TRAJECTORY

# Optimism Index
# August 2021

# Pandemic Analysis

# Sample Information and Methodology

- Every month, Trajectory survey a nationally representative sample of 1500 respondents on a variety of issues, including consumer confidence, personal choice and control, social trust, opportunities in technology, optimism and their place in the world.

- Due to current circumstances surrounding the Coronavirus pandemic, additional questions have been added in recent months examining both the current climate in general as well as the impact that the pandemic is having on certain views in relation to finances, confidence and spending, amongst others.

- All surveys were carried out online, with fieldwork this month taking place between **11th and 18th August.**

# Key Findings

- Savings remain high amidst a slowdown of the post-pandemic recovery
- Employment expectations boosted in both short and long term as end of furlough scheme nears
- Support for small independent businesses declines further this month
- Appetite for out of home leisure continues to grow as consumers ease back towards normality
- Concerns about visiting public spaces decline but still remain prominent amongst many
- Trends in pandemic-related cynicism further polarised across generations this month
- Movements further away from crisis period of pandemic shifts focus nearer the economy

# Last Month's Key Events

**15th July**
Figures from NHS Test and Trace also show the NHS COVID-19 app sent out over half a million self-isolation alerts in the first week of July

**18th July**
After initially announcing that they would not be self-isolating, Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak begin isolating after coming in contact with Sajid Javid, who recently tested positive

**19th July**
The final stage of COVID restrictions are lifted in England, allowing nightclubs to reopen and abolishing social distancing rules, with no limits on how many people can meet or attend events

**22nd July**
The UK Government announces that key workers within the food industry will be allowed to take daily COVID tests from the following day father than self-isolating

**24th July**
The scope of England's planned daily COVID test scheme for key workers is expanded to include police, fire, border force, transport and freight staff following criticism it did not go far enough

**28th July**
The Government confirms that fully vaccinated US and EU citizens arriving into England from an amber list country will no longer be required to quarantine from 4am on Monday 2 August.

**30th July**
The British Retail Consortium reports that the number of empty shops on UK high streets has continued to grow as retailers struggle with the effects of the COVID crisis

**4th August**
The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation recommends that all 16 and 17-year-olds should receive a COVID vaccine

**5th August**
The number of alerts from the NHS COVID-19 app in England and Wales fell by 43% in the final week of July in comparison to the previous week

**10th August**
Health Secretary Sajid Javid confirms plans are in place to begin the rollout of a third COVID vaccine for the most vulnerable groups beginning in early September

**12th August**
Figures show that a record number of people are waiting for NHS hospital treatment in England, with a total of 5.45 million on waiting lists

**16th August**
People in England who have received both vaccines are no longer required to self-isolate if they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19

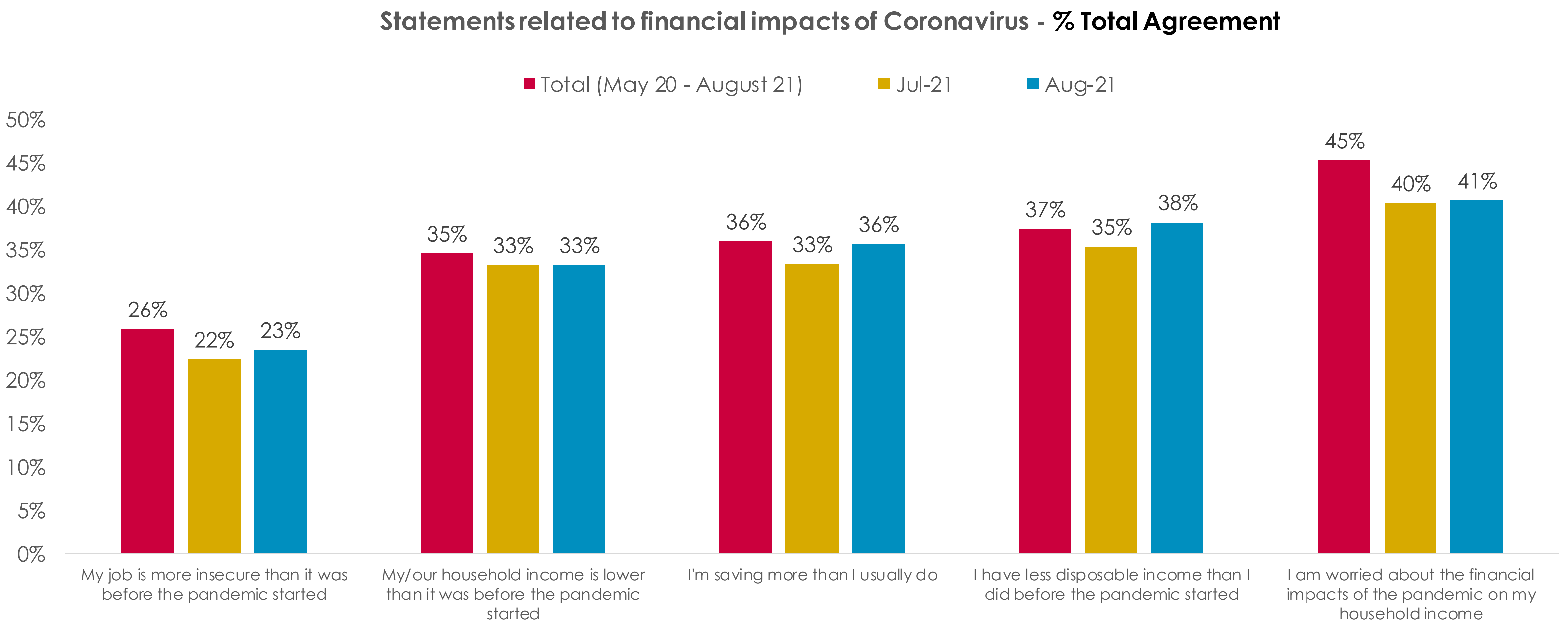
**18th August**
Parliament is recalled to discuss the situation in Afghanistan, and the House of Commons is full for the first time since March 2020

**Fieldwork: 11th – 18th August**

# Financial Implications

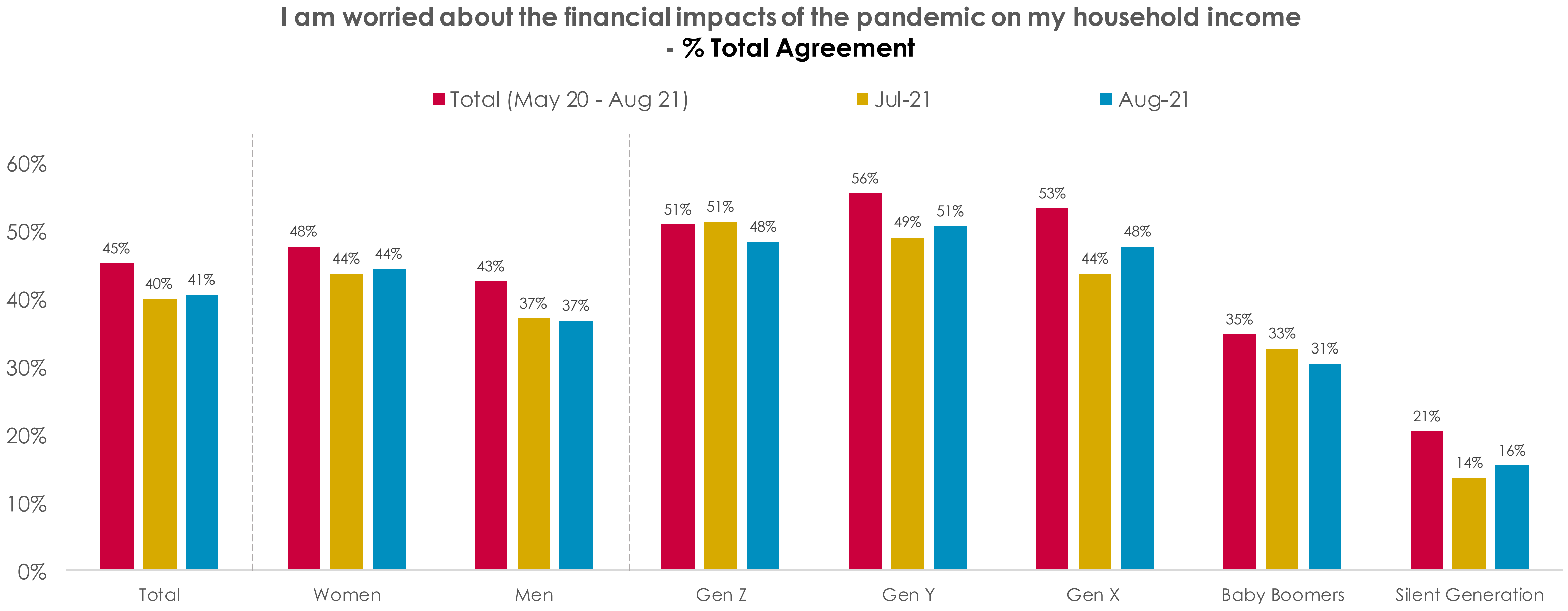
# Proportion saving more than usual rises amidst slowdown of recovery

