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February 2021

General Medical Council MPs poll - January 2021

**General
Medical
Council**

Methodology

Quantitative

Who?



100 x Members of the House of Commons



72 x Members of the House of Lords



47 x Members of Devolved Assemblies

(14 x MLAs, 20 x MSPs, 13 x MSs)

What?

10 minute online survey

When?

8th – 31st January 2021

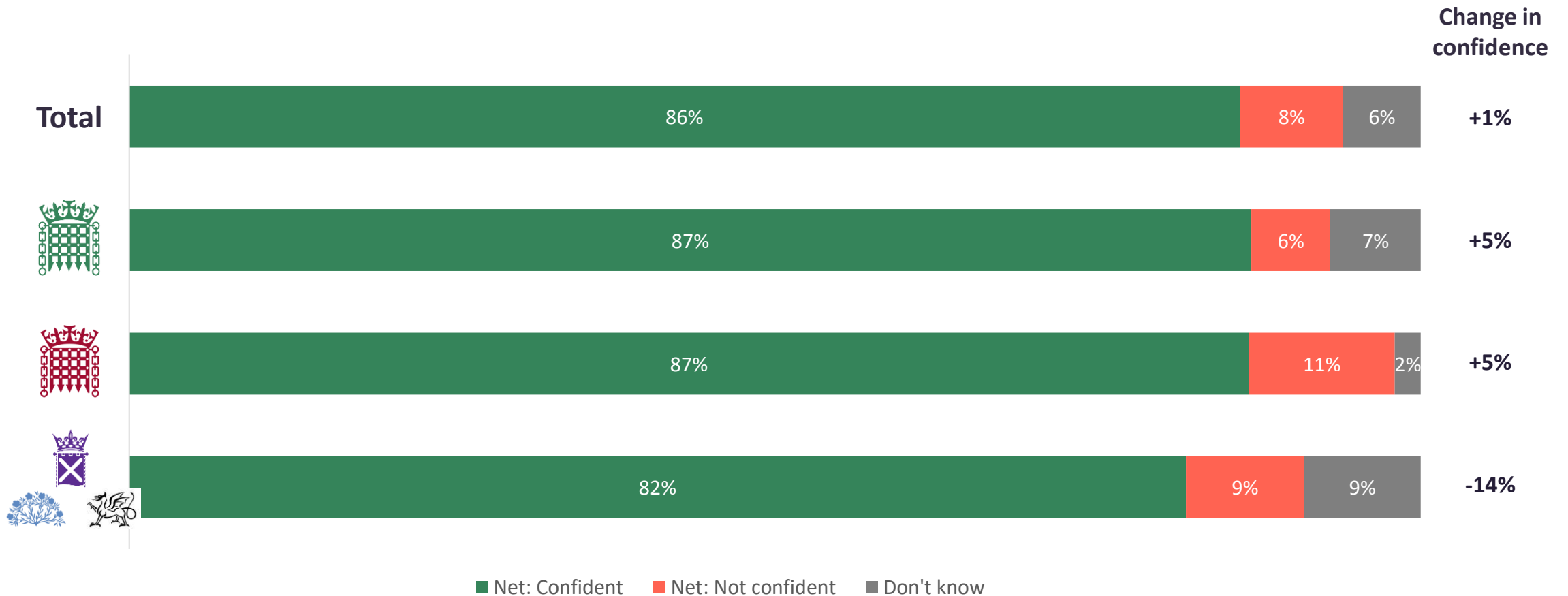
Regional definitions

- This report uses regional data as an analysis variable. These regions are made up of different audiences and parts of the UK, and definitions for each can be seen below:
 - **London:** MPs representing London constituencies
 - **Midlands:** MPs representing constituencies in the East and West Midlands
 - **North England:** MPs representing constituencies in Yorkshire & the Humber, North East, and North West of England
 - **Northern Ireland:** MPs representing Northern Ireland constituencies and Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly
 - **Scotland:** MPs representing Scottish constituencies and Members of Scottish Parliament
 - **South and East of England:** MPs representing constituencies in the South West, South East, and East of England
 - **Wales:** MPs representing Welsh constituencies and Members of the Welsh Assembly

As in 2020, the vast majority of all audiences are confident in the way doctors are regulated by the GMC

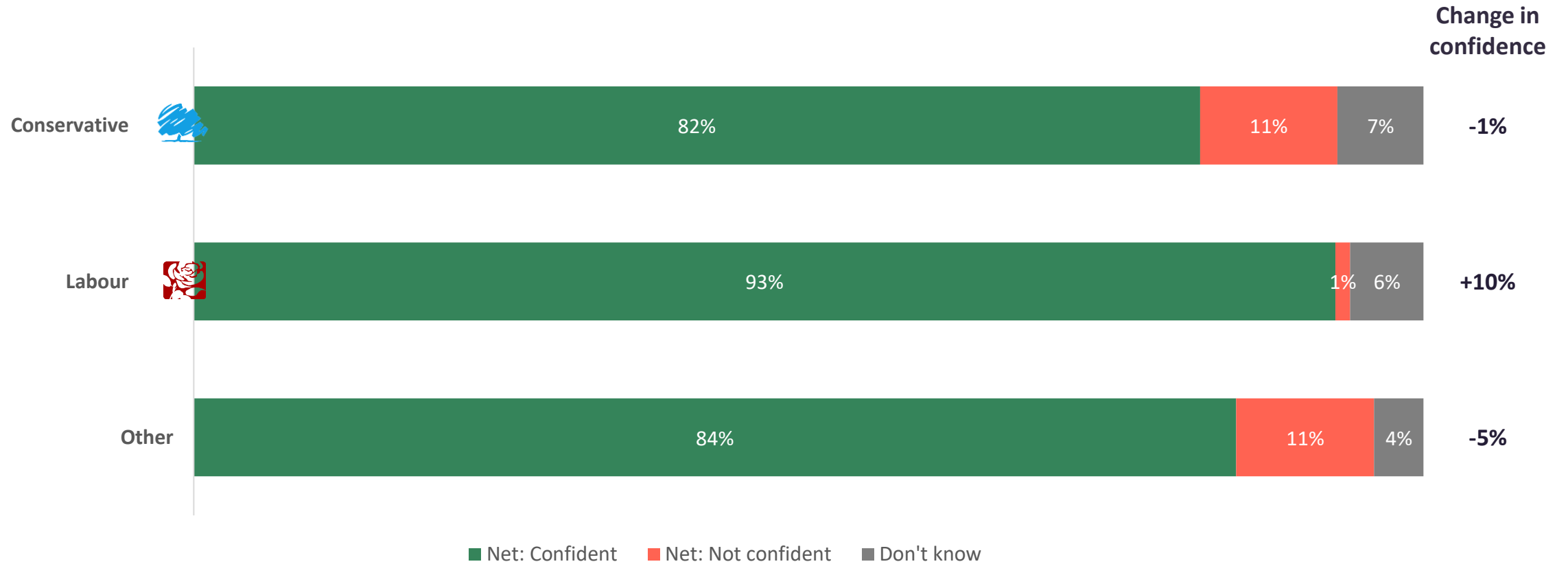
There is a rise in confidence among MPs and Lords, although a drop among Devolved respondents. This Devolved drop is partly explained by an increase in 'don't know', suggesting a lack of familiarity

How confident, if at all, are you in the way that doctors are regulated by the General Medical Council?



The vast majority of respondents from all parties are confident in the way the GMC regulates doctors, with over nine-tenths of Labour respondents confident

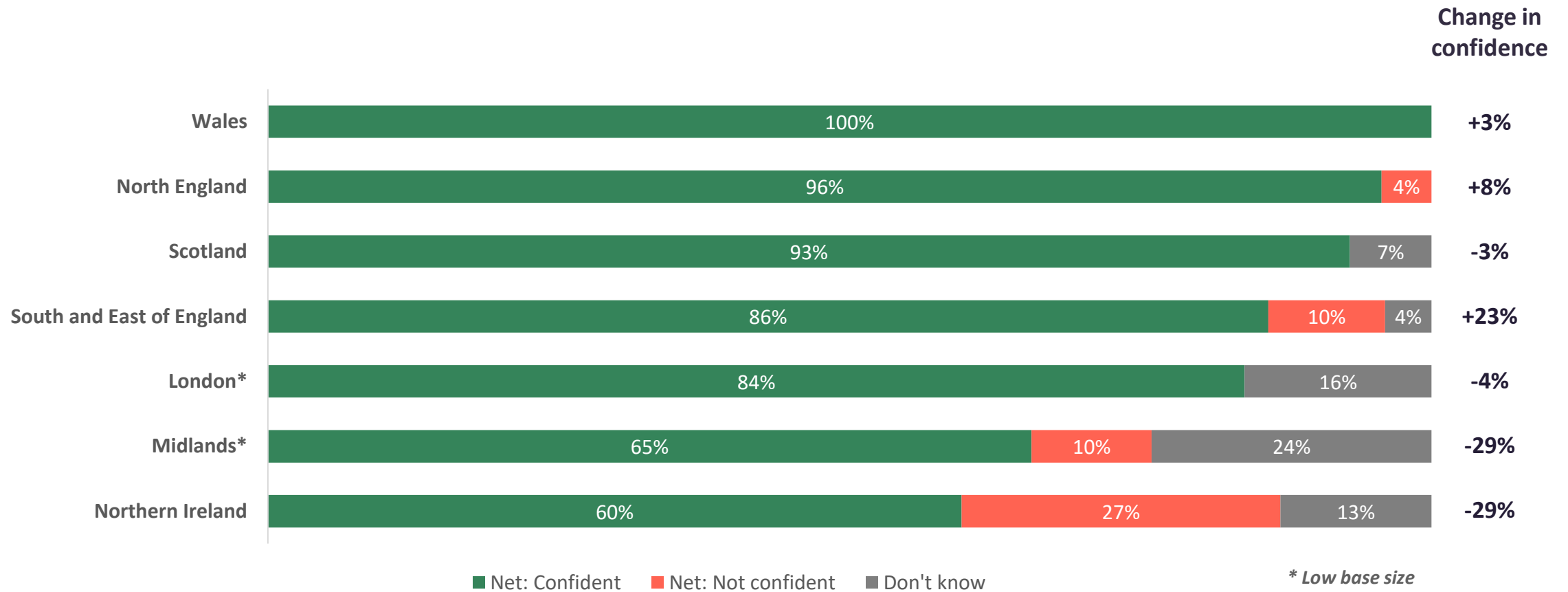
How confident, if at all, are you in the way that doctors are regulated by the General Medical Council?



