Social Research in the UK – Examples of Impact

Bobby Duffy

Global Director, Ipsos Social Research Institute

- Why do government's and public services use research?

- What do we do in the UK?

- A key underlying issue – the perils of perception

- Some examples of how research can make a difference…

- …including using "new" techniques

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Long term trends contributing to rise of government and public sector research

Increasing emphasis on evidence-based policymaking →
- Consultation
- Policy options
- User experience
- Evaluating results

Greater demand for user-focused services →
- Scoping needs
- Customer experience
- Tracking satisfaction
- Segmenting customers

Greater need for efficiency savings →
- Prioritisation
- Understanding "what works"
- Public service reform/more for less
- Co-production and behaviour change

Rising demand for accountability and transparency →
- Performance management
- Communications
- Reputation
- Public participation

Policy and communications

Evaluation of policy /programmes

Customer/service satisfaction

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Citizen's Summit for Prime Minister – day long workshops with public on future of public services, including summit at No 10 Downing Street

New Deal for Communities Evaluation – large longitudinal survey (15,000+ interviews) tracking outcomes in 39 most deprived areas in country

National Survey of Satisfaction with Doctors (GPPS) – postal survey of 9 million people to understand how they rate their doctor, at very local levels

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Sectors we focus on in the public sector

Employment, training and benefits

Sport and leisure

Electronic government

Public Transport

Crime & police

Local Government

Environment

Political Polls for the Media

Health

SOCIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Regeneration

Communities

Housing

Education

Charities

Ethnic Minorities

Science

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A common theme
– the *"perils of perception"*

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Not just in politics...
Understanding public priorities helps government and public services focus on the key issues – as shown in this case study:

Annual tracking survey on quality of life for local London council

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Q *Thinking about this local area, what would you say are the bad things about the area?*

Not clean enough/too much litter	22%
High crime rate/don't feel safe	20%
Vandalism/graffiti	16%
Young people hanging around	12%
Noisy	12%
Poor parking facilities	12%

Base: All respondents (1,113)

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Q   Which two or three of these eleven possible priorities do you think should be the most important for the Council?

Priority	Percentage
Reducing crime/improving safety	64%
Making environment cleaner, safer and more attractive	35%
Access to affordable, quality housing	32%
Caring for children, older and vulnerable people	26%
Improving education	26%
Meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups	15%
Improving access to job opportunities	13%
Improving the health of local people	13%
Supporting the local economy	12%
Making it easier to travel round	11%
Improving leisure facilities	10%

Base: All respondents (1,113)

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Concentrated on streetscene services

Q I would like you to tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with your local authority's…

% Satisfied

Recycling

Parks and open spaces

Refuse collection

Street lighting

Street cleaning

84
83
78
74

80
70
60
50

2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008

Base: All respondents - refuse collection, street cleaning, street lighting. Users: Recycling, parks and open spaces

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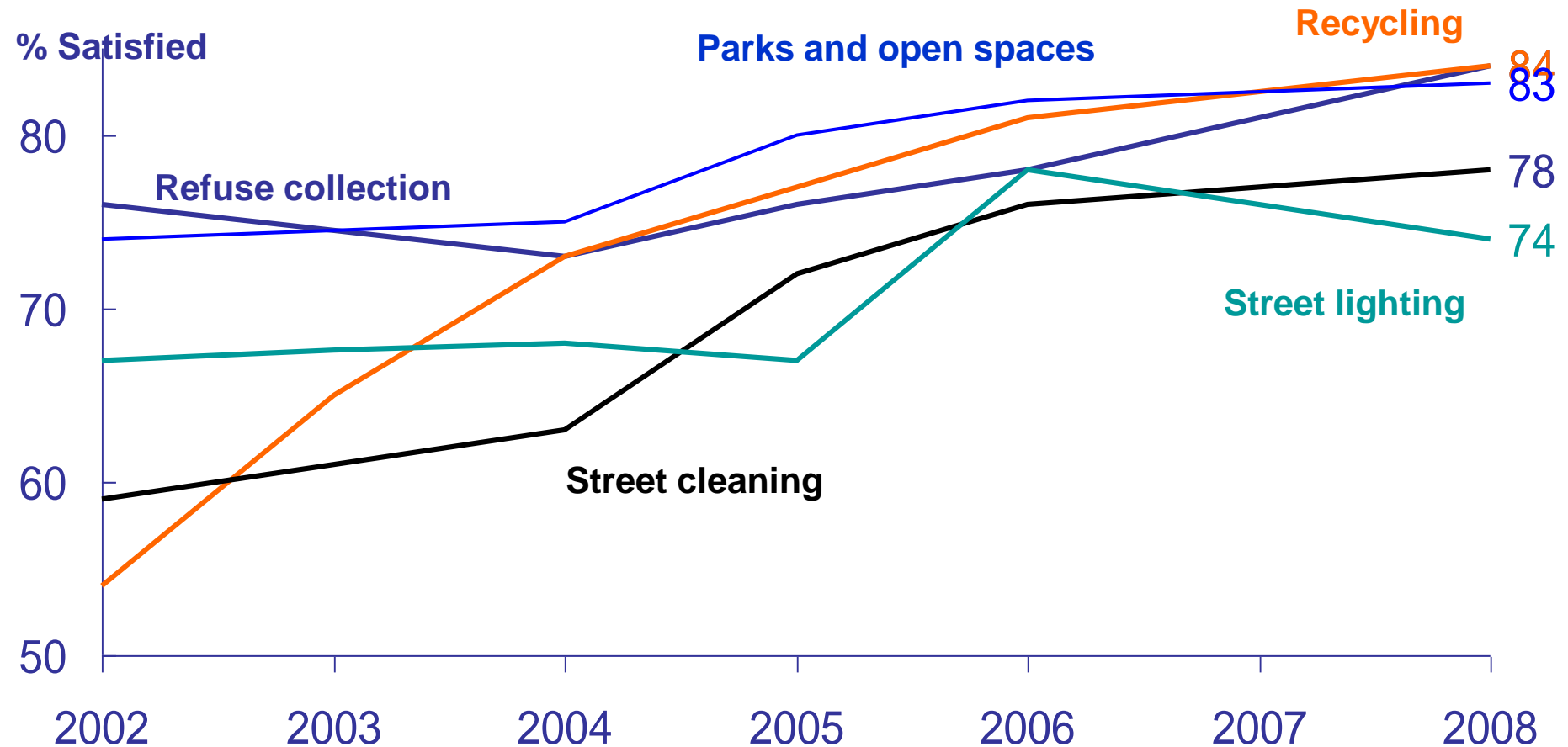
Improved feelings of safety…

Q9/10 *How safe do you feel walking outside in this area alone in the daytime/in the dark?*

% Feel safe

Year	% Feel safe
2000	39
2001	41
2002	43
2003	48
2004	54
2005	45
2006	46
2008	54

Base: All respondents

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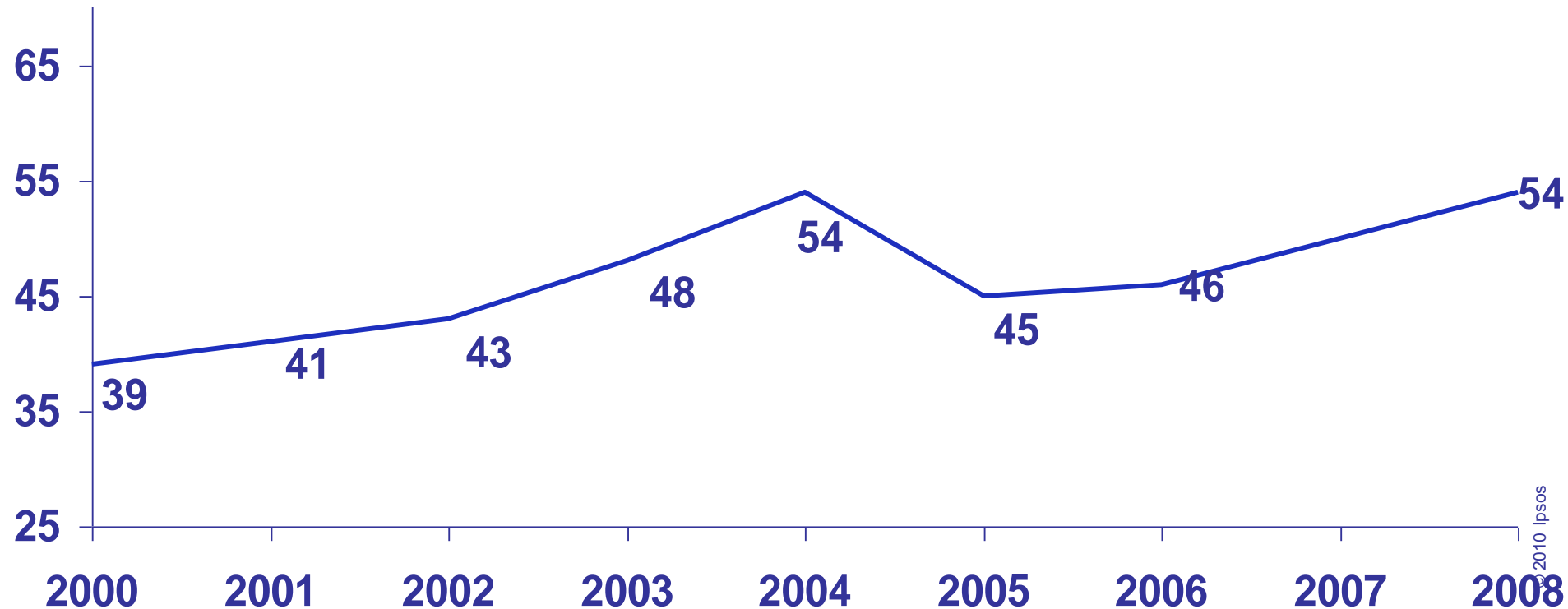
And saw long-term rises in satisfaction with the council and the area

Q *Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local Council as a place to live?*

