

BRC Consumer Sentiment Monitor

April 2025

An analysis of UK consumer sentiment based on financial status,
shopping behaviours and attitudes





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Headline commentary

Consumer Sentiment Monitor – April 2025



Dr Kris Hamer, Director of Insight | British Retail Consortium

“Given the consumer survey was conducted shortly after Donald Trump's "Liberation Day" tariffs, it's not surprising that consumer expectations for the economy hit a record low. The initial tariff schedule, which has now been reduced for most countries, was anticipated to reduce growth in the UK and elsewhere. Despite this economic gloominess, expectations for retail spending improved slightly as Easter shopping drew closer. Unsurprisingly, anticipated grocery spending saw the largest rise, with over 40% expecting to spend more in the upcoming months, increasing to half of those aged over 55. Meanwhile, Generation Z is planning to take advantage of better weather, with rising spending expectations on dining out, home & garden furniture, and health & beauty products.

Even as the threat of a global trade war begins to diminish, business and consumer confidence remains delicate. The risk of higher global prices adds to the £7bn new costs retailers face this year from increased employer National Insurance, National Living Wage, and packaging tax. Many retailers are also concerned about the risk of cheap Chinese products being redirected from the US to other destinations, including the UK. It's crucial that all imports adhere to the UK's stringent safety and ethical standards, and the Government should review the de minimis rules to ensure the best outcome for British businesses and consumers.”

Executive Summary

Consumer Sentiment Monitor – April 2025

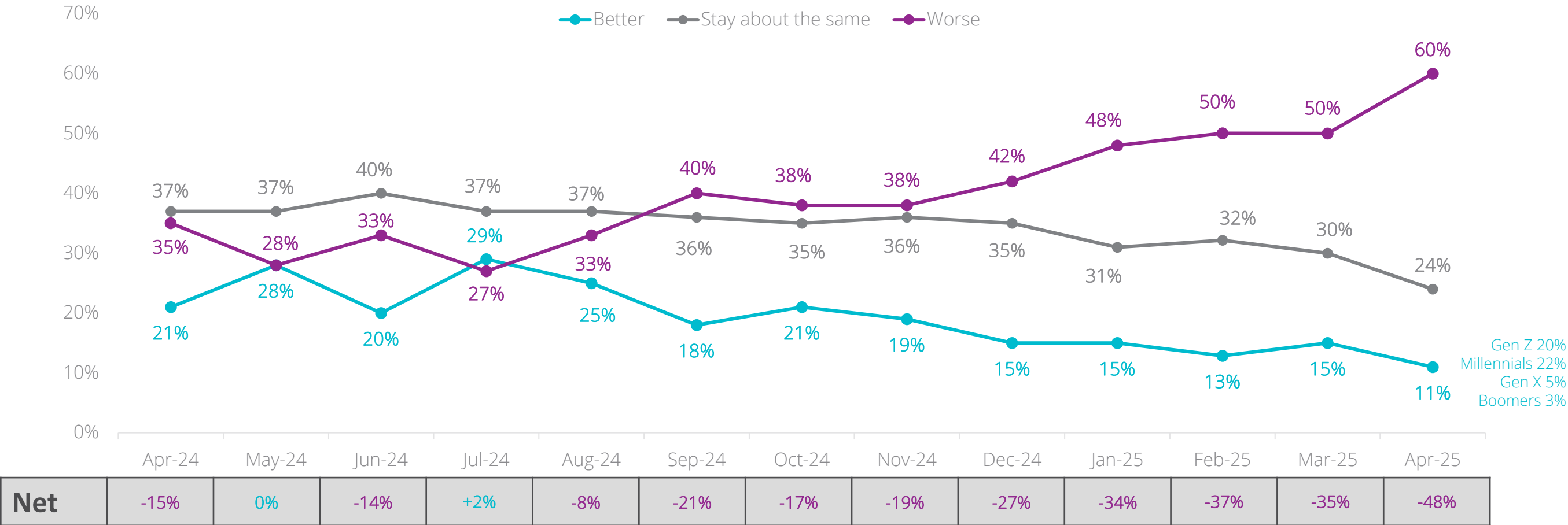
A Survey of 2,000 UK consumers weighted to be Nationally Representative. Consumers are surveyed monthly about their financial status, shopping behaviours, and other topical issues.

- Consumer pessimism towards the UK economy is at an all-time high, while optimism at an all-time low. Older generations are especially negative in their outlook.
- Despite this, confidence in current personal financial situations continues to grow, even as expectations for future finances have dropped to their lowest level to date.
- Saving expectations remain broadly consistent with last month, though younger consumers are more likely than older generations to save more.
- Dining out and leisure travel remain the top spending priorities, though they have declined slightly since last month.
- Food and groceries are where people expect to spend the most, while fashion and clothing are expected to see reduced spend.
- Lack of variety and uncompetitive pricing versus online options are the main deterrents to people shopping locally more often.

Pessimism in the economy has reached an all time high and optimism has reached an all time low. Optimism is particularly low amongst older generations

Over the next 3 months, do you expect the state of the UK economy to get better or worse?

