



Ministry
of Justice

Legal Problem and Resolution Survey 2023

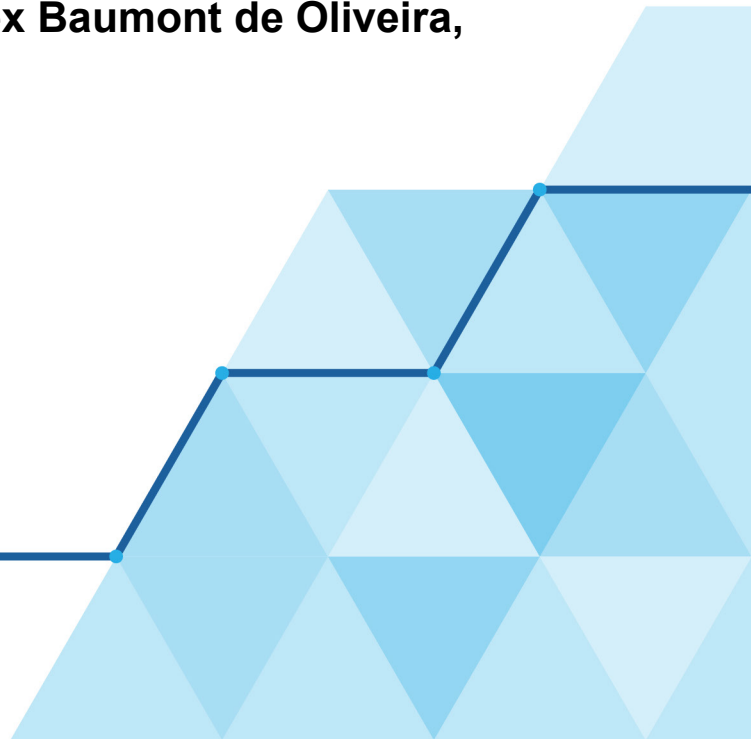
Supplementary Findings Volume

A short report summarising key findings is also available

**Ashley Ames, Kathryn Gallop, Alex Baumont de Oliveira,
Jessica Pace, Ellen Walker**

Ipsos

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1. Introduction

The Legal Problem and Resolution Survey (LPRS) measures people's experiences of everyday problems that may have a legal solution through the courts and tribunal system. The 2023 LPRS builds on previous surveys to provide robust statistical evidence on the extent to which civil, family, and administrative justice problems are experienced, by whom, and how they are dealt with by adults in England and Wales.

The survey was commissioned by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to inform several of the department's policy areas including legal support, court fees, alternative dispute resolution and the MoJ's Evaluation¹ of the HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) reform programme.²

A short report summarising key findings is available here: This volume supplements the short report and presents key descriptive findings from the survey, focusing on people's experience of legal problems and the ways in which they have dealt with these, as well as broader engagement with providers of legal advice and attitudes towards key aspects of the legal system. It sets out detailed findings including differences by problem category, problem characteristics and socio-demographic characteristics.

The wealth of data captured by the survey is available via the UK Data Archive to facilitate further analysis. If you wish to make use of the data or would like further explanation of the survey's methodology, the technical report is available here:

1.1 Background

Legal needs surveys are an established method for measuring the rate of different legal problems experienced by different groups within a population. Legal or 'justiciable' problems are wide-ranging and include everyday issues such as debt, problems with

¹ [HMCTS Reform Overarching Evaluation: Research - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/research/hmcts-reform-overarching-evaluation)

² HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) is an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), responsible for the courts and tribunals system in England and Wales and non-devolved tribunals in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

consumer purchases, disputes with employers and landlords, and issues arising from relationship breakdown.

Legal problems can be resolved through the formal legal system (the use of the courts, tribunals, and related services) but can also be resolved informally through a person's own efforts or use of a specialist advice service. Previous research has shown that only a small minority of the population in England and Wales choose to use the formal legal system to resolve their problems.

The value of legal needs surveys is that they:

- cover all non-criminal legal problems that individuals have experienced, from those resolved using formal court or tribunal proceedings to those where no action was taken;
- collect evidence on a population that is otherwise invisible to the formal legal system (where people experiencing legal problems have not sought advice or help through the legal system); and
- provide rich evidence on people's socio-demographics and how these interact with legal problem experience and resolution strategies.

This survey contributes to a wider body of legal needs research. Pioneering work on the concept was done in the United Kingdom in the 1990s. The concept of 'justiciable' problems was first used by Professor Dame Hazel Genn in her Paths to Justice research programme conducted in the late 1990's.³ Since then, numerous legal needs surveys have been conducted in England and Wales (including this present study).⁴

The Legal Problem and Resolution survey (LPRS) was previously run in 2014–15.⁵ This was a random probability telephone survey of around 10,000 adults, using the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) as a sampling frame. The 2023 LPRS has been conducted through an adapted mixed methodology, encompassing online and face-to-face interviews, which reflects changes in available sample frames and broader trends in the implementation of large-scale random probability surveys. These changes mean that

³ Genn, H. (1999) Paths to Justice. 1st edn. Bloomsbury Publishing.

⁴ For more information on other legal needs surveys see the technical report (Table 5.3).

⁵ [Legal Problem and Resolution Survey, 2014-2015 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

variations in findings between the 2014–15 and 2023 surveys may be due to methodological differences, and this must be considered if seeking to make comparisons between the two datasets.⁶

The importance of legal needs surveys has also been recognised internationally. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has recommended their use as a key tool to understand access to justice and help measure progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal target 16.3 – ‘Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.’ Their 2019 report sets out a framework for the conceptualisation, implementation, and analysis of legal needs surveys,⁷ which has informed the 2023 LPRS.

Legal needs surveys continue to provide important evidence for policy makers within different countries.

Departmental context and use of the LPRS 2023

HMCTS is conducting a large reform programme, consisting of over 40 different projects. HMCTS Reform will bring modern technology and new ways of working to the courts and tribunals system with the aim of delivering a system that is just, proportionate, and accessible. The LPRS 2023 included new modules to explore respondents’ attitudes to two aspects of the courts and tribunal process that are being introduced as part of HMCTS Reform. The first being the digitising and move to services being available online (for example, being able to submit evidence, complete applications, or file claims online) and secondly, the use of remote hearings (hearings in which participants can attend via video or telephone call, rather than attend a court in person).

A key departmental priority is ensuring swift access to justice. While the concept of access to justice is difficult to define, taking Dr Byrom’s⁸ definition (as adopted by other reform related research⁹), the first of four elements is ‘access to the formal legal system’.

⁶ [Data for 2014–2015 LPRS is available here](#) and for data for the LPRS 2023 is available on the data archive.

⁷ [OECD Legal Needs Surveys and Access to Justice](#)

⁸ Byrom, N (2019) Developing the detail: Evaluating the Impact of Court Reform in England and Wales on Access to Justice. Legal Education Foundation

⁹ [Assessing Access to Justice in HMCTS Services - Summary Report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Understanding the overall level of legal need in the general population through the LPRS 2023 provides an understanding of the extent to which people are able and willing to access the legal system.

The LPRS 2023 provides an insight into those who have not used the formal legal system (in addition to those who have), to explore why they have chosen not to do so, and whether they have experienced barriers that can be addressed through provision of support. Identifying barriers to accessing justice is particularly important for vulnerable people, who may require additional support to access justice. This includes factors such as age, disability status, employment status, income, level of education, and digital exclusion. The robust quantitative data on people's pre-court decision making from the LPRS 2023 will enhance understanding of the whole justice system and provide valuable insight to the MoJ's evaluation of the Reform Programme, which looks to understand the effects of Reform in relation to access to justice and vulnerability.¹⁰

The survey provides evidence of the strategies that people use when trying to resolve their problems, and the factors that influence people's decision-making. Without early resolutions, problems can escalate in severity and number.

The survey delivers an up-to-date picture of legal needs across England and Wales, within the context and perceived impacts of COVID-19.

1.2 The Legal Problem and Resolution Survey

Survey design

The LPRS 2023 is a nationally representative general population survey of adults aged 18 and over living in households in England and Wales. A mixed mode approach was used, drawing on available sample frames and utilising innovative methods to maximise the robustness and cost-effectiveness of the survey. The two strands of the survey comprised:

1. An online survey conducted via the UK KnowledgePanel, Ipsos's online random probability panel that includes coverage of the digitally excluded population.¹¹

¹⁰ [HMCTS Reform Overarching Evaluation: Research - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/research-data-and-analysis/publications/hmcts-reform-overarching-evaluation-research)

¹¹ Ipsos's KnowledgePanel recruitment method ensures that those who are digitally excluded can register by post or by telephone. Members of this group are given a Tablet, an email address, and 4G internet access allowing them to complete surveys online. Tablets are restricted to basic online browsing and email to avoid inadvertently changing the panellists' behaviour.

2. Face-to-face interviews, using a Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) approach, taking place in respondents' homes.

A total of 10,324 interviews were achieved across the two strands; 9,284 of these were conducted via the online KnowledgePanel survey, with a further 1,040 from the face-to-face interviews.

The sample for the online KnowledgePanel survey was stratified by country (England or Wales), education, ethnicity, and age groups. One person per household was invited to participate. A total of 17,849 panellists in England and Wales (aged 18+) were selected and invited to take part, with a response rate of 52%.

The sample for the face-to-face survey consisted of 2,550 addresses in England and Wales selected at random from the postcode address file (PAF). The sample was selected in two stages. At the first stage, 85 primary sampling units (PSUs) were selected at random. At the second stage, 30 addresses were sampled within each selected PSU. The adjusted response rate for the face-to-face survey was 42%.

The overall response rate for both modes of the survey was 51%. These response rates are slightly lower than many comparable legal needs surveys, as shown in Table 5.3 in the technical report.

Fieldwork was conducted between 23rd March and 6th August 2023. The average interview length was 23 minutes amongst the online KnowledgePanel respondents and 29 minutes for the face-to-face survey. Interview timings varied depending on the number and complexity of problems that respondents discussed. See separate technical report for further information.

Data were weighted to ensure that they were representative of the target population of adults aged 18 and over living in private households in England and Wales. Survey weights comprised a design weight, a non-response weight, and a post-stratification weight. Separate weights were calculated for problems and categories of problems, which were applied to relevant questions based on multiple problems per respondent.

The survey did not cover organisations or businesses, and individuals were asked to only report problems that they experienced in a personal capacity. The survey does not, therefore, provide any estimates in relation to the experiences of organisations or businesses. Likewise, adults who are not resident in the household population are excluded from the survey, for example those living in communal establishments such as care homes or prisons, or those who are homeless. These groups of individuals may have different experiences of legal problems.

Further details of the survey methodology can be found in the technical report.

Questionnaire design and structure

The questionnaire was consistent across the two survey strands (online and face-to-face) and underwent cognitive testing and piloting before the main stages of fieldwork. The questionnaire was structured as follows:

Section	Summary of content
Introduction	Introducing the survey to respondents and gaining consent for participation
Section A	Socio-demographics of the respondent
Section B	Digital capabilities – use of the internet and confidence in undertaking digital tasks / finding accurate online information
Section C	Awareness / general use of information provider services
Section D	Problem identification – identifying legal problems that respondents have experienced in the 18 months before interview, along with frequency and overview of outcome
Section E	Follow-up to the most recent / second most recent problem – detailed follow-up questions around the experience and resolution of up to two specific problems identified
Section F	Divorce – follow-up to experiences and resolutions relating to divorce proceedings or dissolution of a formal civil partnership
Section G	Probate – follow-up to experiences and resolutions relating to the challenging of a will or probate proceedings
Section H	Legal capabilities – self-confidence in resolving legal issues and levels of anxiety relating to legal issues
Section I	Remote hearings and digital court services – awareness, experience of and attitudes towards the courts and tribunal system reform programme

Section	Summary of content
Section J	Court fees – awareness of and attitudes towards the application of court fees
Additional demographics	Further socio-demographics, including aspects of Protected Characteristics

1.3 Structure of this report

Chapter	Summary of content
Chapter 2 – Prevalence of problems	Presents findings on the prevalence of civil, administrative, and family legal problems.
Chapter 3 – Experience of multiple problems	Focuses on people with multiple legal problems and whether there are certain types of legal problem which are more likely to cluster.
Chapter 4 – Characteristics of legal problems	Examines the characteristics of legal problems, including their duration, whether people considered their problem to be ‘legal’, and how serious people perceived their problem to be.
Chapter 5 – How people tried to resolve their legal problem	Covers how people attempted to resolve their legal problem and the processes they followed. It outlines the resolution strategies used by those with a legal problem, from taking no action at all through to the use of formal resolution strategies.
Chapter 6 – Help obtained to resolve legal problems	Explores how and why people seek information, advice and help to deal with or resolve their legal problems, and why others choose not to seek any help.
Chapter 7 – Outcomes of legal problems	Covers the outcomes of legal problems that people experienced and their intentions to resolve ongoing problems.
Chapter 8 – Attitudes to online services and remote hearings	Examines respondents’ attitudes to digital courts and tribunal services, and their attitudes towards remote hearings.
Chapter 9 – Awareness of advice providers and court fees	Presents overall awareness of advice providers as well as perceptions and attitudes towards court fees.
Key conclusions	The key conclusions from the LPRS 2023.

Note on the analysis and findings presented in this report

Survey findings are subject to margins of error since they are based on samples of respondents rather than interviews with the whole population. Findings were statistically tested at the 5% significance level, and only differences which were statistically significant at that level are referred to in the text unless otherwise stated. Design factors were used in statistical tests to correct for the fact that the survey design did not use a simple random sample. In the tables, where there is less than 5% in a cell this is represented by '-'. Where there were no responses in a particular category this is shown as 0. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding, excluding don't know / prefer not to say responses or being a multi-coded question.

Most of the findings within this report are based on respondent-level data, presented as the proportion of all respondents, or the proportion of all respondents who had experienced a problem. Within chapter 4, findings are based on the total number of problems, which sum to a number higher than the overall sample size. This is because some respondents had experienced multiple problems, and the flexible design of the survey meant that data could be captured across problems. Relevant weights have been applied to ensure that the data is representative, and these are outlined in the separate technical report.

This report presents key descriptive findings from the survey. This includes descriptive analysis of the socio-demographic differences observed. It is important to note that these are headline findings, and the interaction between socio-demographic variables and other characteristics is complex. Additional analysis is required to understand these associations further. Similarly, although fieldwork was conducted whilst no COVID-19 restrictions were in place, the pandemic may have had an impact on the prevalence and the experience of problems. The report includes analysis of the perceived impact of COVID-19, rather than analysis looking to determine the pandemic's impact. The wealth of data captured by the survey is available via the UK Data Archive to facilitate further analysis.

2. Prevalence of legal problems

2.1 Summary

- Experiencing a legal problem is common among adults in England and Wales. Half (50%) of all respondents had experienced a legal problem in the 18 months before interview.¹²
- Some legal problems are far more prevalent than others. Over twice as many adults in England and Wales had experienced civil legal problems (such as consumer, neighbour and debt problems) than administrative legal problems (such as employment, benefit and education problems) (44% and 19% respectively). A relatively small minority had experienced a family legal problem (such as relationship breakdown and/or dispute over children) (2%). See Table 2.1 for full list of problem types included in these three broad jurisdictional problem categories.
- Experience of legal problems is not confined to specific groups. Adults across all sub-groups of the population report having experienced a range of problems. However, experiencing a legal problem is more frequent amongst some groups. Younger people, those from ethnic minority backgrounds, people with long-term conditions, adults on means-tested benefits and single parents are amongst those more likely to experience legal problems.

2.2 Chapter introduction

The LPRS 2023 measured people's experiences of everyday problems, which could be redressed by recourse to the law, even though they may not be perceived as 'legal' by the respondent. Respondents were presented with a list of possible problem types covering

¹² The reported prevalence rate of 50% excludes respondents' experiences of divorce and probate. These issues are covered separately within the analysis due to the substantially different nature of how they are resolved. When including divorce and probate the overall prevalence rate is slightly over half at 51%.

civil, administrative, and family legal problems and asked whether they had experienced each of them in the 18 months prior to the interview.¹³ For the full list of legal problems shown to respondents, see Table 2.1 below.

The prevalence of legal problems varies according to the method used to capture answers.¹⁴ This is a known factor when conducting legal needs surveys, as found in the Pleasance, Balmer and Sandefur (2016) work on methodological differences.¹⁵ The LPRS 2023 used a mixed mode methodology encompassing face-to-face interviews and online interviews using Ipsos' random probability KnowledgePanel. Prevalence of legal problems was higher among those who responded online than those who participated in a face-to-face interview. This variation in prevalence across different data collection methodologies is consistent with patterns found in other legal needs surveys. Caution must therefore be exercised if any comparisons are made to the 2014–15 LPRS, which was conducted via telephone interviews. As in other legal needs surveys, the LPRS 2023 prompted respondents with descriptions of potential problems that they may have experienced and labelled these as everyday problems, rather than as legal issues. This is because previous research (such as the 2014–15 LPRS) has shown that not all people categorise these problems as 'legal problems'.¹⁶ For further information, see the technical report.

This chapter discusses legal problems within different groupings: the three **broader jurisdictional groupings of administrative, civil, and family legal problems**, which are made up of **problem categories** (such as employment problems) and then the **individual types of problems** that people have experienced within each problem category (such as discrimination at work). Table 2.1 outlines the legal problems covered within the survey and how these are categorised.

¹³ This also included problems that had started earlier but were still ongoing as of 18 months prior to the interview. The 18-month time frame was selected to be consistent with the 2014–15 LPRS and its earlier iterations. It is possible that some problems may not have been captured through this list, though the list of problems builds upon previous work and no omissions were identified during cognitive testing of the questionnaire.

¹⁴ Pleasance, P., Balmer, N.J., Sandefur, R. L., (2016). Apples and Oranges: An International Comparison of the Public's Experience of Justiciable Problems and the Methodological Issues Affecting Comparative Study, *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, vol 13 (1) pp. 50–93. Accessed at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/jels.12097>

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ [Legal problem and resolution survey 2014 to 2015 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/legal-problem-and-resolution-survey-2014-to-2015)

Table 2.1: Categorisation and definition of problem types

Problem jurisdiction	Problem category	Problem type	Respondent base
Civil Legal Problems	Consumer problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems related to purchasing faulty vehicles or other high monetary value items • Defective repairs to a vehicle, or other high monetary value items • Defective building work or work by trades people (e.g. plumbers) to respondent's own property • Services that were substantially short of what was promised, such as holidays (e.g. flight cancelled, or hotel not as described) • Major disruption in the supply of utilities such as water, gas, internet 	All were asked this question
Civil Legal Problems	Neighbour problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular and excessive noise by neighbours • Threats, harassment, or violence from neighbours • Damage to respondent's property or garden by neighbours 	All were asked this question
Civil Legal Problems	Owner residential problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning permission or consent • Selling or buying property, such as a misleading property survey • Problems with a lease or the leaseholder • Communal repairs or maintenance • Repossession of respondent's home • Being two months behind or more in respondent's mortgage payments • Squatters occupying a property respondent owns • Boundaries, rights of way or access to respondent's property – including passage of services such as water over other people's land 	Asked if respondent owned a house anytime in the last four years
Civil Legal Problems	Rented residential problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting a deposit back • Being two months behind or more in respondent's rent payments • Being evicted or being threatened with eviction • Getting the landlord to do repairs or maintain the property • Problems agreeing the terms of respondent's lease or tenancy agreement • Problems with the transfer of lease or tenancy • Problems with respondent's landlord or letting agency 	Asked if respondent rented accommodation anytime in the last four years

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Problem jurisdiction	Problem category	Problem type	Respondent base
Civil Legal Problems	Debt problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit cards, store cards or personal loans – excluding mortgages • Hire Purchase or on-credit purchases • Council tax or income tax • Utilities such as electricity, gas, or water • Other household bills such as internet or TV license • Fines • Severe difficulties managing to pay money respondent owed – including to family or friends excluding rent or mortgages payments • Harassment from people or businesses to whom respondent owed money 	All were asked this question
Civil Legal Problems	Money problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting someone or a business to pay money that they owe to respondent • Insurance companies unfairly rejecting claims • Incorrect information about respondent leading to a refusal of credit • Disagreement over division of property after death of a relative or friend • Being given incorrect information or advice from a professional that led respondent to buy insurance, pensions, mortgages, or other financial products • Mismanagement of a pension fund or an investment resulting in financial loss • Incorrect or disputed bills, excluding rent / mortgage payments or tax assessment 	All were asked this question
Civil Legal Problems	Accident or health problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An accident caused by someone else (e.g. a road accident, work accident or a public liability) • Poor working conditions • Negligent or wrong medical treatment • Accident or illness abroad that had an impact on respondent's health back in the UK 	All were asked this question
Administrative legal problems	Employment problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being threatened with or being dismissed or made redundant • Getting pay or a pension to which respondent were entitled 	Asked if respondent was in paid employment

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Problem jurisdiction	Problem category	Problem type	Respondent base
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other rights at work, e.g. maternity leave, sickness pay, holiday entitlement, or changes to respondent's terms and conditions since • Unsatisfactory or dangerous working conditions • Employer not providing adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) during COVID pandemic within the 18 months prior to interview • Unfair disciplinary procedures or other treatment • Harassment or discrimination at work 	anytime in the last four years
Administrative legal problems	Benefit problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondent's entitlement to state benefits, tax credits, or state pensions • Getting the right amount of state benefits, tax credits, or state pensions • Problems relating to delays processing a claim or application for these state benefits / credits 	All were asked this question
Administrative legal problems	Education problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining a place at a school where respondent / their children are or were eligible to attend • Respondent / their children accessing support for special educational needs or disabilities • Respondent / their children being excluded or suspended from school • School or local authority action following repeated truancy or other unauthorised absence 	All with children aged 20 or under or are under 21 themselves
Family legal problems	Relationship breakdown problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The division of property, finances, other assets, debts • Obtaining/agreeing to pay maintenance from/to a former partner excluding payments for children • Obtaining or agreeing to pay child support payments • Agreeing where children should live and how much time they spend with each parent 	All who said they had a break-up of a relationship or dispute over children

2.3 Overall prevalence of legal problems

Half of all respondents (50%) reported that they had experienced one or more civil, administrative, or family legal problem in the 18 months prior to the interview. This prevalence is higher than the previous 2014–15 LPRS survey but is in line with other online legal needs surveys.¹⁷

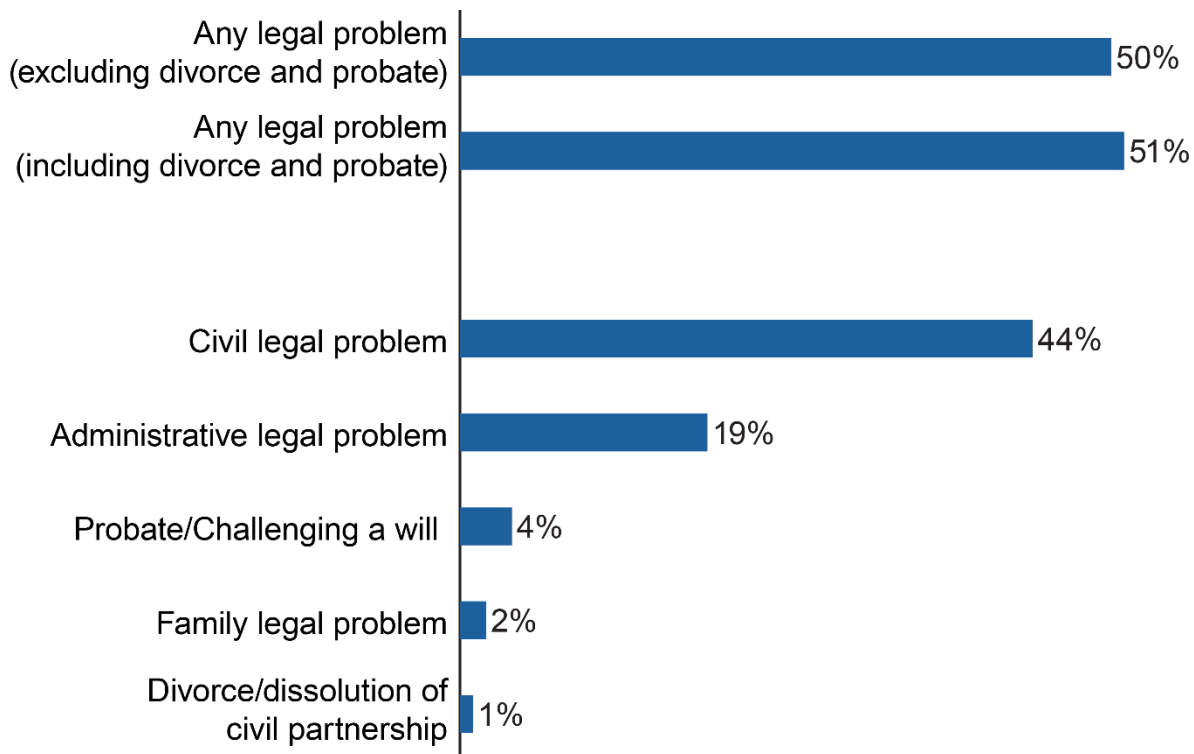
Respondents were also asked whether they had experienced dealing with the estate of someone who died and whether they had been divorced or dissolved a civil partnership¹⁸ in the 18 months before interview. The nature of probate and divorce legal proceedings and resolutions are substantially different to the civil, administrative, or family legal problems, and so these issues were covered separately within the survey. If respondents' experiences of divorce and probate are included within the overall prevalence, slightly over half (51%) had experienced a legal problem/issue in the 18 months before interview.

Civil legal problems were the most frequently experienced broad category of problem (as shown in Figure 2.1). Over two in five (44%) had experienced a civil legal problem, compared to around one in five (19%) who had experienced an administrative legal problem and a much smaller minority (2%) who had experienced a family legal problem.

Within the 18 months prior to the interview, small proportions of respondents had experienced a divorce / dissolution of a civil partnership (1%) or dealt with the estate of someone who had died (4%).

¹⁷ For further information, see chapter 5 in the technical report.

¹⁸ Respondents who had never been married or had a civil partnership were not shown the divorce / dissolution of civil partnership questions.

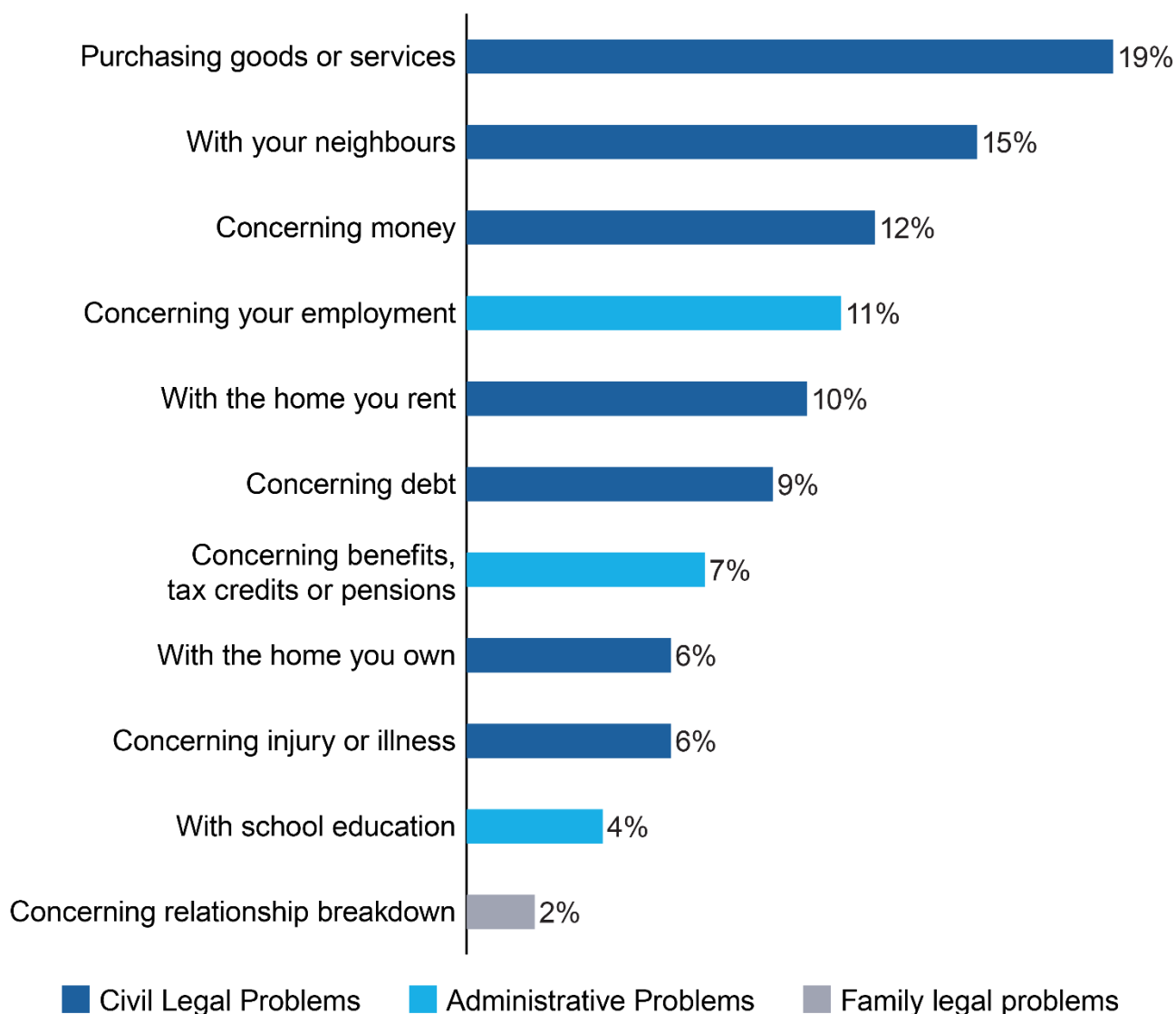
Figure 2.1: Prevalence of legal problems experienced in the 18 months prior to interview

Source: (D1a-D1n, F1, FA1) Did you have any problems concerning...? Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323).

In terms of problem categories, people were most likely to have experienced problems relating to purchasing goods (19%), followed by problems with neighbours (15%), as shown in Figure 2.2. People were least likely to have experienced problems with a relationship breakdown (2%) (separate from divorce / dissolution of a civil partnership), and problems with school education (4%). The types of legal problems that people experience most and least often are broadly in line with those in the previous LPRS 2014–15 and other legal needs surveys.¹⁹ For example, the four most common types of problems in this survey (consumer, neighbours, money/debt, employment) were also the four most common in the 2014–15 LPRS.

¹⁹ For further information about previous legal needs surveys, see table 5.3 in the technical report.

Figure 2.2: Prevalence of legal problems by legal problem type and category



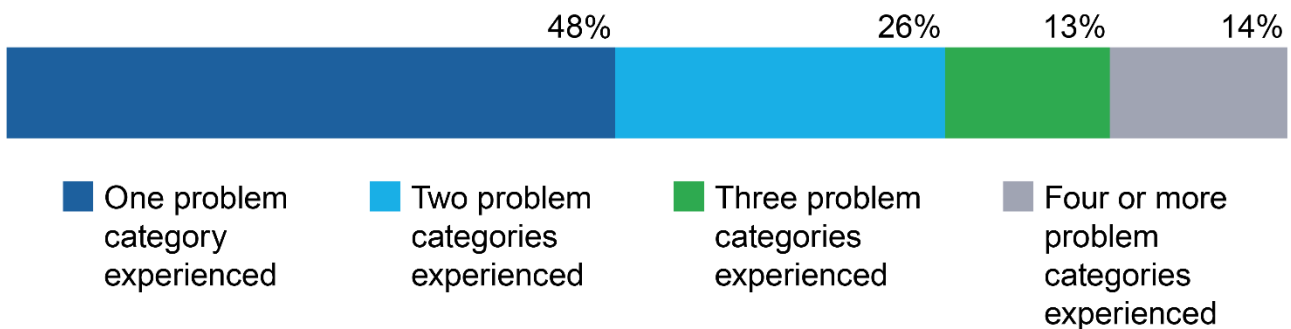
Source: (D1a-D1n, F1, FA1) Did you have any problems concerning...? Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323).

Number of problems people experienced (excluding divorce and probate)

There are different ways to assess how many problems people experience. The first is how many problem categories have been experienced. For example, a person may experience a consumer problem (such as defective repairs to a vehicle), and also problems with neighbours covering both damage to their property and regular noise. This person would have experienced problems across two categories: consumer and neighbour problems (with the latter covering two individual problem types).

Among those who had experienced a legal problem (excluding divorce and probate), people were most likely to have had experience of one problem category. Just under half (48%) had experienced one problem category, compared to a quarter (26%) who had experienced two problem categories and a similar proportion who had experienced three or more problem categories. See Figure 2.3.

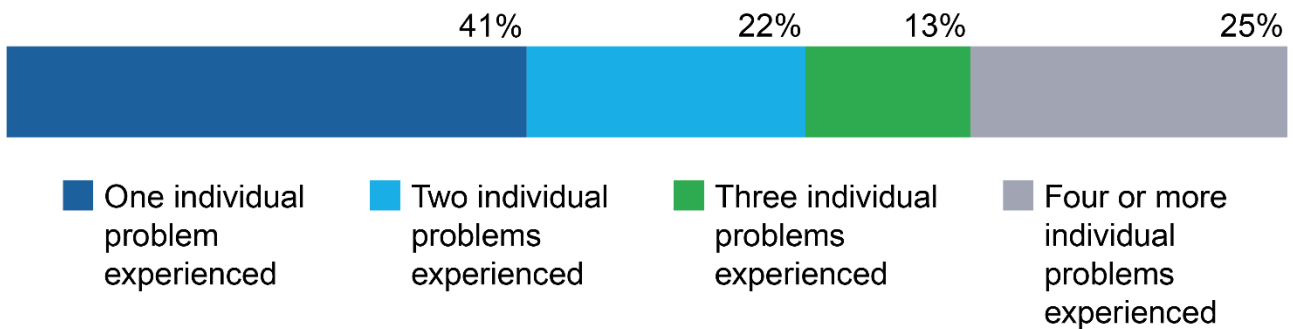
Figure 2.3: Number of legal problem categories people experienced (not including divorce and probate)



Source: (D1a-D1n) Did you have any problems concerning...? Base: Adults in England and Wales who have a legal problem (4,988). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Another way to assess the number of problems experienced is through individual problem types. Using the example outlined above, a person who had experienced defective repairs to a vehicle, damage to a property by a neighbour, and noise disturbance from a neighbour would count as having three types of individual problems. Using this measurement, two in five (41%) of those who experienced legal problems had experienced only one type of individual problem. A quarter (25%) experienced four or more types of individual problems.

Figure 2.4: Number of individual types of problems people experienced



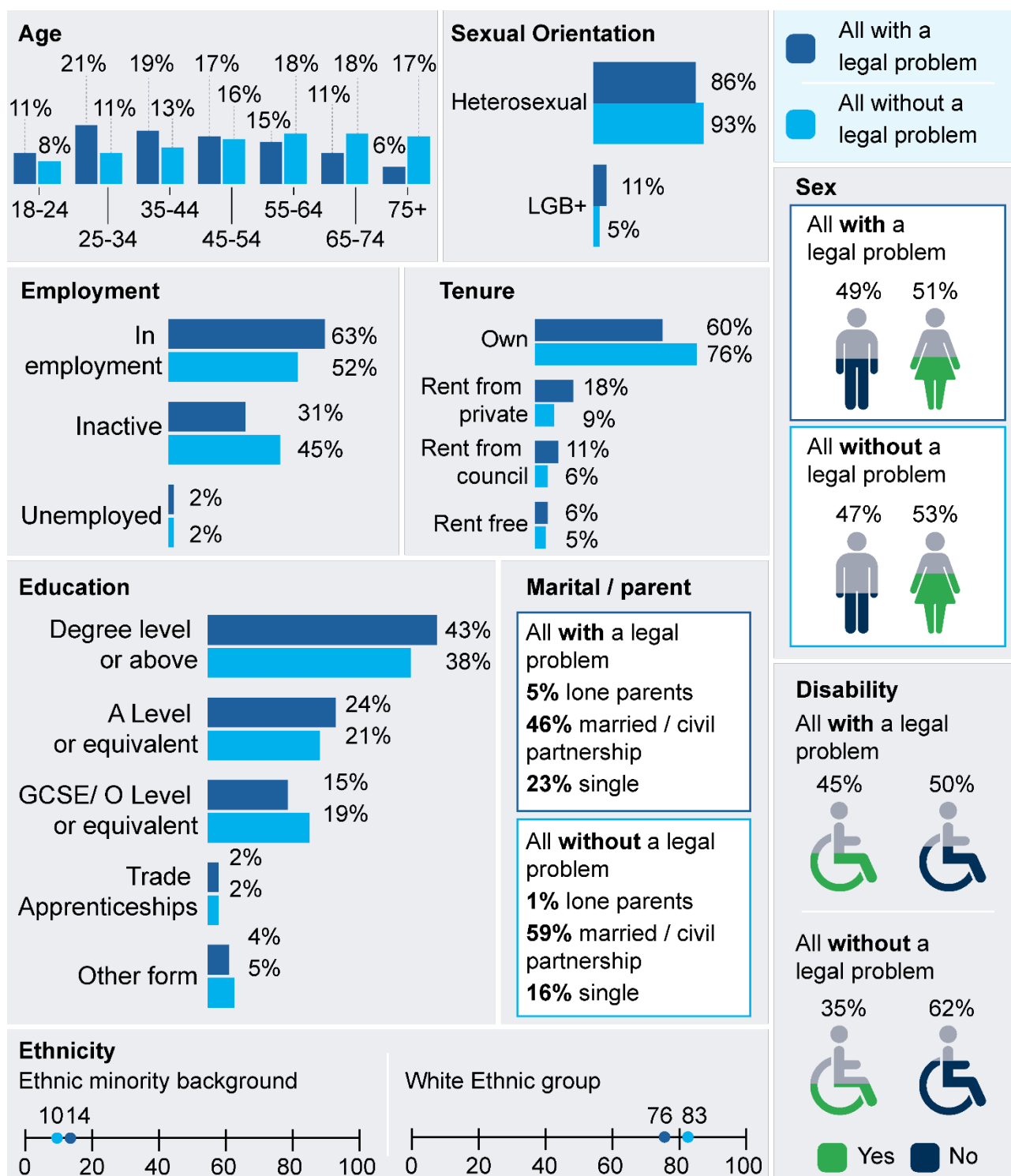
Source: (D1a-D1n) Did you have any problems concerning...? Base: Adults in England and Wales who have a legal problem (4,988). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

The figures above do not consider where a respondent experiences the same individual problem (such as a defective repair) several times. For more information on those who have experienced multiple problems and potential problem clustering, see chapter 3.

Socio-demographic differences by problem prevalence (excluding probate and divorce)

Legal problems were fairly pervasive across all socio-demographic groups. However, there were some statistically significant differences in the likelihood of experiencing problems. Figure 2.5 highlights the profile of people who experienced legal problems and those who did not. This illustrates the proportion of those experiencing a legal problem who were males and the proportion who were females (for example). It does not show what percentage of females experienced a problem; those figures are outlined in the paragraphs and figures that follow.

Figure 2.5: Profile of those with or without a legal problem in the last 18 months



Source: Legal Problem and Resolution Survey 2023. All those with a legal problem in the last 18 months excluding divorce and probate (4,988), all those without a legal problem in the last 18 months excluding divorce and probate (5,335). This examines the demographic profile. Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

There were some socio-demographic groups that were **significantly more likely** to have experienced legal problems:

- **Younger** people
- People from **ethnic minority backgrounds**
- People with **mental health conditions**
- People on **means-tested benefits**
- People with a **disability**.

Other socio-demographic groups were significantly less likely to have experienced legal problems:

- **Older people**
- Those who were **economically inactive** (most of whom were retired at the time of interview)
- People on **non-means-tested benefits**
- Those without a **disability**
- People who were **married / widowed**.

There was no difference in the prevalence of legal problems between those living in England and those in Wales.

It is important to note that there is overlap between demographics and other characteristics. How these interplay to make an individual more or less likely to experience a legal problem can be complex.

For some groups, especially the 'other' categories within the socio-demographic groupings, the numbers of respondents can be small. Caution should be exercised when analysing by these groups, as the findings may be less robust. The differences in prevalence of those experiencing problems (excluded divorce and probate) outlined in the Table below are statistically significant unless otherwise stated.

Table 2.2: Significant socio-demographic differences in how prevalent problems were

Socio-demographics	Differences
Sex	Males and females were almost equally likely to have experienced legal problems in the 18 months prior to interview; 51% of males and 49% of females. This difference is not statistically significant.
Age	<p>There were significant differences in problem prevalence by age. People were decreasingly likely to experience legal problems the older they were. Overall, those aged 25–34 were the most likely to have experienced a legal problem (65%). Those who were 75 or older at the time of interview were the least likely to have experienced legal problems (27%).</p> <p>There are some important intersections between age and other socio-demographic characteristics which are likely to reflect some of the variations in findings across other groups. For example, younger people were more likely to be from an ethnic minority background than older respondents.</p>
Ethnicity	Adults from ethnic minority backgrounds were more likely to have experienced legal problems than those from a white ethnic background. Three quarters (75%) of those from a mixed background, three in five (60%) from a black background, and over half (55%) from an Asian background had experienced legal problems. This compares to just under half (47%) of those from a white ethnic background.
Sexual orientation	Those who identified as gay or lesbian (67%), as bisexual (69%) or ‘other’ (76%) when asked about their sexual orientation were all more likely to have experienced legal problems than those who identified as straight/heterosexual (48%).
Disability status	<p>Those with a physical or mental health condition lasting more than 12 months were more likely to have experienced legal problems compared to those who did not (56% vs 44% respectively).</p> <p>This varied by condition; those with physical health conditions (48%) were almost as likely to experience legal problems as all adults (50%). However, those with mental health conditions were significantly more likely to have experienced a legal problem (72%), and those who had both mental and physical conditions were even more likely to have encountered legal problems (77%).</p>
Education	People with higher level qualifications were more likely than others to have experienced legal problems in the 18 months prior to interview. Just over half (53%) of those with a degree level qualification (or above) or an A-level qualification had experienced legal problems. Those with a GCSE qualification / trade apprenticeship or below were less likely to experience problems (between 41%–44% depending on the level of qualification).

Socio-demographics	Differences
	<p>These patterns will likely reflect variations by age to some extent. Older respondents were less likely to have higher level qualifications and were also less likely to have experienced problems in the 18 months prior to interview.</p>
Marital status	<p>People who were separated from their partners were more likely to experience legal problems (69%). People who were currently married / in a civil partnership were less likely to experience problems (43%) and those who were widowed were least likely (33%). Again, this potentially reflects age variations.</p>
Single parents and the presence of children	<p>Single parents were substantially more likely to have experienced legal problems (78%), compared to all adults. Those with children in the household, regardless of their status as a parent or guardian, were more likely than those without children to have experienced legal problems (55%).</p>
Benefits status	<p>People on means-tested benefits (such as Universal Credit) were more likely to experience legal problems (73%). Only 38% of adults on non-means tested benefits experienced legal problems, which likely reflects a link with age, with older people falling into this category (through receipt of the state pension). Adults not receiving benefits were just as likely to experience legal problems as the overall population (50%).</p>
Employment status	<p>Unemployed people (61%) and those in employment (55%) were more likely to experience legal problems than those who were economically inactive (41%). Those who were economically inactive at the time of interview were most likely to be retired, rather than long-term sick or caring for others. Therefore, these variations will again likely reflect differences by age.</p>
Tenure	<p>People who owned their house were less likely to have experienced a legal problem (44%). Those who rent from a private landlord, or the council / housing association were more likely to have experienced legal problems in the 18 months prior to interview (67% amongst both groups).</p>
Pregnancy status	<p>Both those who were pregnant at the time of the interview or who had been pregnant in the past year were significantly more likely to experience legal problems (64% compared to 50% of all adults). However, the respondents were more likely to be aged 25–34, the age profile most likely to experience legal problems.</p>
English proficiency	<p>Those who did not speak English well or at all were more likely to have experienced legal problems (67%). This may intersect with the age and ethnic background profiles of these respondents: those who did not speak English well were disproportionately likely to be younger and from ethnic minority backgrounds.</p>

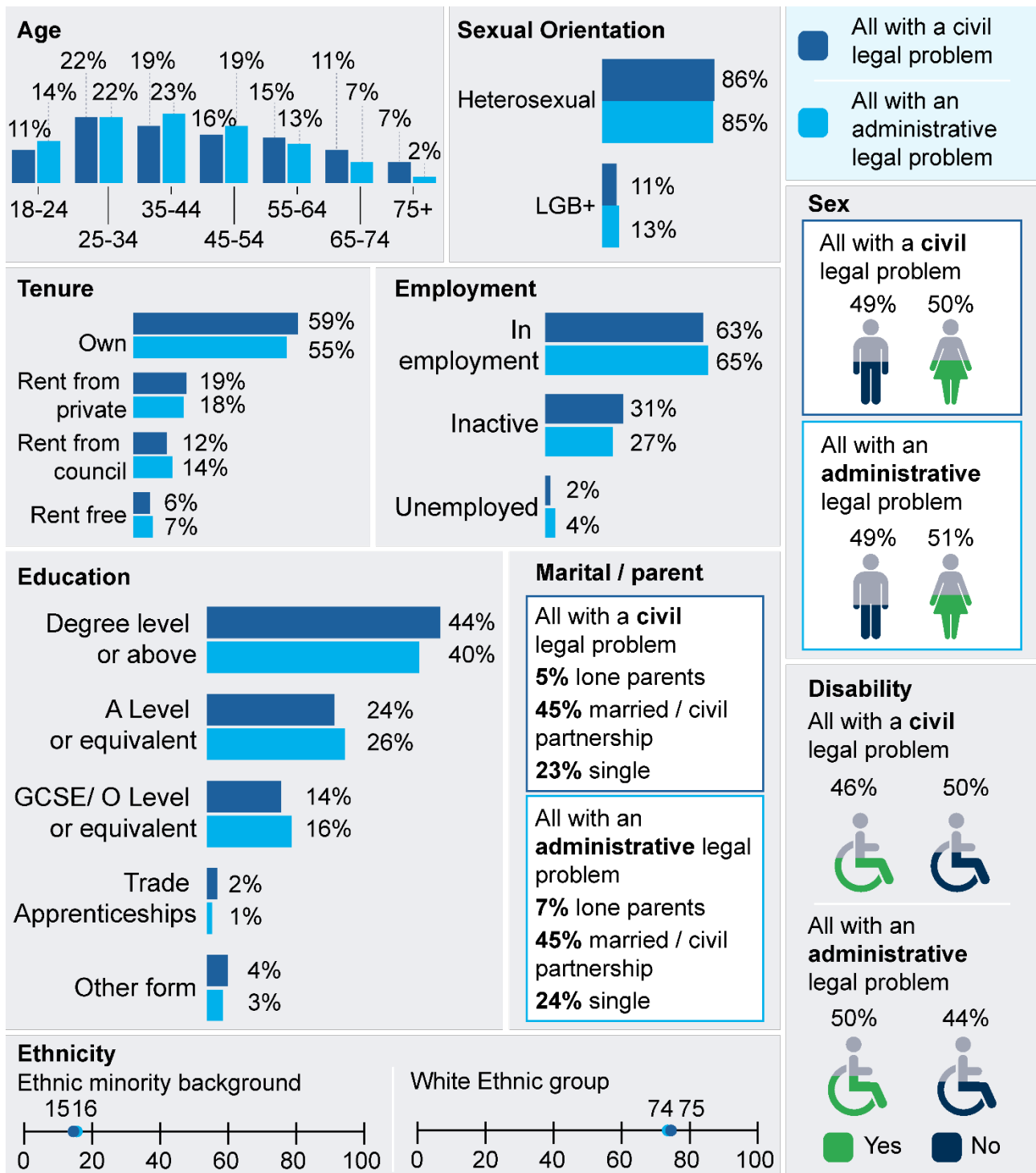
Socio-demographics	Differences
Religion	Those who identified as not being religious were more likely to experience problems (54%, compared to the overall average of 50%). Those who identified as Church of England / Scotland / Ireland were less likely to experience legal problems (39%). There are marked variations in the demographic composition of these groups which will affect these differences. For example, older participants were more likely to be religious and younger participants less so.
Household income	People whose household income was under £14,000 per year were more likely to experience legal problems (59% compared to 51% for those earning above £60,000 and 50% in other income bands). Otherwise, there were no significant variations in likelihood of experiencing at least one problem by income level.

2.4 Profile of those experiencing civil, administrative, and family problems

Many of the socio-demographic variations observed within overall problem prevalence are also evident when problem types are analysed separately.

Figure 2.6 shows the profile of those with civil legal problems and administrative legal problems. Family problems are not included in Figure 2.6 due to small base sizes.

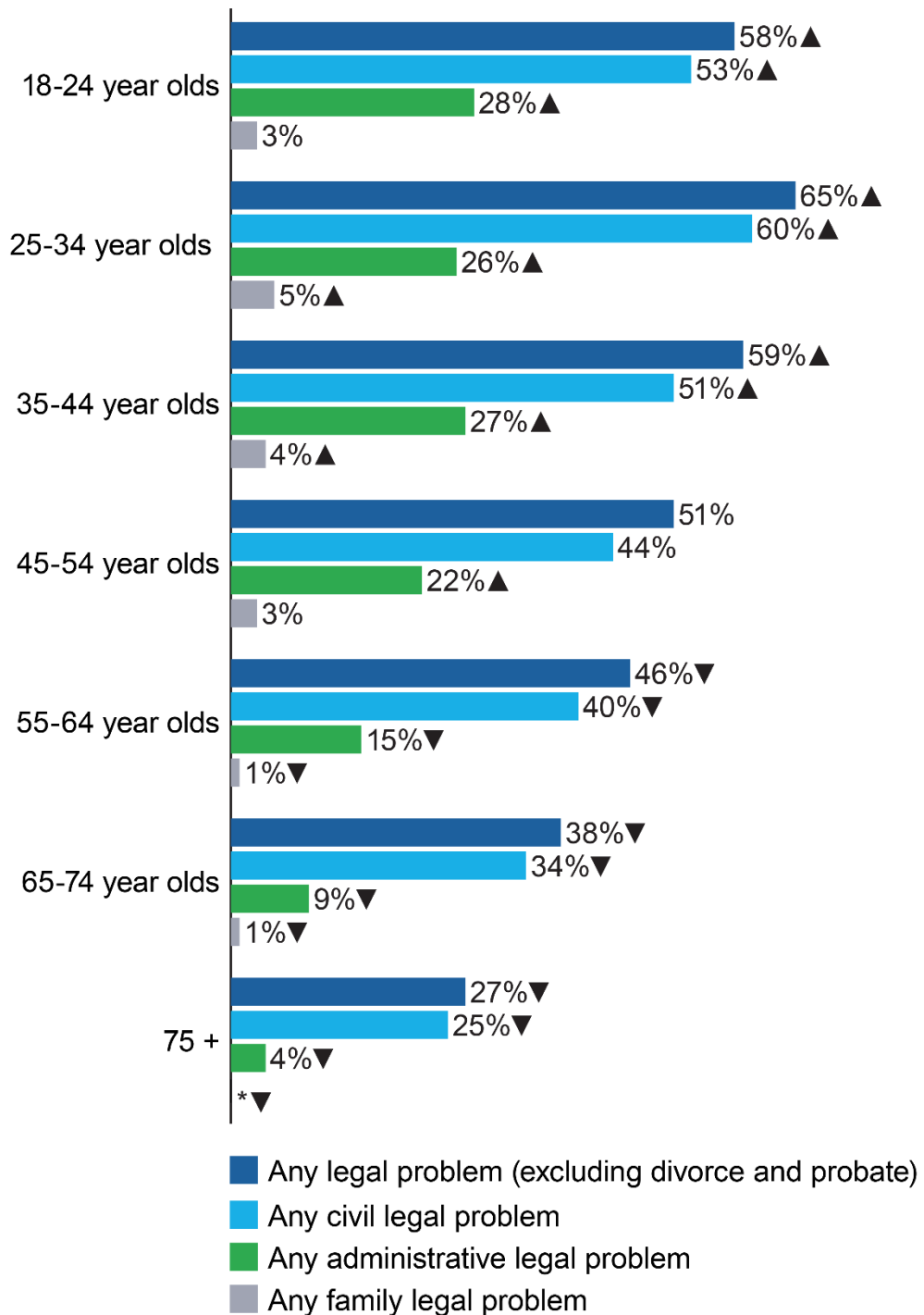
Figure 2.6: Profile of those with a civil or administrative legal problem in the last 18 months



Source: Legal Problem and Resolution Survey 2023. All those with a civil problem in the last 18 months (4,415), all those with an administrative legal problem in the last 18 months (1,782). This examines the demographic profile. Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding. People can experience both a civil and an administrative problem and so can be double counted.

Across all types of problems, there were distinctive differences by age, as shown in Figure 2.7. The 25–34-year-old age group were the most likely to have experienced a civil or family legal problem, whilst 18–24-year-olds were the most likely to have experienced an administrative legal problem. In general, those aged 18–44 were more likely to have experienced different problem types, with likelihood decreasing across older age groups.

Figure 2.7: Experience of different problem categories by age



Source: (D1a-D1n) Did you have any problems concerning...? Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323), all 18–24-year-olds (392), all 25–34-year-olds (1,226), all 35–44-year-olds (1,467), all 45–54-year-olds (1,729), all 55–64-year-olds (2,221), all 65–74-year-olds (2,152), all 75 or older (1,137).

* Answers under 1%.

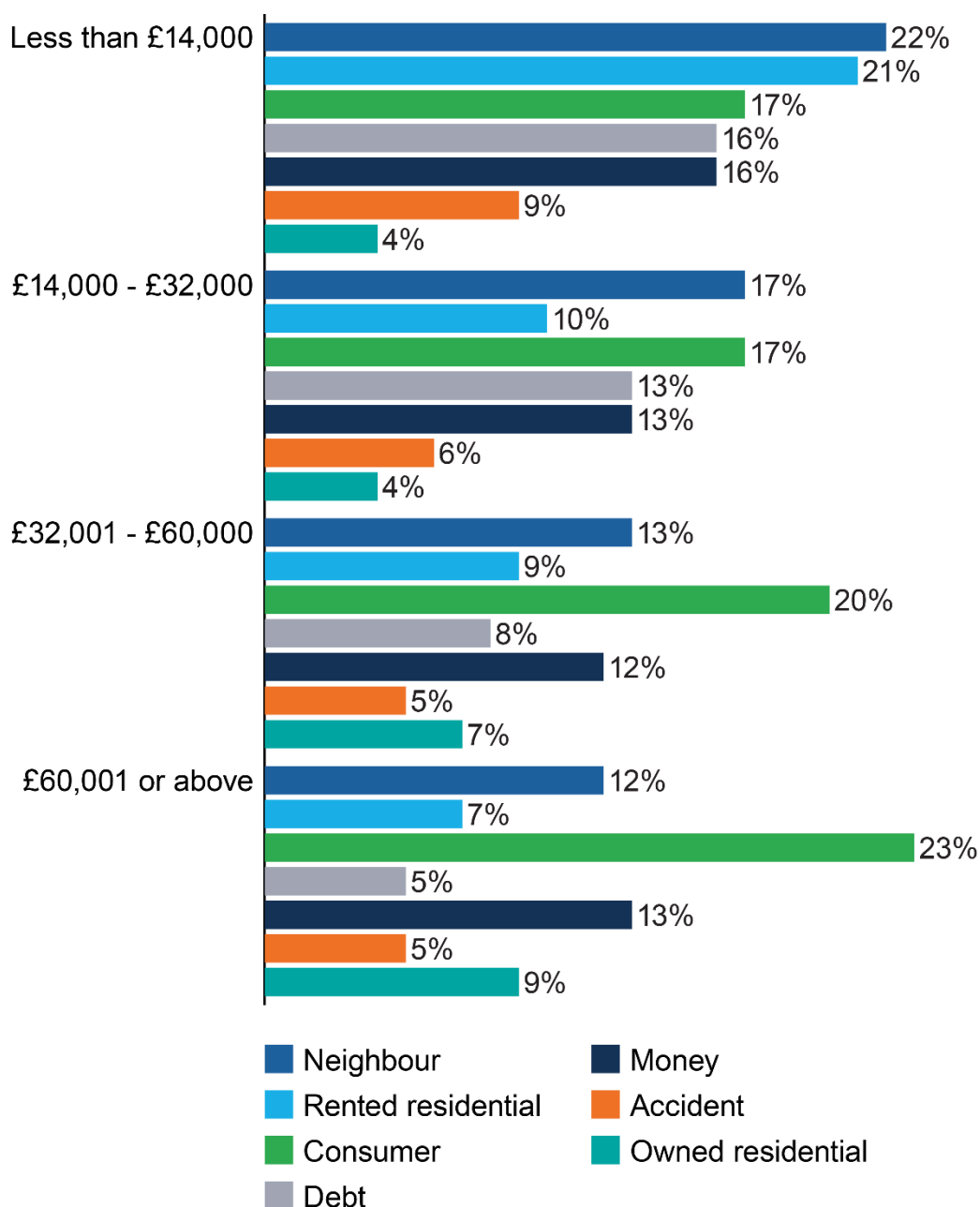
▼▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Civil legal problems

Some characteristics of people who were more likely to experience civil legal problems are intuitive. For example, those who rented from a private landlord, or the council / housing association were more likely than other groups to have experienced legal problems related to renting a residence.

There were some differences in the likelihood of experiencing civil legal problems by household income that illustrate how variations across problem types can be more nuanced than when looking at overall prevalence rates. Figure 2.8 illustrates how those with a higher household income were more likely to experience consumer problems and problems concerning their owned residence. Separately, those on lower household incomes were more likely to experience neighbour problems, problems with their rented residence, debt, money, and accident problem categories.

Figure 2.8 Experience of civil legal problem categories by household income



Source: (D1a-D1n) Did you have any problems concerning...? Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323), all earning less than £14,000 (878), all earning between £14,000–£32,000 (2,595), all earning £32,001–£60,000 (2,687), all earning £60,001 or above (2,035). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to ‘Don’t know/prefer not to say’ responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

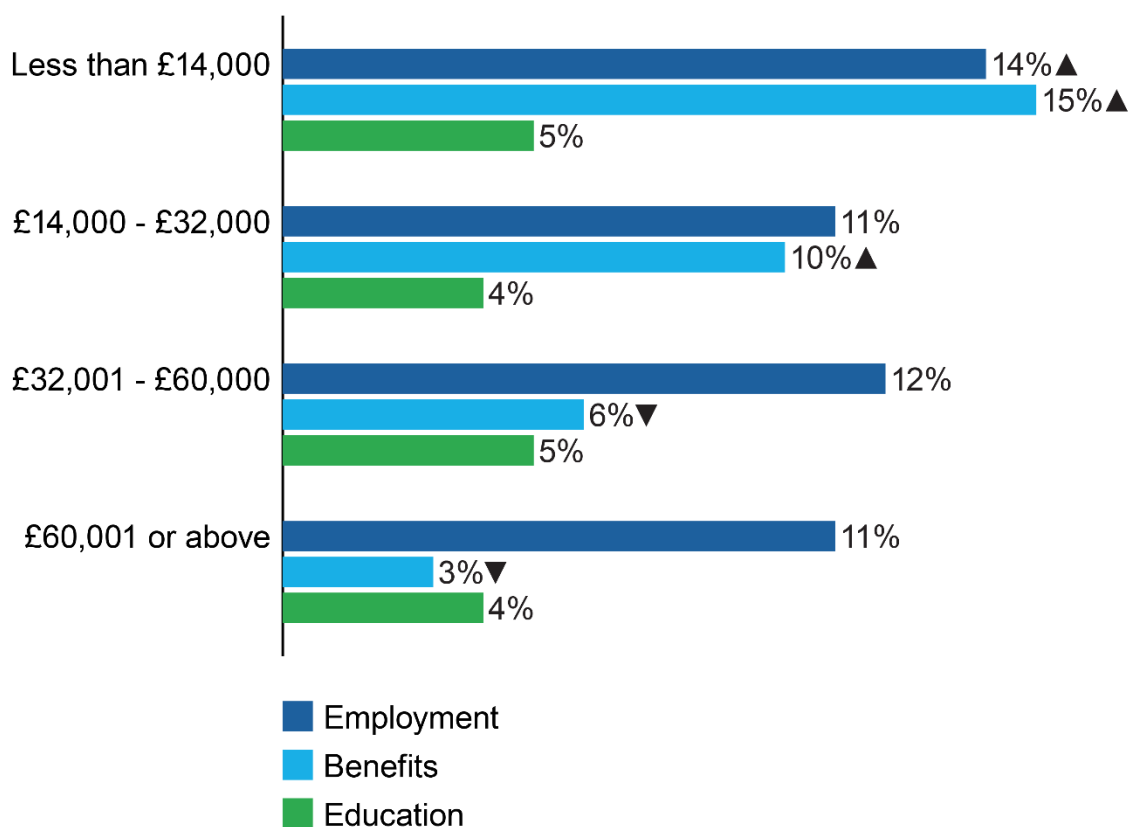
Administrative legal problems

Some of the variations in the prevalence of administrative legal problems across different socio-demographic groups also tended to be intuitive. For example, those in receipt of means-tested benefits were especially more likely to experience problems around benefits.

People who were unemployed at the time of interview were more likely to have experienced administrative legal problems (36%) than employed people (21%), reflecting unemployed people being more likely to interact with the benefits system. This was different to civil legal problems, which both employed and unemployed people were equally likely to experience.

People on lower incomes were more likely to experience administrative problems overall and were more likely to experience employment and benefit-related problems. However, there was no variation by household income with regards to experience of education-related problems, as shown in Figure 2.9.

Figure 2.9: Experience of administrative legal problem categories by household income



Source: (D1a-D1n) Did you have any problems concerning...? Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323), all earning less than £14,000 (878), all earning between £14,000–£32,000 (2,595), all earning £32,001–£60,000 (2,687), all earning £60,001 or above (2,035). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to ‘Don’t know/prefer not to say’ responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Family legal problems

This section focuses on the socio-demographics where the risk of experiencing family legal problems is substantially higher than average and where the risk factor was unique to family legal problems.

Whilst some groups were statistically more likely to have experienced family legal problems (such as those with children and those who were separated), the proportion of respondents experiencing problems within these groups tended to still be low.

Single parents were the group most likely to experience family legal problems, with around one in five (21%) having experienced at least one such problem within the 18 months before the interview.

Marital status of respondents also correlates with likelihood of experiencing family legal problems. Around one in six (16%) of those who had separated from their partner had experienced a family legal problem. Those who were divorced (5%) or single (4%) were more likely to have experienced family legal problems compared to those who were married (1%). Similarly, those who were pregnant at the time of interview or at least a year prior to the interview were more likely to have experienced family legal problems (6%).

More than one in ten (12%) of those who did not speak English well had experienced family legal problems in the 18 months before interview. People renting from the council / a housing association were also more likely (7%) to experience family legal problems, as were those receiving means-tested benefits (9%).

Divorce / Dissolution of a civil partnership

The number of people who had experienced a divorce / dissolution of a civil partnership was comparatively low (1%). As a result, the findings around sub-group variations have a larger margin of error than for the analysis above.

As expected, single parents who previously had been in a legal partnership (22%) and people who were separated from their partner (25%) were the groups most likely to have experienced a divorce / dissolution of a civil partnership within the 18 months prior to interview.

Probate / Challenging a will

Only a small proportion of people were involved in challenging a will or any probate proceedings in the 18 months prior to the survey (4%). The characteristics of people who were more likely to experience probate / challenging a will tend to reflect the nature of these types of proceedings.

People who were widowed (9%) and those aged 55 to 74 were the most likely to have been involved with probate / challenging a will (5% of 55–64-year-olds and 6% of 65–74-year-olds).

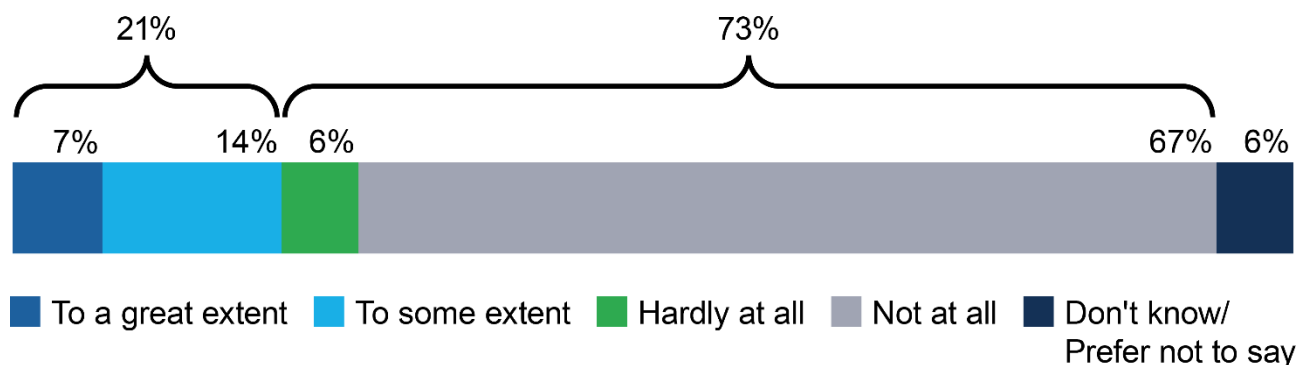
2.5 Impact of COVID-19 on people's experiences of legal problems

Respondents were asked to what extent they thought their legal problem was related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The fieldwork for this survey was conducted between March and August 2023 when there were no COVID-19 restrictions in place. However, because respondents were asked to reflect on problems in the previous 18 months, COVID-19 may have had some impact during this reference period. The last domestic COVID-19 measures in England were lifted in February 2022 and the final COVID-19 regulations in Wales were lifted at the end of May 2022.

Around one in five (21%) respondents thought that the problem they had experienced was related to the COVID-19 pandemic to at least some extent, as shown in Figure 2.10.²⁰

²⁰ Respondents who had experienced multiple problems were asked to focus on their second most recent problem for this question.

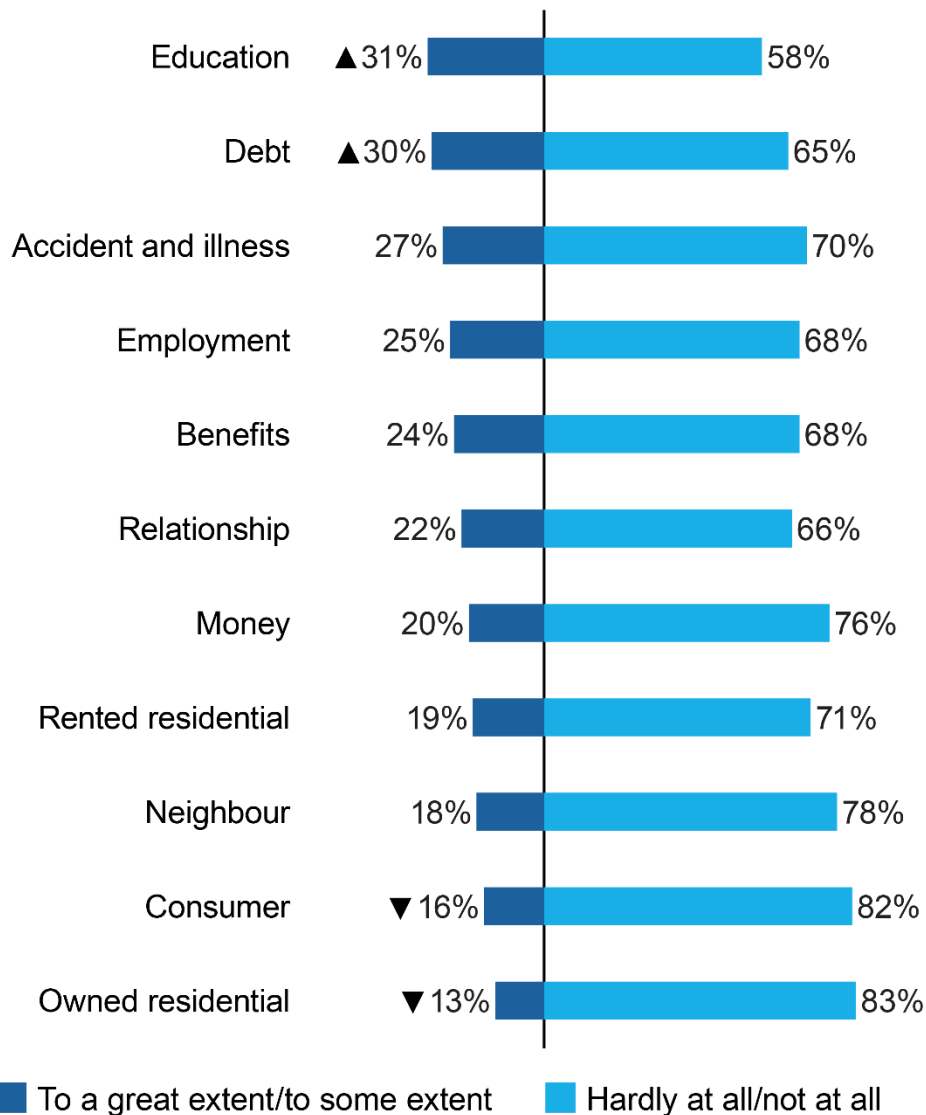
Figure 2.10: Extent to which problems experienced were felt to be related to the COVID-19 pandemic



Source: (E_COVID) To what extent, if at all, was your problem related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 Base: Adults in England and Wales who have a legal problem (4,988). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

The extent to which people considered their problem being linked to COVID-19 differed by the type of problem experienced, as shown in Figure 2.11. Those who experienced education and debt problems were more likely to think their problem was linked to COVID-19. In contrast, those who experienced problems with a residence they own were least likely to think their problem was linked to COVID-19.

Figure 2.11: Extent to which different problems categories were thought to be linked to COVID-19



Source: (E_COVID) To what extent, if at all, was your problem related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Weight 3 – Category Base: Adults in England and Wales who have a legal problem (4,988), all asked follow-up on consumer (811), employment (455), neighbours (582), owned residential (526), rented residential (563), debt (274), money (601), benefits (463), relationships (168), accident & illness (255). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to ‘Don’t know/prefer not to say’ responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼ ▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

There were some differences by socio-demographic characteristics:

- People living in Wales were more likely than those in England to think their problem was linked to COVID-19 (32% compared with 20%).
- People aged between 25 and 44 were more likely than other age groups to think that their problem was related to COVID-19 (27% compared to 16% of those aged 45 or older).
- Almost a quarter of those with a physical or mental health condition or illness similarly felt there was at least some link between their problem and COVID-19 (23% compared to 18% of those without a condition).
- More than a third (35%) of respondents who identified as Muslim thought COVID-19 was related to their legal problem, potentially reflecting the fact that Muslim respondents were slightly more likely to have experienced debt and education-related legal problems.

