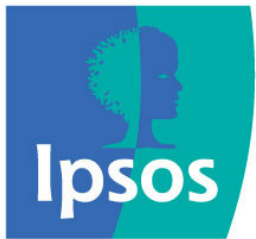


Ipsos MORI



Creating a high aspiration culture for young people in the UK

Ben Page
Chairman, Ipsos MORI SRI



What we did

- Quantitative and qualitative research funded by the Sutton Trust and HM Treasury
- Telephone survey of nearly 2,000 British adults (including 653 parents)
- Saturday morning workshop in Luton with 25 parents and 23 of their children (7-10 year olds and 11-16 year olds)



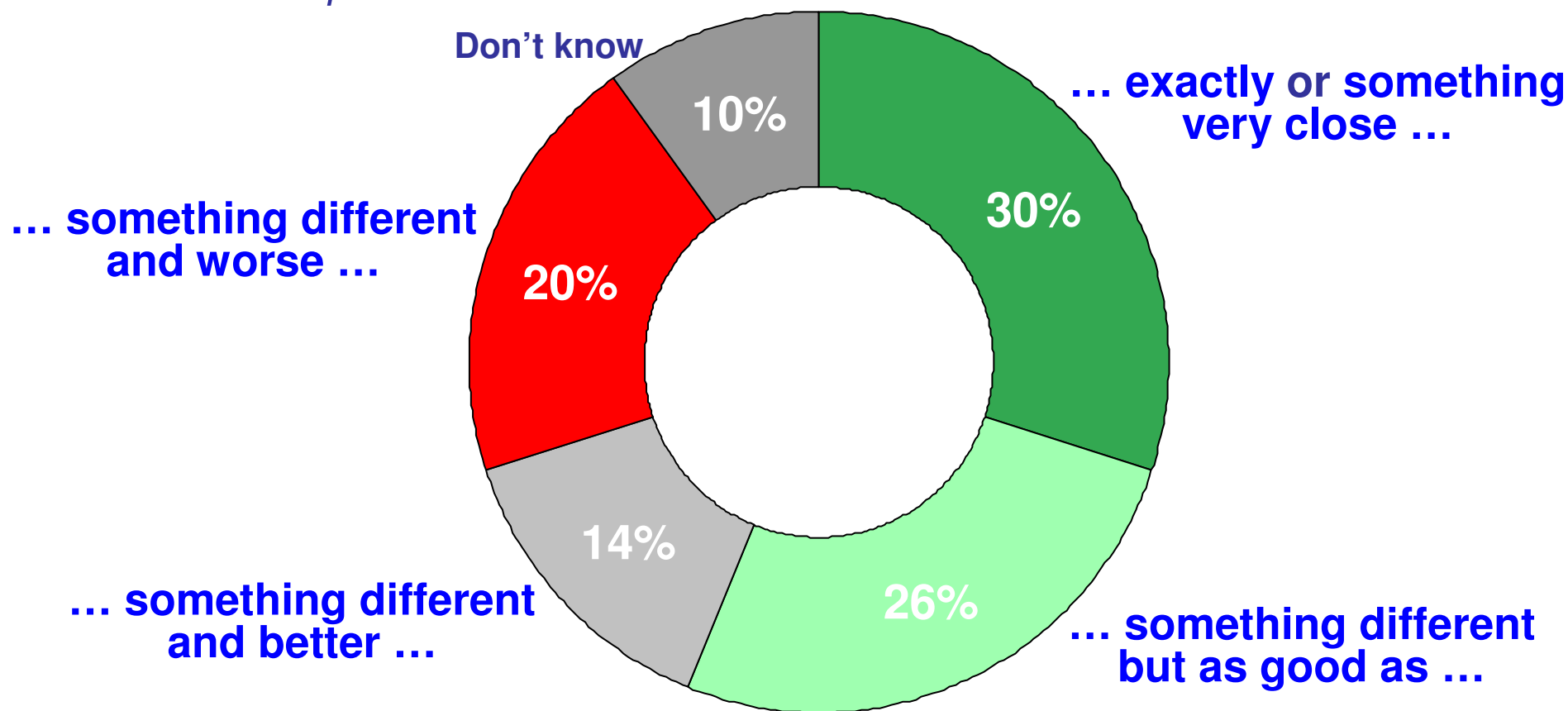
**Most people say they're doing
what they always wanted to do
OR**



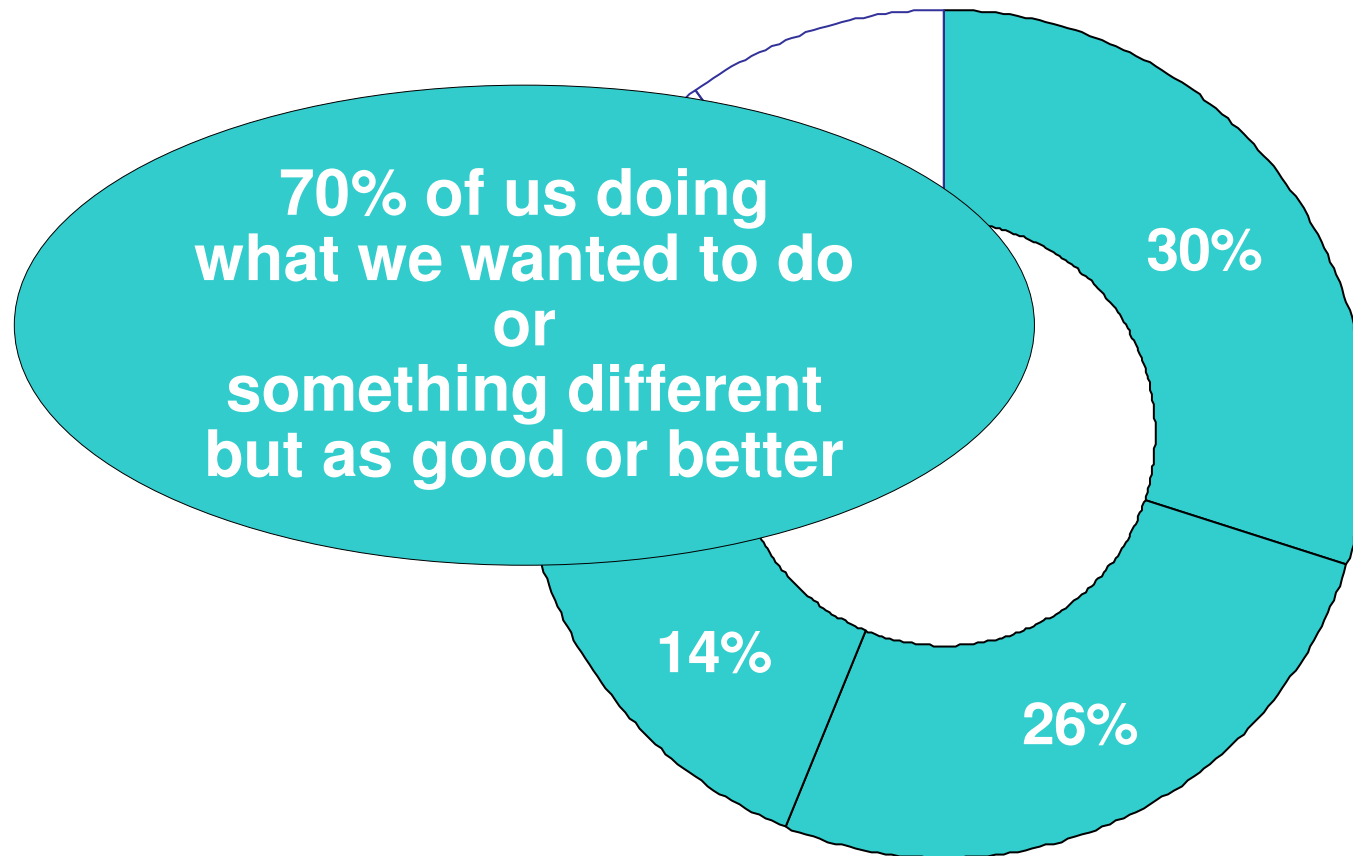
**something
different
but as good
or better**

Comparing then and now

Q Which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel your current or most recent job or occupation compares to what you really wanted or hoped to do when you were still at school? I am doing ... than/to what I wanted or hoped to do back then.