Total sample



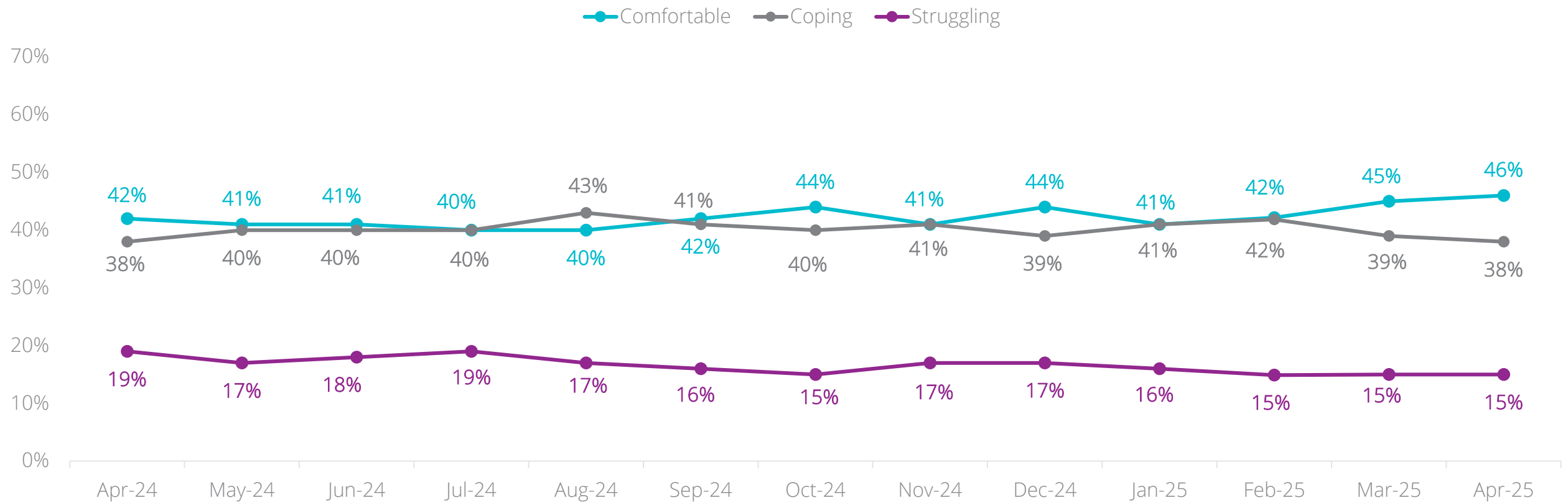
Q2. Over the next 3 months, do you expect the following to get better or worse? State of the UK economy. Base size (2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

People are continuing to feel more confident about their current financial situation

What is the best way to describe your current financial situation?

Total sample



Net	+23%	+23%	+23%	+22%	+23%	+26%	+29%	+23%	+27%	+25%	+27%	+30%	+32%
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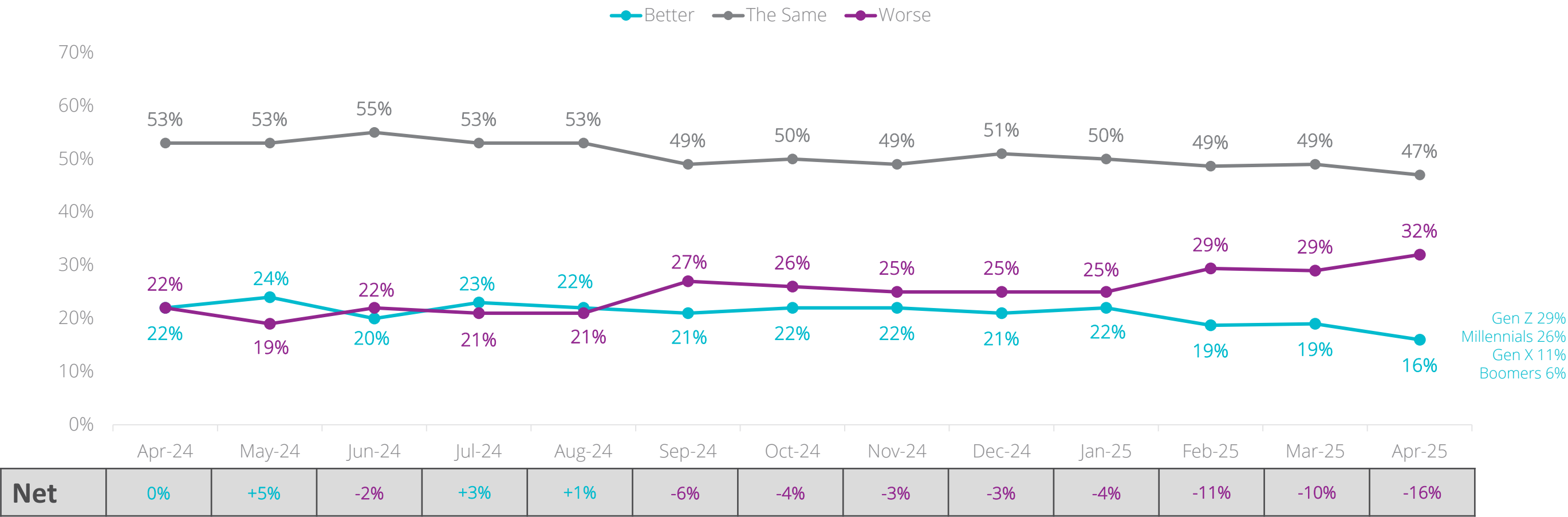
Q1. What is the best way to describe your current financial situation? (Base size: 2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

People’s expectations for their personal finances have worsened this month, reaching an all time low

Over the next 3 months do you expect your personal finances to get better or worse?

Total sample



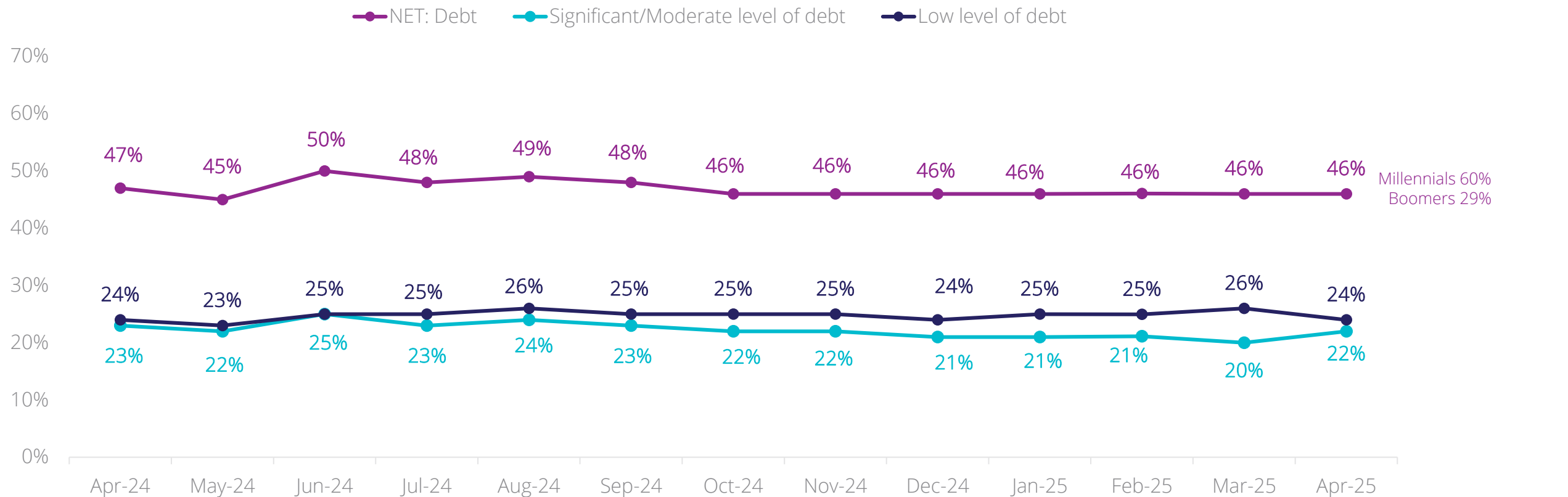
Q2. Over the next 3 months, do you expect the following to get better or worse? Your Personal Finances. Base size (2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Millennials continue to be the most likely to have debt. Perceptions have remained stable since October 2024

