



Consumer Sentiment Monitor

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

December 2025





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Headline Commentary



Tina Spooner
Strategic Insight Manager | British Retail Consortium

"With the Budget not as bad as feared for households, confidence saw a slight uptick in December. Yet the overall picture remains gloomy, with confidence in the economy stuck below -30 for eleven out of last twelve months. Expectations for retail spending continued to slide for the third consecutive month, proving challenges remain in the year ahead. December also saw the highest level of consumers claiming they hold debt at 51%, rising to almost two-thirds for Millennials.

Consumers who participated in Black Friday overall spent more than they intended, with online shopping being prioritised across all categories during the promotional period, except for groceries and alcohol."



Executive Summary

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.

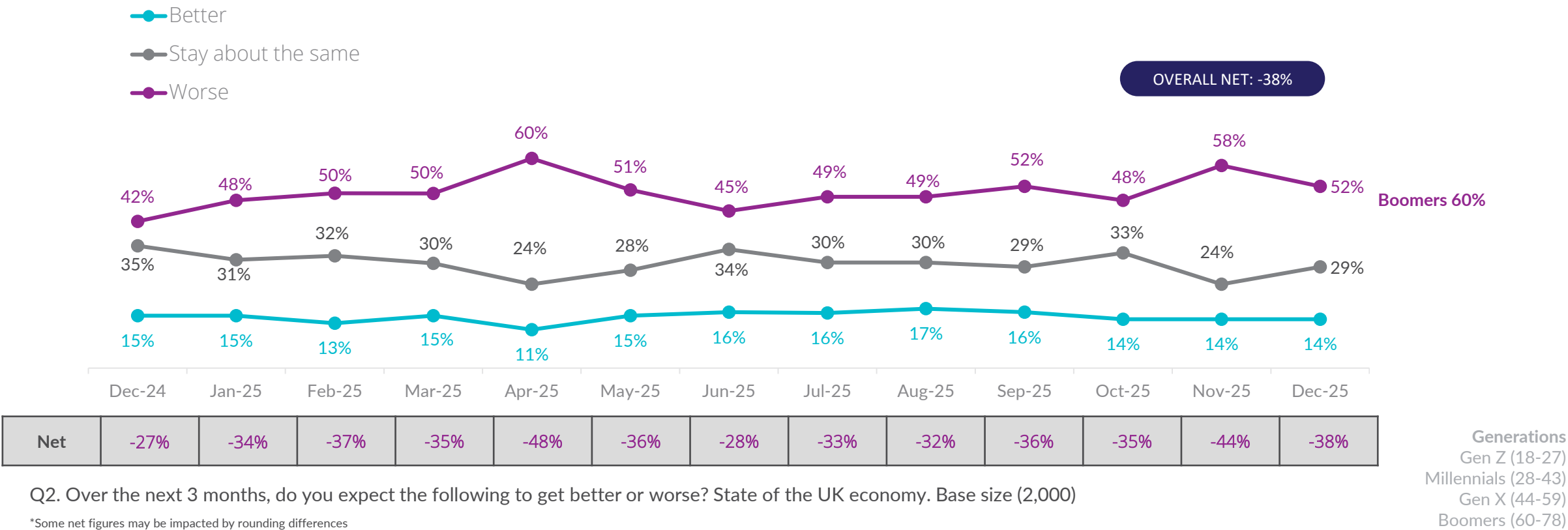
- Sentiment around the economy has improved after dipping last month yet is 11 percentage points more negative than this time last year.
- Over half of UK adults claim to hold debt. This is the highest recorded in the last twelve months.
- NET spending expectations are back up this month. They are six percentage points higher than they were this time last year.
- Overall saving expectations remain in negative territory (they have been in negative territory for every month this year except August).
- Those who participated in Black Friday spent more than they had intended.
- Aside from groceries and alcohol, online shopping was prioritised across all categories this deal season, particularly so for small electronics, beauty products and entertainment



Expectations of the economy have improved since last month, but remain 11 percentage points lower than this time last year

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

Total sample



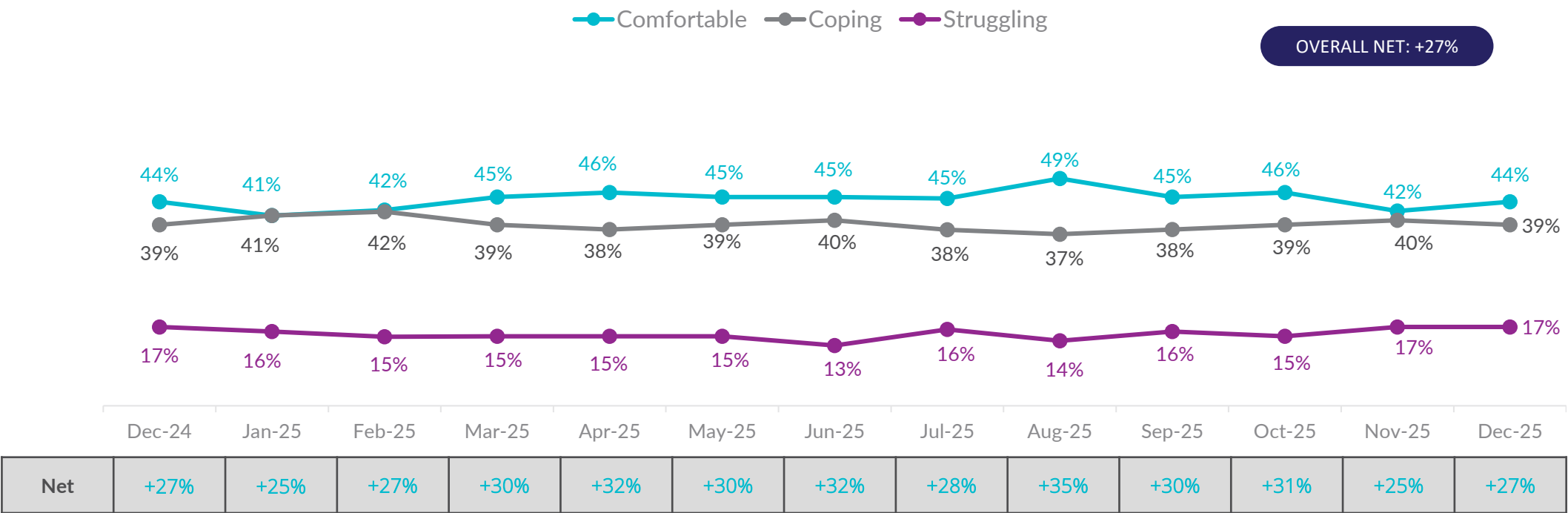
Q2. Over the next 3 months, do you expect the following to get better or worse? State of the UK economy. Base size (2,000)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Perceptions of people’s current financial situation are stable after dipping last quarter

