

Birmingham Design Annual Survey 2020

Results compiled Apr—Jul 2020



Introduction

In April 2020 we launched our first survey of the creative industry in the West Midlands and many creatives kindly responded to our call to take part.

A big thank you if you did take part, your answers will help to reflect and shape the future of design in the region.

Through this survey we aim to highlight both the areas that we are excelling at, as well as where there is scope for improvement.

Together we can build a better and more inclusive space for everyone.

Notes on the survey and results

Our goal is to be able to show a true snapshot of our industry. However we are limited in our reach, in part to this being our first year. For this reason we understand that results may not be entirely representative but we believe that they are valuable in showing a picture of those working in design in the West Midlands.

As this is our first year we are also unable to accurately show or predict trends. Future years, and an increased awareness leading to more respondents, will further our goal of building a clear picture of the design industry in our region.

Numbers of respondents

A total of 155 people filled out the survey, of which 13 were students. This has meant that for some questions where we have cross-referenced the sample size is such that a meaningful representation of the data has not been possible.

Question setting

Questions have been chosen to provide a workable set of data that is valuable to those working both in and with the creative industry. For some terminology and categories we have referred to guidelines from the ONS and UK Government Census.



Executive summary

Gender

Overall around 13% more men took part in the survey. At a professional level this increases to 15%, but among students this swings greatly in the opposite direction as 70% of students identified as female.

At a professional level we see more men in design roles, and more women in non-design roles by a significant amount (11%).

It is at the top level that we see far more men, with more than double the amount of men taking roles of Design and Creative Directors.

Ethnicity

Our respondents are majority white by a significant amount (86%). As mentioned earlier this could be due to survey audience reach but we can't assume that this is not a true representation of the industry.

Our industry is currently not a reflection of the diverse communities of the West Midlands.

Health

We haven't disclosed results, but a number of respondents cited anxiety as a condition, showing that this is a concern the industry should look to support.

Salary

Salary expectation is reasonable for the national industry average, and comparable with other areas outside of London. This is welcoming when compared with work / life balance as a majority of us are working a 30–40 hour week, and can expect a regular increase in those salaries.

In addition, gender doesn't appear to affect pay – our results show that it is fairly equal amongst respective roles.



Position / role

A majority of us are working either at an agency or in house, this is somewhat true across gender and age. Age also seems to be a determining factor in role as we see an expected trend towards more senior positions with age.

We do see a notable increase in freelance / solo in the 45–54 age bracket (47% overall).

Skills and sectors

We're a pretty diverse bunch when it comes to skills – the city of 1,000 trades lives on in the design sector.

This is also true of the sectors we work in, everything from food to pharmaceuticals. Except for shipping, which isn't surprising given our geographic location.

Although, we're not shy when it comes to clients further afield either. It would appear that design from the West Midlands travels well as many of us have clients at a national and international level.

Freelancers are enjoying their freedom with over 30% working with international clients.

Passion projects

Not content with multiple skills and sectors under our belt, most of us can't get enough of this designing lark, 67% of those surveyed take on side projects with 33% of those being just for fun.

Get social

There's no getting away from the dominance of social media as a necessity to all. 97% of those surveyed have social media accounts, and 83% of those admit to spending more than 1 hour a day scrolling and liking.

This isn't true in real life though, 61% of respondents don't meet up regularly with other designers outside of work.



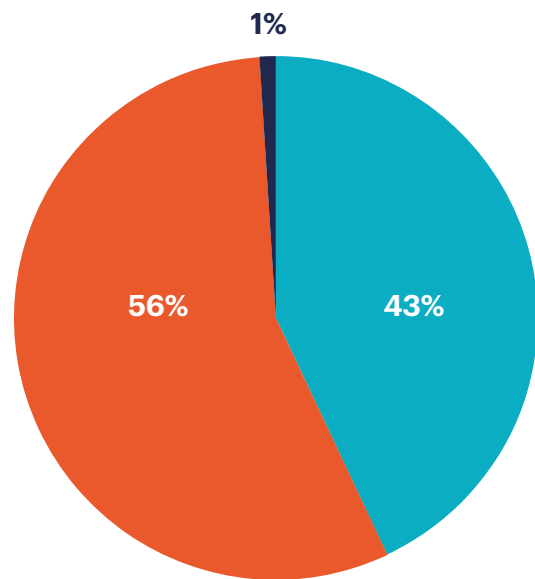
Survey results



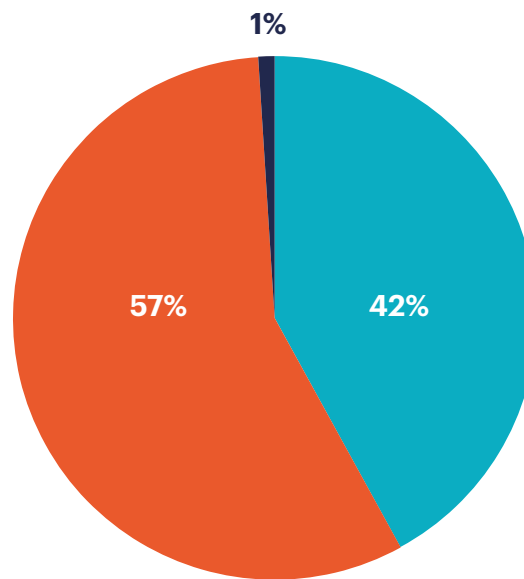
Gender

What gender do you identify as?

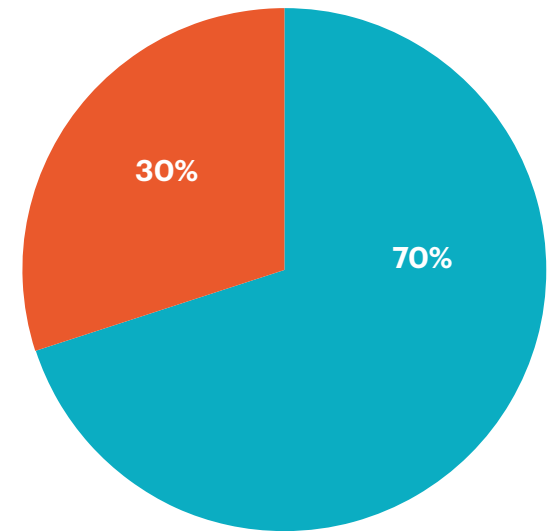
All respondents



All



Excluding students



Students only

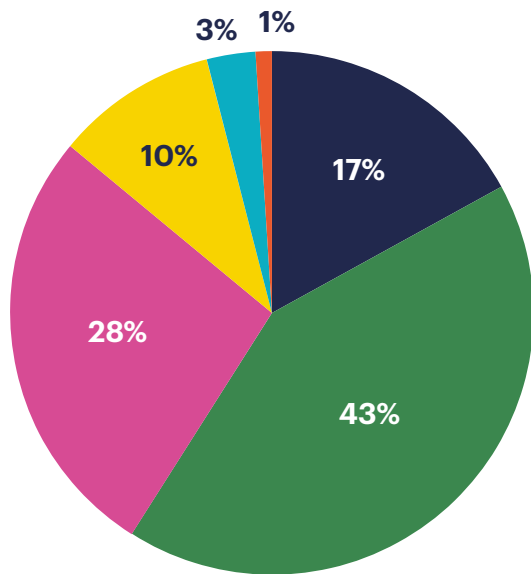


In addition to the option to not disclose their gender, this question included the opportunity for respondents to add their own gender description.

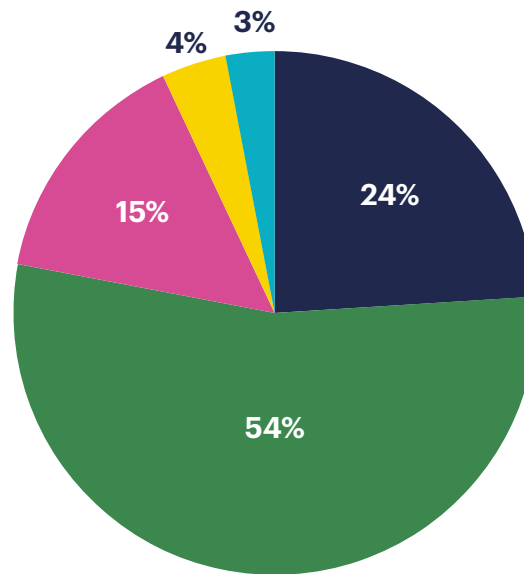
Age

How old are you?

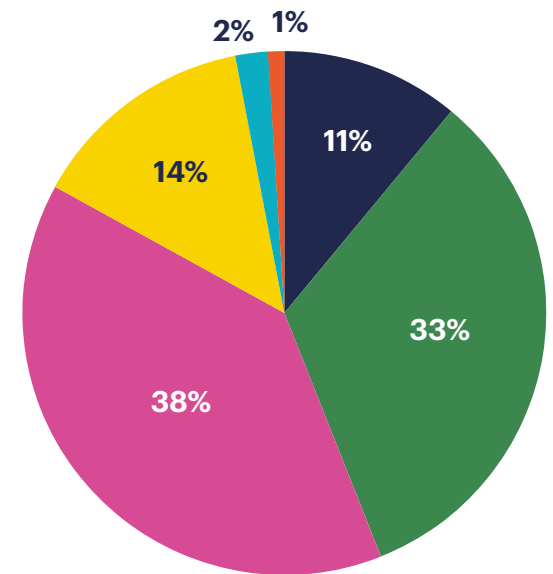
All respondents



All



Identify as female



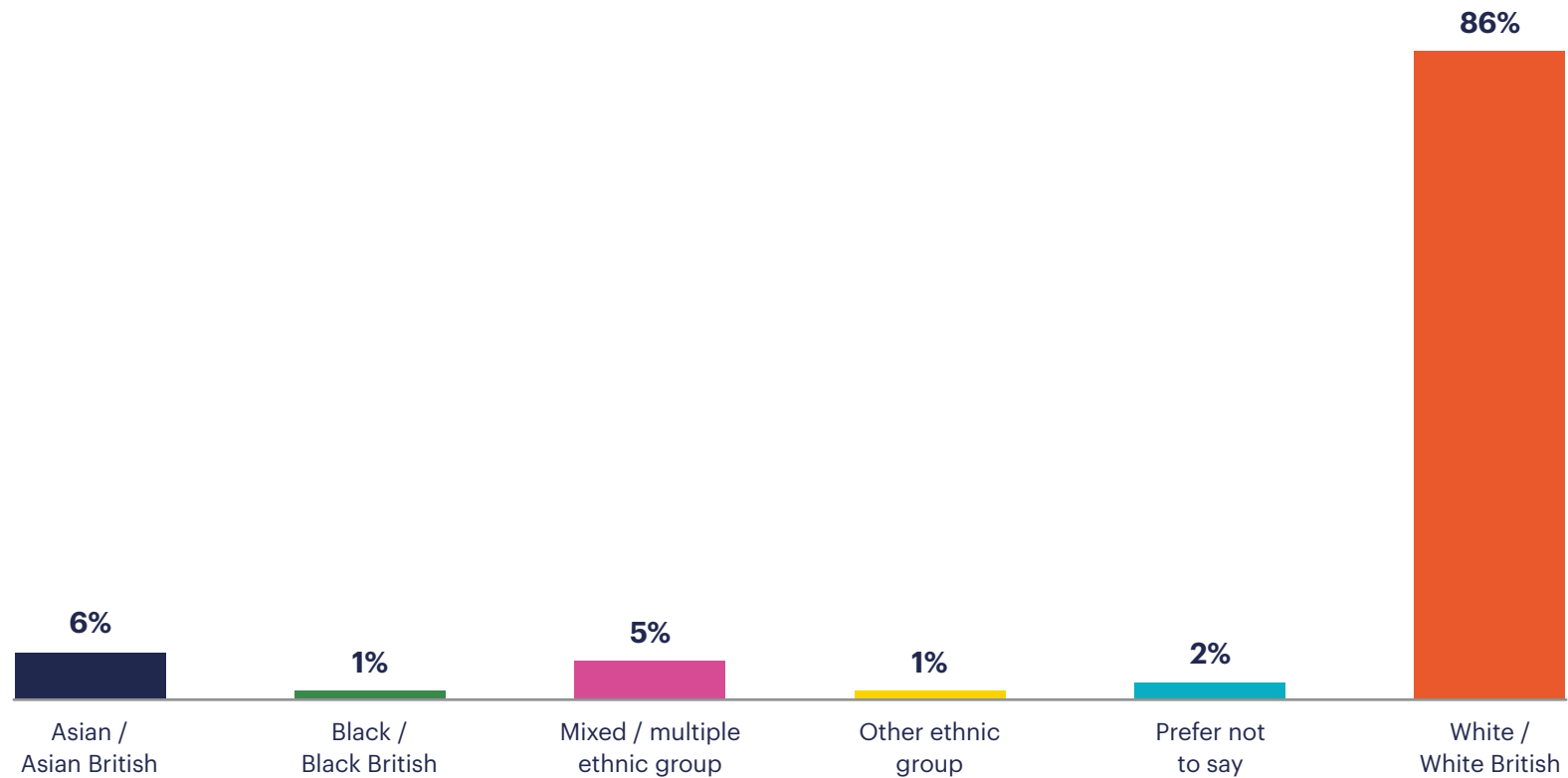
Identify as male



Ethnicity

What is your ethnicity?