**- With the post-pandemic recovery slowing slightly, proportion who are saving more than usual rises by 3% this month**
**- Despite the sense of optimism regarding the economy, 41% remain concerned about impacts of pandemic on their finances**



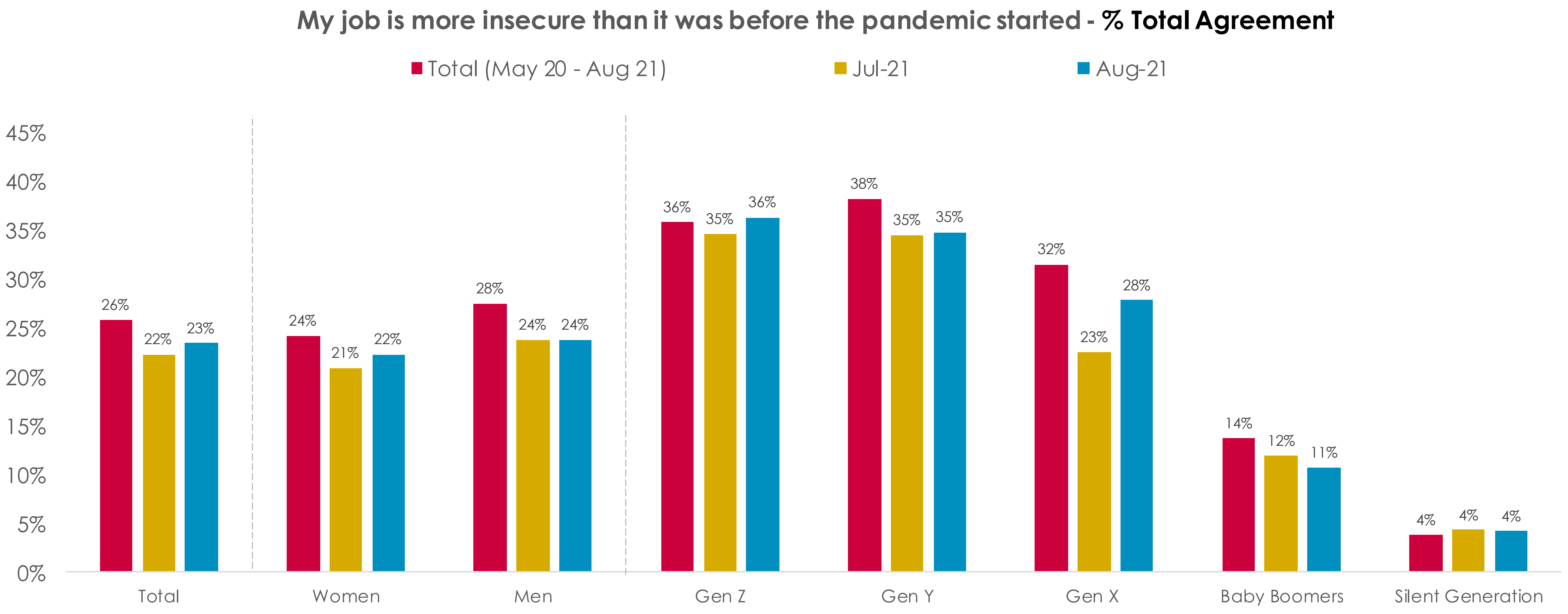
# Middle-aged consumers drive rise in financial concerns

- Amidst just a 1% topline increase in financial concerns, Gen Y saw a 2% rise whilst Gen X saw a 4% increase (44% to 48%)
- Gen Z saw the sharpest decline in concerns about the financial impacts of the pandemic, down 3% from 51% to 48%



# Increased financial concerns amongst Gen X paralleled by rising job insecurities

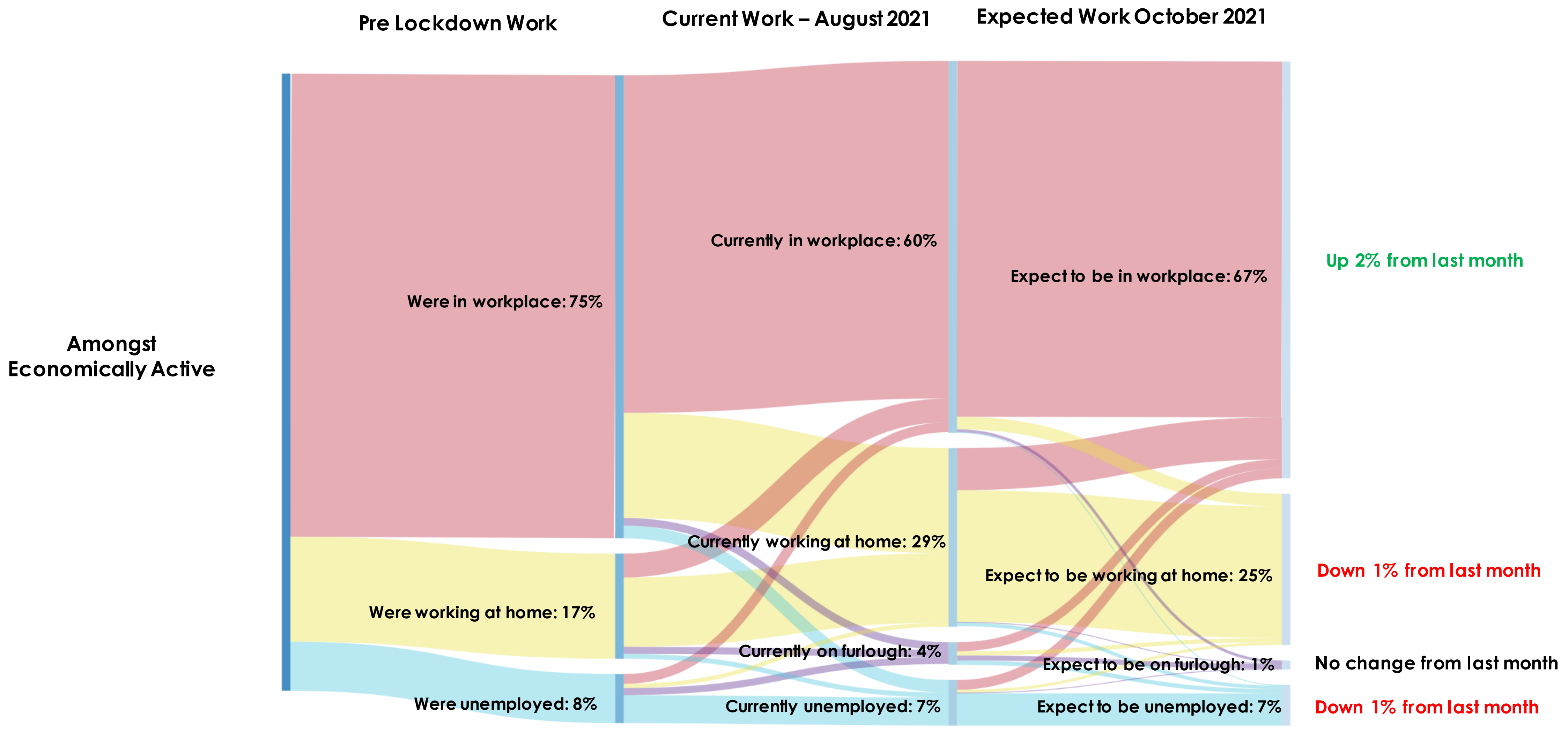
**- Topline rise of 1% driven primarily by a 5% rise in job insecurities amongst Gen X respondents (23% to 28%)**
**- Younger generations remain most likely to feel their role is more insecure than pre-pandemic**




| | Total (May 20 - Aug 21) | Jul-21 | Aug-21 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 26% | 22% | 23% |
| Women | 24% | 21% | 22% |
| Men | 28% | 24% | 24% |
| Gen Z | 36% | 35% | 36% |
| Gen Y | 38% | 35% | 35% |
| Gen X | 32% | 23% | 28% |
| Baby Boomers | 14% | 12% | 11% |
| Silent Generation | 4% | 4% | 4% |