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

Total sample



Q1. What is the best way to describe your current financial situation? (Base size: 2,000)

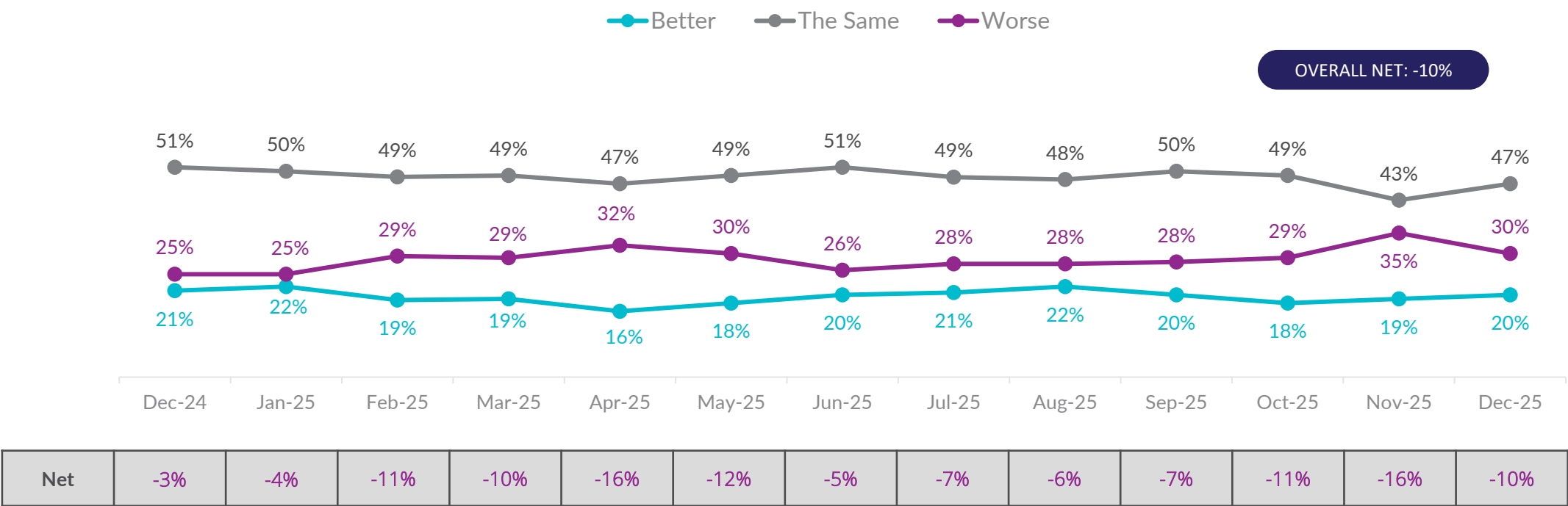
*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Generations
Gen Z (18-27)
Millennials (28-43)
Gen X (44-59)
Boomers (60-78)

Expectations for people’s personal finances over the next 3 months have improved after dropping to their lowest last month

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)

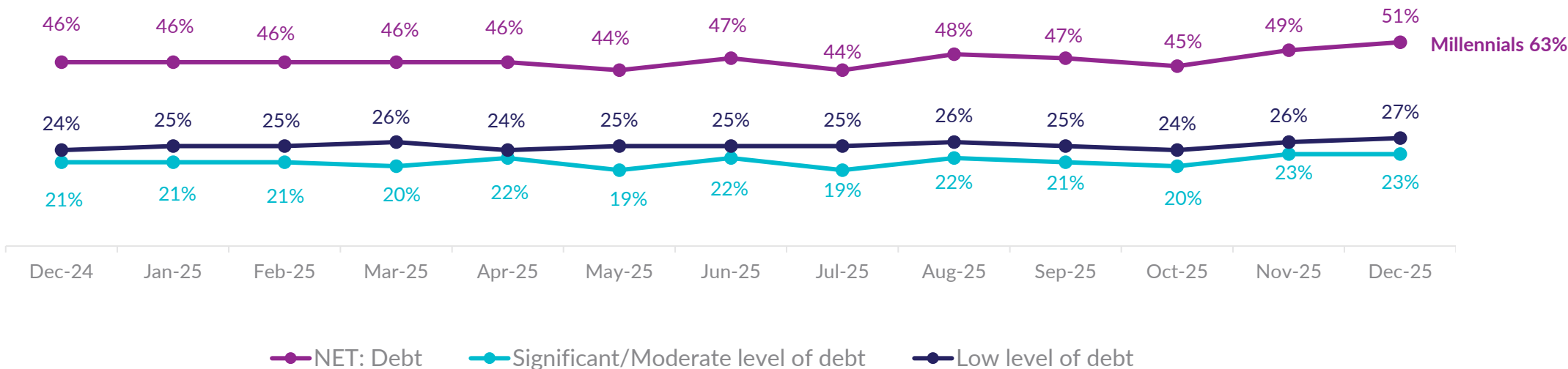
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Generations
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Gen X (44-59)
Boomers (60-78)

Over half of UK adults claim to hold debt, the highest recorded in the last twelve months

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)

