

# BRC Consumer Sentiment Monitor

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June 2024

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





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## Headline commentary

### Consumer Sentiment Monitor – June 2024



**Dr Kris Hamer, Director of Insight | British Retail Consortium**

“The latest results reveal a slowdown in consumer optimism compared to recent months. Since the launch of our Consumer Sentiment Monitor in March, there had been a gradual improvement in consumer sentiment towards both the UK economy and personal finances. But as the General Election campaigning got underway, the latest survey results indicate a decline in positivity. Nonetheless, younger consumers remain more optimistic than older generations about economic improvement.

Attitudes towards personal finances have also deteriorated, with more consumers expecting their financial situation to worsen and fewer expecting improvements in the coming months. Overall debt levels have climbed, with 50% of consumers reporting some form of debt, with debt particularly pronounced among Millennials.

Consumer spending plans remain steady compared to last month. About half of consumers intend to spend the same, while over a quarter expect to spend more. And despite the economic pessimism, nearly half (48%) of consumers plan to take a holiday over the summer, with average spending projected at £1,464, increasing to £1,600 for Millennials.

Despite waning optimism, the consistency in spending plans indicates a resilient consumer base willing to maintain or increase expenditure. Retailers seeking to capitalise on this are offering value-driven promotions and personalised experiences that resonate with consumer needs.”

# Executive Summary

## Consumer Sentiment Monitor – June 2024

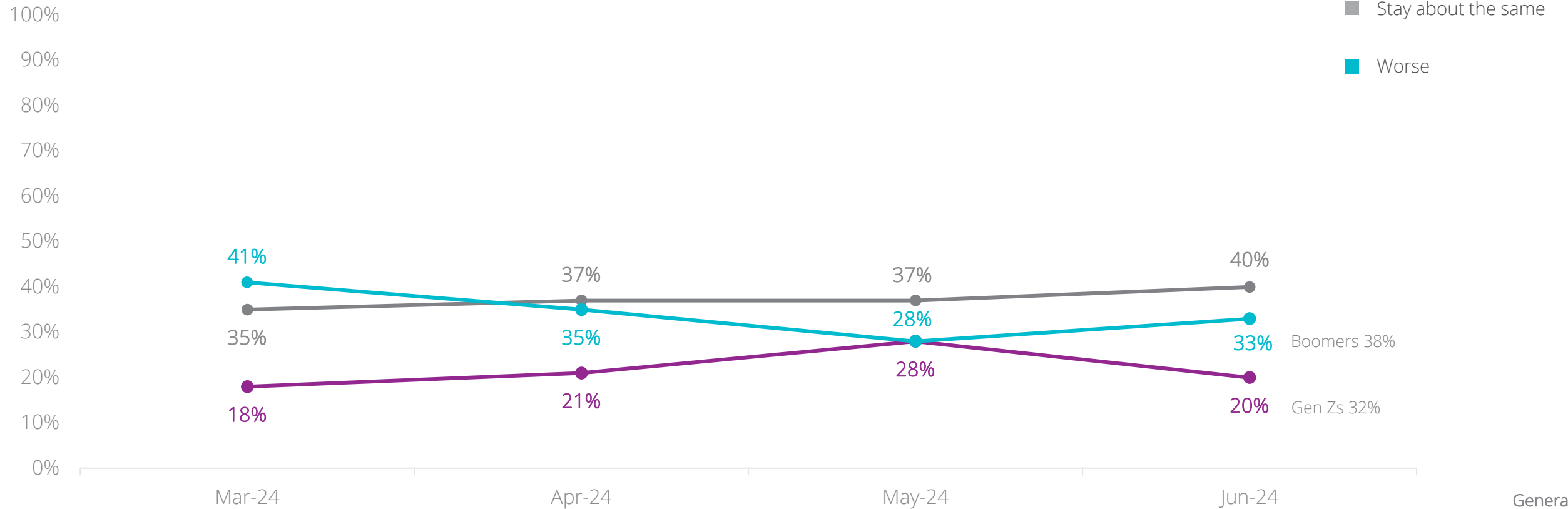
A Survey of 2,000 UK consumers weighted to be Nationally Representative. Consumers are surveyed monthly about their financial status, shopping behaviours, and other topical issues.

- Optimism towards the UK economy has decreased following an uptick in May, as ‘will get *better*’ responses reduced by 8% and ‘will get *worse*’ responses saw an increase of 5%. Younger age groups are, once again, more optimistic than older generations.
- The number of people who are coping financially (40%) or are comfortable (41%) has remained the same since May, whereas the number who report to be struggling has increased slightly to 18% (+1%), with Gen X again most likely to report this.
- After improving in May, positive expectations towards personal finances have slowed. People are now more likely to expect their personal finances to worsen rather than get better as ‘will get *better*’ responses have decreased by 4% and ‘will get *worse*’ responses have increased by 3%. Gen Zs again continue to show the most optimism across age groups (35%) while Gen X continue to show the most pessimism (25%).
- Levels of overall debt have risen to their highest level since March, with 50% reporting some form of debt. Again, it is Millennials who report having the most (65%). Borrowing expectations remain consistent with May, with just over half (54%) expecting to keep their borrowing levels the same over the next 3 months (+3%).
- Spending plans over the next three months remain consistent with May, with most (51%, -1%) planning to spend the same. Over one quarter (27%, +1%) plan to spend more and 19% (+2%) plan to spend less. Millennials continue to be the most likely group to expect to spend more (35%).
- Saving expectations have slightly worsened since May. Less consumers expect to be able to save the same amount (49%, -5%) and more are expecting to save less (26%, +4%). Despite this, slightly more are expecting to save more, with Millennials overtaking Gen Zs as the most likely group to expect a higher saving ability.
- As with previous waves, non-essential spending priorities continue to be dining out, leisure travel and home improvements.