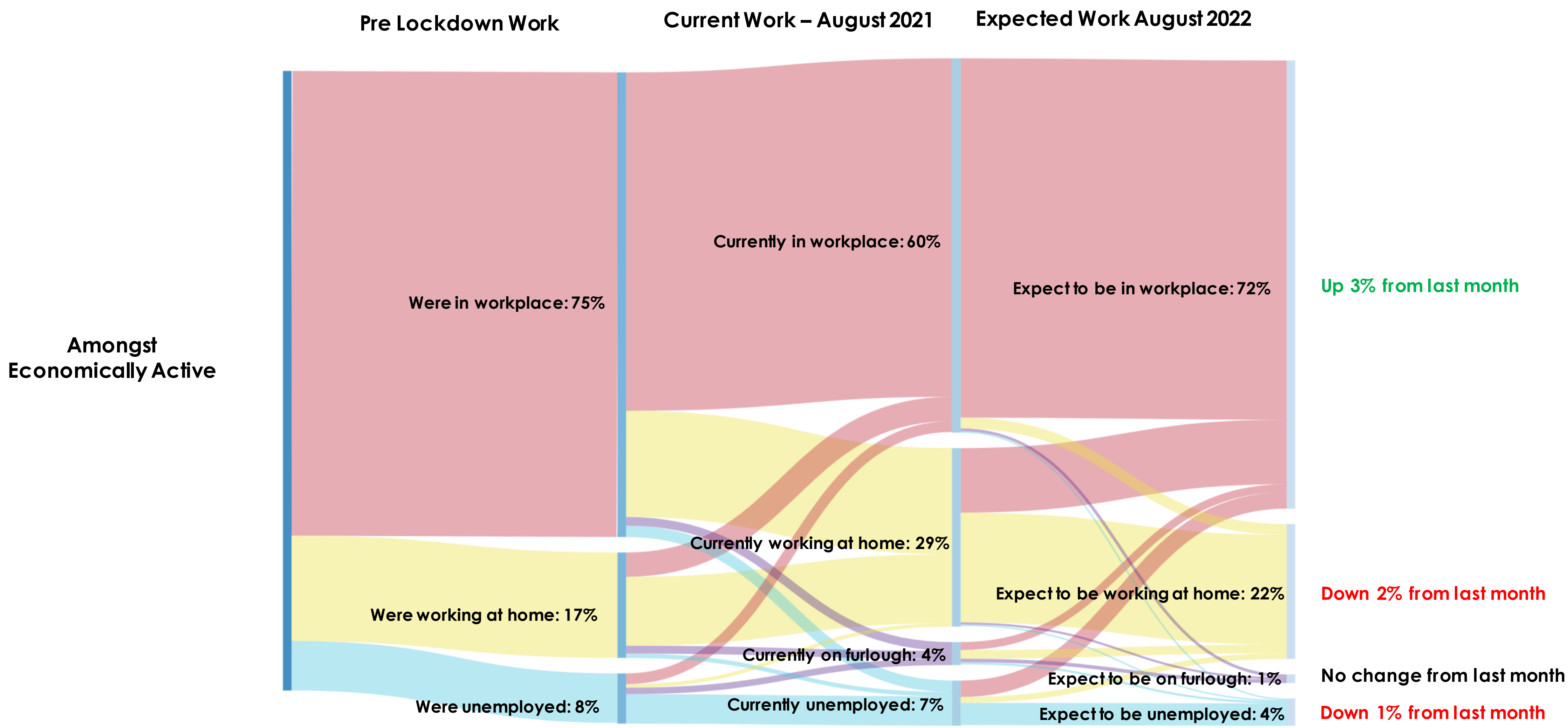
# Short term work expectations boosted by continued recovery

## - Despite the economic recovery slowing down in recent months, expectations for work have continued to improve – with 67% expecting to be in workplace by October of this year (up 2% from last month), whilst there was also a 1% decline in the proportion who expected to be unemployed



# Longer term work expectations also boosted by economic recovery

- Almost three quarters (72%) now expect to be in the workplace by this time next year – down just 3% compared to pre-pandemic
- Whilst proportion expecting to be working remotely fell by 2% this month, this still remains 5% higher than pre-pandemic (22% to 17%)

