

BRC Consumer Sentiment Monitor

February 2025

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





Contents

HEADLINE COMMENTARY	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
PERCEPTIONS ON THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY	5
PERSONAL FINANCES	
- STATE OF PERSONAL FINANCES	6-7
- PERCEPTIONS OF DEBT AND EXPECTATIONS FOR BORROWING	8-9
SPENDING AND SAVING	
- SPEND AND SAVING EXPECTATIONS	10-12
- WAYS TO REDUCE SPEND	13
- NON-ESSENTIAL SPENDING PRIORITIES	14
- EXPECTED SPEND ACROSS RETAIL CATEGORIES	15
SEASONAL/TOPICAL	
- DISTURBANCE AROUND SHOPS	17
- EMPLOYMENT SITUATION	18
- EFFECTS OF STORMS EOWYN AND HERMANINA	19

Headline commentary

Consumer Sentiment Monitor – February 2025



Dr Kris Hamer, Director of Insight | British Retail Consortium

“Public expectations regarding the economy have fallen to a new low, decreasing nearly 40 points since July 2024. Even Generation Z (ages 18-27), typically the most optimistic group about the economy and their financial situation, has experienced a decline in confidence. Additionally, there has been a noticeable increase in the gender gap, with women expressing more pessimism than men about both the economy and their personal finances by 13 points on both. With many business leaders cautioning about the effects of the employer national insurance increase in April on hiring, alongside the rising energy price cap driving up domestic bills, it is understandable that many households are feeling anxious. While there has been a slight improvement in the expectations for retail spending, this may stem from widely reported expectation of higher prices, and is narrowly focused on food and groceries.

As inflation starts to climb again and employers signal potential job losses, consumers are becoming more negative about their financial prospects, dropping 7 points to reach a record low of -11% net. Only one-third of consumers reported feeling secure in their jobs, and one in twenty individuals stated they had either lost their job or faced redundancy in the past year. This uncertainty is impacting retail sales, with 12% indicating they have reduced their spending due to concerns about their employment status.”

Executive Summary

Consumer Sentiment Monitor – February 2025

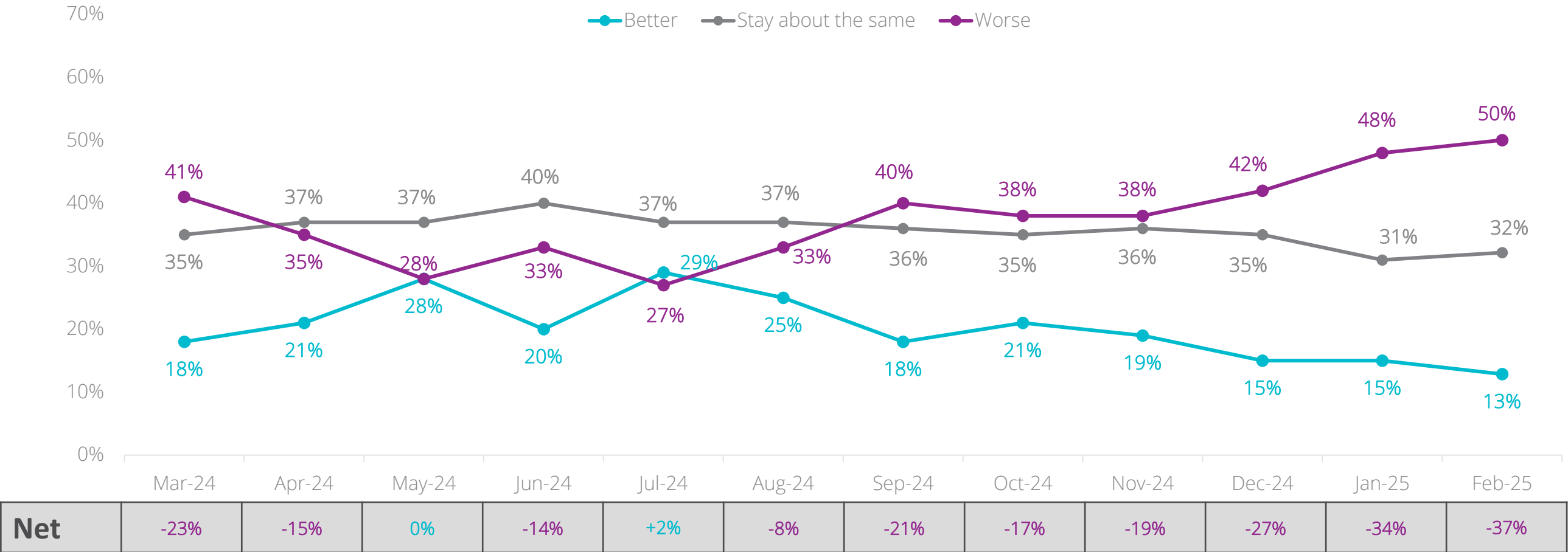
A Survey of 2,000 UK consumers weighted to be Nationally Representative. Consumers are surveyed monthly about their financial status, shopping behaviours, and other topical issues.

- Consumer outlook towards the UK economy over the next three months reaches its lowest level (-4pp), continuing its decline since October. Furthermore, outlook towards personal finances over the next three months are at the worst ever recorded.
- In terms of overall spending expectations, the proportion of those expecting to spend more over the next three months has decreased to its lowest since April 2024.
- Perhaps corresponding to this, the proportion of consumers saying they expect to save less is at its lowest since July 2024.
- However, perceptions over current financial situations are similar to January
- A quarter of consumers have witnessed loitering or shoplifting around retail establishments in the last year.
- As a result of Storms Eowyn and Hermanina, a quarter of UK adults avoided going out or cancelled activities.

Pessimism in the economy continues to increase and rises to a record high. UK confidence has dropped nearly 40 points since July.