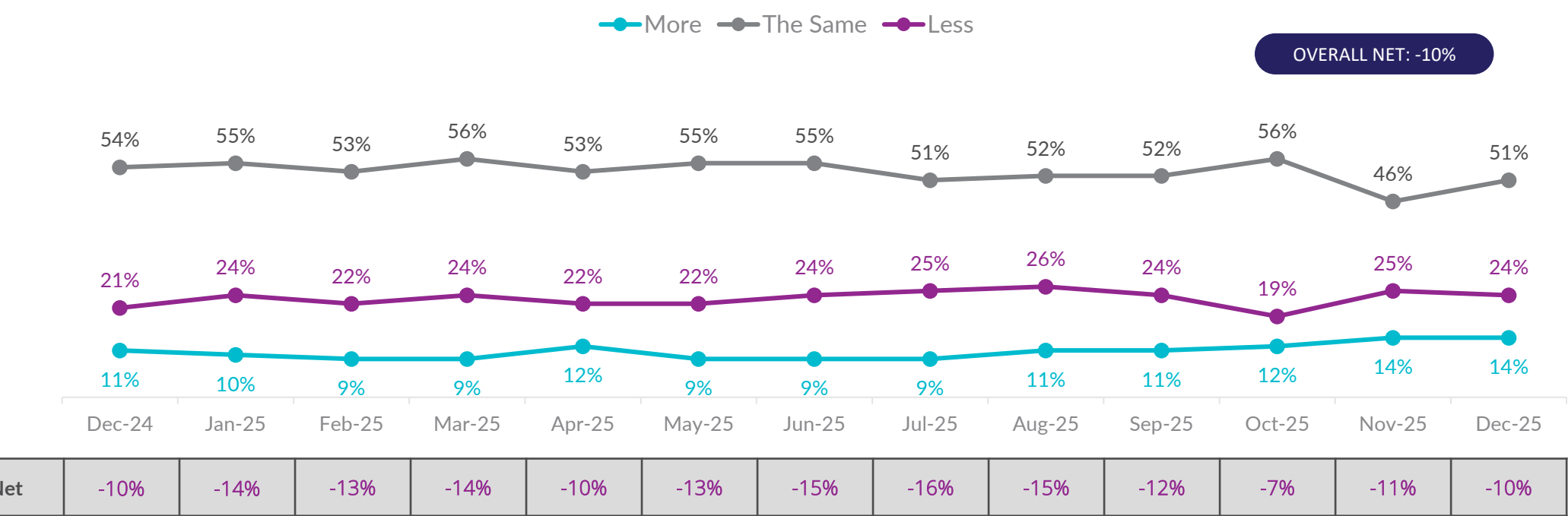
*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

- Generations
- Gen Z (18-27)
 - Millennials (28-43)
 - Gen X (44-59)
 - Boomers (60-78)

Expectations of borrowing over the next 3 months are stable compared to last month

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)

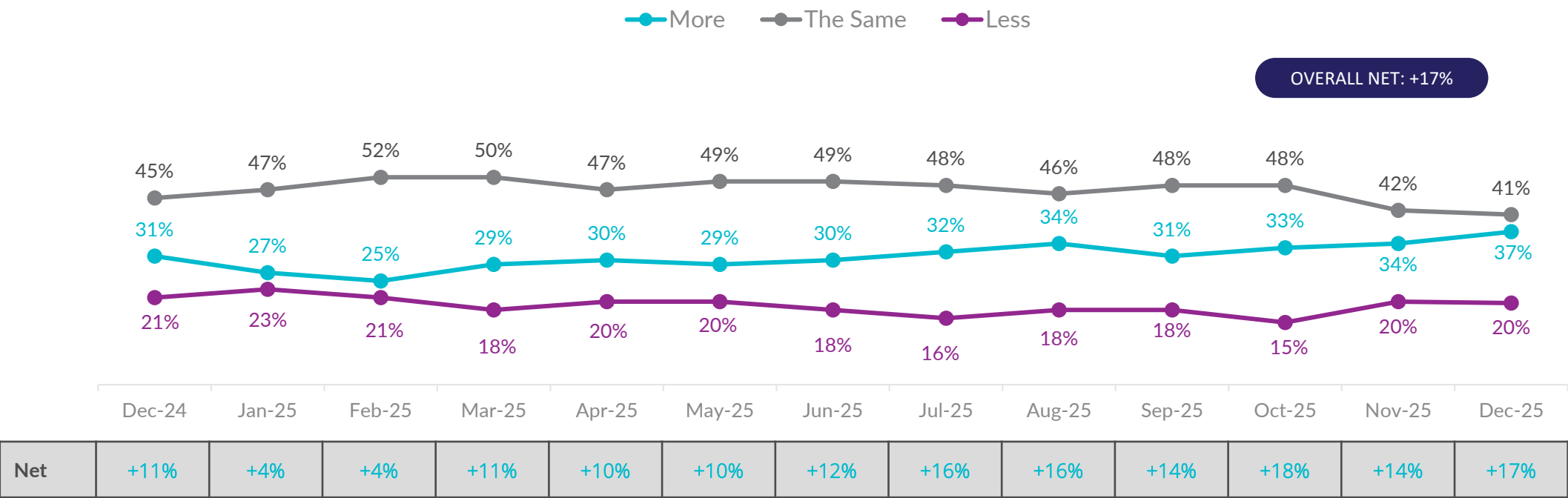
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Generations
Gen Z (18-27)
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Gen X (44-59)
Boomers (60-78)

NET spending expectations are back up this month, reaching six percentage points higher than they were this time last year

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)

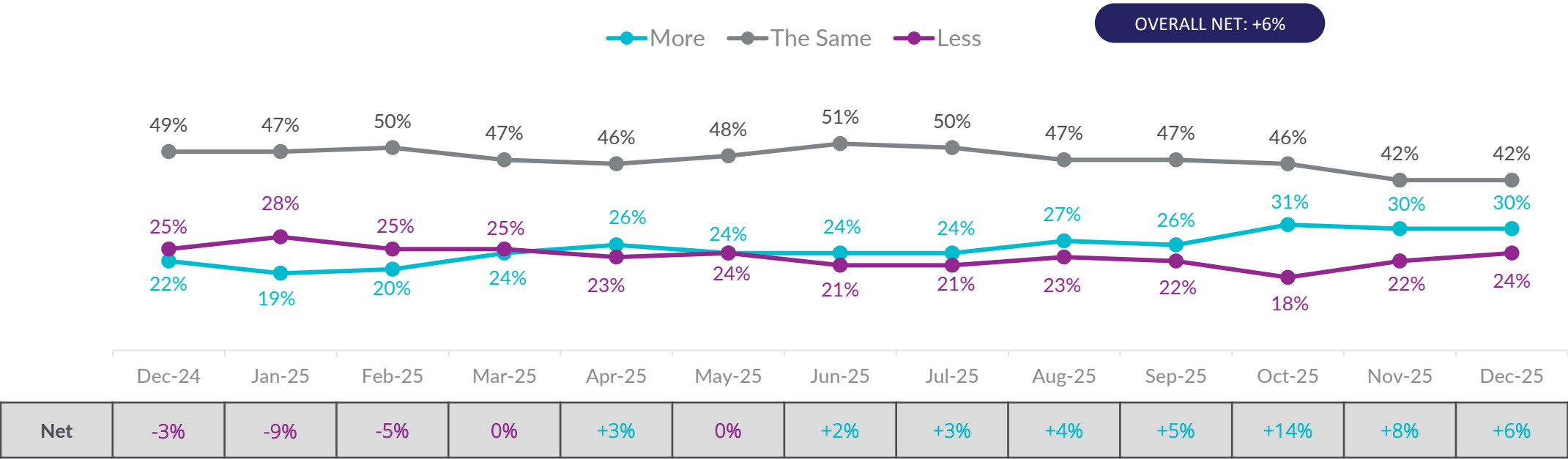
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Millennials (28-43)
Gen X (44-59)
Boomers (60-78)

