

Westminster After Dark

Research & Insight, Strategy & Intelligence

February 2024

Methodology and limitations

- **Method:**

- Online survey disseminated via methods – including on WAD commonplace platform, communication emails, and adverts. Data in this report represents responses gathered between 1 October 2023 and 14 February 2024.
- Since the previous report in January, the survey has remained open to boost the number of responses. **The findings in this report remain consistent with the previous report in January, with no major changes occurring in the data.** Overall, 376 people have responded to the survey so far, made up for 248 residents and 80 visitors, with the remainder being day-time workers and other respondents.

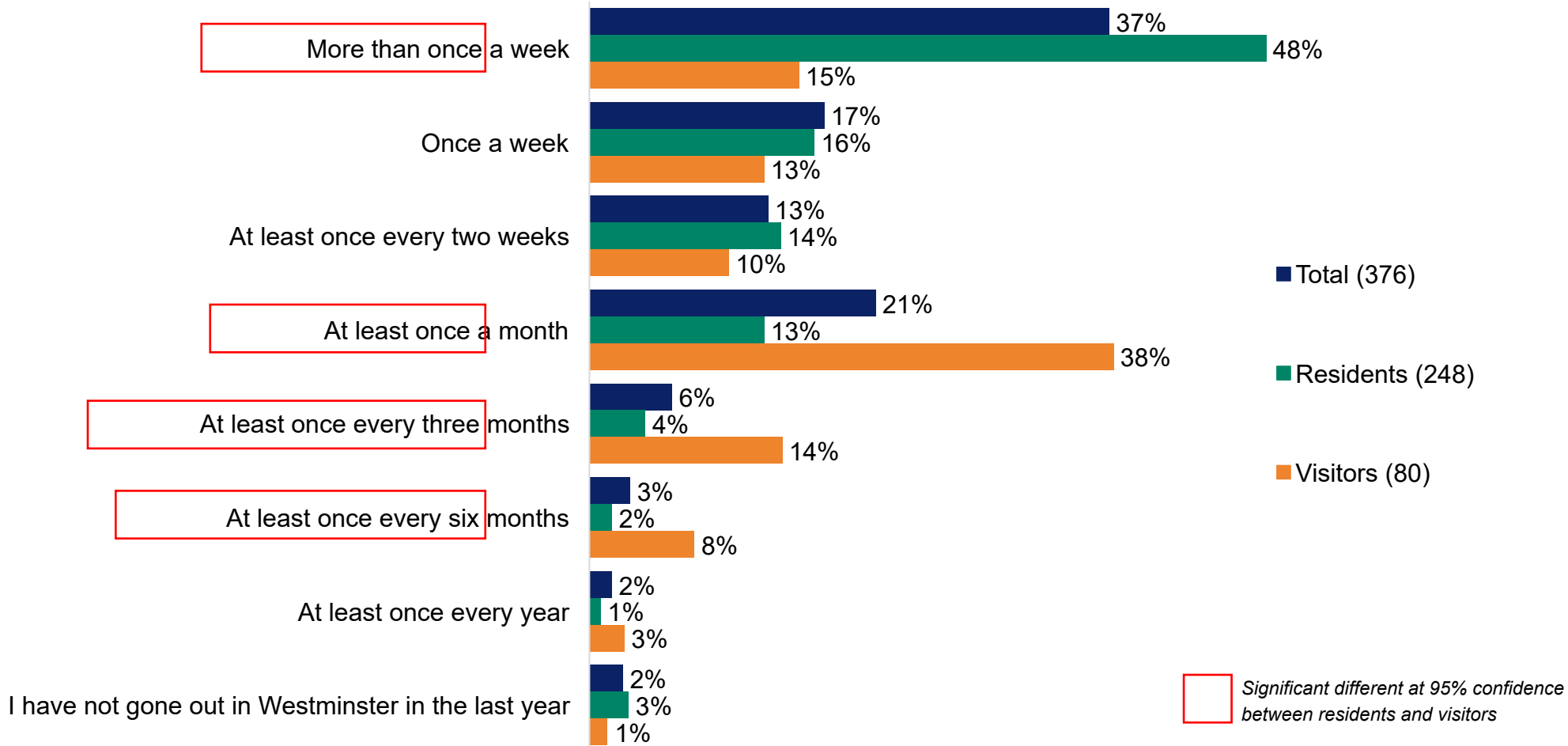
- **Limitations:**

- **The sample size of visitors is still relatively small (80 in total) so findings for this group should still be considered indicative.** Additionally, despite leaving the survey open for a longer period, sample sizes of some sub-groups remain relatively small, limiting our ability to conduct detailed analysis of some groups – for example, we only received 27 responses from black residents or visitors, meaning we are unable to look at how responses from this group differ other ethnicities, if at all. **Where indicated with a star (*) subgroup analysis should be considered indicative.**
- The demographic data gathered in this survey was changed after 2 October 2023 to gather more detailed demographic information, such as religion, sexual orientation, and disability status. Thus, we do not have full demographic data for all responses, various questions were added after some respondents had already taken the survey.
- Responses relating to night-time workers and businesses have not been analysed in this report, due to the small number of responses received (47 night-time workers / 31 businesses).

