



Social distancing and public transport: Transport User Panel survey

June 2020

Survey background

- Transport Focus holds a database of contact details for transport users who have previously told us that they are happy to undertake surveys on different transport issues. These transport users provide their consent for Transport Focus to hold contact details and to re-contact them for research after having completed other research on our behalf. This contact database is known as the 'Transport User Panel'.
- On Tuesday 16 June 2020 Transport Focus sent an email invite to 17,236 members of the Transport User Panel asking them if they would take part in an online survey which asked about their experience of making journeys since restrictions on travel were introduced and their expectations of making journeys by public transport in the future. On 22 June 2020 the survey was closed with 7,072 panellists having completed the survey.
- This report summarises the findings from this research – concentrating specifically on journeys that panellists have made recently and their views on social distancing on public transport in the future. Data is unweighted and should therefore be seen as providing an indicative, rather than statistically significant, view of transport users generally.

Key findings 1: journeys made since lockdown and expectations of using public transport in the future

- A quarter of panellists have made a journey using public transport since restrictions on travel were announced on the 23 March. On the last occasion that they did so, half used a bus outside London while a third have made a journey by train.
- More than six in ten panellists made their last journey by public transport in the seven days prior to completing the questionnaire; that is at some time between 9 and 22 June.
- The majority of panellists, 84 per cent, are satisfied with the last journey that they made by public transport. More than a half found it to be quieter than they expected when they made the journey and eight in ten felt safe from the risk of being exposed to coronavirus when making this journey. Those who found it to be quieter than they expected when they made their journey are more likely than other panellists to have felt safe.
- Around nine in ten panellists expect to make journeys using public transport in the future, but a half are unable to estimate when this will be at this stage.
- Around four in ten panellists say that they will need to make journeys in the future and that using public transport is their only option for these. Alternatively a quarter say that while they will have to make journeys, they have the option of making these without using public transport. A third say that currently they have no need to make journeys.

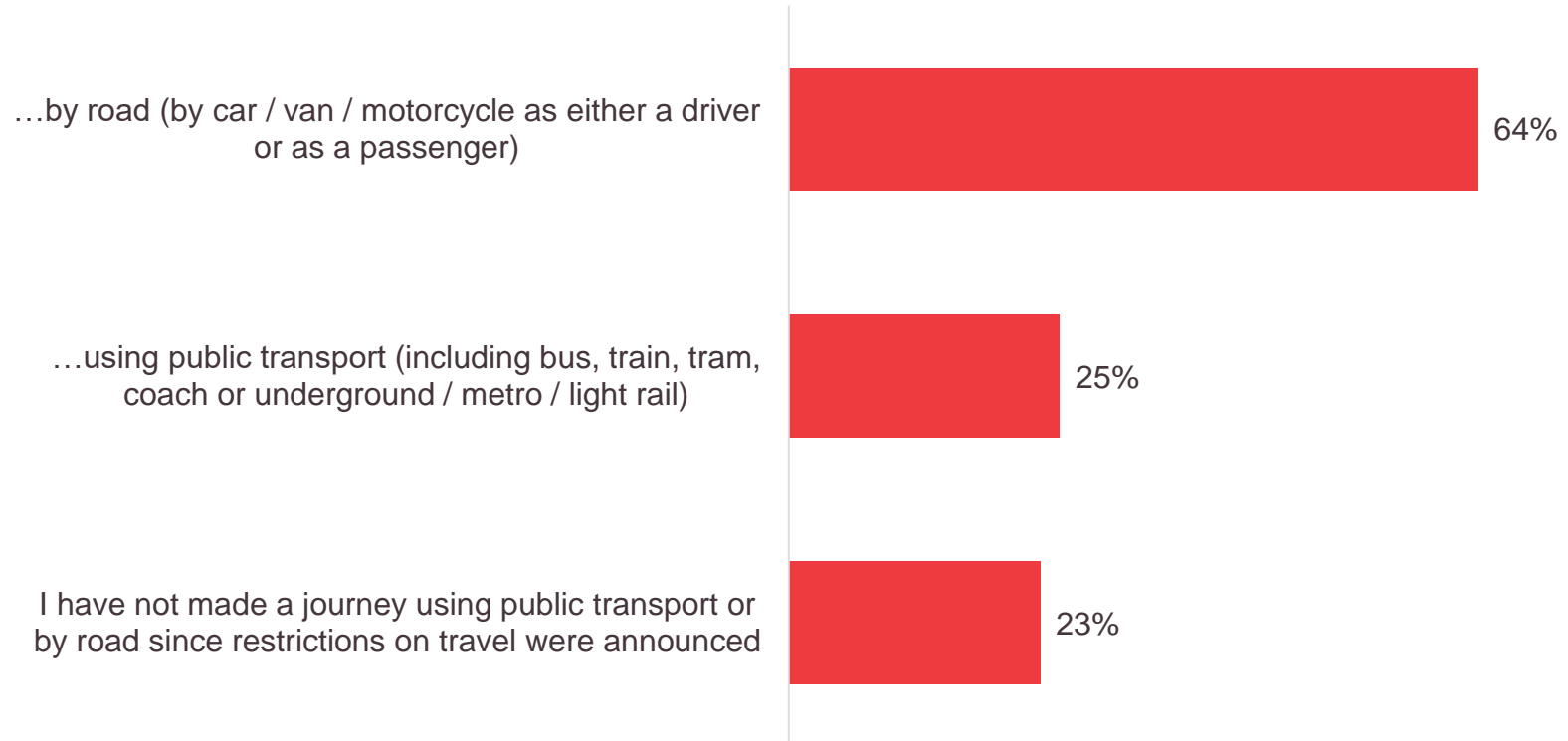
Key findings 2: attitudes towards social distancing on public transport

- Seven in ten panellists agree that people will be unable to socially distance on public transport and the same proportions say that transport operators should limit the numbers of people allowed on buses and also on trains, even if it means that not all passengers can get on. Those who have made a recent journey by public transport, those who will be travelling for work, and those for whom using public transport is their only option for making journeys are slightly less likely to agree.
- More than half are concerned that they could be unable to make essential journeys if the number of people allowed to use public transport is limited. Those who will be travelling for work are slightly more likely than others to take this view.
- Almost eight in ten agree that key workers should be given priority to travel on public transport even if others cannot get on board. Those who will be travelling for work and those for whom using public transport is their only option for making journeys are slightly less likely than others to agree.
- Four in ten agree that it would be a good idea to make it compulsory to reserve seats on buses and trains in advance of making a journey to manage capacity. Those who have made a journey by public transport are marginally less likely than others to agree.

Journeys since lockdown

A quarter of panellists have used public transport since restrictions were placed on making journeys

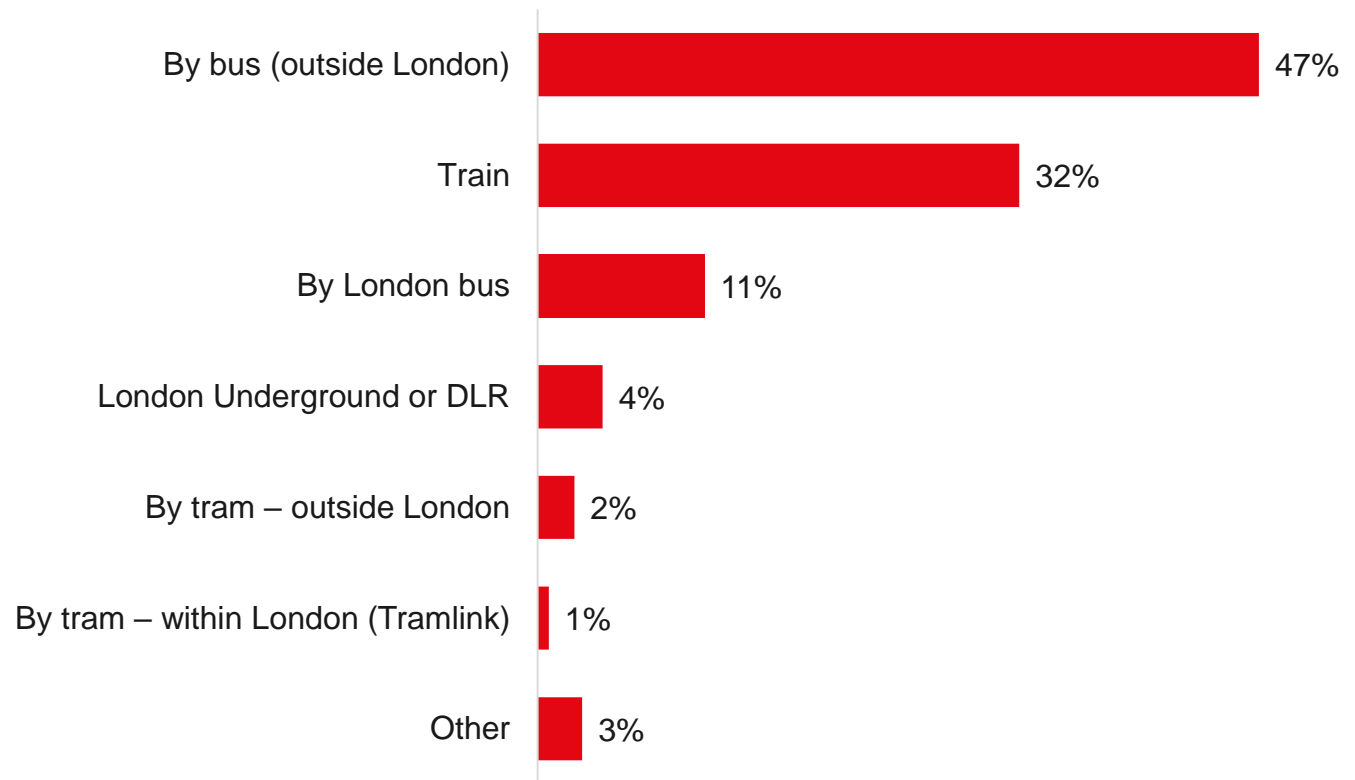
Since restrictions on travel due to the coronavirus pandemic were announced on the 23rd of March have you made a journey...?



Base: All transport user panellists (7,072)

Half of panellists using public transport have made journeys by bus outside London, a third have used trains, and smaller proportions have used other modes

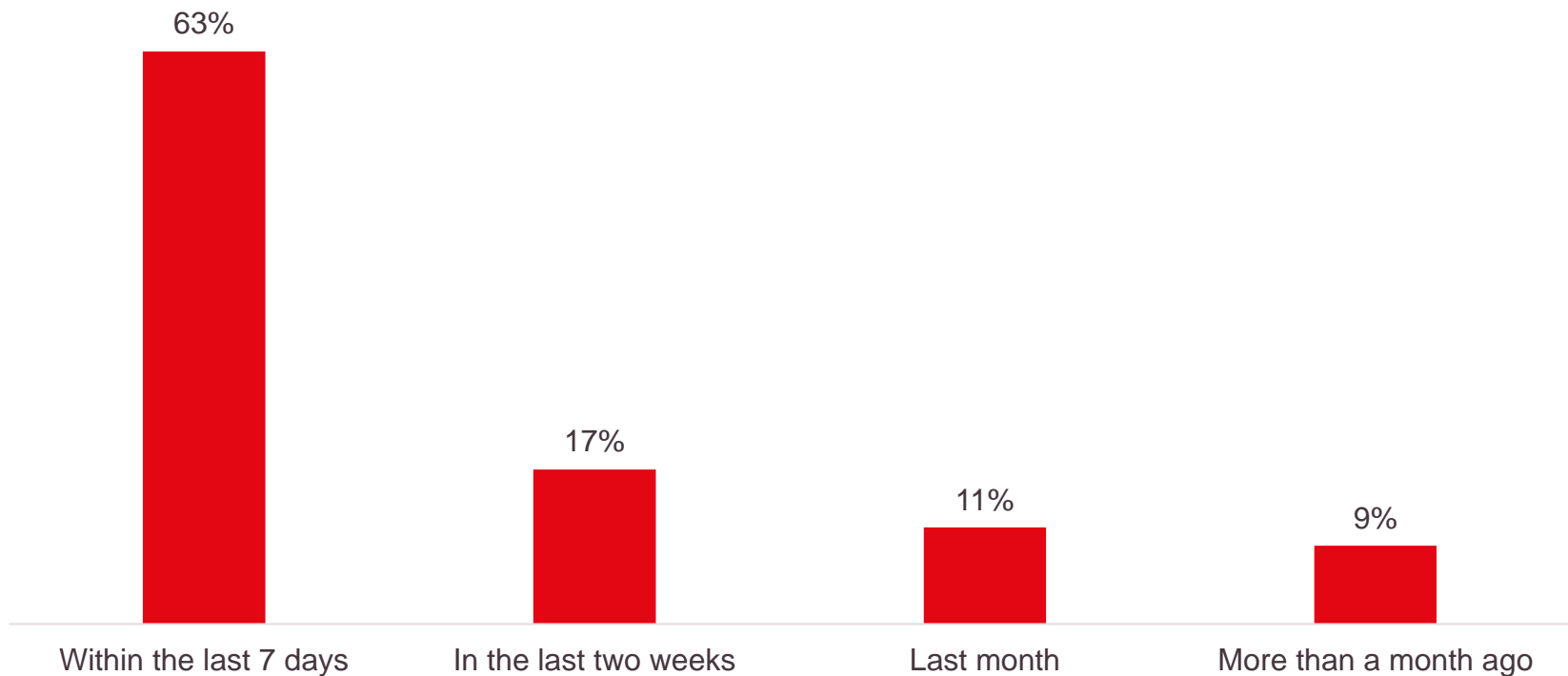
On the last occasion that you travelled using public transport which of the following did you use?