Expectations towards retail spend are slightly down, although have been in positive territory since June 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)

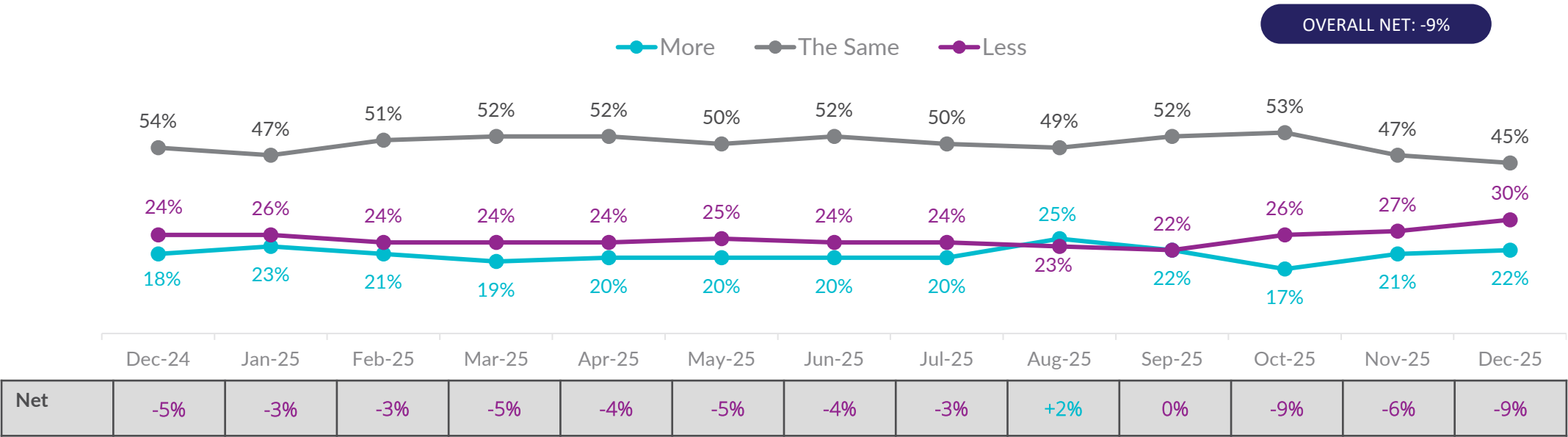
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Gen X (44-59)
Boomers (60-78)

Overall saving expectations remain in negative territory (NET figure has been in negative territory every month this year except August)

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)

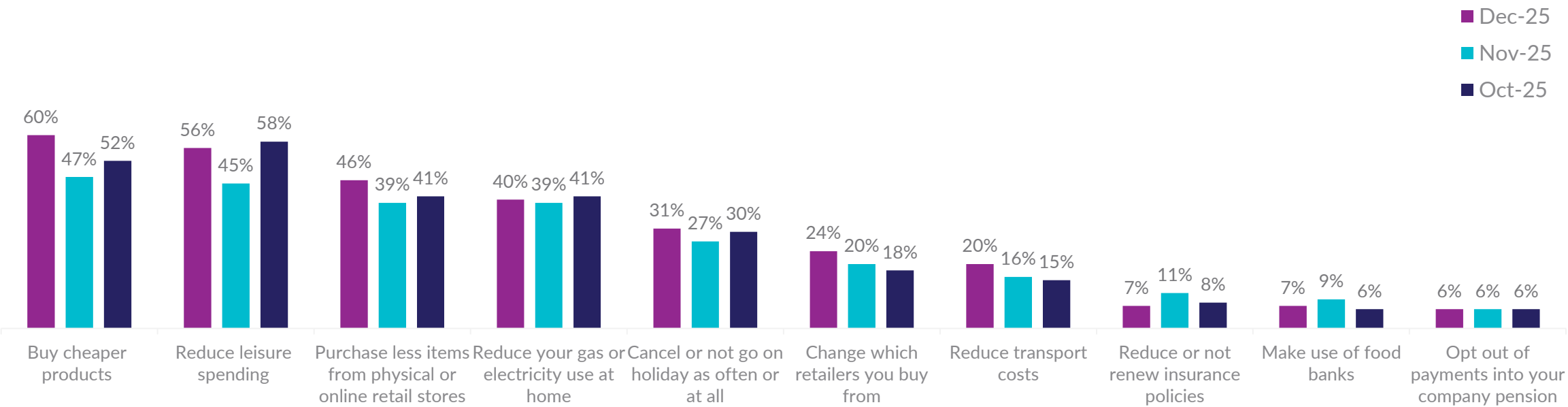
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Boomers (60-78)

Buying cheaper products is the top way people plan to reduce outgoing costs

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

Total sample



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: (394)

