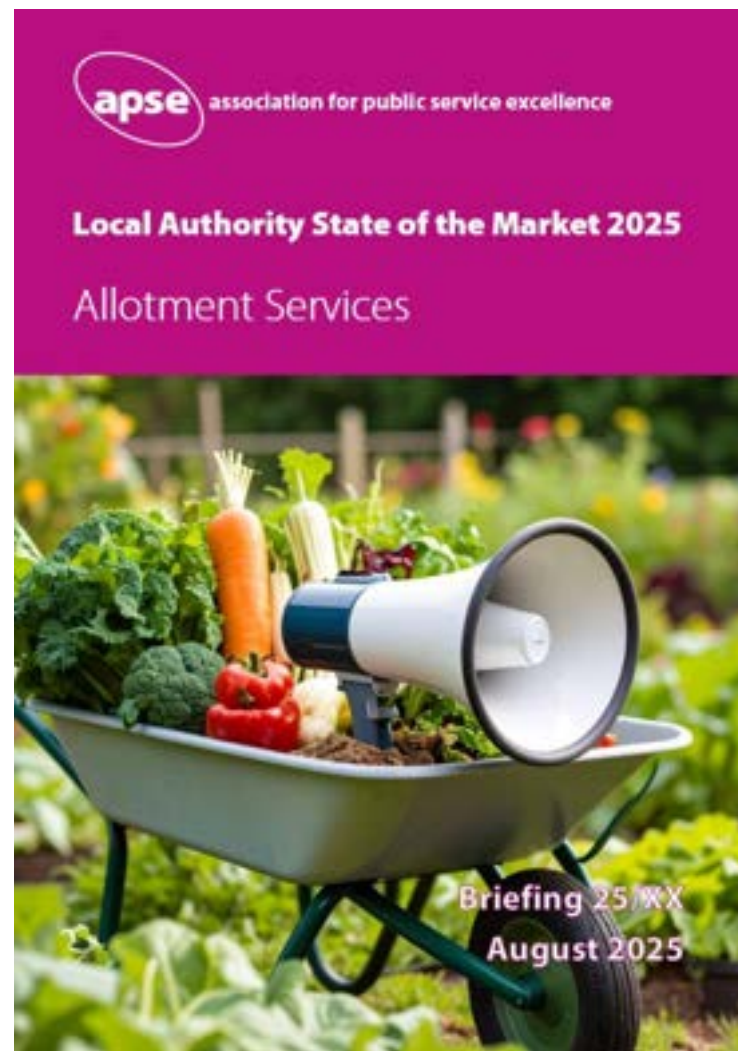




Association for Public Service Excellence

State of the Market: Allotment Services

Matt Ellis, APSE Principal Advisor





Rayner declares war on allotments

Councils could cash in on public gardens to tackle funding crisis under new rules

Tony Diver
Associate Political Editor

Related Topics
Allotments, Gardens, Angela Rayner, James Cleverly, Local councils

02 August 2025 3:41pm BST

1456

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Angela Rayner has already given the go-ahead for councils to sell a number of allotment sites. Credit: Leon Neal/Getty Images

Angela Rayner has given the green light for cash-strapped councils to sell off

HortWeek

No evidence for Angela Rayner allotments sell-off

Newspaper reports suggest since Labour entered Downing Street, a year ago, Housing secretary Angela Rayner has personally authorised the disposal of eight allotment sites across England, an answer that arose from a recent Parliamentary question.

4 August 2025





Purpose

- 🌱 Survey of UK local authority allotment teams.
- 🌱 Conducted between June and August 2025.
- 🌱 Covering a diverse range of topics – from cost and waiting lists to amenities and strategies.
- 🌱 Identification of trends in the sector.

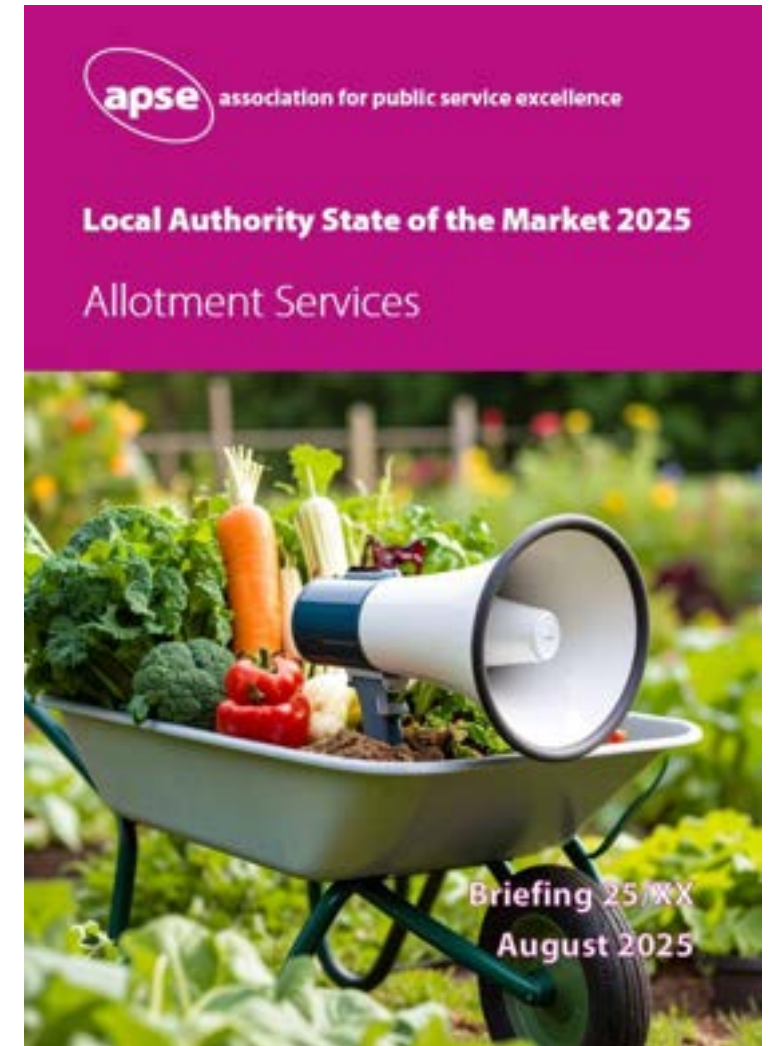
**Aggregated figures – may not reflect the experiences of your council*





