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NI Urban Green Space *Survey Results* *December 2022*



Overview

Purpose of the survey

This survey was undertaken in November 2022 as part of the stakeholder engagement activity for the 'Future of urban green space in Northern Ireland' project.

The aim of the survey was to gain a wide range of stakeholder views on their **personal experience** of using their local urban green space (as opposed to representing an organisation).

536 people responded to the survey.

The findings of the survey will be reviewed alongside feedback from online workshops with organisations and businesses, face to face stakeholder events with community groups and children, as well as park user surveys and an ethnographic study to develop the vision for the future of urban green space in Northern Ireland.

Key findings

Current state

- **Access** - One third of respondents visit their local UGS several times a week. Over half of respondents live within a 10 minute walk of an UGS. 36% of respondents have to drive to get to their local UGS.
- **Uses** - Physical health is the main use of urban green spaces (generally easy and moderate effort physical activities). Mental health second most important with enjoyment of nature and wildlife and dog walking also popular uses.
- **Barriers** - The greatest barriers to greater access were 'lack of time' (which this project may find difficult to influence – but indicates people would like to go more often if they could) and 'lack of quality green space'.
- **Views on the current state** – There were lots of very positive responses about the current state of UGS; it makes their area a great place to live. It allows people to explore nature on their doorstep, improves their quality of life and is somewhere people can relax and unwind, and do exercise or physical activity, and provide a place to meet others from the community and provides space for children to play. Over half of respondents said their UGS promotes good relations between communities. The two most negative views were feeling of safety during the evening/night time and antisocial behaviour.

Future priorities

The highest priorities for the future were that UGS...

- supports more **wildlife and biodiversity**
- are **more commonplace** in green space in towns and cities
- are **high quality and attractive**
- help mitigate against **climate change**
- are more **accessible by walking or cycling**

Other important factors were:

- designed in collaboration with local people
- more inclusive for all
- more cafes and toilet facilities
- better maintained
- safer
- more events

Demographics

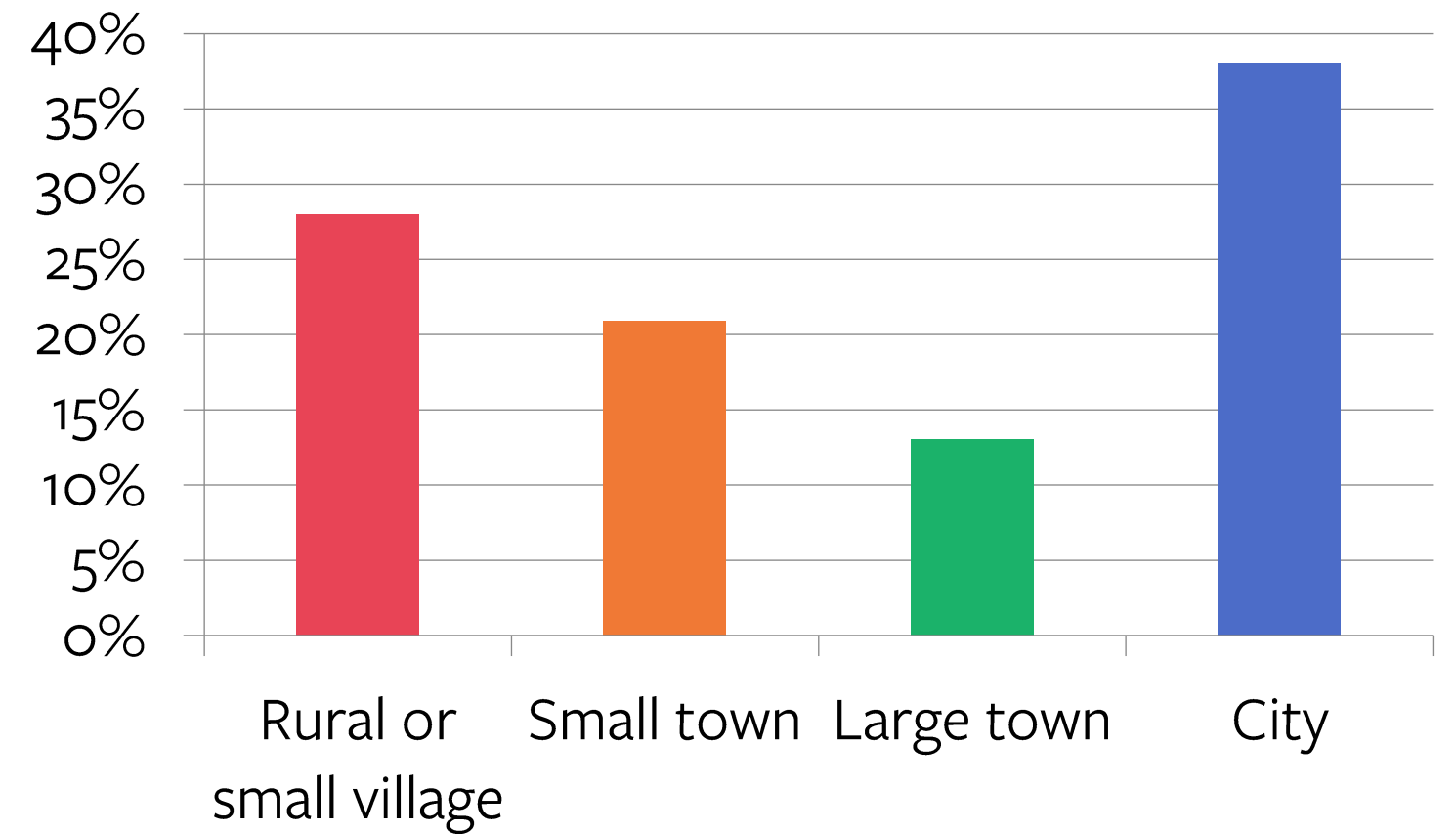
- Location
- Age

Local area

Which of the following best describes the area where you live?

- Cities are the most represented category
- Large representation of rural areas/small villages

