



News Release issued at 9.45am on Tuesday 19 October 2021

Embargoed to 2.30pm on Thursday 21 October 2021

Lack of information on what happens to recyclates after collection risks undermining public confidence in recycling

In England, Scotland and Wales, **lack of information about what happens to recyclates after collection** was given as the top reason in all three nations that negatively influences public confidence in recycling. This insight emerges from a GB-wide public survey carried out by the Industry Council for Packaging and the Environment (INCOPEN).

According to the survey of over 2,000 citizens, the provision of information on what happens to recyclates after collection can positively improve confidence in recycling. Conversely, the lack of information can negatively influence public confidence, and impact on citizens' behaviours and municipal recycling rates.

Positive influences on public confidence in recycling

In Wales, **provision of information on what happens to recycling after collection** is the top positive influence on public confidence in recycling at home. In England this is equal first alongside **having a good service that is reliable and well-designed**, this being the third top influence in Wales.

In Scotland, the top positive influence on public confidence in recycling at home is **having a good service that is reliable and well-designed**. Equal second influences are **information on what happens to recycling after collection**, and **seeing lots of households in the area recycling effectively**, the latter also being the second top influence in Wales and the fourth in England.

Net positive public confidence in recycling in all three nations

Overall, **public confidence that recycling collected from home is actually recycled** is highest in Wales with a net positive of +43%¹. Scotland has a net positive of +36%, and England a net positive of +24%.

Public confidence that recycling collected from on-street bins is actually recycled is lower across all three nations with net positives of +25% in Wales, +16% in Scotland and +9% in England.

¹ Please see **Annex 1** for calculations of all the net positive and net negative figures in the body of this news release.

Changes in public confidence in last 6 months

In the survey, more respondents in Wales and Scotland said they have seen or heard something in the last six months that impacted positively on their confidence rather than negatively. Net confidence has gone up over the last six months in Wales by +8% and Scotland by +5%.

However, in England, more respondents said they had seen or heard something to impact negatively on their confidence in recycling compared to those saying they'd seen something positive. In England, public confidence has gone down by a net negative figure of -4% over the last six months.

Confidence and recycling behaviours

44% of respondents in England, 46% in Scotland and 50% in Wales said their **own recycling behaviours are influenced by whether items actually get recycled**.

Conversely, the number of respondents saying their recycling behaviours are not influenced by whether items actually get recycled were 22% in England, 24% in Wales and 26% in Scotland.

Around double the respondents say their behaviours are influenced by whether items actually get recycled than say they're not.

Support public confidence

The top 4 positive influences in all three nations are the same although in differing order: -

- **A good service that is reliable and well-designed:** top in Scotland and equal first in England.
- **Information on what happens to recycling after collection:** top in Wales and equal first in England
- **Information on how well the area is doing at recycling;** and
- **Seeing lots of households in the area recycle effectively.**

Other influences emerging from the survey include: -

- Seeing how the recycling is collected
- TV news or documentaries about recycling (sixth positive influence in England and Wales)
- Social media such as Facebook and Twitter; and
- Word of mouth, family & friends.

Paul Vanston, CEO of INCPEN said, "A great plan now would be for the recycling supply chain to come together and shape the national and local actions to help improve public confidence because this will help with public behaviours and bolster recycling rates. INCPEN is continuing our work with those councils that have a great history of providing public information on what happens to recyclates. We are ready to broaden the partners, and the agenda, to ensure public confidence is actively supported".

Encouraging sectors to work together on public confidence in recycling was a key call to action in INCPEN's public launch of the survey results at the Resourcing the Future conference in London on 21 October 2021.