What is your perception of the overall level of consumer debt you currently hold?

Total sample



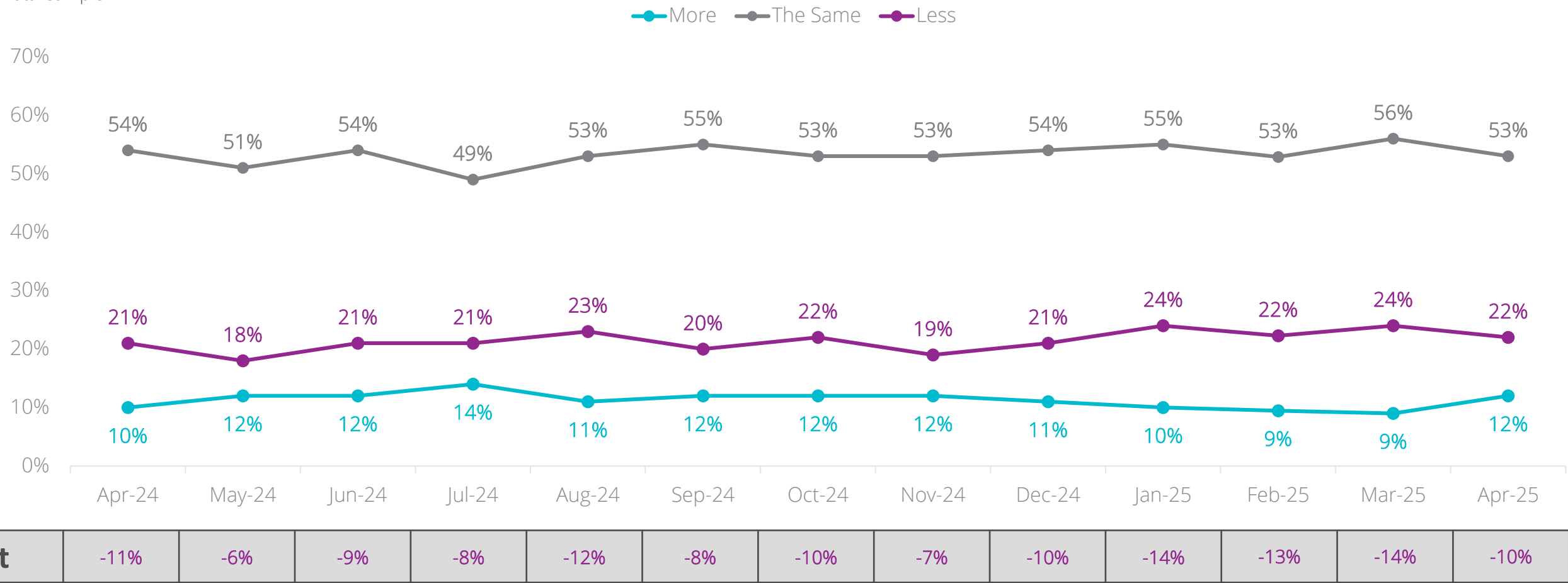
Q7. What is your perception of the overall level of consumer debt you currently hold? By 'consumer debt' we mean any debt used to purchase goods or services for personal consumption. This includes bank overdrafts, credit card balances, personal loans etc. but excludes mortgages and student debt. Base size: (2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Expectations for borrowing have seen a slight increase in those expecting to borrow more

What are your expectations for borrowing over the next 3 months?

Total sample



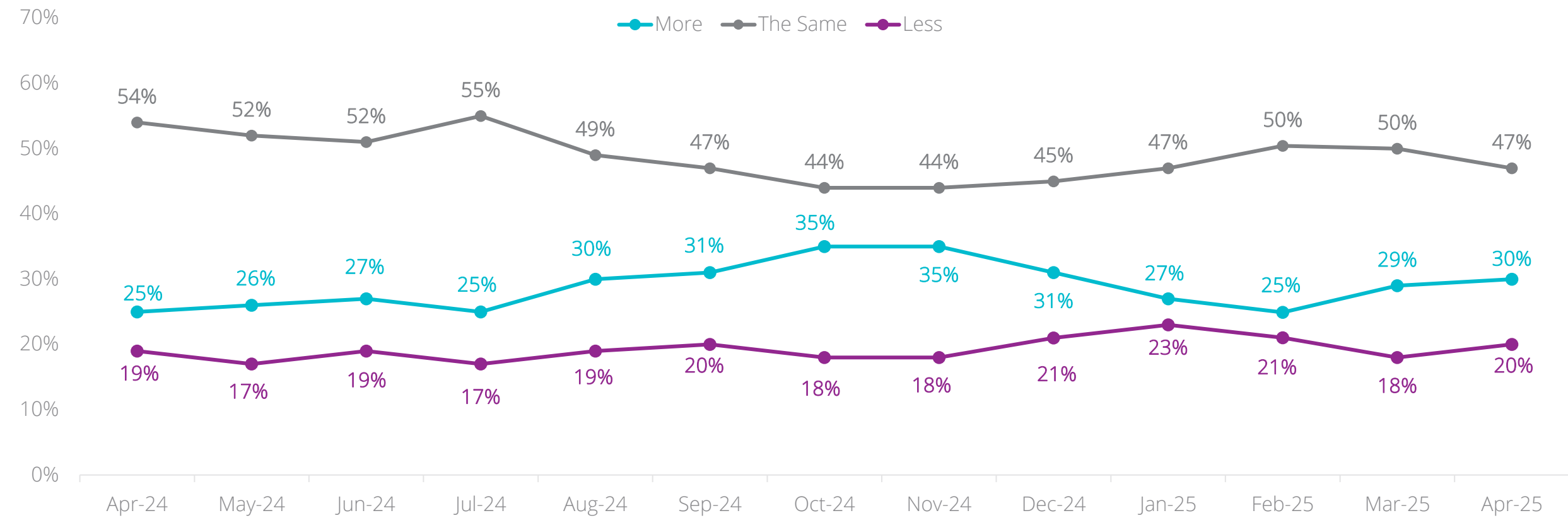
Q6. What are your expectations for borrowing over the next 3 months? Please only think about loans, overdrafts, credit etc. and not about mortgages. By 'usual' we'd like you to think about your typical borrowing habits. Base size: (2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