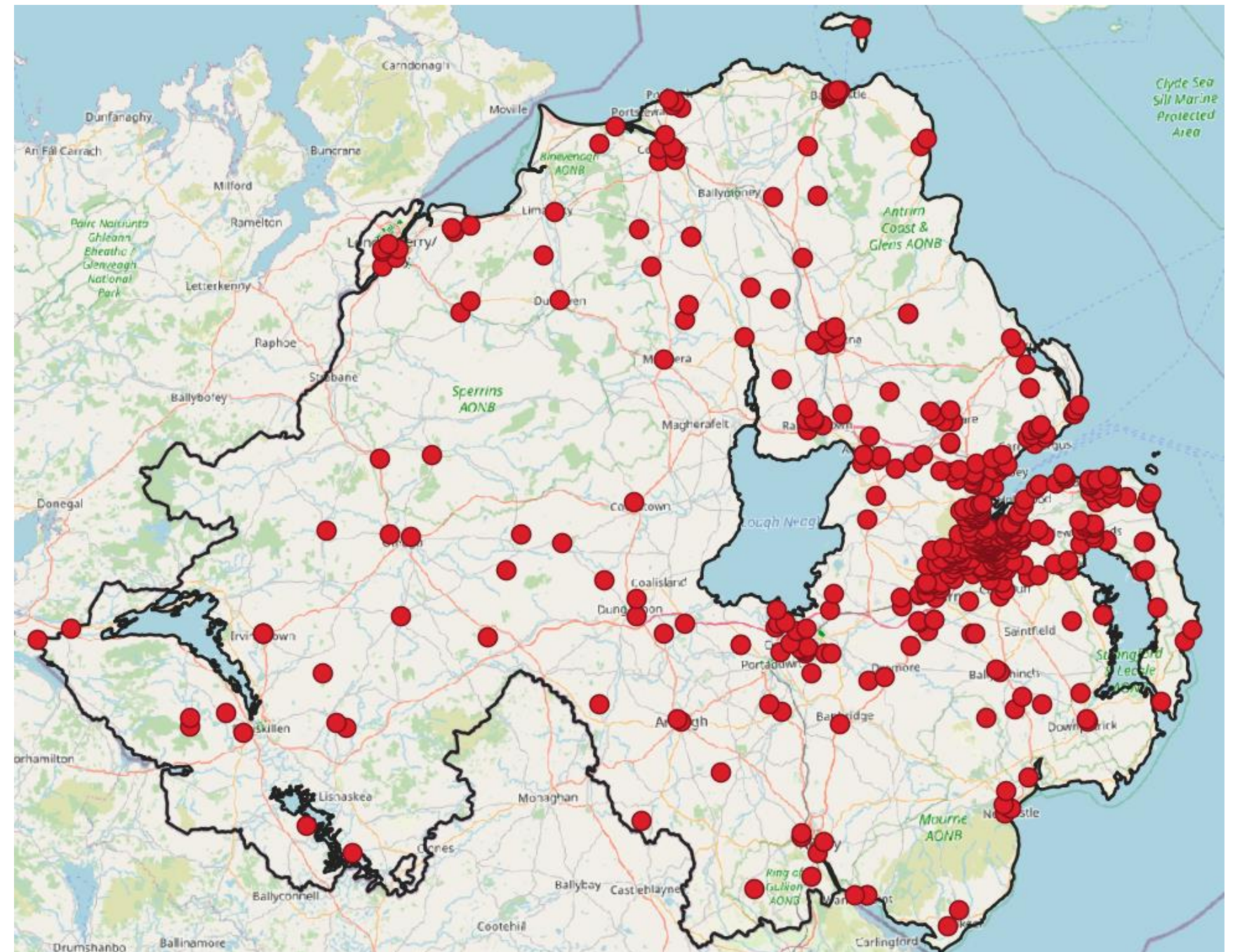
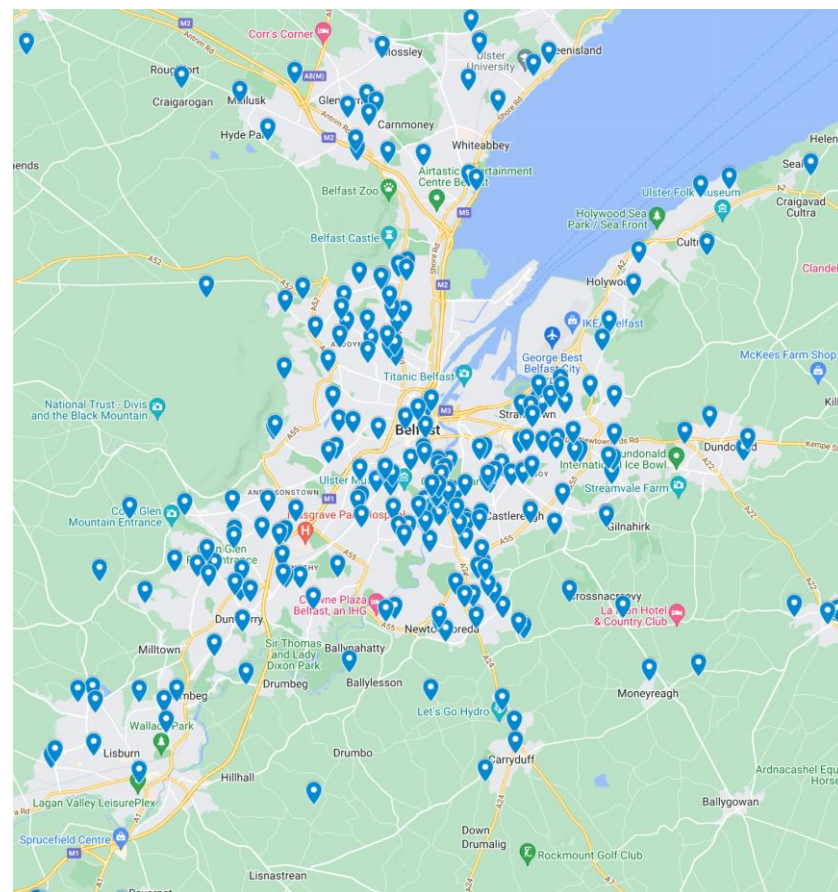
	Responses	
Rural or small village	28%	150
Small town	21%	112
Large town	13%	70
City	38%	204



Local area

What is your postcode?

- Good spread across NI
- Largely concentrated in the Greater Belfast Metropolitan area (below)