All respondents

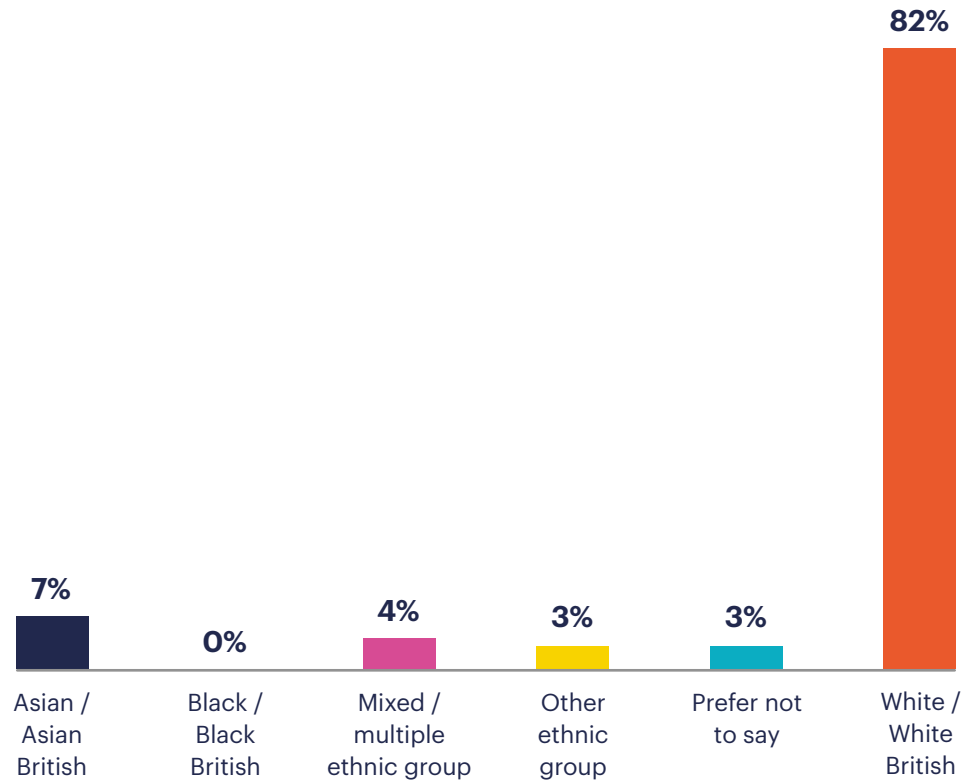


Ethnicity

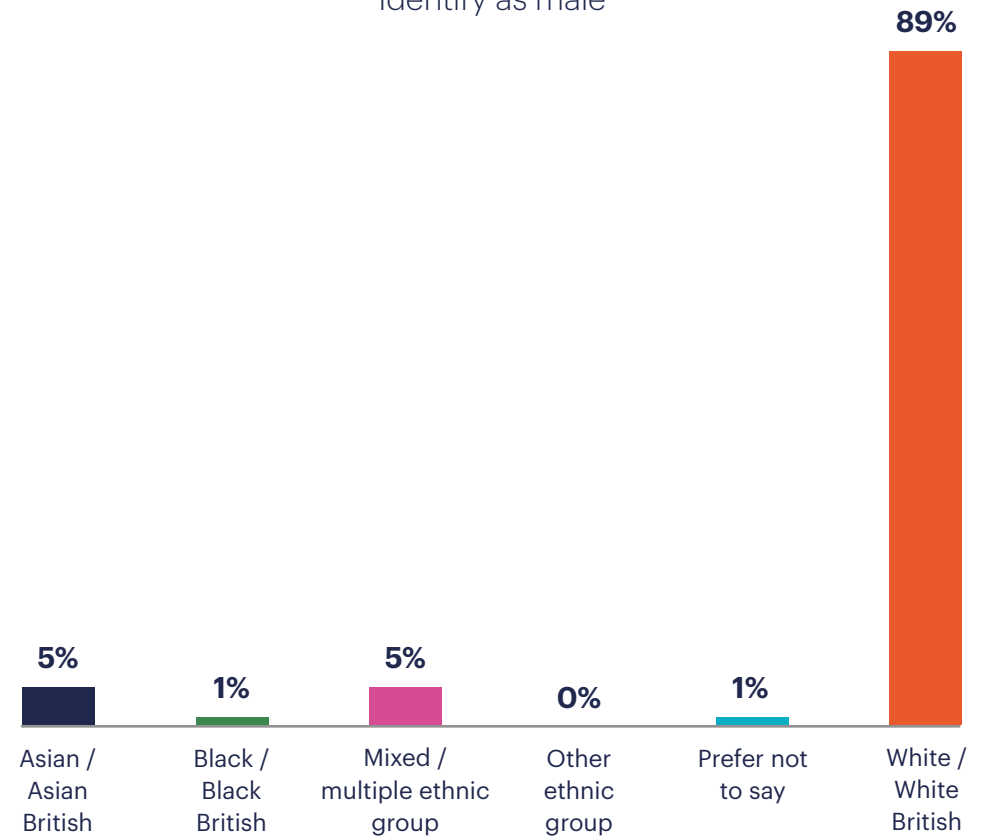
What is your ethnicity? By gender.

All respondents

Identify as female



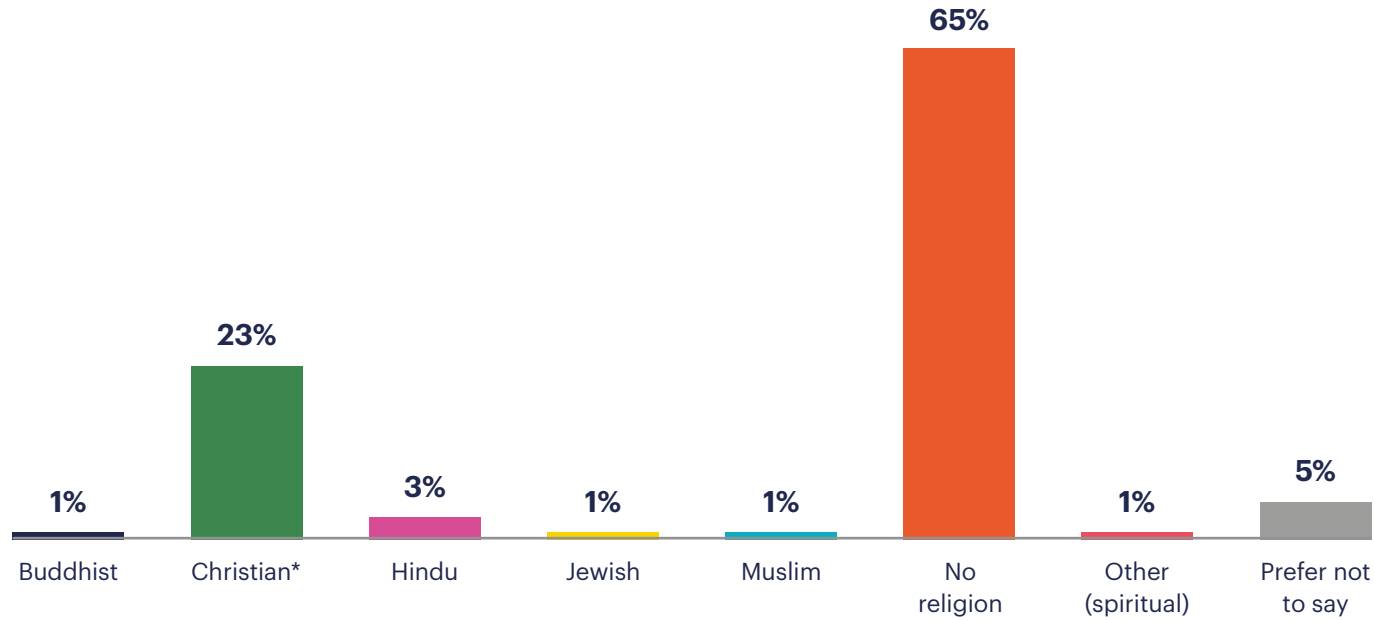
Identify as male



Religion

What is your religion, even if you are not currently practising?

All respondents



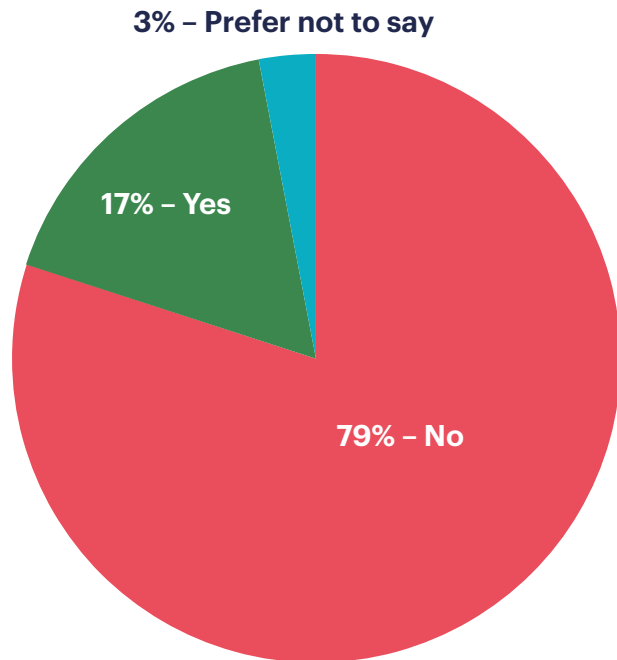
**Including CofE, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations*



Health

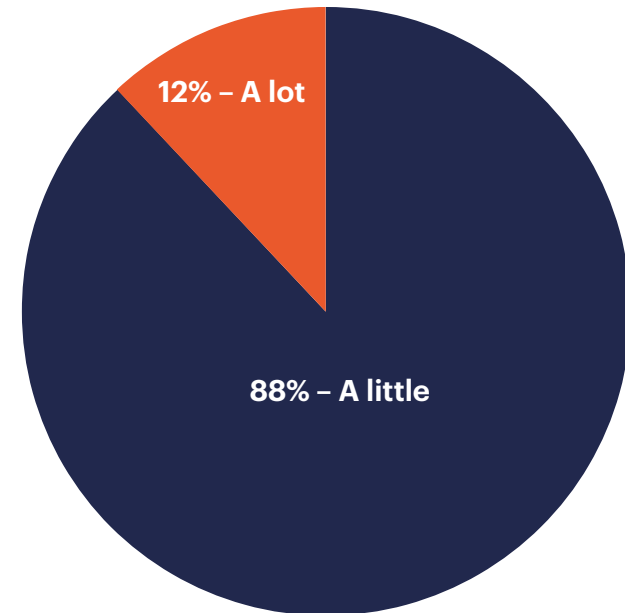
Do you have any diagnosed physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

All respondents



How much do any of your conditions or illness reduce your ability to carry-out day-to-day activities?

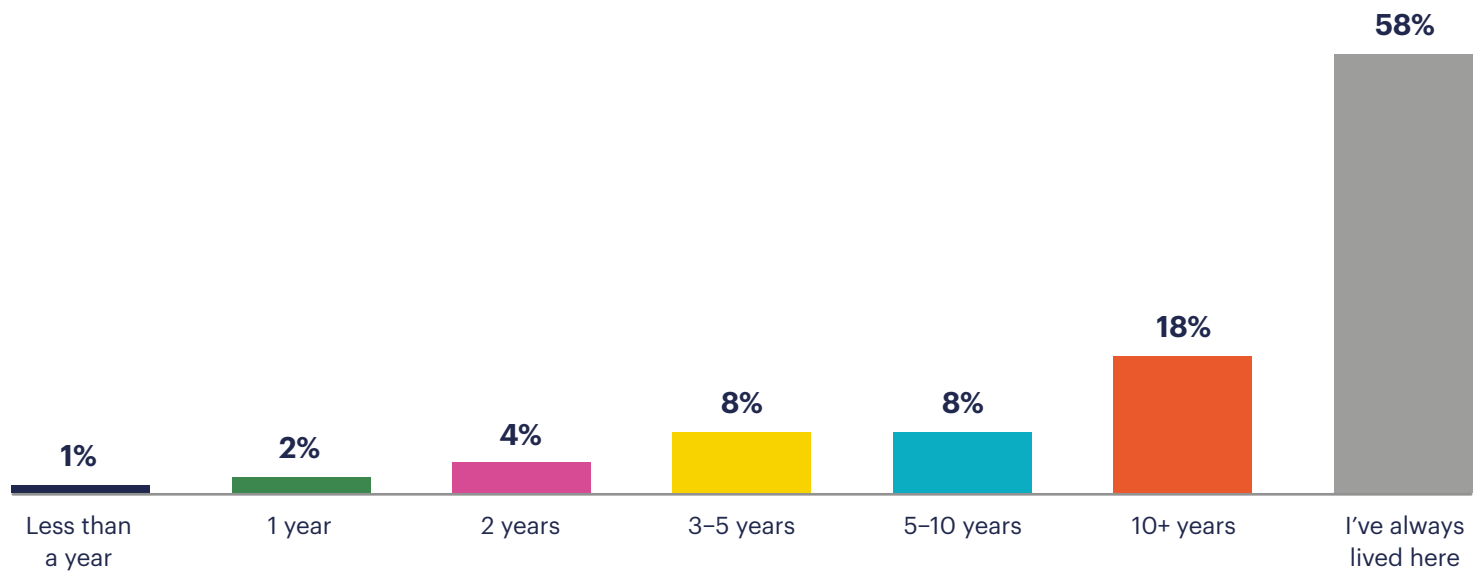
All respondents



Location

How long have you lived in the West Midlands?

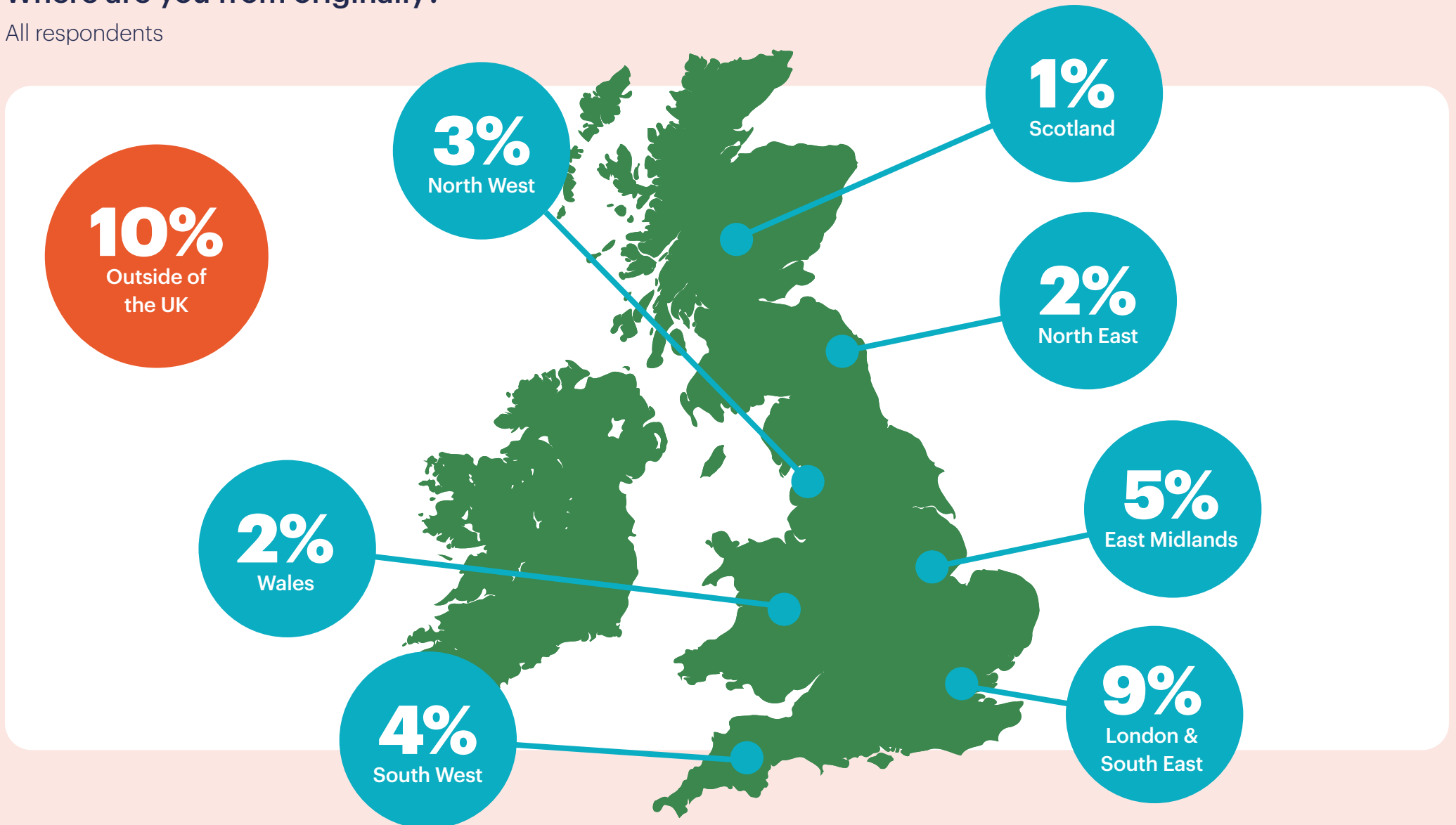
All respondents



Location

Where are you from originally?

All respondents



Location

What made you move to the area? Verbatims.

