

The Independent Office for Police Conduct: Public Perceptions Tracker

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FOR THE 2018/19 FINANCIAL YEAR

Waves: 2.1 – 2.6

Fieldwork: June 2018 – March 2019

Methodology

Tracking the public's perceptions towards the IOPC

- Populus has conducted twelve online surveys at regular intervals among adults in England and Wales. These were nationally representative with sample sizes of approximately n=1850 (with a larger sample in waves 1.4 and 2.5 which boosted selected demographics).
- The first survey was conducted in June 2017 and the most recent, Wave 2.6, was conducted between 25-26 March 2019. This report updates previous analysis to include data from the 2018/19 financial year.
- The first four surveys (Waves 1.1-1.4) were conducted before the organisation become the IOPC. Where relevant, notes on question wording are included in this report.
- This report focusses on the following demographics alongside the overall England and Wales population: people aged 18-24, BME respondents, the C2DE social grades, those with a condition or disability, and, where relevant, LGBT respondents.
- Please note that the base sizes for BMEs and 18-24s are smaller than for other subgroups (with an average of around 70 BME respondents in each wave and 200 18-24s). The fluctuations for these samples therefore tend to be greater wave on wave.
- Some slides display aggregated data across waves. Please note that unique respondents can only be ensured for a maximum of up to four waves. There may therefore be some overlap in respondents in aggregated data.

Executive summary

Executive summary

- The English and Welsh public remain divided on whether the police deal fairly with complaints made against the police, though recent waves suggest there may have been a slight increase in confidence compared with around 18 months ago.
- Most of the public say that they would be likely to complain if unhappy about the conduct of a police officer, with little demographic variation.
- Awareness of the IPCC remains much higher than awareness of the IOPC, which is only known to a minority of the public. The most recent waves suggest a slight increase in awareness of the IOPC, though there is no clear long-term trend. The organisation remains more widely known among older people, white people, and those in the AB social grades. These groups tend to be more engaged with news and current affairs more generally.
- Confidence in the IOPC's impartiality remains high, but 'soft', with far more respondents fairly confident rather than very confident. The minority who are not confident in the IOPC's impartiality overwhelmingly think it is biased in favour of the police. BME respondents are less likely than the public overall to have confidence in the IOPC's impartiality and in the police's handling of complaints.
- In general, the public do not have firm expectations about the complaints process, with few giving strong views about how they expect it to work. However, significant proportions of BME respondents, LGBT respondents, and those with a mental condition say they worry that they might be treated differently if they were to complain.
- When asked to think about the ideal outcome of a complaint, the public place a high degree of importance on learning and change within the police forces concerned. By contrast, they are unconcerned about punishment and compensation.
- Across each of the key metrics, there is little variation in attitudes by region. Respondents in London, for instance, are roughly as likely as respondents overall to be aware of the IOPC, to have confidence in its impartiality, to have confidence in the police's handling of complaints, and to complain if unhappy about the conduct of a police officer.

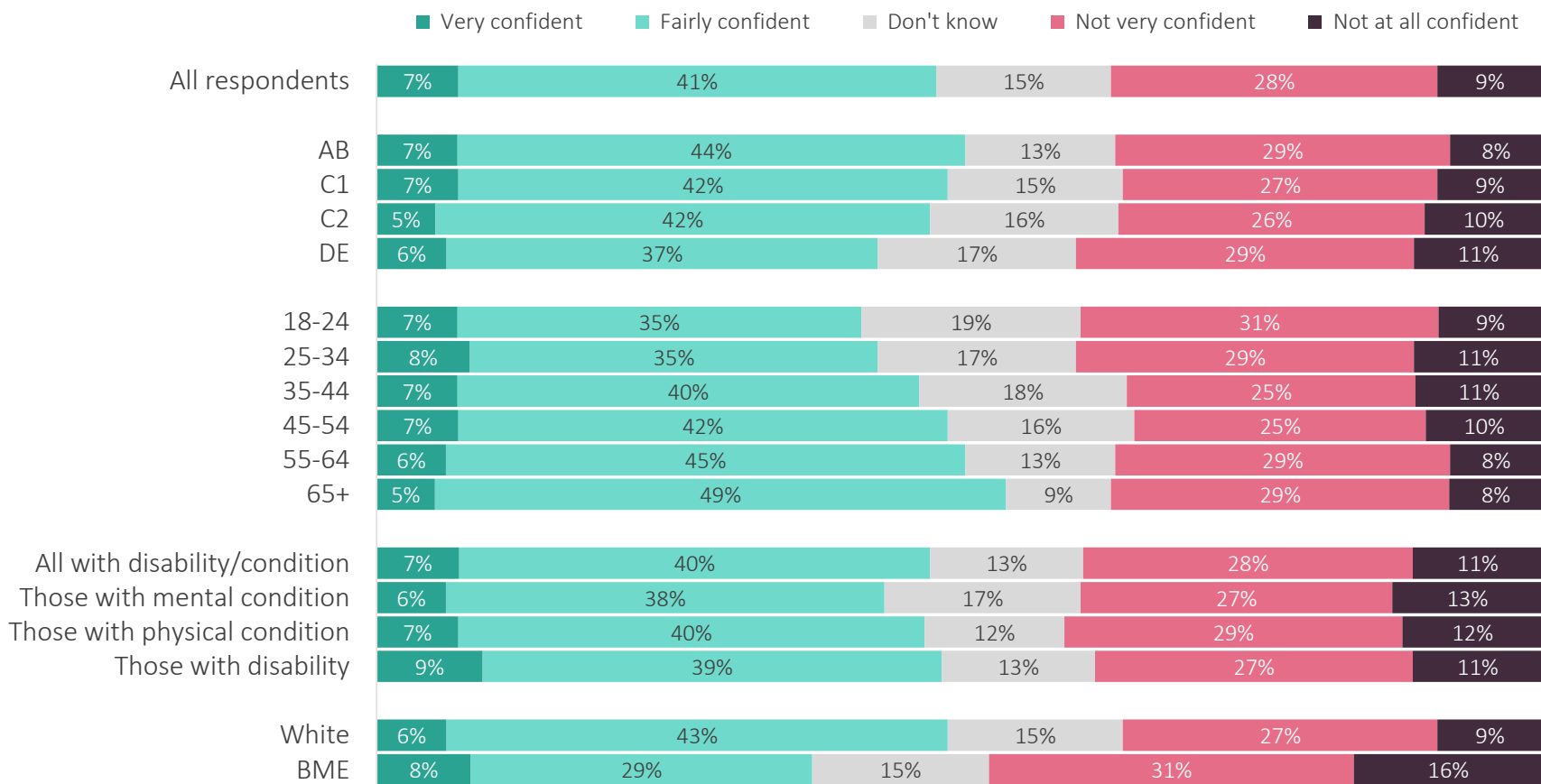
Complaining about the police

The population remains divided on the police's ability to fairly deal with complaints

- Throughout the reporting period, the English and Welsh public has remained divided on whether the police can deal fairly with complaints made against the police. In the most recent waves, there has been an increase in trust in the police's handling of complaints. There is a higher level of trust in the police's complaints handling now than around 18 months ago, but this proportion has fluctuated in between.
- Older people, those in the AB social grades, and white people are significantly more likely to trust the police than others. Across the 2018/19 financial year, those with the least trust in the police when it comes to handling complaints fairly are BME respondents.
- Around two thirds of the public say that they would be either very likely or fairly likely to complain if they were unhappy about the conduct of a police officers. Older people are slightly more likely to complain but there is little difference across demographics.
- There is very little regional variation in either confidence in the police's handling of complaints or likeliness to complain. Those in London, for instance, are roughly as likely to have confidence in the police's handling of complaints or to complain about the police as the rest of the English and Welsh population.

A significant minority are not confident in the police's ability to deal fairly with complaints

Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the police deal fairly with complaints made against the police?
 Showing aggregated results from waves 2.1-2.6*

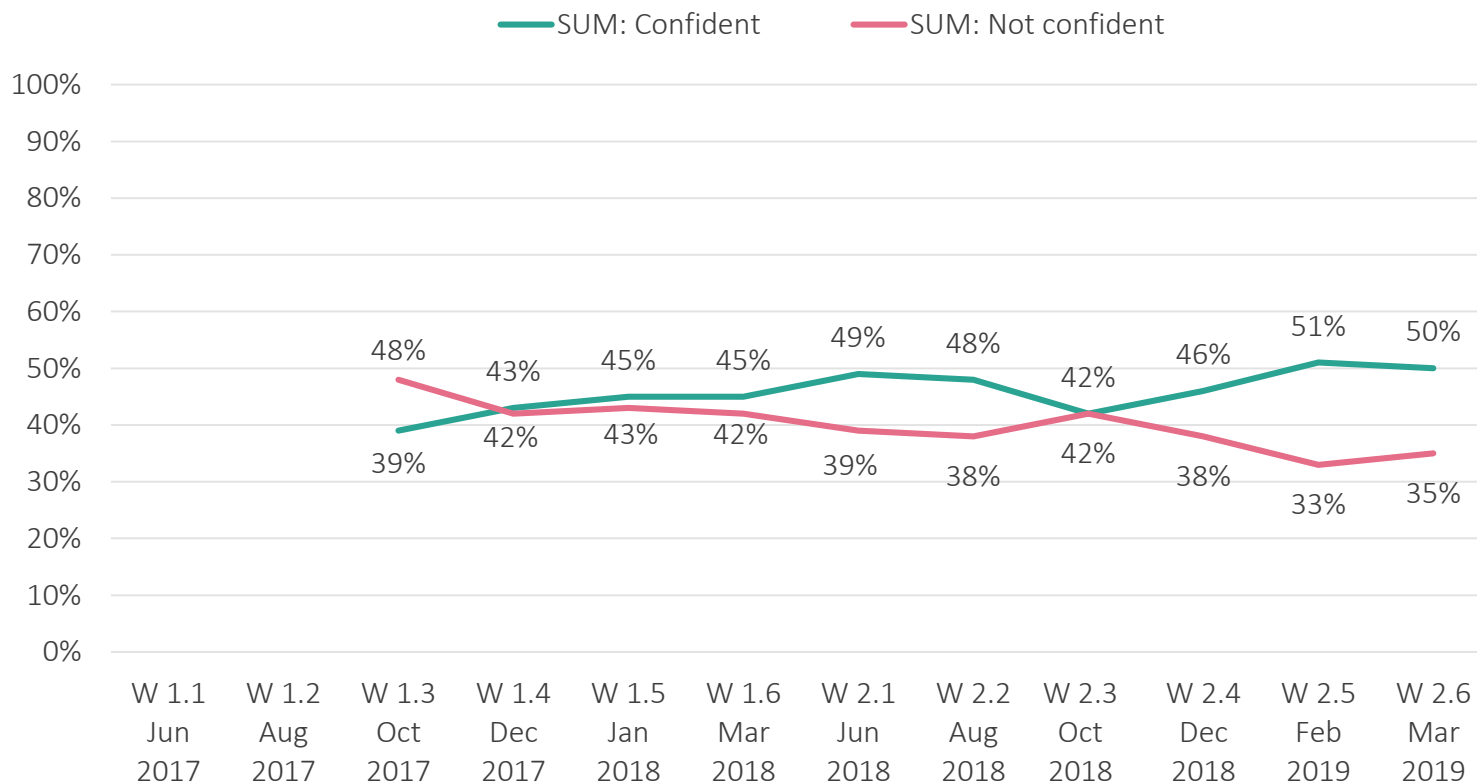


1. Base sizes: All, Waves 2.1-2.6 (n=12,036); AB (n=3,458), C1 (n=3,413), C2 (n=2,131), DE (n=3,034); 18-24 (n=1,487), 25-34 (n=1,992), 35-44 (n=2,022), 45-54 (n=2,049); 55-64 (n=1,760); 65+ (n=2,726); all with disability/condition (n=2,918), those with mental condition (n=1,203), those with physical condition (n=1,799), those with disability (n=920); white (n=10,720); BME (n=1,204)

*NB. Unique respondents can only be ensured for a max of 4 waves. There may therefore be some overlap in respondents in this data.

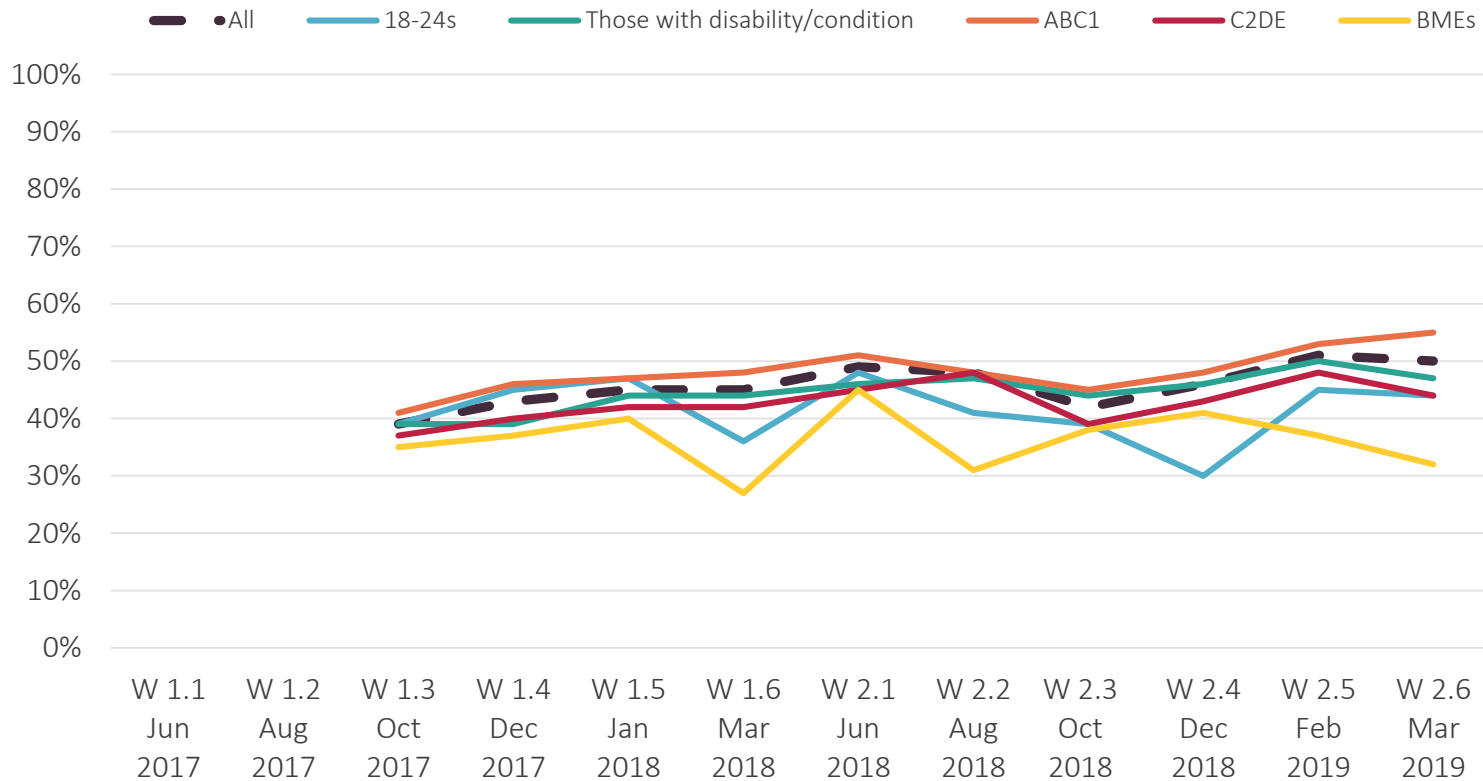
Overall confidence in the police's handling of complaints has slightly increased since 2017

Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the police deal fairly with complaints made against the police?



