

Food Poverty

The Impact on Vulnerable
Children and Families





The data collection programme took place in January 2022.

Context

- At that stage Ireland was 21 months into the Covid 19 pandemic.
- Hugely disruptive consequences for all of society.
- Lower income households remain disproportionately impacted by economic consequences of Covid.

Research Context

Working with Aldi and Barnardos, Amárach designed and implemented this quantitative research programme.

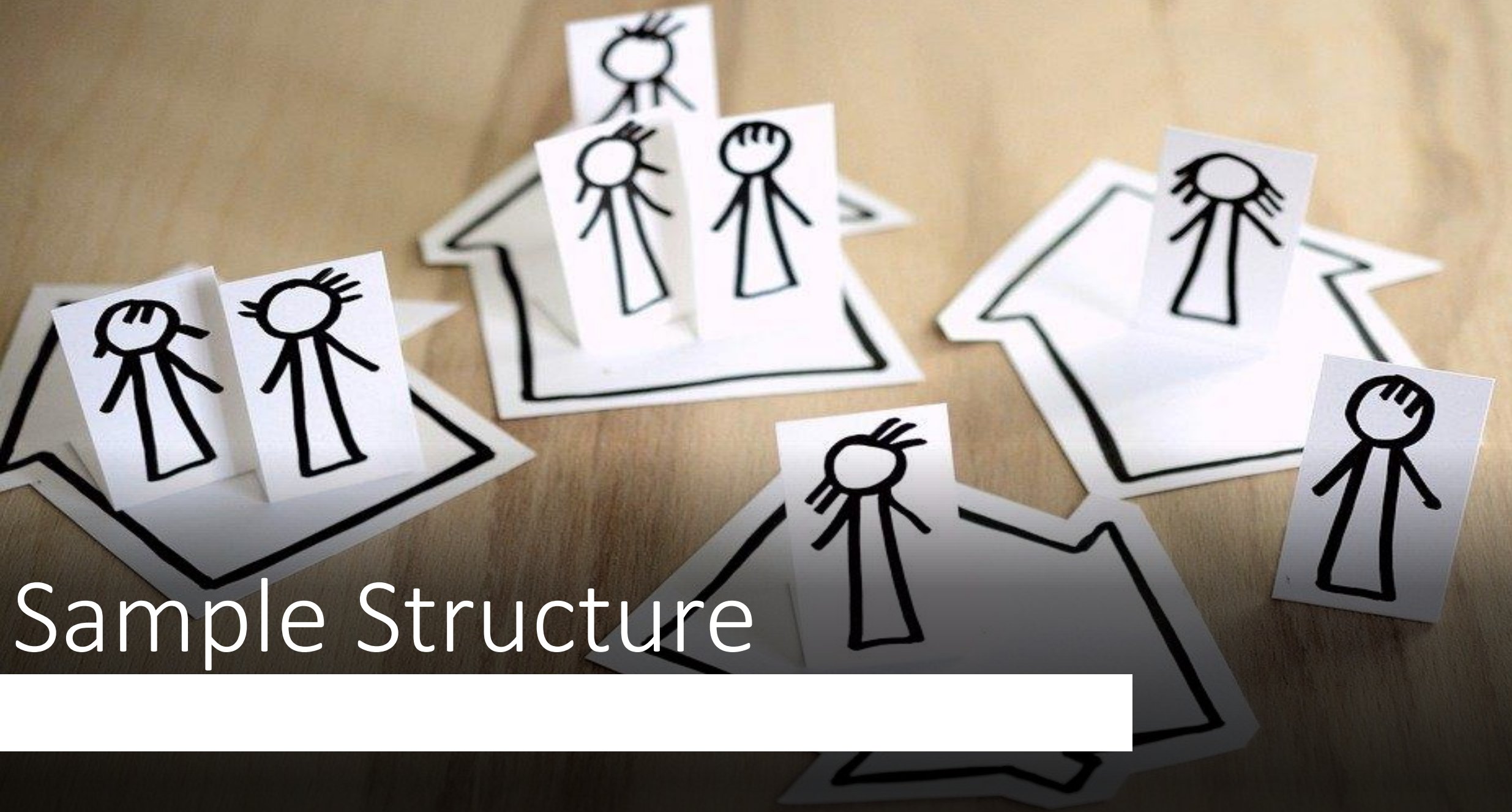
The results demonstrate where food poverty is an issue in Irish society.

By describing how it manifests itself in behavioural terms we hope to have started the debate on practical and pragmatic solutions.

Research Programme: Approach

- Amárach ran an online survey among a nationally representative sample of **n = 1,130 adults** across ROI between 12th to 17th January 2022.
- Quotas were set on gender, age, social class and region to achieve a **sample aligned with national population.**
- Screening and additional demographic and lifestyle questions were used to establish wider links to children, lifestyle, household composition, working, income, education and family status, allowing sub analysis by different cohorts within the population.

Sample Structure

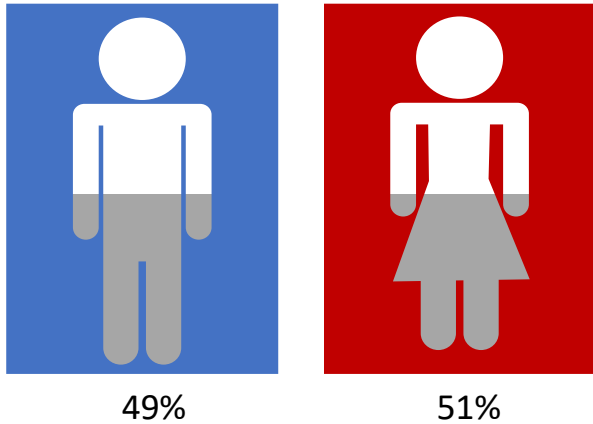




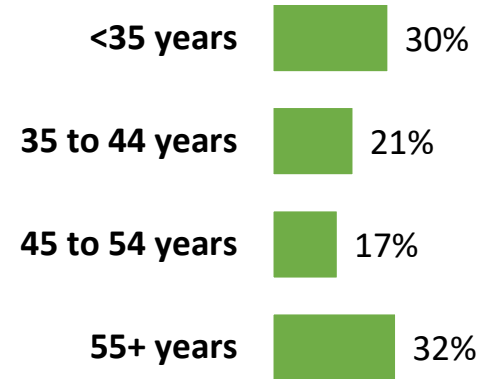
Sample Profile – demographic metrics: nationally representative on gender, age, social class and region

(BASE: All respondents – 1130)