% satisfied

Year	%
1994	50
1996	55
1998	60
2000	57
2002	59
2004	59
2005	61
2006	65
2008	67

Year surveyed

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Base: All respondents

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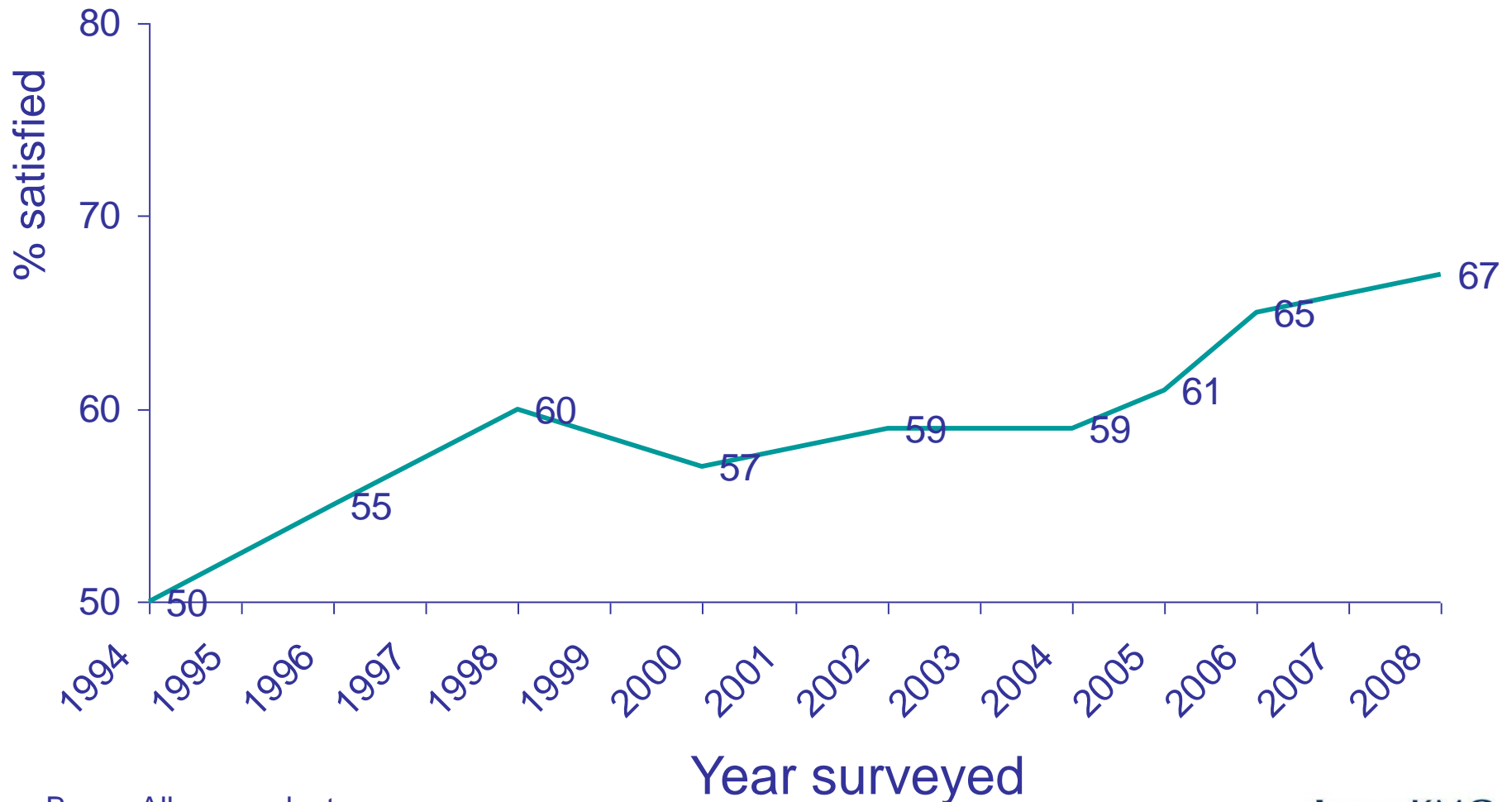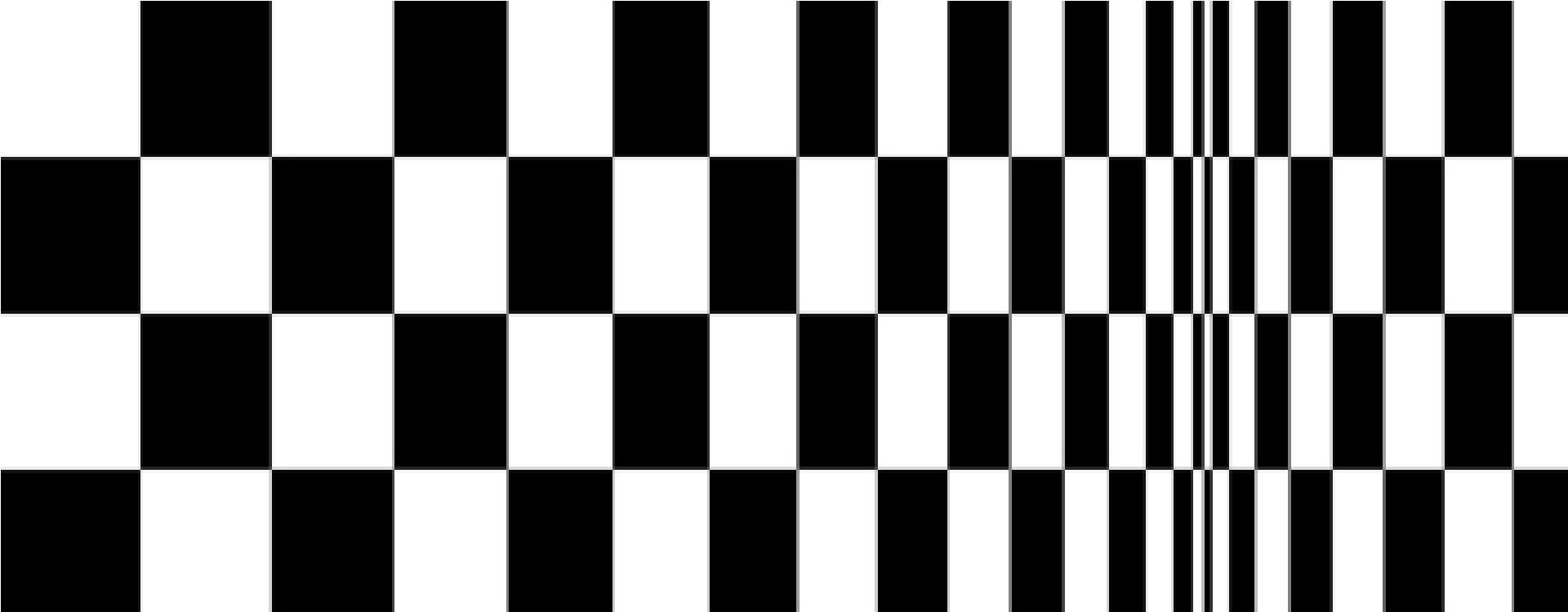
But perceptions aren't always reality...
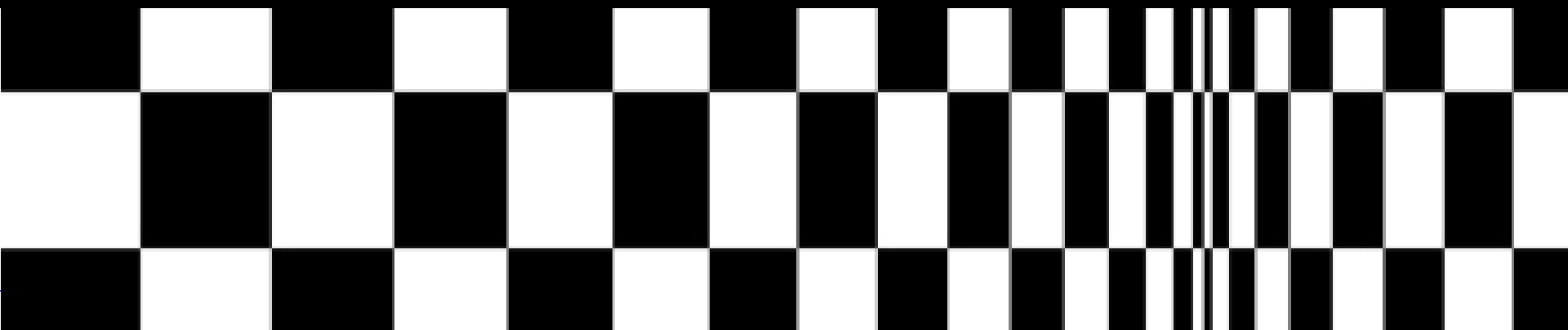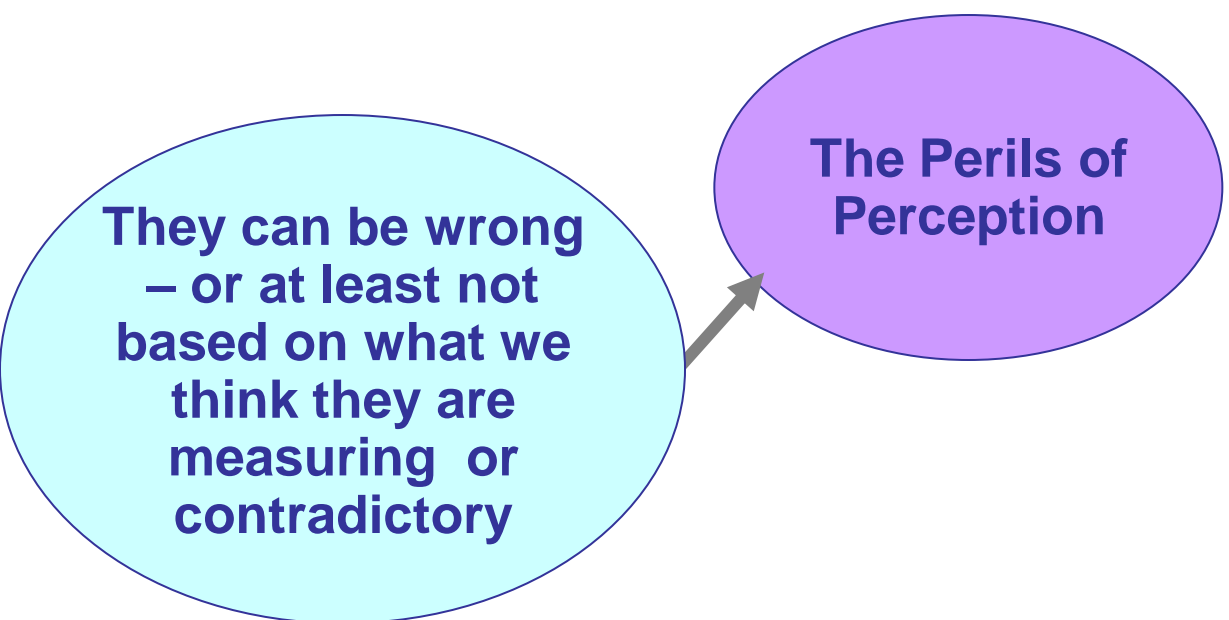
Crime is one well-known example – study for Home Office on perceptions of crime
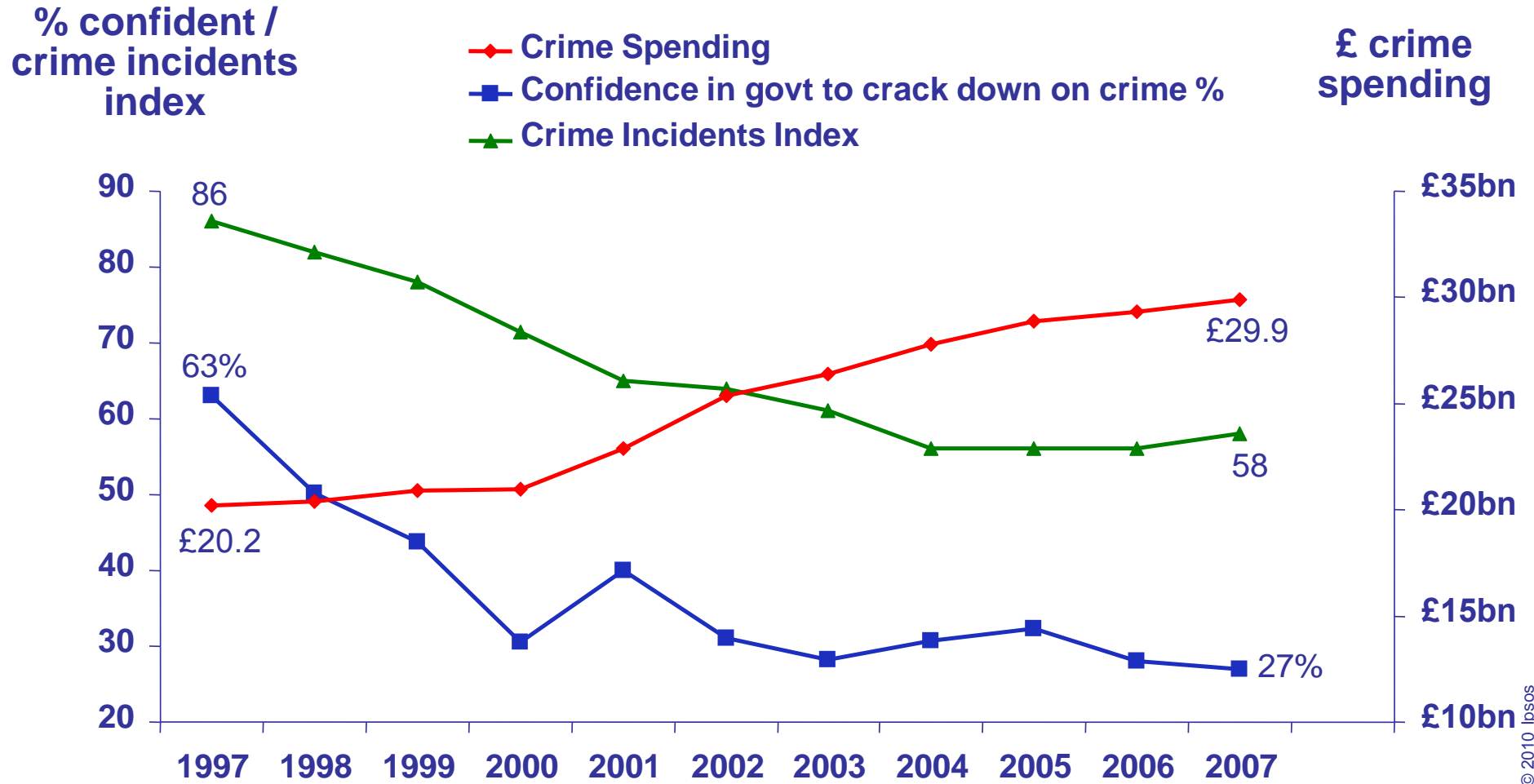
% confident / crime incidents index

