



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

**Public views on ethical
retail**

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Public views on ethical retail

Public opinion research conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2014

Introduction and methodology

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a survey into UK attitudes to ethical standards in retail and their impact on the public's buying decisions.

Research was conducted on i:omnibus, Ipsos MORI's online omnibus, among a total of **2,257** adults aged 16+ in the United Kingdom, between 13 and 17 June, 2014

Survey data were weighted by age, gender, region, social grade, working status and main shopper to the known population profile to be nationally representative of adults aged 16+ in the UK.

Main findings

- Half (49%) of UK adults aged 16 or over believe that, in general, retail companies are 'not very' or 'not at all' ethical nowadays (*'ethical' is defined as selling products that are ethically produced and following good principles in their behaviour and decisions*). By contrast, just under two in five (37%) believe retailers are 'fairly' or 'very ethical' nowadays
- Men are more likely than women to say that retail companies are 'not at all ethical'; 12% of men feel this way compared to 8% of women
- 16-24 year-olds have a more positive view of the ethical standards of retailers than some older age groups. Just under half (46%) think companies are 'fairly ethical', compared to three in ten (30%) 25-34 year-olds, just under one in three 35-44 and 55-75 year-olds (32% each) and just under two in five of those aged 45-54 years old or over 75 (37% each respectively)
- Social grade also has an influence on perceptions of ethics in retail; just under half of AB (45%) and C1 (44%) social grades say that retailers are 'not very ethical' compared to around one in three in the C2 (35%) and DE (32%) bands
- Overall, the ethical standards of retail companies and the products they sell is an issue that matters at least a little to more than four in five adults (83%). For half (49%) it matters 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount'
- Ethical standards of retailers and their products matter more to women than to men; women are more likely to say this 'matters a fair amount' (38%) than men (31%). Men are more likely to say retail companies' ethical standards 'do not matter at all' to them (14%) than women (6%)

- Just under two in five (39%) UK adults say that they have made a buying decision that was influenced by the ethical standards of a retailer or product in the last year. However, over a quarter (28%) say their buying decisions have never been influenced in this way and a similar proportion (26%) don't know or can't say if they have taken this into consideration
 - Men are more likely than women to say they have never made a buying decision that was influenced in this way (33% vs 24%), while women are more likely to say they don't know or can't say (31% of women vs 22% of men)
- Just under two in five (38%) agree that they try to buy products from companies that act in an ethical way, even if it means spending more, while one in five (22%) disagree
 - Women are more likely than men to agree with this proposition (42% of women vs 33% of men). Those aged 25-34 are less likely than other age groups to agree (30%)
- Just under two in three (63%) agree that it is not sufficient for companies to *tell* them that they are ethical, but need to *prove* this is the case
 - Women are more likely than men to agree that companies should prove that they are ethical (44% vs. 36%).
- A similar proportion (62%) agree that it is important that retail companies are clear about where they source their raw materials, components or ingredients from
 - Again, women are more likely than men to agree: just under half of women agree (46%) compared to just over one in three men (36%)
- Pricing is the main factor that makes people less likely to buy products produced in an ethical way. Just under two fifths (39%) say a belief that ethical products tend to have higher prices makes them less likely to buy these goods
 - This is more of an issue for women (43%) than for men (36%). Those aged 55-75 are the least likely to see this as an issue (30% say prices make them less likely to buy ethical products)
 - For one in three (33%), a lack of easily available information about ethical products is a barrier to purchase
 - Again, women are more likely than men to cite this reason (36% vs 30%). Those over 75 are more likely to see a lack of information as an issue than 16-24 year-olds; over two in five (43%) over 75s compared to a quarter (25%) of 16-24 year-olds