Comparing then and now



Comparing then and now

What I wanted to do/something different but as good/better

All



70%

ABs



81%

C1/C2s



71%

DEs

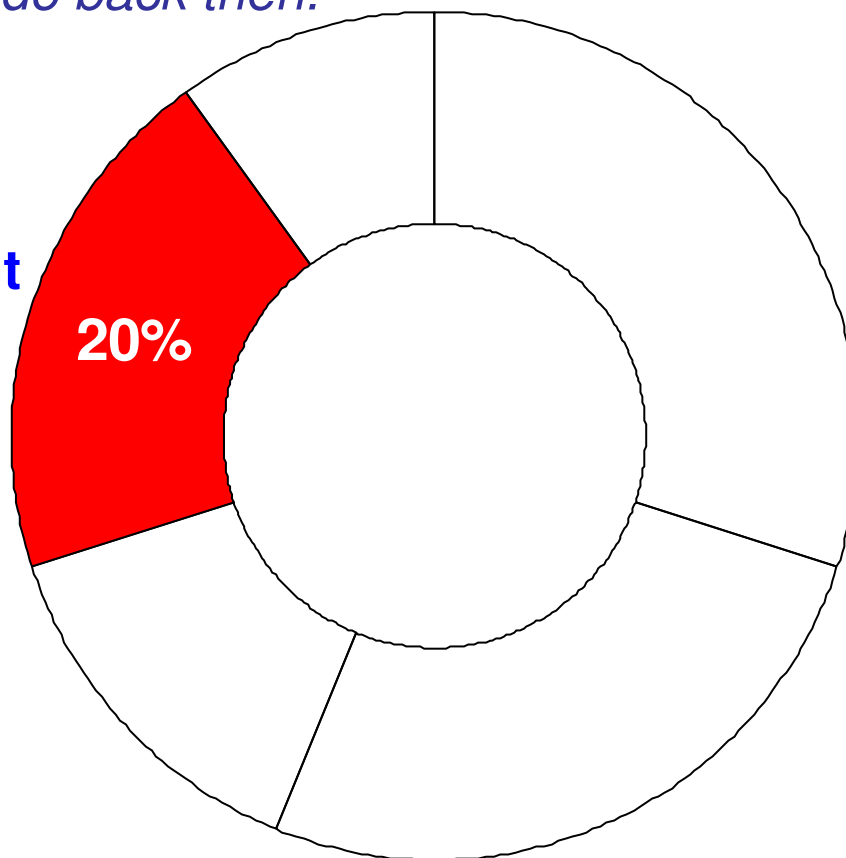


56%

Comparing then and now

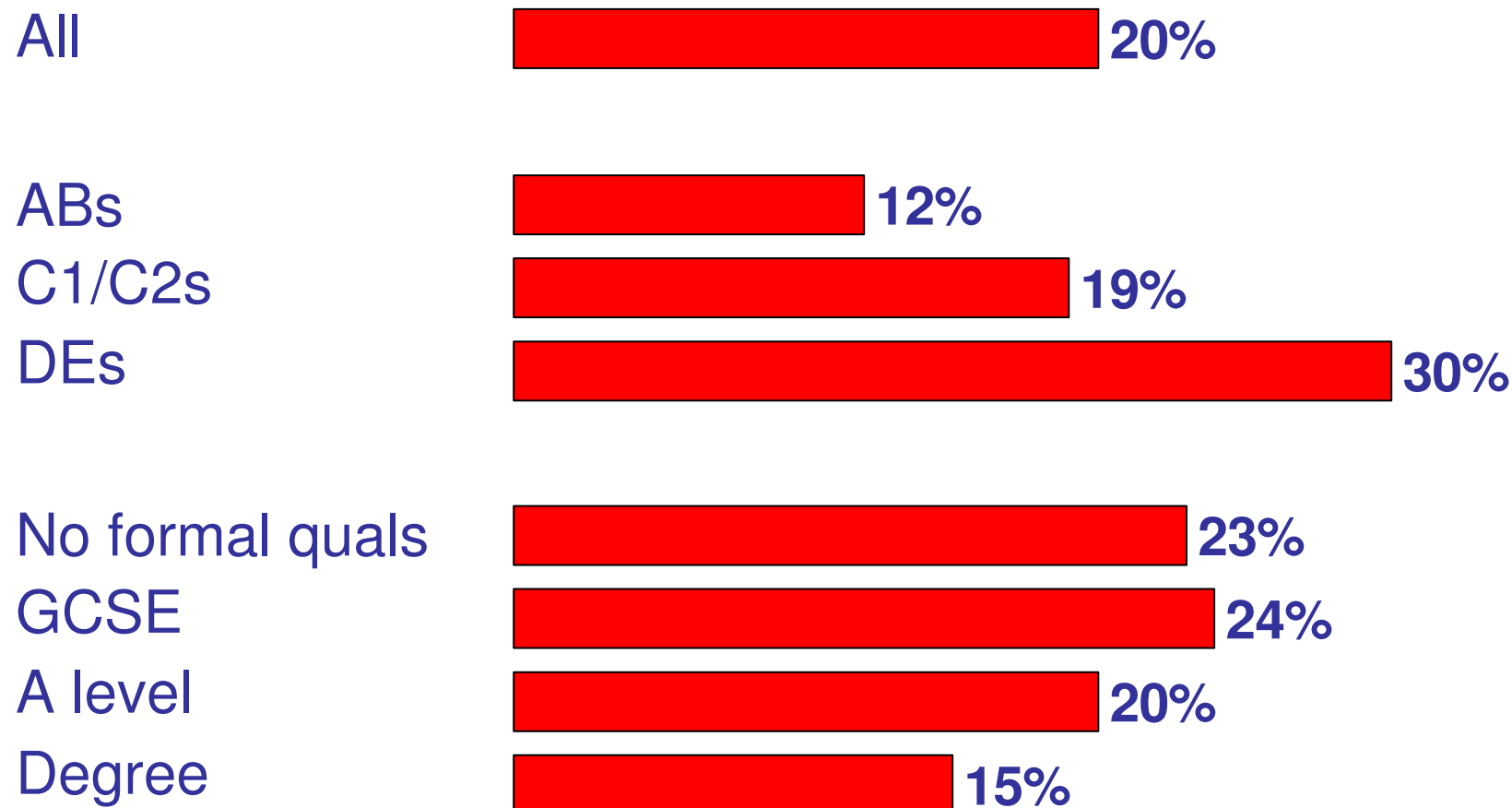
Q Which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel your current or most recent job or occupation compares to what you really wanted or hoped to do when you were still at school? I am doing ... than/to what I wanted or hoped to do back then.

**... something different
and worse ...**



Comparing then and now

Something different and worse

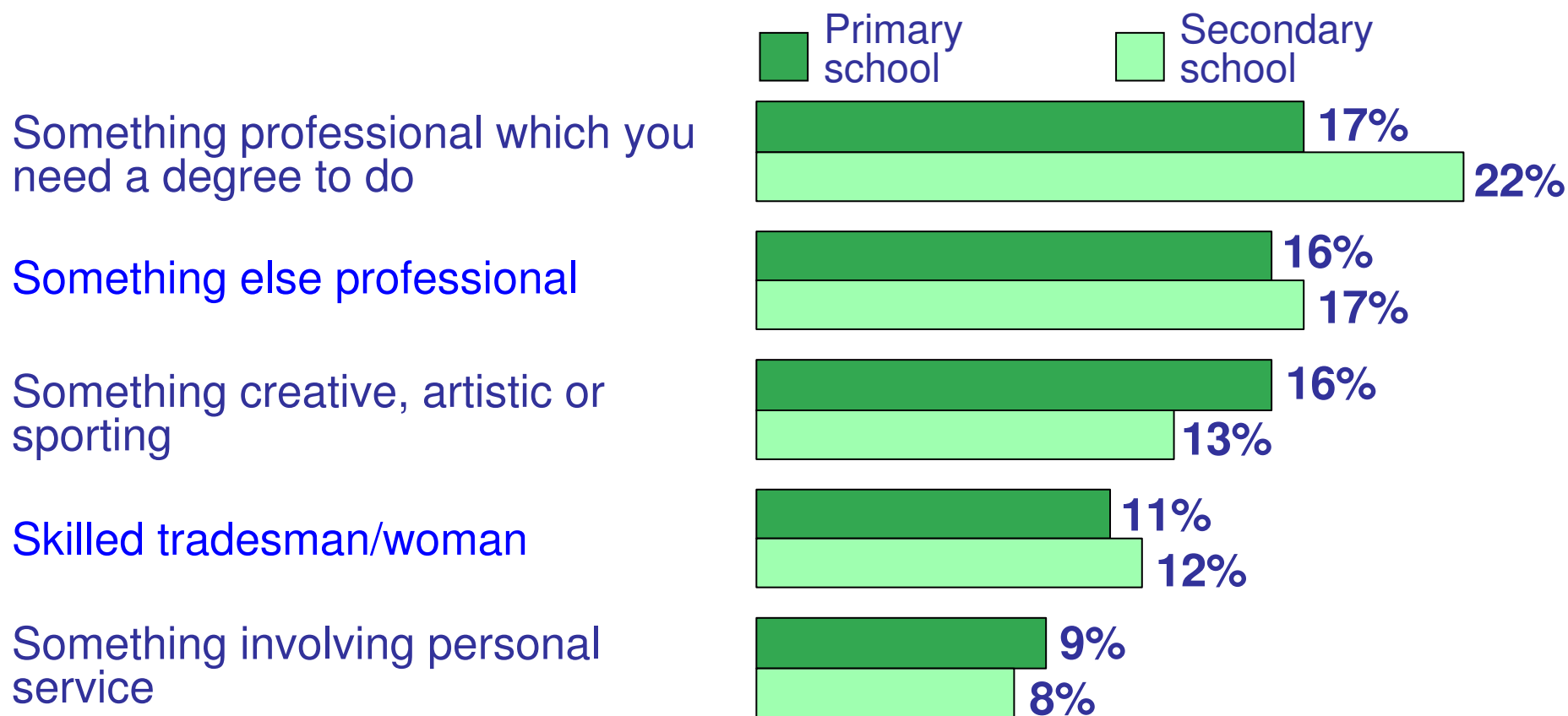




**When you were
at school, what
did you really
want or hope to
do?**

Ideal job or occupation

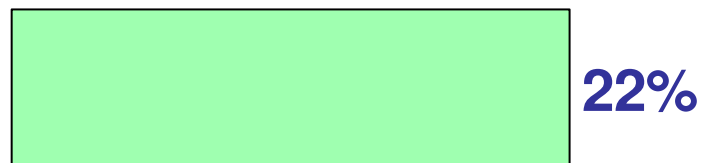
Q Thinking back to when you were at primary school/at secondary school ... which of the following job or occupation categories most closely matches what you really wanted or hoped to do when you left school? [Top 5 selections]



Ideal job or occupation

Something professional which you need a degree to do

All (secondary school)



