

# State of the UK's Parks 2016 Results and Comments



# Are Parks Really Important?

- Growing recognition as to the value of parks to the nation's mental, physical and social well-being.
- Wider environmental value of parks to flood alleviation, ameliorating impacts of climate change, improving air quality, enhancing biodiversity and contribution to natural capital.
- Economic value of parks included in regeneration projects, attracting inward investment and promoting tourism.
- 68% of park users say spending time in parks is essential to their quality of life – rising to 71% in urban areas (80% of UK's population is urban)
- Parks are considered to be essential to 81% of parents with young children
- **34 million visits are made to UK parks each year (2014)**

# Obviously the argument is won - isn't it?

- Still a non-statutory service – rarely a political priority
- Easy target for budget cuts – anticipated up to 60% of parks and greenspace funding will be lost by 2020.
- Value is difficult to measure – generational benefits
- Saleable assets – local authorities have or are considering selling greenspace and parks





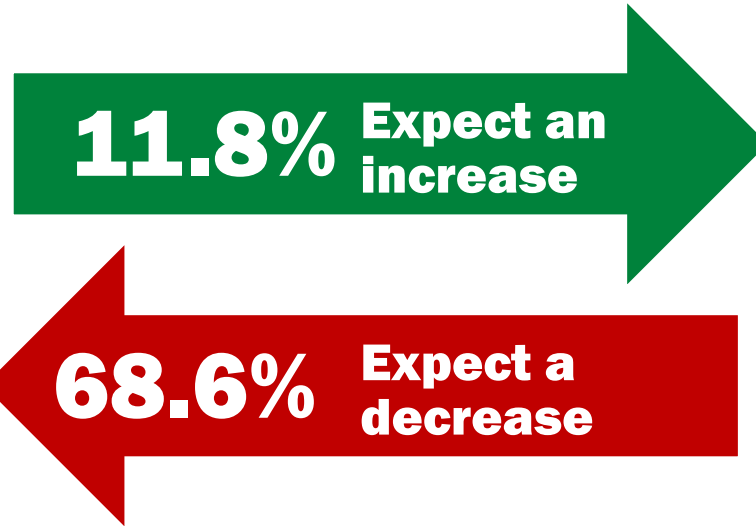
# **State of the Market in Parks and Green Spaces 2016**

# Please give your opinion on the following statements

Answer Options	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	No opinion
The squeeze on public sector resources is affecting parks and green spaces disproportionately to other service areas	40.6%	37.5%	18.8%	0.0%	3.1%
Reductions in funding has resulted in a withdrawal of maintenance from some land and an increase in unmaintained land	35.9%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%	1.6%
Lack of investment in parks and green spaces will have health and social impacts	68.8%	25.0%	4.7%	0.0%	1.6%
There is a clear link between parks/play provision and levels of crime/anti-social behaviour	42.2%	32.8%	6.3%	1.6%	17.2%
There's a limit to the extent to which volunteers can be involved in delivering parks and green space services	77.4%	14.5%	4.8%	3.2%	0.0%
The public should get free access to all parks	60.9%	26.6%	9.4%	3.1%	0.0%

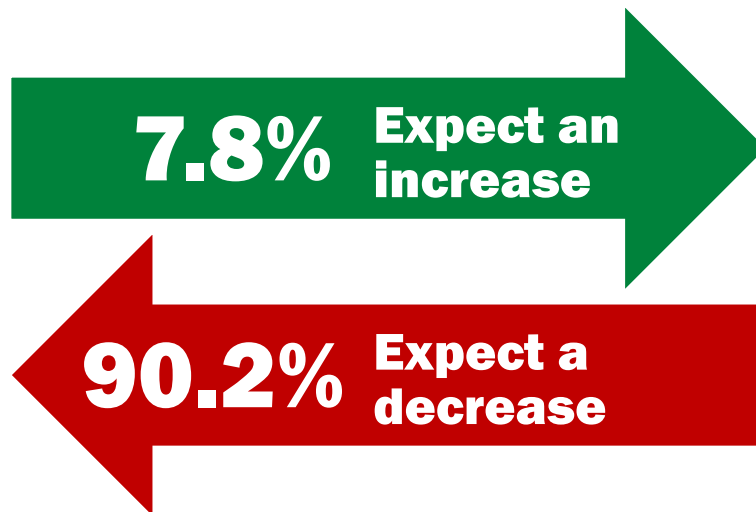
**How do you expect the parks and green space budget to change over the next year?**

