic minority respondents and those from lower SEGs.

And, like the nation, rising costs are worrying the County, with **86%** saying this is a concern.

The Council play a relatively trusted role in residents' lives

52% say they trust Cambridgeshire, and 44% see you delivering value for money.

This is roughly in line with national averages.

Satisfaction with waste management and lights is high...

79% say they are satisfied with waste management services, and 72% with street lighting – core services offered by the Council.

Registration and library services are also drivers of satisfaction amongst those who use them.

But, in line with national trends, many have frustrations with road services

73% say they are **dissatisfied with road services.**

In open questions, **potholes and road services** are most spontaneously raised as frustrations...as is the **introduction of traffic reduction measures.**

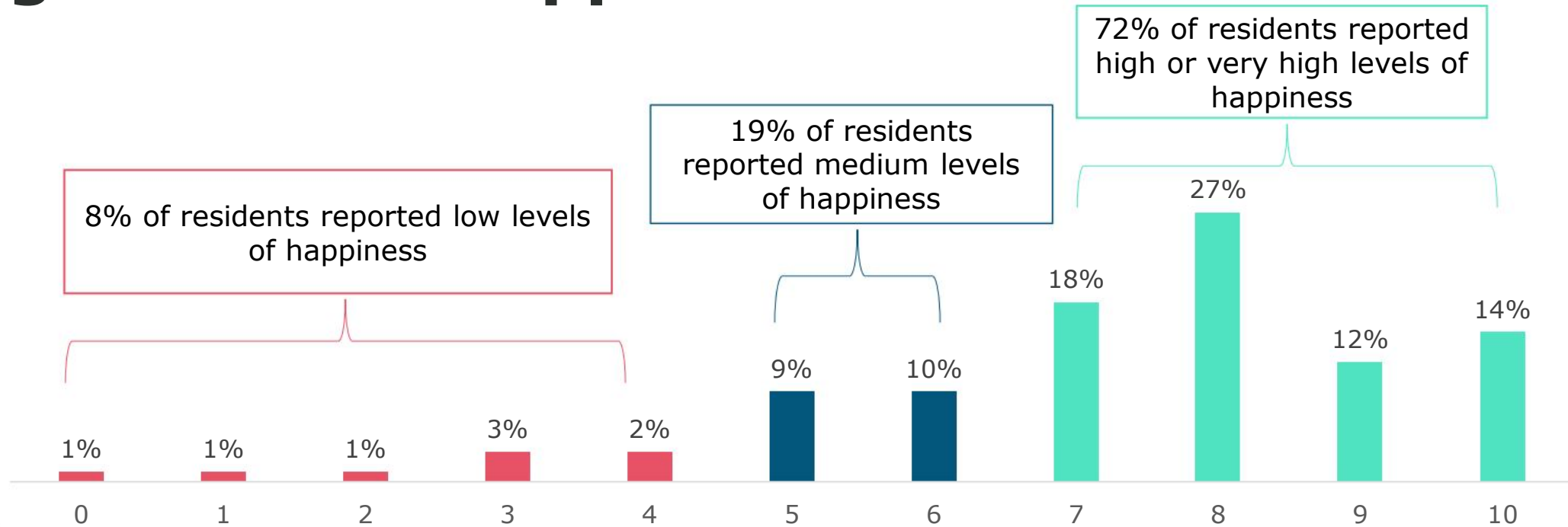
Few know exactly what you deliver...and expect more than is on offer

Residents assess you against services you don't even deliver like GPs and schools...which likely feeds into perceptions of you.

Indeed, **46% don't feel they know about the services on offer to them** through the Council.

Are residents happy and healthy?

Overall, residents in Cambridgeshire report high levels of happiness



18-24 year olds report the lowest happiness score (average of 7.0), whilst over **65+** have the highest happiness score (7.7).



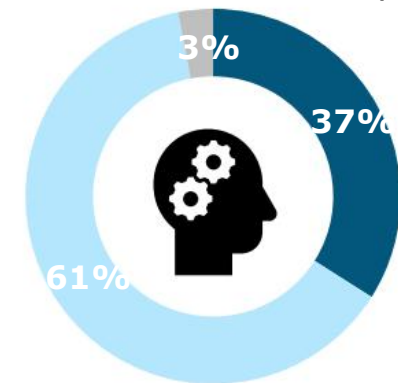
Residents in the lowest SEG report a lower happiness score (7.0) than other SEGs, with the highest social grade reporting an average of 7.6 – perhaps unsurprising considering results later in the report indicate this lower SEG group is more vulnerable to mental and physical health problems, as well as cost-of-living pressures.

Average score of 7.25 compared to ONS data in March 2022 of 7.45¹

Despite overall happiness, over a third (37%) have struggled with their mental health, and over a quarter report feeling lonely

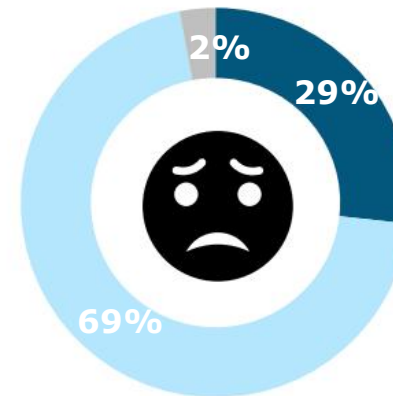
“Thinking about your life specifically at the moment, to what extent do you agree...”