22%

ABs



41%

C1/C2s



16%

DEs



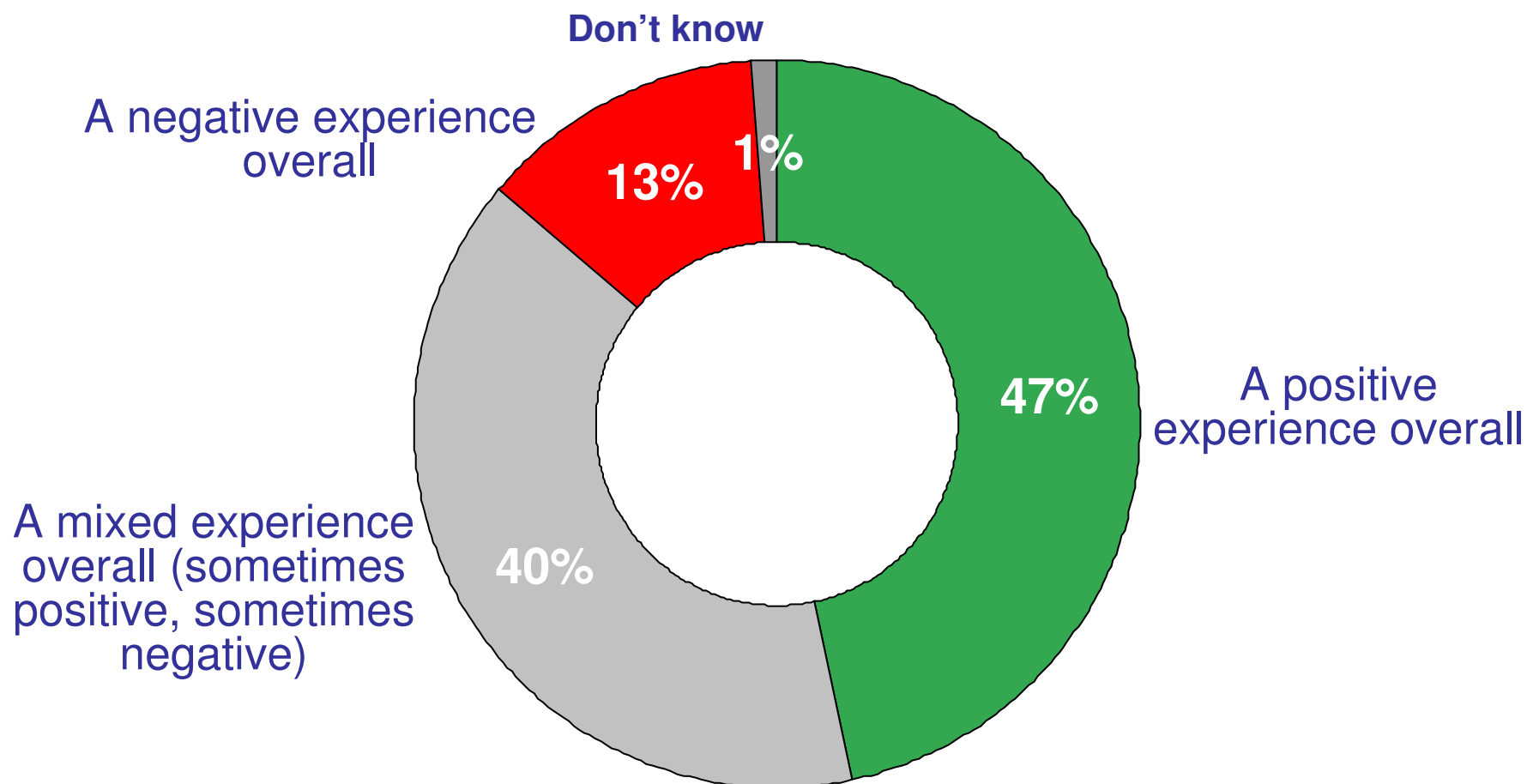
13%



**One in seven
would describe
their time at school
as “a negative
experience overall”**

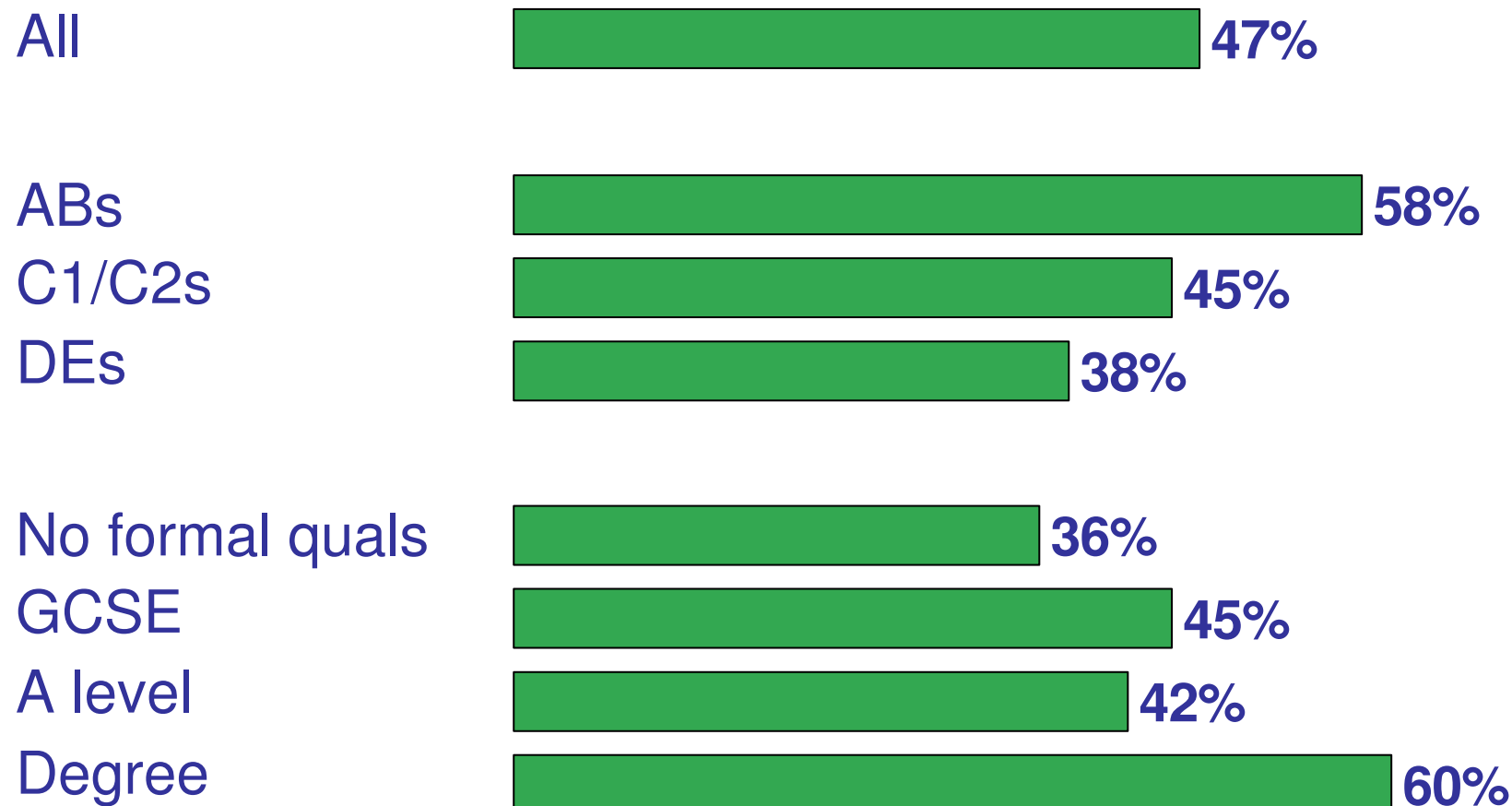
My time at school

Q Looking back to your time at school, would you describe it as ... ?