BME respondents tend to be slightly less confident than the population overall

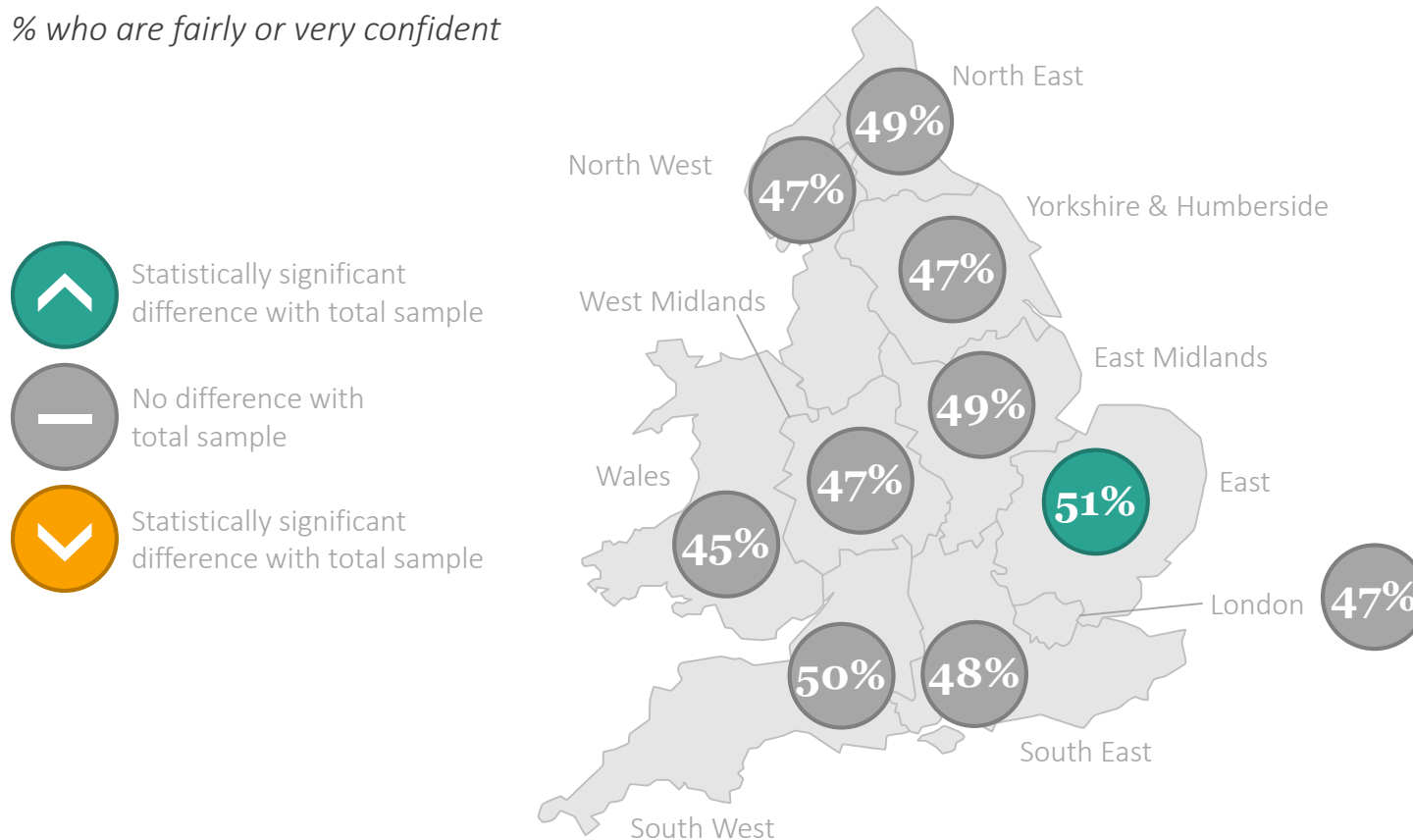
Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the police deal fairly with complaints made against the police?
Showing only 'Sum: Confident'



Confidence in the police's handling of complaints hardly differs by region

Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the police deal fairly with complaints made against the police?
Showing aggregated results from waves 2.1-2.6*

% who are fairly or very confident



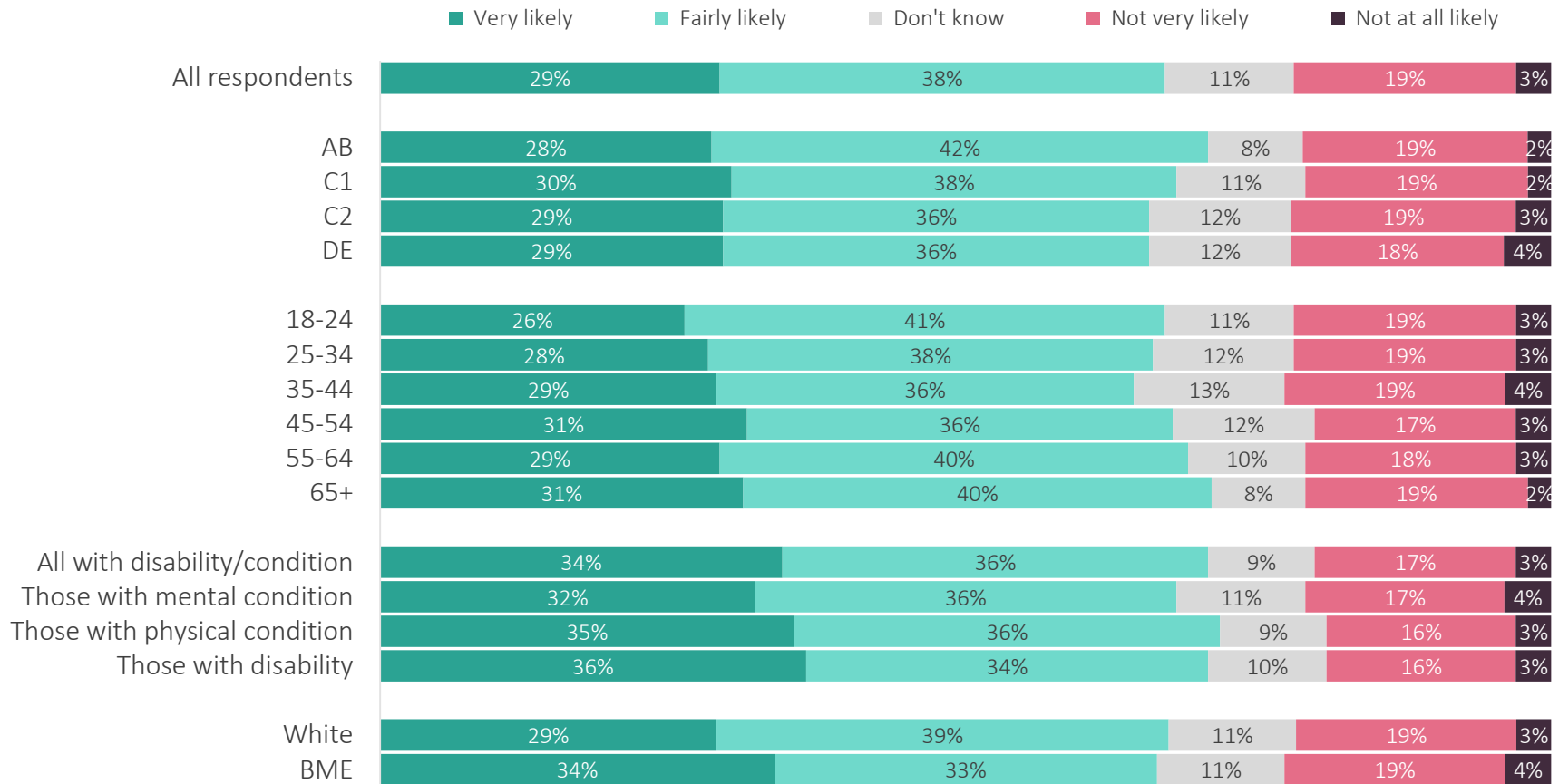
1. Base sizes: All, Waves 2.1-2.6 (n=12,036); North East (n=552); North West (n=1,519); Yorkshire & Humberside (n=1,089); West Midlands (n=1,075); East Midlands (n=1,009); Wales (n=704); Eastern (n=1,232); London (n=1,730); South East (n=1,917); South West (n=1,209)

*NB. Unique respondents can only be ensured for a max of 4 waves. There may therefore be some overlap in respondents in this data.

Most people say they would be likely to complain about police conduct if unhappy

Q. If you were really unhappy about how a police officer behaved towards you, OR handled a matter in which you were involved, how likely would you be to complain?

Showing aggregated results from waves 2.1-2.6*

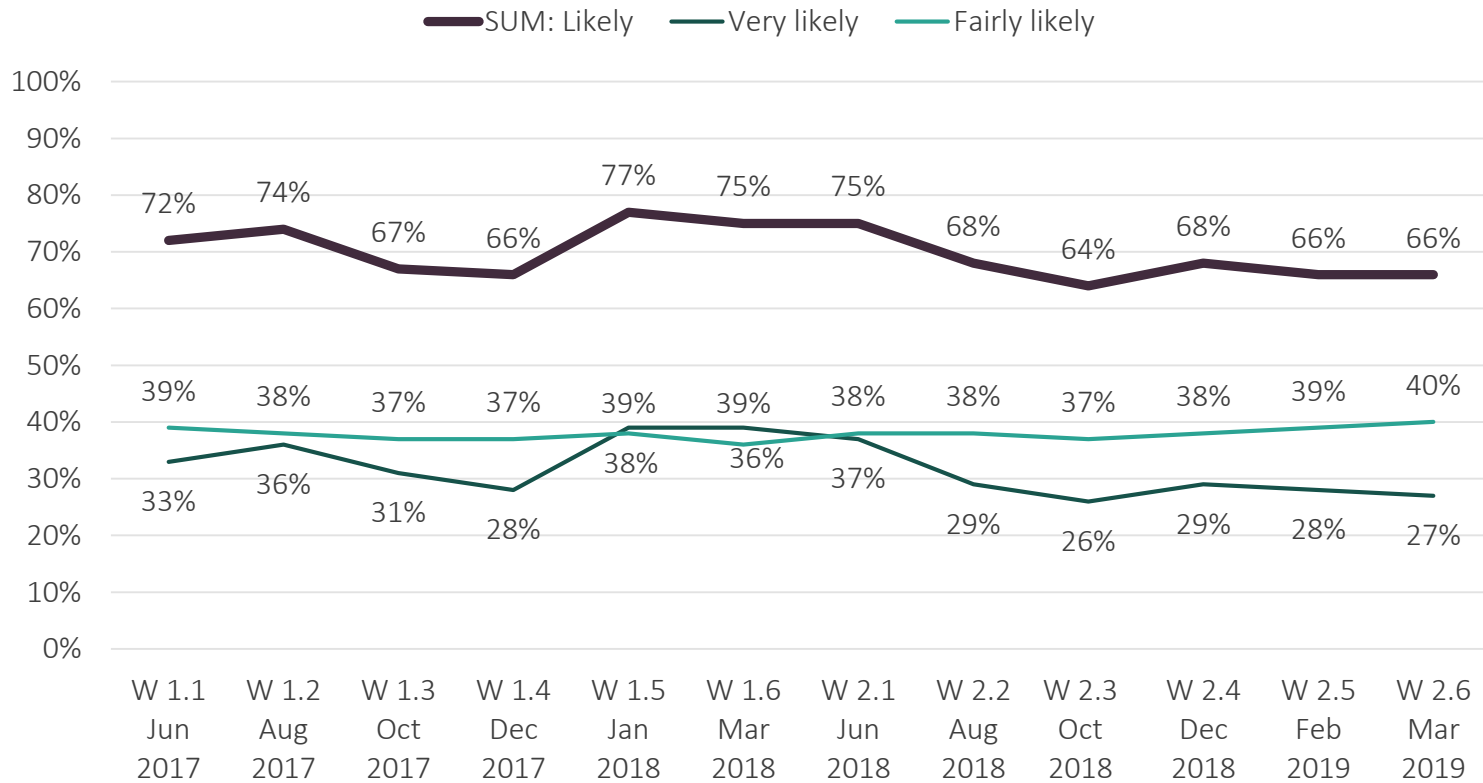


1. Base sizes: All, Waves 2.1-2.6 (n=12,036); AB (n=3,458), C1 (n=3,413), C2 (n=2,131), DE (n=3,034); 18-24 (n=1,487), 25-34 (n=1,992), 35-44 (n=2,022), 45-54 (n=2,049); 55-64 (n=1,760); 65+ (n=2,726); all with disability/condition (n=2,918), those with mental condition (n=1,203), those with physical condition (n=1,799), those with disability (n=920); white (n=10,720); BME (n=1,204)

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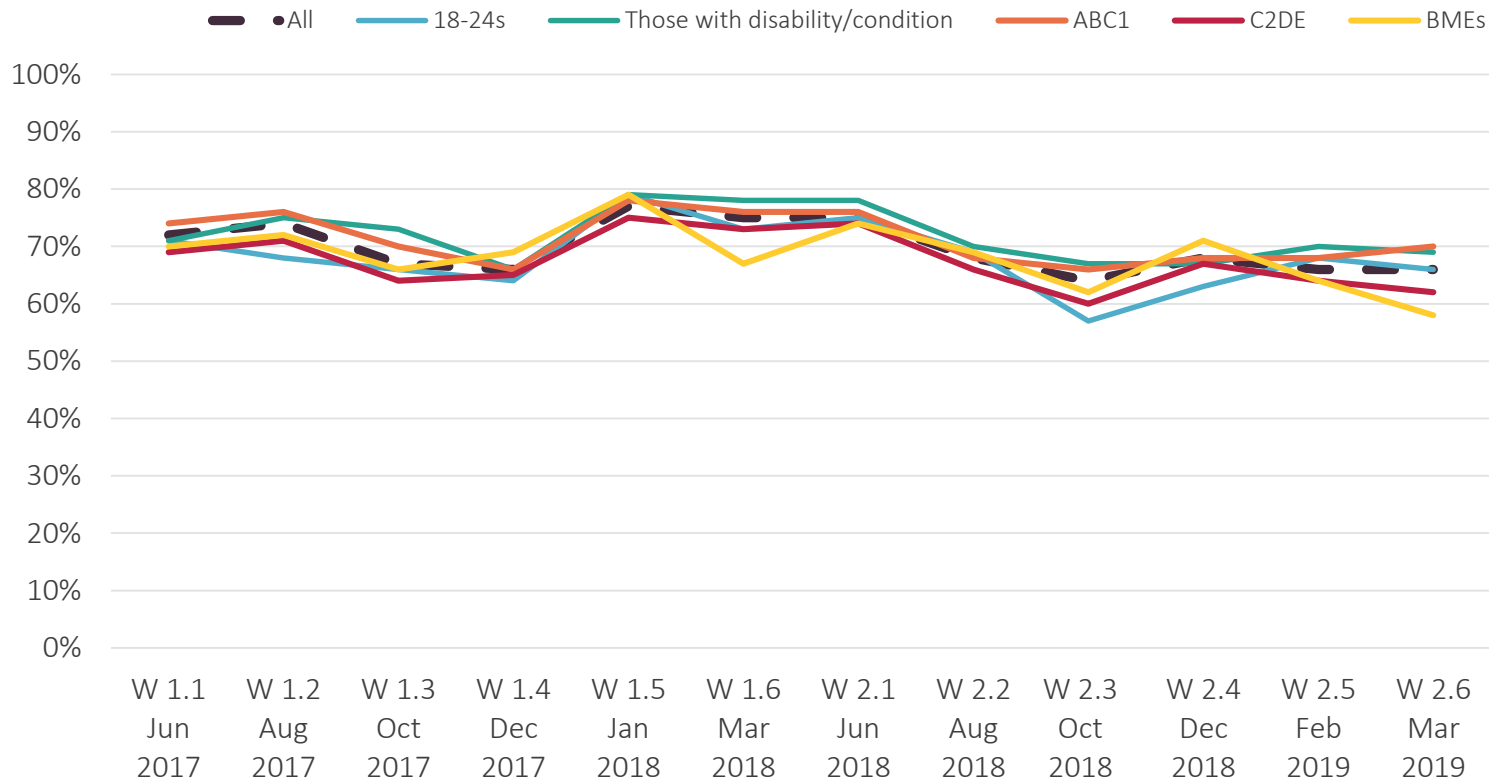
Likelihood to complain has varied a little over time

Q. If you were really unhappy about how a police officer behaved towards you, OR handled a matter in which you were involved, how likely would you be to complain?