Buy flat	More jobs	Work (5)
Cheap housing	Moved for work	Work (I used to work in restaurants)
Cheaper cost of living and fast train connections to London	Moved with family	Work and study migration
Coventry University + friends	Moved with my job	
Education	My partner got a job here	
Family	My partner is from Wolverhampton. One of us had to move if we wanted to be together, so I move here.	
Family & Career	Originally moved to Warwick for college, and went to uni in Birmingham which made me want to stay	
Family has been here since 1950s.	Parents (2)	
Family in Birmingham	Partner (2)	
First job opportunity	Partner's job	
Good job offer	Personal circumstances	
Growing business	Study	
Job after university	Study @ University of Birmingham	
Life - moved from London to the Midlands for love	The work opportunities	
Lived in Staffordshire as a child and moved to Birmingham for work	To be closer to family now we have a child	
Long distance Relationship	University (11)	
Love (2)	University (Coventry)	
Lower costs of living	Went to university in a nearby city and moved to Birmingham for work when graduating	

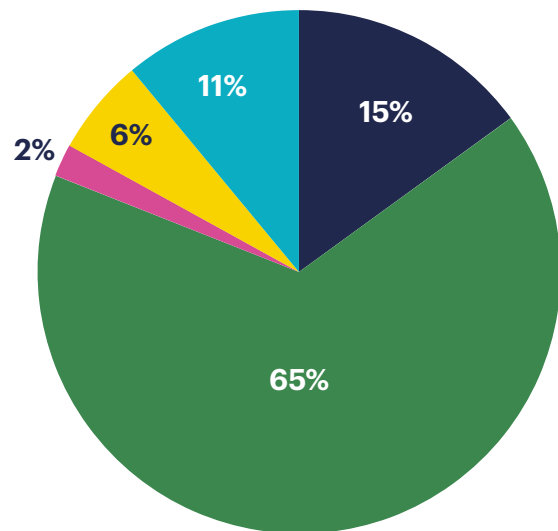
Some heart-warming responses of people giving up everything to move to the West Midlands for love. We're going to assume it's love for the West Midlands.



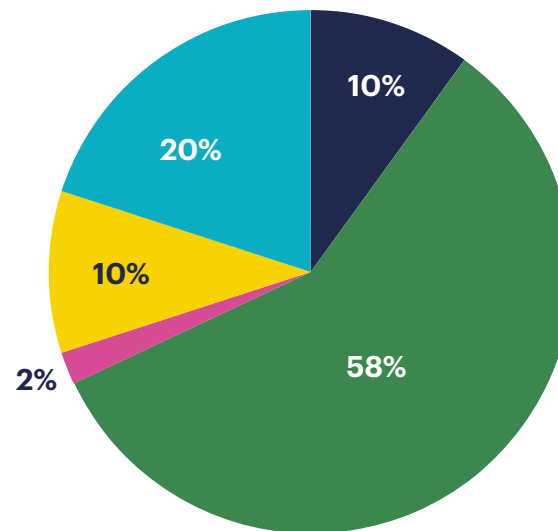
Working life

Do you have a qualification that is relevant to the creative industry?

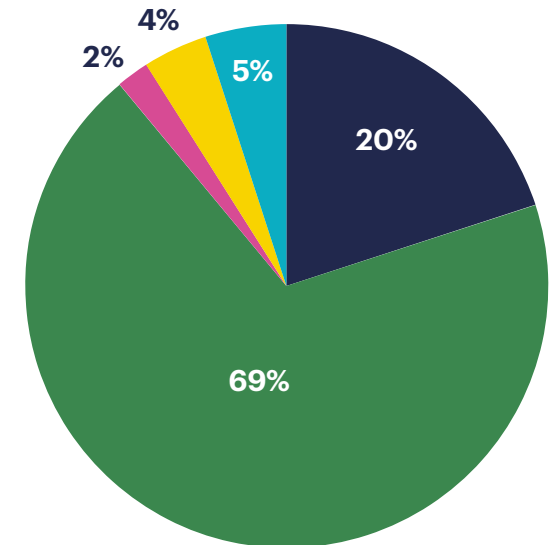
Excluding students



All



Identify as female



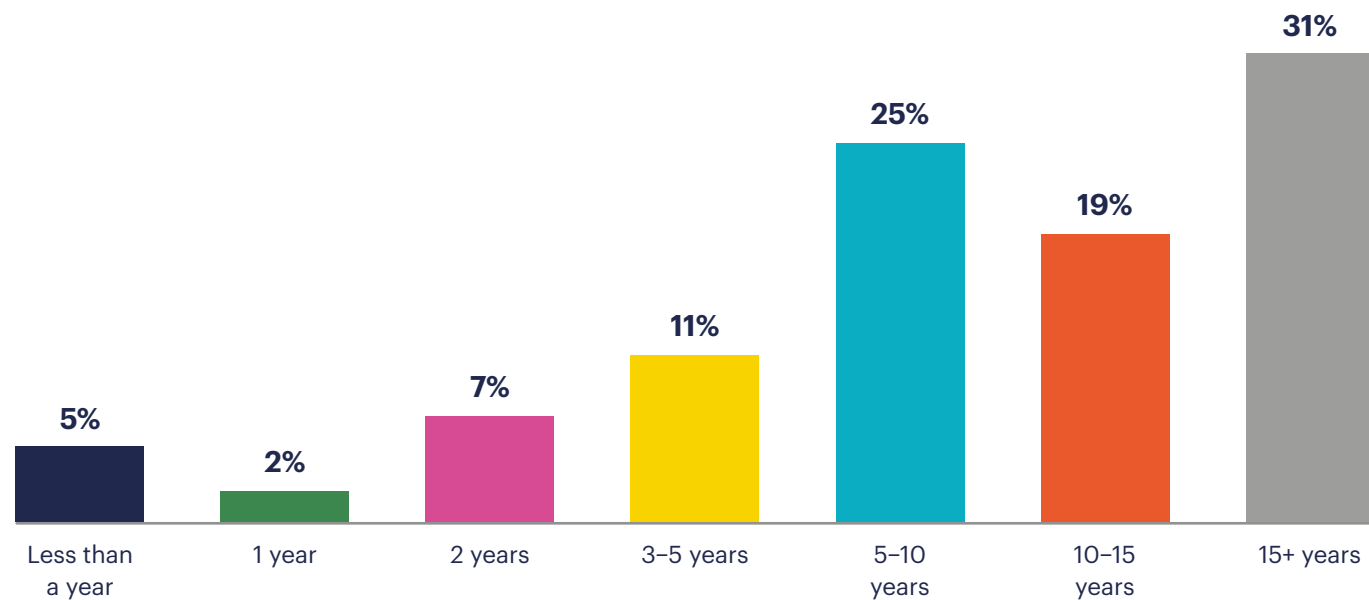
Identify as male



Working life

How long have you worked in the creative industry?

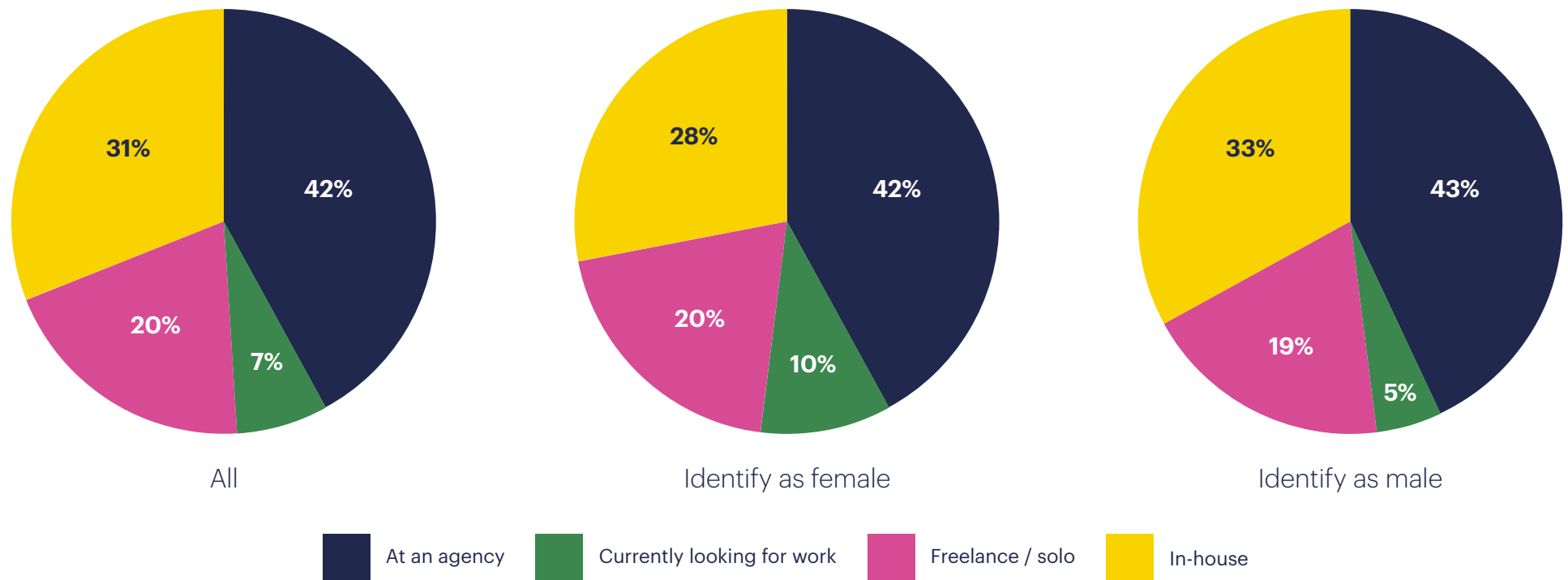
Excluding students



Working life

Where are you currently based? By gender.

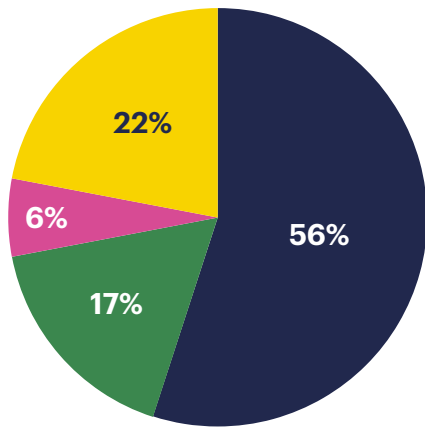
Excluding students



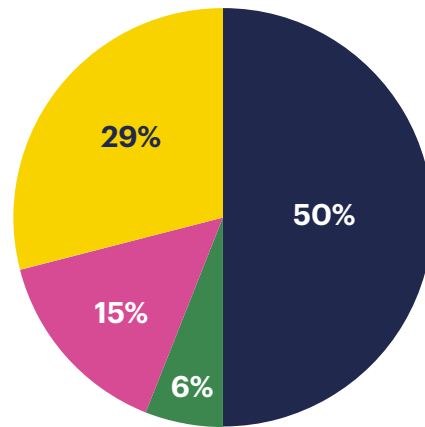
Working life

Where are you currently based? By age.

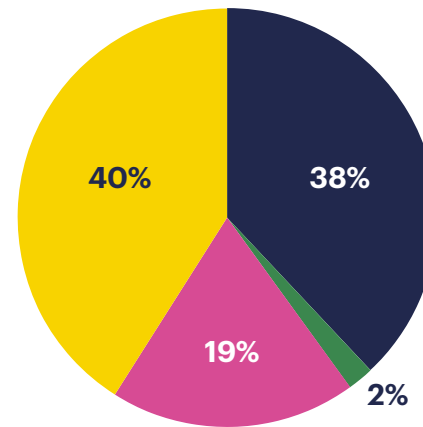
Excluding students



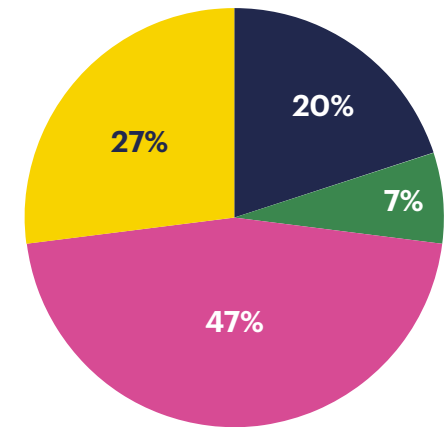
Age bracket 18-24



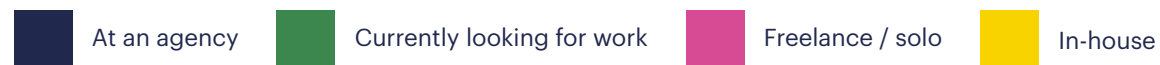
Age bracket 25-34



Age bracket 35-44



Age bracket 45-54*

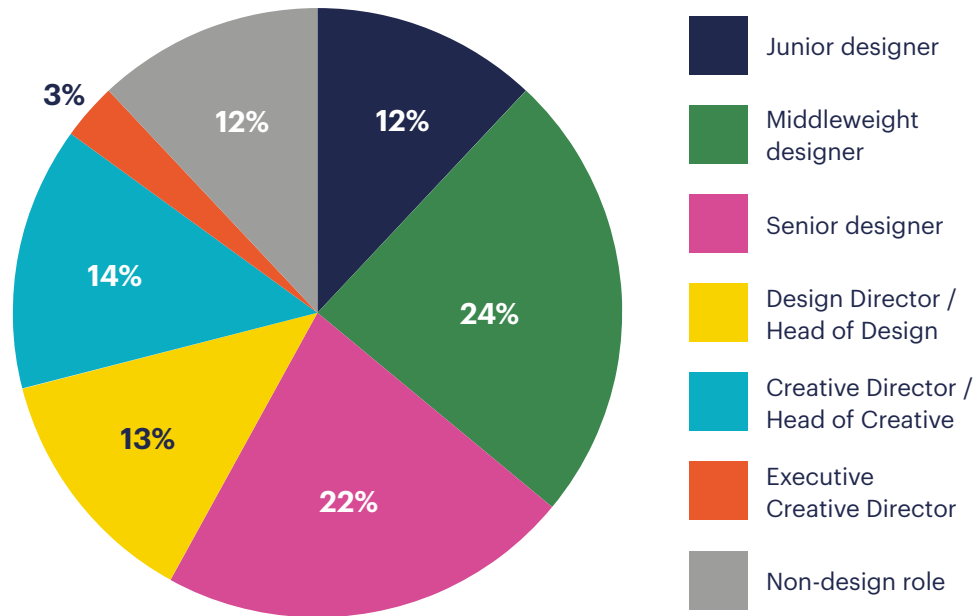


*Sample size small, so not a fair comparison with other age groups.
55+ too small sample size.

Working life

What is your current level?