2.6 Chapter conclusions

- The scale of legal problems and experiences of people across all socio-demographic groups highlights the broad scope that 'legal problems' cover.
- Some groups are more likely to experience legal problems, such as people from ethnic minority backgrounds, adults with long-term conditions, those on means-tested benefits and single parents.
- Variations in how likely people are to associate their problem with the Covid-19 pandemic may illustrate how the pandemic has potentially boosted the incidence of particular problem types (e.g., education and debt problems).

3. Experience of multiple problems

3.1 Summary

- Problems tend to cluster. People who experience one problem type are comparatively more likely to experience another problem in a different problem category.
- Levels of problem clustering varied depending on the characteristics of problems and individuals.
- Despite the levels of problem clustering, most people who experience multiple legal problems in different categories do not think they are linked. However, people who have multiple problems of the same category were more likely to consider these as part of a series.
- Relationship breakdown and accident-related problems were the most likely to cluster with other problem categories.
- Some groups were particularly vulnerable to experiencing certain types of problem clustering, but these are different to the groups who are overall more likely to experience a legal problem. This is partially driven by the fact that different groups are more likely to experience certain problem types.
- People who experience the same problem category a higher number of times were more likely to use the most formal resolution process (going to court or using arbitration). Conversely, people who experienced a problem category once or twice were more likely to use self-help as their most formal resolution process.

3.2 Chapter Introduction

This chapter focuses on people with multiple problems and whether there are certain types of problems which are more likely to cluster. Findings are presented from two data sets: an individual (respondent) level data set, as per other chapters, and a problem level data set. Within the survey, respondents could provide details for up to four separate problems, therefore some percentages are based on the total number of problems experienced in the 18 months prior to interview. For further information on this, see the technical report.

As in chapter 2, this chapter discusses legal problems within different groupings: the three **broader jurisdictional categories of administrative, civil, and family legal problems**, which are made up of **problem categories** (such as employment problems), and then the **individual types of problems** that people have experienced within each problem category (such as discrimination at work). See Table 2.1 for a more detailed explanation of the legal problems covered within the survey and how these are categorised.

3.3 Extent to which problems are linked

As reported in chapter 2, amongst those who had a legal problem, it was not unusual for people to experience multiple problems. Just over half (52%) of those who had a legal problem in the past 18 months had experienced more than one problem category.

How interlinked are legal problem categories?

Just over one in three (35%) of those who had experienced multiple problems across different categories reported that at least some of their problems were related to the same issue. One in eight (12%) thought all their problems were related to the same underlying issue, while around a quarter (23%) said that some of their problems were related to the same issue but that others were separate. Just over half (57%) of those who experienced more than one problem category (e.g., a person may have experienced a consumer problem and a problem with rented property) reported that their problems were related to separate issues.

Figure 3.1: Whether multiple problems were related to the same or different underlying issues



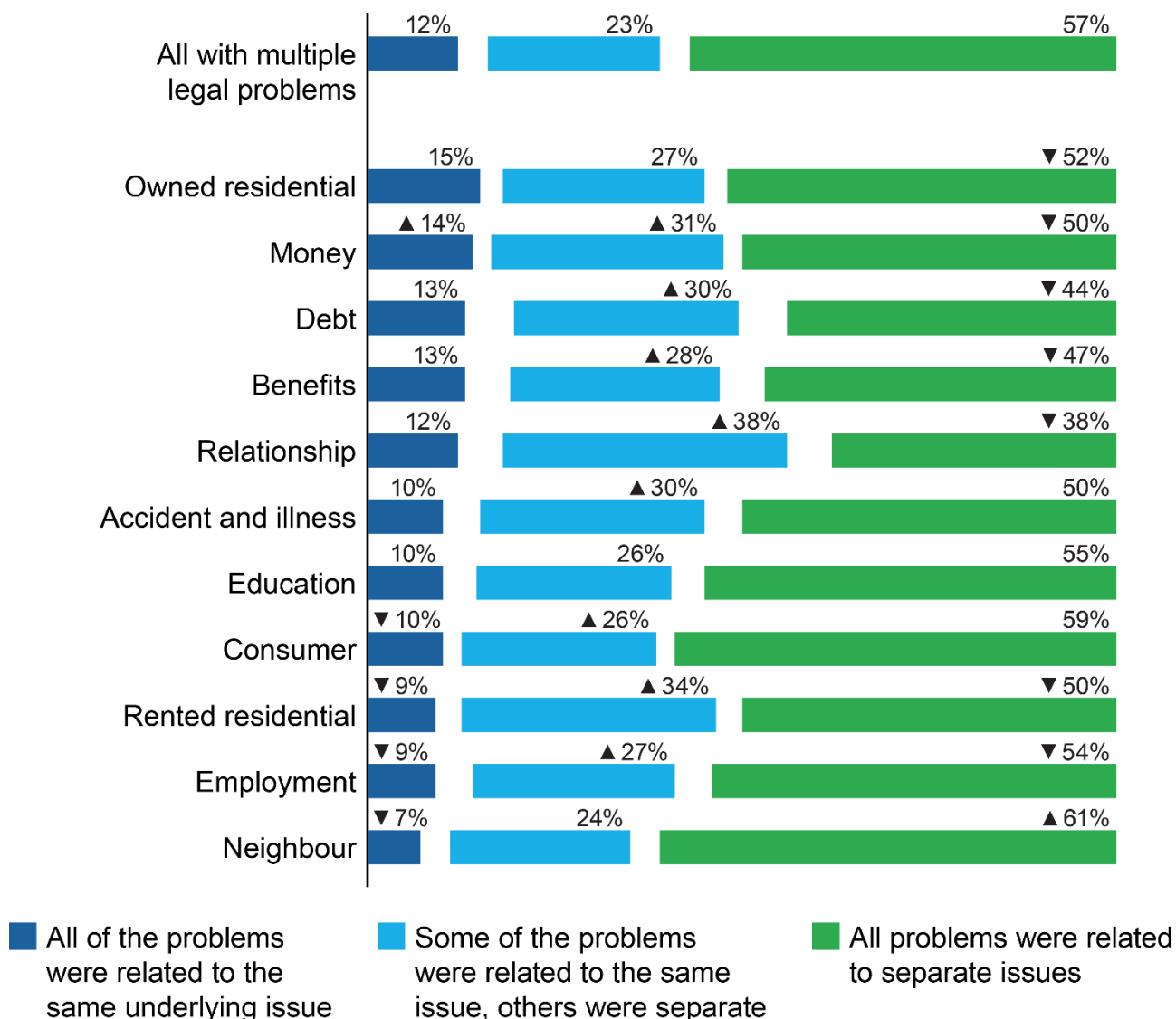
- All of the problems were related to the same underlying issue
- Some of the problems were related to the same issue, others were related to separate issues
- All problems were related to separate issues
- Don't know/Can't remember
- Prefer not to say

Source: (D1new) Did this problem relate to the same underlying issue or were they relating to different issues? Base: Respondent level data, adults in England and Wales who had more than one legal problem (2,519). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Differences by legal problem category

People who experienced a problem relating to a relationship breakdown were the most likely to report that at least some of their problems across different categories related to the same underlying issue (50%). Those with a problem relating to an owned residential property or with money were the most likely to report that all their problems (across different categories) were related to the same underlying issue (15% and 14% respectively). In contrast, those with a neighbour(s) problem (61%) were the most likely to report that all their problems across different categories were related to separate issues.

Figure 3.2: Extent to which multiple legal problems were related to the same or different issues by legal problem category



Source: (D1 New) Did this problem relate to the same underlying issue or were they relating to different issues? Base: Respondent level data, all adults in England and Wales with more than one legal problem category in the last 18 months (2,519). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼ ▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Differences by problem characteristics

There were several problem characteristics that were more prominent in cases where people had multiple problem categories linked to the same underlying issue.²¹ Where

²¹ Problem characteristics are asked of the main problem followed up rather than each problem experienced.

there are differences, this will, to some extent, reflect different categories of legal problems being more prevalent among certain groups.

Table 3.1: Differences in extent to which legal problem categories are linked – by problem characteristics

Problem characteristics	Differences
Adverse consequences	Those who experienced adverse consequences were more likely to report that some of their problems were related to the same issue (28% vs 18% of those who did not experience adverse consequences).
How serious a problem was perceived to be	People who scored their problem as ‘very’ (28%) or ‘fairly’ (25%) serious were more likely to say that some of their problems were related to the same issue, compared to those who reported their problem was not serious (19%).
Discrimination	Those who experienced discrimination in relation to their legal problem were also more likely to report that some of their problems were related to the same issue (30% vs 21% of those who did not experience discrimination).
Perceptions of the problem being ‘legal’	People who perceived their problem as being legal from the outset were more likely to state that all their problems were relating to the same underlying issue. Around a fifth (18%) reported this, compared to one in ten (11%) of those who did not initially perceive their problem as legal.

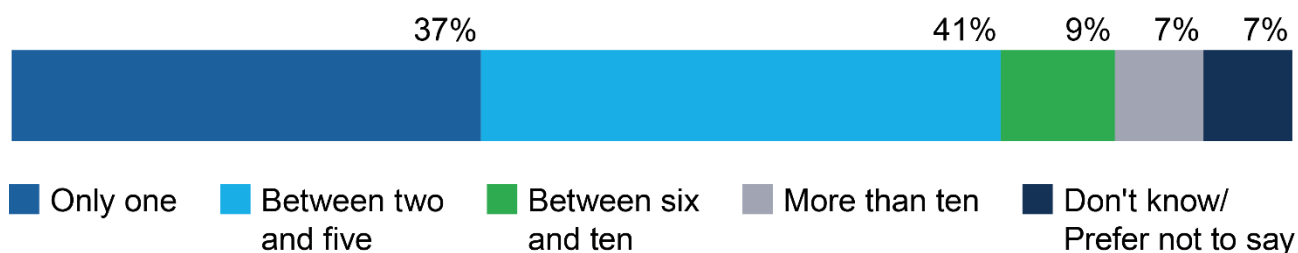
The following section presents findings at the problem level rather than at the individual level, meaning that figures are based on the proportions of all problems experienced (and so an individual may be counted multiple times for multiple problems). Full details of the survey structure are provided in the technical report.

Which legal problem categories were more likely to be experienced multiple times?

In some instances, problem categories were experienced multiple times over an 18-month period. This includes different ways in which problems might have been experienced. For example, a neighbour problem was likely to occur more than once, but that could be with excessive noise (several times) or excessive noise and damage to your property (two different problem descriptions falling in the same category). The majority of problem categories (57%) were experienced multiple times, typically between two and five times in the 18 months prior to interview (41%), though some problem categories were experienced more often (16% of problem categories were experienced six or more times).

Just over a third (37%) of all legal problem categories were experienced only once in the 18 months prior to interview. This varies widely by the type of legal problem category experienced.

Figure 3.3: Number of problems experienced within a legal problem category

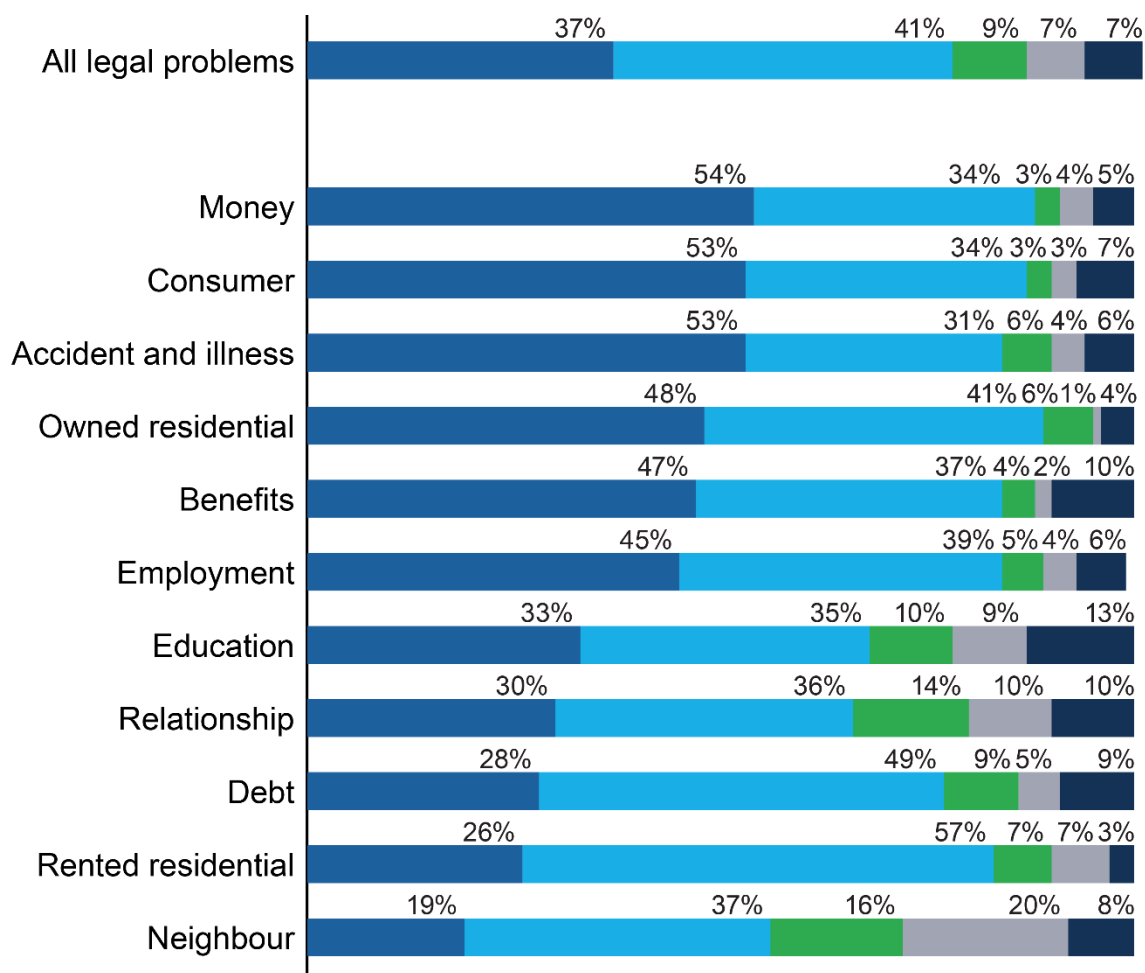


Source: (D2a) In total, how many “PROBLEM CATEGORY” have you experienced since in the last 18 months? Base: Problem level data, how many legal problems experienced (9,902).

Differences by legal problem category

The number of times a legal problem was likely to have occurred varied depending on the category involved. Problems relating to money (54%), consumer-related issues (53%) or accidents/illness (53%) were the most likely to have only occurred once. In contrast, rented property (57%) and debt (49%) problems were more likely than other problems to have occurred between two and five times. Other problem categories were comparatively more likely to have occurred six times or more over the same 18-month period (neighbour-related problems, relationship problems and/or education-related problems).

Figure 3.4: Number of problems experienced by legal problem category



■ Only one
 ■ Between two and five
 ■ Between six and ten
 ■ More than ten
 ■ Don't know/Prefer not to say

Source: (D2a) In total, how many “PROBLEM CATEGORY” have you experienced since in the last 18 months? Base: Problem level data, each legal problem someone experienced (9,902). Respondents can be double counted due to analysis by the number of problem. Due to weighting, percentages do not sum to 100%.

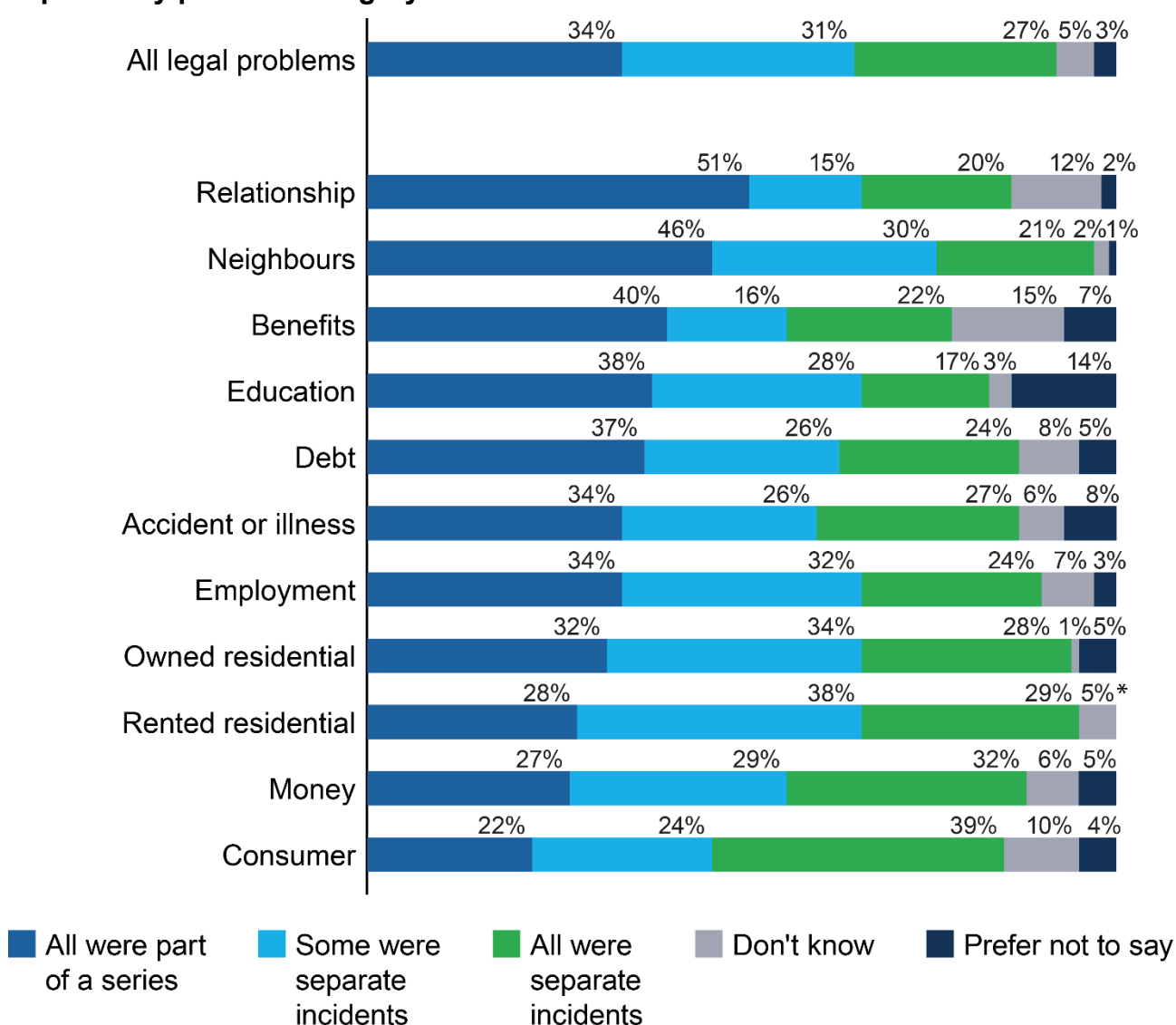
Extent to which problems were part of a series or separate

People who experienced more than one problem within a problem category (e.g., having two consumer problems, such as having a problem purchasing a faulty vehicle and a problem with defective building work) were asked whether those were entirely separate incidents or all part of a series. It was fairly evenly split between whether multiple problems within a problem category were likely to be part of the same series; some separate incidents, or all being separate incidents.

Differences by legal problem category

Relationship problems were most likely to be reported as all being part of the same series (51%). Problems relating to neighbours (46%) and benefits (40%) were also comparatively more likely to be reported as all being part of a series. Compared to other problem types, problems relating to money (32%) or consumer issues (39%) were more likely to report that all their problems (within a problem category) were related to separate incidents.

Figure 3.5: Extent to which problems within categories were part of series or separate by problem category



Source: (D2b) Were all of the problems part of a series or were any of them separate incidents?
 Base: Problem level data, how many legal problems experienced (9,902). * Indicates percentages lower than 1%. Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

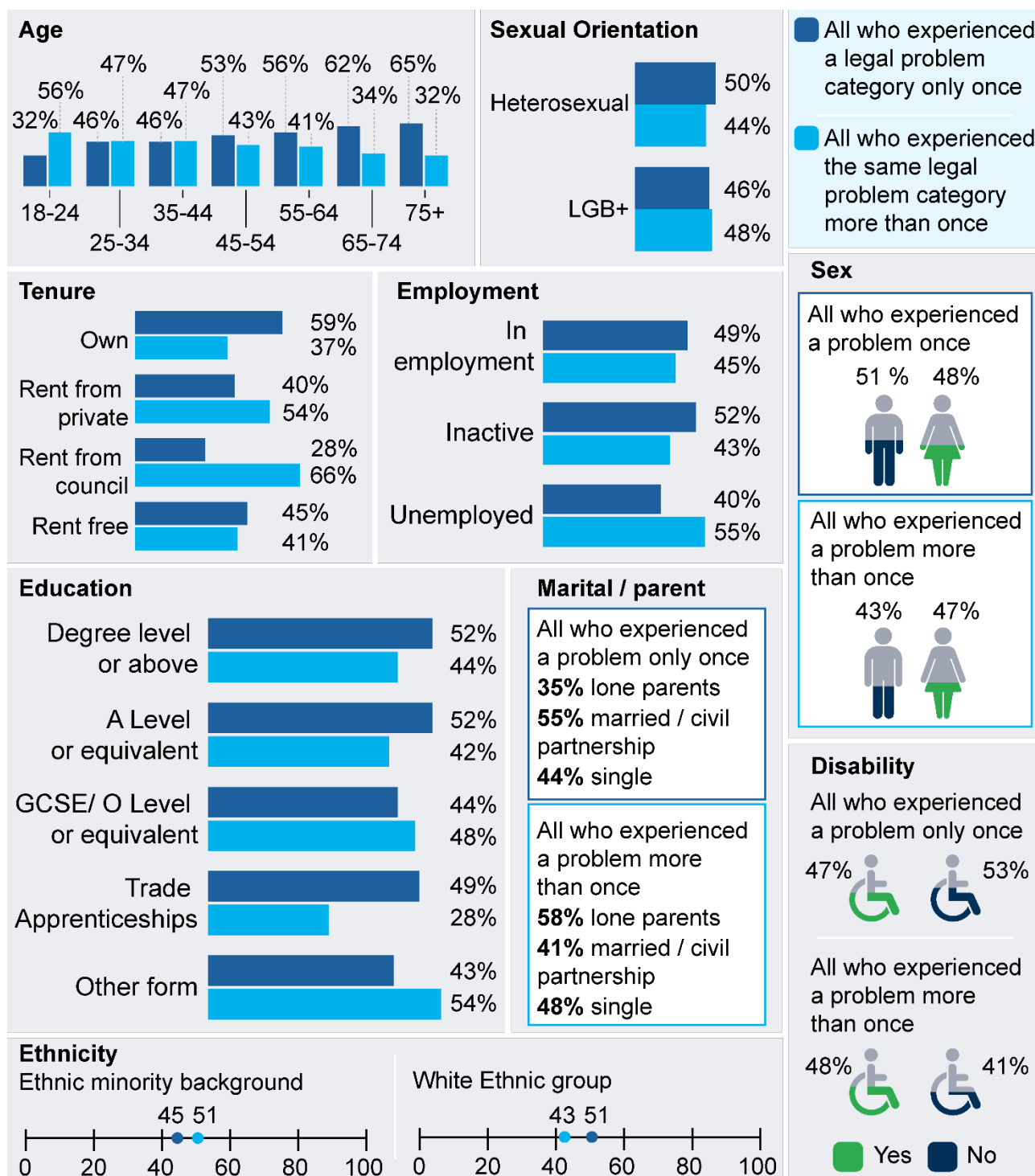
3.4 Which groups were more likely to experience multiple problems?

The following section presents findings at the individual level rather than at the problem level, meaning that figures are based on individual respondents.

There were some socio-demographic groups that were particularly vulnerable to experiencing multiple problems both across and within different types of problem category. These differences, to some extent, will interact with the type of legal problem experienced.

Younger people, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, single parent households and people with long-term health conditions were all more likely to have experienced multiple problems both across and within a category. There were very few differences by sex, religion, or marital status. This is displayed in Figure 3.6 below and outlined in Table 3.2.

Figure 3.6: Profile of those who experienced the same problem category one or more than once in the last 18 months



Source: Legal Problem and Resolution Survey 2023. Base: Respondent level data. All those with a civil problem in the last 18 months (4,415), all those who experienced a problem category only once (2,723), all those who experienced a problem category more than once (2,030). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Table 3.2: Significant socio-demographic differences in whether people experienced the same legal problem multiple times

Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	<p>Younger age groups were more likely to report experiencing the same problem a higher number of times. They were more likely to experience a problem between six and ten times (e.g. 12% of 18–24-year-olds vs 3–7% for other age groups).</p> <p>Older age groups were more likely to experience the same problem a fewer number of times compared to younger age groups, including experiencing a problem category only once (e.g. 62% of 65–74-year-olds vs 32% of 18–24-year-olds).</p>
Ethnicity	<p>People from a white ethnic background were more likely to experience a problem only once (51%) compared to people from an ethnic minority background (43%).</p>
Disability status	<p>People with a long-term health condition were more likely to experience a problem more than ten times compared with people without a long-term health condition (7% vs 4%).</p> <p>In contrast, people without a long-term health condition were comparatively more likely to experience a problem only once (53% vs 47% of those who do have a long-term health condition).</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>People who identify as bisexual were more likely to experience the same problem more than ten times than heterosexual respondents (13% vs 5% respectively).</p>
Employment status	<p>Unemployed respondents were more likely to report experiencing the same problem more than ten times (15%, vs 5% of those in employment).</p>
Benefits status	<p>Those who receive means-tested benefits were more likely to report experiencing the same problem a higher number of times. One in ten (10%) experienced the same problem more than ten times, compared to 3% of those who receive non-means tested benefits and 5% of those who do not receive any benefits.</p>
Single parents	<p>People in single parent households were comparatively more likely to experience the same problem between six and ten times (11% vs 5% of those in multiple parent²² households).</p> <p>Those in multiple parent households were more likely to have experienced a problem only once (50% vs 35% of respondents in single parent households).</p>

²² Multiple parent household refers to households that consist of a child/children aged 0–18 years old and adults living as a couple.

Socio-demographics	Differences
Household income	Those on lower household incomes were more likely to report experiencing the same problem a higher number of times (e.g. 9% of those with a £14,000–£32,000 income reported having experienced a problem between six- and ten-times vs 5% of those with a £32,000–£60,000 income).
Eligibility for legal aid ²³	Those who are eligible for legal aid were comparatively more likely to have experienced the same problem between six and ten times than those not eligible (10% vs 5%). In contrast, those who were not eligible were more likely than those who are to have experienced a problem only once (56% vs 39%).
Tenure	People who rent from the council / housing association were more likely to have experienced a problem more than ten times than those who rent privately (10% vs 5%).
English proficiency	Those who can speak English very well (51%) were more likely to experience the same problem only once, compared to those who speak it well (39%).
Digital capability	People with high digital capability were more likely to experience the same problem a fewer number of times. More than four fifths (83%) of respondents with a high score experienced a problem five times or fewer.

Impact of different factors on problem clustering

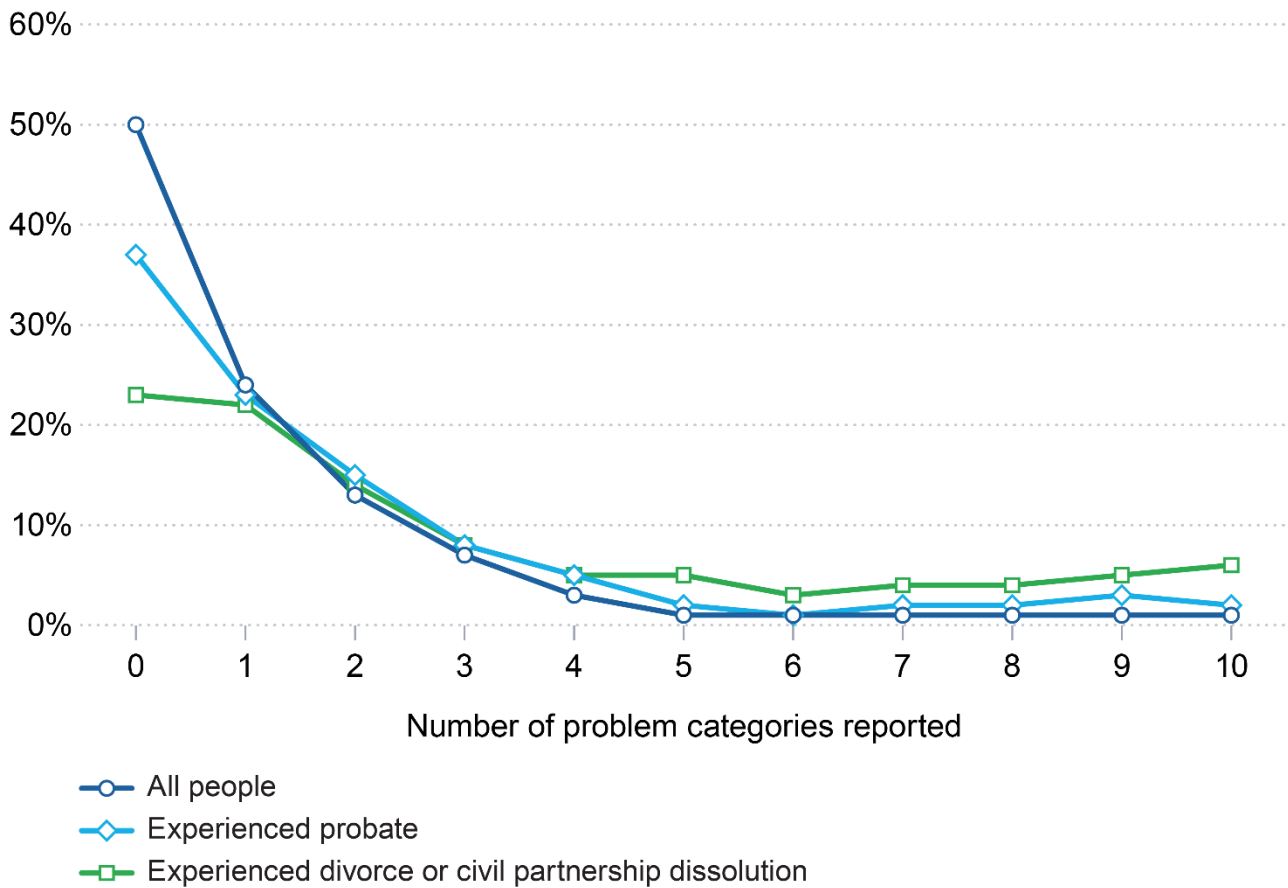
Impact of probate and divorce on problem clustering

Those who had experienced probate or divorce were more likely than average to report having experienced multiple problem categories, see Figure 3.7.

²³ For further information on the legal aid definition see Appendix A. This definition includes financial eligibility only.

Figure 3.7: Number of problem categories experienced by those who had experienced divorce / probate

Percentage of respondents



Source: (F1) Have you been involved in any divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership proceedings, even if no divorce or dissolution was obtained? Base: Respondent level data, adults who have experienced divorce / dissolution of a civil partnership (162) and (FA1) Have you been involved in challenging a will or any probate proceedings? Base: Respondent level data all who have experienced probate challenging a will (434).

Which legal problem categories were more likely to be associated with problem clustering?

People who experienced certain types of problems were more likely to experience problem clustering, in particular those who had a relationship problem or an accident/illness problem.

As shown in Figure 3.8, those with a relationship breakdown related problem were 35 percentage points more likely than others to have also experienced a debt problem. Similarly, those with an accident and illness-related problem were more likely to have also experienced a problem relating to employment, money, or a consumer issue.

Comparatively, consumer problems are not associated with the same level of problem clustering.

Figure 3.8: Uplift in the likelihood of experiencing another problem type amongst those with a consumer, relationship or accident and illness problem (vs all respondents)

	All with a consumer problem	All with a relationship problem	All with an accident or illness problem
Consumer problem		● 20	● 26
Employment problem	● 10	● 12	● 30
Neighbours' problem	● 12	● 24	● 24
Owned residential problem	● 7	● 11	● 9
Rented residential problem	● 9	● 16	● 17
Debt problem	● 7	● 35	● 21
Money problem	● 15	● 19	● 27
Benefits problem	● 7	● 26	● 18
Relationship problem	● 3		● 8
Education problem	● 4	● 23	● 8
Accident and illness problem	● 9	● 21	

Source: (D1a-D1n, F1, FA1) Did you have any problems concerning...? Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323), all with a consumer problem (1,885), all with an accident or illness problem (571).

3.5 Differences in how people resolve multiple problems

Help obtained when trying to resolve multiple problems

People who experienced multiple problems were more likely to obtain all types of help (legal, professional, or self-obtained) than those who had experienced only one type of legal problem, as shown in Figure 3.9. The types of help obtained are categorised as follows:

- **Formal legal help:** information, advice and help from a solicitor's firm, a barrister, a law centre and/or Civil Legal Advice²⁴
- **Other professional help:** information, advice and help from an independent advisor who can provide a wide range of advice, including legal advice (such as Citizens Advice, a trade union, Shelter, the Money and Pensions Service, or other unspecified advisers), or from organisations (such as Court and Tribunals Service Centres, National Digital Support Service, the police, credit card companies or banks, housing associations or local councils)
- **Self-obtained help:** e.g., from the internet or leaflets, family and friends or another party
- **Tried to obtain advice or information but failed**
- **Did not try to obtain advice, information or help**

The more problem categories people experienced, the more likely they were to seek legal advice. However, around one in seven (14%) of those experiencing four or more legal problem categories did not obtain any advice despite their multiple problems.

Resolution strategies across multiple problem types

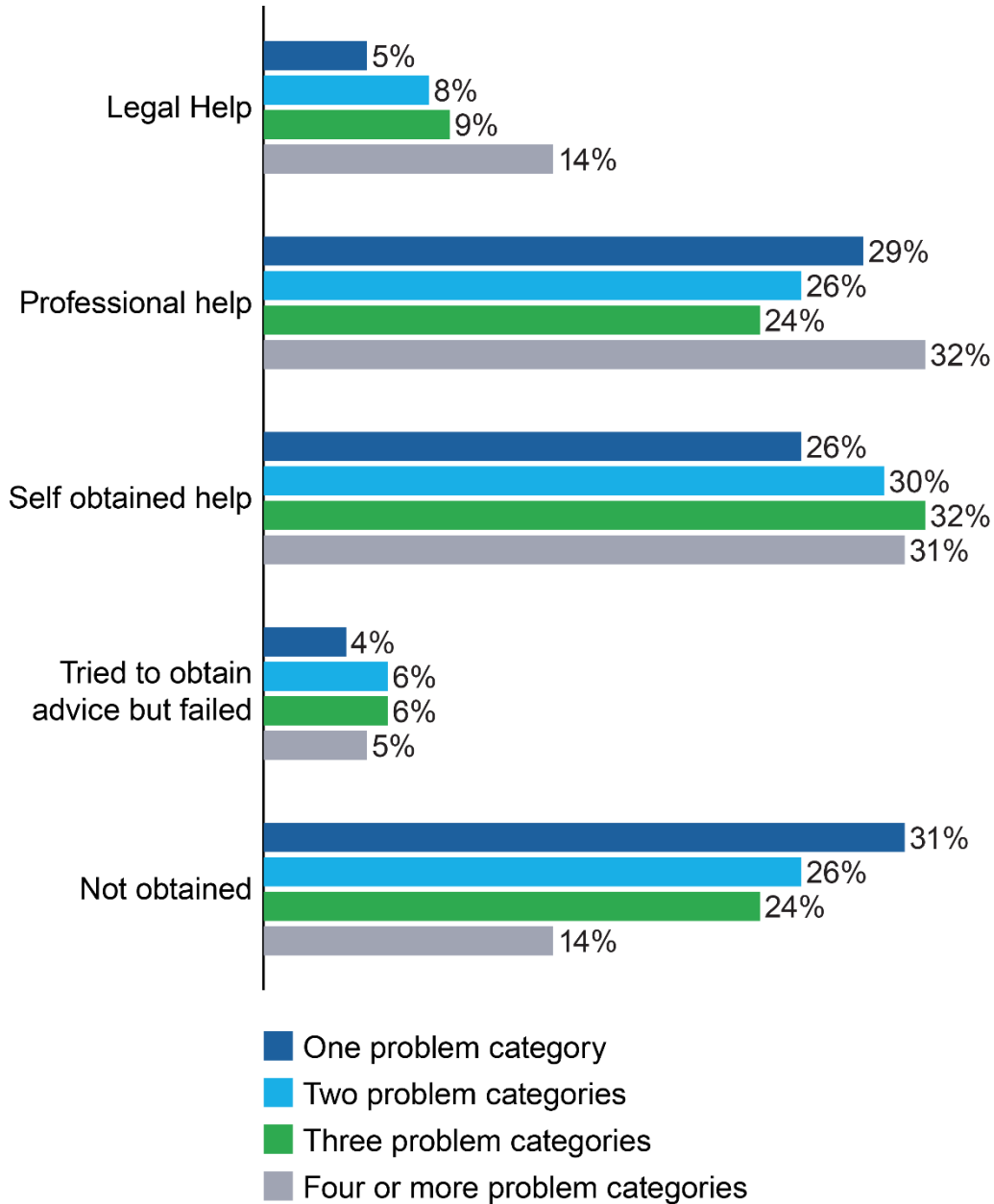
Over half of people experiencing either one (55%), two (53%) or three (56%) legal problem categories used self-help²⁵ as their most formal resolution strategy. Those who had experienced four or more legal problem categories were less likely to have used self-help as their only strategy (38%) and most likely to have used court, mediation or arbitration.

²⁴ Civil Legal Advice provides free and confidential advice as part of legal aid for people in England or Wales.

²⁵ Self-obtained help is separate from self-help as a resolution strategy. Self-help as a resolution strategy includes trying to talk to those on the other side of the problem, or taking action to try and resolve the problem, which is why the percentage for 'self-help' is higher than that for 'self-obtained help'.

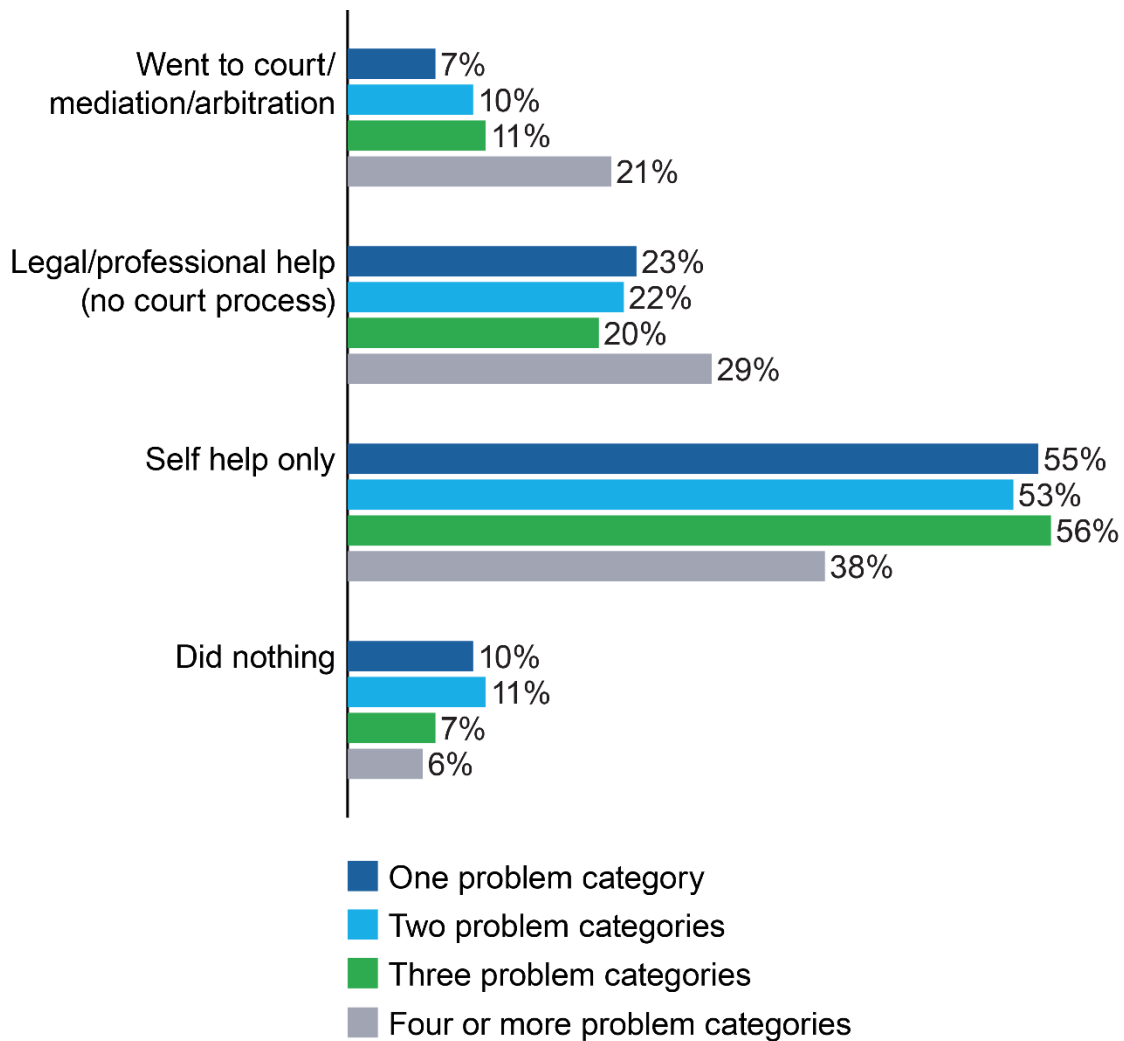
Around a fifth (21%) of those who had four or more problem categories had done so, compared to 7% of those experiencing only one legal problem category.

Figure 3.9: Most formal type of help obtained by number of problems experienced



Source: (D5a) When trying to sort out this “PROBLEM DESCRIPTION”, did you obtain information, advice or any other form of help from any of the following? Base: Respondent level data, adults in England and Wales with one problem category (2,469), with two problem categories (1,289), with three problem categories (647), with four or more problem categories (583). Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

Figure 3.10: Most formal resolution strategy by number of problem categories experienced



Source: (D5a) When trying to sort out this “PROBLEM DESCRIPTION”, did you obtain information, advice or any other form of help from any of the following? / (D7) Did any of the following things happen as part of this problem or sorting it out? Base: Respondent level data adults in England and Wales with one problem category (2,469), with two problem categories (1,289), with three problem categories (647), with four or more problem categories (583). Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

3.6 Chapter conclusions

- The majority of people who have a legal problem experience issues across at least two different problem categories. This suggests that increased experience can lead to heightened susceptibility across different problem categories. For some, this can lead to negative cycles and increase levels of adverse consequences.
- If someone experiences a relationship breakdown or an accident/illness problem, they are particularly vulnerable to experiencing other legal problems. These may be priority areas for intervention if seeking to avoid/reduce problem clustering.
- Among those who experience legal problems across numerous categories, there is a core group who continue to either rely on self-help or do nothing to resolve any of their problems.

4. Characteristics of legal problems

4.1 Summary

- Most of the problems experienced had concluded at the time of interview, with the majority having concluded within 18 months.
- This overall picture reflects the relatively high number of consumer and employment-related problems having concluded. Other categories of problem were more likely to be ongoing, particularly relationship breakdown, neighbour problems, and problems where discrimination has been experienced.
- One in seven people (15%) experienced discrimination during the course of their problem, rising to a third (33%) of those whose problem went to court, mediation, or arbitration.
- After 18 months, it becomes increasingly likely that a legal problem will be long-lasting and difficult to resolve. The longer a problem continues, the increased likelihood that a respondent will experience adverse consequences.
- Half of the respondents experienced some adverse consequence as a result of their problem (50%), with stress and other mental health impacts the most likely.
- How people perceive their problems provides important context for the resolution strategy they may pursue. Only around one in ten (11%) perceived their problem as legal at the outset, which may be a barrier to seeking legal advice.

4.2 Chapter introduction

This chapter analyses the characteristics of people's legal problems, covering a range of factors. This includes the differences between concluded and ongoing legal problems, whether people perceived their problem as 'legal' when it first started, who was viewed to be at fault, what adverse consequences people experienced (if any), their perceptions of how serious the problem was, and whether they experienced any discrimination in relation to the problem. This chapter mainly focuses on legal problems excluding divorce and probate.²⁶

All findings in this chapter are based on people who experienced a legal problem in the 18 months prior to interview. Respondents with multiple problems were asked follow-up questions on each legal problem they had experienced (for further information, see chapter 3). To allow comparisons to be made at the individual level, this chapter looks at the answers from one selected problem.²⁷ Findings have been weighted to mitigate against the impact of selecting one problem.²⁸

4.3 Concluded and ongoing legal problems

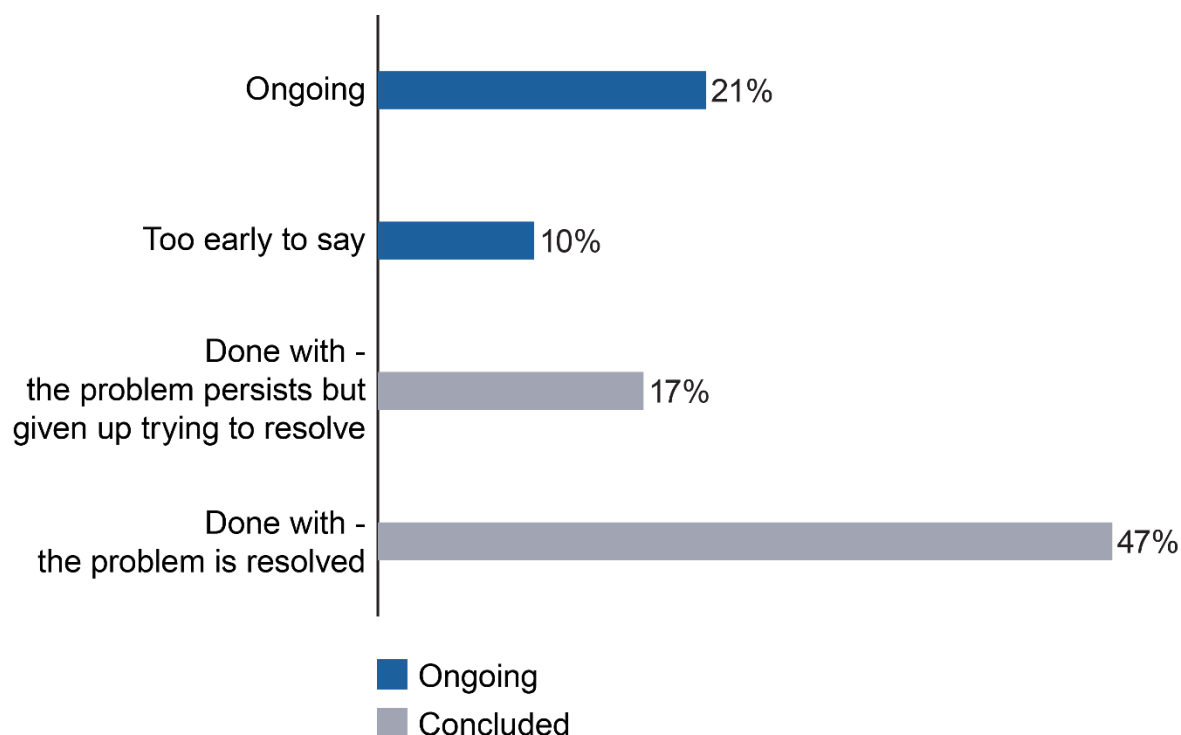
Just under two-thirds (64%) of people who experienced a legal problem within the last 18 months reported that the problem had concluded (either the problem was considered resolved or the respondent had given up trying to resolve it further) at the time of the interview. Around three in ten (31%) described their legal problem as 'ongoing' or thought it was 'too early to say'. These results are broadly similar to the 2014–15 LPRS.

²⁶ Divorce and probate are substantially different in nature and were covered in a separate section in the survey. The questions in this section were therefore not asked for those experiencing divorce or probate.

²⁷ Where respondents had experienced multiple problems. For further information on the problem selection process, see the technical report (Chapter 8).

²⁸ For further information on the weighting scheme, see the technical report (Chapter 8).

Figure 4.1: Percentage of ongoing and concluded problems

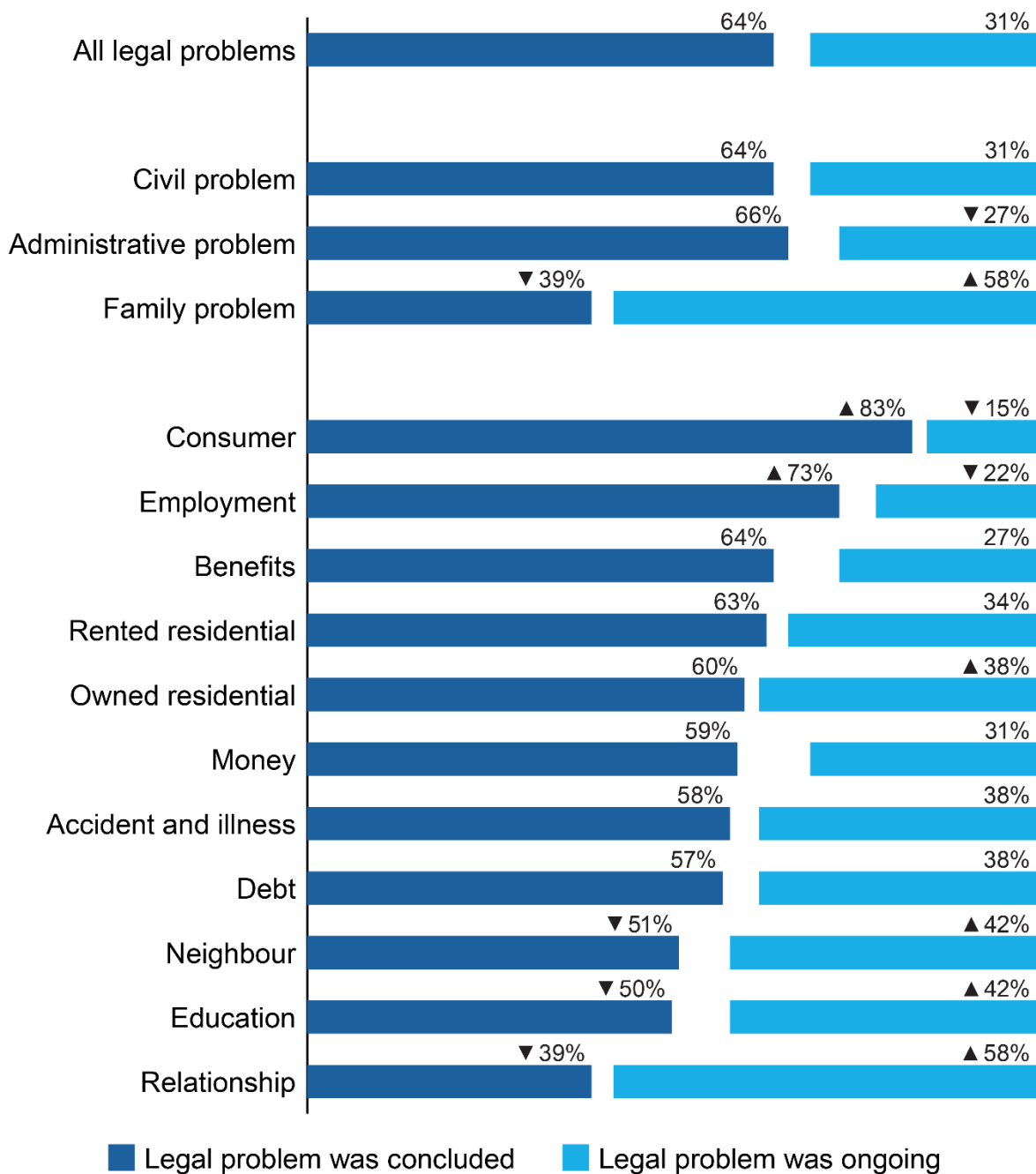


Source: (ED8NEW) Is the problem ongoing or done with? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months (4,988). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Differences by legal problem category

People who experienced consumer or employment problems were the most likely to describe their problem as concluded (83% for consumer and 73% for employment problems). In contrast, those who experienced relationship breakdown problems were the most likely to say it was ongoing at the time of interview (58%). Those who had a problem with a house they own (21%) were more likely than others to report that, although the problem persists, they had given up trying to resolve it further. Those with a debt problem (4%) were less likely to report that the problem persisted. See Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: Whether problems are concluded or ongoing by problem category



Source: (D8) Is the problem ongoing or done with? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months (4,988), all asked the follow-up about their civil (3,612), administrative (1,208), family (168), consumer problems (811), employment problems (455), neighbours (582), problems with a house they own (526), problems with a house they rent (563), debt problems (274), money problems (601), benefits problems (463), relationship problems (168), education problems (290), accident and illness problems (255). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼ ▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Socio-demographic differences

Some groups were more likely than others to report that their problem was ongoing. The key significant differences are detailed in the Table below. However, these variations may reflect the types of problems experienced to some extent and some of these socio-demographic variables will also interact (for example, those from ethnic minority background tend to be younger).

There were very few significant differences between people of different digital capabilities, incomes, education, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or legal aid eligibility.

Table 4.1: Significant socio-demographic differences for concluded and ongoing problems

Socio-demographics	Differences
Sex	Males were slightly more likely to report that their problem had concluded compared to females (66% of males, compared to 61% of females).
Age	There were few differences between age groups, though younger people were more likely to say that they did not know whether their problem was still ongoing or not (7% of 18–24-year-olds, compared to 1% of 65–74-year-olds).
Region	People living in Wales were more likely than those living in England to say that their problem was still ongoing (45% vs 30%). This difference does not appear to be due to people living in Wales experiencing different legal problem categories than those living in England.
Disability status	Those living with long-term illness or disability were more likely to report that their problem was ongoing (38% of those with a disability, compared to 25% of people who do not have a long-term illness or disability).
Benefits status	People on means-tested benefits were more likely to report that their legal problem was ongoing (39%, compared to 28% of those on not on benefits).
Single parents	Single parents were more likely to report ongoing problems (40% reported their problem as ongoing, compared with 31% of people in a multi-parent household).
Tenure	People who rent from the council or a housing association were more likely to report their problem as ongoing (40%, compared to 26% renting from a private landlord).

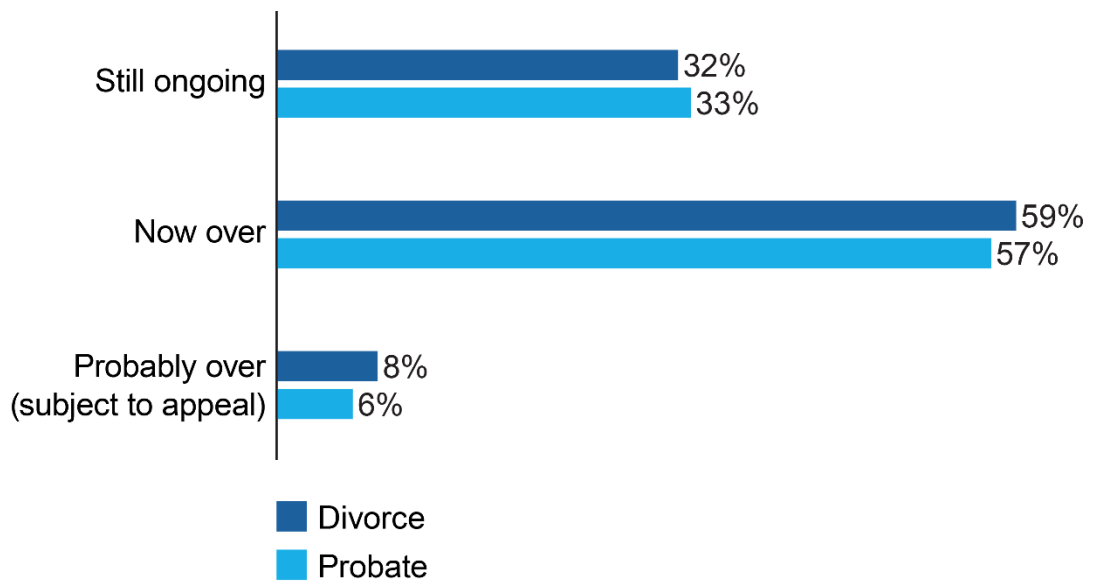
Socio-demographics	Differences
Legal capability ²⁹	<p>Overall, people with low legal confidence were just as likely as those with high legal confidence to report their problem as ongoing (16% and 15% respectively). However, those with low legal confidence were more likely to report that their problem had concluded because they had given up trying to resolve it further (21% of those with low legal confidence, compared to 11% of those with high legal confidence).</p> <p>A similar pattern is observed amongst those with low legal self-efficacy (23% of those with low legal self-efficacy had given up trying to resolve their problem further, compared to 14% of those with high legal self-efficacy).</p>

Divorce and probate³⁰

Around two thirds of people who had experienced divorce or had been involved in probate within the 18 months before the interview considered the proceedings ‘over’ or ‘probably over’ at the time of the interview. Around a third of those involved in a divorce (32%) or probate (33%) reported that the proceedings were still ongoing.

²⁹ Legal confidence and legal self-efficacy measures are derived from a series of statements. For further information, see the technical report.

³⁰ The base size is too small to analyse divorce and probate by socio-demographic differences.

Figure 4.3: Whether Divorce and Probate issues were ongoing

Source: (F2 / FA2) Would you say the proceedings are now over or still ongoing? Base: All Adults in England and Wales who have experienced a divorce or civil partnership dissolution (162), all adults in England and Wales who have been involved in will / probate proceedings (434). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

4.4 How long did people's legal problems last?

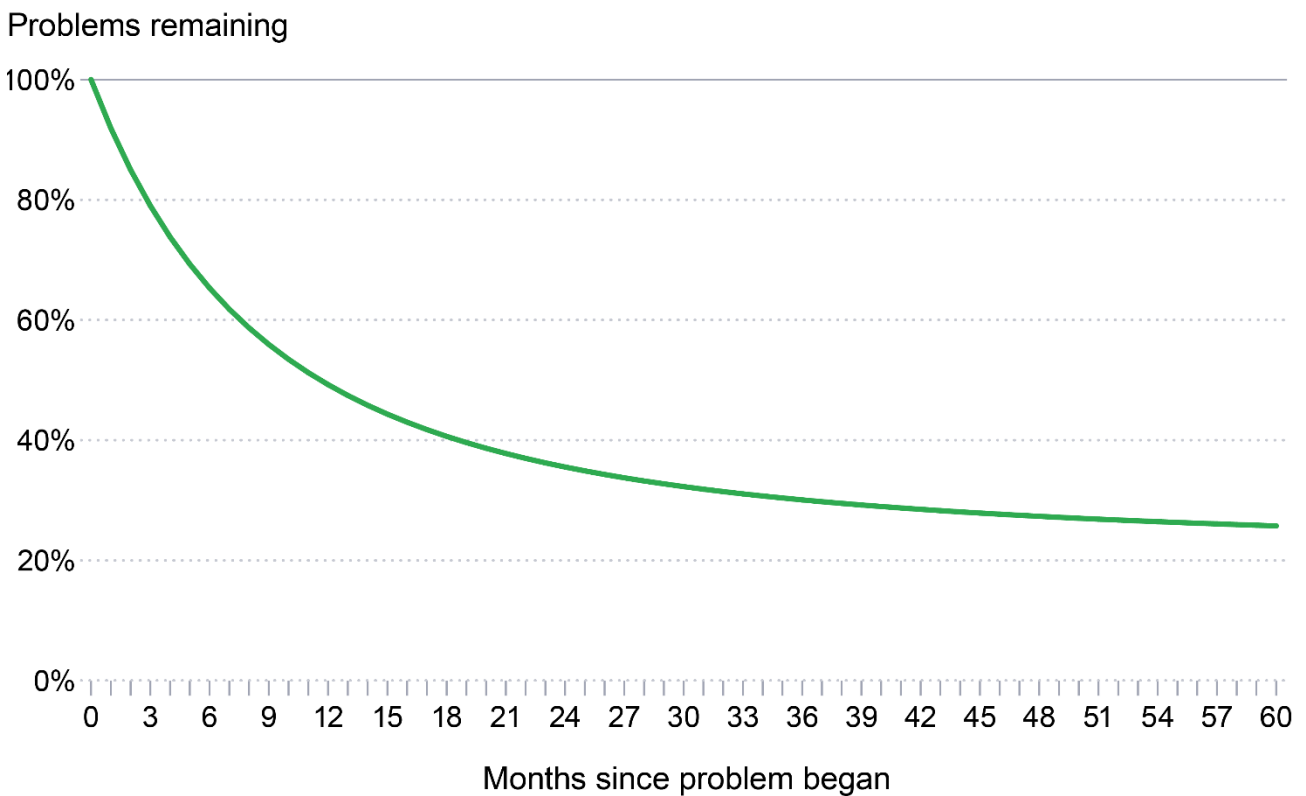
There are two separate ways to determine how long a legal problem lasted. One focuses on concluded problems only and the other uses a model to integrate ongoing problems.³¹ Both methods rely on respondents' recall of when a problem started and there can be differences in how people remember this information. This should be considered when interpreting the findings.

For legal problems which had concluded at the time of the interview, under two in five (36%) were concluded in under three months and three in five (60%) had concluded in under a year. A quarter (24%) were concluded in one year or more. This method underestimates the length of time that legal problems can take, as it does not take account of ongoing problems, which differ in their characteristics compared to concluded legal problems.

³¹ Analysis of concluded problems also includes those who answered did not know / preferred not to say and gave an estimate for how long the problem had been ongoing at the time of interview.

The second method includes information on ongoing problems to model problem duration.³² Figure 4.4 shows the model’s estimate of the percentage of legal problems that remained ongoing over time (in months from when the problem started). Almost two thirds (65%) of problems remained ongoing after six months and a little under half (49%) remained ongoing after a year. The model predicts that a quarter (26%) of legal problems will still be ongoing after five years. The model therefore demonstrates that a substantial proportion of legal problems are long-lasting. This should be considered when analysing the adverse impacts that legal problems can have.

Figure 4.4: Model of legal problem duration



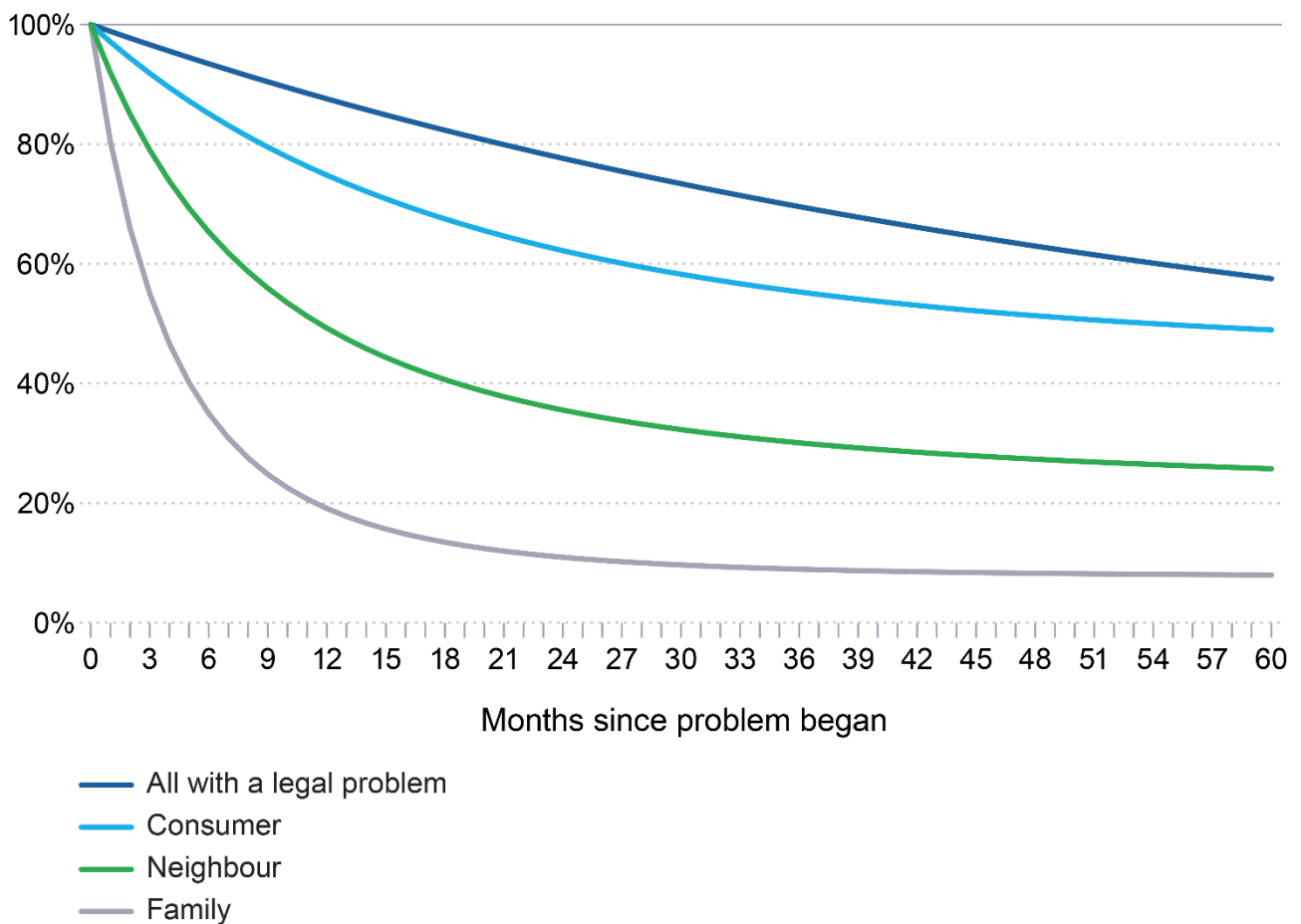
Source: (E1) Approximately what month and year did the problem start? Base: All adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months excluding don’t know / prefer not to say answers for month and date (3,692). The model estimates using 66% of all respondents with a legal problem.

³² A Discrete time event history model was used such as in: Singer, J.D. & Willett, J.B. (1993). It’s about time: Using discrete-time survival analysis to study duration and the timing of events. *Journal of Educational Statistics*, 18, 155–195. For other legal needs surveys using this approach see: Balmer, N.J., Pleasence, P., McDonald, H.M. & Sandefur, R.L. (2023). *The Public Understanding of Law Survey (PULS) Volume 1: Everyday Problems and Legal Need*. Melbourne: Victoria Law Foundation.

Problem duration varies by the type of legal problems that people experience. Figure 4.5 shows that family legal problems were the least likely to resolve over time whereas consumer problems were more likely to be resolved more quickly, with a large majority (81%) of consumer problems resolved within a year. This large variation in problem duration is important to consider when reviewing the adverse consequences people may experience.

Figure 4.5: Model of legal problem duration by problem category

Problems remaining



Source: (D8) Is the problem ongoing or done with? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months (4,988), all asked the follow-up about their consumer problems (811), neighbours (582), relationship problems (168).

4.5 How people perceived their problems

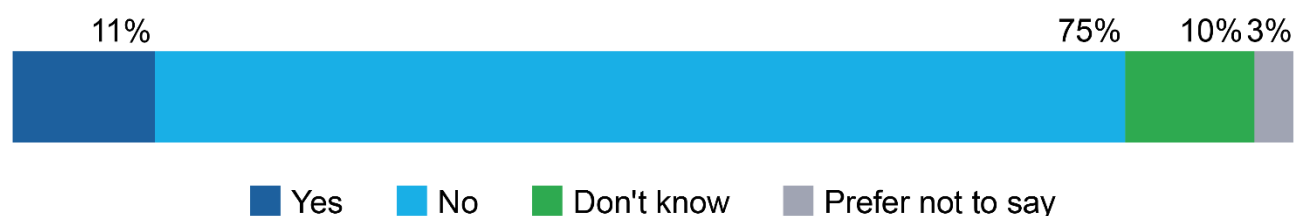
How people perceived their legal problems can influence the type of actions they take to try and resolve them.

This section covers the extent to which people felt their problem was legal from the outset, whether people thought their problem would be resolved without action, and other attitudes that people had around their problem.

Perception of problem being legal from the outset

When people were asked if, at the outset of their problem, they would have described it as a 'legal problem', three-quarters (75%) said they would not have. This is in line with the previous LPRS and other legal needs surveys.³³ Only around one in ten (11%) would have described their problem as a 'legal problem' when it first began, demonstrating that most people are unclear on what constitutes a legal issue and what does not. As shown in Figure 4.6, one in ten did not know whether they saw their problem as being legal from the outset, reflecting levels of uncertainty.