£ crime spending

Legend:
- Crime Spending
- Confidence in govt to crack down on crime %
- Crime Incidents Index

86
63%
£20.2
£29.9
58
27%

Years: 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007

Left axis: 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90
Right axis: £10bn, £15bn, £20bn, £25bn, £30bn, £35bn

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The Perils of Perception

They can be wrong – or at least not based on what we think they are measuring or contradictory
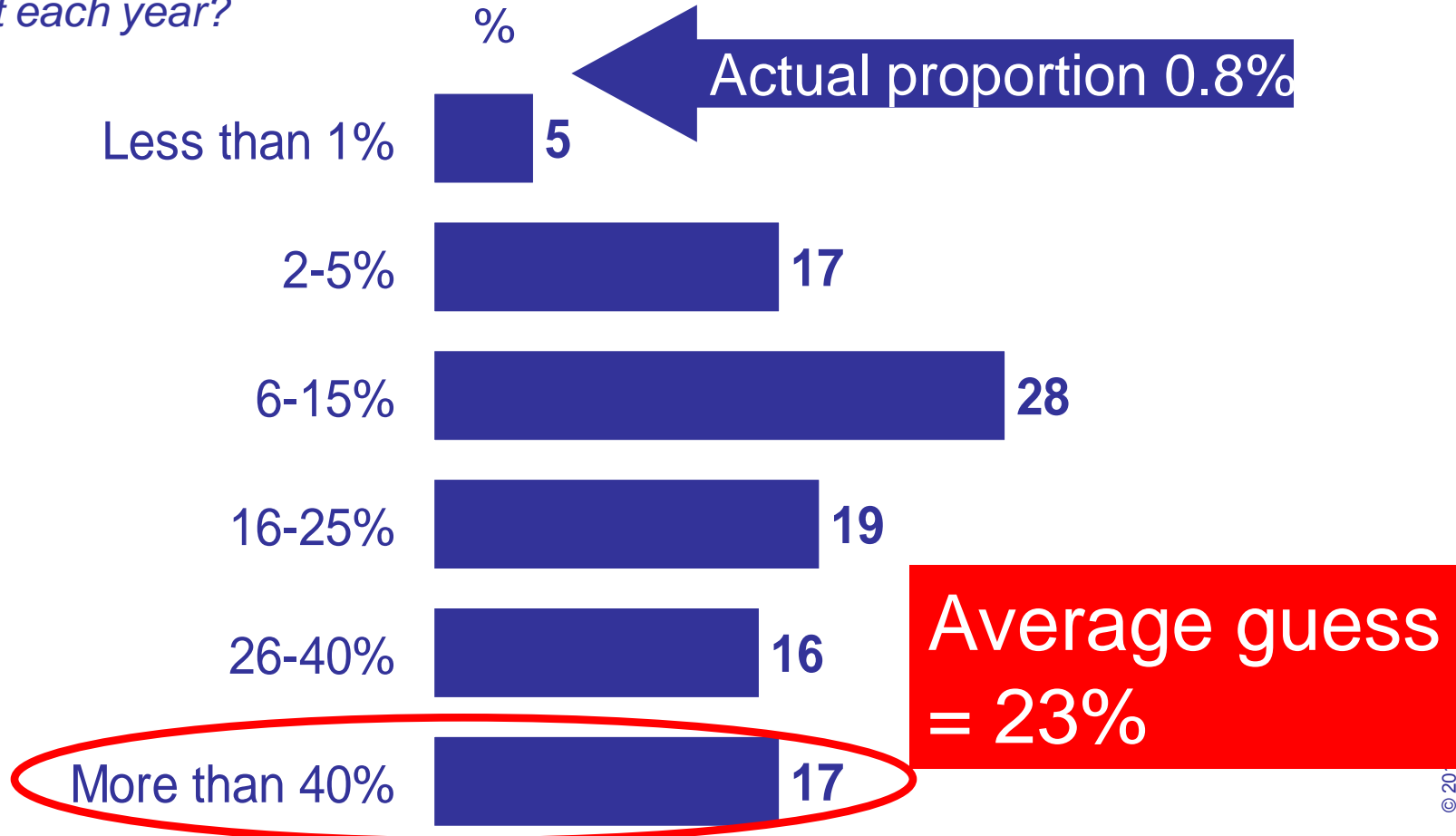
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What proportion are immigrants? Study for our Immigration Authority