While those who expect to spend more continues to rise, there has also been a slight increase in those who expect to spend less

What do you plan to do in relation to your spending over the next 3 months?

Total sample



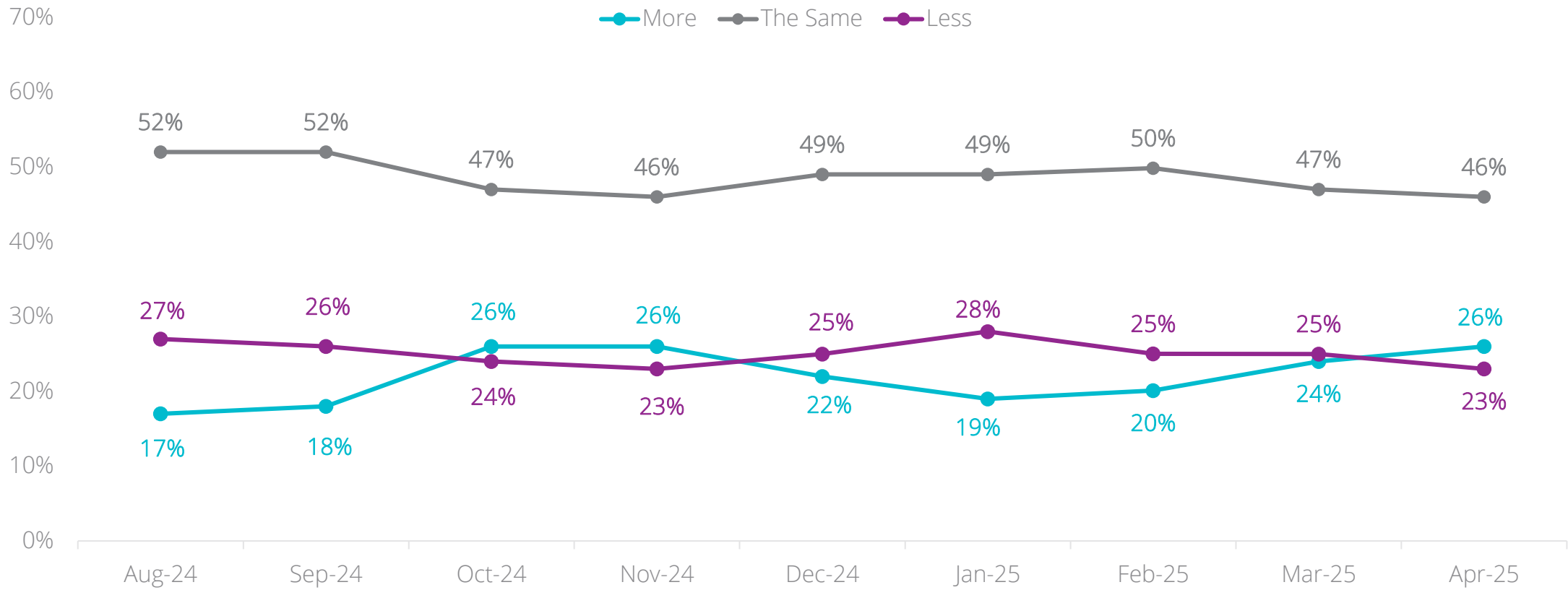
Q3. What do you plan to do in relation to your spending over the next 3 months? By 'usual' we'd like you to think about your typical spending habits. Base size: (2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Expected retail spend continues to increase over 2025

Reflecting on your retail spend across different categories, overall do you expect to spend more or less on retail items over the next 3 months?