Figure 4.6: Perception of problem being legal from the outset



Source: (E55) When the problem first began, would you have described it as a legal problem? Base: Adults in England and Wales with a problem (4,988). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Differences by legal problem category and problem characteristics

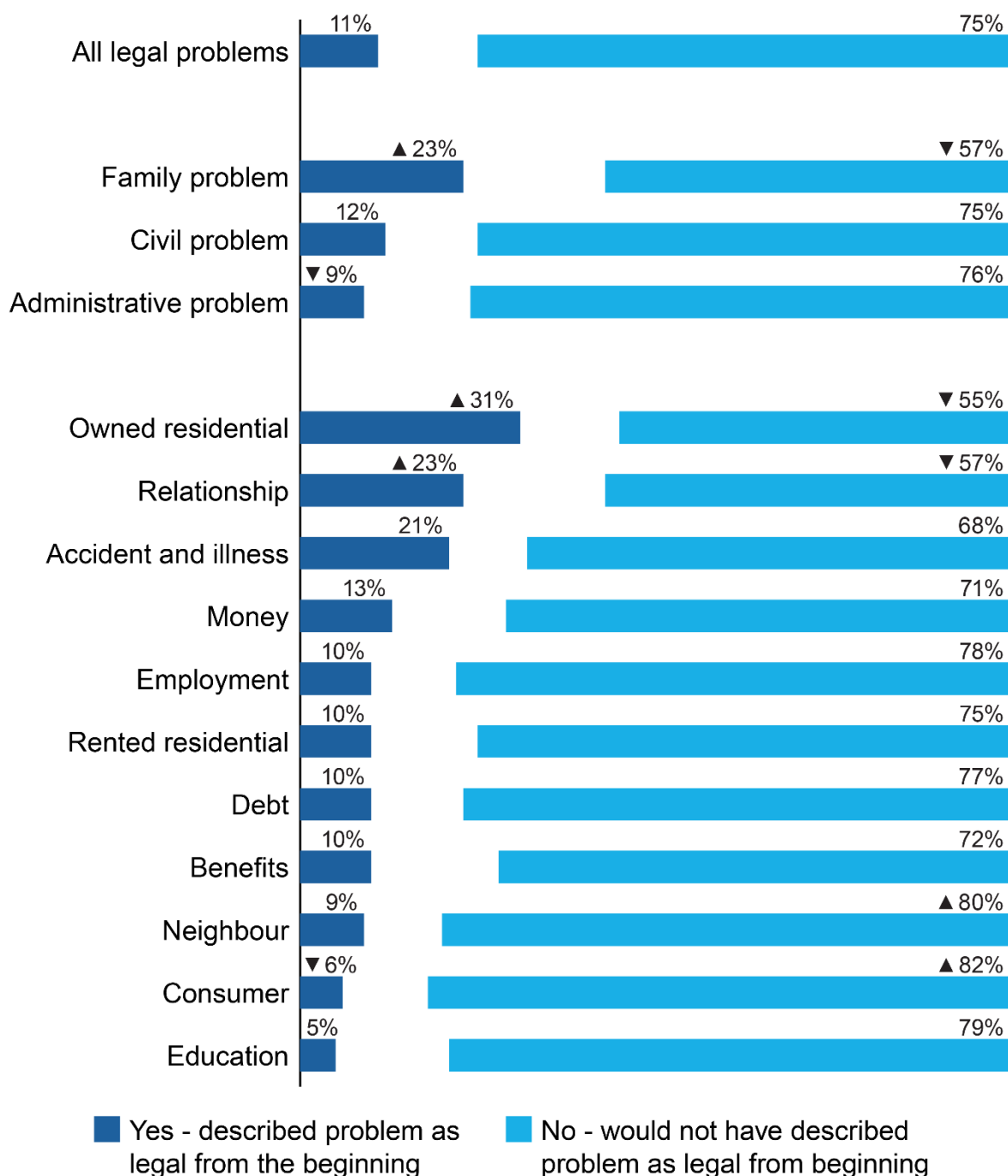
There were some differences in perception amongst people who experienced different types of problems. Those with owned residential problems (31%), relationship breakdown problems (23%) and problems relating to accidents (21%) were more likely to perceive their problem to be a legal issue from the outset, though still only a minority described

³³ [Legal problem and resolution survey 2014 to 2015 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) reported that 25% considered their problem legal at the outset. [English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Panel Survey](#) reported that 10% considered the problem legal at the outset in 2010 and 11% in 2012.

these as legal problems. The large majority of those with consumer (82%), neighbour (80%) or education (79%) problems did not perceive their problem to be a legal issue. See Figure 4.7.

Respondents with an ongoing problem were more likely to say they would have described it as a legal problem at the outset (14%). Respondents who rated their problem as very serious (19%) were more likely to think it was legal from the outset, as well as those who had experienced discrimination (16%) or adverse consequences (16%).

Figure 4.7: Perception of problem being legal or not from the outset, by problem category



Source: (E55) When the problem first began would you have described it as a legal problem? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months (4,988), all asked the follow-up about their consumer problems (811), employment problems (455), neighbour (582), problems with a house they own (526), problems with a house they rent (563), debt problems (274), money problems (601), benefits problems (463), relationship problems (168), education problems (290), accident and illness problems (255). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼ ▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Socio-demographic differences

There were few socio-demographic differences in people’s likelihood to identify their problem as ‘legal’ from the outset. The differences which do exist likely reflect different groups’ propensity to experience certain types of legal problems, and that those problem types are more or less likely to be categorised as legal. There were very few significant differences between people of different digital capabilities, incomes, education, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or legal aid eligibility.

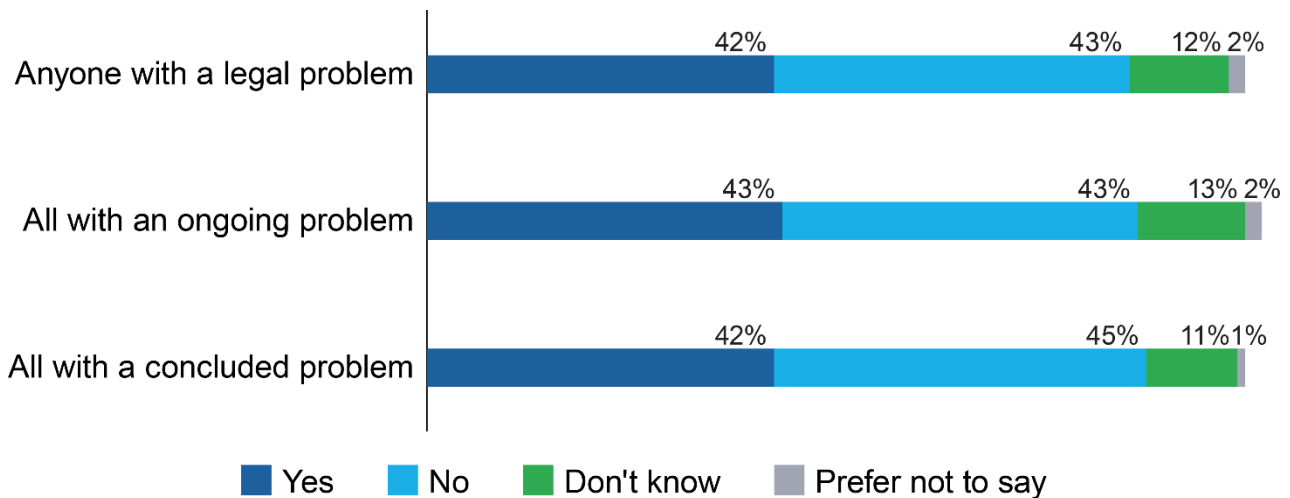
Table 4.2: Significant socio-demographic differences in whether people perceived their everyday problem as legal from the outset

Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	<p>Older respondents (55+) (15%) were more likely than 18–24-year-olds (6%) to initially perceive their problem as legal. There was a higher level of don’t know responses amongst younger respondents (e.g., 14% of 18–24-year-olds vs 7% of 55–64-year-olds). This reflected a lack of awareness or uncertainty of younger people in how to identify their legal problems, which is consistent with higher levels of don’t know responses in awareness of court fees (see chapter 9) and attitudes towards digital services (see chapter 8).</p> <p>These differences reflect the likelihood that certain age groups are more likely to experience certain types of legal problems.</p>
Education	<p>There are marginal differences by education level. Adults with a degree or above were marginally more likely to think their problem was legal (13% of those with a degree compared to 10% without a degree).</p>
Benefits status	<p>Those on means-tested benefits were marginally more likely to think their problem was legal (15%, compared to 10% of those on no benefits).</p>
Legal capability	<p>Amongst those with low legal confidence (14%) and low legal self-efficacy (17%), there were higher levels of ‘don’t know’ responses, compared to those who scored higher on these measures (6% for those with high legal confidence and 8% for those with high legal self-efficacy).</p>

Perception of whether problem would resolve itself without action

People were evenly divided in terms of whether at the outset they felt their problem would resolve itself. Around two fifths (42%) thought it would, whilst 43% thought it would not. This divide was apparent regardless of whether people’s problems had been resolved or not, as shown in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8: Perception of whether the problem would initially sort itself out without taking action



Source: (E2) When the problem first started, did you think it would sort itself out without taking action?
 Base: Adults in England and Wales with a problem (4,988), all whose legal problem is concluded (3,132), all whose legal problem is ongoing (1,636). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to ‘Don’t know/prefer not to say’ responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

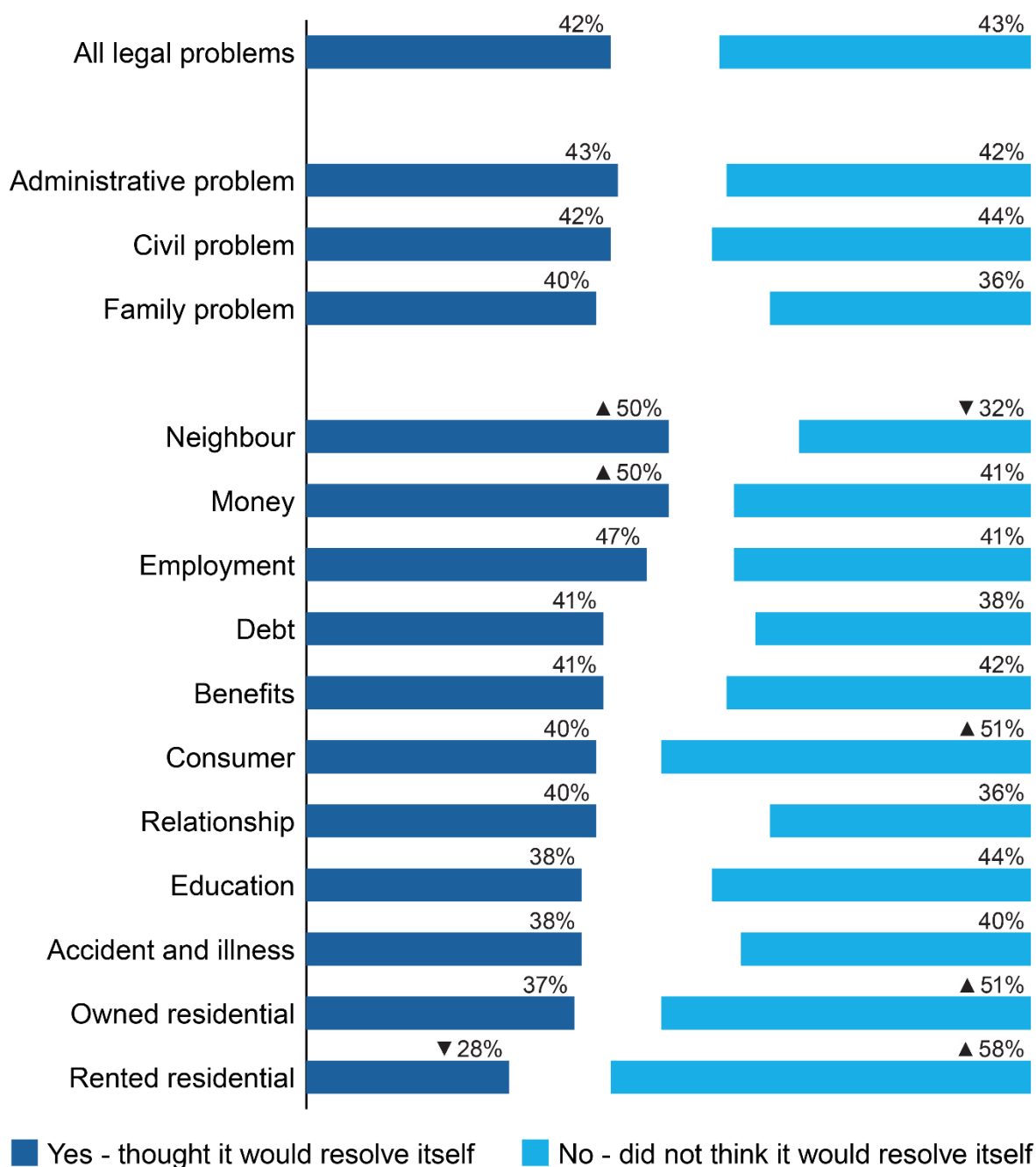
Differences by legal problem category

Opinions between those with different problem categories were more varied, see Figure 4.9. Those with problems regarding neighbours and money were more likely than those with other problems to think that their issue would resolve itself without taking any action (50% of those with these types of problem felt this way). In contrast, those with residential problems were more likely than others to think that the problem would not resolve itself on its own (51% of those with owned property problems and 58% of those with rental property problems).

Those with problems concerning relationship breakdown, accident and illness, debt or neighbours were more uncertain of their initial perceptions, as shown by larger proportions answering ‘don’t know’ than people with other types of problems (relationship breakdown – 19%, accident & illness – 19%, debt – 18%, neighbour – 16%).

Despite people being more likely to consider relationship breakdown problems as legal at the outset, they were no more likely to think action needed to be taken than average. However, those who experienced owned residential problems were both more likely than those with most other problems to think it was a legal problem from the outset and that it would not resolve itself without action. This demonstrates that the interaction between whether the problem is viewed as legal and whether action was perceived to have been required is not consistent across all problem categories.

Figure 4.9: Perception of whether problem would sort itself out without action by problem category



Source: (E2) When the problem first started, did you think it would sort itself out without you taking an action? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months (4,988), all asked the follow-up about their civil (3,612), administrative (1,208), family (168), consumer problems (811), employment problems (455), neighbour (582), problems with a house they own (526), problems with a house they rent (563), debt problems (274), money problems (601), benefits problems (463), relationship problems (168), education problems (290), accident and illness problems (255). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼ ▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Socio-demographic differences

There were very few statistically significant differences between people of different digital capabilities, incomes, education, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or legal aid eligibility, see Table 4.3. Differences among socio-demographic groups may relate to the types of problems or severity of problems experienced between groups.

Table 4.3: Significant socio-demographic differences regarding views on whether action was needed to resolve the legal problem

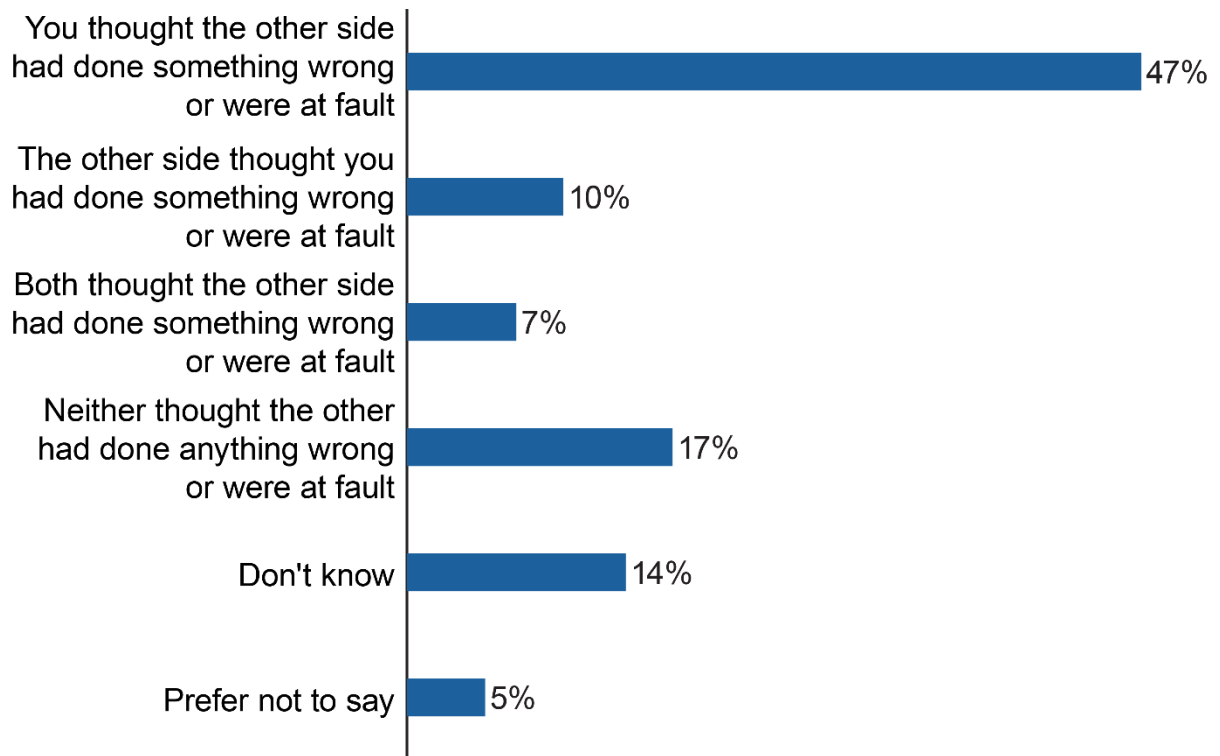
Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	Younger people reported higher levels of 'don't know' responses compared to older people, reflecting a higher level of uncertainty in this group in their responses to a range of questions. A fifth (20%) of 18–24-year-olds said they didn't know, compared to 7% of 55–64-year-olds.
Disability status	Those who did not have a long-term health condition or disability were more likely to think the problem would resolve itself (45% without a disability, compared to 40% with a long-term health condition).
Legal capability	People with high legal anxiety scores ³⁴ were more likely than those with low scores to have thought that the problem would resolve itself (50% vs 36%).

Perceptions of who was at fault

Respondents were asked who they thought had done something wrong or was at fault for their problem when it first started. Just under half (47%) thought that the other side was at fault for the legal problem they experienced. One in ten (10%) reported that the other side had felt that they (the respondent) had been at fault, whilst around one in six noted that no one had been perceived to be at fault (17%).

³⁴ Legal anxiety measure is derived from a series of statements. For further information, see the technical report.

Figure 4.10: Perception of who was at fault

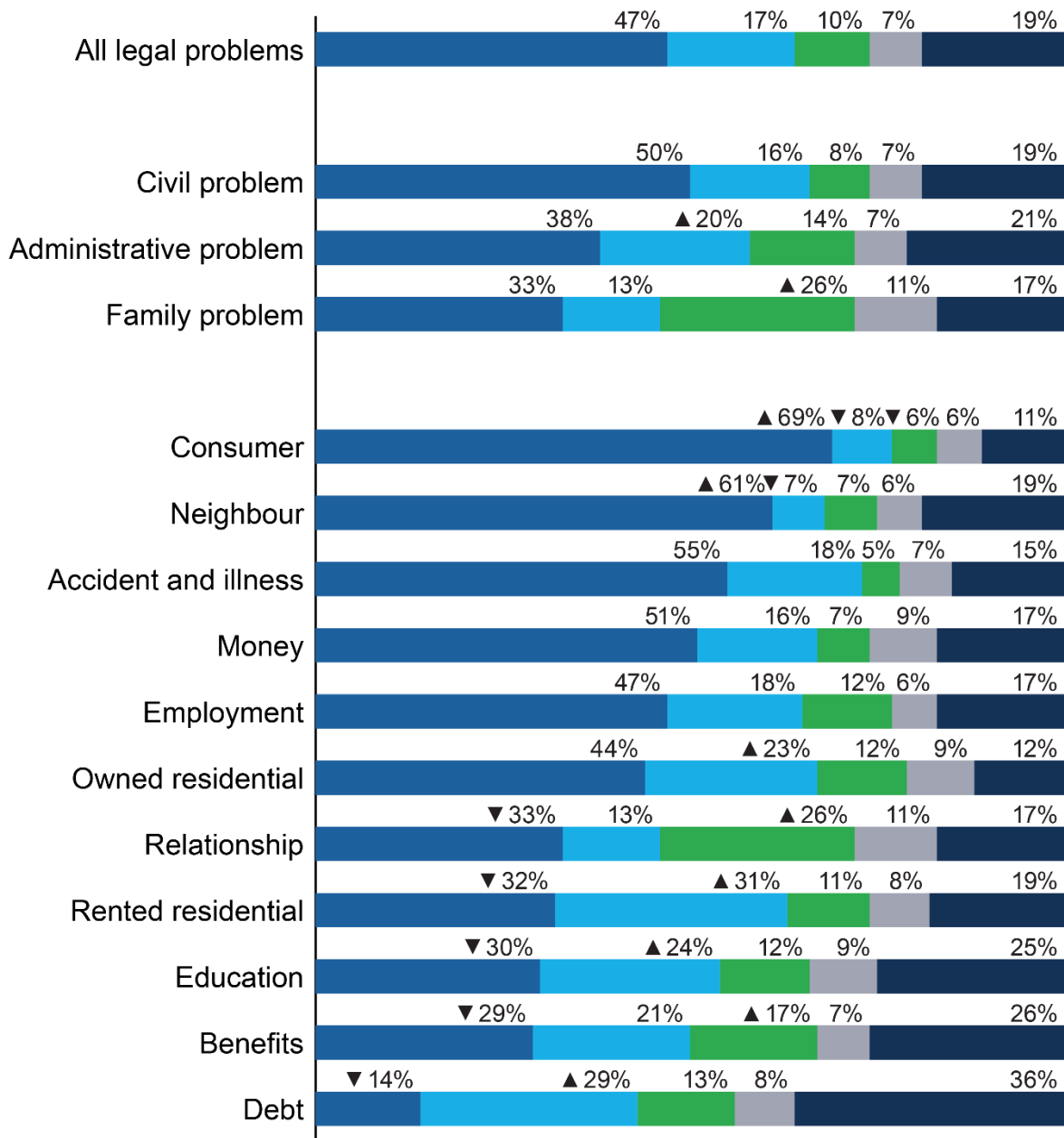


Source: (E4) Thinking about the time the problem first started, which if any of the following best describes the situation? Base: Adults in England and Wales with a problem (4,988). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Differences by legal problem category

People who experienced consumer problems or issues with neighbours were more likely to think that the other party was at fault (69% and 61% respectively). People who had problems concerning debt were the least likely to attribute fault to the other side (14%) and most likely to say they didn't know or would prefer not to say (36%). The higher number of don't know responses for those with debt could reflect that it is more challenging to identify the 'other side' in debt problems.

Figure 4.11: Perceptions of who was at fault by legal problem category



- You thought the other side had done something wrong or were at fault
- Neither thought the other had done anything wrong or were at fault
- The other side thought you had done something wrong or were at fault
- Both thought the other had done something wrong or were at fault
- Don't know/prefer not to say

Source: (E4) Thinking about the time the problem first started, which if any best describes the situation? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months (4,988), all asked the follow-up about their civil (3,612), administrative (1,208), family (168), consumer problems (811), employment problems (455), neighbour (582), problems with a house they own (526), problems with a house they rent (563), debt problems (274), money problems (601), benefits problems (463), relationship problems (168), education problems (290), accident and illness problems (255). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to ‘Don’t know/prefer not to say’ responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Differences by resolution strategy

In general, the type of resolution strategy pursued by the respondent did not vary significantly by the respondent’s view of who had been at fault.

Those who interacted with a formal court, mediation or arbitration process were more likely to think that those on the other side of the dispute thought they (the respondent) were at fault (19%). However, the majority still thought that the other side was at fault (52%).

Those who sought legal or professional help were more likely to report that those on both sides of the problem thought that the other side were at fault (10%, compared to 4% who took no action). Those who took no action were more likely than others to report that they didn’t know who was at fault for their problem (23% vs 14% of all respondents reporting a problem).

Socio-demographic differences

There were few significant socio-demographic differences, and they likely reflect the variations in prevalence of different problem categories.

Table 4.4: Significant socio-demographic differences on perceptions of who was a fault

Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	Older respondents (55+) were more likely to think that the other side were at fault (62% of 75+ year olds, compared to 36% of 18–24-year-olds).
Disability Status	People without a health condition or disability were also more likely to think that the other side were at fault (51% vs 45% of those with a health condition).

Socio-demographics	Differences
Household income	Those with higher household incomes were more likely to think that the other side were at fault (60% of those with £60,000 or above compared to 44% of those with less than £14,000).

4.6 Adverse consequences

Respondents were asked whether they experienced any adverse consequences as a result of their problem, such as stress-related illness, damage to their property or loss of income.³⁵ People who did not report having experienced one of the adverse consequences listed are referred to as ‘did not experience an adverse consequence’.³⁶

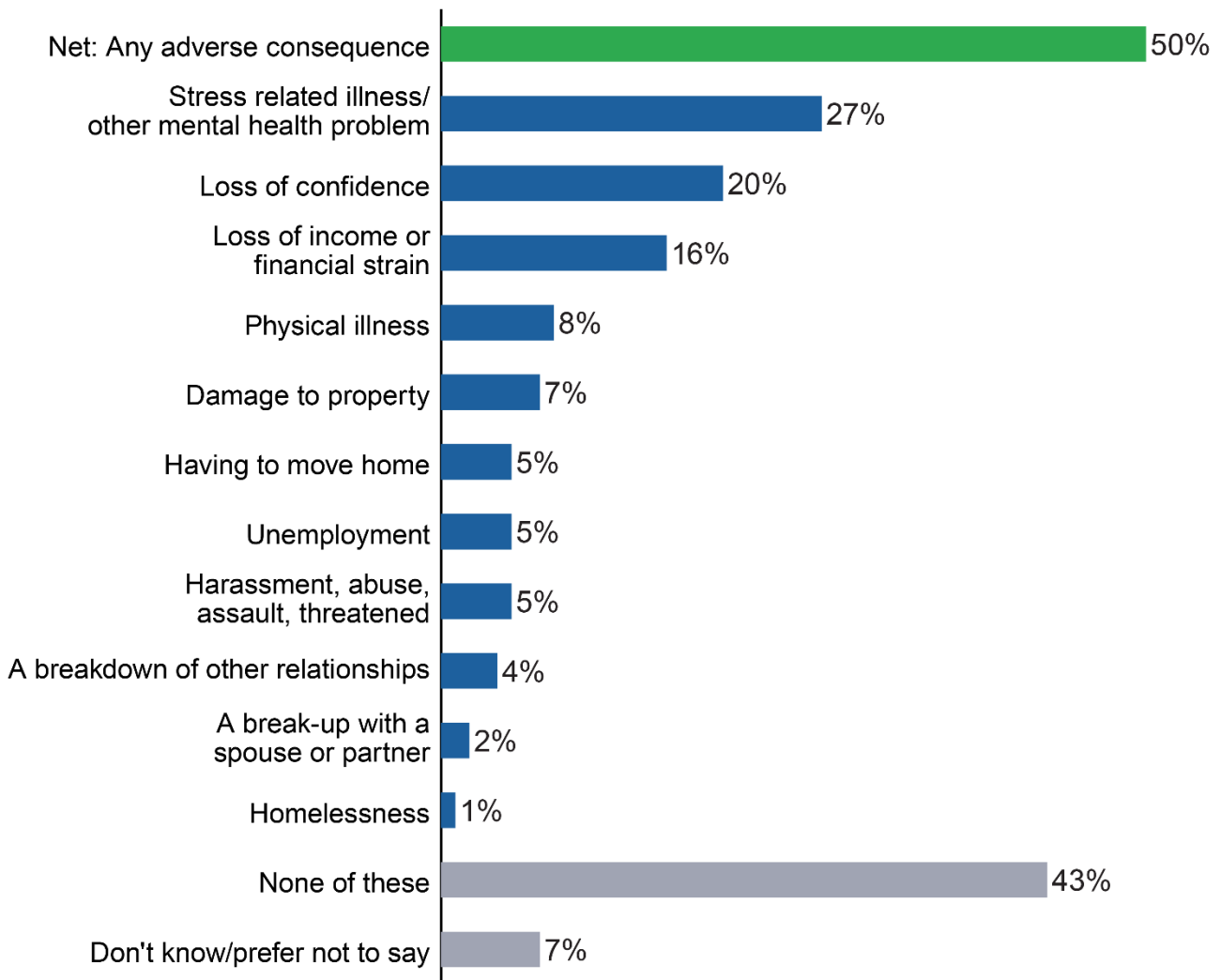
Half of all respondents (50%) said that their problem caused or contributed to one or more of the listed adverse consequences, whilst just over two fifths (43%) said it did not. As shown in Figure 4.12, the most frequently reported consequence was stress-related illness or other mental health problems (27%). One in five experienced a loss of confidence (20%) and around one in six reported losses of income or financial strain (16%). Fewer people (less than 10%) experienced other consequences, with very small proportions experiencing homelessness (1%), a breakdown of a relationship with a spouse (2%), or other relationship breakdown such as with family and friends (4%) because of their problem. These results are broadly similar to the 2014–15 LPRS.

Almost a quarter (24%) experienced one adverse impact as a result of their legal problem, around one in eight (12%) experienced two adverse consequences, and around the same proportion (13%) experienced three or more adverse consequences.

³⁵ In full, respondents were asked whether they experienced: stress-related illness or other mental health problems; physical illness; a breakup with a spouse/partner; a breakdown of other relationships such as with family or friends; having to move home; homelessness; loss of income or financial strain; unemployment; harassment; abuse; assault or being threatened; damage to their property; or loss of confidence. Respondent were able to select multiple adverse consequences.

³⁶ However, caution should be exercised, as there may be respondents in this group who did experience an adverse impact, but it was not covered in the list presented within the survey, or respondents may not have recognised an adverse consequence at the time of interview.

Figure 4.12: Adverse consequences people experienced as a result of their legal problem



Source: (E51) At any time, did the problem in your opinion cause or contribute to the following?

Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months (4,988).

Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

The use of other services beyond legal advice shows how complex and multi-faceted legal problems can become, for example:

- Of the 27% who said their problem had an impact on their health, just under half (46%) consulted a health professional.³⁷
- Of the 19% who said their problem led to homelessness, unemployment, or a loss of income, one fifth (20%) received state benefits or tax credits.

³⁷ Respondents who said that their legal problem caused or contributed to stress or other mental health problem or physical illness.

- Amongst the 11% who experienced harassment, abuse, assault, being threatened or property damage as a result of their legal problem, just over a fifth (22%) contacted the police.

Differences by problem characteristics

Those with a problem that was still ongoing at the time of interview were more likely to report that they had experienced adverse consequences (61%). People who said that their problem had concluded were more likely to report that they did not experience adverse consequences (48%).

Linked to this, the longer the legal problem lasted, the more likely people were to report experiencing an adverse consequence. For example, over three-quarters (77%) of those with a problem estimated to last five years or more said they had experienced an adverse consequence compared to around a third (36%) of those with a problem estimated to last 1–3 months.

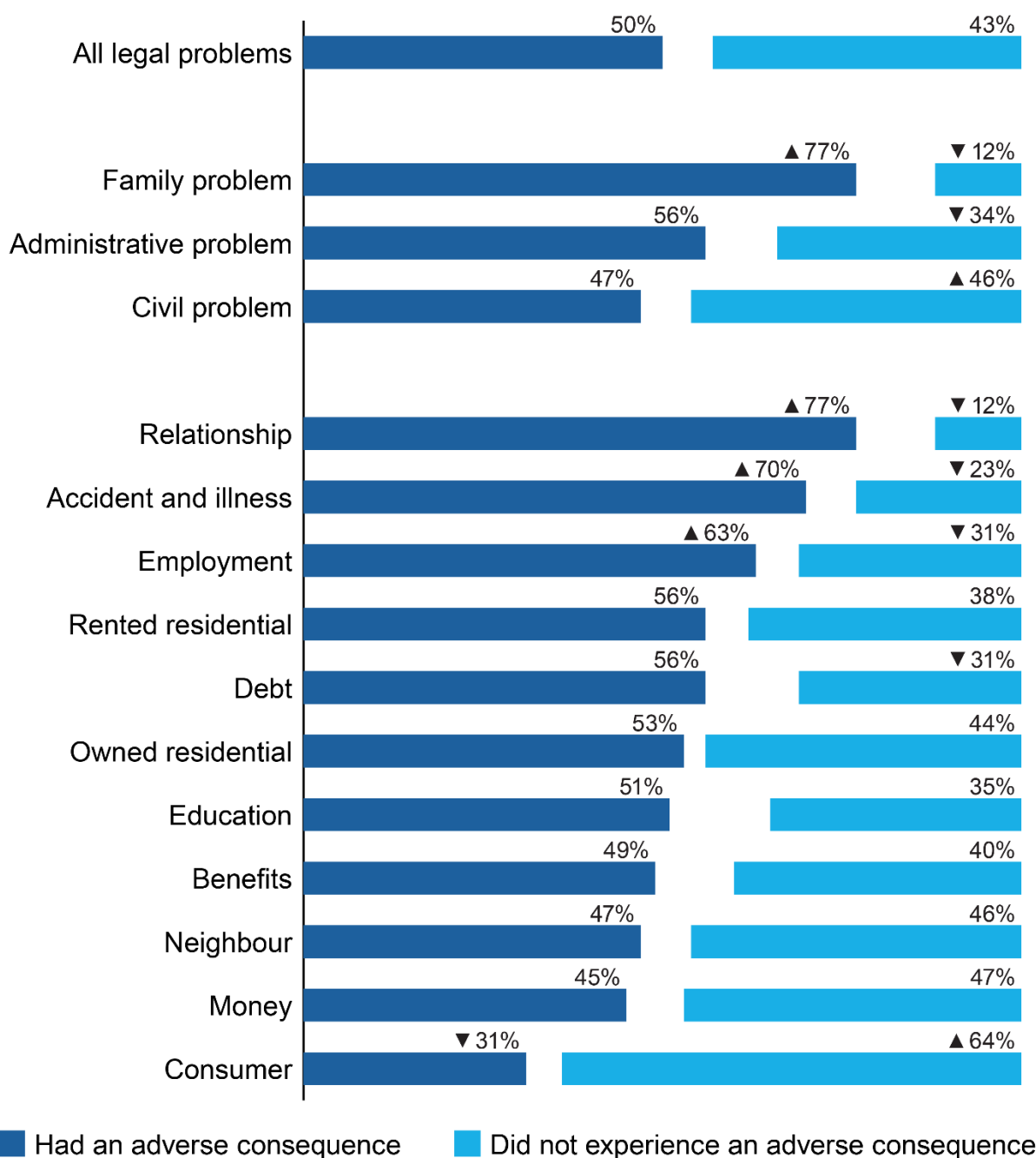
People who perceived their problem as legal from the outset were more likely to report experiencing adverse consequences than those who did not perceive their problem to be legal (70% vs 48%).

People who thought their problem was fairly serious (53%) or very serious (71%) were more likely to report experiencing adverse consequences than those who said their problem was not very serious (32%).

Differences by legal problem category

People who had experienced certain categories of legal problems were more likely to report experiencing adverse consequences. As shown in Figure 4.13, those who had a relationship problem (77%), a problem relating to an accident or illness (70%), or an employment-related problem (63%) were more likely to report having experienced adverse consequences. In line with the overall pattern, stress-related illness or other mental health problems was the most likely adverse consequence reported amongst people experiencing these problem types (relationship problems, 42%; accident or illness disputes, 41%; employment issues, 38%). People who had consumer problems were least likely to report having experienced any adverse consequences (31%).

Figure 4.13: Adverse consequences by legal problem category



Source: (E51) At any time, did the problem in your opinion cause or contribute to the following?

Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months (4,988), all asked the follow-up about their civil (3,612), administrative (1,208), family (168), consumer problems (811), employment problems (455), neighbourhood (582), problems with a house they own (526), problems with a house they rent (563), debt problems (274), money problems (601), benefits problems (463), relationship problems (168), education problems (290), accident and illness problems (255). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼ ▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

In some cases, the adverse consequences are aligned closely with the type of problem experienced. For example, two fifths (41%) of those who had a problem relating to an accident or illness reported that this had caused or contributed to a physical illness. One in ten (10%) of those experiencing a legal problem with a rented residence reported having to move home as a result. More than a third (37%) of those with an employment problem experienced a loss of confidence.

Stress-related illness was the most frequently experienced adverse consequence across problem categories, with the exception of:

- Consumer problems, where loss of income or financial strain was the most common adverse consequence (11%).
- Money and benefit problems, where a quarter or more experienced loss of income or financial strain as the most common adverse consequence (26% of those with money problems and 30% of those experiencing a benefit legal problem).
- Accident or illness problem, where physical illness was as likely to be reported as stress-related illness (both at 41%).

Socio-demographic differences³⁸

There were some differences among socio-demographic groups, though not generally by sex, digital capability, education, sexual orientation, employment status or ethnicity. Differences among socio-demographic groups may relate to the types of problems or severity of problems experienced between groups.

Table 4.5: Significant socio-demographic differences by adverse consequences experienced

Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	Over half (56%) of those aged 35–44 experienced adverse consequences compared to around a third (32%) of those aged 75 and over.
Disability status	Those with a long-term illness or disability were more likely than those without to report having experienced adverse consequences

³⁸ Whilst the survey can identify variations by group, it cannot fully establish the nature of the relationship between adverse consequences and socio-demographics as they likely feed into one another (e.g. a single parent may be a single parent due to a family legal problem).

Socio-demographics	Differences
	(58% vs 42%), particularly stress-related illness or other mental health problems (37% vs 16%), or physical illness (12% vs 4%).
Tenure	Those who rent from the council or a housing association were more likely to experience adverse consequences (63% compared to 47% of those who own their home).
Benefit status	<p>People receiving means-tested benefits were more likely than those not receiving benefits to have experienced adverse consequences (67% receiving means-tested benefits vs 48% receiving no benefits). Respondents who received means-tested benefits were particularly likely to report having experienced stress related or other mental health problems (44%) and/or loss of income or financial strain (25%).</p> <p>Those who receive non-means tested benefits were less likely to have experienced adverse consequences (54% reported having not experienced any compared to 43% overall).</p>
Marital status	Adults who were separated (66%) or single (57%) were more likely to have experienced adverse impacts compared to married respondents (47%).
Single parents	<p>People living in single parent households were more likely than those in multiple parent households to experience adverse consequences (66% vs 52%).</p> <p>Single parents were also more likely to have experienced a break-up with a spouse or partner (11%) as a result of their legal problem.</p>
Household income	Those on a lower income (less than £14,000) were more likely to experience adverse consequences compared to those on higher incomes (63% vs 49% of those with an annual income of £32,000 – £60,000). They are particularly likely to report having experienced stress or other mental health problems (38%), loss of confidence (30%) and/or loss of income or financial strain (27%).
Eligibility for legal aid³⁹	Linked to income, those eligible for legal aid were also more likely to have experienced adverse consequences (62%).
Legal capability	People with high legal confidence (46%), high legal self-efficacy (52%) and those with low legal anxiety (46%) were more likely than average (43%) to report not experiencing any adverse consequences.

³⁹ For further information on the legal aid definition see Appendix A. This definition includes financial eligibility only.

Differences by resolution strategy

Those who used a formal resolution process (e.g., court or arbitration) were more likely to have experienced adverse consequences due to their problem than those who used a less formal resolution strategy. Seven in ten (70%) of those who used a formal resolution process reported experiencing an adverse consequence, including a quarter (26%) who cited loss of income or financial strain. Those who did nothing about their problem were the least likely to experience an adverse consequence (32%).

Many of the differences in experiences of adverse consequences described above are likely to be interrelated. For example, the type, duration and severity of the problem, whether it is perceived as legal, resolution strategy used, and people's socio-demographic characteristics are factors which interact with each other.

4.7 Discrimination

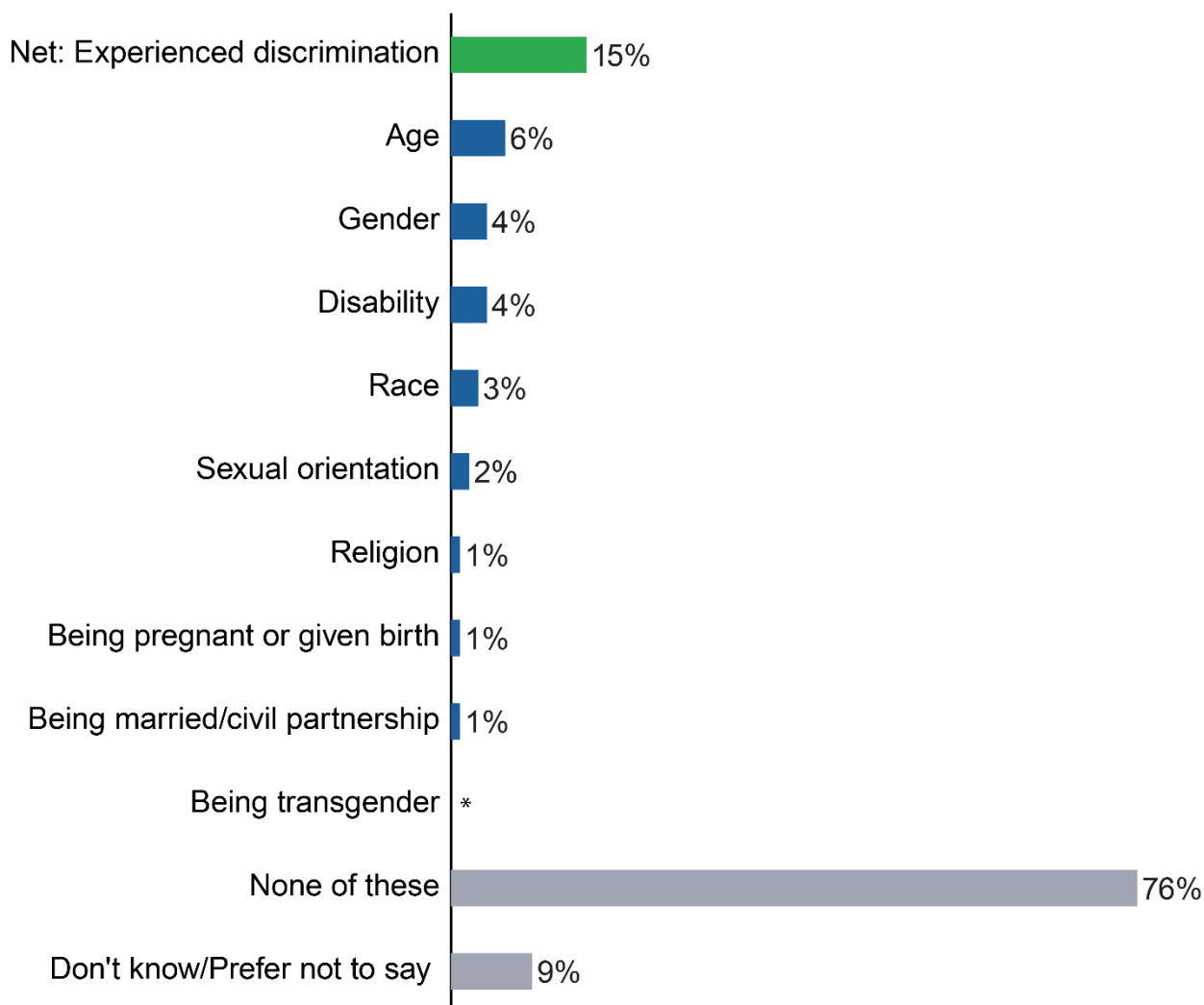
All respondents who had experienced a civil or administrative problem (essentially all legal problems excluding family legal problems, probate, and divorce) were asked whether they had experienced discrimination during their legal problem. This could have occurred at any stage of the process and could relate to the problem itself and/or the subsequent resolution process. Respondents were shown a list of possible protected characteristics on which they might have experienced discrimination.⁴⁰

Around three-quarters reported that they had not experienced any type of discrimination (76%), whilst over one in seven (15%) had experienced discrimination on the basis of at least one protected characteristic.⁴¹ Figure 4.14 shows the proportions of people who reported having experienced discrimination on the basis of each characteristic, with age discrimination being the most frequently reported.

⁴⁰ This report therefore presents self-reported experiences of discrimination.

⁴¹ Protected characteristics are specific attributes safeguarded against discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. They comprise age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. [Equality Act](#) (2010).

Figure 4.14: Breakdown of discrimination experienced by people with a civil or administrative problem



Source: (E5) Do you think you experienced any discrimination on the basis of any of the following?
 Base: Adults in England and Wales with a civil or administrative problem (4,820). Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%. * The base was too small for analysis.

It is important to recognise that discrimination can be intersectional. If, for example, someone has experienced age discrimination they may have also faced other types of discrimination at the same time. A quarter (24%) of people who had experienced discrimination reported discrimination on the basis of two or more characteristics.

“Because of my age and disability, I feel like I was ignored, and no one was there to help.” **Respondent who self-reported discrimination on basis of age and disability, who experienced a benefits problem.**

“Race had an impact on whether my son would be accepted in school”

Respondent who self-reported discrimination on the basis of race, who experienced an education problem.

Socio-demographic differences

Some groups were significantly more likely to report having experienced particular types of discrimination, see Table 4.6. Some other groups, such as single parents, were no more likely to report experiencing discrimination despite their increased likelihood of experiencing some types of legal problems.

Table 4.6: Significant socio-demographic differences in the reported likelihood of experiencing discrimination

Socio-demographics	Differences
Sex	Females were slightly more likely than males to have experienced discrimination overall (17%, compared to 14%) and to report experiencing gender discrimination (5% vs 2%).
Age	18–24-year-olds were the most likely to report having experienced discrimination (24%). 14% of 18–24-year-olds reported experiencing age-related discrimination during their legal problem. Older respondents were also more likely than average to cite having experienced age-related discrimination (13% of 75+ year olds). Younger people were more likely than older age groups to report race discrimination (5% of 18–24-year-olds vs 1% of 55–64-year-olds). This reflects that younger people are more likely to be from ethnic minority backgrounds.
Ethnicity	People from Asian backgrounds (11%), black backgrounds (16%) and mixed backgrounds (7%) were more likely to report experiencing race discrimination than those from a white background (1%).
Sexual orientation	Those who identified as gay or lesbian were more likely to report experiencing discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation (13% compared to 1% who identified as heterosexual / straight). Those who identified as bisexual (28%) were over twice as likely to report experiencing any form of discrimination compared to those who identified as heterosexual / straight (13%)
Disability status	People with long term health conditions or disabilities were more likely to report experiencing discrimination based on their health condition (7% vs 1% of those without such conditions).
English proficiency	Those who speak English ‘well’ (26%) were more likely to experience discrimination than those who speak English very well (14%). Those

Socio-demographics	Differences
	who speak English 'well' were more likely to experience discrimination on the basis of race (12%, compared to 2% of those who speak English very well).
Household income	Those with a higher household income (£60,000 or above) were less likely to report experiencing discrimination compared to lower income households (under £14,000) (10% vs 20% respectively).
Digital capability	Those with medium digital capability were more likely to report experiencing discrimination (22%) compared to those with high capability (14%).
Legal capability	Those with low legal self-efficacy were more likely to report experiencing discrimination (26% compared to 11% of those with high legal self-efficacy).

Differences by legal problem category

People who had experienced certain categories of legal problems were more likely to report experiencing discrimination. In particular, those with problems regarding education (33%), accident and illness (30%), employment issues (27%), benefits (23%) and rented residential property (20%) were all more likely to experience discrimination.

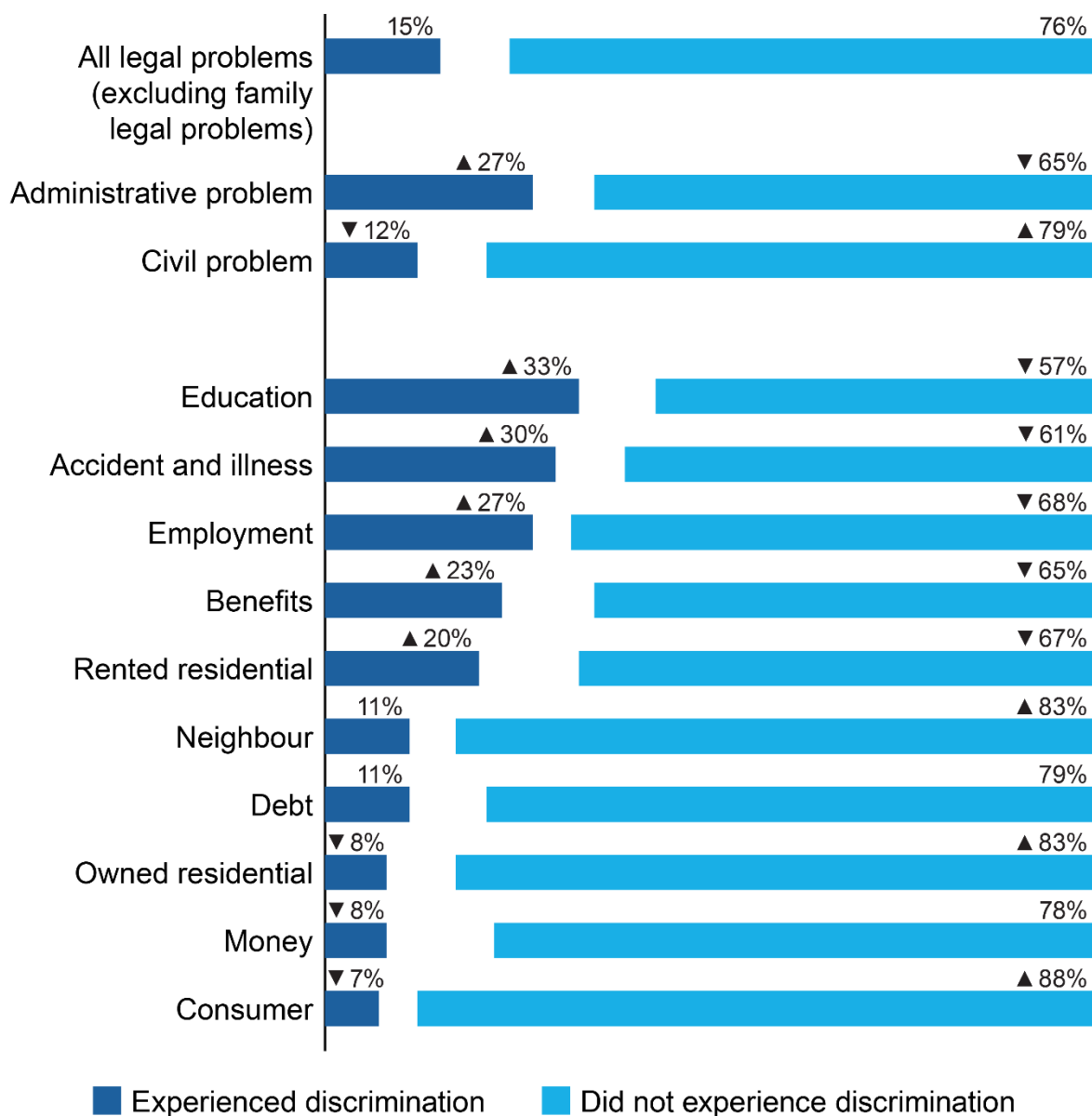
Age related discrimination was the most commonly reported form of discrimination, apart from:

- Debt problems, where being pregnant or having recently given birth was the most commonly reported form of discrimination (4%).
- Benefits problems, where discrimination based on disability was the most commonly reported (12%).
- Education problems, where discrimination based on disability was the most commonly reported (18%).

Those with education problems were also more likely to report experiencing discrimination based on race (6%) and religion (4%). This differs from those experiencing accident and illness problems, where people were more likely to say they had experienced discrimination based on gender (8%), disability (8%), pregnancy status (5%) and marital status (4%).

Those with an employment issue were most likely to report experiencing discrimination based on their age (12%), gender (9%) or race (7%). Those who experienced a problem with rented residential property were more likely to report age discrimination (9%).

Figure 4.15: Discrimination by problem category



Source: (E5) Did you think you experienced any discrimination on the basis of any of the following?
 Base: All Adults in England and Wales with an administrative or civil legal problem (4,820), all asked the follow-up about their civil (3,612), administrative (1,208), consumer problems (811), employment problems (455), neighbourhood (582), problems with a house they own (526), problems with a house they rent (563), debt problems (274), money problems (601), benefits problems (463), education problems (290), accident and illness problems (255). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼ ▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Differences by resolution strategies and legal problem status

Those who used any form of resolution strategy were more likely to report having experienced discrimination compared to those who took no action at all. A third (33%) of people who used a formal resolution process reported experiencing some form of discrimination, compared to a fifth of those who sought legal or professional help (19%) and 6% of those who took no action.

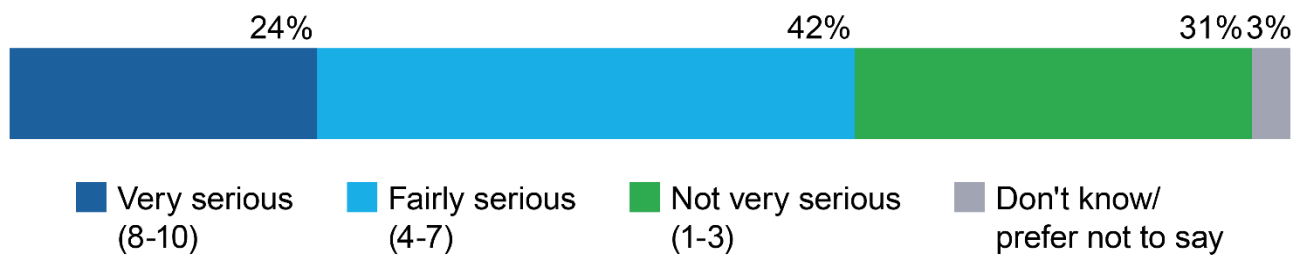
Those whose problem was ongoing were more likely to say they had experienced some form of discrimination (18% vs 14% with a concluded problem).

4.8 How serious did respondents consider their legal problem?

Respondents were asked how seriously they would rate the problem they experienced on a 10-point scale where 1 was ‘not at all serious and 10 was ‘very serious’.⁴² For the purposes of reporting, the scores have been banded into three categories: 1–3 = not very serious, 4–7 = fairly serious and 8–10 = very serious.

A quarter (24%) of those who had experienced some form of legal problem rated their problem as very serious. Around two in five (42%) rated their legal problem as fairly serious, while just under a third (31%) rated their legal problem as not very serious.

Figure 4.16: Seriousness of the legal problem



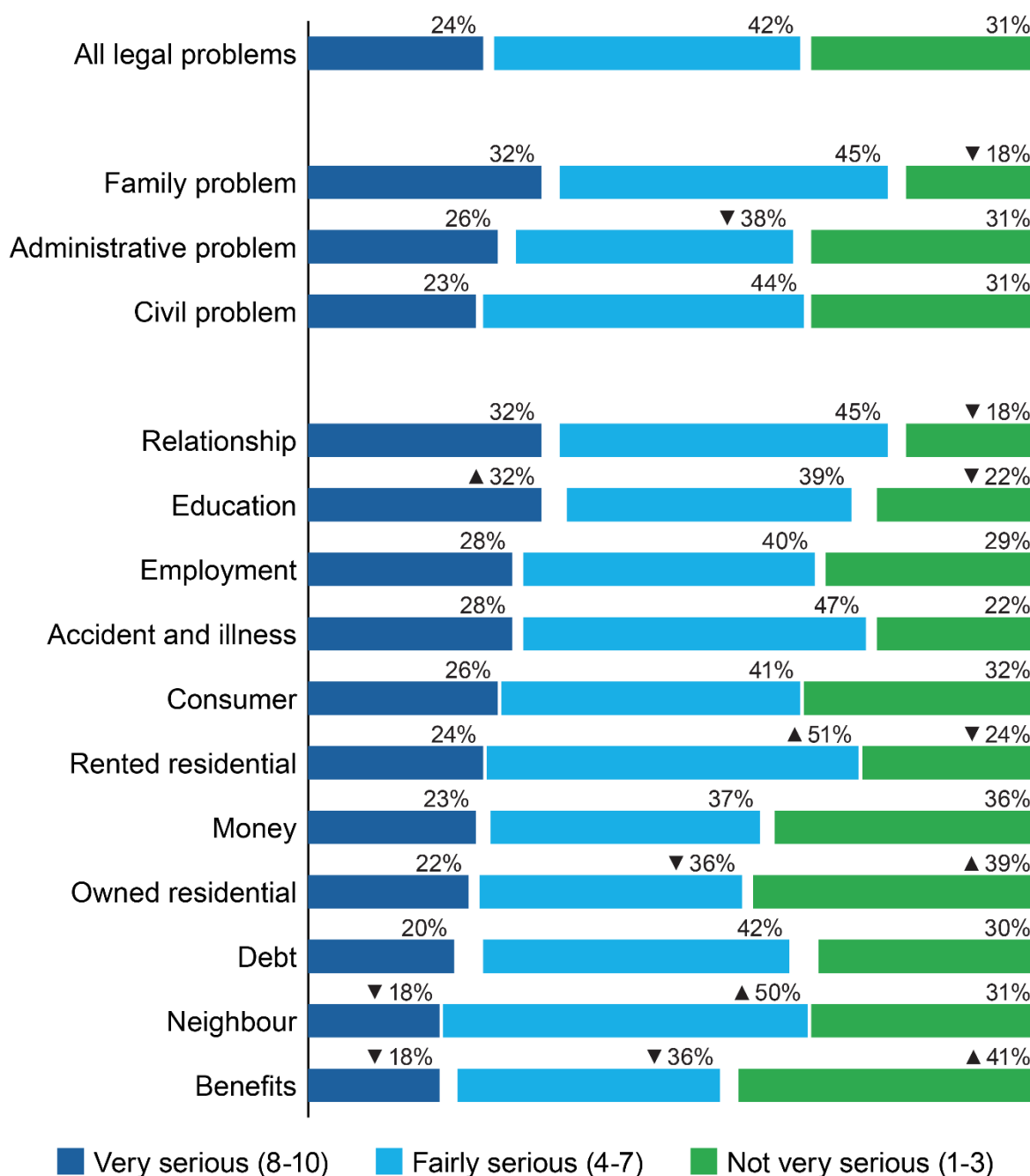
Source: (ED4) How would you rate the seriousness of the problem? Base: Adults in England and Wales who have a legal problem (4,988).

⁴² Respondents were given the following example to help them rate their problem: ‘A score of 2 might be purchasing a moderately expensive electrical item that proves to be faulty and a score of 9 might be being made homeless.’

Differences by legal problem category

Problems relating to family (32%) and education (32%) were the most likely to be perceived as very serious. Problems regarding benefits (18%) and neighbours (18%) were least likely to be perceived as very serious.

Figure 4.17: Seriousness of the legal problem by problem category



Source: (ED4) How would you rate the seriousness of the problem? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months (4,988), all asked the follow-up about their civil (3,612), administrative (1,208), family (168), consumer problems (811), employment problems (455), neighbourhood (582), problems with a house they own (526), problems with a house they rent (563), debt problems (274), money problems (601), benefits problems (463), relationship problems (168), education problems (290), accident and illness problems (255). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼ ▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Overall, problems that had reached a conclusion were less likely to be rated as very serious compared to ongoing problems. Around a fifth (21%) of concluded problems were scored as very serious, compared to around a third (31%) of ongoing problems.

Problems that lasted longer were more likely to be perceived as very serious. Almost two in five (37%) of those whose problem was estimated to last 2 and a half to 5 years thought their problem was very serious, compared to under one in five (17%) of those with a problem estimated to last 1–3 months.

Those who had used a formal resolution strategy or approached legal / professional help were more likely to score their problem as very serious (39% and 33% respectively).

Socio-demographic differences

There are some significant variations in how serious a problem was perceived to be by different socio-demographic groups. These will to some extent reflect certain categories of legal problems being more prevalent among certain groups.

There were no statistical differences by sex, sexual orientation, household income, digital capability, or legal confidence.

Table 4.7: Significant socio-demographic differences by how serious a problem was perceived

Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	Perception of problems being very serious varied by age as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14% of 18–24-year-olds scored their problem as very serious, compared with: • 19% of 25–34-year-olds • 31% of 35–44-year-olds • 28% of 45–54-year-olds • 29% of 55–64-year-olds
Ethnicity	People from a black (35%) or Asian background (35%) were more likely to rate their problem as very serious than those from a white background (21%).
Disability status	Those with a long-term health condition or disability were more likely to rate their legal problem as very serious (26%, compared to 20% of those without a long-term health condition).

Socio-demographics	Differences
Employment status	Those who were unemployed at the time of interview were more likely to rate the problem as very serious (43%, compared to 22% of those employed).
Benefits status	Those with means-tested benefits were more likely to rate their problem as very serious (31%, compared to 22% of those receiving no benefits).
Eligibility for legal aid⁴³	Those eligible for legal aid were more likely to rate their problem as very serious (29%). This is despite there being no statistical difference in how serious a problem was rated by overall household income.
Marital status	Those who were widowed were more likely to rate their problem as very serious (35%, compared to 25% of married respondents), reflecting the higher likelihood of widowed people experiencing family legal problems.
Single parents	Those who were single parents with children in the household were more likely to rate their problem as very serious (36%, compared to 24% of multi-parent households).
Tenure	Adults renting from a council / housing association were more likely to rate their problem as very serious (31%, compared to 23% of those who own their home).
Legal capability	<p>Those with low legal self-efficacy (29%) were more likely to score their problem as very serious, compared to those with medium (23%) or high (22%) self-efficacy.</p> <p>There was no statistical difference for those with high legal anxiety or legal confidence.</p>

⁴³ For further information on the legal aid definition see Appendix A. This definition includes financial eligibility only.

4.9 Chapter conclusions

- With adverse consequences increasing as problems continue beyond 18 months, there are clear benefits to strategies and interventions that seek to reduce the numbers of persisting problems.
- Particular attention could be paid to those problems deemed more serious and most likely to result in adverse consequences, notably those relating to relationship breakdowns, education, employment, or accidents.
- Some socio-demographic groups are particularly likely to suffer adverse consequences, notably mental health issues. These individuals are typically more likely to be in less affluent households, those with a long-term illness or disability, people renting from the council or a housing association, those receiving means-tested benefits, people living in single parent households, and those on the lowest household incomes. Support should be appropriately targeted and tailored.
- Findings suggest that a relatively high number of people think their problem will resolve without action being required. Raising awareness of individuals within some problem categories to manage expectations and to prompt action could help to ensure that problems do not stagnate and remain unresolved.

5. How people try to resolve legal problems

5.1 Summary

- Most people who experienced a legal problem used some form of resolution strategy (86%), though one in twelve (8%) took no action at all to resolve their problem.
- For the majority that took action, their most ‘formal’ strategy was some form of self-help only (50% of all those with a problem). Only a quarter engaged with some form of legal or professional help (24%), and a further one in eight used a formal resolution process (12%).
- Use of resolution strategies varied markedly depending on the type of legal problem experienced. Those who had a problem relating to a relationship breakdown were the most likely to have used a formal resolution process (38%), whilst the large majority of people experiencing a consumer problem had relied on self-help only (70%). Those with problems relating to neighbours were the most likely to have engaged legal or professional help (40%), but also the most likely of all problem types to have taken no action at all (22%).
- One in twenty (5%) of those with a legal problem took it to a court or tribunal. Those who had considered taking their problem to court or tribunal but not done so were most likely to cite the cost of lawyers, the stress it would cause and prohibitive court fees.
- A small number of those who went to court or a tribunal reported receiving legal aid (4%). The most frequently reported reason for not applying for legal aid was the belief that they would not have been eligible for it (43%).

- Around one in twenty respondents (4%) used independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration during the process of their problem. The most cited reason for not using mediation was the perception that those on the other side would not engage.

5.2 Chapter introduction

This chapter covers how people attempted to resolve their legal problem, specifically the processes they followed. It outlines the resolution strategies used by those with a legal problem, from taking no action at all through to the use of formal resolution strategies including the court system. Whilst reference is made to the use of courts and other processes/channels as ‘resolution’ strategies, this does not mean that the problem is necessarily resolved at the time of interview. Similarly, when reference is made to respondents ‘using’ a strategy, this may not have been their own active choice (for example, the other side may have initiated court proceedings).

The findings in this chapter look at the most formal resolution strategy someone used, and why other, more formal, strategies were not pursued. However, people may have used other less formal strategies (like self-help). The data in this chapter therefore does not show all of the resolution strategies a respondent pursued.

All findings in this chapter are based on people who experienced a legal problem in the 18 months prior to interview. Respondents with multiple problems were asked follow-up questions on each legal problem they had experienced (for further information, see chapter 3). To allow comparisons to be made at the individual level, this chapter looks at the answers from one selected problem. Findings have been weighted to mitigate against the impact of selecting one problem.⁴⁴

5.3 Resolution strategies

People use different strategies to try to resolve their legal problem, with some choices reflecting the help that they may have obtained (see chapter 6). Many use more than one

⁴⁴ For further information on the weighting scheme, see the technical report (Chapter 8).

strategy when trying to resolve their problem. This creates complexity when analysing the differences in strategies taken by different groups of people across problem types. The overall resolution strategies, how those strategies are defined and whether they are categorised as ‘formal’ or ‘informal’ is explained in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Categorisation and definition of resolution strategies⁴⁵

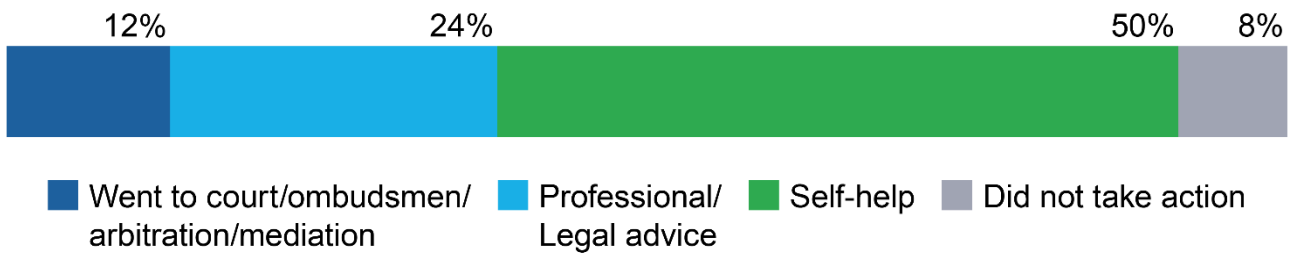
Type of resolution strategy	Categorised as formal or informal
Formal resolution process (e.g., went to the ombudsmen / court / used mediation / arbitration)	Formal
Legal / Professional help (e.g., a solicitor’s firm, a barrister, a law centre, Civil Legal Advice, Citizens Advice, Shelter, local authorities)	Formal
Self-help only (e.g., used social media, a leaflet, GOV.UK, spoke to family or friends)	Informal
Did not take action (Did not obtain any information, advice or help)	N/A (no action)

When analysing strategies by people who have sought to resolve their problem in more than one way, typically the most formal resolution strategy is used. This avoids double counting a respondent. For example, a respondent who has been to court, contacted a barrister and used GOV.UK is coded within the ‘formal resolution process’ category and not in the ‘self-help’ category or ‘legal /professional help’ (since going to court was the most formal resolution strategy used). This is not the case for all questions and throughout the chapter it is noted when respondents may be included within multiple resolution categories.

The majority (86%) of those with a legal problem used some form of resolution strategy, though one in twelve did not take any action to try to resolve their problem (8%). A minority of respondents (12%) used a formal resolution process (e.g., court, tribunal, ombudsman, independent conciliation, mediation, etc.) to resolve their problem, including cases when the other party had initiated this. Almost a quarter (24%) used legal or professional help. Half (50%) used some form of self-help as the most formal strategy to resolve their problem (e.g., obtained own information, advice or help from the internet, leaflets or self-help guides, friends and family, or had tried contacting the other party).

⁴⁵ See appendix B for more in-depth definitions of the different types of resolution strategies.

Figure 5.1: Most formal resolution strategy used



Source: (ED7/ED5a/ED10/ED6) Base: Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem (4,988). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to ‘Don’t know/prefer not to say’ responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Differences by legal problem category

The types of resolution strategies that people used varied significantly depending on the type of legal problem they experienced.

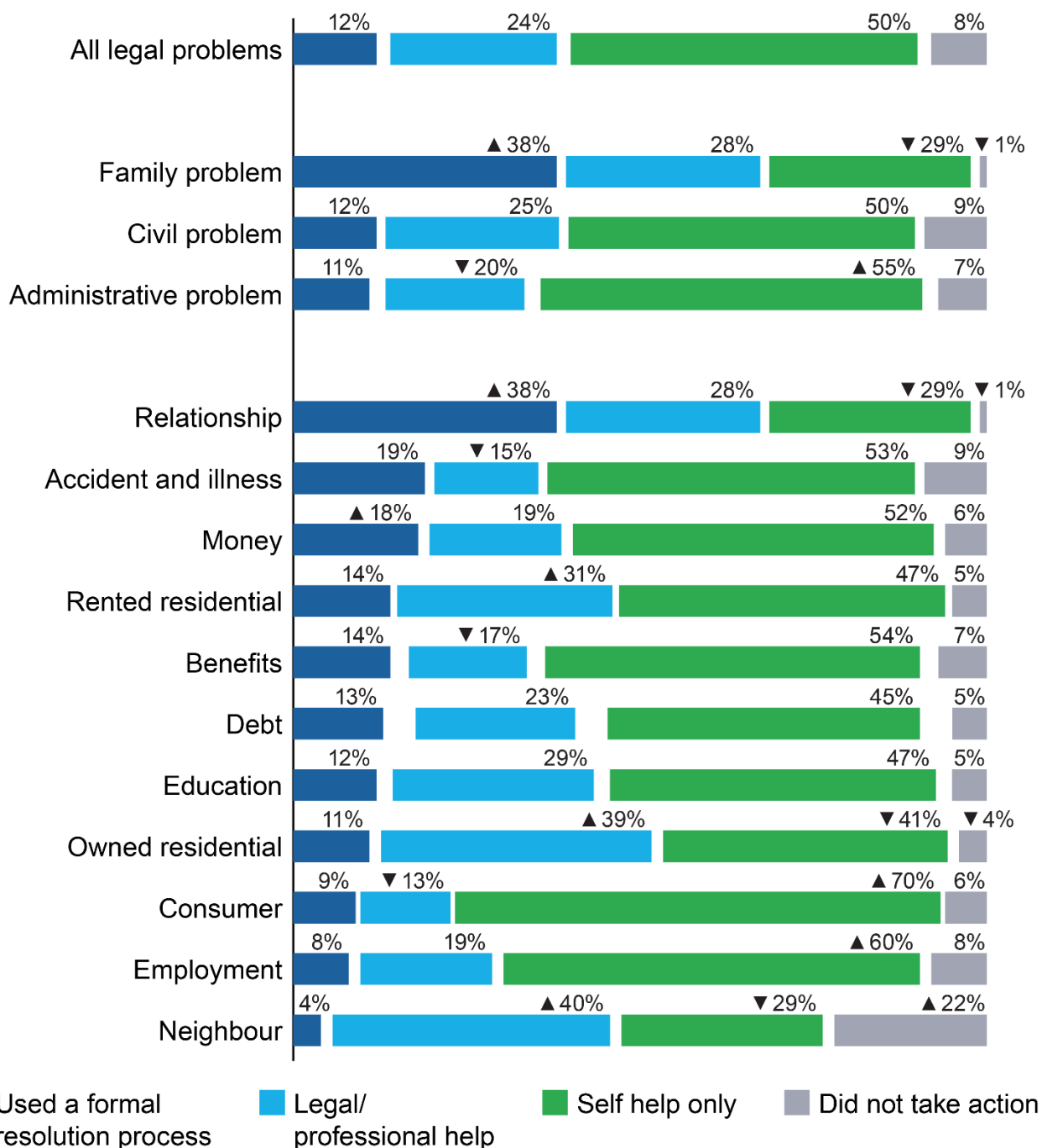
As shown in Figure 5.2, those with relationship breakdown problems were far more likely to have used a formal resolution process than those experiencing other problems (38%, compared to an average of 12% across all problem categories). They were also least likely to have taken no action (1%, compared to 8% for all problem categories). People who had a problem with neighbours or with their house were the most likely to have used legal / professional advice (40% of those with neighbour problems, 39% of those with a residential problem with a property they own, and 31% with a rented residential problem).⁴⁶

Those with neighbour problems were also more likely than others to have taken no action (22%, compared to 8% across all problem types).