All respondents in Wales are confident in how the GMC regulates doctors, and over nine-tenths in North England and Scotland are confident

The lowest confidence can be seen from politicians in Northern Ireland and the Midlands which have both dropped significantly since last year. This drop explained by an increase in respondents saying 'Don't know' and that they are not confident.

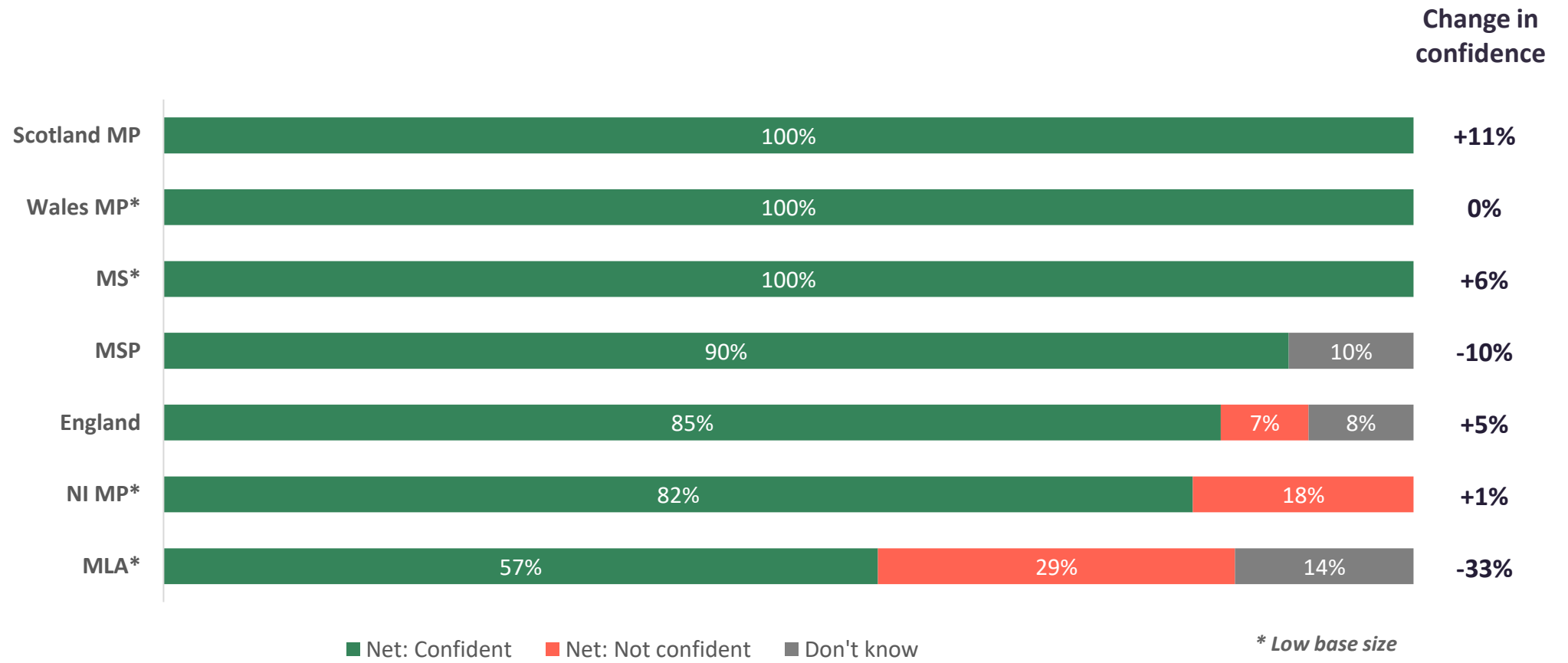
How confident, if at all, are you in the way that doctors are regulated by the General Medical Council?



All Scottish MPs, Welsh MPs, and Members of the Senedd are confident in how doctors are regulated by the GMC, but confidence among MLAs is much lower

Among MLAs we see an increase in respondents both disagreeing and saying 'Don't know' to this question

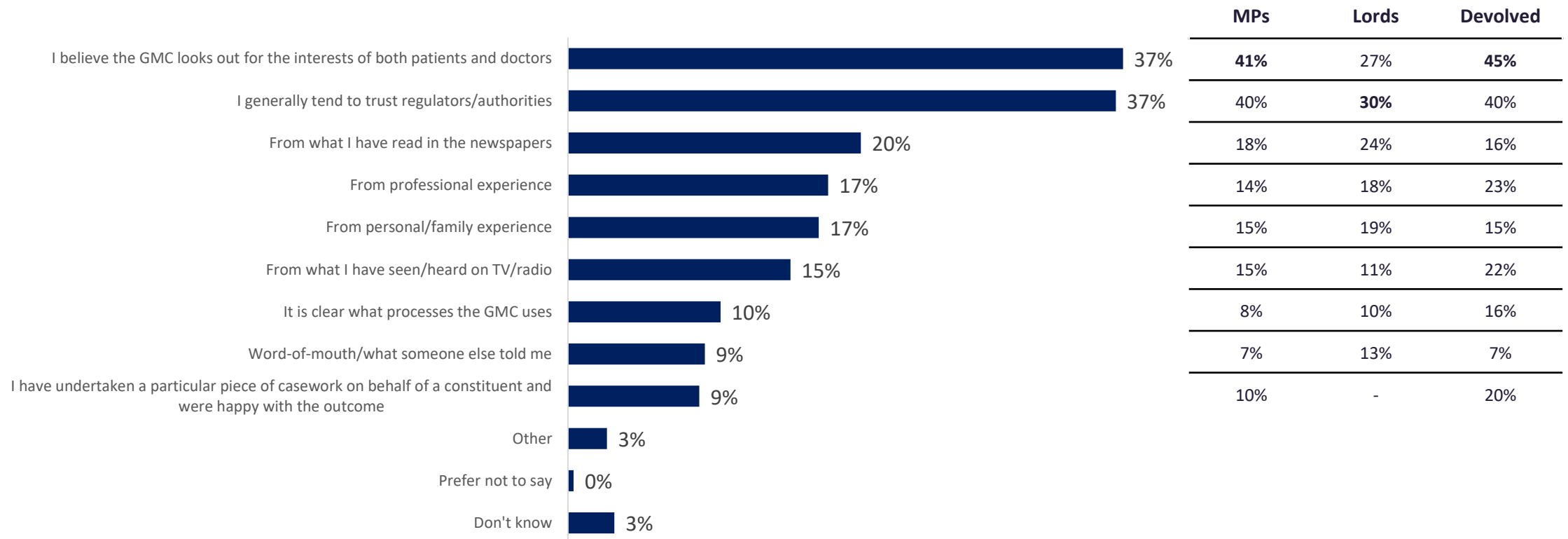
How confident, if at all, are you in the way that doctors are regulated by the General Medical Council?



Those confident in the GMC’s regulation believe that the GMC looks out for the interest of both patients and doctors, and that they generally trust regulators.

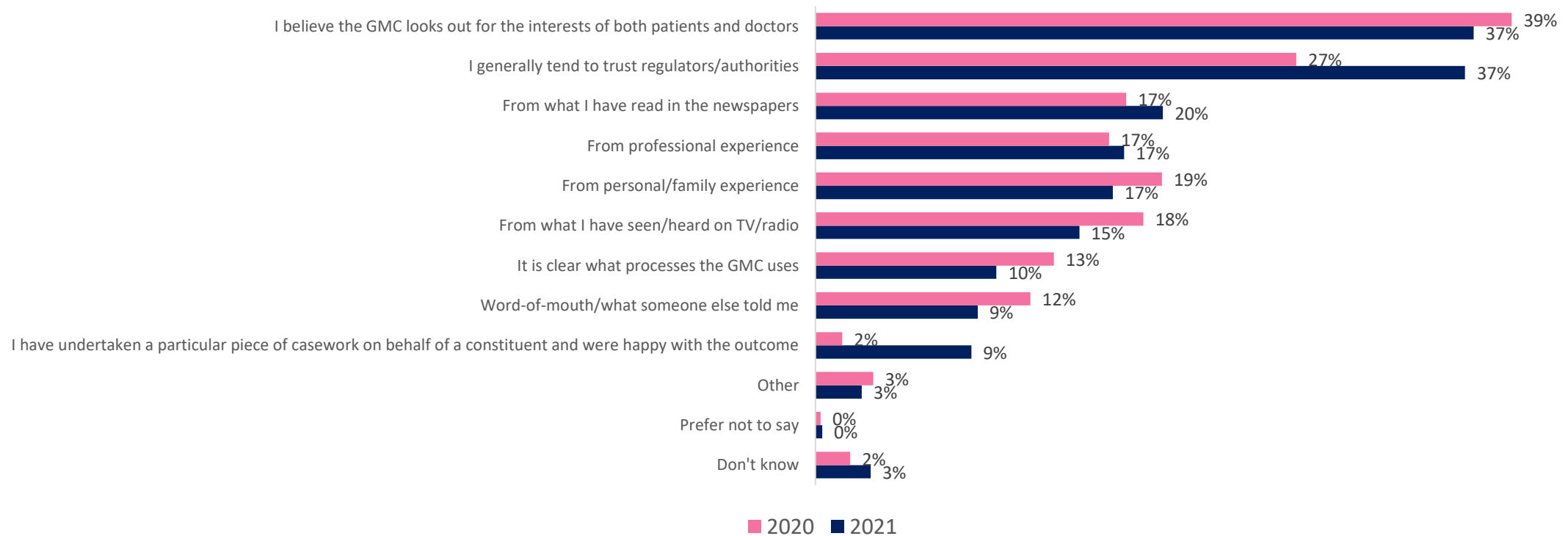
Lords are most likely to say they trust regulators in general, whereas MPs and Devolved respondents are most likely to believe the GMC looks out for the interests of patients and doctors.