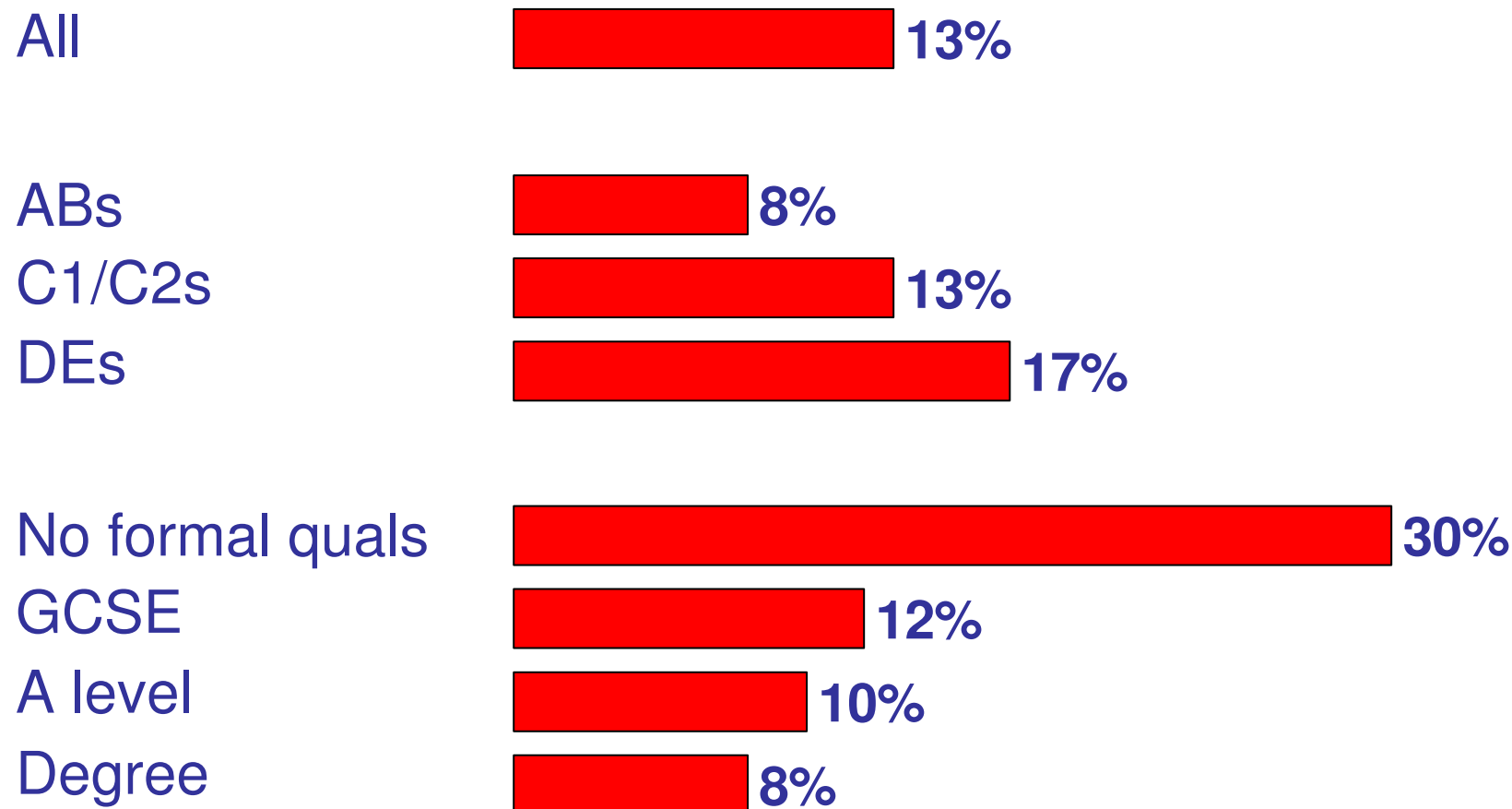
My time at school

A positive experience overall



My time at school

A negative experience overall

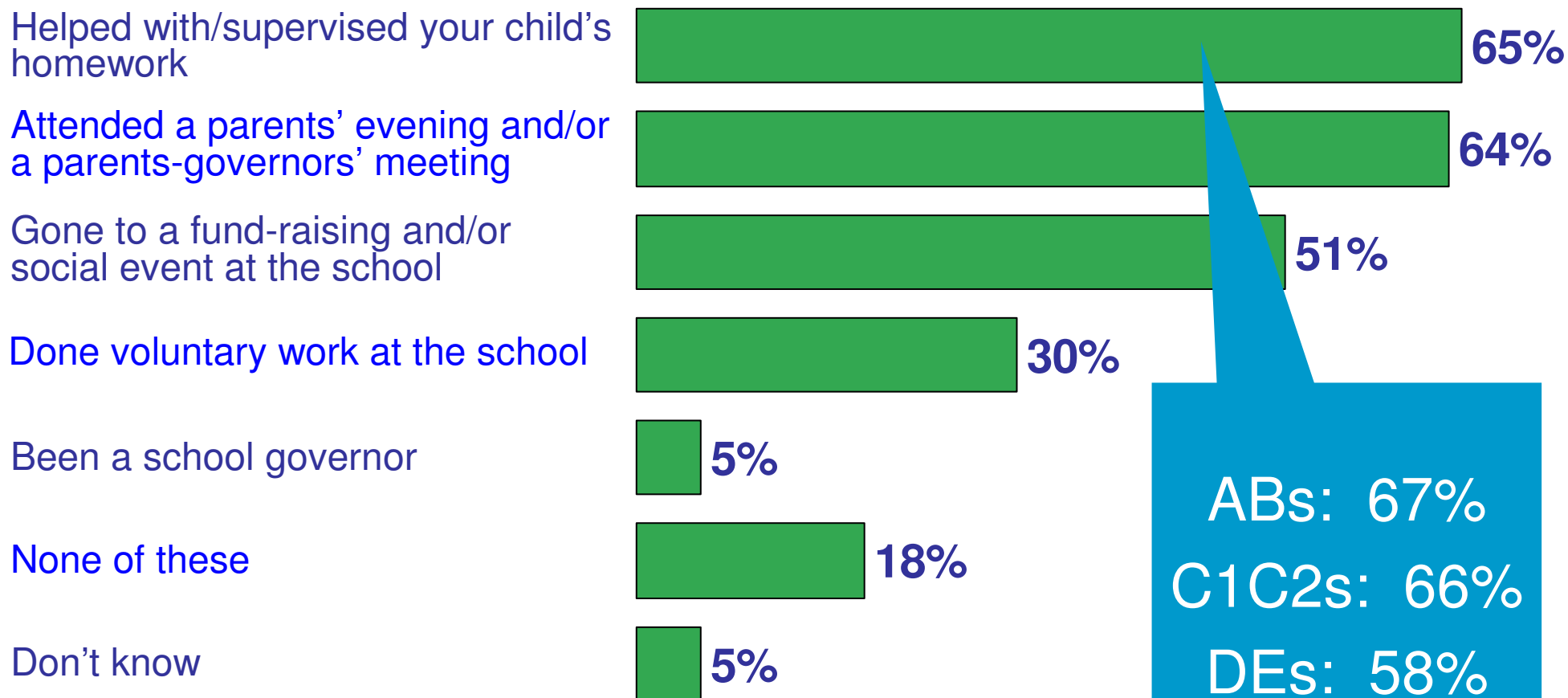


**Around 8 in 10 parents
have had some involvement
in their child's education
in the last couple of years**



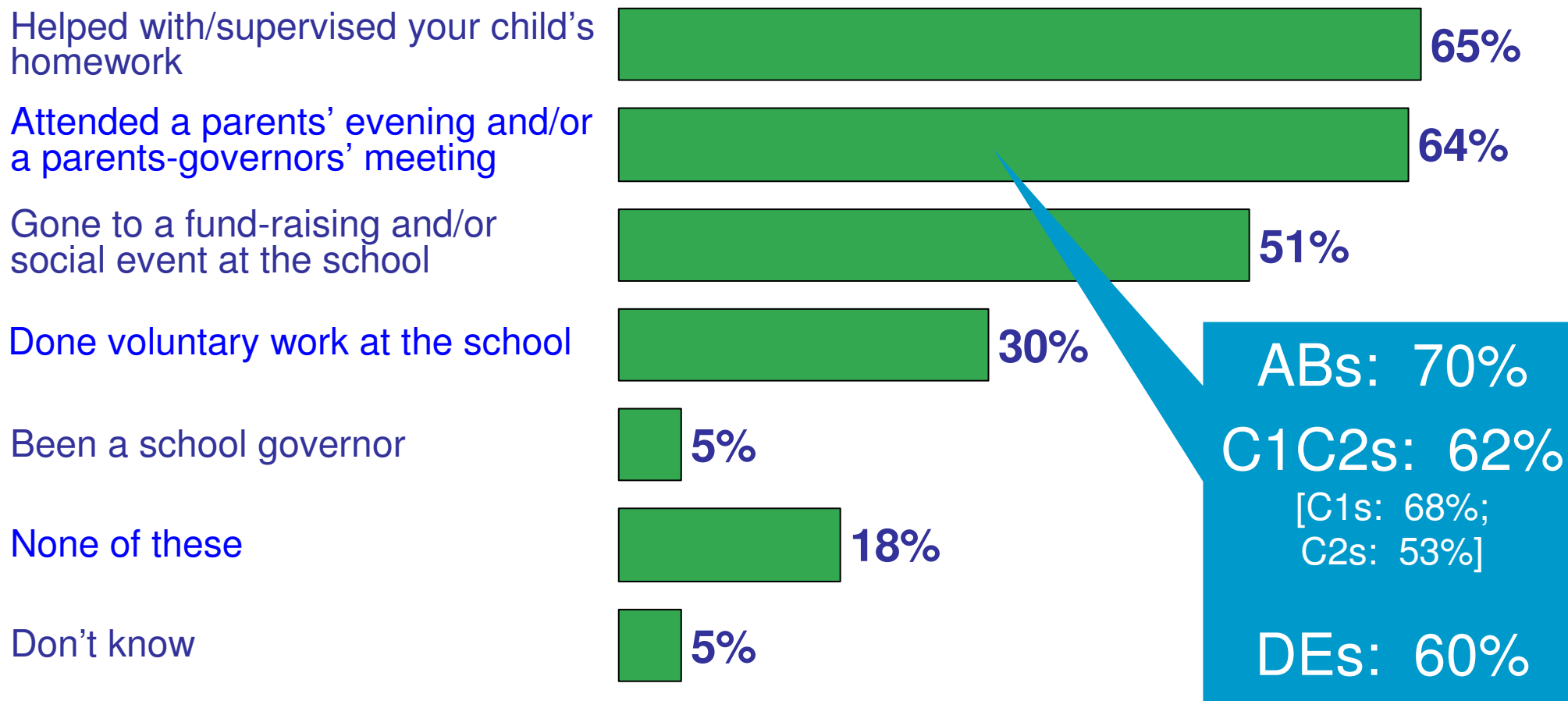
Parental involvement in education

Q Please can you tell me which of the following, if any, you have done in the last 1 or 2 years?



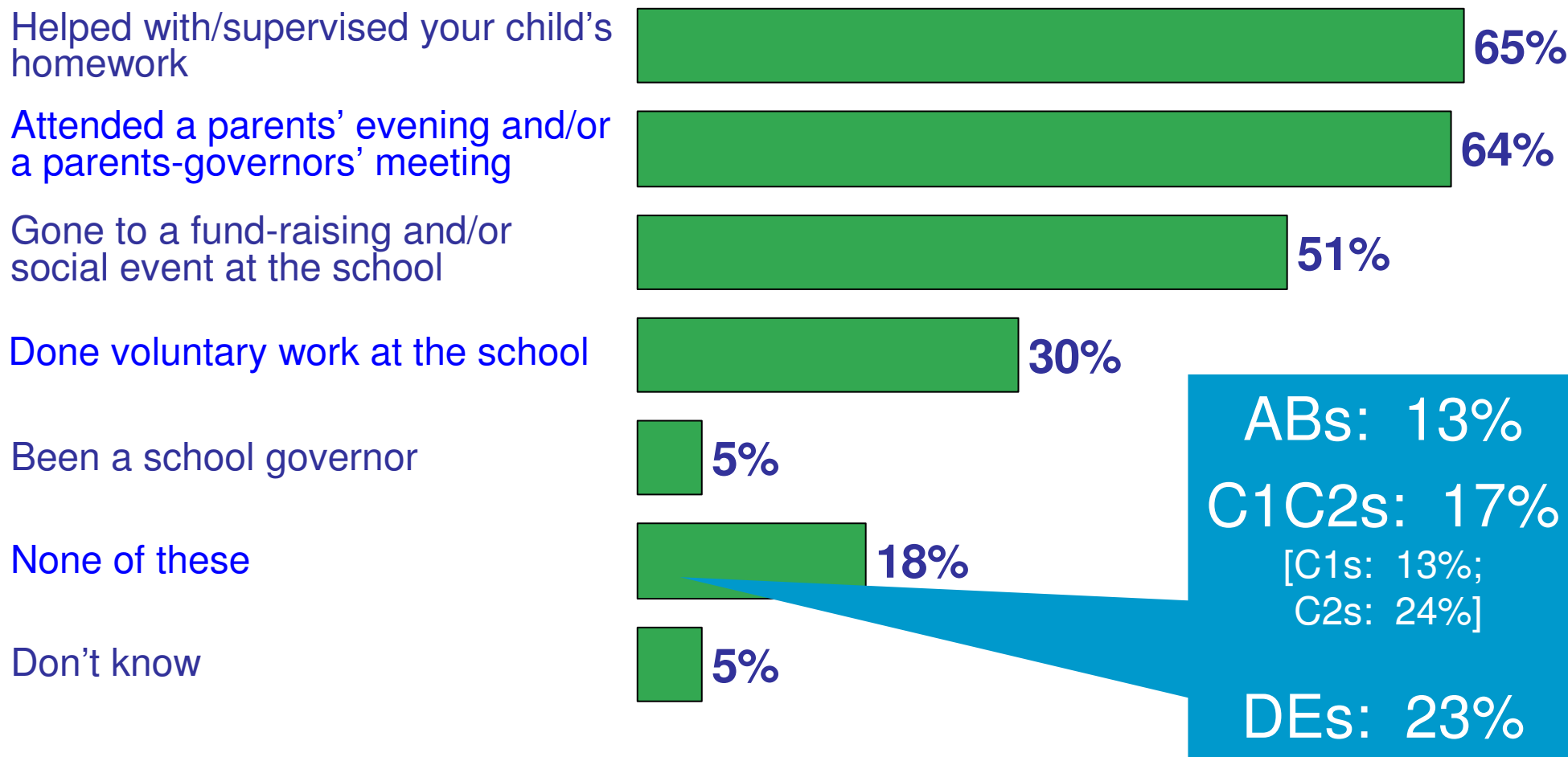
Parental involvement in education

Q Please can you tell me which of the following, if any, you have done in the last 1 or 2 years?