23% All

18% Men

28% Women

12% White with degree

25% White No degree
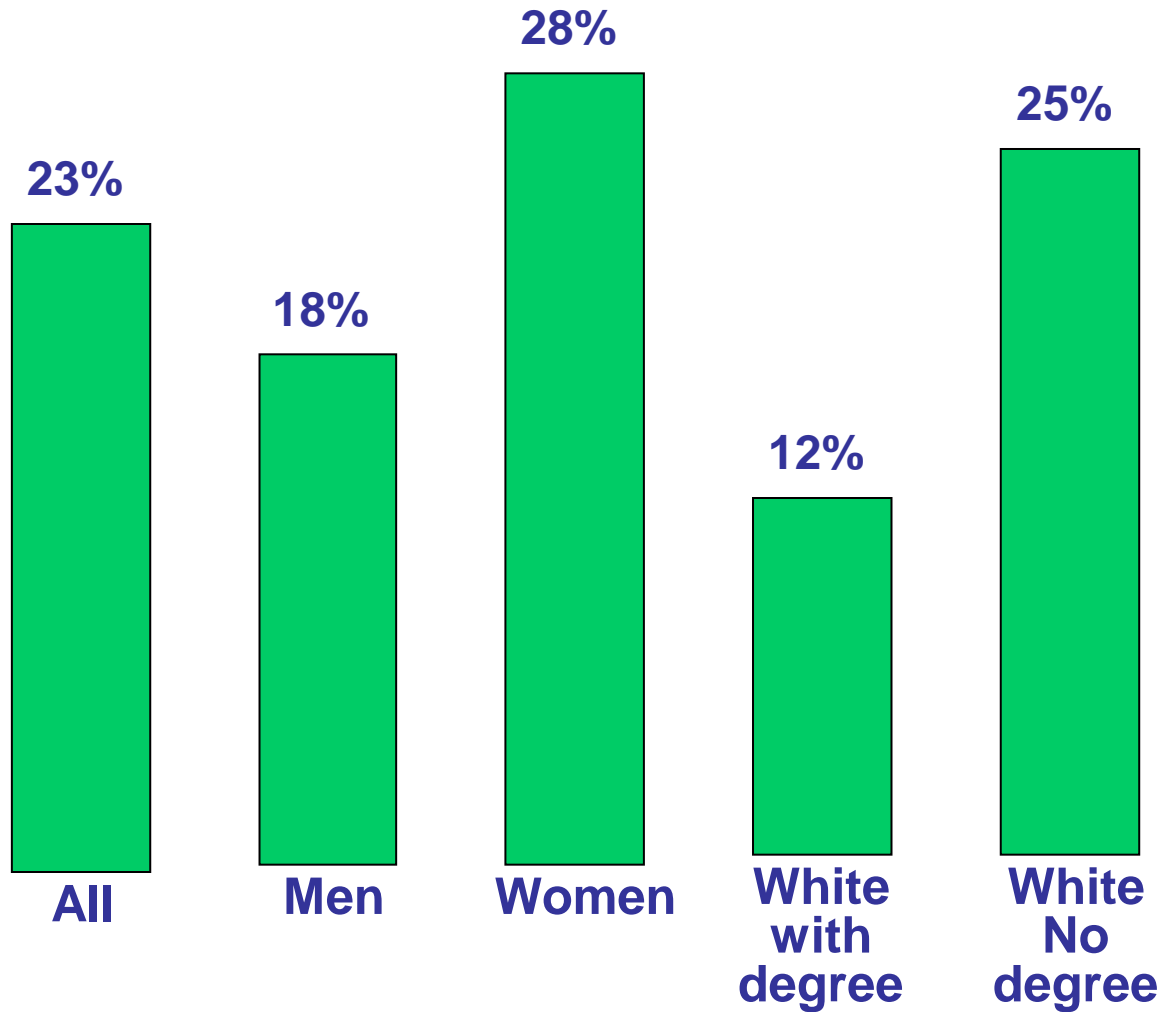
In 2009, 1 in 9 people resident in the UK for more than a year was foreign-born

Base: All adults, aged 16+ (822)

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Five main "Perils of Perception"

Expectations can increase – so that even if see objective improvements, perceptions may not

They are influenced by things like politics and the media more readily than outputs

The Perils of Perception

They can be wrong – or at least not based on what we think they are measuring/ confusing/ contradictory
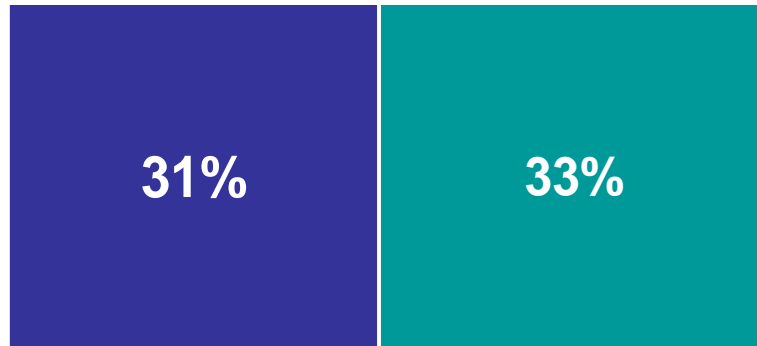
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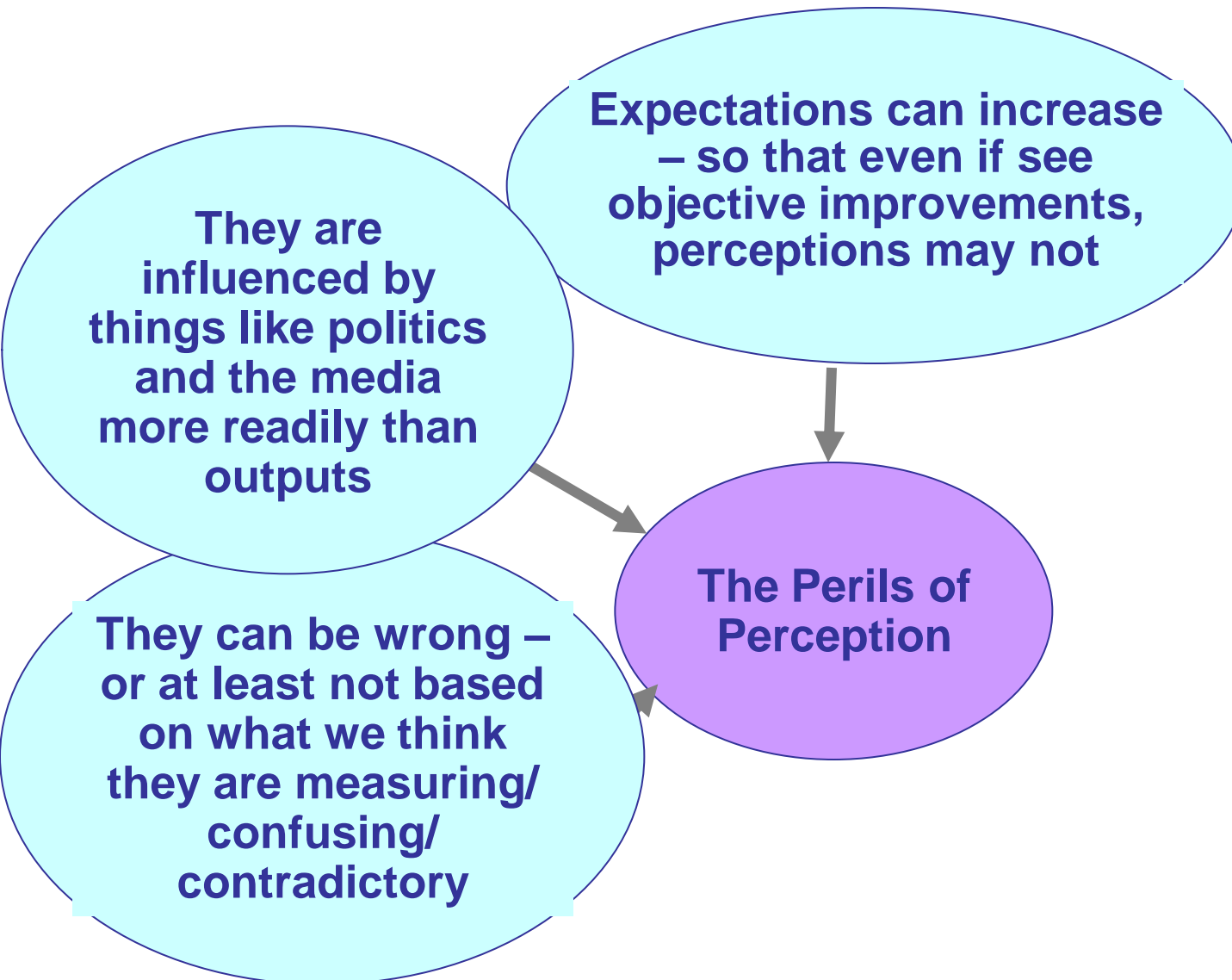
"We now expect more of government than we do of God"

52% of the public agree....

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Many think government has done too much… from study for national newspaper
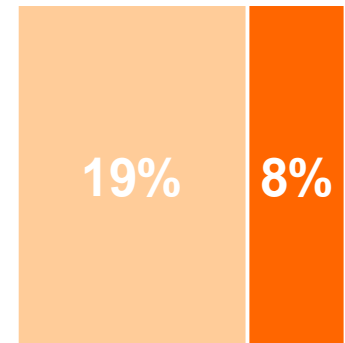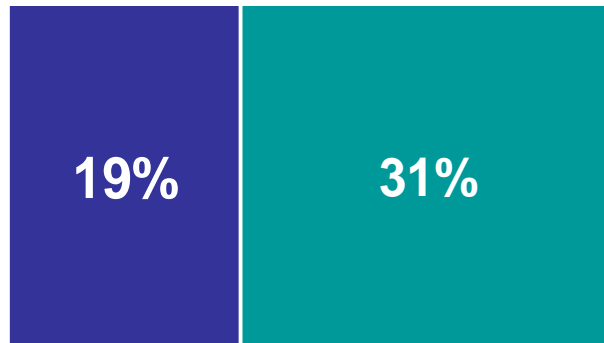
■ Strongly agree   **■ Tend to agree**   **■ Tend to disagree**   **■ Strongly disagree**

In recent years government and public services have **tried to do too much**, and people should take more responsibility for their own lives

| 31% | 33% | | 13% | 7% |
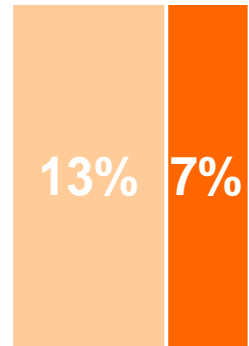
BUT…

I am worried that government and public services will do **too little** to help people in the years ahead

| 19% | 31% | | 19% | 8% |

Base: 1,002 adults in Great Britain aged 16+. Split sample between the two statements. Fieldwork dates: 13-19 May 2010