END

Editor's Notes

1. Questions about this press release can be directed to Paul Vanston, CEO of INCPEN.
Email: paul.vanston@incpen.org
2. INCPEN is presenting the results contained in this News Release at the **Resourcing the Future (RtF) Conference at 2.30pm on Thursday 21 October 2021**. This is the reason for the embargo, though we also appreciate media colleagues find it helpful to have information in advance for reporting purposes.
3. The survey results presented at the RtF Conference are attached at **Annex 1**.
4. The GB survey comprised 2,049 respondents. It was conducted from 25 to 31 August 2021 by Icaro Consulting using the panel provider Savanta.
5. The objectives of the survey were: -
 - To understand how confident citizens are about recyclates actually being recycled, whether collected from homes or via on-street bins.
 - To understand what things impact positively or negatively on citizens' confidence.
 - To help inform development of national/local communications activities including: -
 - a) Analysing what influences public confidence & recycling behaviours, which may then have an impact on recycling rates;
 - b) Development of communications tools and activities highlighted by citizens as being important to reinforce their confidence; and
 - c) Maximising impacts of packaging reforms (e.g. Extended Producer Responsibility & Consistency of Recycling Collections).
6. INCPEN's 'Public Confidence in Recycling' survey is aimed to be conducted annually. This will enable public confidence to be 'tracked' over an extended period. Results will inform national activities by the governments, the forthcoming EPR & DRS Administrators, local authorities and the wider value chain.
7. Whilst the survey was for GB and not the whole of the UK owing to constraints beyond INCPEN's control, efforts are being made to explore options to repeat the survey in 2021 in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
8. A further News Release outlining actions developed by existing partners working with INCPEN will be published in 2022. This enables new partners to join the Public Confidence in Recycling project over the remainder of 2021 and into 2022.

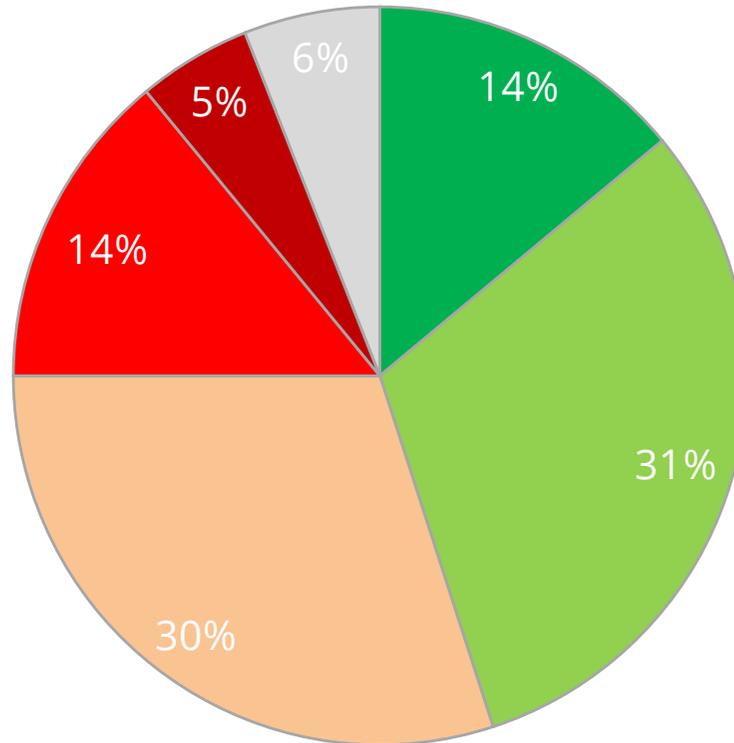
INCPEN presentation of GB survey results: Resourcing the Future Conference, 21 October 2022

Confidence in recycling from home



Q. How confident are you that the recycling collected from your home is actually recycled?

- Highly confident
- Mostly confident
- Moderately confident
- Not very confident
- Not at all confident
- No opinion/not sure