You said you are confident in the way doctors are regulated by the GMC. Why do you say this? (prompted)



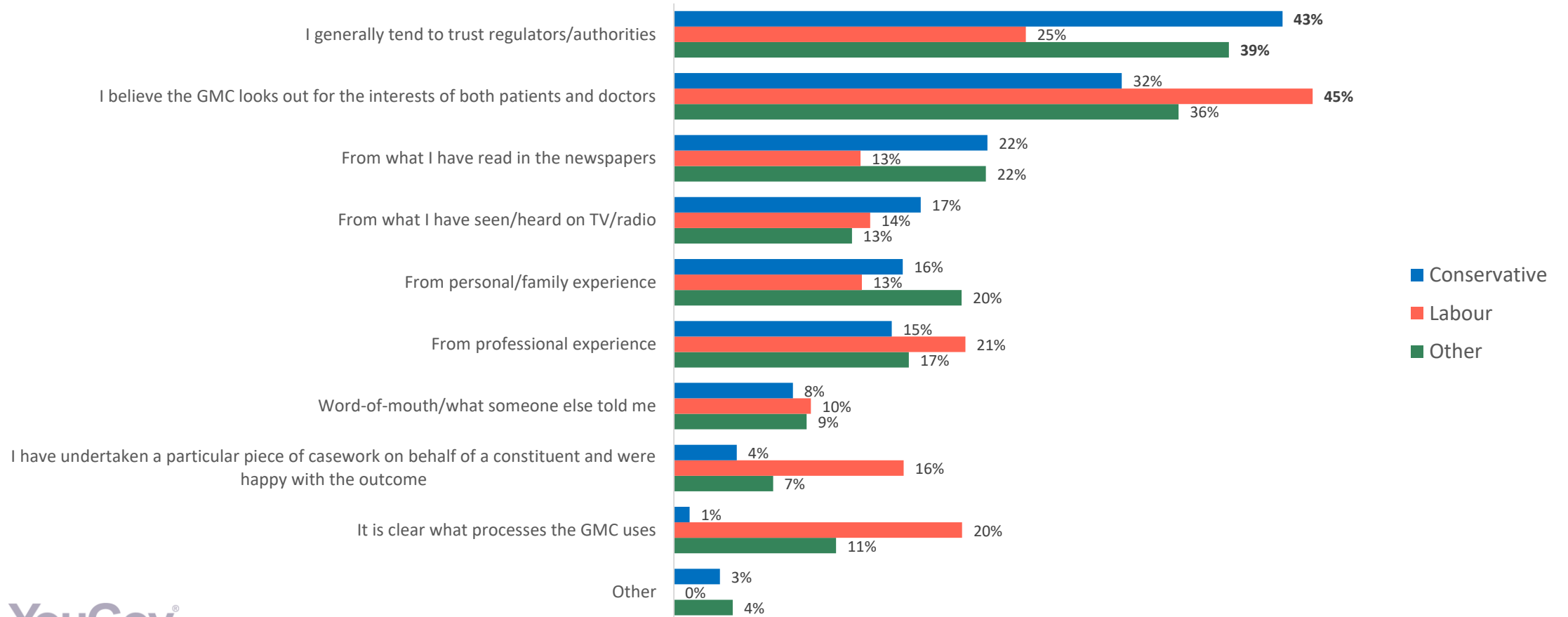
Compared to last year, there is a big rise (+10%) in respondents trusting the GMC due to a general trust in regulators

You said you are confident in the way doctors are regulated by the GMC. Why do you say this? (prompted)



Labour politicians are most likely to have confidence in the GMC's regulation because they believe that the GMC looks out for the interests of both patients and doctors, while Conservative and politicians from other parties have a general trust in regulators

You said you are confident in the way doctors are regulated by the GMC. Why do you say this? (prompted)



Base: All Conservatives (55), Labour (69), Other (68)

NB Numbers are made up of respondents from all political groups

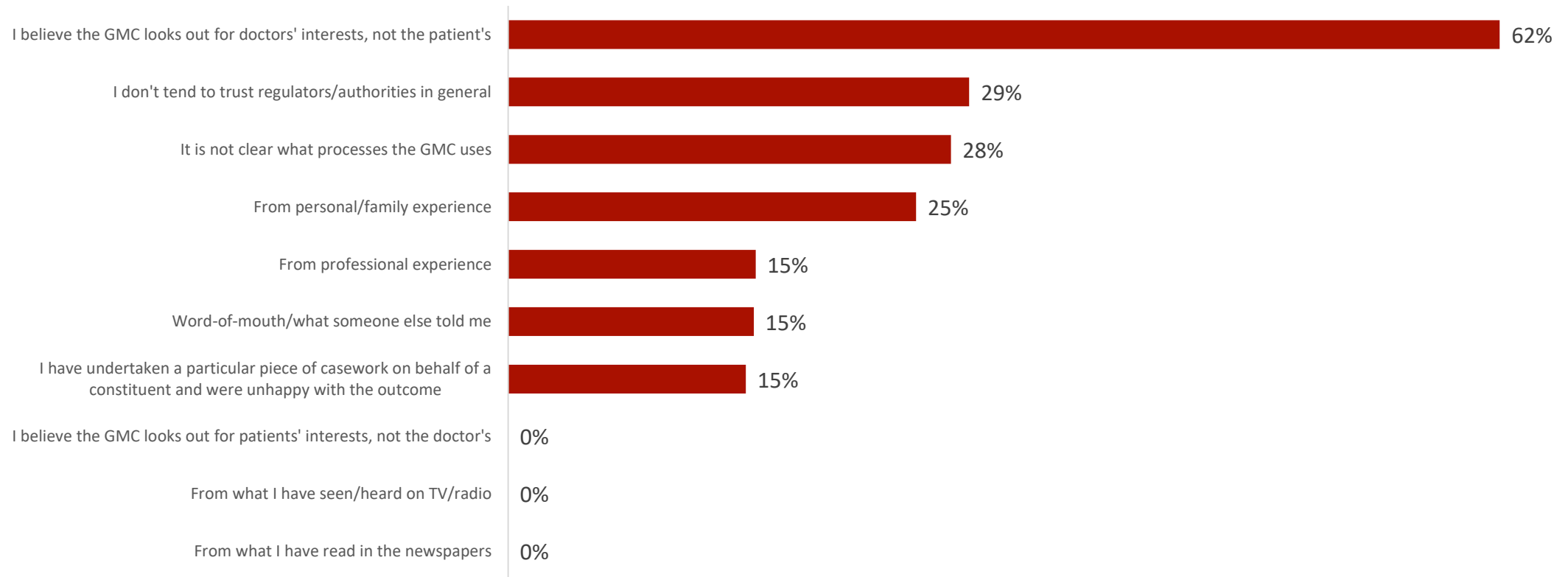
The picture is fairly consistent across the assemblies and Westminster, with a belief that the GMC looks out for the interest of patients and doctors, and a general trust of regulators the main drivers of confidence in the GMC

You said you are confident in the way doctors are regulated by the GMC. Why do you say this? (prompted)

	Total	MSP*	MS*	MLA*	England MP	NI MP*	Wales MP*	Scotland MP*
I believe the GMC looks out for the interests of both patients and doctors	37%	39%	62%	38%	40%	-	60%	44%
I generally tend to trust regulators/authorities	37%	50%	23%	38%	41%	57%	22%	43%
From what I have read in the newspapers	20%	28%	8%	-	17%	-	22%	19%
From professional experience	17%	22%	23%	25%	14%	21%	30%	6%
From personal/family experience	17%	6%	15%	38%	15%	21%	12%	19%
From what I have seen/heard on TV/radio	15%	39%	8%	-	13%	-	33%	20%
It is clear what processes the GMC uses	10%	-	38%	25%	6%	-	12%	23%
Word-of-mouth/what someone else told me	9%	6%	15%	-	7%	-	8%	13%
I have undertaken a particular piece of casework on behalf of a constituent and were happy	9%	11%	23%	38%	12%	-	-	4%
Other	3%	-	-	-	3%	21%	-	6%
Don't know	3%	-	-	-	6%	-	-	6%
Base	192	18*	13*	8*	61	4*	9*	16*

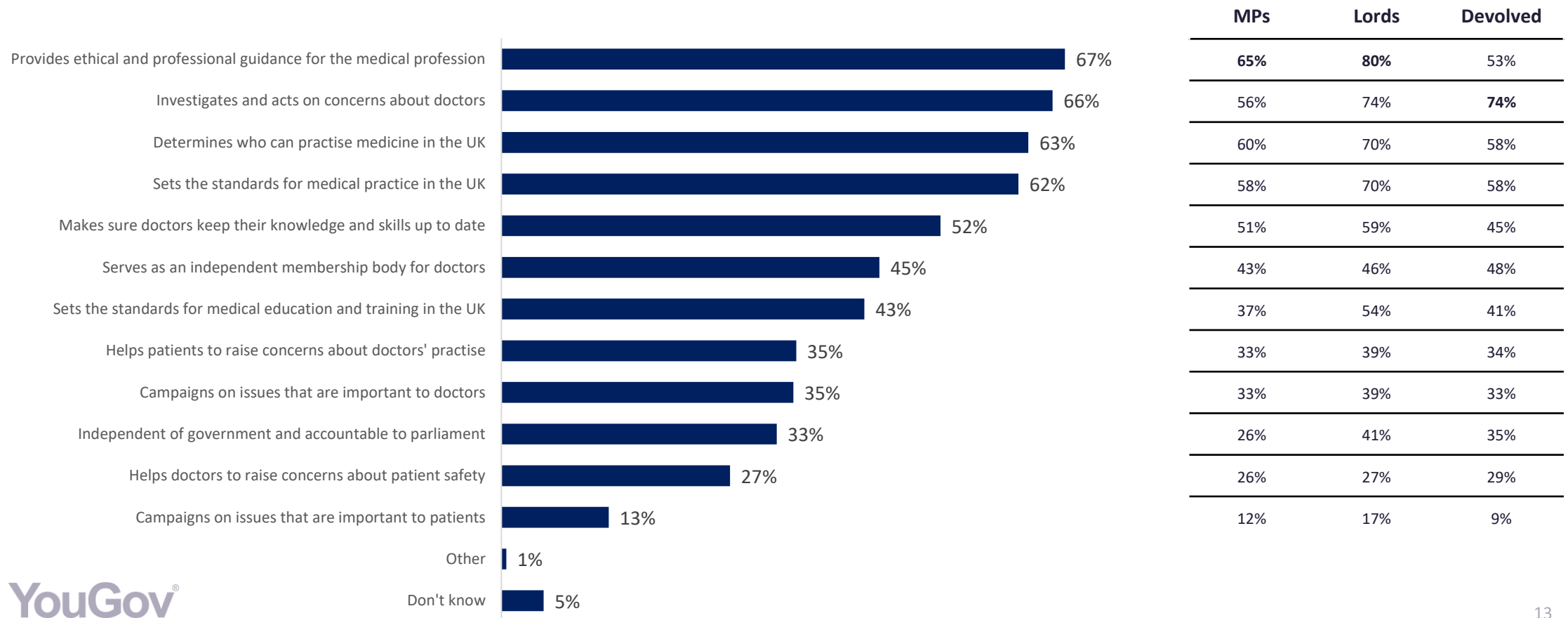
As seen in 2020, the small number (n=16) who are not confident in the GMC are most likely to say so because they think the GMC represents the interests of doctors and not those of patients