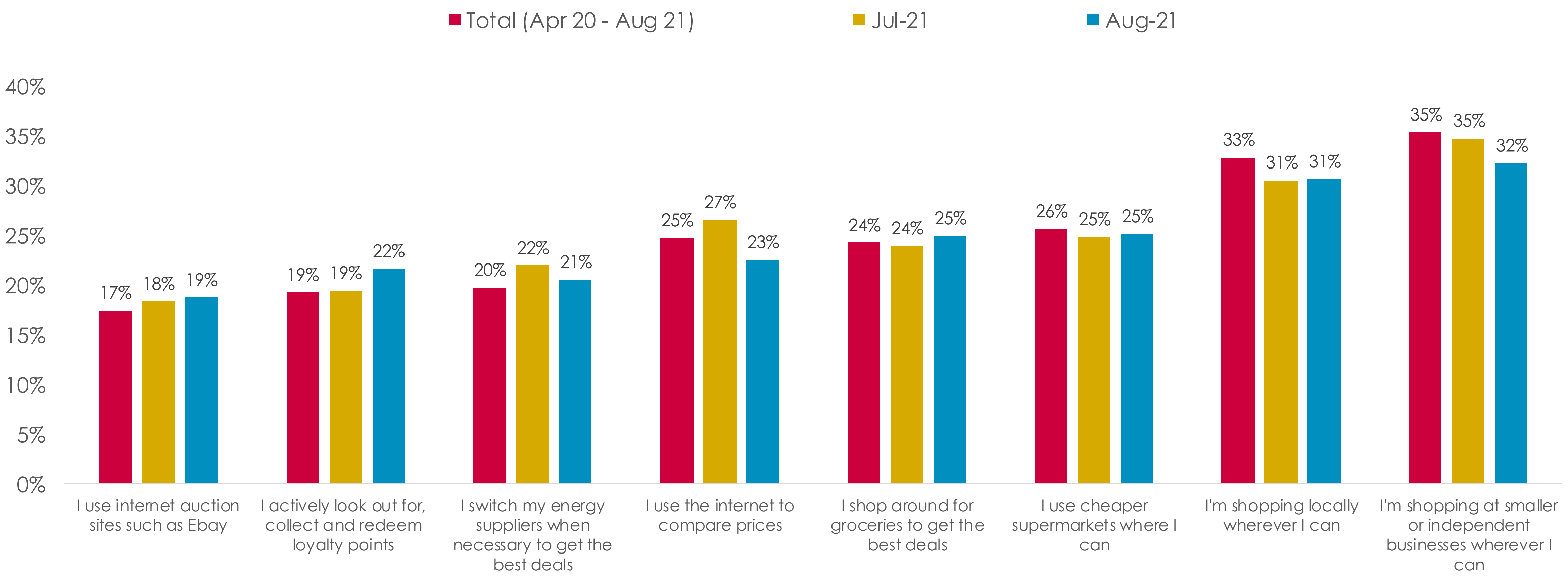


# Impacts on Shopping Habits

# Support for small independent businesses declines further this month

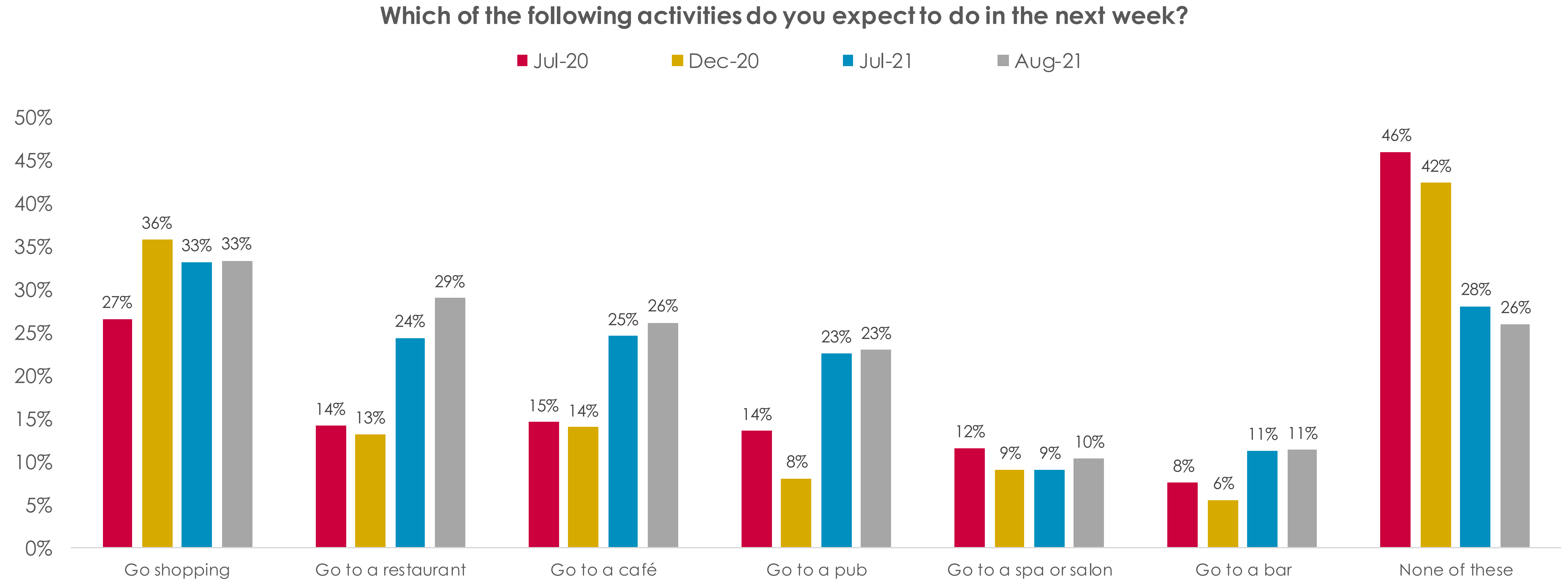
**- Whilst many schemes were in place aiming to support small independent businesses throughout the pandemic, this month sees a further decline in those who have recently started shopping at such businesses wherever they can (35% to 32%)**

**Below are a list of shopping activities. Please select all activities which you *have started doing recently***



# Appetite for out of home leisure rises further amidst reopened economy

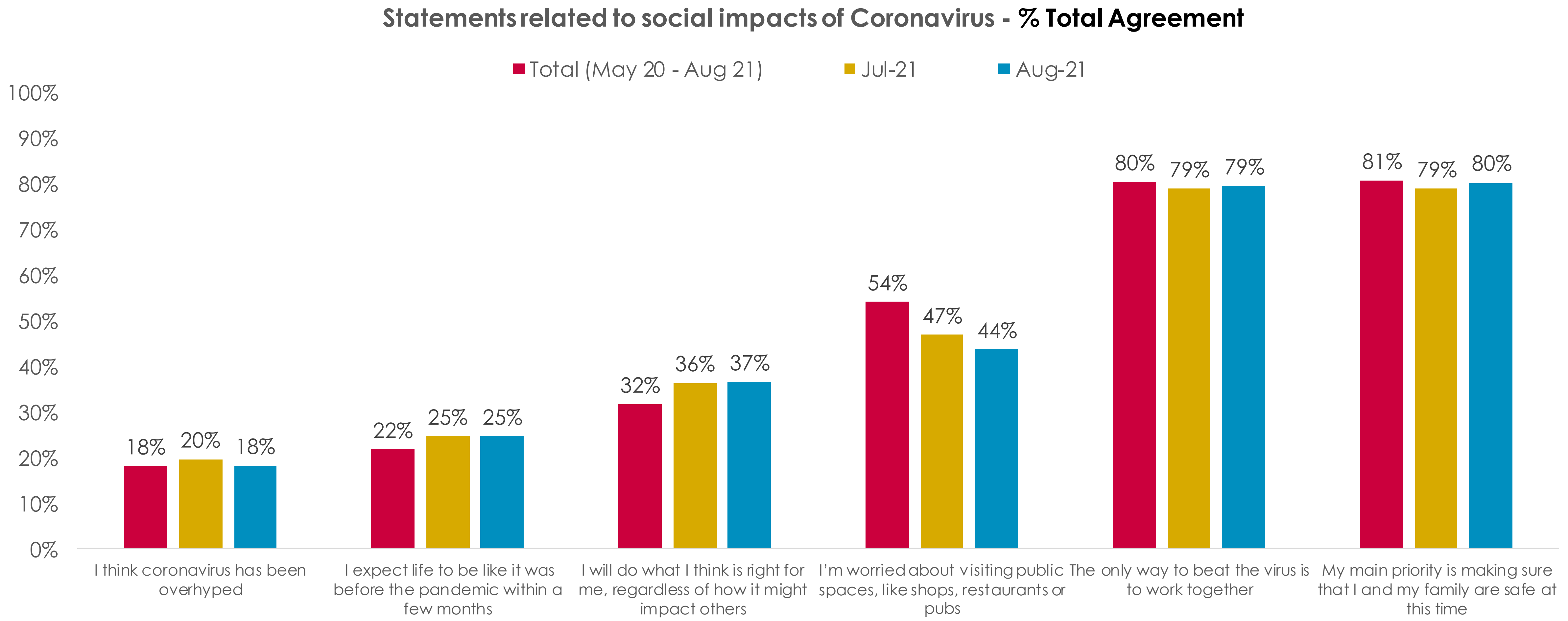
- Proportion expecting to visit a restaurant in the next week up 5% compared to last month (25% to 29%)
- Only just over a quarter (26%) expect not to do any of the listed activities in the next week, down 20% compared to last July