Base: 2,029 GB adults who recycle from home. August 2021

Net confidence (greens minus reds)
GB +26% 45% - 19%

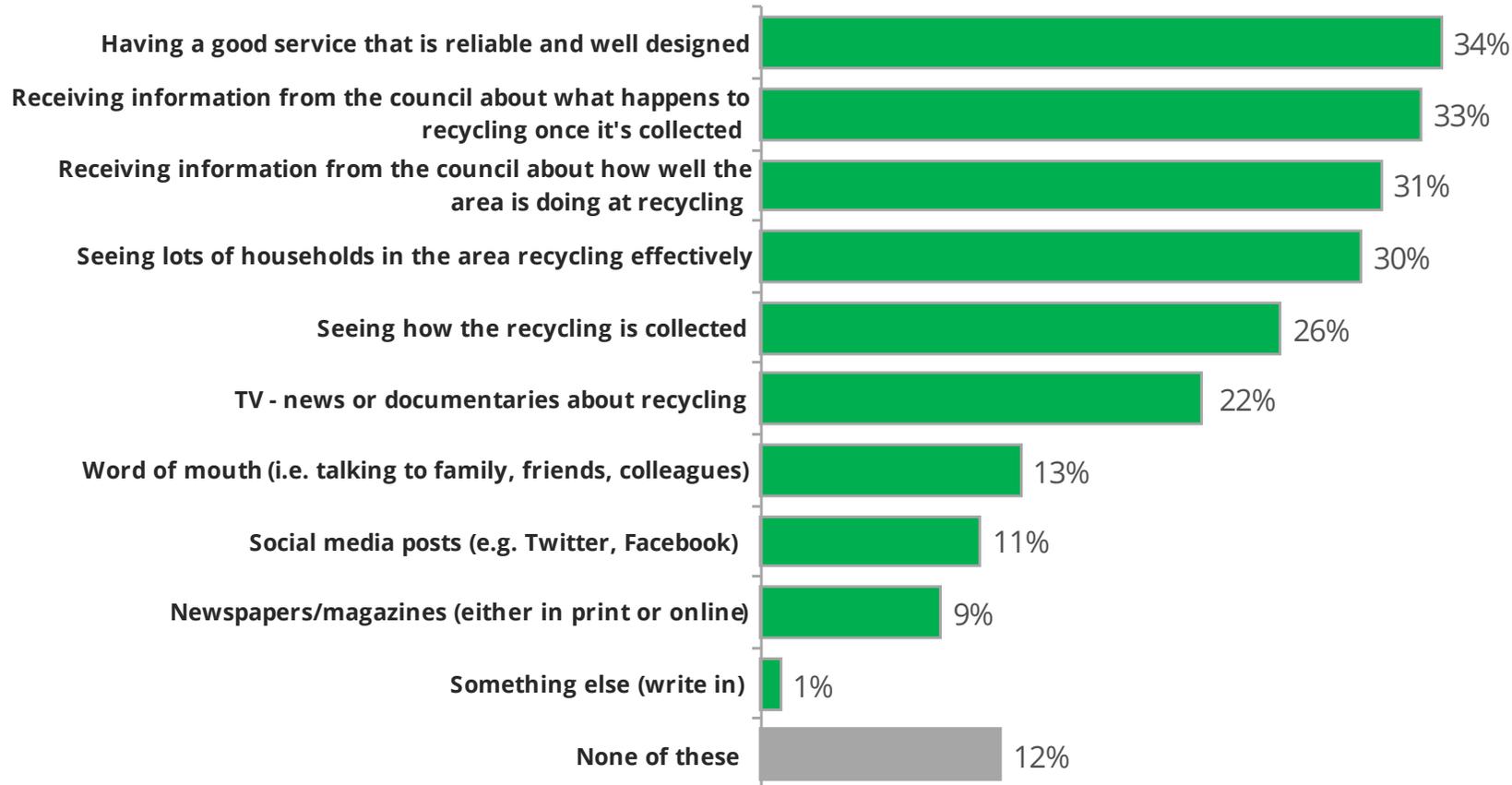
Highest net confidence
Wales +43% 57% - 14%
Scotland +36% 54% - 18%
 Men +30%

Lowest net confidence (but still positive)
England +24% 43% - 19%
 Communal collection +21%
 Women +21%