# Optimism in the UK economy has dropped, with expectations for it to worsen notably overtaking expectations for it to improve.

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

Total sample



\*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

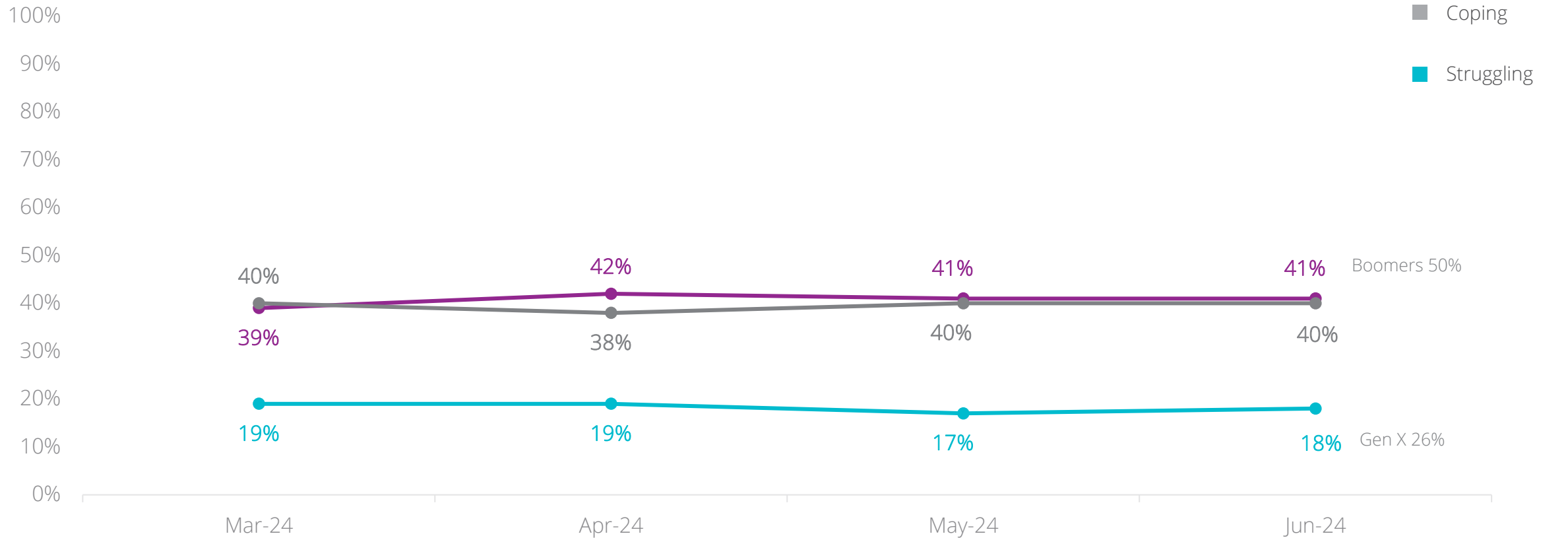
Q2. Over the next 3 months, do you expect the following to get better or worse? State of the UK economy. Base size (2,000)

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

## Two in five continue to be coping financially, with all figures remaining consistent with May. Gen X are still the most likely group to struggle.