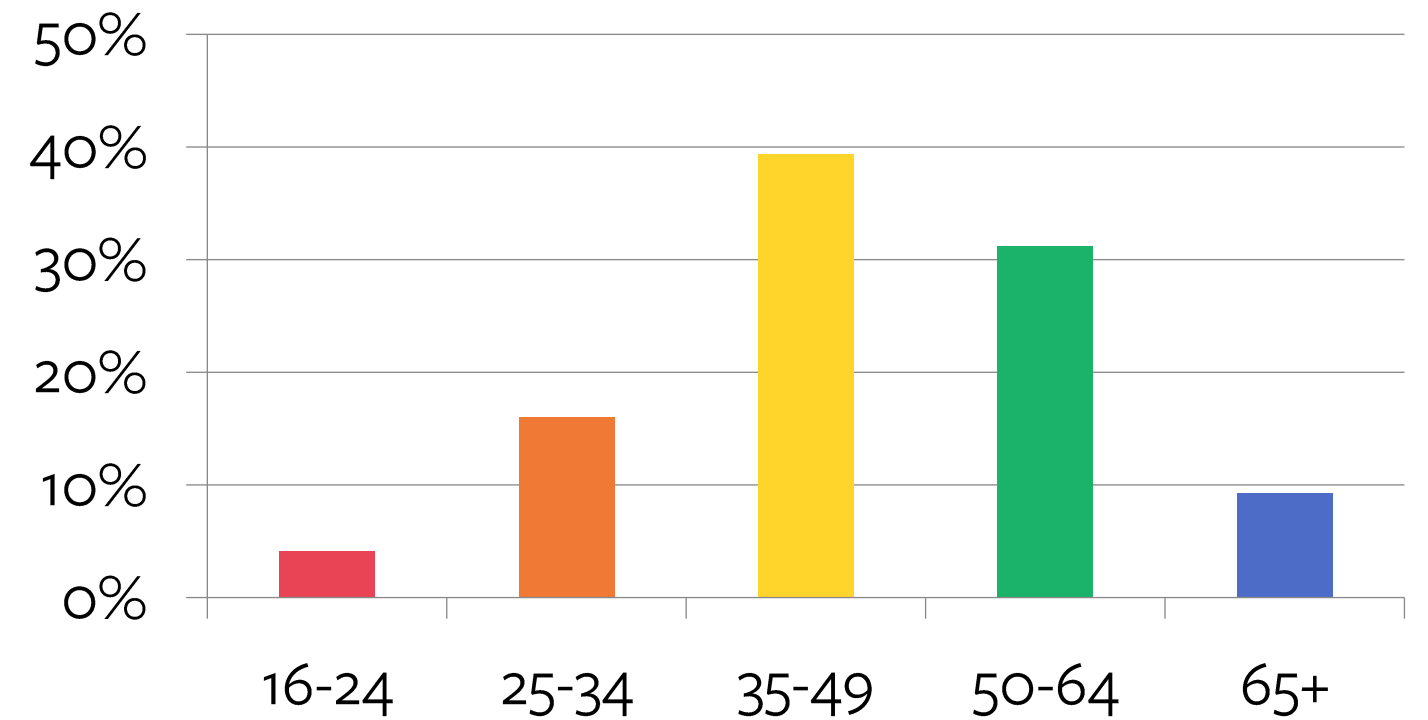
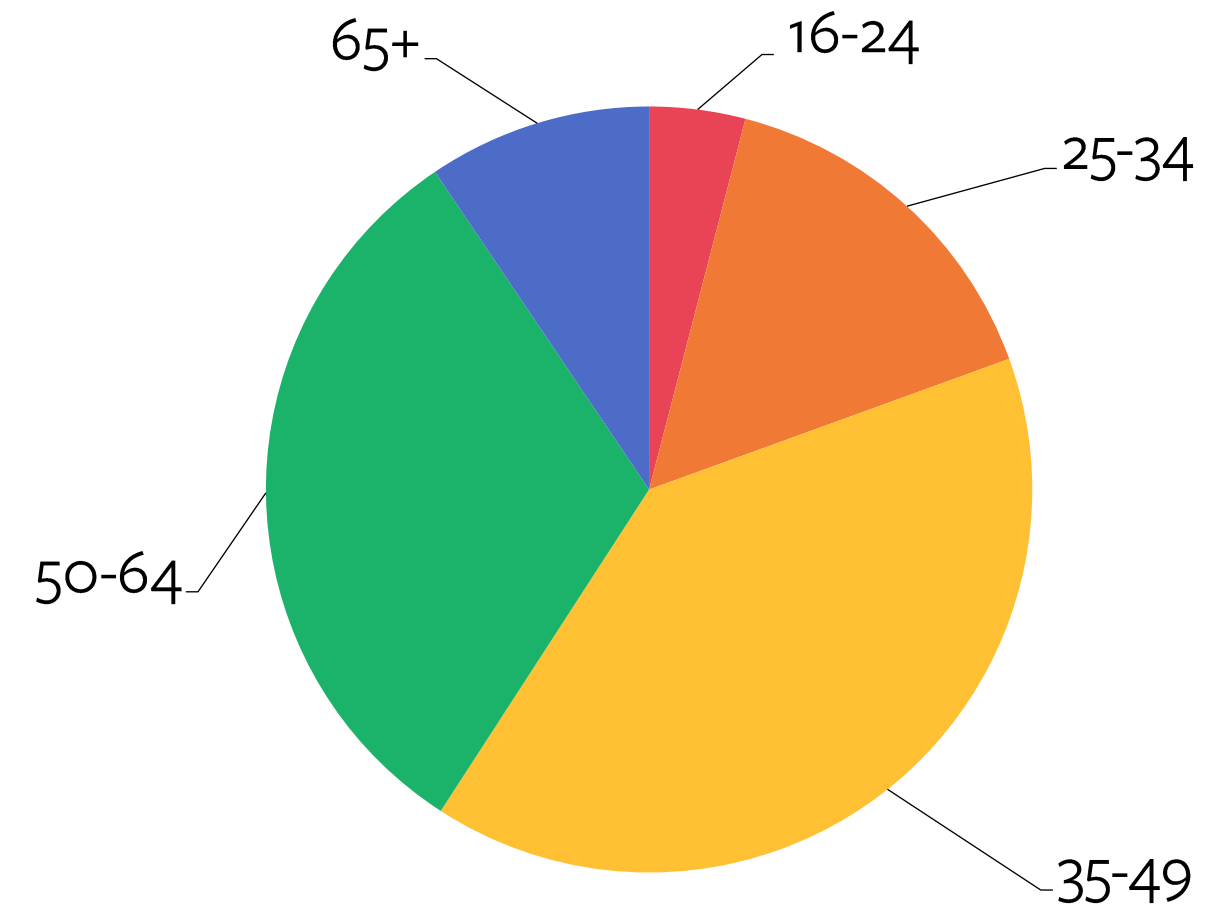


Age

What is your age?

- Responses from all age brackets, but low response from 16-24 year olds
- Greatest representation between ages 34-64

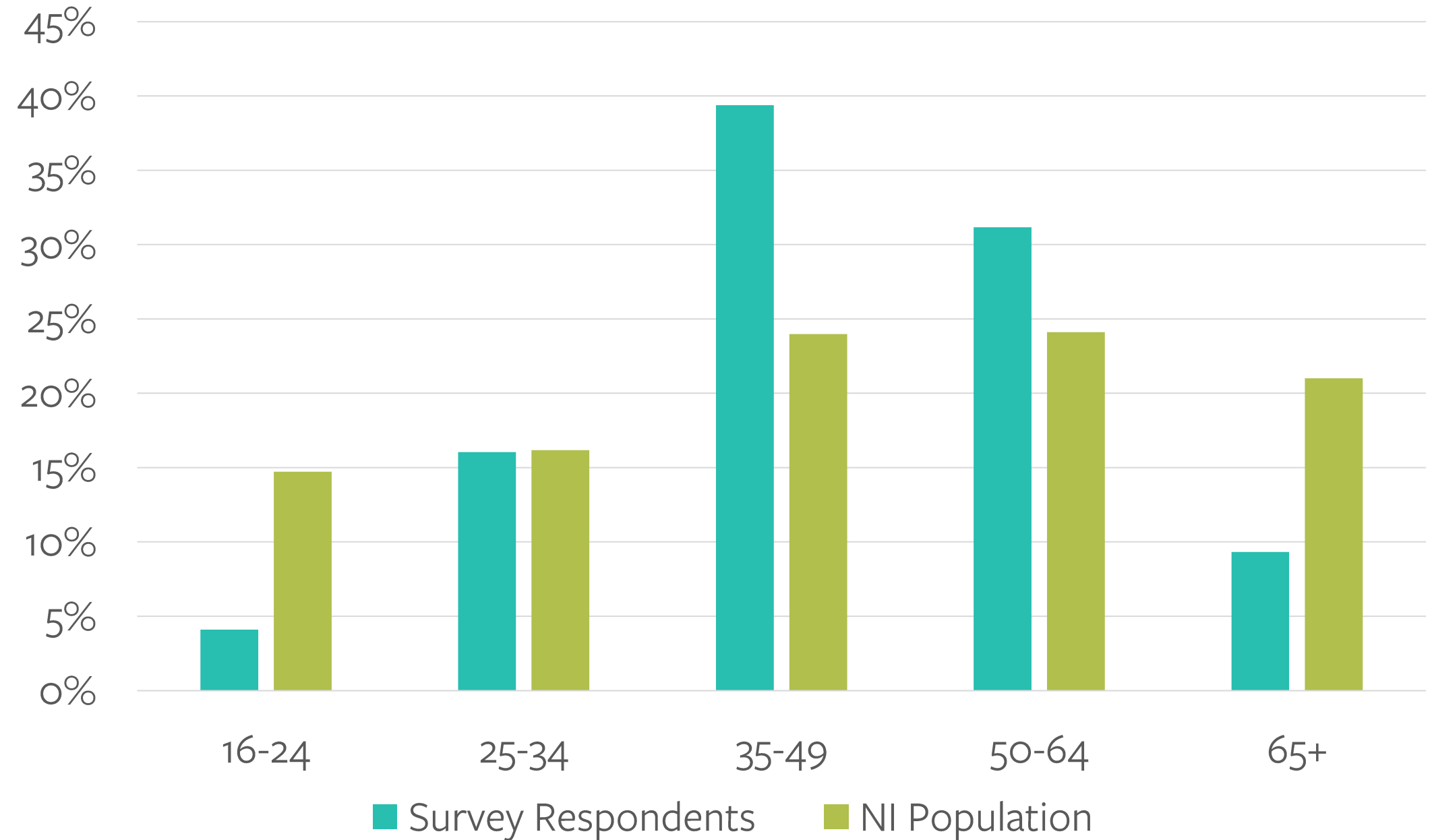
	Responses	
16-24	4%	22
25-34	16%	86
35-49	39%	211
50-64	31%	167
65+	9%	50