Total sample



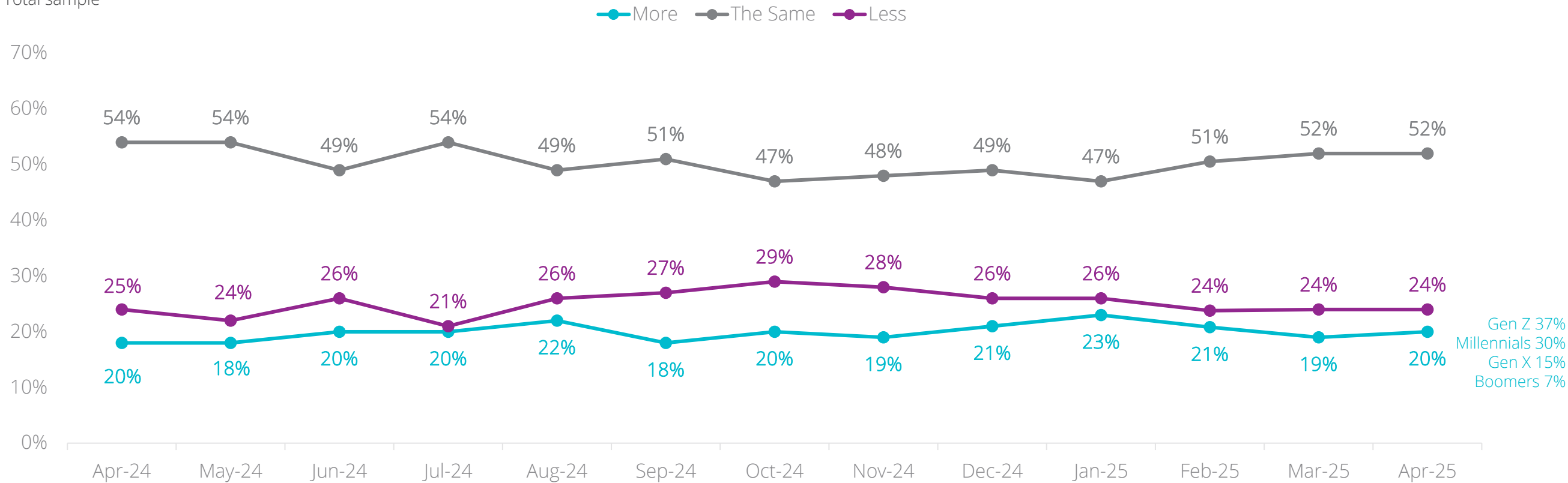
Q10. Reflecting on your retail spend across different categories, overall do you expect to spend more or less on retail items over the next 3 months? Base size: (2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Proportion of consumers saying they expect to save less remains consistent with last month. Younger people expect to save more than those older

What are your expectations for saving over the next 3 months?

Total sample



Net	-6%	-5%	-6%	-1%	-4%	-9%	-9%	-9%	-5%	-3%	-3%	-5%	-4%
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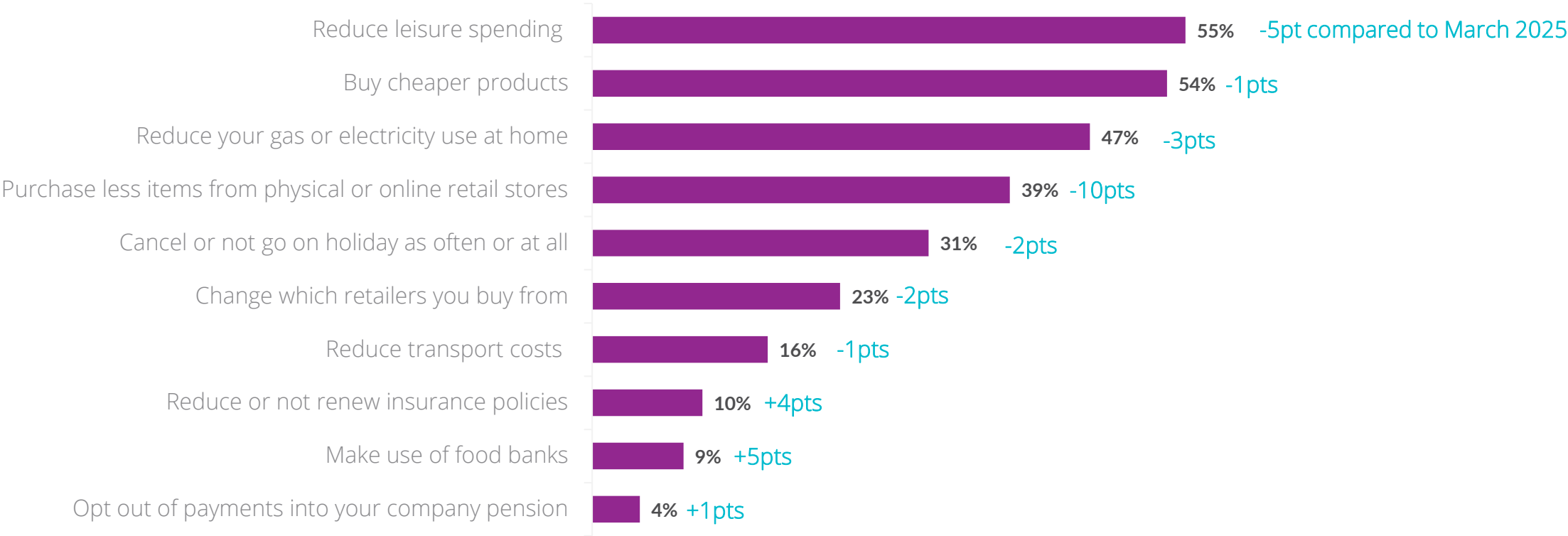
Q5. What are your expectations for saving over the next 3 months? By 'usual' we'd like you to think about your typical saving habits. Base size (2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Reducing leisure spending is how people plan to cut down their outgoing costs. More people are opting to not renew insurance policies and use food banks

What, if anything, do you plan to do to reduce your outgoing costs over the next 3 months?