I have struggled with my mental health in the last year



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

I often feel lonely



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Nationwide, 25% of people report feeling lonely often, always or some of the time from 2023 ONS data, and 8% of people report feeling lonely often/always. ¹

Q7. Thinking about your life specifically at the moment, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: n=5,500

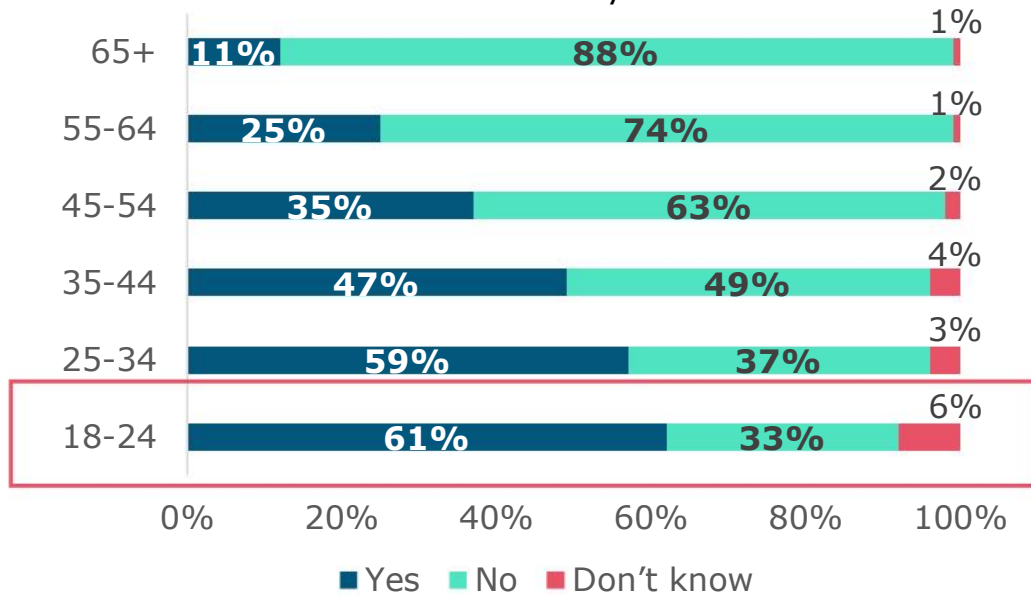
Q20. Do you agree with the following statements? Base: n=5,500

1. Office for National Statistics. September 2023. "Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: personal well-being and loneliness." Base: n=2,670

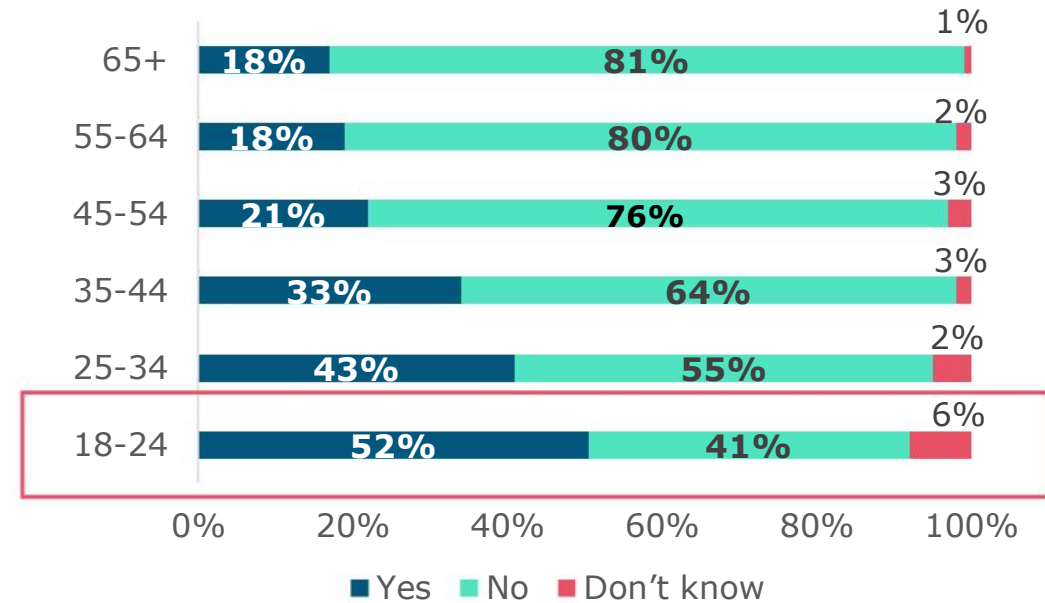
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/datasets/publicopinionsandsocialtrendsgreatbritainpersonalwellbeingandloneliness>

Younger residents in particular report the lowest levels of mental wellbeing

18-24 year olds are most likely to say they have struggled with their mental health in the last year



18-24 year olds are also most likely to report often feeling lonely

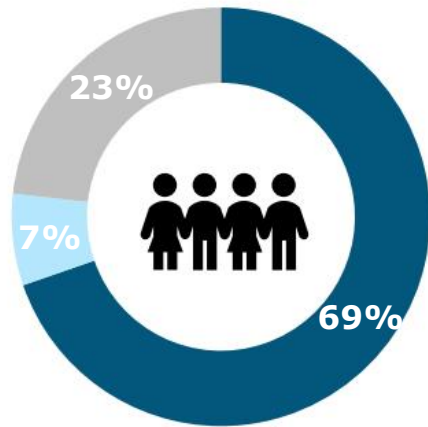


Q20. Do you agree with the following statements? Base: n=5,500 Q7. Thinking about your life specifically at the moment, do you agree with the following statements? Base: n=5,500 Q5. We'd now like to think about the local community in Cambridgeshire in which you live. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Base: n=4750 Q21. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: n=4750
 1. NHS. November 2022. "Mental Health of Children and Young People in England 2022" <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2022-follow-up-to-the-2017-survey> Base: n=2,866