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

Total sample



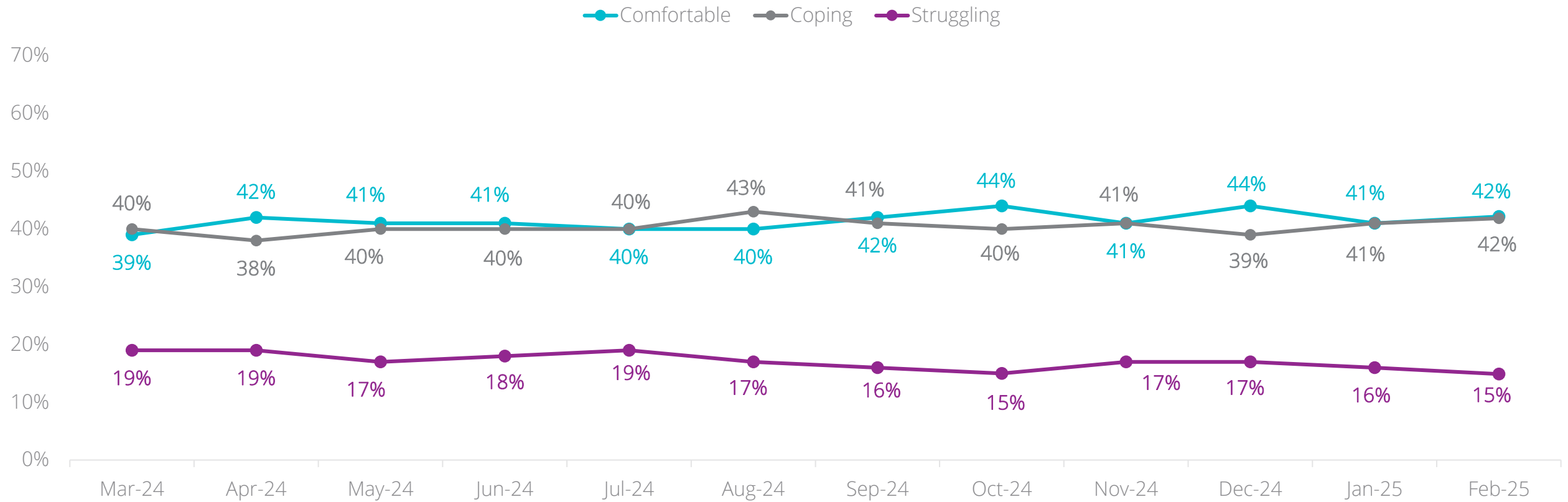
Q2. Over the next 3 months, do you expect the following to get better or worse? State of the UK economy. Base size (2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Current perceptions of people’s financial situations are similar to January.

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

Total sample



Net	+20%	+23%	+23%	+23%	+22%	+23%	+26%	+29%	+23%	+27%	+25%	+27%
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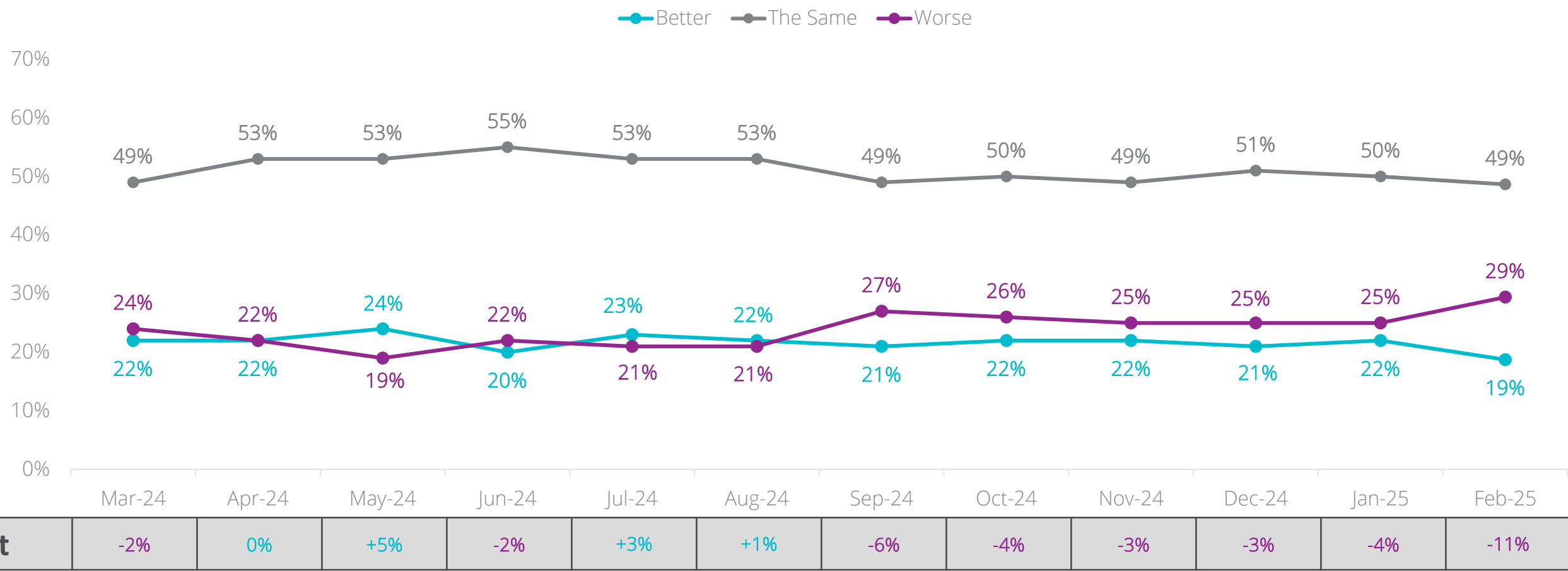
Q1. What is the best way to describe your current financial situation? (Base size: 2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Expectations for personal finance are at the worst ever recorded with 29% of UK adults expecting their personal finances to get worse.