You said you are not confident in the way doctors are regulated by the GMC. Why do you say this? (*prompted*)



The role respondents most associate with the GMC is the provision of ethical and professional guidance for the medical profession, followed by the investigation and acting on of concerns about doctors

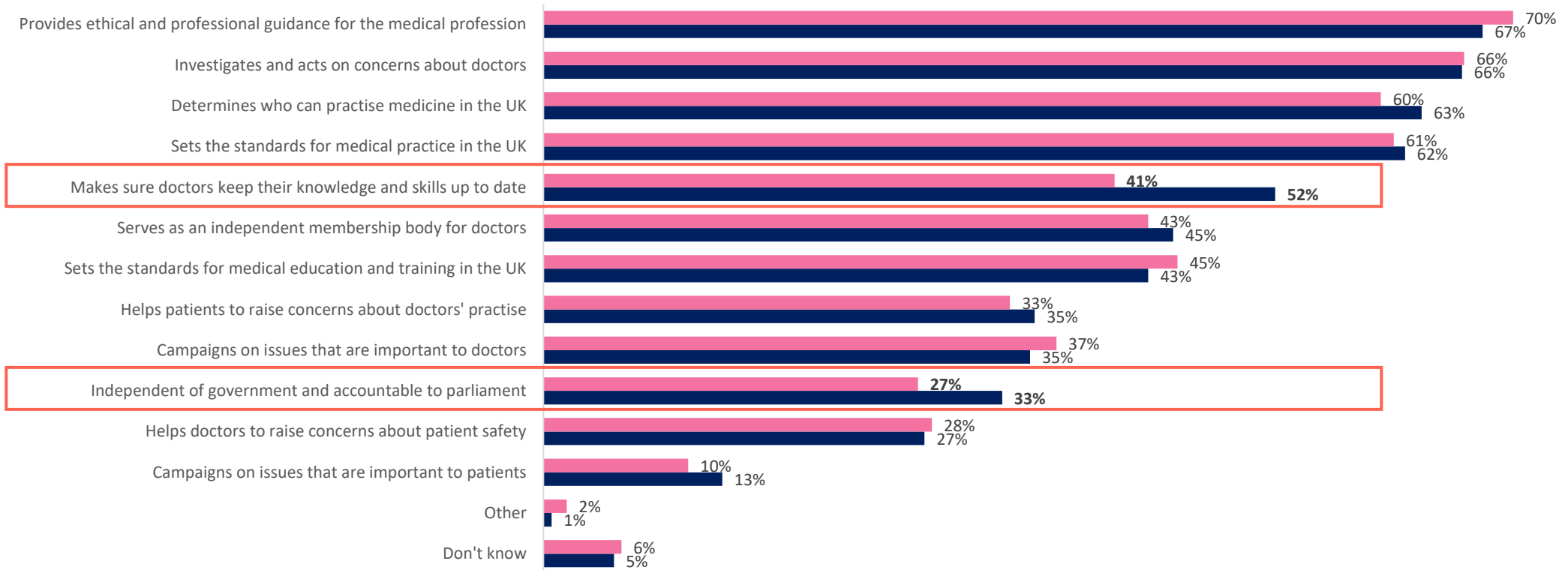
Which of the following roles and responsibilities, if any, do you associate with the GMC? *(prompted)*



The biggest changes in association since last year's research are an increase in ensuring doctors keep their knowledge and skills up to date (+11%) and being independent of government (+6%)

There are no large drops in association; provision of ethical guidance has dropped slightly (-3%), but remains the top association

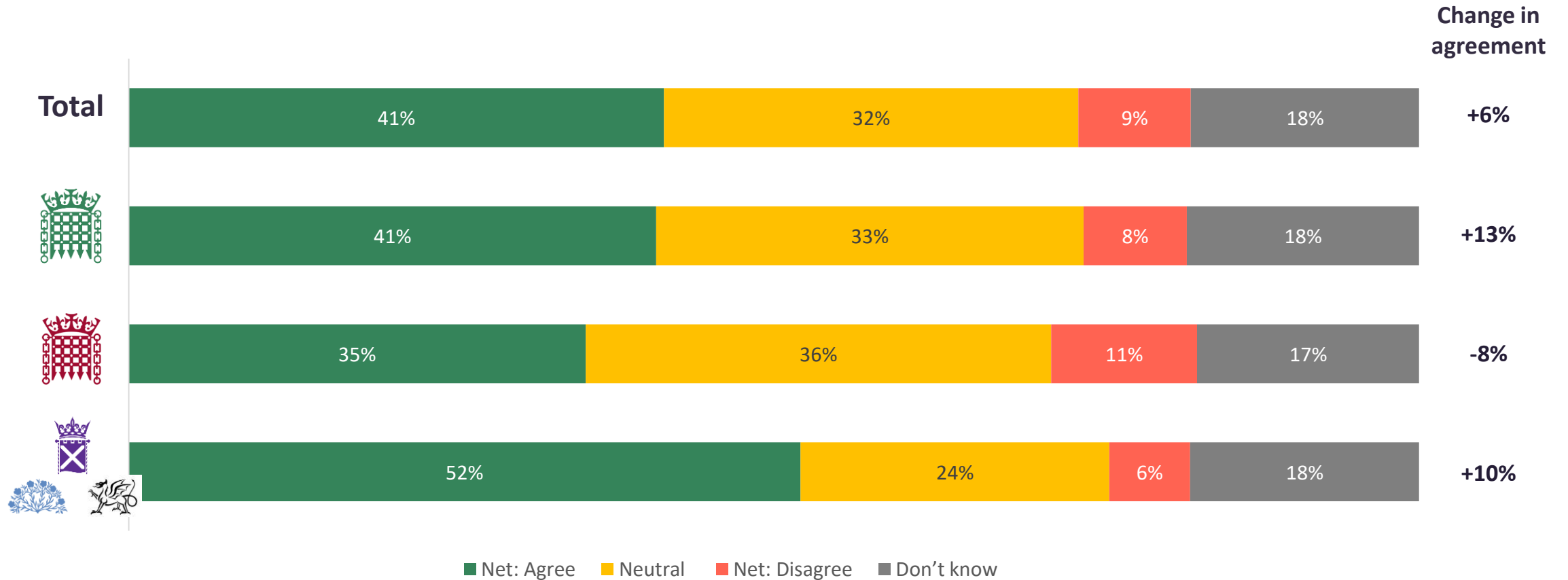
Which of the following roles and responsibilities, if any, do you associate with the GMC? (prompted)



Half of respondents from the Devolved Assemblies agree that the GMC's approach to regulation responds to the needs of the individual parts of the UK

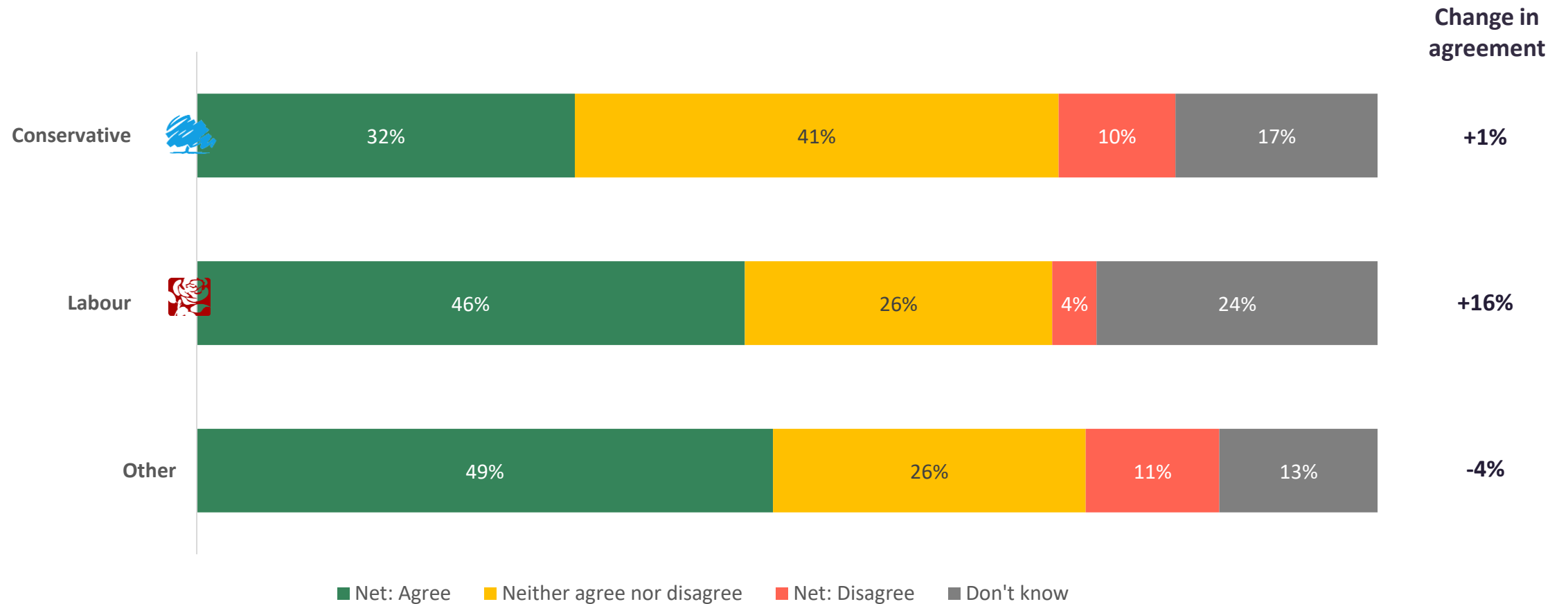
There is at least a 10% increase in agreement among both Devolved and MP respondents, although there is a drop in agreement among Lords

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "The GMC's approach to regulation anticipates and responds to the needs of the individual parts of the UK."