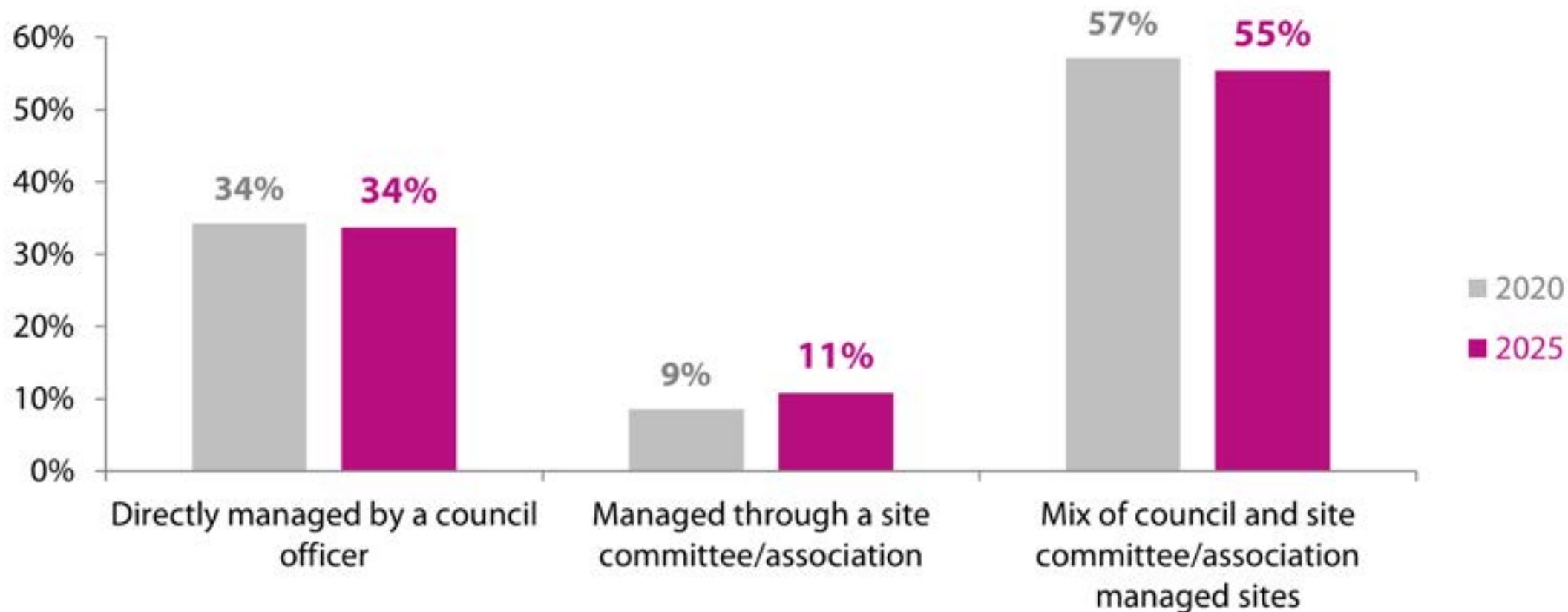
Themes

- 🌱 Management
- 🌱 Cost
- 🌱 Concessions
- 🌱 Access
- 🌱 Number of sites/plots
- 🌱 Plot size
- 🌱 Plot ownership
- 🌱 Monitoring
- 🌱 Waiting lists
- 🌱 Budget
- 🌱 Strategies
- 🌱 Amenities
- 🌱 Biodiversity
- 🌱 Sustainable practices



Management

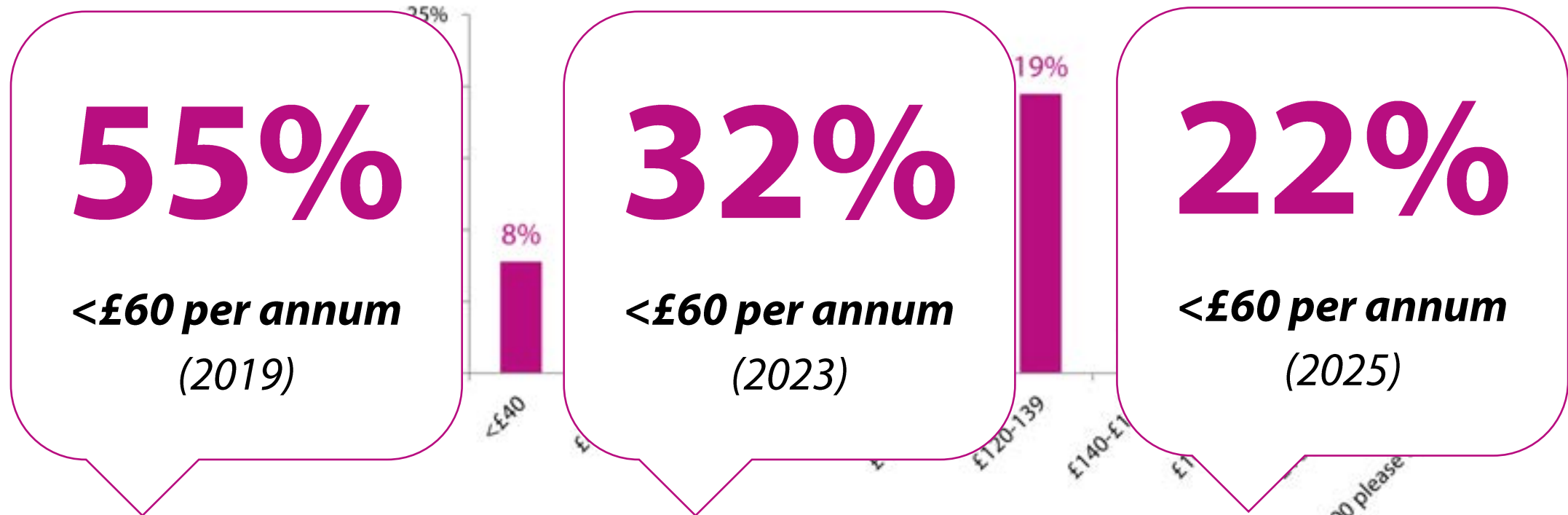
2.1 How are your allotments managed?



Cost

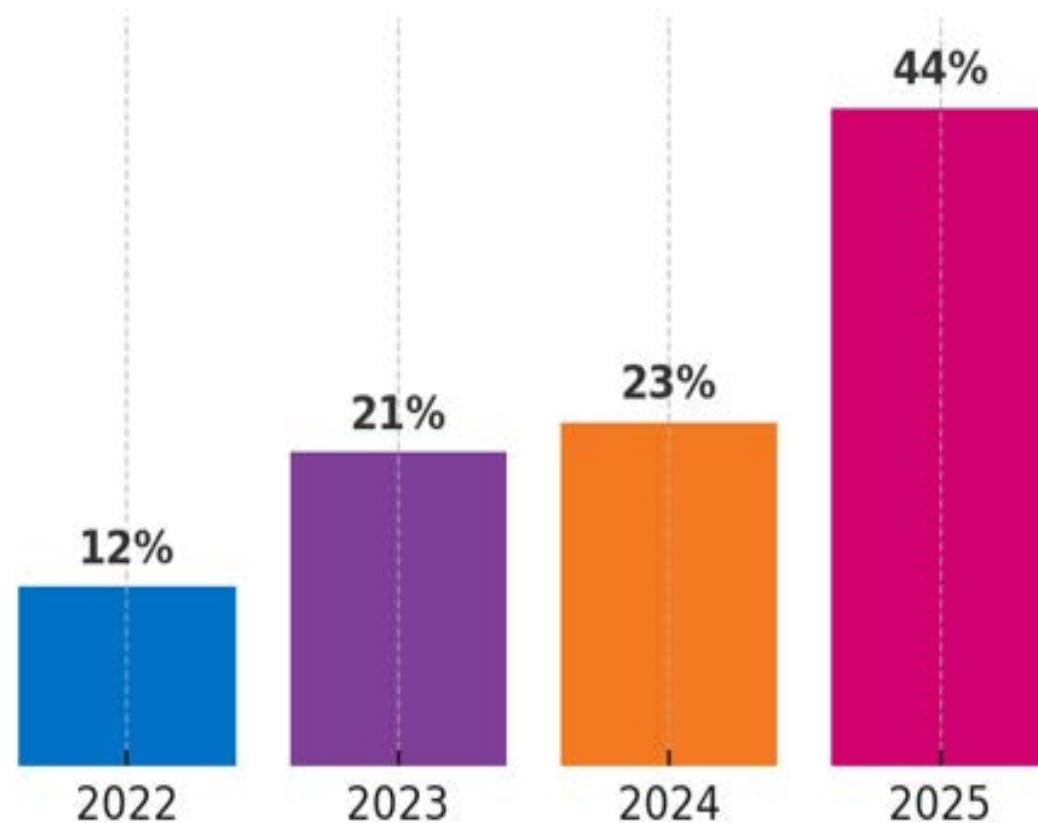
3.1 What is the cost per annum to rent an allotment plot in 2025/26?