# Social Implications

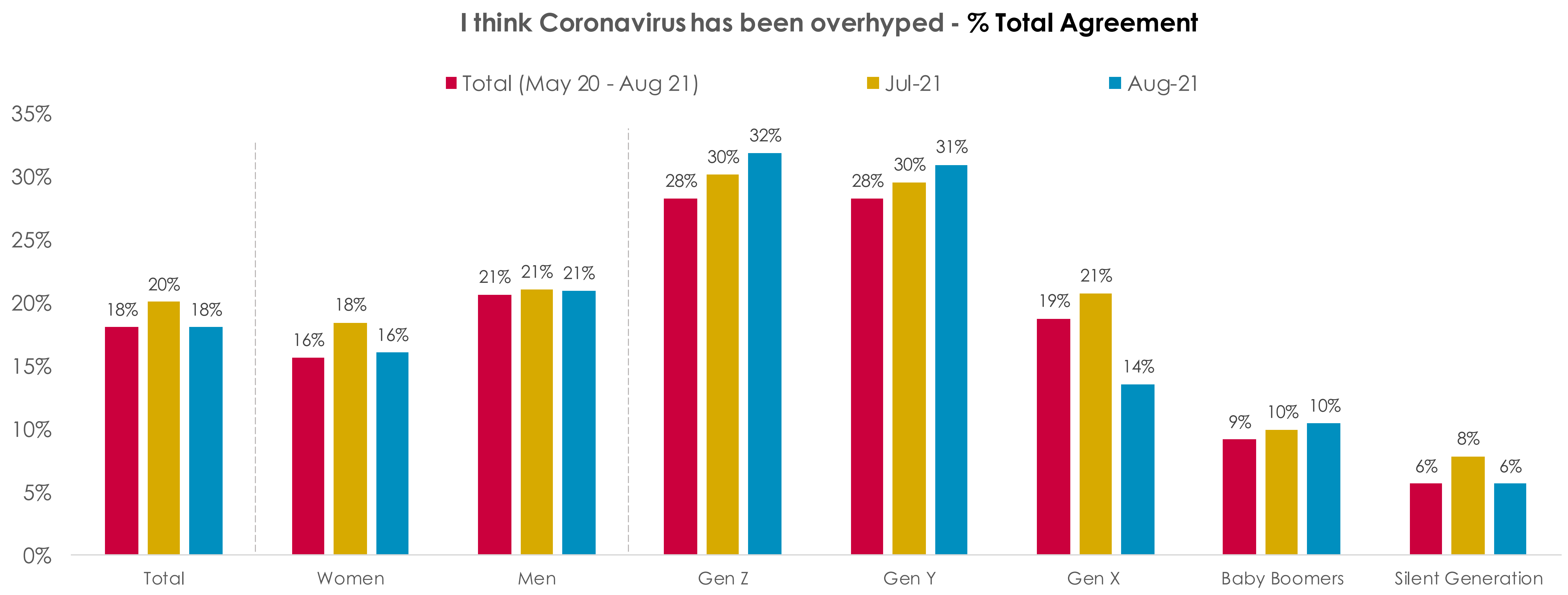
# Concerns about public spaces decline as vaccine rollout continues

**- Proportion feeling worried about visiting public spaces declines by 3% this month, down from 47% to 44%**
**- Compared to pandemic average, the proportion who will do what they think is best for them is up 5% this month (37% to 32%)**



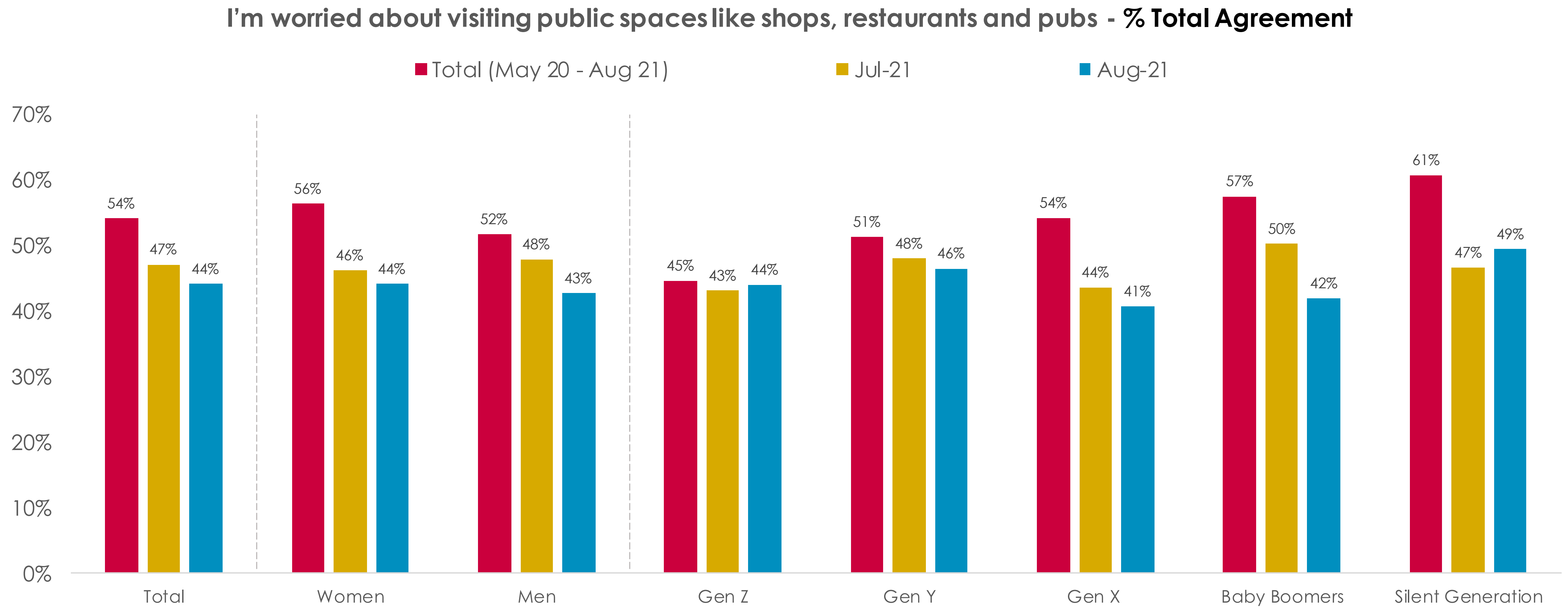
# Pandemic cynicism polarised across generations this month

**- Topline decline in cynicism primarily driven by Gen X, who see a 7% decline this month from 21% to 14%**
**- Neither Baby Boomers nor the Silent Generation either saw a rise in cynicism this month, with Silent Generation actually seeing a 2% decline**
**- These trends contrast with Gen Z and Gen Y, who both saw a slight increase in cynicism this month**



# Baby Boomers the key driver of decline in concerns over public spaces

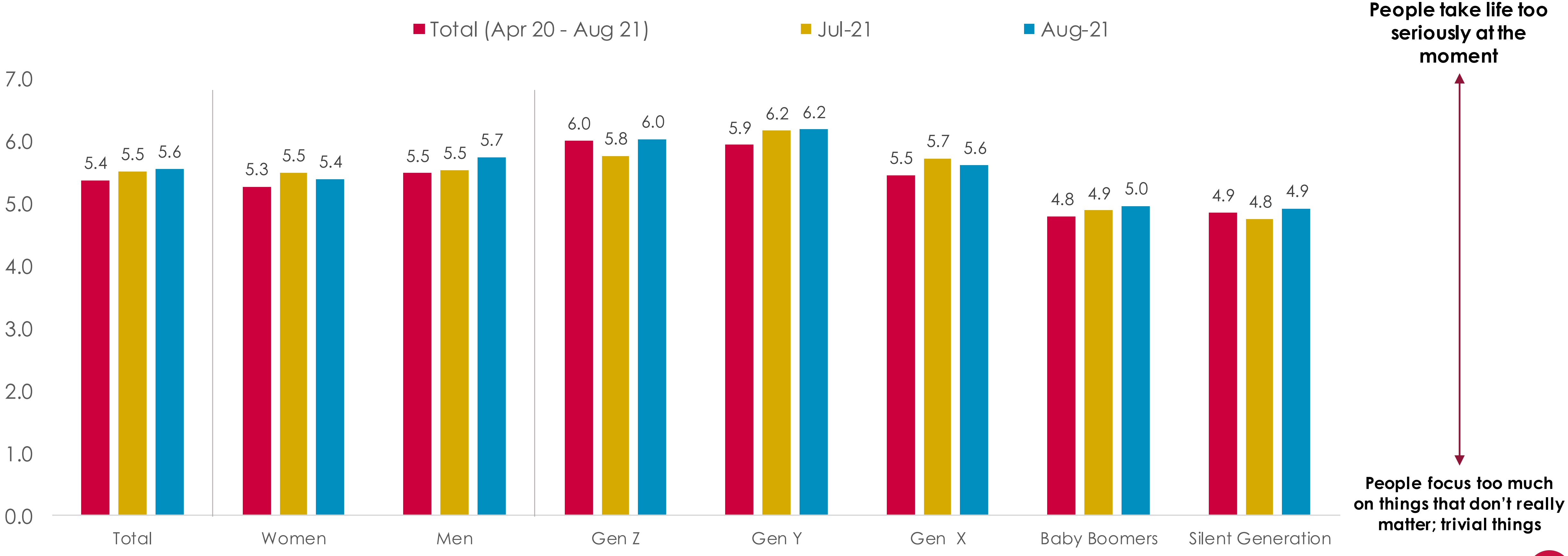
- Baby Boomers saw the sharpest fall in concerns about public spaces this month, falling from 50% to 42%
- This contrasts with the outlook of Gen Z and the Silent Generation, who both saw an increase in concerns this month