The likelihood of people using self-help resolutions varied markedly across problem types. Individuals with consumer problems were the most likely to only use self-help methods (70%), followed by those with employment problems (60%). People experiencing neighbour problems or relationship breakdown problems were the least likely to only use self-help (both 29%).

⁴⁶ As these figures relate to those who chose legal / professional advice as their most formal resolution strategy, they do not capture those who also used court / mediation / arbitration.

Figure 5.2: Most formal resolution strategy by legal problem category



Source: (ED7/ED5a) Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months (4,988), all asked the follow-up about their civil (3,612), administrative (1,208), family (168), consumer problems (811), employment problems (455), neighbour (582), problems with a house they own (526), problems with a house they rent (563), debt problems (274), money problems (601), benefits problems (463), relationship problems (168), education problems (290), accident and illness problems (255). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Differences by problem characteristics

In general, people who thought their problem was legal at the outset, rated their problem as very serious / fairly serious, and/or had experienced adverse consequences and discrimination were all more likely to have used a formal resolution strategy.

Table 5.2: Most formal resolution strategy by problem characteristics

Problem characteristics	Differences in using a formal resolution strategy
Problem duration⁴⁷	<p>Overall, the longer a problem lasted, the more likely a formal resolution strategy was used (court process or legal / professional advice).</p> <p>Around one in five (18%) of those with a problem estimated to last 12–18 months used the most formal resolution process (e.g. court, tribunal, ombudsman, independent conciliation, mediation, etc).</p> <p>Where problems lasted for shorter periods of time (6 months or less), people were more likely to use self-help only (69% for those estimated to last 1–3 months and 61% for those estimated to last 4–6 months).</p>
Discrimination	<p>People who reported experiencing discrimination at some point during their legal problem were more likely to have used a formal resolution process (24%) or legal / professional advice (29%).</p>
Adverse consequences	<p>People who experienced some type of adverse consequence were more likely to have used a formal resolution process or legal / professional advice.</p> <p>Over twice as many of those who experienced an adverse consequence used a formal resolution process, compared to those who did not experience adverse consequences (17%, compared to 7%).</p> <p>Three in ten (30%) of those who experienced adverse consequences used legal / professional advice, compared to 18% of those who did not.</p>
How serious a problem was perceived to be	<p>One in five (20%) of those who rated their problem as very serious used the most formal resolution process, with a further third using legal / professional help (33%).</p> <p>They were less likely than those rating their problem as not very serious to either use self-help only (39% vs 59%) or to do nothing (5% vs 12%).</p>

⁴⁷ This data is derived from modelling on problem length. See chapter 4 and technical report for more information on how problem duration was calculated.

Problem characteristics	Differences in using a formal resolution strategy
Perceptions of the problem being 'legal'	Those who thought their problem was legal from the outset were also more likely to use formal resolution strategies. Over a quarter (27%) used the most formal resolution strategy, whilst a further two in five (38%) used legal / professional help, compared to 9% and 22% respectively for those who did not think their problem was legal.

Socio-demographic differences

The variations in use of resolution strategy by socio-demographic factors are less marked than those outlined above relating to problem types and characteristics. Where there are differences, this will, to some extent, reflect different categories of legal problems or the seriousness of legal problems being more prevalent among certain groups. There were no significant differences by sex, pregnancy status, region, religious status, employment status, or how well respondents spoke English.

Table 5.3: Significant socio-demographic differences in the use of resolution strategies

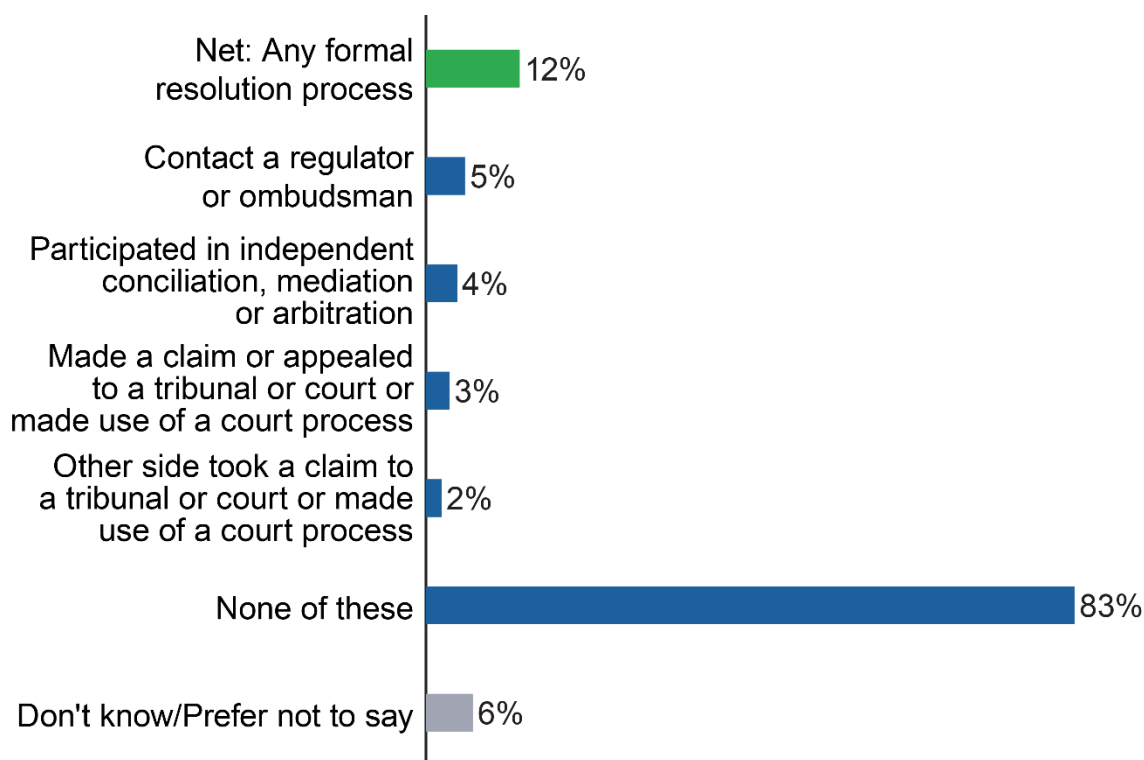
Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	<p>Those aged 45–54 were more likely than other age groups to use a formal resolution process (15%, compared to 9% of 18–24-year-olds).</p> <p>Older respondents aged 65 and over were the most likely to use self-help only (59%, compared to 50% of all adults).</p> <p>Those aged 25–34 were the age group most likely to have not taken any action about their legal problem (13%).</p>
Ethnicity	<p>People from an Asian (19%) or a black background (25%) were more likely to have used a formal resolution process, compared to people from a white background (10%).</p> <p>People from a white background were more likely than people from an Asian background to have used legal / professional help as their most formal resolution strategy (25% and 15% respectively).</p> <p>People from white or Asian backgrounds were more likely to use only self-help as their resolution strategy (52% and 53% respectively) than those from a black background (33%).</p> <p>There were no significant differences by ethnicity amongst those who did not take any action to resolve their problem.</p>

Socio-demographics	Differences
Disability status	<p>People with long-term health conditions or disabilities were more likely to have used a formal resolution process (14%, compared to 10% of those without a long-term health condition).</p> <p>People without a long-term health condition were more likely to use self-help only as their resolution strategy (56%, compared to 47% of those with a long-term health condition).</p>
Education	<p>Those with a GCSE level education were more likely than others to have used legal / professional help (29% compared to 22% of those with a degree).</p> <p>Those with a degree were more likely than others to use self-help only (54%, compared to 50% of all adults) and more likely to take no action (10%, compared to 8% of all adults).</p>
Household income and eligibility for legal aid	<p>Those with a household income of above £60,000 were more likely to have used self-help only (58%, compared to 48% of those with an annual income of £14,000–£32,000).</p> <p>Those who were not eligible for legal aid were also more likely to use self-help only as their resolution strategy (55%, compared to 48% who were eligible for legal aid).</p>
Benefits status	<p>Those who receive means-tested benefits were more likely to have used legal / professional help to resolve their problem (32%, compared to 25% of those claiming non-means tested benefits and 21% of those claiming no benefits).</p>
Single parents	<p>Single parents were more likely to have used a formal resolution process (21%, compared to 12% of those who were not single parents).</p>
Tenure	<p>Adults renting from a council / housing association were more likely to have used professional legal / advice (35%, compared to 23% of those renting privately).</p>
Legal capability	<p>People with high legal self-confidence were more likely to have used a formal resolution process (16%, compared to 8% of those with low legal self-confidence). It is possible that levels of self-confidence are affected by engagement with a formal resolution process.</p> <p>Those with medium or high legal self-efficacy were more likely to have used self-help only (52% for both, compared to 43% for those with low legal self-efficacy).</p> <p>There were no significant differences by levels of legal anxiety.</p>

5.4 Use of formal resolution processes

Around one in eight (12%) of those who experienced a legal problem within the 18 months prior to interview reported having used a formal resolution process at some stage of their problem – as shown in Figure 5.3. The most frequently used formal resolution process was contacting a regulator or ombudsman (used by 5% of people with a problem), followed by independent conciliation, mediation, or arbitration (4%). Five per cent of people with a problem were involved in a court or tribunal claim or process (3% had initiated the court or tribunal action themselves, whilst 2% reported that those on the other side of the problem initiated the process).

Figure 5.3: Use of formal resolution processes



Source: (ED7) Did any of the following things happen as part of this problem or sorting it out?
 Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months (4,988). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding, additionally respondents were able to select more than one answer.

Differences by legal problem category

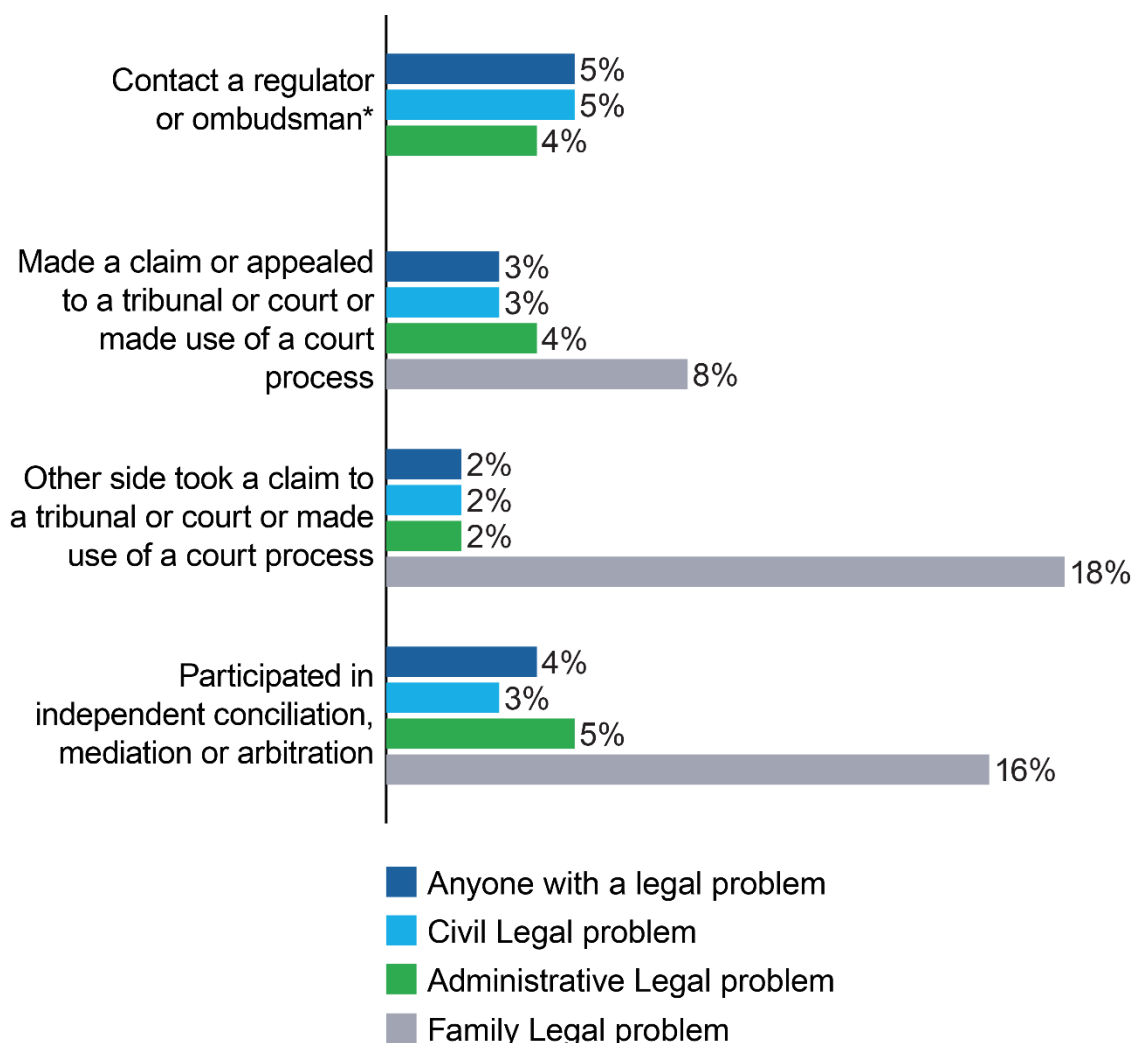
Those who experienced a family legal problem were more likely to report having used each of the different types of formal resolution processes than those experiencing administrative or civil problems.⁴⁸ People with family legal problems were the most likely to report that the other side took them to a tribunal or court (18%), or to have participated in an independent conciliation (16%). They were twice as likely as those experiencing other types of problems to have made a claim/appeal themselves to a court or tribunal (8%, compared to 3% of all those with a legal problem).

Those with problems concerning money or benefits were more likely than others to have used a regulator or ombudsman to resolve their problem (10% and 7% respectively).

Those who had problems concerning a benefit or regarding an accident were comparatively more likely than other problem types to make a claim to a tribunal or court (8% and 12% respectively). Aside from people with a relationship problem, those who experienced a problem relating to debt or a rented residence were the group most likely to report that the other side made a claim to court (7% and 5%).

⁴⁸ People who reported experiencing a relationship breakdown problem were not asked if they had contacted a regulator or ombudsman.

Figure 5.4: Use of formal resolution processes by problem category



Source: (ED7) Did any of the following things happen as part of this problem or sorting it out? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months (4,988), headline problem category-main problem civil legal problems (3,612), administrative legal problem (1,208), family legal problem (168) *Those with family legal problems were not asked about contacting a regulator or ombudsman. Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to ‘Don’t know/prefer not to say’ responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

5.5 Use of court and tribunal processes

A small minority (5%) of adults with legal problems use the court and tribunal system to help resolve a problem. In the LPRS, only a small number of respondents (217) went to court or tribunal. Three per cent of people reported that they themselves had initiated court or tribunal proceedings whilst two per cent of people said that the other party had done so. There are, therefore, limits on the inferences that can be made, especially with regards to sub-group differences, which are only reported on when statistically significant. This

section outlines whether respondents paid fees to use a court or tribunal process, whether these resulted in any hearings and whether they had any representation at said hearings.⁴⁹ It also outlines the reasons that respondents did not use the court or tribunal process.

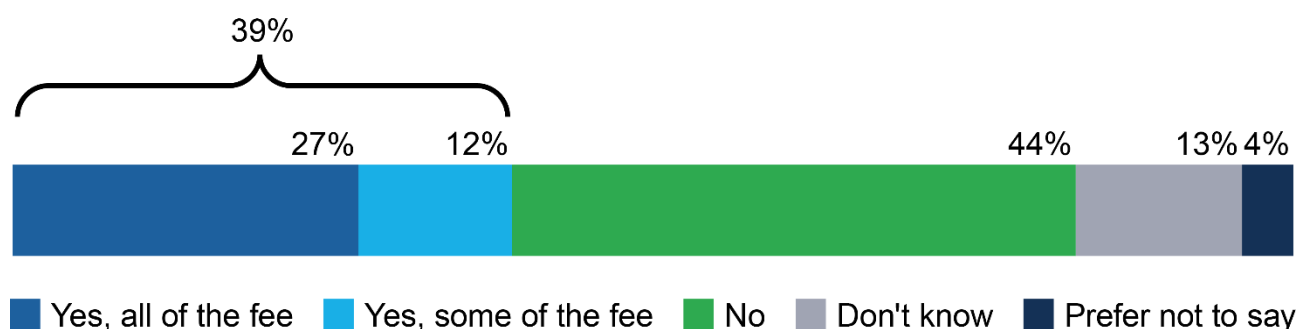
Court fees (excluding divorce and probate)

Respondents who had used a court or tribunal process (regardless of whether they or the other party had initiated the court proceedings) (excluding divorce and probate issues) were asked whether they had to pay a fee to the court in order to use it.⁵⁰ This is separate from the fees that respondents paid to their advice provider (if used), which is covered in chapter six.

The figures below include all those who used a court or tribunal process regardless of who initiated the proceedings. This will have an impact on the figures as court fees are not charged when the other party initiates proceedings.

Around two in five (39%) respondents had to personally pay at least some of the fee to the court or tribunal, whilst a similar proportion (44%) did not personally have to pay.

Figure 5.5: Whether respondent needed to pay a fee to access court/tribunal



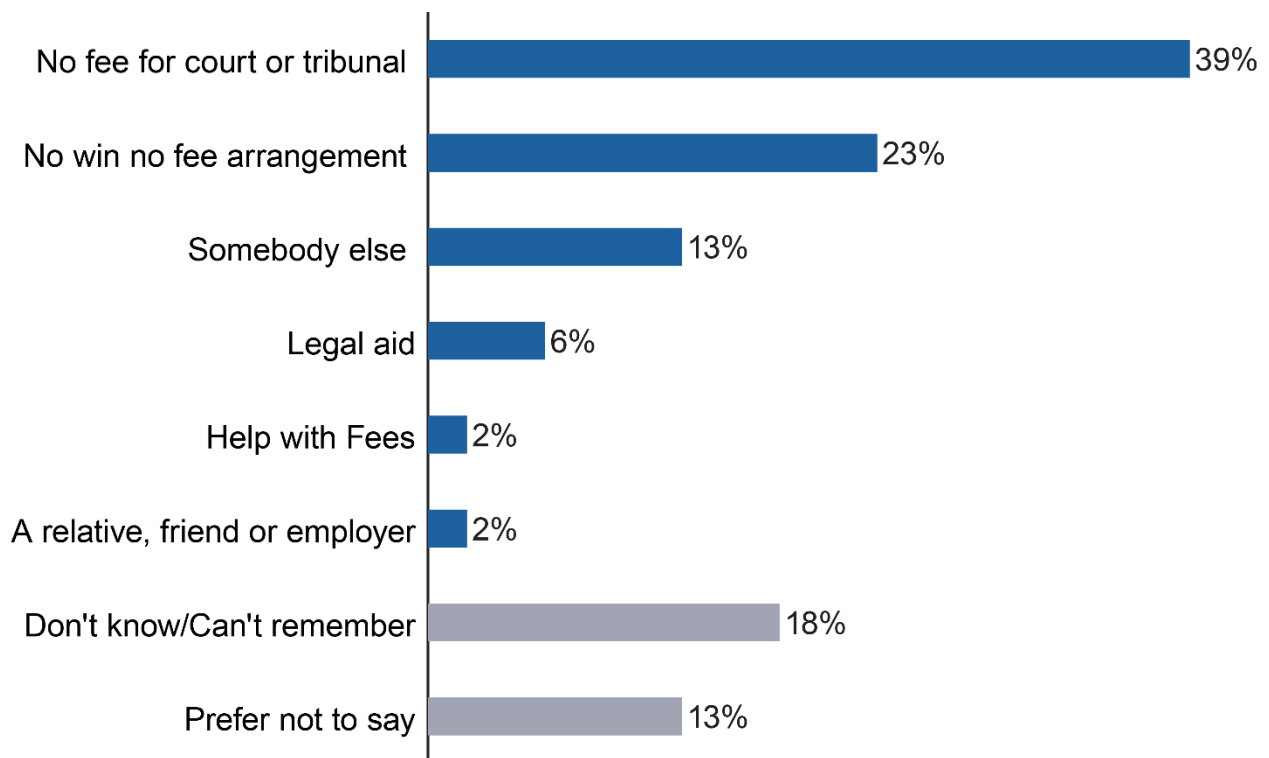
(E28) Have you personally, had to pay a fee to the court or tribunal in order to be able to use it?
 Base: Adults in England and Wales with a problem, where a court or tribunal was involved (217).

⁴⁹ Using the court and tribunal system does not necessarily mean respondents attended a hearing. For example, some cases are settled after a court claim has been issued without the need for a hearing. Also, the system includes using the ombudsman, arbitration, or mediation services.

⁵⁰ In most court cases and for some tribunals in England and Wales people are charged a fee to start a court or tribunal claim or case, and there may also be additional fees within the court process. The Social Security and Child Support Tribunal, Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal and Mental Health Tribunal do not charge fees.

Those who had to pay either some or all of the court fees were asked how they covered the fee.⁵¹ Most respondents were able to cover the court fees from their regular income (42%) or savings (17%). However, more than a third (37%) had to borrow money from friends / family (21%) or a business / organisation (17%). This suggests that, for many, covering this fee was not possible without support. Among those who did not have to pay a full fee (including those who only paid some of it), there was a fairly even split between cases where there was no fee charged at all (39%) and others where somebody else or an organisation helped pay the fee (37%).⁵² Around a quarter of those who did not pay the full fee (23%) had a no win no fee arrangement and around one in eight (13%) stated that somebody else paid the fee. A small number of respondents reported using legal aid (6%) or Help with Fees (2%).

Figure 5.6: Payment of court fees



Source: (E29) Who paid the court fees? Base: All Adults who used court or tribunal and did not pay all of the fee (130). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

⁵¹ The sample size for this question was 82, so caution should be exercised in drawing any conclusions.

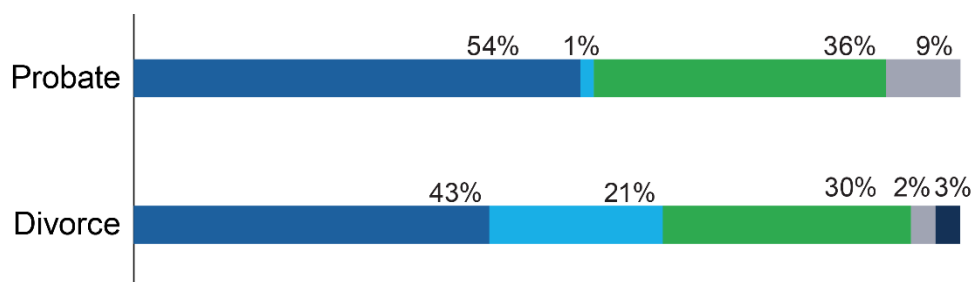
⁵² 37% includes all of the following: all who had a relative, friend or employer pay; all who had somebody else pay; all who had legal aid; and all who used Help with Fees

Court fees for divorce and probate

The relationship between divorce and probate proceedings and court fees is substantially different to other types of legal problems because people will typically use the court process to resolve these cases.

People who submitted an application themselves for divorce or probate proceedings were asked if they had paid a fee to start the proceedings.⁵³ Most people in these cases had personally paid at least some of the fee to start proceedings. Just over half of those experiencing probate proceedings having paid the full fee themselves (54%, compared to 43% of those in a divorce proceeding and 27% of those with other legal problems).

Figure 5.7: Payment of court fees for divorce / probate proceedings



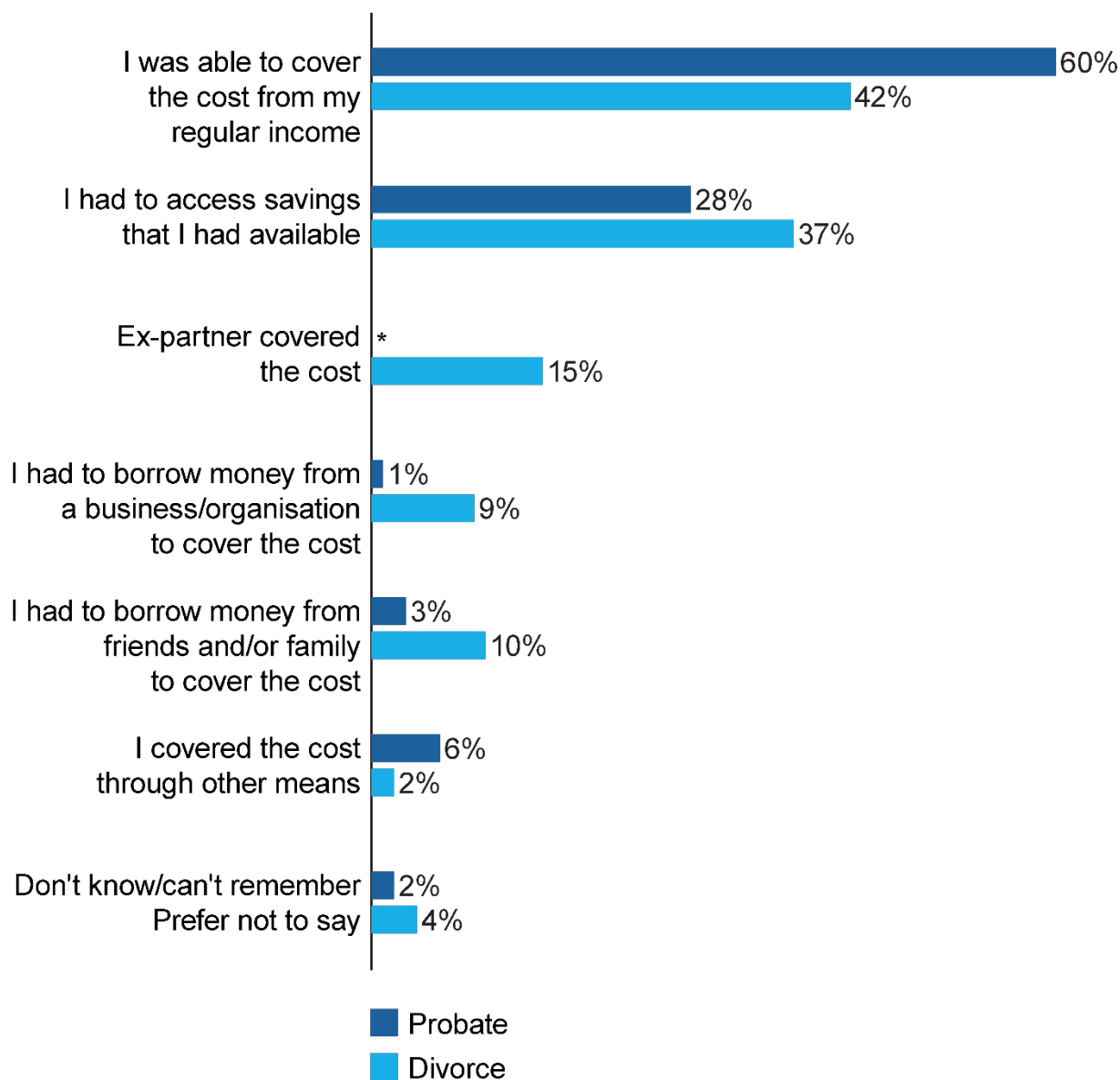
■ Yes, all of the fee ■ Yes, some of the fee ■ No ■ Don't know ■ Prefer not to say

Source: (F12/FA12) Have you, personally, had to pay a fee to the court to start the proceedings?
 Base: All Adults in England and Wales who submitted a probate application themselves (132), all who filed the application for divorce/dissolution for civil partnership themselves (75). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding. **Caution: low base.**

Most people paying a fee for divorce or probate proceedings covered the cost either through their regular income or savings. From the indicative figures, people appeared less likely to need to cover the costs through borrowing than was the case for other legal problems.

⁵³ The sample sizes are limited (n=132 respondents for probate cases and n=75 for divorce) and so should be treated as illustrative rather than statistically conclusive.

Figure 5.8: Breakdown of how respondents with divorce or probate proceedings covered the fees incurred



Source: (F12A/FA12A) Thinking about the fees to the court that you personally have had to pay, which, if any, of the following apply? Base: All who covered all or some of divorce/dissolution of civil partnership court fees (56), all who covered all or some of the probate proceedings (77).

* Ex-partner covering the cost was not shown for probate proceedings. Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding. **Caution: low base.**

Hearings and representation in a court or tribunal

Amongst those whose legal problems involved a court or tribunal claim being made, just under half (45%) said that it did not result in a hearing. Around three in ten (29%) had a hearing, whilst a further quarter (26%) either did not know or preferred not to say. Of the

respondents whose problem involved at least one hearing, around three quarters (74%) attended the hearing themselves (including remote hearings), whilst a quarter (27%) did not. Just under half (43%) said they had a lawyer or someone else represent them, whilst just over half (54%) did not.

Figure 5.9: Incidence of court or tribunal proceedings including a hearing

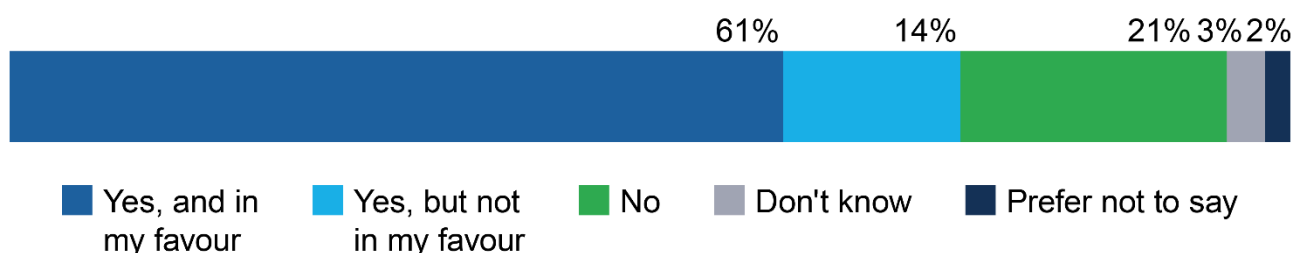


Source: (E30) And were there any court or tribunal hearings, including any remote hearings, about this problem? Base: Adults in England and Wales with a problem, where a court or tribunal was involved (217). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Outcome of court / tribunal

Respondents with concluded problems who were involved in court proceedings (regardless of who initiated the proceedings), were asked whether a decision had been made by the court or tribunal, and whether it was in their favour or not. Three-quarters (75%) of respondents reported that a decision had been made by a court or tribunal, with the majority saying it had been in their favour (61%, compared to 14% who reported the decision had not been in their favour).

Figure 5.10: Decisions made by a court/tribunal

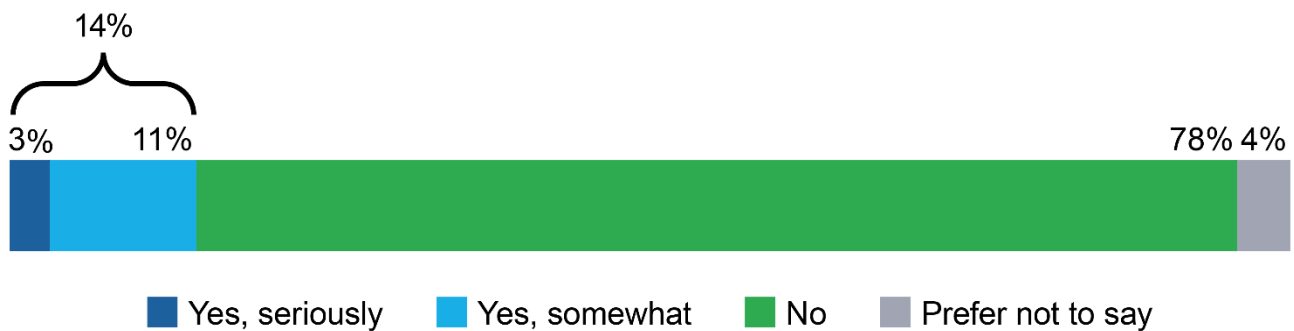


Source: (D9) And did a court or tribunal make a decision to conclude the claim or appeal? Base: Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem who made a claim or appeal to a tribunal or court, or the other side did, and the problem had concluded (106). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Reasons given for not going to court or tribunal

Amongst those who experienced a legal problem, five per cent used a court or tribunal process. Comparatively, amongst those people who had experienced a legal problem but had not used a court or tribunal, around one in seven (14%) had considered doing so but ultimately decided not to, including three per cent who had seriously considered it. The majority (78%) did not consider using a court or tribunal at all.

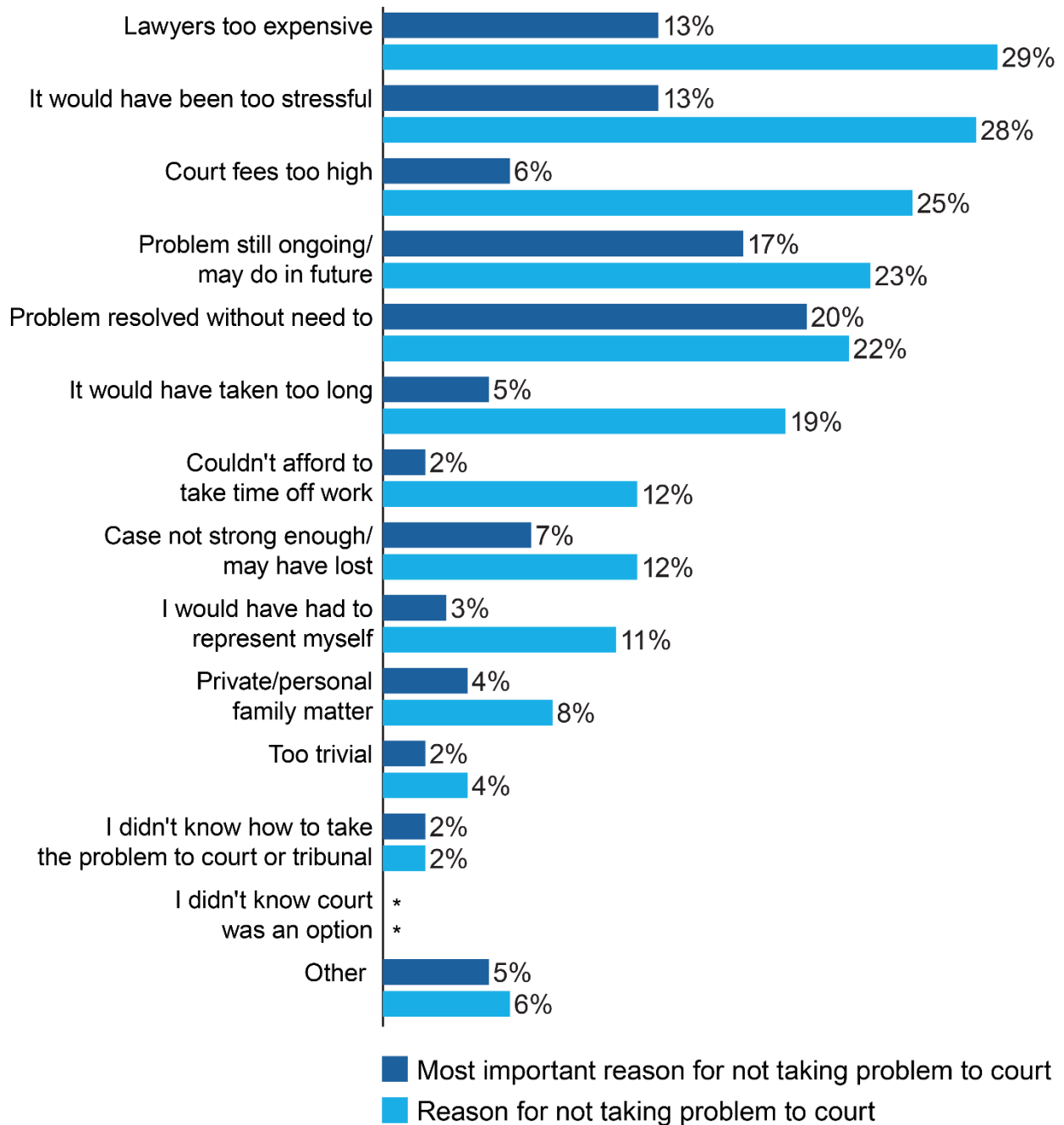
Figure 5.11: Consideration given to taking legal problems to court or tribunal



Source: (E34) Did you ever consider taking this problem to a court or tribunal? Base: Adults in England and Wales with a problem who did not use a court or tribunal (4,771) Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Amongst those who had considered taking their problem to court but had not done so, the key barriers cited revolved around the perceived cost and stress that would have been incurred. As shown in Figure 5.12, the most frequently cited reason for not taking a problem to court was the expense of a lawyer (29%), followed by the prospect being too stressful (28%) and court fees being too high (25%). In a sizeable number of cases, people reported that their problem had been resolved without the need to go to a court or tribunal (22%), or that their problem was still ongoing and so the court or tribunal option remained a possibility (23%).

Figure 5.12: Reasons for not taking the problem to a court or tribunal amongst those who had considered it

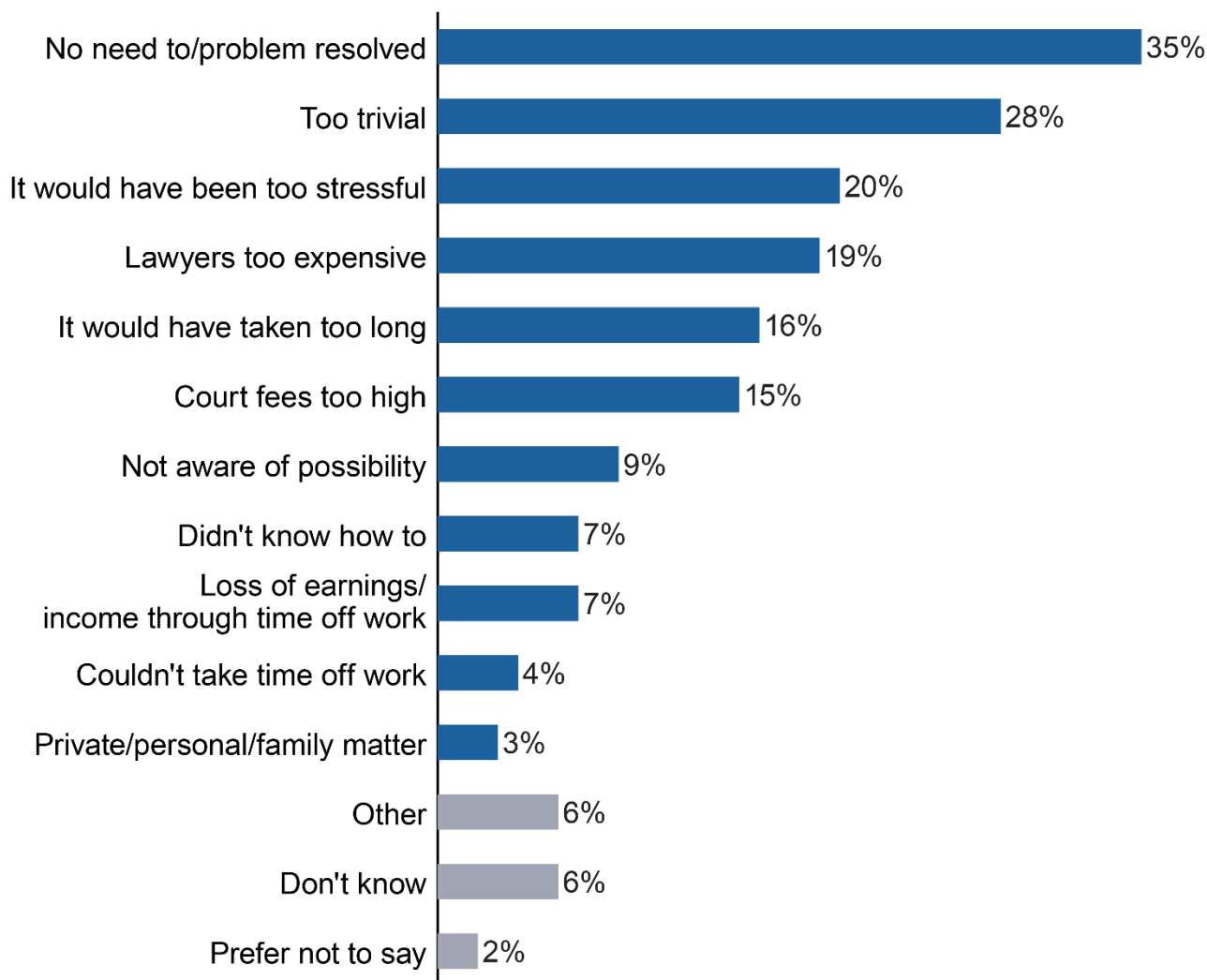


Source: (E35) Why did you decide not to take the problem to a court or tribunal? And (E35b) And what was the most important reason you didn't take the problem to a court or tribunal? Base: Adults in England and Wales with a problem who considered taking the problem to court (711). * indicates percentages lower than 1%. Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding. Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

“The whole process (and what required of me) [was] confusing and not clear on the government website. I gave up on trying to understand.” **Respondent with a rented residential problem who considered going to court or tribunal**

Amongst those who had not considered taking their problem to court or tribunal, the most likely reasons cited were the lack of need and a perception that the problem was too trivial. Around one in ten were not aware of the possibility (9%), whilst seven per cent noted that they did not know how to. See Figure 5.13 for proportions choosing each reason (respondents could select more than one option).

Figure 5.13: Reasons for not considering a court or tribunal as an option.



Source: (E36) Why didn't you consider going to a court or tribunal as an option? Base: Adults in England and Wales with a problem who did not consider taking the problem to court (3,805). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

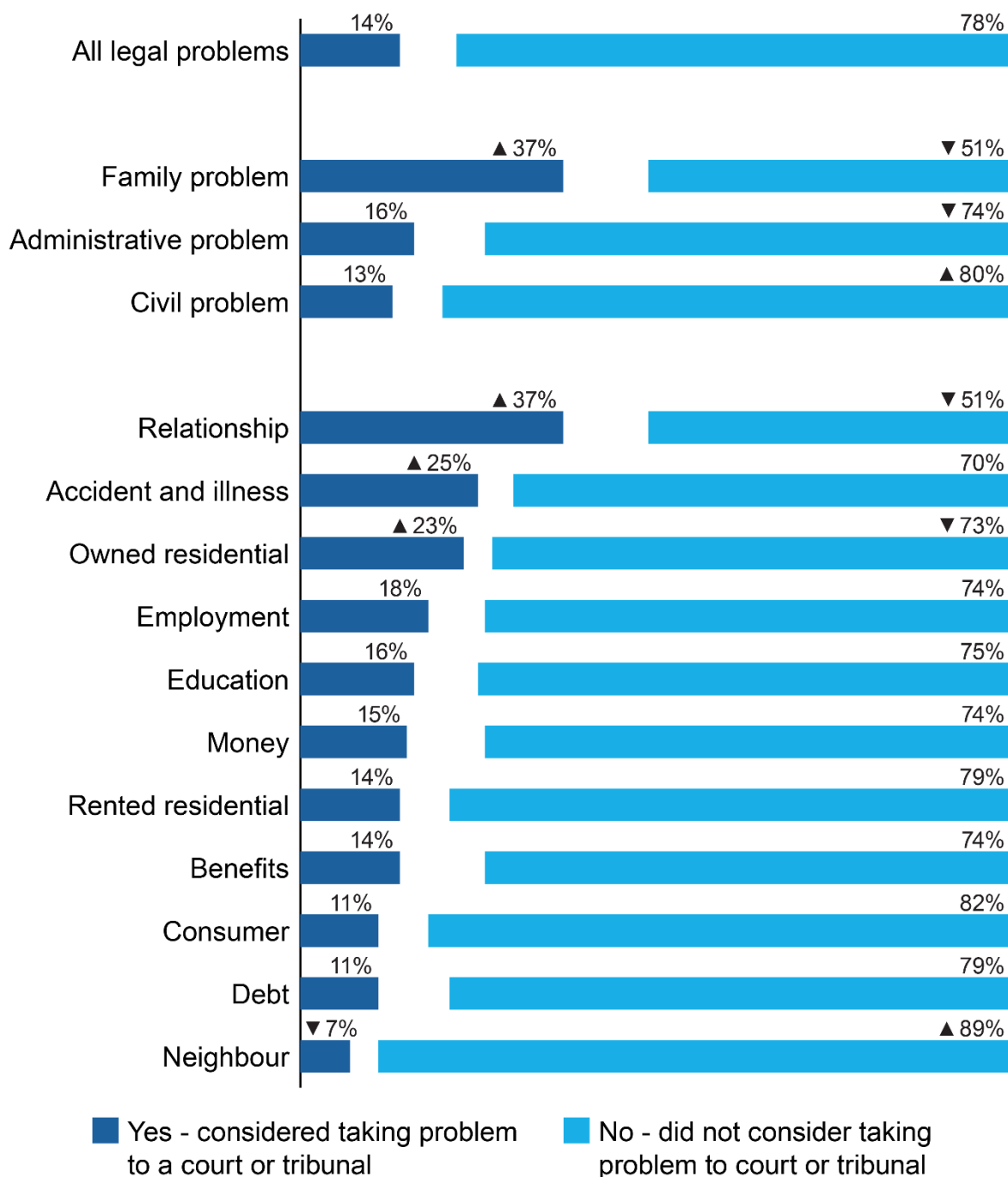
“Too big a company, I'm small fry.” Respondent with employment problem who did not consider courts and tribunals as an option.

“Wouldn't have made a difference.” Respondent with education problem who did not consider courts and tribunals as an option.

Differences by legal problem category

The two problem categories for which people were most likely to have considered going to court or tribunal but not done so are the same as those which have the highest proportions of people using a formal resolution process (including courts): relationship breakdown problems and accident and illness problems. This suggests that people with these two problem categories are more likely to need support from formal sources.

Figure 5.14: Consideration given to going to court by legal problem category



Source: (E34) Did you ever consider taking this problem to a court or tribunal? Base: All with a legal problem in the last 18 months who did not take problem to court or tribunal (4,771), all asked the follow-up and did not take their problem to court or tribunal: their consumer problems (787), employment problems (440), neighbour (580), problems with a house they own (509), problems with a house they rent (542), debt problems (264), money problems (555), benefits problems (437), relationship problems (137), education problems (278), accident and illness problems (242). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼ ▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

The base sizes are too small to robustly analyse differences in reasons for people who ultimately chose to not pursue their problem in court or tribunal (among those who considered it) by legal problem category. However, there are discernible differences by legal problem category with regards to the reasons for *not considering* going to court or tribunal:

- Concerns over cost (either court fees or lawyers being too expensive, cited by 24% overall) were more prominent amongst those with residential problems or those experiencing money problems (30% amongst those with an owned residential problem, 27% rented residential problem, 29% money problems).
- Lack of awareness (not aware of court / didn't know how to go to court, cited by 14% overall) was more likely to be cited as a reason by those who had problems with a house they own (19%) or who had experienced education-related problems (20%).
- The stress of going to court or length of time it would take were more likely to be cited as reasons for not considering going to court by people with a rented residential problem (32%, compared to 26% overall). This may reflect concerns around how escalation towards more formal processes may have implications for the respondent's housing situation.
- Those who experienced consumer problems were more likely than those with other problems to note that their issue had been resolved or was too trivial to take to court (69%, compared to 57% amongst all those with a legal problem).

Differences by problem characteristics

People's reasons for considering whether to take their problem to a court or tribunal or not varied depending on problem characteristics. These differences, to some extent, will interact with the type of legal problem experienced.

Table 5.4: Differences in considering or not considering taking problem to a court or tribunal by problem characteristics

Problem characteristics	Differences
Problem duration ⁵⁴	The longer a problem was estimated to last, the more likely it was that court was considered (of those with a problem estimated to last between 2 and a half to 5 years, 28% considered court vs 8% of those with a problem estimated to last 1–3 months)
Adverse consequences	Those who experienced adverse consequences as a result of their legal problem were more likely to have considered going to court (22% vs 7% of those who did not experience adverse consequences).
How serious a problem was perceived to be	People who rated their problem as very (28%) or fairly (13%) serious were more likely to have considered going to court, compared to those who rated their problem as not very serious (6%).
Discrimination	People who experienced discrimination in relation to their legal problem were more likely to report that they considered going to court (29%), compared to those who did not experience discrimination in relation to their problem (11%).
Perception of the problem being 'legal'	Those who perceived their problem as being legal from the outset were more likely to say that they considered going to court. Over two fifths (43%) reported this, compared to one in ten (10%) of those who did not initially perceive their problem as legal.
Source of advice	Those who received legal or professional advice as their most formal resolution strategy were more likely to have considered going to court (23%), compared to those who used self-help only (10%).

Socio-demographic differences

Differences by socio-demographic group are outlined in Table 5.5 and **to some extent, will interact with the type of legal problem (and seriousness of legal problem) experienced**. Among some groups, there was a lack of awareness around the possibility of taking their legal problem to court, notably amongst those with lower education levels, lower digital capability, and lower proficiency in English.

⁵⁴ This data is derived from modelling on problem length. See chapter 4 and the technical report for more information on how problem duration was calculated.

Table 5.5: Significant socio-demographic differences regarding reasons for considering or not considering taking problems to a court or tribunal

Socio-demographics	Differences
Sex	<p>Males and females were just as likely to have considered taking their problem to court or tribunal.</p> <p>However, males were more likely than females to think that their problem was too trivial (31% vs 25%), that lawyers would have been too expensive (21% vs 16%), and that it would have taken too long (19% vs 13%) as reasons not to take their problem to a court or tribunal.</p>
Age	<p>Older age groups were more likely to say they did not consider going to court (82% of 65–74-year-olds and 87% of those aged 75+, compared to 74% of 18–24-year-olds).</p> <p>35–44-year-olds were the most likely to have considered going to court (19%).</p> <p>Amongst those who did not consider going to court, younger age groups were more likely than older groups to state that their problem was too trivial (41% of 18–24-year-olds and 34% of 25–34-year-olds vs 22% of 55–64-year-olds), or that it would have been too stressful (35% of 18–24-year-olds vs 14% of 55–64-year-olds).</p> <p>Court fees were also more likely to be a concern for younger or middle-aged respondents (19% of those aged 35–44, compared to 6% of those aged 75+).</p> <p>Middle aged participants were the most likely to express concern about loss of income (10% of 45–54-year-olds vs 3% of 55–64-year-olds), or not being able to take time off work (7% of those aged 35–44, compared to 1% of those aged 55–64).</p>
Disability status	<p>People with a long-term health condition or disability were more likely to have considered going to court (16%, compared with 12% without a disability).</p> <p>There were few differences in the reasons why people did not consider going to court. Those without a disability were more likely to say that their problem was too trivial (31%, compared to 25% of those with a disability), reflecting the fact that those with a disability were more likely to have serious problems.</p>
Ethnicity	<p>People from a white background were slightly more likely not to have considered going to court (81%, compared to 78% overall).</p> <p>People from an Asian background were more likely than people from a white background to report that it would be too stressful (29% vs 18%), that lawyers would have been too expensive (36%</p>

Socio-demographics	Differences
	<p>vs 16%), or that the process would have taken too long (31% vs 13%).</p> <p>Comparatively, people from a black background were more likely to report that they were not aware of the possibility of taking their problem to court (18% vs 9% overall).</p>
Religion	<p>Respondents who identified as Muslim were more likely than others to note lawyers being too expensive (43%, compared to 19% overall) and loss of earnings (17%, compared to 7% overall) as reasons they did not consider using court.</p>
Education	<p>There is a correlation between awareness of being able to go to court and education level. Those whose highest qualification was GCSE level were more likely to report that they did not know how to make a claim to a court or tribunal (11% vs 7% overall).</p> <p>Those whose highest qualification was a trade apprenticeship were more likely to report that they couldn't take time off work (17% vs 4% overall) or that the process would take too long (27% compared to 16% overall).</p> <p>Those with a degree level or above were more likely than others to say that their problem was trivial (32%), that it would be too stressful (23%), or that it would take too long (19%).</p>
Tenure	<p>Those renting from the council / housing association were more likely to not be aware of the possibility of using court (14%, compared to 9% overall).</p>
Household income	<p>People on annual incomes of less than £14k were comparatively more likely to report that their problem was too trivial (37%), that taking a claim to court would have been too stressful (31%), that it would take too long (25%), or that lawyers would have been too expensive (29%).</p>
Eligibility for legal aid ⁵⁵	<p>Those who were eligible for legal aid were comparatively more likely to cite cost-related factors for why they did not consider going to court. One in five thought court fees would be too high (20%, compared to 14% of those not eligible for legal aid) and 11% would be concerned about the loss of income (compared to 6% of those not eligible).</p> <p>It is important to note that those entitled to receive legal aid are exempt from paying court fees. This therefore indicates a potential perceived cost issue.</p>

⁵⁵ For further information on the legal aid definition see Appendix A. This definition includes financial eligibility only.

Socio-demographics	Differences
English proficiency	Those who spoke English ‘well’ (as opposed to very well) were more likely to say they were not aware of the possibility of going to court (19%, compared to 8% who spoke English ‘very well’). They were also more likely to think lawyers were too expensive (32%, compared to 17% who spoke English ‘well’).
Legal capability	<p>Those with high legal confidence, high legal self-efficacy, and low legal anxiety were more likely to report that their problem resolved without the need to make a court or tribunal claim.</p> <p>Those with high legal anxiety were comparatively more likely to say that it would have been too stressful (27% vs 13% of those with low legal anxiety).</p> <p>Those with low legal self-efficacy were more likely to note that they were not aware of the possibility of making a claim (13% vs 5% of those with high self-efficacy).</p>
Digital capability	Those with high digital capability were more likely to claim that their problem resolved without the need to make a claim (36%) or that they felt their problem was too trivial (29%). Comparatively, those with lower digital capability were more likely to say that they didn’t know how to make a claim (23% vs 13% of those with medium capability and 7% of those with high capability).

Legal aid

Four per cent of those who used the most formal resolution process (excluding the ombudsmen or regulator) received legal aid to pay their fees.⁵⁶ Seven per cent of those going to court or independent conciliation who did not receive legal aid reported that they had applied for it.

⁵⁶ Respondents were not asked if they had received legal aid but were asked if they paid for all or some of the court / mediation fees. Legal aid was provided in a list of options for who covered the rest of the fee. Caution should be exercised as not all who used court, mediation, conciliation were shown this question.

Figure 5.15: Applications for legal aid amongst those who did not receive it



Source: (LA1) You said you did not receive legal aid for your problem. Did you apply? Base: Adults in England and Wales with a problem who went to court/conciliation and did not receive legal aid (374).

The most frequently reported reason for not applying for legal aid was the belief that they would not have been eligible for it (cited by 43% of those who did not apply). Around a quarter (23%) stated they were not aware of legal aid, suggesting that lack of awareness may be impacting levels of demand to some extent.⁵⁷

Help with Fees remission scheme

Respondents who went to court / conciliation or tribunal and did not receive any help with court fees for their legal problems were asked whether they had applied for the Help with Fees remission scheme.⁵⁸ Six per cent of these respondents said they had applied for it.

Figure 5.16: Applications for the Help with Fees remission scheme amongst those who did not receive it



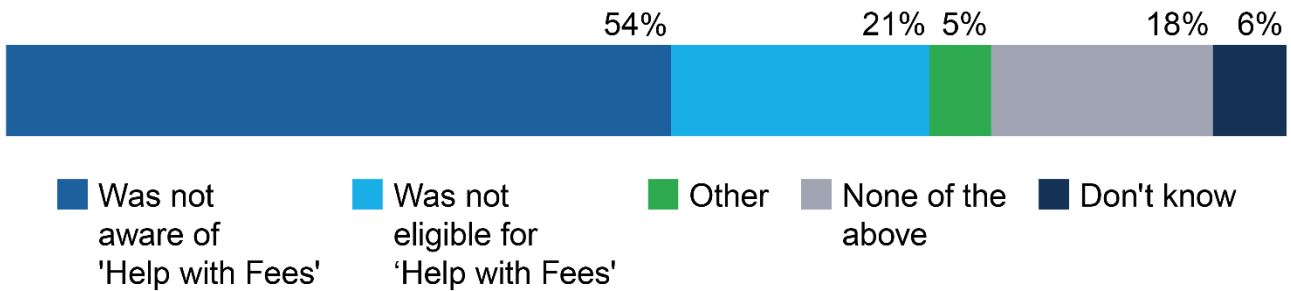
Source: (HWF1) You said that you did not use the Help with Fees remission scheme for your problem. Did you apply to Help with Fees? Base: Adults in England and Wales who went to court independent conciliation and did not use Help with Fees (377).

⁵⁷ All adults who had a legal problem and had gone to court or a tribunal who did not receive legal aid were asked whether they had applied for legal aid, (regardless of whether they would have been eligible for legal aid). The sample sizes for these legal aid questions were too small to conclusively review differences by legal problem category or socio-demographic differences.

⁵⁸ The Help with Fees (HwF) remission scheme is for those bringing a case to court who are on lower incomes, in receipt of certain benefits or who otherwise meet certain eligibility criteria, to ensure they can access court services. More information on Help with Fees can be found here: [Get help paying court and tribunal fees - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/get-help-paying-court-and-tribunal-fees)

Of those who did not apply for the Help with Fees remission scheme, over half (54%) said they were not aware of the scheme and a further one in five (21%) said they were not eligible.

Figure 5.17: Reasons for not applying for the Help with Fees remission scheme



Source: (HWF2) Which, if any, of the following best describes why you didn't apply for the 'Help with Fees' remission scheme? Base: Adults in England and Wales who did not apply for Help with Fees (345). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

“[I] was confident fees would be recovered from debtors”. **Respondent with a money problem who did not apply to Help with Fees remission scheme.**

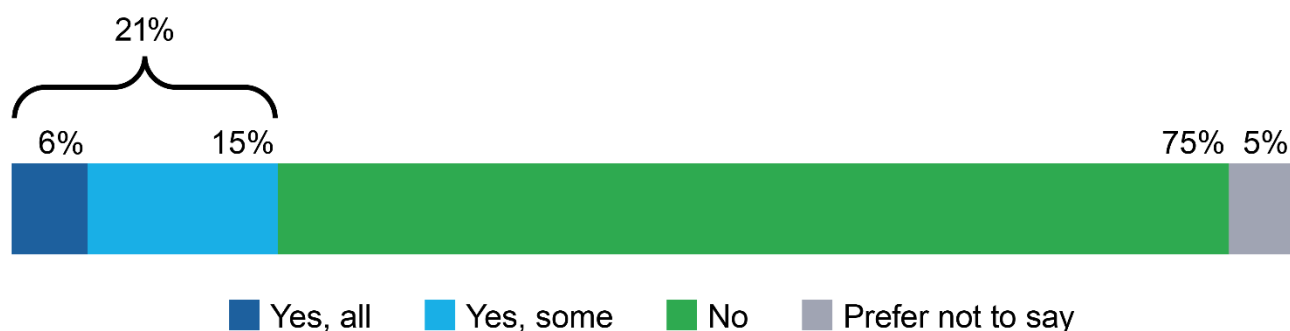
5.6 Use of conciliation, mediation or arbitration

Less than one in twenty respondents (4%) used independent conciliation, mediation, or arbitration during the process of their problem.

Covering the cost of conciliation, mediation, or arbitration

Of those who used conciliation, mediation, or arbitration to resolve their problem, the majority (75%) did not have to pay any of the cost. A fifth (21%) paid for at least some part of the cost.

Figure 5.18: Covering the cost of conciliation, mediation or arbitration



(E38) Did you, personally, have to pay any of the cost of conciliation, mediation or arbitration? Base: Adults in England and Wales who participated in conciliation, mediation or arbitration (188). Don't know responses were less than 1%. Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

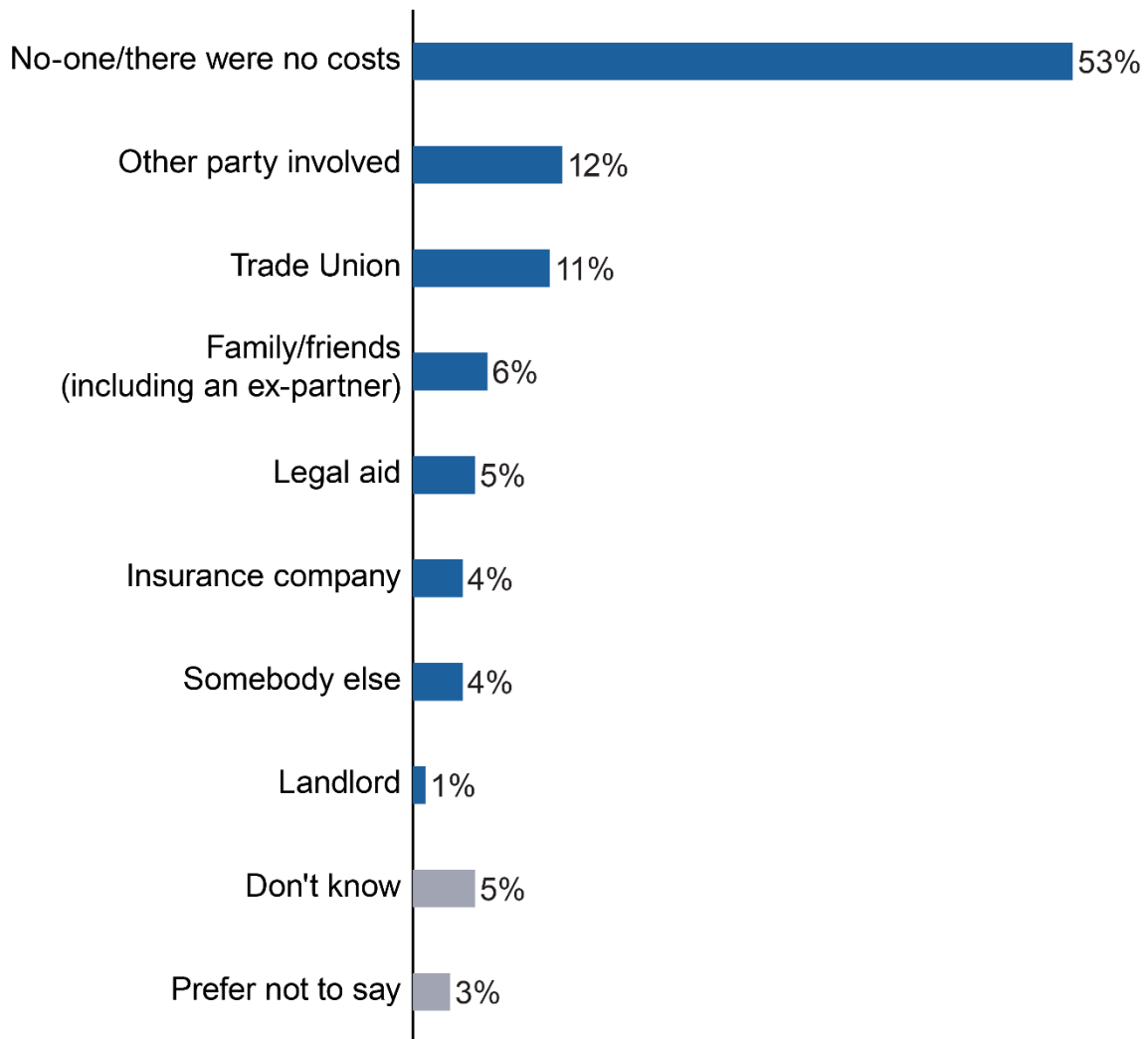
Among those who paid at least some of the fee, it appears that most people covered the cost through their regular income or savings, though sample sizes mean that this is only indicative.⁵⁹ Comparatively fewer people covered the cost by borrowing from friends / family or an organisation.⁶⁰

Just over half of those who did not pay all the fee noted that there were no costs associated with the conciliation/mediation/arbitration (53%). Two in five (39%) reported that someone else or another organisation covered the cost of the conciliation/mediation/arbitration, most frequently the other party involved (12%) or a trade union (11%).

⁵⁹ Sample size of 48 respondents.

⁶⁰ Due to the small base size, inferences should not be made from this.

Figure 5.19: How conciliation/mediation/arbitration costs were covered in cases where respondent did not pay all the fee



Source: (E39) Who paid the cost of conciliation / mediation / arbitration? Base: All Adults who used conciliation / mediation / arbitration and did not pay all the fee (163). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Reasons for not using mediation

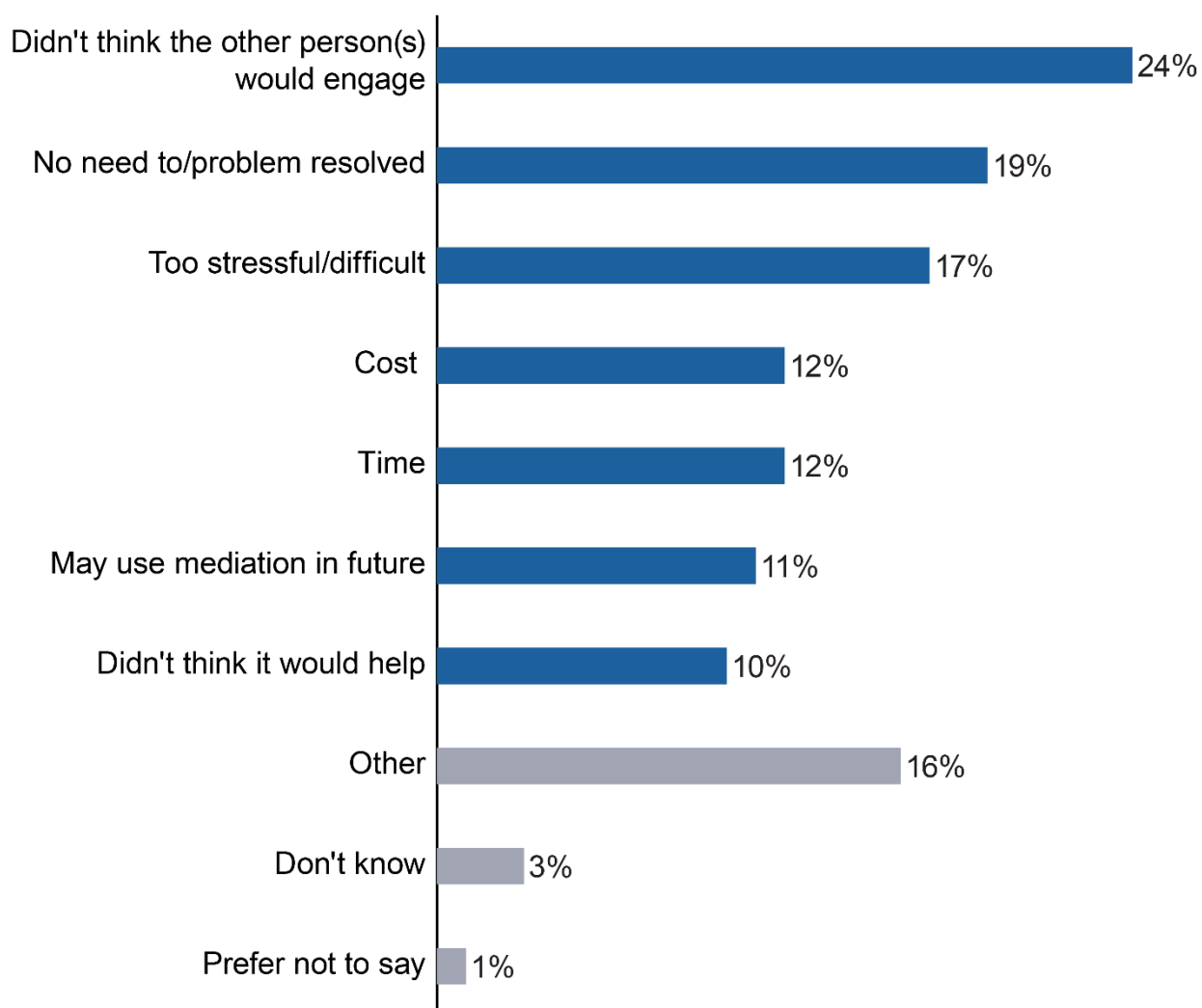
One in ten of those who had not used mediation reported that they had considered using it as a way of helping to resolve the problem (10%). Among those who had considered mediation, the most frequently cited reasons for not using it were thinking the people on the other side of the problem would not engage (24%), that the problem would resolve without the need for it (19%), or that it would be too stressful (17%).

Figure 5.20: Consideration of using mediation to resolve problems among those who had not



(E40) Did you consider using mediation as a way of helping to resolve the problem? Base: Adults in England and Wales who did not participate in mediation (4,789).