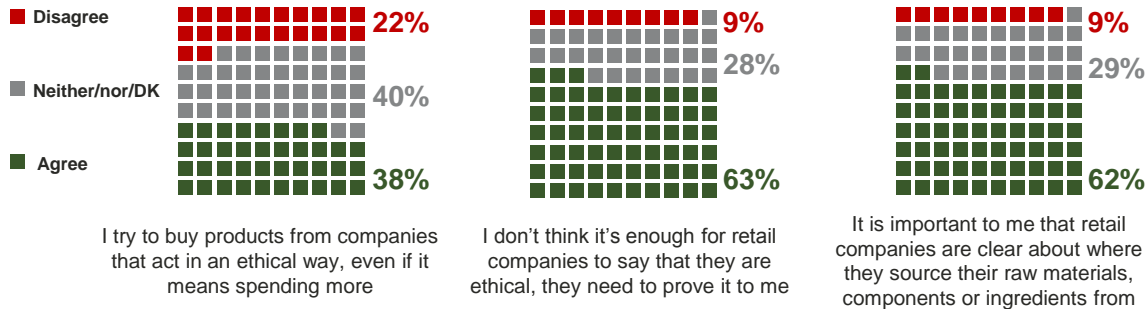
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- Three in ten (30%) say they are less likely to buy ethical options because they aren't well advertised. A further one in four (24%) are less likely to do so because they believe information about ethical goods isn't reliable. The latter is a particular issue for those over 75, where just under two in five (38%) see this as a reason not to buy ethical products
- Just 5% say they are less likely to buy ethical products through a belief that they tend to be lower quality

A little more than one in ten (12%) say they are not concerned about whether products are produced in an ethical way

Ethical retailers: dashboard of key data

To what extent do you agree, or disagree with each of the following statements?



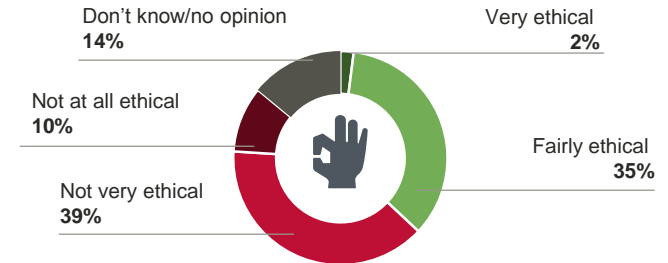
Base: Adults aged 16+ in the UK (2,257) 13-17 June 2014

Which of the following reasons, if any, make you less likely to buy products that are produced in an ethical way?



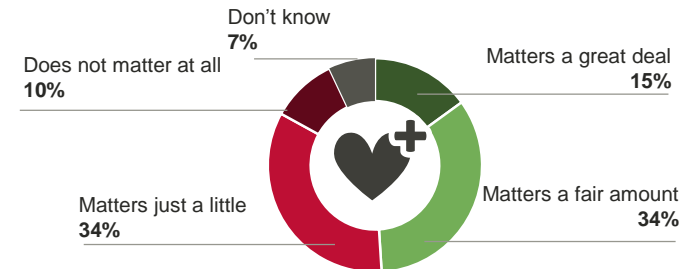
Base: Adults aged 16+ in the UK (2,257) 13-17 June 2014 None of the above – 7% Don't know – 15%

How ethical do you think retail companies are nowadays?



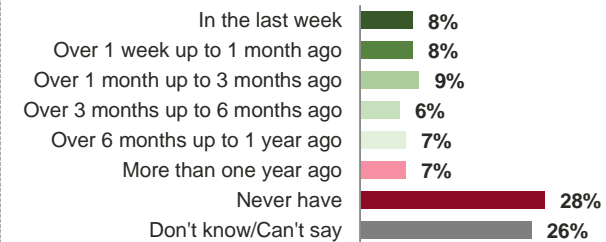
Base: Adults aged 16+ in the UK (2,257) 13-17 June 2014

To what extent is the ethical standards of retail companies and the products they sell an issue that matters to you?