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

Total sample



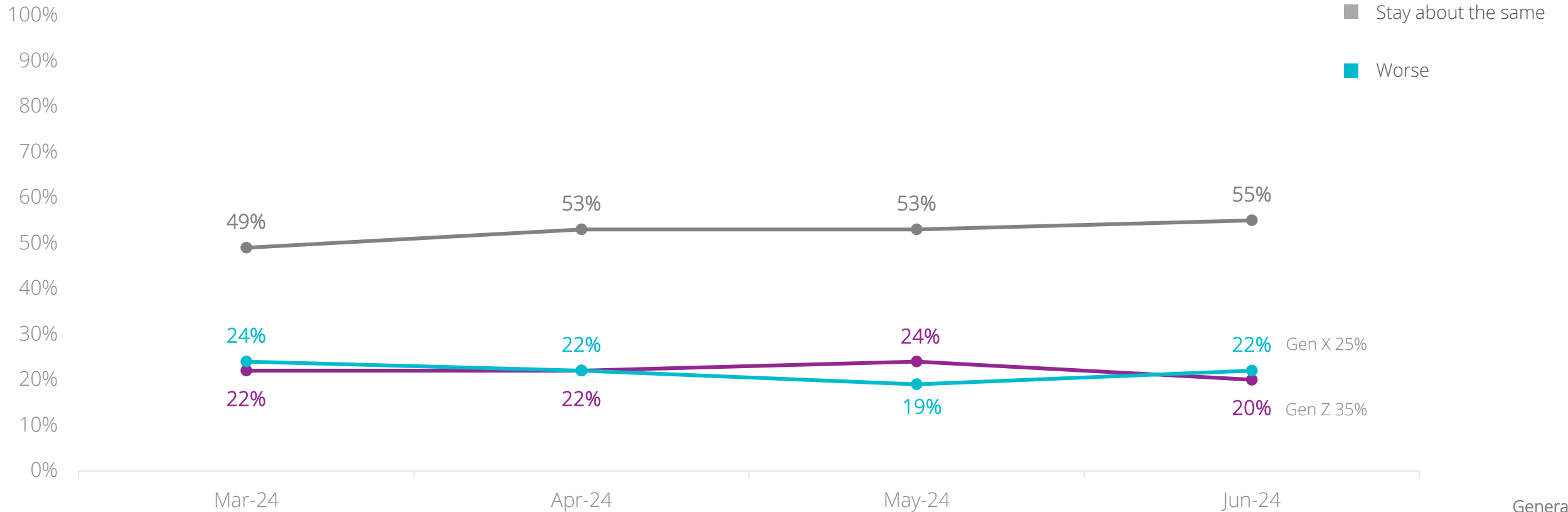
\*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

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

# Expectations over personal finances reveal a drop in optimism compared to May as people are now more likely to expect things to worsen for them rather than improve.

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

Total sample



\*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

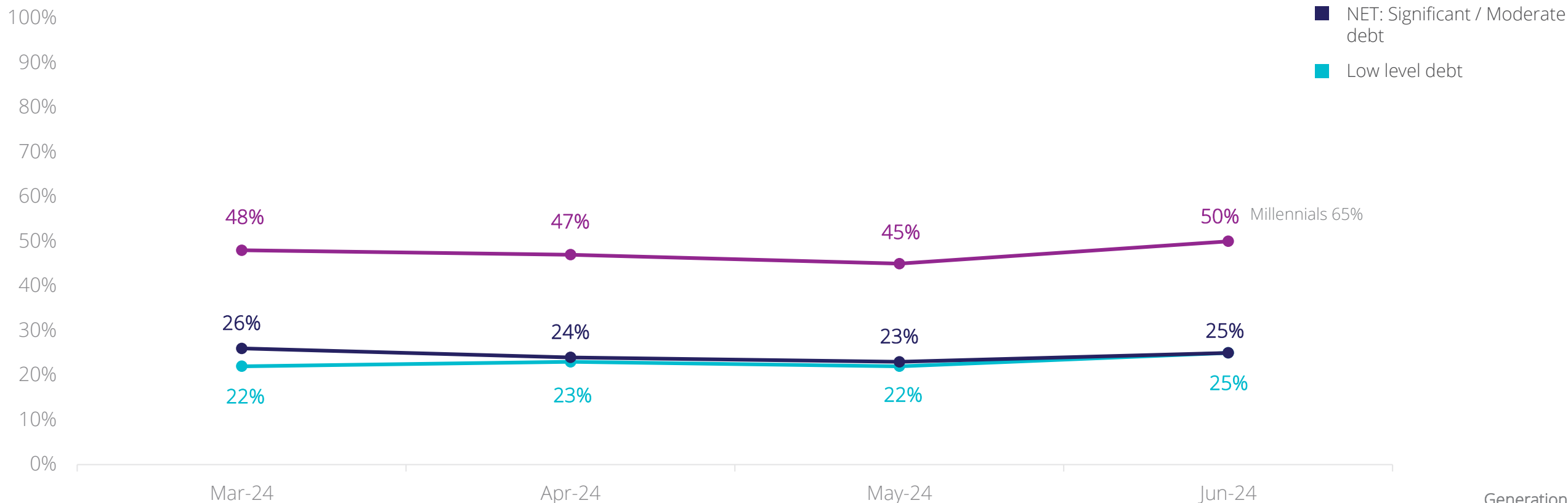
Q2. Over the next 3 months, do you expect the following to get better or worse? (Base size: 2,000)

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

# Overall debt has risen to its highest level since March and continues to be the highest amongst Millennials.

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

Total sample



\*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

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)