A third (30%) of parents say their child has experienced mental health problems this year

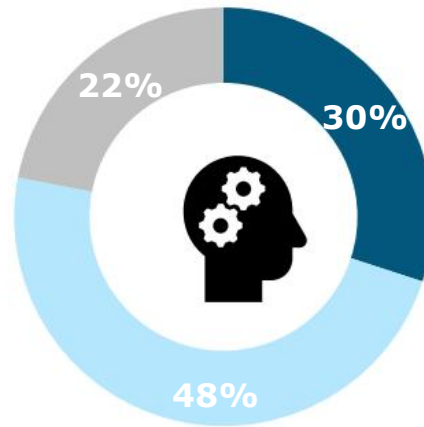
“My child/children...”

have good relationships with their peers



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

have experienced mental health problems in the past year



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

- Nationally, 45% of parents worry about their children’s mental health, suggesting trends in poor mental health amongst children is not unique to Cambridgeshire.¹
- **Parents are worried about their children's mental health especially in the context of COVID**, with almost half saying they are worried their child’s mental health is worst since COVID (research from Mind²).
- According to the NHS, children aged between 7 and 16 are seeing increasing rates of mental health concerns – 1 in 6 reported a mental health issue in 2020, an increase from 1 in 9 in 2017.³



- **Younger parents aged 18-24** are significantly less likely to agree that their child/ren have good relationships with their peers (62%) than older parental age groups.
- **18-24 year old parents** are also more likely to report that their child/ren have experienced mental health problems in the past year (45%) compared to older parents. These results suggest this younger age group may require more support, or access to resources specifically targeted at this cohort.

Q22. Thinking about your child or children in the past year. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: Parents, n=1140

1. Ipsos. July 2023. “Ipsos finds concern about children’s mental health.” <https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/ipsos-finds-concern-about-childrens-mental-health-and-staff-welfare-in-education>

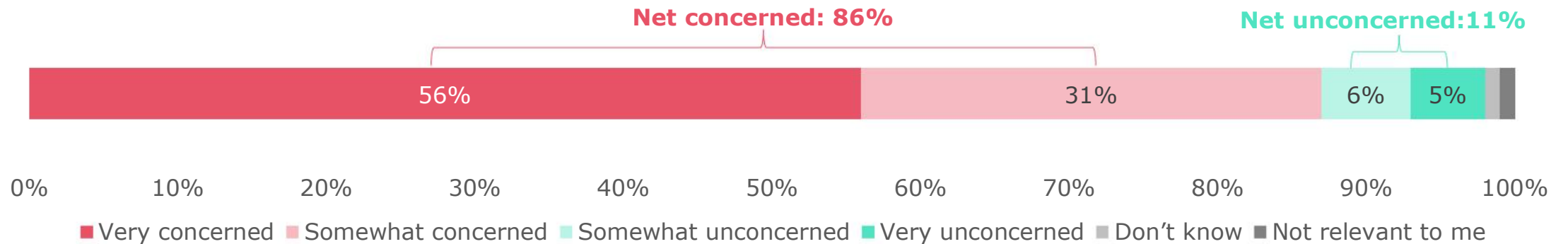
2. Mind. May 2022. <https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/news/new-research-from-mental-health-charity-mind-shows-that-parents-and-grandparents-are-so-worried-about-young-peoples-mental-health-it-s-giving-them-sleepless-nights/>.

3. NHS. November 2022. “Mental Health of Children and Young People in England 2022” <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2022-follow-up-to-the-2017-survey> Base: n=2,866

How do residents feel about and respond to the big issues of the moment?

86% of residents are concerned about cost-of-living increases

“To what extent do you personally feel worried about... the cost-of-living”



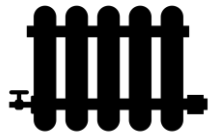
18-24 year olds are less likely to be concerned about cost-of-living increases than other age groups (75% vs 88%)

Residents aged **25-44 years old** and **those with children aged under 18** are most likely to be **very concerned** about cost of living increases.

Think Insights proprietary research suggests 90% of the public say they are concerned about cost-of-living.¹

And residents are changing their behaviour in response to this concern

66% report a change in their behaviour as a result of cost-of-living increases:



48%

report cutting back on heating use



34%

feel their mental health has been affected by CoL increases



27%

report cutting back on nutritious food



9%

report stopping or cutting back prescription medicine

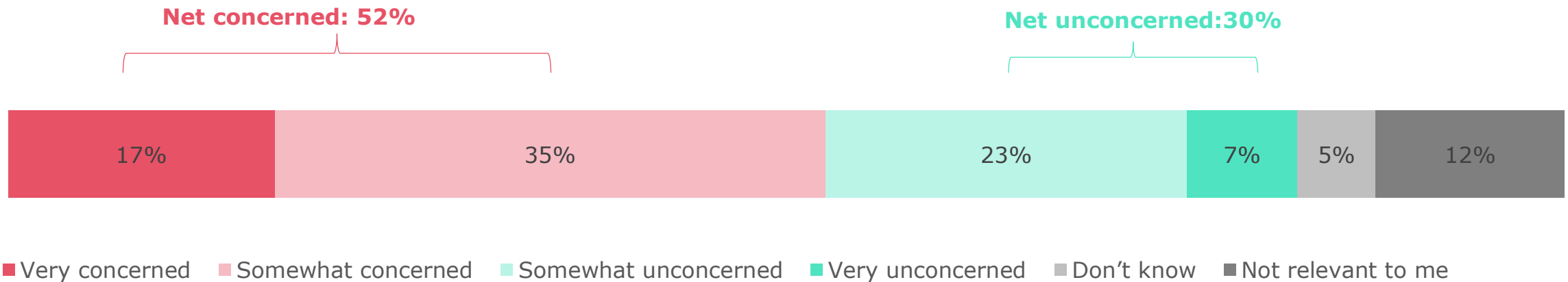


8%

have used a foodbank in the past 12 months

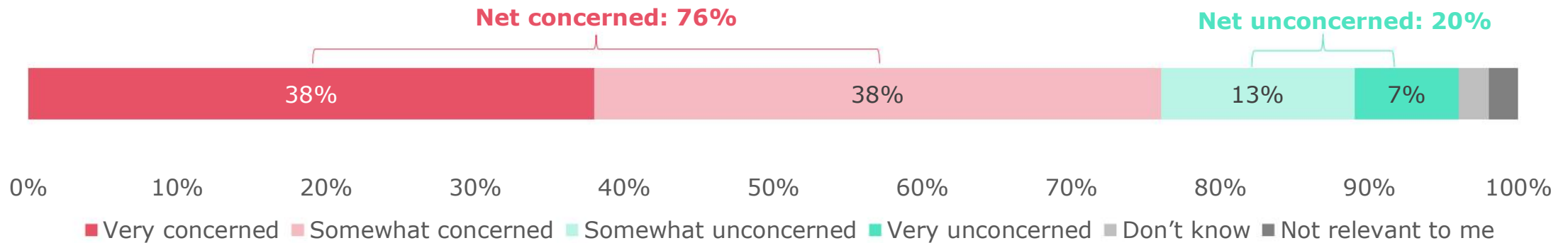
Half of residents are also worried about the local economy

“To what extent do you personally feel worried about... investment and jobs in my local area”



Three quarters are concerned about climate change

“To what extent do you personally feel worried about... climate change”



Expectations on the Council to act on climate change are high, and residents are open to change:

77% would like to see CCC do more when it comes to climate change

85% would like to see CCC do more to protect and enhance the natural environment

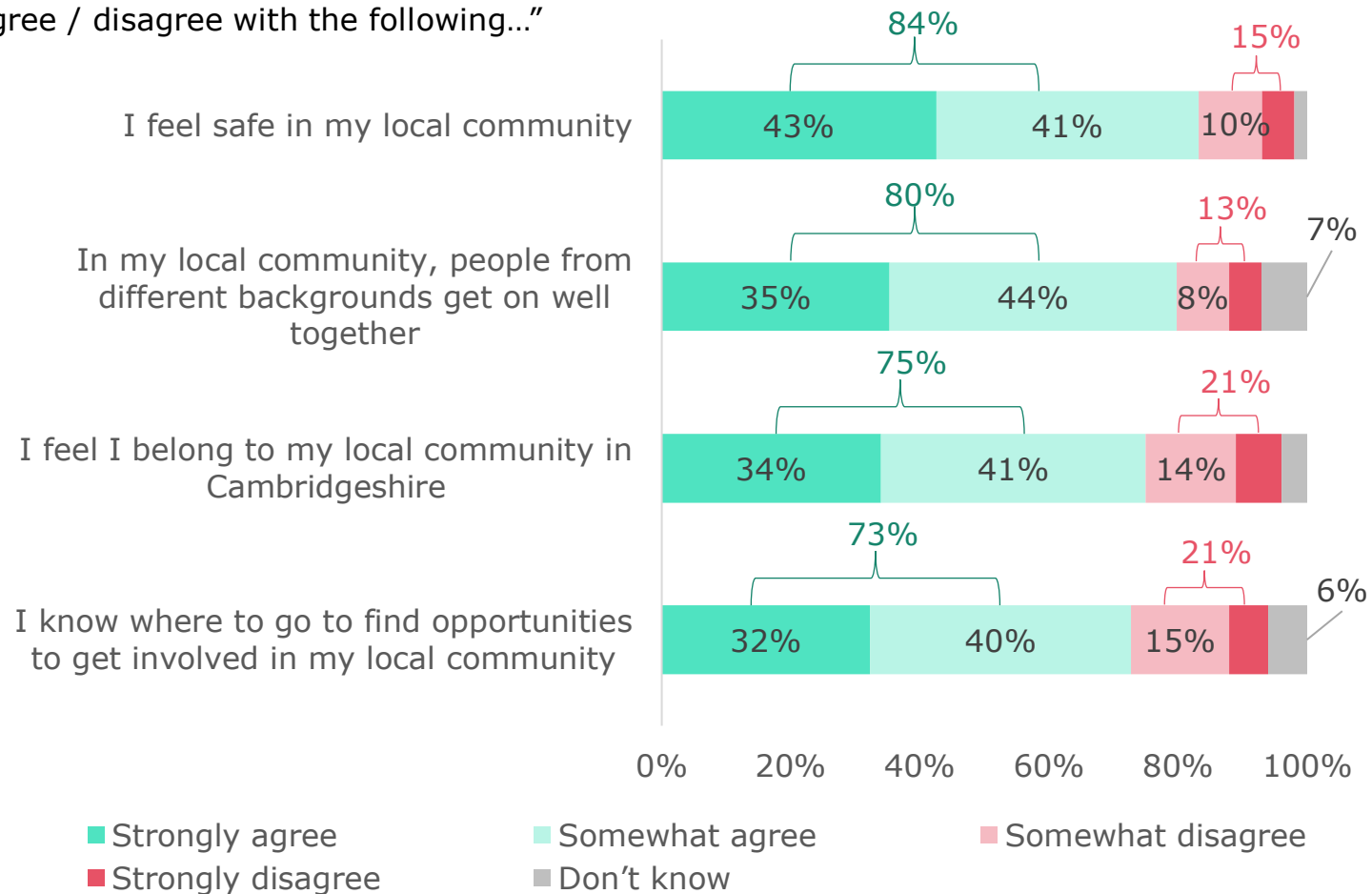
69% would be open to changing their behaviours to be more sustainable