# New Seriousness declines further as we slowly return to sense of normality

- Average score rose by 0.1 this month from 5.5 to 5.6, further suggesting a dampening of the sense of new seriousness
- Topline trend primarily driven by men and Gen Z this month, both seeing a rise of 0.2 points respectively

## On a scale from 1 to 10, please indicate to what extent you feel people take life too seriously *[Average Response]*

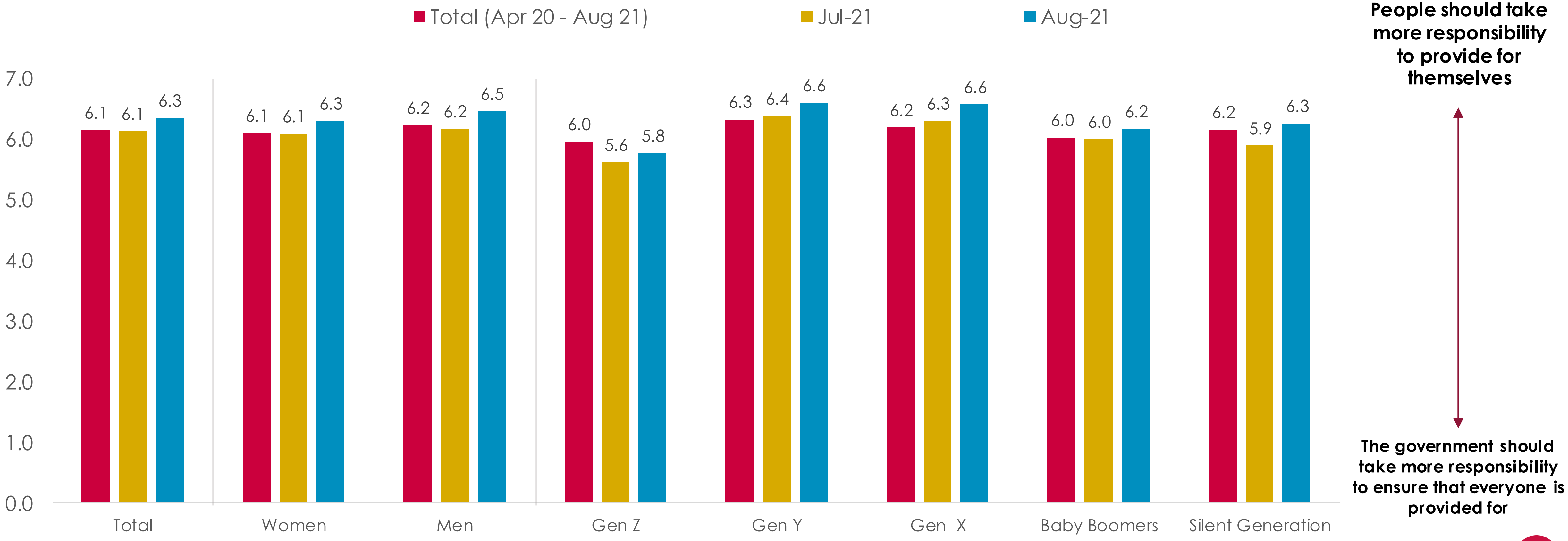


# Priorities

# Over 70s drive growing sense that people should be providing for themselves

- Amongst the Silent Generation, this month sees a 0.4 point increase from 5.9 to 6.3, compared to a 0.2 point increase overall
- Men and Gen X also saw an above average increase this month, rising by 0.3 points from 6.2 to 6.5 and 6.3 to 6.6 respectively

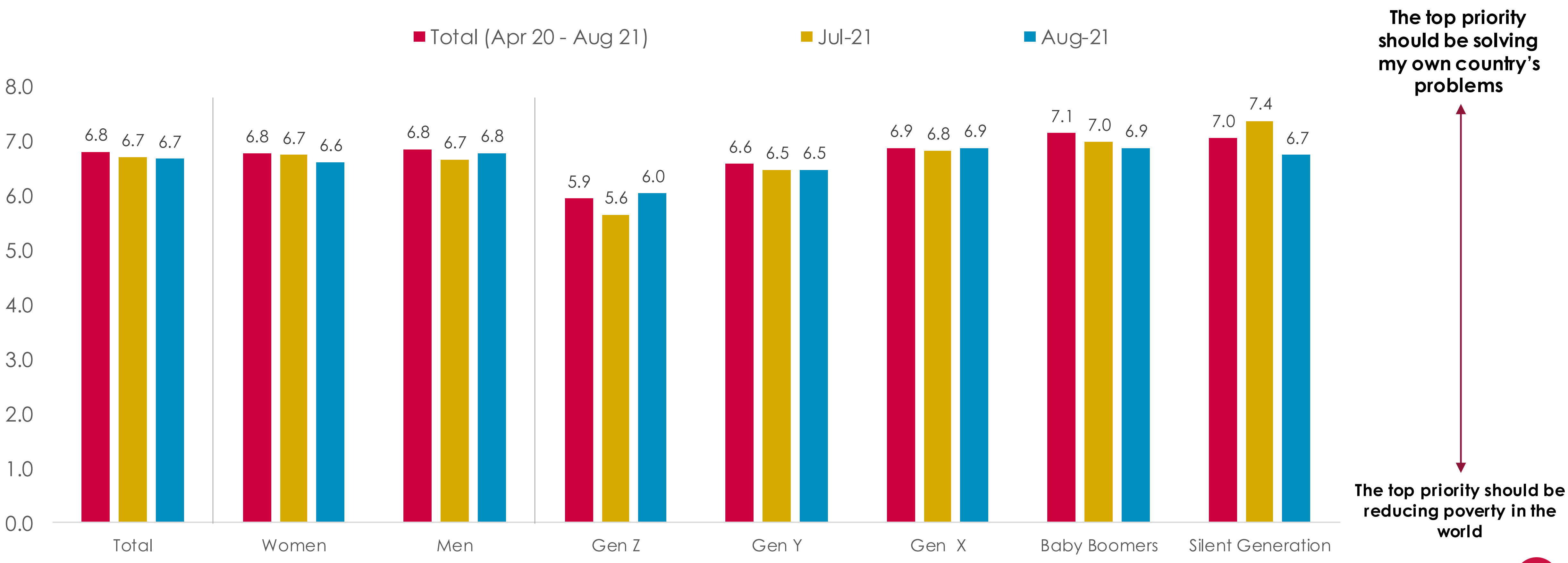
**On a scale from 1 to 10, please indicate to what extent you feel it is the Government's responsibility to ensure everybody is provided for *[Average Response]***



# Over 70s shift priorities towards reducing poverty in the world

- Compared to last month, the average score for the Silent Generation fell by 0.7 points, implying less focus on solving domestic issues
- Gen Z saw the opposite trend this month, with their average score rising by 0.4 points from 5.6 to 6.0