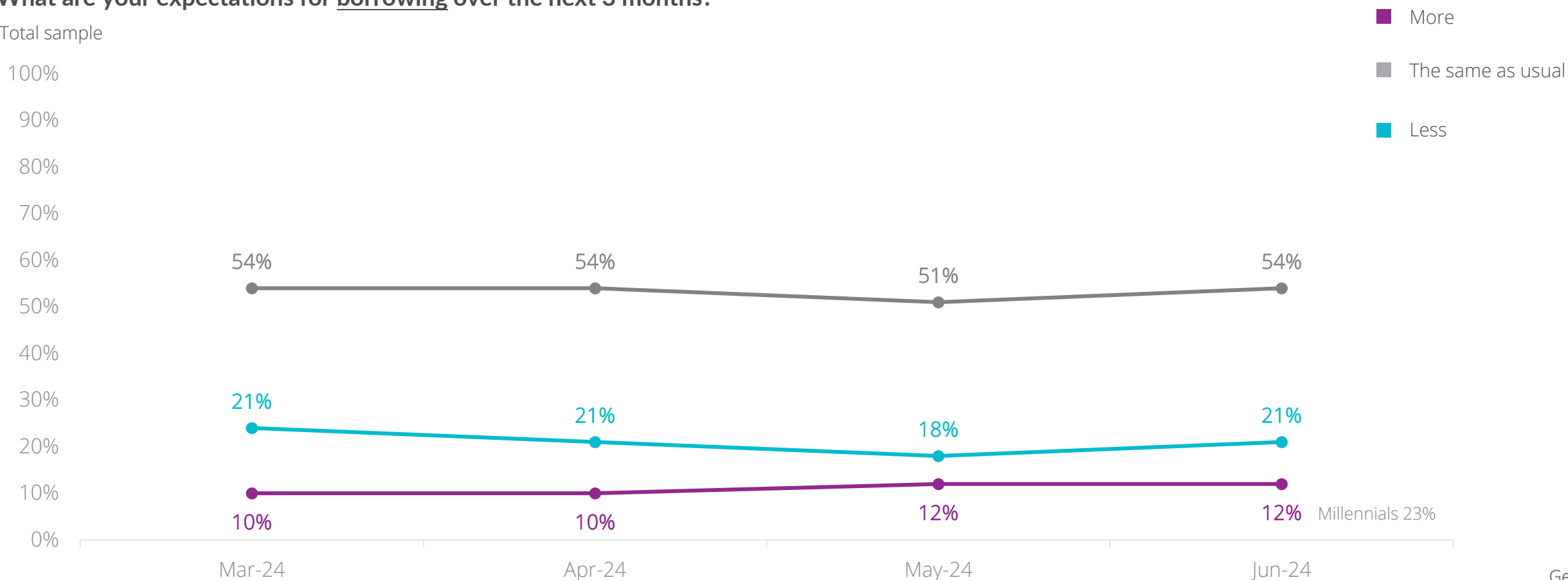
**Generations**  
 Gen Z (18-27)  
 Millennials (28-43)  
 Gen X (44-59)  
 Boomers (60-78)



## Borrowing expectations remain consistent with May, although slightly more expect to borrow less. Millennials continue to anticipate borrowing the most.

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

Total sample



\*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

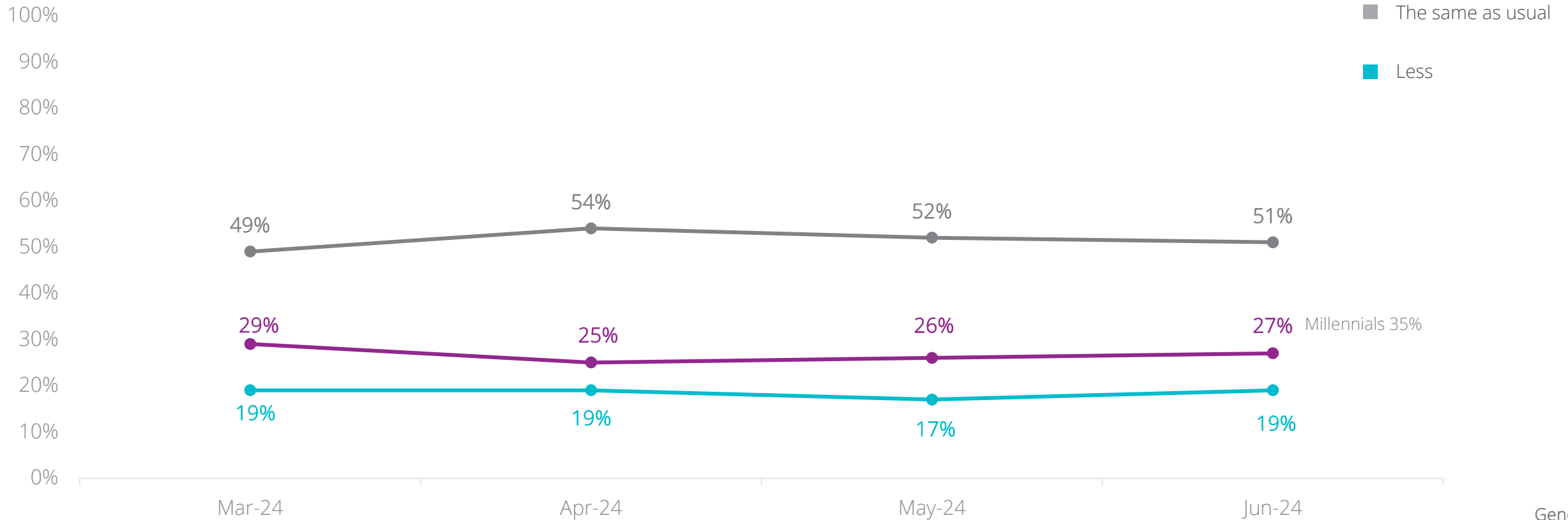
Q6. What are your expectations for borrowing over the next 3 months? Please only think about loans, overdrafts, credit etc. and not about mortgages. By 'usual' we'd like you to think about your typical borrowing habits. Base size: (2,000)

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

## Plans to spend over the next three months stayed consistent in June, with millennials remaining the most likely to anticipate spending more.