Figure 5.21: Reasons for not using mediation to resolve problems among those who had considered it

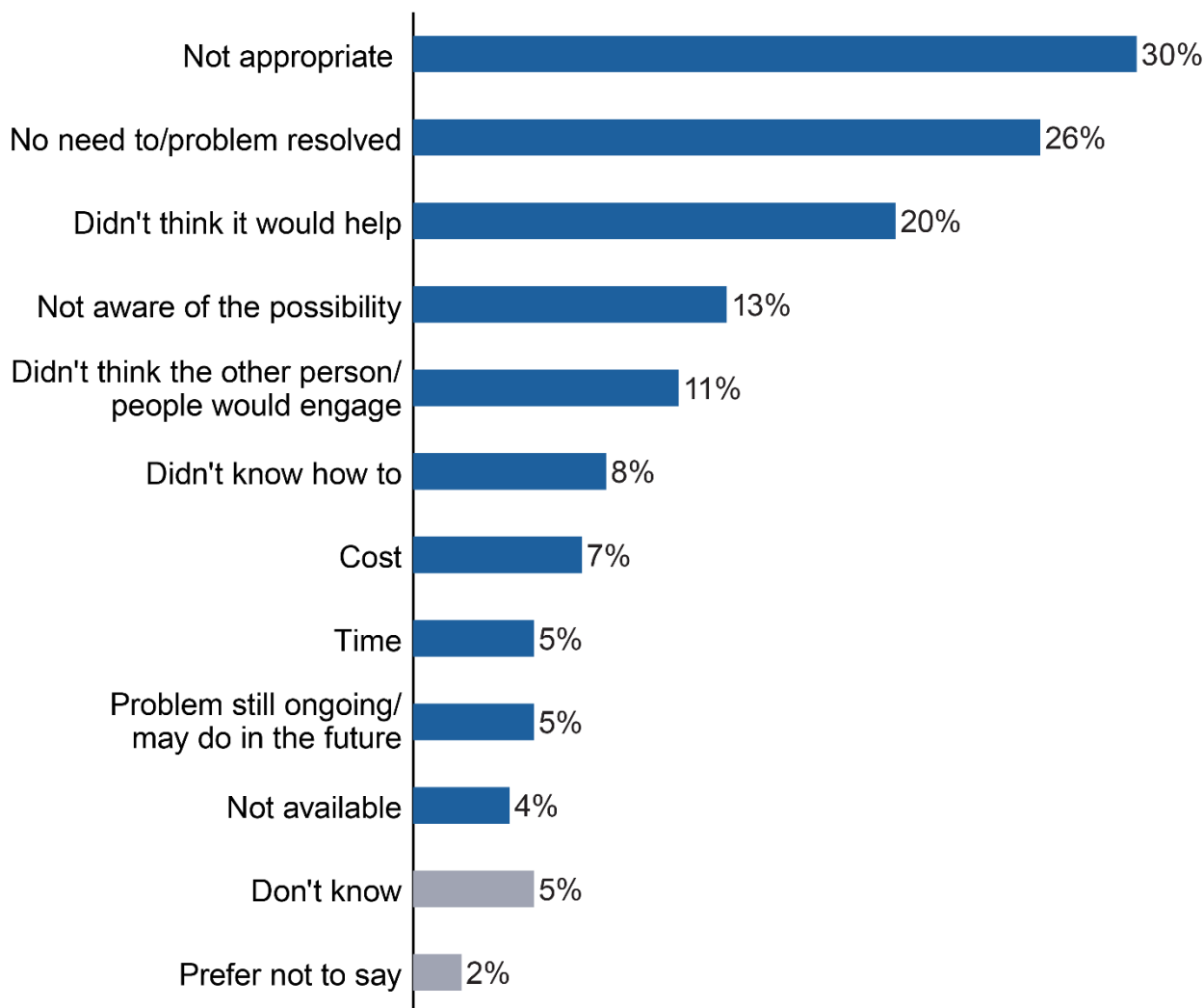


Source: (E41) You said you considered using mediation to help resolve the problem. Why did you decide not to? Base: Adults in England and Wales who considered but did not participate in mediation (418). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

“The police never suggested this option. It would have been our preferred option to talk to each other first and find a solution. But I don’t think the other side will engage.” **Respondent with a neighbour problem who considered using mediation.**

Among those who did not consider using mediation at any point, the most frequent reasons cited were the feeling that it was not appropriate for their problem (cited by 30% of those who had not considered mediation), that there was no need or the problem would resolve without it (26%), or they did not think it would help resolve their problem (20%).

Figure 5.22: Reasons why respondents did not consider mediation



Source: (E42) Why didn’t you consider mediation as an option? Base: Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem who did not consider mediation to resolve the problem (4,079). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to ‘Don’t know/prefer not to say’ responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

“Too stressful.”

Respondent with an employment problem who did not consider mediation.

“Too frightened to approach anyone for help.”

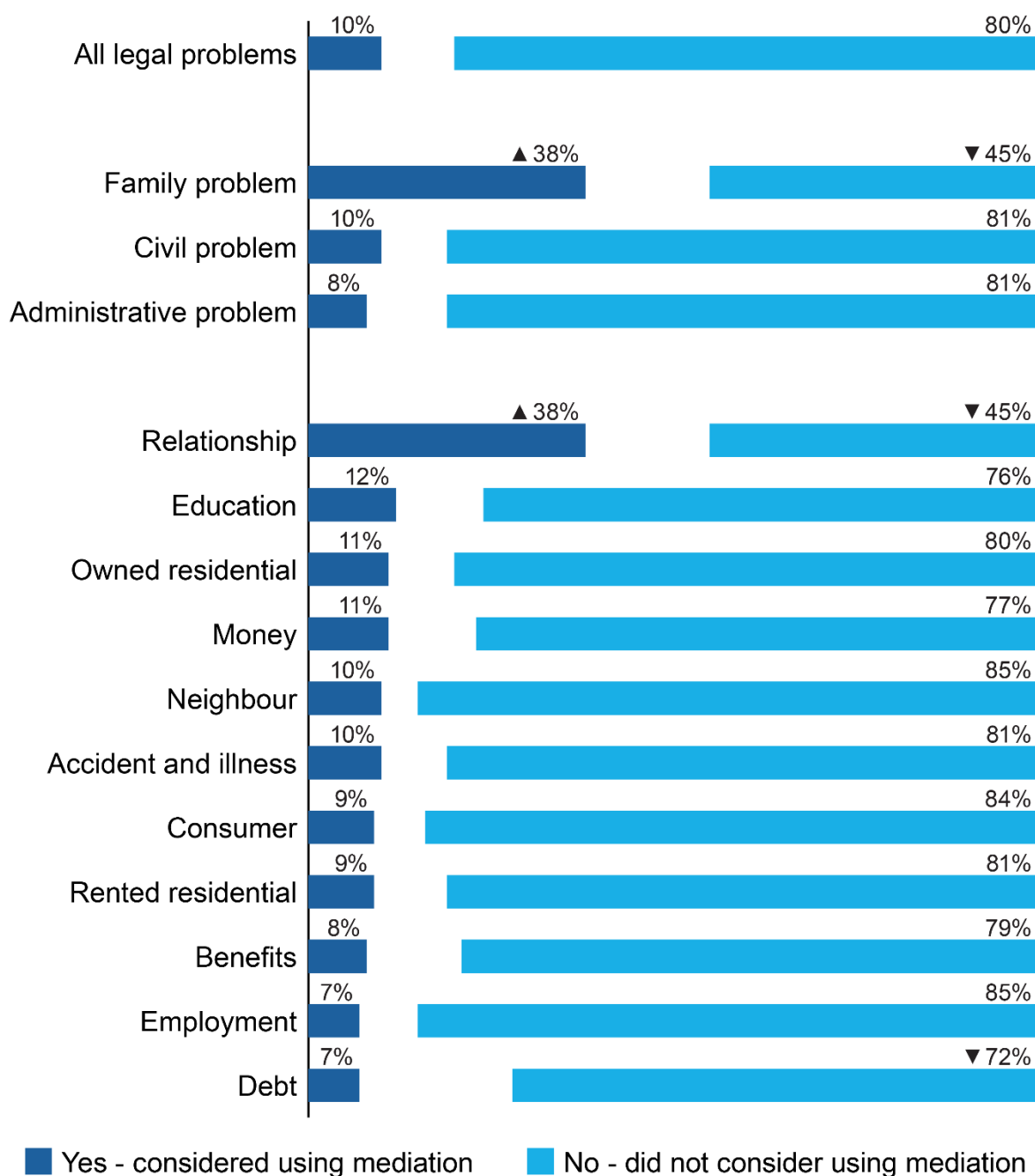
Respondent with an owned residential problem who did not consider mediation.

Differences by legal problem category

There was some variation by problem category. People who experienced relationship breakdown problems were the most likely to have considered mediation (38%) as outlined in Figure 5.23. People who experience relationship breakdown problems may use mediation as it is often seen as costing less time and money and being less confrontational than going to court⁶¹.

⁶¹ It is compulsory to attend a Mediation Information & Assessment Meeting (MIAM with) an accredited family mediator before an application to court can be made. The MIAM asks people to ‘consider’ mediation and making an informed decision either way. This may therefore contribute to higher rates of mediation for Family court users.

Figure 5.23: Consideration of mediation by legal problem category



Source: (E40) Did you consider using mediation as a way of helping to resolve the problem? Base: All with a legal problem in the last 18 months who did not take problem to conciliation / arbitration / mediation (4,789), all asked the follow-up and did not take their problem to mediation / conciliation / arbitration: civil (3,500), family (142), administrative (1,147), consumer problems (795), employment problems (418), neighbour (571), problems with a house they own (505), problems with a house they rent (548), debt problems (261), money problems (577), benefits problems (452), relationship problems (142), education problems (277), accident and illness problems (243). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Across all legal problem categories, around a quarter to a third (23% to 35%) thought that mediation was not appropriate for their problem. Those with problems concerning debt (41%) or a consumer issue (39%) were more likely than others to say that there was no need to use mediation as their problem resolved.

Respondents whose legal problems were more likely to be with an individual rather than an organisation had comparatively greater concerns over whether the other party would engage. Around one in five of those with a neighbour problem (22%) and more than a third of those with a relationship breakdown problem (35%) were discouraged from using mediation as they didn't think the other side would engage.

Awareness of the option of mediation was lower among certain problem categories. People who had a problem relating to an accident or illness were the least likely to be aware of the possibility of using mediation to resolve their problem (25%), whilst those with rented residential problems were more likely to say that mediation was not available to them (7%).

Differences by problem characteristics

Table 5.6: Reasons for not using mediation by problem characteristics

Problem characteristics	Differences
Problem duration⁶²	<p>The longer a problem lasted the most likely it was that a respondent had considered conciliation / mediation / arbitration.</p> <p>People whose problem was estimated to be resolved relatively quickly were more likely to think mediation was not appropriate (35% of those with a problem estimated to last 1–3 months) or that the problem would be resolved (42% of those with a problem estimated to last 1–3 months).</p> <p>Those with longer lasting problems were comparatively more likely to think that the other side would not engage (26% of those with a problem estimated to last 1.5 to 2.5 years).</p>
Discrimination	<p>People who reported experiencing discrimination were more likely to consider using conciliation / mediation / arbitration for their problem (19%, compared to 10% overall).</p>

⁶² This data is derived from modelling on problem length. See chapter 4 and technical report for more information on how problem duration was calculated.

Problem characteristics	Differences
	<p>Among those who experienced discrimination, the most common reason for not considering conciliation / mediation / arbitration was that they did not think it would help (25%, compared to 20% overall) and did not think the other party would engage (19% vs. 11%).</p> <p>People who experienced discrimination were also less likely to be aware of the possibility (21% said they were unaware vs. 13% overall) or thought they may do so in the future / problem ongoing (9% vs. 5% overall).</p>
Adverse consequences	<p>People who experienced adverse consequences from their legal problem were more likely to consider conciliation / mediation / arbitration (14%, compared to 7% of those who did not).</p> <p>The most common reason given by those who had experienced adverse consequences for not considering mediation was they did not think it would help (26%) or that they did not think the other party would engage (17%).</p>
How serious a problem was perceived to be	<p>Those who rated their problem as very serious were more likely to consider using conciliation / mediation / arbitration compared to those who rated their problem as not very serious (13%, compared to 7%).</p>
Perceptions of the problem being 'legal'	<p>Those who saw their problem as legal from the outset were more likely to not consider conciliation / mediation / arbitration because they thought the other side would not engage (22%) or that the problem was still ongoing (12%).</p> <p>Those who did not initially see their problem as legal were more likely to report not considering mediation because their problem had resolved without the need (28%).</p>
Type of advice obtained	<p>Those who obtained informal advice were more likely to report that they did not consider mediation as there was no need to, or that their problem had already resolved (27% vs 22% of those who had formal advice).</p>

Differences by socio-demographics

The likelihood to consider conciliation/mediation/arbitration was fairly consistent across socio-demographic groups. Those who were on means-tested benefits, had a private landlord and spoke English 'well' (rather than 'very well') were marginally more likely to have considered it (between 14% to 18%, compared to 10% overall). The table below highlights differences in the reasons why different groups did not consider conciliation/mediation/arbitration as an option. However, these variations may reflect the types of problems and seriousness of problems experienced to some extent. Additionally,

some of these socio-demographic variables will also interact (for example, those from an ethnic minority background tend to be younger).

Table 5.7: Significant socio-demographic differences for reasons for not using mediation

Socio-demographics	Differences
Sex	<p>Females were more likely than males to say that mediation was not appropriate for their problem (33% vs 26%).</p> <p>Comparatively, males were more likely to report that they did not think mediation would help (22% vs 17%) or to think it would take too much time (7% vs 4%).</p>
Age	<p>Younger people were more likely to say they were not aware of the possibility (16% of 25–34-year-olds vs 7% of 75+).</p> <p>Older age groups were comparatively more likely to think that those on the other side of the problem would not engage (15% of 55–64-year-olds vs 5% of 18–24-year-olds).</p> <p>Older people were more likely to report that their problem was still ongoing, and they may use mediation in the future (12% of 75+ vs 1% of 18–24-year-olds).</p>
Ethnicity	<p>People from an Asian background were more likely than people from a white background to think that mediation would not help (32% vs 18%), that it would take too much time (12% vs 3%) and were also more likely to not be aware that mediation was a possibility (21% vs 12%).</p>
Disability status	<p>Those with a long-term illness or disability were more likely than those without to report that they were not aware of the possibility of using conciliation/mediation/arbitration (15% vs 10%), or that their problem was still ongoing and so they may use it in the future (7% vs 4%).</p>
Education	<p>People whose highest level of education is a degree or above were more likely than others to think that mediation was not appropriate (32%), that they did not know how to use mediation (11%), or that their problem was still ongoing and so they may use it in the future (7%).</p>
Household income	<p>People on the highest incomes were more likely to think that mediation was not appropriate for their problem (36% of those on £60,000 or above vs 27% on those on £32,000–£60,000).</p> <p>Those on lower incomes were more likely to say that they did not know how to use mediation (14% of those on less than £14,000 vs 7% of those on £32,000–£60,000), or it would cost too much (12% vs 4%).</p>
Tenure	<p>People who rent from a private landlord were more likely than those with a mortgage or who owned their home to say that they did not know how to use mediation (13% vs 7%), or that it would cost too much (10% vs 5%).</p>

Socio-demographics	Differences
Marital status	Those who were separated were more likely to be concerned about the cost (16%, compared to 6% of those who were married).
Legal capability	<p>Those with high legal confidence, legal self-efficacy, and low legal anxiety were more likely to report that their problem resolved without the need to use mediation.</p> <p>Those with low legal confidence were more likely to say that cost prevented them from considering mediation as an option (11% vs 4% of those with high legal confidence).</p> <p>Those with low legal self-efficacy were more likely to say that they were not aware of the possibility of using mediation (20% vs 8% of those with high legal self-efficacy).</p> <p>Those with high legal anxiety were more likely to say that they did not know how to use mediation (11% vs 4% of those with low legal anxiety).</p>

5.7 Use of other strategies

Respondents who reported not having obtained any information or talked to the other side to try and resolve their legal problem were asked a follow-up question as to whether they did anything at all to try and resolve it. Around four in ten (41%) said they did try at least something to resolve the problem (and are therefore in the self-help resolution category, compared to just over half (52%) who did not try anything.

Figure 5.14: Whether any action was taken to resolve the problem despite not obtaining information or speaking to the other side



Source: (ED10) Did you do anything to try and resolve the problem? Base: Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem who did not obtain any information or speak to the other side (758). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Differences by legal problem category

There were no significant differences when looking broadly at civil, administrative, or family problems given the small base sizes for whether any action was taken to resolve the problem.

However, those with a consumer problem (58%) or problem with a rented residential property (53%) were more likely to have tried something to resolve the problem compared to those with an employment problem (31%) or neighbour problem (19%). Those with neighbour problems were the most likely to have not taken any action to try and resolve their legal problem (74%, compared to 52% of all those who had not obtained information or spoken to the other side).

Socio-demographic differences

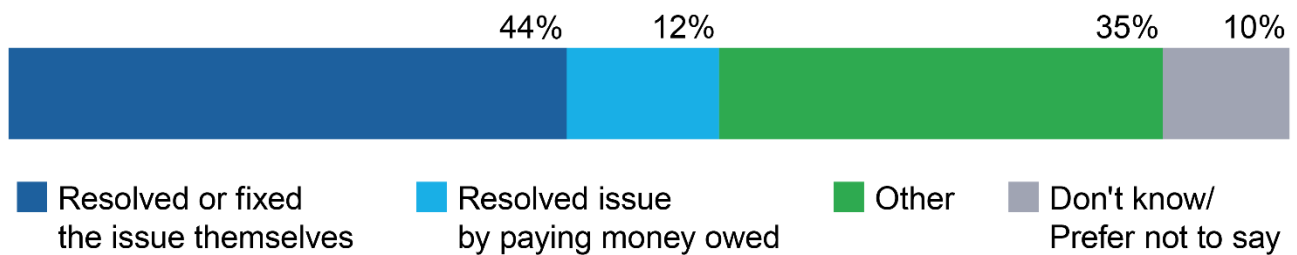
Due to the small base size, there were very few significant socio-demographic differences.

Table 5.8: Significant socio-demographic differences regarding whether people who had not obtained information or spoken to the other side did anything to resolve their problem

Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	Older respondents (50% aged 65–74) were more likely to say they did do something to resolve the problem (compared to 28% of 25–34-year-olds).
Disability status	Respondents with a long-term illness or disability were less likely to report they had tried anything else to resolve the problem compared to those without a disability (35% and 48% respectively).

In terms of the actions taken, over two in five reported resolving the issue themselves (44%), with one in eight paying moneys owed (12%) and one in three taking some other form of action (35%).

Figure 5.25: Actions taken to resolve the problem



(ED11) Which, if any, of the following actions did you take to try and resolve the problem? Base: Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem who did not obtain any information or speak to the other side (758). Base: Adults in England and Wales who took action to resolve the issue (339). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to ‘Don’t know/prefer not to say’ responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

“Tried to communicate with...medical professionals, but no action was taken on their part”. **Respondent with an accident & illness problem**

5.8 Chapter conclusions

- The most common reasons given for not using courts and tribunals were expense of lawyers, the stress the process would cause and the perception of expensive court fees. Addressing these barriers could be a priority where increased court engagement would be beneficial to problem resolution.
- Among those who had to pay at least some of the court fee relating to their legal problem, more than a third had to borrow money from friends/family or from a business/organisation. This suggests that, for many using courts, covering fees is not possible without potentially incurring some financial debt.
- There is a lack of awareness of resolution types and related support mechanisms, particularly for certain types of activity and within some groups. Those from particular ethnic backgrounds (including those from a black background) reported lower levels of awareness. There may be opportunities to further promote particular strategies for specific problem types, notably amongst those experiencing problems with neighbours, where a high proportion take no action.

6. Help obtained to resolve legal problems

6.1 Summary

- Over two in five people with problems (44%) had sourced their own information (self-obtained help) in trying to resolve a problem, such as using the internet, leaflets, family or friends. One in three of those with a problem had obtained professional help (32%), whilst around one in ten had received legal help (9%).
- People who experienced relationship breakdown problems were, by some margin, the most likely to have obtained formal legal advice (43%). Those who had a problem with education (38%) or neighbours (43%) were the most likely to have obtained professional advice, though those with a neighbour problem were also the category most likely not to have sought any help (36%).
- Solicitor's firms were the most frequently used source of formal legal help (5% of adults with legal problems), whilst the most common source of professional help was the local council (10%).
- A key barrier to seeking advice or help from a solicitor or barrister was (perceived) cost, cited by 30% as a reason for not using them (rising to 49% amongst the lowest income households). The main barrier to not obtaining help from other advice providers was the perception of the problem not being important enough.
- Advice providers were cited as providing a range of help covering technical, practical and moral support. People most often used a legal or professional advisor to help them understand their legal rights/situation or for suggestions on what to do.
- Around half (51%) felt their advisor had helped to resolve or reduce their problem. However, one in three (34%) said that their advisor had made no difference and a minority of 3% reported that the advisor had made the problem worse.

- Those receiving advice from an independent advisor such as Citizens Advice were most likely to feel they had helped resolve/reduce the problem (62%). This may reflect problem types covered. Those with debt or accident/illness related problems were more likely to report their advisors having positive impacts. Respondents with neighbour problems or issues with their owned residential property were comparatively more likely to report their advisors making no difference.
- Around two-thirds (64%) were satisfied with the information, advice or help they received from their advisor, though over one in four (27%) were not satisfied. Variations in levels of satisfaction tend to mirror the extent to which people felt their advisor had helped (or hindered) the resolution of their legal problem.

6.2 Chapter introduction

The previous chapter explored the resolution strategies used by adults with legal problems. This chapter explores how and why people seek information, advice and help to deal with or resolve their legal problems, and why others choose not to seek any help. It focuses on the types of help obtained through different routes, which are categorised as follows:

- **Formal legal help:** information, advice and help from a solicitor's firm, a barrister, a law centre and/or Civil Legal Advice⁶³
- **Other professional help:** information, advice and help from an independent advisor who can provide a wide range of advice, including legal advice (such as Citizens Advice, a trade union, Shelter, the Money and Pensions Service, or other unspecified advisers), or from organisations (such as Court and Tribunal Service Centres, National Digital Support Service, the police, credit card companies or banks, housing associations or local councils)
- **Self-obtained help:** information and advice sourced from the internet or leaflets, family and friends or another party

⁶³ Civil Legal Advice provides free and confidential advice as part of legal aid for people in England or Wales.

- **Tried to obtain advice or information but failed**
- **Did not try to obtain advice, information or help**

All findings in this chapter are based on people who had experienced at least one legal problem in the 18 months before interview. Respondents with multiple legal problems were asked questions about one selected problem only.⁶⁴ Findings have been weighted to be representative of all problems.

6.3 Sources of information, advice, and help

Around one in ten adults (9%) with a legal problem reported that they had obtained formal legal help to try and resolve their problem, while around a third (32%) obtained help from another professional. More than two in five (44%) of adults said they had sourced their own information (self-obtained help) in trying to resolve their problem, such as using the internet, leaflets, family or friends, or the party on the other side of the problem.⁶⁵

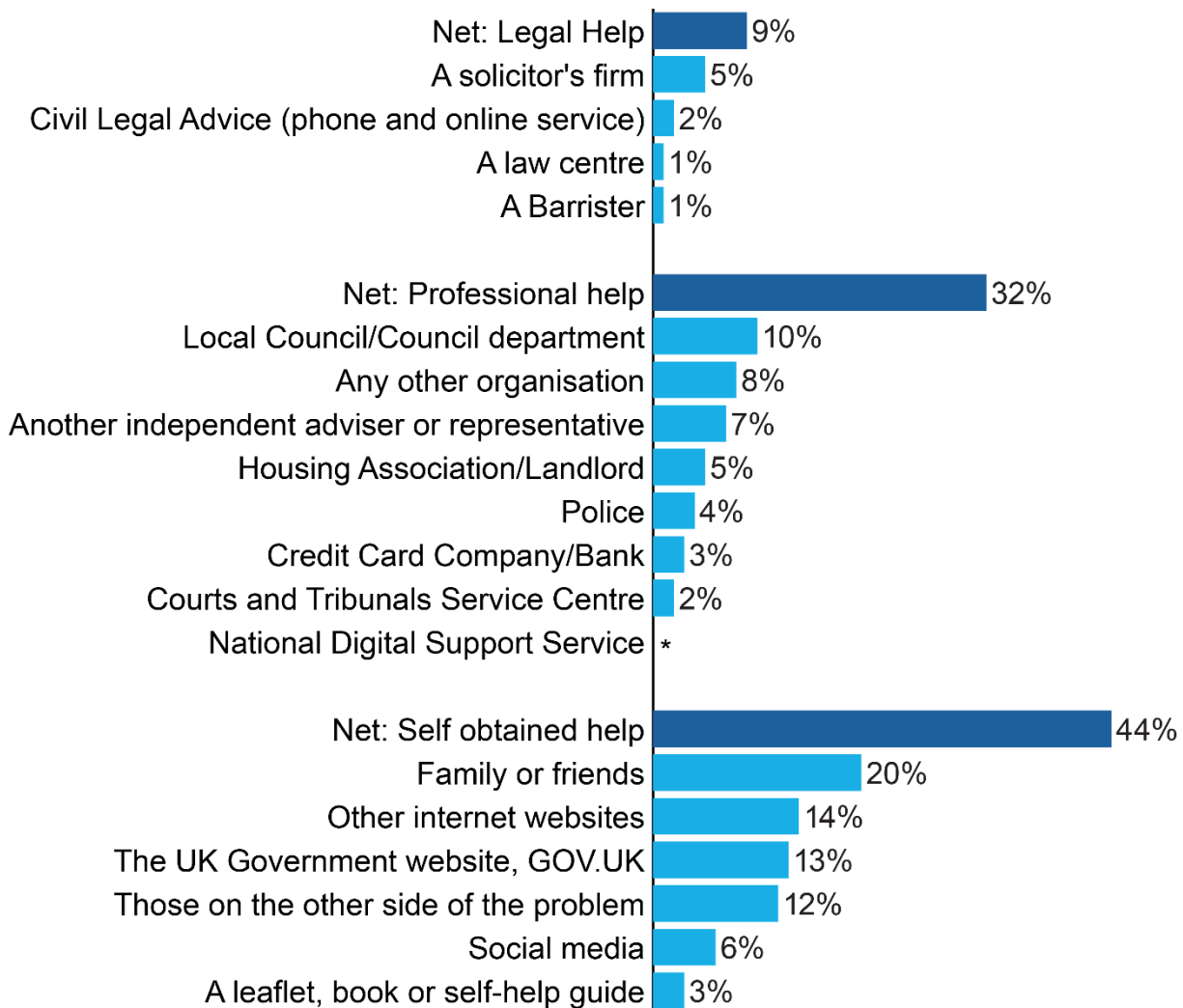
Around three in ten of all those experiencing a problem (29%) said they did not obtain any information or advice (5% had sought out but did not obtain any advice, whilst 24% had not tried to obtain any).

Among the different forms of formal legal help, the most frequently used was a solicitor's firm (5% of adults with legal problems), whilst the most likely source of professional help was the local council (10%), and the most frequent source of self-obtained help was friends and family (20%).

⁶⁴ See chapter 3 of the technical report for information on how problems were selected.

⁶⁵ Self-obtained help is separate from self-help as a resolution strategy. Self-help as a resolution strategy includes *trying* to talk to the other side or taking another action to try resolve the problem, which is why that percentage is higher than self-obtained help.

Figure 6.1: Sources of information, advice and help⁶⁶



Source: (ED5a) When trying to sort out this <PROBLEM> did you obtain information, advice or any other form of help from an of the following? Base: Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem (4,988). People can use several forms of information or advice. * Answers under 1%. Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

⁶⁶ This chart shows what sources of advice people obtained. It counts respondents in each category that they used, so someone who accessed professional advice and self-obtained advice is included in both sub-totals. If this is changed to a hierarchy of the most formal advice someone obtained, the percentages would be: 9% legal advice, 28% professional advice, 29% self-obtained advice, 5% tried to obtain advice but could not do so, and 24% did not obtain advice. 5% gave answers which could not put them in any category (through answering don't know / prefer not to say).

Differences by legal problem category

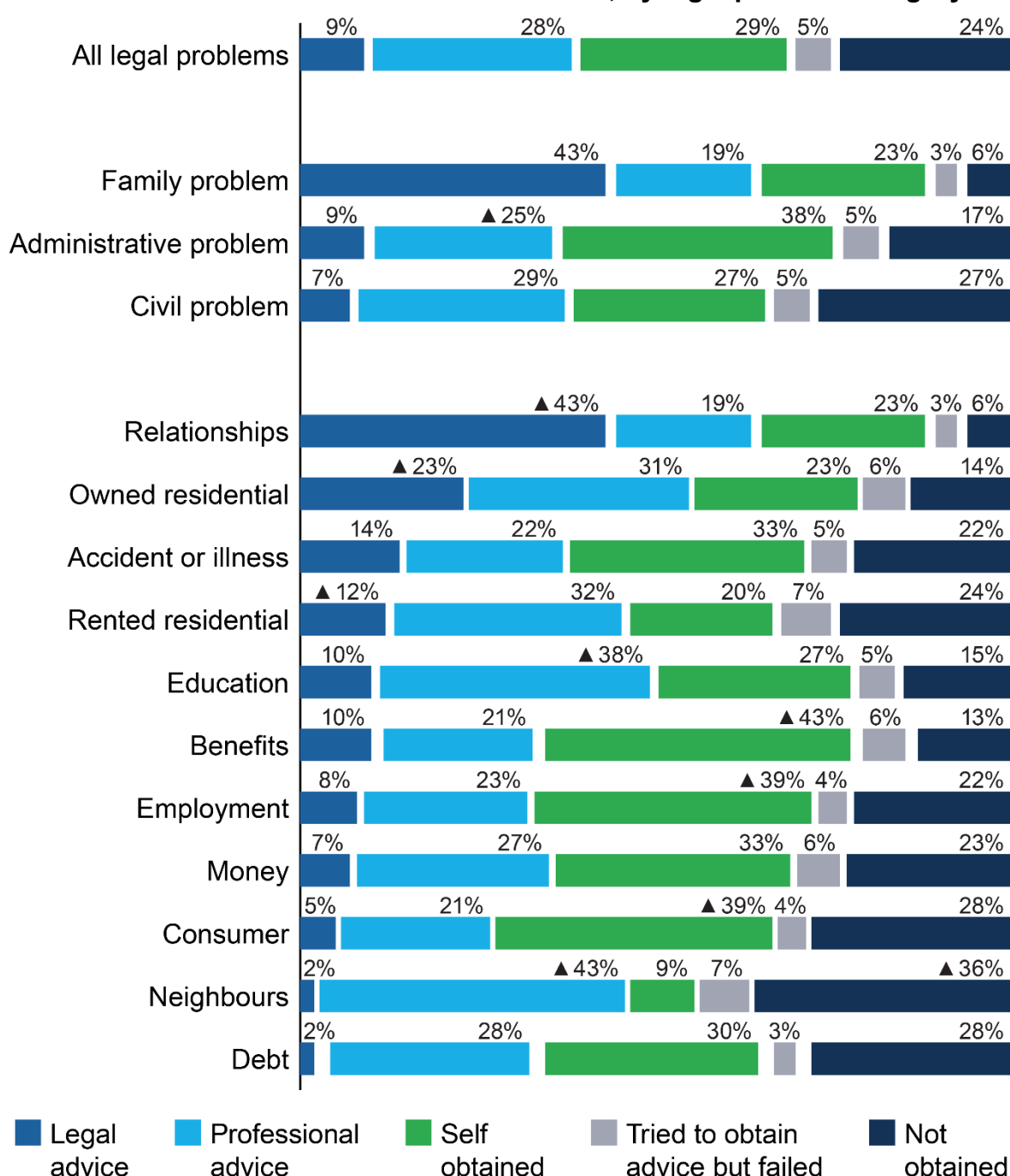
The types of help and advice that people obtained varied depending on the type of legal problem experienced.

As shown in Figure 6.2, those with a relationship breakdown problem were, by some margin, the most likely to have obtained legal advice (43%), followed by people who had a problem with a property they owned (23%).

Those who had a problem with education (38%) or neighbours (43%) were the most likely to have obtained professional advice. Those with a neighbour problem were also the category most likely not to have sought any help (36%).

Those with benefits (43%), employment or consumer (both 39%) problems were more likely than others to use self-obtained sources of advice. Comparatively, those with neighbour problems (9%), problems with rented residential property (20%), or relationship breakdown problems (23%) were less likely to use self-obtained advice.

Figure 6.2: Most formal source of advice obtained, by legal problem category⁶⁷



Source: (ED5a) When trying to sort out this <PROBLEM>, did you obtain information, advice or any other form of help from any of the following? Base: Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem (4,988), all asked the follow-up about their family (168), administrative (1,208), civil (3,612), consumer problems (811), employment problems (455), neighbours (582), problems with a house they own (526), problems with a house they rent (563), debt problems (274), money problems (601), benefits problems (463), relationship problems (168), education problems (290), accident and illness problems (255). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼ ▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Differences by problem characteristics

Those who felt their problem was serious, perceived it as being a legal problem, experienced an adverse consequence, and/or experienced discrimination were more likely to have obtained legal or professional advice. People who had an ongoing or long-lasting problem (5 years or more) were also more likely to have obtained legal or professional advice, compared to those with a concluded or shorter-lasting problem.

Table 6.1: Most formal source of advice by problem characteristics

Problem characteristics	Differences
Problem status	Those whose problem was ongoing were more likely to obtain legal advice (11%, compared to 8% with concluded problems) or professional advice (35%, compared to 26% with concluded problems). People whose problems were concluded were more likely to have used self-obtained advice (32%, compared to 26% with an ongoing problem) or not obtained advice at all (26%, compared to 20% with an ongoing problem).
Problem duration ⁶⁸	Those whose problems lasted longer were more likely to have sought legal / professional advice. 16% of those whose problems are estimated to last 5 years or more sought legal advice, compared to 2% of those whose problems are estimated to last 1–3 months.
Discrimination	Those who experienced discrimination at some point during their problem were more likely to obtain legal advice (18%, compared to 6% of those who did not experience discrimination).
Adverse consequences	Those who experienced adverse consequences were more likely to obtain legal (13%) or professional advice (34%), compared to those who did not experience adverse consequences (4% and 23% respectively).
How serious a problem was perceived to be	Those who rated their problem as very serious were more likely to obtain legal or professional advice (17% obtained legal advice, 36% professional advice), compared to those who rated their problem as not very serious (5% obtained legal advice and 21% obtained professional advice). Those who rated their problem as not very serious were more likely to say they had not obtained advice (39% compared to 12% who said their problem was very serious).

⁶⁸ This data is derived from modelling on problem length. See chapter 4 for more information on how problem duration was calculated.

Problem characteristics	Differences
Perceptions of the problem being 'legal'	Those who thought their problem was legal at its outset were more likely to obtain legal (27%) or professional advice (35%), compared to those who did not perceive their problem as such (5% and 27% respectively). Those who did not think of their problem as legal at the outset were more likely to obtain advice themselves (32%) or not obtain advice at all (28%).

Socio-demographic differences

There were some socio-demographic differences between the sources of advice obtained, as outlined in Table 6.2. In general, the differences outlined below are linked to those groups more likely to experience a legal problem, and certain categories of legal problems which were perceived to be more serious. There were very few, or no differences, between people of different sex, ethnicity, sexuality, country, pregnancy status or income.

Table 6.2: Significant socio-demographic differences in most formal advice obtained

Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	Middle aged respondents were more likely to have obtained professional advice compared to younger age groups (34% of 45–55-year-olds vs 21% of 18–24-year-olds).
Disability status	Those with a long-term illness or disability were more likely than those without to obtain professional advice (31% vs 26%), and less likely to not obtain advice at all (22% vs 27%).
Education	People who have GCSEs as their highest qualification were more likely than those with a degree level or above to obtain professional advice (35% vs 27%).
Employment status	People who are employed were more likely than those who are economically inactive to have not obtained any advice (26% vs 21%).
Benefits status	People who receive benefits (both means tested and not means-tested), were more likely than those who receive no benefits to have obtained professional advice (36%, 33% and 25% respectively).
Single parents	Single parents were more likely than average to have obtained legal advice (15% vs 9%).
Eligibility for legal aid	Those who are not eligible for legal aid were more likely than those who are to have not obtained any advice (27% vs 19%).
Tenure	People who rent from the council or a housing association were more likely to have obtained professional advice (42%, compared to 23% who rent from a private landlord).

Socio-demographics	Differences
English proficiency	Those who can speak English 'very well' were more likely to have not obtained any help compared to those who speak the language 'well' (25% vs 14%).
Marital status	People who are widowed (38%) were more likely than people who are married (28%) or cohabitating (29%) to have obtained professional advice.
Legal capability	<p>There were fairly minor differences by levels of legal confidence and no significant differences by legal anxiety.</p> <p>People with medium legal confidence and self-efficacy scores were the most likely to use self-obtained source of advice (34% of people with medium legal confidence vs 26% of those with high / low).</p> <p>However, those with high self-efficacy scores were more likely to use legal advice compared to those with a medium level (11% vs 7% of those with a medium score).</p>
Digital capability	People with a high digital capability score were more likely to have used self-obtained sources of advice (30% vs 23% of those with a medium score).

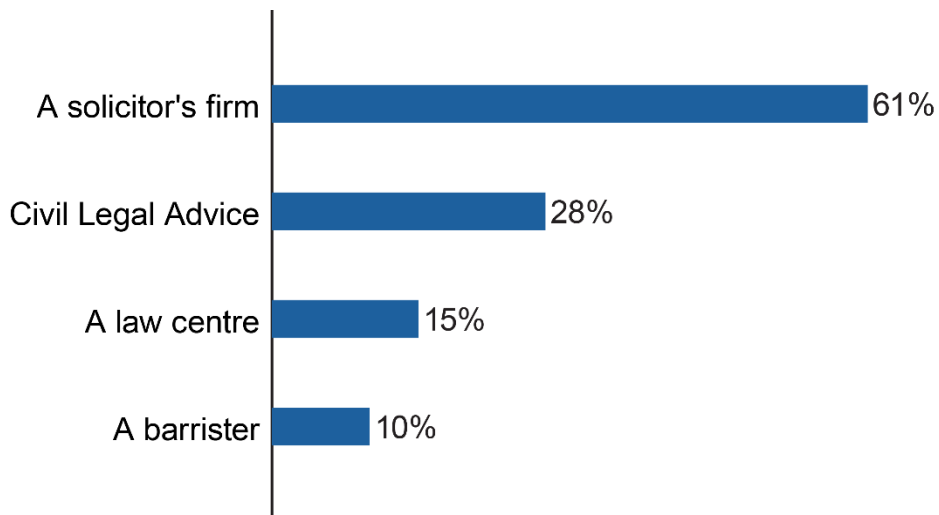
6.4 Use of legal and professional help

This section provides details on the type of legal or professional advice that people received.

Breakdown of advice providers

Amongst those who received legal advice, the most common source was a solicitor’s firm (cited by 61% of those who received legal advice), followed by Civil Legal Advice (28%).

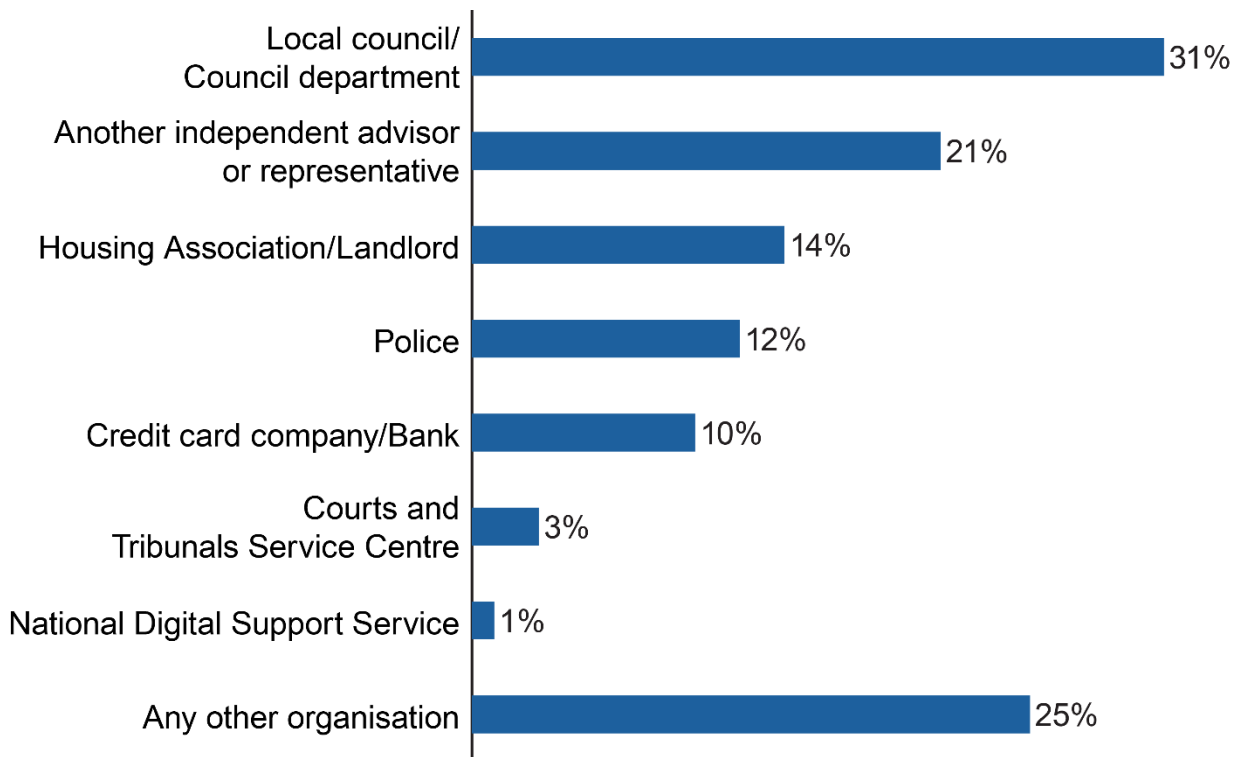
Figure 6.3: Breakdown of advice provider among those who obtained legal advice



Source: (ED5a) When trying to sort out this problem, did you obtain information, advice or any other form of help from any of the following? Base: All who obtained legal advice (470). Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

The sources of professional advice tended to be a bit more mixed, with the local council the most frequently used, as shown in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4: Breakdown of advice provider among those who obtained professional advice

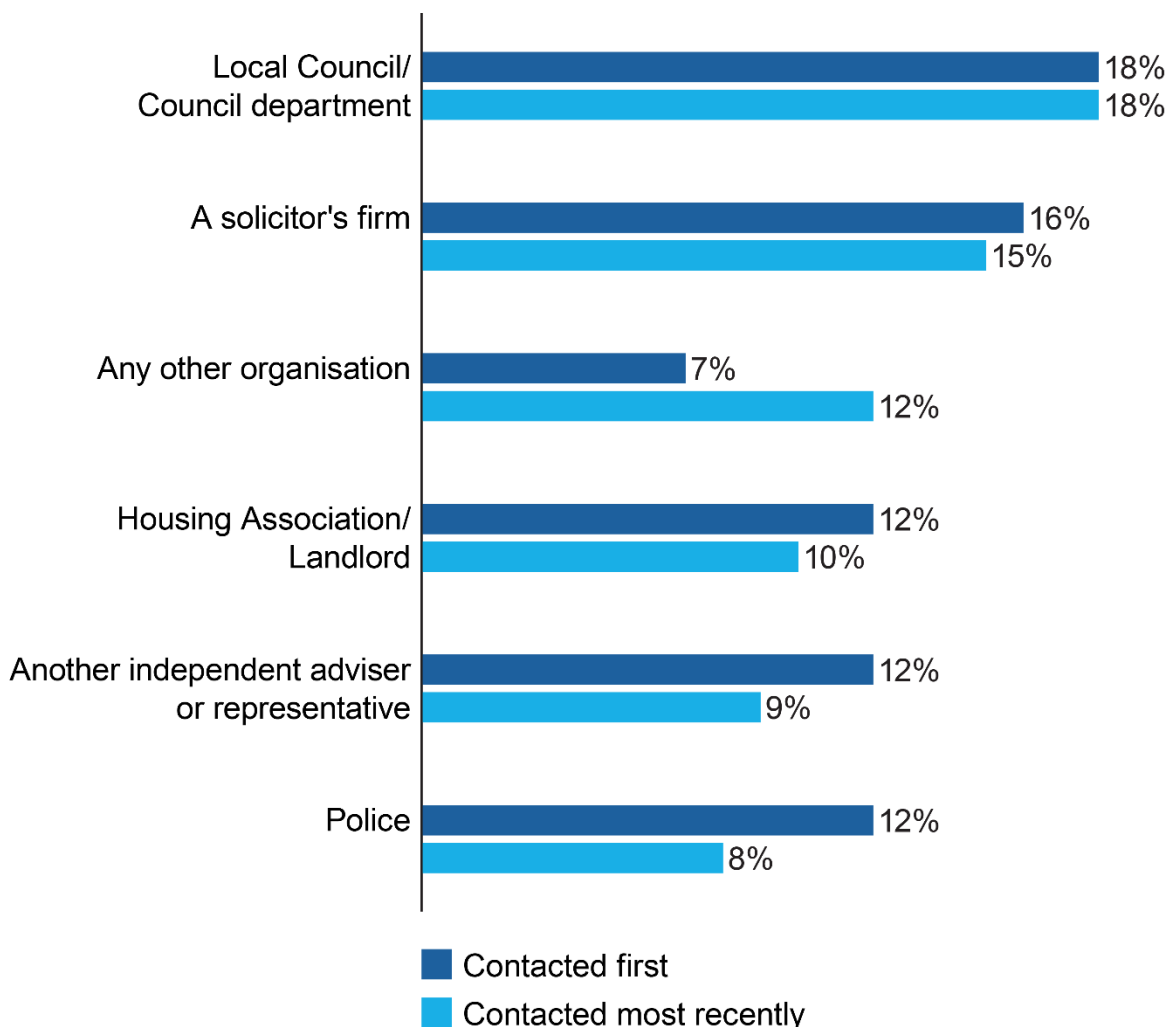


Source: (ED5a) When trying to sort out this problem, did you obtain information, advice or any other form of help from any of the following? Base: All who obtained professional advice (1,493). Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

Three-quarters (76%) of people who obtained some form of legal or professional advice did so through a single type of advice provider. A quarter (24%) obtained help from two sources of legal / professional advice. However, of those who used legal advice (9% of all adults with problems), almost half (45%) also used a source of professional advice.

Those who had used multiple sources of legal or professional advice were asked which they had contacted first and which they contacted most recently. As shown in Figure 6.5, for police and independent advisors, there is a reduction between the number of people contacting them as their first and most recent advisor. This suggests that independent advisors and the police are to some extent more likely to be contacted first and may be gateways to other sources of advice.

Figure 6.5: Sources of advice contacted initially and most recently



Source: (E16/E17) Which of the advisers that you mentioned did you contact first? / And which of the advisers did you contact most recently? Base: All who contacted more than one legal / professional advisor (437). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Differences by legal problem category

People with relationship breakdown problems were the most likely to have used advice from all types of legal advisors, in particular solicitors (33%, compared to 5% of all people with a legal problem). Those with problems relating to a house they own (20%) or to an accident (12%) were also more likely than average to use a solicitors' firm and/or other forms of legal advice.

Other patterns reflect how people obtained help from sources that were more specific to their problem type. People who had a problem relating to rented housing, owned housing, or neighbours were more likely to have sought help from their housing association / landlord (15%, 9%, and 11% respectively), or from their local council (13%, 24%, and 26%). Those with neighbour(s) problems were also the most likely to have contacted the police for help (19%). Those experiencing problems with money (8%), debt (6%), or consumer issues (6%) were comparatively more likely to have sought help from a credit card company or bank than average (3%). People who had experienced problems concerning benefits (12%) or employment (15%) were the most likely to contact an independent advisor like Citizens Advice.

Types of help and advice received

Respondents were asked which types of help they received from the legal or professional advisor that they had contacted most recently about their legal problem.⁶⁹

Advice providers were most frequently used to help people understand their situation, options and/or legal rights (cited by 54% of those using a legal/professional advisor). The next most common types of help received were suggestions for next steps or signposting to further help (cited by 46% overall). Just under a quarter (23%) used an advisor to act on their behalf, with a very small minority (1%) using the advice provider for representation. One in five used the advisor to help prepare or submit documents (19%), whilst 16% cited their advice providers as providing moral support.

⁶⁹ The findings only relate to the 'last' advisor, and therefore only provide a partial picture of the full range of advice received.

Figure 6.6: Type of help respondents received from any advisor⁷⁰



Source: (E18) Thinking of the advisor you contacted, which of the following types of help did you get from them? Base: All who contacted an advisor (1,963). 21% of respondents said they did not receive any of these types of help from their advisor – they are not shown in the chart. Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%. The colour coding of the figures below denotes which types of help have been combined.

⁷⁰ In Figure 6.6, the colour coding of figures on the right-hand side of the chart relates to combining percentages.

Differences by type of advisor

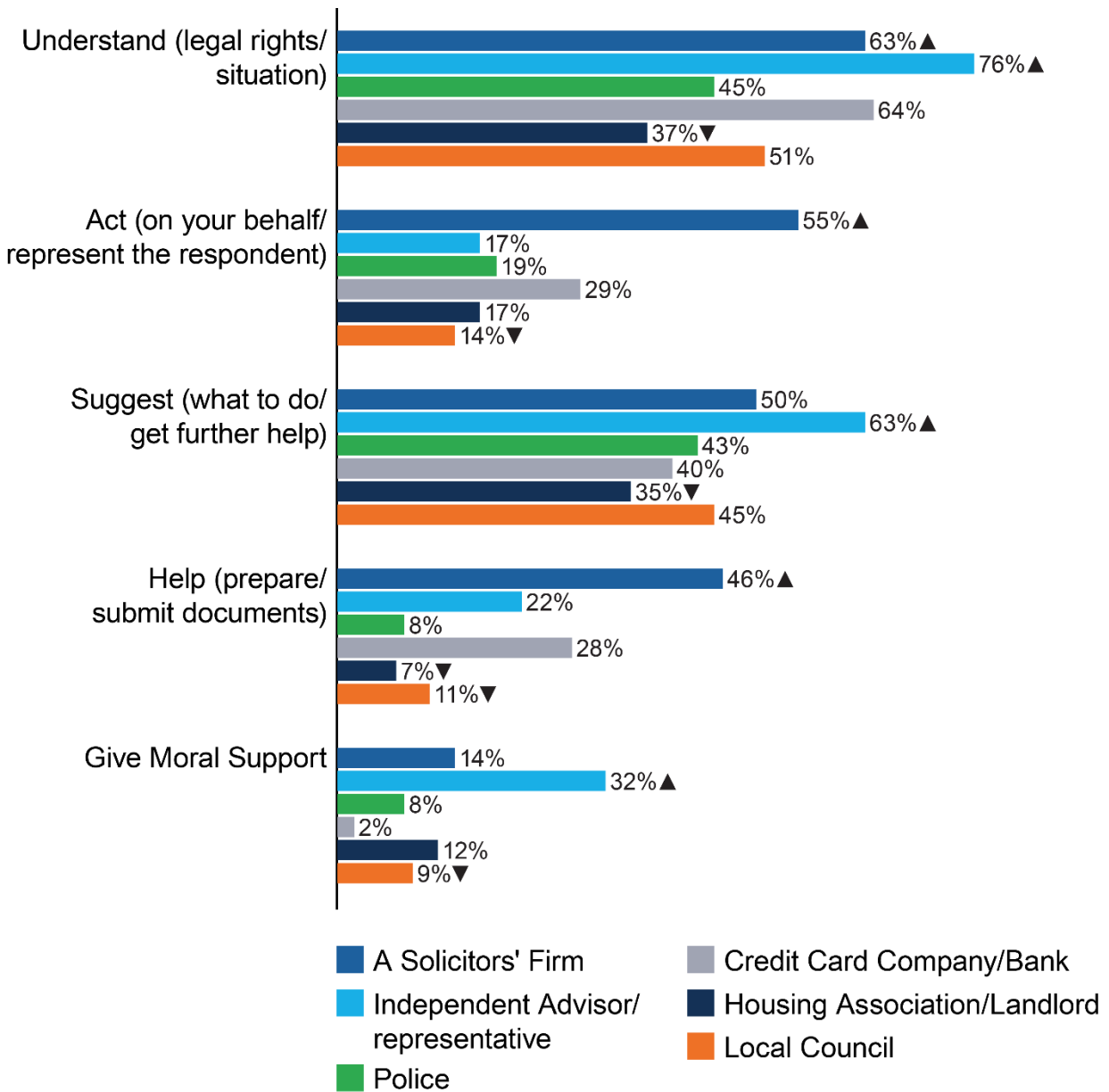
Figure 6.7 shows the help that people reported receiving from different advice providers and demonstrates the multiple sources that are used for all types of advice.

Those who received advice/help from solicitors were most likely to cite their help in understanding legal rights (63%), though this type of help was more prevalent amongst those who received advice from an independent advisor / representative (76%).

Some types of help are provided more often by certain sources but are still provided by others. For example, over half (55%) of those who used a solicitor received help in the form of representation, though between 14% and 29% used other types of advice providers to act on their behalf.

Independent advisors / representatives were the most likely to be cited as having provided moral support (32%).

Figure 6.7: Types of help provided across advice providers



Source: (E18) Thinking of the adviser you contacted, which of the following types of help did you get from them? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months and contacted an advisor (1,963), all who contacted a Solicitor most recently (285), independent advisor (288), Police (120), Credit Card Company / Bank (98), Housing Association (171), Local Council (413). Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

Caution: low base for some advisor types.

▼▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Differences by legal problem category

As shown below in Figure 6.8, those who had problems with debt (69%) or employment (58%) were the most likely to obtain help from an advisor to understand their situation.

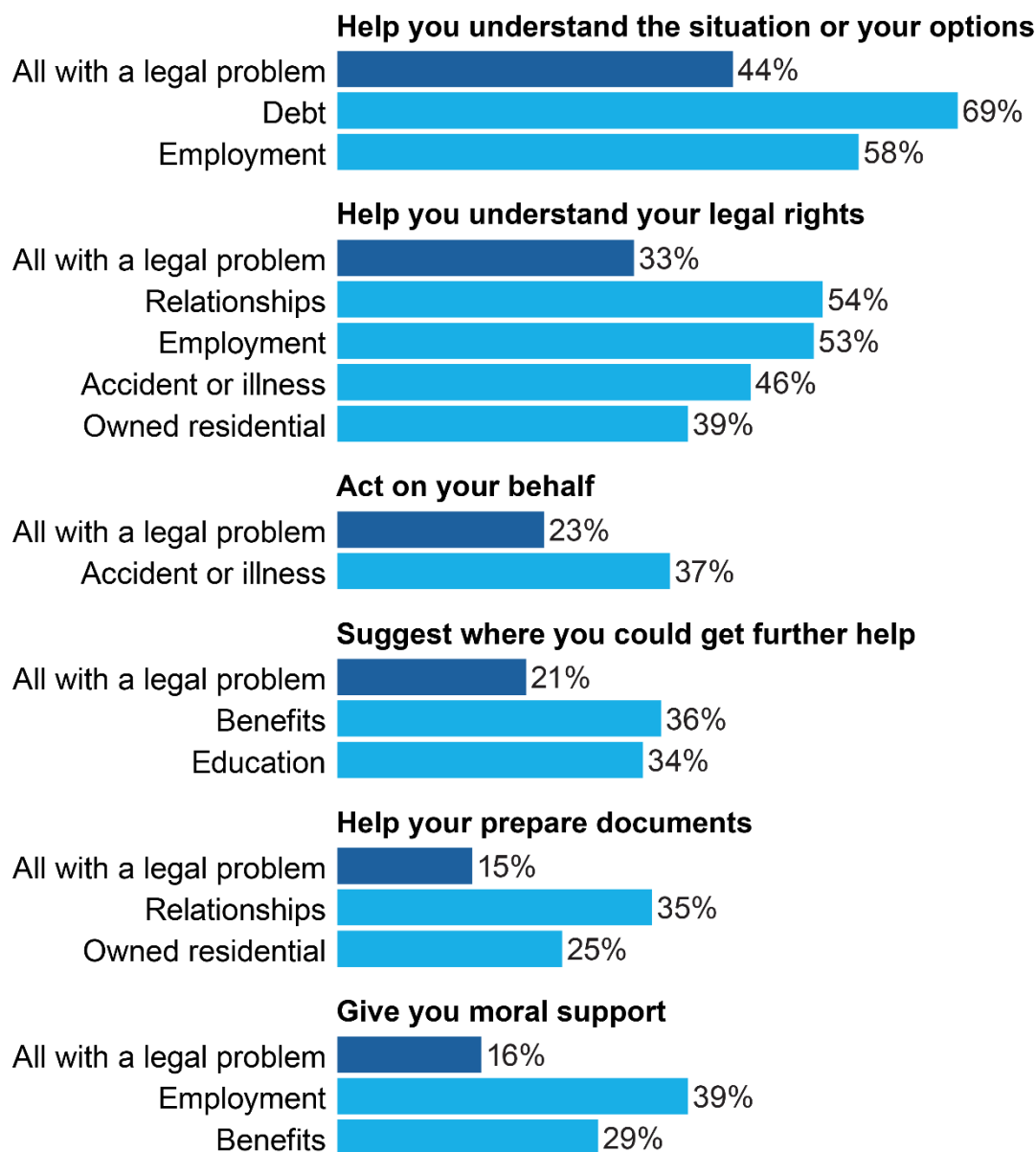
People who experienced relationship breakdown problems (54%) or employment problems (53%) were the most likely to obtain help from an advisor to better understand their legal rights, closely followed by those with problems relating to an accident or illness (46%) or an owned residential property (39%).

Those with relationship breakdown problems (35%) or a problem with an owned residential property (25%) were the most likely to have obtained help from an advisor to prepare documents.

Those with employment (39%) or benefit-related problems (29%) were comparatively more likely to have received moral support from their advice provider.

There were no significant differences by problem category with regards to likelihood of obtaining help to submit documents online.

Figure 6.8: Differences by problem category in type of help received from legal or professional advisor⁷¹



Source: (E18) Thinking of the adviser you contacted, which of the following types of help did you get from them? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months and contacted an advisor (1,963), all asked the follow-up about their consumer problems (199), employment problems (172), neighbours (294), problems with a house they own (307), problems with a house they rent (307), debt problems (230), money problems (221), benefits problems (124), relationship problems (95), education problems (132), accident and illness problems (102). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

⁷¹ This chart only shows problem types that are significantly higher than all those with a legal problem.

Socio-demographic differences

Some groups were more likely than others to receive certain types of help or advice. The key significant differences are detailed in the table below. However, **these variations will reflect the types of problems experienced, the severity of problems experienced, and the interactions with socio-demographic variables.**

Table 6.3: Significant socio-demographic differences in the types of help received from legal or professional advice providers

Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	People aged 55–64 years old were more likely to have an advisor act on their behalf (29%), particularly compared to those aged 18–24 years old (9%).
Ethnicity	People from an Asian background were more likely to receive help or advice on what to do from an advisor (56%, compared to 40% of all those who received help/advice).
Disability status	Those with a long-term illness or disability were more likely to have received help on understanding their situation or options (49%, compared to 41% of those with no illnesses or disabilities).
Benefits status	People who received means-tested benefits were more likely to receive advice on where they could get further help (34%, compared to 18% of those on non-means-tested benefits or no benefits).
Single parents	Respondents who live in a single parent household were comparatively more likely than those in multiple parent households to have received advice on where they could get further help (35% vs 25%) or moral support (26% vs 17%).
Marital status	<p>Around three in five (62%) of those cohabitating reported that they contacted an advisor to help them understand their situation or their options (compared to 44% across all those obtaining help from an advisor).</p> <p>Those who are divorced or had a legally dissolved partnership were more likely to have had an advisor act on their behalf (38%), compared to 23% of all people who sought advice, reflecting the increased likelihood of this group having a relationship breakdown problem.</p> <p>Similarly, people who are cohabitating were more likely than average to report having an advisor help to submit documents online (16% vs 8%).</p>
Tenure	Those who rent from their local council, or a housing association, were the most likely to have an advisor act on their behalf (33%, compared to 16% renting from a private landlord). They were also more likely to

Socio-demographics	Differences
	have received suggestions on where they could get further help (30% vs 21% on average).
Education	<p>Those whose highest level of education is a degree were most likely to have obtained help from an advisor to help them understand their situation or options (50% vs 44% on average), suggest what they need to do (44% vs 40% on average), or to help them understand their legal rights (36% vs 33% on average).</p> <p>Comparatively, those who have A Levels as their highest qualification were more likely to have had an advisor act on their behalf (31% vs 21% with GCSEs as their highest) or given moral support (23% vs 16% on average).</p>
Employment status	People currently in employment were more likely than those not to report that they had help from an advisor regarding suggestions on what they should do next (44% vs 34%).
Household income	Those on higher incomes were more likely than those on lower incomes to have obtained suggestions on what they should do next (53% of £32,000–£60,000 vs 29% of less than £14,000), and/or to help them understand their legal rights (38% vs 24%).
Legal capability	<p>Those with high legal confidence were more likely to have received help on understanding their own legal rights (41%, compared to 28% of those with lower legal confidence).</p> <p>Those with high legal anxiety were the most likely to have received moral support from an advisor (22%, compared to 13% of those with low or medium levels of legal anxiety).</p>
Digital capability	People with high digital capability scores were more likely than those with medium scores to have received various forms of help from an advisor, including help in understanding the situation (46% vs 35%), their legal rights (35% vs 21%), suggestions on where they would get further help (23% vs 13%), and help in submitting documents (9% vs 3%).

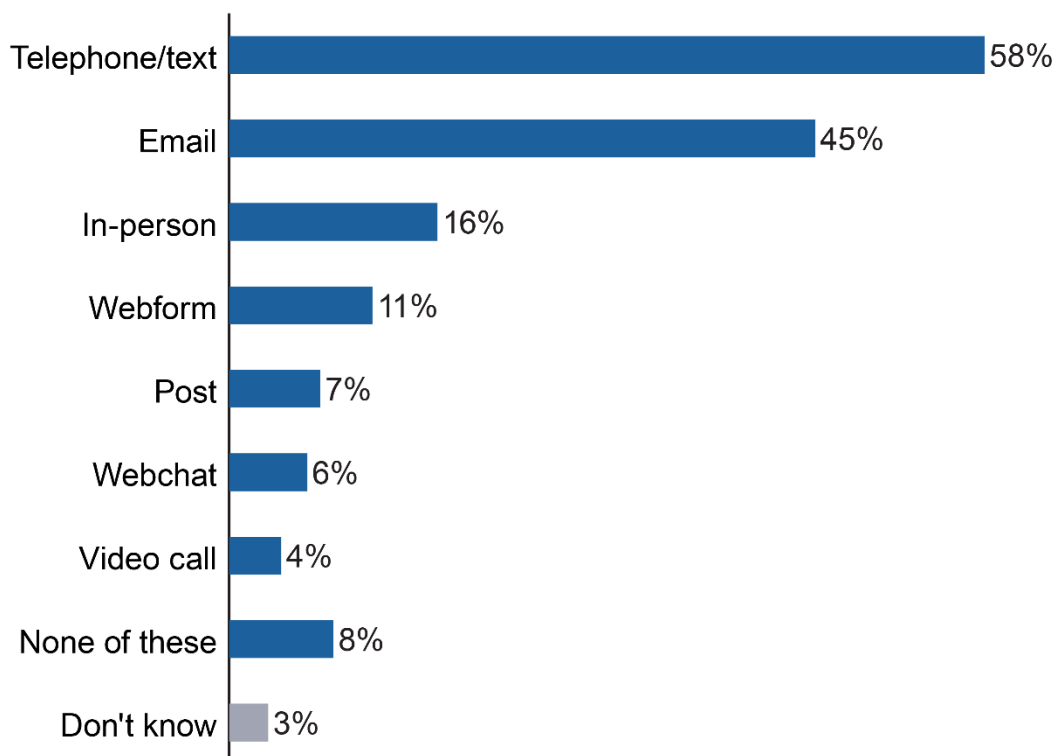
How people communicated with advisors

As shown in Figure 6.9 below, the majority of people contacted an advisor remotely, with around six in ten (58%) predominately communicating with them by telephone or text message, and just under half via email (45%).

There have been significant shifts in patterns of communication compared to the previous LPRS survey in 2014–15, likely due to the context following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Around one in six (16%) of respondents in this survey reported having had some in-person contact, whilst this was half (50%) in the 2014–15 LPRS.⁷²

Figure 6.9: Methods used to communicate with advisors



Source: (E19) Thinking of the advisor you contacted, which, if any, of the following ways did you communicate with them? Base: All who contacted an advisor (1,963). Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

Differences by type of advisor⁷³

The channels through which people communicated with legal/professional advisors varied to some extent by the type of advisor:

Those contacting a solicitor were more likely than those using most other advice providers to use email (70%, compared to 45% overall), post (19% compared to 7% overall) and/or video calls (9%, compared to 4% overall).

⁷² The 2023 LPRS used a mixed-mode approach, including an online component, compared to the telephone survey approach taken in 2014–15. Whilst the online component was conducted on Ipsos UK's online probability panel that includes coverage of the digitally excluded population, this may reflect in respondents being more comfortable using online methods to contact advisors.

⁷³ Some types of advisors were only used by a small minority so only those with a large enough base size are described in the text.

Contact with independent advisors was comparatively more likely to have been via video calls (10% vs. 4% overall).

Those in contact with housing associations / landlords were comparatively more likely to have used telephone (72% vs. 58% overall).

Contact with the police was comparatively more likely to have been in-person (32% vs 16% overall) and less likely to have been via digital forms of communication including email (18%, compared to 45% overall).

Differences by legal problem category

Accessing an advisor by telephone / text was the most likely method of communication for most problem categories, though there were some variations in the likelihood of using other channels.⁷⁴

Those who had an accident or illness related problem were significantly more likely than the average across problem types to have contacted an advisor by telephone or text (73% vs 58% on average).

Those with problems relating to owned residential properties were comparatively more likely than average to email an advisor (66% vs 45%) or have been in contact via post (16% vs 7%).

Those with employment-related problems were significantly more likely to have met an advisor in person (24% vs 16% on average).

Those with money related problems were more likely than others to have used a web-form (21% vs 11% on average), whilst those with debt problems were more likely than others to have used a webchat (19% vs 6% on average).

⁷⁴ The exception to the telephone / text being the most popular method of communication was for those with a problem with a house they own / and those with relationship problems.

Table 6.4: Differences in communication channels used by legal problem category⁷⁵

Communication channel with advisor	Use across all problem types	Problem categories more likely to communicate via this method
Telephone / text message	58%	Accident and illness (73%)
Email	45%	Owned residential (66%)
Saw the adviser in person	16%	Employment (24%)
Webform	11%	Money (21%)
Post	7%	Relationship (16%) Education (16%) Owned residential (12%)
Video call	4%	Relationship (17%)
Webchat	6%	Debt (19%)

Socio-demographic differences

Some socio-demographic differences will again reflect the interaction of problem types with different groups, though there are some statistically significant differences by age in terms of communication channels used with advisors.

Table 6.5: Significant socio-demographic differences in how people communicated with their advisor

Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	<p>Older people were more likely than younger groups to either see an adviser in person or contact them by post. Almost a quarter (23%) of those aged 55–74 years old had met their adviser in person (compared to the average of 16% across all age groups). Those aged 75 and older were over twice as likely to have communicated via post than the average across age groups (16% vs 7%).</p> <p>Two-thirds of those aged 45–64 (66%) had contacted an adviser by telephone or text message (compared to 58% across age groups).</p> <p>Comparatively, those under 45 were more likely to use online contact methods. 12% of 18–24-year-olds used webchat (compared to 6% across age groups), whilst 8% of those aged 35–44 used video call (compared to 4% across age groups).</p>
Tenure	Those renting their homes from a council or housing association were comparatively more likely to have contacted an adviser by telephone

⁷⁵ All the problem categories referenced in the table show statistically significant differences compared to the average.

Socio-demographics	Differences
	or text (77%, compared to 56% of those who own their homes outright and 54% among those who rent from a private landlord).
Household income and benefits status	<p>Respondents with a lower household income were more likely to have contacted an advisor by telephone (66% of those with a household income of £32,000 or less vs 50% those with an income of over £60,000). Those with a higher household income were more likely to use a webform (17% of those with an annual income above £60,000 vs 9% with an income of less than £14,000).</p> <p>Those on means-tested benefits were comparatively more likely to use telephone/text (75%, compared to 54% of those not on benefits).</p>
Eligibility for legal aid	Respondents who were eligible for legal aid were more likely to contact an advisor by telephone or text message (69%, compared to the average of 58%).

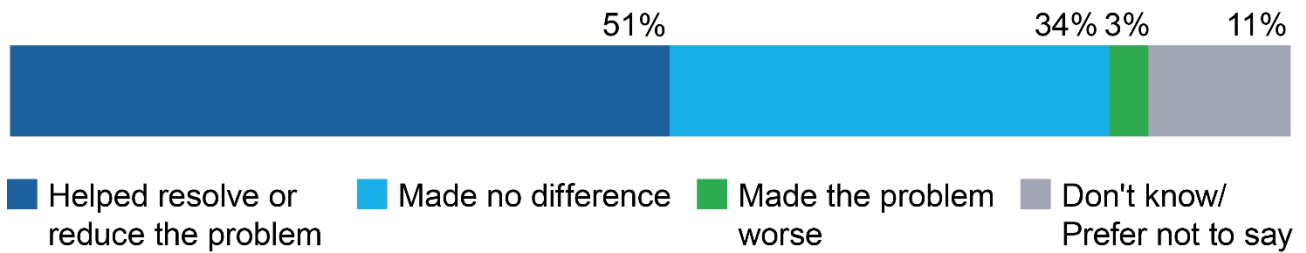
Quality of service

Respondents were asked to reflect on whether their legal or professional advisor had helped to resolve the legal problem and whether they were satisfied with the service provided.⁷⁶

In terms of help in resolving problems, around half (51%) reported that their advisor had helped to resolve or reduce their problem. In contrast, one in three (34%) said that their advisor had made no difference, whilst a minority of 3% reported that the advisor had made the problem worse, as shown in Figure 6.10.

⁷⁶ As per the previous section, the focus within these questions was on the most recent advisor used by respondents in relation to their most recent problem (in cases of multiple problems/advisors).

Figure 6.10: The impact that advisors had on resolving problems



Source: (E21) Did the advisor help you resolve or reduce the problem, did they make it worse, or did they make no difference? Base: Adults in England and Wales who contacted an advisor (1,963). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Differences by type of advisor

Around half of those who obtained both legal advice and professional advice said that their advisor had helped resolve or reduce the problem (both 52%).

Those who obtained legal advice were more likely than those who had professional advice to report that they didn't know whether their advisor helped resolve or made the problem worse (16% vs 6%). Respondents who obtained professional advice were more likely than those receiving legal advice to report that their advisor made no difference to their problem (36% vs 26%).

However, there is variation in the outcomes reported for different types of professional advice. Those who received advice from an independent advisor, such as Citizens Advice, were more likely to report that they had helped resolve or reduce the problem (62%, compared to 52% overall).