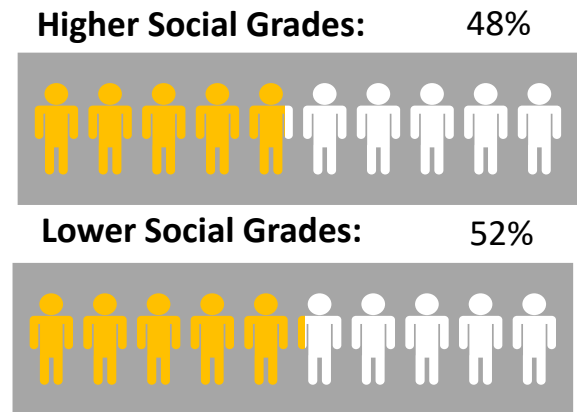
GENDER



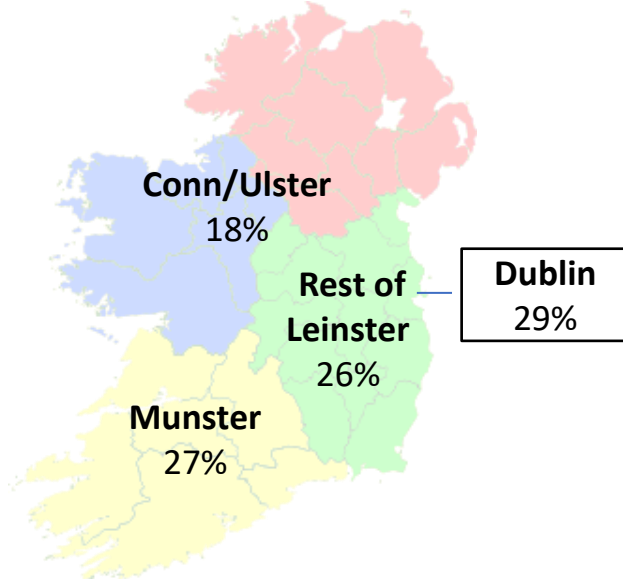
AGE



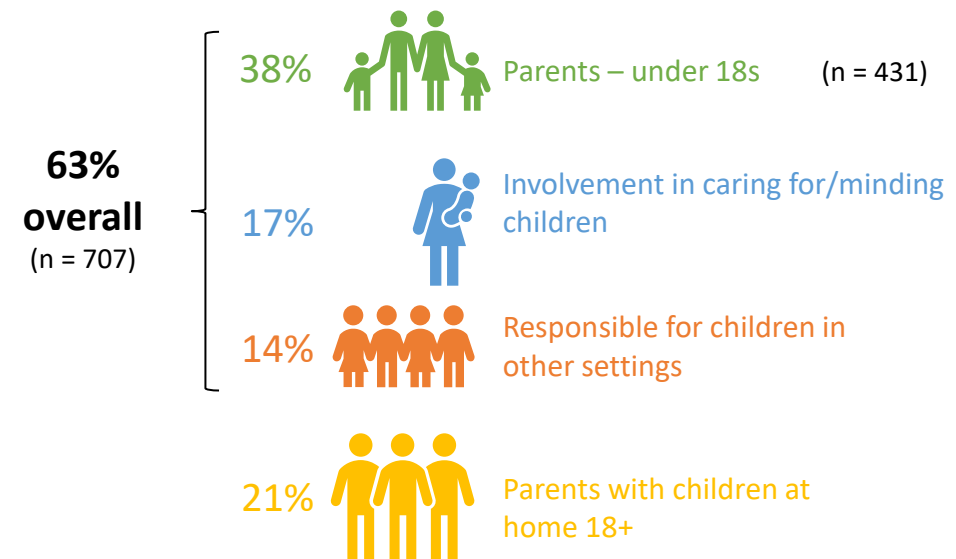
SOCIAL CLASS



REGION



RESPONSIBILITY FOR / LINKS TO CHILDREN



Food Habits

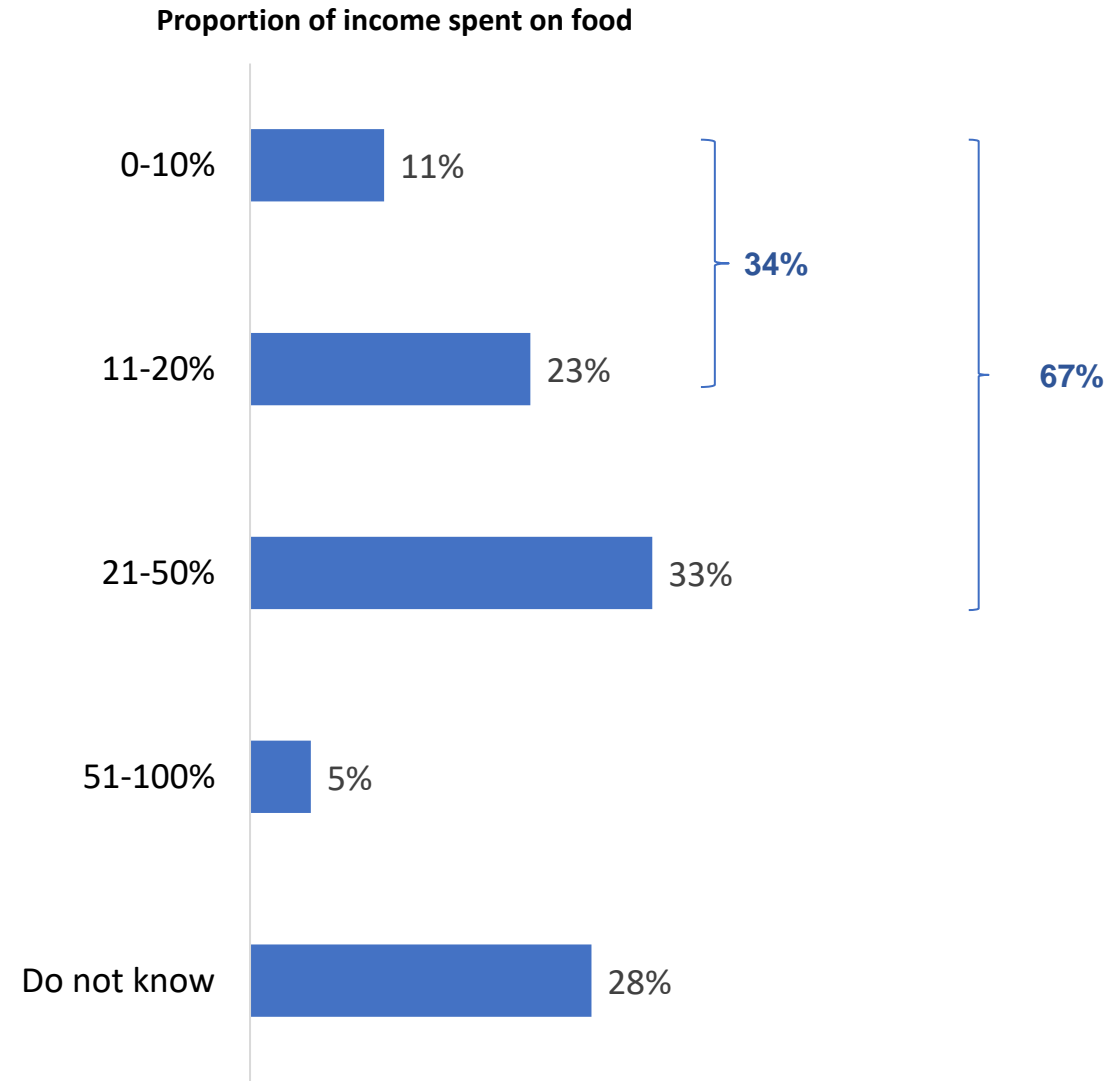


One third of the population spend under 20% of their income on food, one third spend 21-50%

Average spend (mean) 28% of income



(BASE : All respondents – 1130)

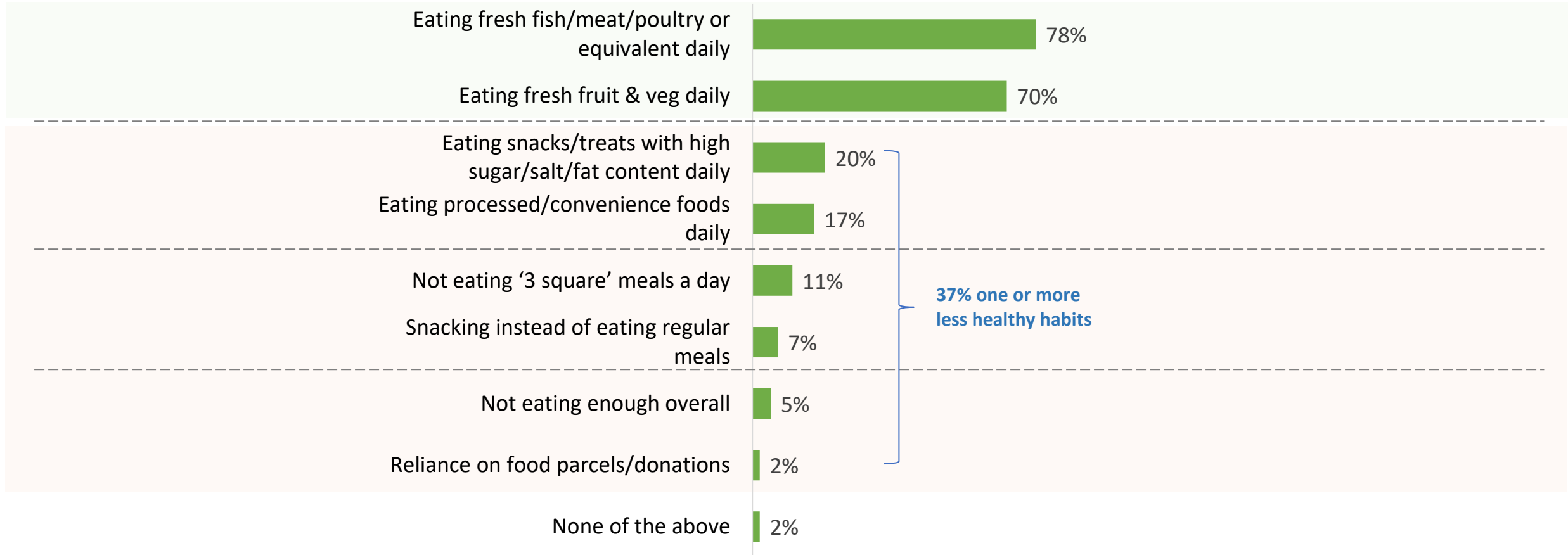




Nearly one third experienced what could be described as less healthy food habits in their own childhood, most prevalent among the under 35s.