Base: All transport user panellists who have made a journey by public transport (1,785)

The majority of panellists had last made their most recent journey by public transport in the seven days before completing the questionnaire – that is at some time between 9 and 22 June

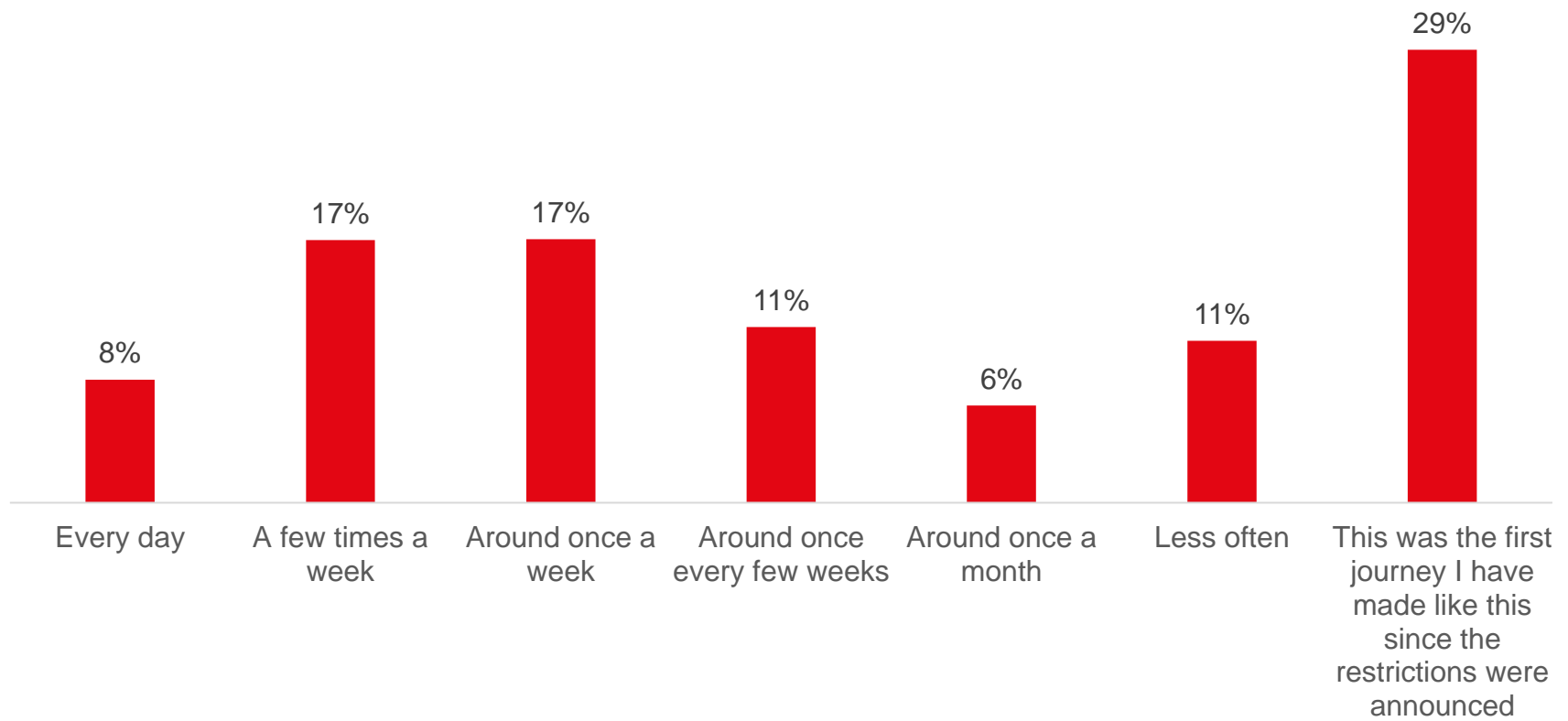
When did you make this journey?



Base: All transport user panellists who have made a journey by public transport (1,785)

...and for around a third this was the first journey of this type that they had made since restrictions on travel were announced.

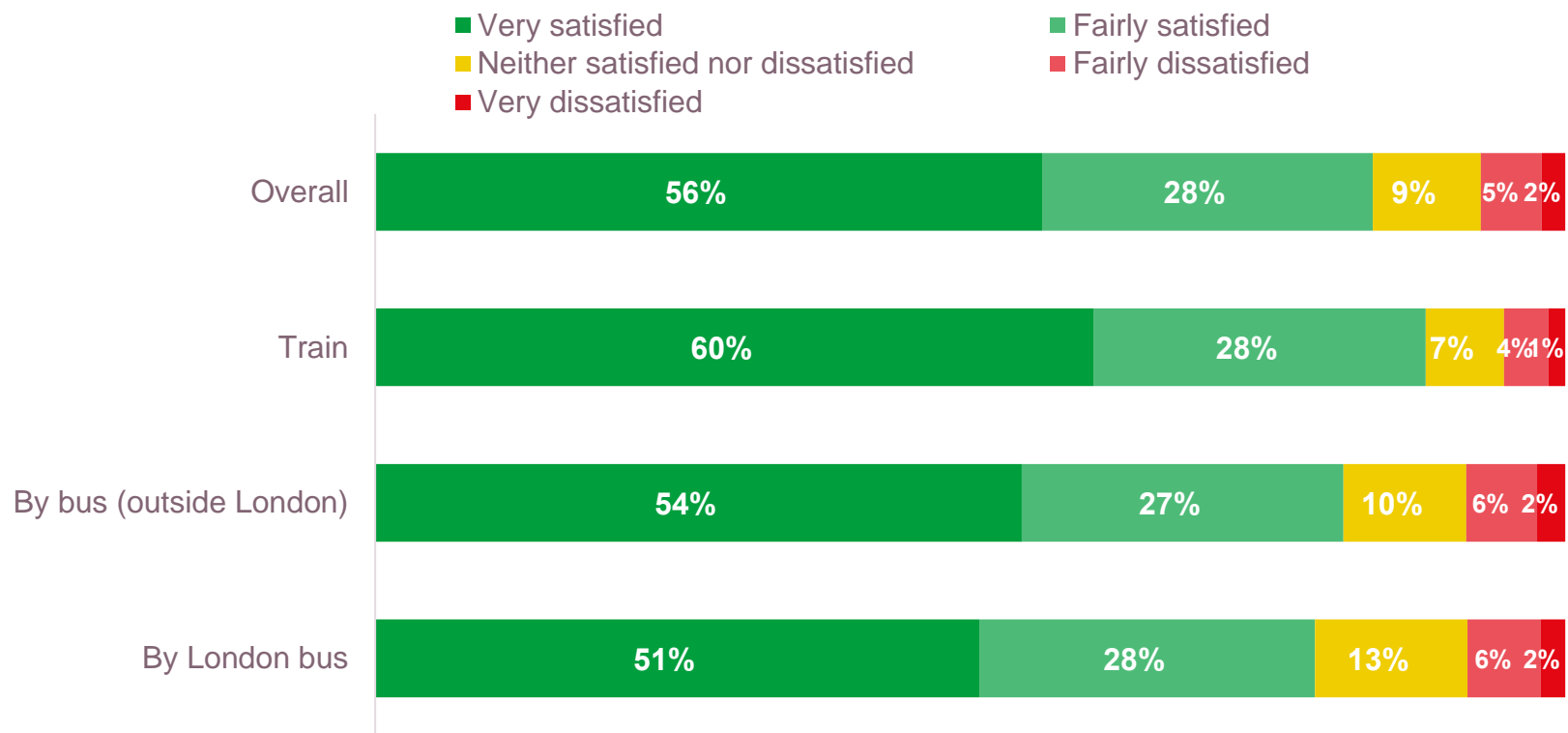
And how frequently have you been making journeys of this type since restrictions on travel were announced?



Base: All transport user panellists who have made a journey by public transport (1,785)

More than four in five panellists are satisfied with the last journey that they made using public transport. Those using trains are more satisfied than others

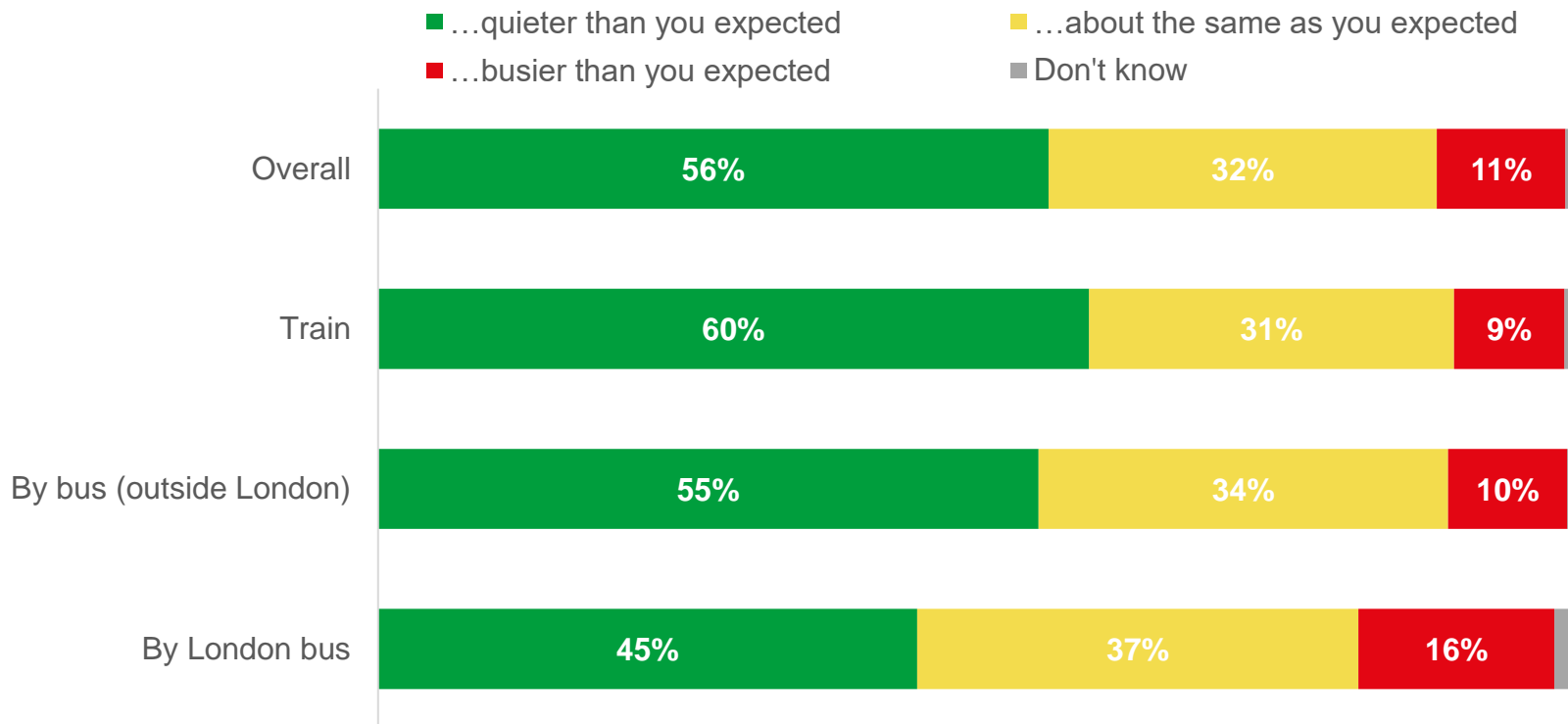
Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with this journey overall?