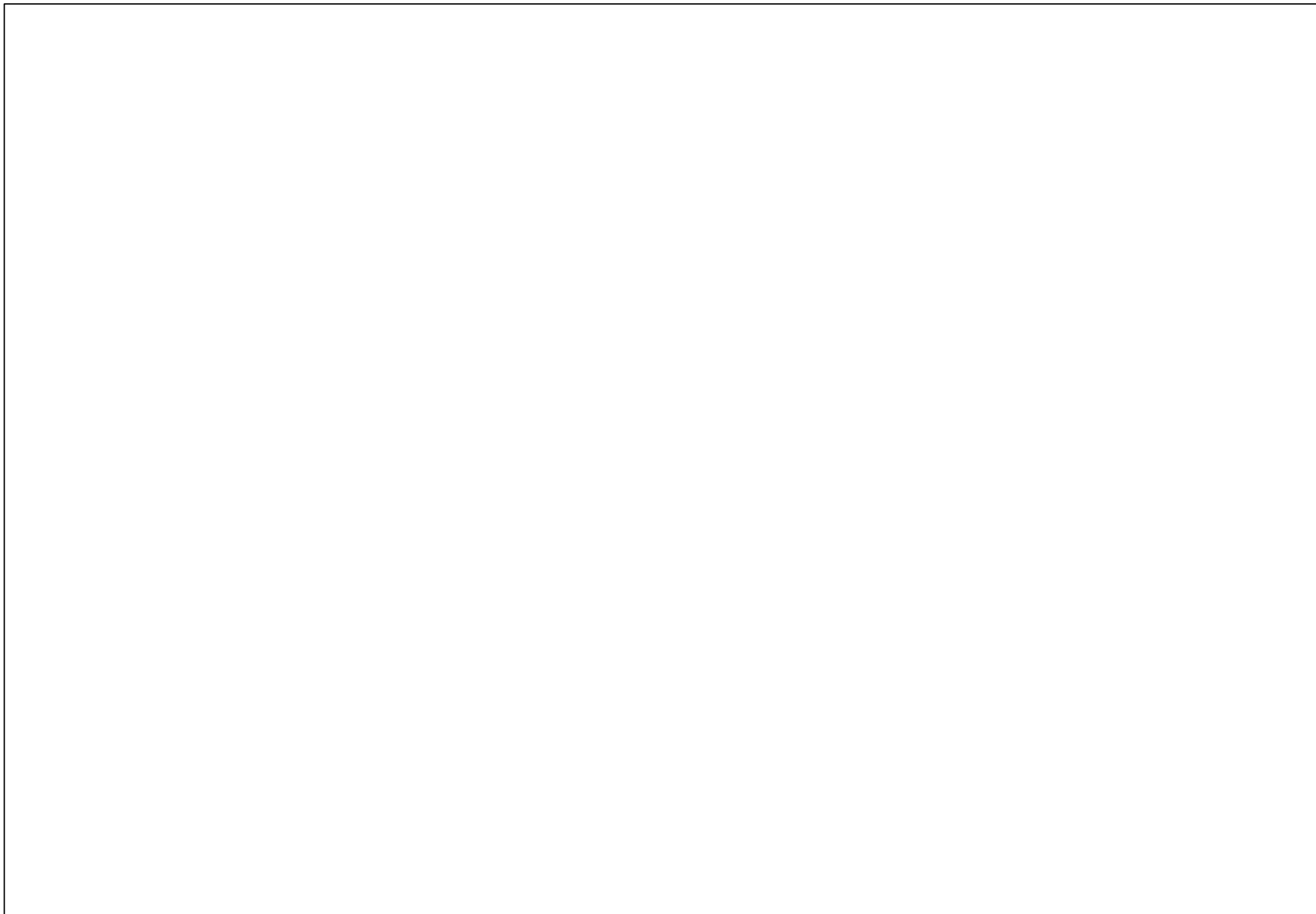


Base: Adults aged 16+ in the UK (2,257) 13-17 June 2014

When, if at all, did you last make a buying decision that was influenced by the ethical standards of a retailer or a product?