(Note: if you have different costs according to size of land, please use the cost for a typical 250 square metre plot including water)



Cost

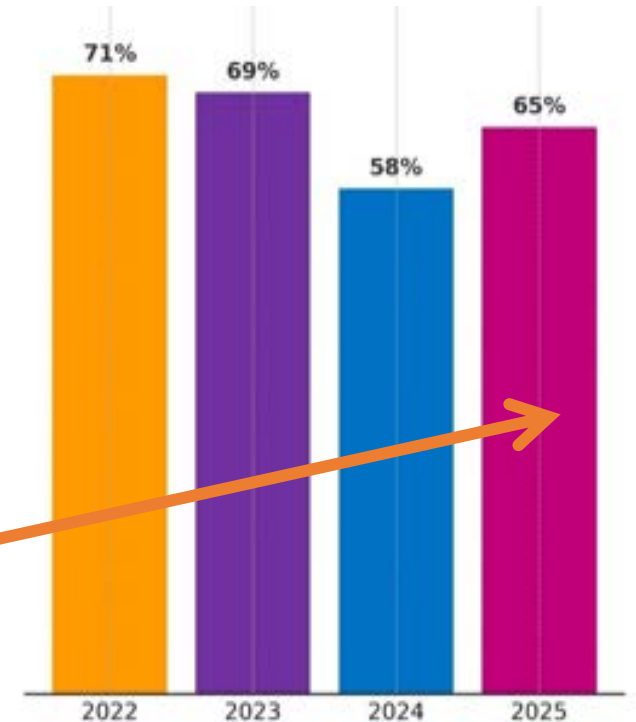
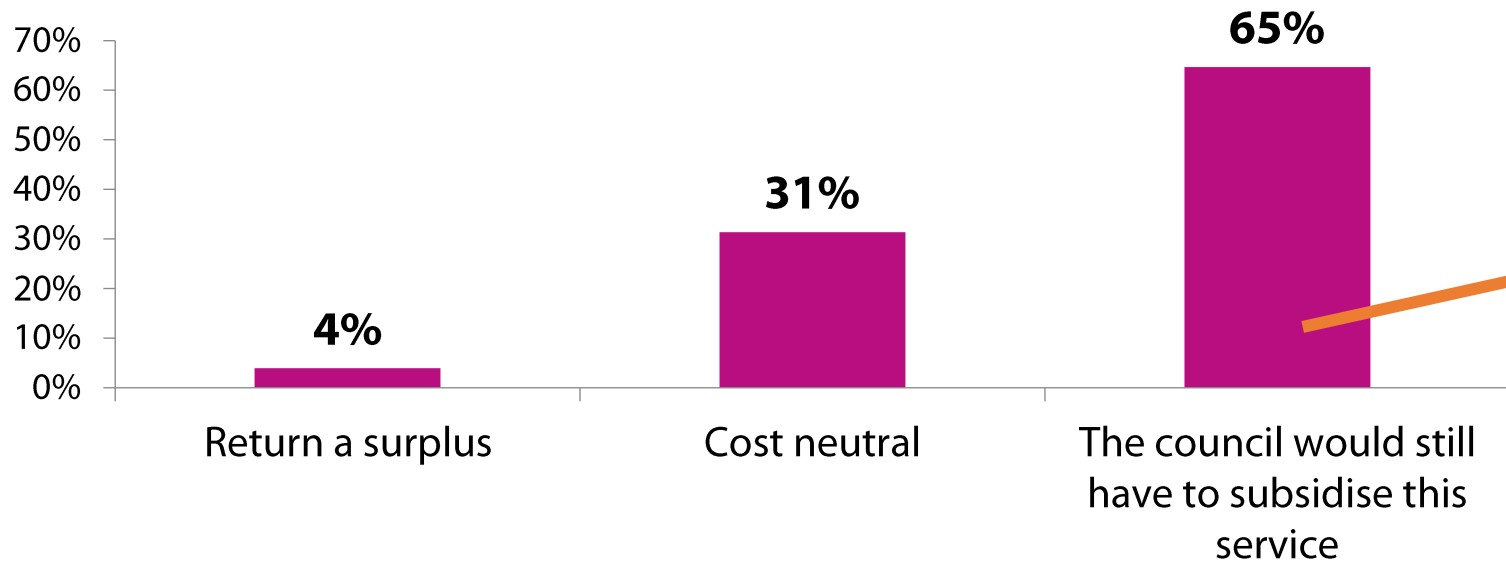
Has the cost per annum to rent an allotment plot increased (beyond an inflationary increase) during the past 2 years?



Percentage answering 'Yes' by year

Subsidies

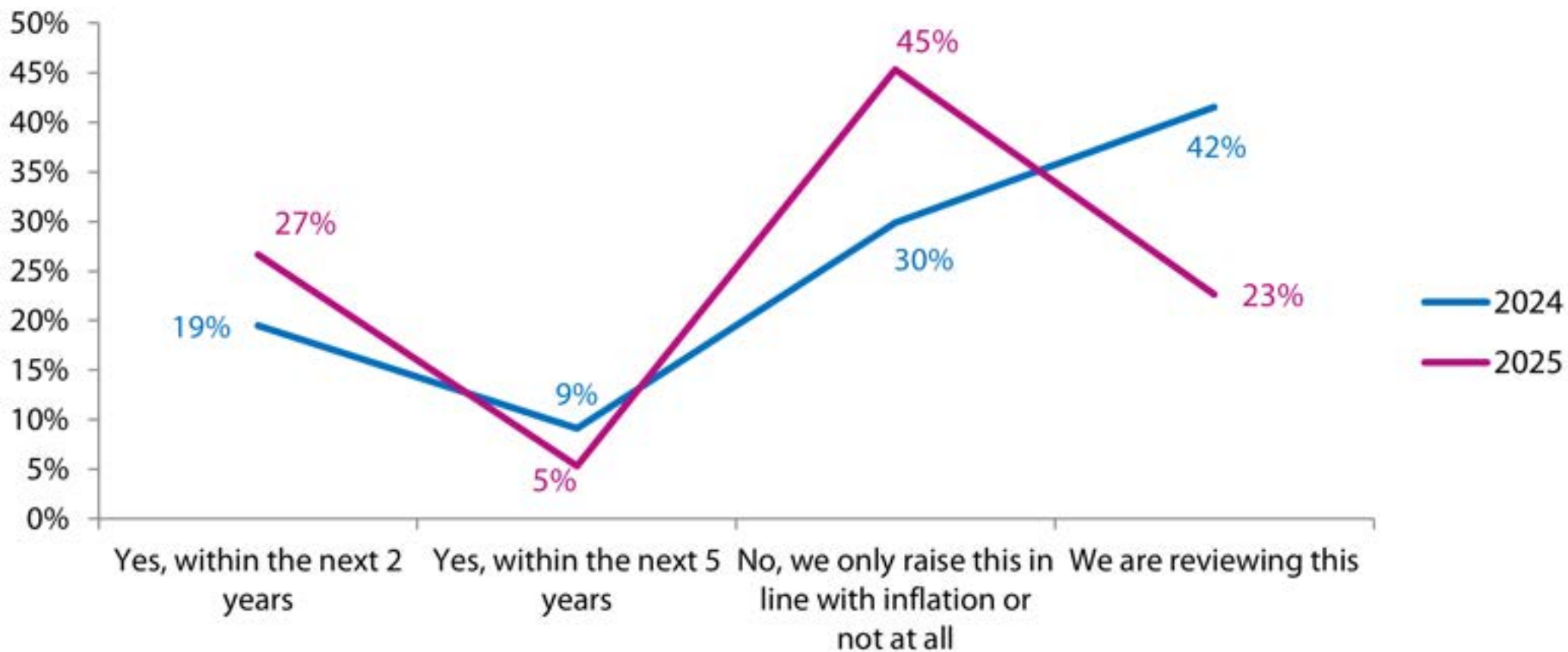
If you are increasing the price of allotment plots beyond inflation, would this increase make the service:



The council would still have to subsidise the service

Cost

3.3 Are you intending to increase the price of allotment plots?





Subsidies

Do you recover the costs from managing allotments?

25%

We break even
(2024)

35%

We break even
(2025)

70%

We subsidise these
(2024)