All those who plan to reduce spending

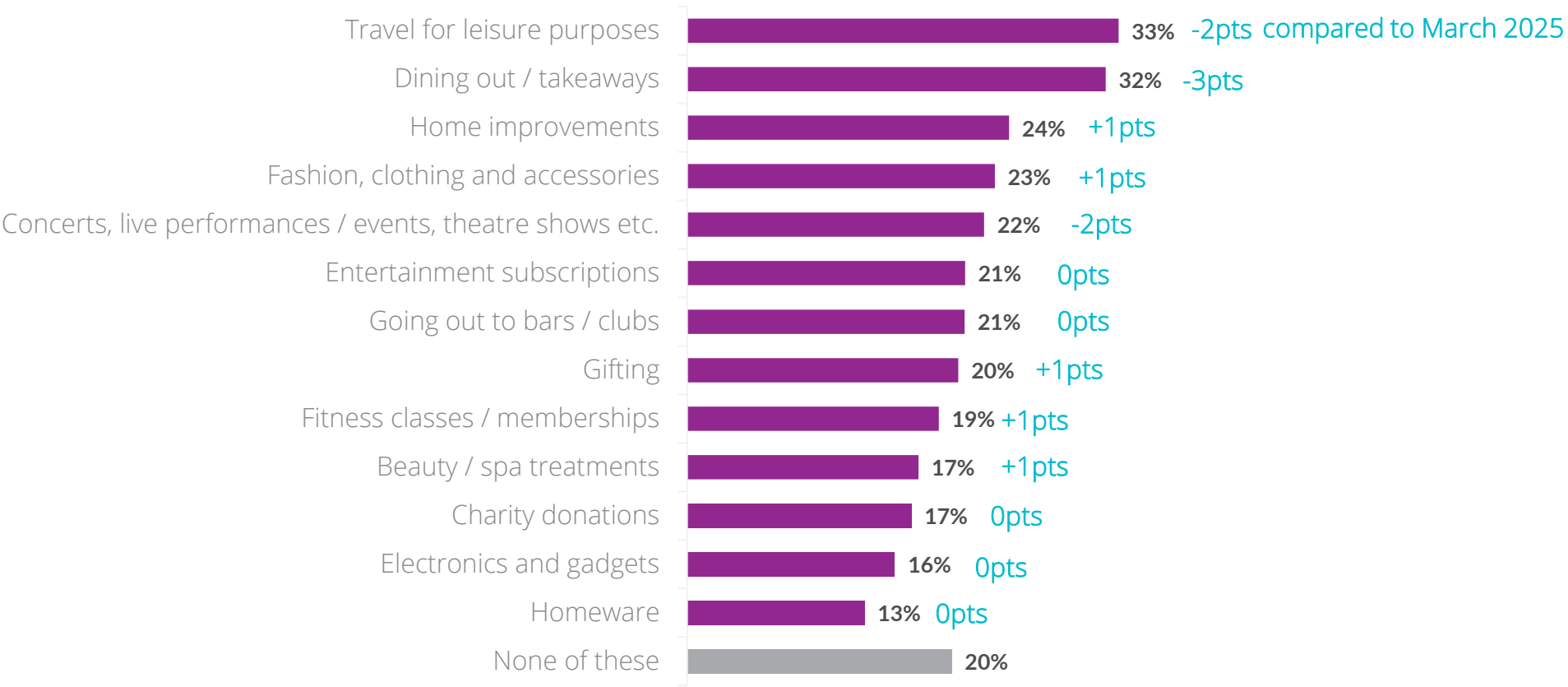


Q4. What, if anything, do you plan to do to reduce your outgoing costs over the next 3 months? Please select all that apply. Base size: (391)

Consumers continue to prioritise dining out and leisure travel, but these as a priority have slightly decreased since last month.

Over the next 3 months, which of the following would you say are your non-essential spending priorities?

Total sample

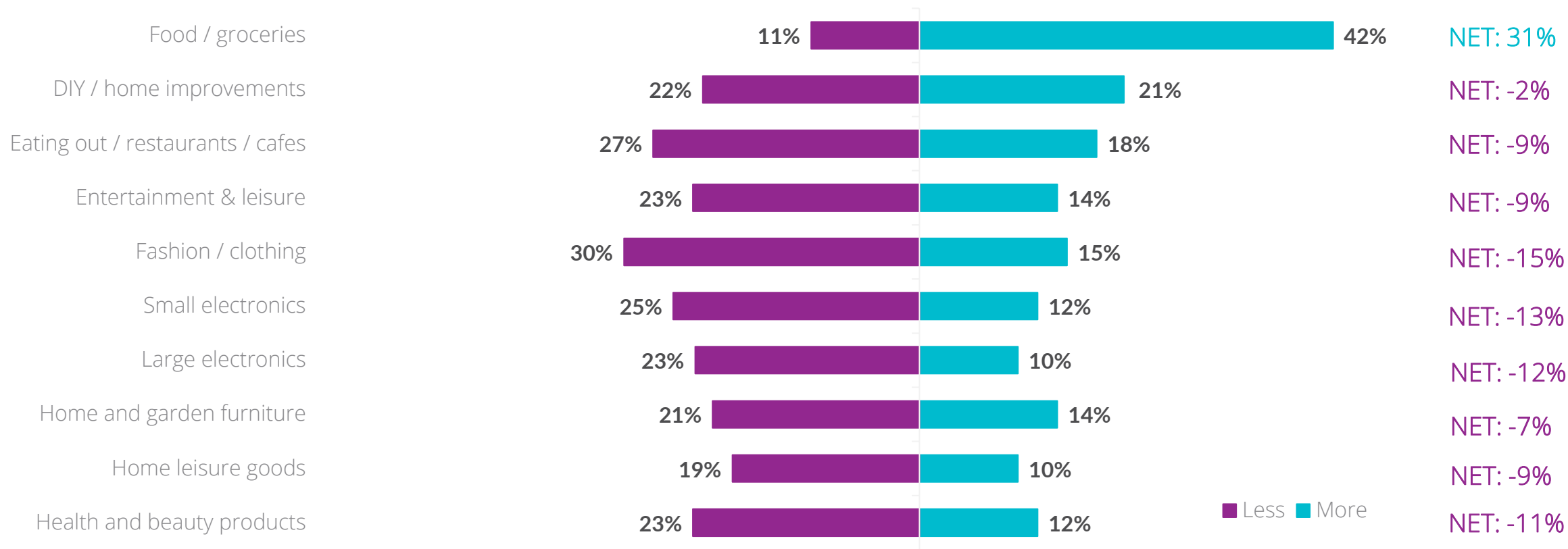


Q8. Non-essential spending is optional / discretionary spend for goods or services that are not necessary for maintaining a minimum standard of living. With this in mind, over the next 3 months, which of the following would you say are your non-essential spending priorities? Please select all that apply. Base (2,000)

Food and groceries are where people expect to spend the most, while people are expecting to spend less on fashion / clothing

What are your expectations for spending on the following retail categories over the next 3 months, compared to the previous 3 months?

