



What people think,
feel and do

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Opinium & Heywood Foundation

Policy Testing



Key findings

27 September 2021

Project details

PROJECT NUMBER	OP17710
PROJECT NAME	Policy Testing
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SAMPLE	2,002 UK adults
FIELDWORK DATES	20 to 22 September 2021

SUMMARY

- **Best performing policy:** the NHS voluntary reserve force is the most popularly supported policy.
- **Worst performing policy:** Citizens assemblies is supported and opposed by roughly equal proportions of the adult population.
- **The qualities that make these policies a success:** Most of the policies are appealing, appear to be fair or right for the country and are relevant to the problems facing the country. The policies that underperform on workability and affordability in particular, with citizens assemblies being the clearest example.
- **NHS reserve force:** The NHS voluntary reserve force meets with particularly positive responses from the older UK adults and is very popular in the 'red wall' seats.
- **Impact of who proposes a policy:** Only a limited impact on popular support when we A/B tested between "a member of the public" and "the government" and no discernible impact across the five policies tested.

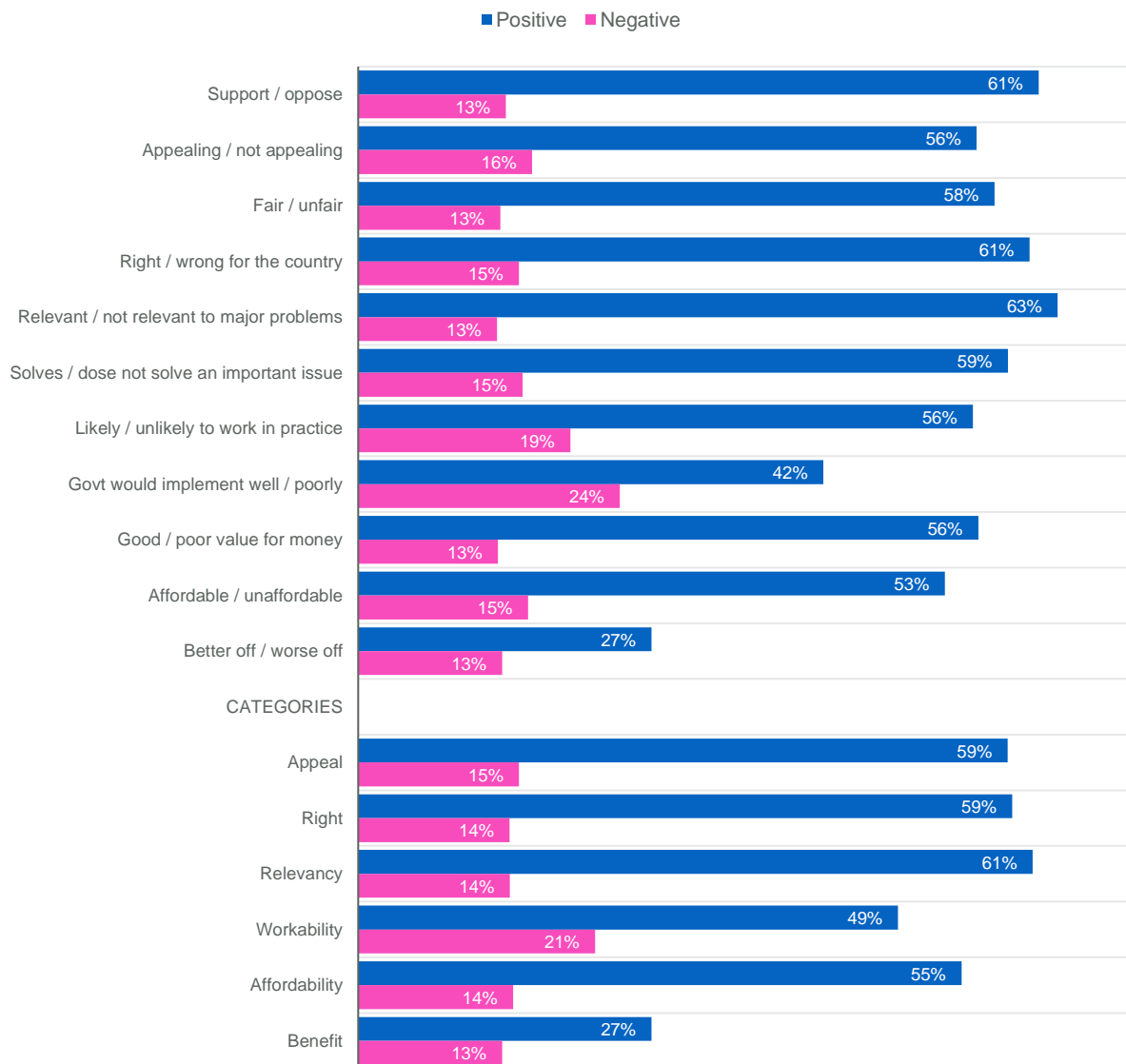
NHS voluntary reserve force

61% would support an NHS reserve force, while only 13% would oppose

The NHS voluntary reserve force performs very well across all metrics. Notably this includes a belief that the policy will be workable and has potential to benefit people with 27% of UK adults saying they think it would benefit them.

The policy is seen as the most relevant to the problems facing the country (63%) and right for the country (61%). Three in five (61%) would support this policy, while only 13% would oppose it.

NHS voluntary reserve force

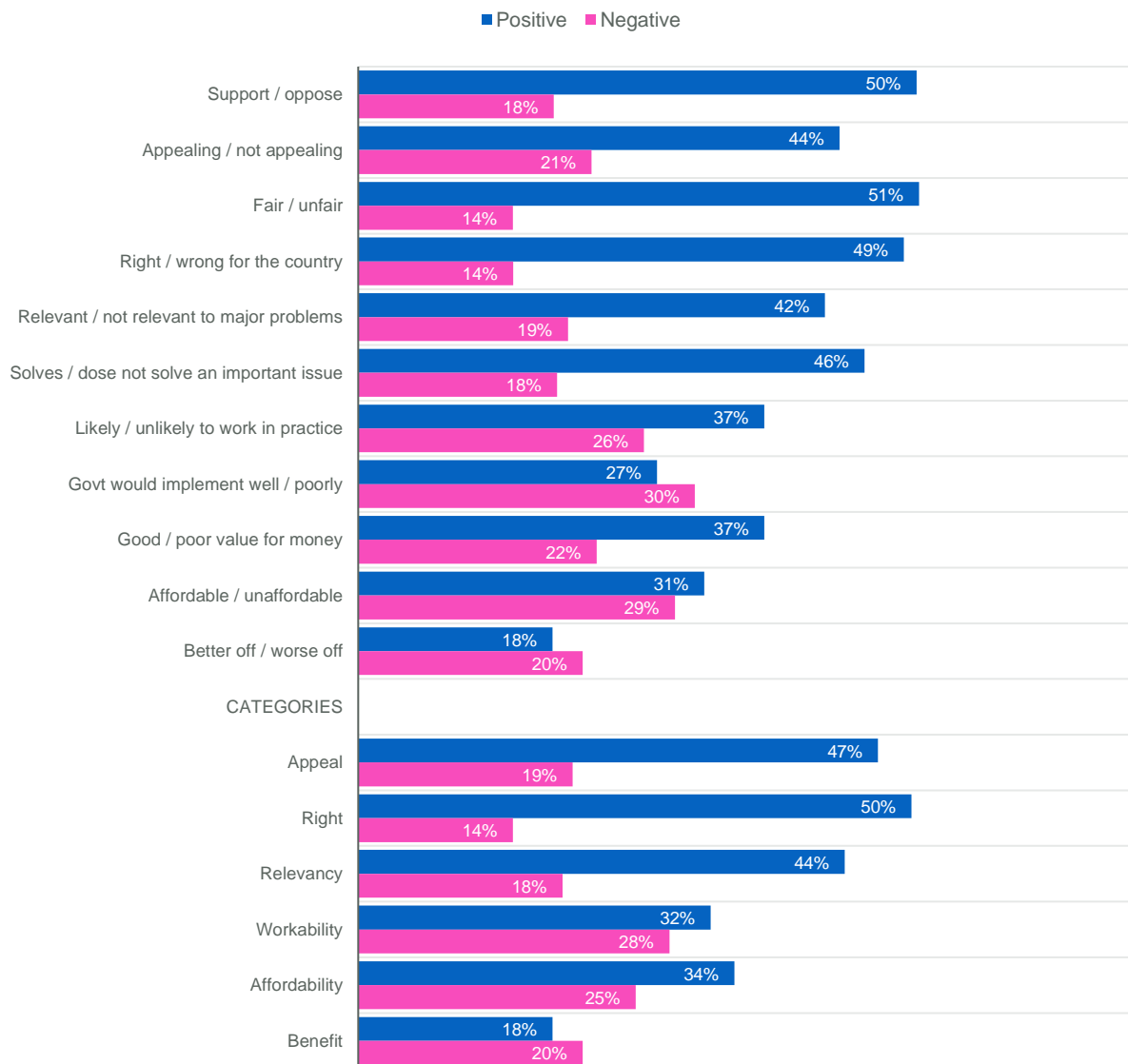


Supported graduate scheme

50% would support a supported placement scheme for disabled graduates, while 18% would oppose them