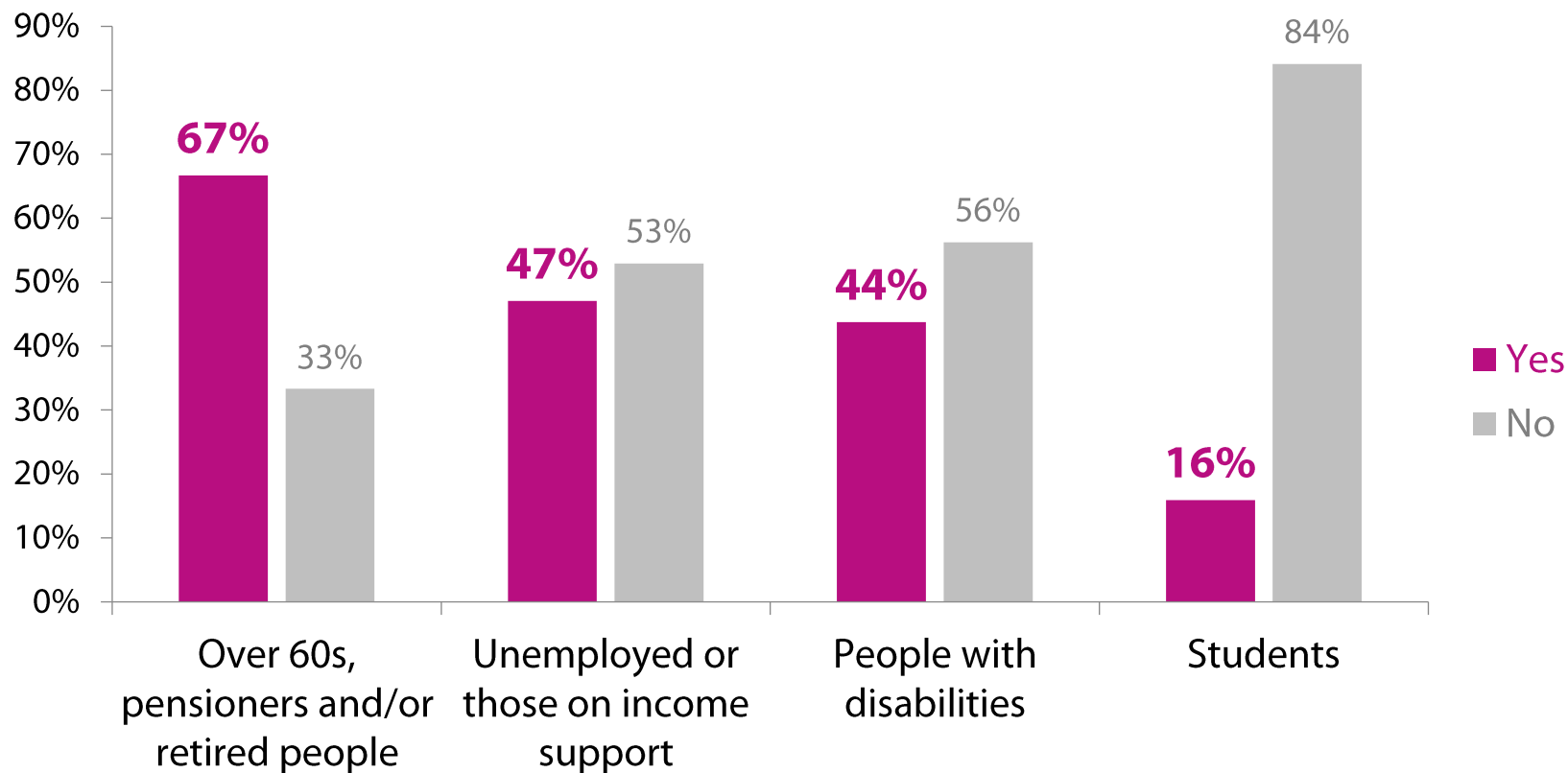
63%

We subsidise these
(2025)

Concessions

60%
Offer concessions

4.1 Do you offer a concession for the following?





Concessions

"Based on the condition of the plot at the time of the tenancy being taken on. If a plot is overgrown, then we will offer the plot as is in return for discounted rent (free period)."

"Those on pension credit/universal/council tax reduction (excluding student/single person)/"

"Armed forces."

"30% for all tenants over the national retirement age, currently 67. 50% for all tenants over the age of 60 who have been an allotment tenant since the 22nd August 2016."

" People on means tested benefits- PIP, Disability living allowance, attendance allowance, jobseekers Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support, Univ Credit, Working Tax credit, Pension Credit,"

"Site Secretary 100% on one full plot."



Access

Do you make provision for people with disabilities to access allotment plots?

57%

"Yes"

"We have recently opened a new community allotment site which has been designed to have accessible areas and facilities such as raised beds and wide pathways."

"If we are made aware of a disability on an application for an allotment we will endeavour to allocate a suitable plot."

"Reasonable adjustments when practicable, including identifying plots near parking/site entrances/plot swaps, improving plot access through wider gates and surfaced paths, and supplying raised beds."

"Council grant-aided upgrading of access path at one site."

"We try to locate those with disabilities closer to the main access gate on a more level plot or we have some sites with raised planters that can be offered."

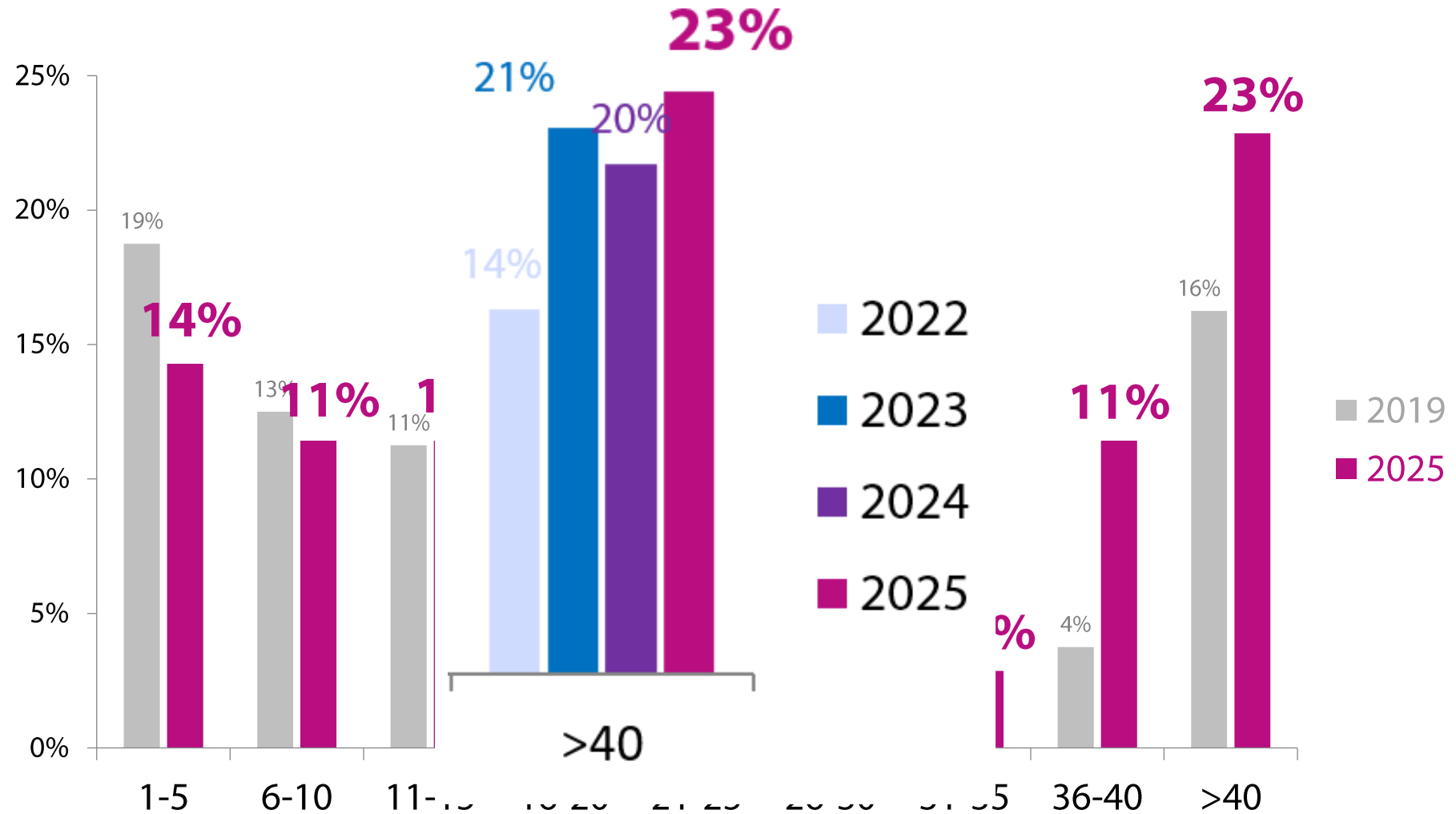
"New sites being developed meet DDA requirements. We also provided wheelchair accessible raised beds on sites developed prior to the enactment of the DDA."



Number of sites

6.2 H

How got?





Number of sites

Does the council have plans to increase the number of allotments?