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

Total sample



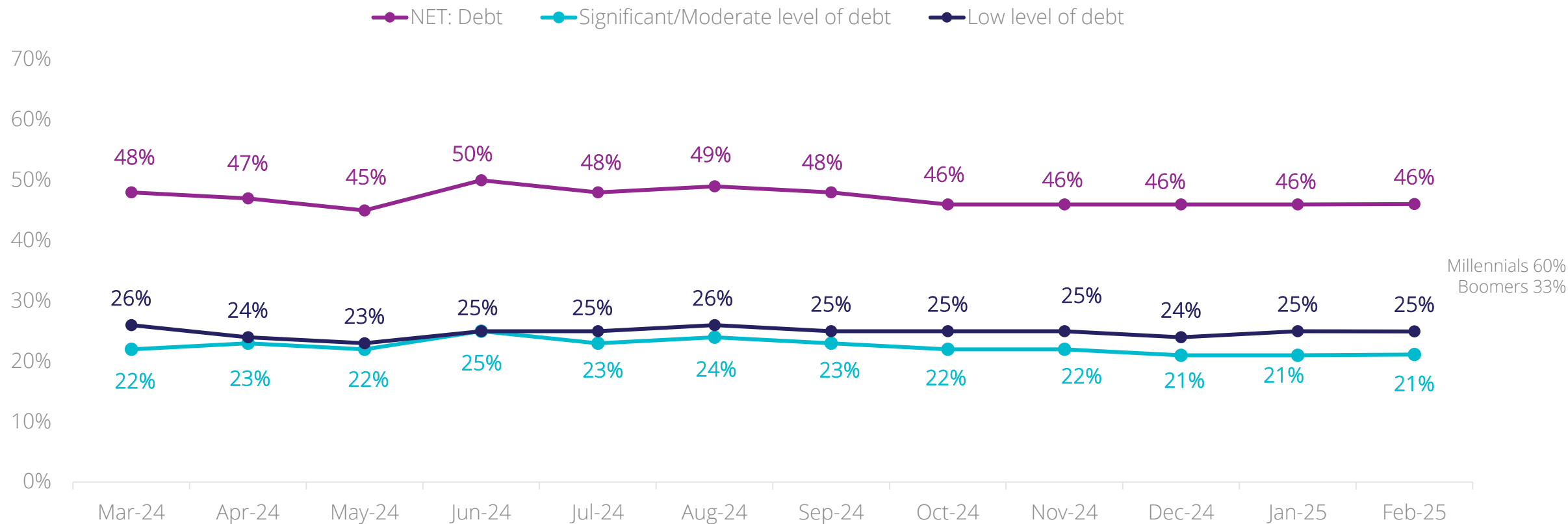
Q2. Over the next 3 months, do you expect the following to get better or worse? Your Personal Finances. Base size (2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Overall debt levels remain the same since November, whilst Millennials remain as the most likely group to hold debt.

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

Total sample



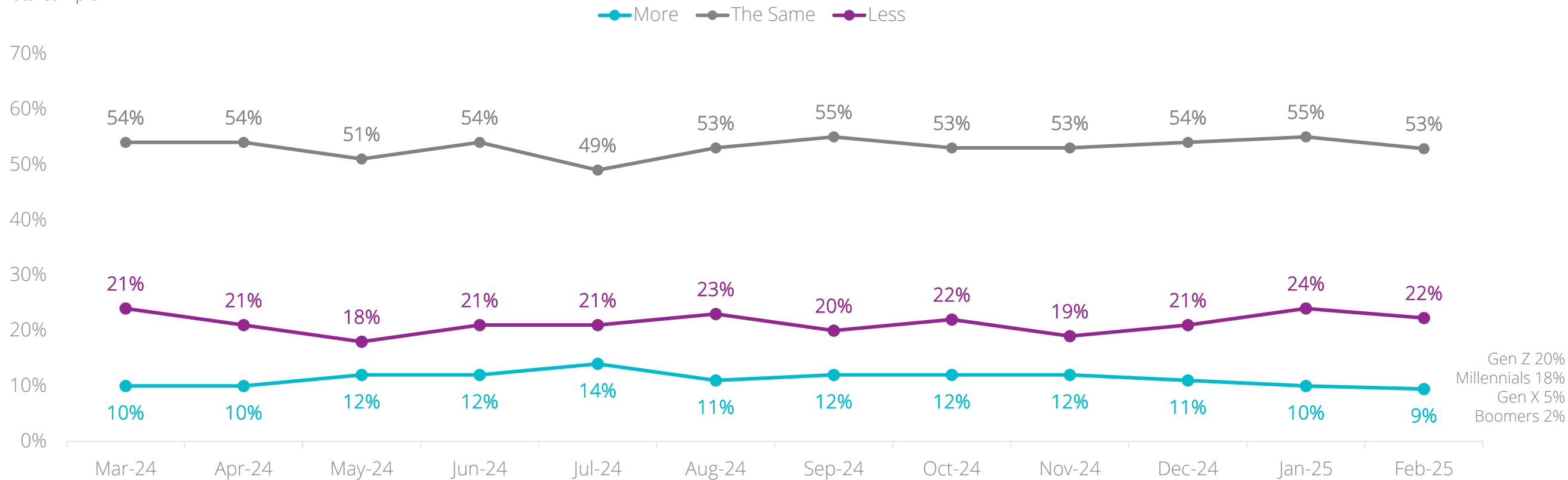
Q7. What is your perception of the overall level of consumer debt you currently hold? By ‘consumer debt’ we mean any debt used to purchase goods or services for personal consumption. This includes bank overdrafts, credit card balances, personal loans etc. but excludes mortgages and student debt. Base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

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Consumers expect to borrow slightly less than in January, however Gen Z and Millennials are more likely to borrow than Gen X or boomers