There is little variation in likeliness to complain by demographic

Q. If you were really unhappy about how a police officer behaved towards you, OR handled a matter in which you were involved, how likely would you be to complain? **Showing Sum: Likely [very likely + fairly likely]**






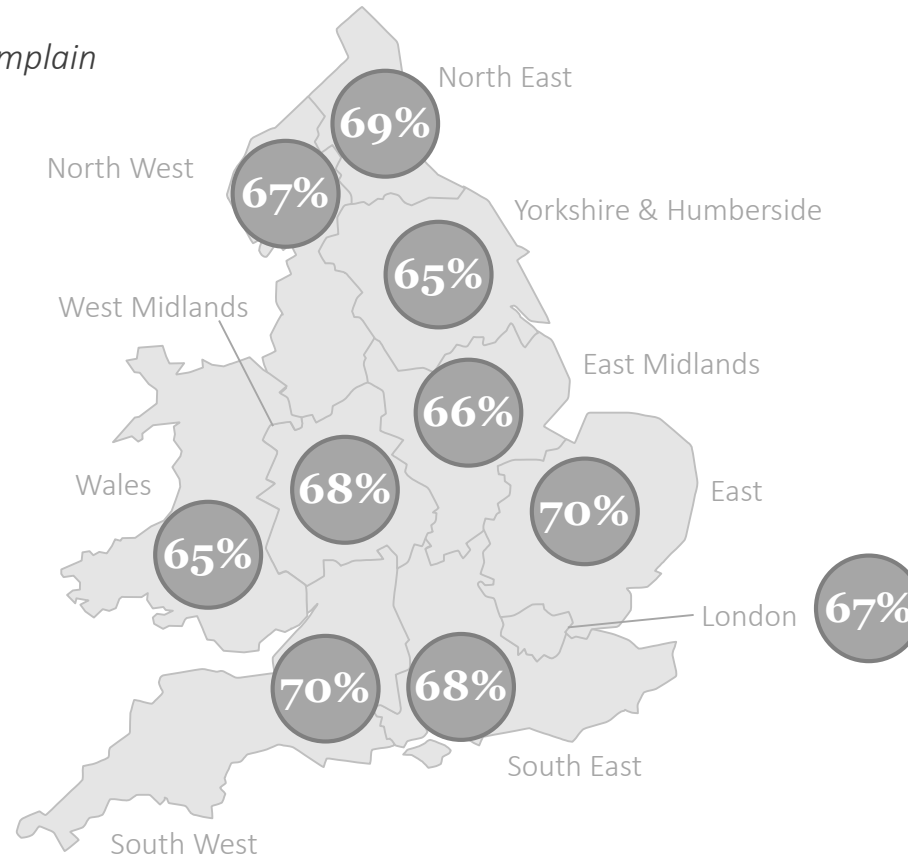
There is little variation in likeliness to complain by region

Q. If you were really unhappy about how a police officer behaved towards you, OR handled a matter in which you were involved, how likely would you be to complain?

Showing aggregated results from waves 2.1-2.6*

% who are fairly or very likely to complain

-  Statistically significant difference with total sample
-  No difference with total sample
-  Statistically significant difference with total sample



1. Base sizes: All, Waves 2.1-2.6 (n=12,036); North East (n=552); North West (n=1,519); Yorkshire & Humberside (n=1,089); West Midlands (n=1,075); East Midlands (n=1,009); Wales (n=704); Eastern (n=1,232); London (n=1,730); South East (n=1,917); South West (n=1,209)

*NB. Unique respondents can only be ensured for a max of 4 waves. There may therefore be some overlap in respondents in this data.

Awareness of the IOPC

The IOPC remains less known than the IPCC

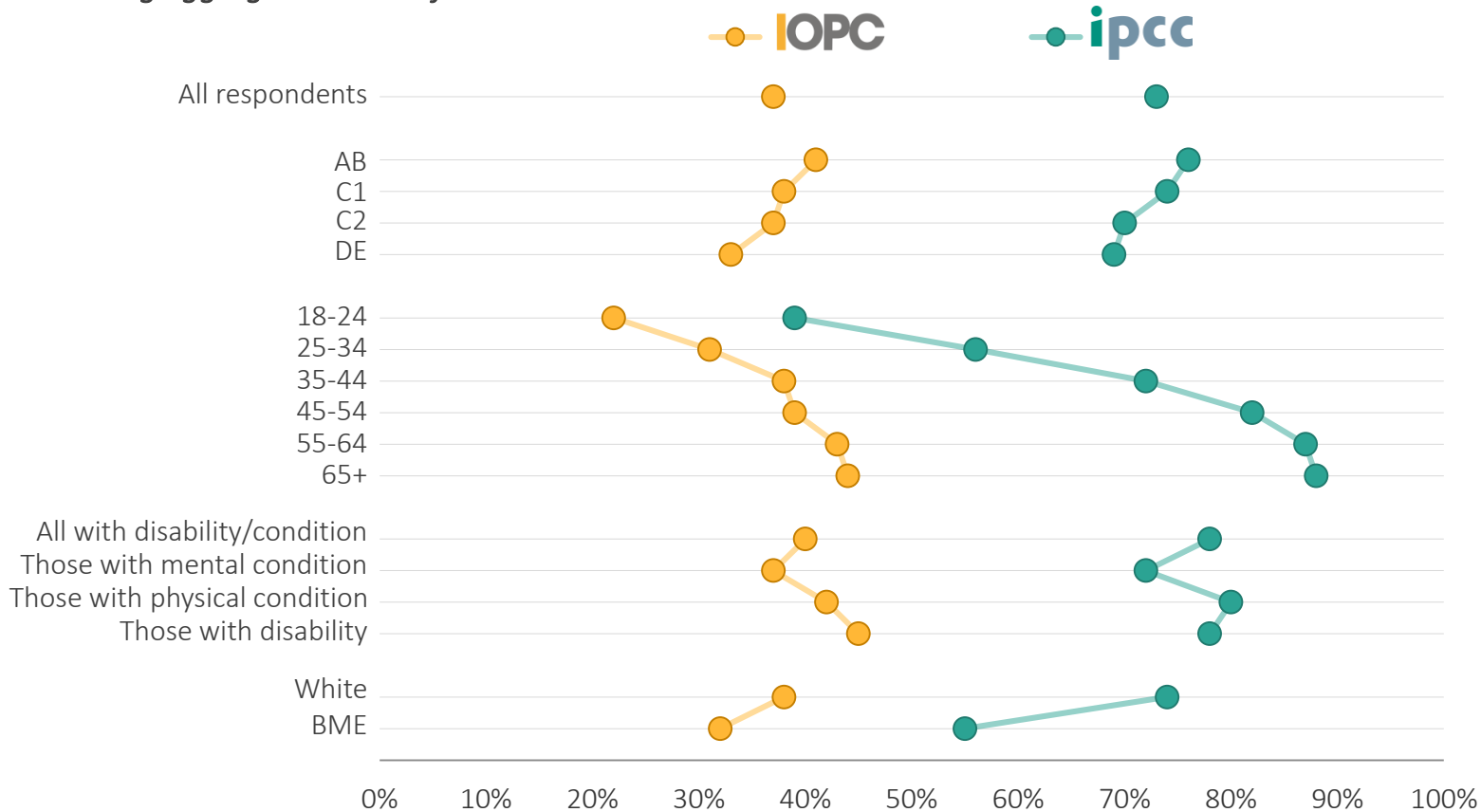
- Awareness of the IPCC remains much higher than awareness of the IOPC, which is only known to a minority of the public.
- The most recent waves suggest a slight increase in awareness of the IOPC, though there is no clear long-term trend.
- Both the IPCC and the IOPC are far more likely to be known among older respondents and white respondents than among younger respondents and BME respondents. This difference is particularly strong with regard to awareness of the IPCC.
- Those in the AB social grades are slightly more likely than those in the DE social grades to be aware of both the IPCC and the IOPC.
- There is very little difference in awareness by region. Those in London are equally as likely as the rest of the population to have heard of the IOPC.

The IPCC remains more well-known than the IOPC, particularly among older people

Q.A1.1 Have you heard of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) before today? [% saying 'yes']

Q.A1.2 Have you heard of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) before today? [% saying 'yes']

Showing aggregated results from waves 2.1-2.6*



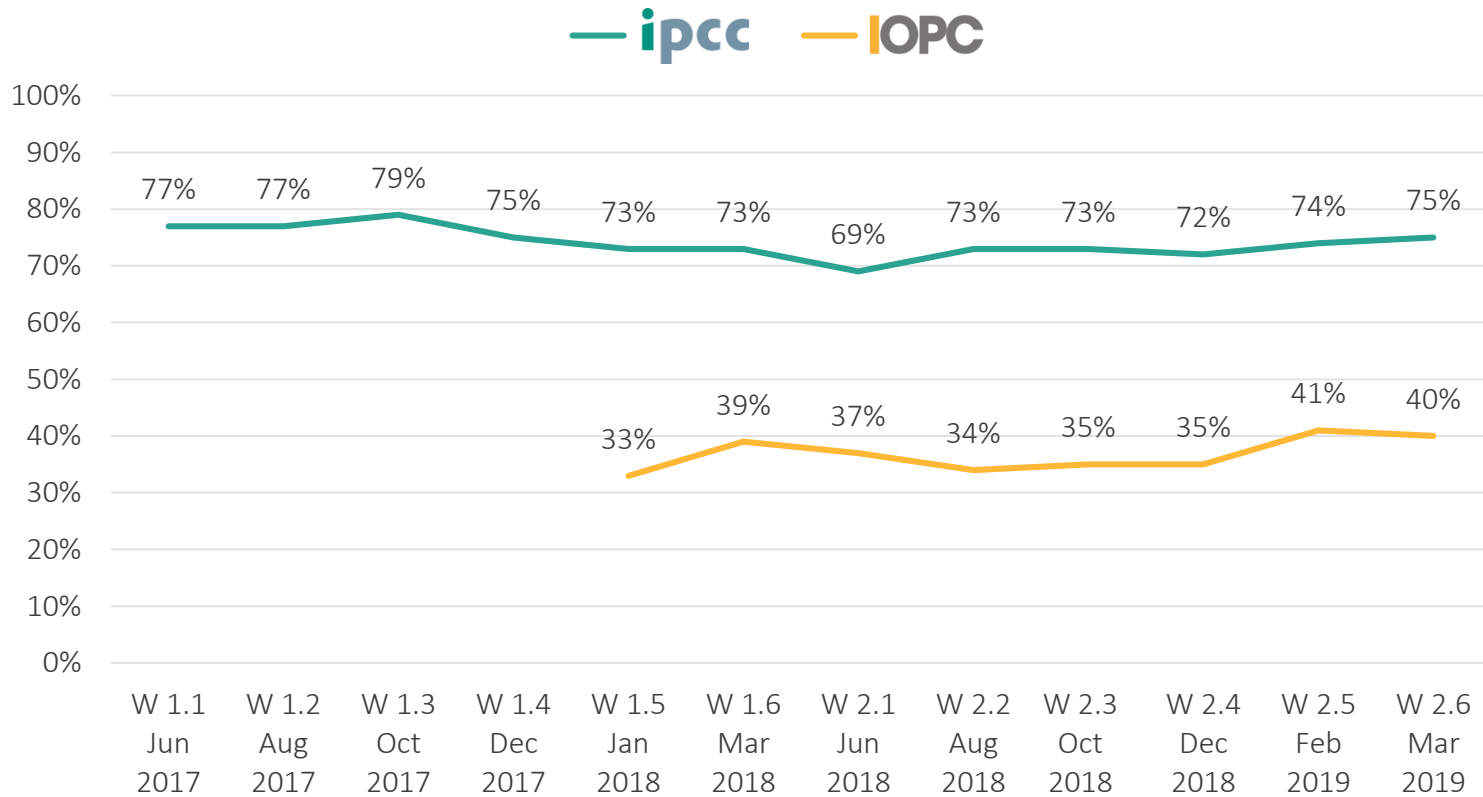
1. Base sizes: All, Waves 2.1-2.6 (n=12,036); AB (n=3,458), C1 (n=3,413), C2 (n=2,131), DE (n=3,034); 18-24 (n=1,487), 25-34 (n=1,992), 35-44 (n=2,022), 45-54 (n=2,049); 55-64 (n=1,760); 65+ (n=2,726); all with disability/condition (n=2,918), those with mental condition (n=1,203), those with physical condition (n=1,799), those with disability (n=920); white (n=10,720); BME (n=1,204)

*NB. Unique respondents can only be ensured for a max of 4 waves. There may therefore be some overlap in respondents in this data.