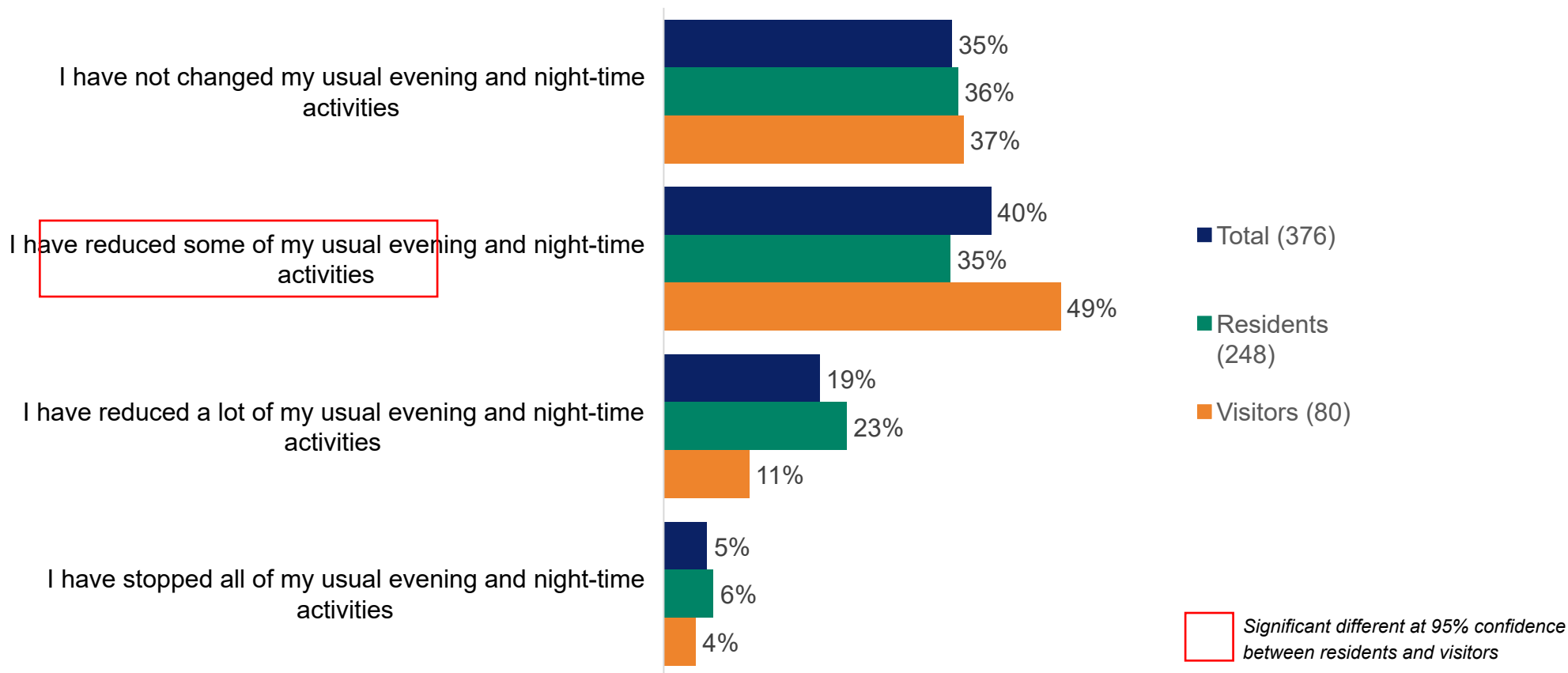
- **Significant difference:**

- Statistical significance helps us decide if differences in the data, for example between the views of residents and the views of visitors, are likely to be a real difference or just coincidence. Statistical significance helps to determine if the patterns or differences we see in the data are due to a genuine effect or if they could have happened by chance.
- A red box indicates that a difference between two specific samples (e.g. between residents and visitors, or men and women) is significant – and therefore likely to be real rather than a coincidence. **However, it remains the case that any differences between residents and visitors are indicative.**

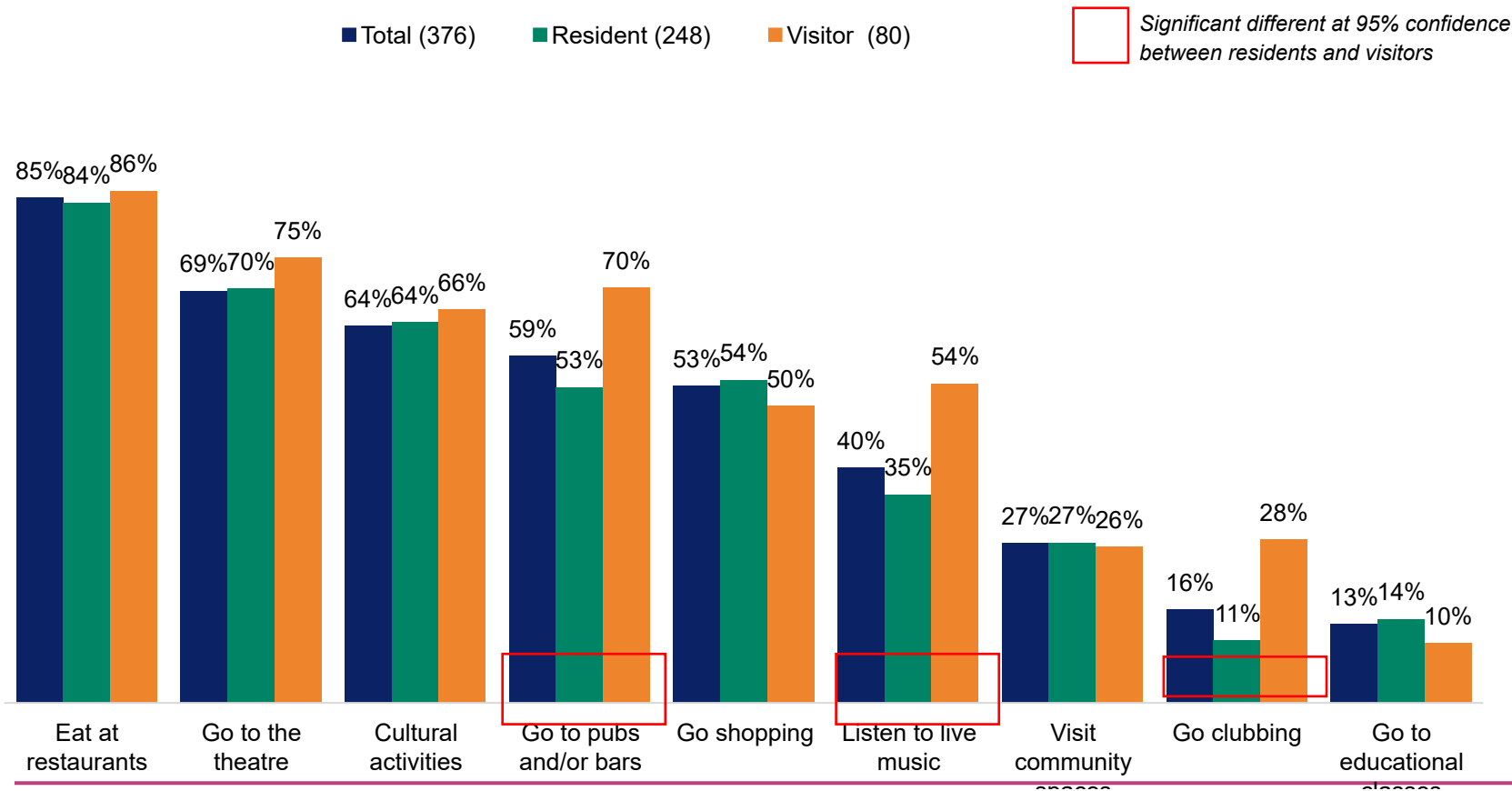
Around a third 3 in 5 residents go out in Westminster in the evening and night-time at least once a week. Visitors mostly visit at least once a month.