Excluding students



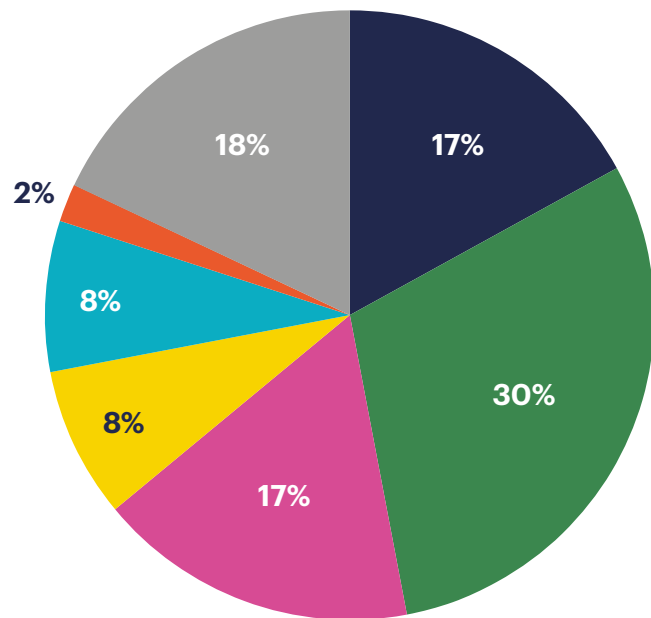
Non-design roles. Verbatims.

Strategy and Agency Owner
Managing Director
Head of editorial
Project Development Manager
Midweight Art Director
Client Services
Account Manager
Strategy
Working in retail as a shop supervisor
Working part-time in retail, and the rest of the time freelancing
Freelance illustrator
Model & event co-ordinator
Chief product officer
Peoples Park activities planner
Assistant Comms Project Manager
Product development, including layout of textbooks and design for marketing materials

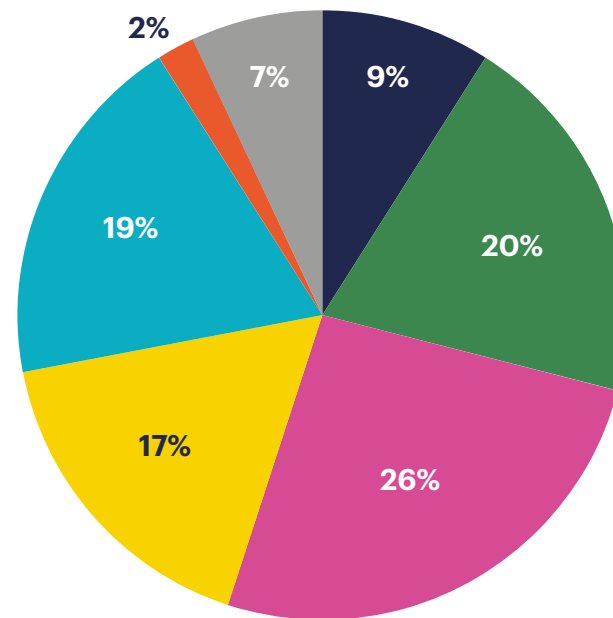
Working life

What is your current level? By gender.

Excluding students



Identify as female



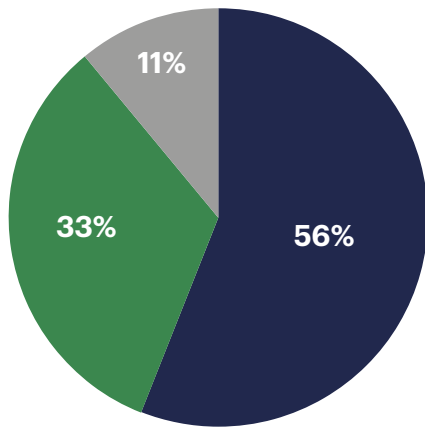
Identify as male



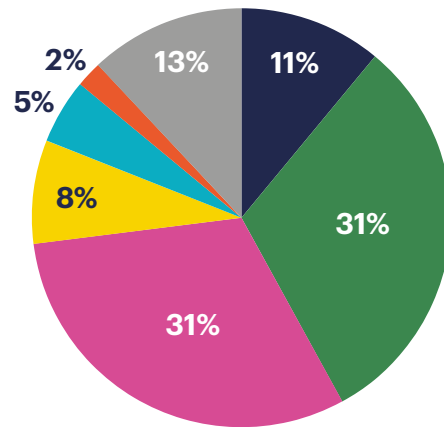
Working life

What is your current level? By age.

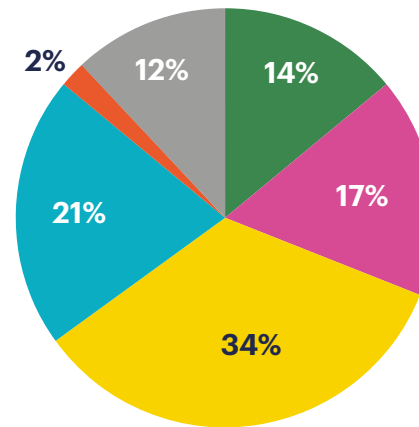
Excluding students



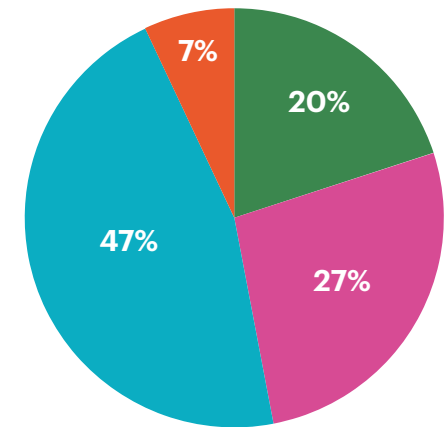
Age bracket 18-24



Age bracket 25-34



Age bracket 35-44



Age bracket 45-54*

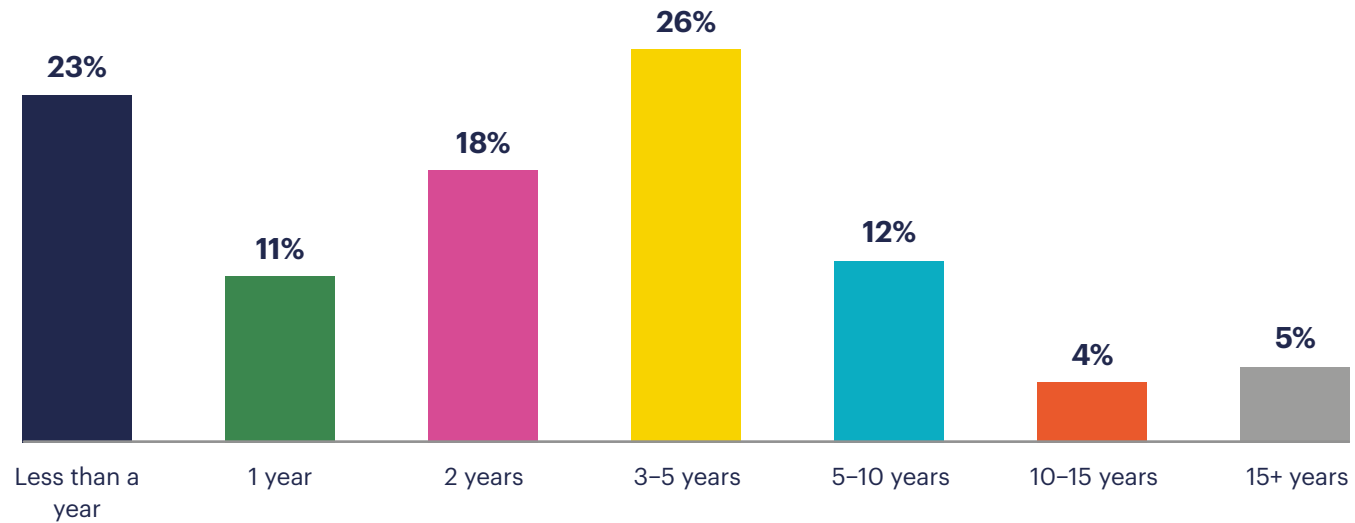


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55+ too small sample size.

Working life

How long have you held this position?

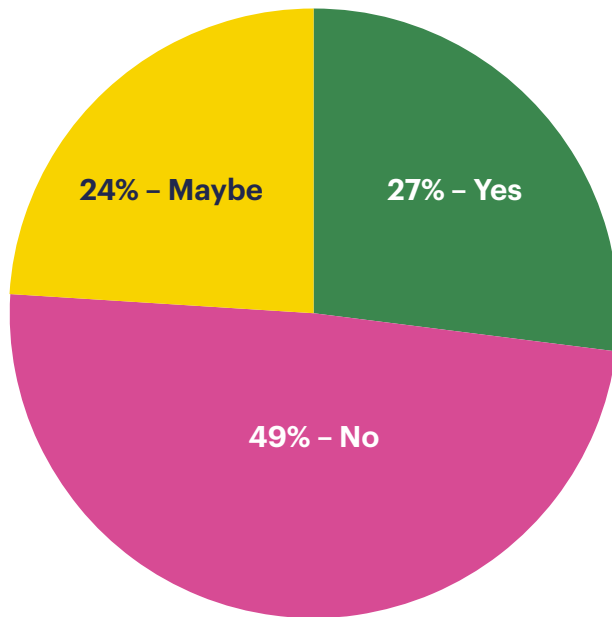
Excluding students and those looking for work



Working life

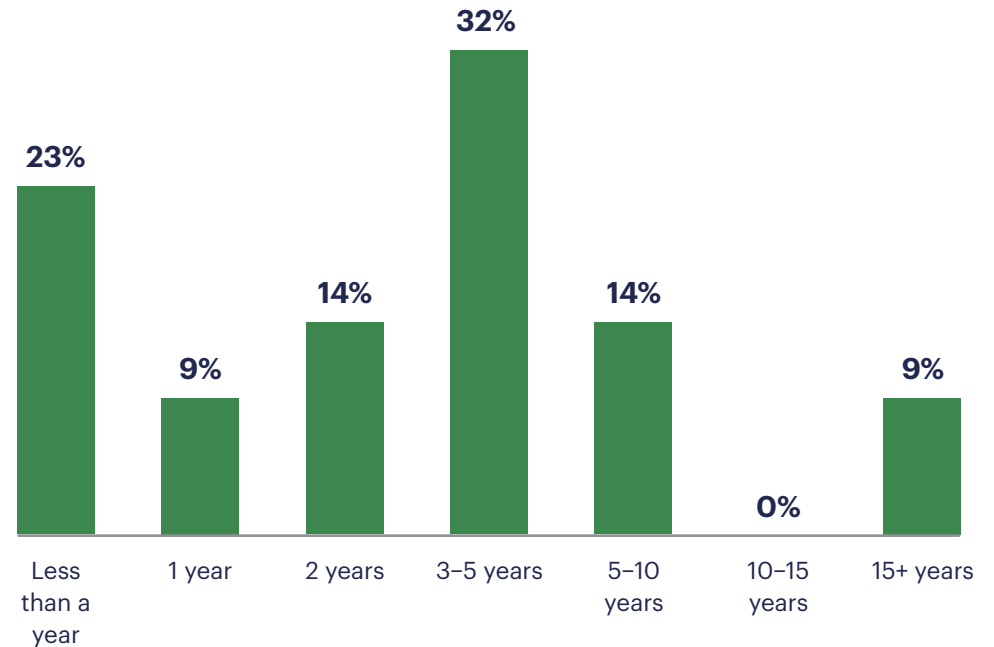
Are you considering leaving this position within the next 12 months?

Excluding students and those looking for work



How long have you held this position?

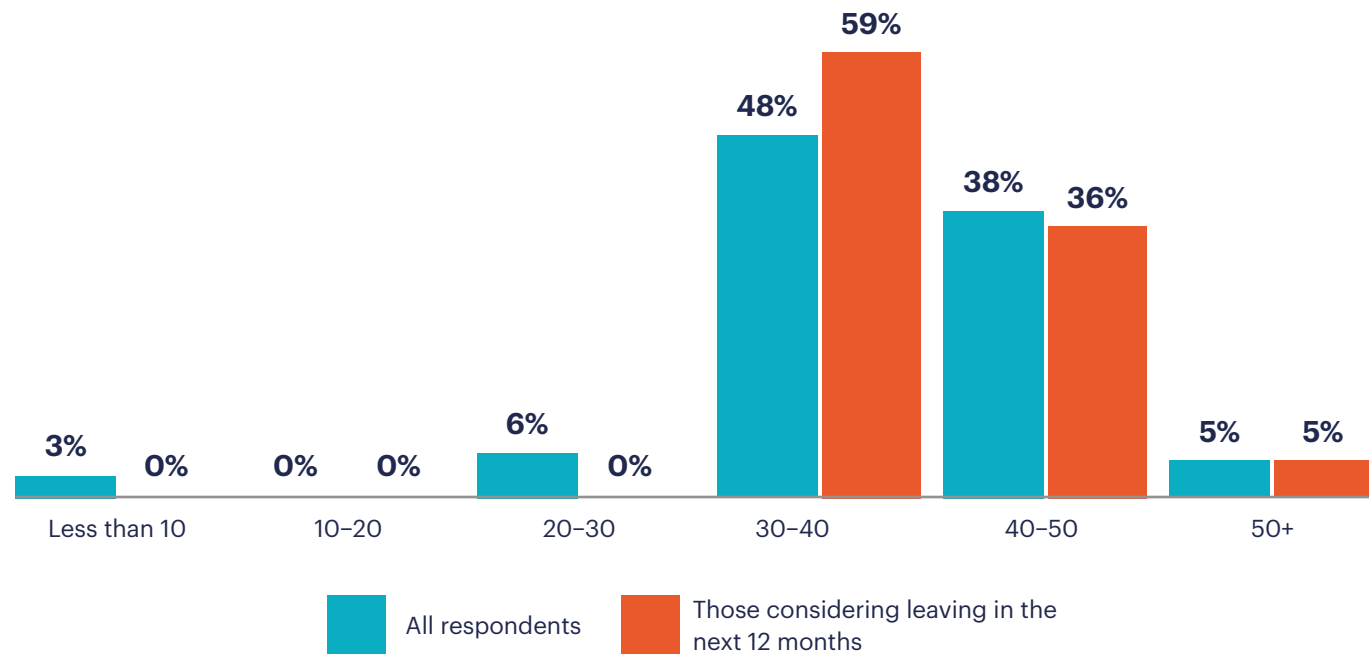
Those considering leaving in the next 12 months, excluding students and those looking for work



Working life

On average, how many hours a week do you work?

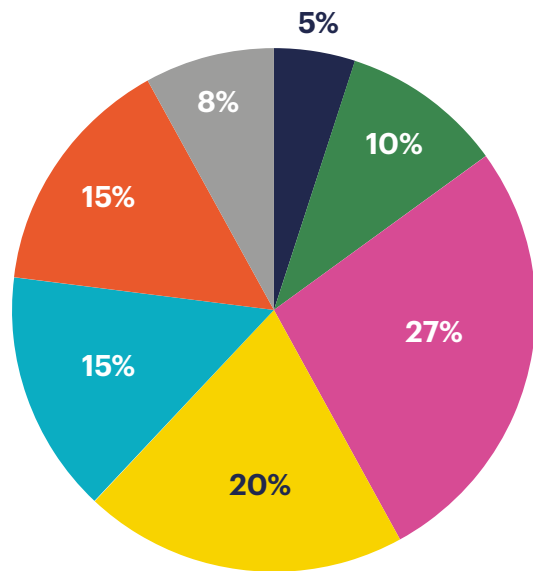
Excluding students and those looking for work



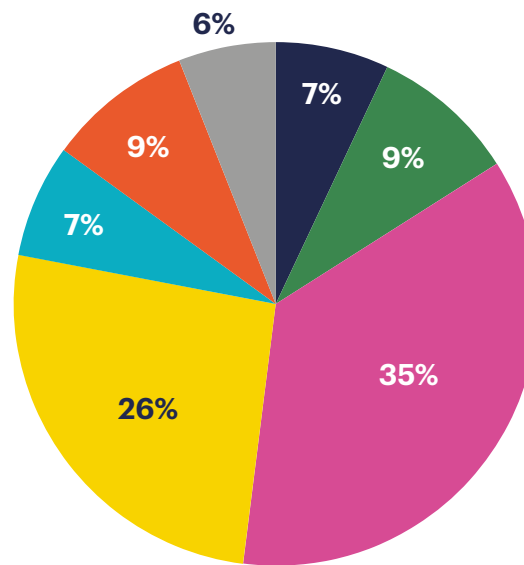
Working life

What is your current salary? By gender.