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

Total sample



\*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

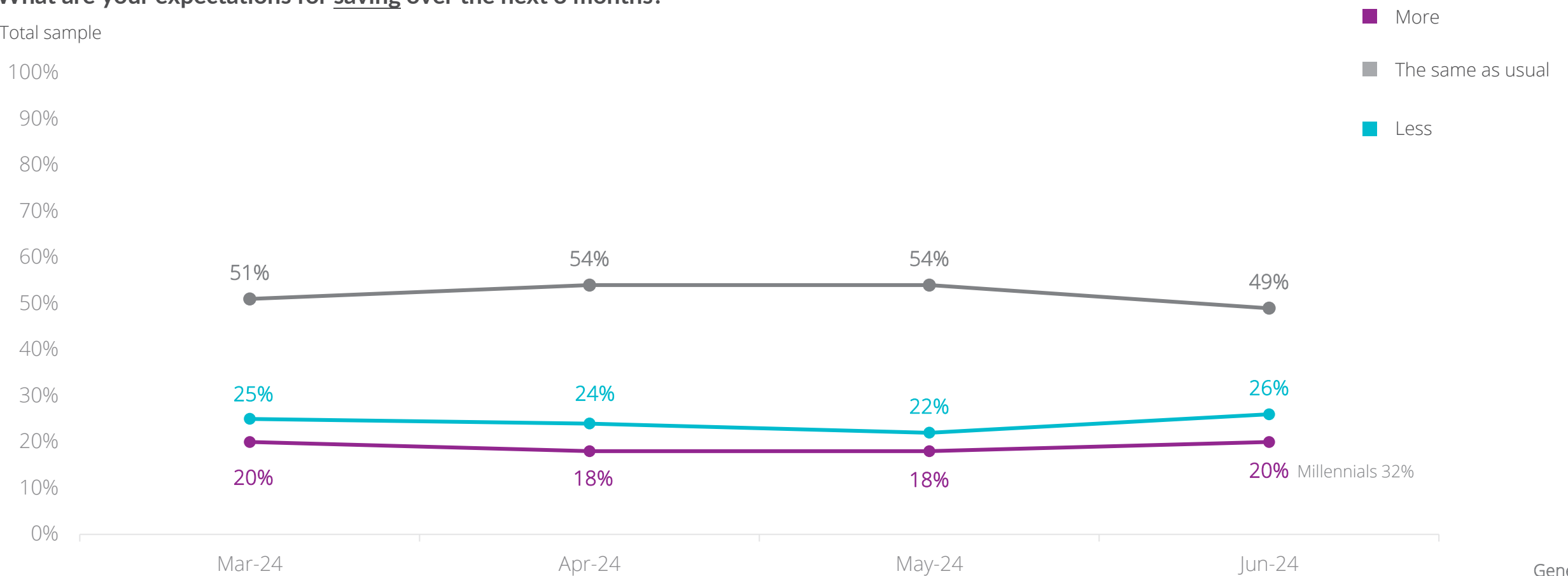
Q3. What do you plan to do in relation to your spending over the next 3 months? By 'usual' we'd like you to think about your typical spending habits. Base size: (2,000)

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

## Consumers report both an uptick in expectations to save less and to save more, with millennials overtaking Gen Z as most likely group to anticipate a stronger saving ability.

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

Total sample



\*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

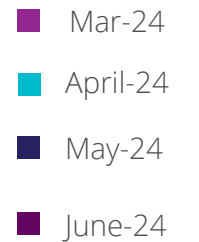
Q5. What are your expectations for saving over the next 3 months? By 'usual' we'd like you to think about your typical saving habits. Base size (2,000)

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

## Buying cheaper products and reducing leisure spend remain top ways to reduce outgoings, whilst there has been an uptick in plans to reduce transport 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