When analysing by party, a third of Conservatives believe the GMC's regulation responds to the needs of the individual parts of the UK. There is a big increase in agreement among Labour politicians, where almost half agree

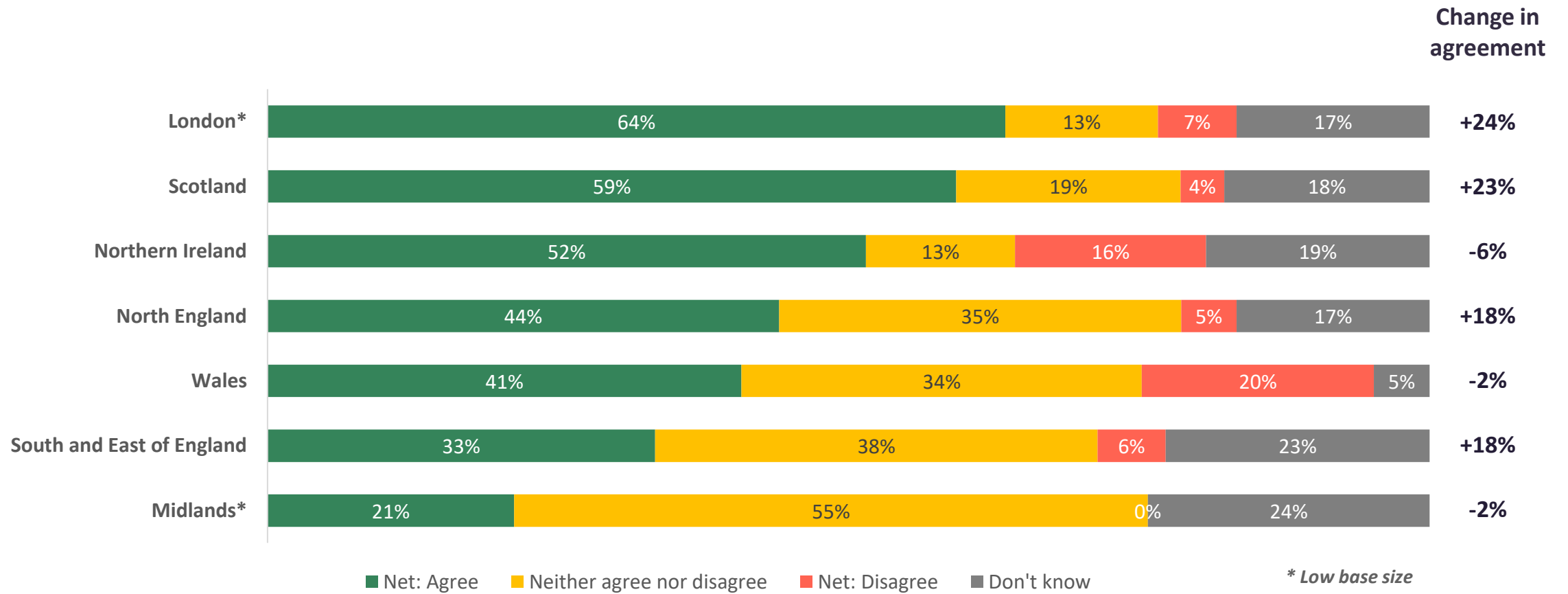
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "The GMC's approach to regulation anticipates and responds to the needs of the individual parts of the UK."



When looking by region, we generally see an improvement in agreement, particularly among those in Scotland and London

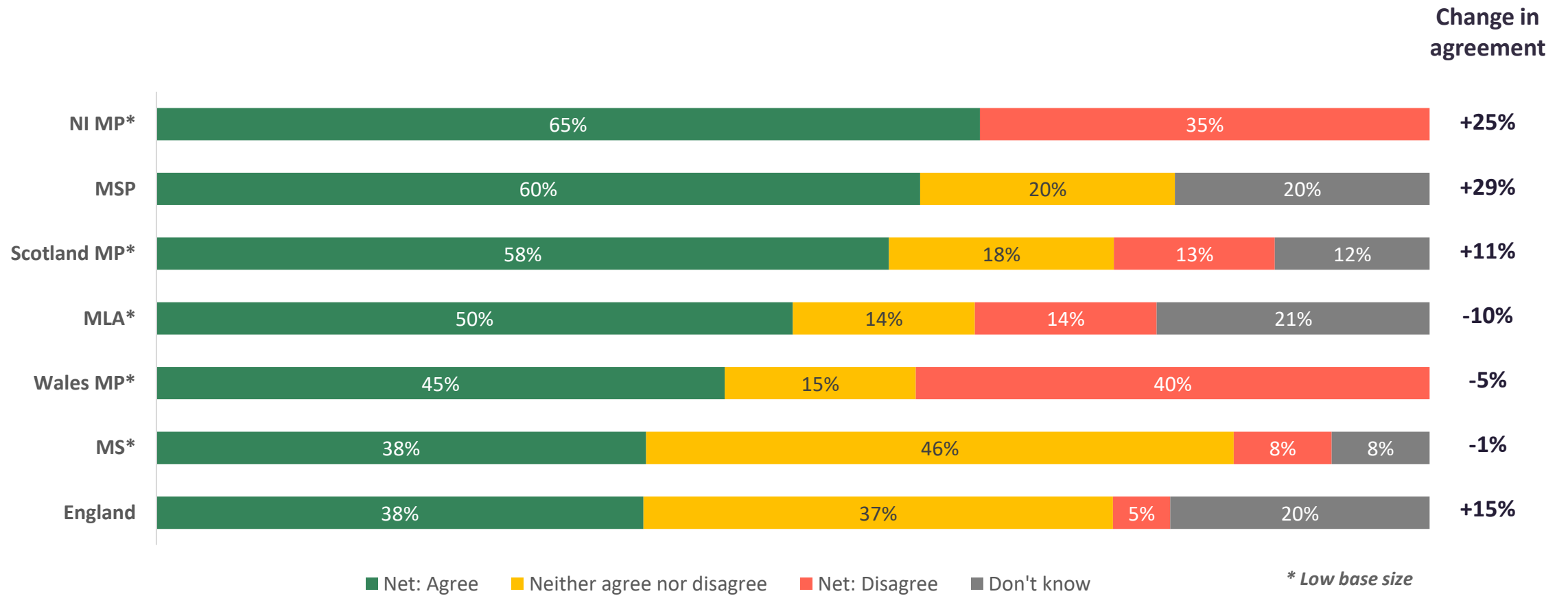
A drop in agreement among Northern Irish respondents can be explained by a big increase in 'Don't know' responses. No region has more respondents disagreeing than agreeing

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "The GMC's approach to regulation anticipates and responds to the needs of the individual parts of the UK."



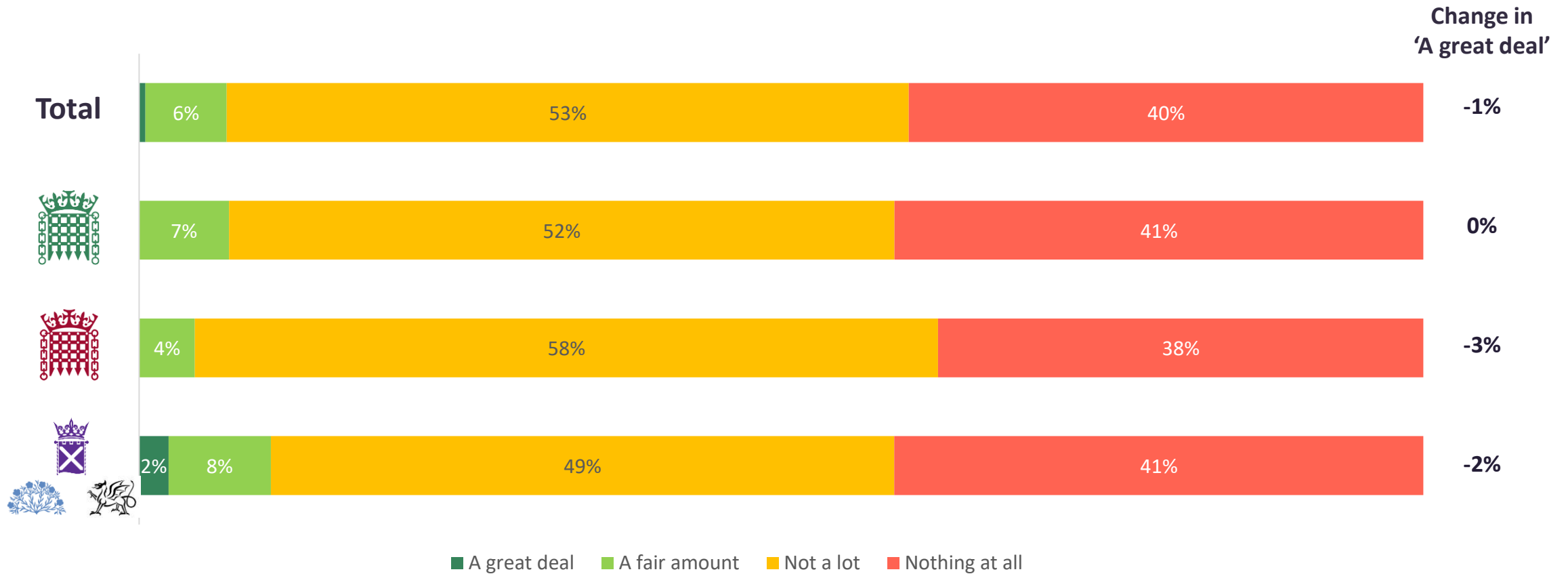
Northern Ireland MPs are most likely to agree that the GMC's approach responds to the needs of the individual parts of the UK, although there is considerable disagreement. MSPs are the only audience not to disagree with this statement

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "The GMC's approach to regulation anticipates and responds to the needs of the individual parts of the UK."