Parental involvement in education

Q Please can you tell me which of the following, if any, you have done in the last 1 or 2 years?



Two in five parents expect their child to achieve a degree or higher degree

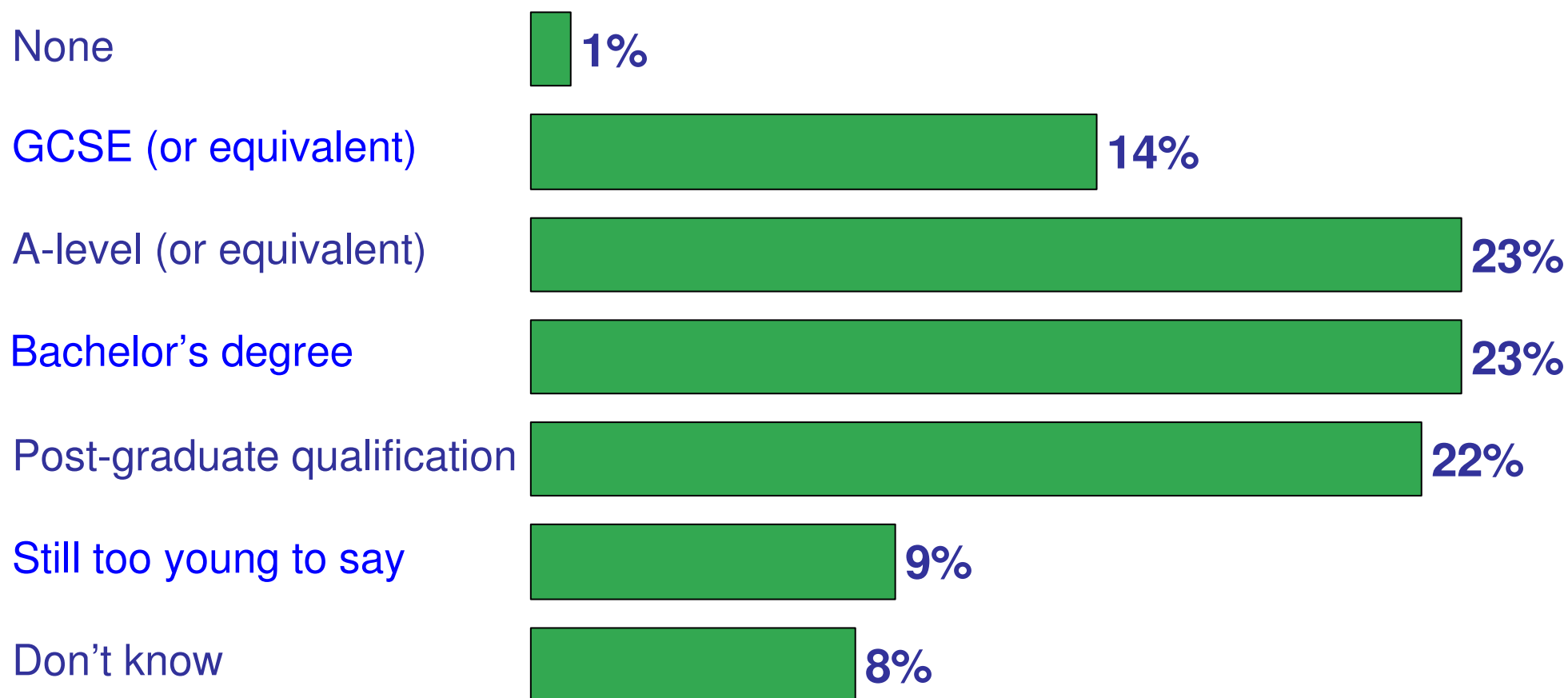


BUT

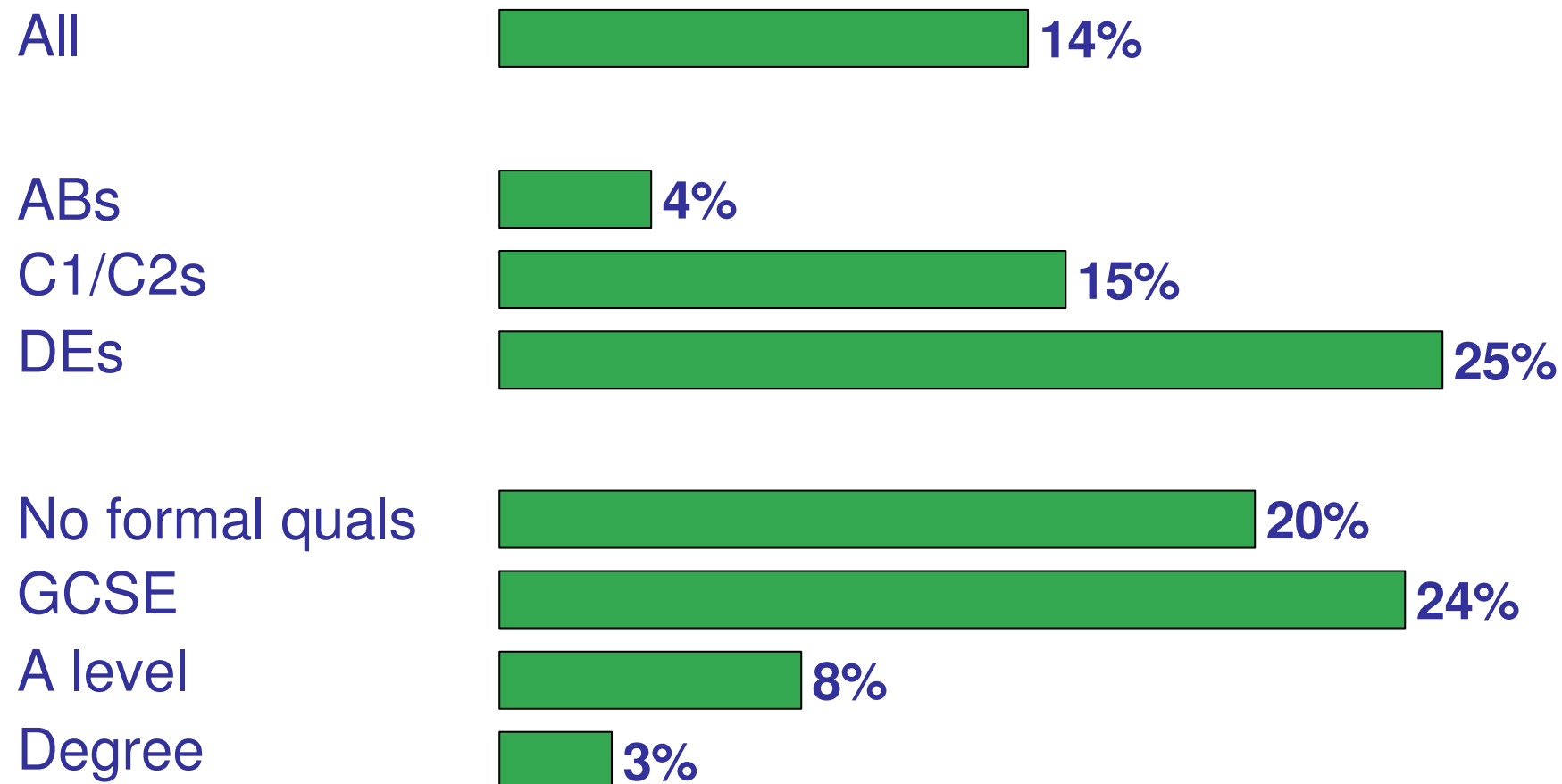
One in seven parents expect their child to 'peak' at GCSE