Think Insights proprietary research suggests 71% of the public say they are concerned about climate change.¹

**How do residents feel about where
they live?**

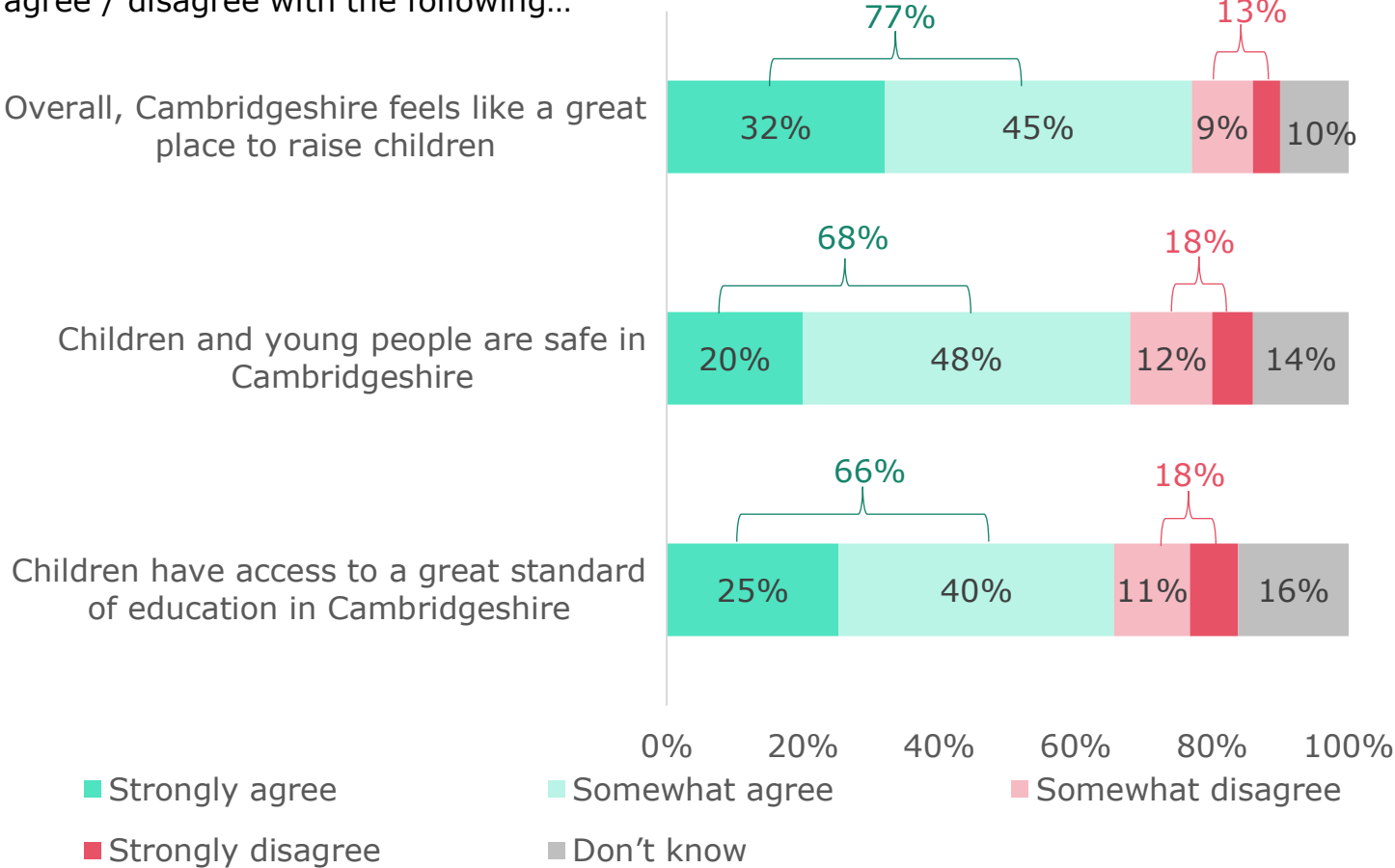
Overall, the majority feel positively about the local area

“To what extent do you agree / disagree with the following...”