**Capital expectations**

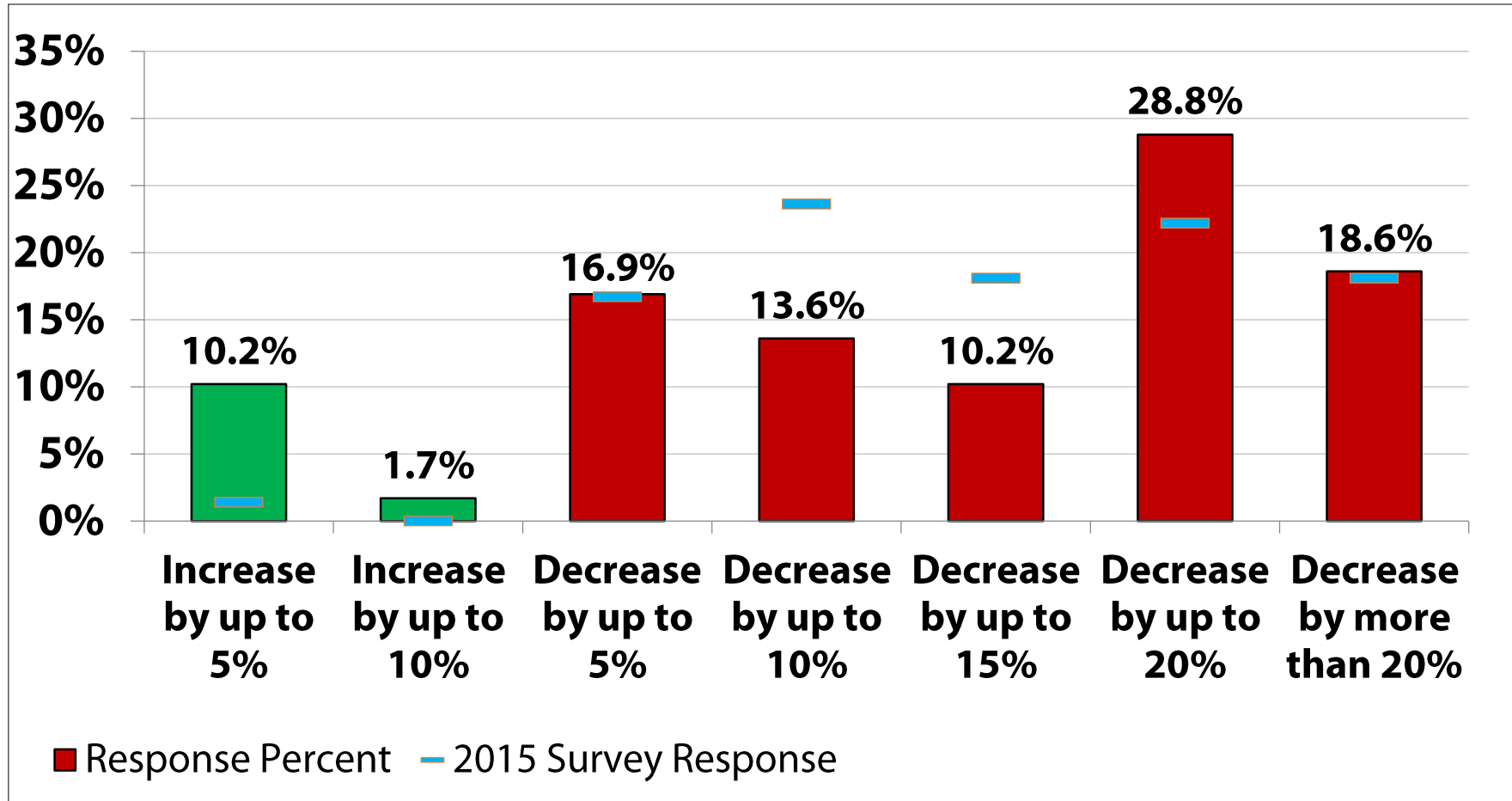


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