Awareness of why the GMC is calling for legislative reform is generally low, with two-fifths knowing nothing at all. Those in the Devolved Assemblies have the highest awareness

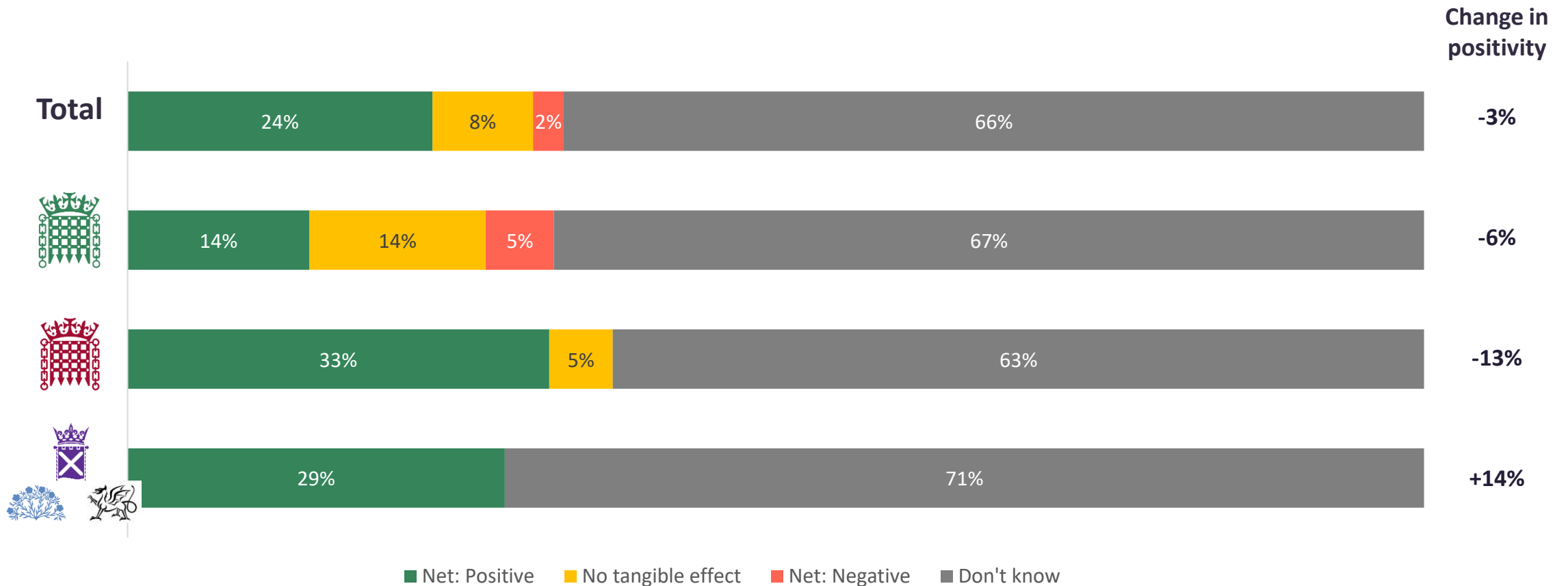
As you may or may not know, the GMC is currently calling for legislative reform. How much, if anything, do you know about why they are doing this?



Two-thirds of respondents say they do not know what effect the proposed reforms would have on the medical workforce

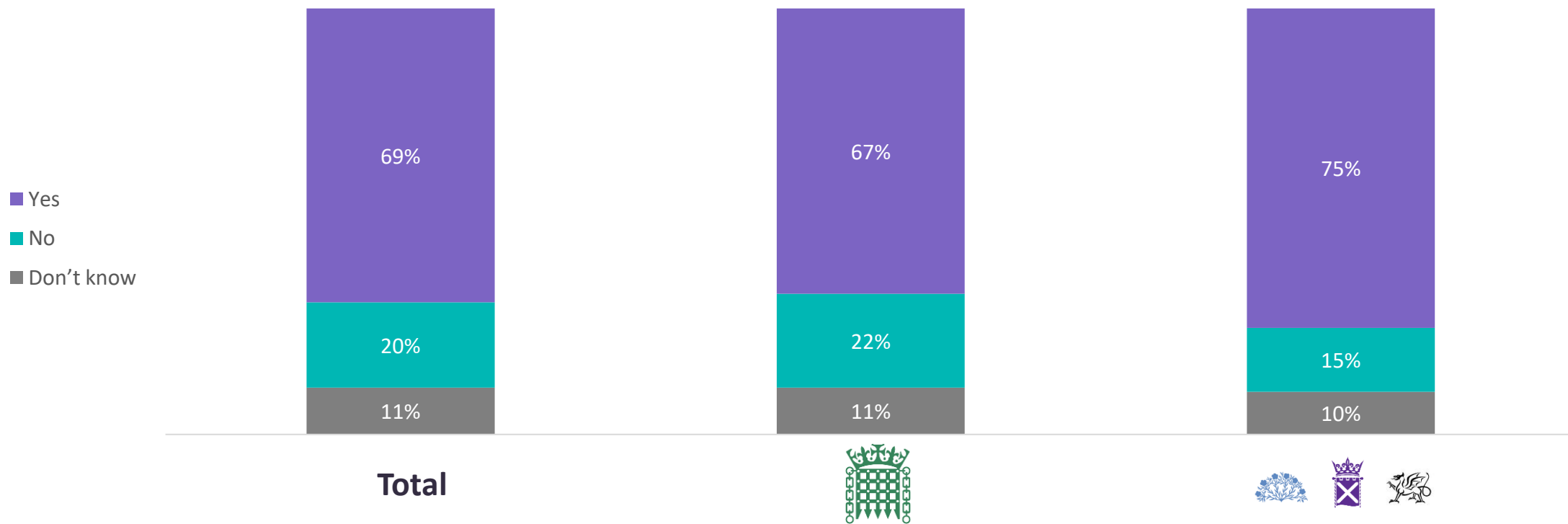
Those who do have a view though are most likely to say the effect will be positive. An increase in respondents saying 'Don't know' explains the drop in positivity for Lords. While fewer Devolved respondents know a great deal about the reforms, general awareness is higher, which corresponds with a sizeable increase in positivity towards the proposed reforms

What is your understanding of the effect these reforms would have on the medical workforce?



Three-quarters of Devolved respondents and two-thirds of MPs have done work on behalf of their constituents regarding complaints against the medical profession

Have you ever done any work on behalf of your constituents regarding complaints against the medical profession?



2020

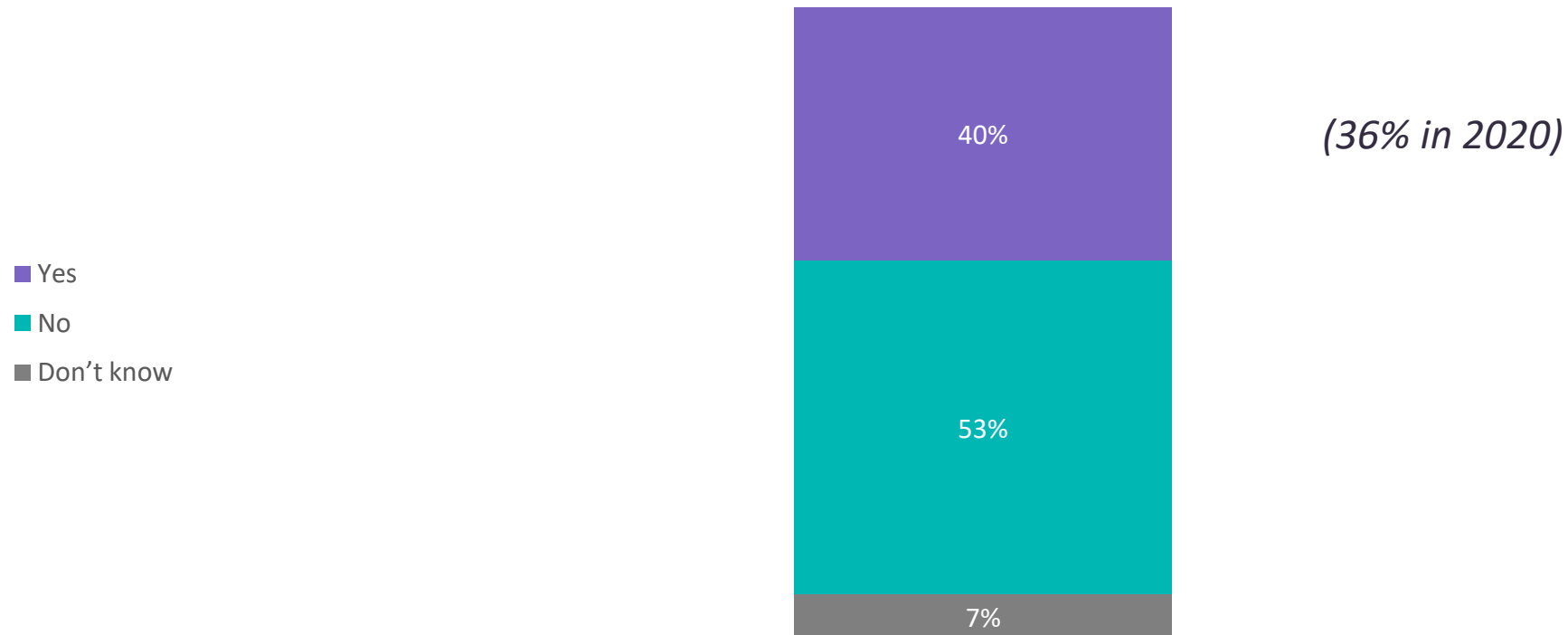
67%

63%

76%

Two-fifths of Lords surveyed have done work regarding complaints against the medical profession

Have you ever done any work regarding complaints against the medical profession?



Around a third of MPs and Devolved respondents that have dealt with complaints against the medical profession contacted the GMC as part of the work

Only a tenth of Lords say the same, however

Did you contact the GMC as part of this work?