Child's highest level of educational qualification

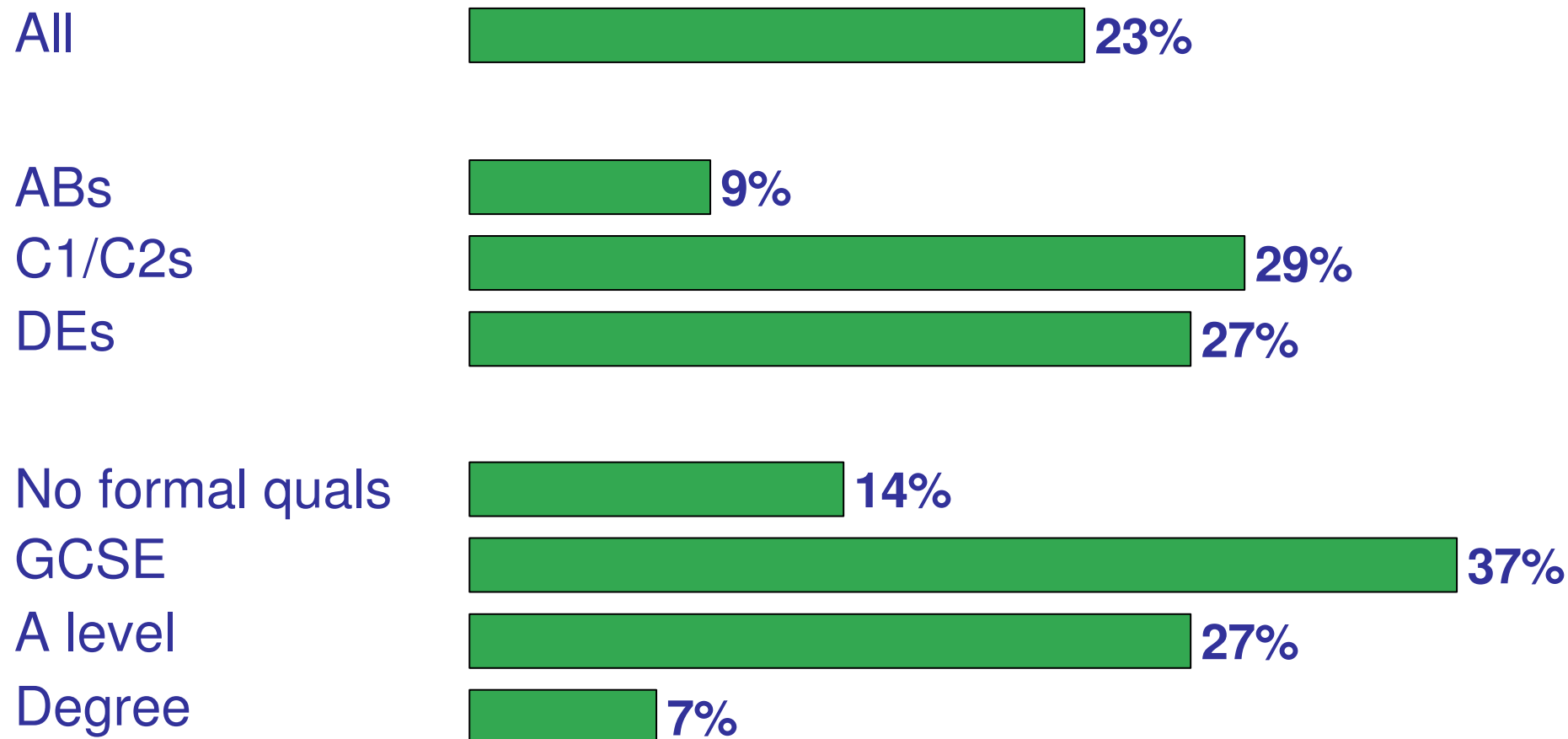
Q What is the highest level of educational qualification you think your child is likely to achieve?



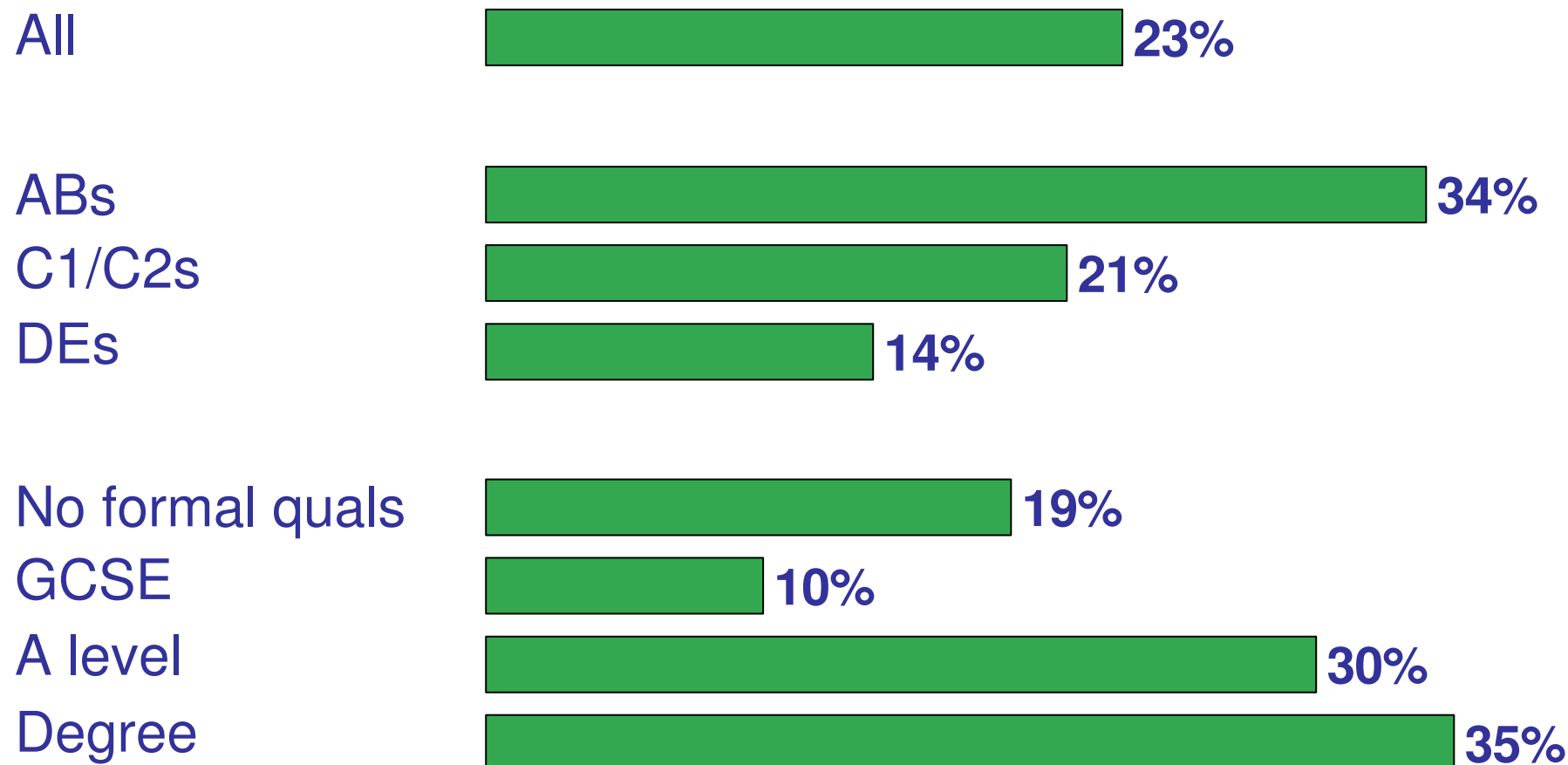
Child will peak at GCSE



Child will peak at A level



Child will peak at degree

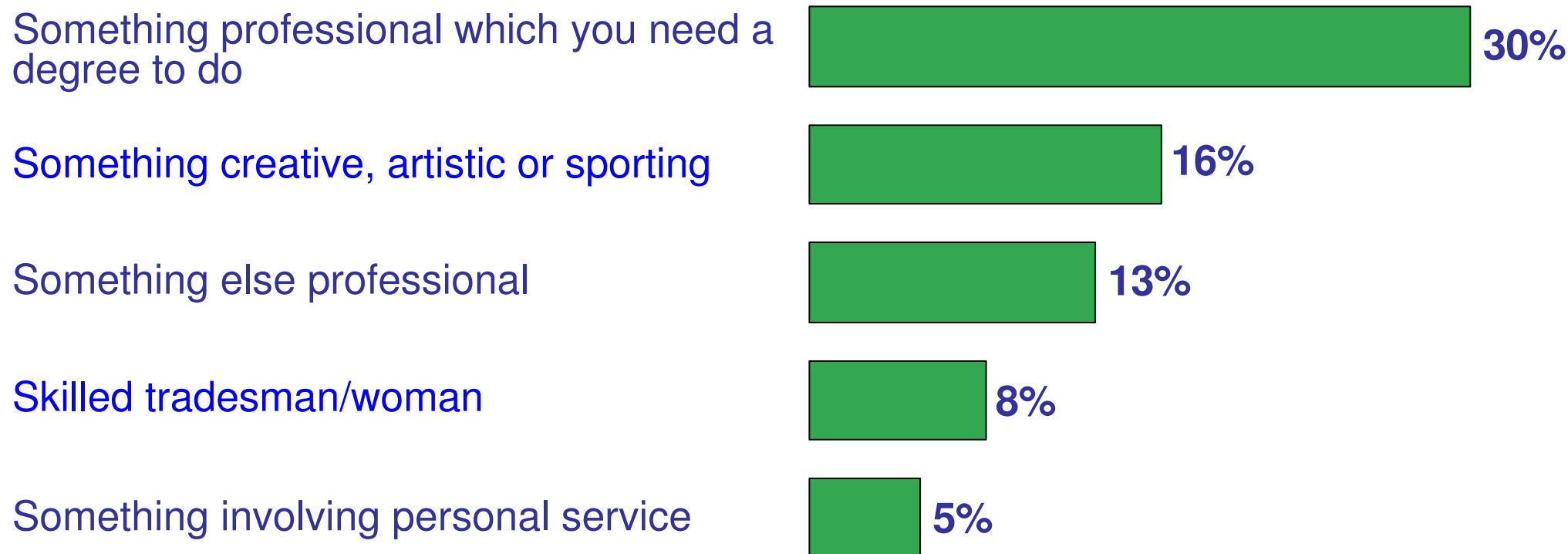


What do you think your child will end up doing?