Source: Ipsos MORI

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Expectations can increase – so that even if see objective improvements, perceptions may not

They are influenced by things like politics and the media more readily than outputs

Perceptions "leak" between different services

The Perils of Perception

They can be wrong – or at least not based on what we think they are measuring/ confusing/ contradictory

They depend on who you serve

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Can predict how happy you are just by how many children in the area.... Over 200 studies Ipsos MORI conducted for individual local councils
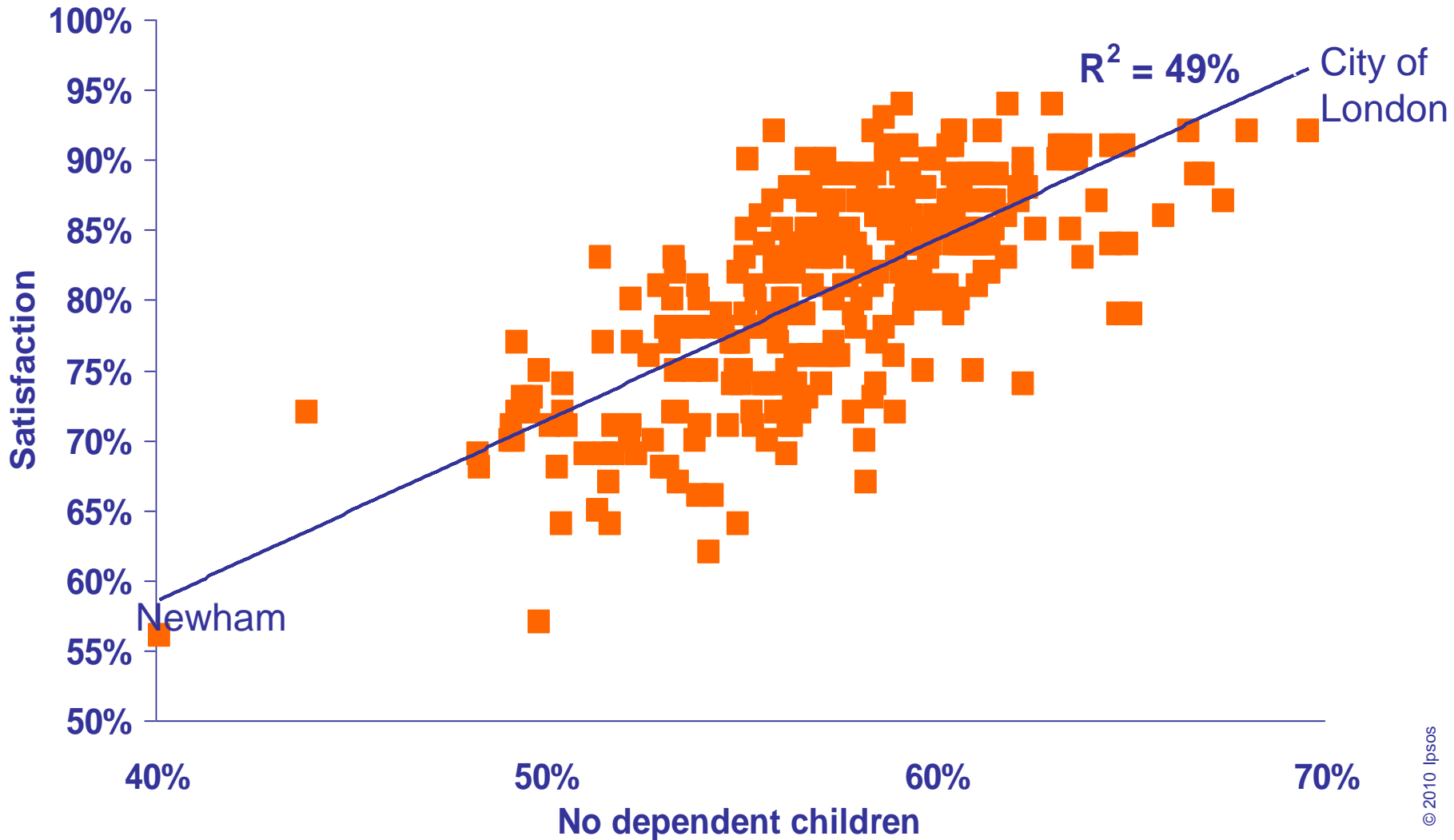

$R^2 = 49\%$

City of London

Newham

Satisfaction (y-axis): 50%, 55%, 60%, 65%, 70%, 75%, 80%, 85%, 90%, 95%, 100%

No dependent children (x-axis): 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%

Base: All valid responses, 323 local authorities, Place Survey 2008/09

Source: Ipsos MORI

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Built dataset of background factors, that are beyond easy/immediate control of local services…

…we can explain **82%** of variation in satisfaction with area knowing only…

Degree level or higher qualifications (positive)
Households living in homes with 0.5 people or fewer per room (positive)
Deprivation/poverty (negative)
Proportion under 21 (negative)
Geographic region – North East happy, London unhappy

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So what can you do about it?

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Main elements

Drivers

The final outcome The way the service kept its promises The way the service handled any problems	→	**Delivery**
Initial wait How long it takes overall Number of times had to contact the service	→	**Timeliness**
Accuracy of info Comprehensiveness of info Being kept informed about progress	→	**Information**
Competent staff Being treated fairly Reliability	→	**Professionalism**
Polite and friendly staff How sympathetic staff were to your needs	→	**Staff attitude**

- Delivery → **30%** → **Satisfaction with service**
- Timeliness → **24%**
- Information → **18%**
- Professionalism → **16%**
- Staff attitude → **12%**
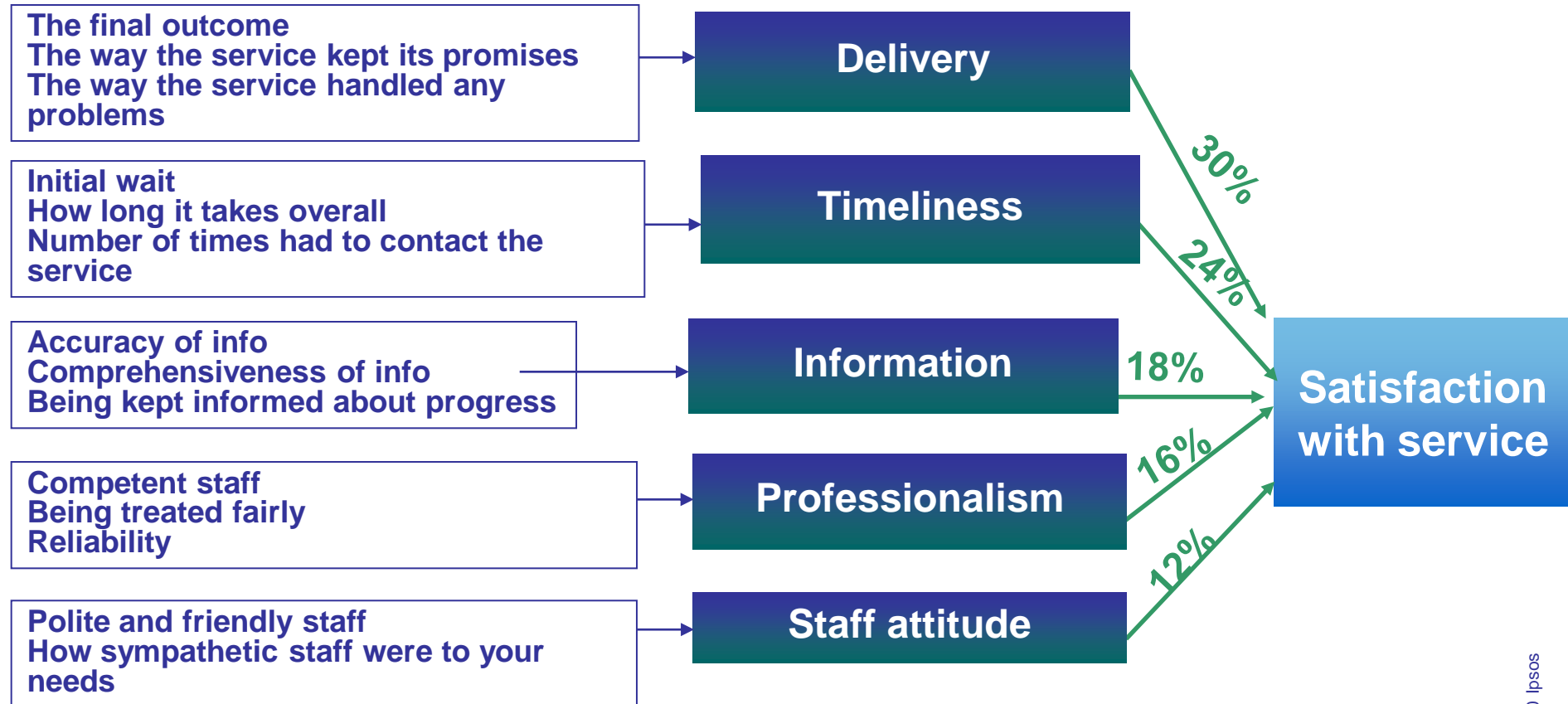
This model explains 67% of the variation in satisfaction

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Understanding what drives satisfaction with municipal government – ISRI thought leadership