Age

Compared with NI population spread

- Good representation of ages 25-34
- Over representation of ages 35-64
- Under representation of ages 16-24 and the over 65s



Green space usage

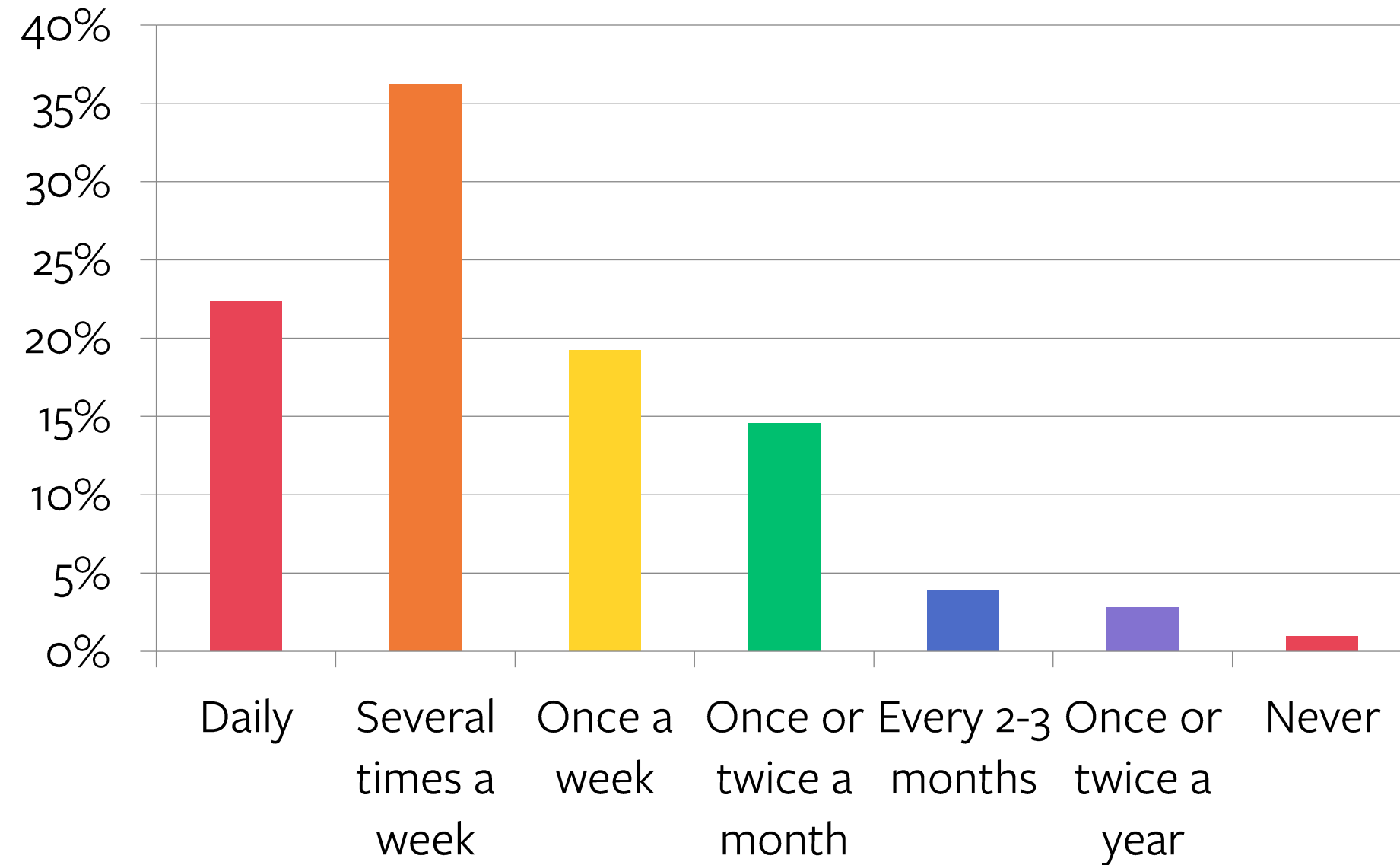
- Frequency of use
- Walking distance
- Mode of transport
- Activity intensity
- Green spaces uses
- Time spent
- Barriers to use

Frequency of use

How often do you visit your local urban green spaces, on average?

- One third of respondents visit their local UGS several times a week
- 22% are daily users of UGS

	Responses	
Daily	22%	120
Several times a week	36%	194
Once a week	19%	103
Once or twice a month	15%	78
Every 2-3 months	4%	21
Once or twice a year	3%	15
Never	1%	5

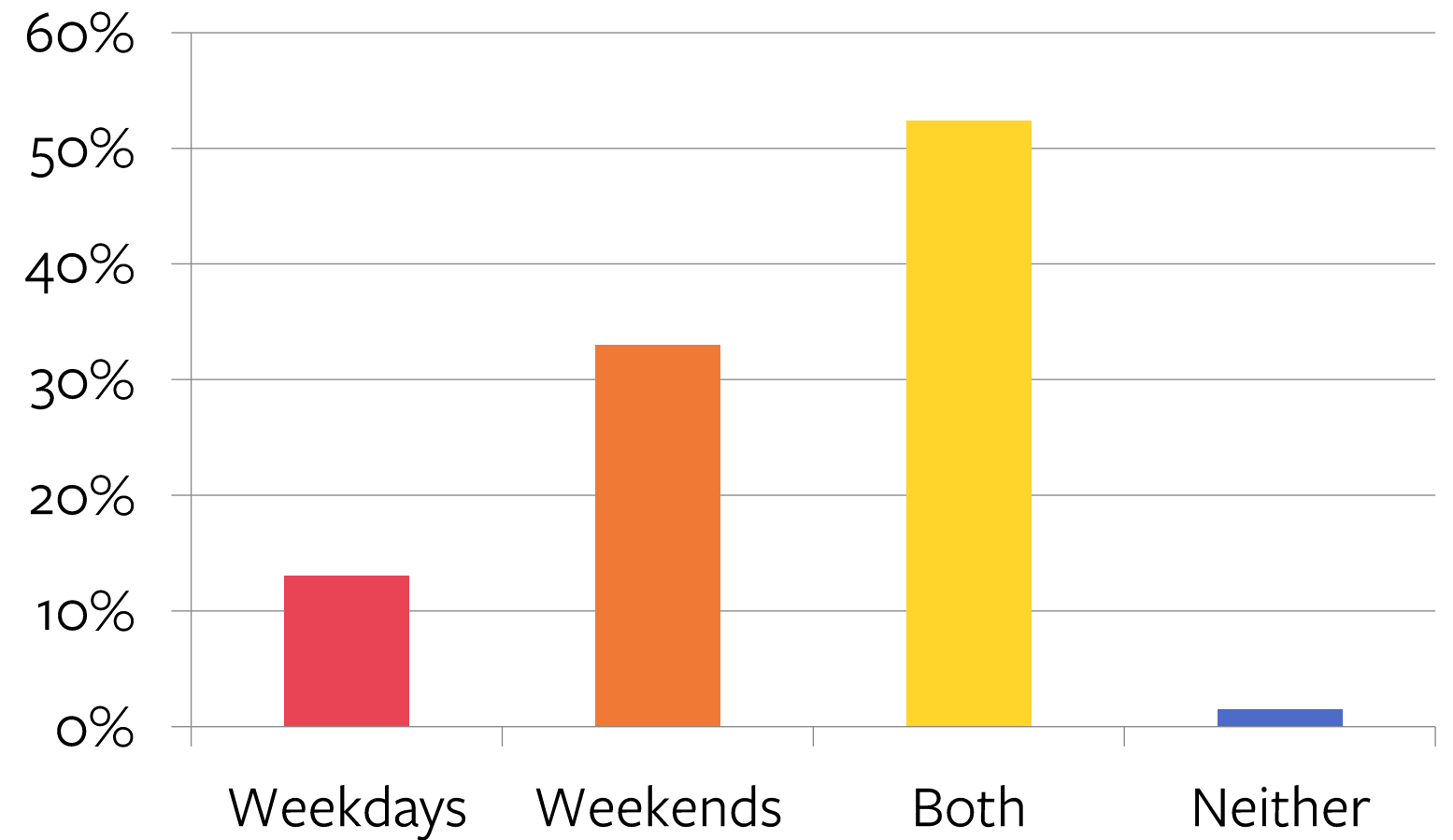


Weekly use

What time of the week do you tend to use your local urban green spaces the most?