Just under two thirds have reduced their evening and night-time activities due to cost of living pressures, mostly by a small amount. Over a third have made no changes.



Residents and visitors are attracted to similar activities in Westminster in the evening and night-time – with restaurants, theatres, cultural activities, and pubs/bars the most popular activities. Visitors are more likely than residents to go to pubs/bars, listen to live music, or go clubbing.

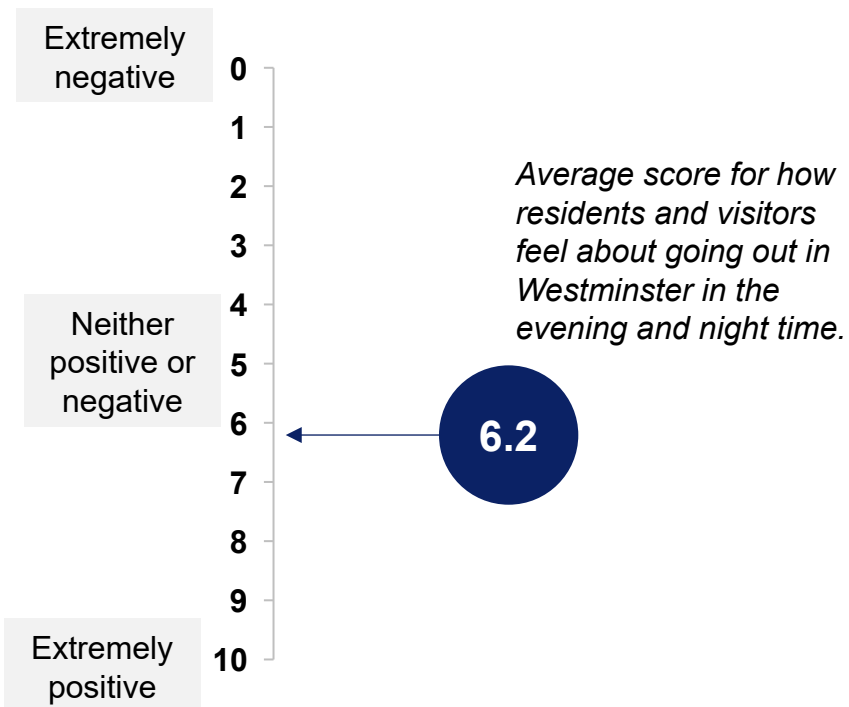


Subgroup analysis:

- Men are more likely to listen to live music, go to pubs/bars, go clubbing than women.
- Those aged 65+ are more likely to attend cultural activities than other age groups.*
- Those 65+ are less likely than other age groups to go to pubs and/or bars, as well as to go clubbing.*
- Those from a Global Majority background are less likely than white people to go restaurants, the theatre, cultural activities, pubs/ bars, live music and clubs.*

Residents and visitors are generally positive about Westminster after dark and appreciate the wide range of things to do.

On average, residents and visitors are slightly positive about going out in Westminster after dark.



What do residents and visitors like about Westminster after dark?*

People are generally positive about going out in Westminster in the evening and night time, particularly in areas like Soho, Chinatown, and the West End. Respondents appreciate the vibrant and diverse atmosphere, with a wide range of options for restaurants, pubs, theatres, and cultural activities.

The variety of entertainment choices, including live music venues, LGBTQ+ establishments, and late-night options, contributes to the appeal.

Safety is a theme and many people say they generally feel safe going out in Westminster after dark, with some referencing the volume of people and the crowds as contributing to a feeling of safety. It is worth noting that a similar number of people also feel unsafe.

However, some express concerns about noise, traffic, and a shift towards fast-food outlets.

Overall, the responses highlight the dynamic and lively nature of these urban areas, where people enjoy the convenience, cultural richness, and social opportunities

Residents and visitors experience a range of issues in Westminster after dark that they would like addressed.

What do residents and visitors dislike about Westminster after dark?*

Safety Concerns: Despite many people saying they feel safe after dark in Westminster, many people feel unsafe, particularly women.

Traffic and Congestion: Many respondents express frustration with traffic congestion, unsafe driving practices, and a lack of pedestrian-friendly areas. Some suggest pedestrianizing certain streets, particularly in Soho.