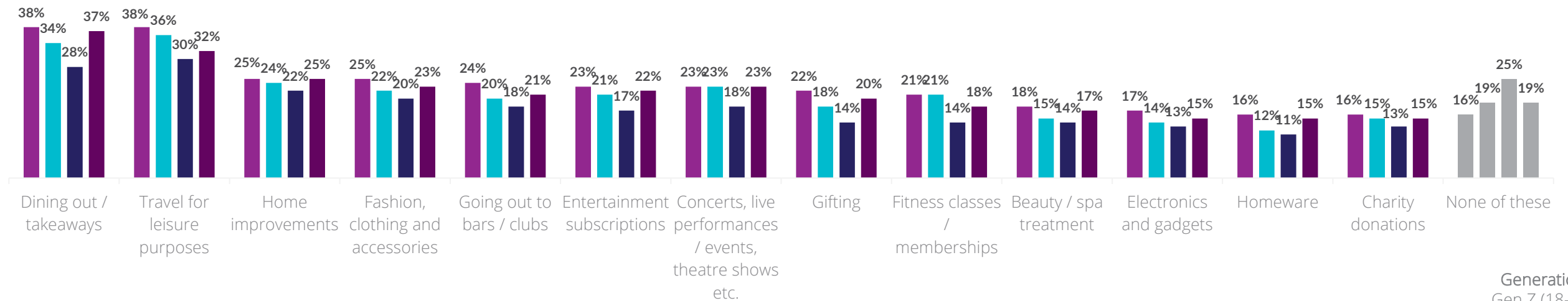
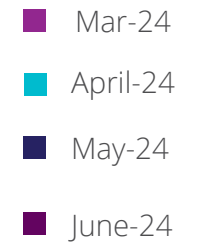
**Generations**  
 Gen Z (18-27)  
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 Gen X (44-59)  
 Boomers (60-78)

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: (2,000)

# Consumers continue to prioritise dining out, leisure travel and home improvements for their non-essential spending priorities.

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

Total sample



Q10. 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)

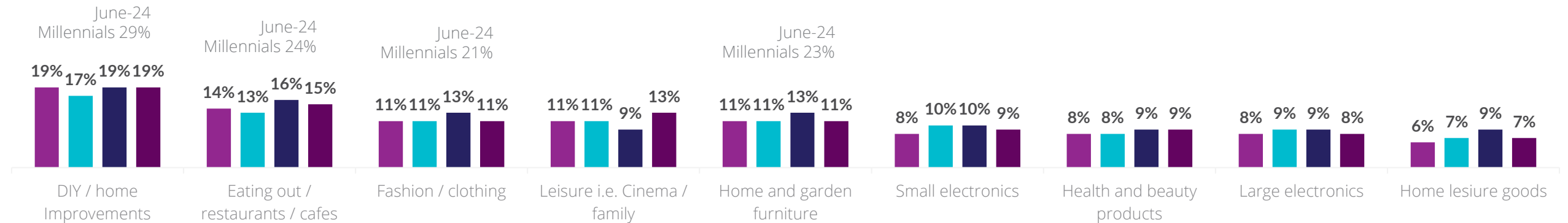
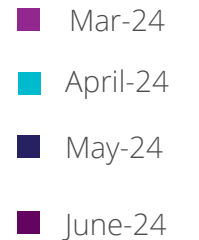
**Generations**  
 Gen Z (18-27)  
 Millennials (28-43)  
 Gen X (44-59)  
 Boomers (60-78)

## Consumers expect to spend more on DIY, eating out and leisure in the next three months, with Millennials primarily driving this spending.

**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: More



\*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Q12. 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)

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

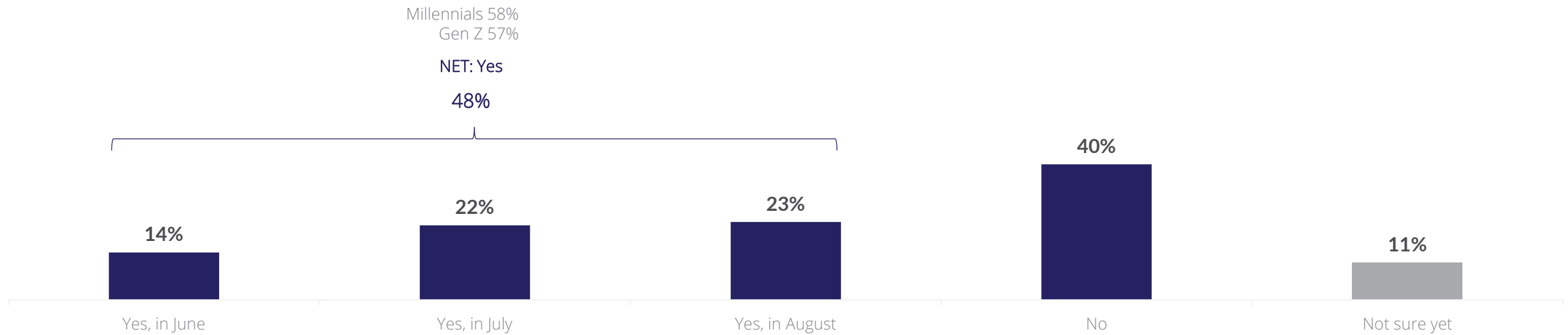
# Appendix

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# Nearly half of consumers plan to go on holiday during June - August, with August being the most popular month. Gen Zs and Millennials are the most likely group to take trips away.