A supported placement scheme for disabled graduates is right to do, appealing and relevant, but confidence in workability and affordability is lower. The public are most likely to believe this policy is fair (51%) and right for the country (49%), although 30% believe the government would implement this poorly. Half of UK adults support (50%) while only a small minority (18%) oppose this policy.

Supported graduate scheme



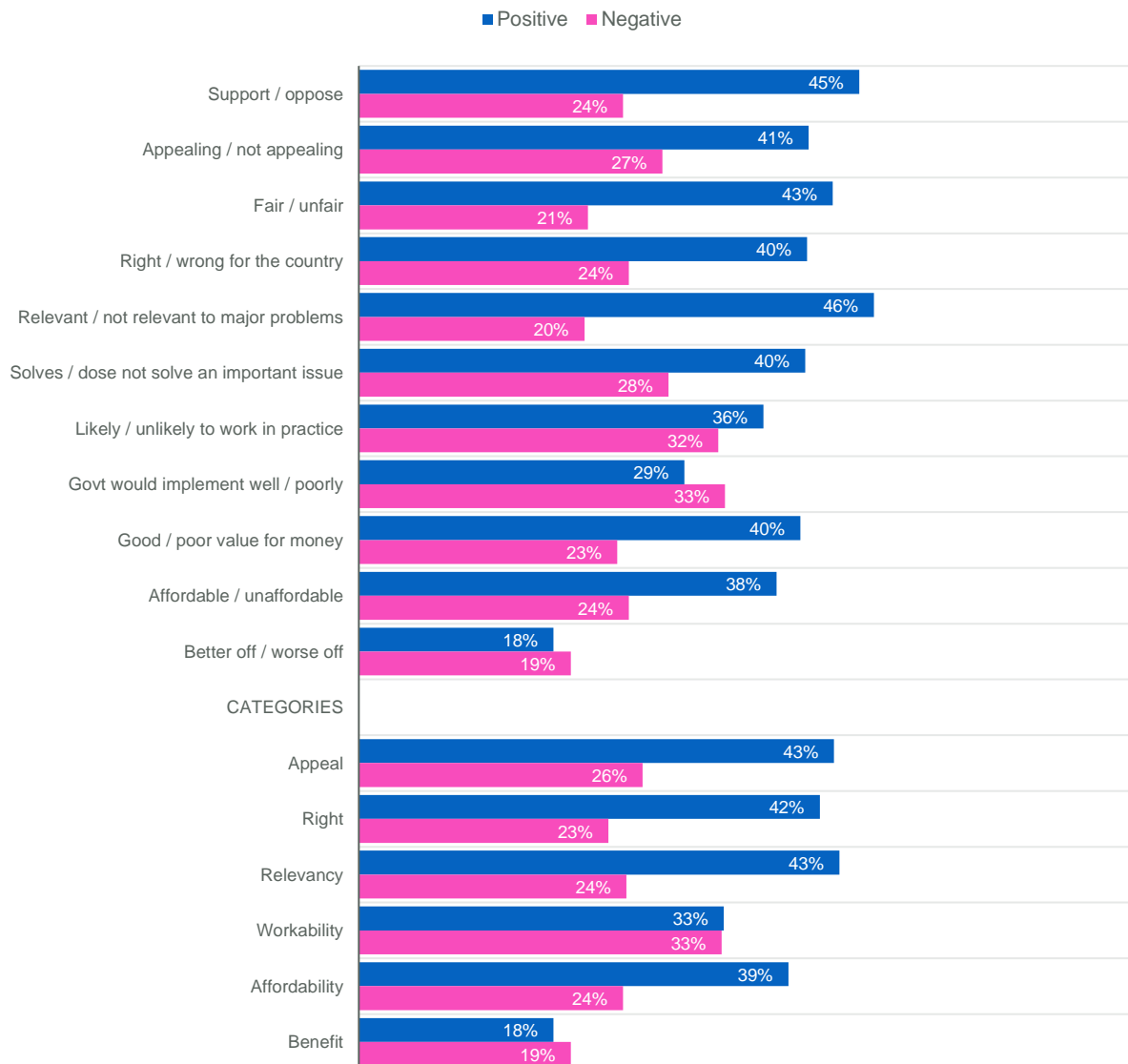
Online learning database

45% would support a national online learning database, while 24% would oppose

The online learning database is seen as relevant to the problems facing the country (46%) and fair (43%). Just over two in five (45%) would support this policy, while 24% would oppose it.