And Cambridgeshire is seen as a good place to raise children by the majority

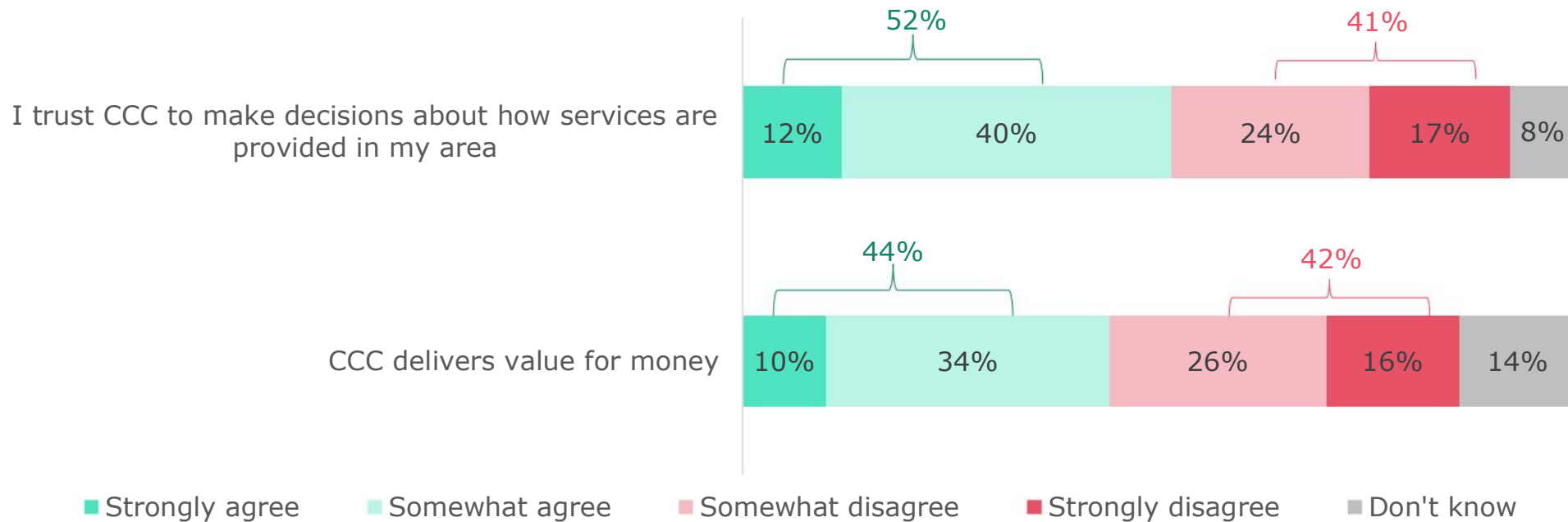
“To what extent do you agree / disagree with the following...”



Q21. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Base: n=5,500

How does the Council fit into the picture?

Over half of residents say they trust CCC – though few have strong feelings either way, suggesting some uncertainty



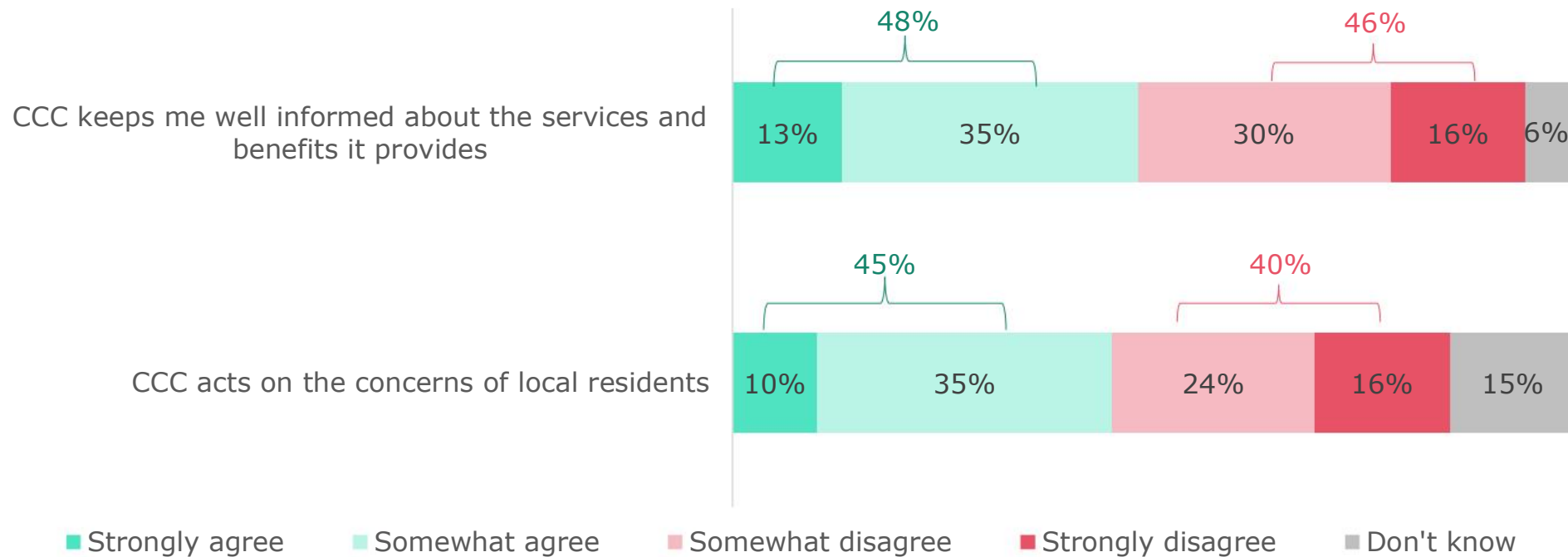
These questions mirror those asked in the **LGA residents survey** conducted in June 2023.¹ The LGA survey found that **42% agree their local council delivered good value for money**, compared to 44% of Cambridgeshire residents. Interestingly, only **2% of LGA respondents suggested they were unsure**, compared to **14% in the Cambridgeshire survey**. When asked **about trust in their local council**, the LGA survey asked a broad question and found **56% reported trusting their local council**, compared to 52% of Cambridgeshire residents who reported trust in decisions about how services are provided. *NB: these questions employ different answer scales therefore results are not directly comparable.*