Total sample



Q9. What are your expectations for spending on the following retail categories over the next 3 months, compared to the previous 3 months? Base size: (2,000)

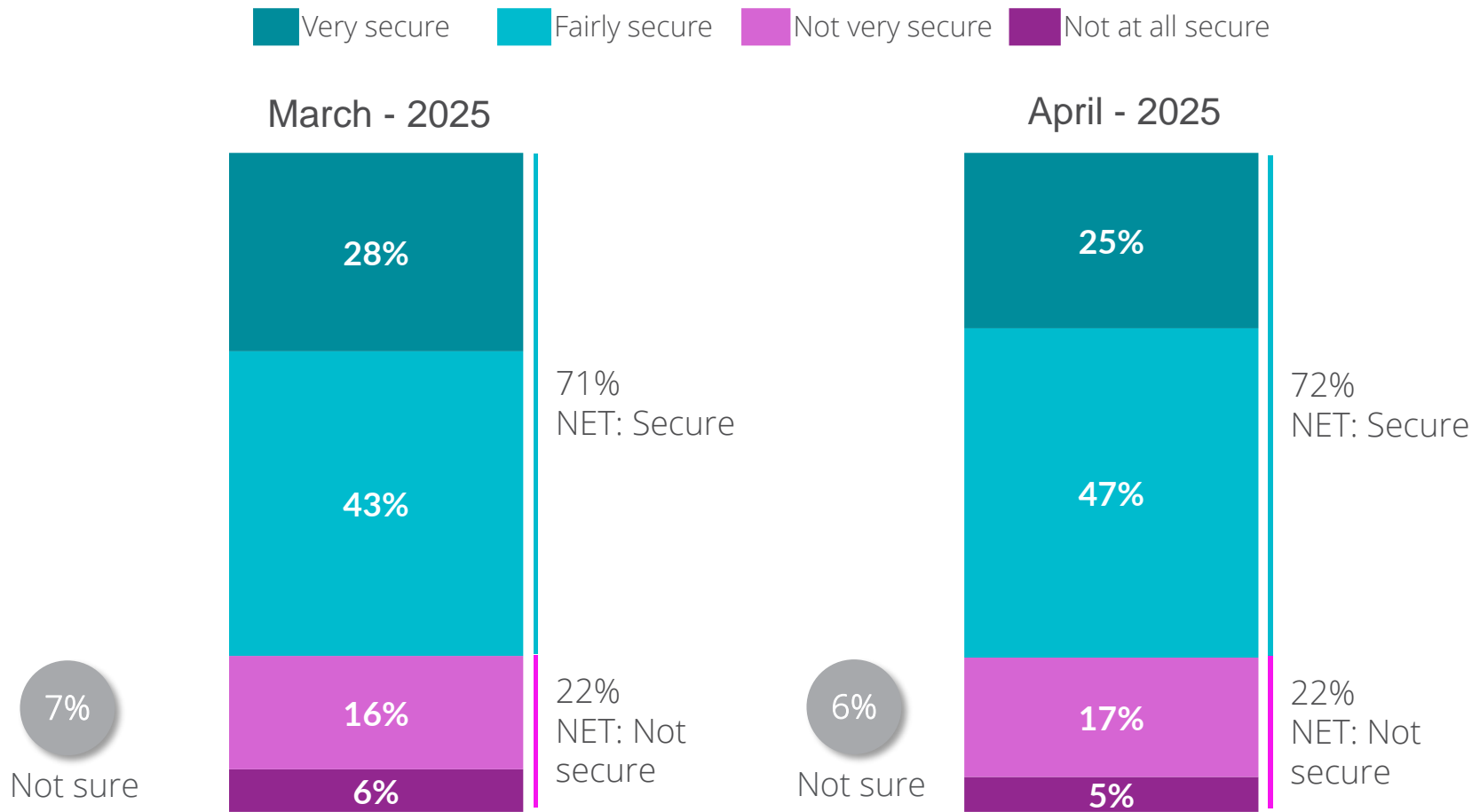
*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Ad-hoc

The majority of people continue to feel secure in their job with little change from the previous month

Thinking about your employment situation, how secure do you feel in your current job?

Those who are working



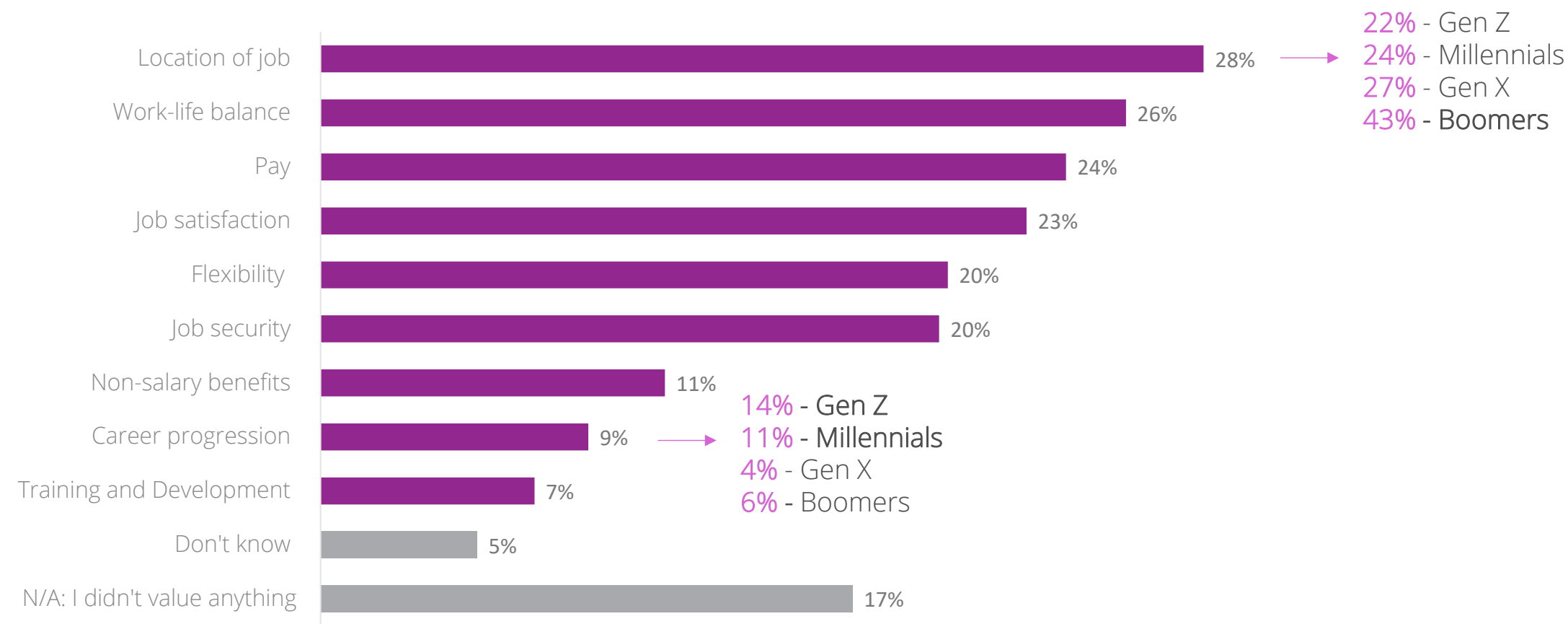
Q11. Thinking about your employment situation, how secure, if at all, do you feel in your current job? Base: All working (1210)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Location of job, work-life balance and pay are the most valued factors for those who currently or have worked in a retail job