Base: Transport user panellists who have made a journey by public transport (1,785).
Those making journeys by train (563), Bus outside London (843), London Bus (195)

For more than a half making a journey by public transport it was quieter than they expected. Six in ten of those travelling by train found it to be quieter than they expected.

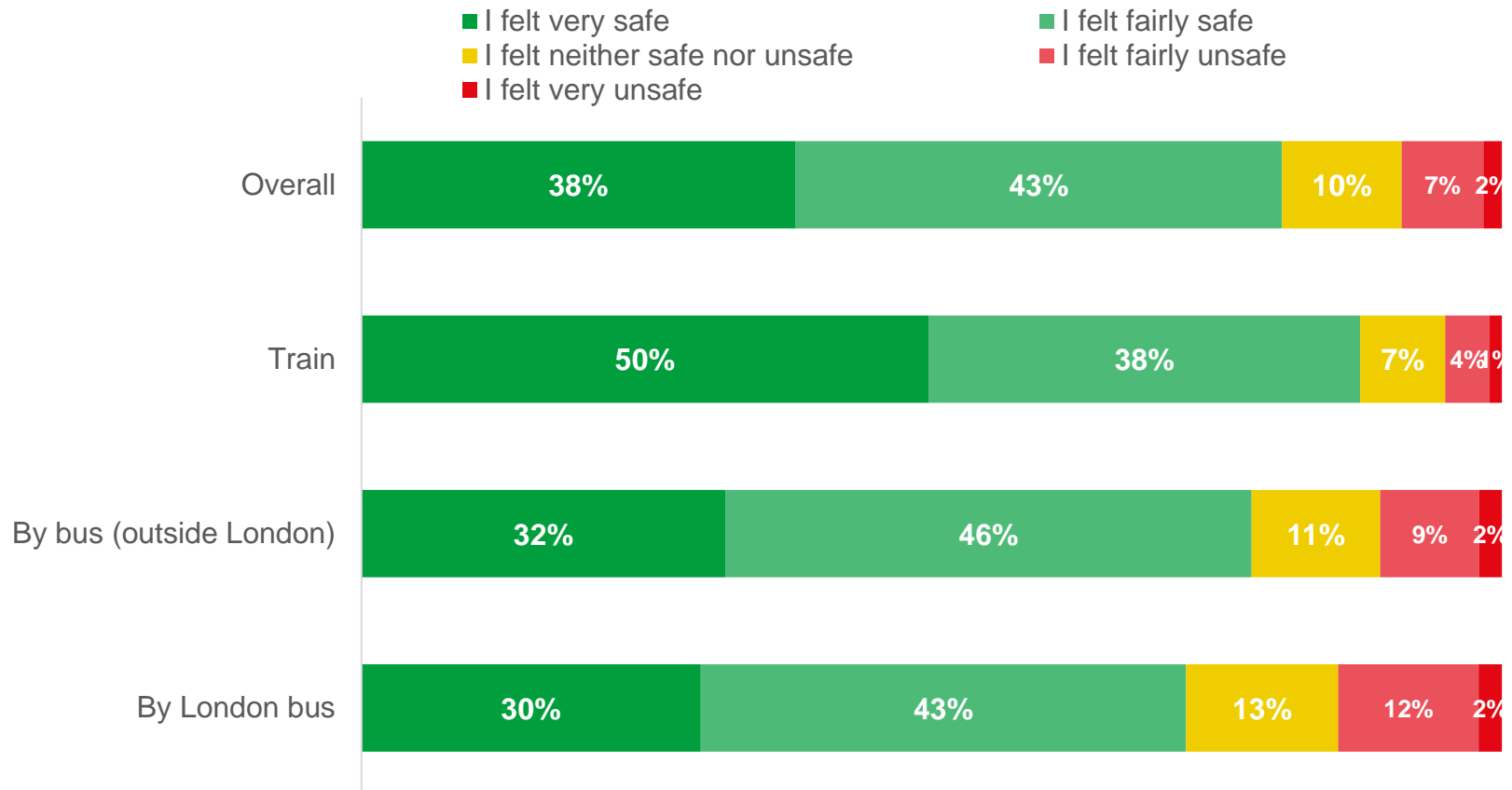
Thinking about the number of other people who were travelling at the same time as you on the last occasion that you made this journey, was it..?



*Base: Transport user panellists who have made a journey by public transport (1,785).
Those making journeys by train (563), Bus outside London (843), London Bus (195)*

Four in five of those making journeys by public transport felt safe from the risk of being exposed to coronavirus when they made their journey. Panellists making train journeys are most likely to have felt safe.

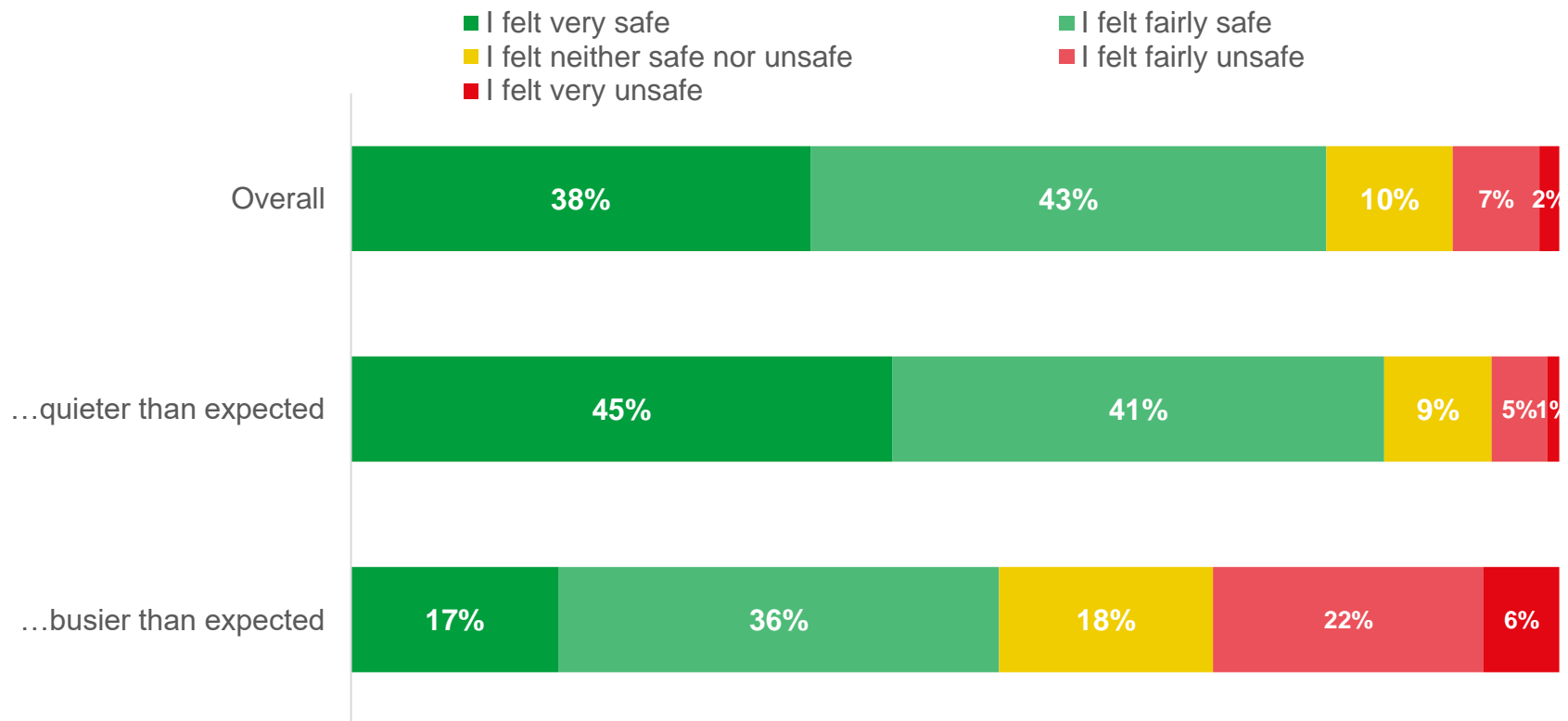
To what extent did you feel safe or unsafe from the risk of being exposed to coronavirus when you made this journey?



Base: Transport user panellists who have made a journey by public transport (1,785).
 Those making journeys by train (563), Bus outside London (843), London Bus (195)

Panellists using public transport who found it to be quieter than they expected are more likely than others to have felt safe when they made their journey.

To what extent did you feel safe or unsafe from the risk of being exposed to coronavirus when you made this journey?



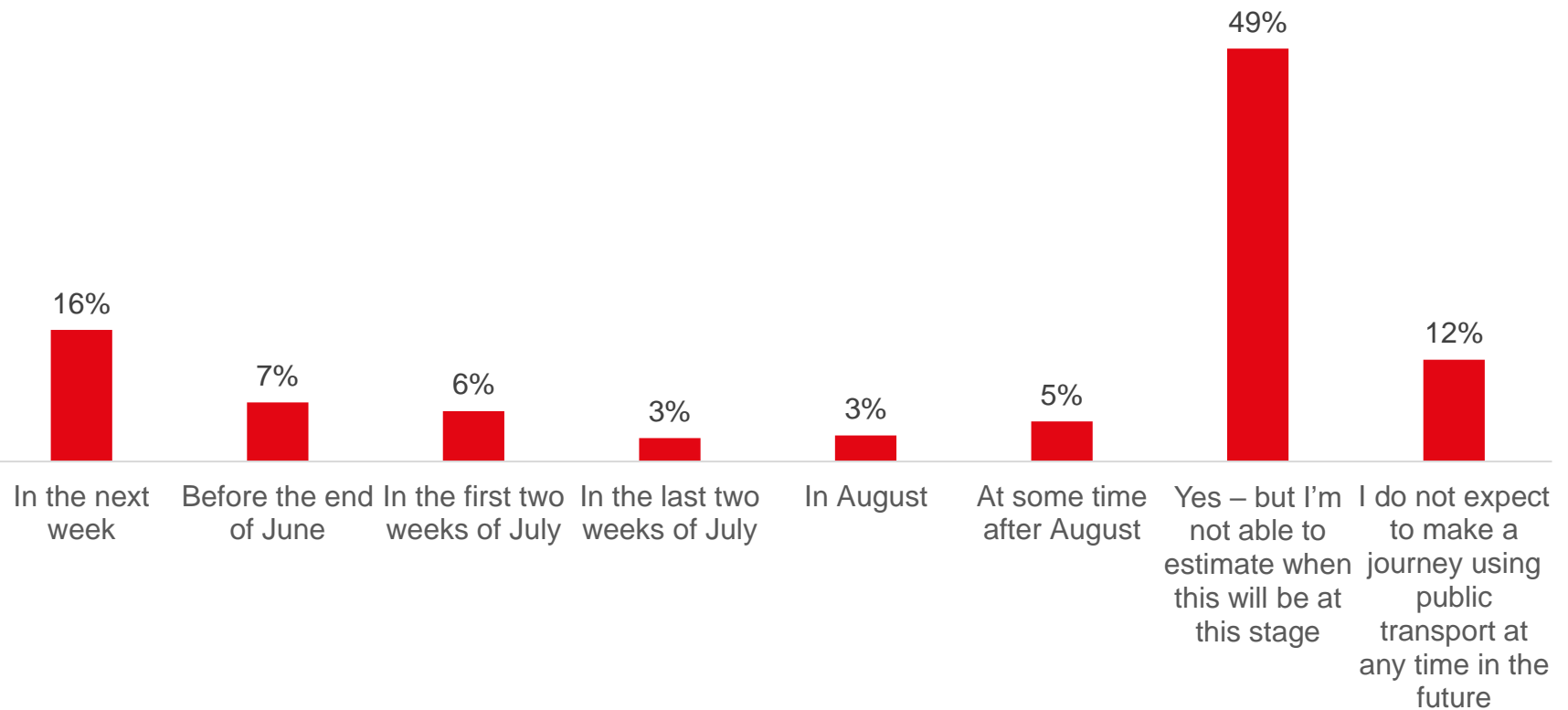
Base: Transport user panellists who have made a journey by public transport (1,785).