Awareness of the IOPC has remained relatively flat over time

Q. Have you heard of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) before today? [% saying 'yes']

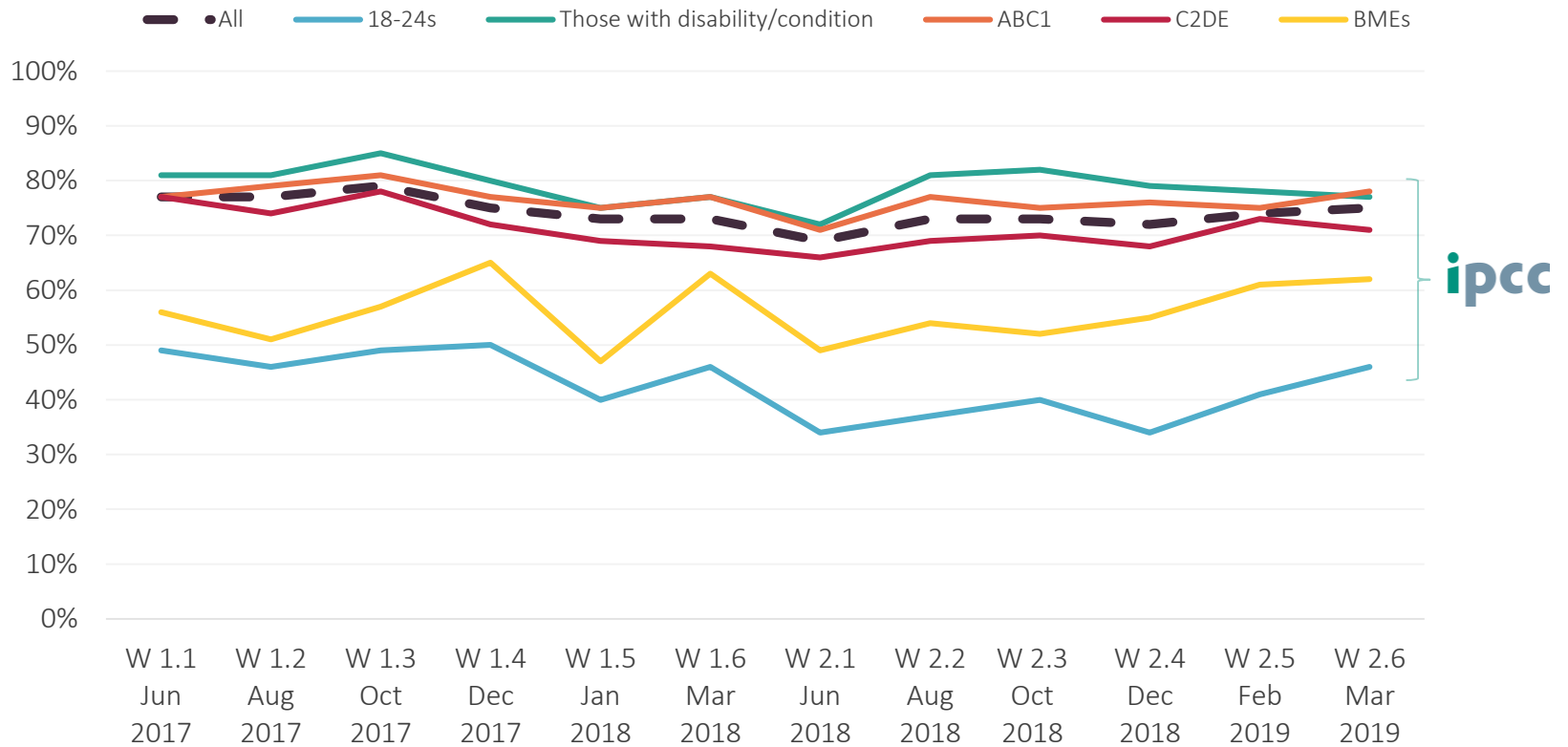
Q. Have you heard of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) before today? [% saying 'yes']



Young people and BMEs are consistently less likely to have heard of the IPCC than older people

Q. Have you heard of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) before today? [% saying 'yes']

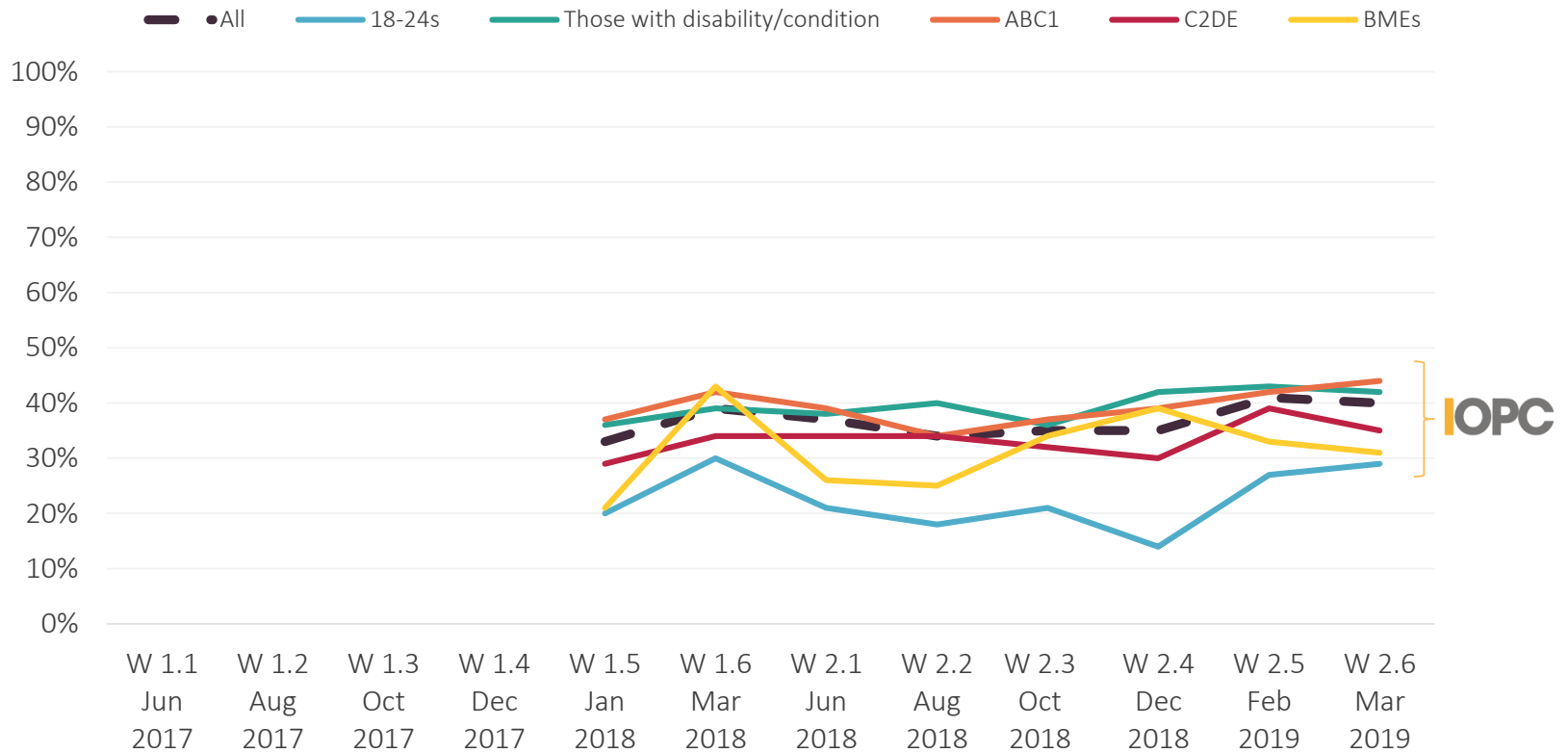
Q. Have you heard of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) before today? [% saying 'yes']



Young people are less likely to have heard of the IOPC than older people

Q. Have you heard of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) before today? [% saying 'yes']

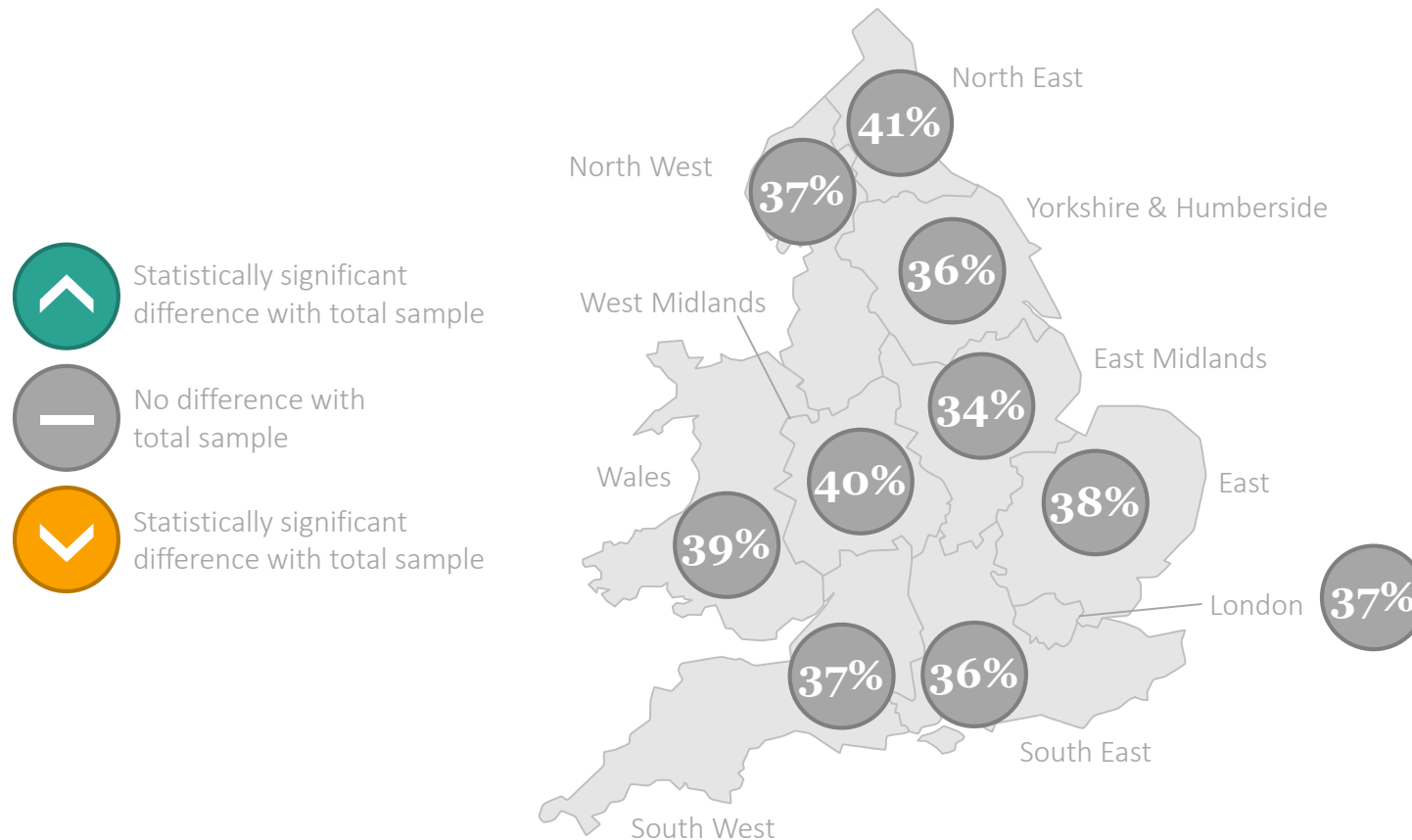
Q. Have you heard of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) before today? [% saying 'yes']



1. Base: All respondents (n=approx. 1850; Wave 1.4, n=2416; Wave 2.5, n=2848); 18-24s, (n=approx. 200; Wave 1.4, n=504; Wave 2.5, n=515); Those with a disability or condition (n=approx. 430; Wave 2.5, n=662); ABC1s (n=approx. 1,000); C2DEs (n=approx. 800); BMEs (n=approx. 130; Wave 1.4, n=521; Wave 2.5, n=543).

Awareness of the IOPC does not differ greatly by region

Q. Have you heard of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) before today? [% saying 'yes']
Showing aggregated results from waves 2.1-2.6*



1. Base sizes: All, Waves 2.1-2.6 (n=12,036); North East (n=552); North West (n=1,519); Yorkshire & Humberside (n=1,089); West Midlands (n=1,075); East Midlands (n=1,009); Wales (n=704); Eastern (n=1,232); London (n=1,730); South East (n=1,917); South West (n=1,209)

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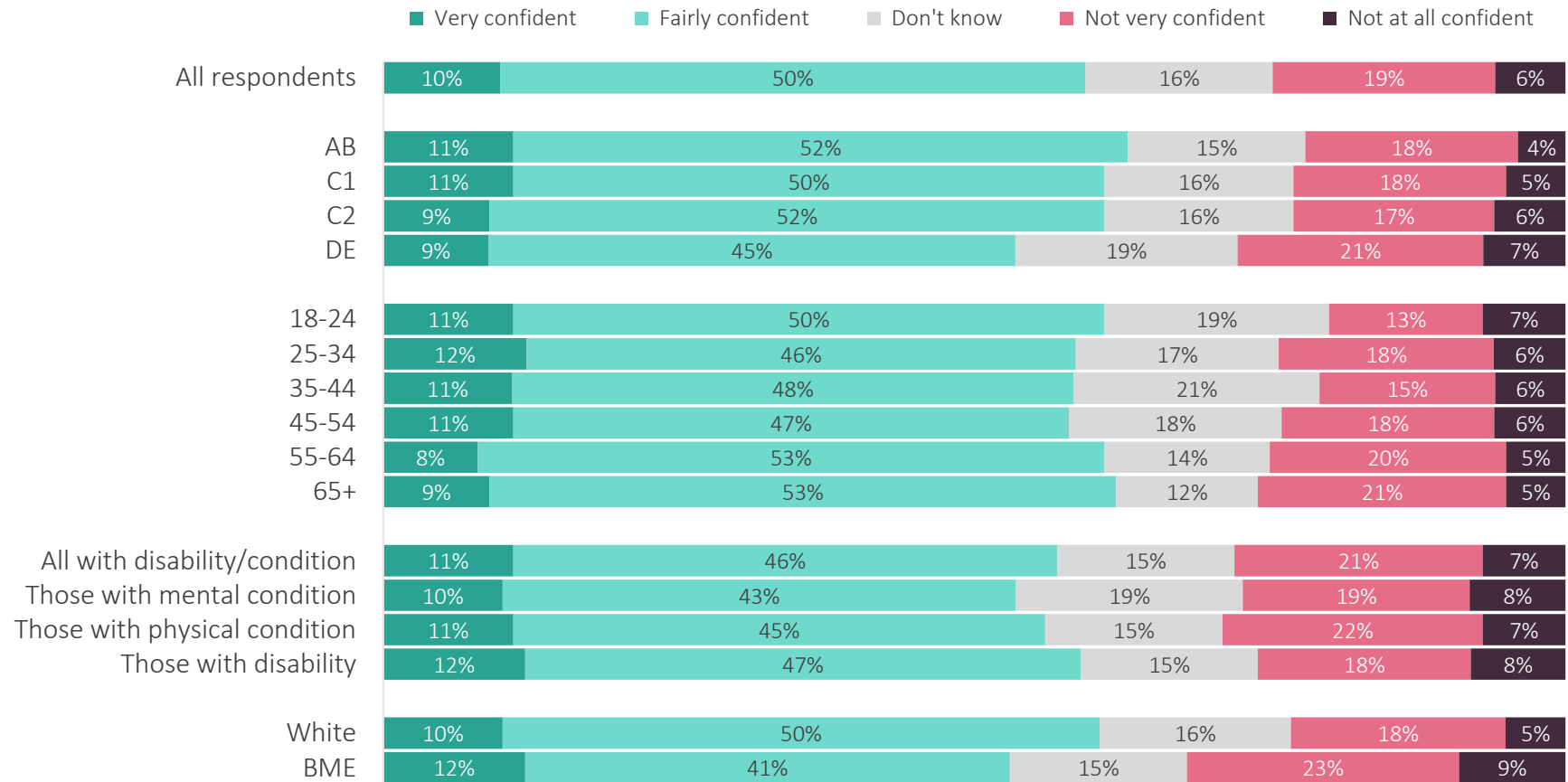
Confidence in the IOPC's impartiality

Confidence in the IOPC's impartiality is high

- Confidence in the IOPC's impartiality remains high, with most of those who are aware of it saying that they are confident that it goes about its work in an impartial way.
- However, most of this confidence is 'soft', with respondents far more likely to say they are 'fairly' rather than 'very' confident, and there is still a significant minority (around a quarter of those aware of the organisation) who say they are not confident.
- The current overall level of public confidence in the IOPC is similar to around 18 months ago, but there has been considerable fluctuation in between.
- Overall, BME respondents are the least likely to have confidence in the IOPC's impartiality. It should be noted that, due to the particularly small base sizes of BME respondents who are aware of the organisation, there is considerable fluctuation wave on wave.
- As with other key variables, there is very little regional variation with regards to confidence in the IOPC's impartiality. Respondents in London are as likely as the English and Welsh population overall to have confidence.
- The majority of those who do not have confidence in the IOPC's impartiality think that it is biased in favour of the police, not in favour of those who make complaints.
- When asked how their confidence in the IOPC's impartiality might be improved, respondents overall suggest that being taken seriously and feeling listened to is most important, but there is some demographic variation. BME respondents are more likely to focus on police learning and evidence of outcomes, while 18-24s are notably less concerned than the population overall about having reassurance that the IOPC is transparent and independent.