Early Closing Times: People complain about early closing times for pubs, bars, and other venues. Uniform closing times seen as contributing to congestion and limiting late-night options. Some feel that there is a limited variety of late-night options for entertainment, food, and activities.

Anti-Social Behaviour: Concerns about anti-social behaviour, rowdy patrons, noise, and the impact of alcohol-led venues on the streets are often mentioned. Issues include harassment, aggression, and feeling unsafe.

Dirty and Unkempt Streets: The cleanliness of streets is an issue, with complaints about rubbish, graffiti, and an overall sense of neglect. The smell of urine in certain places is also noted with people mentioning insufficient availability of public toilets as an issue contributing to this problem.

Pedicabs and Noise Pollution: Pedicabs are a source of annoyance, with mentions of noise pollution, aggressive behaviour, and the need for stricter regulations.

Changes that would improve resident and visitor experience*

Safety and Security: Desire for increased police presence, better lighting, and measures to address anti-social behaviour, drug use, and crime. Concerns about feeling unsafe, particularly for women, are noted.

Reduced Noise and Crowds: People emphasize the need for reduced noise, both from traffic and late-night activities. Complaints about crowded streets, especially in areas like Soho, are frequent.

Traffic and Pollution: People call for reduced traffic, better cycling infrastructure, and pedestrian-friendly zones. Concerns about air pollution and noise from vehicles are mentioned.

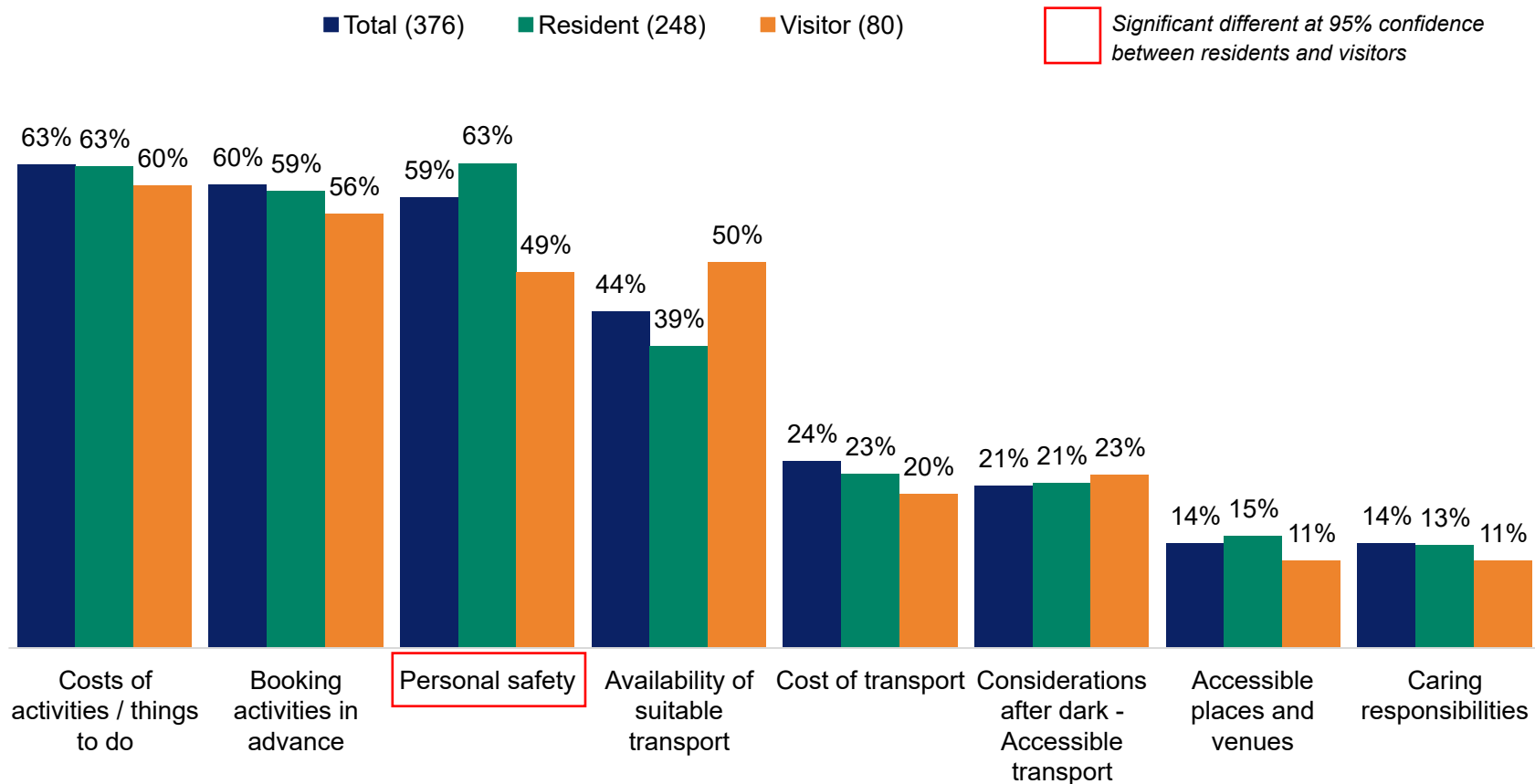
Extended Opening Hours: Requests for businesses, including pubs, bars, and restaurants, to have extended opening hours.

Public Facilities: Requests for more public toilets, especially during the night. Suggestions for creating safe spaces and facilities for women, families, and vulnerable individuals.

Affordability: Some respondents mention the cost of going out as a consideration, suggesting more affordable options.

Transportation: Requests for better and more frequent night bus services. Desire for the night tube to operate beyond Fridays and Saturdays. Concerns about the availability and cost of late-night transportation, including taxis.