35%

"Yes"

If you plan to increase the number of allotments, what will be the method of provision? (more than one answer can be selected)

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Direct provision by the council of additional plots	73%	75%	50%	68%
Provision by builders/developers as part of a housing/planning policy	50%	30%	56%	55%
Provision by community groups supported/facilitated by council	41%	45%	37%	32
Provision by other council departments (e.g., Education, Social Work) as part of a healthy lifestyles/eco-schools/health type project	32%	20%	8%	23%
Other	18%	5%	13%	18%



Plot size

Have you reduced the size of your plots to create smaller-sized plots to allow waiting lists to be reduced?

76%

"Yes"

"Wherever possible, larger plots are being spit to make them more manageable / enjoyable, this has

"Once a tenant leaves we ask the next person on the list show them the plot to see if they can manage the size, if not we will reduce the size.

"We are reducing our historical full size plots which have proven in the last few years too big for

"As legacy plot holders move on, plots are divided into smaller plots."

"We have been splitting 10 rod plots into 5 rod plots where feasible."

"We offer half plots, unless plot cannot be split. We also offer quarter plots."

"Some large plots have been turned in to starter plots that are more manageable to working



Plot size

What is the size of your smaller plots?

25sq.m

Smallest plot

If you have reduced plot size how has the public reacted?

"Very happy people cant manage large plots - no time - but just want to grow something. They have a sense of community and they have fresh air and exercise."

"It has been welcomed and accepted by allotment associations and plot holders, however it is not something that we actively publicise."

"Very positively, the smaller plots are managed well, with tenants using the space more efficiently."

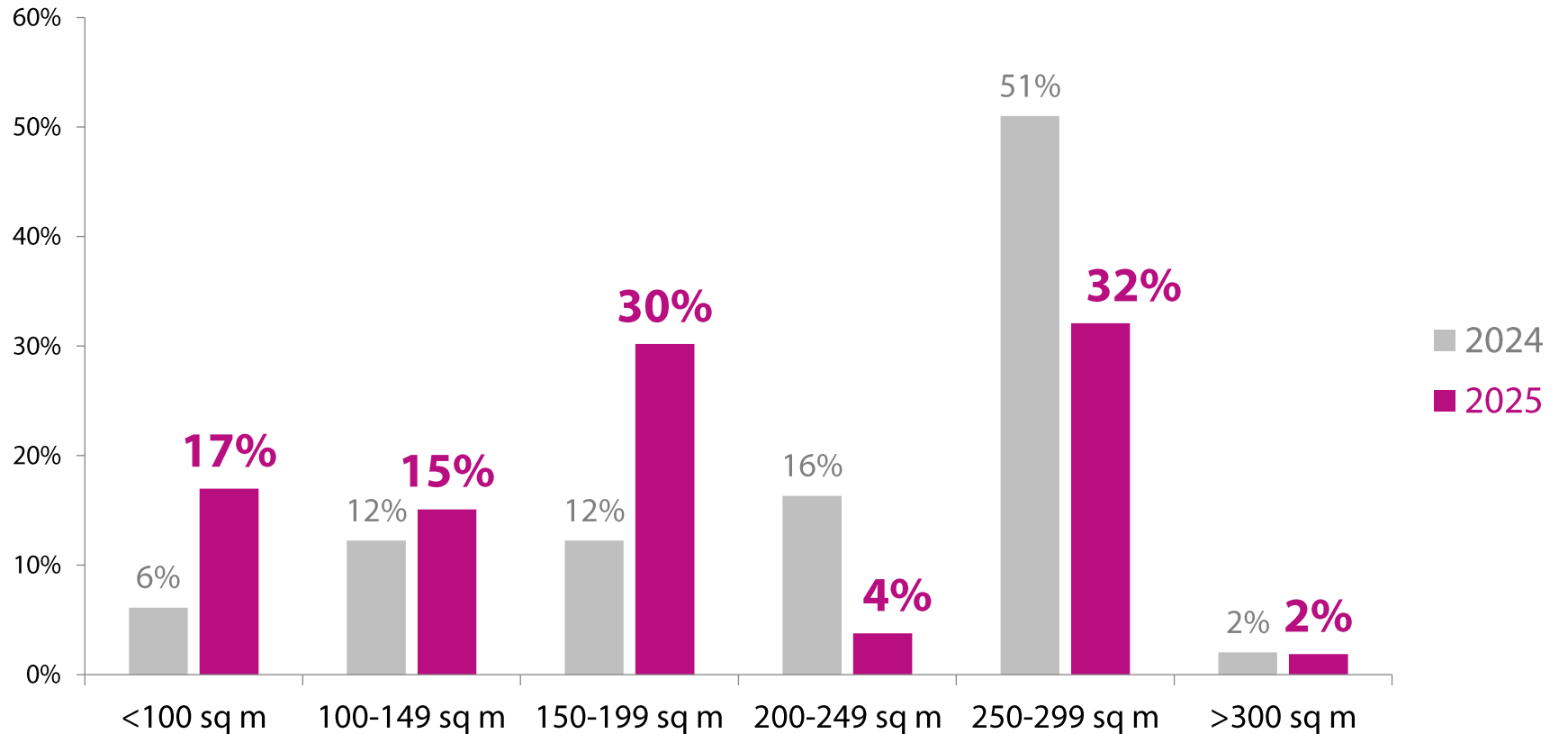
"Favourably. Large plots are hard to modern families to manage."

"Positively for getting people on allotments and off the waiting list. But this does put additional pressure on associations and the council to manage more people and plots."

"There have been no complaints about this. There are very few people left that can manage a 25mts x 10mts plot."

Plot size

7.1 What is the approximate size of a standard plot in square metres?





Plot ownership

Do you restrict plot ownership to a person or a household?
i.e. one plot per household?

55%

"Yes"

Can plots be passed on to families and friends?

65%

"No"

Are plot-holders required to undertake a probationary period to ensure they can manage their plot effectively?

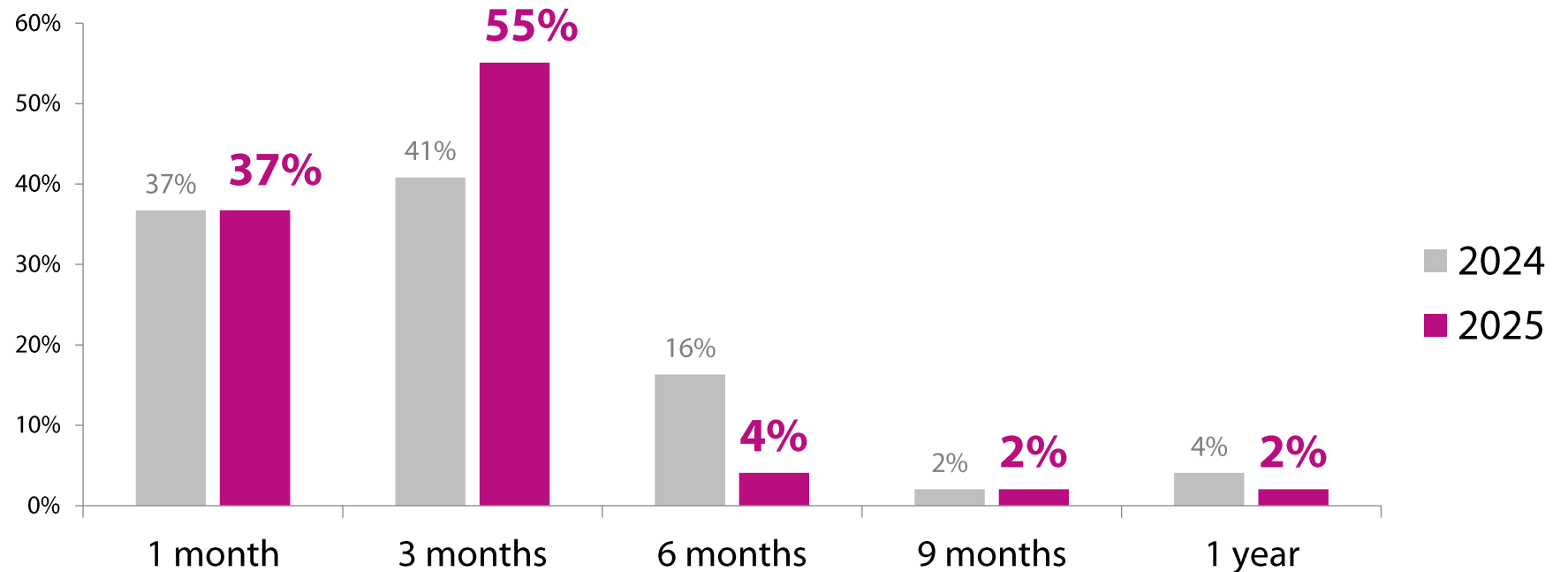
30%

"Yes"