Around a third of both MPs and Devolved respondents have had contact with the GMC in the past 12 months

The vast majority of Lords have had no contact, however

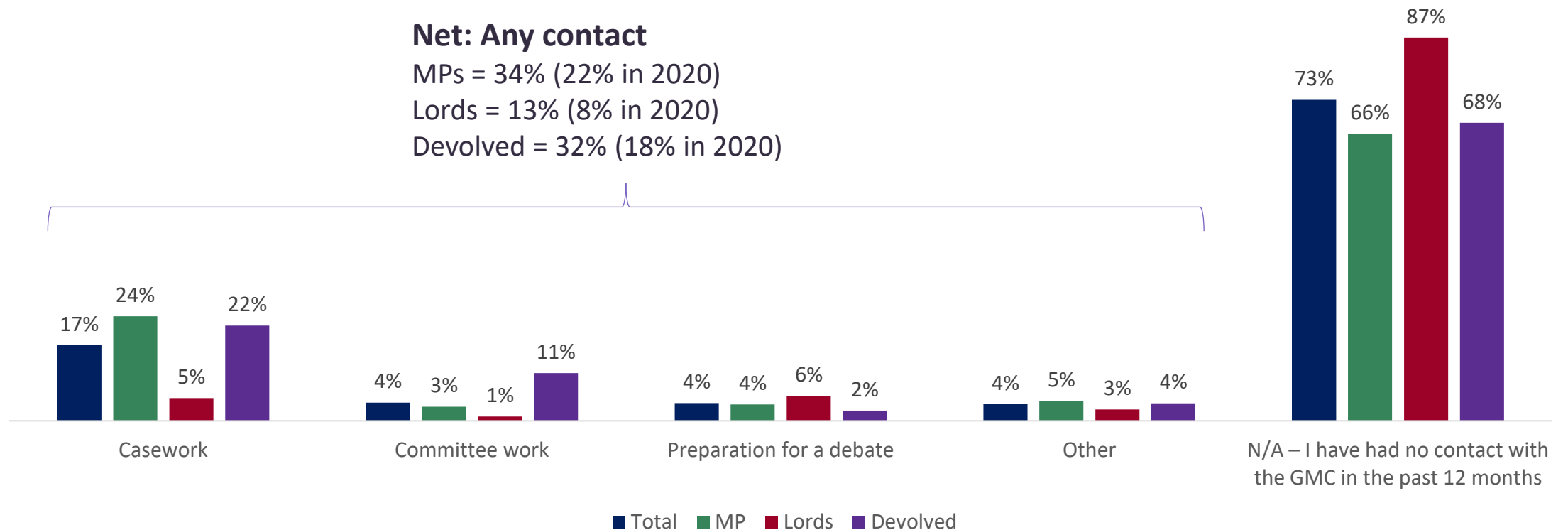
For which, if any, of the following reasons have you had contact with the GMC in the past 12 months?

Net: Any contact

MPs = 34% (22% in 2020)

Lords = 13% (8% in 2020)

Devolved = 32% (18% in 2020)



Casework is the main reason for contact among all sub-groups except those in the House of Lords, who are most likely to have done so in preparation for a debate

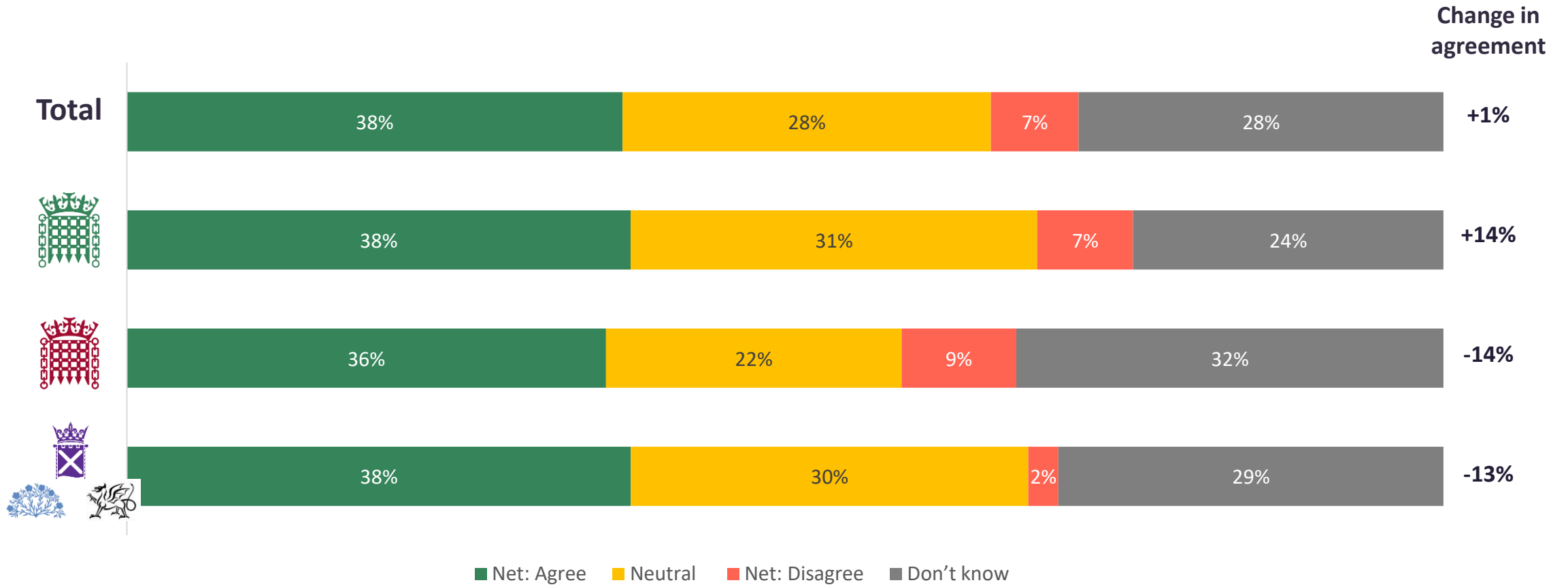
For which, if any, of the following reasons have you had contact with the GMC in the past 12 months?

	Total	MPs	Lords	Devolved	S&E England	London	North England	Midlands	MSP	MS*	MLA*	England MP	NI MP*	Wales MP*	Scotland MP*
Casework	17%	24%	5%	22%	16%	23%	21%	43%	20%	15%	29%	24%	18%	36%	17%
Preparation for a debate	4%	4%	6%	2%	-	5%	4%	-	5%	-	-	2%	18%	12%	13%
Committee work	4%	3%	1%	11%	4%	-	8%	-	10%	8%	14%	4%	-	-	-
Other	4%	5%	3%	4%	15%	-	-	-	5%	8%	-	5%	-	-	-
N/A	73%	66%	87%	68%	65%	72%	67%	57%	70%	69%	64%	65%	82%	52%	77%
Base	219	100	72	47	22	16	23	9	18	13	8	61	4	9	16

Around two-fifths of respondents agree the GMC is focusing on the right issues as a regulator, with very low levels of disagreement

This is consistent across each of the different political audiences

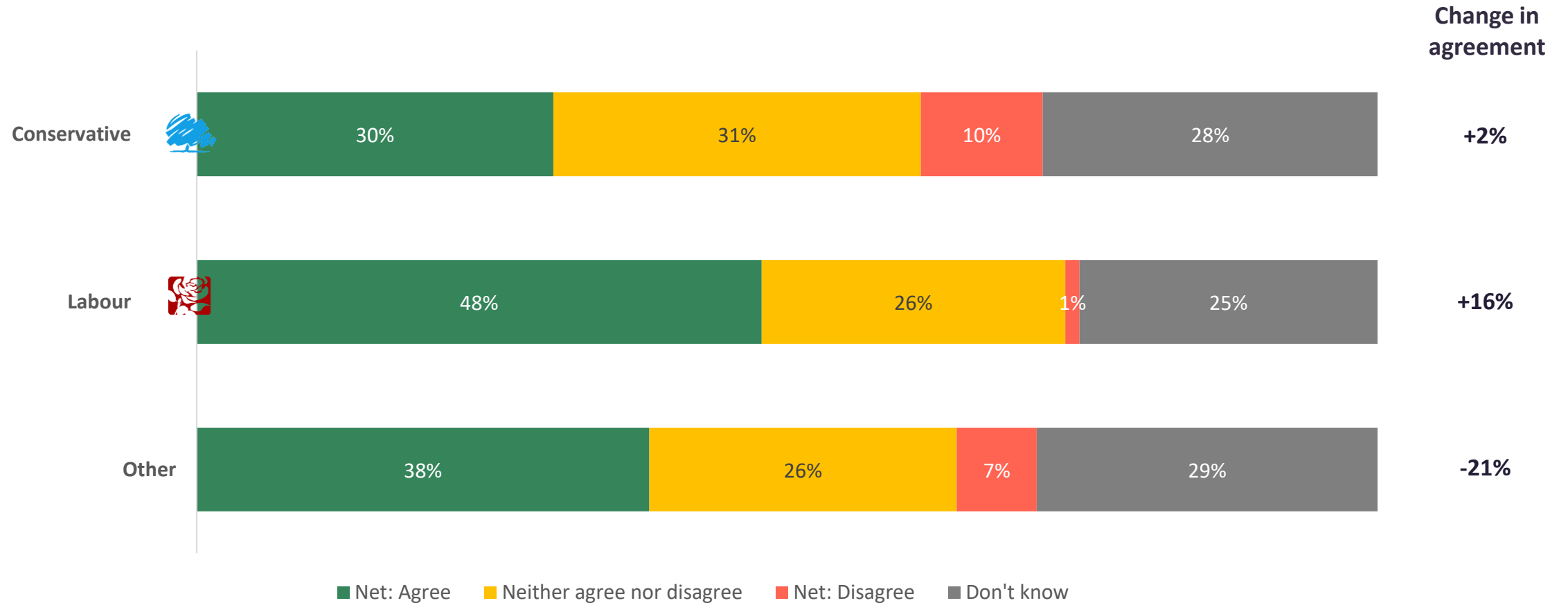
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the GMC is focusing on the right issues as a regulator?