Those who received advice or help from the police were significantly less likely to think they helped to resolve or reduce the problem (27%). They were also more likely than others to think they had made no difference to the problem (51%) or that they made the problem worse (10%).

Those who used the council for advice / help were also comparatively more likely to report that their help / advice made no difference (47%, compared to 36% overall).

Table 6.6: The impact by advisor on helping problems⁷⁷

Type of advisor	Helped resolve or reduced the problem	Made no difference	Made the problem worse	Don't know
Legal Advisor ⁷⁸	52%	26%▼	4%	16%
A Solicitors' Firm	57%	21%	2%	18%▲
Professional Advisor ⁷⁹	52%	36%	3%	6%
Another independent advisor or representative	62%▲	29%	3%	5%
The Police	27%▼	51%▲	10%▲	8%
Credit card company / Bank	74%	19%	0%	6%
Housing Association / Landlord	46%	44%	3%	5%
Local council / Council department	44%	47%▲	5%	4%
Any other organisation ⁸⁰	59%▲	27%	*▼	10%

Source: (E21) Did the advisor help you resolve or reduce the problem, did they make it worse, or did they make no difference? Base: All who contacted a legal advisor most recently (369), all who contacted a professional advisor most recently (1,566), all who contacted a Solicitors' Firm (285), All who contacted an independent advisor (288), all who contacted the police (120), all who contacted a credit card company / bank (98), all who contacted a housing association (171), all who contacted the local council (413), all who contacted any other organisation (425).

⁷⁷ This Table shows column percentages by advisor type. Arrows indicate statistically significant differences.

⁷⁸ Those who received advice from a Barrister (19), Law Centre (17) and Civil Legal Advice (47) are not shown due to small base sizes.

⁷⁹ Those who received help from the Courts and Tribunals Service (47) and National Digital Support Service (4), are not shown due to small base sizes.

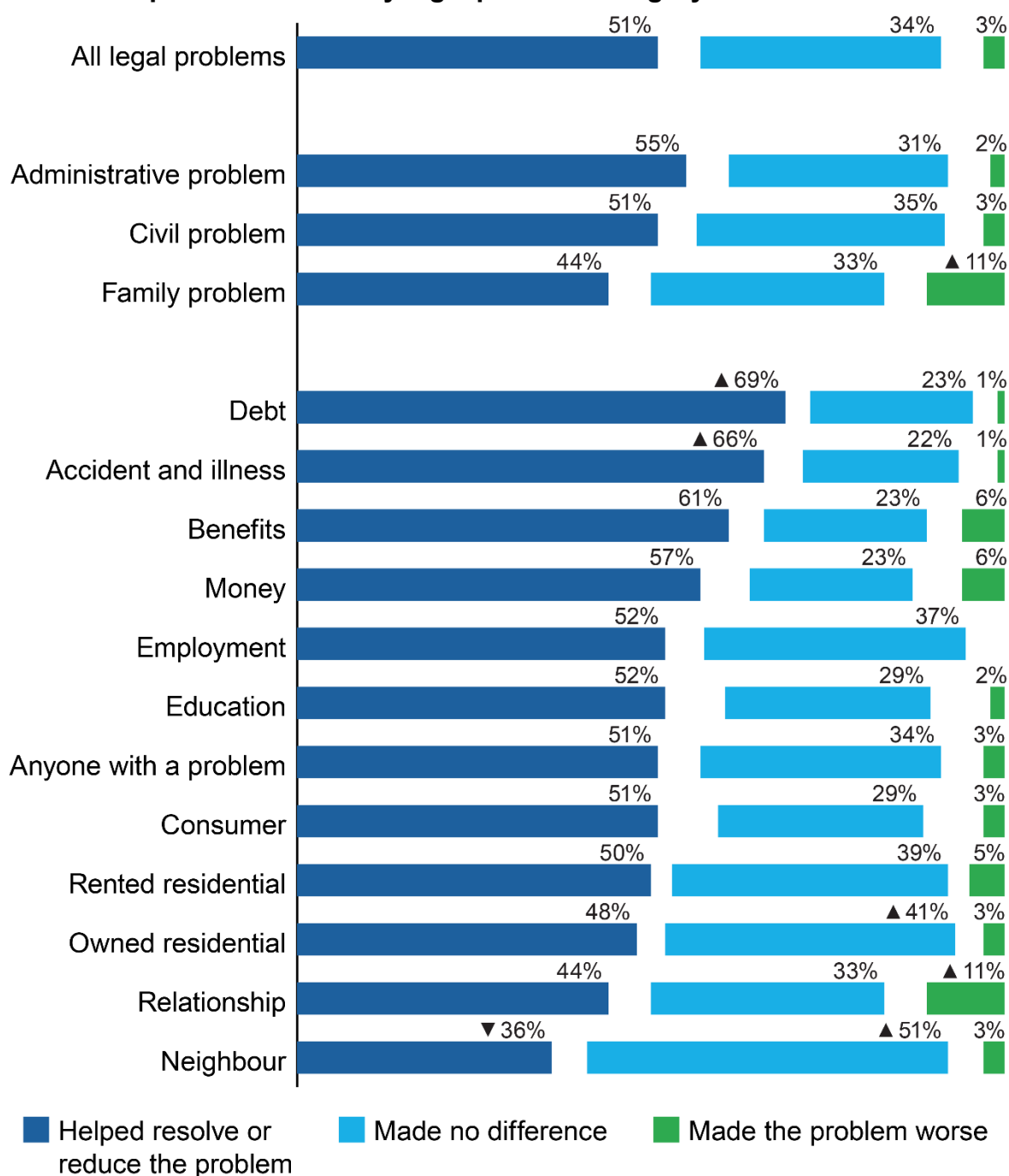
⁸⁰ * Represents answers under 1% but greater than zero.

Differences by legal problem category

Those with debt or accident and illness related problems were more likely to report their advisors having positive impacts. Over two thirds of those with debt problems (69%) and those with accident and illness problems (66%) said that their advisor had helped reduce or resolve their problem.

Respondents with neighbour problems or issues with their owned residential property were more likely than others to report their advisors making no difference to their problems (51% and 41% compared to 34% overall), whilst those with relationship problems were the most likely to cite their advisor having made their problem worse (11% compared to 3% overall).

Figure 6.11: Impact of advisors by legal problem category



Source: (E21) Did the advisor help you resolve or reduce the problem, did they make it worse, or did they make no difference? Base: All contacted an advisor (1,963), all asked the follow-up about their administrative (428), civil (1,440), family (95), consumer problems (199), employment problems (172), neighbour (294), problems with a house they own (307), problems with a house they rent (230), debt problems (87), money problems (221), benefits problems (124), relationship problems (95), education problems (132), accident and illness problems (102). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding. **Caution: low base for some problem categories.**

▼ ▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Socio-demographic differences

There were varying socio-demographic differences between the reported impact of advisors, as outlined in Table 6.7. These differences, to some extent, will interact with the type of legal problem experienced. There were very few or no differences between people of different countries, sexual orientation, pregnancy status or religion.

Table 6.7: Significant socio-demographic differences in the reported impact of advisors

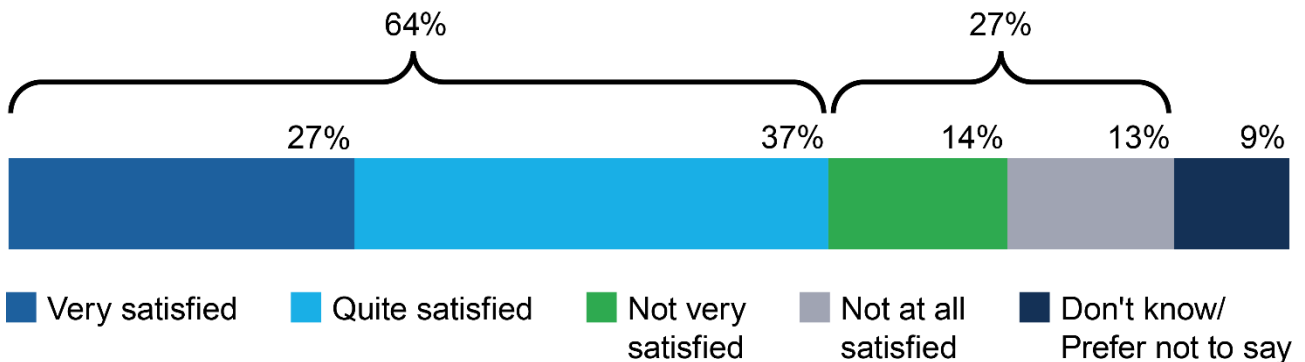
Socio-demographics	Differences
Sex	Males were more likely than females to report that their advisor had helped to resolve or reduce the problem (56%, compared to 46%), whilst females were comparatively more likely to report that their advisor had made no difference (39%, compared to 30% of males).
Age	Those aged 75 and older were more likely to feel that their advisor made no difference in resolving or reducing their problem (47%, compared to 34% across all age groups).
Ethnicity	Comparatively, people from an Asian background (9%) were more likely than those from a white background (2%) to say that their advisor made the problem worse.
Disability status	Those who do not have a long-term disability or illness were more likely than those who do to report that their advisor helped to resolve or reduce their problem (56% vs 50%). In contrast, those with a long-term disability or illness were more likely than those without to report that their advisor made the problem worse (5% vs 1%).
Education	Those whose highest qualification are A-Levels were more likely to report that their advisor had resolved or reduced their problem (62% vs 51% across all). Those whose highest qualification are GCSEs or equivalent were more likely to say that their advisor had made no difference (42% vs 35% of people with degree level qualifications).
English proficiency	People who spoke English 'well' were more likely to say that the advisor made the problem worse (13%, compared to 2% of those who speak English very well).
Household income	People in the highest income bracket (£60,000+) were more likely to report that their advisor had made no difference to their problem (39% vs 28% of those on £32,000–£60,000). Comparatively, those on an income of £32,000–£60,000 were more likely than those in the highest income bracket to report that their advisor had helped resolve or reduce their problem (60% vs 46%).

Socio-demographics	Differences
Eligibility for legal aid	Those eligible for legal aid were slightly more likely than those who are not, to report that their advisor made their problem worse (5% vs 2%).
Legal capability	Those with higher legal self-efficacy scores were more likely to say that their advisor helped resolve or reduce their problem (58% vs 42% of those with a low score). In contrast, those with low confidence scores were more likely to report their advisor had made the situation worse (6% of those with low legal confidence vs 1% of those with high confidence).

Satisfaction with help provided by advisors

Just under two-thirds (64%) reported being satisfied with the information, advice or help they received from their advisor, including just over a quarter overall who were ‘very’ satisfied. In contrast, over one in four (27%) were not satisfied, around half of whom were ‘not at all’ satisfied with what they received.

Figure 6.12: Satisfaction with the information, advice or help provided by advisors



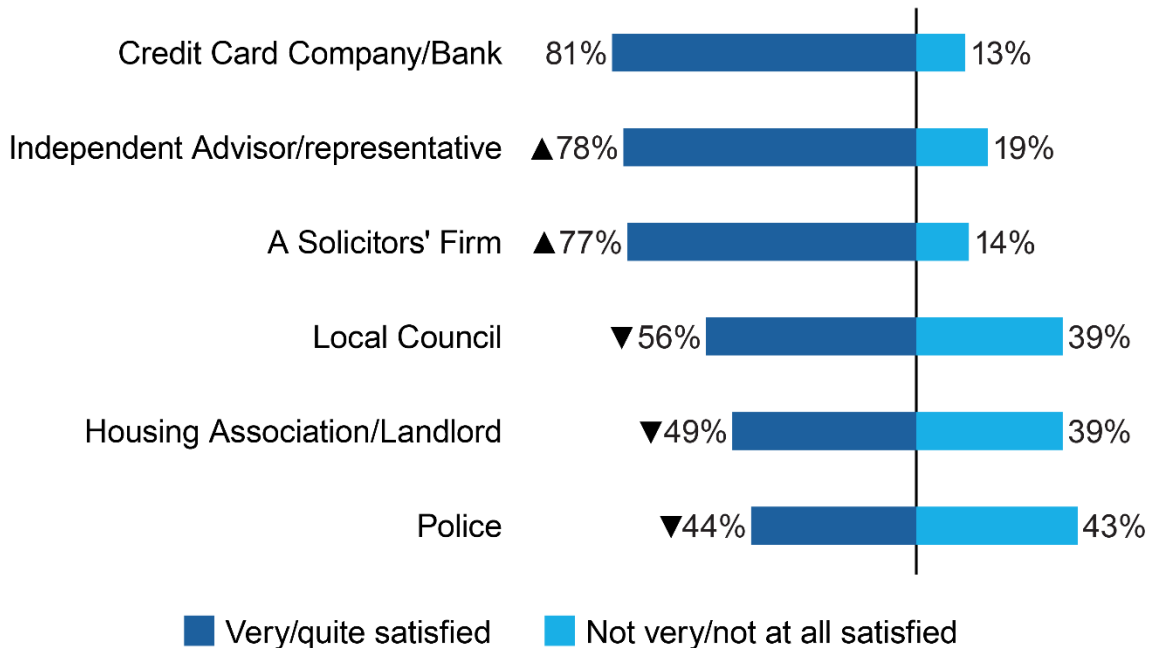
Source: (E22) To what extent, if at all, were you satisfied with the information, advice or help you received from the advisor? Base: Adults in England and Wales who contacted an advisor (1,963). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to ‘Don’t know/prefer not to say’ responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Differences by type of advisor

As might be expected, the variations in levels of satisfaction by type of advisor tend to mirror the extent to which people felt their advisor had helped (or hindered) the resolution of their legal problem. Over three-quarters of those using solicitors (77%), independent advisors (78%) or a credit card company / bank (81%) were satisfied with the information,

help or advice they received. Satisfaction ratings were more mixed among those who received help from their local council, a housing association/landlord, or from the police.

Figure 6.13: Satisfaction by type of advisor



Source: (E22) To what extent, if at all, were you satisfied with the information, advice or help you received from the advisor? Base: Adults in England and Wales who contacted an advisor (1,963), all who contacted a Solicitor most recently (285), independent advisor (288), Police (120), Credit Card Company / Bank (98), Housing Association (171), Local Council (413). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding. **Caution: low base for some advisor types.**

▼ ▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Differences by legal problem category

Overall levels of satisfaction tended to be fairly consistent across different problem categories. The only exceptions were those with employment problems being more likely to express satisfaction with the information, help or advice they received (75%, compared to 64% across problem types). Those with neighbour problems were comparatively less likely to express satisfaction (39% saying they were not very/at all satisfied, compared to 27% across problem types).

Socio-demographic differences

There were few statistically significant differences between sub-groups for reported satisfaction with an advisor, as shown in Table 6.8. There were very few significant

differences between disability status, country, sexual orientation, education level, single parent status, and employment.

Table 6.8: Significant socio-demographic differences in satisfaction with advisor

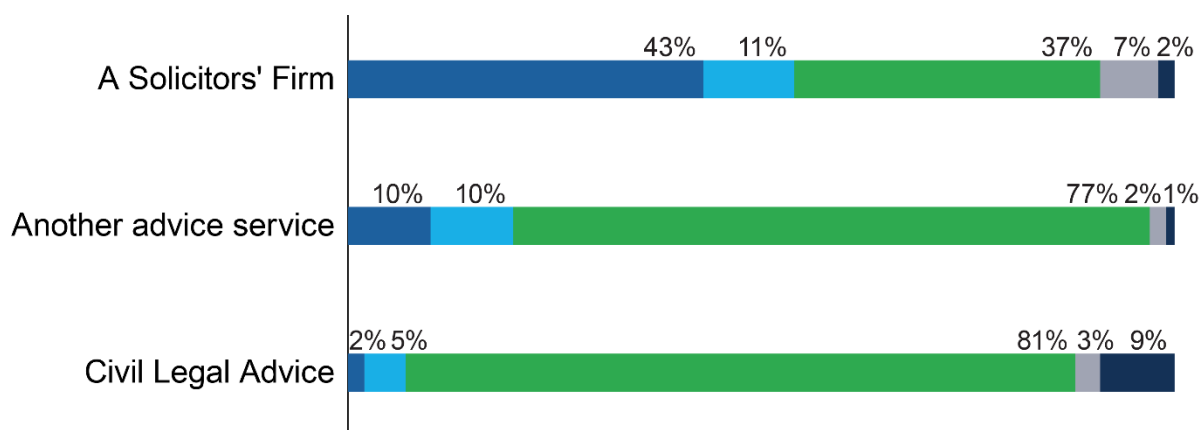
Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	People aged 75 years or older were the most likely to report not being satisfied with the advice and help received from their advisor (41% vs 27% across all age groups).
Ethnicity	People from an Asian background were comparatively more likely than people from a white or black background to report being satisfied (72% vs 67% vs 61).
Benefits status	Those who receive means-tested benefits were more likely than those who receive non-means-tested benefits to say that they were satisfied with their advisor (73% vs 61%).
Legal capability	People with high legal confidence were more likely to express satisfaction (70% of those with high confidence vs 53% of those with low confidence).

Fees paid to legal advisors

Respondents were asked whether they paid for the information, help or advice they obtained, and, if so, the amount and how they covered it. Over half (54%) who received help or advice from a solicitor's firm paid for some or all of the cost. A minority (7%) of those receiving information, advice or help from Civil Legal Advice (CLA) noted that they had to pay.⁸¹

⁸¹ Civil Legal Advice do not charge a fee for providing advice. This 7% may have been referred to paid services by CLA.

Figure 6.14: Extent to which people paid for advice from different providers



■ Yes, all of the fee ■ Yes, some of the fee ■ No ■ Don't know ■ Prefer not to say

Source: (E10) Did you, personally, have to pay for any information, advice or help you have received? Base: Adults in England and Wales who received help, information or advice from: a solicitor's firm (355), another advice organisation (478), Civil Legal Advice (91).

Among those who had to pay for a solicitor (either in whole or in part), the mean average payment cited was £4,265. Around one in six (15%) paid between £1–£500, whilst seven per cent said they paid £10,000 or more. There are limitations with the mean, as it only includes the amount that people were willing to disclose and may therefore not be an accurate reflection of costs. A significant proportion (44%) of respondents could not remember or preferred not to say the amount they had paid.

Table 6.9: Amount paid for information, help or advice from solicitors⁸²

Amount paid to solicitors (which may be all or some of the total fees)	
£100 or less	2%
£101 – £500	15%
£501 – £1,000	7%
£1,001 – £5,000	21%
£5,001 – £10,000	4%
£10,000 or higher	7%
Mean	£4,265
Don't know / Prefer not to say	44%

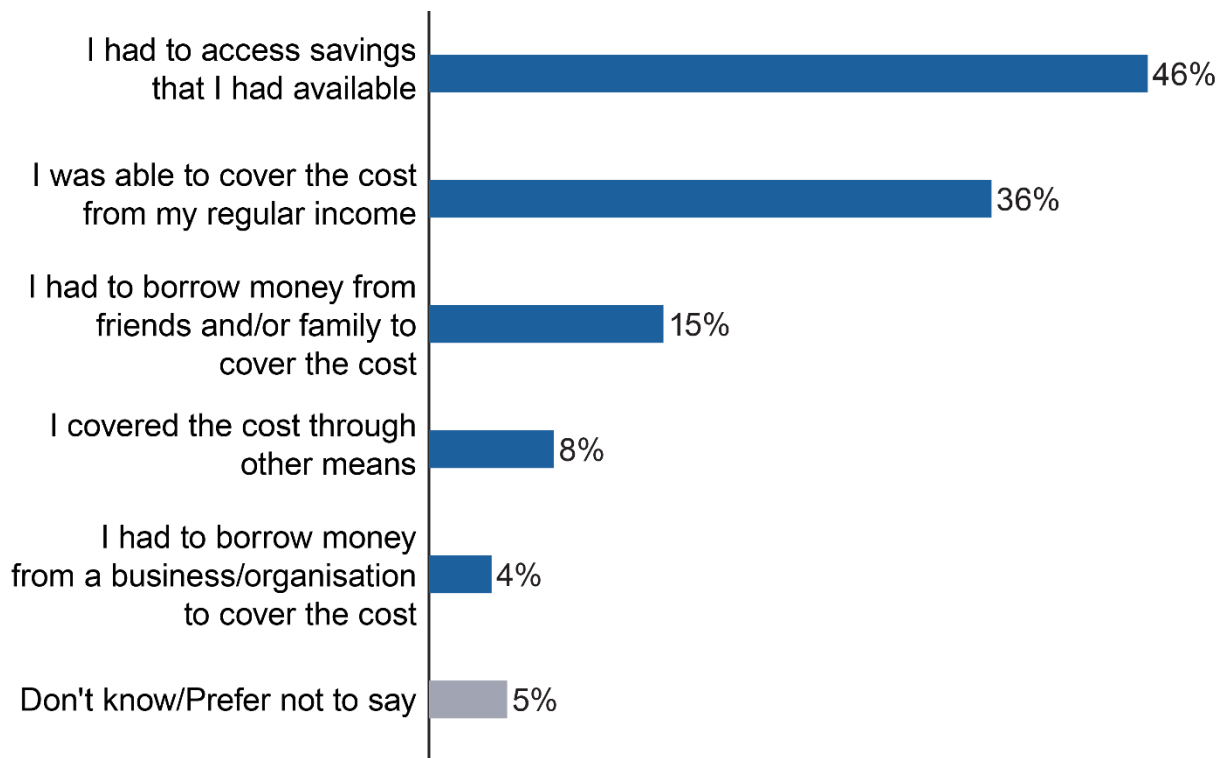
Source: (E11) in total, how much have you, personally, paid so far for the information/help/advice you received? Base: All who paid for some or all of their Solicitors' Fees (205).

The majority of those who paid for some or all of the solicitors' fees were able to cover the cost via their regular income or accessible savings (77%). However, a quarter (27%) reported needing to borrow money from family or friends, from a business, or through some other means.⁸³

⁸² Due to small numbers of those who paid for another advice service or civil legal advice only answers for a Solicitor are shown here.

⁸³ This question was shown as multiple choice, so percentages will not add to 100%.

Figure 6.15: How those paying solicitor fees covered the cost



Source: (E12_B) Thinking about the money you personally have had to pay, which, if any, of the following apply? Base: Adults in England and Wales who used a Solicitors' Firm and paid for some, or all, of the service (205). Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

Respondents who did not pay the full amount of fees were asked who covered the (remaining) costs. Around a quarter of those using solicitors (23%) had a 'no win, no fee' agreement, whilst around one in six (16%) used an insurance company.

Table 6.10: Sources used to cover the (remaining) costs of legal advice

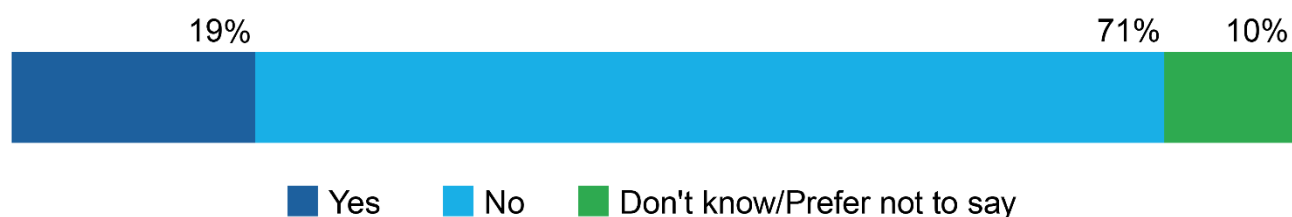
	Used a Solicitors' Firm	Used Civil Legal Advice	Used another advice service
A no win, no fee agreement	23%	1%	<1%
An insurance company	16%	1%	3%
A relative, friend or your employer	9%	7%	2%
A charity	6%	3%	2%
Legal aid	3%	5%	1%
A trade union or professional body	2%	11%	1%
None of these	39%	69%	86%
Don't know	8%	9%	4%

Source: (E12) Did any of the following pay for any of the information, advice or help you received?
 Base: Adults in England and Wales who used a legal advisor and paid for some or none of the service, adults who used a Solicitors' firm (189), used Civil Legal Advice (83), used another advice service (426). Prefer not to say excluded due to low responses.

'No win, no fee'

Respondents with an accident or illness related problem who did not contact an advisor on a 'no, win no fee' basis were asked whether they considered obtaining a lawyer on a 'no win, no fee' basis. Around one in five (19%) had considered obtaining a lawyer on a 'no win, no fee' basis.

Figure 6.16: Extent to which those with an accident-related problem considered a lawyer on a 'no win, no fee' basis



Source: (E13) Did you consider obtaining a lawyer on a no win, no fee basis? Base: Adults in England and Wales who had an accident problem and have not contacted anyone on a no win, no fee basis (237).

Responses among those who said they had considered obtaining a lawyer on a 'no win, no fee' basis provided some illustration of reasons why they may not have proceeded with the option.

“No idea how it works or how to do it, felt stupid like I might get scammed and didn't want to risk owing anyone money I don't have.” **Respondent with an accident / illness problem who did consider 'no win, no fee'**

Of those who did not consider a 'no win, no fee' lawyer, almost half (49%) reported that they did not need or want a lawyer for their problem(s).

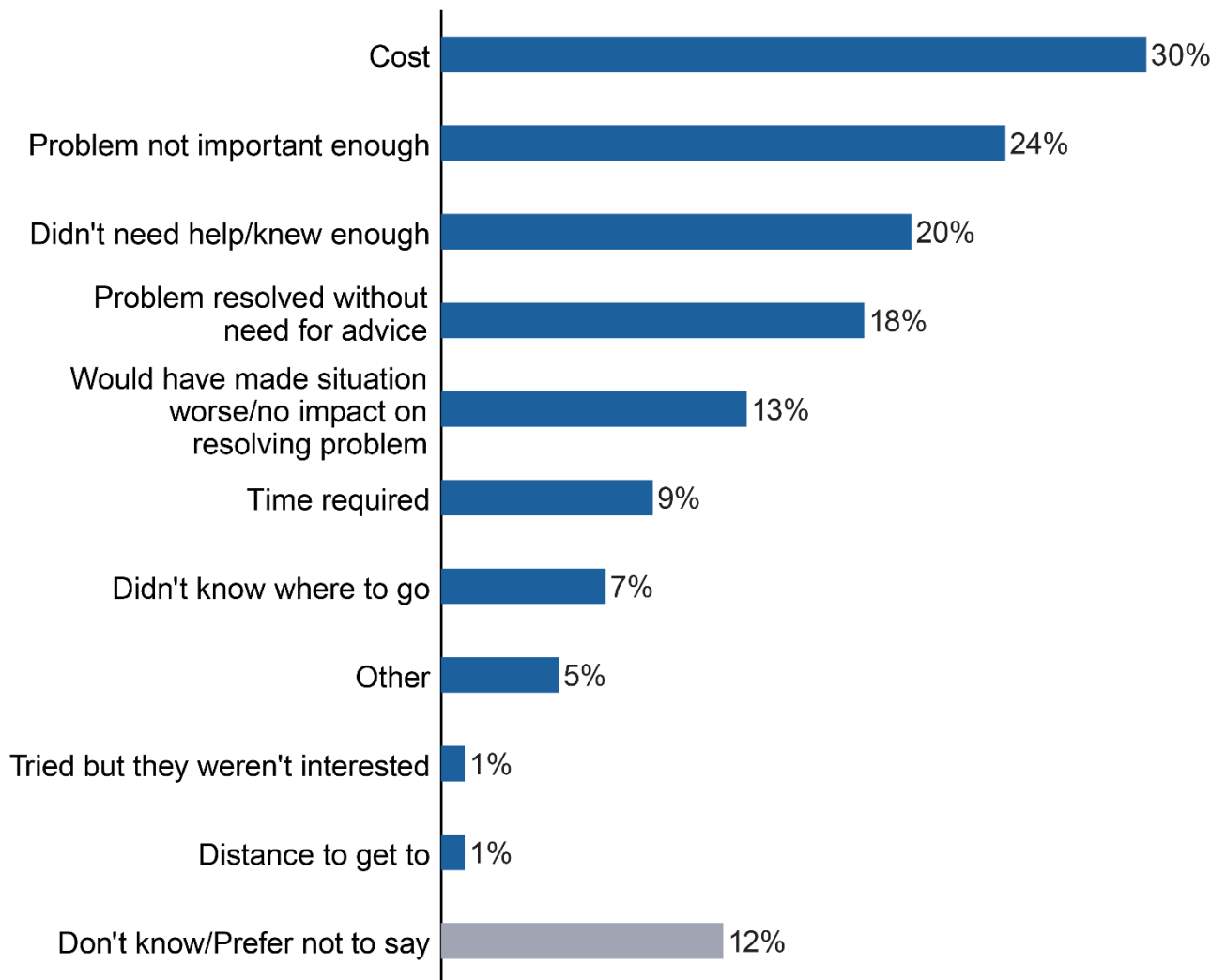
“The problem was far too minor to get involved at this level”. **Respondent with an accident / illness problem who did not consider using 'no win, no fee'**

Reasons why legal help was not obtained

All respondents who reported having a problem but not using a solicitor or barrister were asked why they had not sought advice through these legal channels.

One of the main barriers to seeking advice or help from a solicitor or barrister was cost, with three in ten (30%) citing this as a reason. Almost a quarter (24%) did not think their problem was important enough to seek advice through a solicitor or barrister, while around one in five didn't think they needed help, they knew enough themselves (20%), or noted that their problem resolved without the need for formal legal advice (18%).

Figure 6.17: Reasons for not seeking advice from a lawyer, solicitor or barrister



Source: (E26) Why didn't you get the information, advice or help from a lawyer, solicitor or barrister?
 Base: All who did not contact a solicitor or barrister (4,617). Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

“I’m giving them a chance to sort directly with me rather than getting another party involved.” Respondent with a legal problem who did not contact a solicitor or barrister

Differences by legal problem category

Cost was particularly likely to be cited as a barrier to seeking legal advice among those with problems relating to relationships (47%), owned and rented residential property (both 40%), and money (38%).

A third (33%) of those who had experienced a neighbour-related problem viewed their problem as not being important enough to seek professional advice, significantly higher than the average across all problems (24%).

Those with consumer problems were comparatively more likely to report they did not need any help (26%) or that the problem resolved without the need for advice (24%), compared to those with a neighbour problem (14% and 13% respectively), or owned property problem (16% and 13% respectively).

Table 6.11: Reasons for not seeking information, advice or help from legal professionals – by legal problem category

	Cost	Problem not important enough	Didn't need help or knew enough	Problem resolved without the need for advice	Would have made the problem worse
All legal problems	30%	24%	20%	18%	13%
Civil legal problems	30%	25%	21%	18%	13%
Consumer	19%	27%	26%	24%	7%
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	28%	33%	14%	13%	19%
Debt	31%	20%	25%	16%	15%
Money (excluding personal debt)	38%	18%	22%	18%	11%
Rented accommodation	40%	28%	19%	17%	11%
Accidents/illness	25%	20%	21%	16%	19%
Owning or buying residential property	40%	18%	16%	13%	16%
Administrative legal problems	32%	24%	19%	20%	11%
Employment	31%	28%	17%	22%	16%
State benefits	33%	20%	21%	18%	6%
Education	32%	17%	21%	16%	9%
Family legal problems	47%	10%	15%	11%	14%

Source: (E26) Why didn't you get information, advice or help from a lawyer, solicitor or barrister?

Base: Adults in England and Wales who did not contact a solicitor or barrister (4,617), adults who have civil problems: consumer (794), neighbours (572), money (555) rented accommodation (544), accidents/illness (215), owning or buying a property (407); those who have administrative legal problems: employment (420), state benefits (457), education (280); family legal problems: relationships (101).

Differences by problem characteristics

Those who categorised their problem as more serious and/or had experienced discrimination or adverse consequences were more likely to cite practicalities and/or cost as reasons for not contacting a legal advisor. There were also heightened concerns that contacting a legal advisor may make the problem worse or have no impact on its potential resolution.

Table 6.12: Reasons for not contacting a legal advisor by problem characteristics

Problem experiences	Differences
Problem status	Those whose problems were ongoing were more likely than those with a concluded problem to cite cost (37% vs 28%) as the reason why they had not contacted a lawyer, as well concerns that it would make the situation worse (17% vs 11%).
Problem duration ⁸⁴	Those whose problem lasted longer were comparatively more likely to say that cost was a barrier to contacting a lawyer (cited by 40% among those with problems estimated to last 7–11 months and 41% for those estimated to last 12–18 months).
Discrimination	Compared to those who did not experience discrimination (28%), just under half (45%) of those who did cited cost as a reason why they did not contact a lawyer. A fifth (20%) thought that the lawyer would have either a neutral or negative impact on their problem, compared with one in ten (11%) of those who did not experience discrimination.
Adverse consequences	Those who experienced adverse consequences were comparatively more likely than those who did not to cite cost (44% vs 19%), time (11% vs 7%), or feeling it would have made the situation worse or had no impact (17% vs 9%).
How serious a problem was perceived to be	Following a similar pattern, those who thought their problem was serious were more likely to cite cost as a barrier (38% vs 21% of those who thought their problem was not serious). Those who categorised their problem as not serious were comparatively more likely than those who saw their problem as serious to say their problem was not important enough to seek legal advice (34% vs 10%).
Perceptions of the problem being ‘legal’	Just under half (47%) of those who thought their problem was legal at the outset cited cost as a barrier to getting legal advice (compared to 29% of those who did not think their problem was legal). Findings suggest a pattern between those who did not initially perceive their problem as being legal and not obtaining advice from a legal advisor because they thought their problem was not important enough (28% thought this, compared to 9% of those who did perceive their problem as legal).

Socio-demographic differences

As outlined in Table 6.13, there were some demographic differences between reasons for not contacting a legal advisor. For example, men, older age groups and those with a university degree were more likely to report that they did not need advice as their problem

⁸⁴ This data is derived from modelling on problem length. See chapter 4 for more information on how problem duration was calculated.

resolved without it, or that they knew enough themselves. There were very few statistically significant differences amongst those of different sexual orientations and digital capabilities.

Table 6.13: Significant socio-demographic differences in reasons for not contacting a legal advisor

Socio-demographics	Differences
Sex	Males were slightly more likely than females to report that they did not contact a solicitor or barrister because their problem resolved without the need for advice (20% vs 16%), or because of the time it would have required (11% vs 7%).
Age	Those aged 65–74 years old were comparatively more likely to say they didn't need help or knew enough information themselves (28% compared to 15–22% for all other age groups), or that the problem resolved without the need for advice (23% compared to 14–16% for those aged 25–64). Younger respondents were more likely than older age groups to cite that time was a barrier (19% of those aged 18–24 compared to 4–10% across all other age groups).
Ethnicity	People from an Asian background were more likely than people from white backgrounds to say they didn't contact a barrister or solicitor because of the time it would have required (19% vs 7%). People from a black ethnic background were more likely to say that cost was a barrier (44%), or that they did not know where to go (21%, compared to 6% of people from white backgrounds and 8% of those from Asian backgrounds).
Country	People living in Wales were more likely than those living in England to report that a barrister or solicitor would have made the situation worse / had no impact on resolving the problem (20% vs 12%).
Disability status	Those without a long-term illness or disability were more likely than those with a long-term illness or disability to say that their problem was not important enough (27% vs 23%) or that they didn't need help or knew enough themselves (23% vs 19%). Whereas those with a disability were more likely than those without to say that a barrister or solicitor would have made the situation worse or would have had no impact on resolving the problem (15% vs 11%).
Pregnancy status	Those who were pregnant / had been pregnant in the last year were more likely to report that they tried to get help from a solicitor or barrister but that they were not interested in helping them (6% vs 1% on average).
Education	People who have a degree were slightly more likely than average to report that they did not think their problem was important enough (28%

Socio-demographics	Differences
	vs 24%), that they did not need help, or knew enough themselves (23% vs 20%).
English proficiency	Those who speak English ‘well’ as opposed to ‘very well’ were less likely to know where to go for legal advice (16% vs 6%).
Employment status	Respondents who were unemployed were more likely to say they had not sought legal advice because it would have made the situation worse or had no impact on resolving the problem (24% vs 12% of those in employment).
Benefits status	Those who receive means tested benefits were more likely than those who receive no benefits to say that cost was a barrier (41% vs 30%) to contacting a legal advisor. They were also more likely to report that they did not know where to go (11% vs 7%).
Single parents	Single parents were more likely to report that they tried to contact a legal advisor, but the advisors were not interested in helping (6% vs 1%).
Household income	Lower income households were comparatively more likely to cite cost, time, and low awareness of where to go as barriers to seeking advice. Around half (49%) with a household income of less than £14,000 said cost was a barrier (compared to 29% among those on incomes above £14,000). Almost one in five (19%) on the lowest household incomes reported the time required as a barrier (compared to only 8% of those with incomes above £14,000), and 14% of lowest income respondents said they did not know where to go (compared to 7% across all income bands).
Eligibility for legal aid ⁸⁵	Two in five (40%) of those eligible for legal aid reported that cost was a barrier to accessing support from a solicitor or barrister (compared to 27% among those not eligible).
Tenure	People renting from a council or housing association were more likely than those who own their home to cite cost as a barrier (40% vs 28%), as well as not knowing where to go (13% vs 5%).
Legal capability	Respondents with high legal anxiety were significantly more likely than those with low anxiety to cite that cost (41% vs 23%), time (13% vs 6%), low awareness of where to go (12% vs 4%), and the perception it would have made the problem worse (17% vs 9%) as reasons for not seeking advice from a solicitor or barrister.

⁸⁵ For further information on the legal aid definition see Appendix A. This definition includes financial eligibility only.

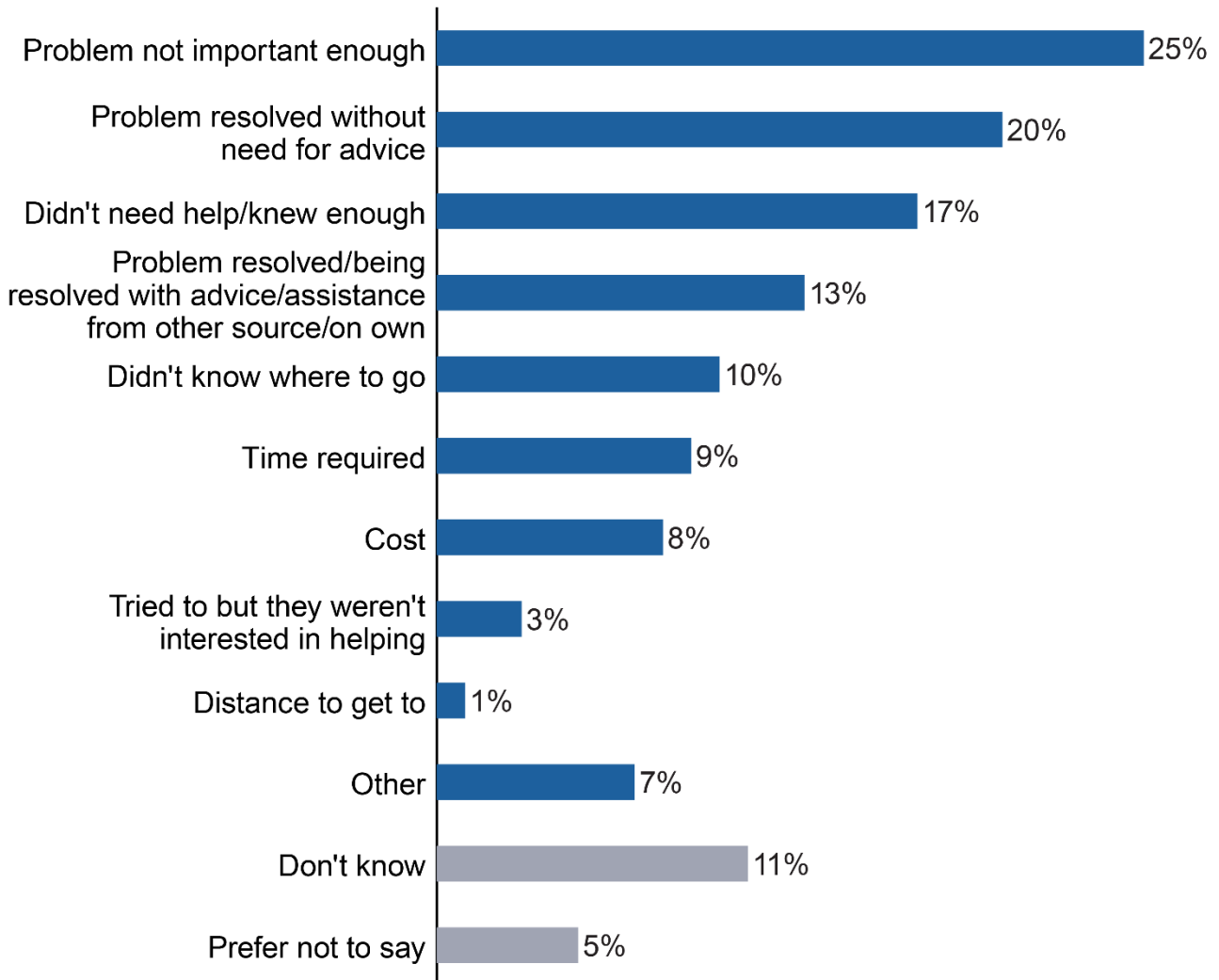
Reasons for not obtaining help from other advice providers

Respondents who did not seek advice from sources such as Citizens Advice, a trade union, Shelter, or money advice services were asked why they had not sought advice from any of these types of providers.

A quarter (25%) felt that their problem was not important enough, while one in five (20%) reported that their problem resolved without the need for advice, and a similar proportion (17%) felt they did not need any help or had enough information.

Fewer than one in ten (8%) mentioned cost as a barrier to seeking advice from these types of providers, perhaps reflecting that many of these providers do not charge for their advice.

Figure 6.18: Reasons for not obtaining advice from other sources



Source: (E27) Why did you decide not to get help from another type of advisor or representative such as Citizens Advice, a trade union, Shelter or Money advice services? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem who did not contact an advisor or representative (4,621). Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

Differences by legal problem category

Those who had problems with neighbours or with a property they rent were more likely to not seek independent advice because they did not view their problem as important enough (37% and 31% respectively). Respondents with consumer problems were the most likely to say there wasn't the need as their problem had resolved (31%).

Those with problems regarding a residential property they own were the most likely across problem categories to cite not knowing where to go for help or advice (16%) or to have tried contacting an advisor who was not interested in helping (7%).

Table 6.14: Reasons for not obtaining advice from other sources by legal problem category

Reasons why help was not obtained	Overall	Problems more likely to report as reason
Problem not important enough	25%	Neighbour problems (37%) Rented residential (31%)
Problem resolved without need for advice	20%	Consumer (31%)
Problem resolved/being resolved with advice/assistance from other source/on own	13%	Accident and illness (20%)
Didn't know where to go	10%	Owned residential (16%)
Cost	8%	Rented residential (13%)
Tried to but they weren't interested in helping	3%	Owned residential (7%) Relationships (7%)
Distance to get to	1%	Benefits (3%) Education (3%)

Source: (E27) Why did you decide not to get help from another type of advisor or representative such as Citizens Advice, a trade union, Shelter or Money advice services? Base: Adults in England and Wales who did not contact an independent advisor (4,621), consumer (769), neighbours (574), money (554) rented accommodation (523), accidents/illness (240), owning or buying a property (501); employment (369), benefits (421), education (269); relationships (155)

Differences by problem characteristics

Those whose problems lasted longer, who experienced discrimination or adverse consequences, and who categorised their problem as legal / serious, were more likely to have not used professional advice due to practicalities / lack of awareness of where to go.

Table 6.15: Reasons for not obtaining advice from other sources – by problem characteristics

Problem characteristics	Differences
Problem status	Those whose problem was ongoing were far less likely than those with a concluded problem to say that they didn't seek help because the problem was resolved (9% vs 26%) or that they received advice elsewhere (9% vs 15%).
Problem duration ⁸⁶	Those whose problems were estimated to go on for an intermediate time (between one and a half years to two and a half

⁸⁶ This data is derived from modelling on problem length. See chapter 4 for more information on how problem duration was calculated.

Problem characteristics	Differences
	years) were more likely to not seek professional advice because they didn't know where to go (17%) or due to the time required (15%).
Discrimination	Those who experienced discrimination were comparatively more likely to cite the cost as a reason for not obtaining help (15% vs 6% of those who did not experience discrimination).
Adverse consequences	People who had experienced adverse consequences as a result of their problem were comparatively more likely than those who did not to not seek professional advice because they did not know where to go (14% vs 6%), the time required (12% vs 6%), cost (11% vs 4%), or to note that they had tried to but the providers had not been interested in helping (5% vs 1%).
How serious a problem was perceived to be	People who viewed the seriousness of their problem as high were more likely than those with low seriousness to not know where to go (14% vs 5%), to cite the time required (12% vs 6%), the cost (11% vs 4%), or to say that they had tried to seek support but that the provider had not been interested (7% vs 2%).
Perceptions of the problem being 'legal'	Those who thought the problem they experienced was legal at the outset were more likely to say they didn't know where to go (15% vs 9% of those who did not perceive their problem as being legal).

Socio-demographics differences

Differences by socio-demographic group are outlined in Table 6.16. Among some groups, people's problems had been resolved without advice, such as males and older age groups, whereas amongst others there was a lack of awareness about where to go to obtain advice.

There were very few significant differences amongst those from different countries, or with different sexual orientations, or digital capabilities.

Table 6.16: Significant socio-demographic differences in reasons for not obtaining advice from other sources

Socio-demographics	Differences
Sex	Males were more likely to report that their problem was being resolved with advice or they were receiving assistance from another source (15%, compared to 10% of females). Males were also twice as likely to report that cost was a factor behind not choosing an independent advisor or representative (10% vs 5% of females).
Age	Those aged 18 to 44 were more likely to feel the time required was a barrier (12%, compared to 5% of those aged 45+). Cost was more likely to be cited as a barrier among 18–24-year-olds (17%). People aged 65 to 74 were the most likely to report that their problem resolved without the need for advice (24%) or that they didn't need advice (24%).
Ethnicity	People from an Asian background (25%) were the most likely to cite the time required to seek the advice as a barrier (compared to 9% overall). People from a black background were the most likely to note that they had tried to seek advice but the provider had not been interested in helping (10%, compared to 3% across all respondents).
Disability status	Those with a long-term illness or disability were more likely to have tried to seek this type of advice but found the provider was not interested in helping (4%, compared to 2% of those with no disabilities).
Education	Those whose highest level of education was degree level or higher were the most likely to view their problem as not important enough (30%, compared to 25% across all respondents).
Employment status	A quarter of people who were unemployed didn't know where to go for this type of advice (25%, compared to 10% amongst those in employment or not economically active).
Single parents	Single parents were more likely to have tried but found the provider not interested in helping them (9%, compared to 3% overall).
Household income	People with household incomes of less than £14,000 were the most likely to cite cost as a reason why they did not access this type of support (14%, compared to 6% among those on higher incomes).
Eligibility for legal aid	Those who were eligible for legal aid were more likely to not know where to go for advice (14%, compared to 9% of those not eligible).

Socio-demographics	Differences
Legal capability	<p>Those with low legal confidence were the most likely to not know where to go for this type of advice (15%, compared to 4% of those with high legal confidence) or to cite cost as a barrier (12%, compared to 6% of those with medium or high legal confidence).</p> <p>Those with high-level legal anxiety were the most likely to not know where to go to get this type of support (17%, compared to 5% among those with low-level legal anxiety).</p>

6.5 Self-help⁸⁷

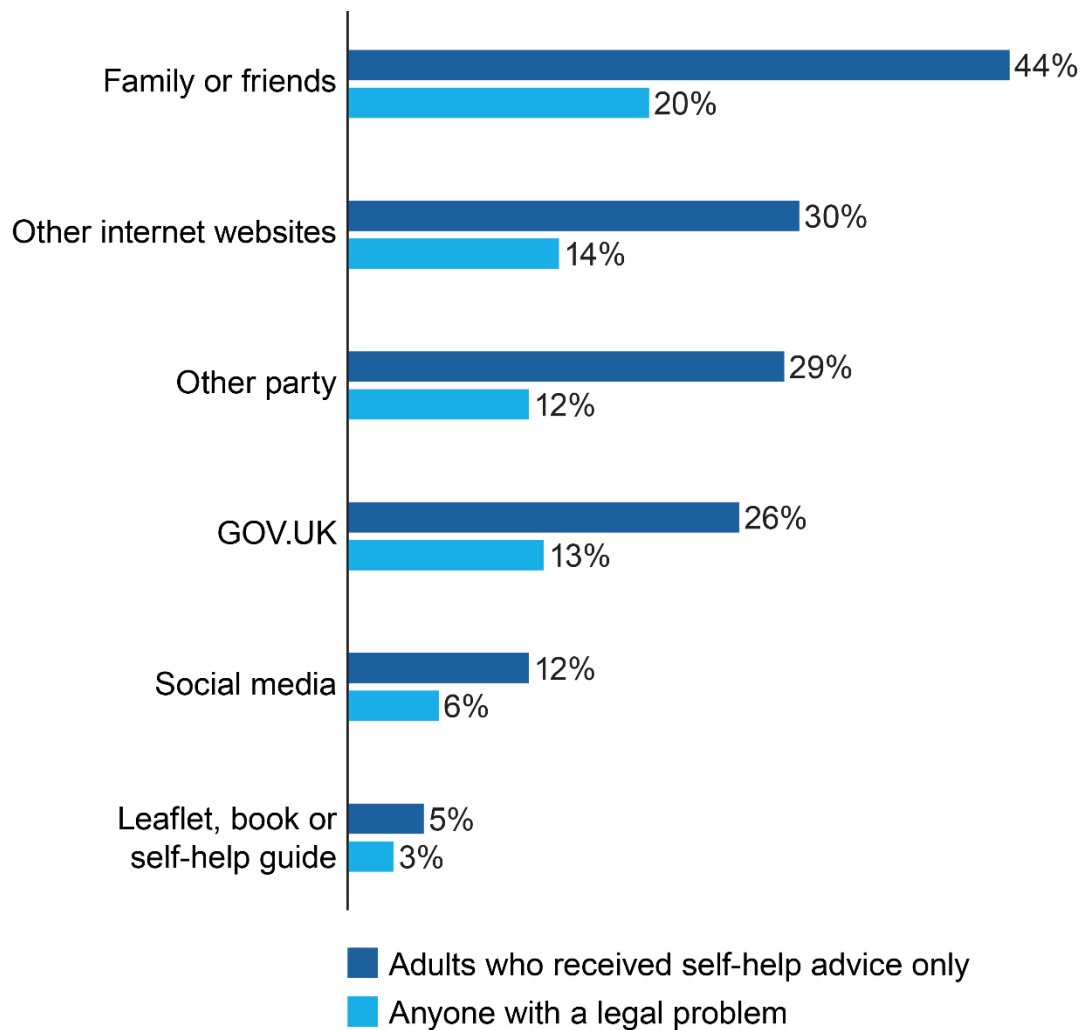
People who obtained self-help used a variety of different sources for advice.

One in five (20%) obtained help from family or friends, while over one in ten looked for help on the GOV.UK website (13%) or other websites (14%). Slightly fewer (12%) went to the person on the other side of the dispute for information, advice or help.

The majority of people (64%) who obtained self-help advice only (and did not get legal or professional advice) used one source, though over a third (36%) used two or more sources of self-help advice. Around two in five of those who obtained legal advice (43%) or obtained professional advice (38%) also sought self-help advice. Self-help can be used in these circumstances be used to supplement or be a pathway for further advice.

⁸⁷ Types of self-help that people obtained to try and resolve their legal problems includes the UK government website (GOV.UK), social media, other internet websites, leaflets, books or self-help guides, family or friends, and those on the other side of the problem or dispute. Most of the data in this section excludes those who have received legal or professional advice.

Figure 6.19: Use of different types of self-help



Source: (ED5a) When trying to sort out this problem, did you obtain information, advice or any other form of help with any of the following? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a problem (4,988), all who received self-help advice only (1,373). Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

Differences by legal problem category

The types of self-help used varied depending on the problem experienced. Respondents with family (26%) or administrative legal problems (25%) were more likely to seek help from GOV.UK than those with civil legal problems (9%). Family or friends were more commonly used for help with education (31%) and employment (30%) problems.

Table 6.17: Type of self-help advice used by legal problem category

	GOV.UK	Social media	Other internet websites	Leaflet, book or self-help guide	Family or friends	Other party
All legal problems	13%	6%	14%	3%	20%	12%
Civil legal problems	9%▼	5%	14%	2%▼	19%▼	12%
Money (excluding personal debt)	15%	5%	14%	2%	18%	15%
Rented residential	14%	5%	12%	2%	25%	7%▼
Owned residential	13%	5%	16%	2%	21%	14%
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	8%▼	2%▼	7▼	*	13%▼	4%▼
Debt	8%	9%	10%	1%	19%	11%
Accidents/illness	6%▼	7%	16%	8%▲	26%	8%
Purchasing good and services	3%▼	6%	22%▲	1%	18%	20%▲
Administrative legal problems	25%▲	6%	14%	5%▼	26%▲	13%
State benefits	41%▲	7%	12%	6%▲	15%▼	11%
Employment	20%▲	4%	13%	3%	30%▲	14%
Education	13%	10%▲	18%	6%▲	31%▲	14%
Family legal problems	26%▲	4%	9%	5%	30%▲	8%

▲▼ Denotes whether a value is significantly different (higher or lower) to the average.

Source: (ED5a) When trying to sort out this problem, did you obtain information, advice or any other form of help from any of the following? Base: Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem (4,988), all asked the follow-up about their consumer problems (811), employment problems (455), neighbours (582), problems with a house they own (526), problems with a house they rent (563), debt problems (274), money problems (601), benefits problems (463), relationship problems (168), education problems (290), accident and illness problems (255). * Answers below 1%.

Differences by socio-demographics

There were variations in the type of self-help methods people used by different socio-demographics. Where there are differences, this will to some extent reflect different categories and severities of legal problems being more prevalent among certain groups. There were very few statistically significant differences between people of different countries, disability status, religions, and tenure.

Table 6.18: Significant socio-demographic differences in sources of self-help

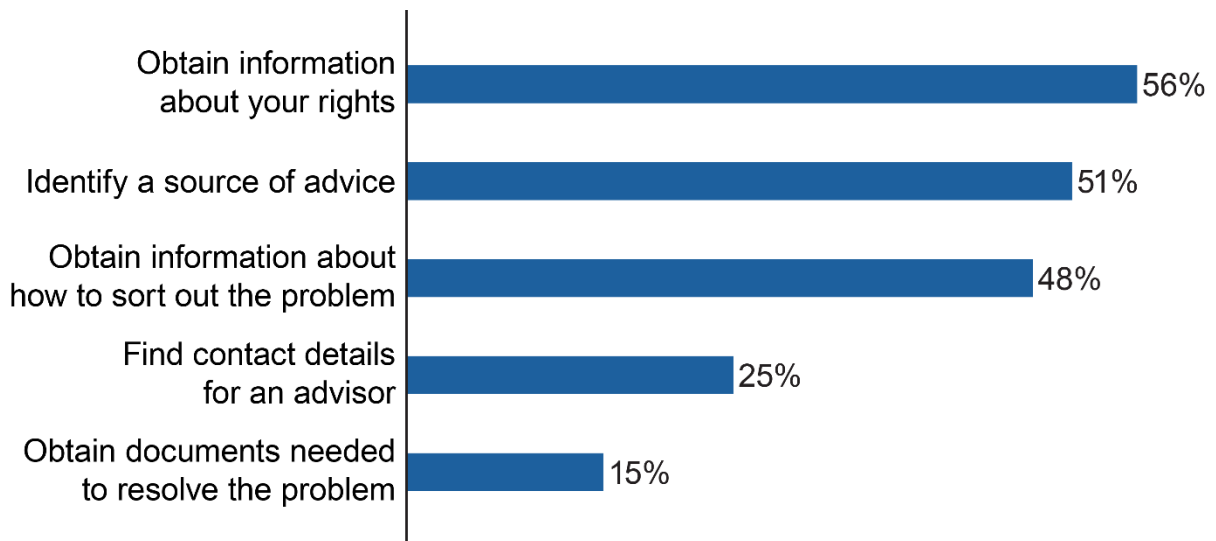
Socio-demographics	Differences
Sex	Females were slightly more likely than males to talk to those on the other side of the problem or dispute (14% vs 11% of men).
Age	<p>Younger people were more likely to turn to family or friends, with almost four in ten (38%) of those aged 18 to 24 obtaining information, advice or help from family and friends compared to all other age groups (20%).</p> <p>Those aged 35–44 and 55–74 were more likely to speak to the other side (15% among those aged 35–44 and 55–64 and 17% of 65–74-year-olds) compared to those aged 18–24 and 45-54 (6% and 9%).</p>
Ethnicity	People from an Asian background were more likely than those from a white background to turn to family or friends for help and advice (31% vs 20%).
Sexual orientation	Those who identified as bisexual were more likely than those who identified as heterosexual to use GOV.UK (22% vs 12%), social media (12% vs 5%), and family and friends (33% vs 20%) for help and advice.
Employment status	Individuals who were unemployed were more likely to seek information or advice on government websites (24%), compared to those in employment or economically inactive (both 12%).
Benefits status	<p>People receiving means-tested benefits were more likely to use GOV.UK (17%), whilst those on non-means tested, or no benefits at all were comparatively more likely to use other internet websites (14% and 16% respectively).</p> <p>Those on no benefits at all were more likely than others to turn to family and friends for advice (22% vs 20% on means-tested benefits vs 17% on non-means tested benefits). Those receiving non-means-tested benefits were more likely to talk to those on the other side of the dispute (16% vs 13% of those receiving means-tested benefits vs 12% those receiving no benefits).</p>
Household income	<p>Respondents with a household income of less than £14,000 were more likely to seek help from their family or friends (31%), compared to those with higher incomes (19%).</p> <p>Those with a household income of less than £14,000 were comparatively more likely to use a leaflet or book (6%) compared to those with higher incomes (2%).</p>
Eligibility for legal aid	Those who were eligible for legal aid were more likely to seek help from family or friends (26%) compared to those not eligible (19%).

Socio-demographics	Differences
Legal capability	Respondents with medium (21%) or high (25%) levels of legal anxiety were more likely to turn to family or friends for help for their legal problems, compared to those with low legal anxiety (15%).
Digital capability	People with high digital capability were more likely to report using GOV.UK (14%) or other internet websites (15%) for advice (compared to 1% and 4% of those with low digital capability respectively).

Types of information obtained from leaflets, books and online sources

Almost six in ten (56%) respondents obtained information about their rights, whilst around half identified a source of advice (51%) or obtained information about how to sort out the problem (48%) by going online or using a leaflet or book.

Figure 6.20: What people achieved when using leaflet, books and online sources



Source: (E7) Which, if any, of the following did you achieve through going online or using a leaflet/book? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months and went online or used a leaflet for advice (1,273). Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

Those with problems with a house they rent were most likely to go online/ use a leaflet or book to obtain information about their rights (74%). Those with education problems more commonly used these sources to obtain information on how to sort out the problem (61%).

Respondents who receive non-means tested benefits were more likely to obtain information about how to sort out their legal problem (62%) by going online or using a leaflet or book, compared to those who receive no benefits (46%).

Those with high legal self-efficacy were also more likely to obtain information about how to sort out their legal problem (57%) by going online or using a leaflet or book, compared to those with low (37%) or medium levels of legal self-efficacy (46%).

Device used to access advice via the internet

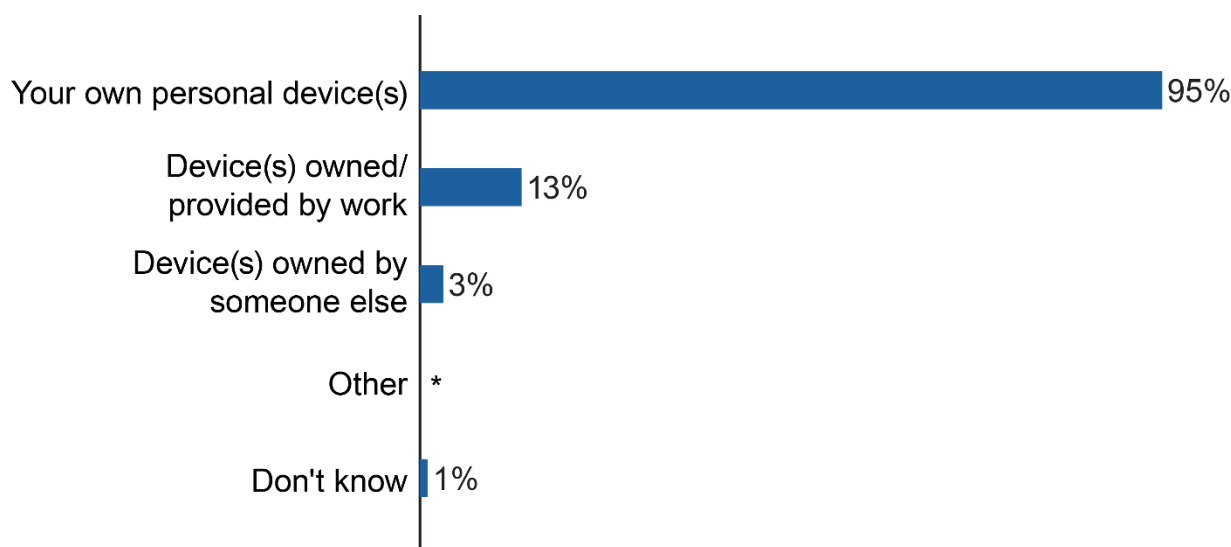
Almost three-quarters of those who went online for advice (73%) used a phone to do so, compared to around two-thirds (64%) who used a laptop or home computer, and one in five (20%) who used a tablet. Younger respondents were more likely to use their phone to access the internet compared to older people (85% of 35–44-year-olds compared to 45% of 65–74-year-olds). Conversely, older people were more likely to use a laptop or home computer or a tablet.

Respondents with high legal self-efficacy were more likely to use a laptop or home computer to go online and source help (73%), compared to those with low (57%) or medium legal self-efficacy (61%).

Ownership of device

The majority of those who went online for advice used their own personal device(s) to do so (95%). Around one in eight (13%) used a device provided by their workplace, whilst a small number (3%) used a device owned by someone else.

Figure 6.21: Device ownership amongst those who went online for problem advice



Source: (E6C_NEW) And thinking about the devices you used, are these...? Base: All Adults in England and Wales who went online for advice (1,231). * Indicates answers lower than 1%. Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

Socio-demographic differences

Some groups were more likely than others to report using certain devices to go online for advice, as outlined in Table 6.19. There were very few significant differences between people of different sexual orientations, country, religion, employment status, single parent status and tenure.

Table 6.19: Significant socio-demographic differences in device ownership

Socio-demographics	Differences
Sex	Males were slightly more likely than females to say they used their own personal device(s) to go online for advice (97% vs 93%).
Age	Those in the oldest age bracket (75+) were more likely to use a device owned by someone else (12% vs 3% on average).
Disability status	Those with a long-term illness or disability were more likely to use a device owned by someone else (6% vs 1%).
Household income	Those on higher income brackets were more likely to use a device owned by their workplace (21% of those on £60,000 and over, 19% of those on £32,000–£60,000) than those on lower income brackets (6% of those on £14,000–£32,000).
Legal capability	Those with low legal self-efficacy were more likely to use a device owned by someone else (11%) compared to those with medium (1%) or high legal self-efficacy (2%).

6.6 Chapter conclusions

- The variation in use of help across problem categories will reflect the nature of problems, though there are some notable areas where those who would benefit from help are not obtaining it, particularly with regards to neighbour problems. Signposting to help may be beneficial if directed at these particular issues.
- The perceived cost of using solicitors/barristers is a notable barrier to people seeking legal help, particularly those on lower incomes. This underlines the importance of continued efforts to raise awareness of financial aid/support that is available to relevant groups.
- The main barrier to seeking other forms of professional advice is the perception that problems are not important enough. This suggests that some people who would benefit from professional advice may need further information and encouragement on the scope of help that can be obtained.
- Over one in three (37%) of those who obtained help/support said that their advisor had made no difference to their problem or had made things worse. Some of this may reflect the timing and nature of the interactions with support providers, though additional analysis and potential further research may be beneficial to understand how advisor support can be improved moving forwards.
- The GOV.UK website is well-known as a source of advice and was used by more than one in eight (13%), highlighting its potential as a critical source of information and signpost to other forms of help and support.

7. Outcomes of legal problems

7.1 Summary

- Around two thirds of people with problems (64%) said it had ended.
- Those who reported their problem had concluded gave various outcomes. One in five noted it was sorted independently of the other side (20%), whilst a similar number (19%) said an agreement had been reached with the other side or with the help of an independent party.
- A small proportion (3%) reported that the problem was resolved through a decision made by a court, tribunal or other independent party. This rises significantly amongst those with relationship breakdown-related problems (19%).
- Almost one in six (16%) noted that the problem had sorted itself or they had moved on. Over a fifth (22%) were putting up with the problem, rising to two in five (39%) of those with neighbour-related problems.
- Those whose problem had concluded and was resolved were more likely to report that it ended in their own favour, whereas those who reported that their problem was concluded but unresolved were more likely to say the problem ended in favour of the other side.
- Amongst those with ongoing problems, almost half (45%) planned to resolve it in future. Respondents with consumer problems were the most likely to be planning future action, whilst those with neighbour problems were the least likely.

7.2 Chapter introduction

This chapter covers the outcomes of legal problems that people experienced. The survey captured problems that were both resolved and ongoing at the time of interview. This

chapter examines one selected problem per person. See technical report for details on how problems were selected. As stated in Chapter 5, around twice as many respondents reported that their problem had ended (64%) rather than was still ongoing (31%). This chapter first examines the outcomes of concluded problems and whether they were resolved, or have concluded but the problem still persists, followed by ongoing problems. It looks at the resolution strategies used and in whose favour the problem resolved.

It is important to note the nuances between resolved and unresolved problems, which are defined as follows:

- **Concluded problems** refer to problems that were reported as having ended, including those that were done with and resolved (concluded and resolved) and those that are done with, but the problem persists (concluded but unresolved). Both are discussed in section 7.3.
 - **Concluded and resolved problems** refer to problems that had ended and were resolved.
 - **Concluded but unresolved problems** refer to problems that had ended but the problem still persists, and the respondent had given up trying to resolve it further.
- **Ongoing problems** refer to problems that were reported as ongoing at the time of interview and are discussed in section 7.4.

7.3 Outcomes of concluded problems

This section discusses problems that had ended by the time the respondent was interviewed, (both concluded and resolved problems and concluded but unresolved problems, see above). Individual paragraphs, tables and figures describe whether they are referring to all concluded problems, concluded and resolved problems, or are providing a comparison between concluded and resolved problems and concluded but unresolved problems.

Table 7.1. shows the most formal resolution strategies and help used in concluded problems. Of those whose problem was resolved, the majority had used self-help as their main resolution method (59%), compared to one in five (20%) who had used legal or professional help, and around one in ten (9%) had used a formal process, such as a court or tribunal hearing or mediation. Seven per cent did nothing to try to resolve their problem.

The most common type of formal help obtained for those with a concluded and resolved problem was self-obtained (33%). Interestingly, just over one quarter (27%) managed to resolve their problem without obtaining any help at all.

Table 7.1: Most formal resolution strategy used, and type of help obtained amongst those whose problem had resolved⁸⁸

Most formal resolution strategy used	Proportion of all those with a concluded problem (including both resolved & unresolved problems)	Proportion of all of those with a concluded and resolved problem
Formal resolution process	10%	9%
Legal or professional help	21%	20%
Self-help	57%	59%
Did nothing	8%	7%

Most formal type of help obtained	Proportion of all those with a concluded problem (including both resolved & unresolved problems)	Proportion of all of those with a concluded and resolved problem
Legal advice ⁸⁹	8%	6%
Professional advice ⁹⁰	26%	26%
Self-obtained ⁹¹	32%	33%
Tried to obtain advice but failed	5%	5%
Did not obtain help	26%	27%

* Percentages do not add to 100 as don't know and prefer not to say options are not shown.

⁸⁸ Respondents who used more than one resolution strategy or advice type have only been included once for the most 'formal' type used. Appendix B has a breakdown by all resolution strategies used and all advice obtained.

⁸⁹ Legal advice obtained through a solicitor, a barrister, a law centre and/or Civil Legal Advice.

⁹⁰ Professional advice obtained through an independent advisor whose role isn't necessarily to give legal advice (such as Citizens Advice, a trade union, Shelter, the Money Pensions Service or other unspecified advisers) or from organisations such as Court and Tribunals Service Centres, National Digital Support Service, the police, credit card companies or banks, housing associations, local councils or another organisation.

⁹¹ Self-obtained information, advice or help from the internet, leaflets, books or self-help guides, family and friends or another party.

How the problem was resolved

Respondents with concluded problems were asked to describe how their problem ended. This was split between those who took some form of action (42%) and those who were either putting up with the problem or it sorted itself out (38%).