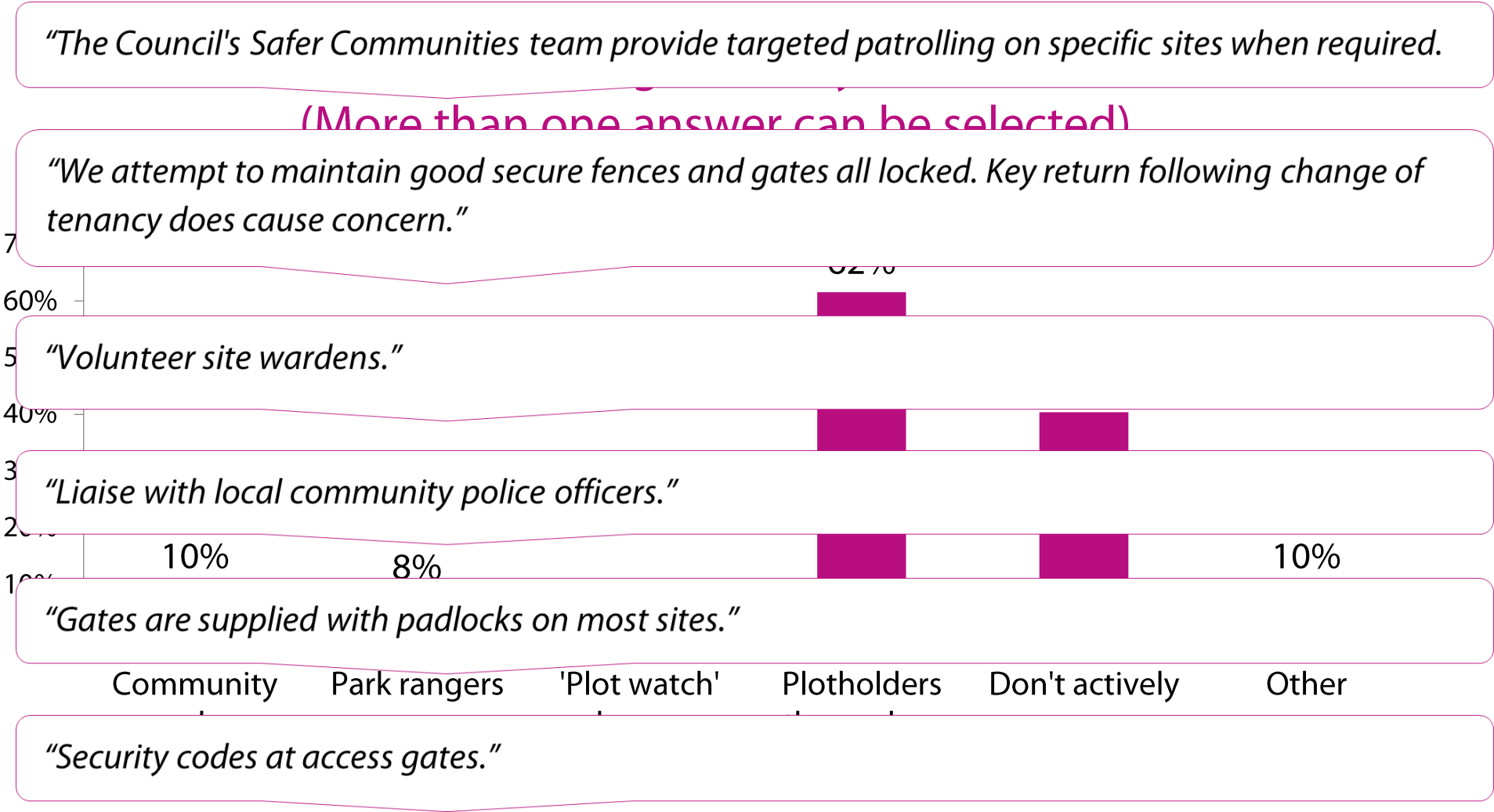
Monitoring

9.1 What length of time do you allow a plot to be uncultivated before you take action?



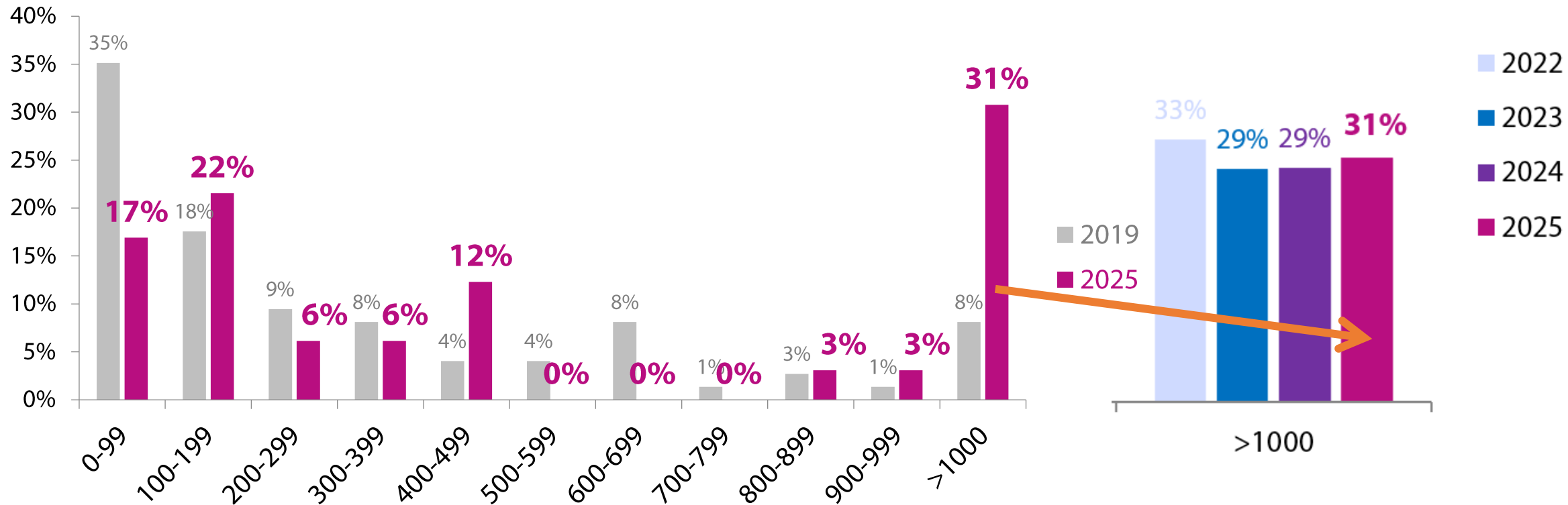


Monitoring



Waiting lists

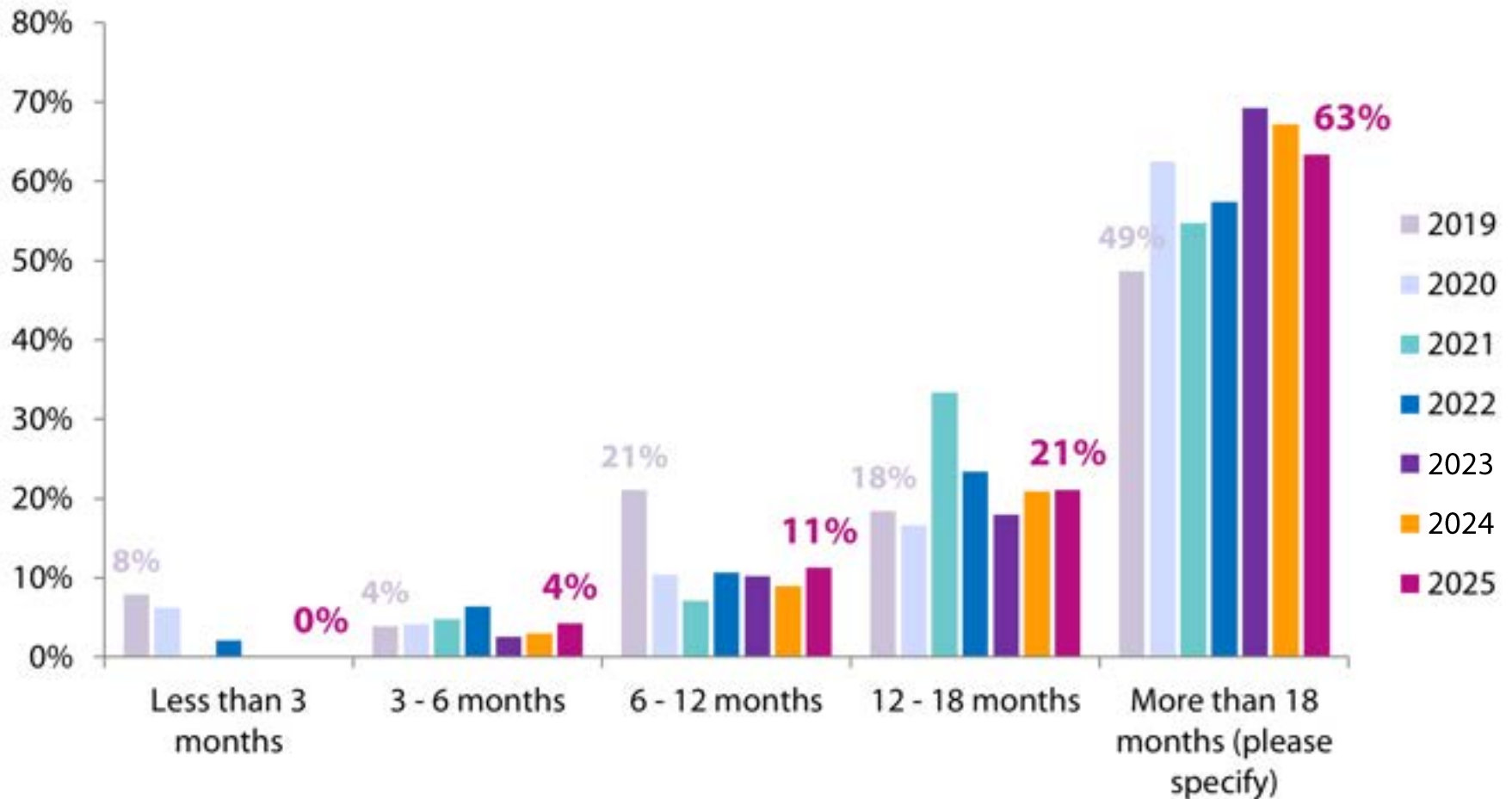
10.1 What is the approximate number of people on the waiting list for an allotment?





Waiting time

What is the average waiting time to receive an allotment plot?





Budget responsibility

28%

Green waste disposal

30%

Promotion activities

25%

Provision and maintenance
of community huts

90%

Perimeter walls/ fencing
provision and repair

88%

Paths / roads / steps
construction and repair

75%

Water bills

28%

Electricity bills

40%

Waste disposal - other

Do you charge separately for water supply?

25%

"Yes"

- Of those who charge separately, most said they charge a flat rate for water supply on their allotments.