Positive influences on recycling confidence



Q. Which of the following, if any, positively influence your confidence in recycling from home?

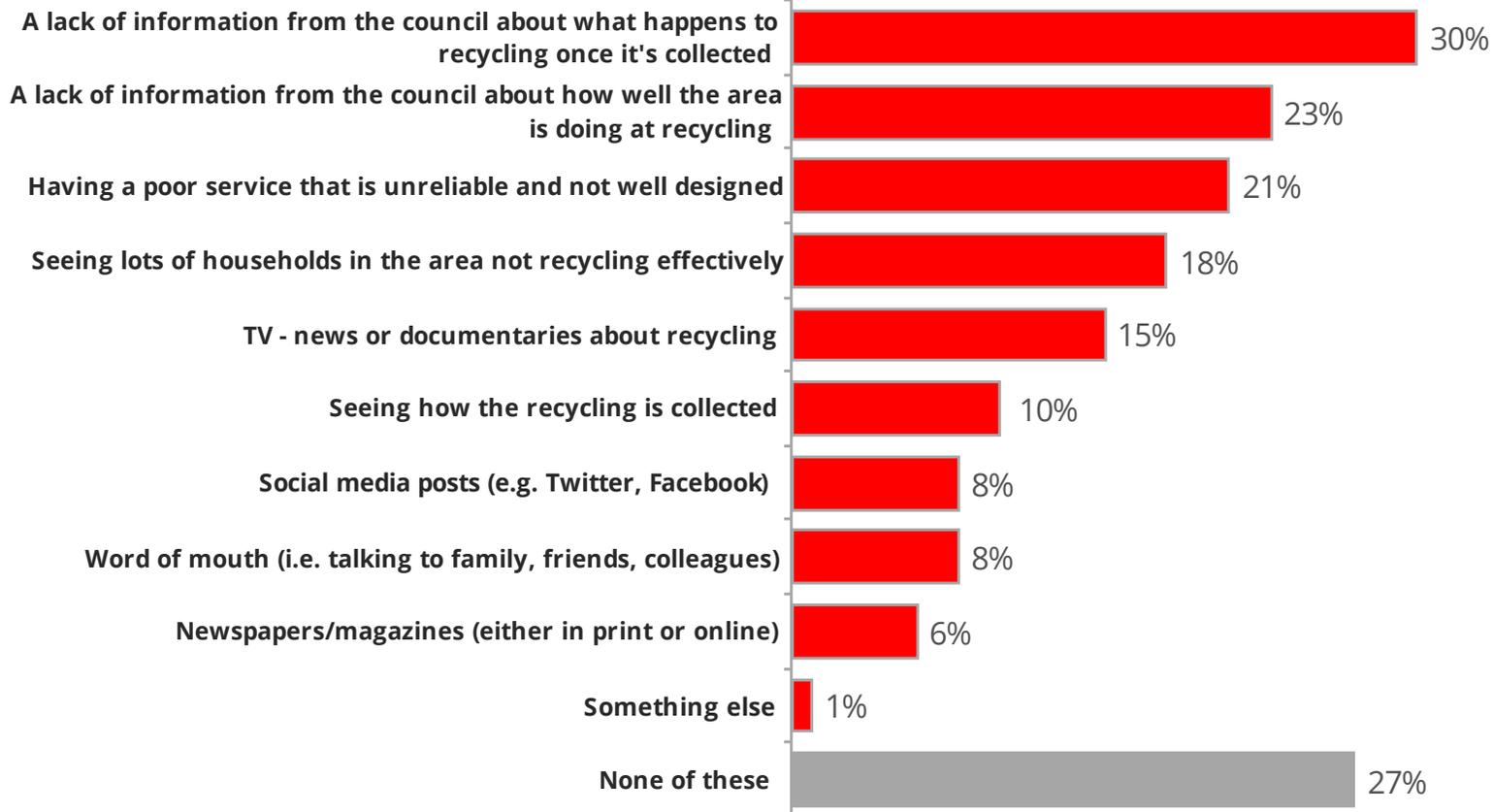


Base: 1,917 GB adults who recycle from home and express a view on their confidence in recycling from home. August 2021