Those who found it quieter than expected (1,002) and those who found it busier than expected (193)

Expectations around future use of public transport

Almost nine in ten panellists expect to make a journey using public transport at some point in the future, but half are unable to estimate when this will be at this stage

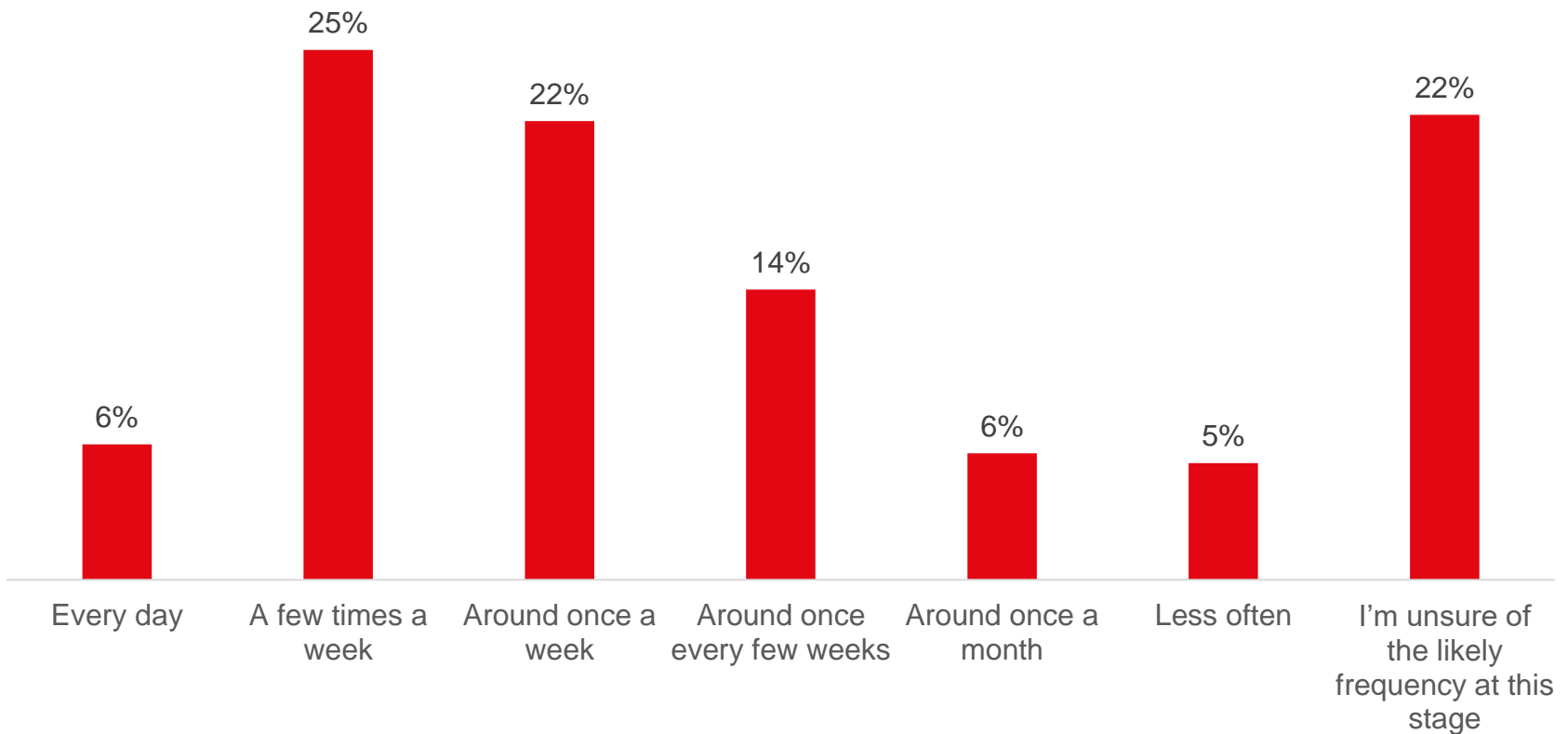
Do you expect to make a journey using public transport at some time in the future?



Base: All transport user panellists (7,072)

Among those panellists who expect to use public transport in the future, three in ten expect to use public transport a few times a week or more. Around one in five are unsure of the likely frequency.

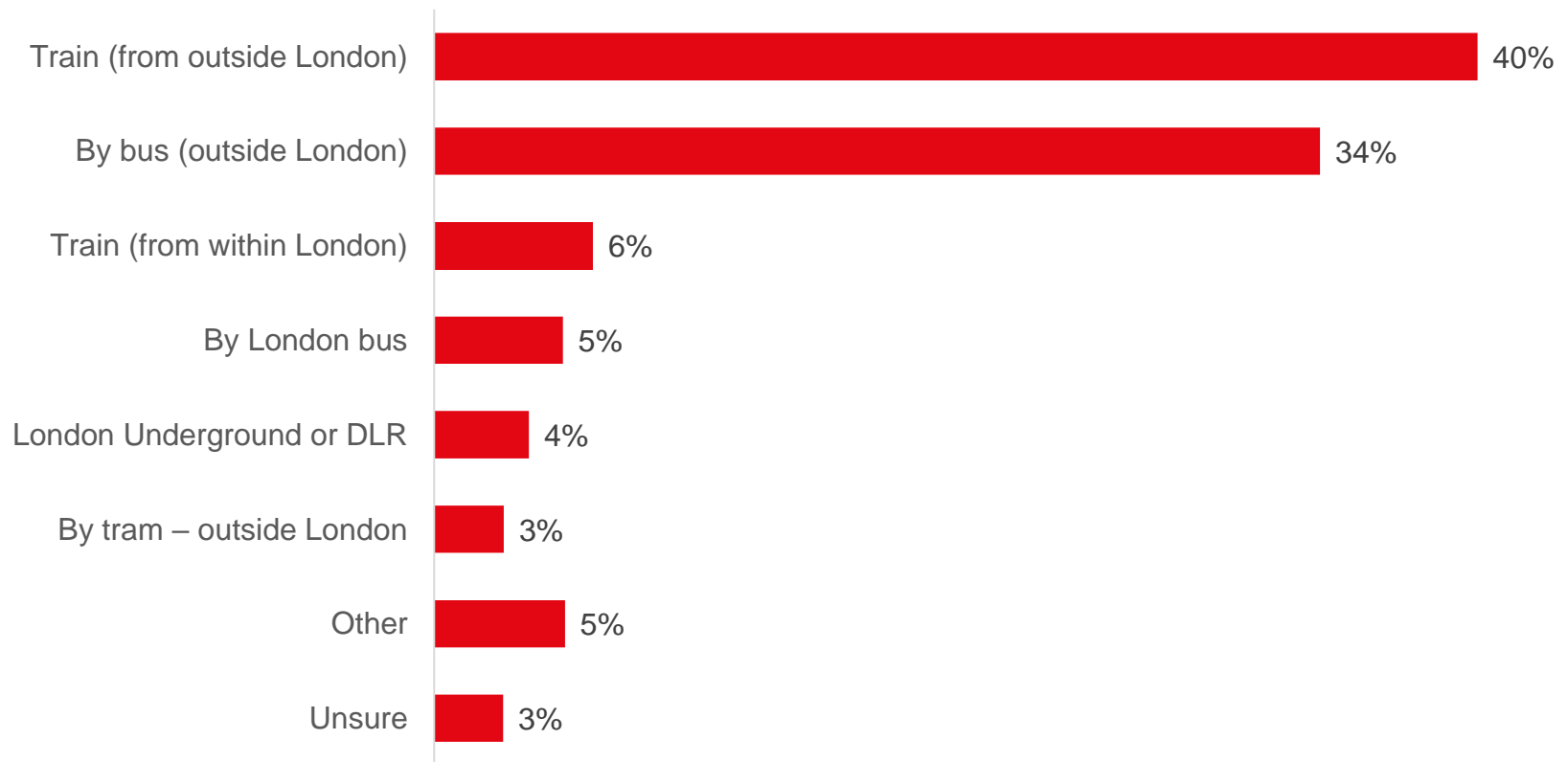
And from the time that you make this journey, how frequently do you expect to use public transport?



Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221)

Two in five panellists who expect to use public transport in the future expect to use trains (from outside London) most often. A third expect to use buses outside London most often.

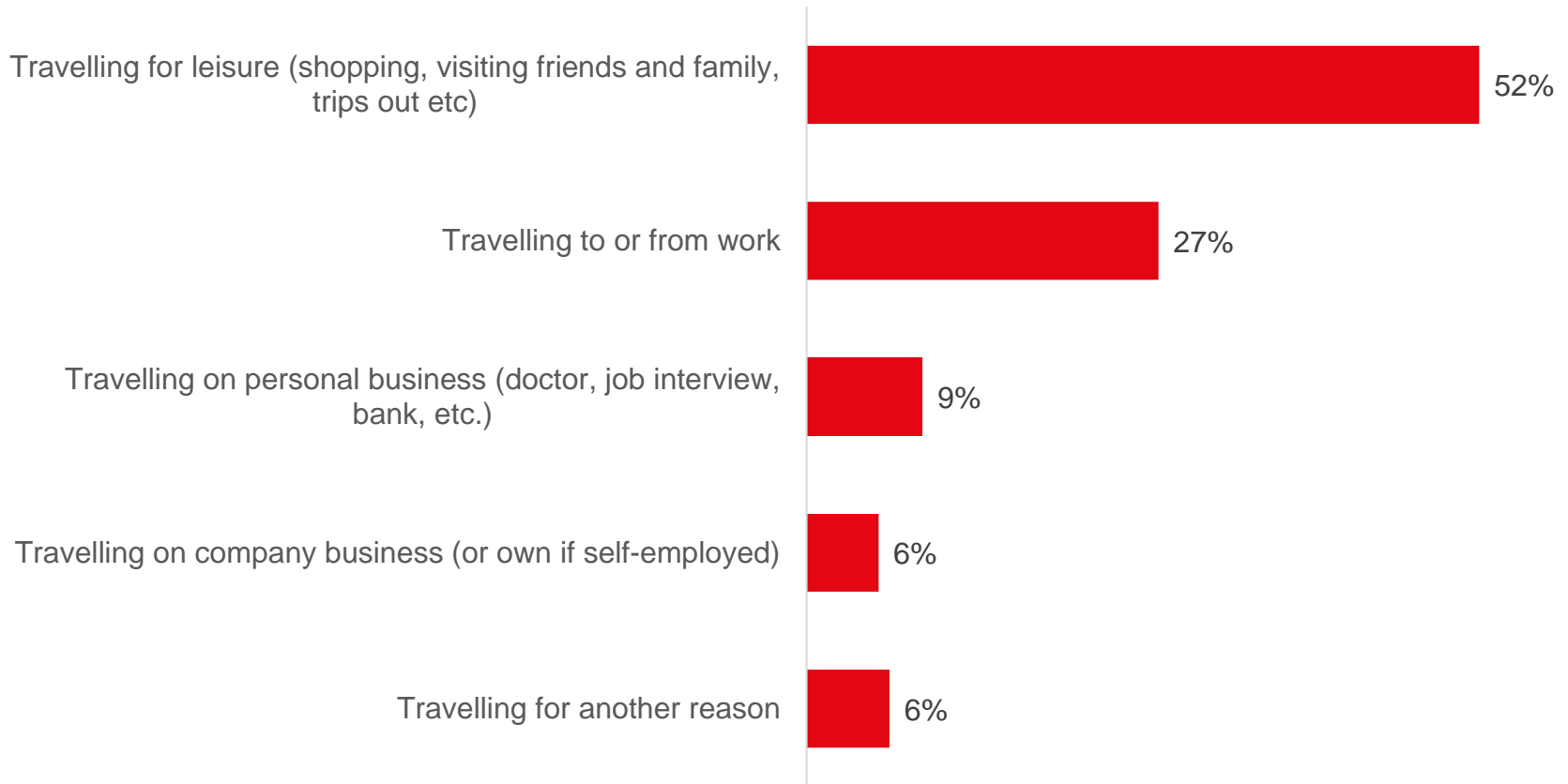
Which mode of transport do you expect to be using most often?



Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221)

Half of panellists who expect to use public transport in the future expect to travel mainly for leisure reasons. A quarter expect to use public transport mainly to travel to or from work.