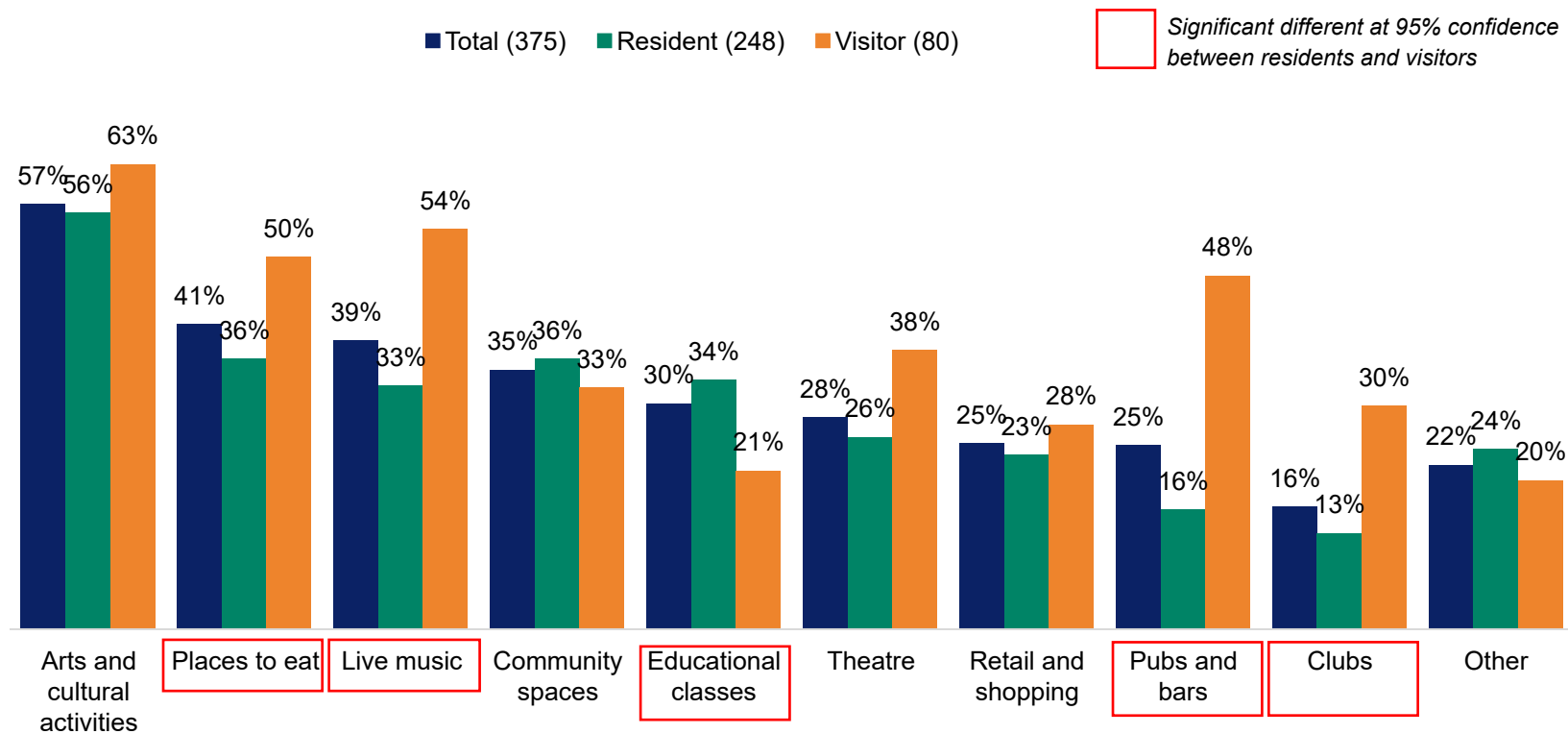
Cost of activities, booking activities, and personal safety are most important considerations for going out after dark in Westminster. Personal safety is significantly more important a consideration for residents than for visitors.



Subgroup analysis:

- Women more likely than men to consider personal safety (69% vs 44%).
- People from a Global Majority background more likely to consider personal safety and the cost of transport than white people.*
- People aged 65+ less likely to be concerned about cost of transport than other ages.*
- Those aged 35-54 more likely than other ages to consider caring responsibilities.*