Negative influences on recycling confidence



Q. And which of the following if any, negatively influence your confidence in recycling from home?

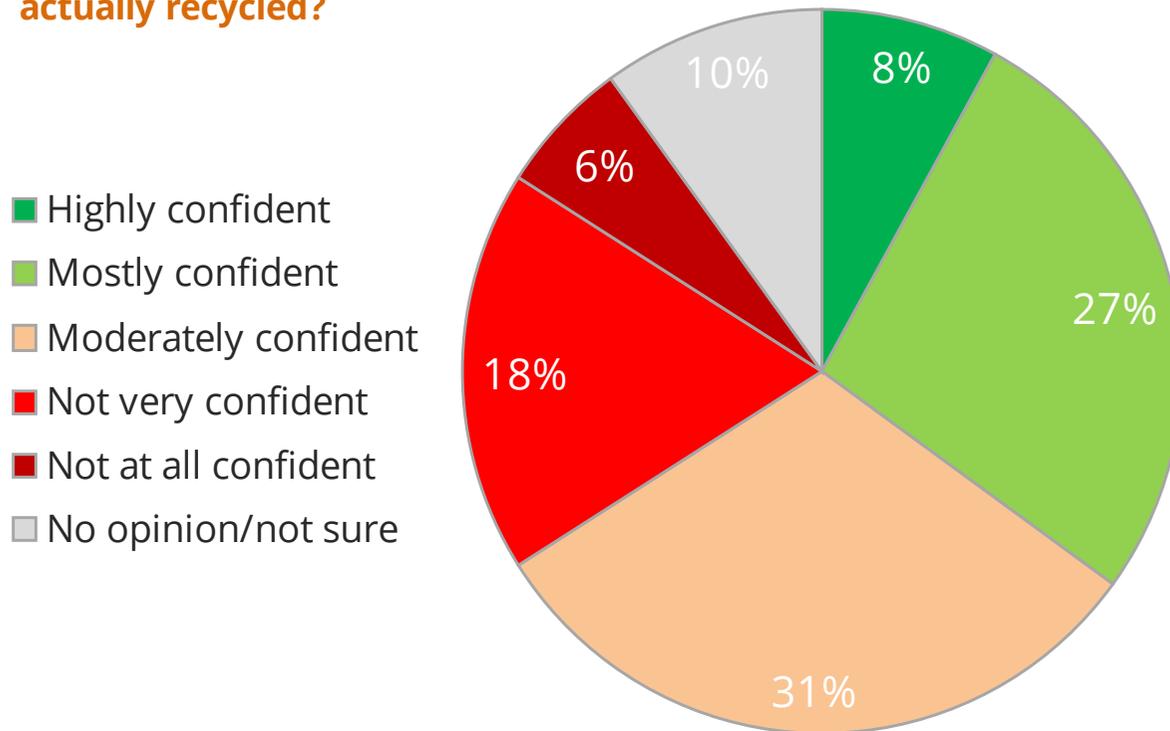


Base: 1,917 GB adults who recycle from home and express a view on their confidence in recycling from home August 2021

Confidence in on-street recycling



Q. And now thinking about recycling bins in the street (i.e. dedicated recycling bins that are sometimes put alongside litter bins in town centres/shopping malls/high streets), **how confident are you that the items disposed of here are actually recycled?**



Net confidence (greens minus reds)

GB +11% 45% - 19%

Highest net confidence

Wales: +25% 45% - 20%

Scotland: +16% 41% - 25%

Men: +16%

Lowest net confidence (but still positive)