The policy broadly performs well with seen to be appealing, right or fair, relevant and relatively affordable. However, there is some doubt over workability in practice.

Online learning database



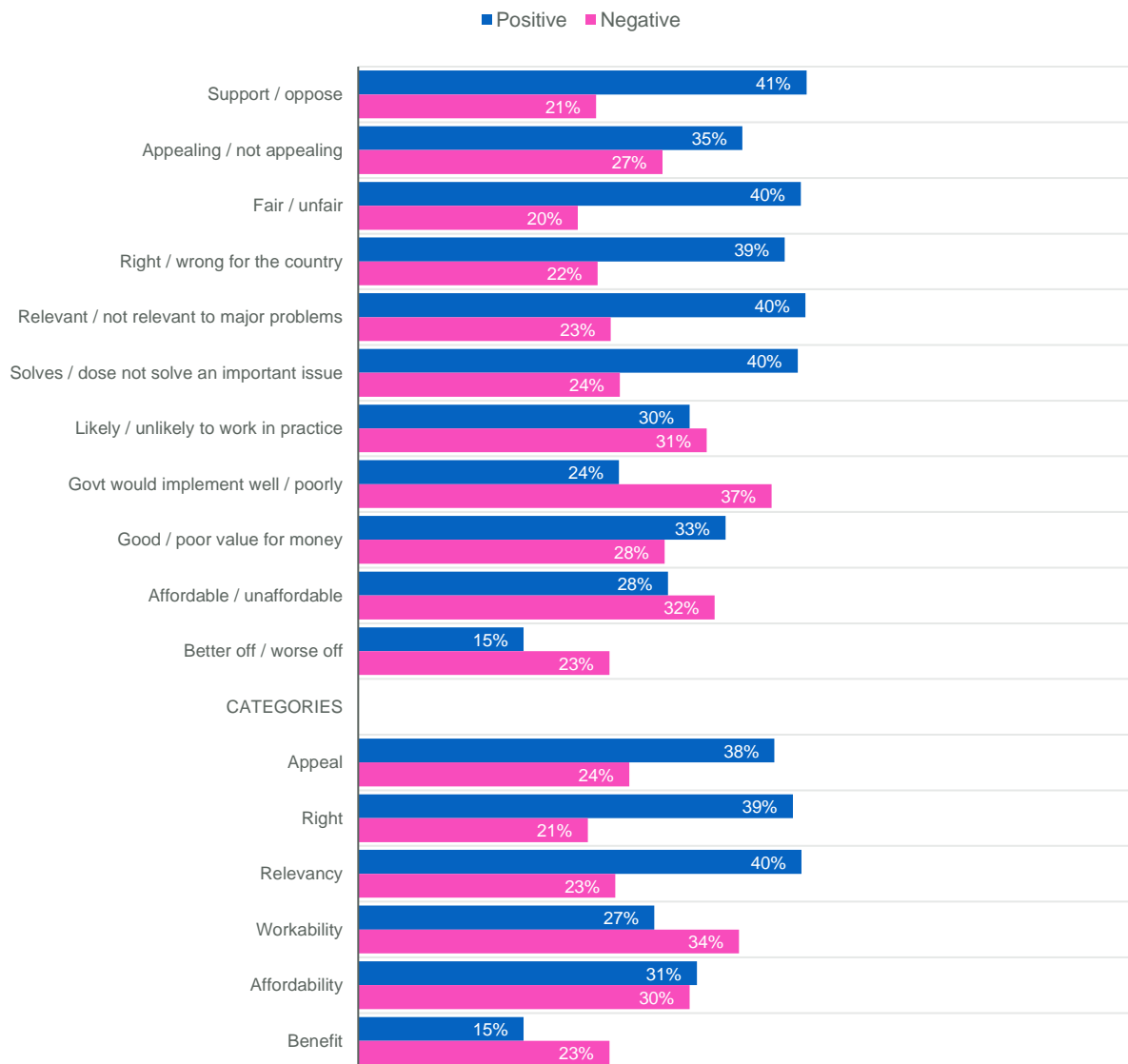
Student Care Service

41% would support a supported placement scheme for disabled graduates, while 21% would oppose them

There is some belief that a student care service would be relevant and right to do, but there are concerns about workability while on balance people believe it would make them slightly worse off.