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

Total sample



Net	-11%	-11%	-6%	-9%	-8%	-12%	-8%	-10%	-7%	-10%	-14%	-13%
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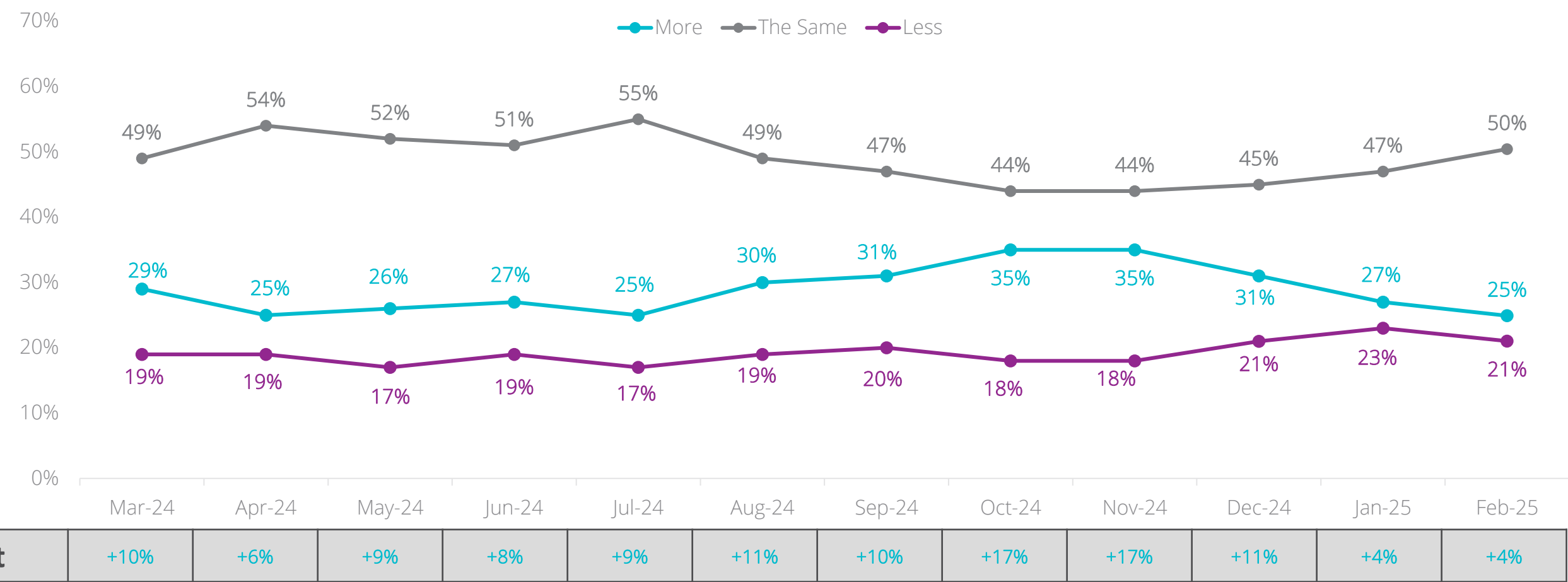
Q6. What are your expectations for borrowing over the next 3 months? Please only think about loans, overdrafts, credit etc. and not about mortgages. By 'usual' we'd like you to think about your typical borrowing habits. Base size: (2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

The proportion of those expecting to spend more over the next three months has decreased to its lowest since April 2024

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

Total sample



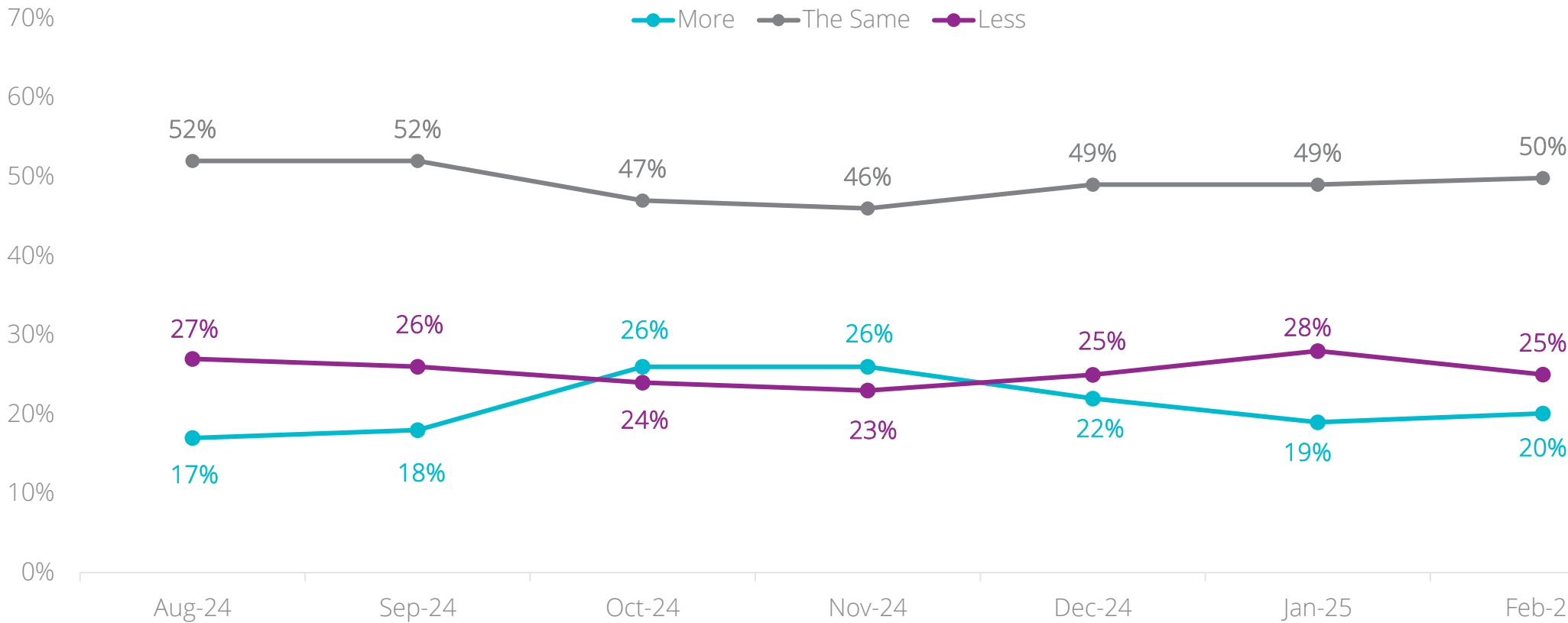
Q3. What do you plan to do in relation to your spending over the next 3 months? By 'usual' we'd like you to think about your typical spending habits. Base size: (2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Expected retail spend is up marginally after decreasing in January