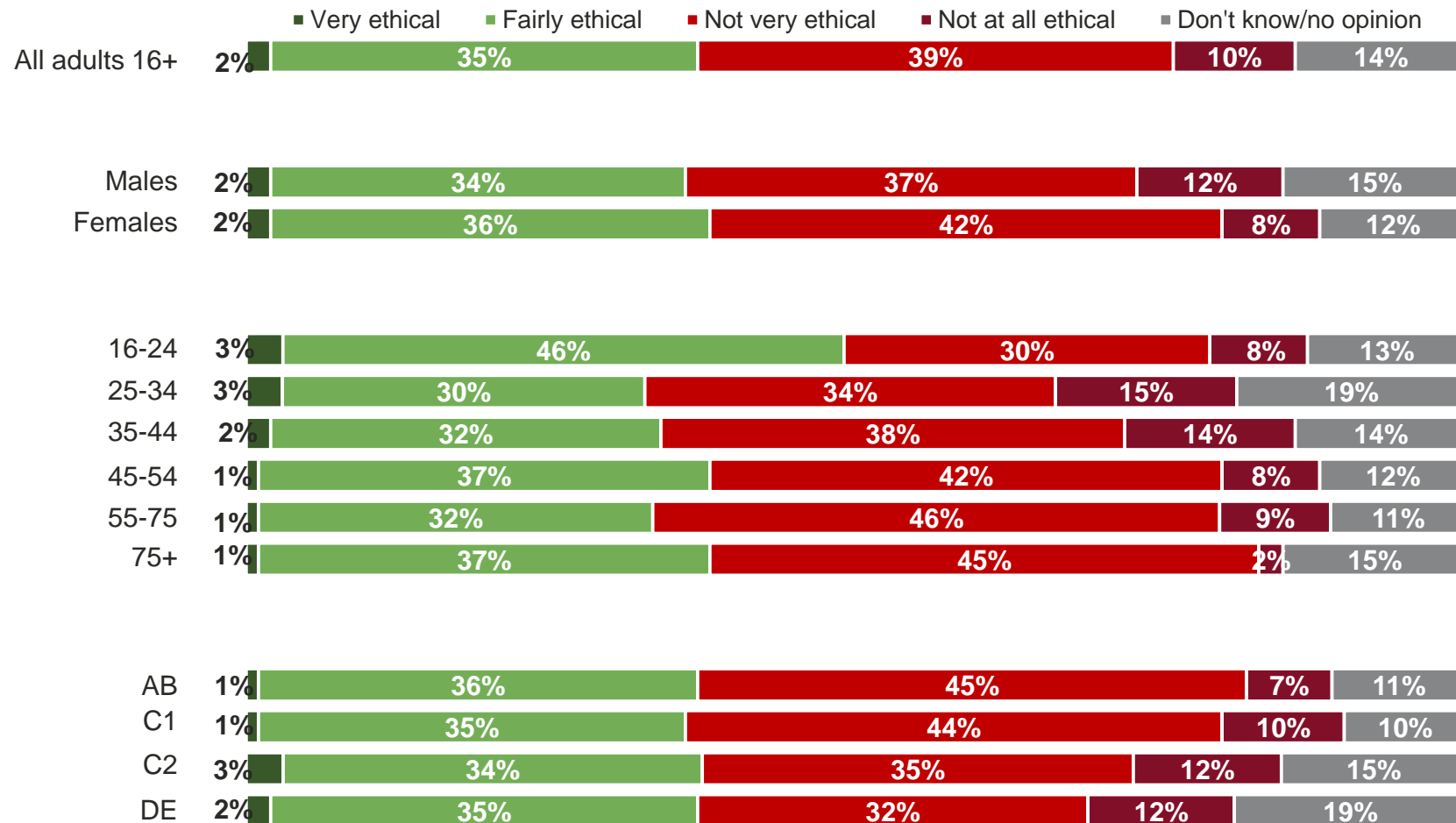


Base: Adults aged 16+ in the UK (2,257), 13-17 June 2014



Perceptions of how ethical retail companies are today

In general, how ethical do you think retail companies are nowadays?