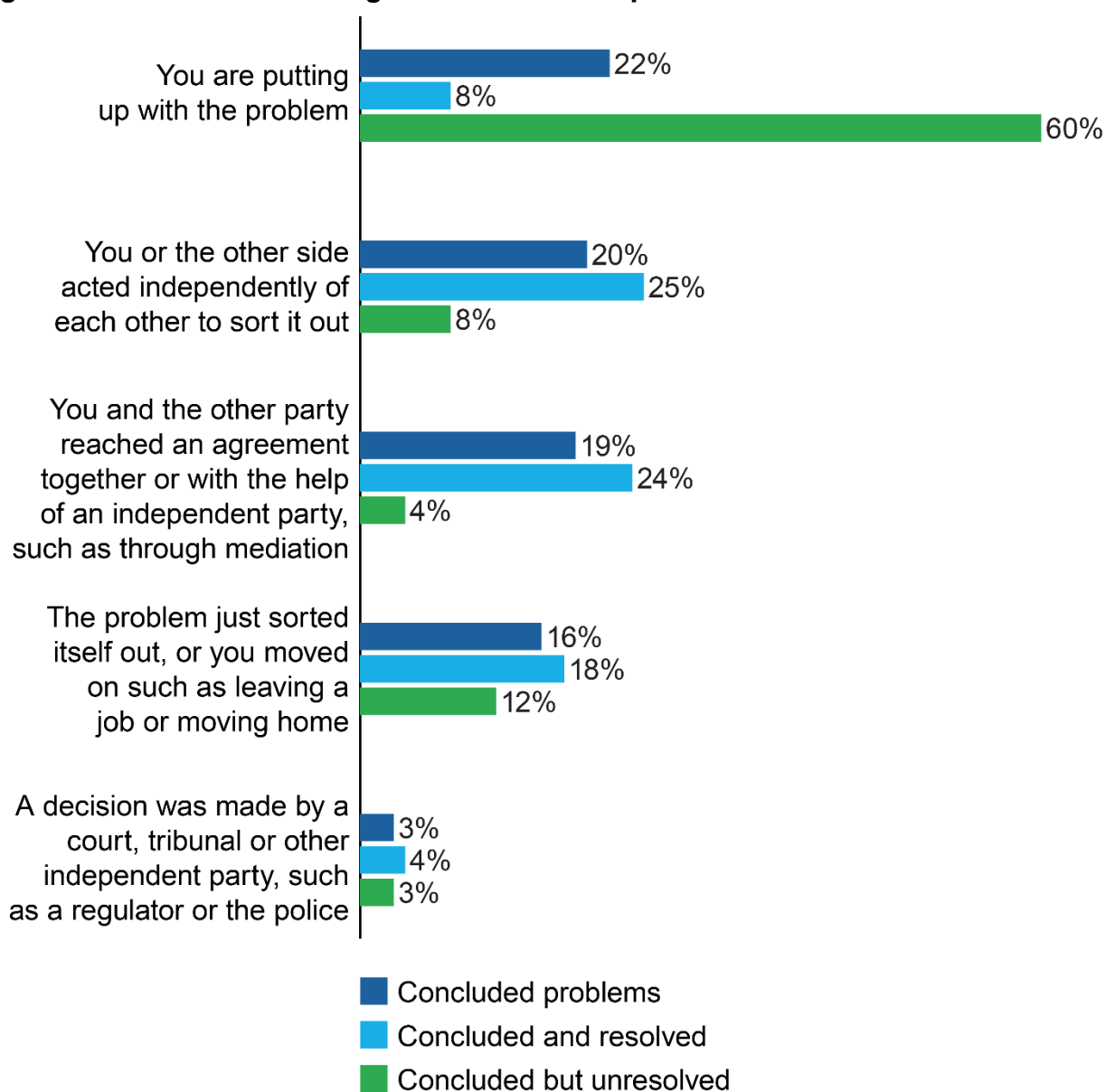
Amongst those with concluded problems:

- 22% reported putting up with the problem,
- 20% reported acting independently (either they or the other side) to sort it out,
- 19% reported reaching an agreement with the other party either together or with the help of an independent party,
- 16% reported that the problem just sorted itself out,
- 3% reported that their problem ended by a decision made in a court, tribunal, or other independent party.

“I was fully refunded when the service provider realised I was not going to just go away, got full refund on damaged goods.” **Respondent with a resolved consumer problem**

Respondents with resolved problems were more likely to report their problem had ended as a result of some form of action (52%), compared to those with concluded but unresolved problems (15%).

Figure 7.1: Resolution strategies for concluded problems⁹²



Source: (E43) You said earlier that the problem was done with. Which of the following, if any, describes how the problem ended? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months which has concluded (3,132) and has either been resolved (2,383) or it's concluded but unresolved (749). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

⁹² Respondents with a concluded problem (either resolved or unresolved) were given the option to select 'you are putting up with the problem' at question E43. 8% of respondents expressed both that their problem is resolved but they are putting up with the problem / problem still persists.

Where a problem was resolved independently:

- around four in ten (41%) reported both parties acting independently to resolve the problem,
- three in ten (29%) acted independently themselves,
- over a quarter (26%) reported that the other side had acted independently to resolve the problem.

Amongst those where the problem was resolved through an agreement with the other party:

- the majority were able to resolve the problem directly with the other party (82%)⁹³
- fewer people used conciliation, mediation, or arbitration (15%).

Where the problem was reported to have sorted itself out:

- over half (54%) contributed this to having moved on, either leaving a job or moving home,
- a quarter (25%) felt the problem had resolved without either side doing anything directly.

Among those who said a decision was made via a formal process:⁹⁴

- 61% reported that the decision was made by a court or tribunal,
- 31% said that the decision was made by an independent third party, such as a regulator or the police.

Differences by legal problem category

Those with resolved family legal problems were, by far, the most likely to have their problem resolved by a court, tribunal, or other independent party decision (19%), compared to respondents with civil problems (3%) or administrative problems (5%).

Respondents with benefit problems (10%) were the most likely administrative problem to have reported their problem was resolved through a court, tribunal, or other independent party. Those with an accident or illness problem were the most likely civil legal problem to report the problem resolved through a court, tribunal, or independent party (10%).

⁹³ There was little difference between those who had a resolved problem and those with a concluded but persisting problem.

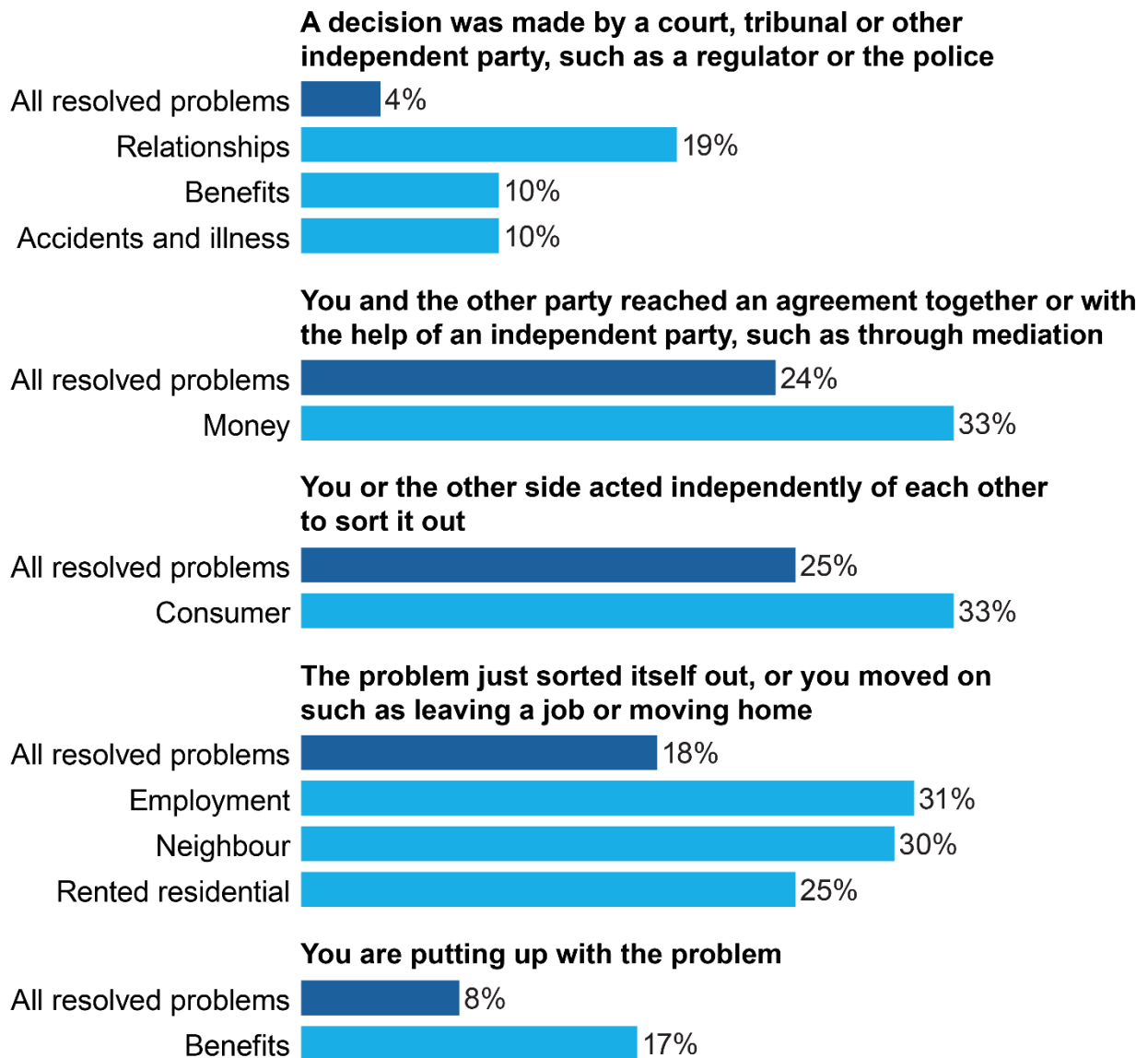
⁹⁴ Including all concluded problems (problem resolved and problem persists).

Amongst those with civil problems, those with money problems were the most likely to report resolving their problems through reaching an agreement with the other party together or with the help of an independent party (33%). Respondents with consumer problems were the most likely to have their problem resolved by acting independently of each other to sort the problem out (33%). Those with either a problem with a neighbour (30%) or problem with a rented residential property (25%) were the most likely to report that the problem sorted itself out.

Those with employment problems were the most likely to report that their problem had just sorted itself out (31%). Amongst respondents with resolved problems, those with benefit problems were more likely to be putting up with the problem (17%), compared to the average (8%).

Problem categories that are significantly more likely than average to have been resolved through each resolution type are shown in Figure 7.2.

Figure 7.2: How resolved problems ended, by problem category



Source: (E43) You said earlier that the problem was done with. Which of the following, if any, describes how the problem ended? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months that had ended and was resolved (2,383), all asked the follow-up about their consumer problems (550), employment problems (251), neighbours (184), problems with a house they own (204), problems with a house they rent (263), debt problems (128), money problems (286), benefits problems (241), relationship problems (53), education problems (120), accident and illness problems (103). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Differences by problem characteristics

Respondents who had faced discrimination, viewed their problem as very serious or viewed their problem as 'legal' from the outset were the most likely to say their problem

was resolved through a decision made by a court, tribunal, or other independent party, such as a regulator or the police.

Table 7.2: Resolutions of legal problems by problem characteristics for those with concluded and resolved problems

Problem characteristics	Differences in resolutions of legal problems
Problem duration	Those with legal problems estimated to last longer were more likely to report that their problem was resolved as a result of a decision made by a court, tribunal, or other independent party (12% lasting 2 and a half to 5 years, compared to 2% lasting 1–3 months).
Discrimination	Respondents who had experienced discrimination were more likely to say the problem was resolved by a decision made by a court, tribunal, or other independent party (8%), compared to those who had not experienced discrimination (3%).
Adverse consequences	Those who had experienced adverse consequences were more likely to say that they were putting up with the problem (11%, compared to 6% who did not experience adverse consequences).
How serious a problem was perceived to be	Respondents who rated their problem as very serious were more likely to have their problem resolved through a court, tribunal, or other independent party (9%), compared to those who viewed their problem as not very serious (1%).
Perceptions of the problem being 'legal'	Those who viewed their problem as 'legal' from the outset were more likely to have their problem through a court, tribunal, or independent party decision (15%, compared to 2% who did not think their problem was legal).

Socio-demographic differences

Respondents who received means-tested benefits or were from single parent households were more likely to have had their problems concluded and resolved through legal or formal routes. Those with lower legal capabilities or renting from a private landlord were more likely to report their problem was concluded and resolved by putting up with the problem. There were no significant differences by sex, disability status, religion or country.

Table 7.3: Significant socio-demographic differences in resolutions of legal problems for concluded and resolved problems

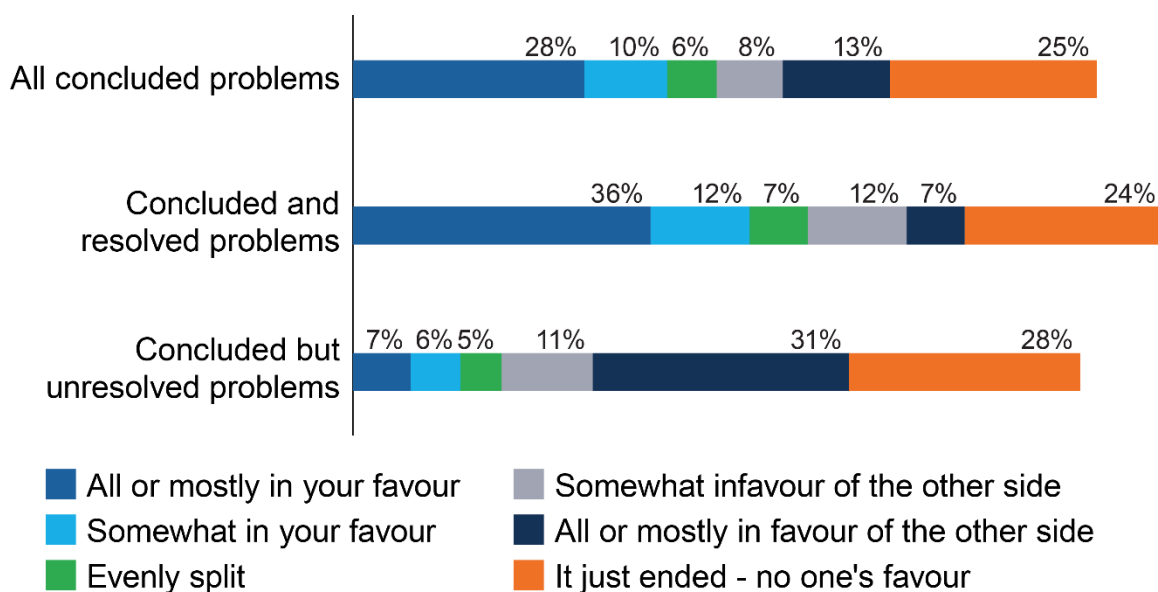
Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	People aged 35–44 (28%) were more likely than other age ranges to say they were putting up with the problem (17–22%).

Socio-demographics	Differences
Ethnicity	People from an Asian background were more likely to have sorted the problem out independently of the other side (41%), compared to people from a white background (22%).
Benefits status	Respondents who received means-tested benefits were the most likely to report their problem resolved as a result of a decision made by a court, tribunal, or other independent party (12%), compared to individuals who received non-means tested (3%) or no benefits at all (2%).
Single parents	Similarly, single parent households were the most likely to say the decision was made by a formal process, such as a court, tribunal, regulator, or the police (16%).
Household income	Those on a higher annual income of between £32,001 and £60,000 (28%) were more likely to have reached a mutual agreement with the other party, compared to those on less than £14,000 (13%).
Tenure	Those who rent from a private landlord were the most likely to report they were putting up with the problem (14%), which reflects their higher likelihood of problems with neighbours. Respondents who rent from the council or housing association were the most likely to say a decision was made by a court, tribunal, or other independent party (10%).
Legal capability	Respondents with concluded and resolved problems who had low legal confidence (12%), low legal self-efficacy (13%) or high legal anxiety (13%) were the most likely to say they are putting up with the problem. Those with high legal self-efficacy were the most likely to say they reached an agreement with the other party, either together or through the help of an independent party (30%).

In whose favour did the problem conclude?

Amongst those who reported their legal problem had concluded, almost three in ten (28%) said that the problem was resolved all or mostly in their favour, and an additional one in ten (10%) felt that it was somewhat in their favour. This is compared to around a fifth (21%) who thought it had resolved either somewhat in favour of the other side or all or mostly in favour of the other side. A further six per cent thought the outcome was evenly split and a quarter (25%) felt the problem had ended in no one's favour – as illustrated in Figure 7.3. Those who reported their problem as concluded but unresolved (as they had given up trying to resolve it) were more likely to say it resolved in favour of the other side (42%) or in no-one's favour (28%).

Figure 7.3: In whose favour problems concluded



Source: (E50) Which of the following, if any, best describes how the problem concluded? Base: Adults in England and Wales who have a legal problem that has concluded (3,132) and is either resolved (2,383) or concluded but persists (749). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

When looking at the most formal resolution strategy people used, respondents who used a formal resolution process (56%), obtained legal or professional advice (42%), or obtained self-help only (39%) were more likely to say the problem resolved in their favour, compared to those that did nothing (22%).

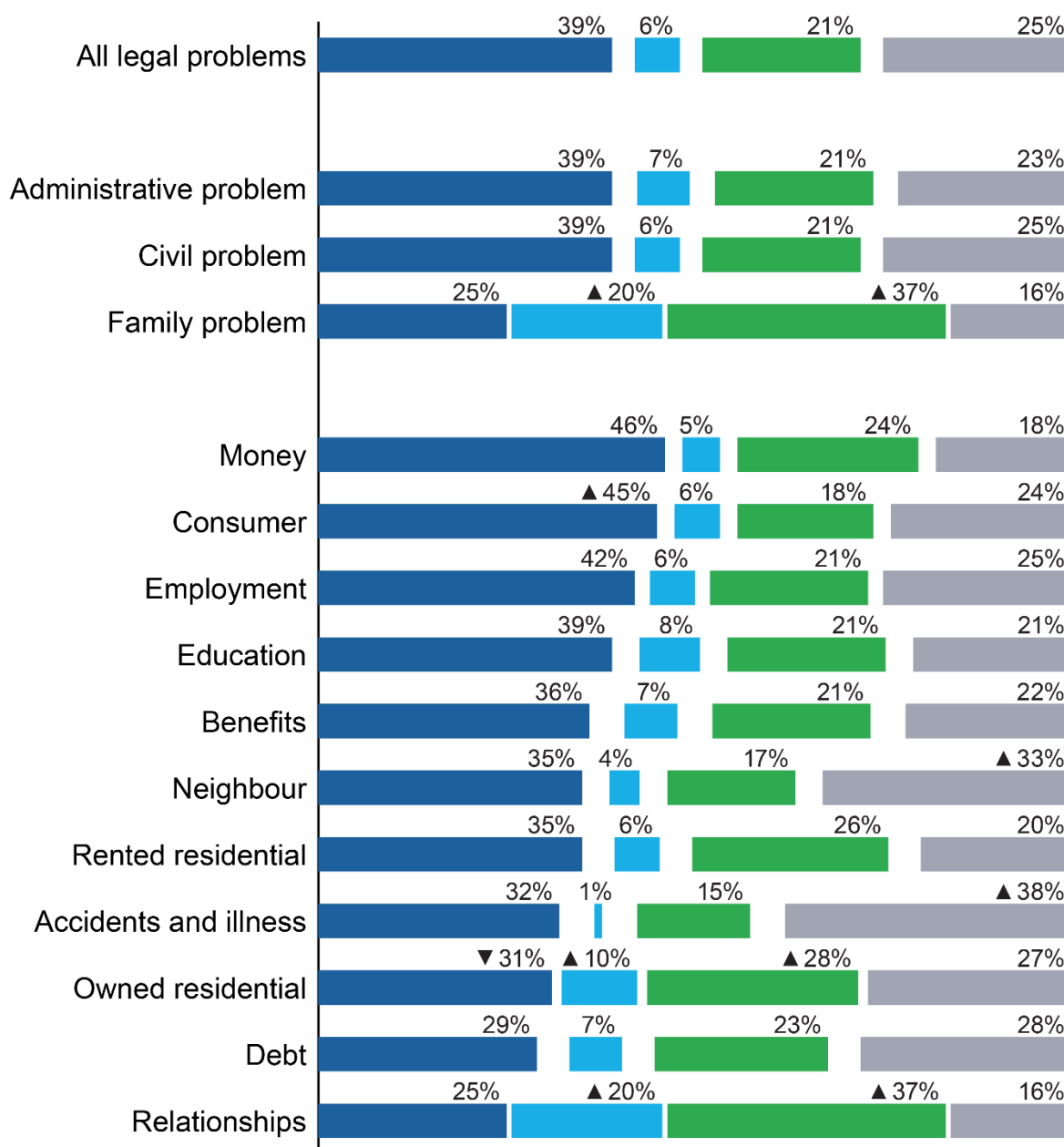
*Differences by legal problem category*⁹⁵

As shown in Figure 7.4, those with concluded consumer problems or money problems were the most likely to report the problem ended in their favour (45% and 46% respectively). In contrast, those with relationship breakdown problems were the least likely to report their case concluding in their favour (25%) and were more likely to say that it had ended in favour of the other side (37%). This makes it the only problem type where a higher proportion feel that their case has ended ‘against them’ rather than in their favour. It is also the problem type with the highest proportion of people saying the outcome was ‘evenly split’.

Respondents who had problems related to an accident or illness or problems with their neighbours were the most likely to say the problem just ended, with it being in no one’s favour (38% and 33% respectively, compared to 25% average across problem types).

⁹⁵ This analysis includes all concluded problems.

Figure 7.4: In whose favour problems concluded by problem type



■ In your favour ■ Evenly split ■ In favour of the other side ■ In no one's favour

Source: (E50) Which of the following, if any, best describes how the problem concluded? Base: Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem that has ended (3,132): civil (2,275), administrative (780), family (77), consumer problems (661), employment problems (326), neighbour (284), problems with a house they own (296), problems with a house they rent (365), debt problems (140), money problems (378), benefits problems (303), relationship problems (77), education problems (151), accident and illness problems (151). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding. **Caution: low base for relationship problems.**

*Differences by problem characteristics*⁹⁶

There were some differences by problem characteristics, see Table 7.4. However, these are likely to reflect the links between characteristics and legal problem categories. There was little variation in whose favour problems had ended across perceived seriousness of problems or whether experienced discrimination.⁹⁷

Table 7.4: Differences in how problems resolved by problem characteristics

Problem characteristics	Differences in how problems resolved
Adverse consequences	Respondents who had experienced adverse consequences were more likely to report that the problem did not end in their favour (27%), compared to those who had not experienced adverse consequences (17%).
Perceptions of the problem being 'legal'	Those who initially perceived their problem as 'legal' in nature were significantly more likely to say that it had ended in favour of the other side (33%), compared to those who did not initially perceive their problem as 'legal' (19%).

Socio-demographic differences

There are some socio-demographic differences in how a problem was concluded. However, these will be somewhat owing to the legal problem category a respondent was experiencing and the severity of the problem.

Respondents in single parent households, those who rented their property from the council or housing association, and people with lower levels of legal confidence or self-efficacy or high legal anxiety, were more likely to report that the problem did not conclude in their favour. A problem not concluding in their favour may in fact be the reason why some respondents reported having lower levels of confidence or self-efficacy.

⁹⁶ This analysis includes all concluded problems.

⁹⁷ Due to small base sizes, no analysis could be undertaken by problem duration.

Table 7.5: Significant socio-demographic differences in conclusion of problems

Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	<p>Older people were typically more likely to report the problem ended in their own favour. Those aged 55–64 (46%) and 75 and older (49%) were the most likely to report that the problem ended in their favour.</p> <p>Those aged 35 to 44 years old were the most likely to report the problem did not end in their favour (28%) or it was evenly split (13%).</p>
Single parents	<p>Respondents in multi-parent households were more likely to say the problem resolved in their favour (38%), compared to those in a single parent household (25%). This may be driven by the type of problem experienced.</p>
Legal capability	<p>Those with medium (39%) or high (47%) levels of legal confidence were the most likely to report the problem ended in their favour, while those with low legal confidence were more likely to say it resolved all or mostly in favour of the other side (18%).</p> <p>Those with high levels of legal self-efficacy were more also more likely to report that their problem resolved all or mostly in their favour (38%), compared to 18% of those with low legal self-efficacy.</p>

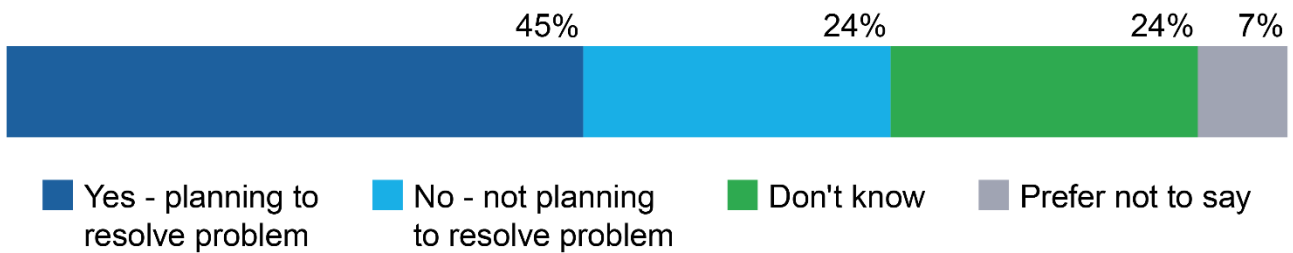
7.4 Intentions for ongoing problems

Respondents with ongoing problems either reported that their problem was still ongoing at the time of interview or that it was too early to say. This section looks at those with ongoing problems and their plans to resolve them.

Plans to resolve ongoing problems

People who reported that their legal problem was still ongoing were asked whether they were planning to do anything in the future to resolve it. Almost half (45%) were planning to take action to resolve it, compared to a quarter who were not (24%) and a further quarter who were not sure (24%).

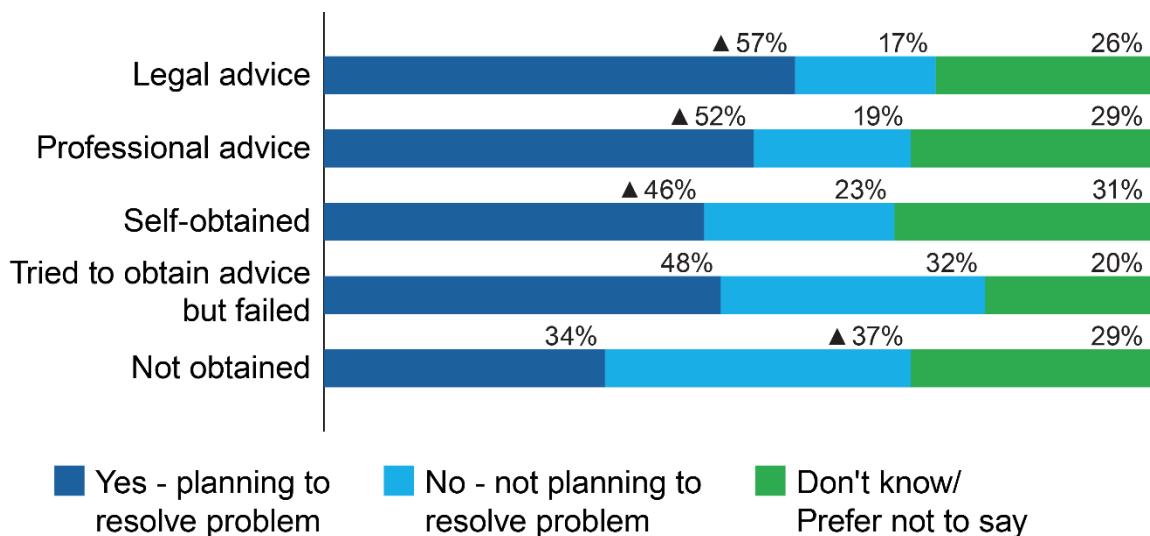
Figure 7.5: Intentions amongst those with ongoing problems



Source: (E48) You said earlier that the problem is still ongoing. Are there things you are planning to do in the future to resolve the problem? Base: Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem still ongoing (1,856).

Those who obtained legal advice (57%), professional advice (52%) or obtained self-help (46%) were more likely than those who had not obtained any help/advice (34%) to intend on resolving their problem.

Figure 7.6: Whether plan to take further action by type of advice obtained



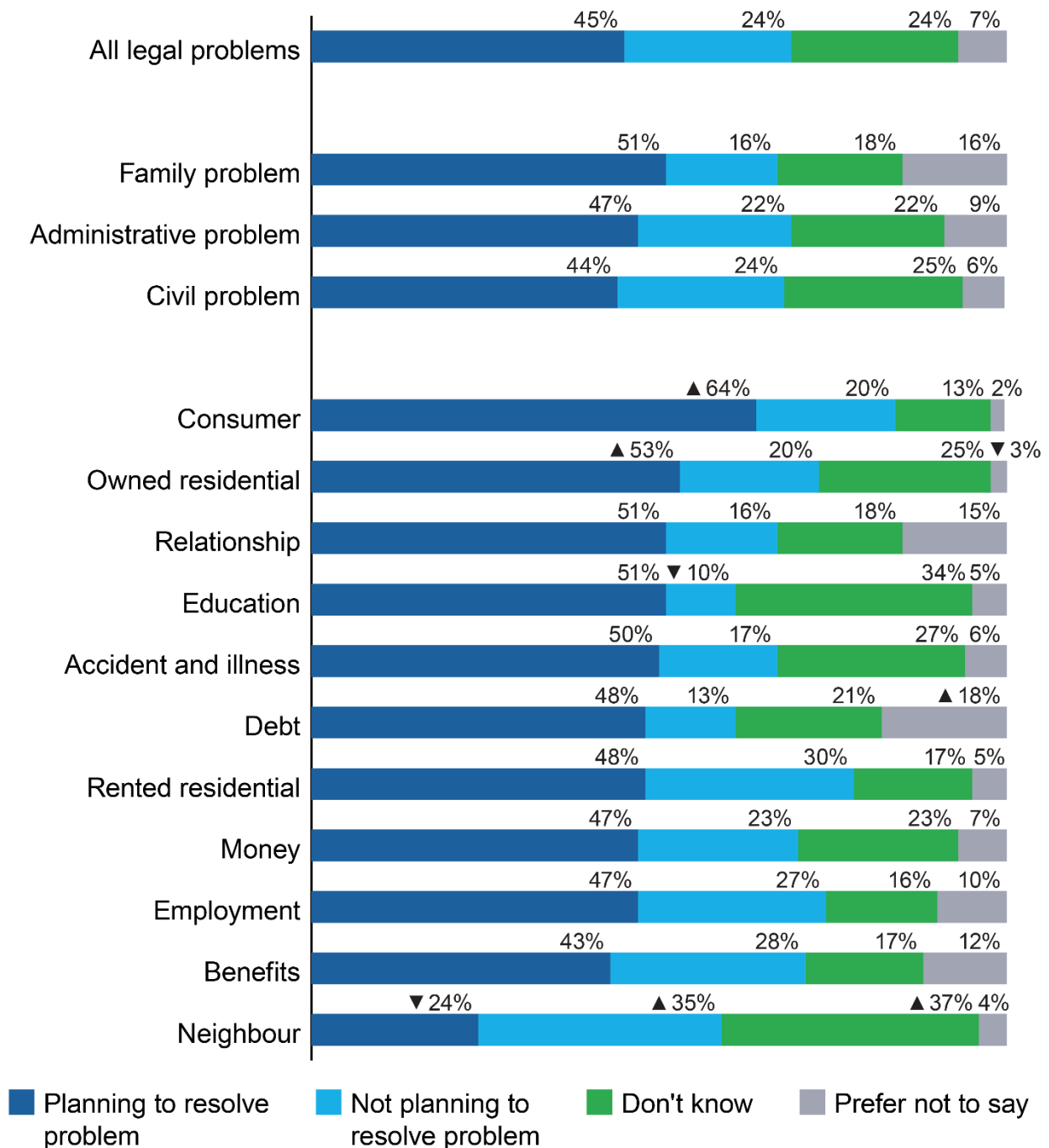
Source: (E48) You said earlier that the problem is still ongoing. Are there things you are planning to do in the future to resolve the problem? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months that is still ongoing (1,856). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼ ▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Differences by legal problem category

Those with an ongoing consumer related problem were the most likely to be planning a resolution (64%), whilst those with neighbour related problems were least likely (only 24% of whom were planning to resolve the problem, compared to 35% who were not).

Figure 7.7: Differences in whether respondents planned to take further action by legal problem category



Source: (E48) You said earlier that the problem is still ongoing. Are there things you are planning to do in the future to resolve the problem? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months that is ongoing (1,856), all asked the follow-up about their civil (1,337), administrative (428), family (91) consumer problems (150), employment problems (129), neighbourhood (298), problems with a house they own (230), problems with a house they rent (198), debt problems (134), money problems (223), benefits problems (160), relationship problems (91), education problems (139), accident and illness problems (104). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding. **Caution: low base for relationship problems.**

▼ ▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Differences by problem characteristics

There are few significant differences by problem characteristics, suggesting it is the type of problem rather than any associated characteristics that affect whether a respondent is planning to take action in the future.

Table 7.6: Differences in whether respondents planned to take further action by problem characteristics

Problem characteristics	Differences in future intentions
Adverse consequences	Respondents who experienced adverse consequences were more likely to be planning to resolve their problem (52%), compared to those who did not have any adverse consequences (44%).
How serious a problem was perceived to be	Respondents who viewed their problem as very serious were more likely to report they were planning to resolve their problem in the future (55%), compared to those that viewed their problem as not very serious (36%).

Socio-demographic differences

Respondents who were aged 45 years or older, received non-means tested benefits, had higher levels of legal confidence, or were already divorced or had a legally dissolved partnership were all significantly more likely to report that they were planning future action to resolve their ongoing legal problems. Aside from key differences presented in Table 7.7, there were few significant differences across other socio-demographic characteristics. Such differences might be somewhat owing to differences in problem type or severity of problems between groups.

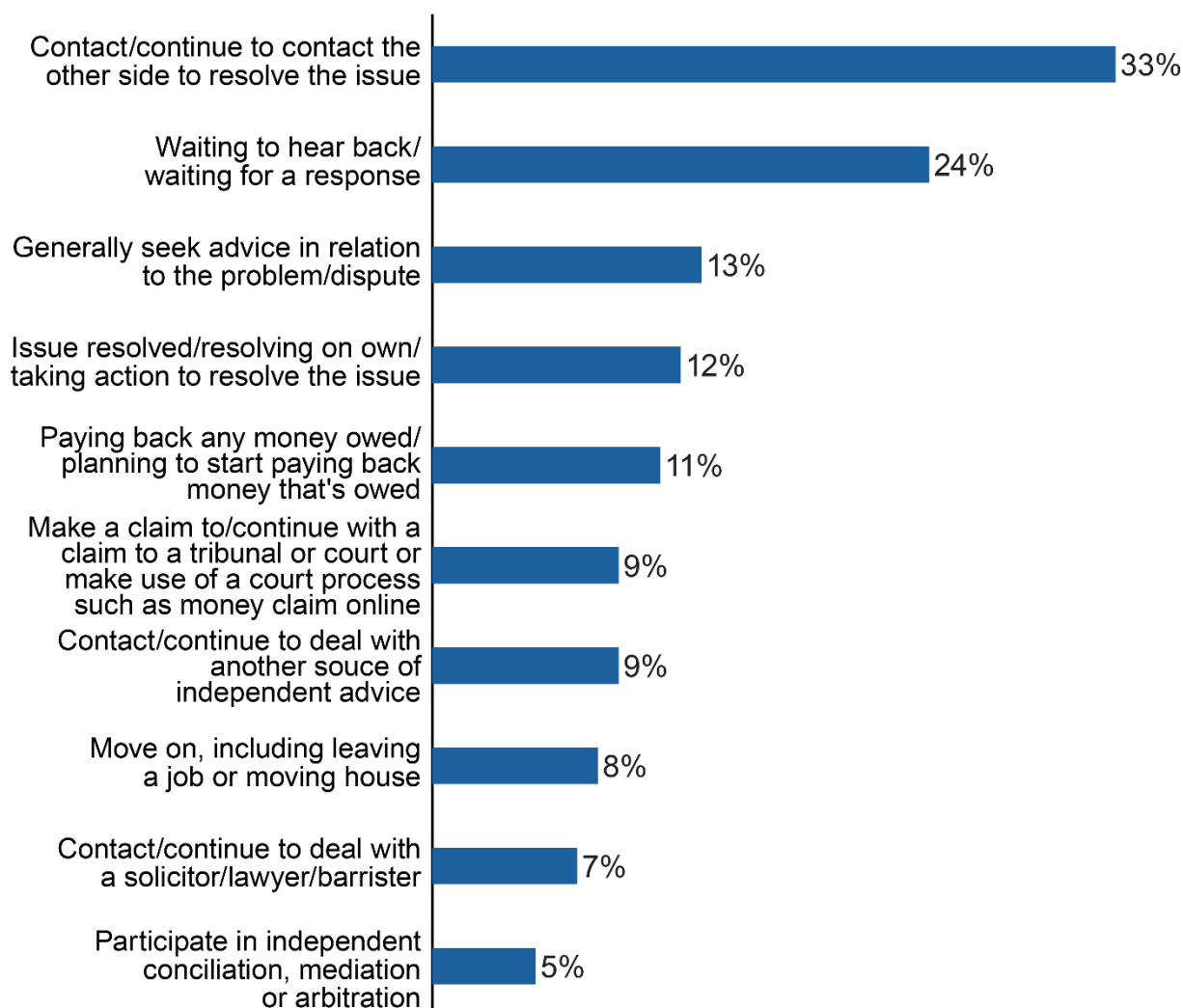
Table 7.7: Significant socio-demographic differences in whether respondents planned to take further action

Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	Respondents aged 45 and over were the most likely to say that they were planning to take future action to resolve their problem (52%). Those aged 18 to 24 years old (39%) were the most likely to say they were not planning on taking further action to resolve their problem.
Benefits status	People who received non-means tested benefits were more likely to say they were planning future action (54%), compared to those who received no benefits (45%).
Marital status	Those who were already divorced or had a legally dissolved partnership were more likely to be planning to resolve their problem (59%), compared to average (45%).
Legal capability	Those with medium (46%) or high (52%) legal confidence were more likely to report they planned to take further action to resolve their legal problems, compared to those with low (37%) legal confidence. Those with low (26%) or medium (28%) legal self-efficacy were more likely to be uncertain and not know whether they would take any future action than those with high legal self-efficacy (16%).

Plans to resolve legal problems in the future

One in three (33%) of those who were planning to seek a resolution to their ongoing problem were going to contact or continue to contact the other side to try and resolve the issue, while just under a quarter (24%) were still waiting to hear back on a response. A range of other actions were identified by respondents planning on seeking a resolution to their problem, as shown in Figure 7.8.

Figure 7.8: Plans for attempting to resolve ongoing legal problems



Source: (E49) How, if at all, do you plan to resolve this problem? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months which was ongoing and plans to take action in the future (921). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

“Meeting with all neighbours who have suffered from this anti-social behaviour”.

Respondent with an ongoing neighbour problem

“Involve my MP and pursue a legal challenge”. **Respondent with an ongoing relationship breakdown problem**

Differences by legal problem category

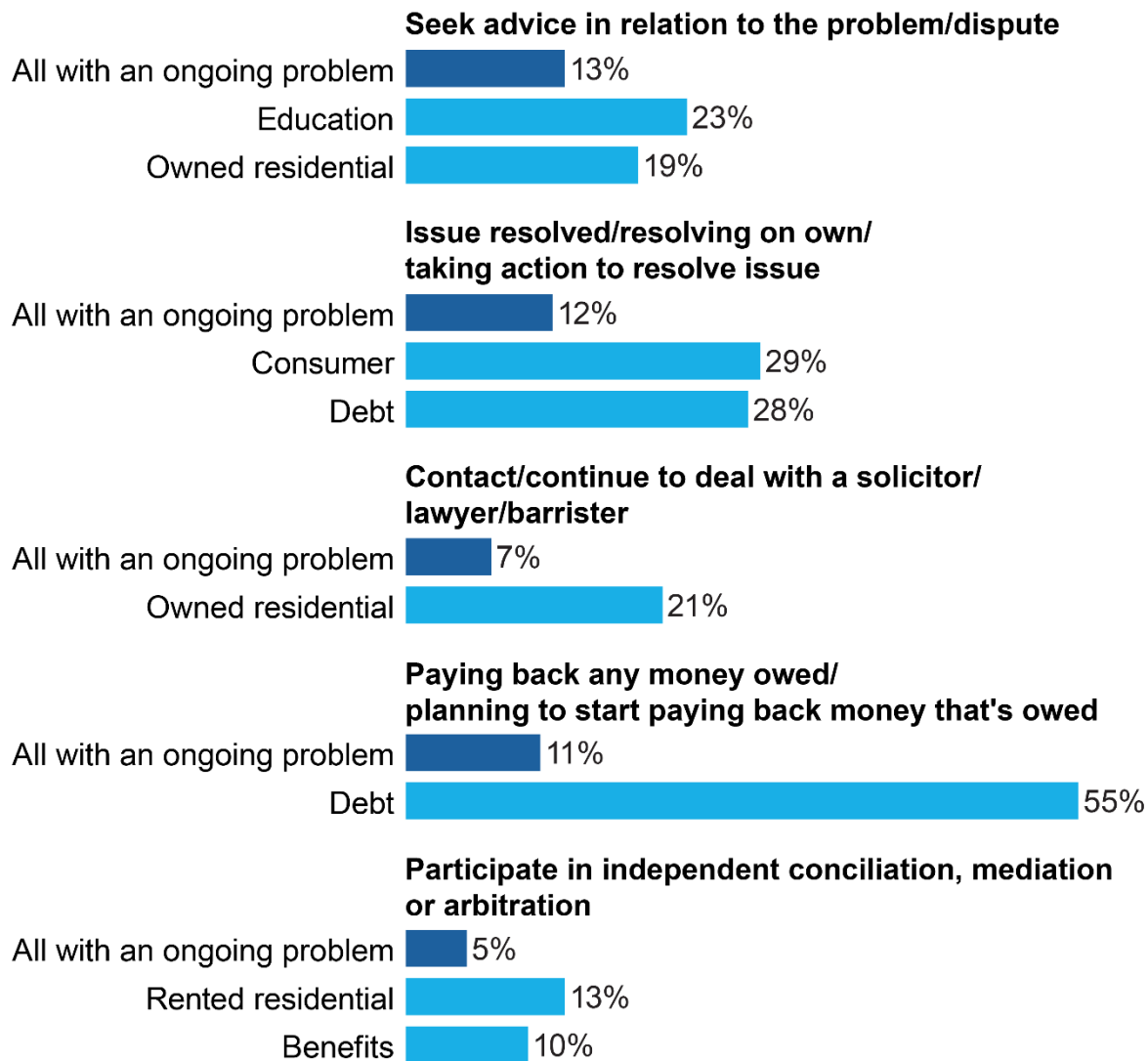
Resolution strategy plans varied by legal problem category. Those with debt problems were significantly more likely than other problem types to be planning on paying back money that was owed (55%) or to note they will be resolving the issue on their own or taking independent action (28%).

Those with problems related to education (23%) or problems related to a property they own (19%) were the most likely to be planning to seek general advice in relation to the problem or dispute.

Those with problems related to a residential property they own were also more likely than other problem types to be planning to contact/continue using a formal legal route to help resolve their problem (21%).

Future participation in independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration was most likely cited as a potential future route to resolution amongst those with problems related to a rented property (13%) or to benefits (10%).

Figure 7.9: Future plans for resolving problems by problem category



Source: (E49) How, if at all, do you plan to resolve this problem? Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months which is still ongoing, and they plan to resolve the problem (921). all asked the follow-up about their consumer problems (95), employment problems (65), neighbours (86), problems with a house they own (119), problems with a house they rent (102), debt problems (70), money problems (378), benefits problems (303, relationship problems (77), education problems (151), accident and illness problems (151). **Caution: low base.**

Differences by problem characteristics

Respondents who had multiple problems across four or more problem categories were more likely than those with fewer problems to be planning to participate in independent conciliation, mediation, or arbitration (14%, compared to 2%).

There were few significant differences by whether respondents had experienced discrimination.

Table 7.8: Differences in future plans by problem characteristics

Problem characteristics	Differences in future plans to resolve the problem
Adverse consequences	Those who had experienced adverse consequences due to their problem were more likely to be planning on making a claim to a court or tribunal or make use of a court process such as an online money claim (12%) than those without any adverse consequences (4%).
How serious a problem was perceived to be	Those who rated their problem as very serious were more likely to be planning on making a claim to a court or tribunal or make use of court processes (17%) than those with who perceived their problem as fairly (7%) or not very serious (3%).
Perception of the problem being 'legal'	Those who perceived their problem to be legal at the outset were more likely to plan on using legal routes to resolve their issues, either with a solicitor, barrister, or lawyer (17%) or using a court, tribunal or other court process (19%), compared to those who did not view their problem as legal at the outset (5% and 8% respectively).

Socio-demographic differences

There were very few differences between different socio-demographic groups regarding how they were planning to resolve their ongoing problems.

Those aged 75 and older were the most likely to be waiting to hear a response about their problem (41%), whilst those aged 25 to 34 years old were the most likely to say they would continue to contact the other side to resolve the issue (45%).

Those who did not have a long-term illness or disability were more likely to be waiting to hear back on a response (31%), compared to those who have a long-term illness or disability (19%).

7.5 Chapter conclusions

- Over one in five of those with concluded problems were simply putting up with the problem, rising to two in five of those with neighbour-related problems. Among those with ongoing problems, slightly less than half (45%) planned to resolve it in future. These figures potentially suggest inertia and resignation amongst significant numbers of people experiencing legal problems. Increasing awareness of options and instilling a sense of empowerment could be prioritised amongst those where problems are more serious and having adverse consequences.
- The ways in which problems are resolved and the plans that people have to resolve ongoing problems vary markedly by legal problem category. Interventions and resolution strategies need to take on board these variations and the nuances between different groups of people and problem characteristics, avoiding one size-fits all type approaches.
- Those with ongoing problems who had previously sought legal / professional advice were more likely to have some plan to resolve their problem. This highlights the positive impact that advisors can have on the pathway to resolution.

8. Attitudes to online services and remote hearings

8.1 Summary

- Around half (49%) of all respondents in England and Wales had heard of online options for courts and tribunals services. However, levels of knowledge were low (only 7% said they know a great deal / a fair amount about online options).
- A small minority (5%) of the public have had personal experience of using online options, rising to one in five (21%) of those who have experienced a relationship breakdown problem.
- The majority of people recognised the convenience of online options and viewed them as an acceptable alternative to offline paper routes (64%).
- Six in ten of the public had heard of remote hearings (61%), though again, only a small minority claim any degree of knowledge (38%).
- Whilst the majority recognise the convenience of remote hearings and the balance of opinion is generally positive, over half would still prefer to have an in person hearing.

8.2 Chapter introduction

The Legal Problem and Resolution Survey included questions for all respondents on their attitudes towards certain court-related topics, regardless of whether they had experienced a legal problem. This chapter first examines respondents' attitudes to online options for courts and tribunal services, followed by their attitudes towards remote hearings. Within both sections, it explores how people's perceptions towards online options and remote hearings vary between different socio-demographic groups and problem experiences.

8.3 Awareness and use of online court and tribunal services

Awareness of online options

Respondents were asked about their knowledge around aspects of the courts and tribunals reform programme, specifically on digitising and moving services online (with examples given of being able to submit evidence, complete applications, or file claims online). When asked how much they knew about online options for courts and tribunal services, around half noted that they had heard of the online options available (49%).

Levels of knowledge about online options were low amongst those who said they were aware of them. A minority (7%) of respondents said they knew a great deal or fair amount about online court services, compared to a quarter (26%) who knew not very much, and a further one in six (16%) who had heard of them but knew nothing about them. Almost half of adults reported that they had never heard of them (46%).

This lack of awareness is likely due to low levels of usage and familiarity. Only a small minority of respondents (5%) reported having any personal experience of using online options for courts and tribunal services.

Figure 8.1: Awareness and knowledge of online options for courts and tribunal services



Source: (GA4) How much, if anything, do you know about online options for courts and tribunal services? Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323).

Respondents who had experienced a relationship problem were more likely to have greater levels of awareness of online options for court and tribunal services, with almost two in five (18%) reporting to know either a great deal or fair amount about them (compared to 7% on average).

Socio-demographic differences

Overall patterns in awareness of online options for court and tribunal services are fairly consistent across socio-demographic groups, with only minorities of respondents in any group stating relatively high levels of knowledge. There are some variations by age, with those in the oldest age group being the least aware of online court services. Almost three quarters (71%) of those aged 75 or over reported having never heard of the online options or knowing nothing about them (compared to 62% on average).

Three per cent of those with low legal confidence and four per cent of those with medium levels of legal confidence had some previous experience of using online options, compared to eight per cent of those with high legal confidence. These lower levels of knowledge amongst those with lower legal confidence and legal self-efficacy will, to some extent, reflect their comparative likelihood to have had personal experience of using online options.

Table 8.1: Significant socio-demographic differences in awareness of online services

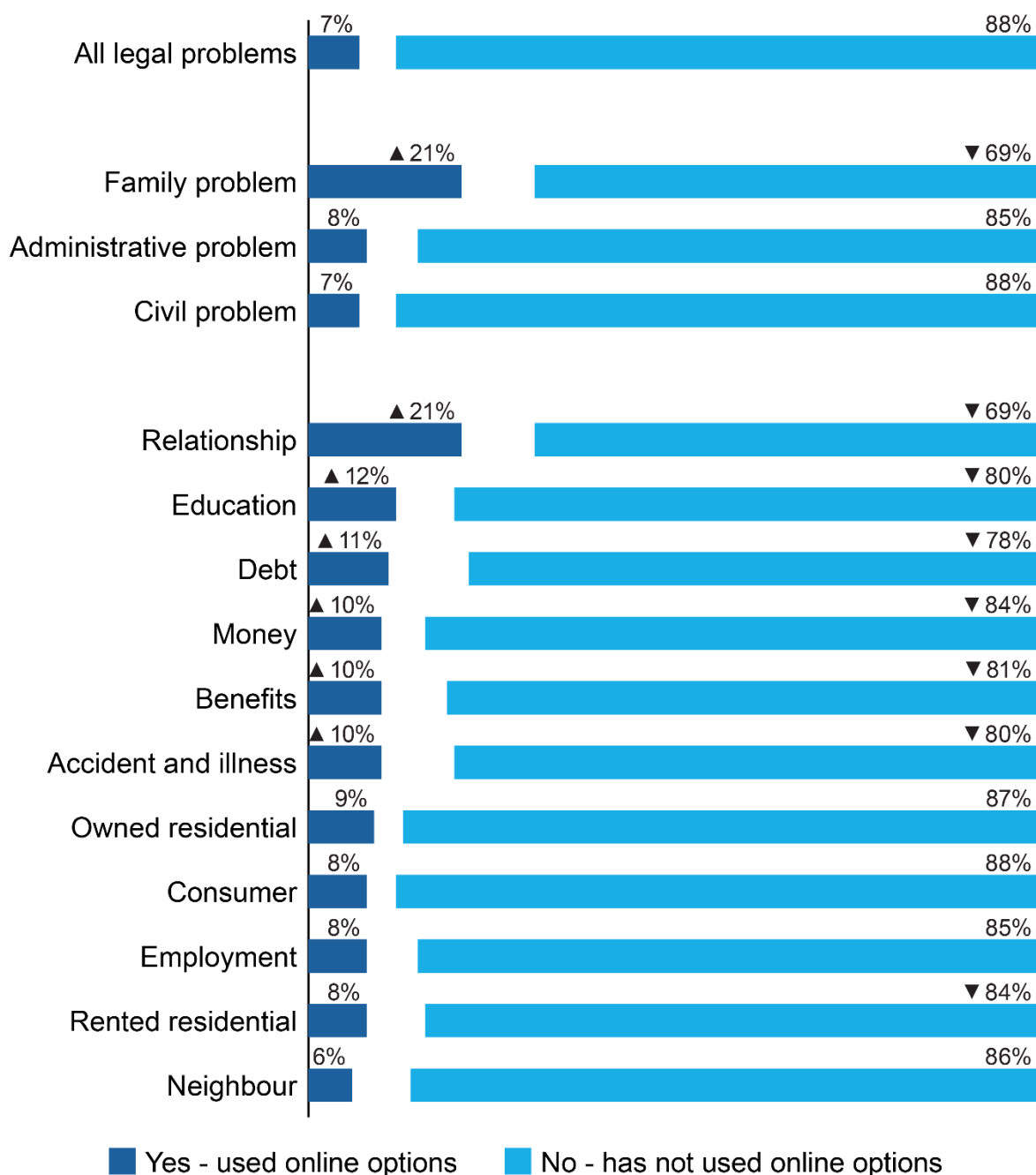
Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	Respondents aged 75 and over had the lowest level of awareness, with 71% reporting that they did not know anything about online options. Those aged 55 to 74 also had significantly lower levels of awareness, with 64% who knew nothing about online services, compared to 58% of those aged 25 to 54.
Ethnicity	People from a white background had the lowest level of awareness (63%) compared to people from other backgrounds.
Employment status	Those who were economically inactive at the time of interview had the lowest awareness of online services, with 67% who knew nothing about them or had never heard of them, compared to those who were in employment (59%) or unemployed (58%). This may be related to the age of the economically inactive population.
Benefits status	Those who received means-tested benefits had higher levels of awareness of online services, with 10% who knew a great deal or fair amount about them, compared to those with non-means-tested benefits (6%) or no benefits (7%).
Household income	Respondents on lower household incomes of £32,000 or less were the most likely to know nothing about online services or never heard of them (65%).
Legal capability	Respondents with low legal confidence were the most likely to be unaware of online services (69%), compared to those with high legal

Socio-demographics	Differences
	confidence (51%). Those with medium levels of legal confidence (65%) were also unaware of digital services available to them. Respondents with high legal anxiety were the most likely to be unaware of online options (69%).
Digital capability	Those with lower levels of digital capability were less likely to be aware of online options. 70% of respondents with low or medium levels of digital capability reported to have never heard of online options or had heard of them but knew nothing, compared to 60% of those with high digital capability.

Personal experiences of using online services

As expected, respondents who had not experienced a legal problem in the 18 months before interview were least likely to have had personal experience of using online court or tribunal services (4%). Of those with legal problems, seven per cent had some experience of using online options. People were more likely to have used online court and tribunal services if they had experienced four or more legal problem categories (13%), compared to those who had experienced one (5%), two (6%) or three (8%) problems, or no problems (4%). Those who had experienced a relationship problem were significantly more likely to have used online options (21%), as outlined in Figure 8.2. However, it is important to note that not all types of legal problems may have had an online option for courts and tribunal services during the fieldwork period.

Figure 8.2: Personal experience of using online options by type of problem experienced



Source: (GA5) Have you personally had an experience of using online options for courts and tribunal services? Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323), anyone with a legal problem excluding divorce and probate (4,988), anyone with a civil problem (4,415), family problem (231), administrative problem (1,782), anyone with consumer problems (1,885), employment problems (1,004), neighbour problems (1,487), problems with a house they own (676), problems with a house they rent (827), debt problems (840), benefits problems (706), relationship problems (231), education problems (373), accident and illness problems (571). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Socio-demographic differences

Respondents who received means-tested benefits, were single parents, have been separated or divorced, or have higher legal capabilities were all more likely to have had experience of using online options for courts and tribunal services compared to other socio-demographic characteristics.

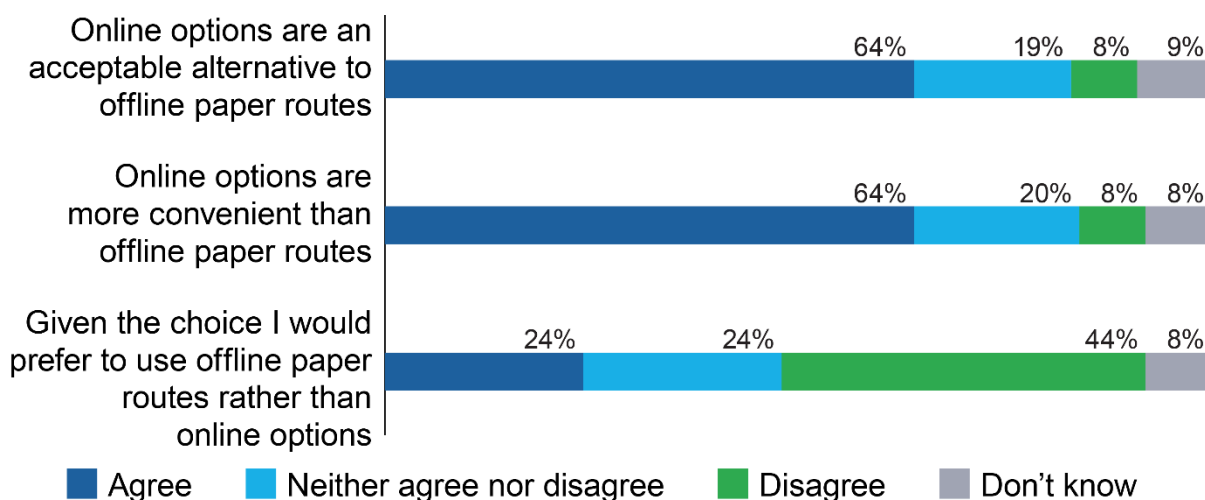
Table 8.2: Significant socio-demographic differences in experience of online services

Subgroup	Differences
Benefits status	Respondents who receive means-tested benefits (10%) were more likely to have used online options.
Single parents	Single parents were more likely to have had personal experience of using online options (12%, compared to 5% amongst respondents overall).
Marital status	Respondents who reported their marital status as separated (14%) or as divorced or in a legally dissolved civil partnership (9%) were more likely to have had personal experience of using online court and tribunal options.
Legal capability	Respondents with high legal confidence (8%), high legal self-efficacy (7%) and low legal anxiety (7%) were most likely to have used online services.

8.4 Public attitudes to using online services

Most people recognised the convenience of online options and viewed them as an acceptable alternative to offline paper routes (around two-thirds agreeing and only small minorities disagreeing). When it comes to personal preference, a quarter of respondents (24%) agreed that they would prefer to use offline paper routes, though a far higher proportion disagreed (44%) and another quarter were neutral (24%).

Figure 8.3: Attitudes on online options and offline paper routes



Source: (GA6) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following...? Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323).

Socio-demographic differences

Older respondents and those who have low digital capability or rarely use the internet were the most likely to favour using offline routes.

Table 8.3: Significant socio-demographic differences in attitudes towards online and offline services

Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	Almost half of respondents aged 75 and over (46%) and a third of those aged 65–74 (34%) would prefer to use paper routes, compared to only 16% of those aged 18–34.
Disability status	Respondents who have a long-term illness or disability were more likely than average to state a preference for offline paper routes, though they were still in the minority amongst all respondents with a long-term illness or disability (28%, compared to 23% without a long-term illness/disability).
Legal capability	Levels of preference for offline paper routes did not vary by level of legal confidence (23% to 26%), though those with low levels of legal confidence were more likely than other groups to report they didn't know what their preference would be between offline and online options. Those with low levels of legal self-efficacy were slightly more likely than those with higher levels of legal self-efficacy to prefer to use offline options if given the choice (28% compared to 24% with high legal self-efficacy), though still more of them disagreed (33%) and a relatively high proportion selected don't know (15%).

Socio-demographics	Differences
Digital capability	Those with low digital capability were the most likely to prefer to use offline options (61%), compared to 40% of those with medium level digital capability and 21% of those with high digital capability.
Internet use	Two-thirds (66%) of respondents who never use the internet would prefer to use offline paper routes, compared to 36% of those who use the internet up to 8 hours a week, 27% of those who use the internet 9–15 hours a week, 24% of those who use it 16–22 hours a week, and 18% of those using it for over 22 hours a week.

8.5 Public awareness and experience of remote hearings

Respondents were asked how much they knew about the use of remote video hearings in the legal system, alongside a short explanation of these as hearings in which participants can attend via video or telephone call, rather than attend a court in person.

The majority of people said they were aware of remote hearings (61%), though only 12% overall said they knew a great deal / fair amount about them. A quarter (26%) had heard of them but did not know very much, whilst a further quarter (23%) had heard of them but knew nothing. Just over a third of respondents said they had never heard of them (35%).

Figure 8.4: Public awareness of remote hearings



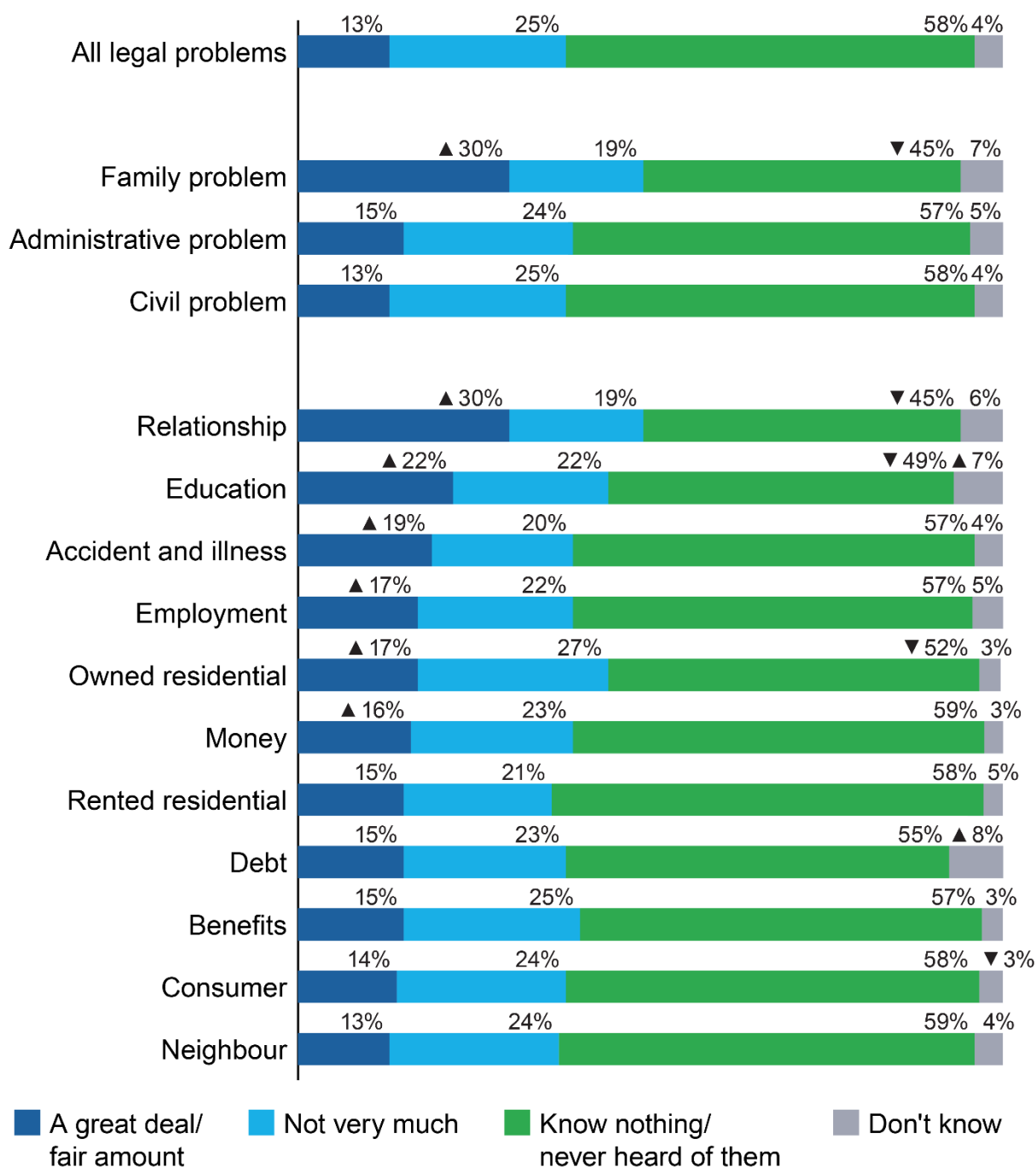
Source: (GA1) How much, if anything, do you know about remote hearings? Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323).

Most respondents had no personal experience of participating in a remote hearing in England or Wales (94%). Only three per cent said they had participated in a remote hearing, whilst a further two per cent were not sure.

Differences by legal problem category

People who had experienced family problems were significantly more likely to say they knew a great deal/fair amount about remote hearings (30%). This reflected their greater likelihood to have had personal experience of participating in a remote hearing in England or Wales (14% of these respondents reported having experienced a remote hearing, compared to 3% of all respondents). Other problem types were less likely to have a higher level of awareness of remote hearings, varying from 13% to 22%.

Figure 8.5: Awareness of remote hearings by legal problem category



Source: (GA1) How much, if anything, do you know about remote hearings? Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323), anyone with a legal problem excluding divorce and probate (4,988), anyone with a civil problem (4,415), family problem (231), administrative problem (1,782), anyone with consumer problems (1,885), employment problems (1,004), neighbour problems (1,487), problems with a house they own (676), problems with a house they rent (827), debt problems (840), benefits problems (706), relationship problems (231), education problems (373), accident and illness problems (571). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

▼ ▲ Denotes statistically significant difference between all and the subgroup.

Socio-demographic differences

Awareness of remote hearings was lowest amongst females, those who were aged 75 and older, and those with lower levels of legal capabilities. Unsurprisingly, those with high levels of legal confidence, high legal self-efficacy or low legal anxiety were more aware of remote hearings. Awareness of remote hearings was fairly consistent across those with different levels of digital capabilities.

Table 8.4: Significant socio-demographic differences in awareness about remote hearings

Socio-demographics	Differences
Sex	Males (13%) were more likely than females (10%) to state they were aware of remote hearings, or to have had personal experience of them.
Age	Almost two thirds of respondents aged 75 and older reported that they didn't know anything about remote hearings (65%). Those in older age groups were also the least likely to have participated in remote hearings.
Single parents	Those in single parent households were more likely to say they knew a fair amount or great deal about remote hearings (18%, compared to the overall average of 12%).
Eligibility for legal aid	Those eligible for legal aid were slightly more likely to know a fair amount/great deal about remote hearings than those not eligible (14% vs 11%).
Legal capability	Around one in five (19%) of those with high legal confidence knew a great deal or fair amount about remote hearings, compared to 6% of those with low legal confidence. Respondents with high legal-self efficacy (17%) and low legal anxiety (15%) were also more likely to know a great deal or fair amount about remote hearings.

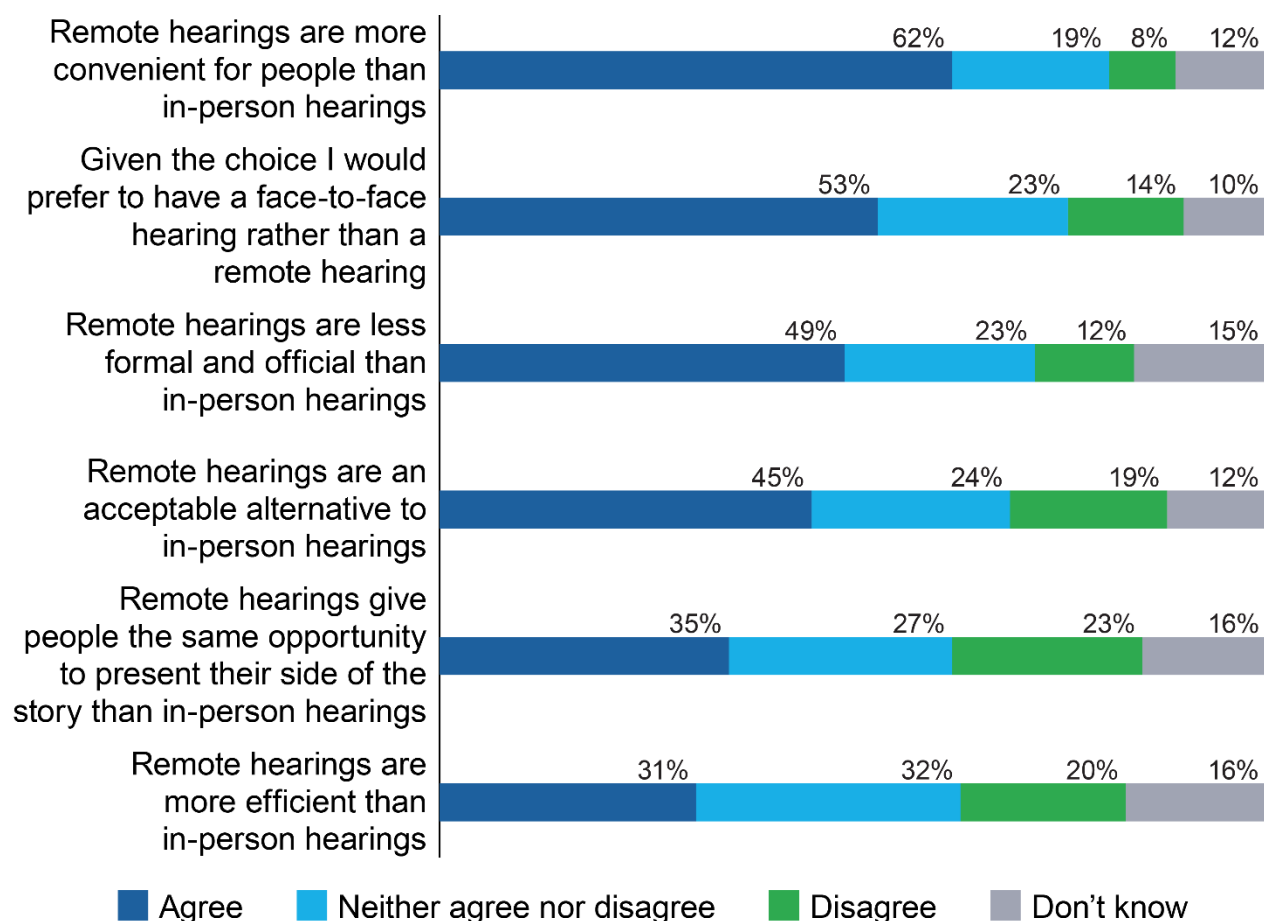
8.6 Public attitudes to remote hearings

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a range of statements comparing remote hearings with in-person hearings.

Around six in ten respondents (62%) agreed that remote hearings are more convenient than in-person hearings, though over half of respondents (53%) would still prefer to have

an in-person hearing. Respondents were less likely to agree that remote hearings are more efficient or that they provide the same opportunity for individuals to present their side of the story (31% and 35% respectively), as outlined in Figure 8.6.

Figure 8.6: Public attitudes towards remote hearings



Source: (GA3) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following...? Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Socio-demographic differences

When asked if remote hearings are more convenient for people than in-person hearings, those aged 35–54, from white backgrounds, in employment, with higher legal capabilities and higher digital capabilities were the most likely groups to agree that remote hearings are more convenient.

Older respondents were particularly likely to express a preference for an in-person hearing over a remote one. However, it was interesting to see that even though those with higher

legal capabilities recognised that remote hearings are more convenient, they were still more likely to express a preference for in-person hearings. Those with low legal capabilities were more likely to express they did not know what they would prefer if given a choice.