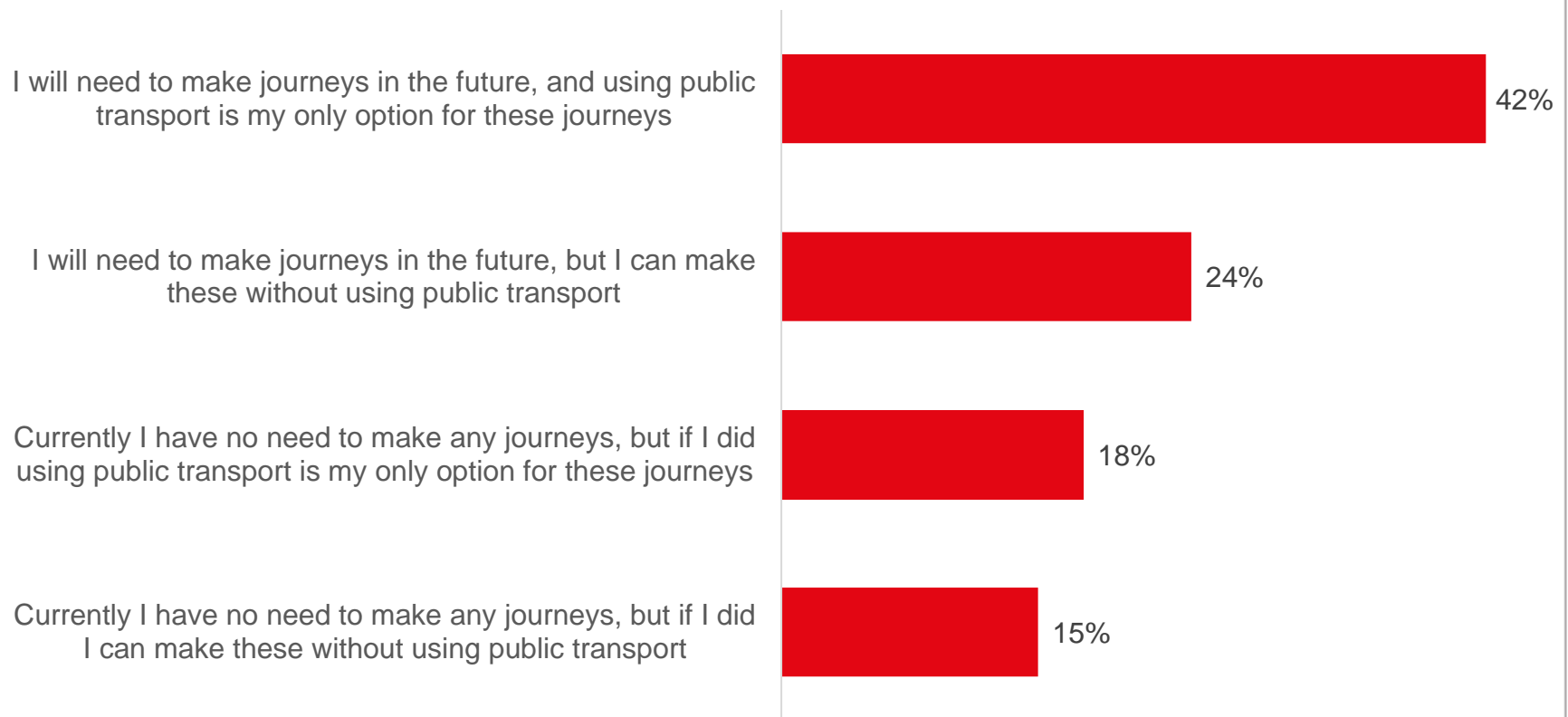
And what do you expect to be the main purpose of the journeys that you will be making?



Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221)

Four in ten panellists say that they will need to make journeys in the future and that using public transport is their only option for these journeys.

Which of the following statements best applies to you?



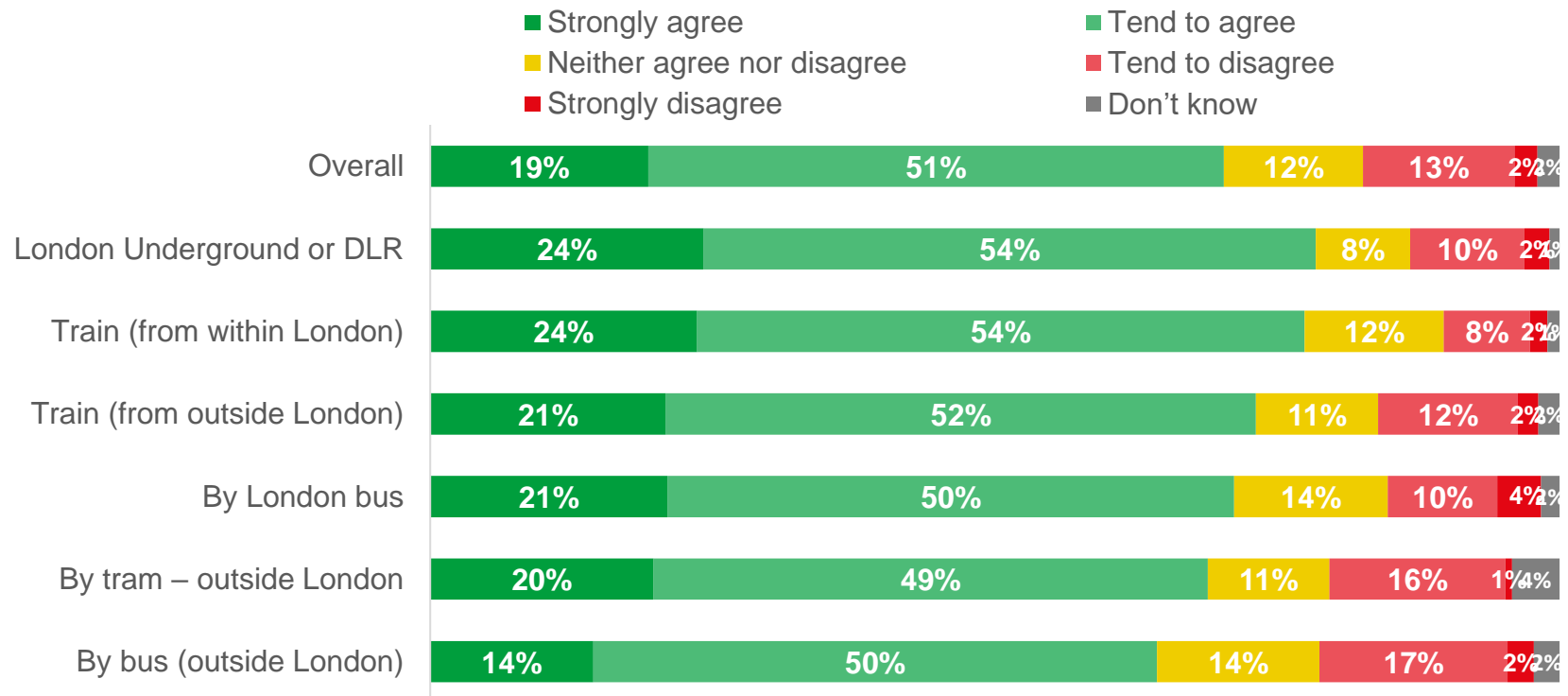
Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221)

**Attitudes towards social distancing on
public transport:
ability to socially distance**

Seven in ten panellists agree that people will be unable to socially distance on public transport. Those who intend to use London Underground are most likely to agree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social distancing on public transport?

People will be unable to socially distance on public transport



Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221).

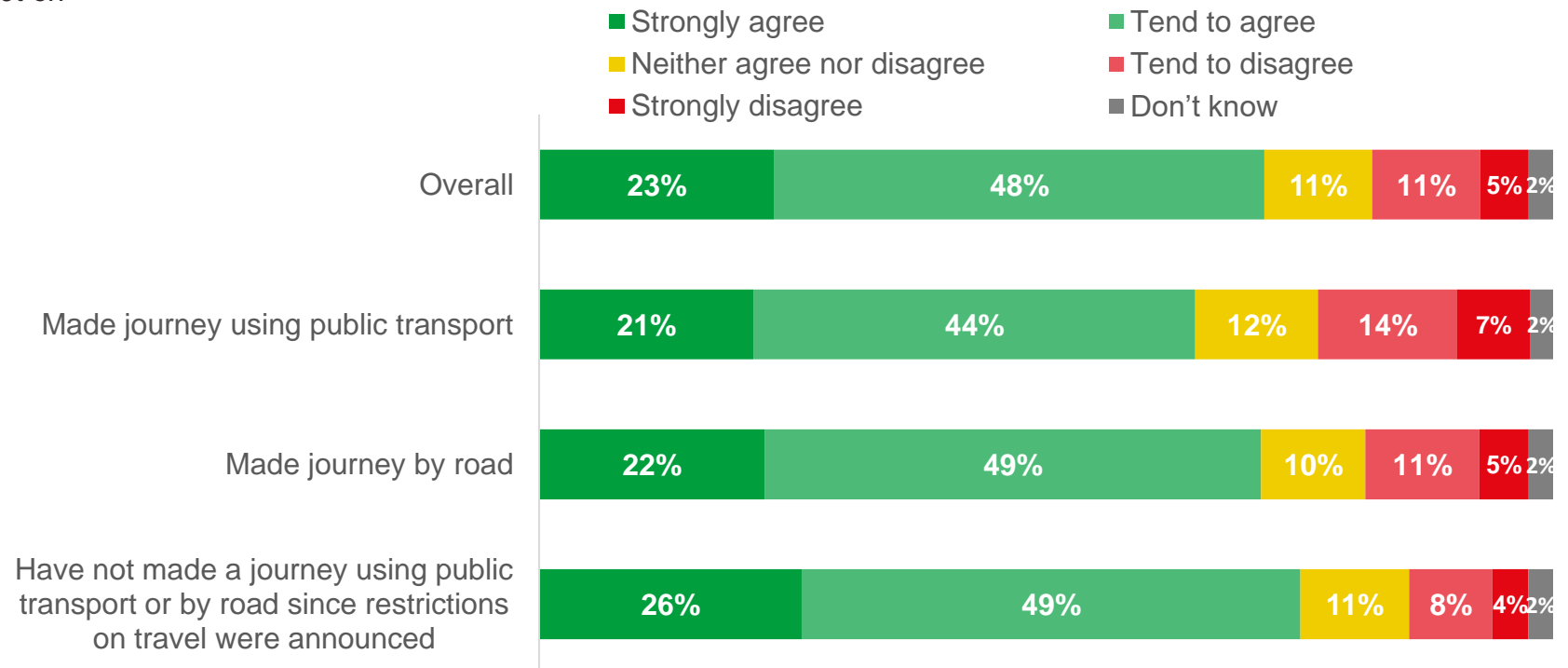
Those who will use train outside London (2,505), bus outside London (2,127), train within London (381), London bus (309), London Underground (227), tram outside London (167)

**Attitudes towards social distancing on
public transport:
limiting numbers on buses**

Seven in ten panellists agree that transport operators should limit the number of people allowed on buses. Those who have made a journey by public transport are less likely than others to agree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social distancing on public transport?