England: +9% 33% - 24%

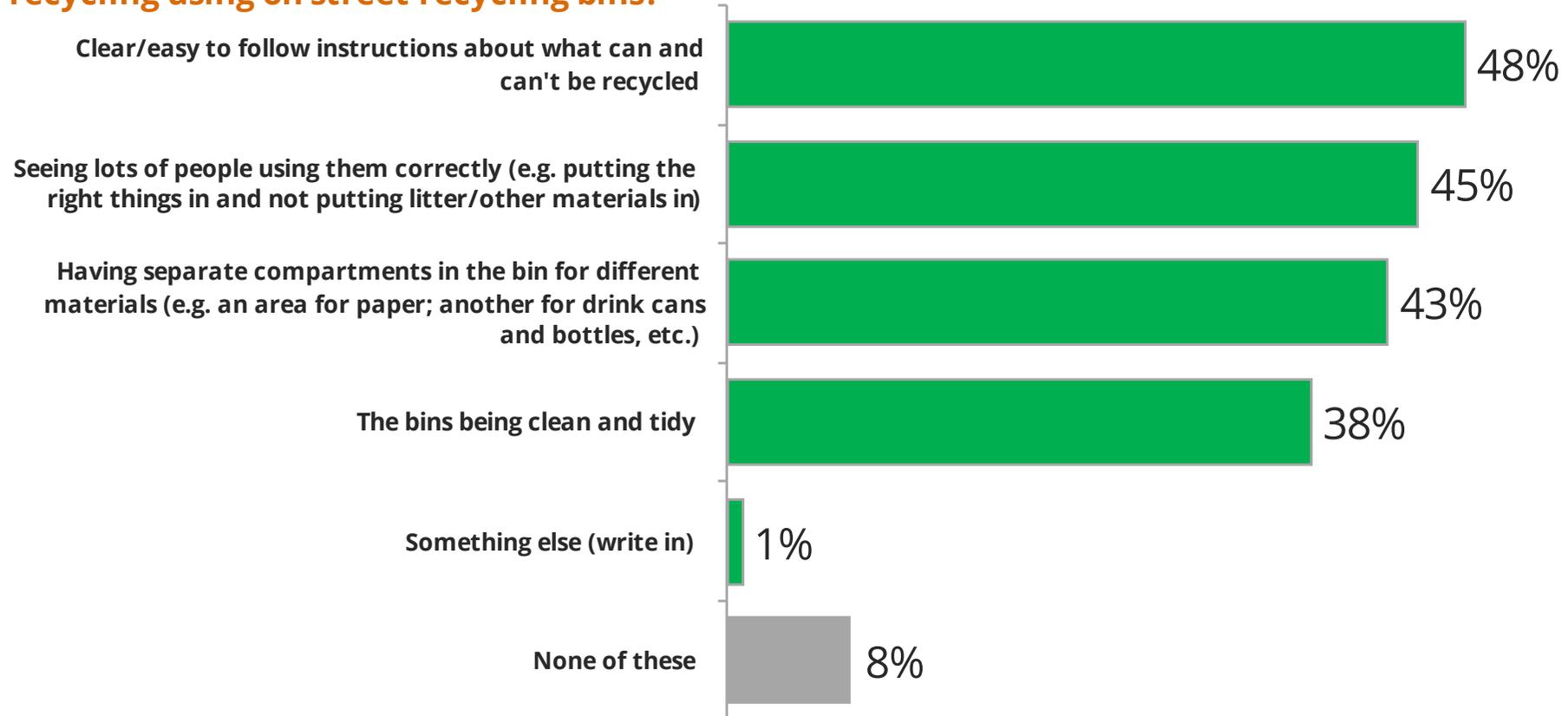
Women: +5%

Base: 2,049 GB adults. August 2021

Positive influences on on-street recycling confidence



Q. Which of the following, if any, positively influence your confidence in recycling using on-street recycling bins?

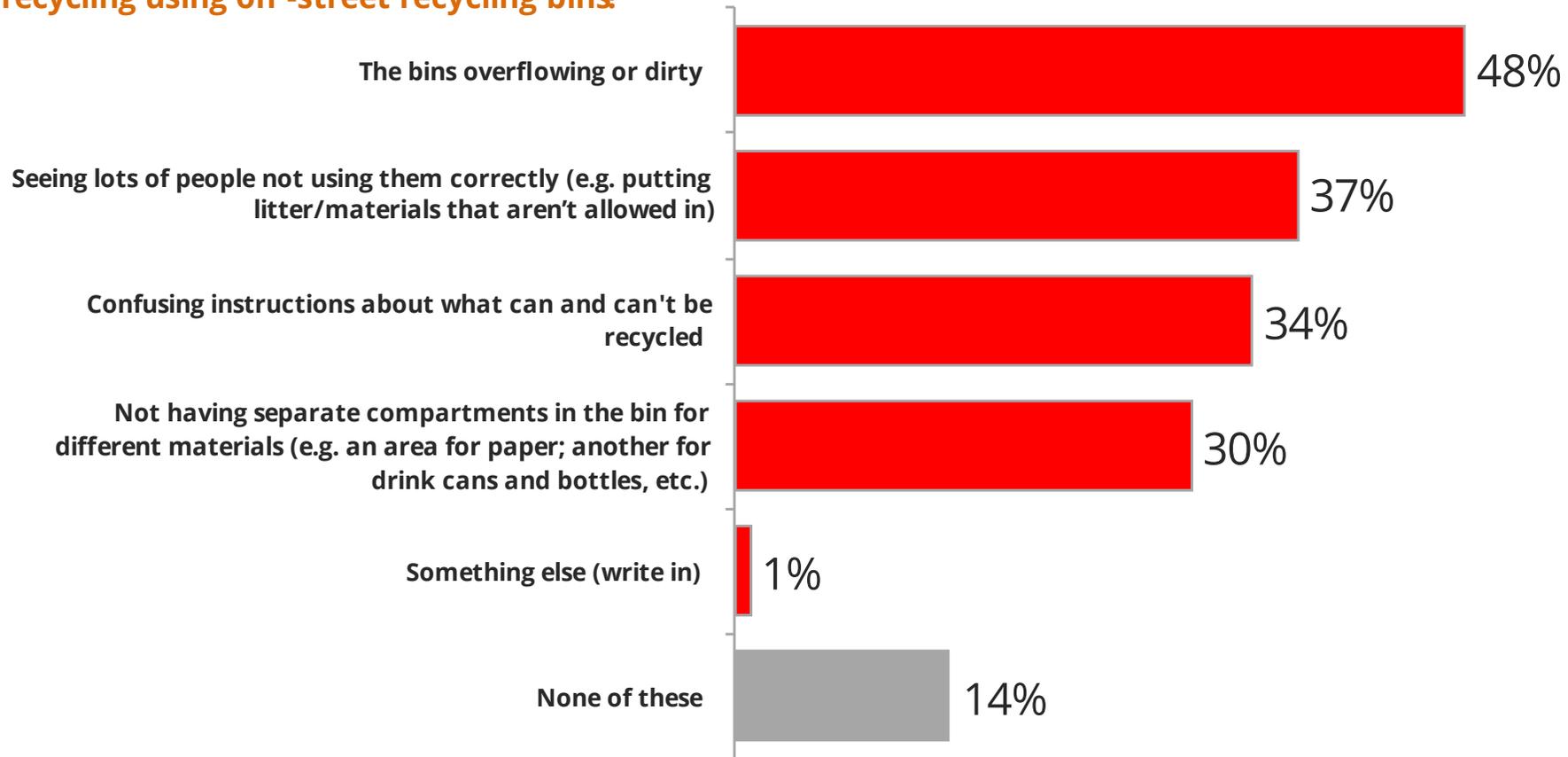


Base: 1,868 GB adults who express a view on their confidence of using in-street recycling. August 2021

Negative influences on on-street recycling confidence



Q. And which of the following if any, negatively influence your confidence in recycling using on -street recycling bins?