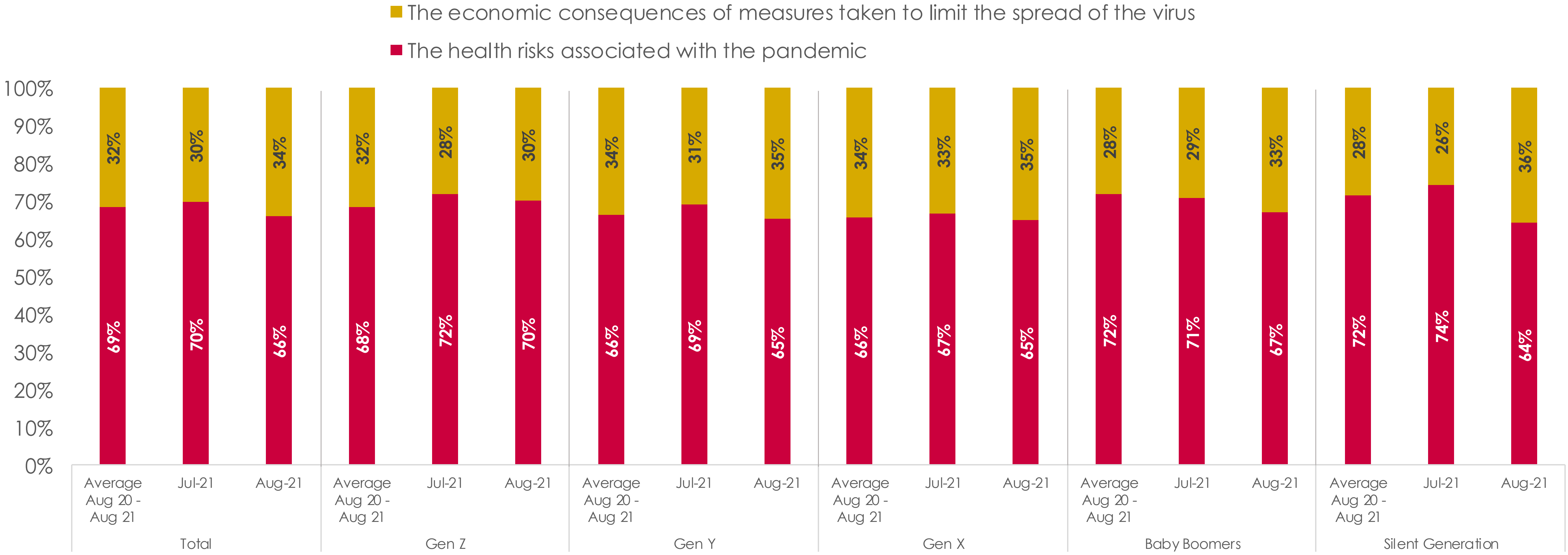
## On a scale from 1 to 10, please indicate what you feel the top priority for the UK Government should be
***[Average Response]***



# Movement away from crisis period of pandemic shifts focus to economy

**- Proportion who prioritise public health over the economy down 4% this month from 70% to 66%, with 34% prioritising the economy**
**- This decline primarily driven by Silent Generation and Baby Boomers, with 10% and 4% declines respectively**

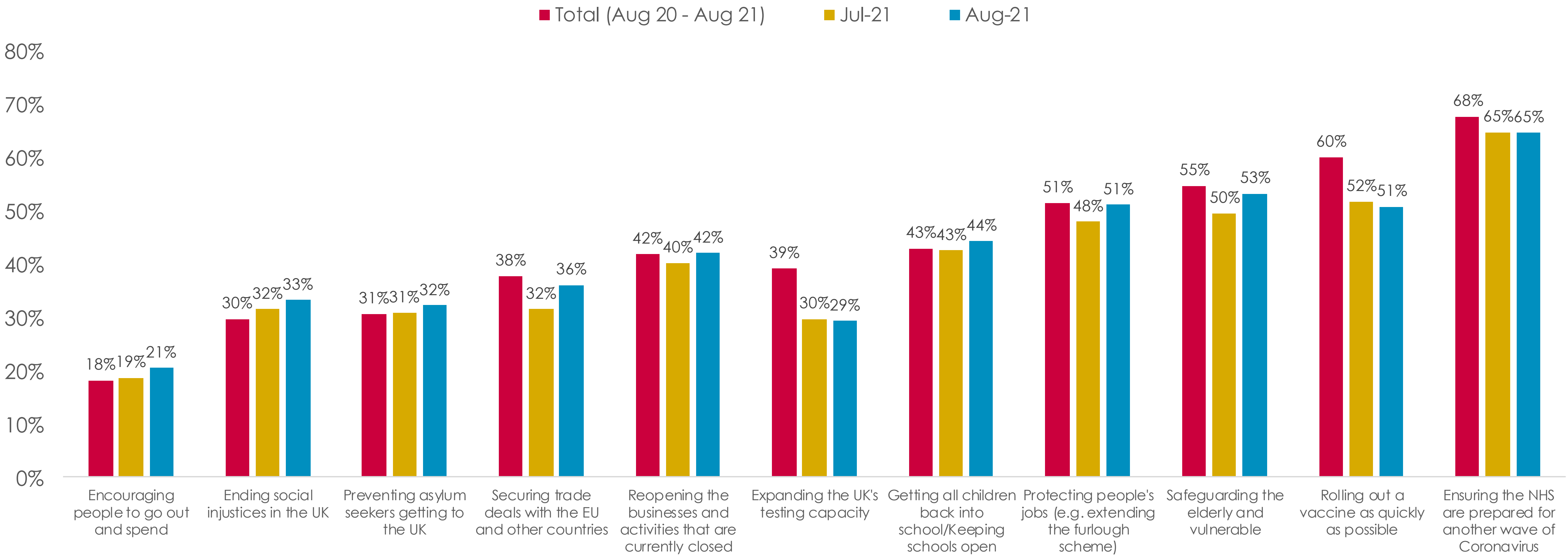
**If you had to choose, which of the following two options would you say is your biggest concern at the moment?**



# Rising case numbers drive greater concern for safeguarding vulnerable

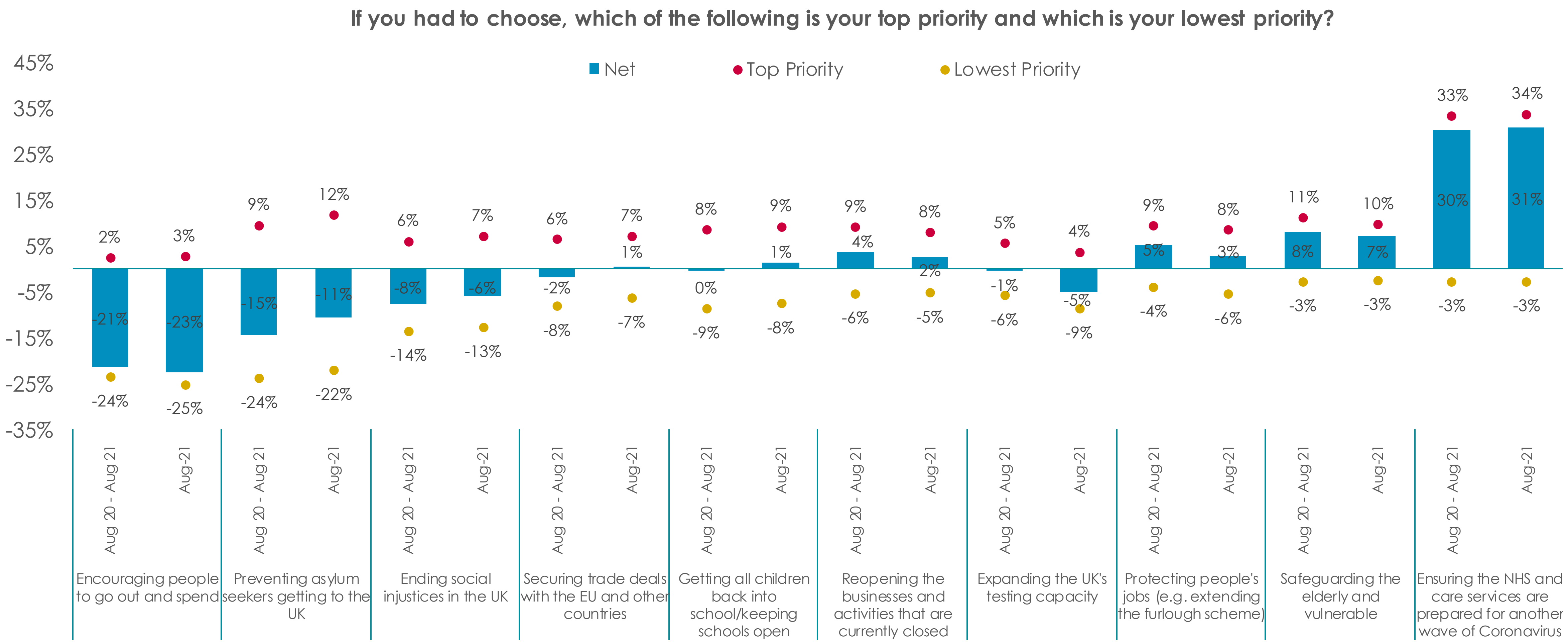
- Proportion who feel safeguarding of vulnerable should be a Government priority up 3% this month from 50% to 53%
- Rollout of vaccine remains far less of a priority than compared to the pandemic as a whole, as is the case with expansion of testing
- Paralleled by a slight shift towards prioritising the economy, this month sees a 2% rise in those who feel encouraging spending should be a priority