- Over half of respondents tend to use their local UGS on both weekends and weekdays
- One third use green spaces mainly on weekends

	Responses	
Weekdays	13%	70
Weekends	33%	177
Both	52%	281
Neither	1%	8

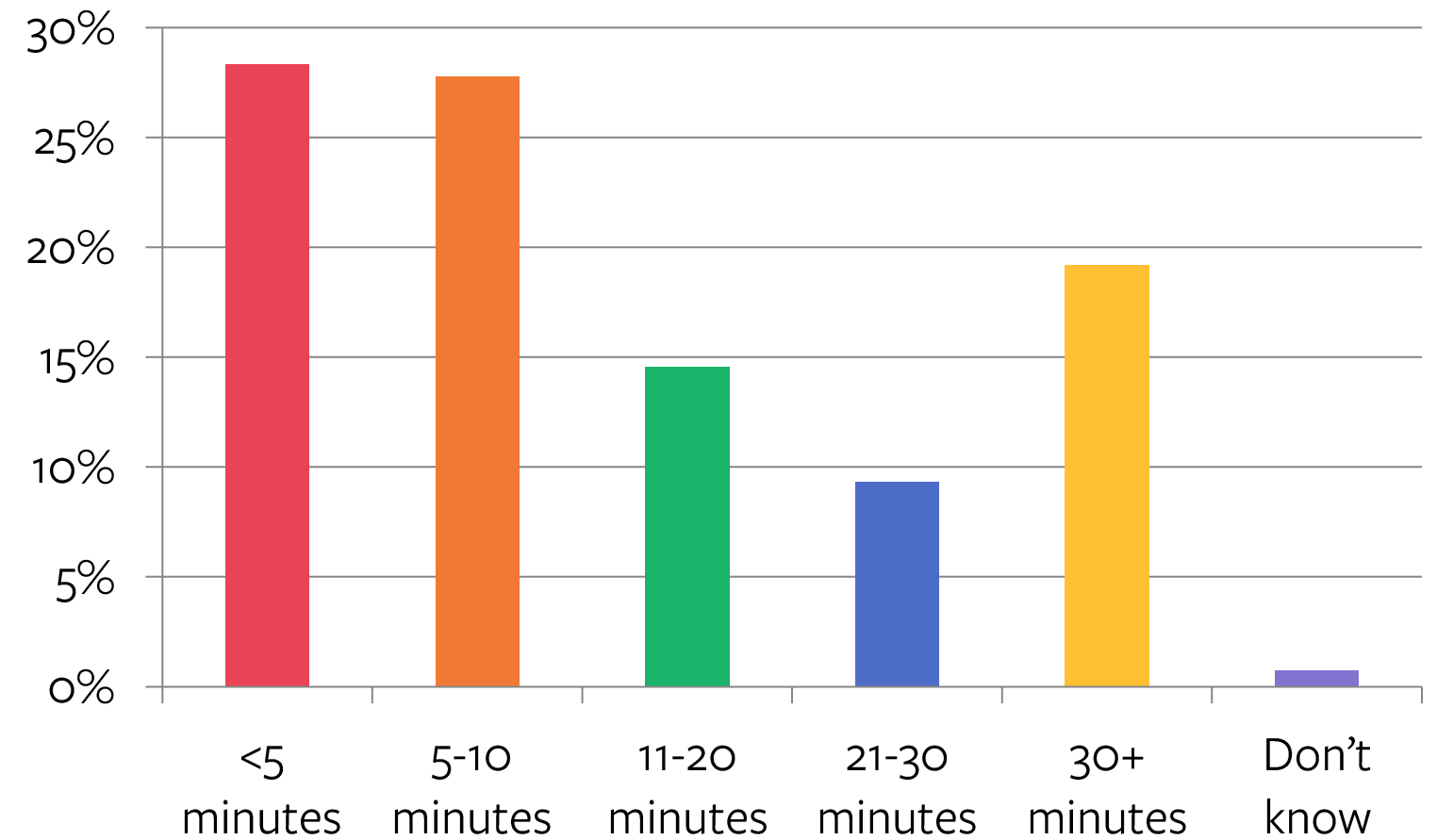


Walking distance

How long does it take you to walk to your nearest urban green space area?

- Over half of respondents live within a 10 minute walk of an UGS
- Around 25% live between 10-30 minutes by foot from an UGS
- 20% live over 30 minutes from an UGS

	Responses	
<5 minutes	28%	152
5-10 minutes	28%	149
11-20 minutes	15%	78
21-30 minutes	9%	50
30+ minutes	19%	103
Don't know	1%	4