Q13. I'd like you to now think about Cambridgeshire County Council's performance. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Base: n=5,500

1. Local Government Association. August 2023. "Polling on resident satisfaction with councils – Round 35."

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Resident%20Satisfaction%20Polling%20Round%2035%20-%20Accessibility.pdf>

Views are split about the extent residents see CCC responding to needs and keeping them informed of services



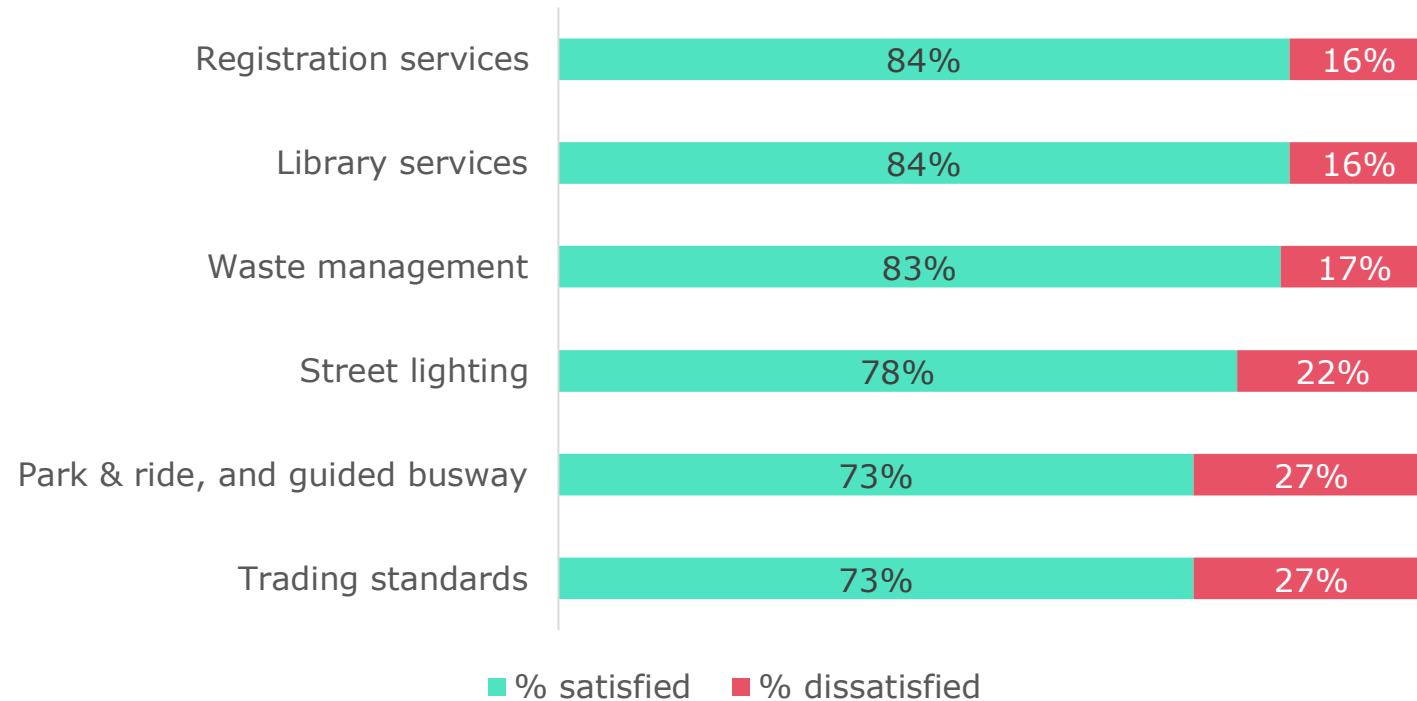
52% of respondents were found to indicate their council acts on the concerns of residents in the LGA survey¹, compared to 45% of Cambridgeshire residents. When asked how well informed their local councils keep residents about the services and benefits it provides, the LGA survey found that 55% felt they were informed compared to 48% of Cambridgeshire residents
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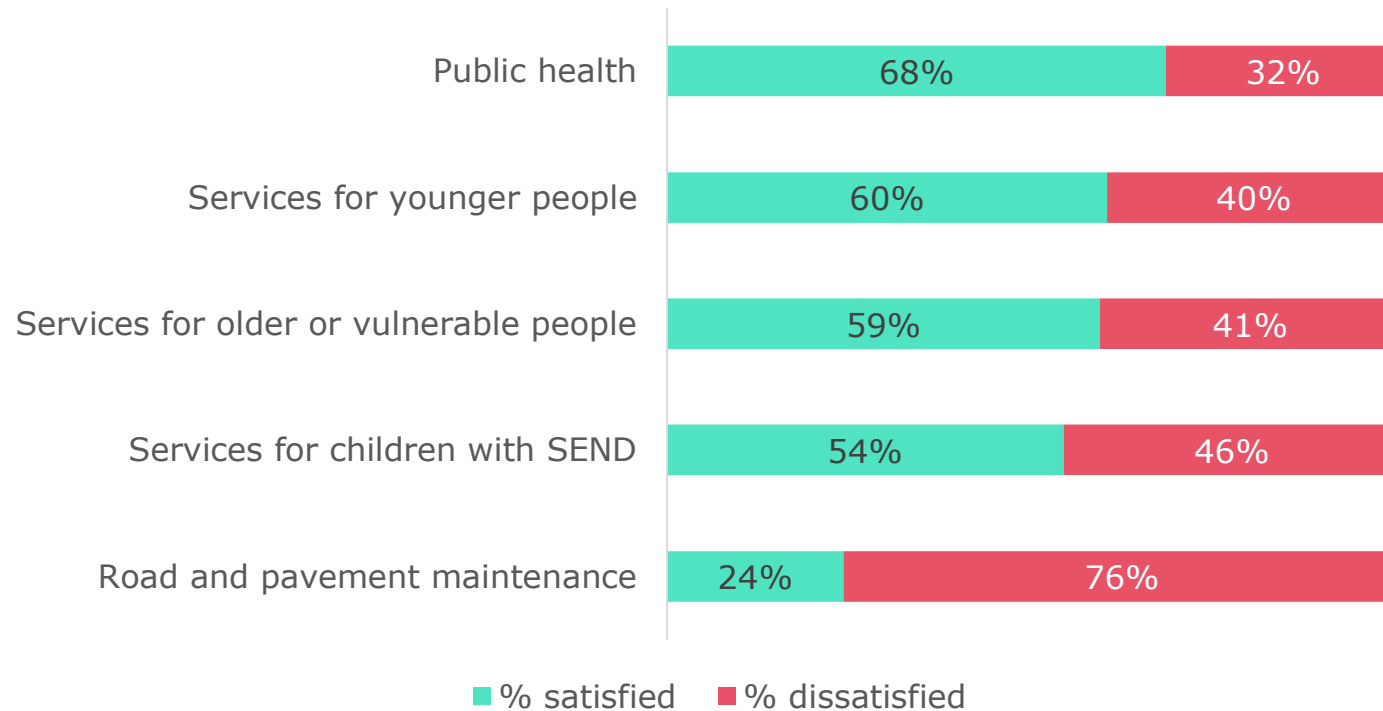
<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Resident%20Satisfaction%20Polling%20Round%2035%20-%20Accessibility.pdf>