Most are confident in the IOPC's impartiality, but only 'fairly'

Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the Independent Office for Police Conduct, previously known as the Independent Police Complaints Commission deals with its work in an impartial way? [Showing only those who had heard of the IPCC/IOPC]
 Showing aggregated results from waves 2.1-2.6*

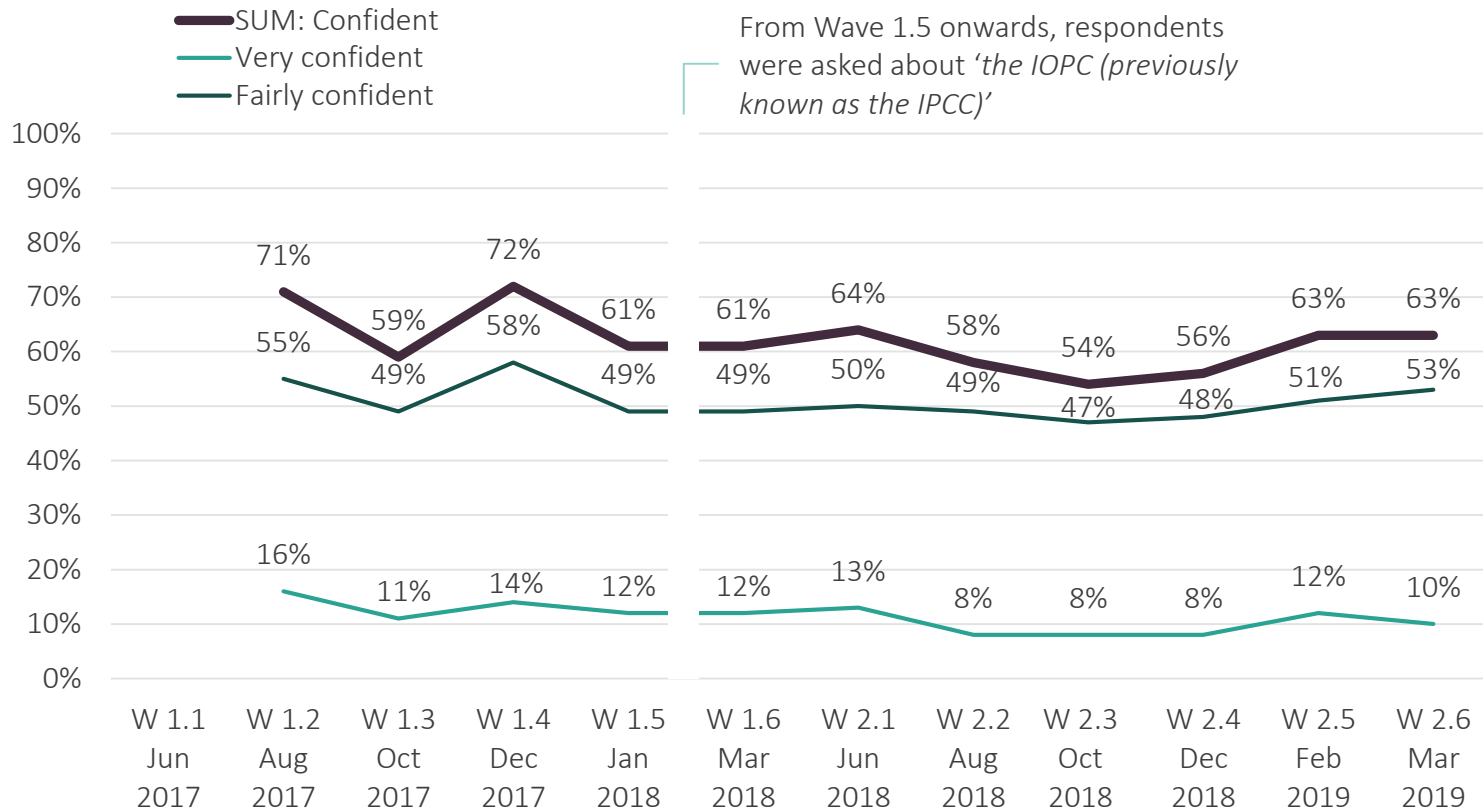


1. Base sizes: All aware of the IPCC/IOPC, Waves 2.1-2.6 (n=8,854); AB (n=2,671), C1 (n=2,531), C2 (n=1,507), DE (n=2,145); 18-24 (n=630), 25-34 (n=1,127), 35-44 (n=1,436), 45-54 (n=1,686), 55-64 (n=1,545), 65+ (n=2,430); all with disability/condition (n=2,281), those with mental condition (n=862), those with physical condition (n=1,467), those with disability (n=738); white (n=8,090); BME (n=695)

*NB. Unique respondents can only be ensured for a max of 4 waves. There may therefore be some overlap in respondents in this data.

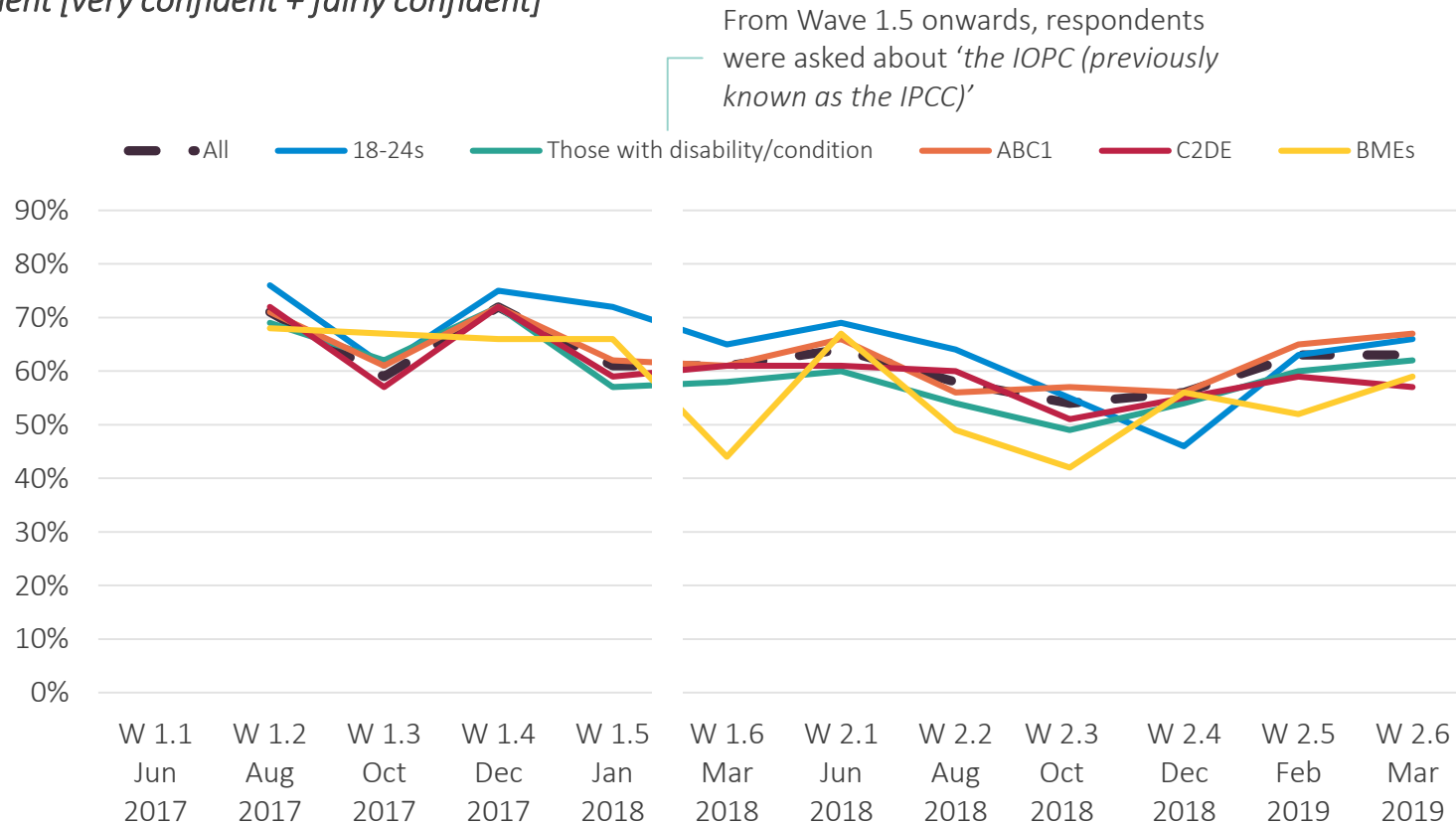
Confidence in the past year has been slightly lower than in 2017

Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the Independent Office for Police Conduct, previously known as the Independent Police Complaints Commission deals with its work in an impartial way? [Showing only those who had heard of the IPCC/IOPC]



There have been some fluctuations in confidence by demographic but no consistent trend

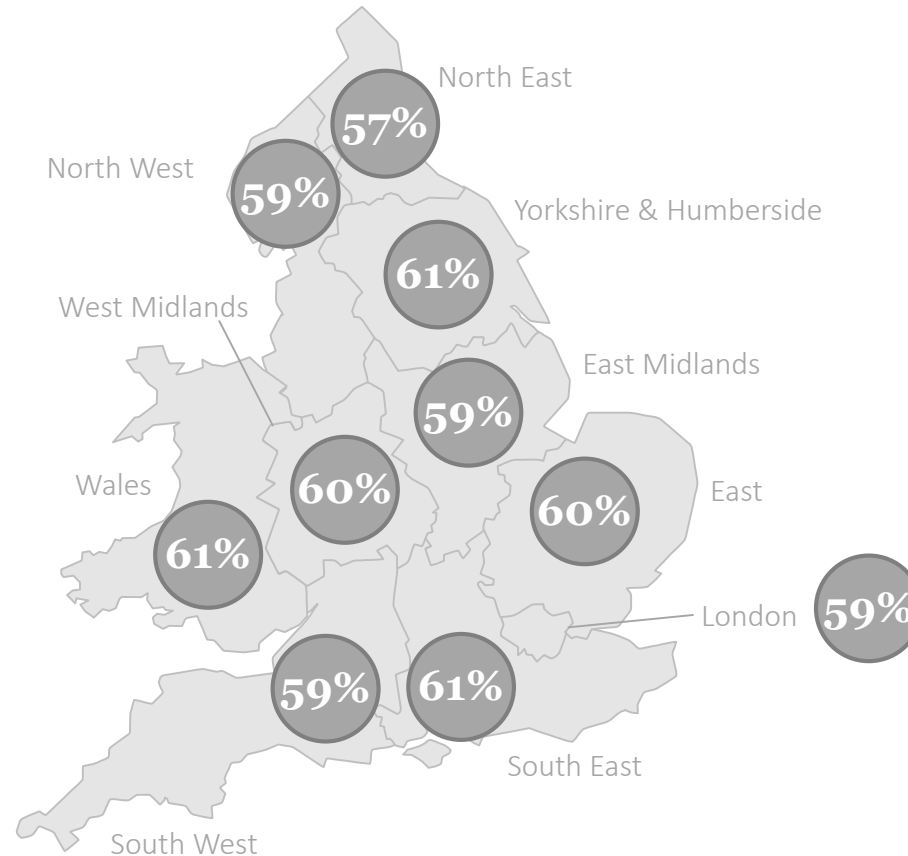
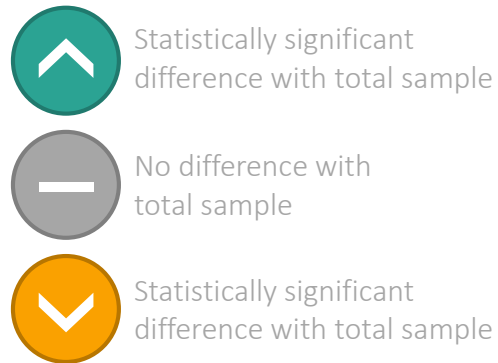
Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the Independent Office for Police Conduct, previously known as the Independent Police Complaints Commission deals with its work in an impartial way? Showing only those who had heard of the IPCC/IOPC
Sum: Confident [very confident + fairly confident]



Confidence in the IOPC's impartiality also does not vary by region

Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the Independent Office for Police Conduct, previously known as the Independent Police Complaints Commission deals with its work in an impartial way? [Only those aware of the IPCC/IOPC]
Showing aggregated results from waves 2.1-2.6*

% who are fairly or very confident



1. Base sizes: All those aware of the IOPC, Waves 2.1-2.6 (n=8,854); North East (n=399); North West (n=1,130); Yorkshire & Humberside (n=809); West Midlands (n=786); East Midlands (n=732); Wales (n=535); Eastern (n=923); London (n=1,149); South East (n=1,453); South West (n=938)

*NB. Unique respondents can only be ensured for a max of 4 waves. There may therefore be some overlap in respondents in this data.

Those who are not confident in the IOPC's impartiality think it is biased in favour of the police

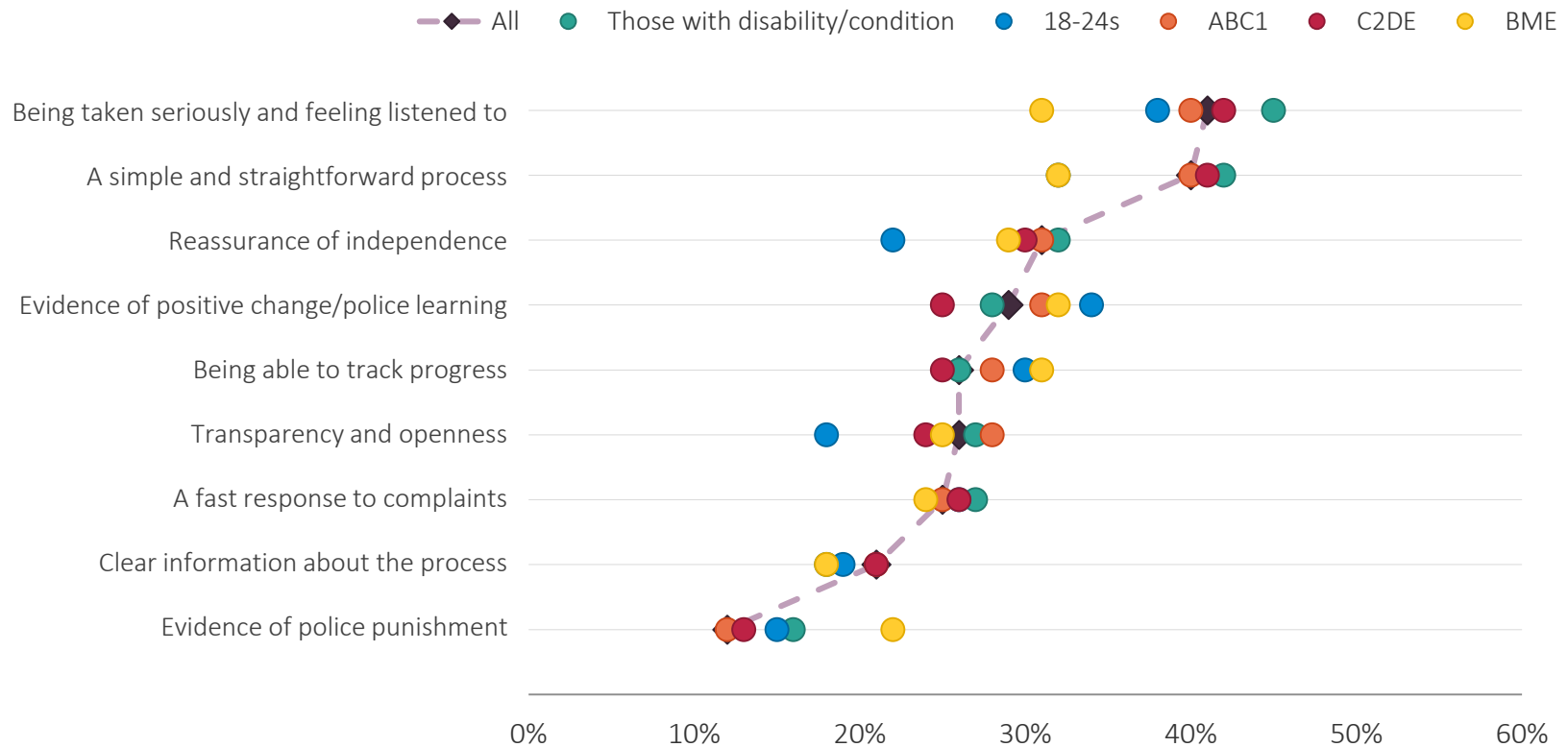
Q. You said that you were not confident that the IOPC deals with its work in an impartial way. Do you think that it is biased in favour of the police, biased in favour of people who make complaints about the police, or neither? [Showing only those who are not very confident/not at all confident]