Child's likely job or occupation

Q When your child completes their education, which of the following job or occupation categories most closely matches what you think they will end up doing? [Top 5 selections]



Ideal job or occupation

Something professional which you need a degree to do

All

30%

ABs

48%

C1/C2s

24%

DEs

21%

C1s: 31%
C2s: 15%

Ideal job or occupation

Skilled tradesman/woman

All



ABs



C1/C2s

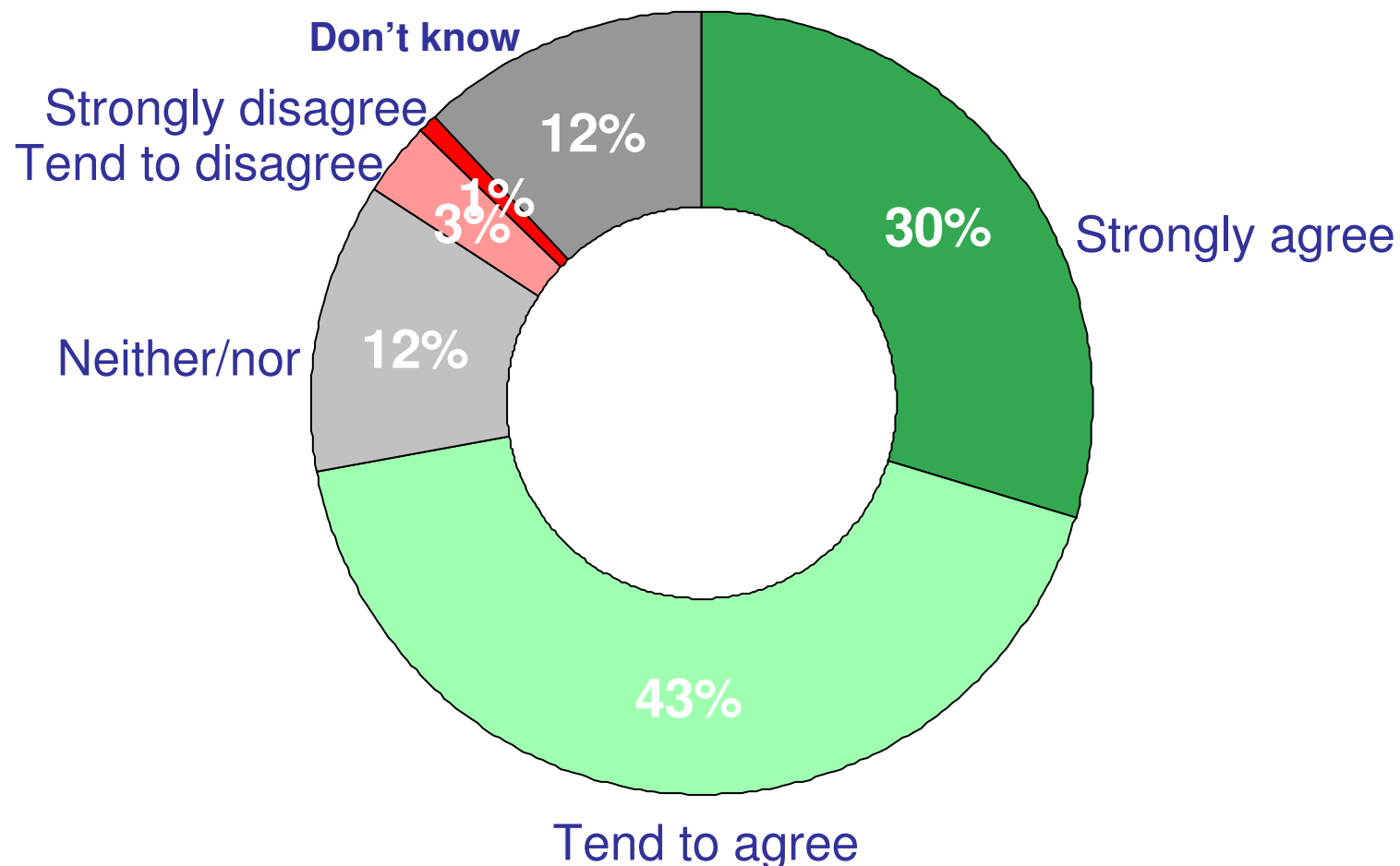


DEs



Child's likely job or occupation: a fair reflection of them?

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree that the job or occupation your child is likely to end up doing will fairly reflect your child in terms of their characteristics, personality, interests, skills, talents, abilities and so on?



Child's likely job or occupation: a fair reflection of them?

Agree

All



ABs



C1/C2s



DEs



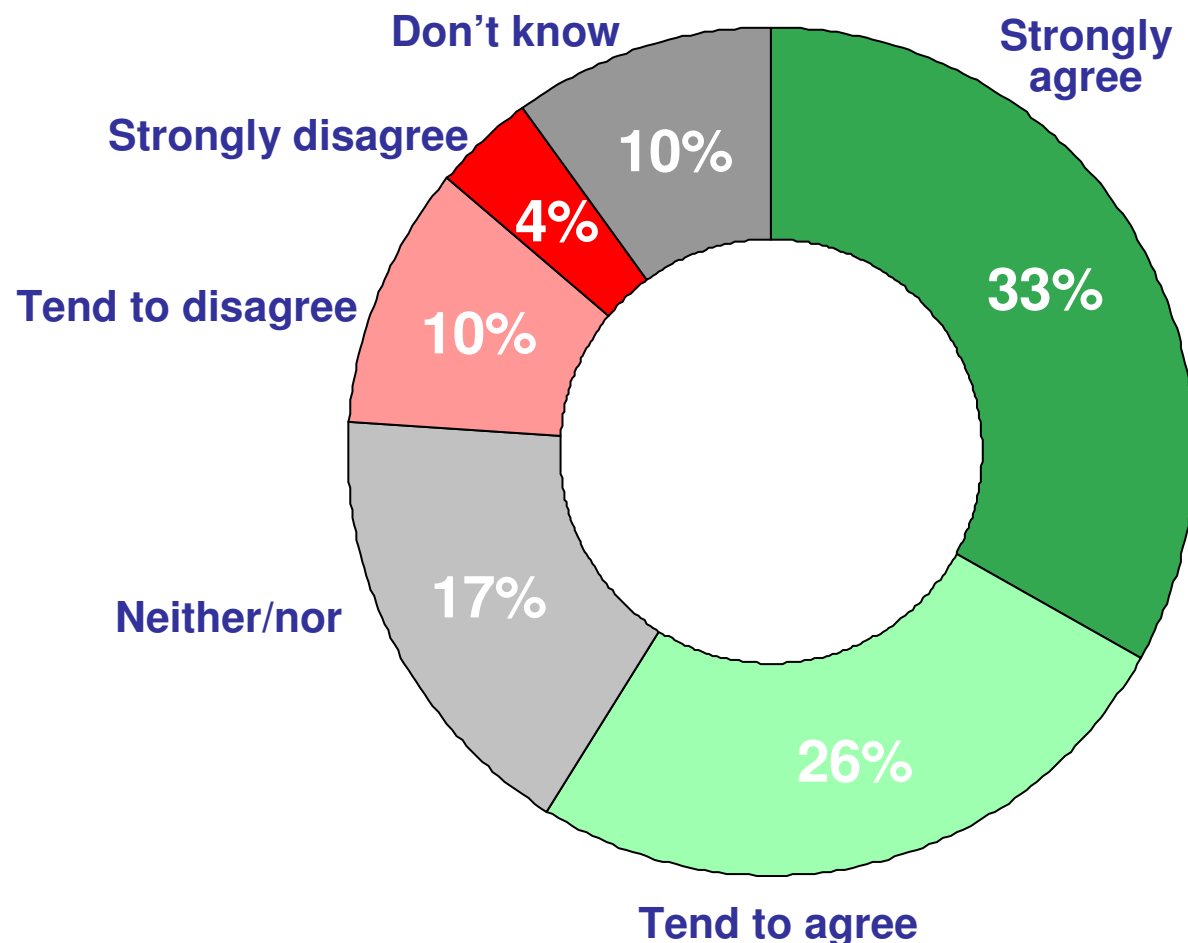
And yet ...



Three in five parents
AGREE that
their child's prospects
are **BETTER**
than their own were

Child's prospects

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree that your child's prospects are better than your own prospects were at the same age?



Base: 653 British adults who are parents of a child age 0-19 (where 16-19s in fte), 22-26 June 2006, Ipsos MORI Omnibus for the Sutton Trust/the Treasury

Child's prospects

Agree

All



ABs



C1/C2s



DEs



Acceptance of their “lot in life” by lower socio- economic groups?



Surely not ...

You work hard enough, you get the relevant qualifications and you knuckle down ... you don't have to live on a council estate like we do

I want them to achieve what I didn't

I've drummed into all of them: "I want you to have these things, I can't get you these things ... what you need to do is get your backside down to school ... and get it yourself"