(BASE : All respondents – 1130)

Applied to your childhood food and meals

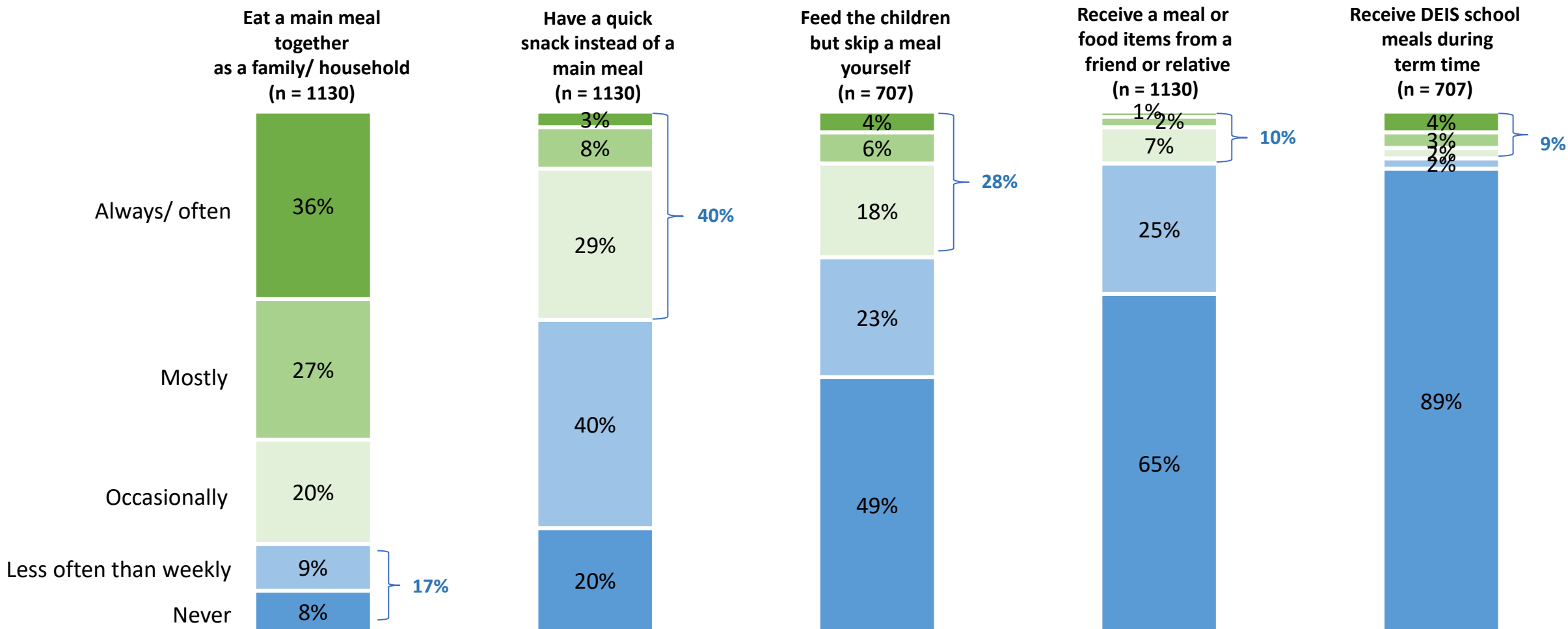




Weekly food habits

How often does each apply, in an average week?

(BASE : All respondents – 1130)



Q7. For each of the following statements please state how often in an average week this applies in your household / when feeding your children/children in your care?

Note: Rounding may affect single coded questions +/- 100%



Parents and those responsible for children:

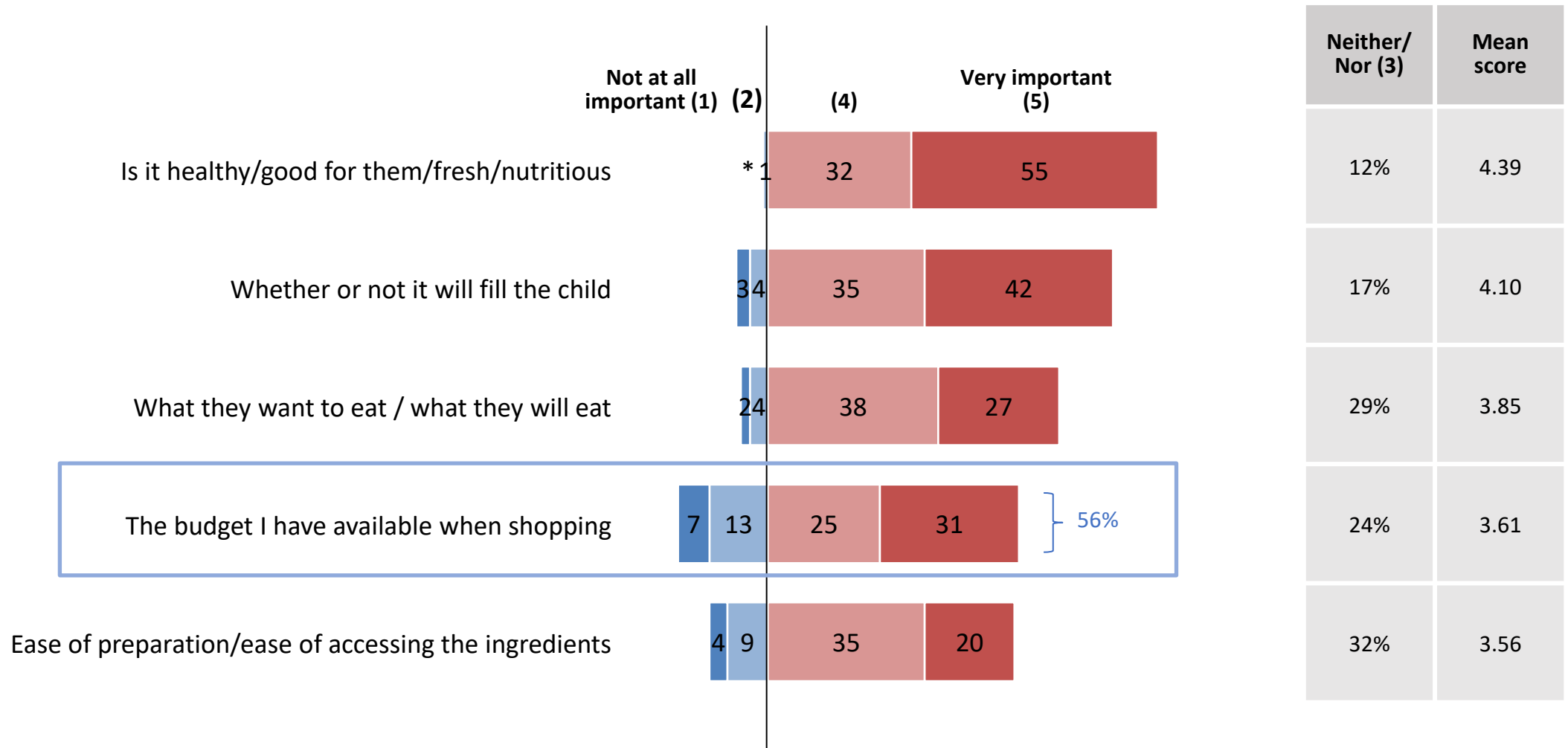


- 50% Give their children what they know they will eat, even if it is not the healthiest
- 23% Don't have time to cook meals
- 19% Don't know enough about fresh food and cooking to feel confident
- 13% Don't regularly eat meals together as a family
- 14% Don't cook from scratch
- 11% Find it difficult to get hold of fresh fruit and veg



The budget available when shopping is a key factor for over half, 56%, when choosing food for their children / children in their care

(BASE : All with links to children – 707)