Being taken seriously and feeling listened to is most important in improving confidence, but there is some variation by demographic

Q. Which of the following would most improve your confidence in the police complaints system?

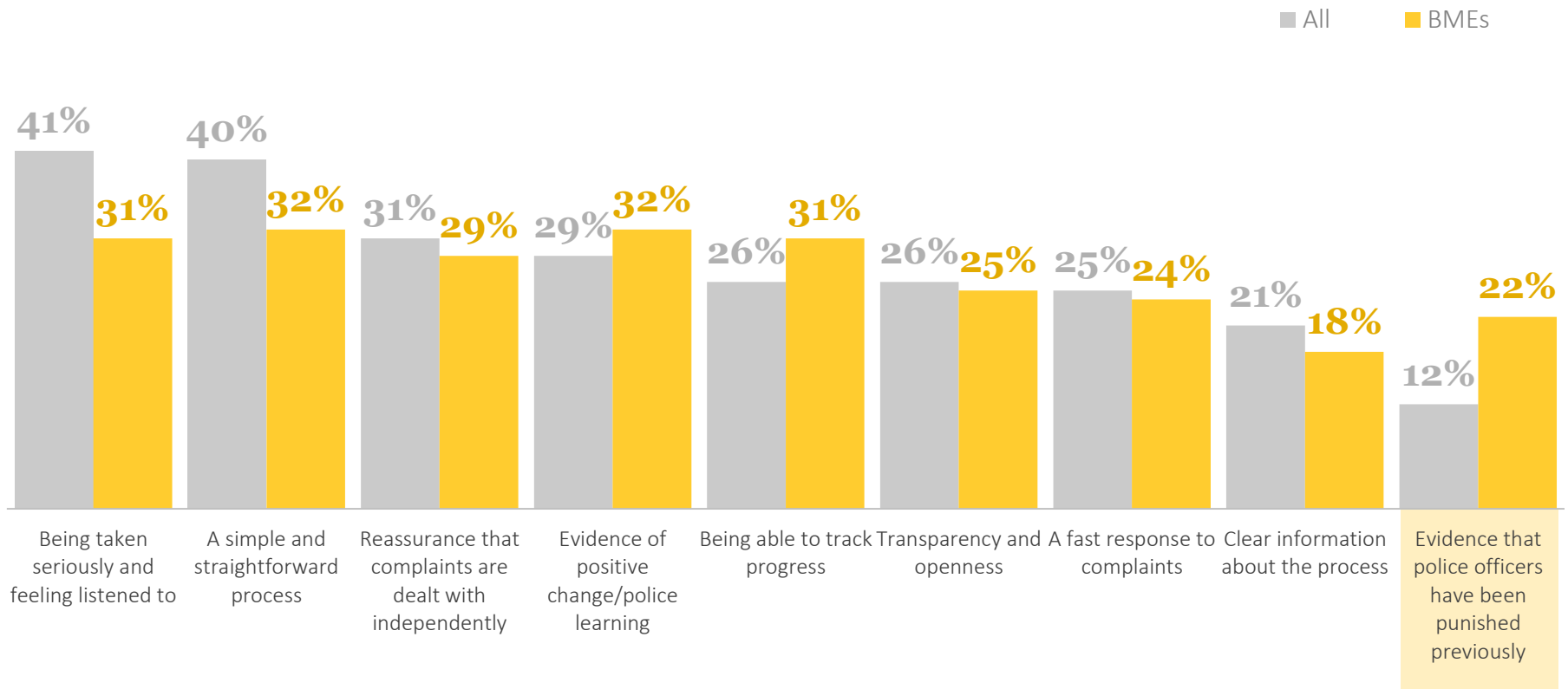
Showing aggregated results from waves 2.5-2.6



For BME respondents, evidence of punishment features more prominently

Q. Which of the following would most improve your confidence in the police complaints system?

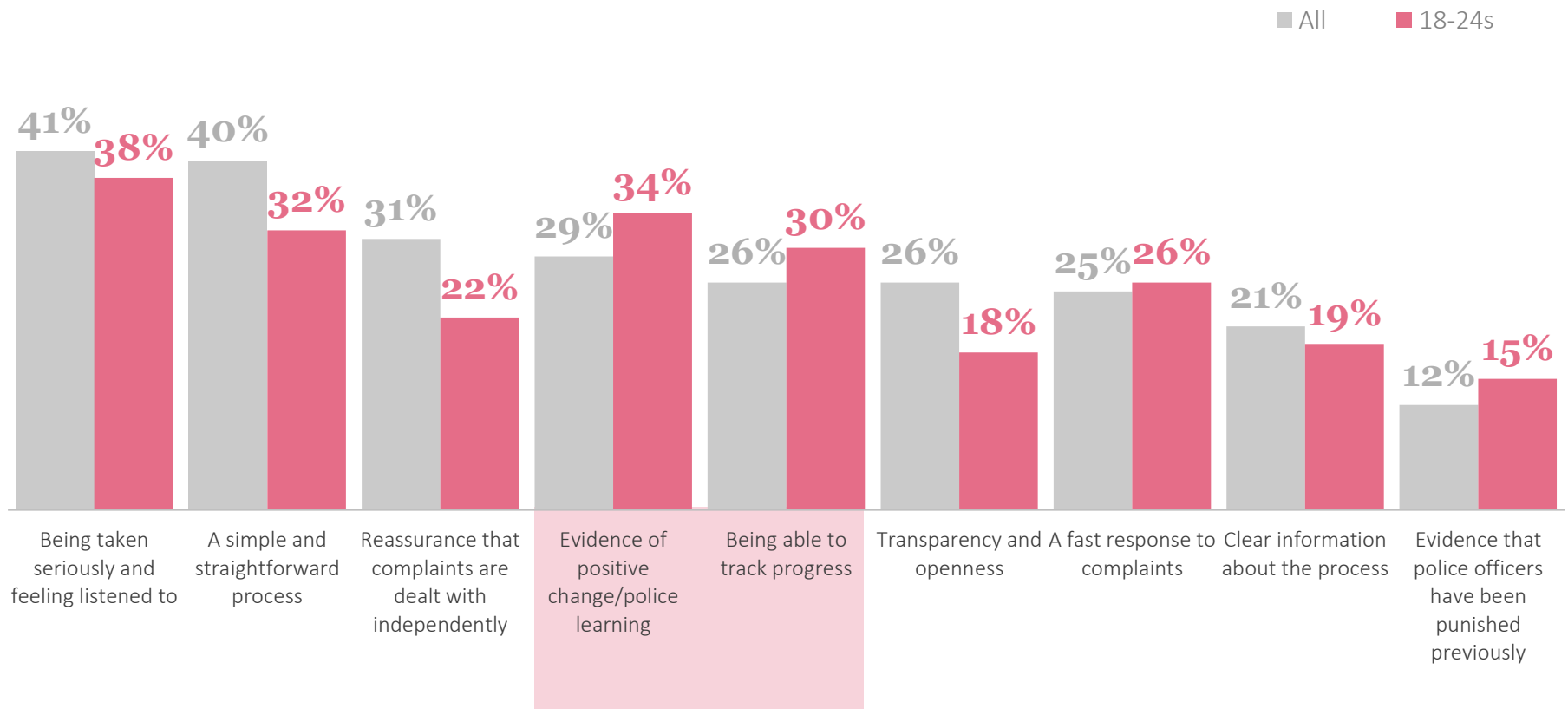
Showing aggregated results from waves 2.5-2.6



18-24s are slightly more likely to focus on evidence of positive change and progress tracking

Q. Which of the following would most improve your confidence in the police complaints system?

Showing aggregated results from waves 2.5-2.6



Child sexual abuse and corruption are the public's top priorities for police learnings

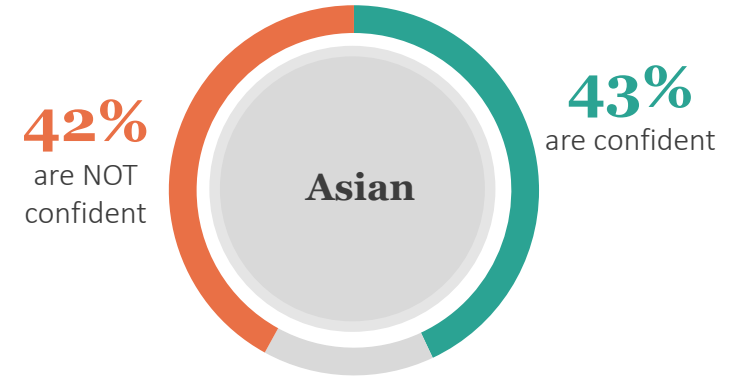
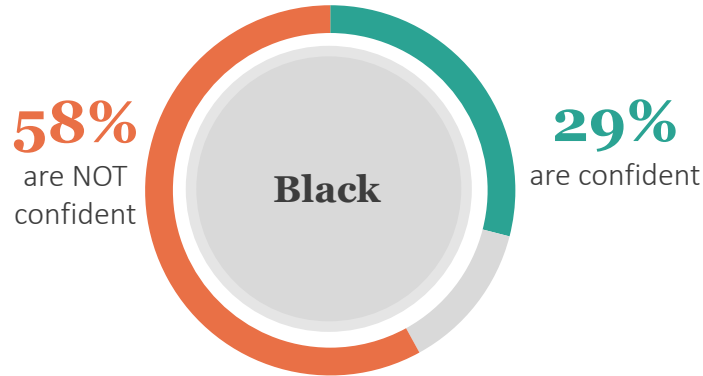
*Q. From the following areas related to policing, which do you think should be a priority for the IOPC to identify learning?
Showing aggregated results from wave 2.1*

All respondents

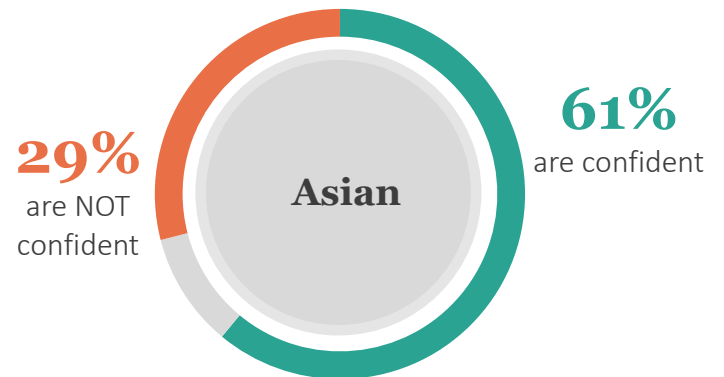
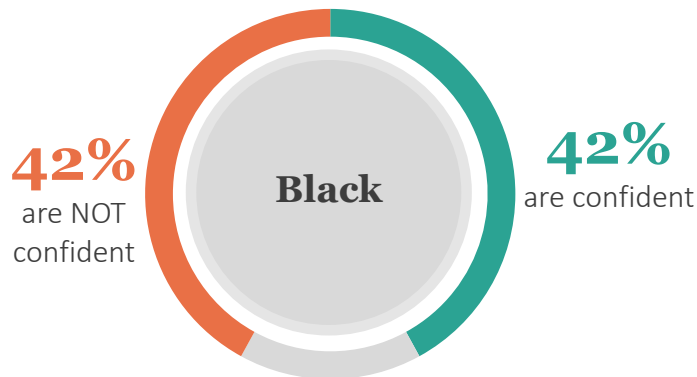
- 1 Child sexual abuse
- 2 Corruption/abuse of powers
- 3 Mental health
- 4 Domestic abuse
- 5 Modern slavery/trafficking
- 6 Hate crime
- 7 Children and young people
- 8 Police firearms / shootings
- 9 Discrimination
- 10 Near miss deaths in custody

BME breakdowns: Black respondents are the least confident BME group in both the police and the IOPC

Confidence in the police's handling of complaints



Confidence in the IOPC's impartiality (among those aware)



The complaints process

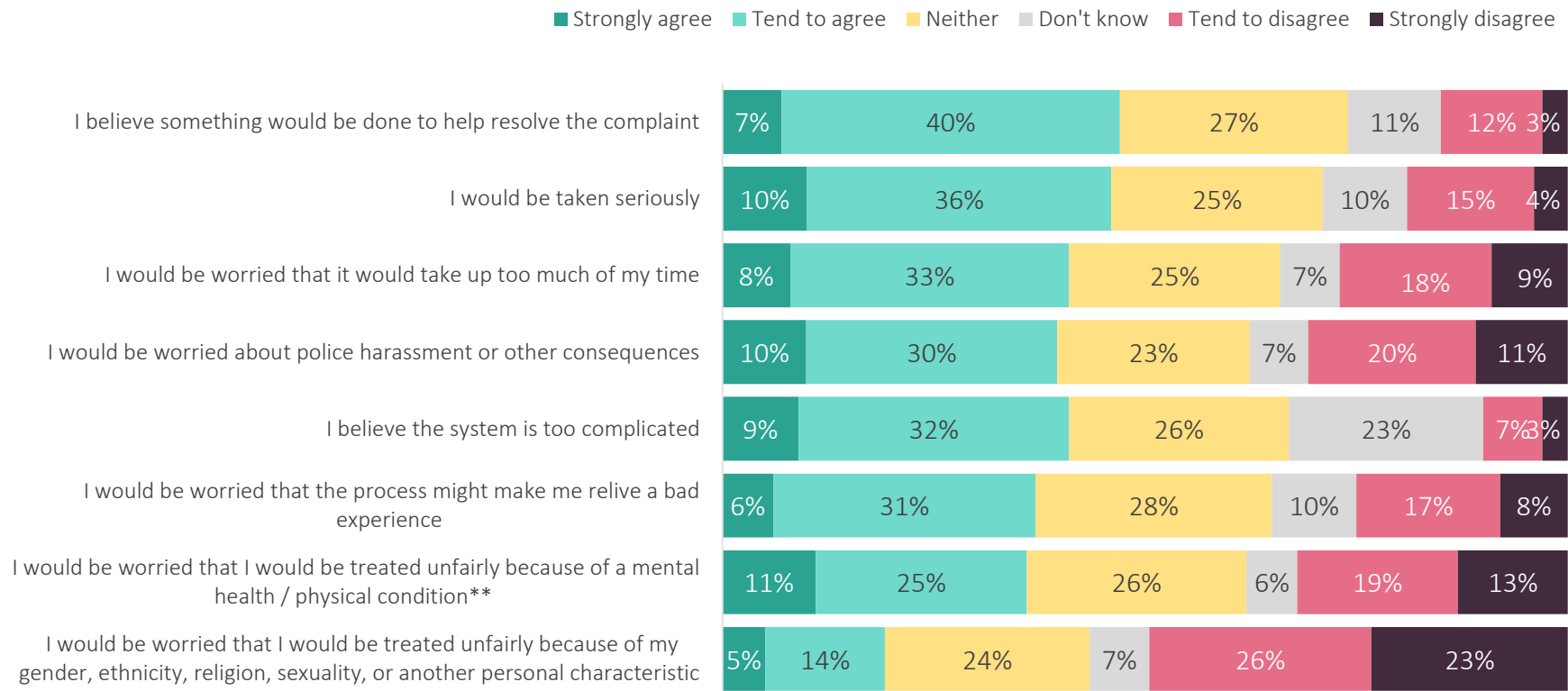
The public have few strong views about the complaints process

- In general, the English and Welsh public do not have strong views about the complaints process. Around half of the public assume that something would be done to resolve any complaint they might have, and only one in six disagree. However, there are few strong opinions either way.
- Similarly, the public assume on balance that their complaint would be taken seriously. There is no major demographic difference when it comes to expectations about complaints being resolved.
- There is some concern, however, that the complaints process could take up too much time; that it could lead to police harassment or other consequences; and that the system may be too complicated.
- BME respondents are more likely to worry about police harassment or other consequences, and more likely to worry that they would be treated differently due to their gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, or another personal characteristic. LGBT respondents are also more likely than the population as a whole to worry about the latter.
- The idea of an advocacy service proves popular among all demographics, with most of the public saying they would be likely to use one. Those with a mental or physical condition or a disability are slightly more likely than the public as a whole to say that they would be likely to use one, while younger people are the least likely.
- When thinking about the ideal outcome of a complaint, the public place a high degree of importance on learning and change within the police forces concerned. By contrast, they are unconcerned about punishment and compensation.