Which, if any, of the following do you think should be priorities for the government over the next few months?



# Personal priorities remain strongly focused upon protecting NHS

- One in three respondents (34% this month) felt that their top priority was protecting the NHS amidst rising case and death numbers
- Net proportion feeling prevention of asylum seekers reaching the UK was their top priority rose by 4% this month, despite remaining negative

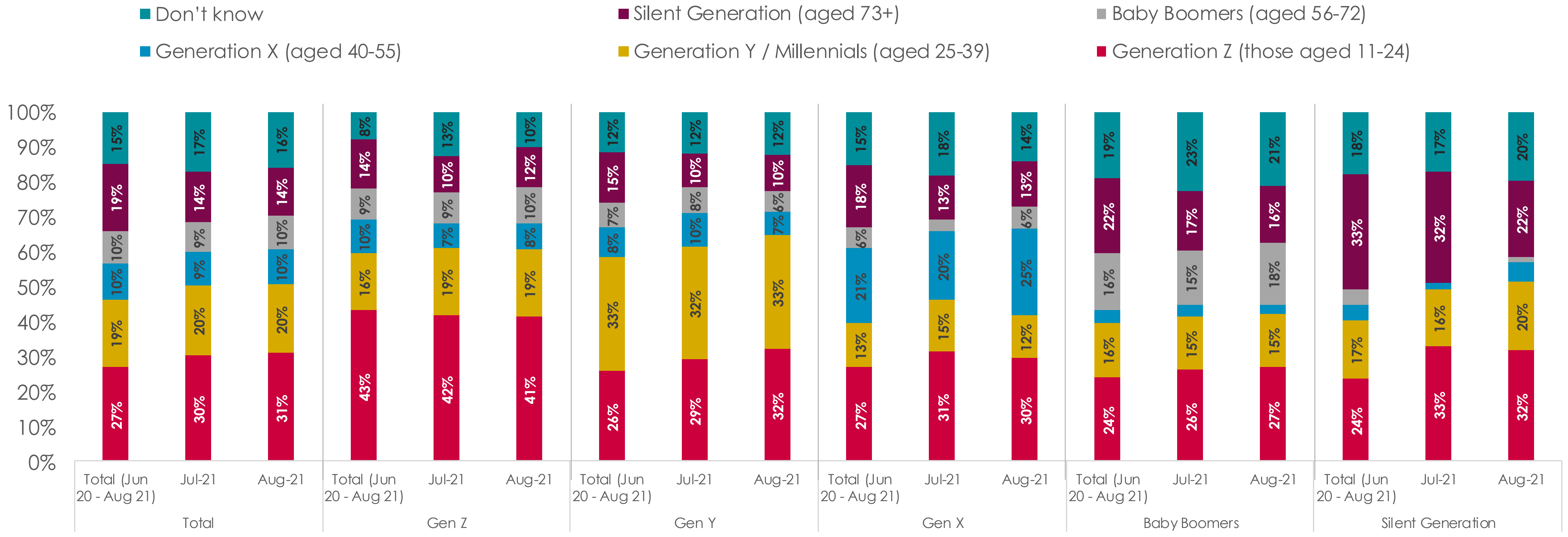


# Generational Impacts

# Consensus remains that Gen Z are most likely to be damaged by pandemic

- Proportion who feel Gen Z are most likely to be negatively affected by the pandemic up from 30% to 31% this month – 4% higher than average
- Silent Generation see sharp decline in proportion who feel their own generation will be worst affected (32% to 22%)

Which generation do you think will be most **negatively** affected by the coronavirus pandemic, all things considered?

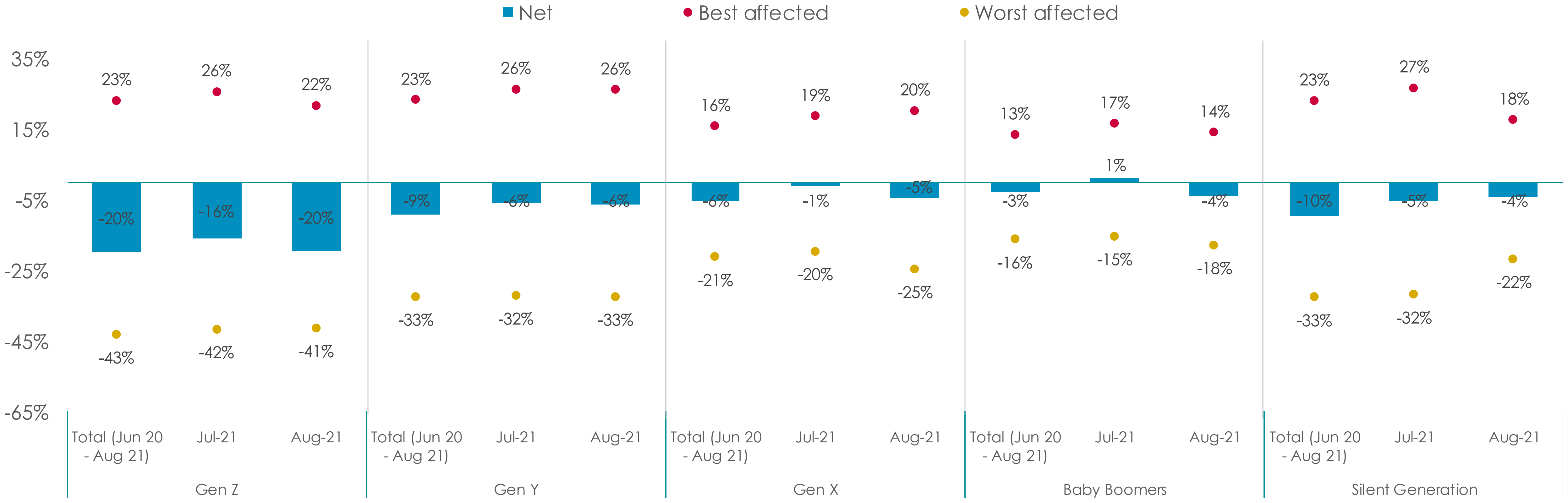


# Gen Z grow more pessimistic regarding impacts of pandemic for their cohort

**- Net proportion of Gen Z who feel they will be worst affected by pandemic down 4% this month from -16% to -20%**
**- Both Gen X and Baby Boomers also see a slight decline in net positive minus negative impacts this month**

## Which generation do you think will be most affected by the coronavirus pandemic, all things considered?

**[Net % saying <u>their own generation</u> will be best *minus* worst affected]**



# TRAJECTORY

Each month Trajectory survey 1500 adults in the UK on a range of issues including consumer confidence, personal choice and control, social trust, opportunities in technology, optimism and their place in the world.

This data is analysed and produces The Optimism Index. The data presented here is a snapshot of the full data, which can be used for bespoke analyses on request – including time-series analysis (from 2011 onwards) and global comparisons.

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