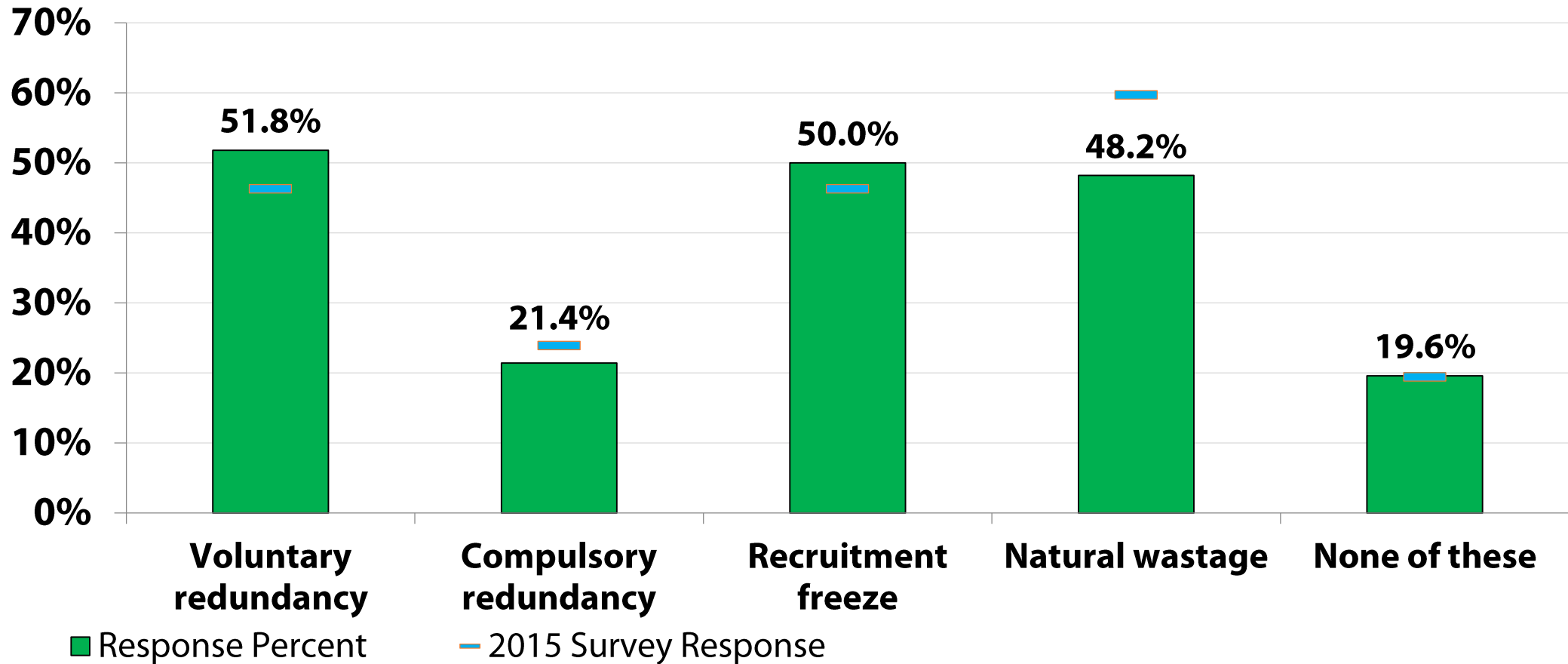
**Revenue expectations**