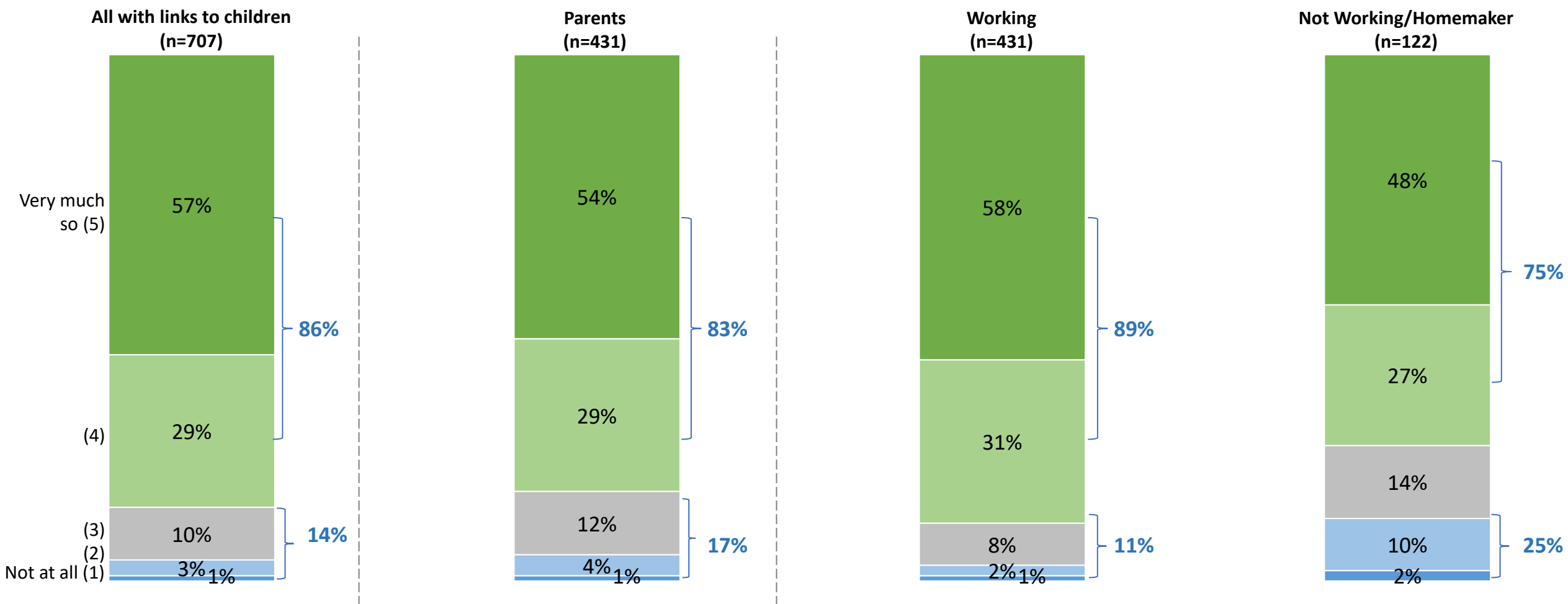
A dark blue ceramic bowl is shown from a slightly elevated angle, containing a black spoon. The bowl is empty and sits on a dark surface. The background is a soft, out-of-focus gradient of warm colors, likely from a window or light source. The text 'Food Worries' is overlaid in the bottom left corner in a white, sans-serif font.

Food Worries



14% did not feel able to provide children with the food they would ideally like, rising to 17% among parents and 25% among those 'not working'

DO YOU FEEL YOU CAN PROVIDE YOUR CHILDREN WITH A SUFFICIENTLY NUTRITIOUS DIET



Q12. Do you feel you can provide your children / children in your care with a sufficiently nutritious diet, quality and quantity, which you would ideally like?



Around 1 in 10 indicated difficulties in feeding their family, including nearly 1 in 5 having skipped meals themselves so their children can eat enough

(BASE : Links to children – 707)

PARENTS + ALL WITH ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILDREN:



YES TO ONE OR MORE STATEMENT	28%
→ Skipped meals yourself or reduced portion size so your family/children can eat enough	19%
→ Felt you have not had enough food to feed your family/children	12%
→ Had to borrow money to feed your family/children	11%
→ Been conscious your children haven't had access to the food they want/friends are consuming?	10%
→ Been regularly unable to afford a main meal for your family/children with meat or a vegetarian equivalent as often as you'd like	9%
→ Had to decide that your children would miss out on social opportunities due to food	9%
→ Known your children to feel shame or anxiety for the food they consume	5%
→ Used a food bank	3%

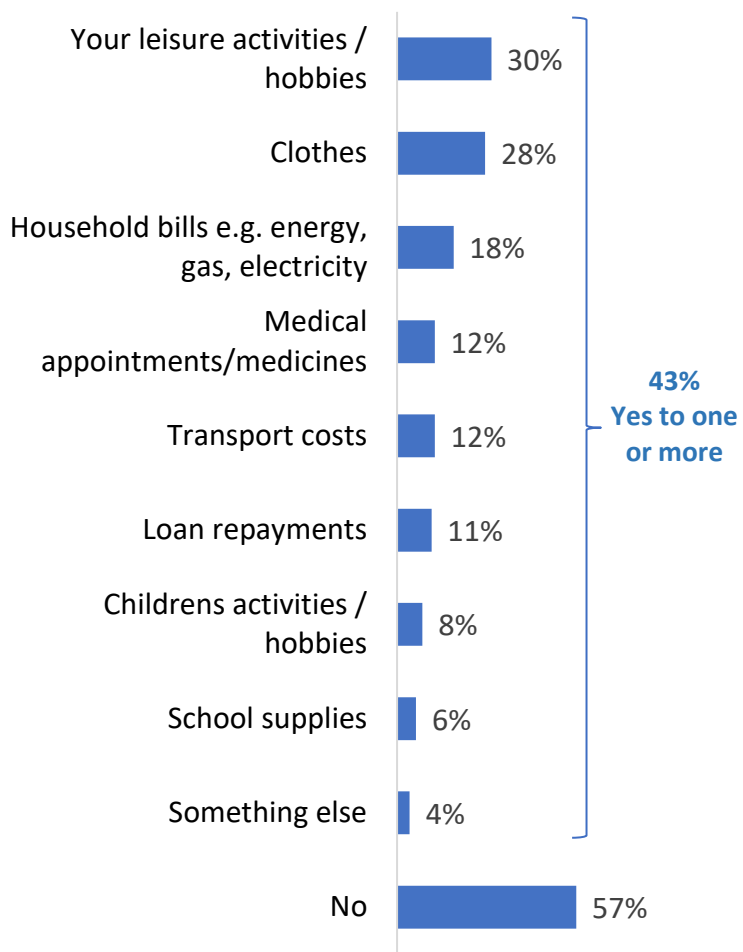
Q14. In the past 12 months have you:



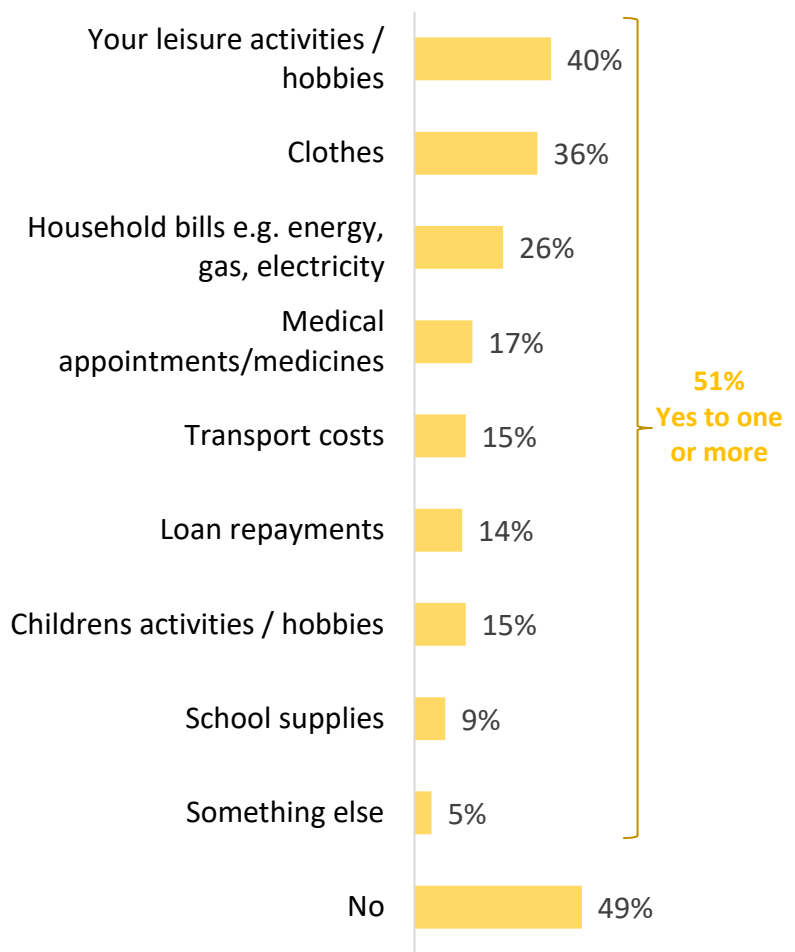
Parents and those 'not working' were most likely to cut down spending, including on household & medical bills and children's activities/hobbies in order to afford food