If complaining about the police, around half of the public assume that something would be done to resolve their complaint

Q.If you were thinking of making a complaint about the police, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

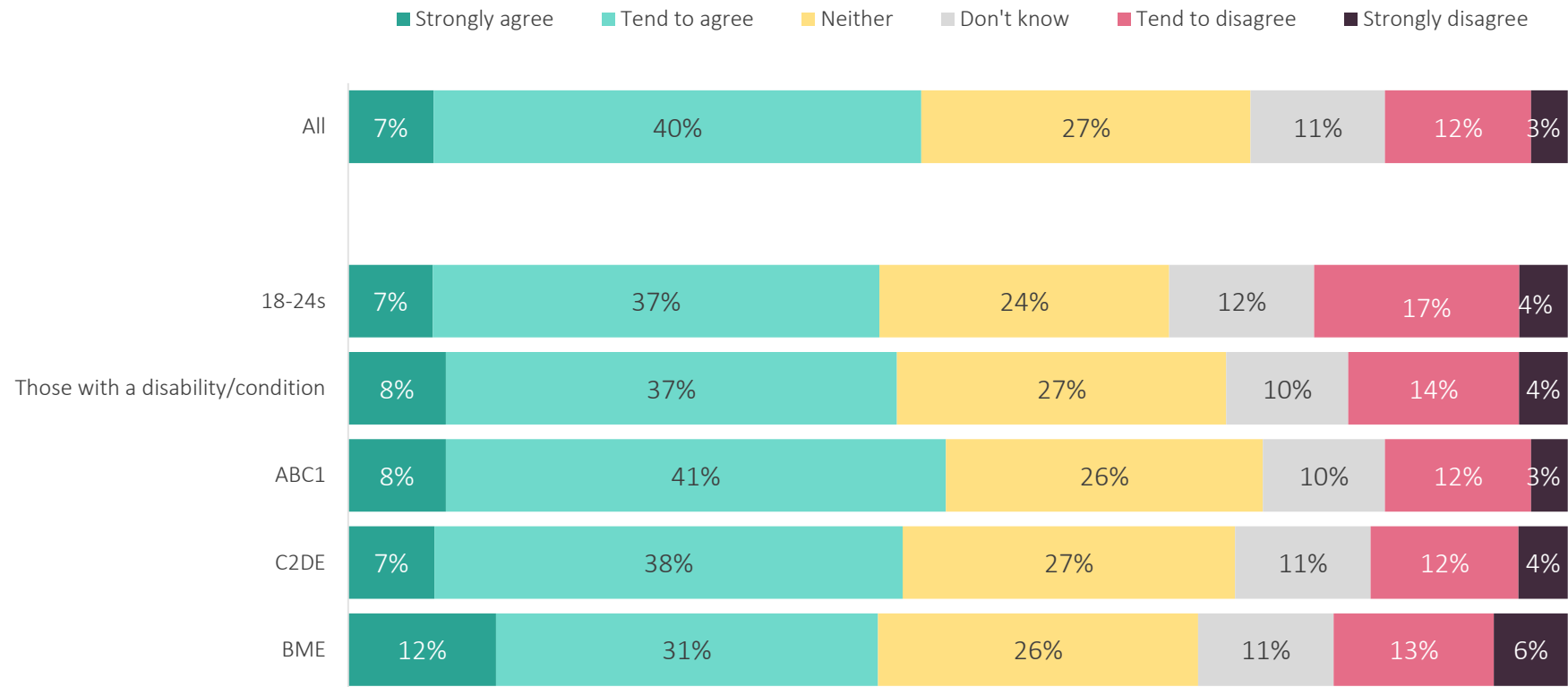
Showing aggregated results from waves 2.2-2.6*



'I believe something would be done to resolve the complaint'

Q. If you were thinking of making a complaint about the police, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Showing aggregated results from waves 2.2-2.6*



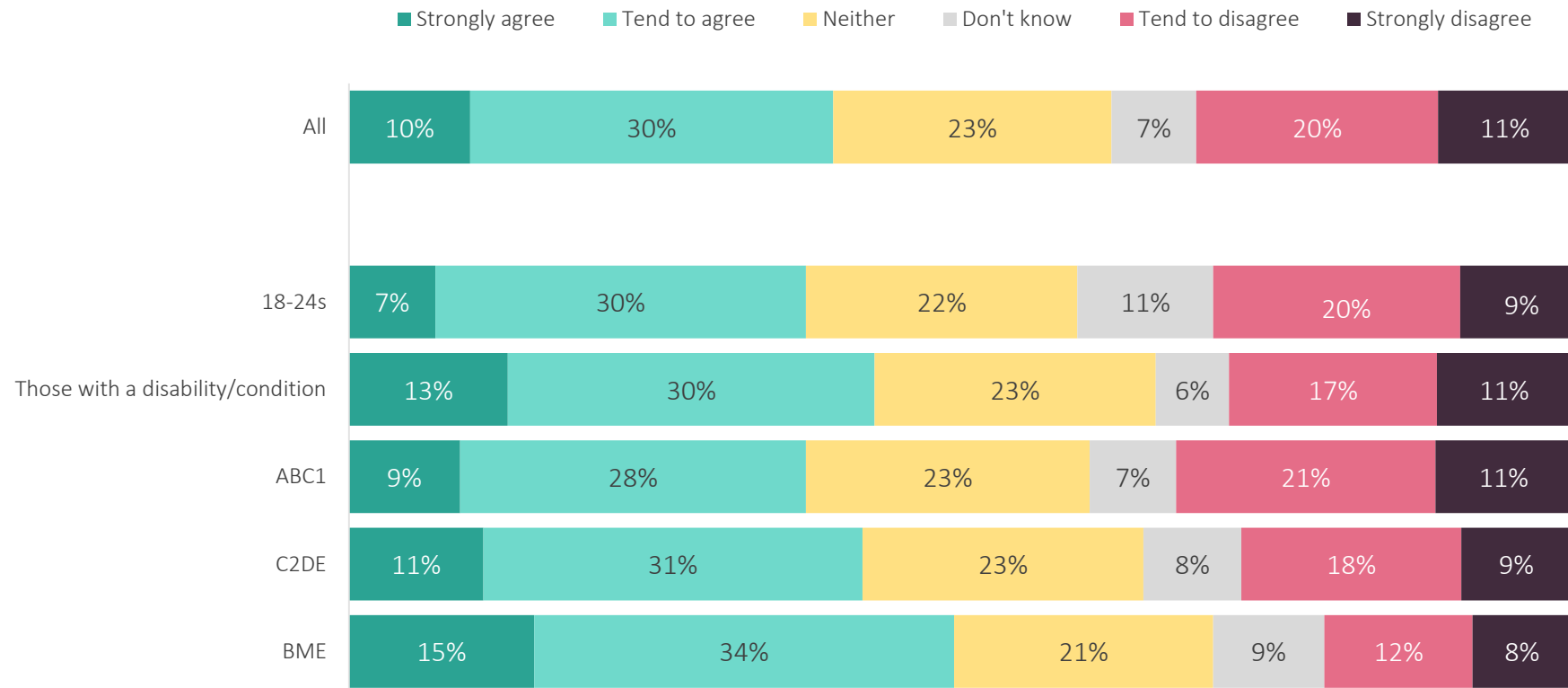
1. Base: All respondents (n=10221); 18-24s, (n=3012); Those with a disability or condition (n=2417); ABC1s (n=1783); C2DEs (n=1065); BMEs(n=1086).

*NB. Unique respondents can only be ensured for a max of 4 waves. There may therefore be some overlap in respondents in this data.

'I would be worried about police harassment or other consequences'

Q. If you were thinking of making a complaint about the police, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Showing aggregated results from waves 2.2-2.6*



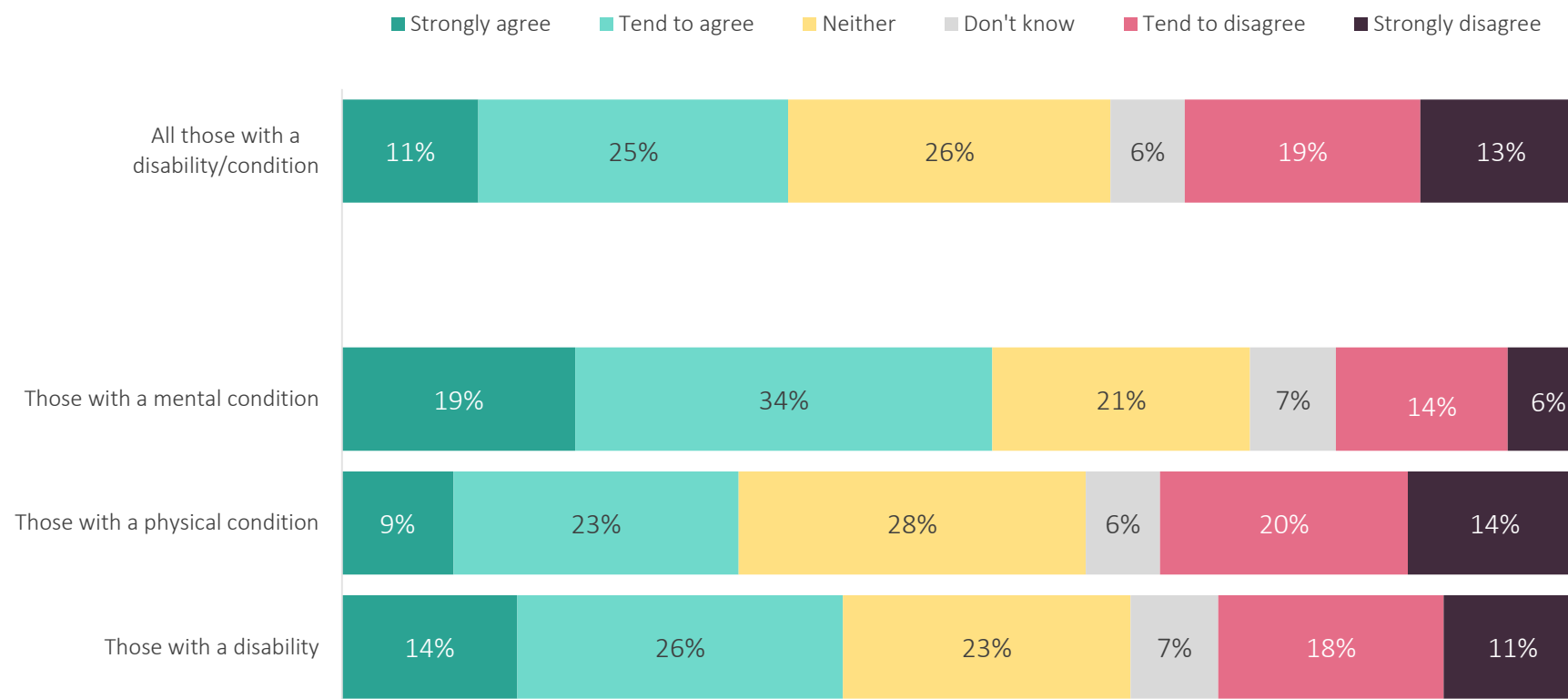
1. Base: All respondents (n=10221); 18-24s, (n=3012); Those with a disability or condition (n=2417); ABC1s (n=1783); C2DEs (n=1065); BMEs(n=1086).

*NB. Unique respondents can only be ensured for a max of 4 waves. There may therefore be some overlap in respondents in this data.

'I would be worried I would be treated differently because of a mental/physical condition'

Q. If you were thinking of making a complaint about the police, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statement? [Only asked to those with a disability or condition]

Showing aggregated results from waves 2.2-2.6*



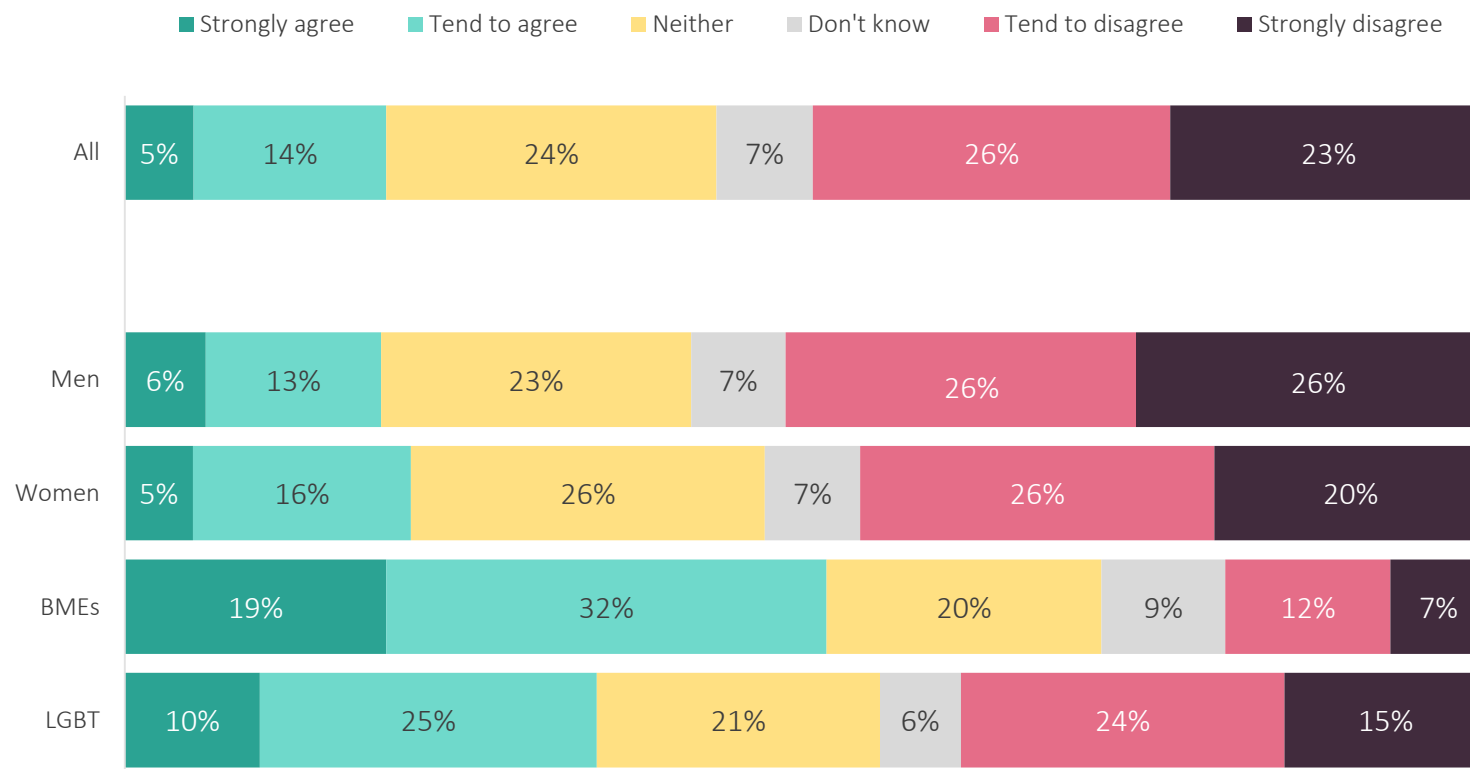
1. Base sizes: All with a disability or condition (n=2417); those with a mental condition (n=992); those with a physical condition (n=1503); those with a disability (n=760).