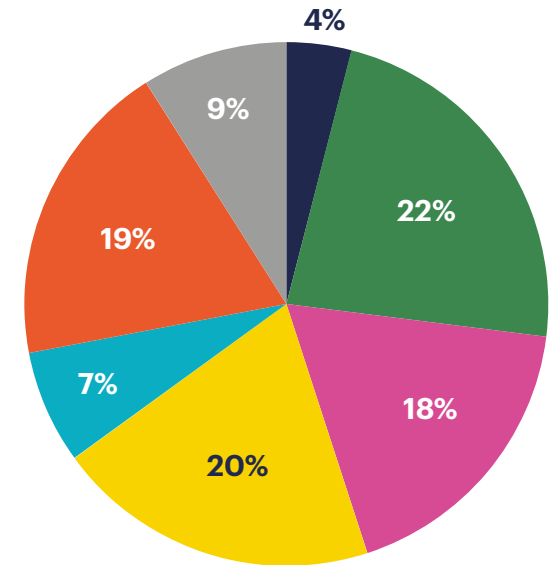
Excluding students and those looking for work



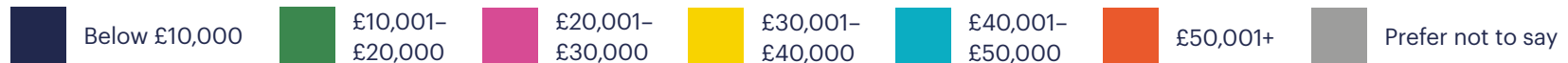
All



Identify as female



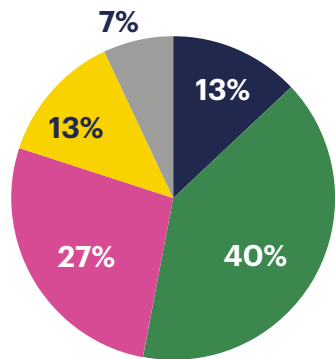
Identify as male



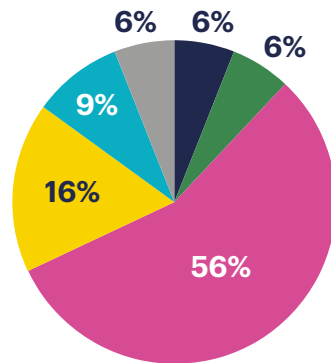
Working life

What is your current salary? By position.

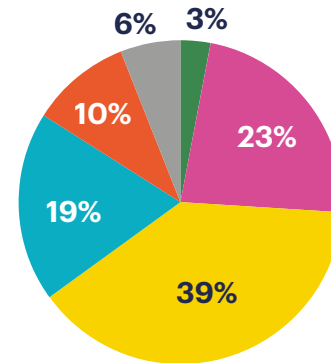
Excluding students and those looking for work



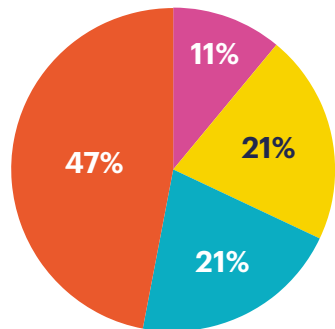
Junior designers



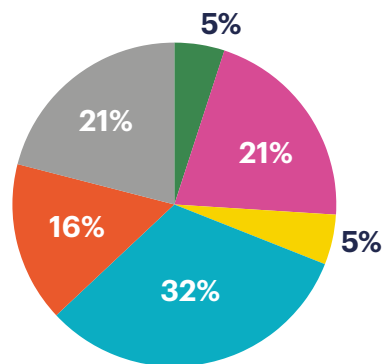
Midweight designers



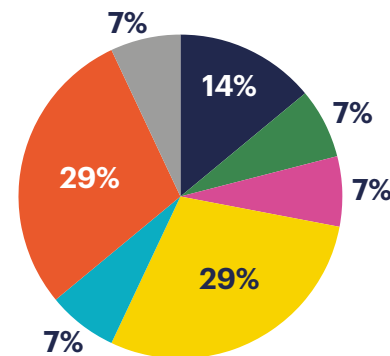
Senior designers



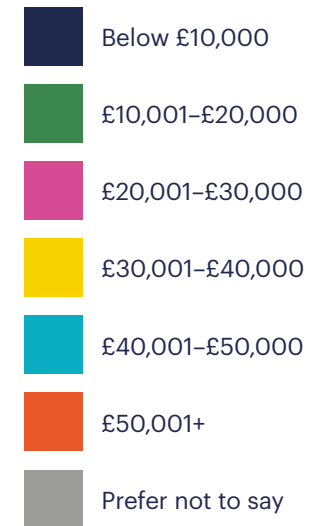
Design director /
Head of design



Creative Director /
Head of Creative



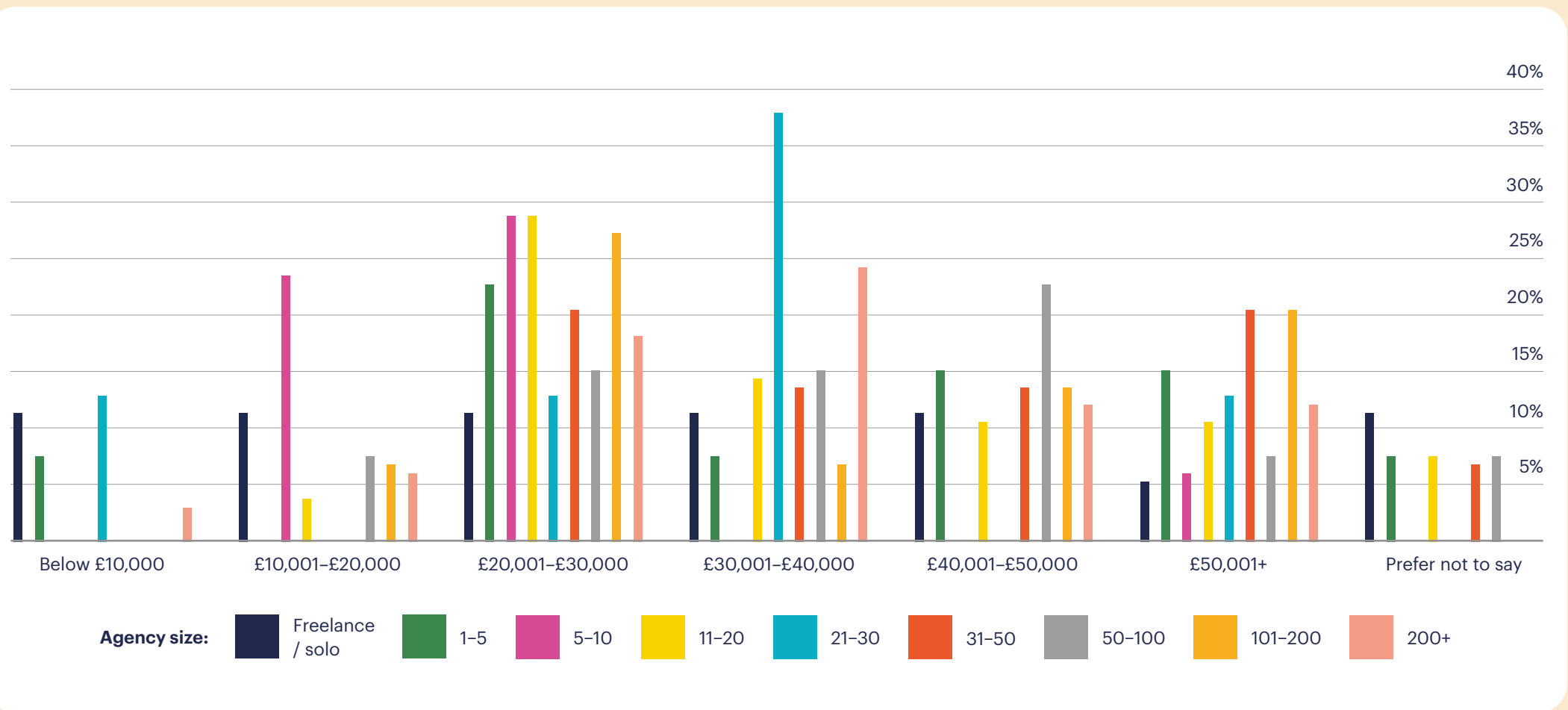
Non-design role



Working life

What is your current salary? By agency size.

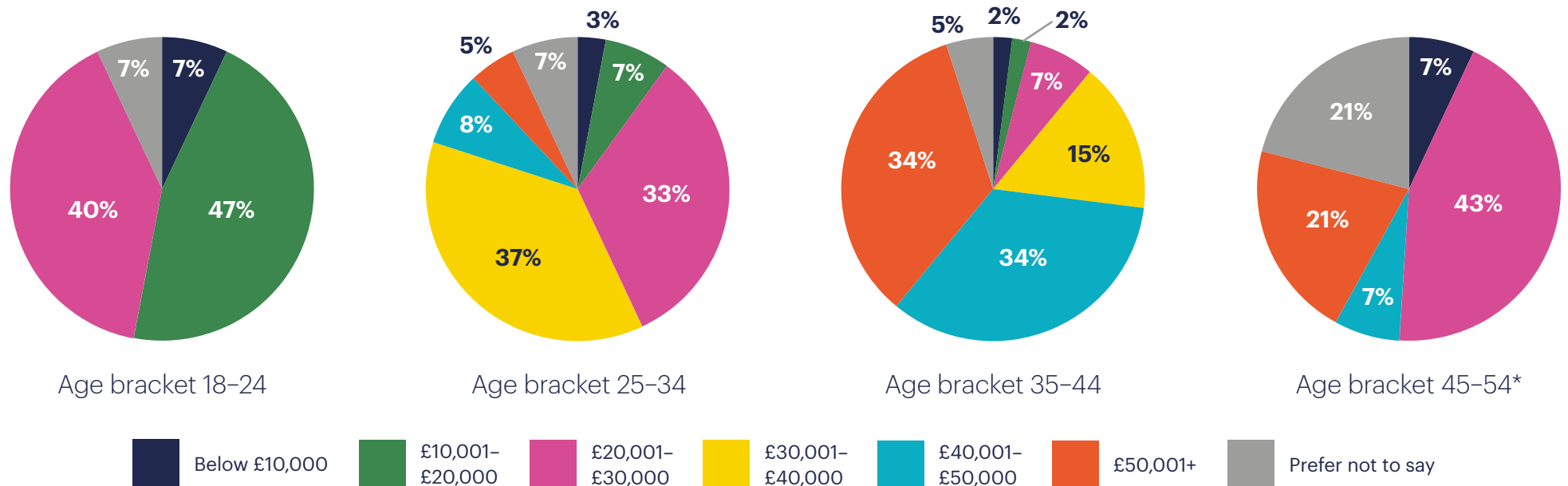
Excluding students and those looking for work



Working life

What is your current salary? By age.

Excluding students and those looking for work



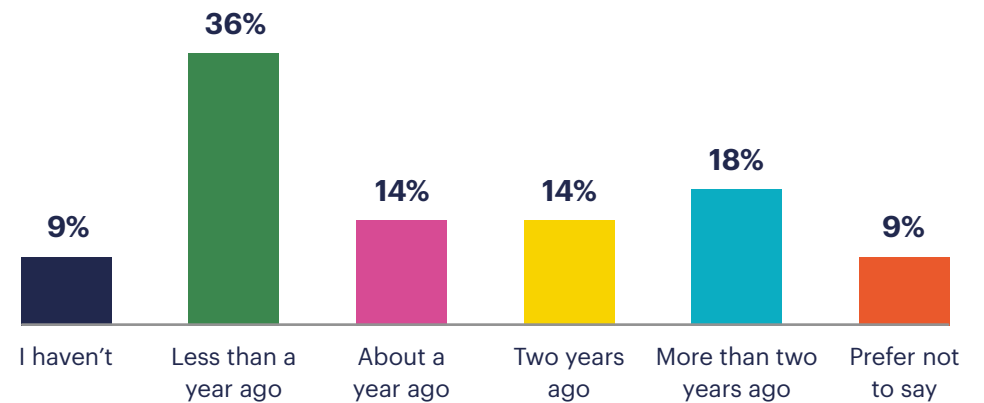
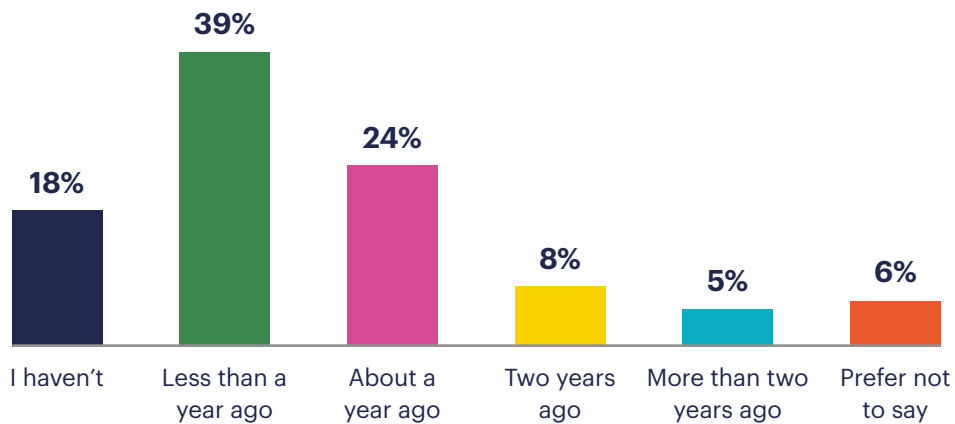
*Sample size small, so not a fair comparison with other age groups.
55+ too small sample size.

Working life

When did you last have a pay rise / increase your rates?