# What is your expectation of the level of funding in your service budget in the coming five years?

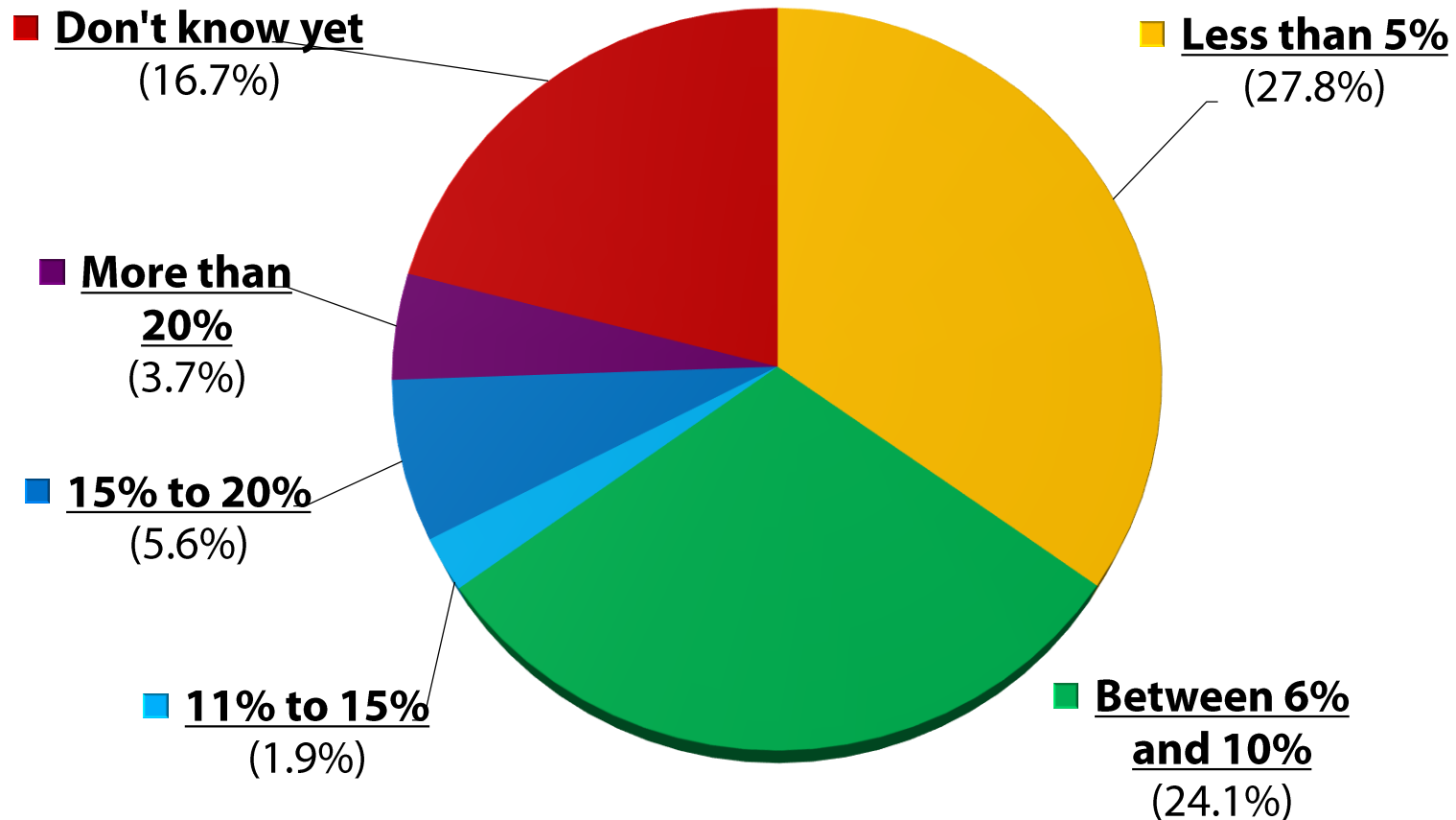


# Has or does your service intend to implement any of the following within the next 12 months:





# If your service area is subject to workforce reductions, what percentage of staff do you expect to lose from the service?