(BASE : All respondents – 1130)

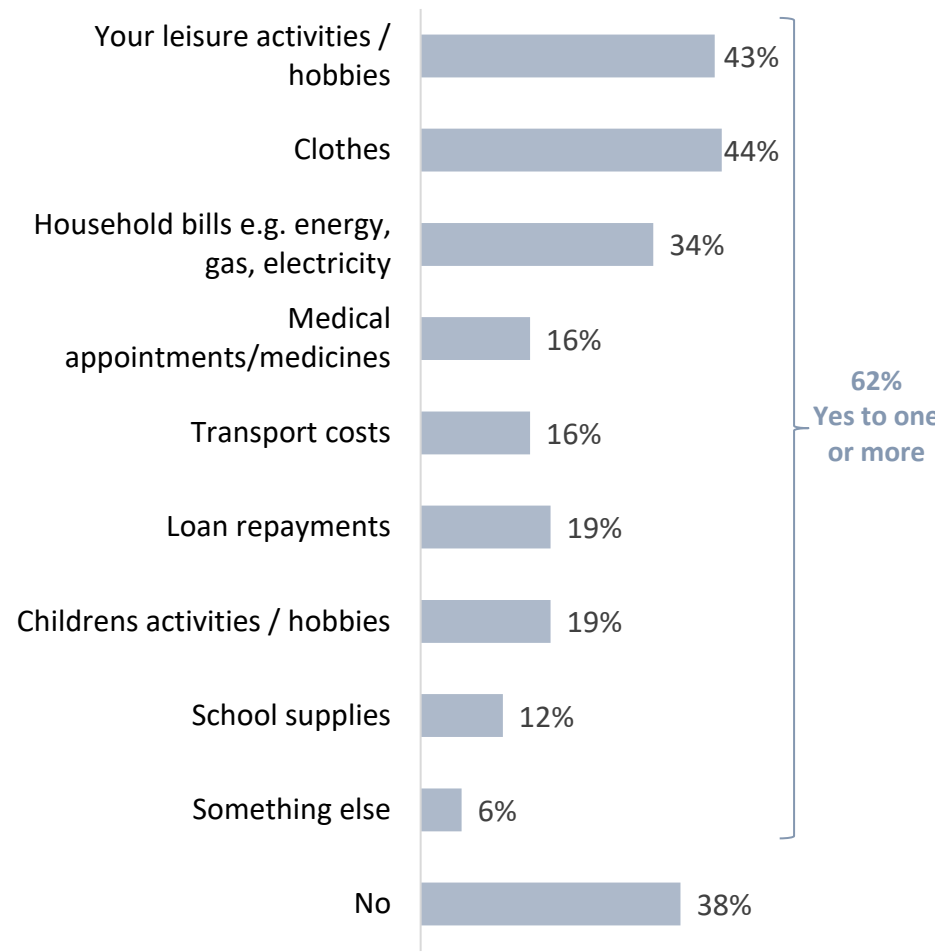
All respondents: n = 1130



Parents: n = 431



Not Working/Homemaker n=155

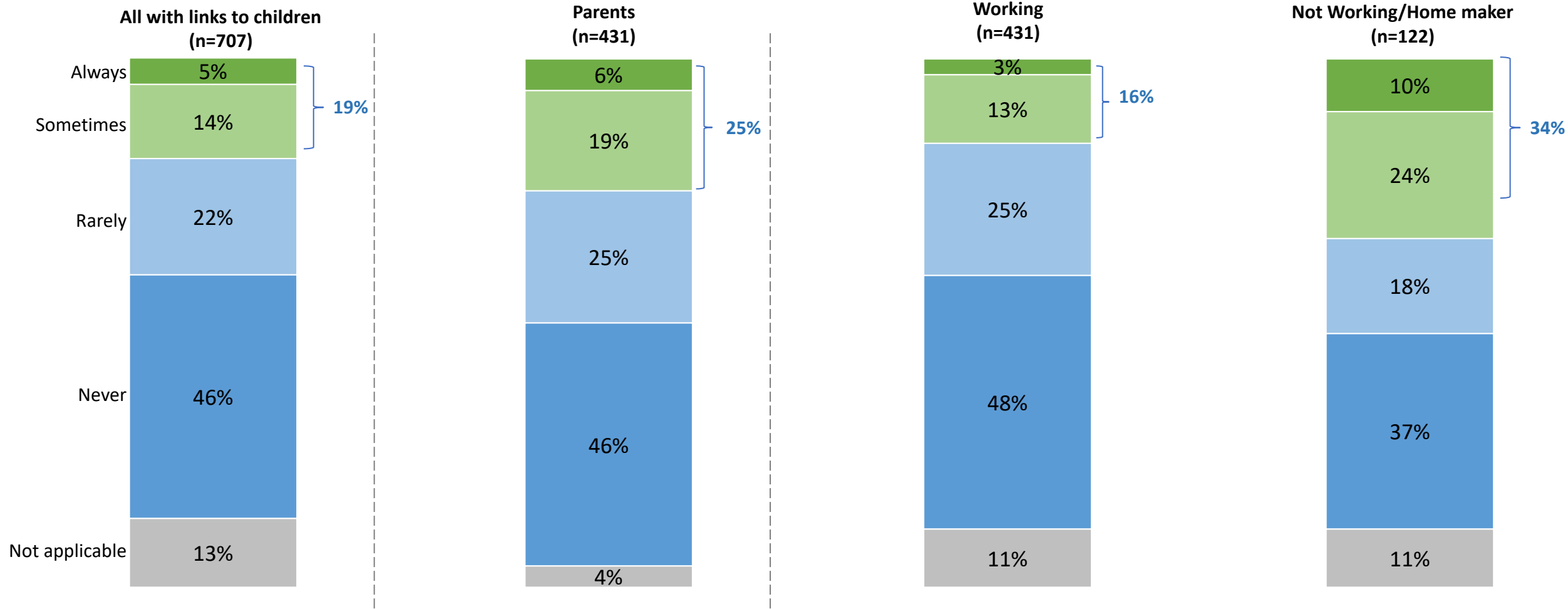


Q16. Have you ever cut down on spending, or missed payments, in any of the following areas to afford food costs?



Nearly 1 in 5 were always/sometimes worried about not being able to provide children with sufficient food, rising to 25% of parents and 34% among those 'not working'

HOW OFTEN DO YOU WORRY ABOUT NOT BEING ABLE TO PROVIDE YOUR CHILDREN WITH SUFFICIENT FOOD?