Excluding students and those looking for work

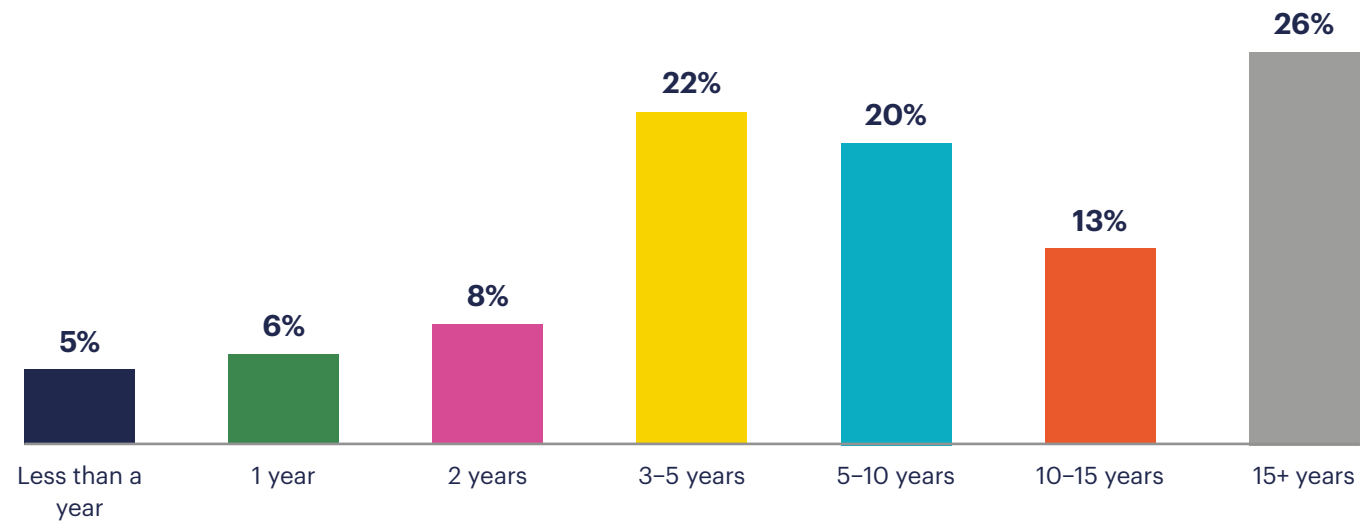
Those considering leaving in the next 12 months, excluding students and those looking for work



Working life

How long have you worked in the West Midlands?

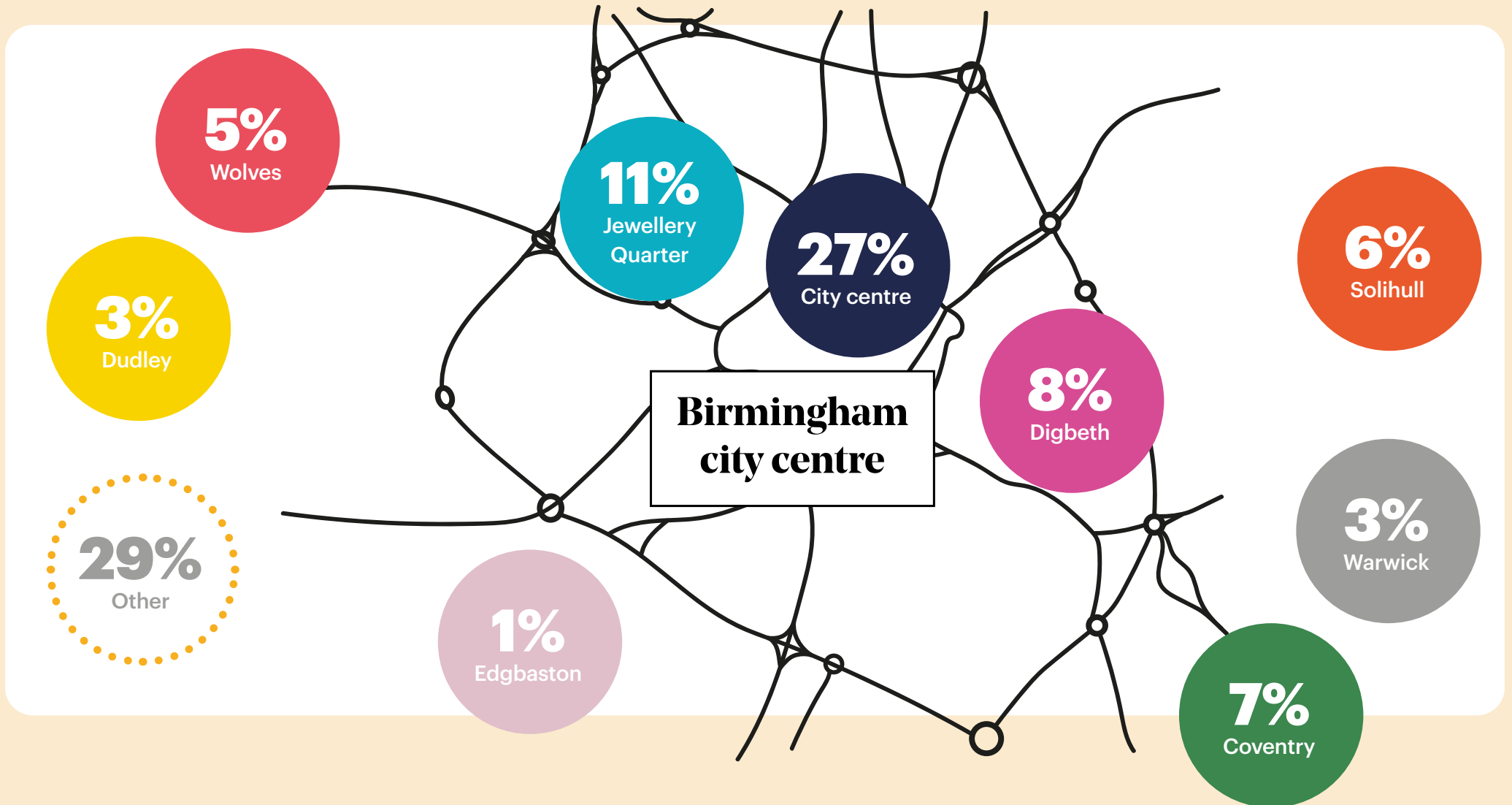
Excluding students



Working life

Where is your workplace located?

Excluding students and those looking for work.



Working life

Other workplace location, please specify. Verbatims.

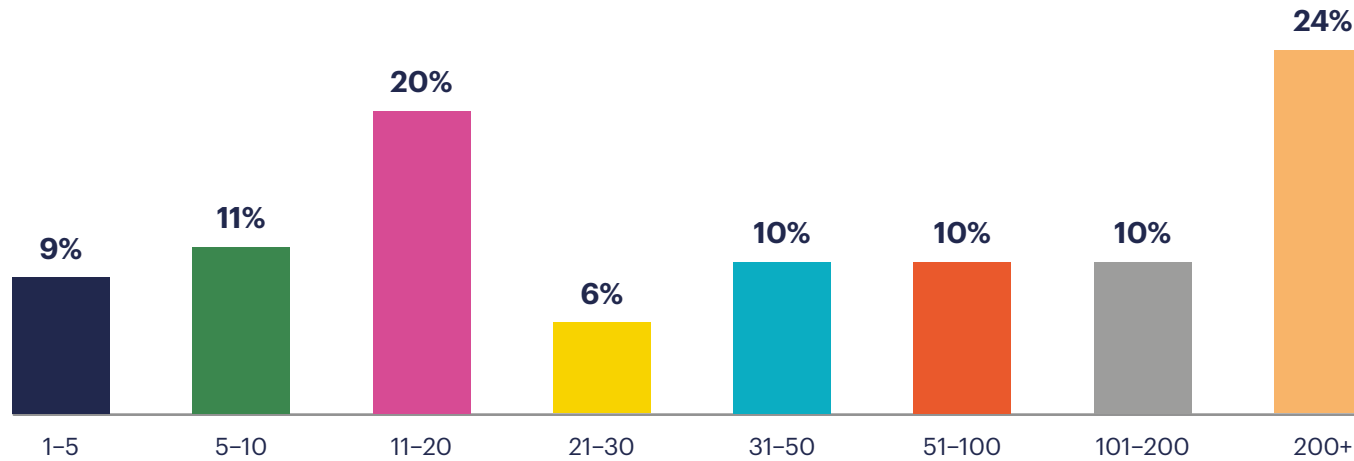
Kidderminster
Wombourne, South Staffordshire
Moseley
North Birmingham
Castle Bromwich
Lichfield (2)
Leamington Spa (3)
Bilston
Hartlebury
Birmingham Airport
Erdington (3)
Stirchley
Perry Barr
South Birmingham (2)
Leamington for the home office, but mainly I work at venue throughout the UK and Europe
Worcestershire
Alvechurch
Bearwood (2)
Walsall (2)
I work remotely in peoples offices
Sutton Coldfield
Selly Oak/Edgbaston

Worcester
Birmingham suburban village
Commute to London 2 days, at home in B'ham for the other 3
Stourbridge (2)
Halesowen
London
Shrewsbury/Stafford
Remotely

Working life

How many people work there?

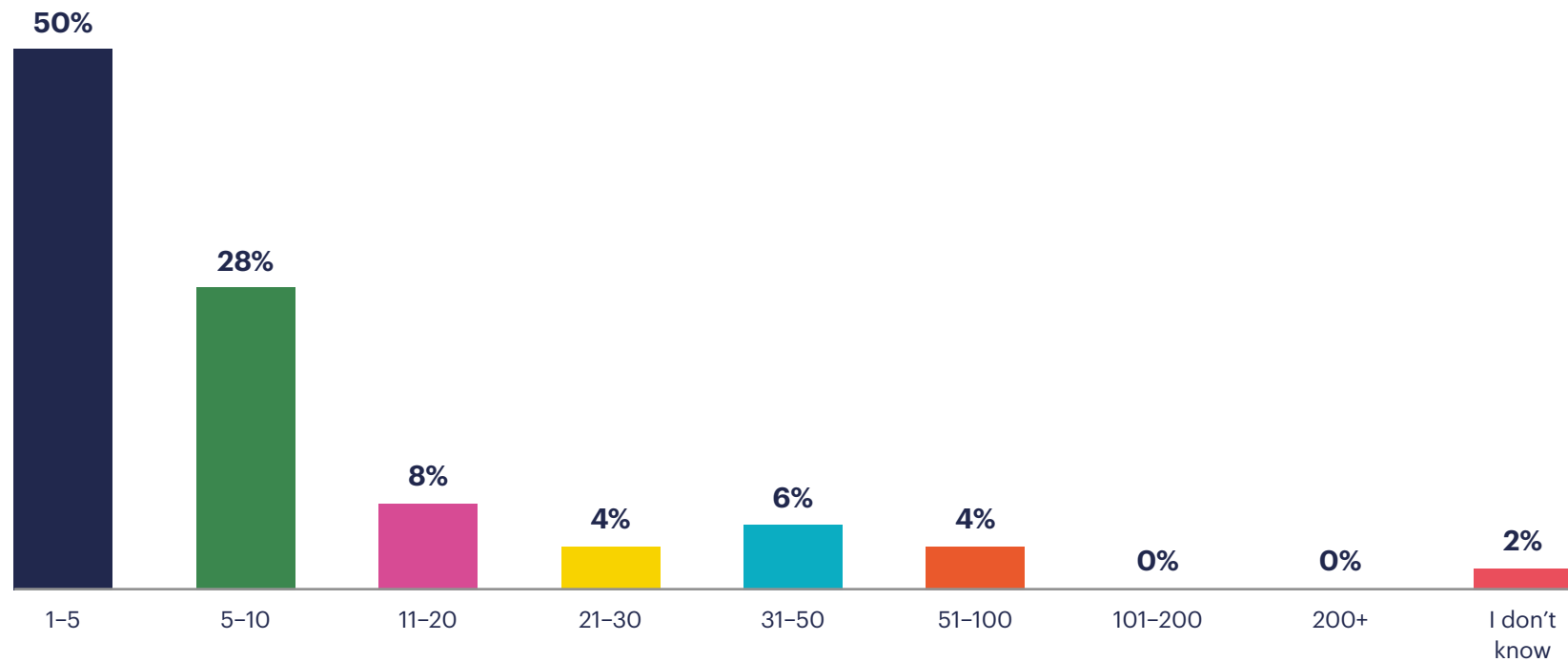
Excluding students, those looking for work and freelance/solo



Working life

Of those team members, how many of them are creatives?

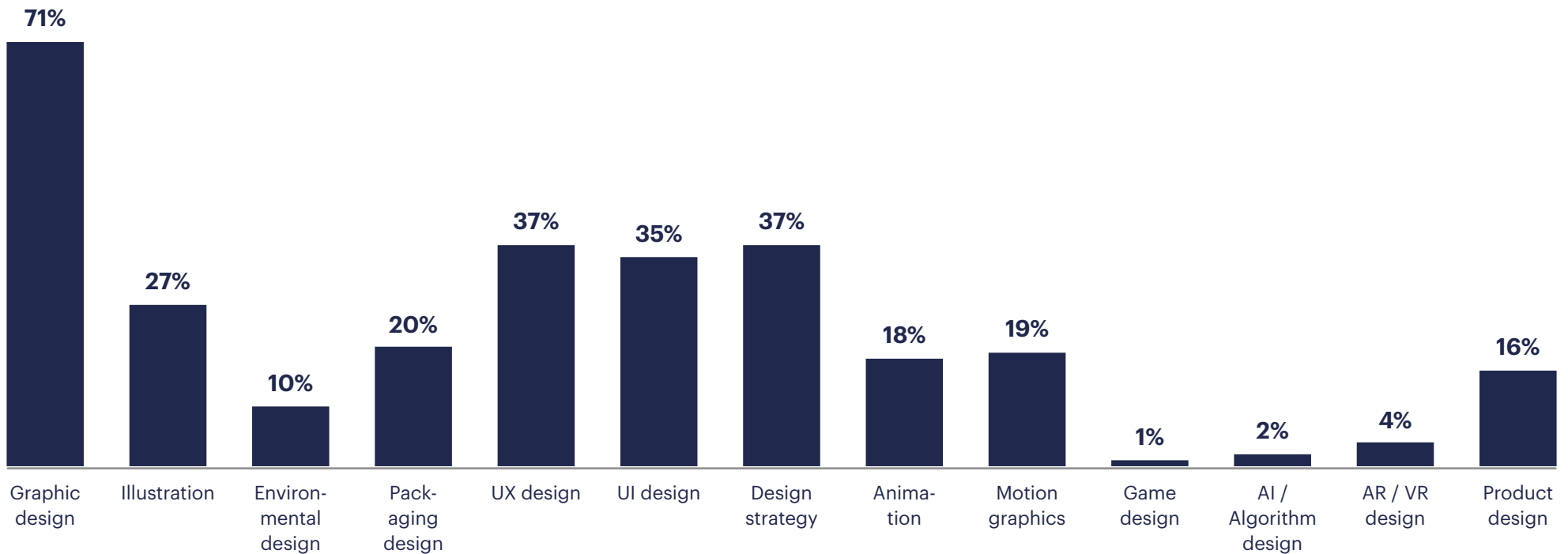
Excluding students, those looking for work and freelance/solo



Working life

What area(s) of the industry do you work in?