Service users are most satisfied with registration, libraries and waste management



Q10/11/12. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following services provided by Cambridgeshire County Council? Base: n=2072-4816 excluding Don't Know and those who have not used service

Services users are less satisfied with roads and SEND delivery



Dissatisfaction with services overall varies by age, ethnicity, gender, SEG and housing tenure.

Residents would like to see the Council acting on roads climate change and council tax to improve their quality of life

At the end of the survey residents were asked what one thing the Council could do to improve residents quality of life. Responses given were broad but the most commonly mentioned that are **within** the Council's remit to change are:



Roads and traffic management

- Fixing potholes and improving general road maintenance
- Removing the congestion charge



Climate change/care for the environment

- Provision of more green spaces
- Better recycling services



Other

- Greater communication from the Council that residents concerns are being heard
- Reduction in council tax

There were also minor mentions of reducing crime figures and investing more in education and childrens services (including SEND)

However residents also raise concerns that are outside of the Council's remit

At the end of the survey residents were asked what one thing the Council could do to improve residents quality of life. Responses given were broad but the most commonly mentioned that were **outside** of the Council's remit are:



Housing support

- More affordable housing
- More social housing
- Improve standard of housing (incl. better upkeep of social housing)



Improvements to bus services

- Greater frequency of bus services
- Greater coverage of bus services to include rural areas



Improvements to health services

- Better access to GP and dentist surgeries
- Better availability and access to mental health support



While the Council has limited ability to directly help with the above concerns, it may be possible for the Council to signpost residents towards services and support, and influence key partners responsible for these concerns.

Wrap up and reflections

The 'so what'... overarching recommendations 'in a nutshell':

Keep up the good work



Overall, quality of life is high in Cambridgeshire. Maintain quality where it exists because you're getting so much right.

Focus on those who need your help the most...



Some groups, especially young people, renters, lower SEG groups, disabled people and Fenland and Cambridge City residents require the most support to improve their quality of life. There is scope for the Council to fill an information gap and improve experiences.

Where you can't help - signposting is key



Raise awareness about services on offer to those who need them. Couple this with clear signposting for services outside your control to help residents reach what they need and drive satisfaction. The Council website will be a good place to start.

Framing and justifying challenging decisions is critical



Explaining *why* a measure is introduced is important (as with traffic reduction). Emphasise the decision isn't financially motivated to help reduce criticism, especially when residents are feeling the pinch.

Set goals for change



Discuss where you hope to see greatest shifts and changes next year...and how you will get there! This is just the start of the journey to understanding quality of life.