The public are most likely to believe this policy is relevant to the problems facing the country (40%) and would be fair (40%), although 37% believe the government would implement this poorly. Two in five adults support (41%) while 21% oppose this policy.

Student Care Service



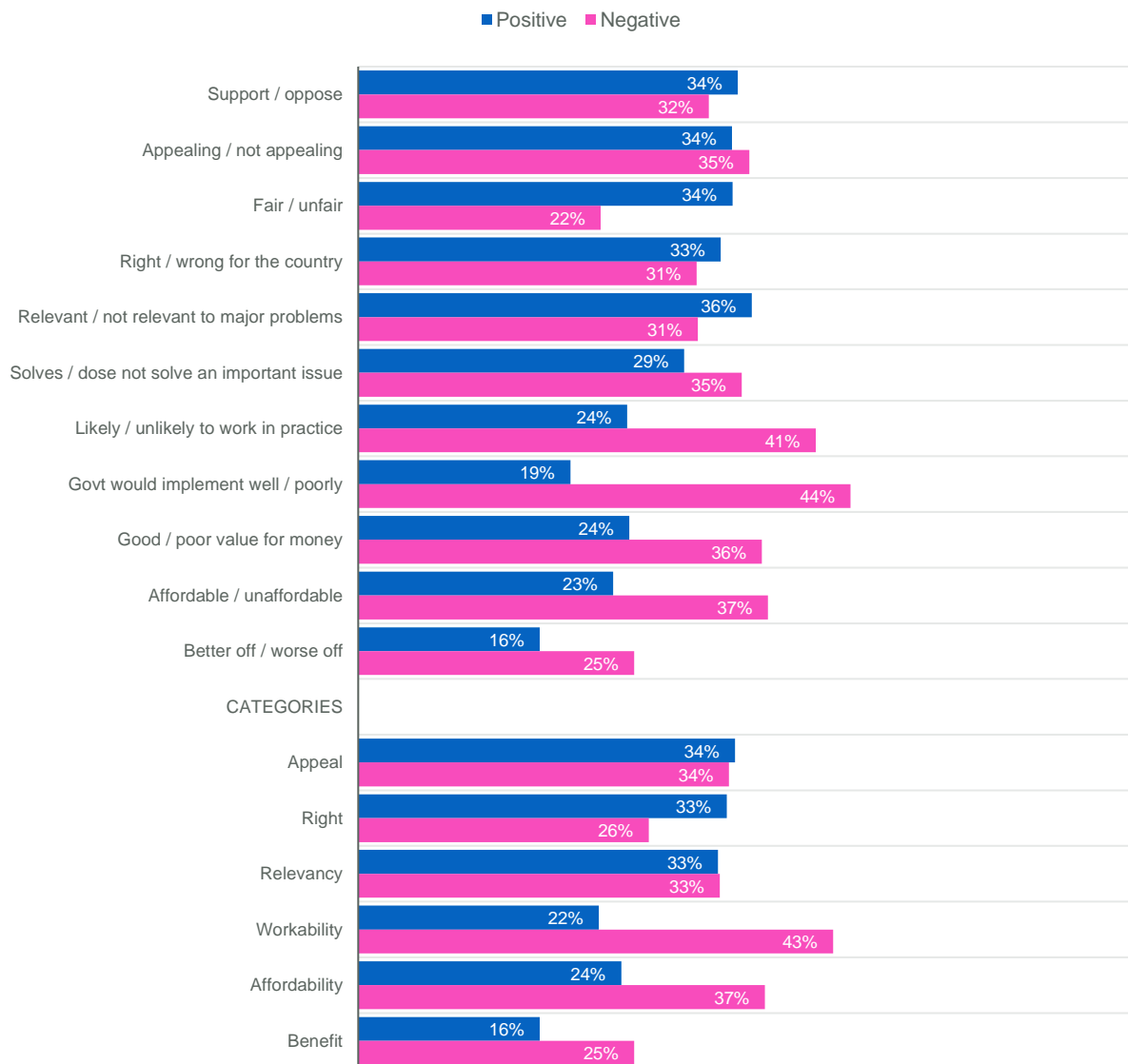
Citizens Assemblies

34% would support Citizens Assemblies, while 32% would oppose them

The Citizens Assemblies policy receives mixed reviews. While some see it as fair, a plurality has concerns about the policy’s workability (43%) and affordability (37%).