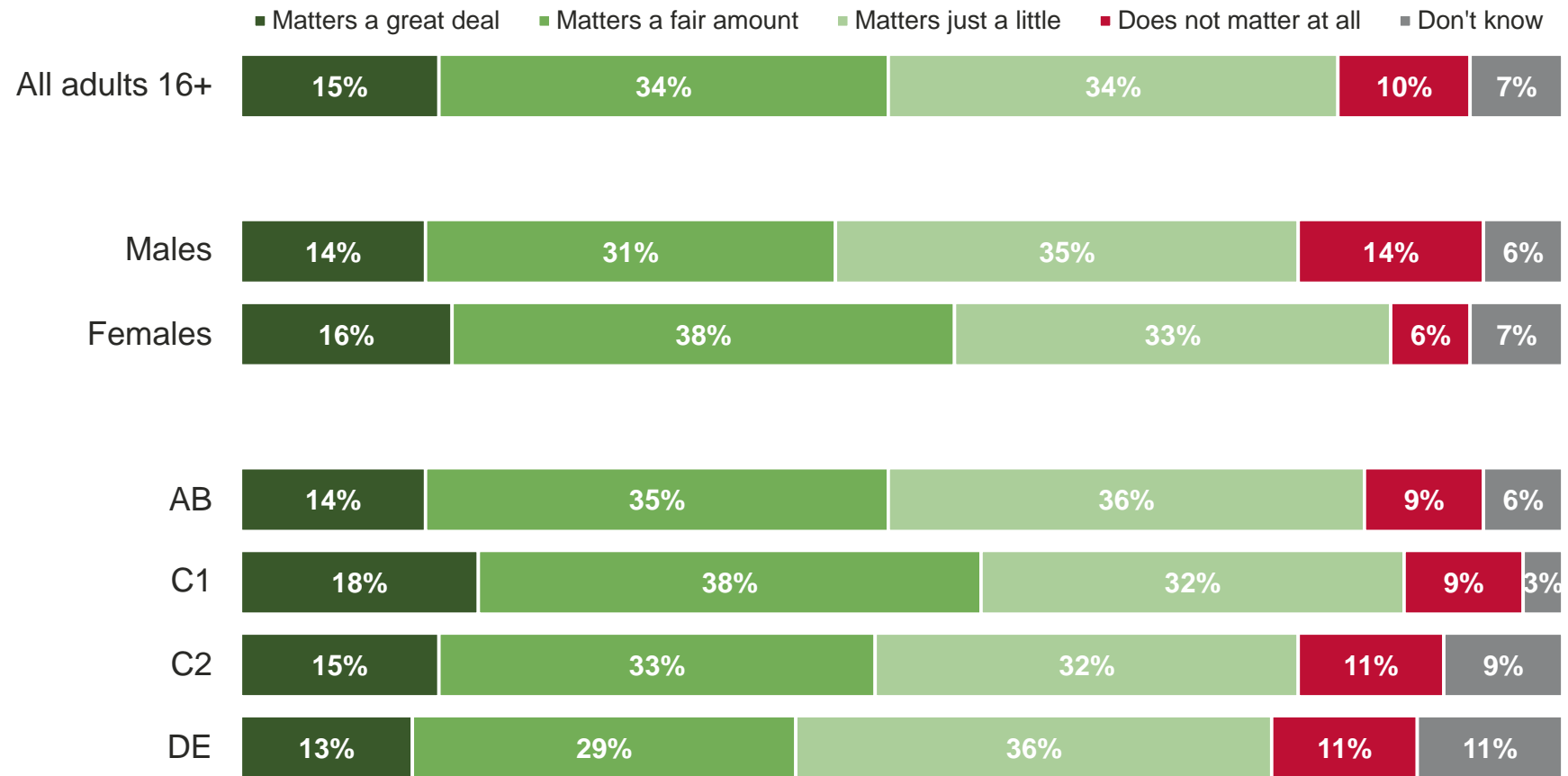


Q1 There is a lot of discussion these days about how ethical retail companies are – that is, whether the products they sell are ethically produced and whether their behaviour and decisions follow good principles. In general, how ethical do you think retail companies are nowadays? Base: 2,257 UK adults, 16+, 13-17 June 2014

Source: Ipsos MORI

Importance of ethical standards and products in retail

To what extent is the ethical standards of retail companies and the products they sell an issue that matters to you?