Public transport operators should limit the number of people allowed on buses, even if it means not all passengers can get on

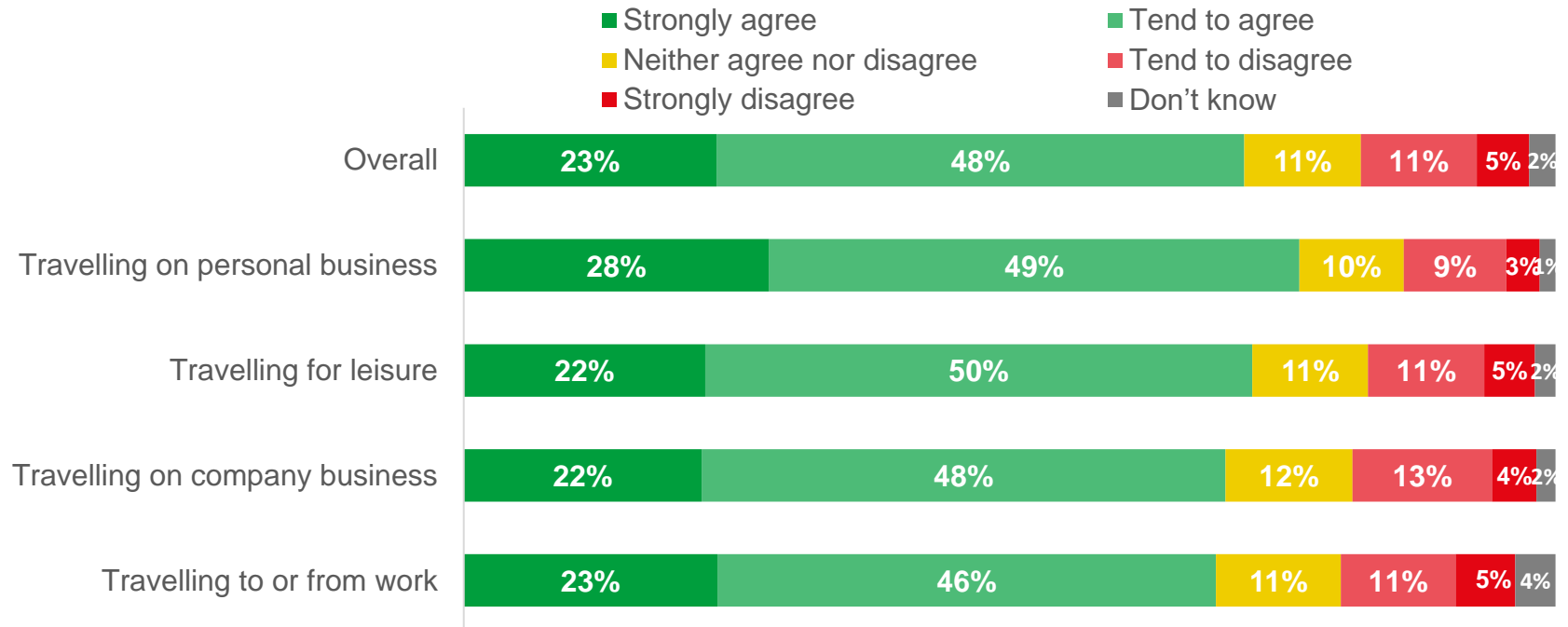


Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221).
 Those who have made a journey by public transport (1,742), by road (3,893), those who have not made a journey (1,464)

Panellists who will be travelling to or from work are slightly less likely than others to agree that transport operators should limit the number of people on buses

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social distancing on public transport?

Public transport operators should limit the number of people allowed on buses, even if it means not all passengers can get on

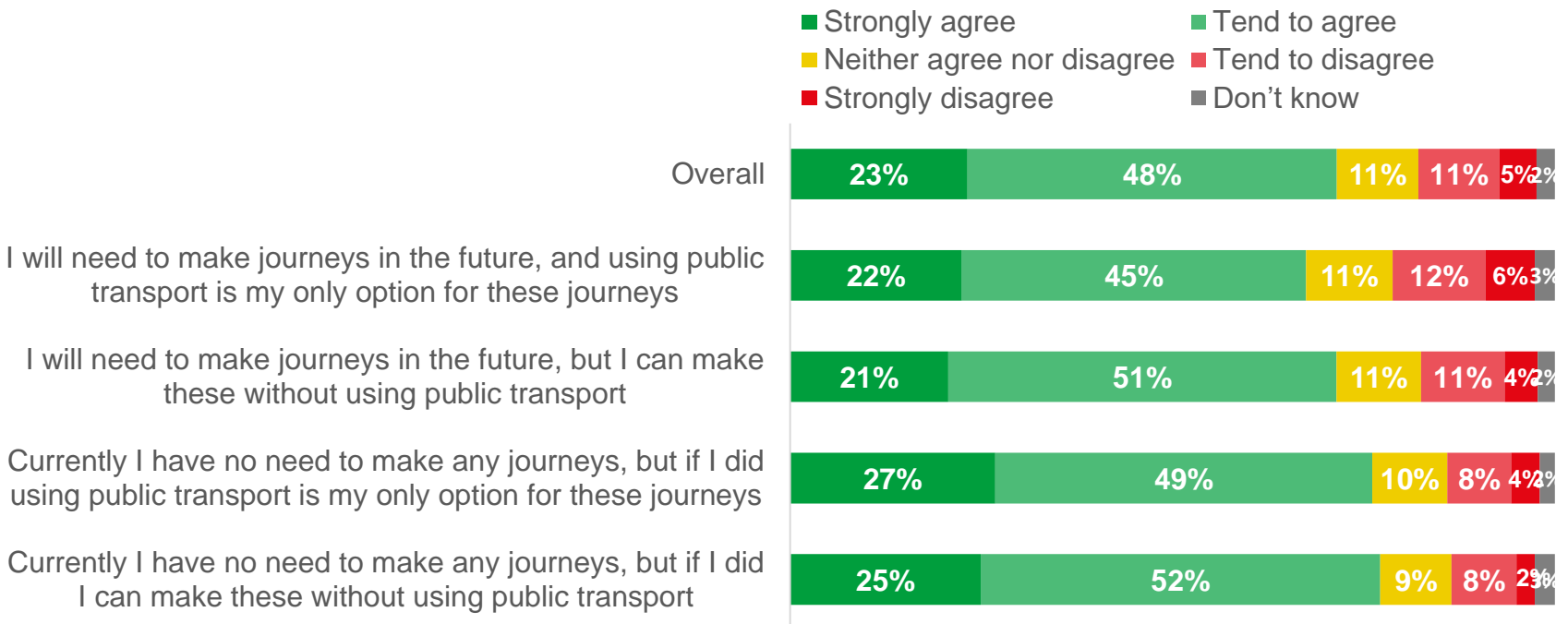


Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221).
 Those who will be travelling for leisure (3,215), to or from work (1,682), on personal business (554), on company business (344)

Panellists who need to travel and have no alternative to public transport to make journeys are less likely than others to agree that transport operators should limit the number of people on buses

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social distancing on public transport?

Public transport operators should limit the number of people allowed on buses, even if it means not all passengers can get on



Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221).

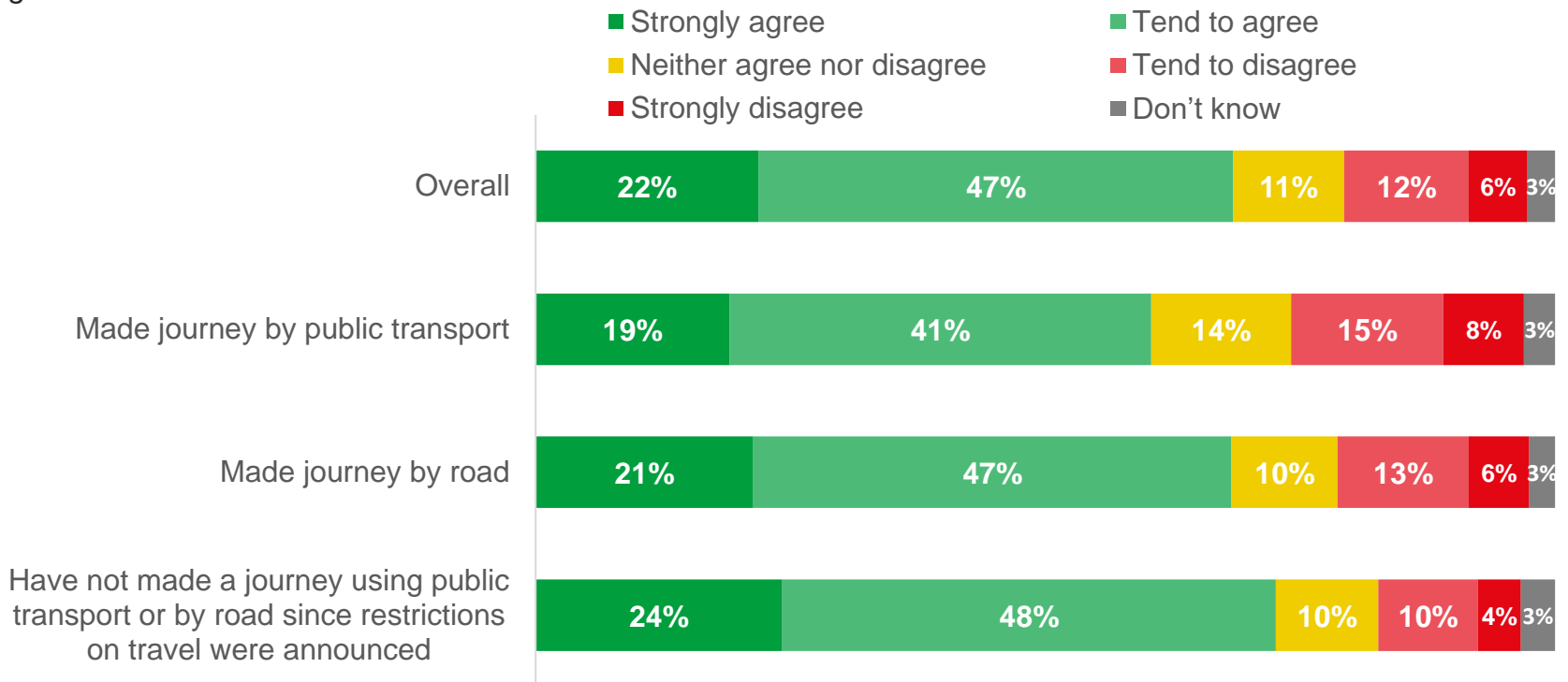
Those who need to travel and public transport is the only option (2,619), those who need to travel and have alternatives (1,524), those who don't need to travel but public transport is the only option (1,123), those who don't need to travel and have alternatives (955)

**Attitudes towards social distancing on
public transport:
limiting numbers on trains**

69 per cent of panellists agree that transport operators should limit the number of people allowed on trains. Those who have made a journey by public transport are less likely than others to agree

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social distancing on public transport?

Public transport operators should limit the number of people allowed on trains, even if it means not all passengers can get on



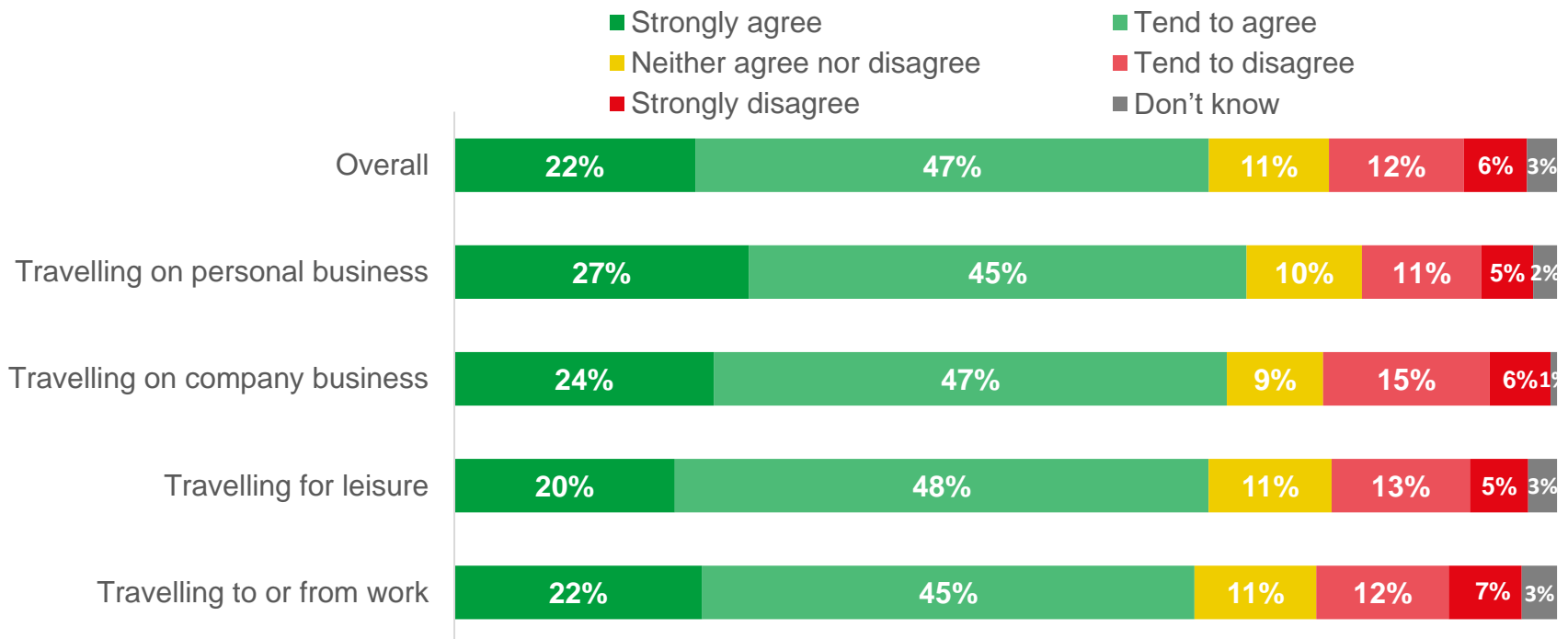
Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221).