Do you have any plans to go on holiday, or take a short break, in the next 3 months (June – August)? (NEW June-24)

Total sample



\*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Q8. Do you have any plans to go on holiday, or take a short break, in the next 3 months (June – August)? Base size: (2,000)

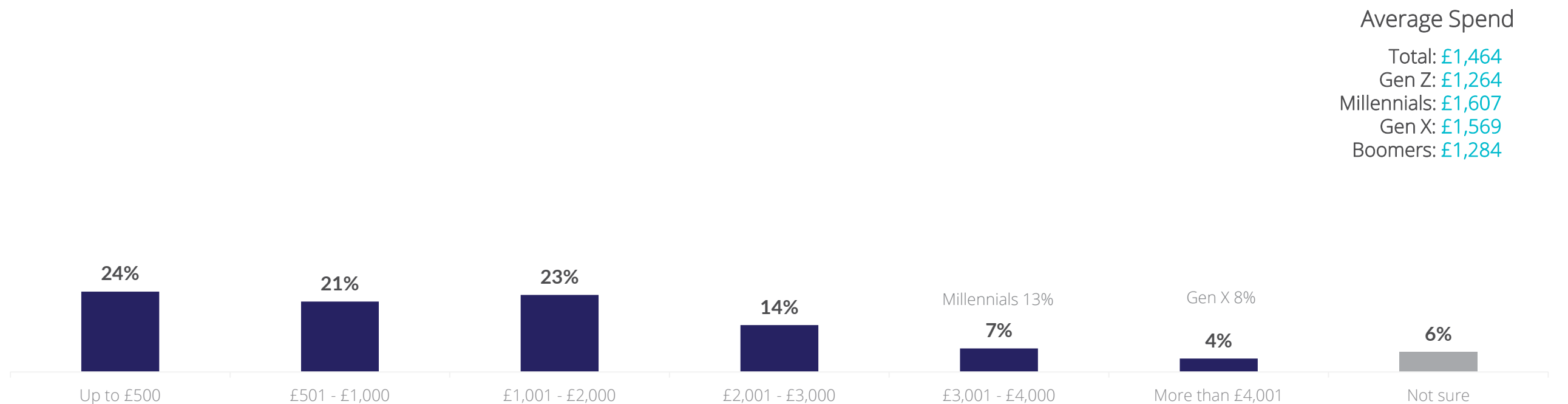
Generations  
Gen Z (18-27)  
Millennials (28-43)  
Gen X (44-59)  
Boomers (60-78)



## Holidaying consumers plan to spend an average of £1,464 pounds on their next trip during June - August, rising to over £1,600 amongst Millennials.

### How much will you spend going on holiday, or taking a short break, over the next 3 months (June - August)? (NEW June-24)

All those going on holiday or taking a short break in June - August



**Average Spend**  
 Total: £1,464  
 Gen Z: £1,264  
 Millennials: £1,607  
 Gen X: £1,569  
 Boomers: £1,284

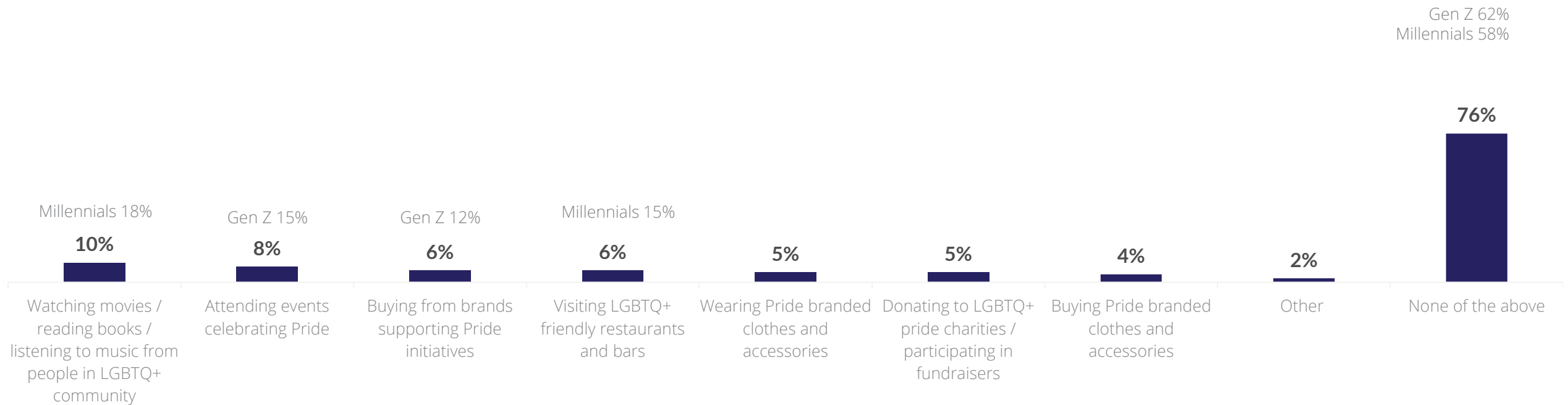
**Generations**  
 Gen Z (18-27)  
 Millennials (28-43)  
 Gen X (44-59)  
 Boomers (60-78)

Q9. How much will you spend going on holiday, or taking a short break, over the next 3 months (June - August)? By spend we mean any money used for travel, accommodation, spending money etc. If you are going on multiple holidays or breaks, please think about the next trip you're taking. Answer based on how much you're contributing to the trip, not the cost of the trip in total. Base size: (965)

## Whilst most are not planning to do much for Pride in June, one in ten will consume movies/books/and music by LGBTQ+ artists, with Gen Zs and Millennials the most engaged group.