The public believe the government would implement this poorly (44%) and that it is unlikely to work in practice (41%), although 34% believe it would be fair. A similar proportion of UK adults support (34%) and oppose (32%) this policy.

Citizens Assemblies

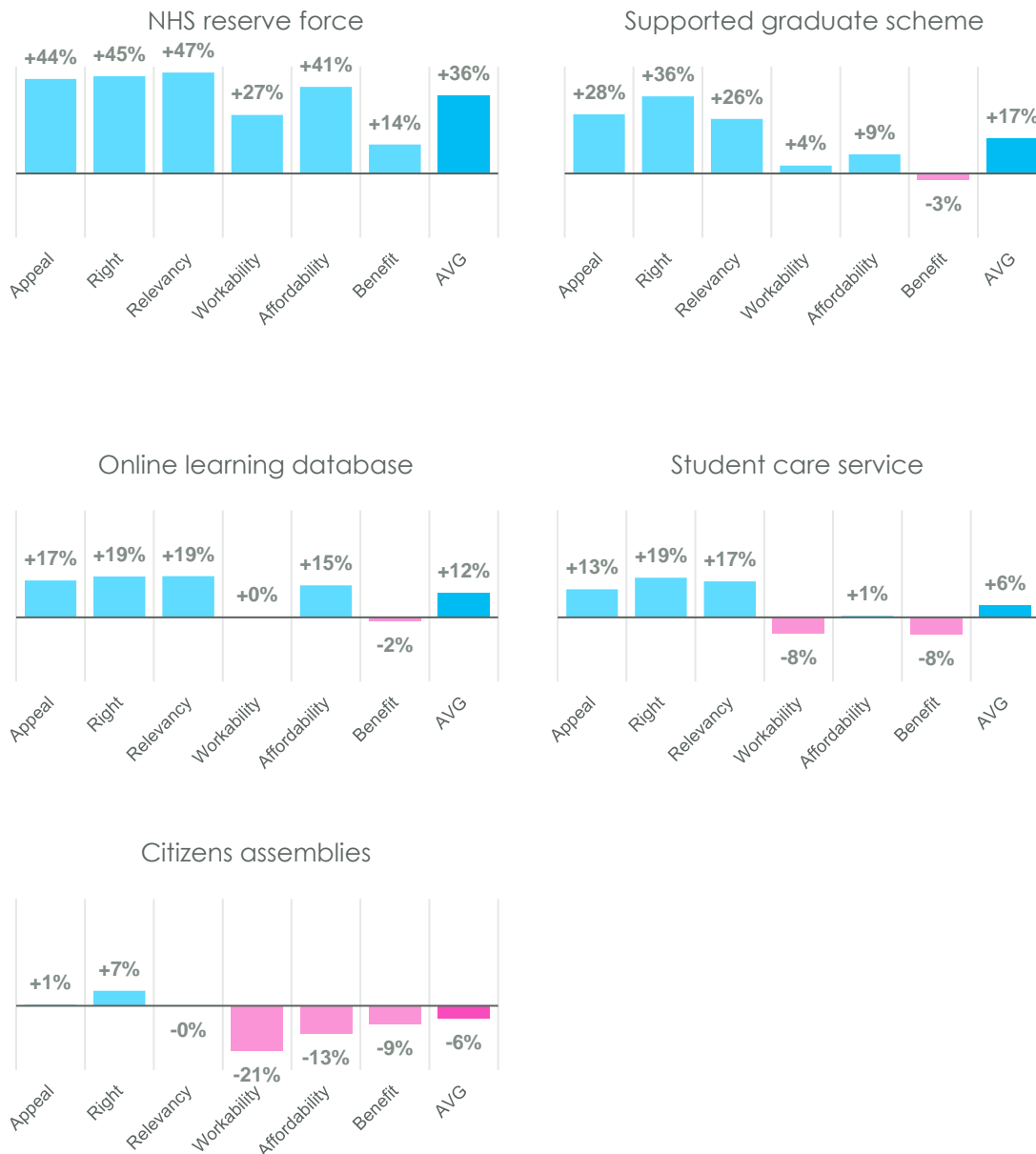


Detail: comparing the policies

Most policies receive net positive scores from the public, especially the NHS voluntary reserve force and the supported placement scheme for disabled graduates. However, introducing citizens assemblies receives more negative scores than it does positive scores.