*NB. Unique respondents can only be ensured for a max of 4 waves. There may therefore be some overlap in respondents in this data.

‘I would be worried I would be treated differently because of my gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, or another personal characteristic’

Q. If you were thinking of making a complaint about the police, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Showing aggregated results from waves 2.5-2.6

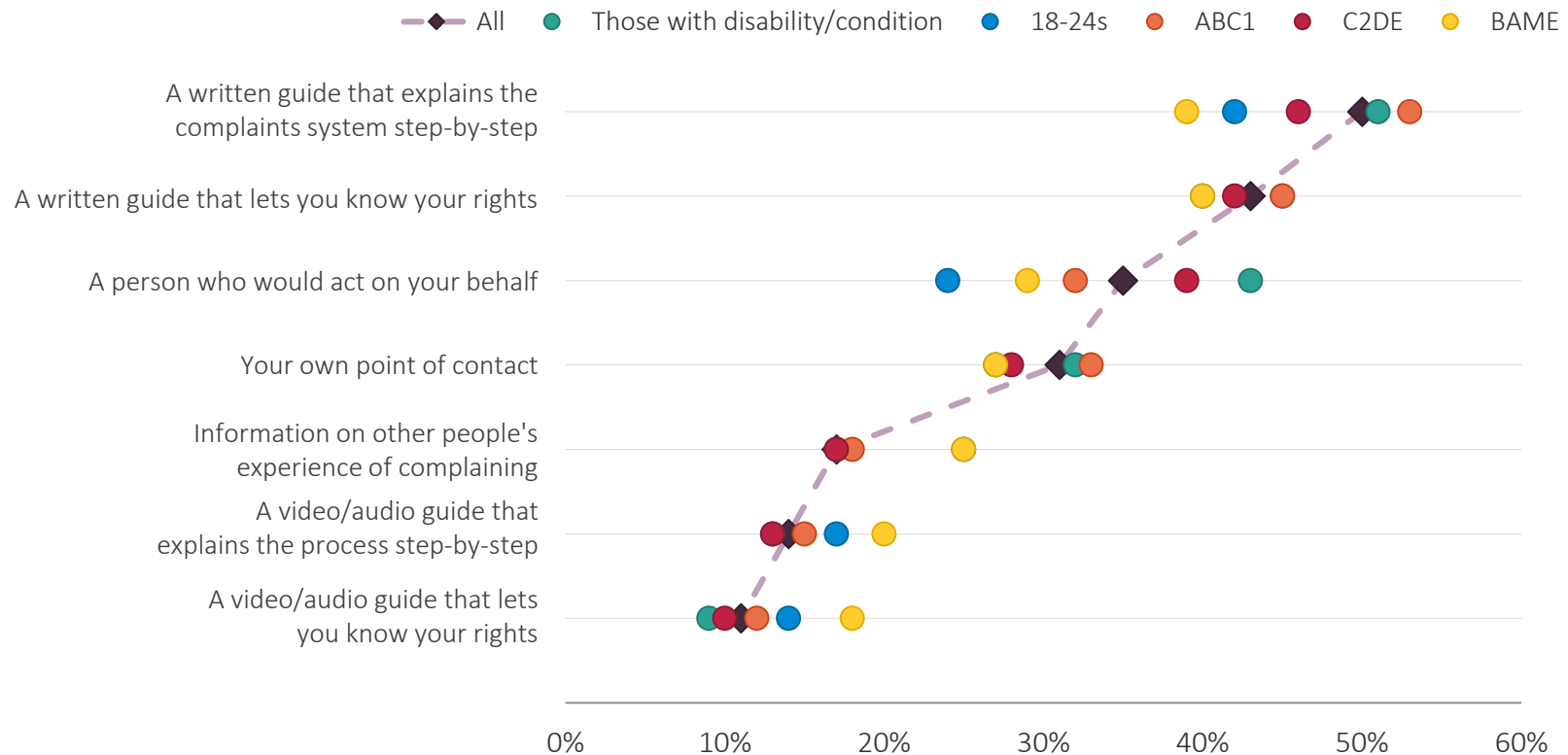


1. Base: All (n=4701); Men (n=2262); Women (n=2439); BMEs (n=641); LGBT (n=384).

A written guide is chosen by the public as the most helpful form of support when making a complaint

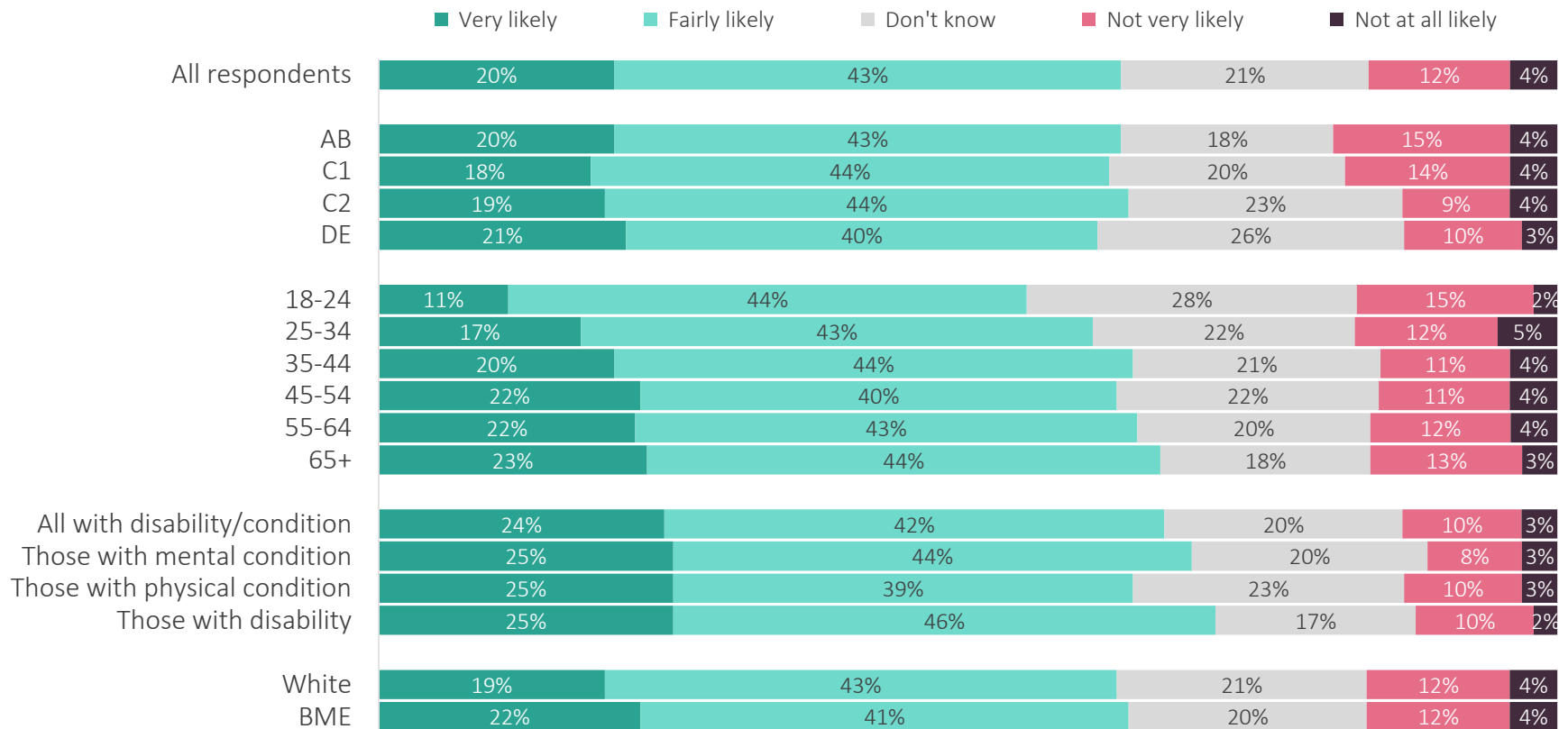
Q. If you wanted to make a complaint about the police, what would help you the most to do this? Please choose up to three answers.

Showing aggregated results from waves 2.2-2.6*



Most say they would be likely to use an advocacy service, particularly if older

Q. [Advocacy service explained] ... If you wanted to make a complaint about the police, how likely, if at all would you be to use an advocacy service to help you do this? Showing aggregated results from waves 2.4-2.6



1. Base sizes: All, waves 2.4-2.6 (n=6,540); AB (n=1,959), C1 (n=1,814), C2 (n=1,135), DE (n=1,632); 18-24 (n=884), 25-34 (n=1,118), 35-44 (n=1,132), 45-54 (n=1,154), 55-64 (n=889), 65+ (n=1,363); all with disability/condition (n=1,535), those with mental condition (n=639), those with physical condition (n=947), those with disability (n=493); white (n=5,710); BME (n=777)

Those who say they would be likely to use an advocacy service cite specialist advice, knowledge, and support, and their independence

Q. Why would you be likely / unlikely to use an advocacy service to make a complaint about the police? Please write your reasons into the box below, giving as much detail as possible.

Common reasons for wanting to use

Specialist advice

"To ensure I put forward the complaint in the correct way and to get specialist advice on whether my complaint was likely to be looked into."

Knowledge

"They would have a greater knowledge than myself and would know the rules and regulations."

Independent

"They would be in a better position than myself in understanding the process of along with being independent which would give me further confidence the matter would be dealt with impartially."

Support

"It would offer me guidance and support and I wouldn't feel like I was on my own making my complaint."

Common reasons for *not* wanting to use

Confident in acting alone

"I would rather speak to the police directly to ensure my problem is heard by the police and dealt with accordingly."

Doubts about effectiveness

"It does not matter if a person has an advocate or a lawyer, the police are never found to be at fault. Complaining about something they had done wrong would not result in a positive result for the civilian."

Perceived cost

"My concern would be if they are only able to offer advice and nothing else, how much does it cost for this advice?"

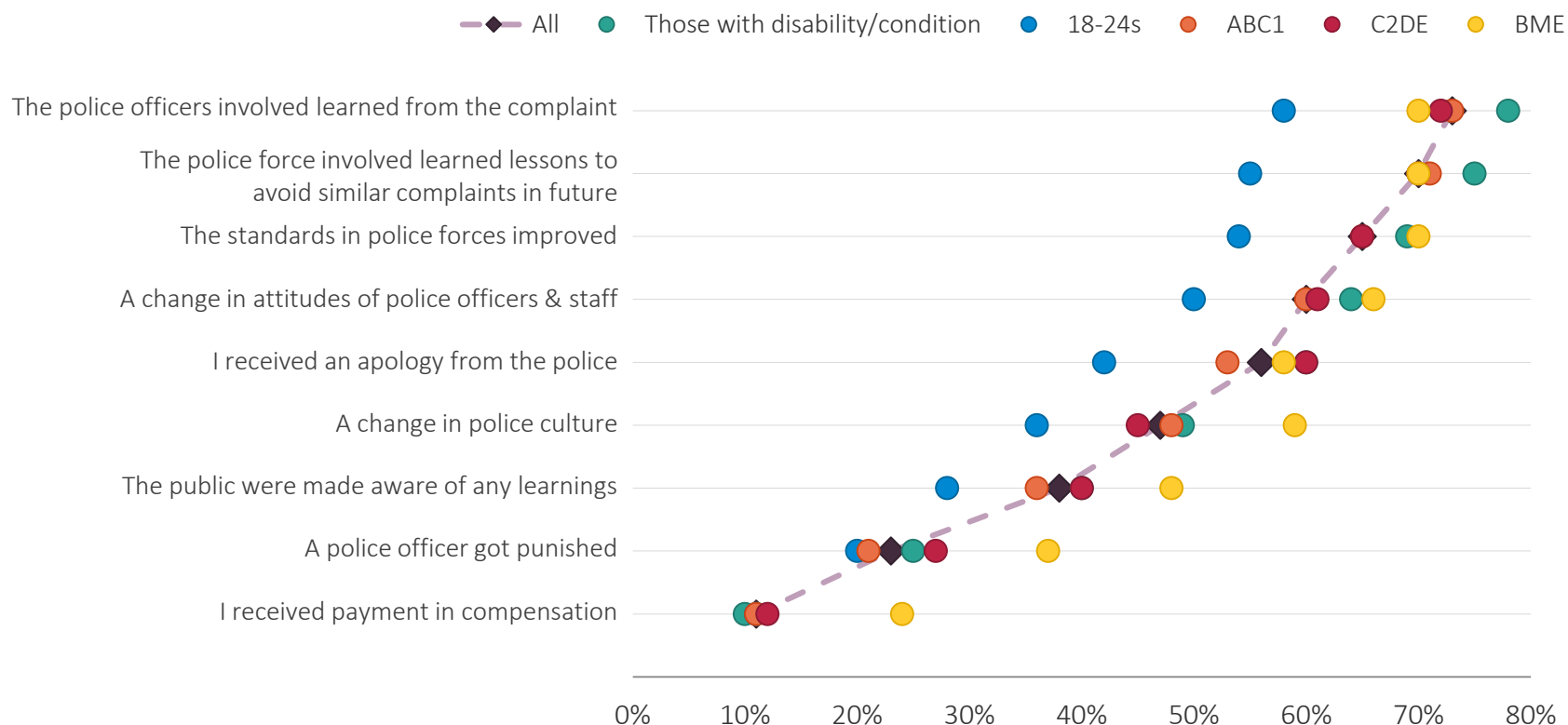
Impartiality

"I don't believe they would be any more independent than the 'police complaint service'"

That the police learn from complaints is very important to the public. Younger people, however, are less likely to have a strong view

Q. If you made a complaint about the police, how important or unimportant would it be to you for each of the following to happen as a result?

Showing aggregated results from waves 2.2-2.6*



1. Base sizes: All, Waves 2.2-2.6 (n=10,221); 18-24s (n=1,299); Those with a disability/condition (n=2,417); ABC1 (n=5,928); C2DE (n=4,293); BME (n=1,086)

*NB. Unique respondents can only be ensured for a max of 4 waves. There may therefore be some overlap in respondents in this data.

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