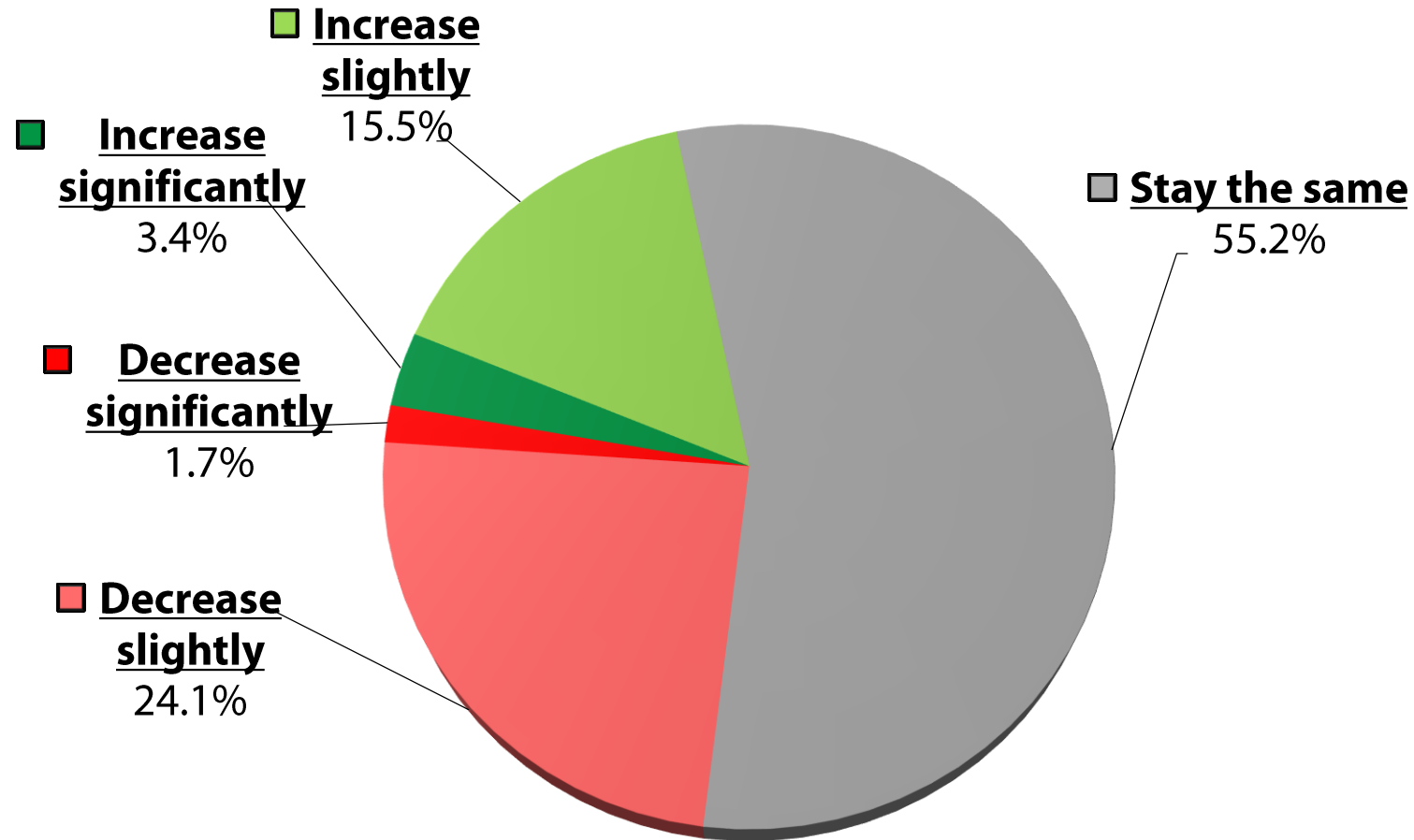


# Are staff absence levels at an acceptable level?

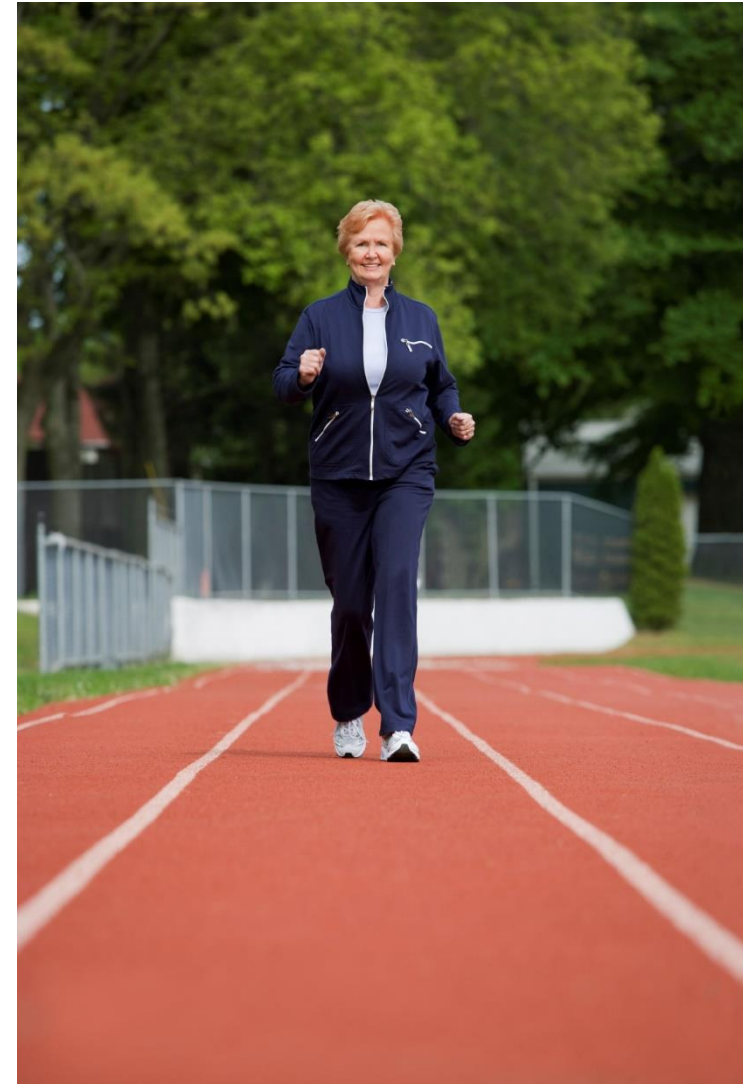