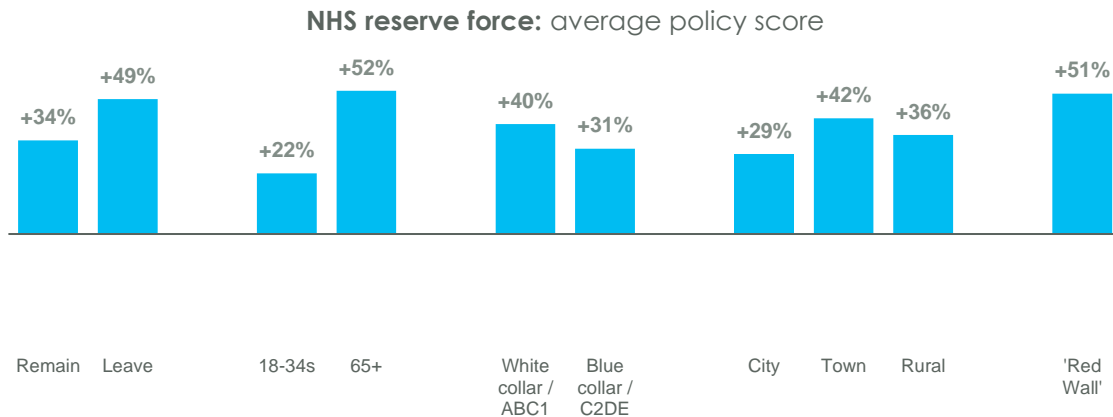
The policies that struggle the most perform worst on workability and affordability in particular, with citizens assemblies being the clearest example.

Net positive scores for each category by policy

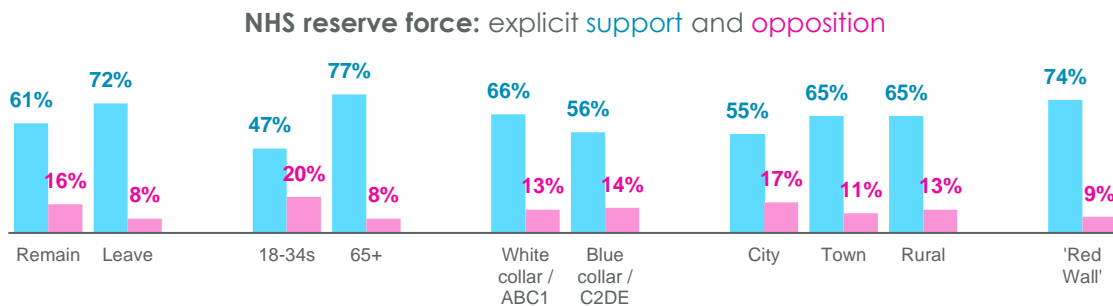


In detail: the NHS reserve force

When we take an average of how the policy performs across all of our measures, the NHS voluntary reserve force meets with particularly positive responses from the older UK adults, with a +52% score from over 65s, compared to only +22% from 18–34-year-olds. This policy is particularly popular in the ‘red wall’ seats, with a positive score of +51%.



A similar pattern is apparent when explicit support and opposition to the policy is explored. Over 65s support the policy by a wide margin (77% support vs 8% oppose), while support is much more muted amongst 18–34-year-olds (47% support vs 20% oppose). Three quarters of the population in the ‘red wall’ support the policy compared to only 9% who oppose it.



Supporters of this policy told us...

“They are already trained, already have the right aptitude for the work and have proved themselves to be capable and are a bit wasted if they aren’t used. It would be an excellent use of resources, and they we would not have to train them up from scratch.”

“The recent pandemic has identified massive gaps in the NHS and vital services have been missing leading to more avoidable deaths from non-Covid patients.”

“This policy benefits everyone in society whereas the others are for specific sections of the public only.”