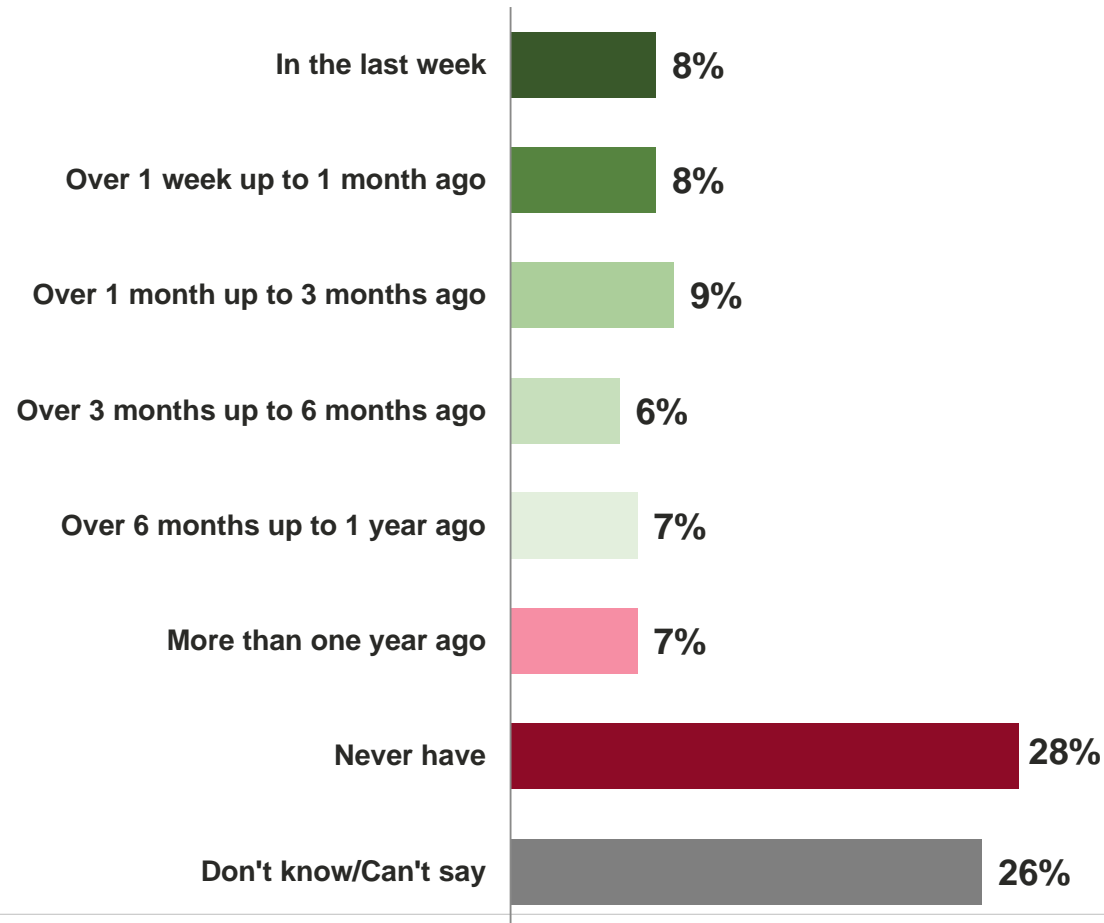


Q2. To what extent is the ethical standards of retail companies and the products they sell an issue that matters to you? Base: 2,257 UK adults, 16+ ,13-17 June 2014

Source: Ipsos MORI

Purchase behaviour influenced by ethical standards

When, if at all, did you last make a buying decision that was influenced by the ethical standards of a retailer or a product?