- Some base the amount on plot size (e.g., £3 per pole, with one pole equating to 25 sqm) or a set annual fee (e.g., £8.65 per plot).
- A few mentioned charges linked to usage from the previous year.
- One noted that a flat rate would be reviewed if costs became very high.

Strategies

8. Promoting healthy and safe communities

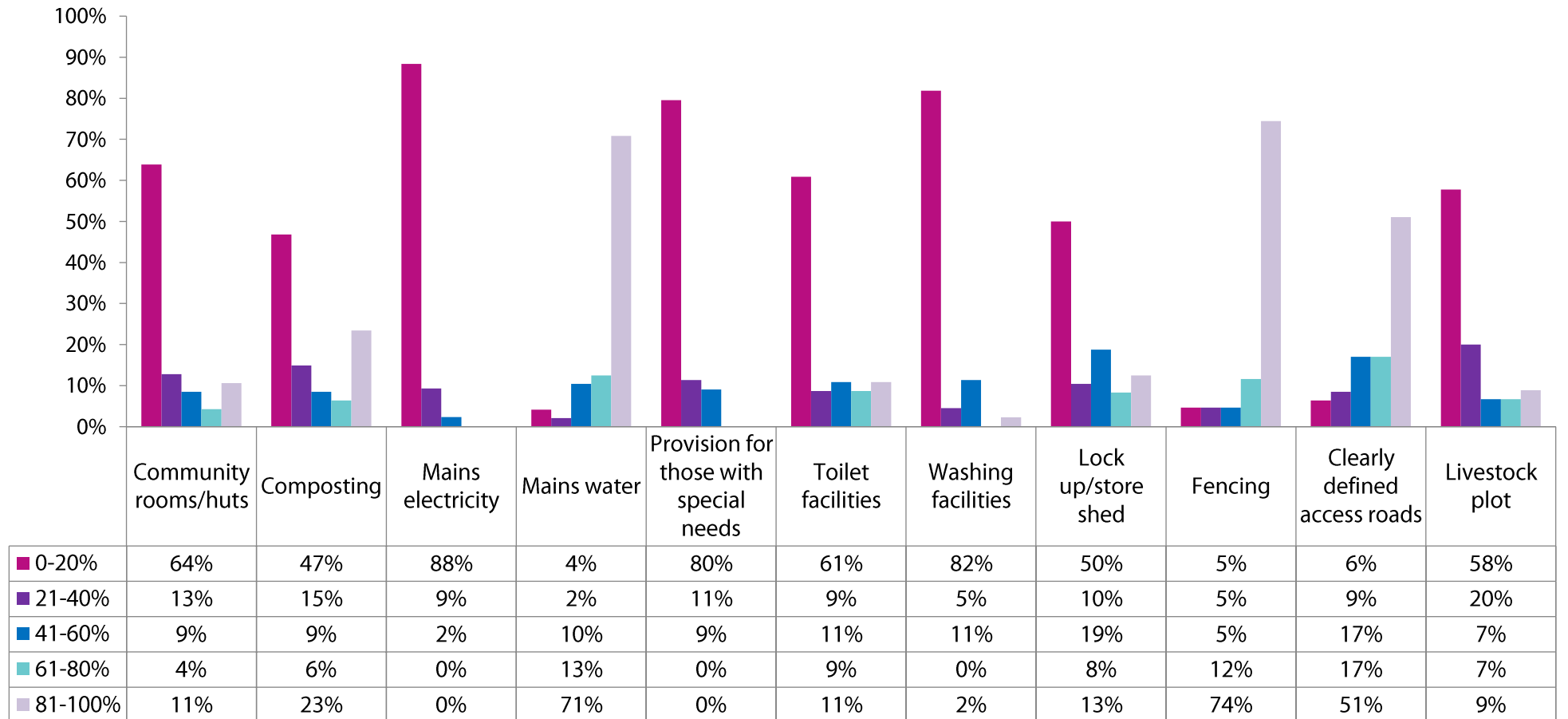
96. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:
- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;
 - b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and
 - c) enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

11. Making effective use of land

124. Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land⁴⁹.
125. Planning policies and decisions should:
- a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;
 - b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;