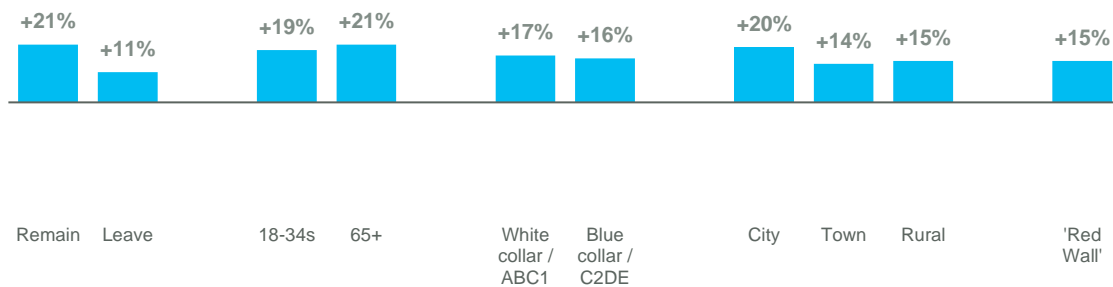
“It would take the strain off the current NHS workforce, reapply the knowledgebase of skills available that are not used, payback the cost of training those personnel in the first place and provide a reliable backup for other disasters.”

“I’m a retired nurse and would have liked to help in something like vaccination, but as I had not kept up my registration, I wasn’t able to support.”

In detail: the supported graduate scheme

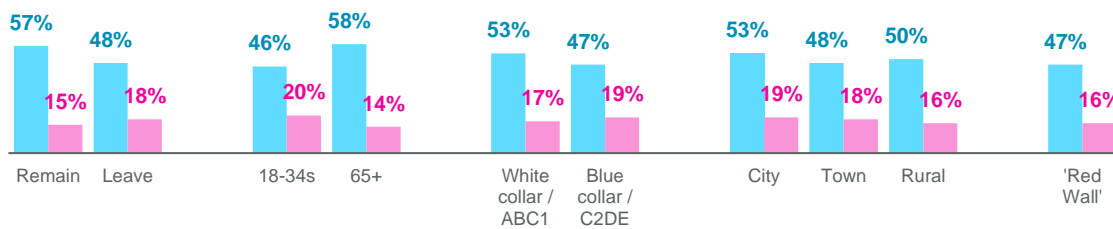
The positive reception for the supported placement scheme for disabled graduates is much more uniform across different demographic and geographic groups.

Supported graduate scheme: average policy score



A similar pattern is apparent when explicit support and opposition to the policy is explored: support for this policy is relatively even across different demographics groups, although over 65s are more likely to support this policy than those aged 18-34 (58% vs 46% respectively).

Supported graduate scheme: explicit support and opposition



Supporters of this policy told us...

"I am painfully aware of just how much discrimination that disabled people face. As a disabled person myself who had a real problem finding a job when I left university, so it would be very helpful if this scheme were to be introduced, especially so early in their adult lives."

"There should definitely be continuity of support for graduating students to help the transition from study to work. I would have benefited from this, and my children would also - they are currently studying with support in place."

"I think the issues facing disabled graduates are not spoken about enough. It would be a good investment to support them into first jobs having completed their studies, then they would pay taxes as workers so it would be cost effective."

"Many disabled people are overlooked for internships or paid employment. This proposed scheme would enable some people to get a foot on the employment ladder without the stigma of being disabled as is so often the case."

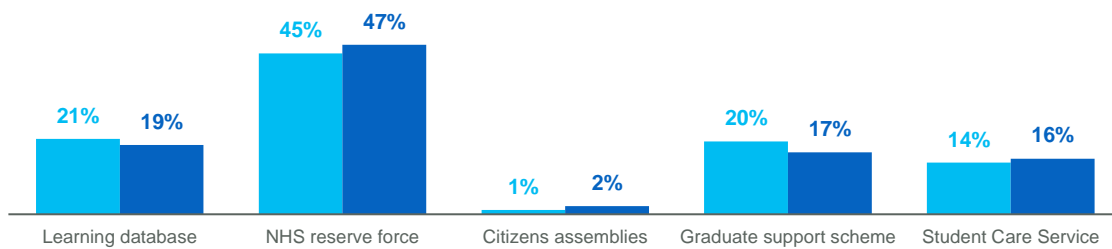
How important is the policy source?

The origin of a policy does not have a discernible impact on levels of support it receives

Who proposes a policy has only a limited impact on support for that policy and had no discernible impact across the five policies tested.

For each policy we split the sample, and asked participants if they would support or oppose the policy knowing it had been supported by either the government or a member of the public. In no case did it impact net support for a policy by more 3 points, and none of these are outside of the margin of error.

Net support by policy:
if proposed by **the government** or **a member of the public**



About Opinium

OPINIUM is an award winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on pulse of what people **think, feel** and **do**. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter. We work with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. We use the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.

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