Respondents from all parties are more significantly more likely to agree the GMC is focusing on the right issues as a regular than disagree

There is a big increase in agreement among Labour respondents, but a big drop in those from other parties, which see an increase in both disagreement and 'Don't know' responses

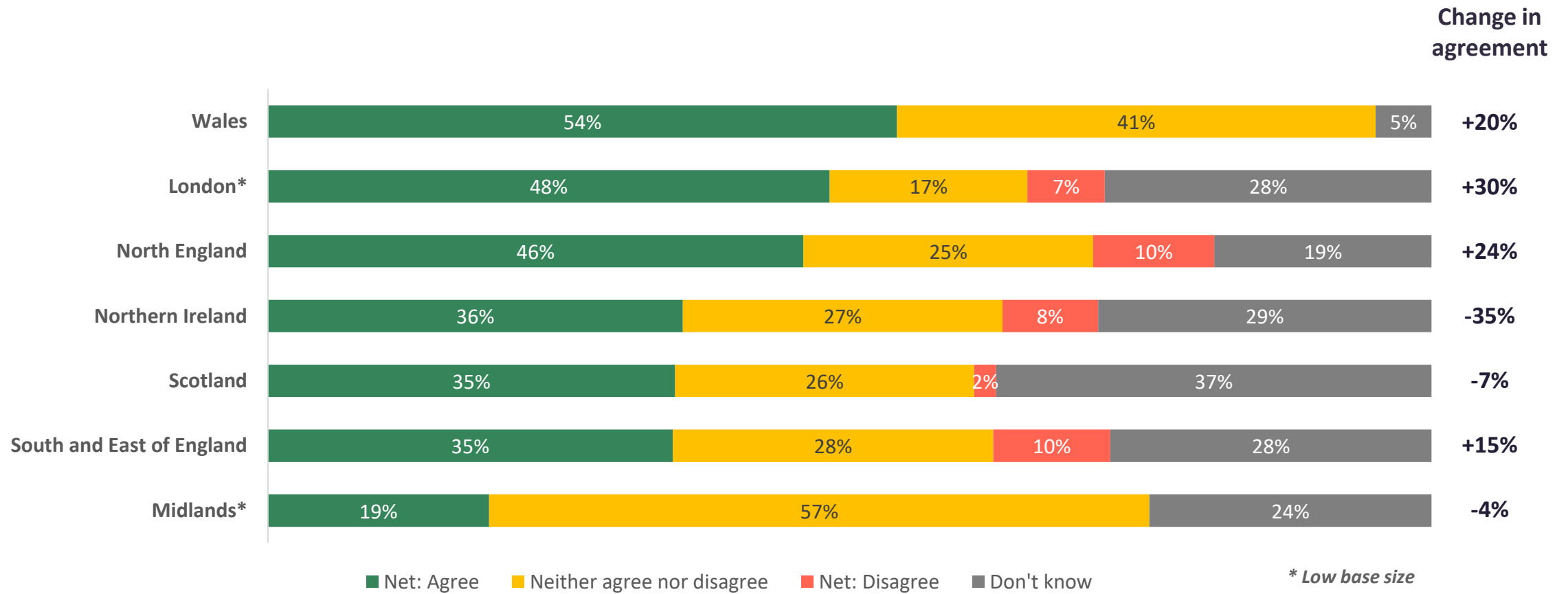
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the GMC is focusing on the right issues as a regulator?



Over half of Welsh respondents now agree the GMC is focussing on the right issues. There are also big increases in agreement among respondents in London, Northern England, and Southern England

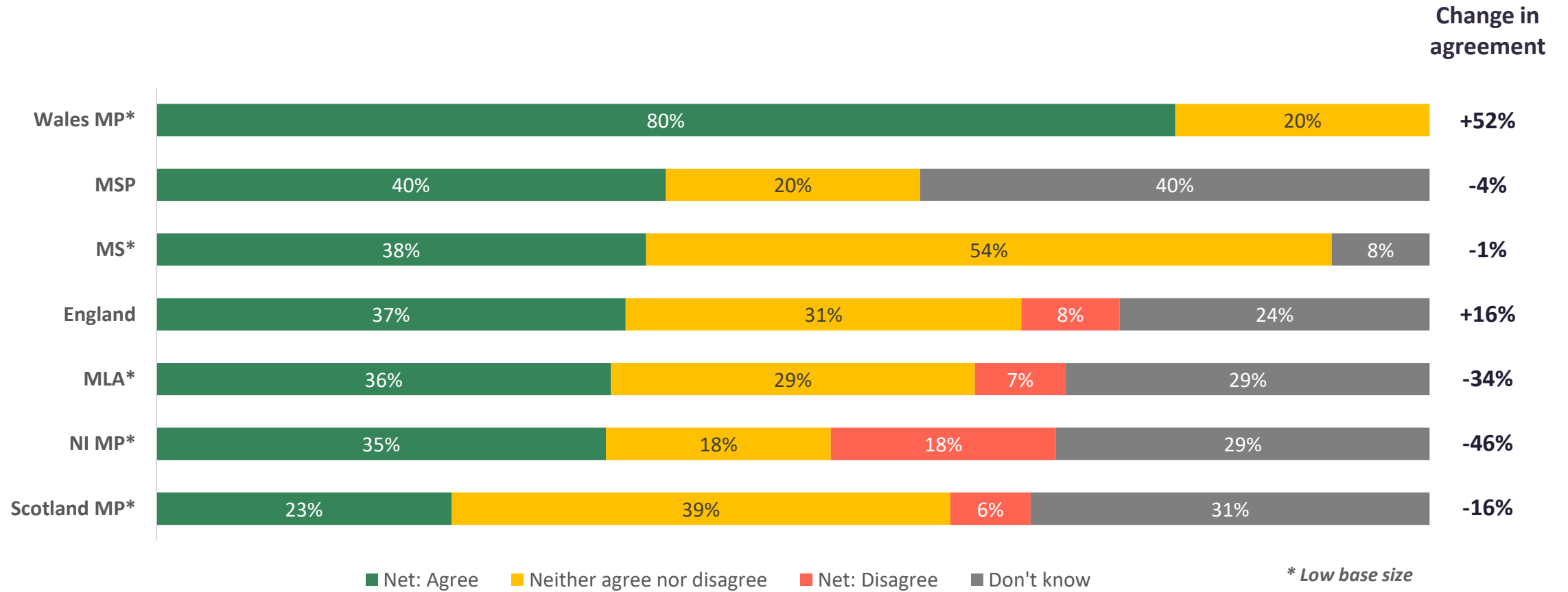
Agreement among Northern Irish respondents has dropped by half, with significantly higher levels of respondents saying they disagree or 'Don't know'

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the GMC is focusing on the right issues as a regulator?



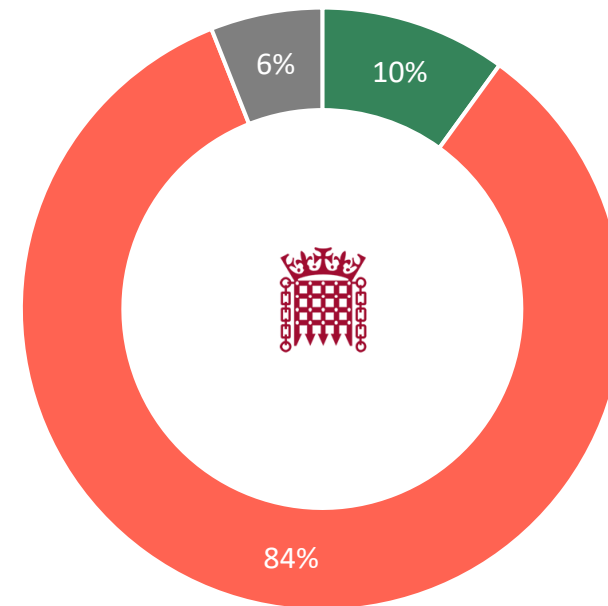
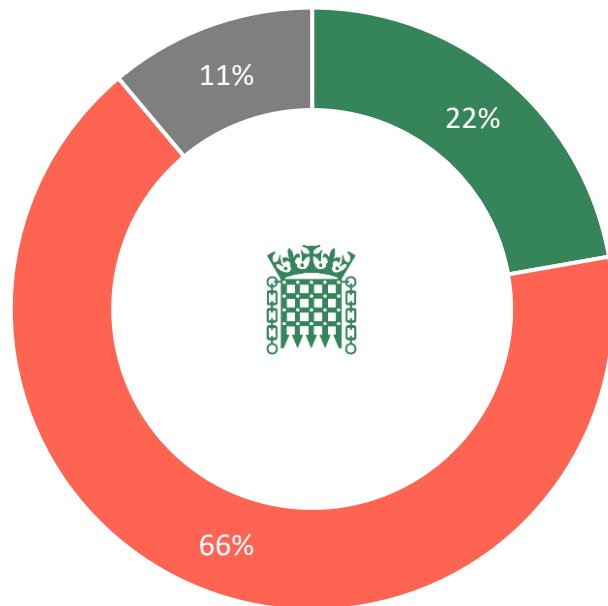
Welsh MPs are the group most likely to agree that the GMC is focusing on the right issues as a regulator. Northern Irish MPs are most likely to disagree

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the GMC is focusing on the right issues as a regulator?



A fifth of MPs are aware of the GMC's dedicated parliamentary correspondence channel, and a tenth of Lords are aware

Are you aware of the GMC's dedicated parliamentary representative only correspondence channel (a dedicated mailing list for MPs and Lords)?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Suggestions on improving the relationship between the Devolved Assemblies mainly revolves around engaging with members beyond those on the Health Committees, and offering more briefings

How do you feel that the relationship between parliament/assembly/Scottish parliament and the GMC could be improved over the next 12 months?

“I am not really aware of any relationship between the Scottish Parliament and the GMC. I assume the Health Committee will have some relationship. Maybe after the elections the GMC could provide a briefing.”

Member of Scottish Parliament

“More contact and briefings. I am aware of BMA briefings but not GMC. I'd like to know more about what they do and how they make a difference.”

Member of the Welsh Parliament

“Better communication to all MLAs, rather than just Health Committee/Executive members.”

Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly

“More understanding of why the GMC takes a particular view on a given issue rather than simply stating the position.”

Member of the Welsh Parliament

“I presume there is a relationship with the Health Committee, but not aware of the wider work of the GMC in relation to the Scottish Parliament.”

Member of Scottish Parliament

“Share information outside the Health Committee to other MLAs.”

Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly

“There have been a series of high profile, clinical governance issues in the H&SC Trusts in NI, it would be useful to understand what they are doing to facilitate, investigate, etc.”

Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly

“Streamline and focus communications to online the top line issues that are a priority for us and them.”

Member of Scottish Parliament

“Short and easily digestible briefings.”

Member of the Welsh Parliament

“I feel that the GMC has to be more pro-active in contacting MSPs regarding upcoming work and/or plans.”

Member of Scottish Parliament

“More regular briefings (post Covid) and updates for members, including those not on the Health Committee.”

Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly

“Virtual briefings on a periodic basis.”

Member of the Welsh Parliament

Thank you for your attention!

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