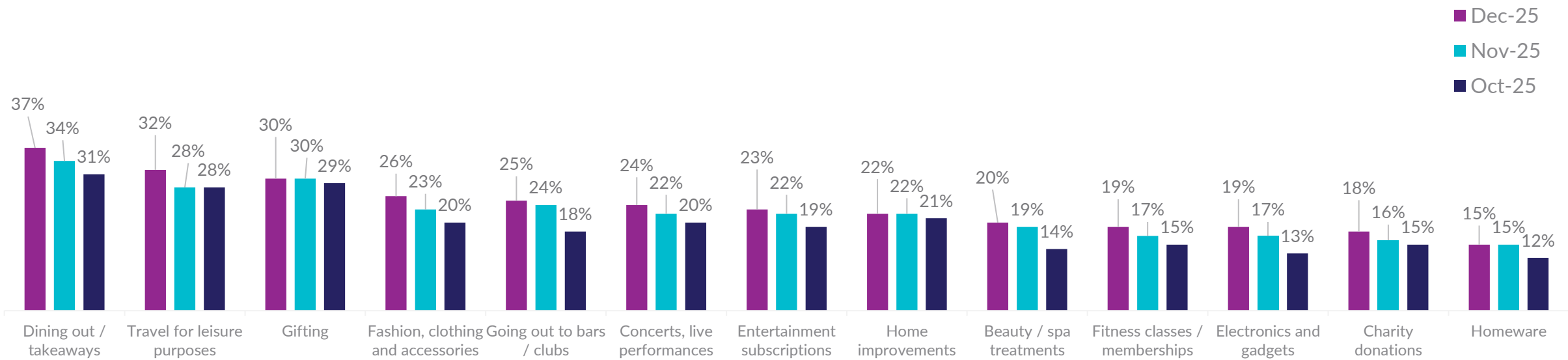
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Gen X (44-59)
Boomers (60-78)

Dining out remains the top non-essential spending priority followed by travel for leisure purposes

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)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

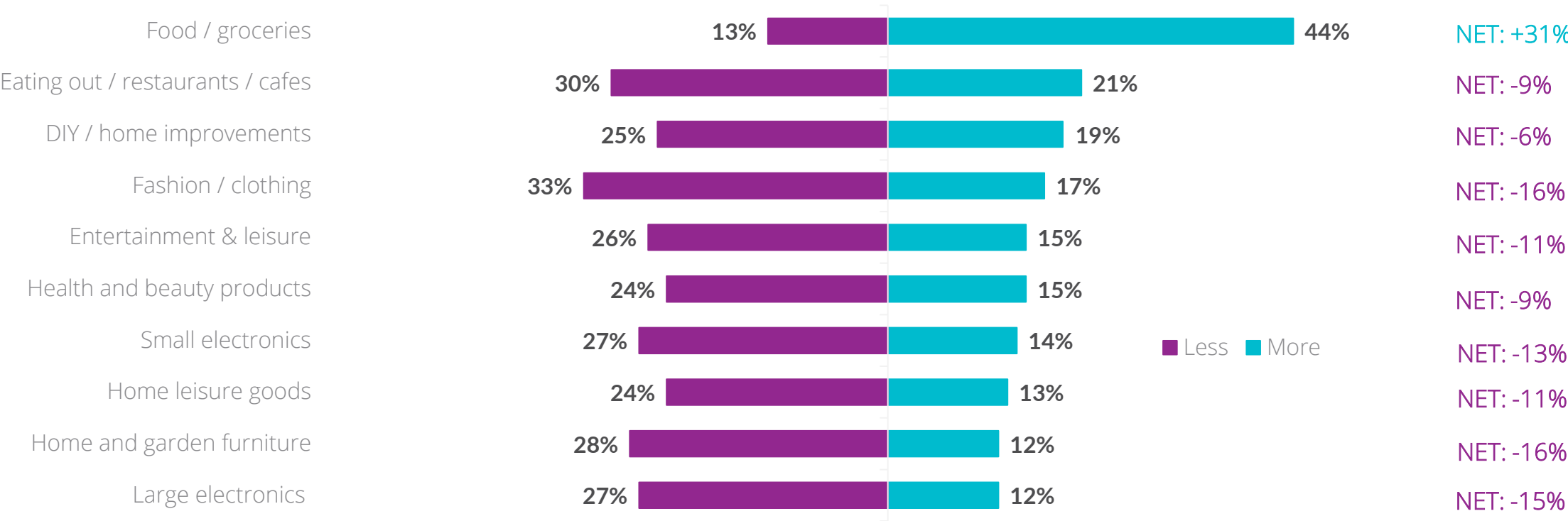
Generations
Gen Z (18-27)
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Boomers (60-78)