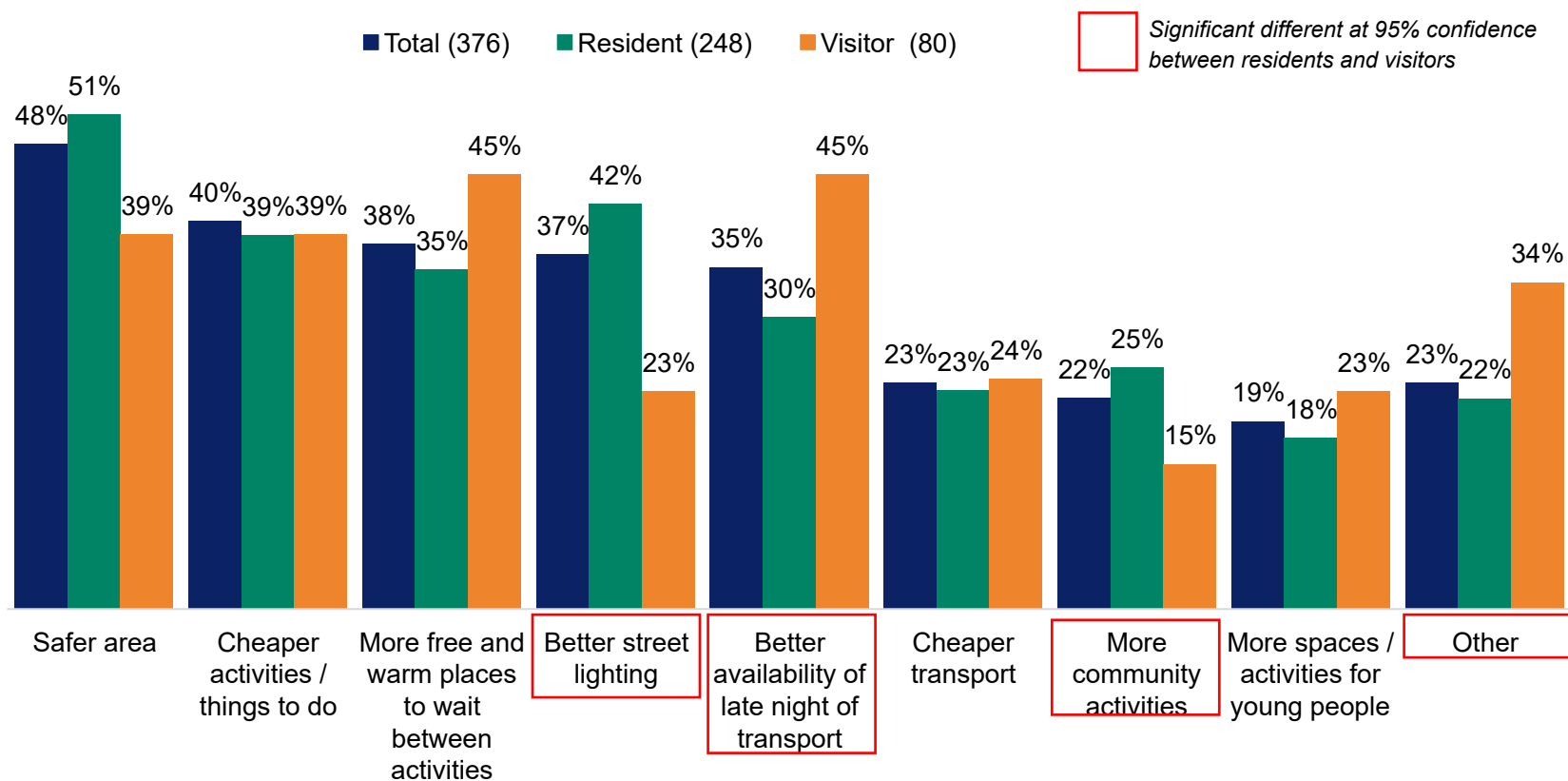
People would like to see more arts and cultural activities in Westminster in the evening and night-time, followed by places to eat and live music. Compared to residents, visitors see more restaurants, live music, pubs / bars, and clubs as an attractive proposition. On the other hand, residents are more likely than visitors to want more educational classes.



Subgroup analysis:

- Men are more likely than women to want to see more pubs/bars and clubs. Women are more likely to want to see more educational classes.
- People from Global Majority backgrounds are more likely to want to see more educational classes and community spaces than white people.*
- White people are more likely to want to see more live music and pubs and bars than other ethnicities.*

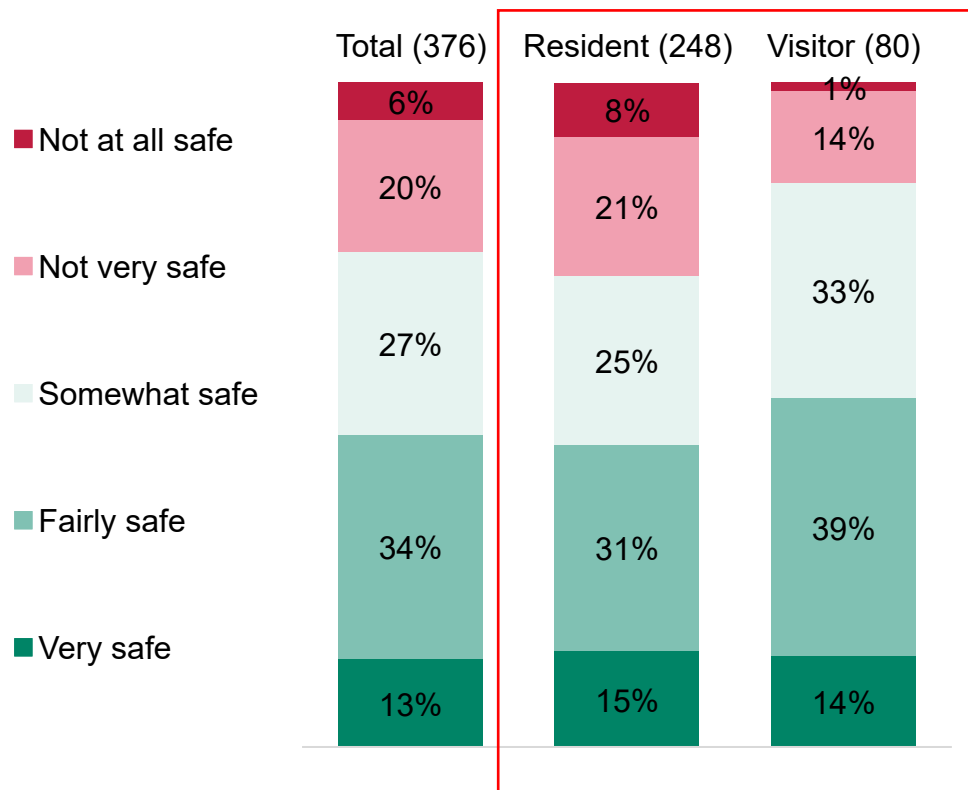
Overall, greater safety would most encourage people to stay and go out in Westminster after dark, followed by cheaper activities and places to wait. Resident and visitor priorities differ in some areas – better late night transport is more important to visitors, whilst residents are more concerned about improving street lighting.



Subgroup analysis:

- Women are more likely than men to say that a safer area and better street lighting would encourage them to stay and go out in Westminster after dark.
- People from a Global Majority background are more likely than white people in all areas to say that specific change or improvement would encourage them to say and go out in Westminster in the evening and night-time.*

Just over 1 in 4 do not feel safe after dark in Westminster – residents are more likely to feel unsafe in the evening and night-time than visitors. There is no significant difference in how safe men and women feel in the evening and night-time in Westminster.