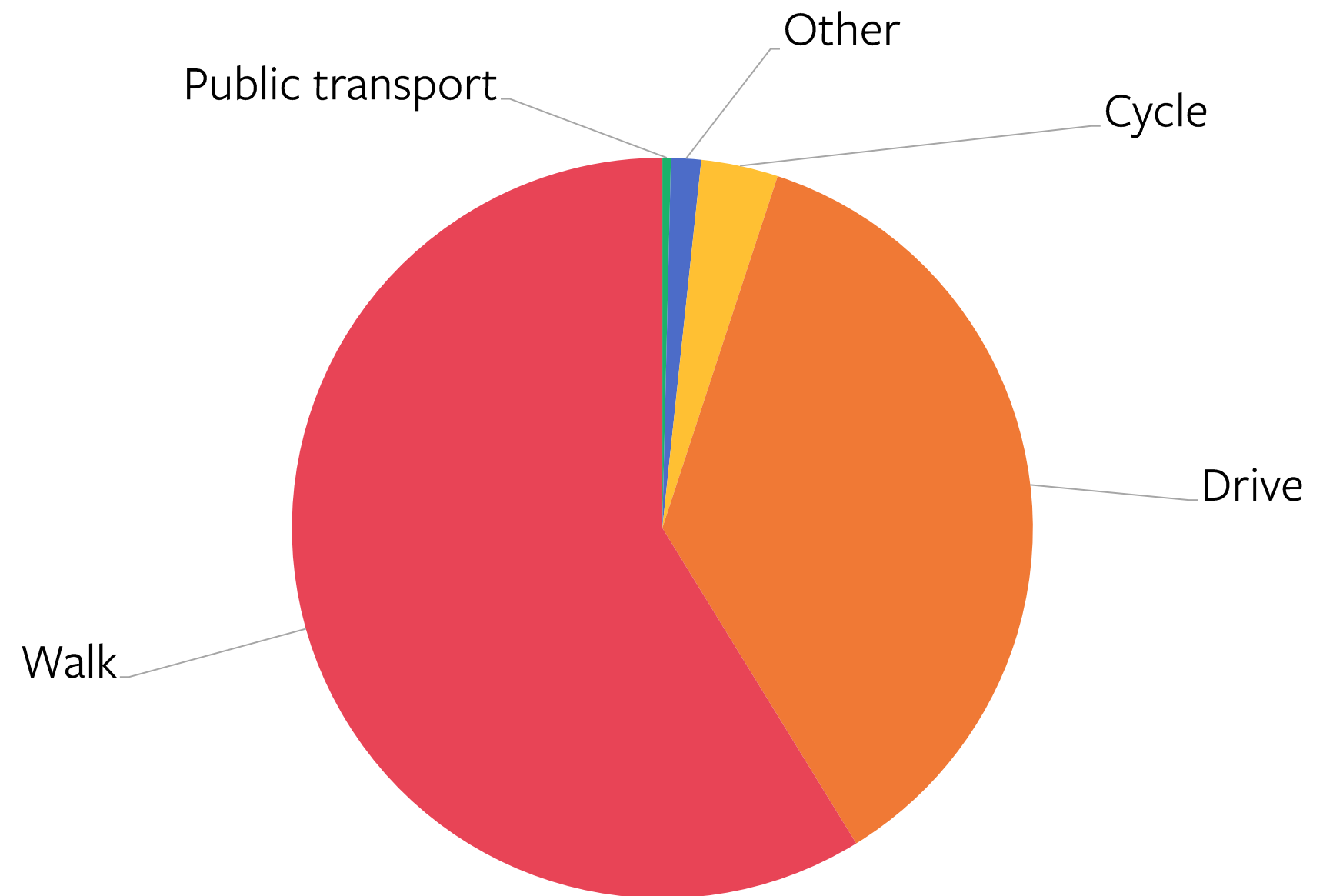
Mode of transport

How do you tend to travel to your local urban green space?

- Walking and driving are by far the most popular modes of transport respondents use to access their local UGS
- Only 3% cycle

	Responses	
Walk	59%	315
Drive	36%	194
Cycle	3%	18
Other	1%	7
Public transport	0%	2
Wheelchair/Mobility scooter	0%	0

Other responses: run, mixture of walk and drive

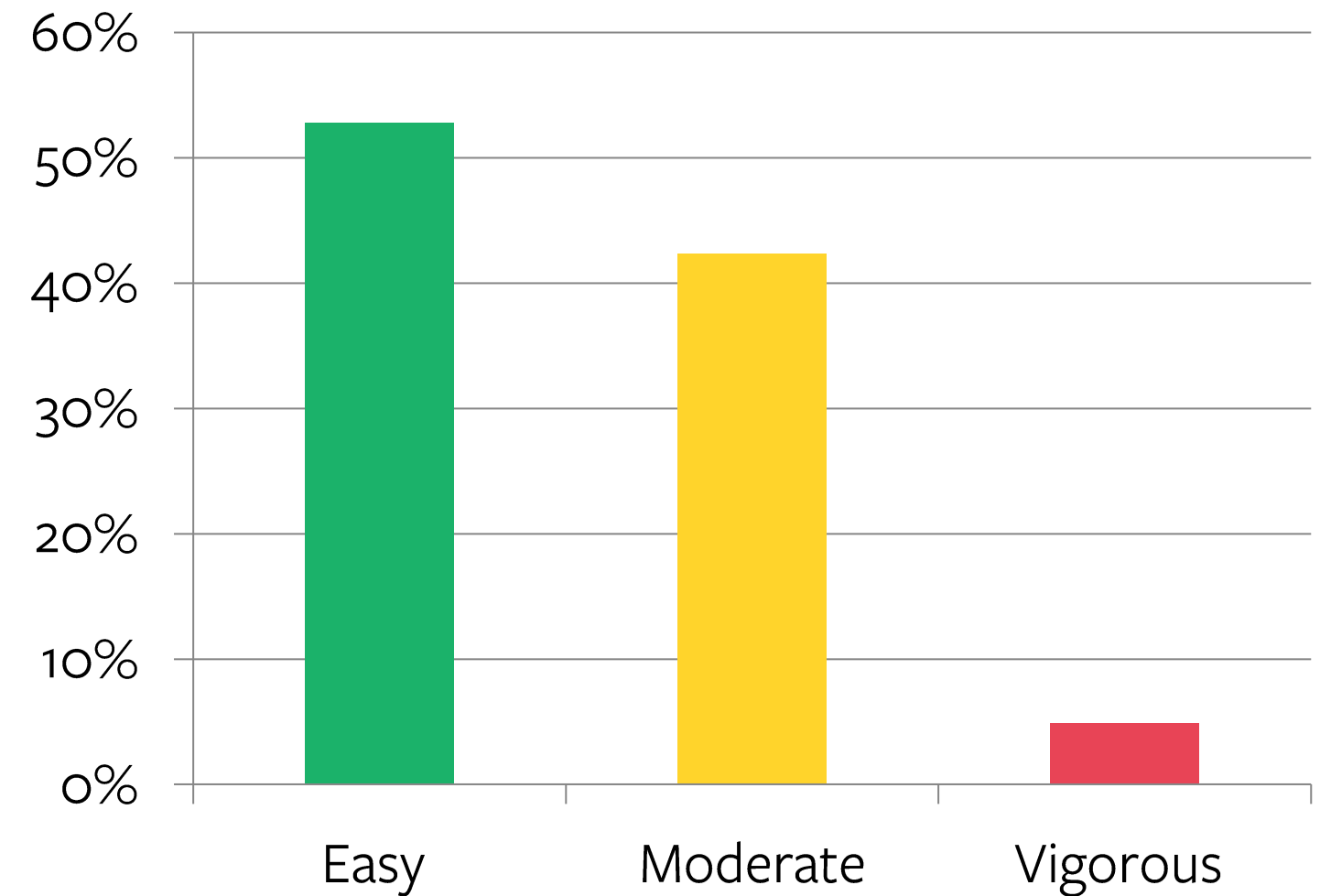


Activity intensity

When you are at your local green space how would you describe your normal level of activity?

- Respondents tend to use UGSs for easy and moderate effort activities
- Comparatively few use their local UGS for vigorous activities, requiring significant effort

	Responses	
Easy (easy effort, breathing normal or slightly raised)	53%	283
Moderate (moderate effort, breathing somewhat harder than normal)	42%	227
Vigorous (significant effort, breathing much harder than normal)	5%	26



Green space uses

What do you tend to use your local urban green space for?

- Physical health is the main use of urban green spaces
- Mental health second most important with enjoyment of nature and wildlife and dog walking also popular uses

	Responses	
Physical health, sport and exercise	67%	360
Mental health and relaxation	65%	349
Nature and wildlife	55%	295
Dog walking	29%	158
Activities for children	19%	101
Meeting friends and family	18%	98
Events, activities and art	4%	22
Other	4%	19