High

Low

Level of control

Overall service quality

Perceived value for money and/or absence of corruption

Direct communication and engagement

"Liveability": clean, safe and strong communities

Media coverage

Background factors: affluence, diversity etc

Satisfaction with local/ municipal government
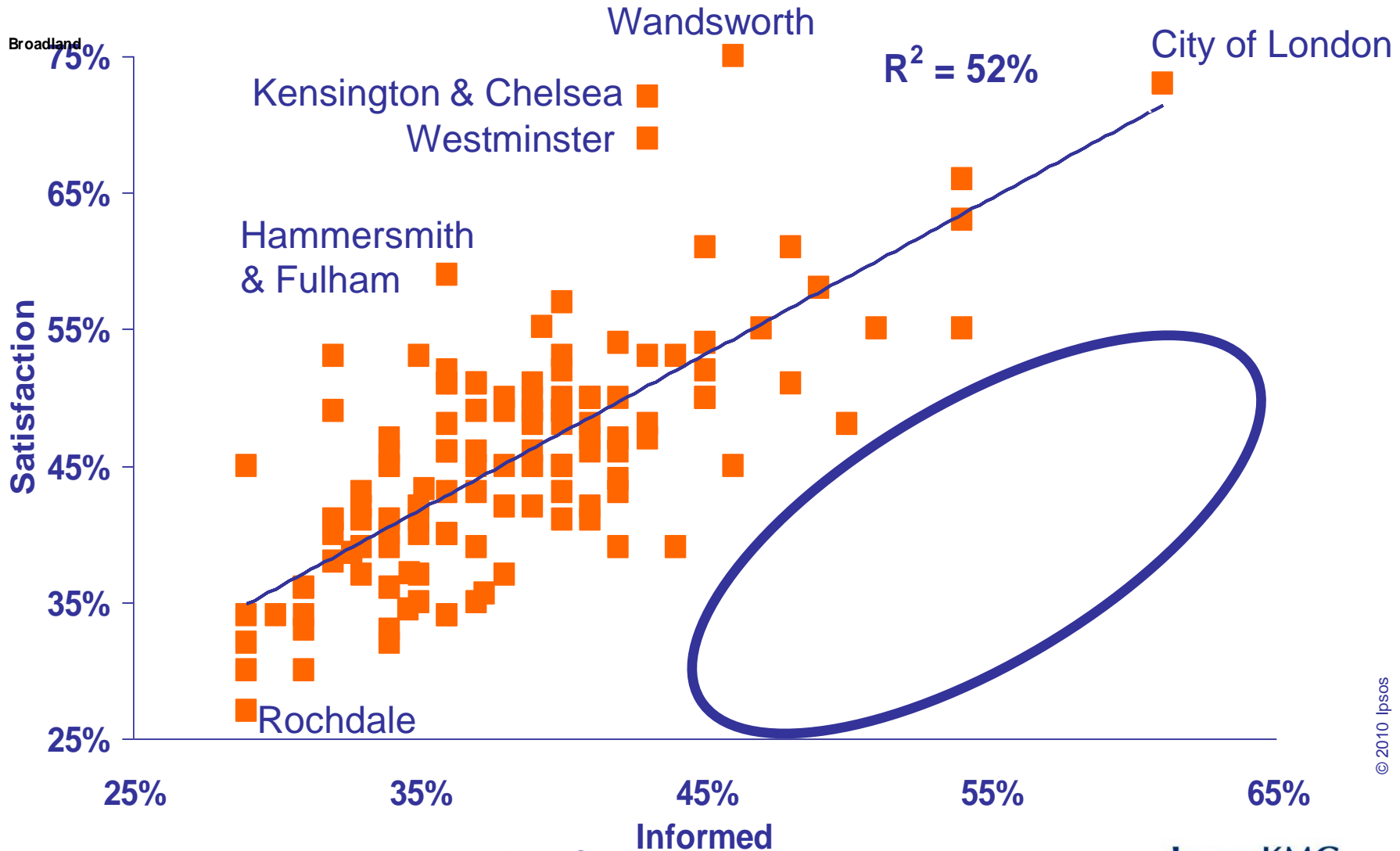
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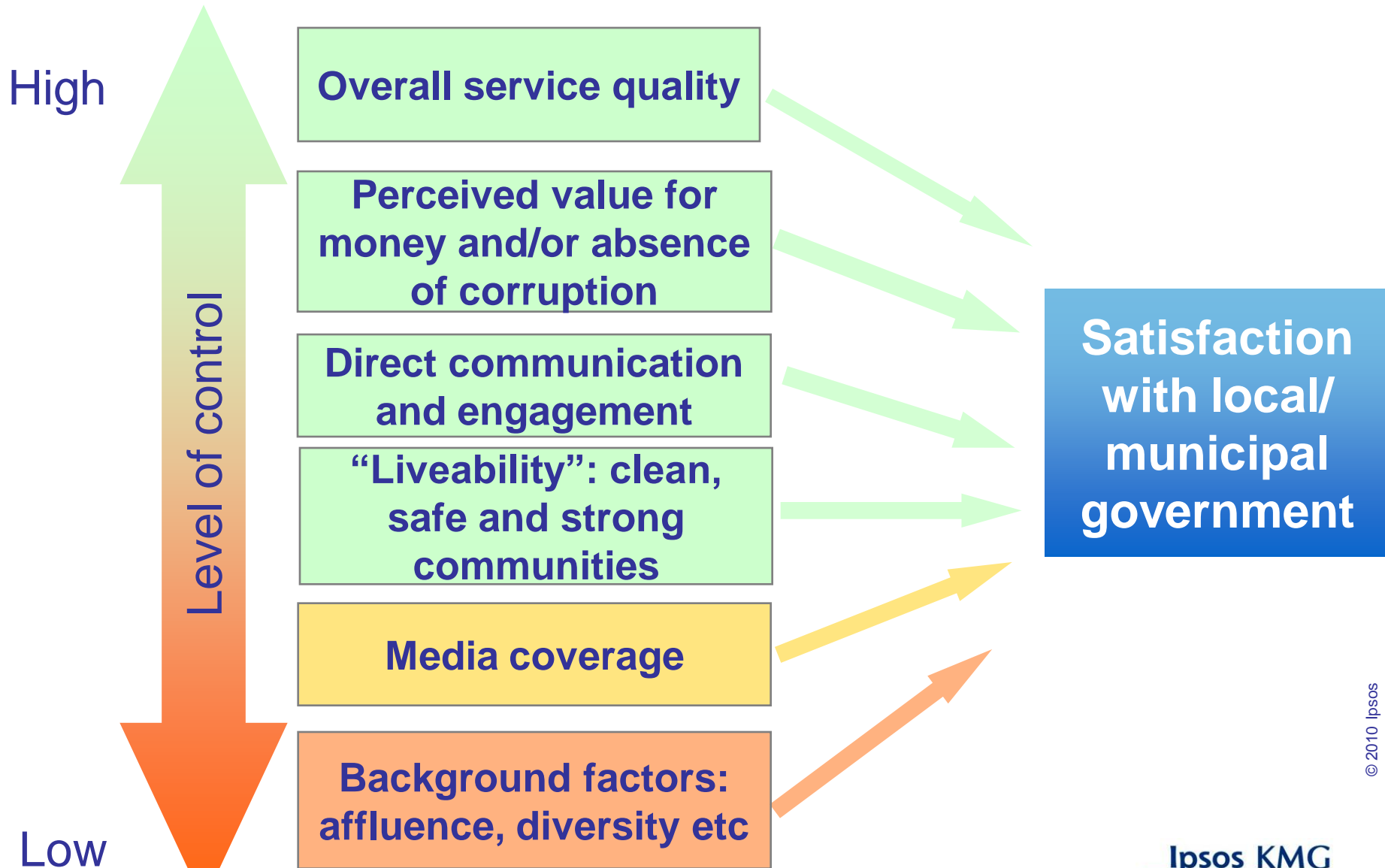
2. Improve our communications – e.g. is this why local councils aren't getting the credit?

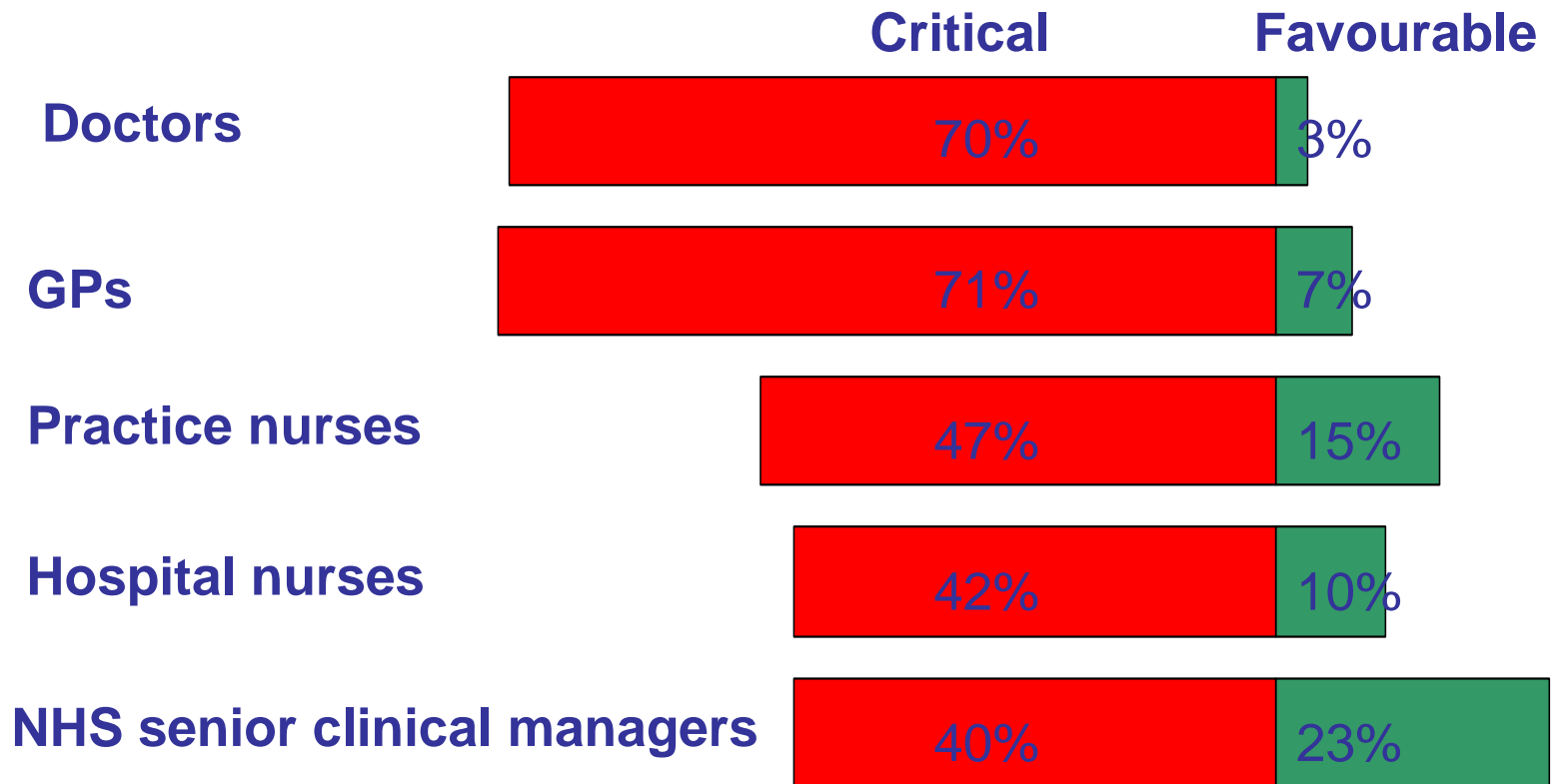Q   Overall, how well informed do you feel about local public services?