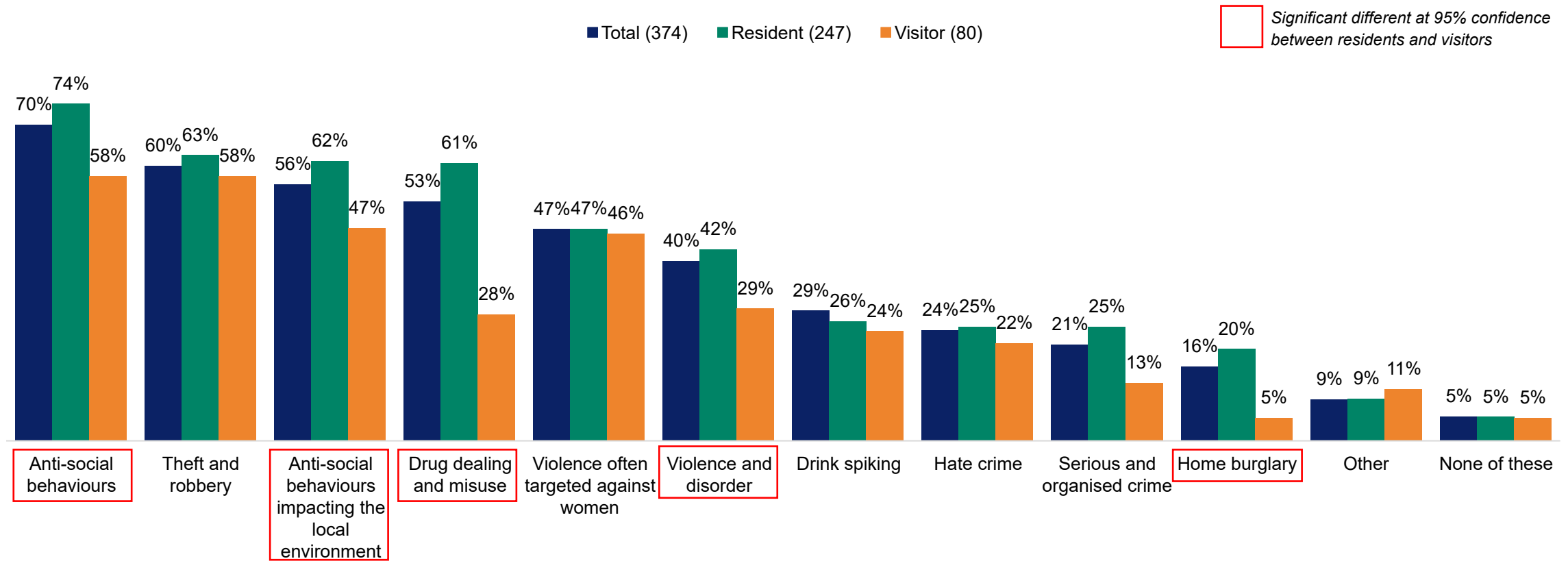


 Significant different at 95% confidence between residents and visitors

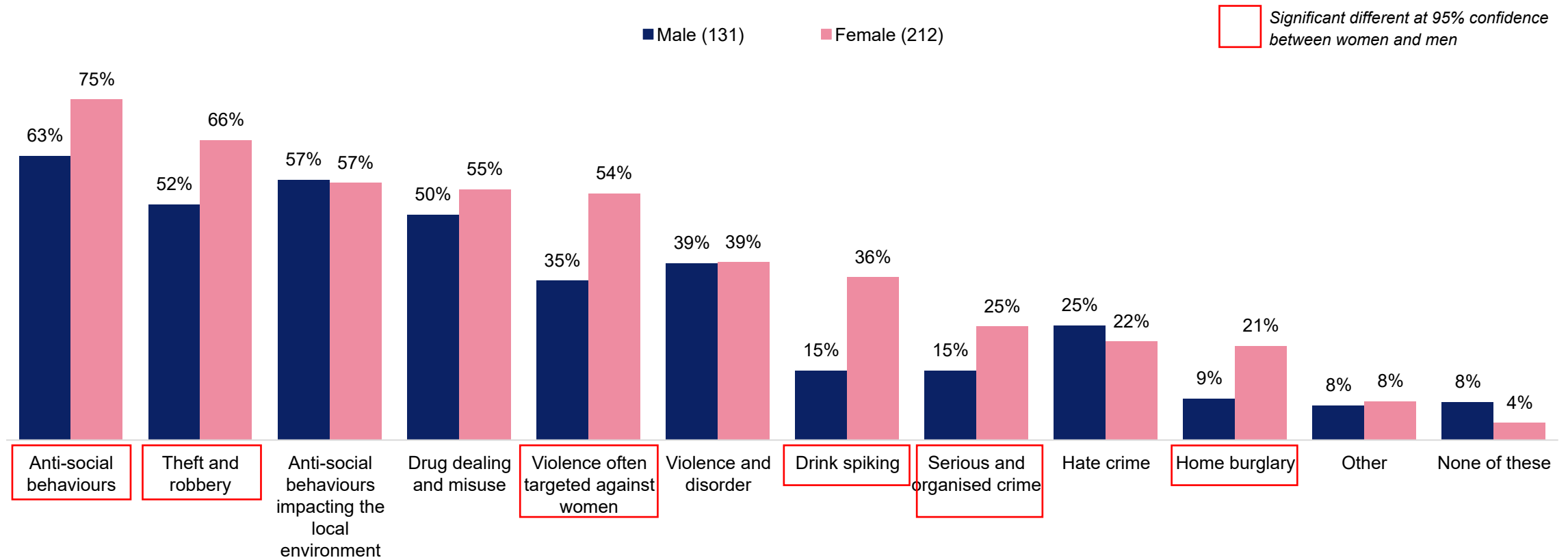
Subgroup analysis:

- Women are more likely than men to be concerned about theft and robbery, gender-based violence, and drink spiking.
- People from a Global Majority background are more likely to be concerned about hate crime than white people.*
- People aged 64+ are more likely than other age groups to be concerned about anti-social behaviours (both social and environmental).*

Matching the CIA findings, ASB is the biggest safety issue in Westminster in the evening and night-time, followed by theft and robbery. Visitors are less concerned than residents about a range of issues, such as ASB, drug dealing / misuse, and violence and disorder.