Other responses: photography, commuting, reading, foraging, horse riding

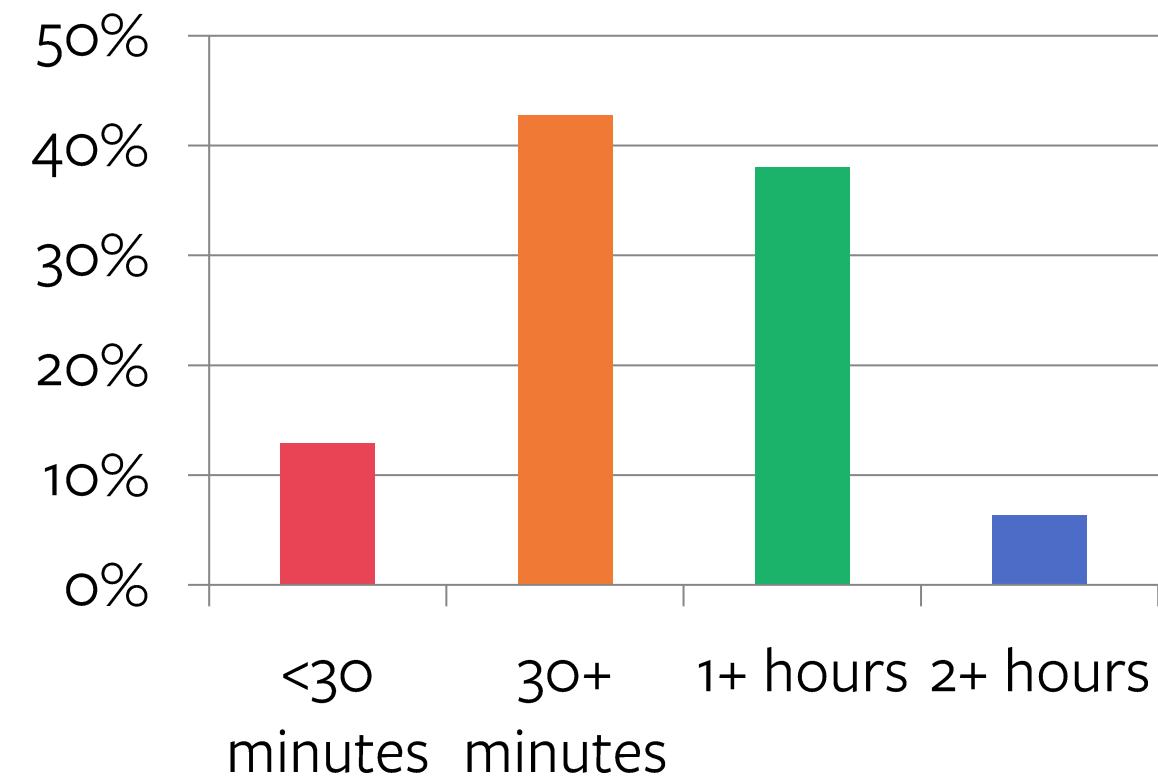


Time spent

How long on average do you tend to stay at your local urban green space for?

- Most respondents tend to spend between 30 minutes to 2 hours in their local green space

	Responses	
<30 minutes	13%	69
30+ minutes	43%	229
1+ hours	38%	204
2+ hours	6%	34



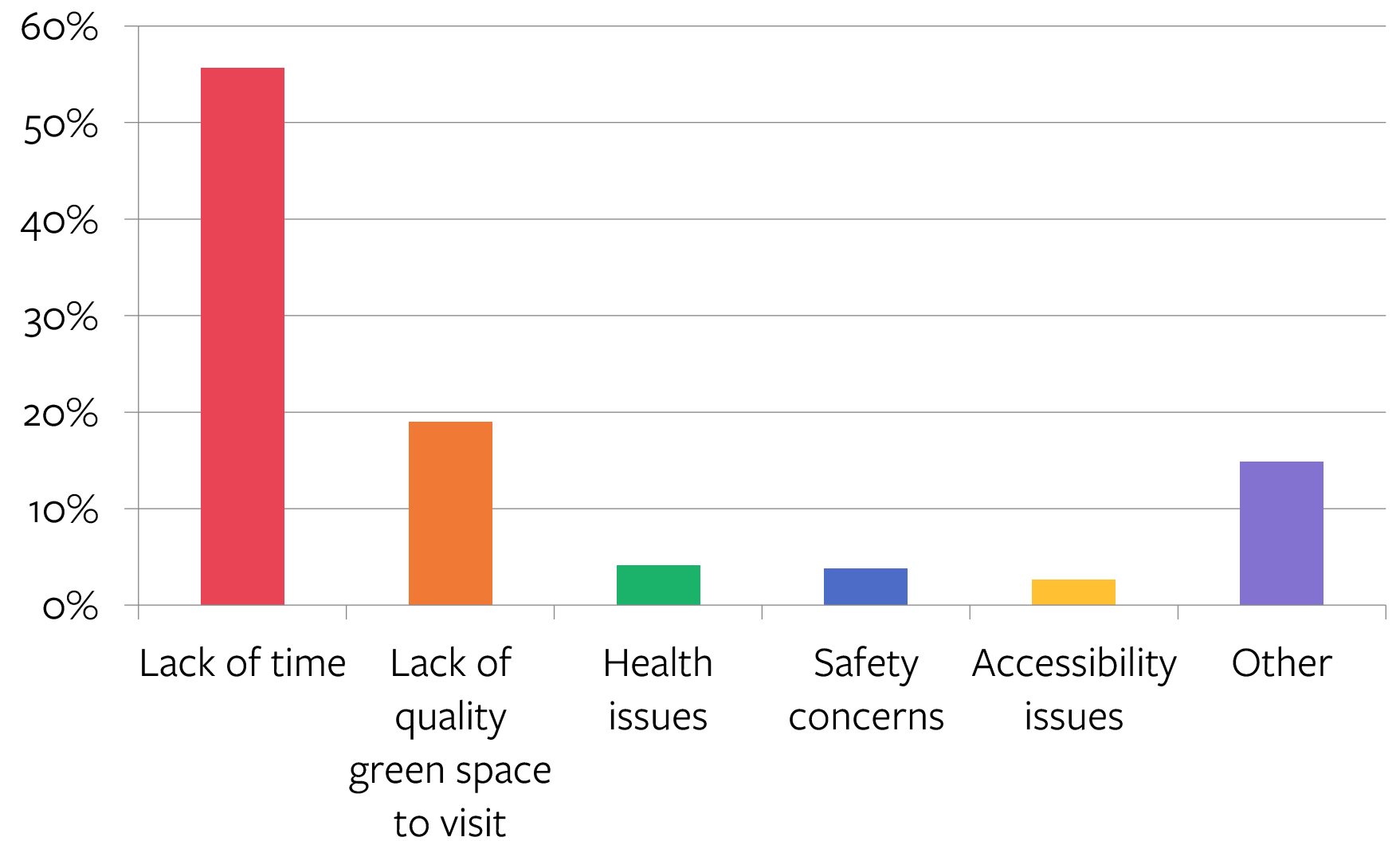
Barriers to use

What is the main barrier preventing you using your local green space more?

- Lack of time is the greatest barrier with over half of respondents choosing that option (this could indicate that people would like to go more often)
- The lack of quality green space is the second biggest barrier

	Responses	
Lack of time	56%	296
Lack of quality green space to visit	19%	101
Health issues	4%	22
Safety concerns	4%	20
Accessibility issues	3%	14
Other	15%	79

Other responses: early closing times in winter, too many dogs off leads, lack of lighting, local weather, laziness