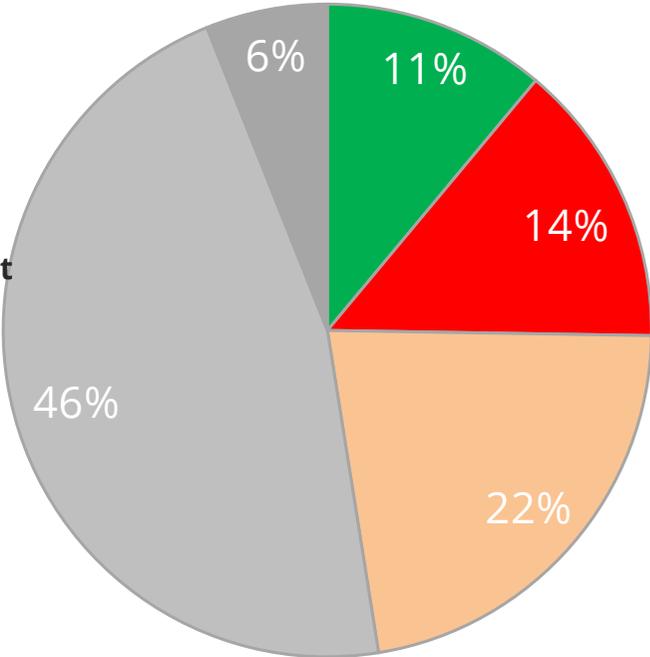
Base: 1,868 GB adults who express a view on their confidence of using in-street recycling. August 2021



Changes in confidence in past 6 months

Q. In the past six months or so, have you heard or seen something that has impacted - either positively or negatively - on your confidence in recycling?

- Yes, and my confidence in recycling has gone up
- Yes, and my confidence in recycling has gone down
- I have seen or heard things about recycling, but my confidence has stayed the same
- No, I've not seen or heard things about recycling
- Don't know