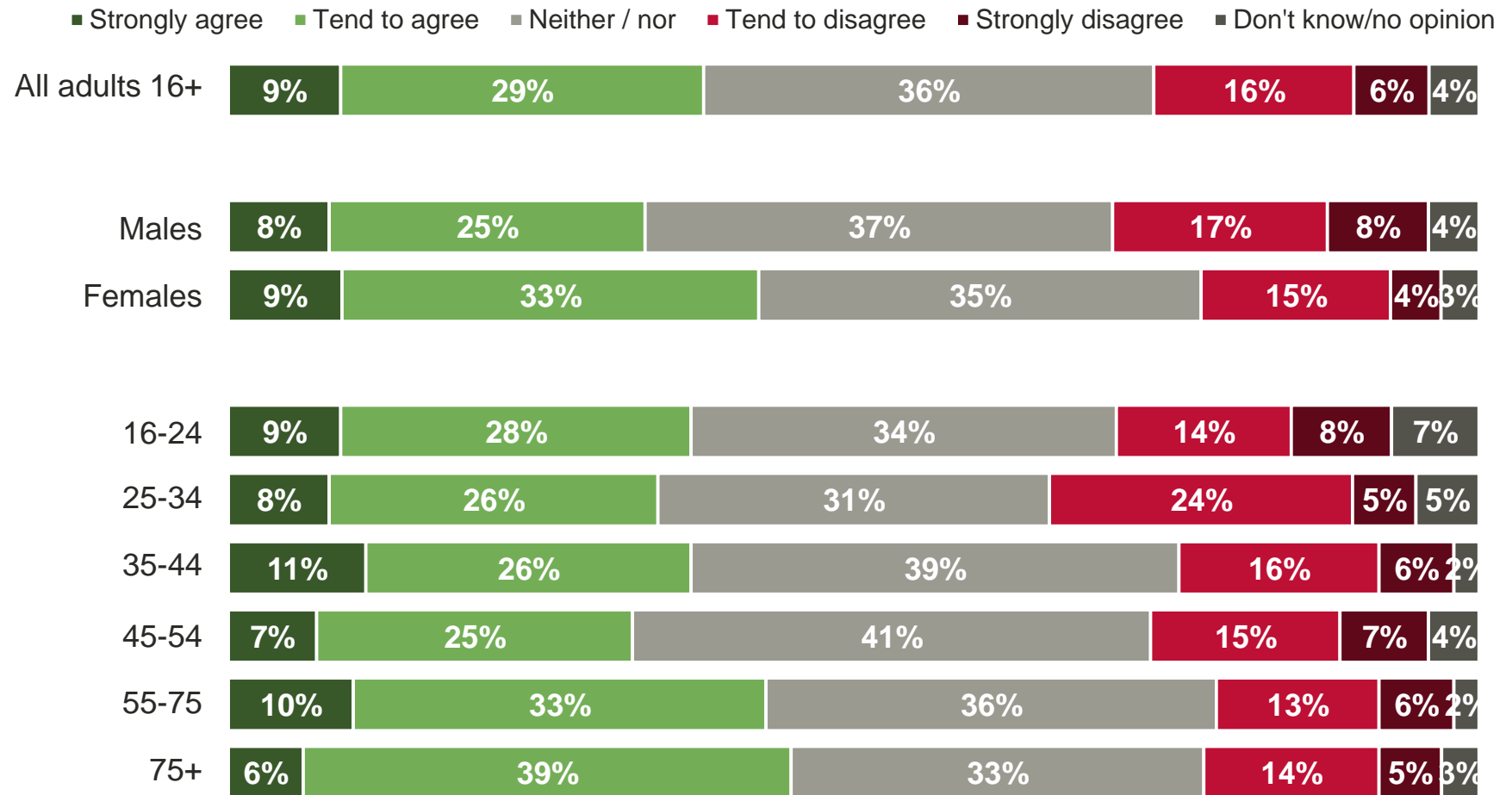


Q3. When, if at all, did you last make a buying decision that was influenced by the ethical standards of a retailer or a product? Base: 2,257 UK adults, 16+, 13-17 June 2014

Source: Ipsos MORI

Do people buy ethically produced products even if it means spending more?

I try to buy products from companies that act in an ethical way, even if it means spending more



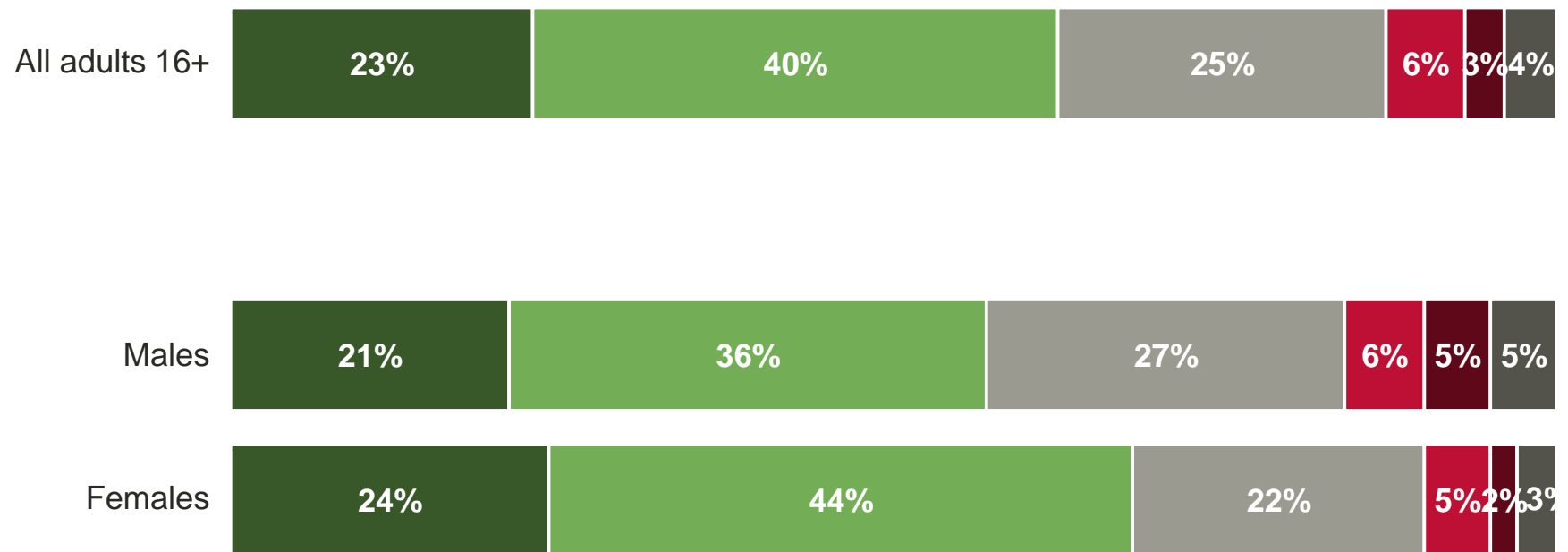
Q4. To what extent do you agree, or disagree with each of the following statements? Base: 2,257 UK adults, 16+, 13-17 June 2014

Source: Ipsos MORI

Do retailers need to prove they are ethical?