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



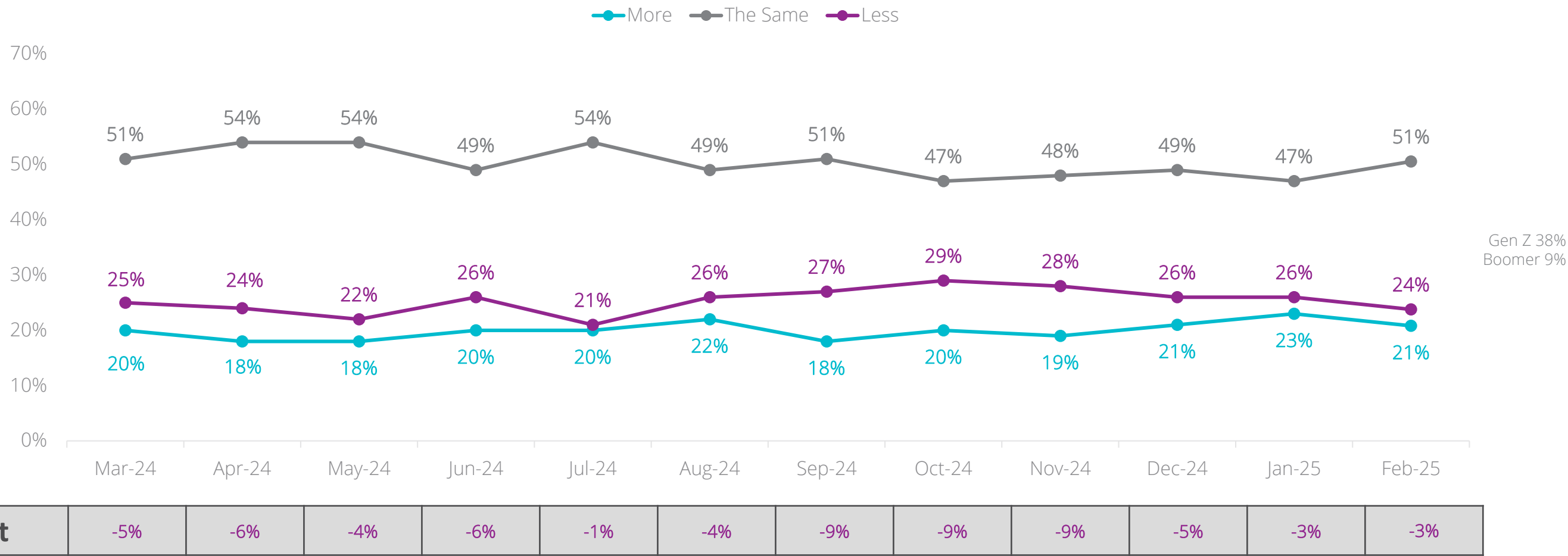
Q10. Reflecting on your retail spend across different categories, overall do you expect to spend more or less on retail items over the next 3 months? Base size: (2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Proportion of consumers saying they expect to save less at its lowest since July 2024.

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

Total sample



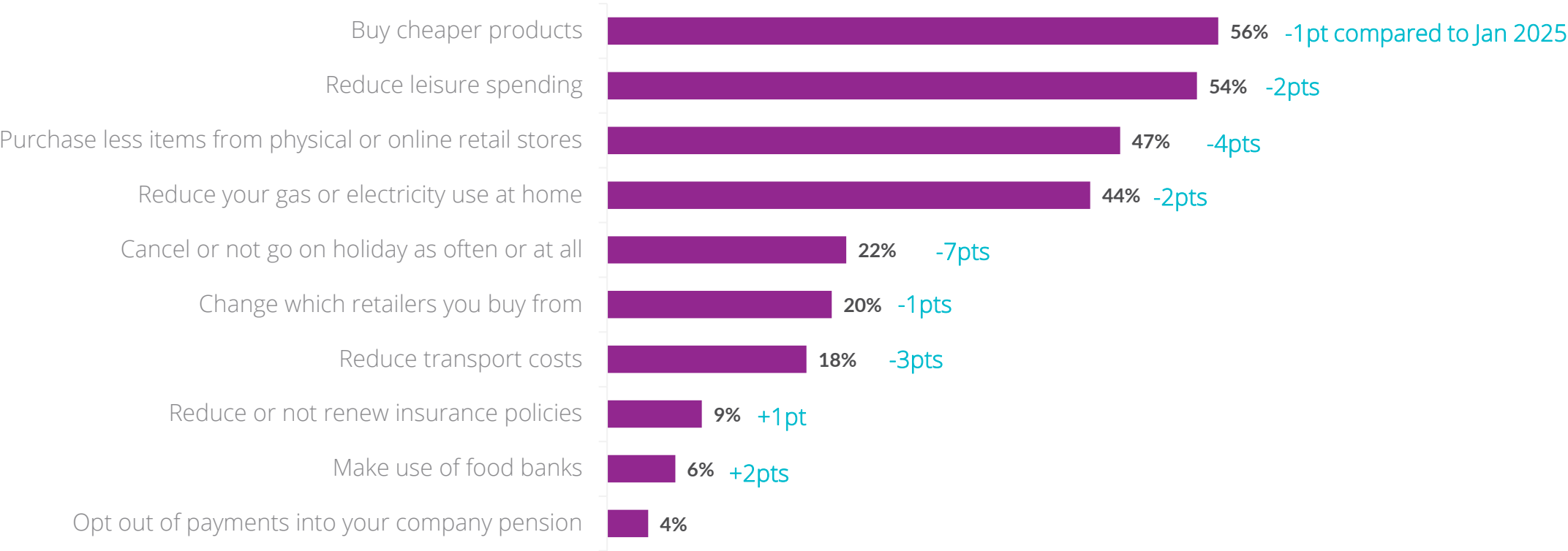
Q5. What are your expectations for saving over the next 3 months? By 'usual' we'd like you to think about your typical saving habits. Base size (2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

A significant decrease is seen in those planning to cancel or not go on holiday to reduce outgoing costs.