Table 8.5: Significant socio-demographic differences in attitudes towards remote hearings

Socio-demographics	Differences
Sex	Males (57%) were more likely than females (50%) to prefer an in-person hearing than a remote hearing. However, there were no significant differences between males and females when asked if they thought remote hearings were more convenient for people than in-person hearings.
Age	Those aged 35–54 were the most likely to agree that remote hearings are more convenient than in-person hearings (65%), compared to those aged 65 and older (57%). This mirrors respondents' preferences for hearings, as those aged 65 and older were the most likely to report they would prefer a face-to-face hearing (65%) compared to the average (53%).
Ethnicity	People from white backgrounds were more likely to agree that remote hearings are more convenient than in-person hearings (65%), compared to those from Asian backgrounds (54%) or black backgrounds (52%). However, when asked if they were given a choice between them, people from a white background were more likely to prefer an in-person hearing (54%), compared to people from a black background (45%).
Employment status	Those in employment were the most likely to agree that remote hearings are more convenient for people (65%). This reflects people's preferences for remote or in-person hearings, as those who were economically inactive were the most likely to prefer an in-person hearing (60%), compared to those who were in employment (50%) or were unemployed (43%).
Benefits status	Respondents who do not receive any benefits were the most likely to agree that remote hearings are more convenient for people (64%), compared to those with means tested benefits (57%) or non-means tested benefits (61%). When asked about their preference for in-person hearings over remote hearings, those who received non-means tested benefits were more likely to state a preference for an in-person hearing (61%), compared to those receiving no benefits (52%) and those in receipt of means-tested benefits (44%). This likely reflects age variations, with older people more likely to receive non-means tested benefits (via state pension).

Socio-demographics	Differences
Eligibility for legal aid	Those who were not eligible for legal aid were more likely to express a preference for in-person hearings (56%), compared to those who were eligible for legal aid (48%).
Legal capability	<p>Those with higher levels of legal confidence (64%) and legal self-efficacy (67%) were the most likely to think remote hearings are more convenient for people. However, in contrast, those with high legal confidence (60%) and high legal self-efficacy (59%) were more likely than others to express a preference for in-person hearings. Those with low levels of legal confidence (19%) or self-efficacy (20%) were more likely to report they did not know which option they would prefer.</p> <p>Respondents with high legal anxiety were the most likely to agree that remote hearings are more convenient for people (63%), and those with low legal anxiety were the most likely to prefer in-person hearings (56%).</p>
Digital capability	<p>Unsurprisingly, those with low digital capability were the least likely to think remote hearings are more convenient (27%), compared to those with high digital capability (65%).</p> <p>Those with medium levels of digital capability were the most likely to state a preference for in-person hearings (58%), compared to those with low (56%) or high (52%) capability levels, although the variation is fairly small.</p>
Internet use	Those who use the internet less frequently tended to be more likely to state a preference for in-person hearings over remote hearings, though there are still high proportions of heavy internet users who would prefer an in-person hearing. Around two-thirds (65%) of respondents who are never online would prefer in-person hearings, compared to half of those who use the internet over 22 hours a week (49%).

8.7 Chapter conclusions

- Public awareness and attitudes towards online options will vary by personal experience and socio-demographic characteristics, notably age. Whilst people recognise the convenience of online options, there remains a fairly strong attachment to in-person hearings.
- Particular consideration should be given to older age groups (especially those aged 75+) and those with lower levels of digital capability (who typically fall within the older age groups), who have lower levels of familiarity and will require more engagement and support around online options.

9. Awareness of advice providers and court fees

9.1 Summary

- Citizens Advice and solicitors were the most familiar sources of advice for the public, whilst GOV.UK is the most used source alongside solicitor firms.
- Awareness of advice providers varied, with younger people and those with lower legal and digital capability less likely to be aware.
- The public are more likely to think that courts and tribunals charge fees than do not, but there is a lot of uncertainty. Around a third of people said that they did not know whether courts charge a fee (31%–36%).
- Those with experience of specific problems were more aware that court fees applied for those problems, though only marginally in some cases.
- On balance, the public tend to think that court fees should not be applied across problem types, particularly in cases of disputes over children. Opinion is more mixed regarding cases of relationship problems.

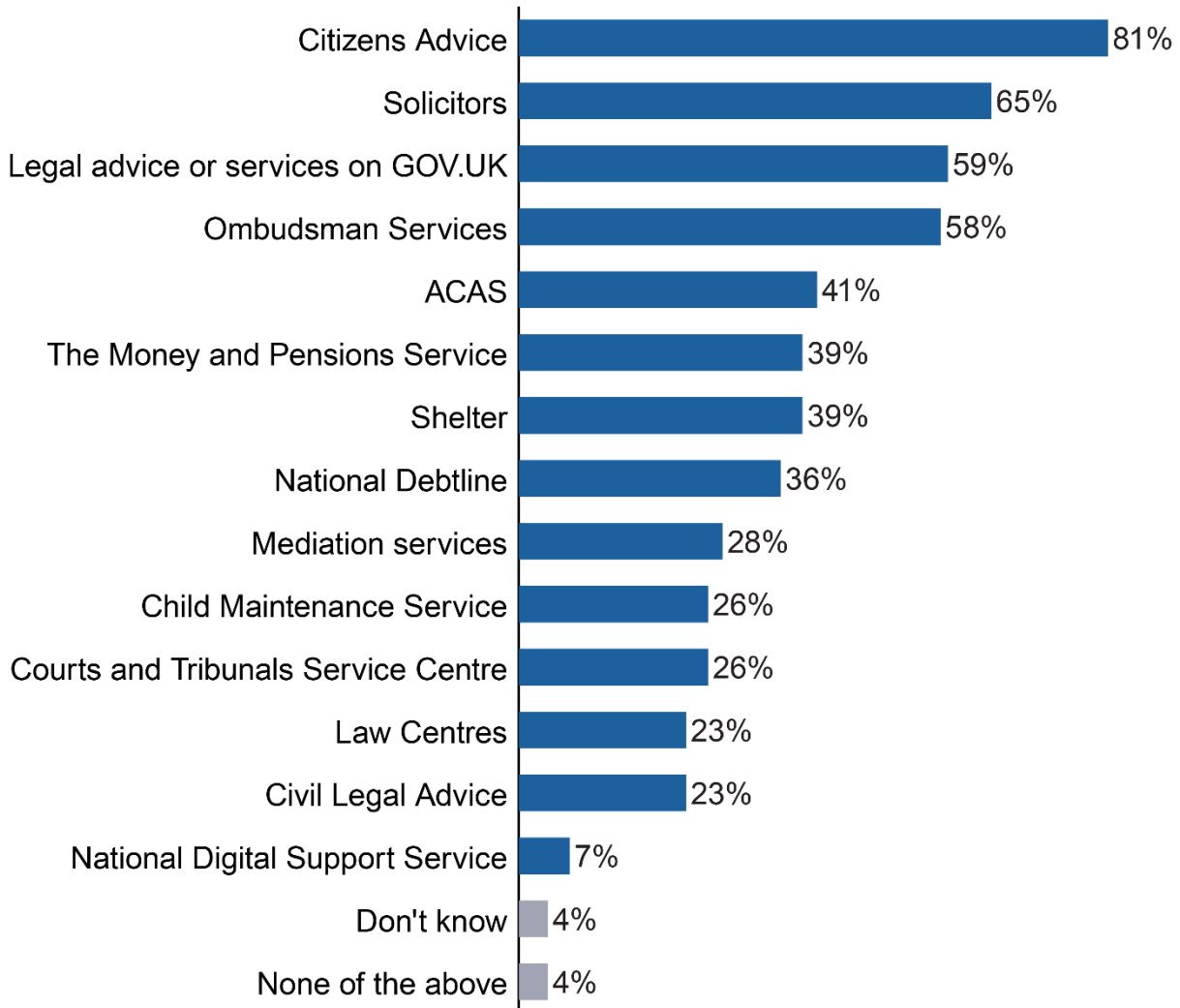
9.2 Awareness of sources of information

General awareness of sources of information or advice

Respondents were asked if they were aware of a list of legal information and advice providers. This question was framed quite broadly with regards to providers of 'advice and information' and was asked early in the survey, before questions relating to experience of legal problems. Responses will therefore reflect broad familiarity with the organisations listed and association with advice provision, including factors beyond the provision of information or advice relating to legal issues.

When prompted with the list of different providers (see Figure 9.1), the majority of people had heard of at least one (92%), though awareness of different providers varied markedly. By far the most familiar to people was Citizens Advice, with over eight in ten (81%) saying they were aware of it.

Figure 9.1: Awareness of different providers of information and advice



Source: (C1) Which, if any, of the following are you aware provides information or advice? Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323) Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

Socio-demographic differences

There were some socio-demographic differences between people’s awareness of different advice providers, as shown in Table 9.1. The age of respondents may account for differences by religion and marital status.

Table 9.1: Significant socio-demographic differences for awareness of different advice providers

Socio-demographics	Differences
Age	<p>Those aged 18–24 were less aware of all advice providers compared to older age groups, with 21% of 18–24-year-olds aware of Ombudsman Services, compared to 68% of 55–64-year-olds and 58% of all respondents.</p> <p>Levels of awareness regarding advice providers were broadly similar across older age groups above this youngest age band.</p>
Sex	<p>Female respondents were more likely to report that they were aware of the legal advice and services on GOV.UK (61% vs 57%), Shelter (42% vs 36%), National Debtline (40% vs 33%), Mediation Services (30% vs 26%), and Child Maintenance Service (29% vs 23%).</p> <p>Comparatively, male respondents were more likely to be aware of Courts and Tribunals Service Centre (27% vs 25%).</p>
Disability status	<p>Those with a long-term disability or health condition were more likely to be aware of most providers (for example, 85% of those with a long-term disability or health condition had heard of Citizens Advice, compared to 79% of those without a disability).</p>
Ethnicity	<p>There were differences in awareness of some providers across respondents from different backgrounds. For example, ACAS (the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) was familiar as an advice provider to 44% of respondents from a white background, compared to 25% of those from an Asian background, 29% of those from a black background, and 24% of respondents from other ethnic backgrounds.</p> <p>For most advice providers, those from an Asian background tended to report lower levels of awareness compared to respondents from other backgrounds.</p>
Education	<p>People with a degree (or equivalent) tended to report higher levels of awareness of advice providers (e.g., 48% of those with a degree had heard of Shelter, compared to 33% of those whose highest educational qualification were GCSEs / O-Levels). The exception to this is National Debtline, where those with GCSEs / O Levels as their highest qualification (42%) reported higher awareness than those with a degree (36%).</p>
Household income	<p>Similarly, those with an annual income of more than £32,000 reported higher awareness for most advice providers compared to those on lower incomes.</p>

Socio-demographics	Differences
Employment status	People in employment also tended to report higher awareness of advice providers compared to those who were unemployed or inactive. For example, 63% of those in employment were aware of the legal advice and services available on GOV.UK, compared to 40% of those unemployed.
Single parents	Those living in single parent households reported higher awareness of Child Maintenance Services than others (53%, compared to 26% amongst all respondents).
Legal capability	People with higher levels of legal confidence and legal self-efficacy were consistently more likely to report greater awareness of advice providers compared to those with low or medium levels. However, there were no statistically significant differences between those with different levels of legal anxiety.
Digital capability	Similarly, those with higher digital capabilities typically showed greater awareness of advice providers. The biggest difference was for services and advice available on GOV.UK, with around two-thirds of those with high digital capability (64%) having heard of this service, compared to only 15% of those with low digital capability.

Differences by legal problem category

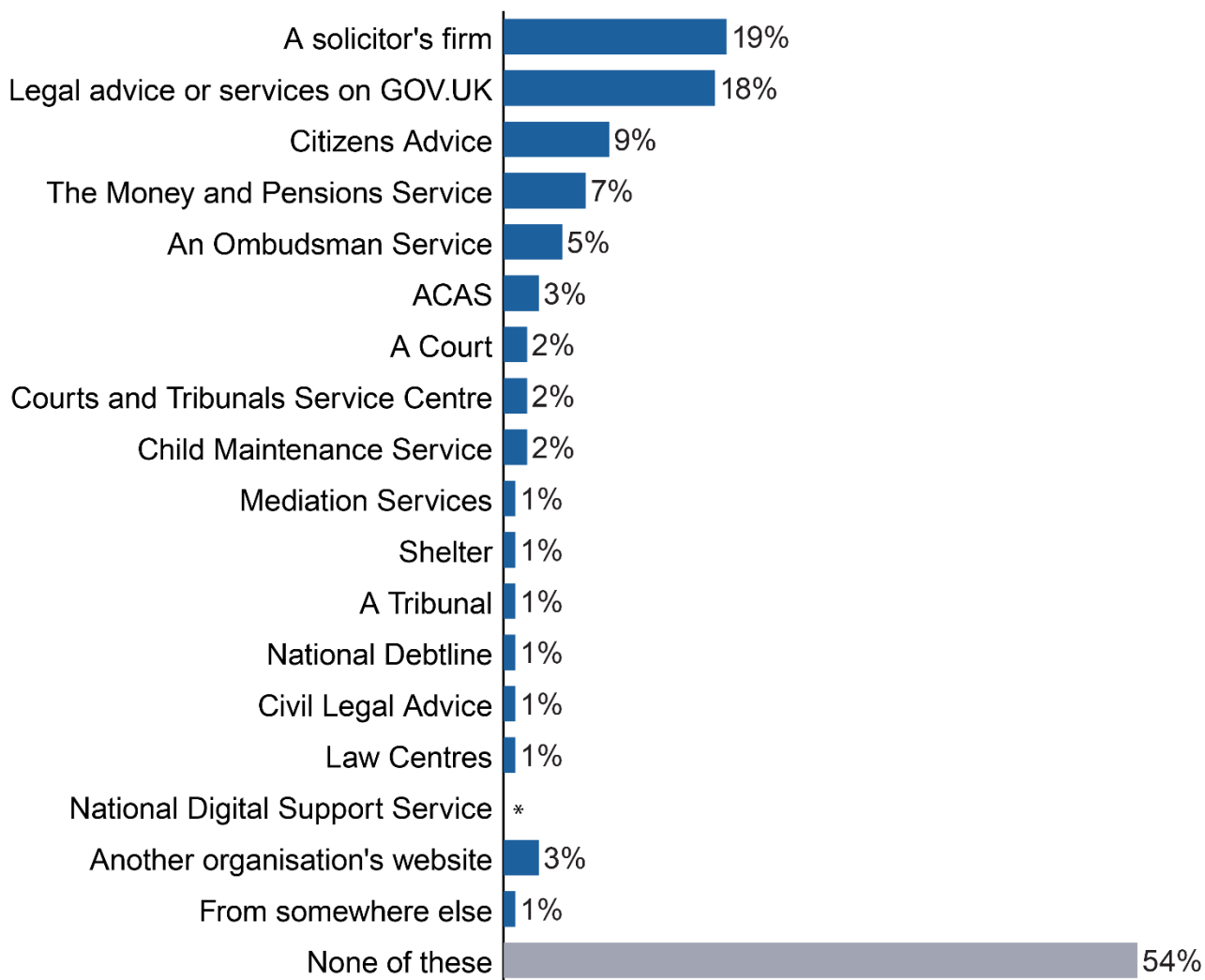
Those who had experienced a legal problem were more likely than average to be aware of different advice providers.

Awareness of some advice providers was higher amongst those who had experienced problems that related more specifically to these providers. People who had experienced problems to do with debt or money were more likely to be aware of National Debtline (45% and 41% respectively, compared to 36% of all respondents). Similarly, those who had relationship problems were more likely than others to be aware of Child Maintenance Services (48%, compared to 26%).

9.3 Levels of contact with advice providers

Just under half of all adults (46%) had contacted at least one of the advice providers listed in Figure 9.2 for advice or information within the past four years.⁹⁸

Figure 9.2: Contact with different advice providers over the past four years



* Indicates percentages lower than 1% Source: (C2) In the past four years, have you contacted, on your own behalf, any of the following sources for information or advice? Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

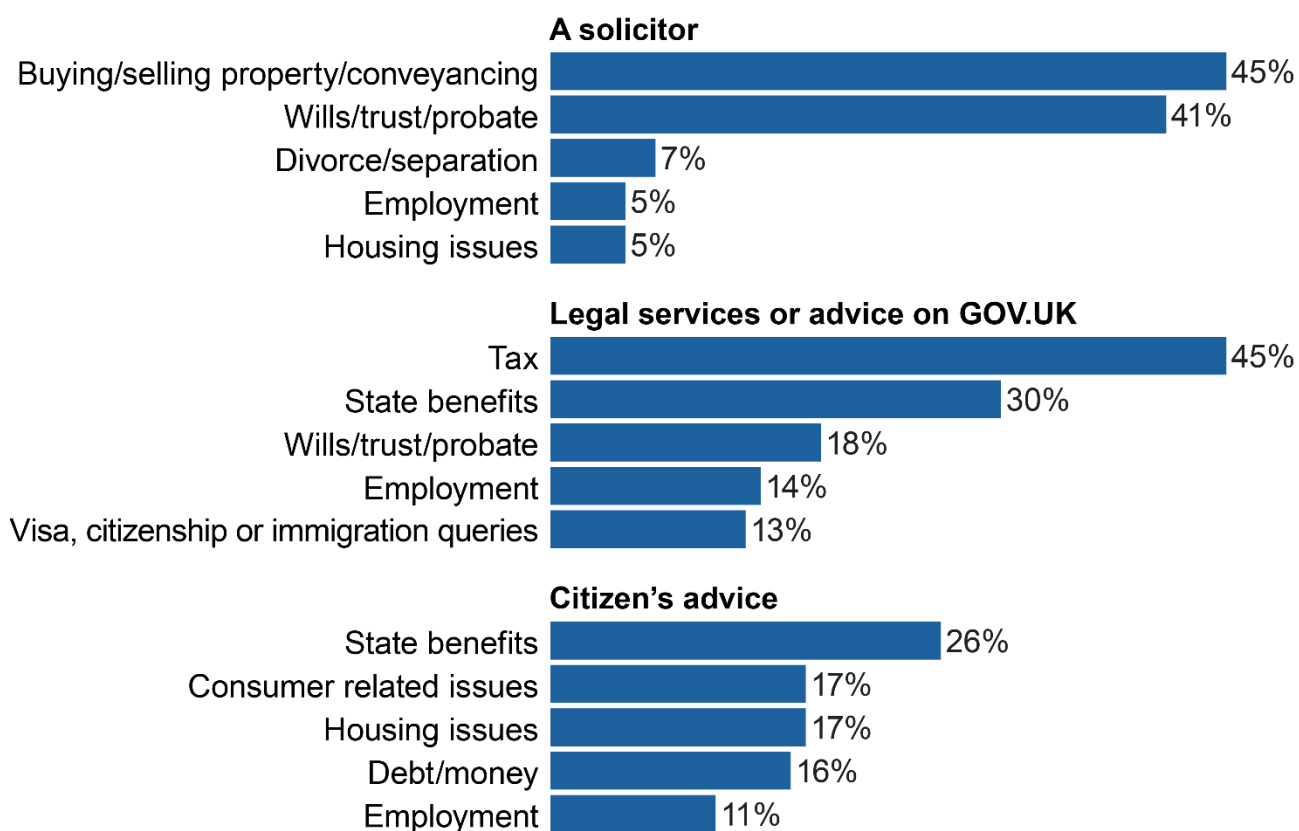
Solicitors' firms (19%) and GOV.UK (18%) were most likely to have been contacted or used as a source for information or advice. As shown in Figure 9.3, those who had contacted solicitors' firms did so most often for buying / selling / conveyancing on a property

⁹⁸ This question used a four-year timeframe to remain consistent with previous LPRS 2014–15 survey.

(accounting for 45% of those contacting solicitors' firms for advice / information). The second common most reason for contacting a solicitor was for wills / trust / probate (41%). Those who sought information from legal advice/services on GOV.UK did so most often in relation to taxes (45%), followed by issues concerning state benefits (30%).

Whilst Citizens Advice was, by far, the most familiar source of information/advice, fewer than one in ten adults (9%) indicated that they had contacted the provider for information or support within the past four years. The next most frequently contacted providers were the Money and Pensions Service (7%), Ombudsman services (5%), and ACAS (3%). Other advice providers had been used by 2% or fewer of respondents over the past four years.

Figure 9.3: Issues that people contacted different advice providers about



Source: (C4) Thinking about the last time you sought information or advice, what did you contact them about? Base: All adults in England and Wales who contacted a solicitor (2,194), GOV.UK (1,962) or Citizen's Advice (937). Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages may not sum to 100%.

Differences by legal problem category

Those who had experienced relationship problems were more likely than others to have contacted Child Maintenance Services for advice (31%, compared to less than 10% of those experiencing other problem types), as well as Mediation Services in general (10%, compared to less than 5% of those experiencing other problems). Those with problems relating to money or benefits were more likely than others to have contacted the Money and Pensions Service (12% and 15% respectively) and/or sourced advice or services on GOV.UK (28% and 30% respectively).

Socio-demographic differences

There were some socio-demographic differences between people’s contact with different advice providers, as shown in Table 9.2. There were relatively few significant variations in levels of contact with different advice providers between those of different ethnic backgrounds.

Table 9.2: Significant socio-demographic differences between contact with different advice providers over the past four years

Sub-group	Differences
Age	18–24-year-olds were significantly less likely to have contacted providers for advice/information compared to older age groups, mirroring the comparatively lower levels of awareness of advice providers amongst younger people. Around two thirds (64%) of 18–24-year-olds said that they had contacted none of the listed advice providers, compared to 47% of 55–64-year-olds.
Sex	A similar proportion of male and female respondents had contacted advice providers, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a solicitor’s firm: 21% of males vs 18% of females, • Citizen’s Advice: 8% of males vs 9% of females, • an Ombudsman service: 5% of males vs 4% of females, • a court: 3% of males vs 2% of females. • ACAS: 2% of males vs 3% of females • Child Maintenance Service: 1% of males vs 2% of females
Education	Those with a degree were more likely to use solicitors (23%, compared to those with a GCSE 18%), legal advice or services on GOV.UK (21%, compared to 14% of those with a GCSE) and ombudsmen (6% vs 3% of those with a GCSE).
Benefits status	People receiving means-tested benefits were more likely than those receiving non-means tested benefits or no benefits at all to have contacted Citizens Advice (23%, 7% and 7% respectively).

Sub-group	Differences
	Those receiving non-means tested benefits (e.g. state pension) were more likely to have contacted a solicitor's firm for advice than those receiving means-tested benefits (21% vs 15%).
Household income	Respondents with higher household income were more likely to use a solicitors' firm (26% of those with £60,001 or above, compared to 15% of those with less than £14,000). People on lower household incomes were more likely to use Citizens Advice (13% of those with household income of less than £14,000, compared to 6% of those with £60,001 or above).
Single parents	Single parent households were far more likely than others to have sought advice or information from Child Maintenance Services (21%, compared to 2% of all respondents) and/or Citizens Advice (20%, compared to 9% of all respondents). Single parent households were also more likely than others to have contacted Mediation Services (6%), Tribunals (3%), and Courts (9%).
Disability status	Those who have a long-term health condition were slightly more likely than those who do not to contact most advice providers, such as a solicitor's firm (21% vs 19%), advice and services on GOV.UK (20% vs 17%), and Citizen's Advice (12% vs 6%).
Marital status	There were differences between single people and those who are or have been married or in a civil partnership. Those who are separated were more likely than single people to have contacted a solicitor (30% vs 14%). Those who are single (10%), separated (15%) or divorced (12%) are more likely to have contacted Citizens Advice, compared to those who are married or in a civil partnership (7%).
Legal capability	<p>Those with higher legal confidence and legal self-efficacy were more likely than those with low or medium scores to have contacted advice providers. Those with low legal anxiety were also more likely to have contacted most providers compared to those with high anxiety scores.</p> <p>The exception to these patterns was Citizens Advice. Those with low legal confidence, low self-efficacy, and/or high legal anxiety were more likely than others to have contacted Citizens Advice.</p>
Digital capability	<p>Reflecting the variations in awareness of different advice providers outlined in the previous section, those with high digital capability were also more likely than those with low or medium digital capabilities to have contacted the majority of providers.</p> <p>Again, the largest difference is for GOV.UK (the only explicitly online provider listed). One in five (20%) of those with high digital capability had contacted or sourced legal advice/services on GOV.UK within the past four years, compared to less than 1% of those with low digital capability.</p>

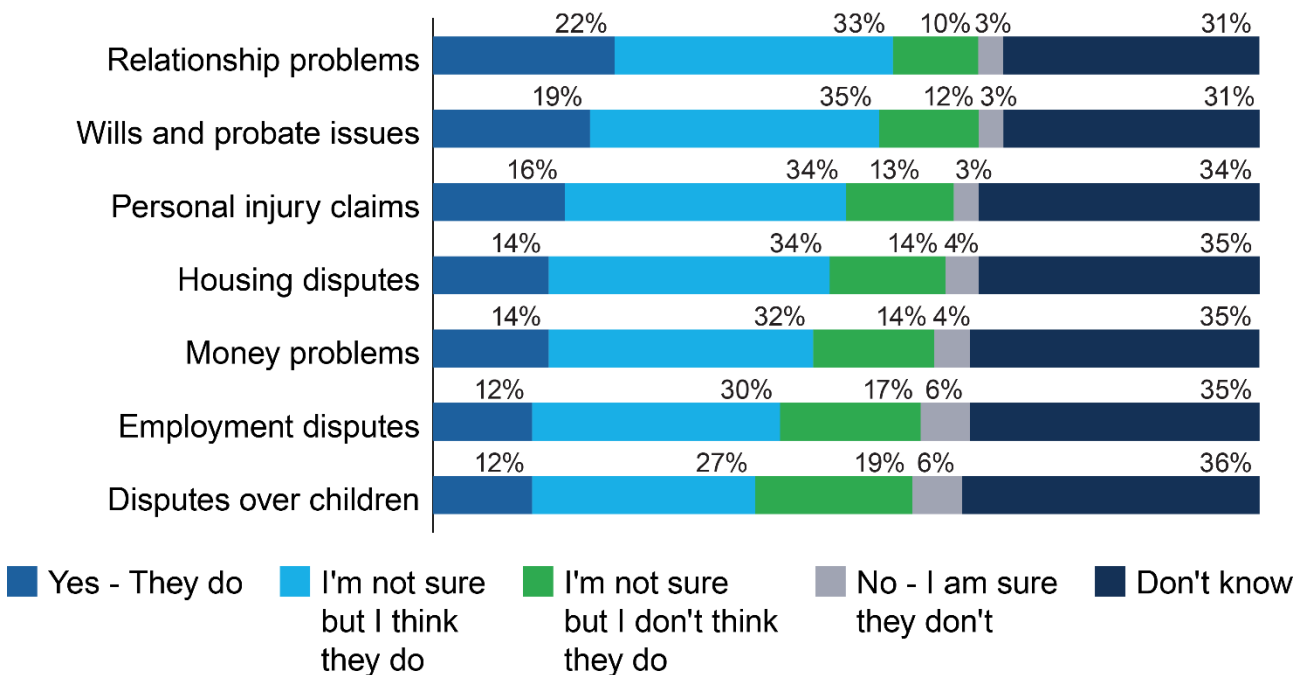
9.4 Public awareness of court fees

Courts and tribunals in England and Wales charge people a fee to start a court or tribunal claim or case.⁹⁹ Respondents were asked whether they thought courts and tribunals charge fees for problems concerning relationships, money, housing disputes, personal injury claims, will and probate issues, employment disputes and disputes over children.

Figure 9.4 shows the proportions of respondents who thought that courts and tribunals charge a fee for different types of cases. Respondents were given the option to give a firm view either way, or to state that they were not sure but thought that fees were/were not applied, or to say they did not know. Respondents were more likely to say they were not sure than give a firm view across all problem types, reflecting an overall lack of awareness of court fees. On balance, people were more likely to think that courts and tribunals do charge fees than do not, though there is much uncertainty.

⁹⁹ Some people are eligible for court and tribunal fee exemptions, via the Help with Fee Scheme, based on how much money they have in savings, whether they receive certain benefits, and their income.

Figure 9.4: Awareness of whether courts and tribunals in England and Wales charge a fee to go to court



Source: (GB1) As far as you know, do courts and tribunals in England and Wales charge people a fee to go to court for the following? Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

There are variations in the perceived use of fees for different types of cases. Respondents were most likely to think people are charged a fee to go to court for relationship problems (e.g. divorce or financial disputes). Over half of respondents (55%) thought a fee is applied in these cases, compared to 13 who did not think people have to pay a fee. That said, most of those who thought that people are charged a fee to go to court for relationship problems were *not sure but thought they did* (33% compared to 22% who were sure).

People are least likely to think that court fees apply in cases where there are disputes over children, though they are still more likely to think a fee is charged than not (39% and 25% respectively).

Across all problem types, around a third of adults (31%–36%) said they did not know whether court fees apply.

Socio-demographic differences

There were some socio-demographic differences between people’s awareness of court fees, as shown in Table 9.3. There were few or no statistically significant differences between people of different ethnic backgrounds, religions, or levels of English proficiency.

Table 9.3: Significant socio-demographic differences in awareness of court fees in England and Wales

Socio-demographics	Differences
Sex	Female respondents (57%) were slightly more likely than males (54%) to think that court fees are applied to family-related cases (e.g., relationship problems or disputes over children).
Age	Those in the middle-aged groups were more likely to think that court fees applied for certain problems. Just over six in ten (62%) 45–54-year-olds think that courts apply a fee in cases relating to relationship problems, compared to 50% of 18–24-year-olds and 46% of 75+ year olds. A similar pattern is apparent for money problems, employment and housing disputes. Younger respondents were more likely than others to respond “don’t know” across most categories. Nearly two fifths (38%) of 18–24-year-olds said that they did not know whether people had to pay court fees for probate issues, compared to 26% of 65–74-year-olds. A similar pattern is seen for money problems and employment disputes.
Employment status	Across most problems, people who are in employment were more likely than those who are unemployed or inactive to think that people are charged a fee to go to court. For example, 46% of employed people think fees are charged for employment disputes, compared to 38% of inactive people and 33% of unemployed people.
Education	Generally, those who have a degree or higher were more likely than those with other qualifications to think that people are charged a fee to go to court. For example, 41% of those with a degree think you are charged a fee concerning disputes over children compared to 31% of those with a trade apprenticeship.
Single parents	People in single-parent households were significantly more likely than those in multi-parent households to think that people have to pay court fees (for issues concerning relationships (66% vs 58%), money (58% vs 48%) and disputes over children (54% vs 44%)).
Household income	People in higher income households were more likely than those in lower income households to think that people are charged a fee to go to court, e.g., for housing disputes (54% of those with a

Socio-demographics	Differences
	£60,000+ income vs 47% of those with a less than £14,000 income).
Marital status	People who have been separated (70%) or have divorced / legally dissolved their civil partnership (63%) were more likely to think that people are charged a fee to go to court over relationship problems compared to people who are widowed (50%), married (55%) or single (54%).
Disability status	Across all problem types except disputes over children, people with long term disabilities were more likely than those without to think that court fees are applied. In particular, employment disputes (45% vs 41%), money problems (50% vs 46%), and relationship problems (58% vs 54%).

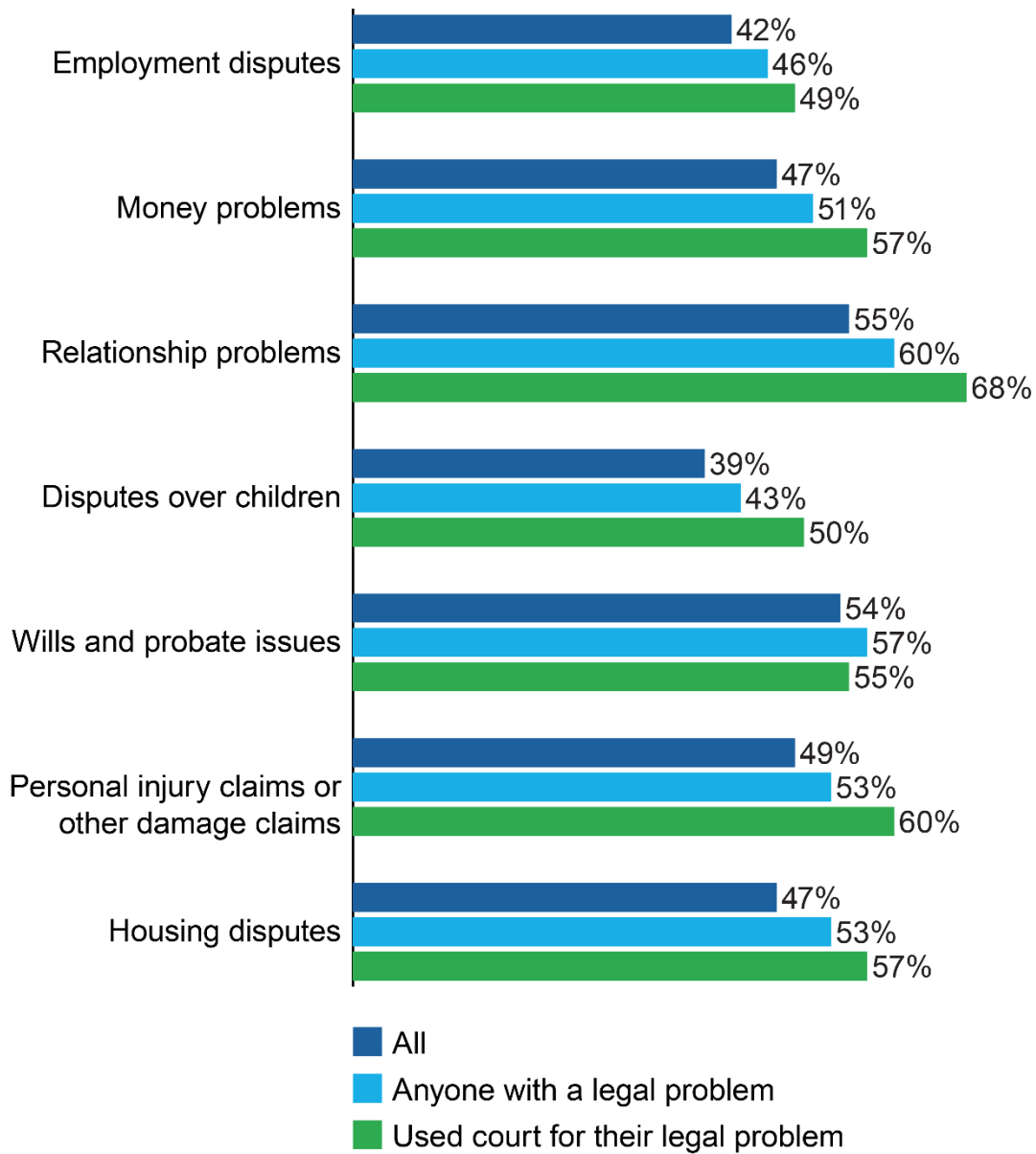
Differences by legal problem category

People who had experienced a particular problem in the 18 months before interview were not always more likely to think that people have to pay a fee to go to court in cases relating to this type of problem. There were high percentages of ‘don’t know’ answers amongst those who had experienced particular problems (e.g., 33% of people who had experienced rented residential problems didn’t know whether court fees were applied for housing disputes).

Differences by use of court

Respondents who had a legal problem in the 18 months before interview were more likely to think that courts charged fees. However, there was not a significant difference between those who used court to try to resolve their legal problem and those who did not use court.

Figure 9.5: Percentage of people who thought courts charge court fees



(GB1) As far as you know, do courts and tribunals in England and Wales charge people a fee to go to court for the following. Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323). Base: All Adults in England and Wales with a legal problem in the last 18 months (4,988), Base: All who used courts to try and resolve their legal problem (217). Those who used court are included in base for those with legal problem, and those with legal problem are included in base for all.

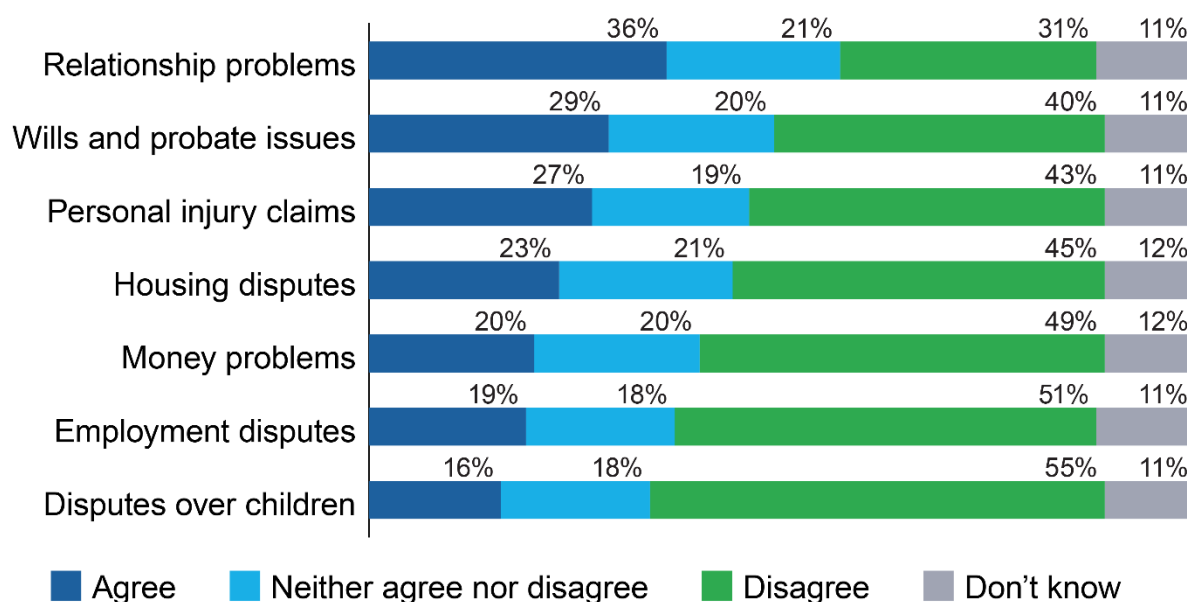
9.5 Public attitudes towards court fees

When asked whether they thought people should have to pay a fee to go to court, respondents' preferences tended to vary depending on the type of case, though in general the balance of opinion was typically against people having to pay a fee. The exception was relationship problems, where more people thought that a fee should be charged than thought it should not, though opinion was fairly evenly divided (36% and 31% respectively).

Overall opinion is markedly different for cases involving children, with over three times as many respondents disagreeing that fees should apply for disputes over children (55%) than thinking fees should apply (16%).

Around half of respondents did not think that people should have to pay court fees for employment disputes (51%) or money problems (49%), compared to around one in five who believe that they should. A full breakdown is shown in Figure 9.6.

Figure 9.6: Opinions on whether people should pay a fee to go to court



Source: (GB2) Do you agree or disagree that people should pay a fee to go to court for the following? Base: Adults in England and Wales (10,323). Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to 'Don't know/prefer not to say' responses not being shown, and/or due to rounding.

Socio-demographic differences

There were socio-demographic differences regarding respondents' attitudes towards court fees, see Table 9.4.

Table 9.4: Significant socio-demographic differences for preferences for court fees

Socio-demographics	Differences
Sex	Male respondents were more likely than females to agree that people should have to pay court fees for all problems. Males were significantly more likely to agree that fees should apply in cases involving relationship problems (40% agreeing, compared to 33% of females). Whilst males were more likely to agree that fees should apply for disputes over children (18%, compared to 14% of females), this was still a relatively small minority of males, reflecting the majority view that people should not have to pay fees in these types of cases.
Age	Older respondents were more likely than younger respondents to agree that people should have to pay court fees. The largest differences were observed for personal injury claims (32% of 55–64 year olds agreeing, compared to 18% of 18–24 year olds) and money problems (25% of 65–74 year olds, compared to 12% of 18–24 year olds). The only issue where there was no variation between age groups was disputes over children, where the majority of all age groups disagreed that people should have to pay court fees.
Household income	Those on higher incomes were more likely to agree that people should have to pay court fees for all the problems covered. In particular, around a third (32%) of those with an annual income above £60,000 thought that people should pay court fees for personal injury claims, compared to only 17% amongst those with an income lower than £14,000.
Benefits status	Those receiving non means-tested benefits (22%) or no benefits at all (20%) were more likely than those in receipt of means-tested benefits (15%) to agree that people should have to pay court fees for money problems.

Differences by legal problem category

In general, adults who had experienced legal problems in the 18 months before interview had similar views on court fees to those with no legal problems. However, people who had experienced certain legal problems were more likely to disagree that court fees should be charged for their type of problem:

- Relationship breakdown problems: Over two fifths (44%) of those who had experienced a relationship breakdown in the 18 months before interview disagreed with having to pay a court fee, compared to 31% of those who had not experienced this problem.
- Rented residential problems: Over half (57%) of those with this problem disagreed with having to pay court fees for housing disputes, compared to 48% of those who had not experienced this problem.

Difference by use of court

There were no significant differences in attitudes towards the application of court fees between those who had taken their legal problem to court and all respondents (including those without legal problems).

9.6 Chapter conclusions

- GOV.UK is the most used source of advice alongside solicitor firms and is utilised across socio-demographic groups. Efforts to further increase awareness of the potential of the site for helping with relevant problem types could lead to further use and related benefits.
- There is currently low awareness around whether people are charged a fee to go to court in England and Wales. Findings suggest a lack of familiarity with the process, which must be considered when interpreting public attitudes towards court fees, which will be based on minimal levels of personal experience.

10. Conclusions and implications

The LPRS 2023 measured people's experiences of everyday problems that may have a legal solution through the courts and tribunal system. This has provided robust quantitative evidence on the extent to which civil, family, and administrative problems are experienced, by whom and how they are dealt with. It should be acknowledged that these findings may have been impacted by recent global events, particularly the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. These events caused difficulties for large groups of the population, which may have impacted the quantity of societal legal problems and how people experienced such problems.

This report has presented the key descriptive findings from the survey, focusing on people's experience of legal problems and the ways in which they have dealt with these, as well as broader engagement with providers of legal advice and attitudes towards key aspects of the legal system. The wealth of data captured provides opportunity for analysis in further depth across the areas reported on here. The data is available via the UK Data Archive to facilitate further analysis, with the technical report providing the required accompanying methodological information.

Experiencing a legal problem is a fairly common experience, with half¹⁰⁰ of all respondents having had at least one problem in the 18 months before interview. Whilst most people take some type of action to try and resolve their problem, only a small proportion use a formal resolution process or gain any legal or professional advice. With only a small proportion perceiving their problem as 'legal' at the outset or as very serious, this is a likely influencing factor as to why many problems are dealt with informally. These findings are broadly in line with those from previous legal needs surveys, although the reported problem prevalence rate is higher than the previous LPRS in 2014–15. The technical report provides further information on the range of factors which may influence these estimates (such as methodological differences with earlier surveys).

¹⁰⁰ The reported prevalence rate of 50% excludes respondents' experiences of divorce and probate. These issues are covered separately in the analysis due to the substantially different nature of these issues. When including divorce and probate the overall prevalence rate is slightly over half at 51%.

Also similar to previous findings, the LPRS 2023 identified that certain groups of the population are more likely to experience problems than others. This includes people from ethnic minority backgrounds, adults with long-term health conditions, those on means-tested benefits and single parents. These same groups are also particularly vulnerable to experiencing multiple problems or problem clustering.

There was variation in the types of problems experienced by different groups of people, with the characteristics of those more likely to experience particular problem types often following intuitive patterns. For example, those in receipt of means-tested benefits were more likely to experience problems around benefits, and single parents were the group most likely to experience at least one family legal problem. Assessing the extent to which current service provision is delivering to these groups (for example, through administrative data where available) could identify potential gaps (compared to LPRS estimates of problem prevalence) and particular areas for intervention.

The LPRS 2023 also identified the types of problems that are particularly likely to cluster with other issues, such as experiencing a relationship breakdown or accident problem. This highlights potential areas for interventions to reduce people experiencing multiple problems.

Experiencing adverse consequences as a result of a legal problem was a common experience. Stress, other mental health impacts, and a loss of confidence were experienced the most. These findings (the adverse consequences experienced and the proportion of people experiencing them) are similar to those of the LPRS 2014–15. With adverse consequences increasing as problems continue beyond 18 months, there are clear benefits to strategies and interventions that seek to reduce the numbers of persisting problems. These could be targeted towards those problems deemed more serious and most likely to result in adverse consequences, notably those relating to relationship breakdowns, education, employment, or accidents.

Most people took some form of action to resolve the problem they faced, typically through the use of self-obtained help (such as advice from family and friends, or the internet), rather than obtaining professional help. Relatively few resolution attempts involved using a formal process, such as going to a court or tribunal.

How people approached resolution varied by the problem being experienced. Those with relationship breakdown problems were most likely to have used a formal process, and the least likely to have taken no action, whereas those with a neighbour or housing related issue were most likely to have received legal or professional advice. Self-help methods were most commonly used by those with consumer problems. The problem type with the highest proportion of people taking no action was neighbour related issues.

The type of action taken relates closely to how people perceive their problem, with those identifying their problem as legal when it first began, and as serious, more likely to have used a formal process. These findings highlight well-known issues concerning legal awareness, legal capability, and public legal education.

Further research to explore the reasons why people take the action they take (or do not take) would help to establish how people could be supported. It may be that raising awareness of what constitutes a legal problem, and the remedies available to resolve those issues, would benefit those who are not seeking or obtaining help currently. This relates to both specific problem types where a high proportion take no action (notably those with neighbour problems) and within specific groups with lower awareness of formal resolution processes (such as those from a black ethnic background). Additionally, with most people not considering the use of mediation, increasing awareness of mediation as an option for some problem types could be beneficial to problem resolution. Use of mediation is currently being expanded for civil claims, with most lower value disputes (less than £10,000) being automatically referred to mediation before a hearing from May 2024. Further research could explore the reasons why mediation, conciliation, or arbitration (or other resolution routes) are not considered, and the barriers around awareness and uptake of available services.

Advice providers were cited as providing a range of help covering technical, practical, and moral support. People most often used a legal or professional advisor to help them understand their legal rights/situation, or for suggestions on what to do. A range of different advisors were used by those with problems, with GOV.UK and solicitor firms most used across socio-demographic groups. Those with ongoing problems who had previously sought legal or professional advice were more likely to have some plan to resolve their

problem. This highlights the positive impact that advisors can have on the pathway to resolution.

However, over a third of those who obtained help or support said that their advisor had made no difference to their problem or had made things worse. This could indicate several issues around people's ability to locate and connect to the right sources at the right time, the mode and delivery of advice, and/or the ability of advisors to help with entrenched issues that may have progressed to crisis. A clear understanding of what types of support are most helpful to people with problems, what they would like to receive, and where key gaps exist in support provision is an ongoing evidence gap, which is difficult to answer comprehensively. Several research and evaluation projects have been conducted by the MoJ on different forms of legal support including [early legal advice](#), [generalist and specialist legal support](#), [online information and guidance](#), [blended delivery models](#), and [health-justice partnerships](#), with further work ongoing.

For those that did not seek professional advice, legal help or use the courts, barriers cited were the perceived cost (of using solicitors, barristers, lawyers, or of court fees), the stress it would cause, and the perception that the problem was not important enough. This suggests that, for those where professional advice or court engagement would be beneficial, there is a need for further information and encouragement on the scope of help that can be obtained and continued efforts to raise awareness of financial aid and support that is available to relevant groups. The ongoing review of the eligibility requirements for such support is also important.

For the relatively small proportion of people with legal problems using the courts and tribunals, the LPRS 2023 has highlighted those groups which may need more support in using online services and remote hearings. As increasing numbers of people use online court and tribunals services, opinions and preferences will be shaped by personal experience and through word-of-mouth. Particular consideration should be given to older

age groups (particularly those aged 75+) and those with lower levels of digital capability who have lower levels of familiarity and will require more engagement and support.¹⁰¹

Overall, the LPRS 2023 findings have identified adults more likely to experience legal problems, the type of problems they experience, and the action taken to deal with problems. This highlights where attention should be focussed to meet the needs of particular audiences and gaps or perceived weaknesses in service provision. Further tailored research is however needed to explore what support would be most useful, as this study was not designed to illuminate what works best in helping adults to successfully resolve their legal problems.

¹⁰¹ HMCTS are keeping paper routes available for those who would prefer to access services in this way. HMCTS also offers a free digital support service (National digital support service) across England, Wales and Scotland, to support users who are unable to, or struggle getting online.

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Appendix A

Glossary of key definitions

Table A.1: Glossary

Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
Sex	Male	Respondents who were assigned 'male' as their sex at birth.
	Female	Respondents who were assigned 'female' as their sex at birth.
Age	18–24	Respondents who were aged between 18 and 24 years old at the time of interview.
	25–34	Respondents who were aged between 25 and 34 years old at the time of interview.
	35–44	Respondents who were aged between 35 and 44 years old at the time of interview.
	45–54	Respondents who were aged between 45 and 54 years old at the time of interview.
	55–64	Respondents who were aged between 55 and 64 years old at the time of interview.
	65–74	Respondents who were aged between 65 and 74 years old at the time of interview.
	75+	Respondents who were aged 75 and over at the time of interview.
Ethnicity	White	Respondents who self-identified their ethnic group as 'White' and one of the following: White British, White Irish, White Gypsy or Irish Traveller, another white background.

Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
	Asian	Respondents who self-identified their ethnic group as 'Asian or Asian British' and one of the following: Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, another Asian background.
	Black	Respondents who self-identified their ethnic group as 'Black or Black British' and one of the following: Caribbean, African, another black background.
	Mixed	Respondents who self-identified their ethnic group as 'Mixed' and one of the following: White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, another mixed background.
	Other	Respondents who selected that their ethnic group was another background or selected either Arab or another ethnic group.
Country	England	Respondents who lived in England at the time of interview.
	Wales	Respondents who lived in Wales at the time of interview.
Long term illness	Yes	Respondents who reported they had a physical and/or mental health condition/illness lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more.
	No	Respondents who reported no physical or mental health condition lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more.
Pregnant	Currently / Last year	Female respondents who were either pregnant at the time of interview or were pregnant in the previous year.
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual / straight	Respondents who self-identified as 'heterosexual or straight' at the time of interview.
	Gay or Lesbian	Respondents who self-identified as 'gay or lesbian' at the time of interview.
	Bisexual	Respondents who self-identified as 'bisexual' at the time of interview.

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Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
	Other	Respondents who selected another sexual orientation that was not listed.
Highest level of education	Degree level or above	Respondents who held a degree or above: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctorate or equivalent (e.g., PhD, Dphil) • Master's degree or equivalent (e.g., MA, MBA, MSc) • Undergraduate degree or equivalent (e.g. NVQ / SVQ level 4 or 5).
	A Level or equivalent	Respondents who held A-Level / AS-Levels or equivalent (e.g., NVQ / SVQ / GSVQ level 3, SCE Higher, International Baccalaureate).
	GCSE / O level or equivalent	Respondents who held O level / GCSE or equivalent (e.g. NVQ / SVQ / GSVQ level 2, BTEC, General Certificate City and Guilds Craft).
	Trade Apprenticeships or equivalent	Respondents who held a Trade Apprenticeship or equivalent.
	Other form of qualification	Respondents' highest qualification was another form of qualification that was not listed.
Religion	No religion	Respondents who selected their religion as 'no religion'.
	Catholic	Respondents who selected their religion as 'Catholic'.
	Church of England / Scotland / Ireland	Respondents who selected their religion as 'Church of England / Scotland / Ireland'.
	Church in Wales	Respondents who selected their religion as 'Church of Wales'.
	Other Christian	Respondents who selected their religion as 'Other Christian'.
	Buddhist	Respondents who selected their religion as 'Buddhist'.

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Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
	Hindu	Respondents who selected their religion as 'Hindu'.
	Jewish	Respondents who selected their religion was 'Jewish'.
	Muslim	Respondents who selected their religion was 'Muslim'.
	Sikh	Respondents who selected their religion was 'Sikh'.
Employment status	In employment	Respondents who selected their current working status as one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working for an employer full-time • Working for an employer part-time • Self-employed
	Unemployed	Respondents who selected their current working status as one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed (less than 12 months) • Unemployed (12 months or more)
	Inactive	Respondents who selected their current working status as one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not working: on maternity/paternity leave • Not working: retired • Not working: looking after house / children / relatives • Not working: permanently sick / disabled • Student (full-time) • Student (part-time)

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Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
Receiving benefits	Means tested	Respondents who reported they were in receipt of one or more of the following benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income support • Employment Support Allowance (ESA) • Income based Job-seekers Allowance • Guaranteed pension credit • Universal Credit • Tax credits • Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance
	Non-means-tested	Respondents who reported they were in receipt of one or more of the following benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State pension • Child benefit
	No benefits	Respondents who reported they were not in receipt of any state benefits.
Single parent household	Yes	Households with a child/children aged 0–18 years old and one parent.
	No	Households that consist of a child/children aged 0–18 years old and adults living as a couple.
Household income	Less than £14,000	Respondent’s household income was less than £14,000 per year. If respondent lived with a partner, this included the joint pre-tax annual income.
	£14,000 – £32,000	Respondent’s household income was between £14,000 and £32,000 per year. If respondent lived with a partner, this included the joint pre-tax annual income.

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Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
	£32,001 – £60,000	Respondent's household income was between £32,001 and £60,000 per year. If respondent lived with a partner, this included the joint pre-tax annual income.
	£60,001 or above	Respondent's household income was over £60,000 per year. If respondent lived with a partner, this included the joint pre-tax annual income.
Eligibility for Legal Aid	Yes	This includes respondents who had £8,000 or less in savings, shares or investments and either of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-tax annual income from all sources is £32,000 or less • In receipt of income support, employment support allowance, income-based job-seekers allowance, guaranteed pension credit or universal credit
	No	This includes respondents who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had a household pre-tax annual income of more than £32,000, or had more than more than £8,000 in savings, shares or investments. If respondents lived with a partner, this included their pre-tax annual income or their savings, shares or investments. • Were not in receipt of income support, employment support allowance, income-based job-seekers allowance, guaranteed pension credit or universal credit
Tenure	Owned outright / buying with a mortgage	Respondents who own their accommodation through one of the following means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own it outright • Buying it with the help of a mortgage or loan • Pay part rent and part mortgage (shared ownership)
	Rent from private landlord	Respondents who rent their accommodation from a private landlord.

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Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
	Rent from council / housing association	Respondents who rent their accommodation from a local authority or housing association.
	Rent free	Respondents who live in their accommodation rent free (including rent free in relative / friend's property, excluding squatting)
English proficiency	Very well	Respondents who self-reported they speak English 'very well'.
	Well	Respondents who self-reported they speak English 'well'.
	Not well / Not at all	Respondents who self-reported they speak English 'not well' or 'not at all'.
Marital status	Married / in a civil partnership	Respondents who were married or in a registered civil partnership at the time of interview.
	Cohabiting	Respondents who have never been married or never registered in a civil partnership and live with someone in the same household as a couple.
	Single	Respondents who have never been married or never registered in a civil partnership and do not live with someone in the same household as a couple.
	Separated	Respondents who were separated but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership at the time of interview.
	Divorced / Legally dissolved partnership	Respondents who were divorced or were formerly in a civil partnership which was legally dissolved at the time of interview.
	Widowed	Respondents who were widowed at the time of interview.

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Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
Digital capability	Low	Respondents who have never done any of the following online, and do not feel confident in their ability to do so: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay bills • Online banking • Send or receive emails • Make a video call • Set-up 2-step ID verification • Looking online for information on government websites • Completing government processes online
	Medium	Respondents who have done some of the following online, and have mixed level of confidence to do so: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay bills • Online banking • Send or receive emails • Make a video call • Set-up 2-step ID verification • Looking online for information on government websites • Completing government processes online
	High	Respondents who have done all of the following online, or feel confident in their ability to do so: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay bills • Online banking • Send or receive emails • Make a video call • Set-up 2-step ID verification • Looking online for information on government websites • Completing government processes online

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Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
Internet use	Never online	Respondents who are never online.
	Less than once a week	Respondents who are online less often than once a week, in a typical week.
	Up to 8 hours a week	Respondents who are online up to 8 hours per week, in a typical week.
	9–15 hours a week	Respondents who are online between 9 and 15 hours per week, in a typical week.
	16–22 hours a week	Respondents who are online between 16 and 22 hours per week, in a typical week.
	Over 22 hours	Respondents who are online over 22 hours per week, in a typical week.
Legal problems	All with a legal problem excluding divorce or probate	Respondents who have experienced any problems related to consumer, employment, neighbours, owning a residential property, renting a residential property, debt, money, benefits, relationship breakdown problems, education or accident and illness – and excluding divorce and probate.
	All with a legal problem including divorce or probate	Respondents who have experienced any problems related to consumer, employment, neighbours, owning a residential property, renting a residential property, debt, money, benefits, relationship breakdown problems, education or accident and illness – and including divorce or probate.

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Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
Problem jurisdiction	Civil	Respondents who had experienced at least one of the following problem categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer problems • Neighbour problems • Owned residential problems • Rented residential problems • Debt problems • Money problems • Accident and illness problems.
	Family	Respondents who had at least one problem linked to the break-up of a relationship or disputes over children.
	Administrative	Respondents who had experienced at least one of the following problem categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment problems • Benefits problems • Education problems
Number of problem categories experienced	None	Respondents who had not experienced any legal problems.
	One	Respondents who had problem(s) in one problem category only.
	Two	Respondents who had problem(s) in two problem categories.
	Three	Respondents who had problem(s) in three problem categories.
	Four or more	Respondents who had problem(s) in four or more problem categories.
Number of individual problem types experienced within a problem category	None	Respondents who had not experienced any legal problems.

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Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
	One	Respondents who had experienced one type of problem only within a problem category.
	Two	Respondents who had experienced two different types of problems within a problem category.
	Three	Respondents who had experienced three different types of problems within a problem category.
	Four or more	Respondents who had experienced four or more different types of problems within a problem category.
Advisor type	Barrister	Respondents who reported they had obtained information, advice or help from a barrister.
	Solicitor's firm	Respondents who reported they had obtained information, advice or help from a solicitor's firm.
	Law Centre	Respondents who reported they had obtained information, advice or help from a Law Centre.
	Civil Legal Advice	Respondents who reported they had obtained information, advice or help from Civil Legal Advice.
	Another advice service	Respondents who reported they had obtained information, advice or help from another organisation that was not listed.
Advisor fees	Paid in full themselves	Respondents who reported they personally paid for all of the information, advice or help they had received from a legal advisor.
	Paid partially themselves	Respondents who reported they personally paid for some of the information, advice or help they had received from a legal advisor.

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Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
	Did not pay themselves	Respondents who reported they did not personally pay for the information, advice or help they had received from a legal advisor.
Whether problem concluded	Yes	Respondents who reported that their legal problem was 'done with' at the time of interview. This included those who reported that their legal problem was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Done with but the problem persists; they have given up trying to resolve it further • Done with and problem was resolved
	No	Respondents who reported that their legal problem was 'ongoing' or 'too early to say' at the time of interview.
Of concluded problems, whether problem is resolved	Resolved	Respondents who said that their legal problem was 'done with', and it had been resolved.
	Problem persists	Respondents who said that their legal problem was 'done with', but the problem persisted, and they had given up trying to resolve it further.
Length of concluded problem	0–3 months	Respondents whose problem had concluded and lasted 3 months or less.
	4–6 months	Respondents whose problem had concluded and lasted between 4 to 6 months.
	7–12 months	Respondents whose problem had concluded and lasted between 7 to 12 months.
	1–2 years	Respondents whose problem had concluded and lasted between 1 and 2 years.
	3–4 years	Respondents whose problem had concluded and lasted between 3 and 4 years.

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Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
	Longer than 4 years	Respondents whose problem had concluded and lasted longer than 4 years.
Length of all problems (this includes estimated timeframes for those with ongoing problems using the start date of the problem given in the interview, and the date of interview)	0–3 months	Respondents who had either a problem that concluded within 3 months or an ongoing problem at the time of interview estimated to conclude within 3 months.
	4–6 months	Respondents who had either a problem that concluded in 4 to 6 months or an ongoing problem at the time of interview.
	7–11 months	Respondents who had either a problem that concluded in 7 to 11 months or an ongoing problem at the time of interview.
	12–18 months	Respondents who had either a problem that concluded in 12 to 18 months or an ongoing problem at the time of interview.
	19–30 months	Respondents who had either a problem that concluded in 19 to 30 months or an ongoing problem at the time of interview.
	31–59 months	Respondents who had either a problem that concluded in 31 – 59 months or an ongoing problem at the time of interview.
	60 months or more	Respondents who had either a problem that concluded in 60 months or more or an ongoing problem at the time of interview.
Cluster of problems	Five or fewer	Respondents who had experienced problems across five or fewer problem categories.
	Between six and ten	Respondents who had experienced problems between six and ten problem categories.
	More than ten	Respondents who had experienced problems across more than ten problem categories.

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Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
Whether went to court	Yes	Respondents who either personally, or the other side, made a claim or appeal to a tribunal or court or made use of a court process, such as money claims online.
	No	Respondents who reported one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They, or somebody acting on their behalf, contacted a regulator or ombudsman • They participated in an independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration • Did not take any of the actions listed.
Type of help obtained	Formal	Respondents who used “formal” types of help to try and resolve their problem, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicitors firm • Barrister • Law centre • Civil Legal Advice • Courts and Tribunals Service Centre • National Digital Support Service • Another independent advisor or representative, such as Citizens Advice, a trade union, Shelter or the Money Advice Service • Police • Credit Card Company / Bank • Housing Association / Landlord • Local council / Council department

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Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
	Informal	<p>Respondents who used “informal” types of help to try and resolve their problem, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK government website (GOV.UK) • Social media • Other internet websites • A leaflet, book or self-help guide • Family or friends • Those on the other side of the problem or dispute
Most formal help obtained	Legal advice obtained	<p>Respondents who obtained advice from legal advisors, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A solicitor’s firm • A Barrister • A law centre • Civil Legal Advice
	Professional advice obtained	<p>Respondents who did not obtain legal advice (as described above) but did obtain advice from professional advisors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courts and Tribunals Service Centre • National Digital Support Service • Another independent advisor or representative, such as Citizens Advice, a trade union, Shelter or the Money Advice Service etc • Police • Credit Card Company / Bank • Housing Association / Landlord • Local Council / Council department

Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
	Self-obtained	<p>Respondents who did not obtain either legal or professional advice (as described above) but did obtain advice by themselves, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UK Government website (GOV.UK) • Social media • Other internet websites • A leaflet, book or self-help guide • Family or friends • Those on the other side of the problem or dispute
	Tried to obtain advice but failed	<p>Respondents who reported that they tried to obtain help from either legal advisors, professional advisors, or self-obtained help, but were unable to get help.</p>
	Not obtained	<p>Respondents who reported that they did not try to obtain help at all.</p>
Type of resolution strategy	Formal	<p>Respondents who used a “formal” resolution strategy reported that they obtained either legal or professional help or reported a specific action that happened as part of the problem or sorting it out.</p> <p>This includes respondents who reported they used one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicitors firm • Barrister • Law centre • Civil Legal Advice • Courts and Tribunals Service Centre • National Digital Support Service • Another independent advisor or representative, such as Citizens Advice, a trade union, Shelter or the Money Advice Service

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Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police • Credit Card Company / Bank • Housing Association / Landlord • Local council / Council department <p>It also includes respondents who reported one of the following actions as part of resolving their problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacted a regulator or ombudsman (either they or somebody acting on their behalf) • They made a claim or appeal to a tribunal or court or made use of a court process • The other side made a claim or appeal to a tribunal or court or made use of a court process • Participated in independent conciliation, mediation, or arbitration
	Informal	<p>Respondents who used “informal” resolution strategies to help with their problem, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK government website (GOV.UK) • Social media • Other internet websites • A leaflet, book or self-help guide • Family or friends • Those on the other side of the problem or dispute

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Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
Experienced adverse consequences	Yes	<p>Respondents who felt their problem contributed to any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress-related illness or other mental health problem • Physical illness • A break-up with a spouse or partner • A breakdown of other relationships such as with family or friends • Having to move home • Homelessness • Loss of income or financial strain • Unemployment • Harassment, abuse, assault or being threatened • Damage to your property • Loss of confidence
	No	Respondents who said that they did not experience any of the above adverse consequences as a result of their legal problem.
How serious a problem was perceived to be	Low	Respondents who rated their problem as 1–3 on a scale of 1–10 of how serious they perceived their problem to be.
	Medium	Respondents who rated their problem as 4–7 on a scale of 1–10 of how serious they perceived their problem to be.
	High	Respondents who rated their problem as 8–10 on a scale of 1–10 of how serious they perceived their problem to be.

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Different groups	Sub-group	Definitions of each sub-group
Experienced discrimination	Yes	<p>Respondents who reported they experienced discrimination at any stage during their legal problem, including discrimination against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race • Gender • Disability • Sexual orientation • Age • Religion • Being pregnant or having recently given birth • Being married or in a civil partnership • Being transgender (e.g. trans man or trans woman)
	No	Respondents who reported they did not experience any discrimination related to their legal problem.
Perception of problem as legal	Yes	Respondents who said that they would have described their problem as a legal problem when it first began.
	No	Respondents who said that they would not have described their problem as a legal problem when it first began.
Problem related to COVID-19	Greatly / To some extent	Respondents who noted that their problem was related to the COVID-19 pandemic to a great extent, or to some extent.
	Hardly / Not at all	Respondents who noted that their problem was related to the COVID-19 pandemic hardly at all, or not at all.

Table A.2: General Legal Confidence scores

General Legal Confidence (GLC): Responses from six statements around legal confidence at question B4 were combined to produce a GLC score, ranging from 0 to 100. A higher score indicates greater legal confidence.¹⁰²

Statements	GLC score	Definition
A) the disagreement is substantial B) The other side says they will not compromise C) The other side will only speak to you through their solicitor D) A notice from court says you must complete certain forms, including setting out your case	Low GLC	Respondents who had “low” GLC scores (0–36 out of 100), indicated lower levels of legal confidence.
E) The problem goes to court, a barrister represents the other side, and you are on your own	Medium GLC	Respondents who had “medium” GLC scores (37–58 out of 100), indicated medium levels of legal confidence.
F) The court makes a judgement against you, which you see as unfair. You are told you have a right to appeal	High GLC	Respondents who had “high” GLC scores (59–100 out of 100), indicated greater levels of legal confidence.

¹⁰² For more information on the GLC scores and Rash converted scores see Pleasence, P. T., & Balmer, N. J. (2018). Legal confidence and attitudes to law: developing standardised measures of legal capability accessed via <https://research.thelegaleducationfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Legal-Confidence-and-Attitudes-to-Law-Developing-Standardised-Measures-of-Legal-Capability-web-version-1.pdf>

Table A.3: Legal Anxiety scores

Legal Anxiety (LAX): Responses from four statements on legal anxiety at question B5 were combined to produce a LAX score, ranging from 0 to 100. A higher score indicates greater legal anxiety.¹⁰³

Statements	LAX score	Definition
A) I am afraid to speak to people directly to press my rights. B) Worry that I don't express myself clearly can stop me from acting.	Low LAX	Respondents who had "low" LAX scores (0–29 out of 100), indicated lower levels of legal anxiety.
C) I avoid pressing my rights because I am not confident, I will be successful.	Medium LAX	Respondents who had "medium" LAX scores (30–56 out of 100), indicated medium levels of legal anxiety.
D) I do not always get the best outcome for myself, because I try to avoid conflict.	High LAX	Respondents who had "high" LAX scores (57–100 out of 100), indicated greater levels of legal anxiety.

¹⁰³ For more information on the LAX scores and Rash converted scores see Pleasence, P. T., & Balmer, N. J. (2018). Legal confidence and attitudes to law: developing standardised measures of legal capability accessed via <https://research.thelegaleducationfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Legal-Confidence-and-Attitudes-to-Law-Developing-Standardised-Measures-of-Legal-Capability-web-version-1.pdf>

Table A.4: Legal Self-Efficacy scores

Legal Self-Efficacy (LEF): Responses from six statements around legal self-efficacy at question B3 were combined to produce a LEF score, ranging from 0 to 100. A higher score indicates greater legal self-efficacy.¹⁰⁴

Statements	LEF score	Definition
A) I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.	Low LEF	Respondents who had “low” LEF scores (0–42 out of 100), indicated lower levels of legal self-efficacy.
B) If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.		
C) It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.	Medium LEF	Respondents who had “medium” LEF scores (43–67 out of 100), indicated medium levels of legal self-efficacy.
D) I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.	High LEF	Respondents who had “high” LEF scores (68–100 out of 100), indicated greater levels of legal self-efficacy.
E) When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.		
F) I am good at finding information to help resolve problems.		

¹⁰⁴ For more information on the LEF scores and Rash converted scores see Pleasence, P. T., & Balmer, N. J. (2018). Legal confidence and attitudes to law: developing standardised measures of legal capability accessed via <https://research.thelegaleducationfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Legal-Confidence-and-Attitudes-to-Law-Developing-Standardised-Measures-of-Legal-Capability-web-version-1.pdf>

Appendix B

Definitions and explanations of the most formal resolution strategy

Table B.1: Definitions of the most formal resolution strategy

Type of resolution strategy	Definition	Categorised as formal or informal
Formal resolution process	<p>Respondent said that one of the following occurred as part of the problem or sorting it out. These could be instigated by the respondent or the party on the other side.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you, or somebody acting on your behalf, contact a regulator or ombudsman? • Did you make a claim or appeal to a tribunal or court or make use of a court process, such as money claims online? • Did the other side take a claim to a tribunal or court or make use of a court process? • Did you participate in independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration – by this we mean when a neutral third party helps both sides try to reach a solution 	Formal
Legal / Professional help	<p>Respondent said they used one of the following as a source of advice / information and said they did not use court:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Solicitor's Firm • A Barrister • A Law Centre • Civil Legal Advice • Courts and Tribunals Service Centre • National Digital Support Service in partnership with 'We Are Digital'. • Another independent adviser or representative, such as Citizens Advice, a trade union, Shelter or the Money Advice Service etc. • Police • Credit Card Company / Bank • Housing Association / Landlord • Local Council / Council department 	Formal

Type of resolution strategy	Definition	Categorised as formal or informal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any other organisation 	
Self-help only	<p>Respondent said they used any of the below and have not gone to court or used any legal / professional advice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UK Government website, GOV.UK Social media Other internet websites A leaflet, book or self-help guide Family or friends Those on the other side of the problem or dispute <p>Or they <i>tried</i> contacting the other party to the dispute or they <i>tried</i> to resolve the problem further.</p> <p>In trying to sort out this “problem description”, did you personally, or through a solicitor, talk or communicate with the other side?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes – Personally <p>Did you do anything to try to resolve the problem?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes 	Informal
Did not take action	<p>Respondent did not use any of the above and did not try to do anything to resolve the problem or try to speak to the other side. This category does not include those who said don’t know / prefer not to say when asked about sources of advice / information.</p>	