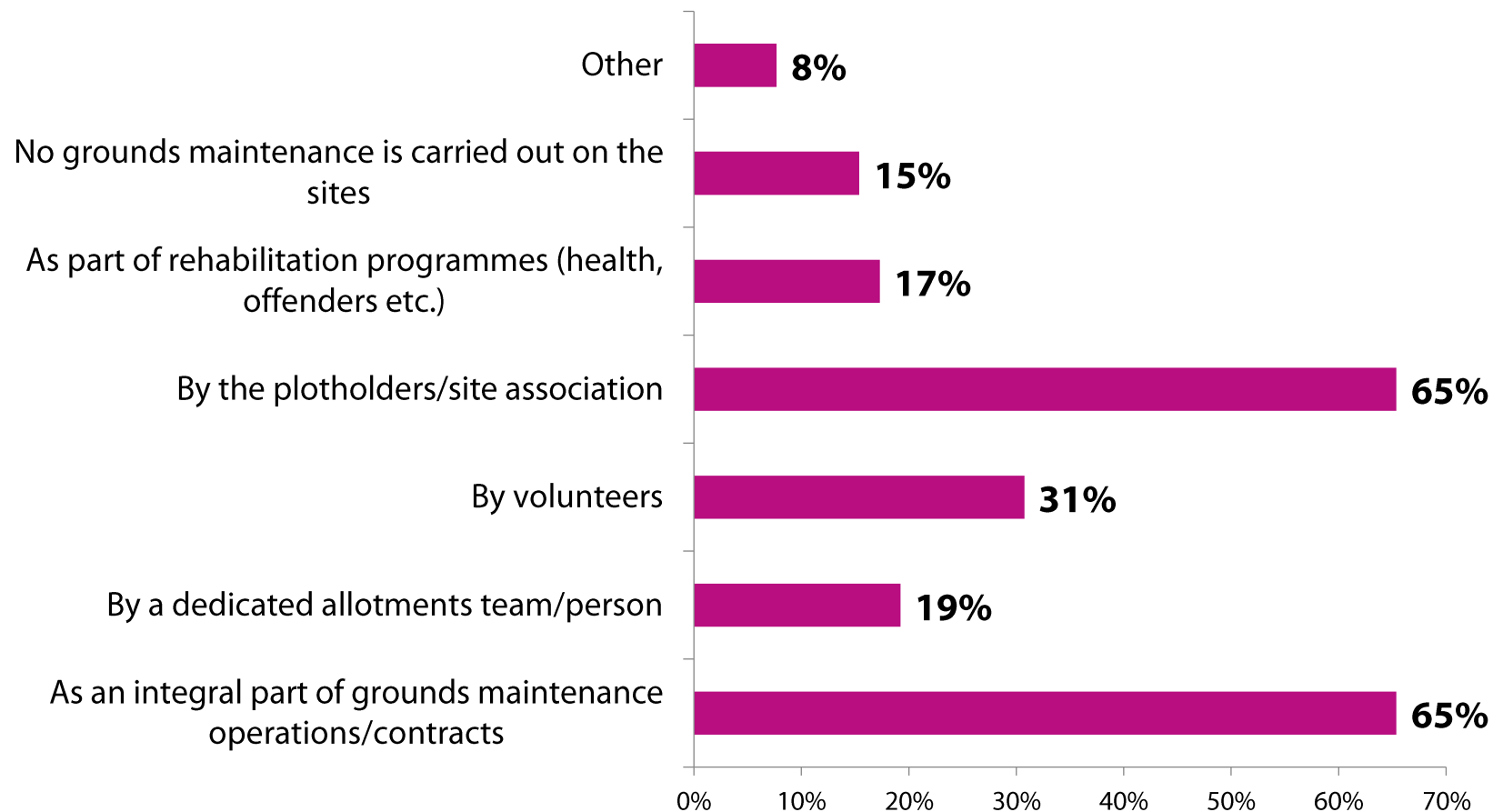
Amenities

13.1 What is the approximate percentage of allotment sites with:



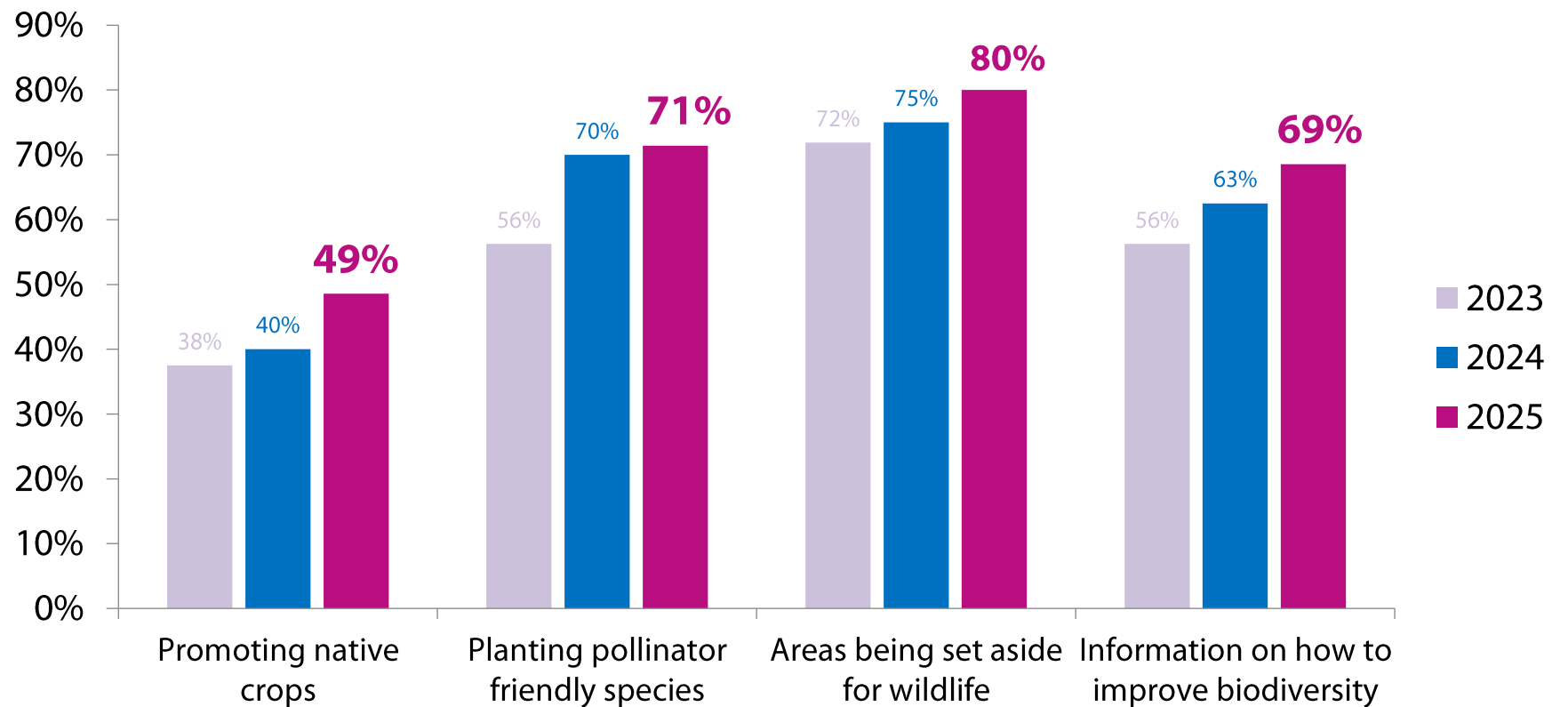
Amenities – Grounds maintenance

12.2 How is grounds maintenance carried out on allotment sites? (More than one answer can be selected)



Biodiversity

14.1 How is biodiversity promoted amongst plot-holders?
(More than one answer can be selected)





Sustainable practices

67%

Cultivating plots organically

95%

Adopting water-saving measures (e.g. water butts)

23%

Using solar power instead of mains power



Five takeaways

1. Continued focus on plot size adjustments
2. Waiting times may be starting to plateau
3. Cost pressures are shifting services towards cost neutrality
4. Biodiversity actions are becoming embedded
5. Progress towards accessibility and inclusivity



Conclusion

- 🌱 While the “Angela Rayner’s War on Allotments” headline distorts the actual situation, it reinforces the need for continued advocacy to ensure allotments are protected and supported.
- 🌱 Allotments play a vital role in promoting health and wellbeing, providing people with valuable opportunities for physical activity, stress relief and social connection.
- 🌱 The challenge will be to sustain the environmental and social gains delivered by allotments while balancing financial sustainability and land pressures.
- 🌱 What next for this network: Parks Network sub-groups with (semi)regular allotment online meetings?
Research ideas?



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Managing allotments in local authorities

Online training course

This online training course provides an introduction to the key issues and principles of allotment management. If you are looking to move towards a more senior position, or you want to grow the skills to understand, develop, and cope with the demands faced by managers, this course will provide a robust overview.

Next date: 10-11 September 2025





Upcoming meetings



*Climate Change Network
Online Meeting*

A Focus on Local Authority Greenspace

Thursday 21 August,
10.30-11.30, MS Teams

A **FREE** networking meeting for members



The Really Rewild Show

Rewilding tools, techniques and strategies for
local authorities

Wednesday 3 September, 09.30-13.00, MS Teams



apse

Annual seminar and service awards 2025

10-11 September 2025, Glasgow

Bookings now open at apse.org.uk/events

**Two complimentary
places per member
council!**