Excluding students



Working life

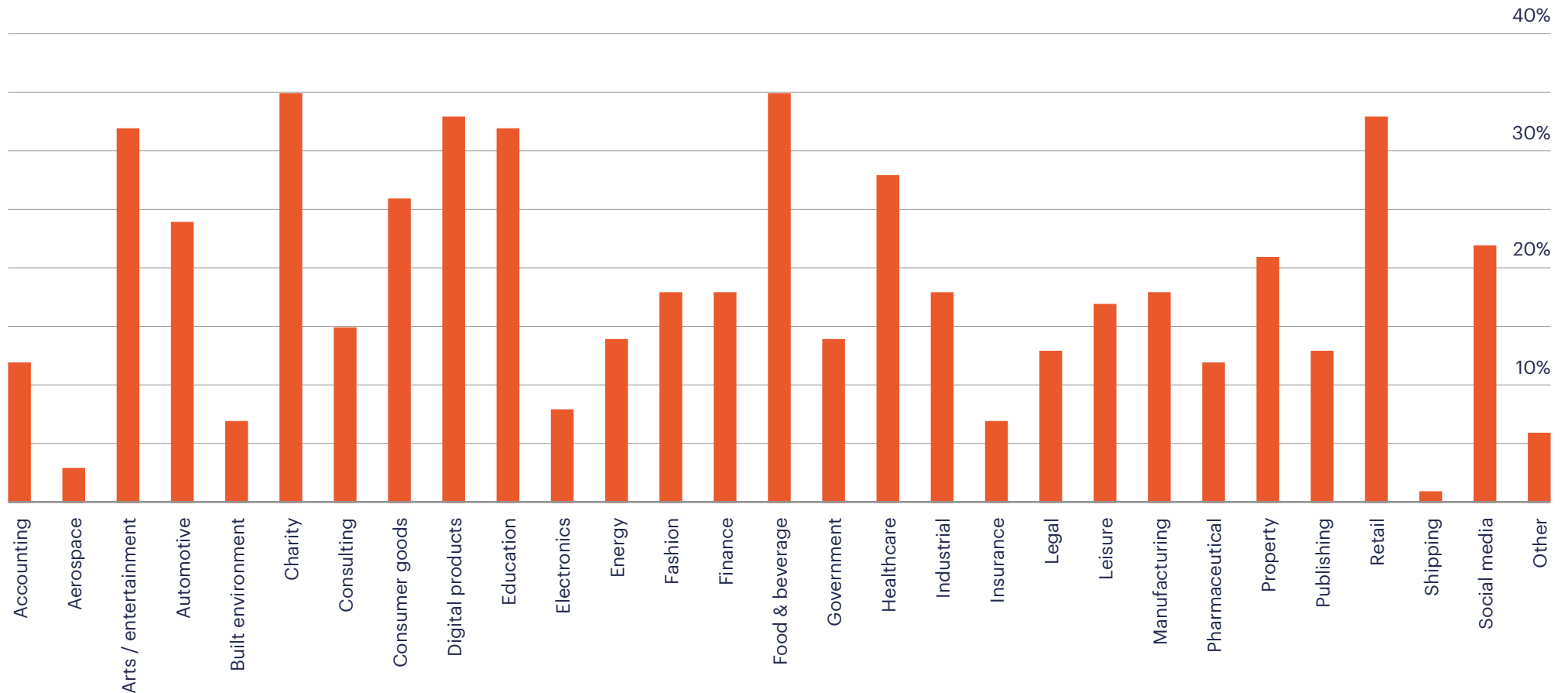
Other areas of skills, please specify. Verbatims.

Account Management/New Business
Advertising
Branding, website design and production
Client liaison and management
Communications
Concept & Strategy
Education
Engineering Design Teaching
Fashion
Interior
Interior design, retail design, event design
Interior Designer
Layout design, conceptual work, web design
Lighting designer/operator for live events, mainly corporate.
Marketing
Service design
Service design
Service design, business modelling
UX researchers, Content designers
Workspace Branding

Working life

What sector(s) do you work for?

Excluding students



Working life

Other sectors, please specify. Verbatims.

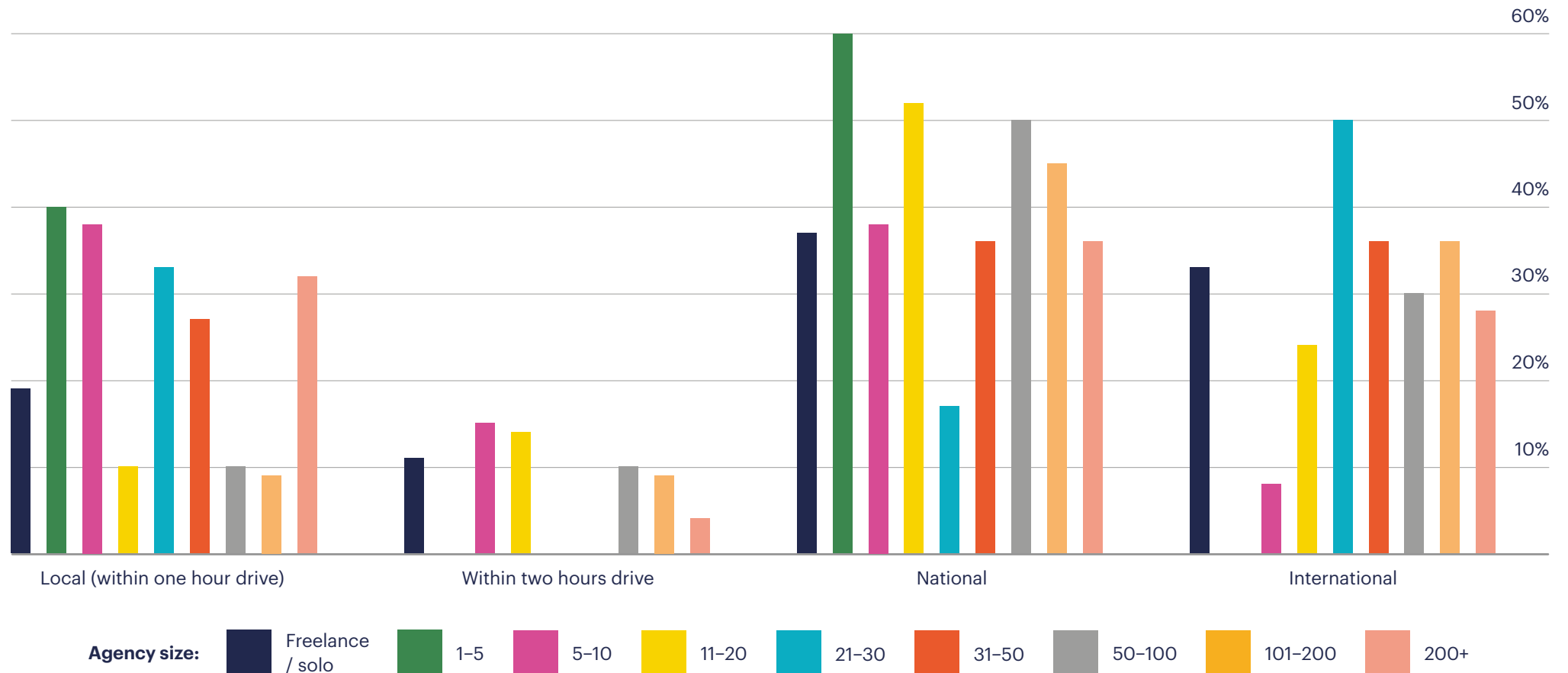
Aviation
Chemicals and adhesive for building/construction
Childcare
Environment & Infrastructure
Events
Independent commissioners, independent brands
Parks and gardens
Transport
Utilities
Interior design, retail design, event design
Interior Designer
Layout design, conceptual work, web design
Lighting designer/operator for live events, mainly corporate.
Marketing
Service design
Service design
Service design, business modelling
UX researchers, Content designers
Workspace Branding



Working life

Where are most of your clients based?

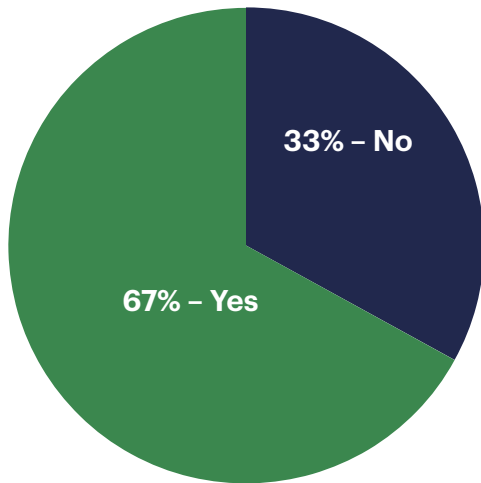
Excluding students and those looking for work



Outside work

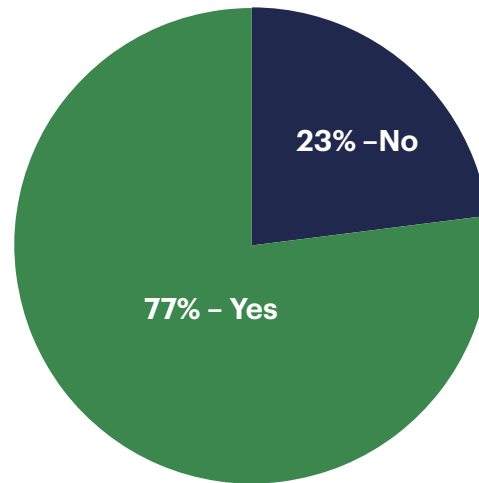
Do you take on side projects?

All respondents



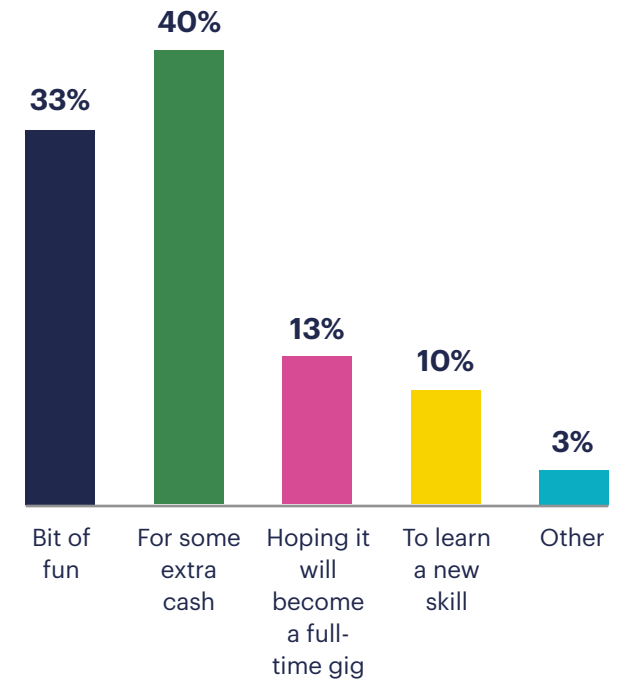
Are these often paid?

All respondents



What is your main reason for doing side projects?

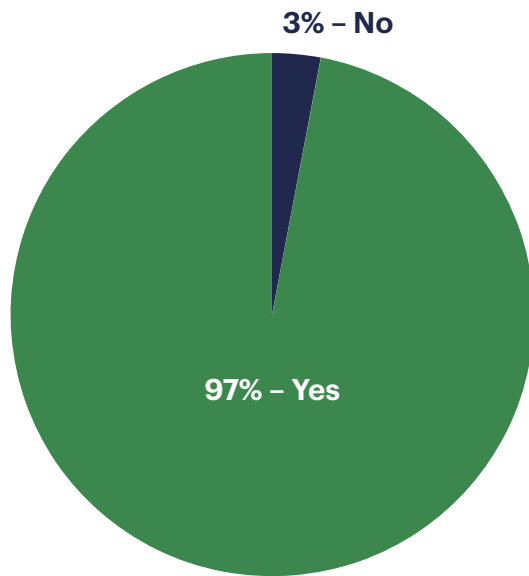
All respondents



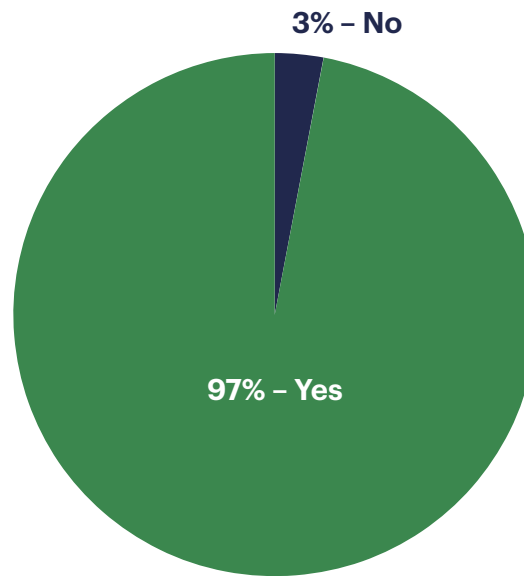
Outside work

Do you have any social media account(s)? By gender.

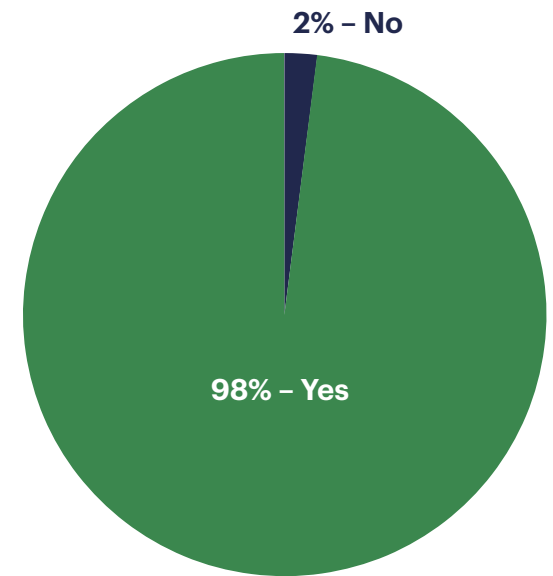
All respondents



All



Identify as female

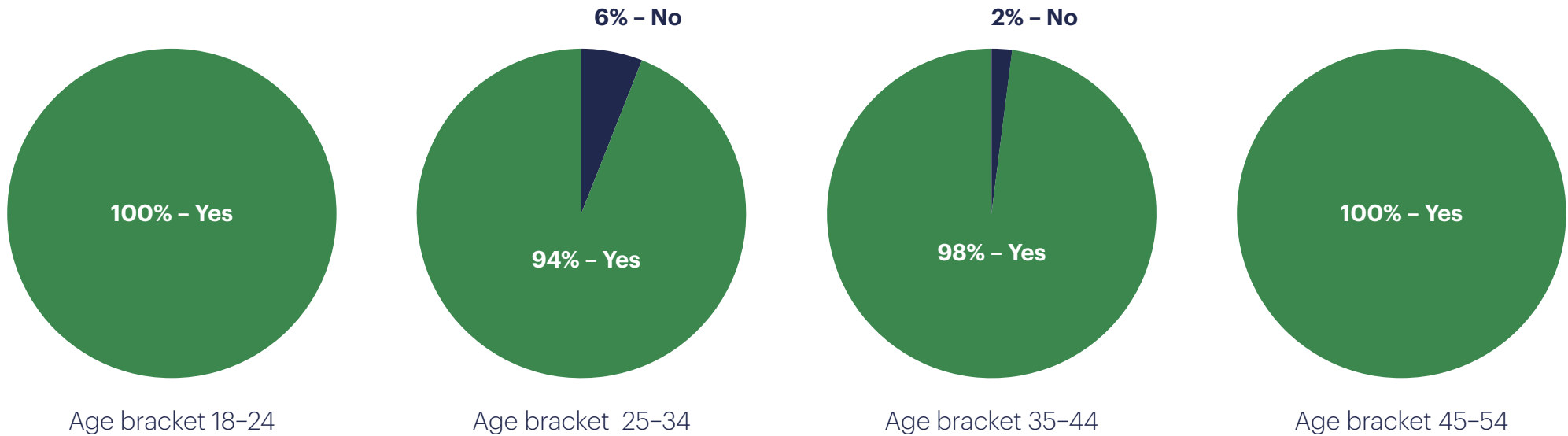


Identify as male

Outside work

Do you have any social media account(s)? By age.