I don't think it's enough for retail companies to say that they are ethical, they need to prove it to me

■ Strongly agree
 ■ Tend to agree
 ■ Neither / nor
 ■ Tend to disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Don't know/no opinion

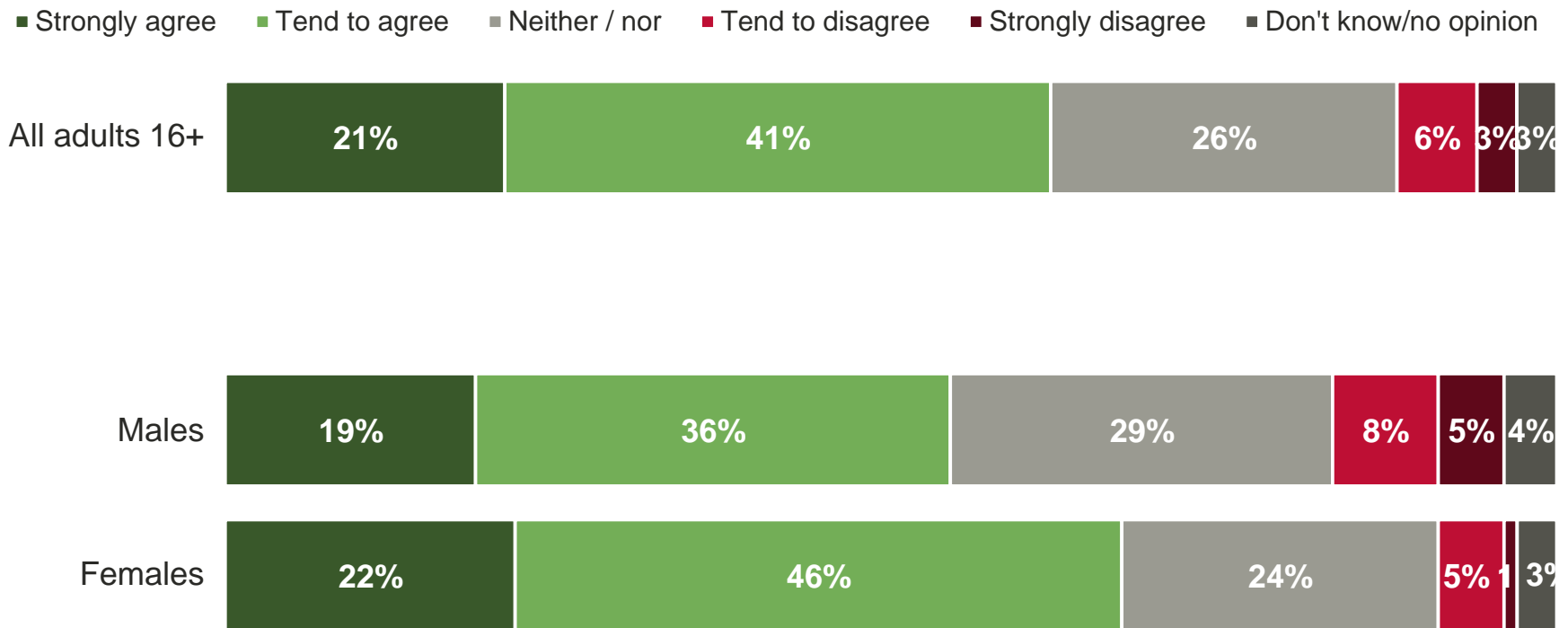


Q4. To what extent do you agree, or disagree with each of the following statements? Base: 2,257 UK adults, 16+ ,13-17 June 2014

Source: Ipsos MORI

Importance of clarity on where materials, components or ingredients are sourced

It is important to me that retail companies are clear about where they source their raw materials, components or ingredients from



Q4. To what extent do you agree, or disagree with each of the following statements? Base: 2,257 UK adults, 16+, 13-17 June 2014

Source: Ipsos MORI

Possible factors that make people less likely to buy ethically produced products



Q5 Which of the following reasons, if any, make you less likely to buy products that are produced in an ethical way? Please select all answers that apply.
Base: 2,257 UK adults, 16+, 13-17 June 2014

Source: Ipsos MORI

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to:

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET
Tel: 020 7215 5000

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