Those who have made a journey by public transport (1,742), by road (3,893), those who have not made a journey (1,464)

Panellists who will be travelling to or from work are less likely than others to agree that transport operators should limit the number of people on trains

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social distancing on public transport?

Public transport operators should limit the number of people allowed on trains, even if it means not all passengers can get on

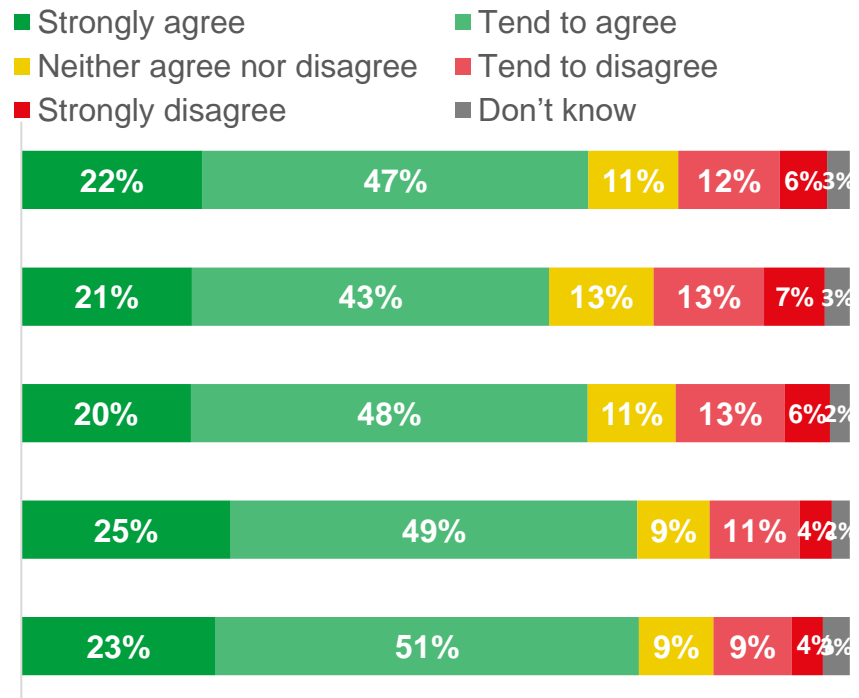


Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221).
 Those who will be travelling for leisure (3,215), to or from work (1,682), on personal business (554), on company business (344)

Panellists who need to travel and have no alternative to using public transport to make journeys are less likely than others to agree that transport operators should limit the number of people on trains

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social distancing on public transport?

Public transport operators should limit the number of people allowed on trains, even if it means not all passengers can get on



Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221).

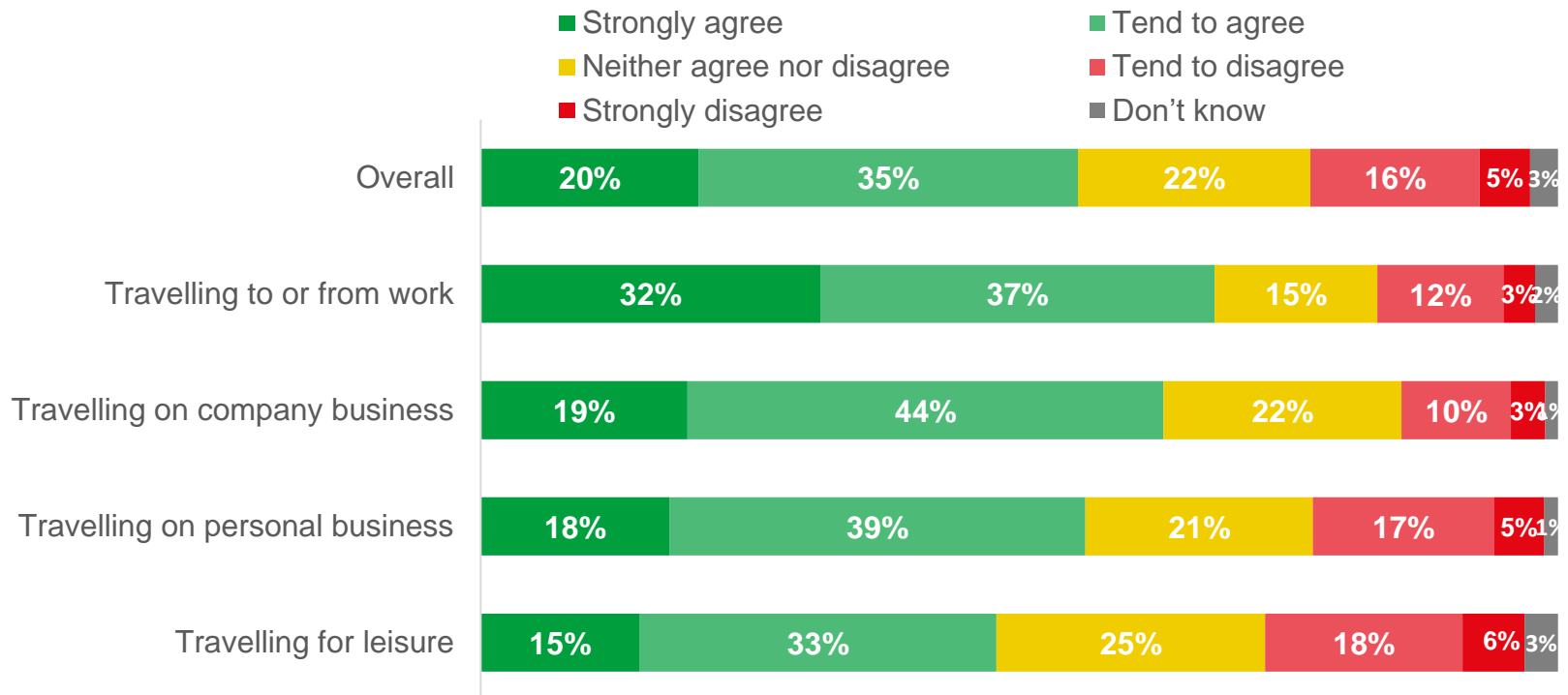
Those who need to travel and public transport is the only option (2,619), those who need to travel and have alternatives (1,524), those who don't need to travel but public transport is the only option (1,123), those who don't need to travel and have alternatives (955)

**Attitudes towards social distancing on
public transport:
ability to make ‘essential journeys’**

Around half of panellists who expect to use public transport in the future are concerned that they could be unable to make essential journeys if capacity is limited. Those travelling for work are more likely to agree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social distancing on public transport?

I am concerned that I could be unable to make essential journeys if the number of people allowed to travel on public transport is limited



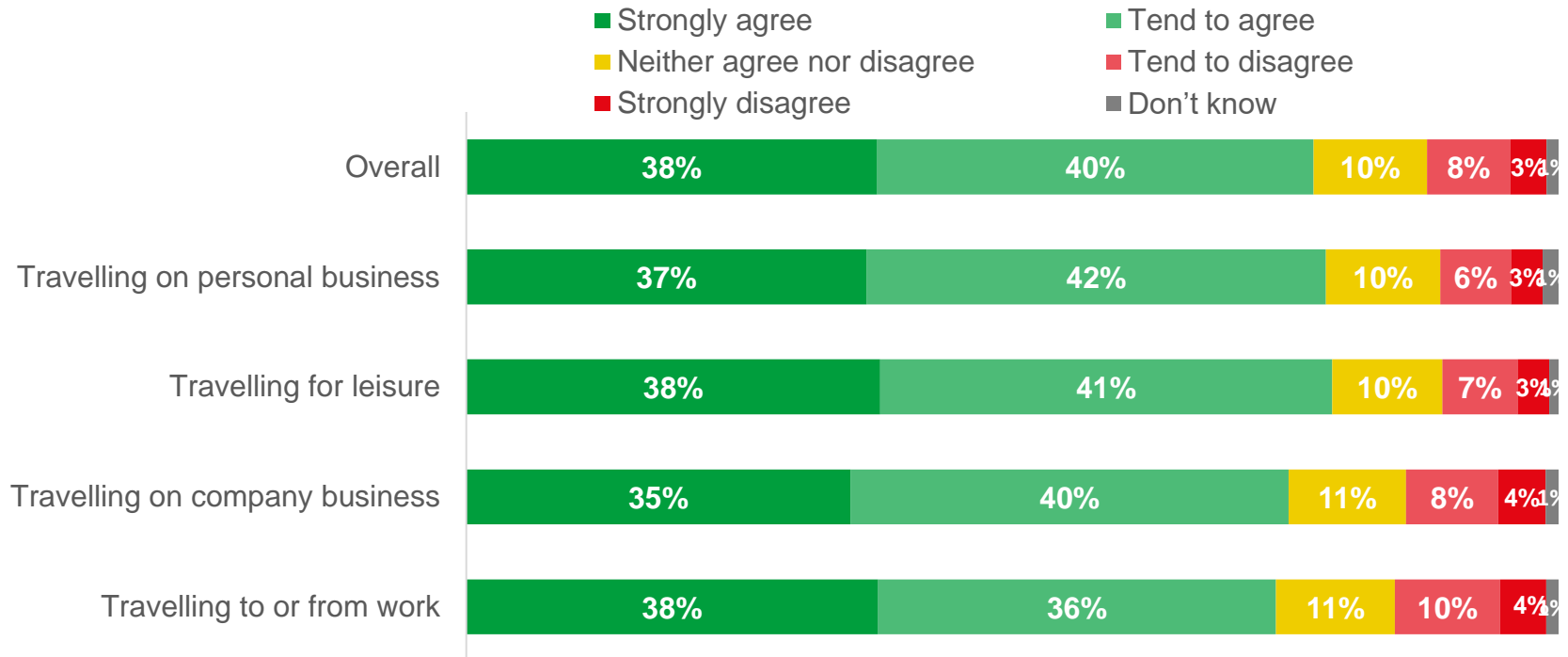
Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221).
 Those who will be travelling for leisure (3,215), to or from work (1,682), on personal business (554), on company business (344)

**Attitudes towards social distancing on
public transport:
giving key workers priority**

Four in five panellists who expect to use public transport in the future agree that key workers should have priority. Those who will be travelling for work are slightly less likely to agree than others.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social distancing on public transport?

Key workers should have priority to travel on public transport – even if it means other passengers can't get on board

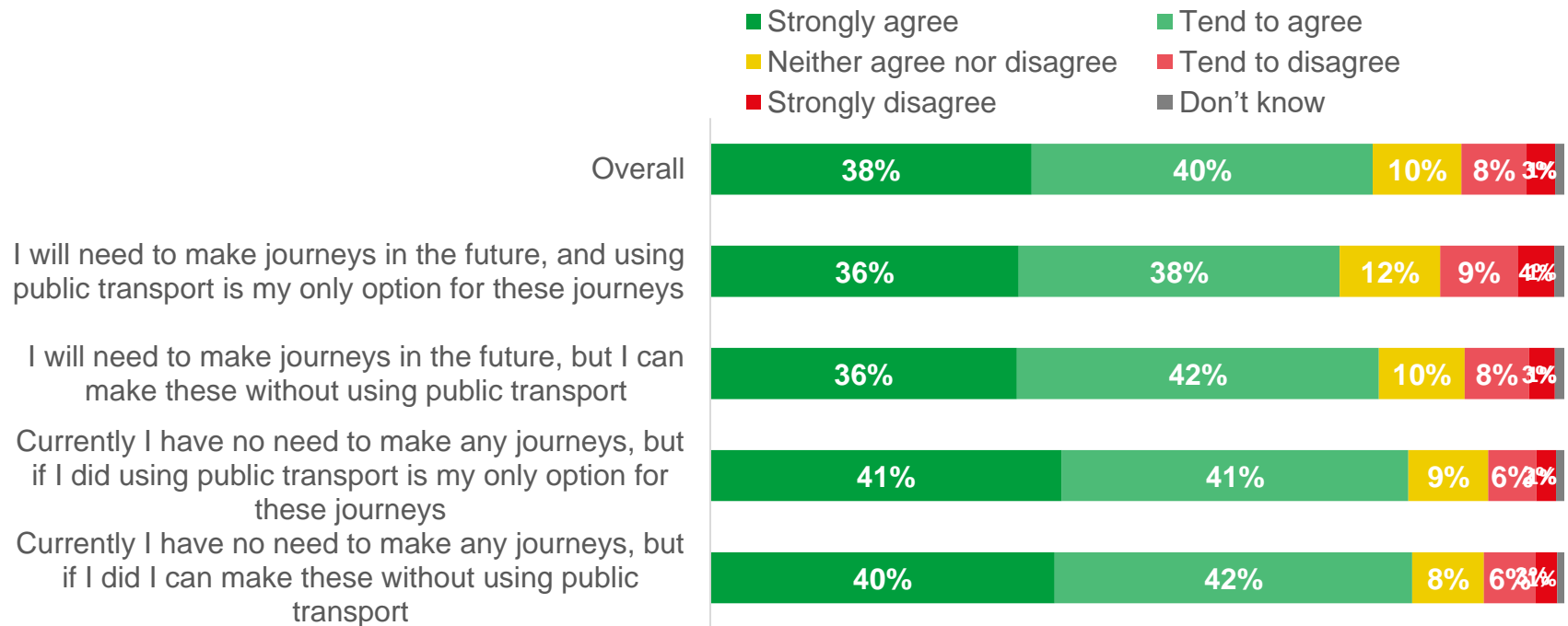


Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221).
 Those who will be travelling for leisure (3,215), to or from work (1,682), on personal business (554), on company business (344)

Those who need to make journeys in the future and whose only option is to use public transport for these journeys are slightly less likely than others to agree that key workers should have priority.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social distancing on public transport?