Barriers to achieving aspirations



Child's prospects: schools' influence

Agree that child's prospects are better than own

All



Agree that child's
school encourages
them to aim high



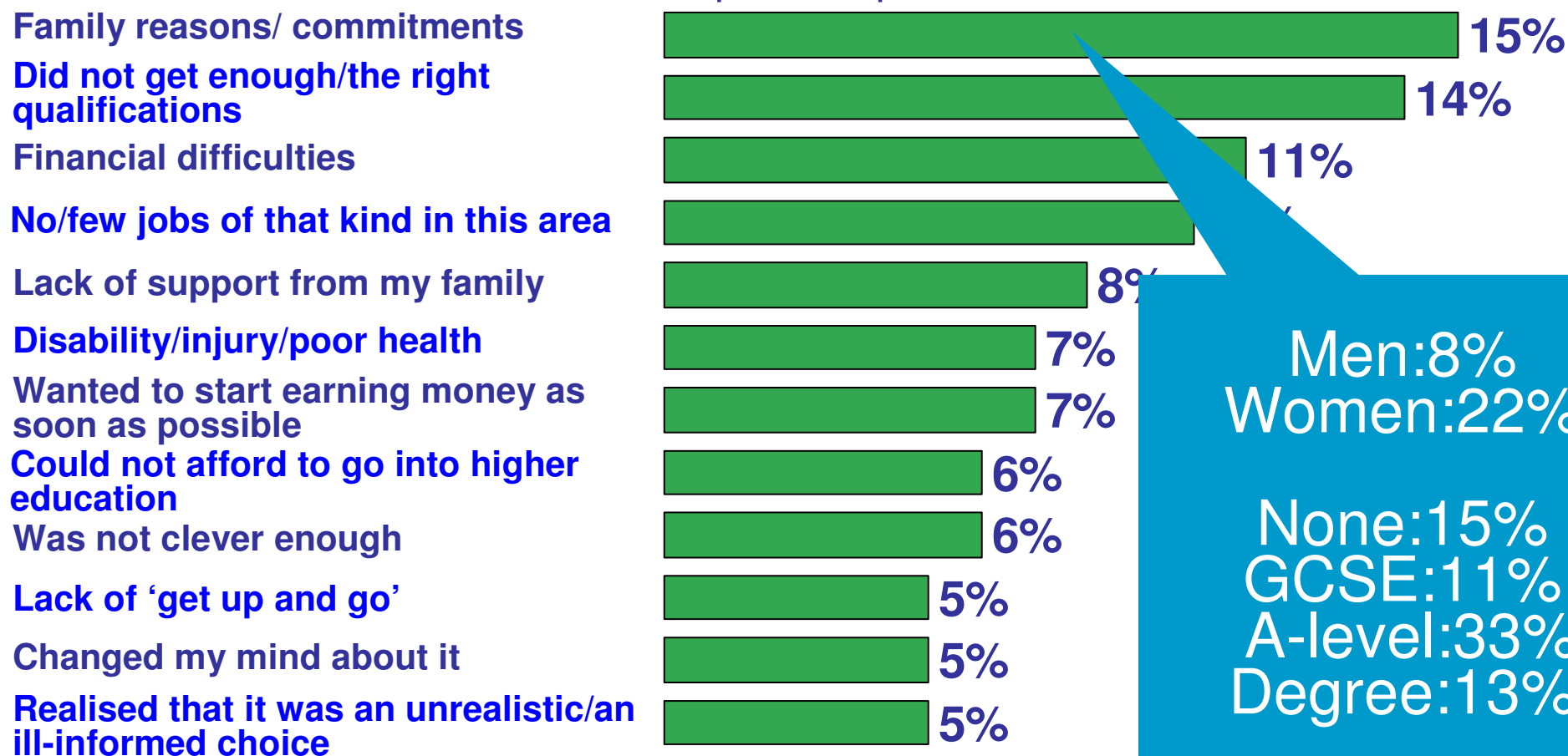
Disagree that child's
school encourages
them to aim high



Achieving job/occupation aspirations – what got in the way?

Q What was it that stopped you from doing the job or occupation that you really wanted or hoped to do when you were still at school, if anything?

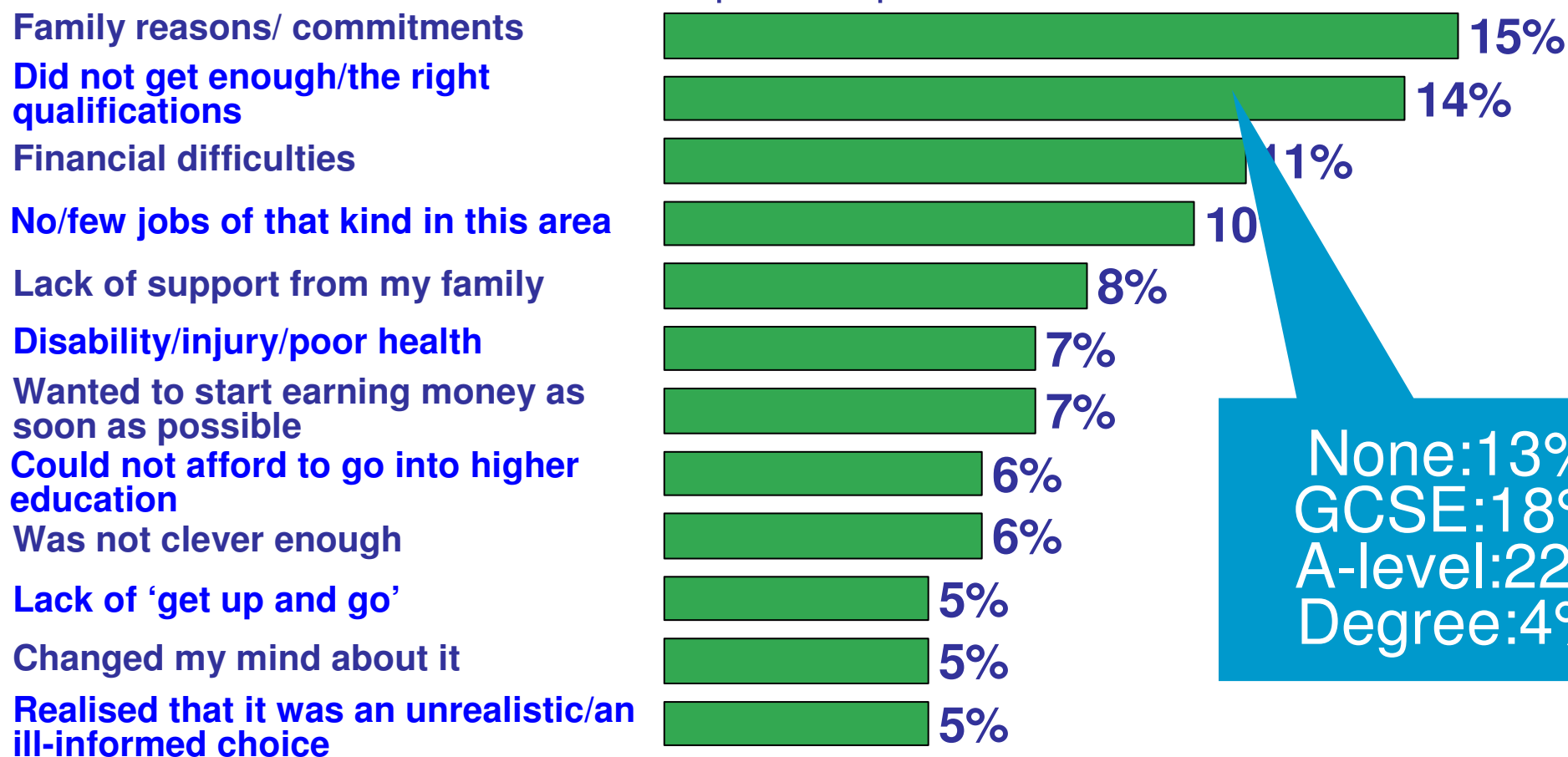
Top 12 responses



Achieving job/occupation aspirations – what got in the way?

Q What was it that stopped you from doing the job or occupation that you really wanted or hoped to do when you were still at school, if anything?

Top 12 responses



None:13%
GCSE:18%
A-level:22%
Degree:4%

Re-iterated by Luton parents ...

- Starting a family, and needing to work around them (can be an active choice, though)
- Needing to support oneself/contribute to the family's finances
- Not getting 'essential' qualification(s) for a particular job
- Plus
 - Redundancy/ "having to start all over again"
 - Unstable family life (going into care, early bereavement etc.)
 - Difficult time at school
 - Getting a criminal record
 - "Thinking you know it all" ("*when you know bugger all*")
 - Not realising the *importance* of school
 - Not getting the right support/advice/guidance at the right time and/or from the right people

Re-iterated by Luton parents ...

As a kid, if someone had shown me a photograph of where I live [now] and my situation and told me “If you don’t get qualifications, if you don’t get a decent job, this is where you’re going to end up living” ... if it had been more reality, I would have said “Right! I’m going to school”. I’d have been there at 8 o’clock in the morning

When you don’t come from a rich background, you know that you could aspire to be whatever you want to be, but if your parents can’t afford to put you through college, or your parents can’t afford for you to not work, you know you can’t do these things

Re-iterated by Luton parents ...

I wanted to be a window dresser ... my Dad said "you'll end up washing windows"

Not one person encouraged me

It wasn't in [my parents] to put it into me to go forwards like that because of the way they were brought up

Parents' expectations for their children are framed by their own sphere(s) of reference.

**They need:
guidance on helping their children to set their sights high ...**



Luton parents told us ...

- Don't know how to advise children on what their options are (don't have all the info, what info they have may be out-of-date, often based on only limited experience)
- Can't assess for sure what their children are capable of, when parents haven't done it themselves
- Element of chance/luck in children getting the right advice from elsewhere
- Cost of HE may be prohibitive, anyway

Young people confirm that parents are a strong influence

I really like art but when I was picking my [GCSE] options my Mum said there's no point doing it as I don't want to be an artist

I would like to be a journalist because my Mum says I'm good at writing stories

They're more realistic – I used to want to be in the FBI!

At the end of the day, if you wanted to do something that your parents disagreed with, they'd let you know about it

I used to want to be a police officer – they thought it would be dangerous



**... and society providing
a strong(er) safety net**

In general

- An equal quality of education for all (no “*postcode lottery*”)
- Pro-active encouragement of young people to “think bigger”
- More awareness-raising with them about why they need to do this: the effect on their future life chances, where they’ll live, what car they’ll drive etc. (“*the real world consequences of education*”)
- More emphasis on developing basic skills and vocational experience (not everyone can, or needs to, get academic qualifications, e.g. A-levels or a degree; we need cleaners as well as brain surgeons)
- More support for parents so that they can support their children
 - Appointments for parents with local guidance service
 - More/clearer advice on information sources they can access and how/where they can find these
- Increase the school leaving age to 18 (more mature/informed decisions about the future)?

Careers guidance

- Discrete careers education/guidance from a younger age
- More attention by providers of guidance to those “in the middle” (not just the very high/very low achievers)
- Providers able to offer a fuller range of, and a more sophisticated level of, guidance
 - Not just the obvious jobs that can be done with a particular subject, the more obscure ones, too
 - Unpicking and explaining all the applications of a particular subject and why it will be useful “in the real world” – specific, but also the generic
 - More probing questions re. young people’s interests, aptitudes etc.

Looking at work experience in particular

- Multiple opportunities for work experience, each one of longer duration than a week, and with a structured outcome built in (not just there to make the tea) ...
- ... young people supported financially so they can take up these multiple opportunities ...
- ... no young person left to arrange their own work experience (should be an entitlement) ...
- ... employers encouraged (incentivised?) to offer the fullest range of work experience opportunities (including a dedicated work experience co-ordinator in every company?)

The emerging questions

- Are barriers to achieving aspirations amongst lower socio-economic groups perceived or real?
- Whose aspirations should we be raising – parents' or children's or both? And how about teachers' aspirations for pupils??
- Is the issue just a lack of marketing/ information?
- What can be done by government and others to address this?

Thank you