Very well informed

Not well informed at all

Fairly well informed

4%

21%

35%

41%

Not very well informed

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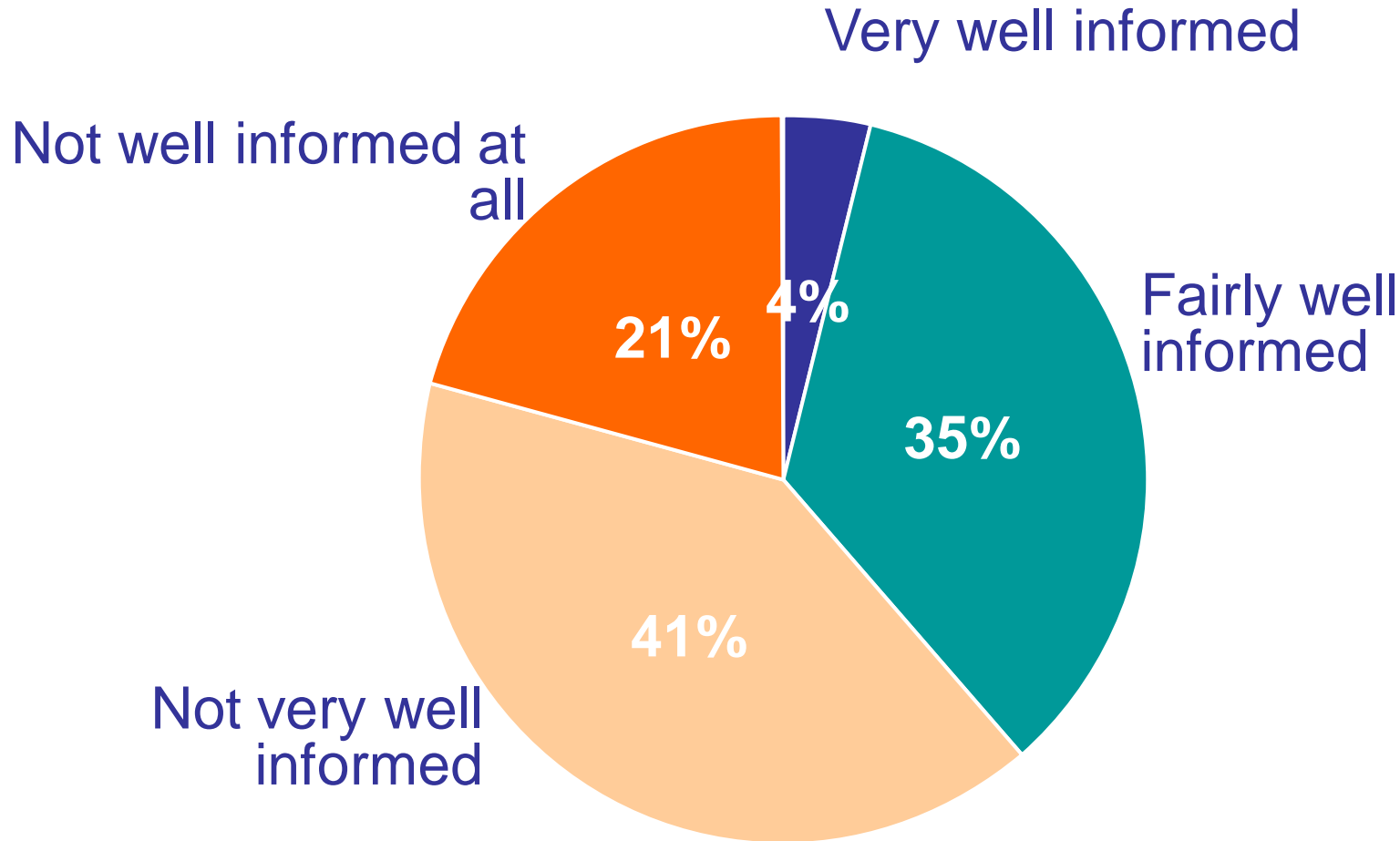
No councils that communicate well are poorly rated overall…

Wandsworth

City of London

$R^2 = 52\%$

Broadland

75%

Kensington & Chelsea

Westminster

65%

Hammersmith & Fulham

55%

Satisfaction

45%

35%

Rochdale

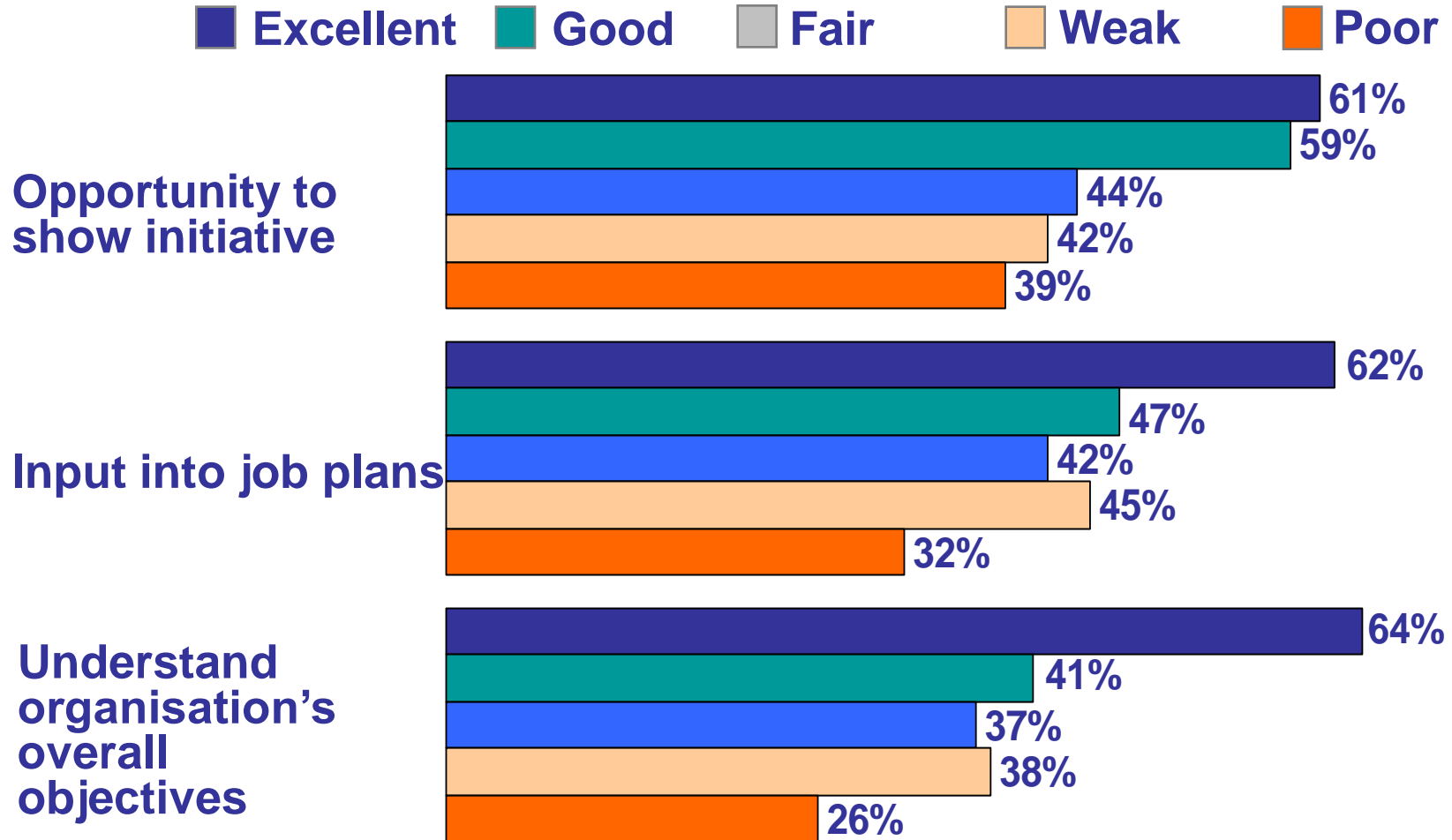25%

25%   35%   45%   55%   65%

Informed

3. Think hard about staff engagement – what do doctors say about our health service??? From staff study for our Department of Health

	Critical	Favourable
Doctors	70%	3%
GPs	71%	7%
Practice nurses	47%	15%
Hospital nurses	42%	10%
NHS senior clinical managers	40%	23%

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What do the best get right on staff engagement?