Which of the following, if any, will you be doing / have you already done to participate in / celebrate Pride this month? (NEW June-24)

Total sample



Q11. June is LGBTQ+ Pride Month. Pride Month is a month dedicated to the celebration of LGBTQ culture, the support of LGBTQ rights, and the uplifting of LGBTQ voices. It is a celebration of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people—and the history, culture, and contributions of these people and their communities. Which of the following, if any, will you be doing / have you already done to participate in / celebrate Pride this month? Please select all that apply. Base size: (2,000)

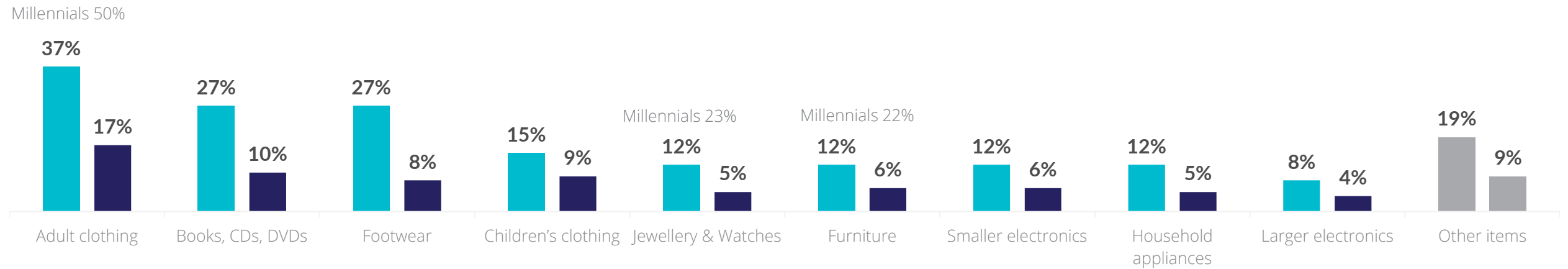
**Generations**  
 Gen Z (18-27)  
 Millennials (28-43)  
 Gen X (44-59)  
 Boomers (60-78)

## Adult clothing, books/CD/DVDs and footwear are the most popular ‘used’ products to buy, with millennials the most likely to participate in the second-hand market.

Have you bought or sold any of the following second-hand or used products in the past 3 months? (NEW June-24)

Total sample

■ Bought  
■ Sold



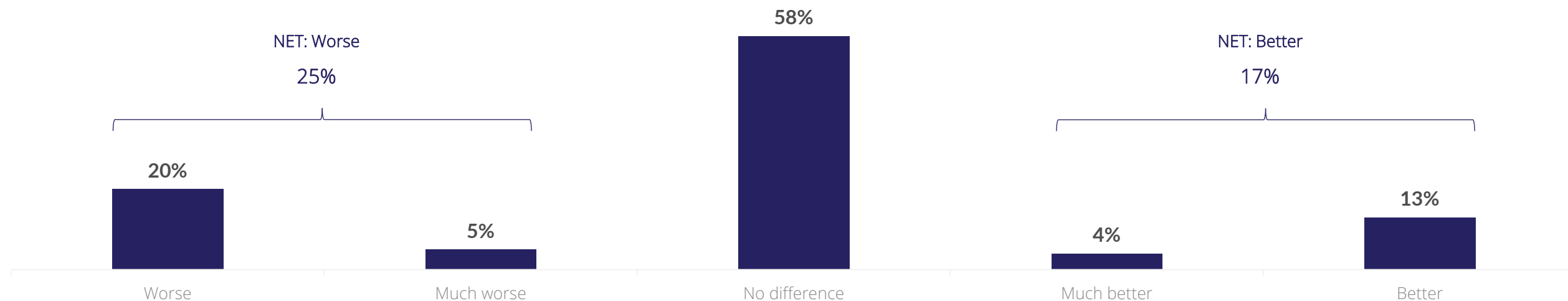
Generations  
Gen Z (18-27)  
Millennials (28-43)  
Gen X (44-59)  
Boomers (60-78)

Q13. Have you bought or sold any of the following second-hand or used products in the past 3 months? Base size: (2,000)

Despite the slowing of food inflation, most consumers report no difference in their personal finances, whilst also being more likely to report their personal finances have gotten worse rather than better.

Thinking about your finances, have they got better or worse since inflation has slowed down, or has it made no difference? (NEW June-24)

Total sample



\*Some net figures may be impacted by rounding differences

Q14. The rising cost-of-living has caused inflation amongst food prices, however in the past year, this has slowed down and is now at its lowest levels since 2022. Thinking about your finances, have they got better or worse since inflation has slowed down, or has it made no difference? Base size: (2,000)

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

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## 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.



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## OPINIUM

Founded in 2007 Opinium is an award-winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on pulse of what people think, feel and do. Creative and inquisitive, the Opinium team is passionate about empowering clients to make the decisions that matter.

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