The NET spend for food and groceries continues to be in positive territory

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

Total sample

NET December 2025



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

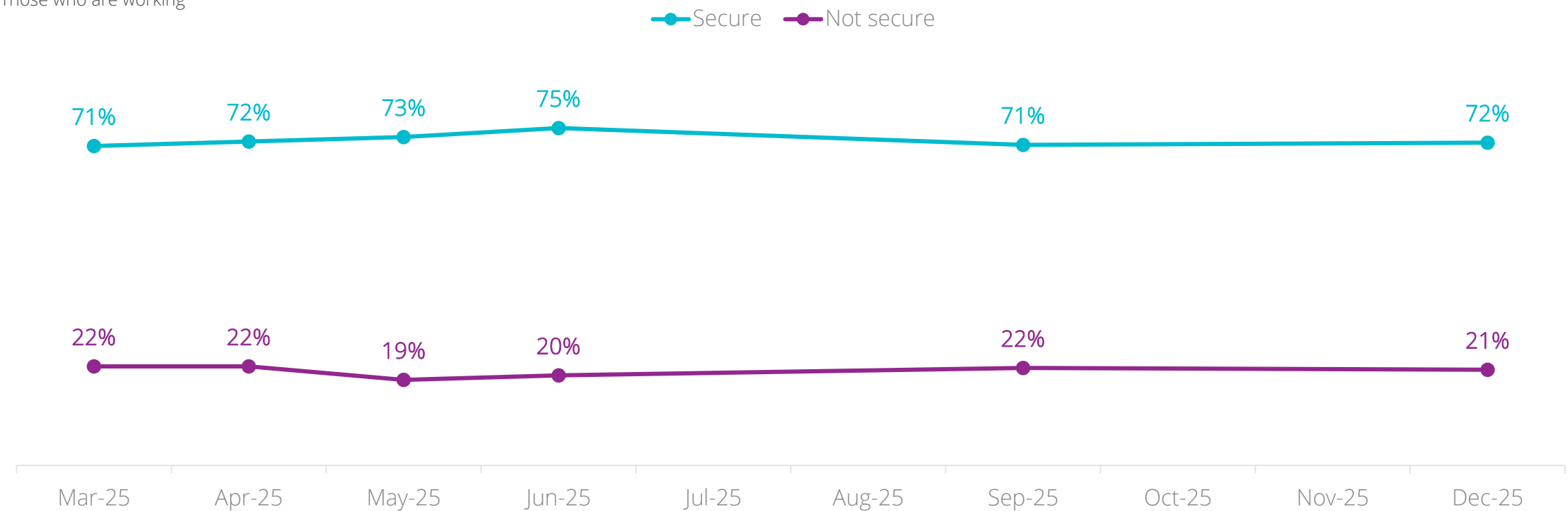
Appendix



Job security is stable with the figures reported in September

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

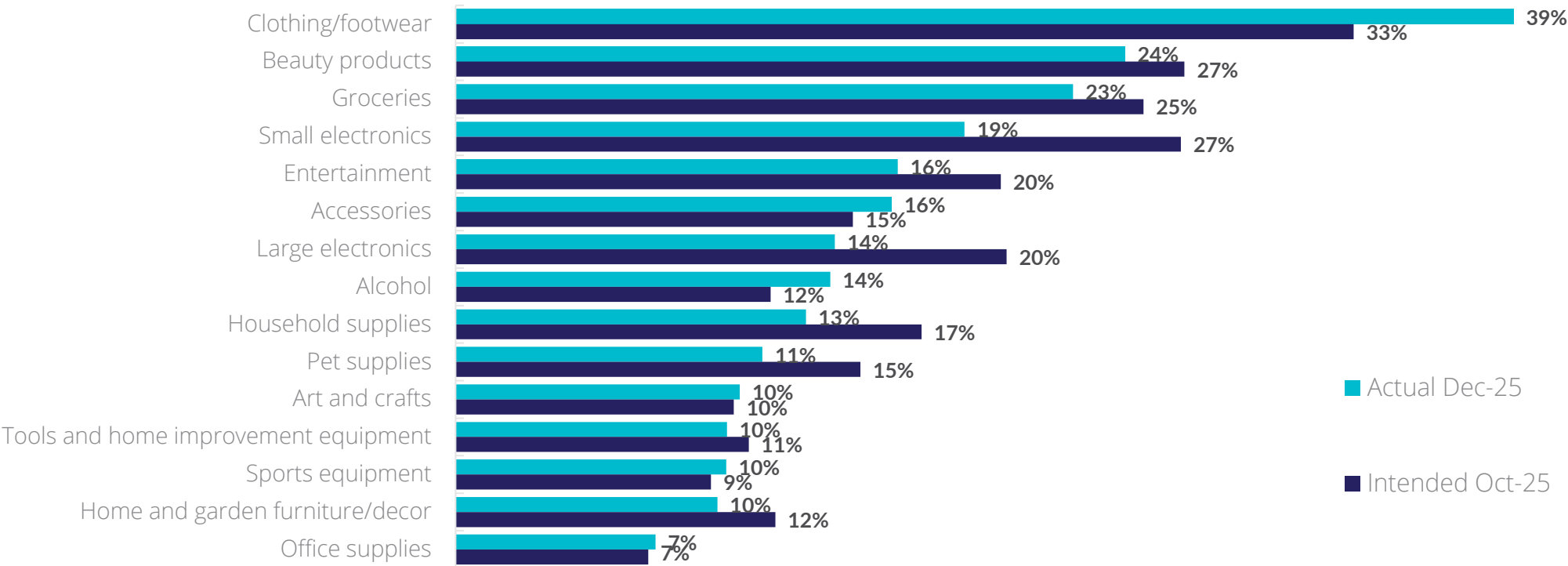
- Generations**
- Gen Z (18-27)
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The most popular categories consumers shopped over the Black Friday / Cyber Monday period were Clothing & Footwear, Beauty and Groceries

Thinking back to your Black Friday or Cyber Monday spend this year (2025), which category(ies) of items did you buy, if any? (Dec-25).

All who participated in Black Friday

Most popular spending categories across 2025 deals intended (Oct-25) vs. actual (Dec-25)



Q12. Black Friday and Cyber Monday are major shopping events held around the last weekend of December, marked by significant sales and discounts. Thinking back to your Black Friday or Cyber Monday spend this year (2025), which category(ies) of items did you buy, if any? Please select all that apply.

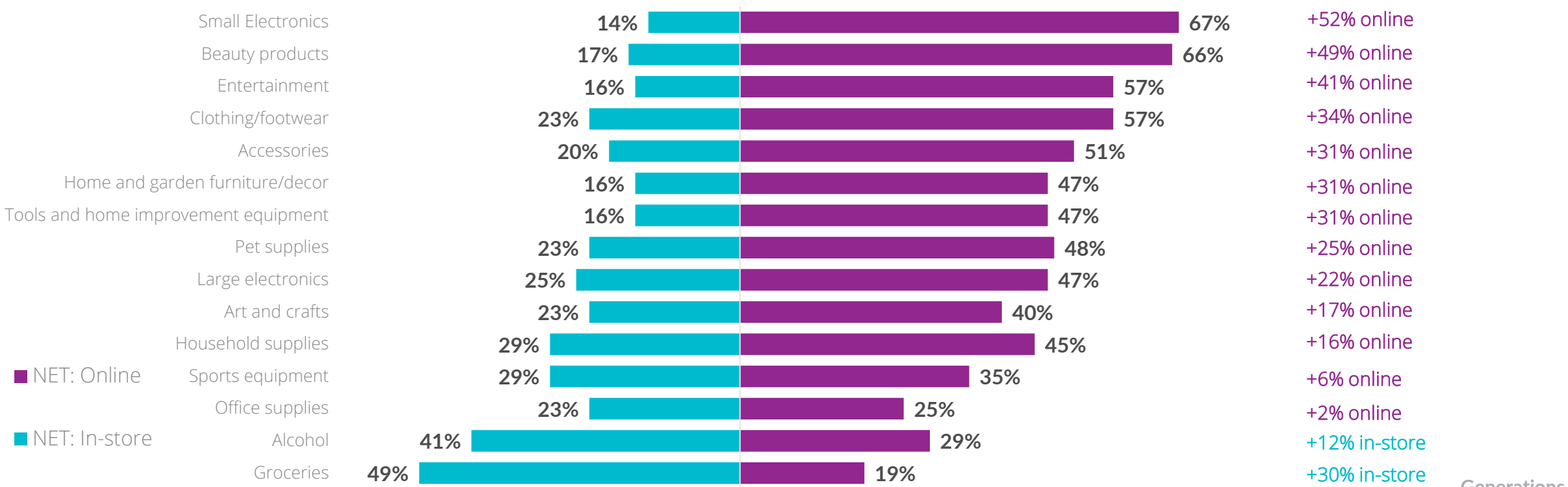
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Gen X (44-59)
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Aside from groceries and alcohol, online shopping was prioritised across all categories this deal season, particularly so for small electronics, beauty products and entertainment