% very satisfied with job factors/strongly agree

■ **Excellent** ■ **Good** ■ **Fair** ■ **Weak** ■ **Poor**

Opportunity to show initiative
- 61%
- 59%
- 44%
- 42%
- 39%

Input into job plans
- 62%
- 47%
- 42%
- 45%
- 32%

Understand organisation's overall objectives
- 64%
- 41%
- 37%
- 38%
- 26%

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But it's not all about surveys…

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The Royal Borough of Kingston were going through a tendering process for a new contract for kerbside collection of refuse and recycling
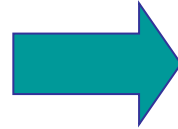
Challenges

- Reduce the **amount of waste** sent to landfill

- Reduce the Council's **liability to the landfill tax**

- Meet **Landfill Allowance Targets** set by the EU

Requirement

Evidence to make changes to the way waste and recycling was collected in the Borough
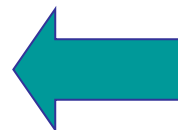
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Commissioned research to gauge local peoples' reactions to **different options** for refuse and recycling collection

recycle

At the time: **recycling** collected every other week and **refuse** collected every week

The Council proposed to **switch this around** to encourage residents to recycle as much as possible

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Research findings:

Public support for the proposed scheme, despite early reservations about fortnightly refuse collection, assuming:

- Clarification over the **size and robustness** of the containers
- Measures be put in place to **ensure food waste** would not smell

The new scheme started in September 2008. During the first three months of 2009, **the recycling rate rose to 47%** - almost double that of the same period the previous year.

What was it?
A programme of **community consultation** – part of a wider programme of engagement on the council's Sustainable Community Strategy.

Ipsos MORI's role?

x4 mid-sized deliberative events with 99 members of the public

x6 mini groups with migrant workers (Polish, Lithuanian and South African)

x1 expert panel workshop

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Local residents were **unhappy with number of fast food take-aways** in the borough

Why?

! Impact on the **cleanliness** of the local area

! Impact on **residents'** health

So…Ipsos MORI reported this issue to Waltham Forest

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Waltham Forest Council became the **first local authority** in the UK to ban fast food outlets from opening within 400 metres of schools, leisure centres and parks.

+

The ban was supported by a drive to **improve the quality of school meals** to ensure all pupils receive at least one healthy meal a day

=

The Council received five **applications to open new hot food takeaways** – they were all **rejected**.

&

In the same period **childhood obesity levels dropped** nearly 10%

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New forms of research…

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1) Social Listening - what's already being said in existing online communities?

- Social listening crawls the web every day and captures new content
- Using this tool, we are able to track the number of online mentions of an organisation or concept over time, and whether these are positive or negative
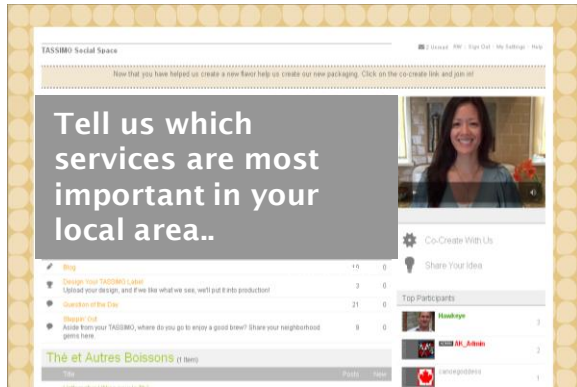

"Big Society"

- It identifies common topics, locations, organisations and people
- It presents all the data in a manageable format for analysis and reporting
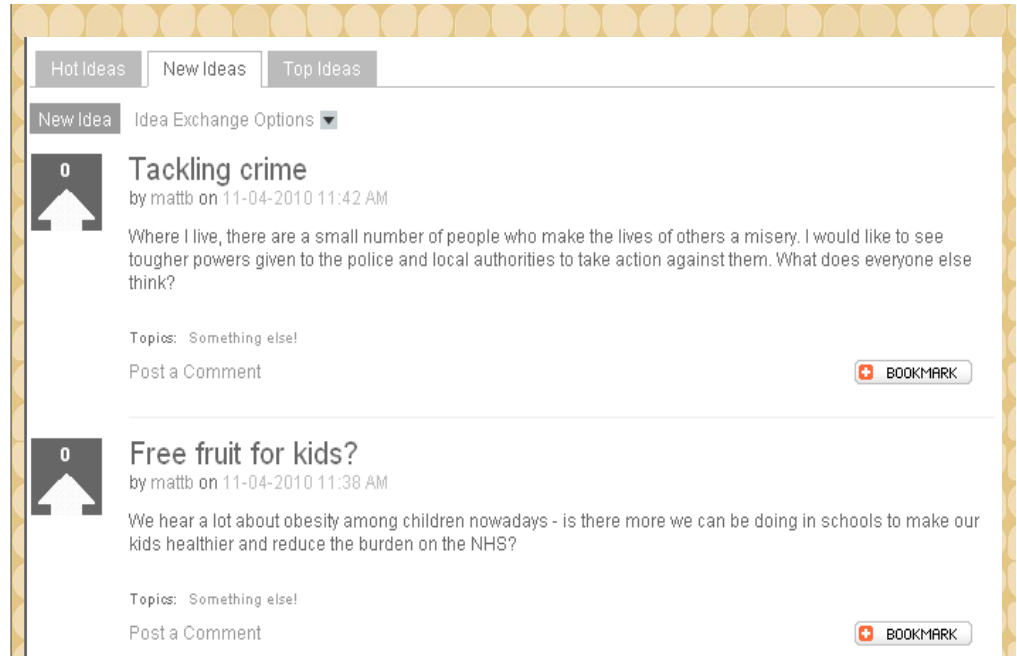

Adil Abrar   Attila   Baron   BBC   Big con   big disappointment   Big Flop   Big government
Big Questions   Big Society Bank   Big Society http   Big Society idea   Big Society report
Blair   Britain   Brown   CAB   Cabinet   Cabinet Office
Cabinet Office Structural Reform   Cameron   Cameron big   Cameron big society
Charity   Charity bank   Charity sector   Civil Society   Clegg   Communities
condems   Conservative Party   Conservatives   County Council   Croydon Council
Culture Minister   Dave   daveguff   David   David Cameron   David Davis
David Miliband   Davis   Deputy Prime   Digital inclusion   Dover   Downing Street   Ed Vaizey
English Tea Party   Europe   Exeter   George   Gerald Warner   Gigha Heritage Trust
Government   Guardian News   Halpern   Home Office   Hurd   Independent
Jamie Oliver   Jeremy Hunt   Julian Dobson   Kids Company   Last night   libcons

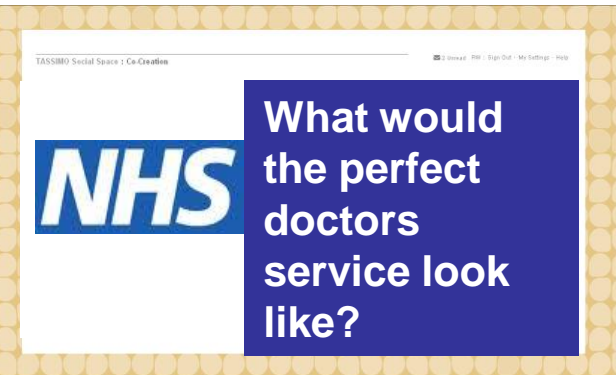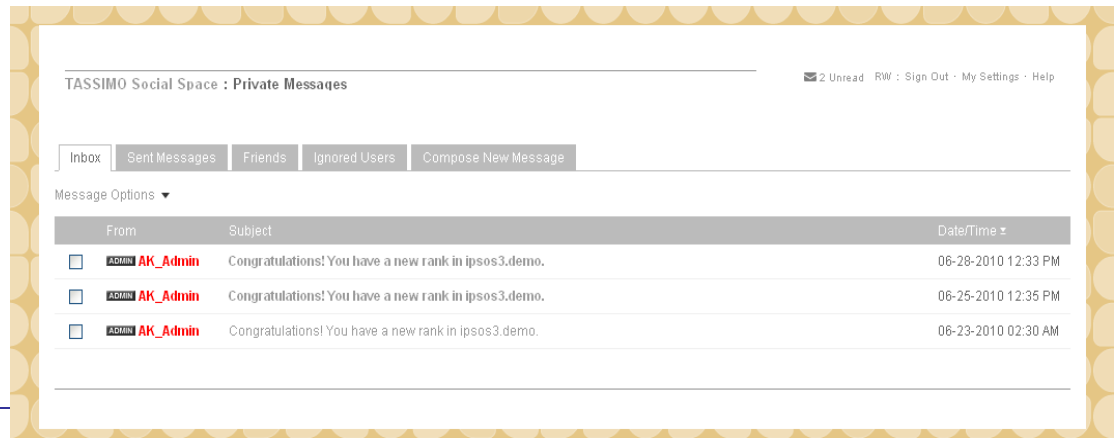# 2) Social Spaces – creating your own online communities

Home page

Tell us which services are most important in your local area..

Co-creation: Designing public services

What would the perfect doctors service look like?

Idea generation

Hot Ideas | New Ideas | Top Ideas

New Idea | Idea Exchange Options ▼

0

Tackling crime
by mattb on 11-04-2010 11:42 AM

Where I live, there are a small number of people who make the lives of others a misery. I would like to see tougher powers given to the police and local authorities to take action against them. What does everyone else think?

Topics: Something else!

Post a Comment

➕ BOOKMARK

0

Free fruit for kids?
by mattb on 11-04-2010 11:38 AM

We hear a lot about obesity among children nowadays - is there more we can be doing in schools to make our kids healthier and reduce the burden on the NHS?

Topics: Something else!

Post a Comment

➕ BOOKMARK

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	From	Subject	Date/Time ▼
☐	ADMIN AK_Admin	Congratulations! You have a new rank in ipsos3.demo.	06-28-2010 12:33 PM
☐	ADMIN AK_Admin	Congratulations! You have a new rank in ipsos3.demo.	06-25-2010 12:35 PM
☐	ADMIN AK_Admin	Congratulations! You have a new rank in ipsos3.demo.	06-23-2010 02:30 AM

Applying the best of academic techniques – the role of ethnography…

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Conclusions

- Even in an "age of austerity" there is a key role for research on social policy/public service issues

- It can save you money/stop mistakes/engage people to change their behaviour/help them to "co-create" services

- Need to be skilled in understanding how to interpret perception-based data…

- …combine this with range of methods, including using new technology and re-purposing accepted academic techniques

- Use it all to tell the story and get to better decisions

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Thank you for listening

Bobby Duffy

Global Director, Ipsos Social Research Institute