Present and future of UGS

- Views on the current state of UGS in NI
- Future priorities

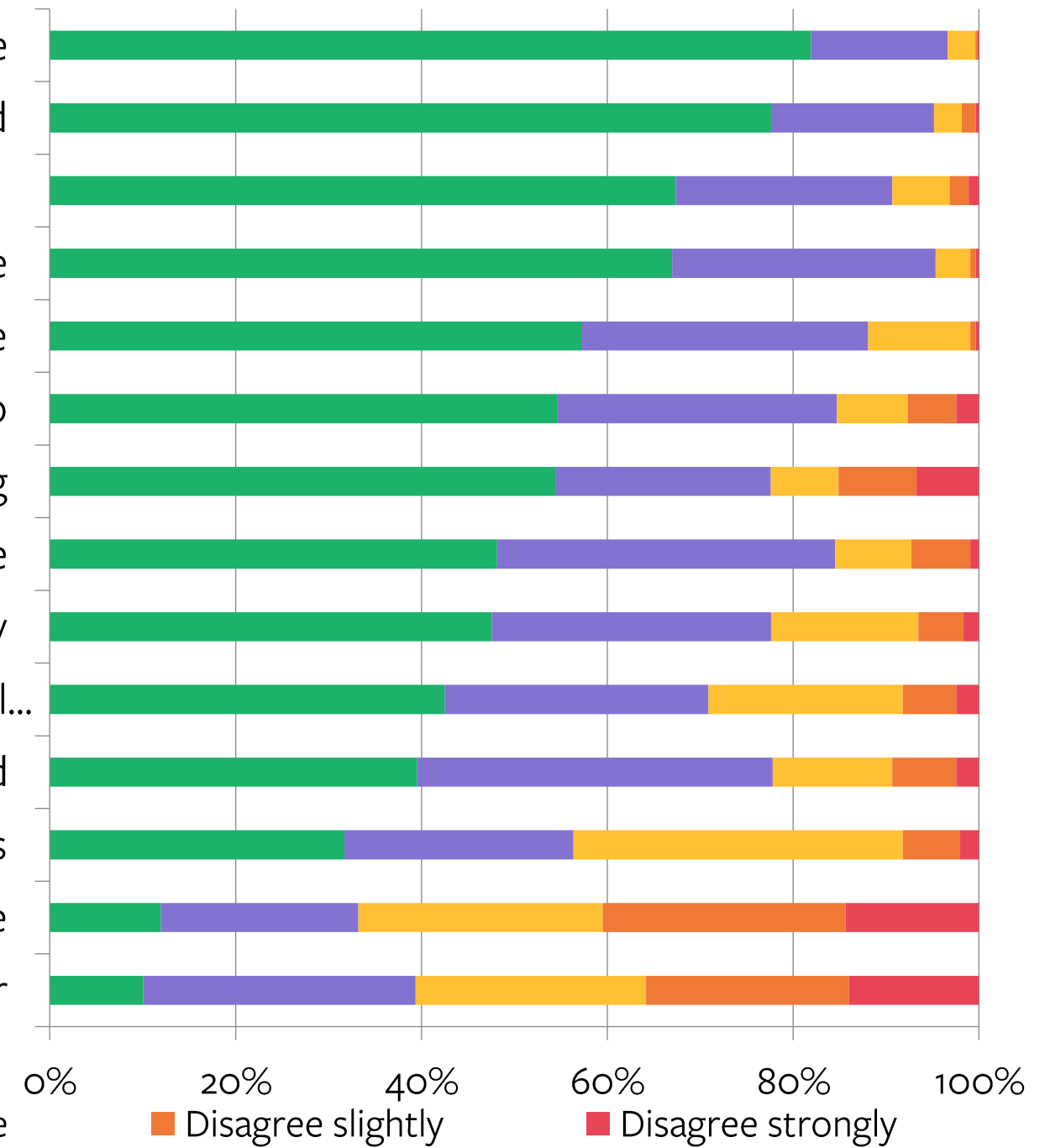
Current state of urban green spaces

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- Lots of very positive responses
- Two areas for improvement are safety during the evening/night time and tackling antisocial behaviour

My local green space...

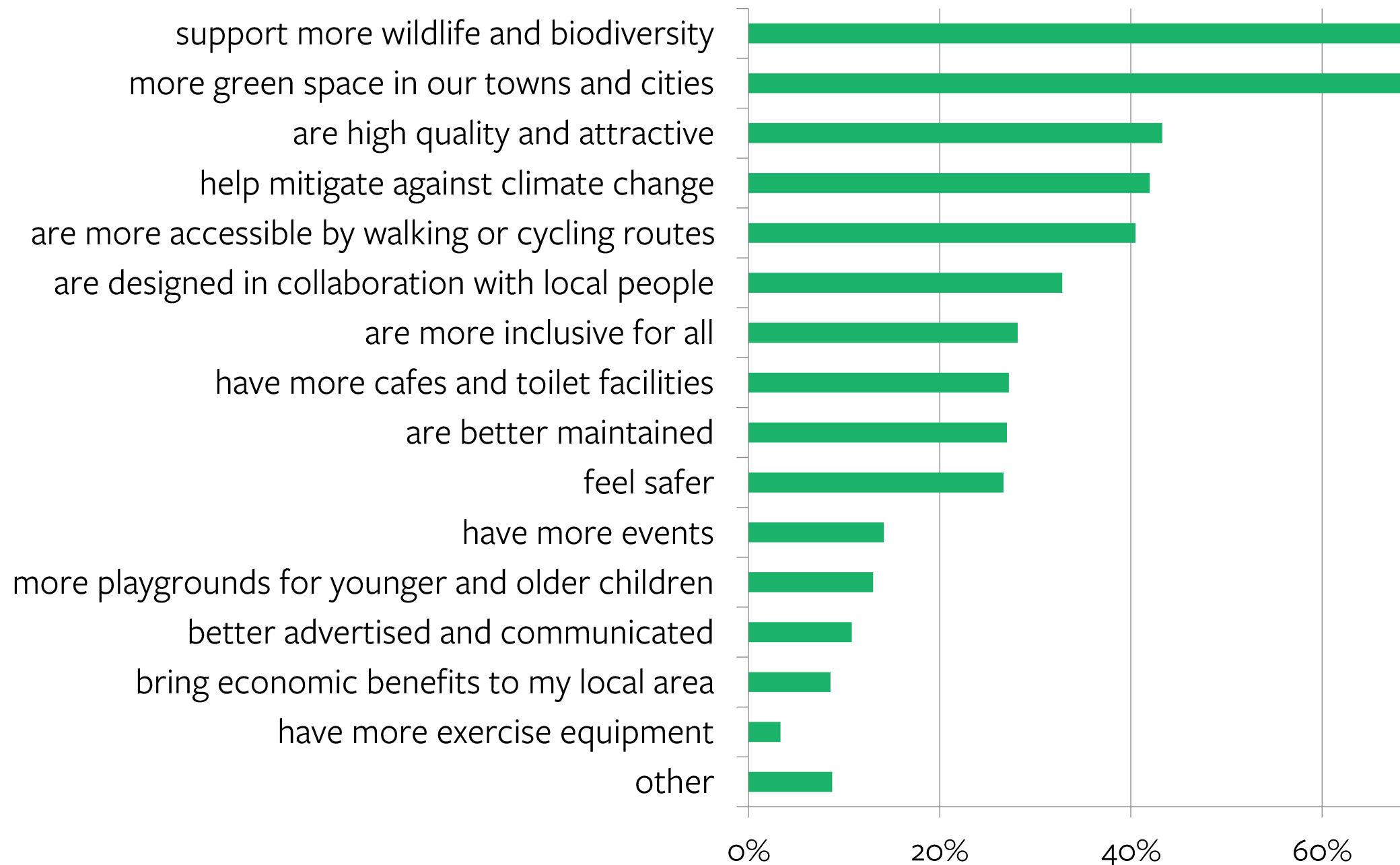
- improves my quality of life
- is somewhere I can relax and unwind
- is somewhere I do exercise or physical activity
- feels safe during the daytime
- makes the area a great place to live
- allows me to explore nature on my doorstep
- is easy to get to by walking or cycling
- is an attractive and high quality place
- is a good place for children to play
- is a good place for people to meet others from the local...
- is well maintained
- promotes good relations between communities
- feels safe during the evening/night time
- often has antisocial behaviour



Future of urban green spaces

What are your priorities for the future of urban green space in Northern Ireland in the future?

Urban green spaces...



Other priorities:

- More natural green spaces (e.g., more wildflower meadows, fewer lawns)
- Food growing opportunities (community gardens, fruit trees)
- Creation of green networks
- Improved lighting
- Pollution reduction
- Educational opportunities for all ages
- Places for adults to play