You mentioned that you purchased the following items over Black Friday or Cyber Monday this year (2025), did you buy the following online or instore? (Dec-25)

NET Difference



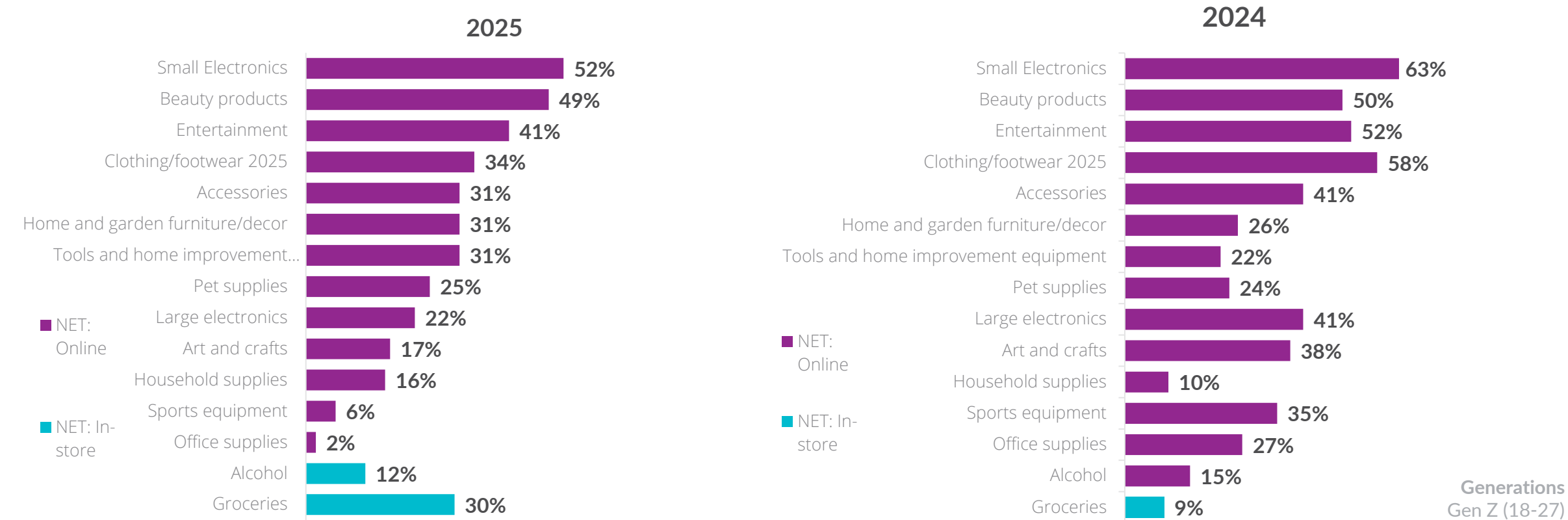
Q13. You mentioned that you purchased the following items over Black Friday or Cyber Monday this year (2025), did you buy the following online or instore?

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Compared to last year more people turned to shopping in-store over Black Friday compared to last year

You mentioned that you purchased the following items over Black Friday or Cyber Monday this year (2025), did you buy the following online or instore? (Dec-25)

All who participated in Black Friday/Cyber Monday deals



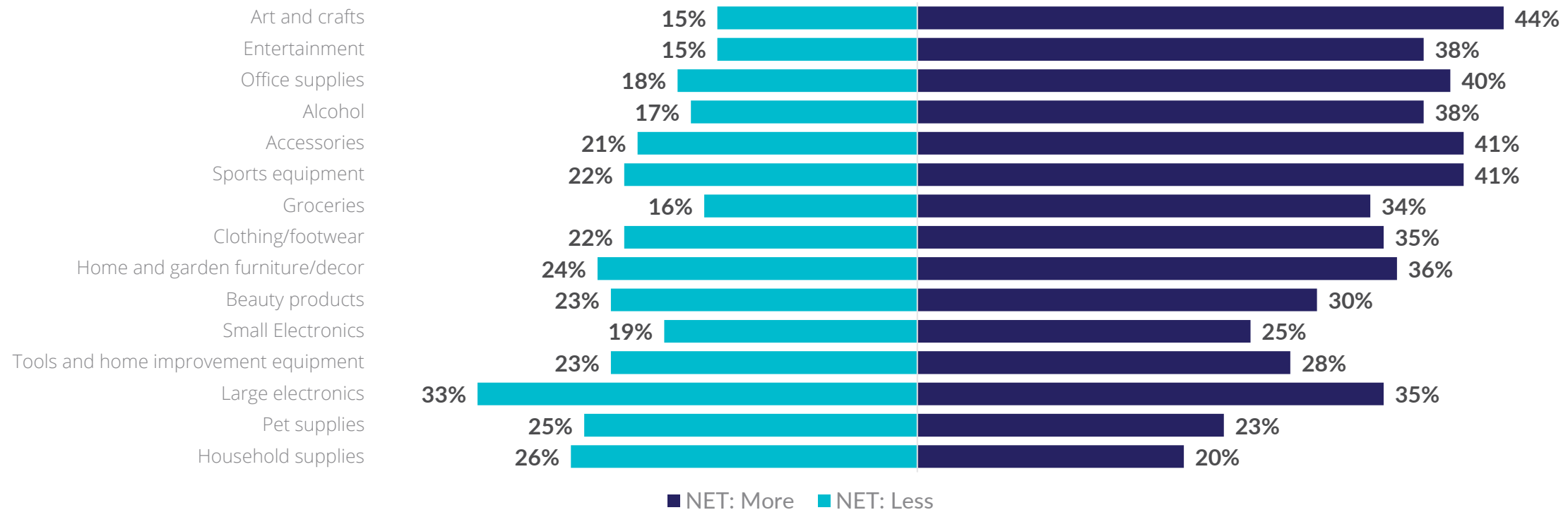
Q13. You mentioned that you purchased the following items over Black Friday or Cyber Monday this year (2025), did you buy the following online or instore? (Base size: 762)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Those who participated in Black Friday spent more than they had intended

For the following items you purchased over Black Friday or Cyber Monday, did you spend more or less than you intended? (Dec-25)