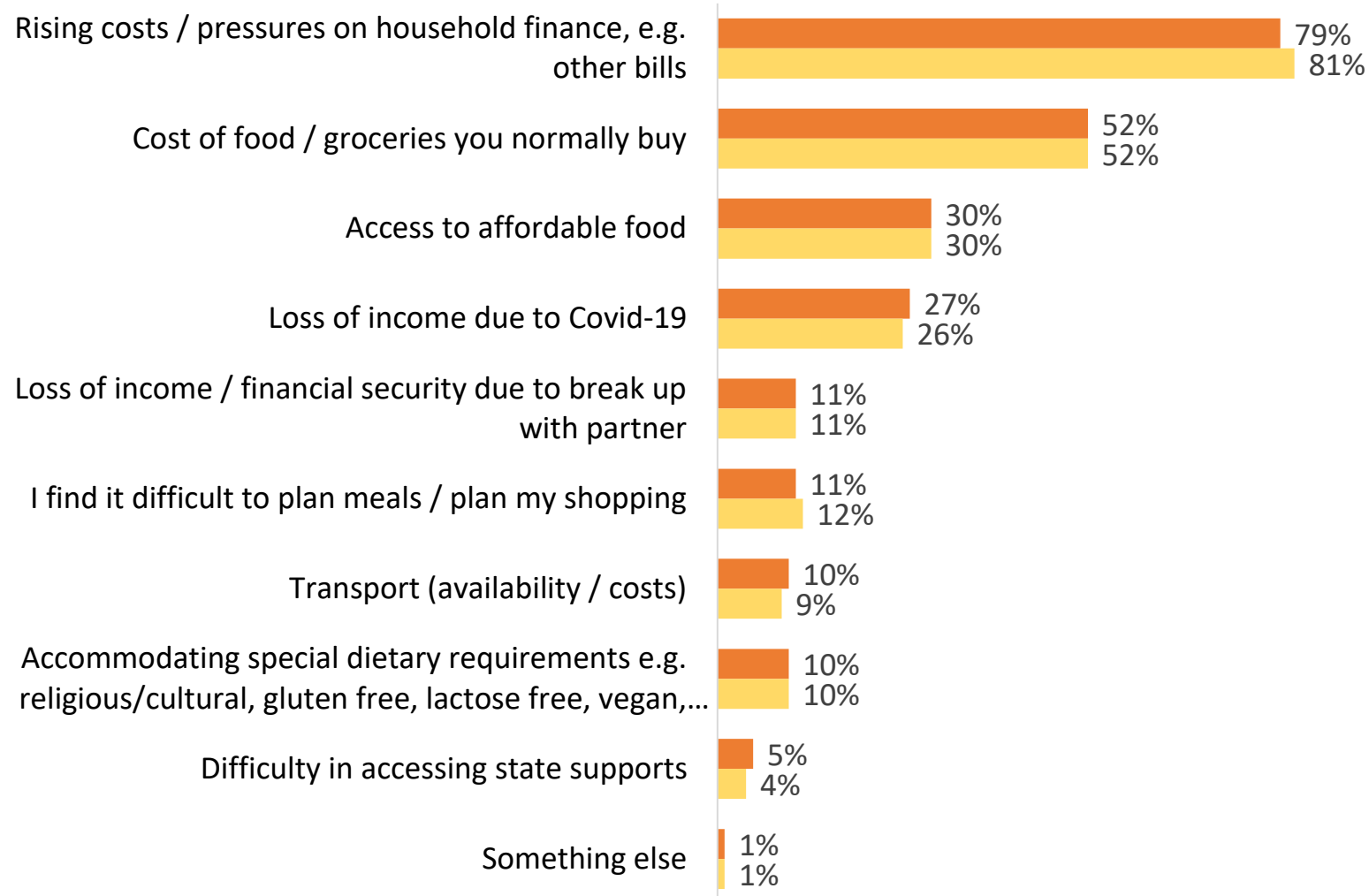




Pressure on finances, rising costs, cost of food – are the factors having the biggest impact on those always/sometimes worried about providing food for their children

(BASE: Q17 Worried - Always/Sometimes)

All with links to children: n = 134
Parents: n = 107



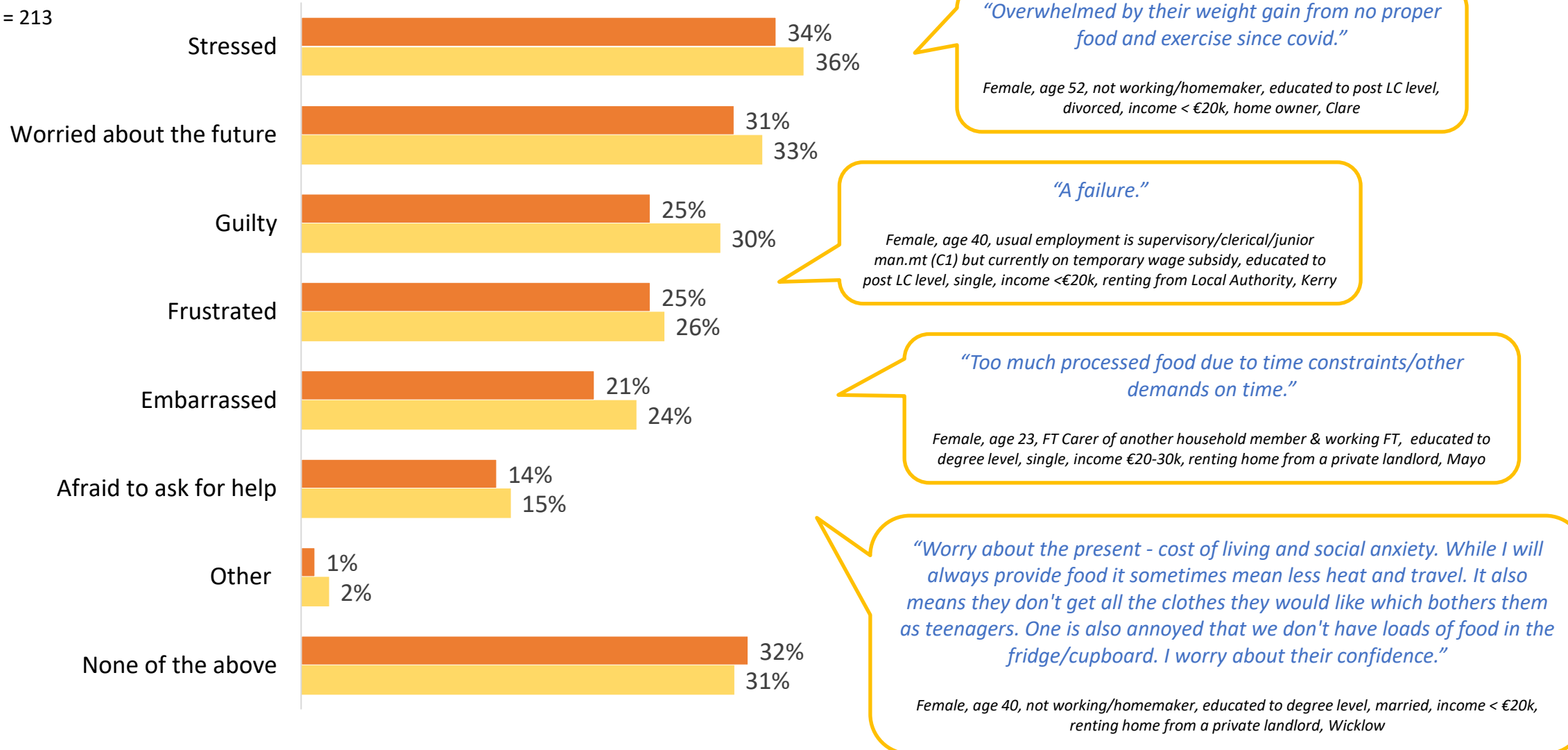


The majority of those with worries related to the provision of sufficient food to their children identified with a range of emotive words to describe how this makes them feel

(BASE: Worried - Always/Sometimes/Rarely)

All with links to children: n = 290

Parents: n = 213





14% did not feel sufficiently distanced from food poverty to provide a rating of 6 or more, and overall, one quarter could not provide a rating of 8 or more out of 10

(BASE : All respondents – 1130)

HOW CLOSE TO OR FAR AWAY FROM FOOD POVERTY/INSECURITY DO YOU FEEL?

Very close

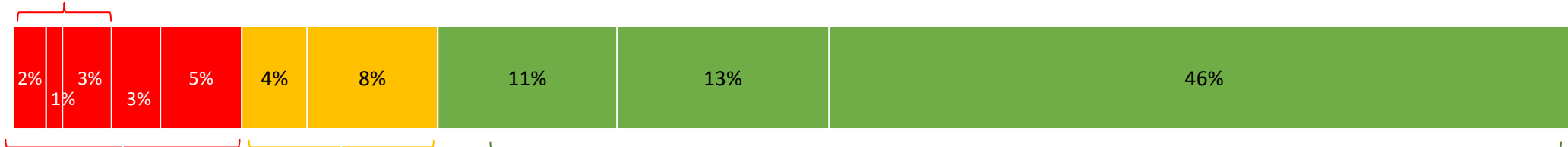
Far away

1

10

1 to 3

6%



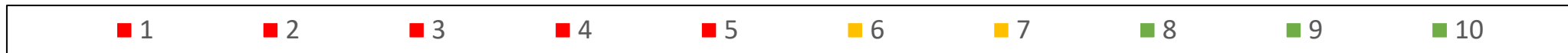
Unsure
4%

Ratings Summaries:

1 to 5
14%

6 to 7
12%

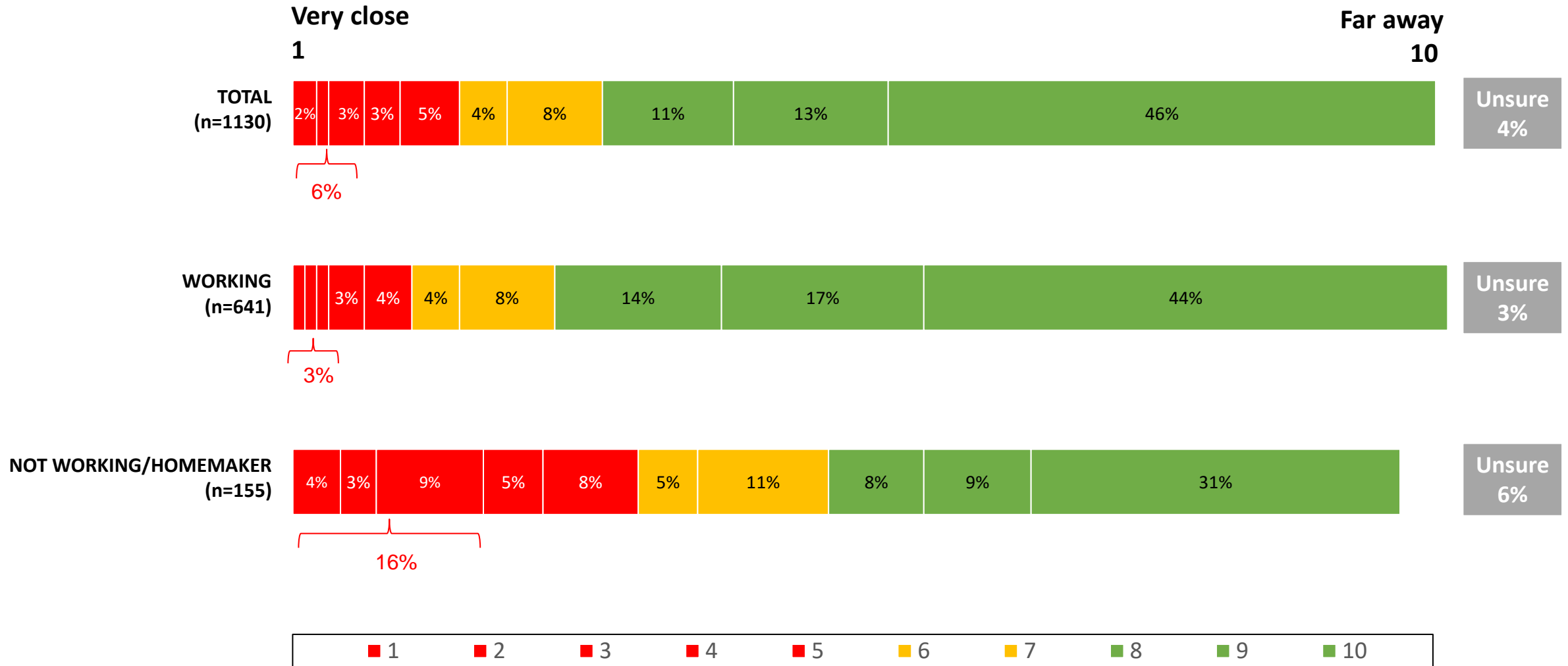
8 to 10
70%





3 in 10 of those in the not working/homemaker group feel close to food poverty/insecurity

HOW CLOSE TO OR FAR AWAY FROM FOOD POVERTY/INSECURITY DO YOU FEEL?



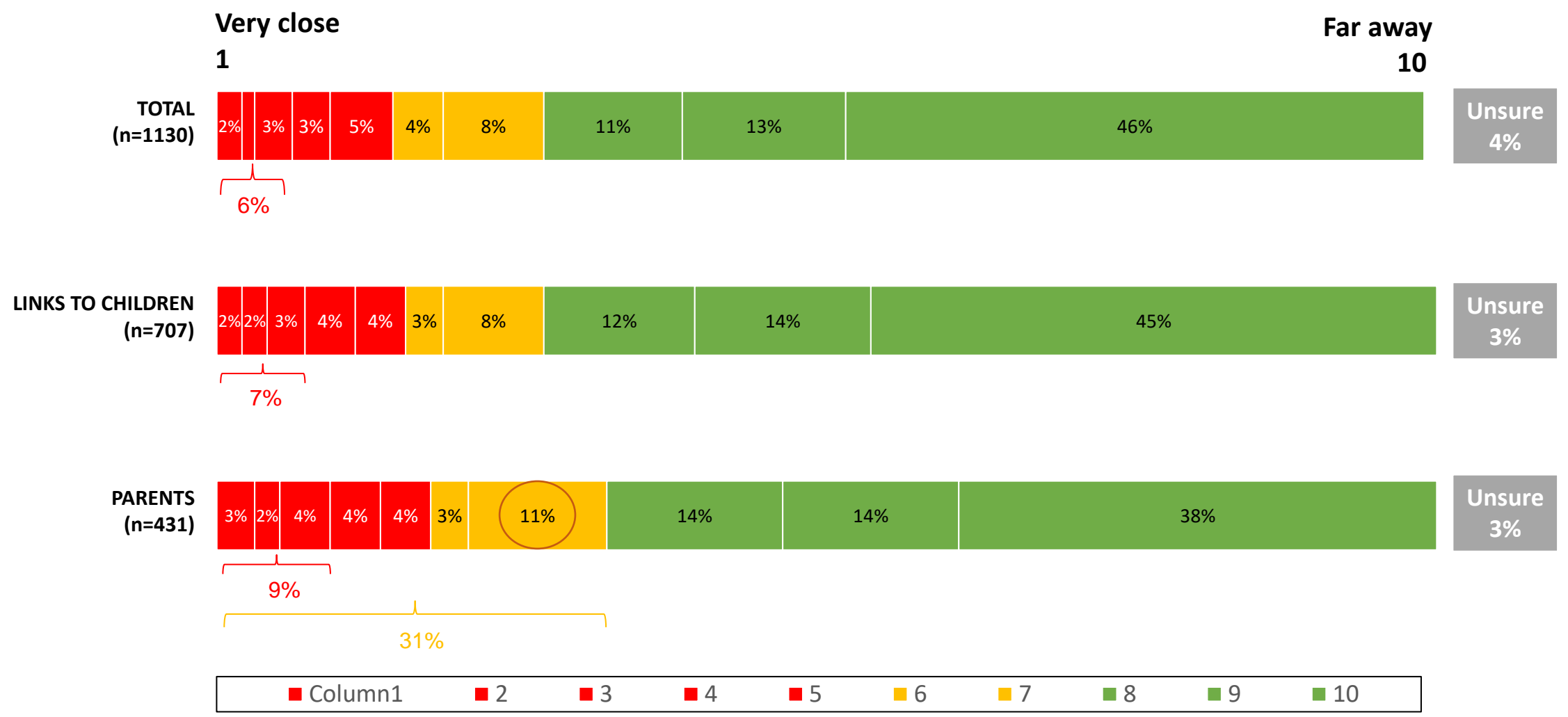
Q20. How close to, or far away from, food poverty/insecurity do you feel currently?
Please rate using a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is very close and 10 is far away from.



9% of parents feel 'close' (1-3) to food poverty.

Close to one third of parents (31%) did not feel distanced enough from food poverty to rate as 8/9/10

HOW CLOSE TO OR FAR AWAY FROM FOOD POVERTY/INSECURITY DO YOU FEEL?