Despite no significant difference in how safe women and men feel in the evening and night-time in Westminster, women are more concerned about a range of safety concerns than men – particularly anti-social behaviour, theft and robbery, gender-based violence, and drink spiking.



Women highlight a complex set of issues related to public safety, ranging from social behaviour problems to environmental factors and a perceived lack of law enforcement presence.

Feeling unsafe after dark:

- Feeling unsafe due to disorderly and anti-social behaviour linked to alcohol and drugs. Women express concerns about aggression, fights, shouting and rowdy behaviour.
- Fear of safety when walking alone at night, with inadequate lighting contributing to this feeling.
- Several provided specific instances of crime and street harassment, such as being chased, robbed, or curb crawled.
- Presence of drug users and dealers, with drug taking in public spaces contributes to feelings of insecurity.

Homelessness and Begging:

- Issues related to the presence of rough sleepers, homeless encampments, and begging contribute to feeling unsafe.

Diminished Police Presence:

- Women feel there has been a decline in visible policing, which has negatively impacted their sense of safety. As a result, there are requests for more police presence on the streets in the evening and night time.

Inadequate Lighting:

- Poorly lit areas contribute to feelings of insecurity with requests for better street lighting to enhance safety.

Street Environment:

- Concerns about cleanliness, including litter, graffiti, and unpleasant smells. Notable mention of urine in certain areas and the lack of cleanliness contributing to an unsafe atmosphere.

Transportation-related Concerns:

- Specific mentions of feeling unsafe due to bicycles, e-scooters, and pedicabs.

By comparison, fewer men identify safety concerns, but these are similar to those identified by women.

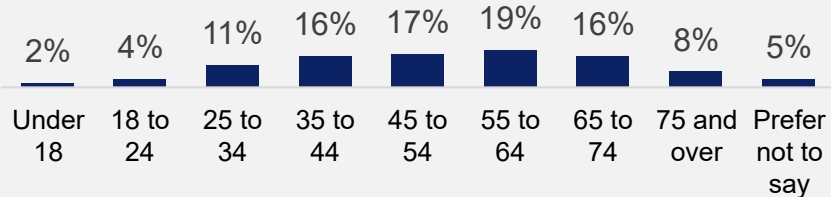
Anti-social behaviour: some concerns about drunkenness and rowdiness, particularly in areas with high concentrations of bars and pubs.

Homelessness and Begging: homeless people and begging lead some men to feel unsafe after dark.

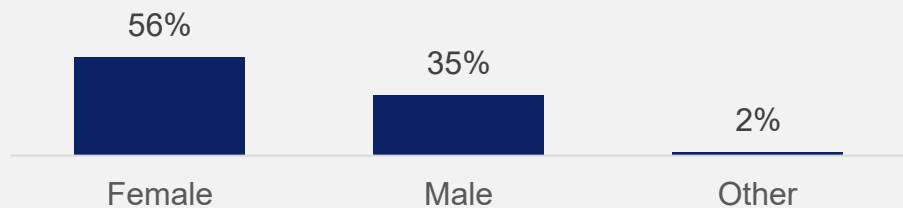
Traffic and transport: several mention safety concerns about traffic and cars, particularly with regards to speeding and bad driving at night.

Sample demographics (residents and visitors combined)

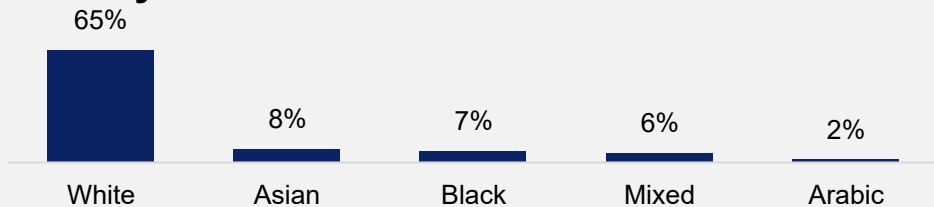
Age



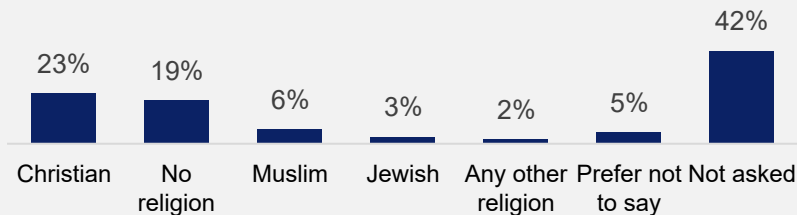
Gender



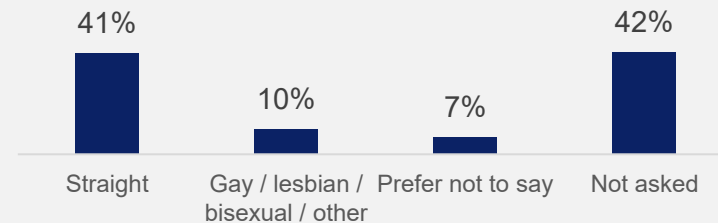
Ethnicity



Religion



Sexual orientation



Disability status