All who participated in Black Friday/Cyber Monday deals

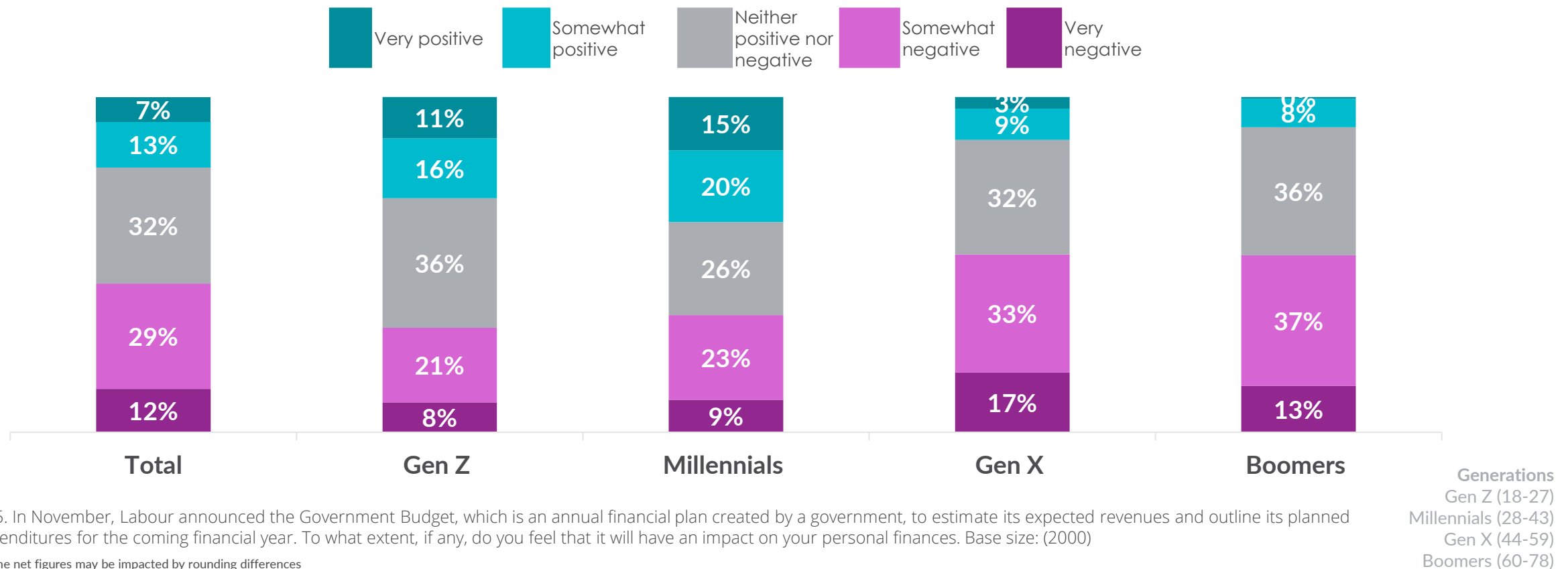


Q14. For the following items you purchased over Black Friday or Cyber Monday, did you spend more or less than you intended? (Base size=762)

*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

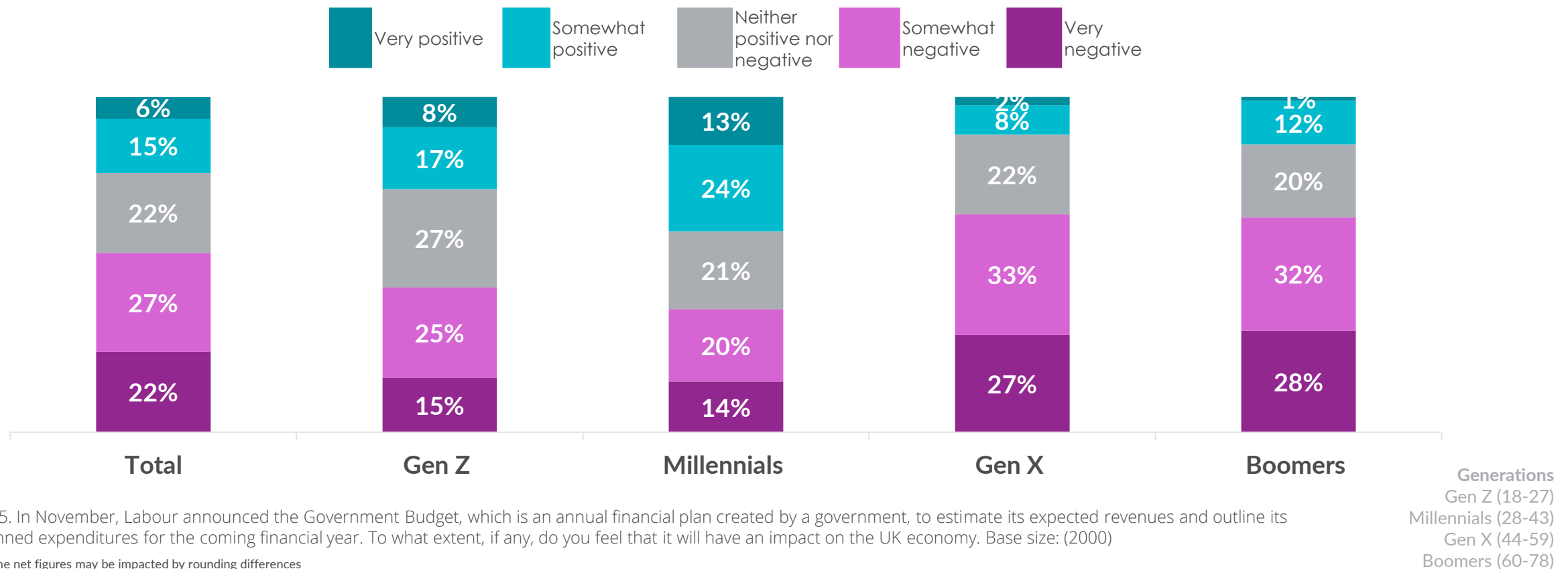
Overall, UK adults are negative about the budget especially Gen X and Boomers

To what extent, if any, do you feel that it will have an impact on your personal finances? (December-25)



Furthermore, most UK adults are negative about the impact it will have on the UK economy

To what extent, if any, do you feel that it will have an impact on the UK economy? (December-25)





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

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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.