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

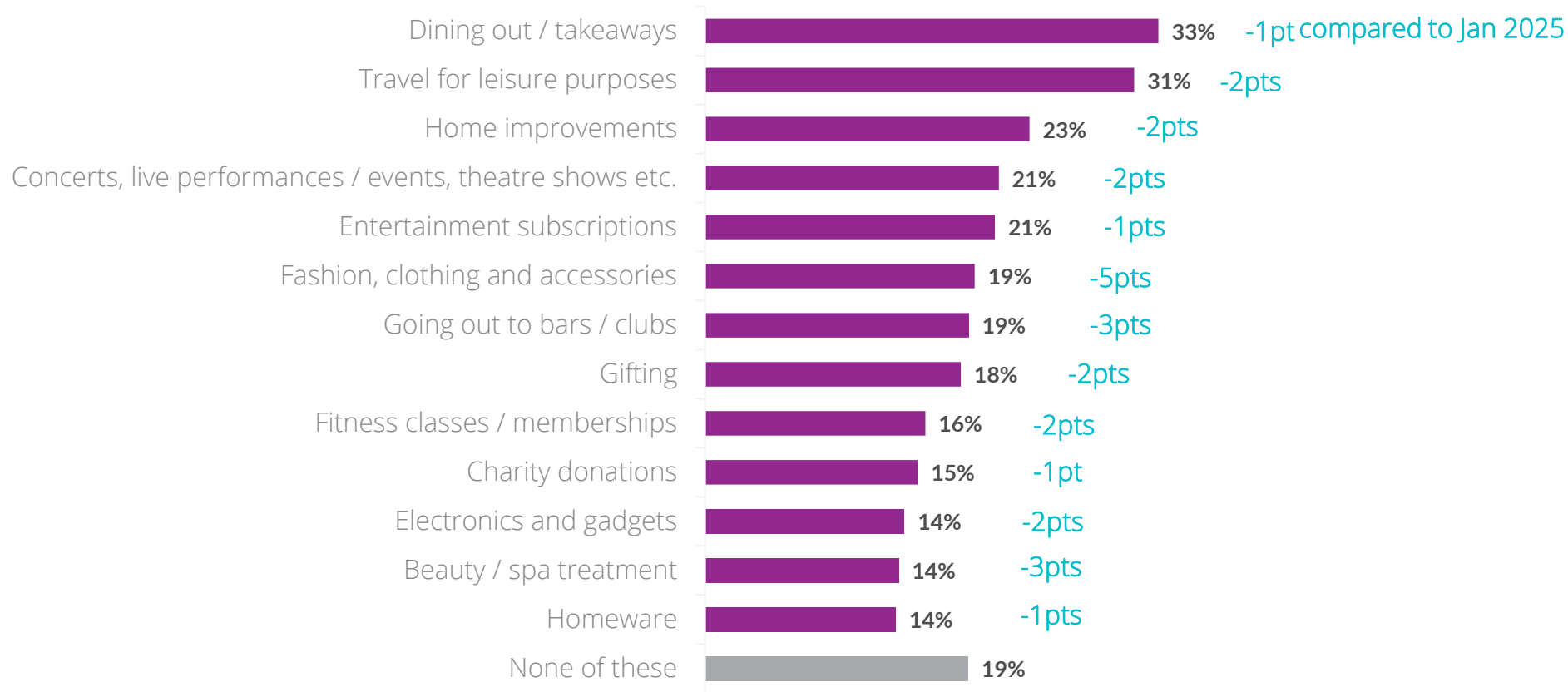


Q4. What, if anything, do you plan to do to reduce your outgoing costs over the next 3 months? Please select all that apply. Base size: (420)

Consumers are still prioritising dining out and leisure travel for non-essential spend. All goods or services saw a decrease in the proportion of people prioritising them