What did you value most while working in retail? (NEW April-25)

Those who have worked in retail



Q12. Retail jobs involve working in places like shops and supermarkets, serving customers and assisting them with their purchases. Do you, or have you ever worked in retail? If yes, what did you value the most, if anything? (Base size: 1030, those who have worked in retail)

The most common reasons for why people do not shop locally more often is because of the lack of variety and the prices aren't competitive compared to online

What are the reasons you don't shop locally more often? (NEW April-25)

Total sample

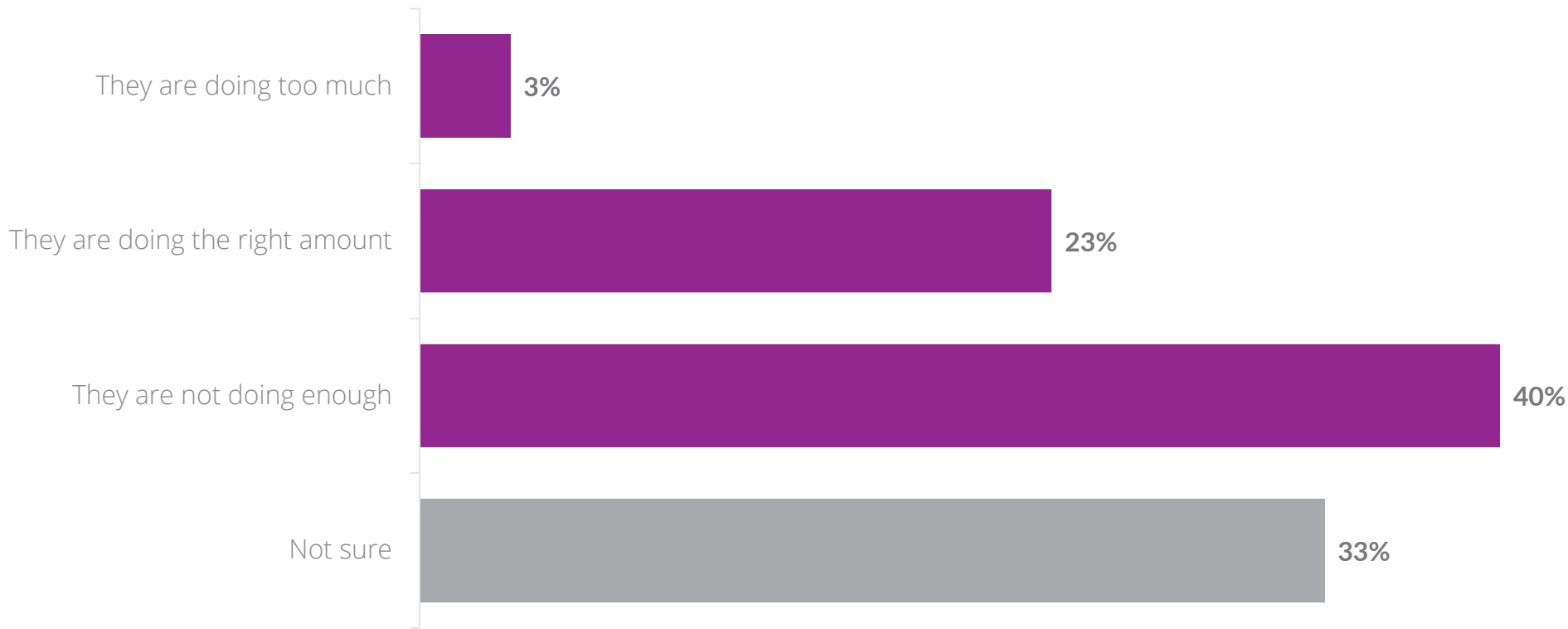


Q13. Thinking about how often you shop locally, what are the main reasons, if any, you do not shop locally more often? (Base size: 2000)

Two in five people think their local MP is not doing enough to support their local high street. However, a third of people are not sure about the issue

Do you think your local MP is doing enough to support your local high street? (NEW April-25)

Total sample



Q15. Do you think your local MP is doing enough to support your local high street? (Base size: 2000)

THE BRITISH RETAIL CONSORTIUM

The BRC's purpose is to make a positive difference to the retail industry and the customers it serves, today and in the future.

Retail is an exciting, dynamic and diverse industry which is going through a period of profound change. Technology is transforming how people shop; costs are increasing; and growth in consumer spending is slow.

The BRC is committed to ensuring the industry thrives through this period of transformation. We tell the story of retail, work with our members to drive positive change and use our expertise and influence to create an economic and policy environment that enables retail businesses to thrive and consumers to benefit. Our membership comprises over 5,000 businesses delivering £180bn of retail sales and employing over one and half million employees.



BRITISH RETAIL CONSORTIUM

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Opinium works with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. It uses the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.

Opinium's consultants are experts in political, financial services, tech, industrial, healthcare and consumer packaged goods research. Opinionum was the most accurate research agency in the 2019 UK General Election, the 2016 London Mayoral Election and the EU Referendum.



What people think,
feel and do