Base: 2,049 GB adults. August 2021

Net change past six months
(Green minus red)
GB -3% 11% - 14%

Confidence **UP** in last 6 months

Wales +8% 17% - 9%
Scotland +5% 13% - 8%

Confidence **DOWN** in last 6 months

England -4% 11% - 15%

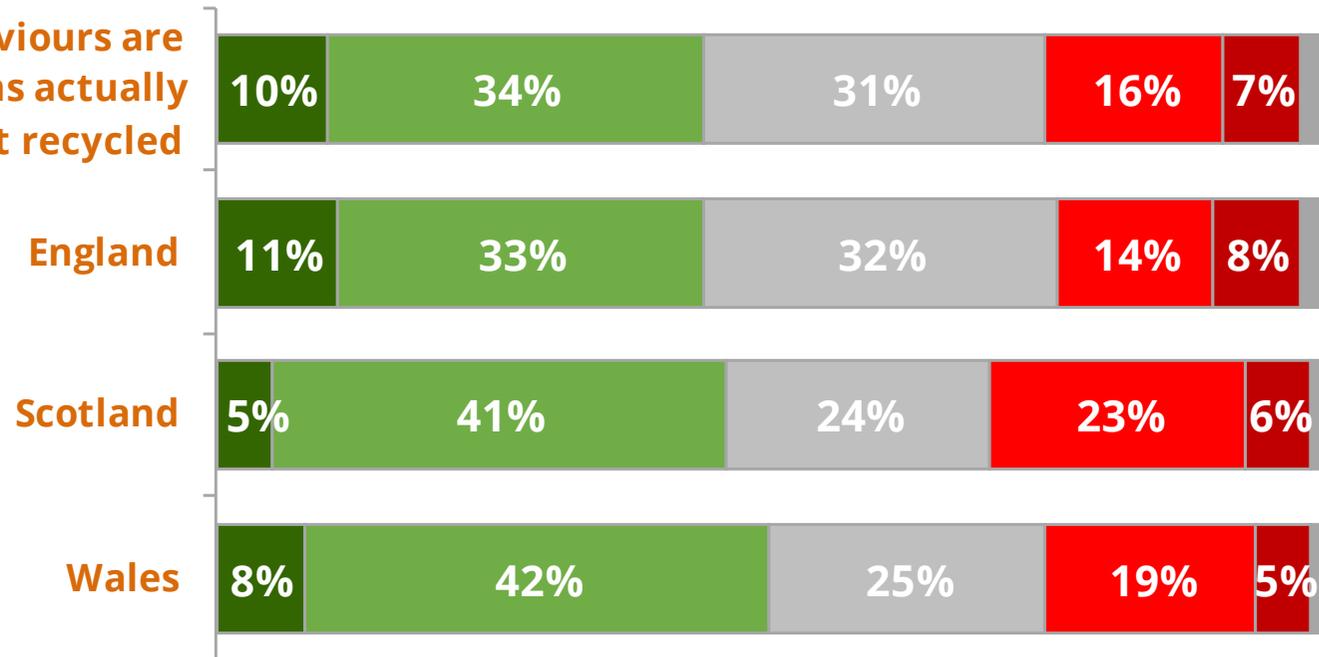
Recycling confidence and recycling behaviours



Q. Here is a statement
Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with it.

■ Strongly agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Don't know

GB: My own recycling behaviours are influenced by whether items actually get recycled



Base: 2,049 GB adults. August 2021

Strongly agree + Agree:



44%



46%



50%

What are positive influences on confidence?



The public indicate a **top 7** of **positive** influences on their confidence in recycling at home.

The foremost positive influences on confidence in recycling in England, Scotland and Wales are ...

A good service that is reliable and well-designed
Info on what happens to recycling after collection
Info on how well the area is doing at recycling
Seeing households in the area recycle effectively

Seeing how the recycling is collected

TV news or documentary

Word of mouth, family/friends



Top 7

1	34%
2	33%
3	31%
4	30%
5	26%
6	22%
7	13%

Top 7

=1	33%
=1	33%
3	31%
4	29%
5	15%
6	23%
7	13%

Top 7

1	38%
=2	36%
4	31%
=2	36%
5	15%
7	9%
6	10%

Top 7

3	34%
1	39%
4	30%
2	35%
7	9%
6	21%
5	17%

What are negative influences on confidence?



The public indicate a **top 7** of **negative** influences on their confidence in recycling at home.

Top negative influence on confidence in recycling is the same for England, Scotland and Wales ...



Top 7



Top 7



Top 7



Top 7

Lack of info: what happens to recycling after collection

Lack of info: how well the area is doing at recycling

Poor service that's not reliable and well-designed

Not seeing households in the area recycle effectively

TV news or documentary about recycling

Seeing how the recycling is collected

Social media (Facebook, Twitter etc)

Word of mouth, family/friends

	UK	England	Scotland	Wales
Lack of info: what happens to recycling after collection	1 30%	1 30%	1 30%	1 31%
Lack of info: how well the area is doing at recycling	2 23%	2 21%	3 28%	4 21%
Poor service that's not reliable and well-designed	3 21%	3 20%	2 29%	3 22%
Not seeing households in the area recycle effectively	4 18%	4 17%	4 22%	2 26%
TV news or documentary about recycling	5 15%	5 15%	5 15%	7 9%
Seeing how the recycling is collected	6 10%	6 10%	=6 7%	6 11%
Social media (Facebook, Twitter etc)	=7 8%	=7 8%	7 6%	5 16%
Word of mouth, family/friends	=7 8%	=7 8%	=6 7%	4%