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

Total sample

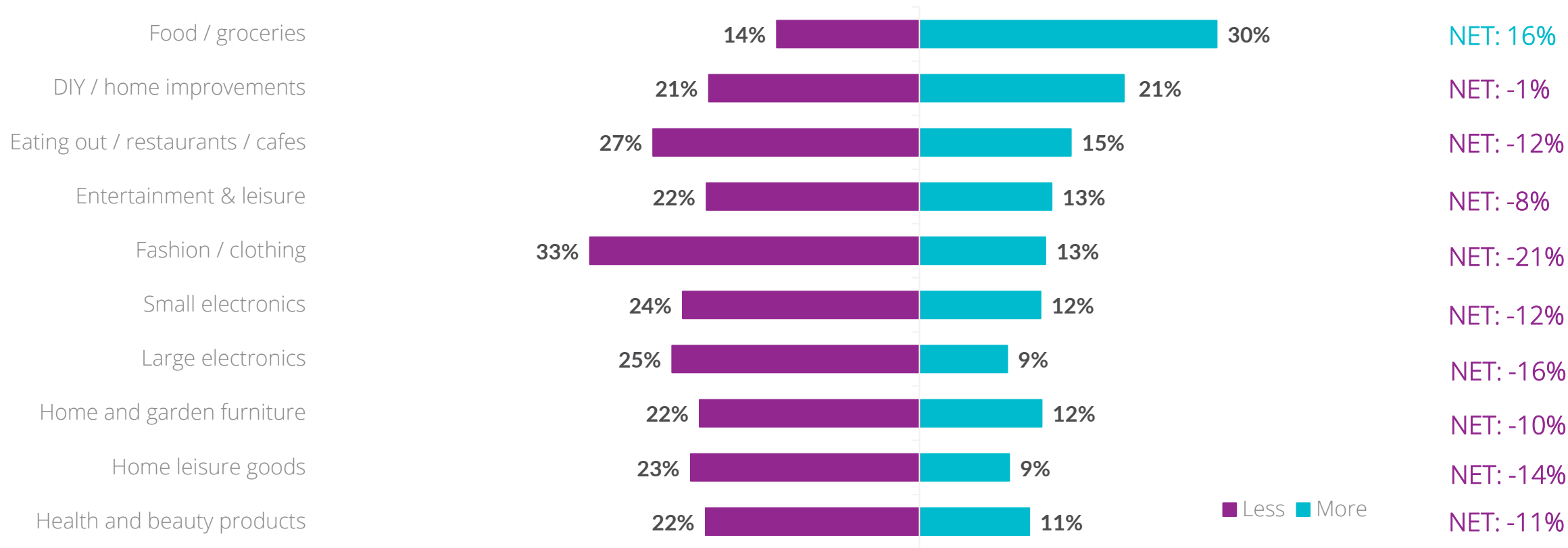


Q8. Non-essential spending is optional / discretionary spend for goods or services that are not necessary for maintaining a minimum standard of living. With this in mind, over the next 3 months, which of the following would you say are your non-essential spending priorities? Please select all that apply.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

NET expectations for spending over the next three months by category. UK adults continue to expect to spend less across all categories apart from food and groceries.

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)

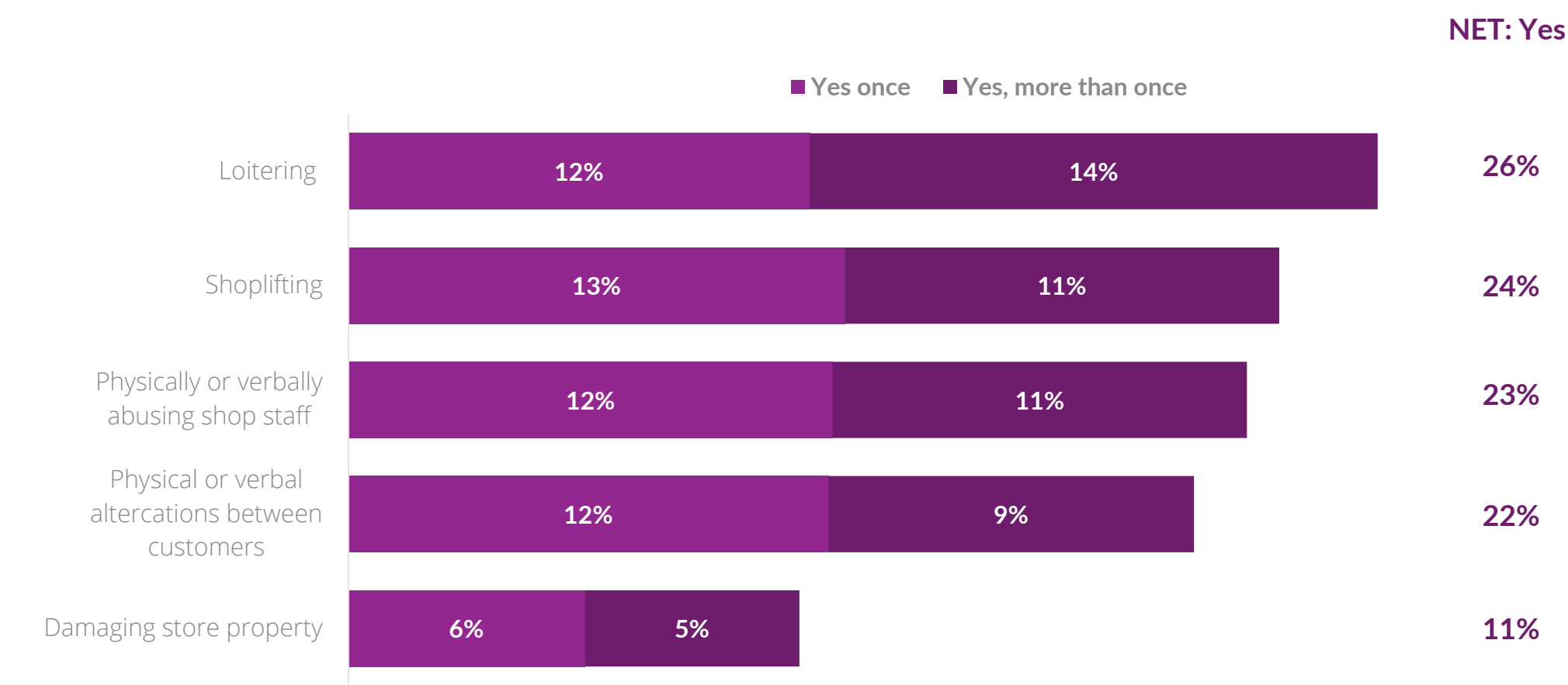
*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Ad-hoc

In the last 12 months, a quarter of UK adults have witnessed loitering or shoplifting around retail establishments

Thinking about the last 12 months, have you witnessed someone doing any of the following around retail establishments [\(NEW Feb-25\)](#)