Key workers should have priority to travel on public transport – even if it means other passengers can't get on board



Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221).

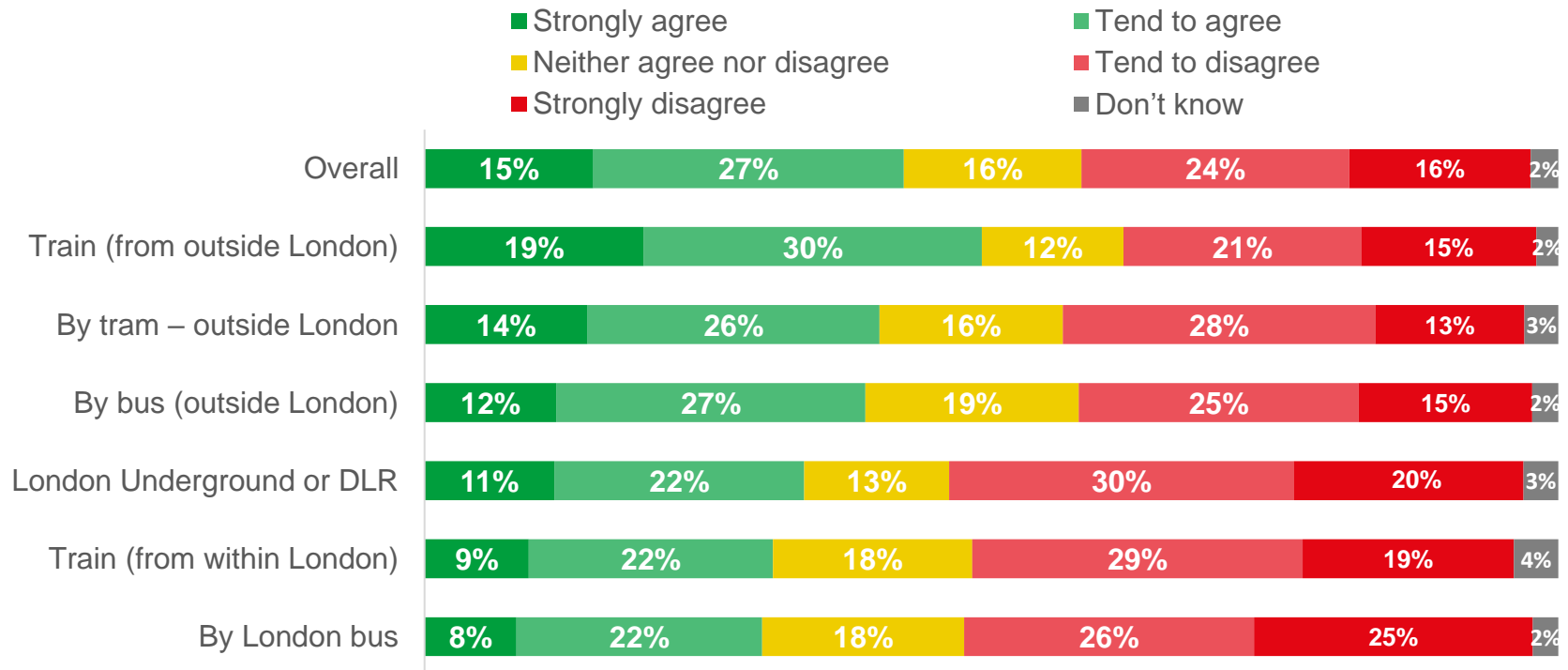
Those who need to travel and public transport is the only option (2,619), those who need to travel and have alternatives (1,524), those who don't need to travel but public transport is the only option (1,123), those who don't need to travel and have alternatives (955)

Attitudes towards social distancing on public transport: compulsory reservations

Around two in five panellists agree that it would be a good idea to make reservations on buses or trains compulsory. Those who will be using trains outside London are more likely to agree

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social distancing on public transport?

It would be a good idea to make it compulsory to reserve your seat on a train or bus in advance so that capacity can be managed



Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221).

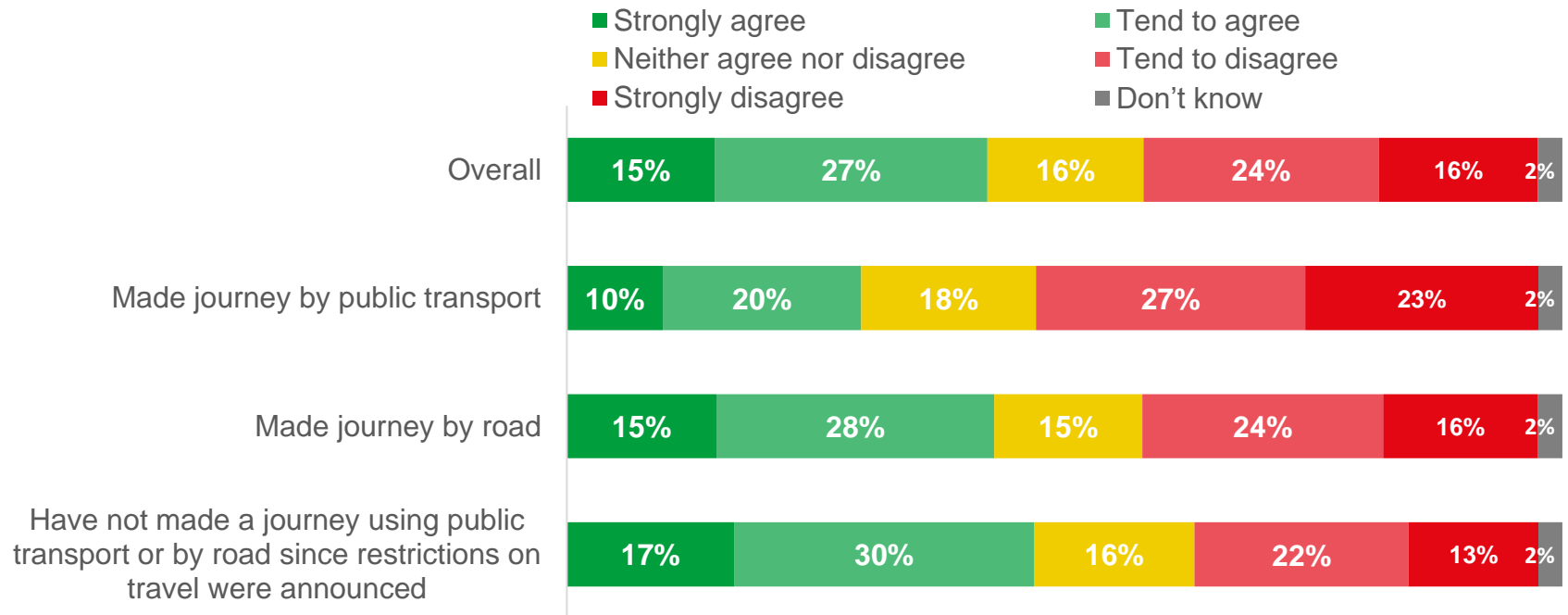
Those who will use train outside London (2,505), bus outside London (2,127), train within London (381),

London bus (309), London Underground (227), tram outside London (167)

Those who have made journeys since restrictions on travel were announced are less likely than others to agree that it would be a good idea to make reservations on buses or trains compulsory.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social distancing on public transport?

It would be a good idea to make it compulsory to reserve your seat on a train or bus in advance so that capacity can be managed



Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221).

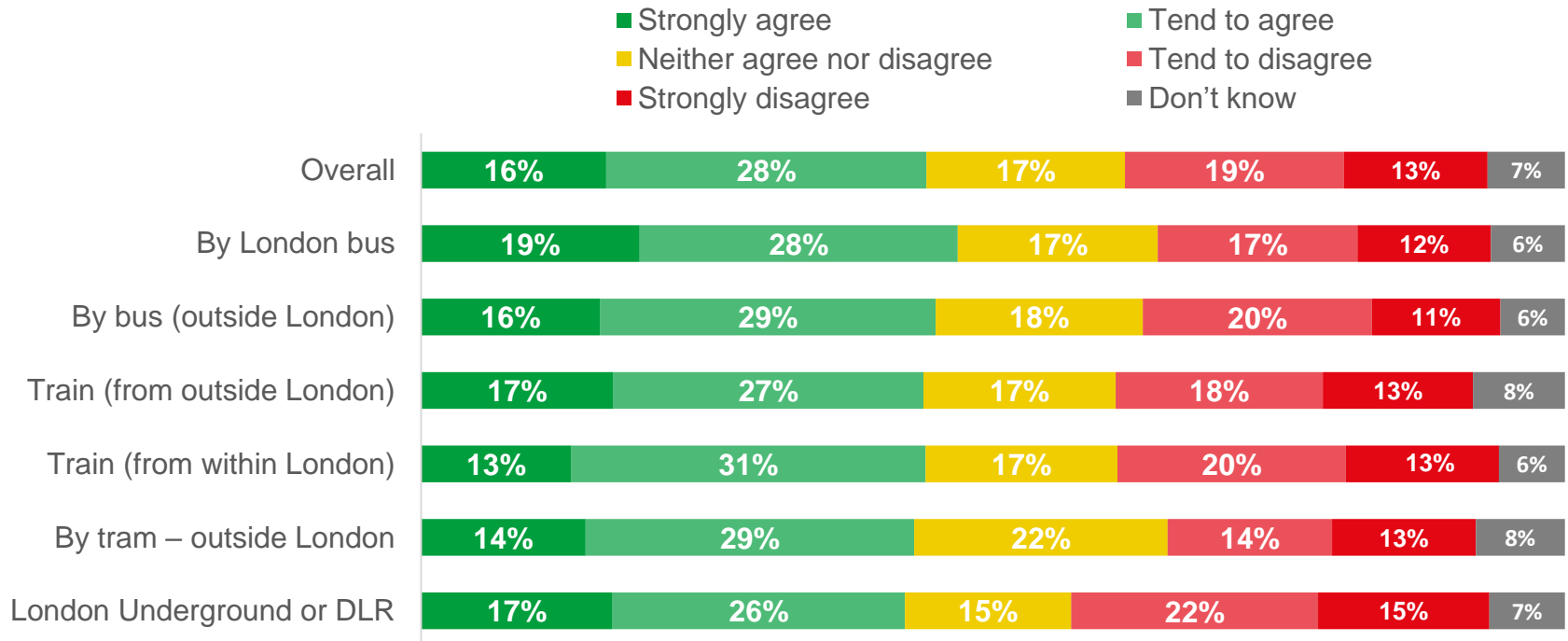
Those who have made a journey by public transport (1,742), by road (3,893), those who have not made a journey (1,464)

**Attitudes towards social distancing on
public transport:
reducing social distance guidance**

Panellists who expect to use public transport in the future are relatively split on whether reducing social distancing on public transport from 2 metres to 1 metre is a good idea. There is little difference by mode.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social distancing on public transport?

Reducing social distancing on public transport from 2 metres to 1 metre is a good idea



Base: Transport user panellists who expect to use public transport in the future (6,221).

Those who will use train outside London (2,505), bus outside London (2,127), train within London (381), London bus (309), London Underground (227), tram outside London (167)