All respondents



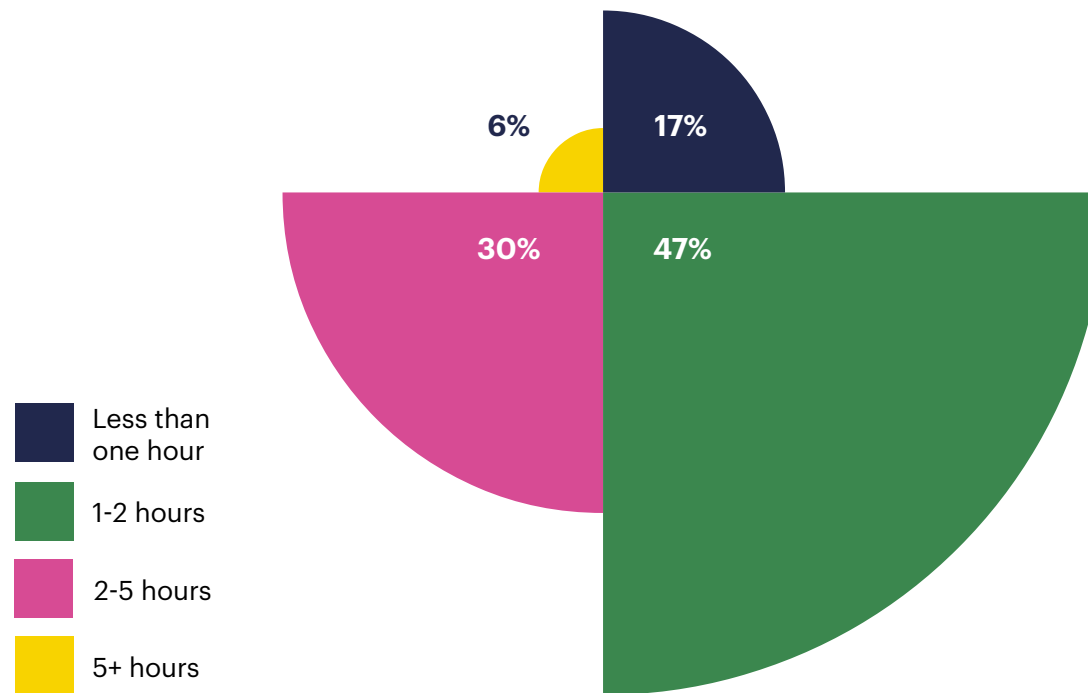
**Sample size small, so not a fair comparison with other age groups.
55+ too small sample size.*



Outside work

On average how many hours a day do you spend on social media?

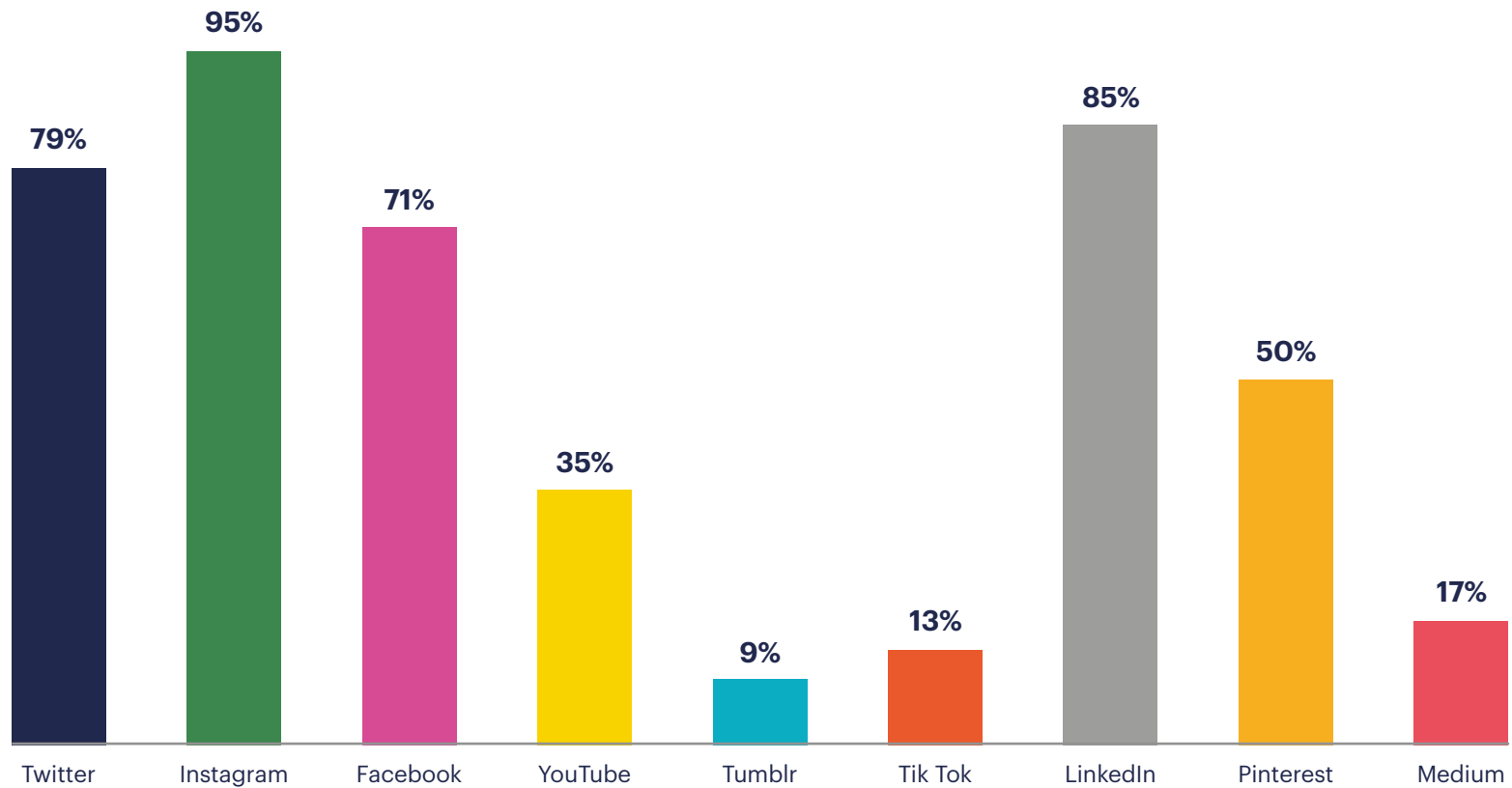
All respondents [answering yes to previous question]



Outside work

Which of the following [social media accounts] do you have?

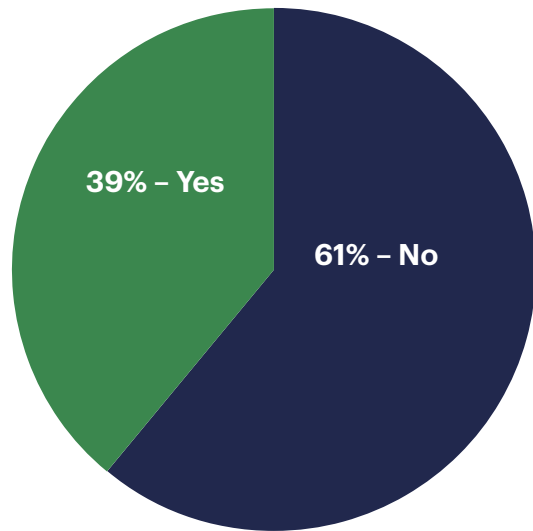
All respondents



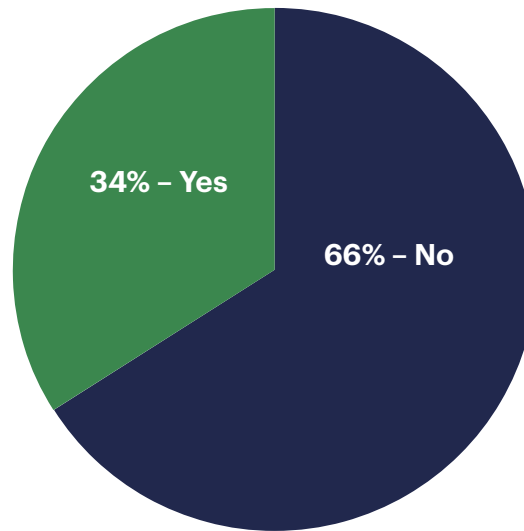
Outside work

Do you meet up regularly with other designers outside of work? By gender.

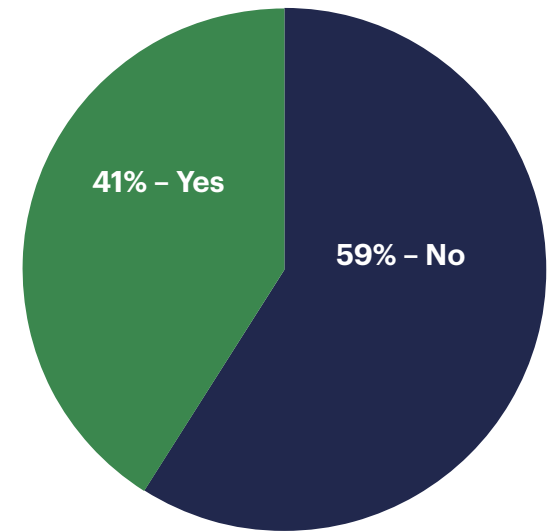
All respondents



All



Identify as female

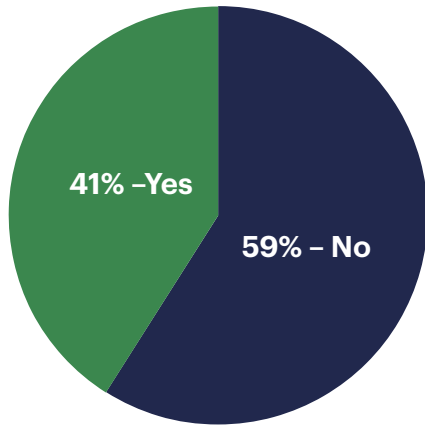


Identify as male

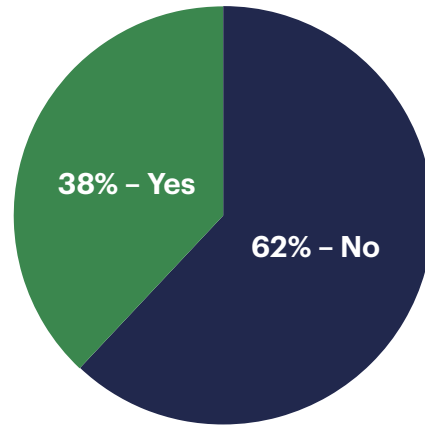
Outside work

Do you meet up regularly with other designers outside of work? By age.

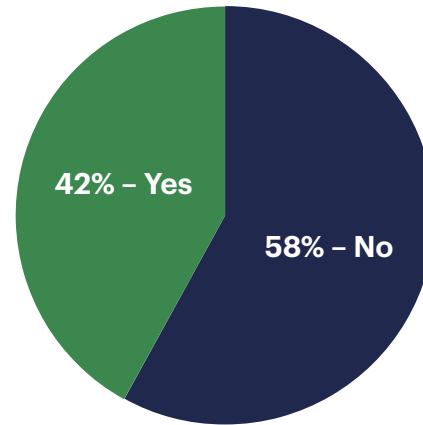
All respondents



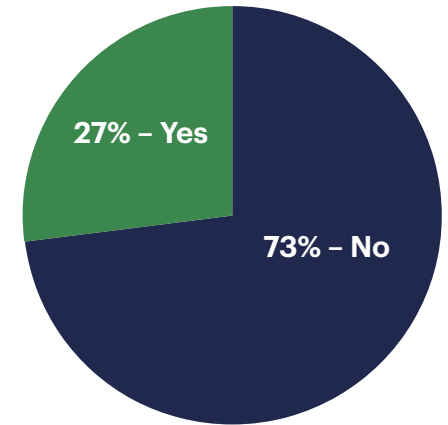
Age bracket 18-24



Age bracket 25-34



Age bracket 35-44



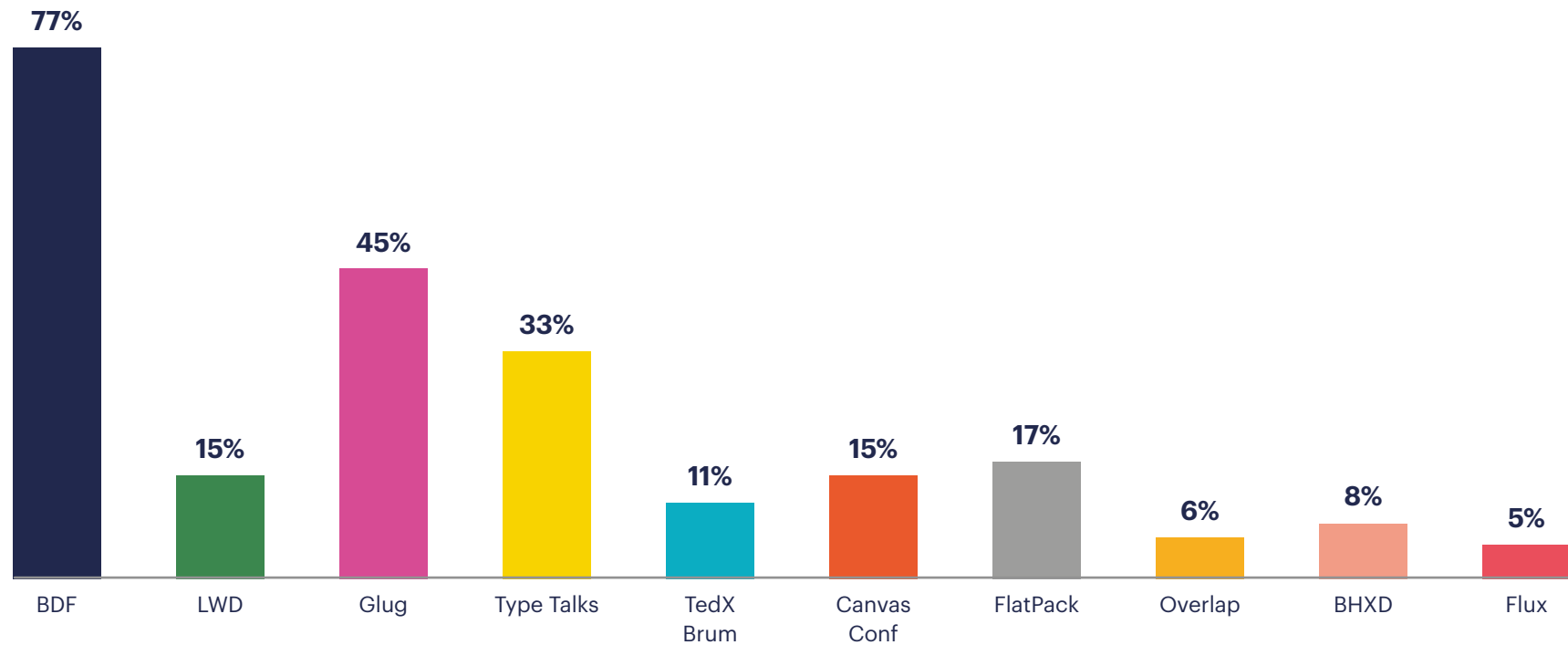
Age bracket 45-54*

**Sample size small, so not a fair comparison with other age groups.
55+ too small sample size.*

Outside work

Which of the following events have you attended?

All respondents



Get in touch

For more information or to give feedback, please contact

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