Total sample



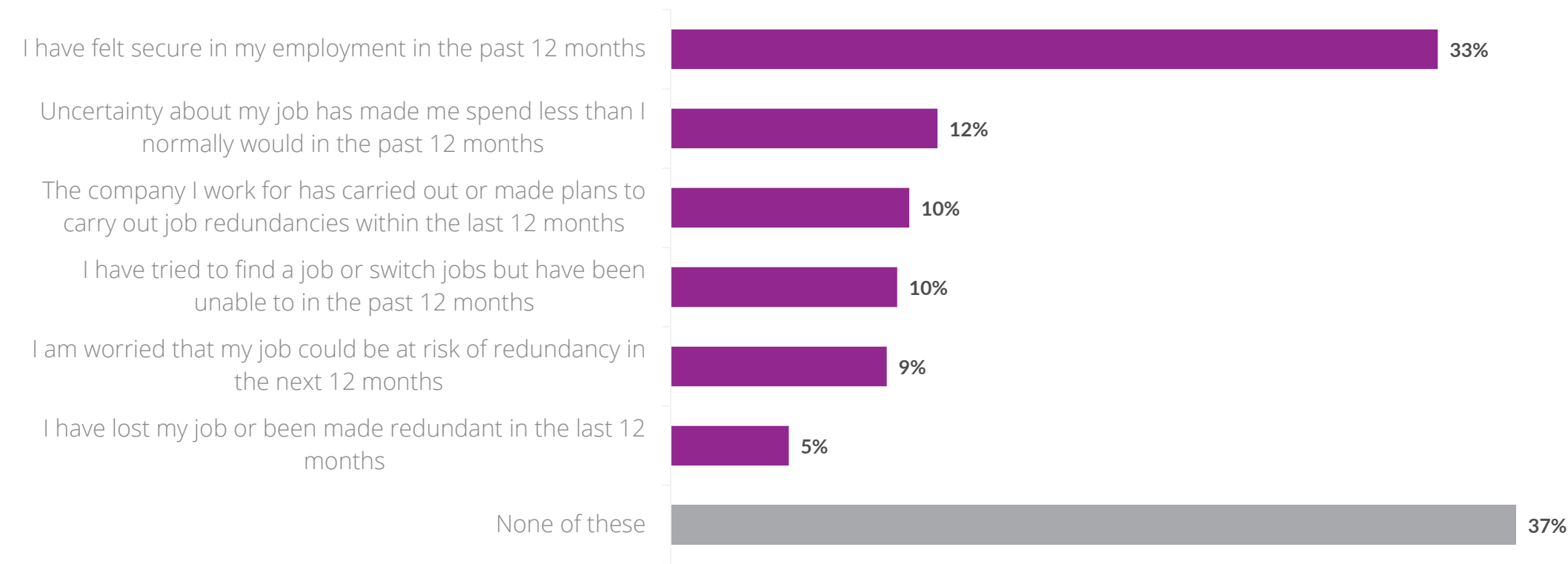
Q11. Thinking about the last 12 months, have you witnessed someone doing any of the following around retail establishments (e.g. shops)? (Base size: 2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Only a third of UK workers have felt secure in their employment in the past 12 months

Thinking about your employment situation, which, if any, of the following apply to you? (NEW Feb-25)

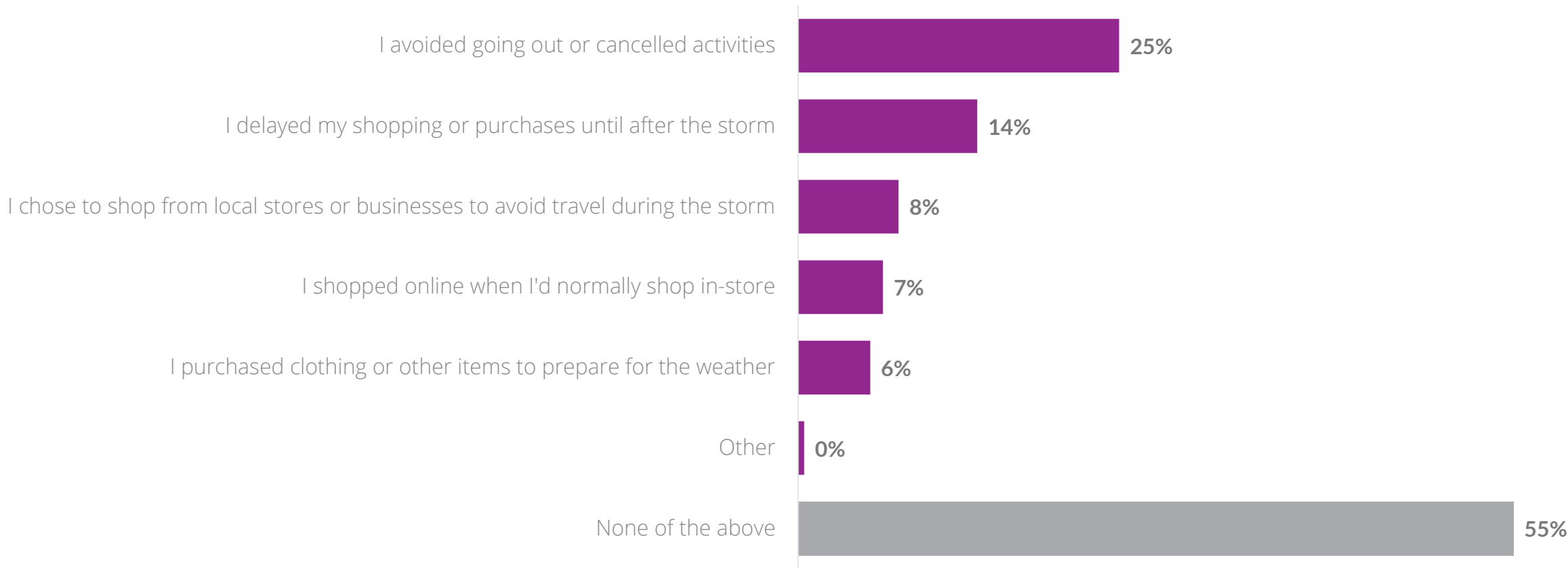
Total Sample



As a result of Storms Eowyn and Hermanina, a quarter of UK adults avoided going out or cancelled activities

Which, if any, of the following actions did you take as a result of Storms Eowyn and Hermanina? (NEW Feb-25)

Total sample



Q15. Which, if any, of the following actions did you take as a result of Storms Eowyn and Hermanina? Please select all that apply. (Base size: 2,000)

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. Opinium 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