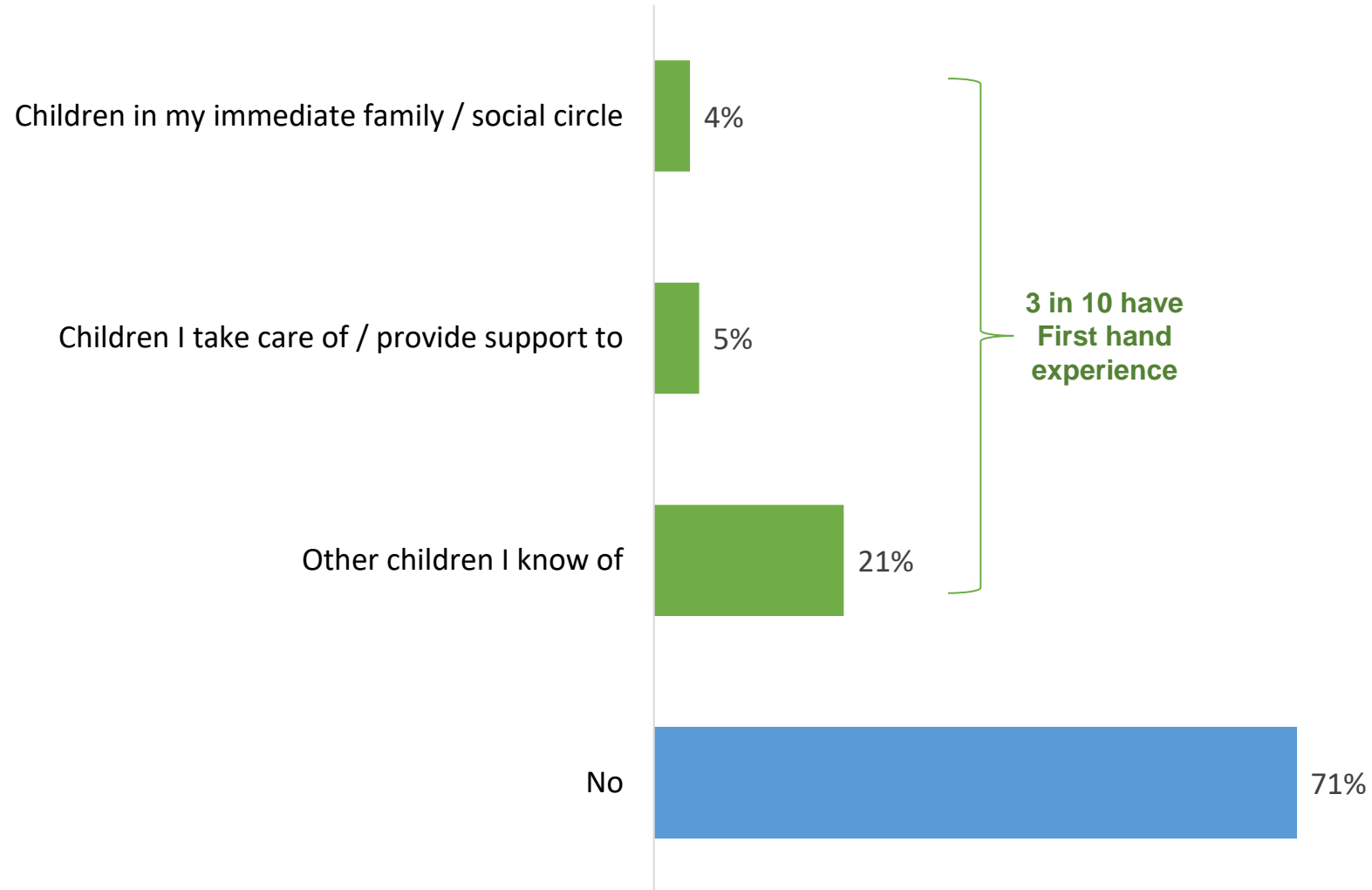


Q20. How close to, or far away from, food poverty/insecurity do you feel currently?
Please rate using a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is very close and 10 is far away from.



Almost 3 in 10 adults had first-hand experience of children where the impact of not having sufficient nutritious food was evident

(BASE : All respondents – 1130)

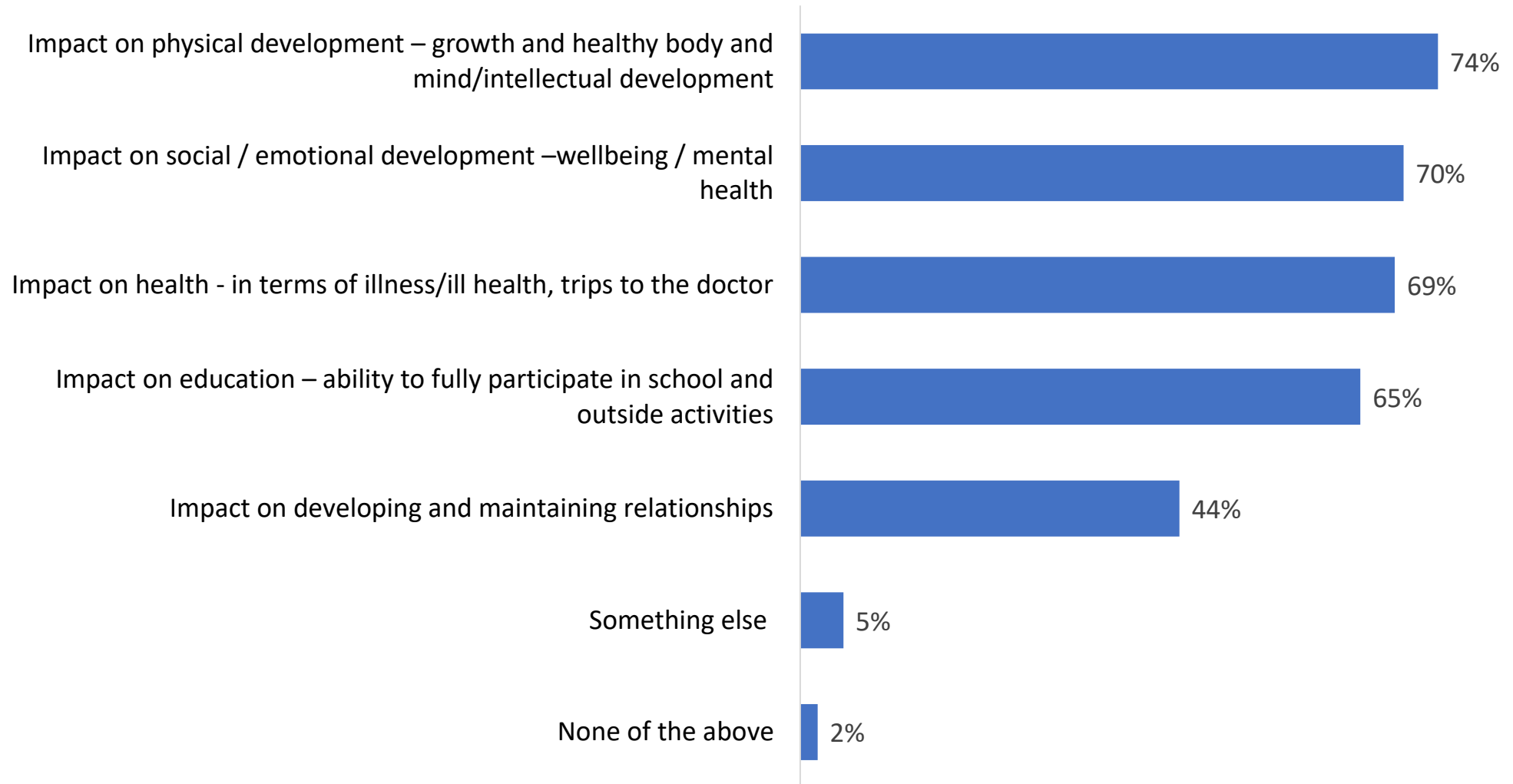


Q22a. Do you have any first-hand experience of children where the impact of not having sufficient nutritious food has been evident to you?



The impact of not having sufficient nutritious food was evident on a number of levels to those with experience of children affected

(BASE : All with first-hand experience - 324)



Q22b. What impact(s), if any, did you notice in those children who had not had sufficient nutritious food?



Food poverty/insecurity in ROI 2021/22 – key stats

- 3% had used a food bank in the past 12 months.
- 14% concerned they are ‘very close’ to food poverty/insecurity.
- 14% do not feel they can provide their children with a sufficiently nutritious diet.
- 19% always/sometimes worried about not being able to provide their children with sufficient food.
- 19% had skipped meals themselves or reduced their own portion size in the past 12 months so children can eat enough.
- 28% said they feed their children but skip meals themselves every week.
- 29% first-hand experience of children where the impact of not having sufficient nutritious food has been evident.
- 43% cut down on spending in one or more area to afford food costs.

Parents with food worries are **stressed, worried, guilty, frustrated** and **embarrassed** about their circumstances.

*Worry about the present - **cost of living** and **social anxiety**. While I will always provide food it sometimes mean **less heat and travel**. It also means **they don't get all the clothes they would like** which bothers them as teenagers. One is also annoyed that we don't have loads of food in the fridge/cupboard. **I worry about their confidence.**"*

Female, age 40, not working/homemaker, educated to degree level, married, income < €20k, renting home from a private landlord, Wicklow



Michael McLoughlin / Alison Flannery
e. info@amarach.com
t. 01 410 5200
w. www.amarach.com
Tw. twitter.com/AmarachResearch