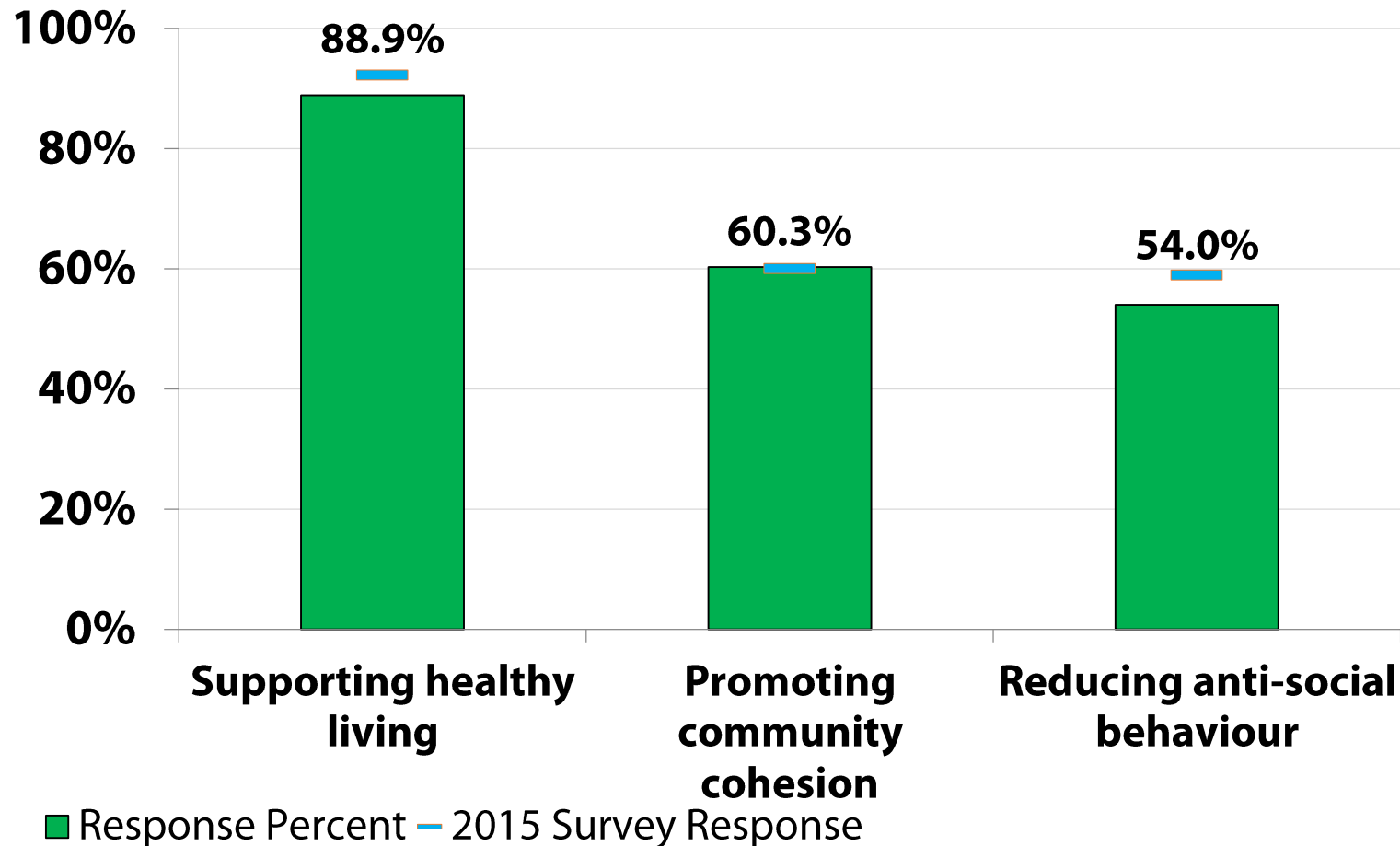
Too high	16.9%
Slightly above average	16.9%
About average	25.4%
Slightly below average	22.0%
Very low	18.6%



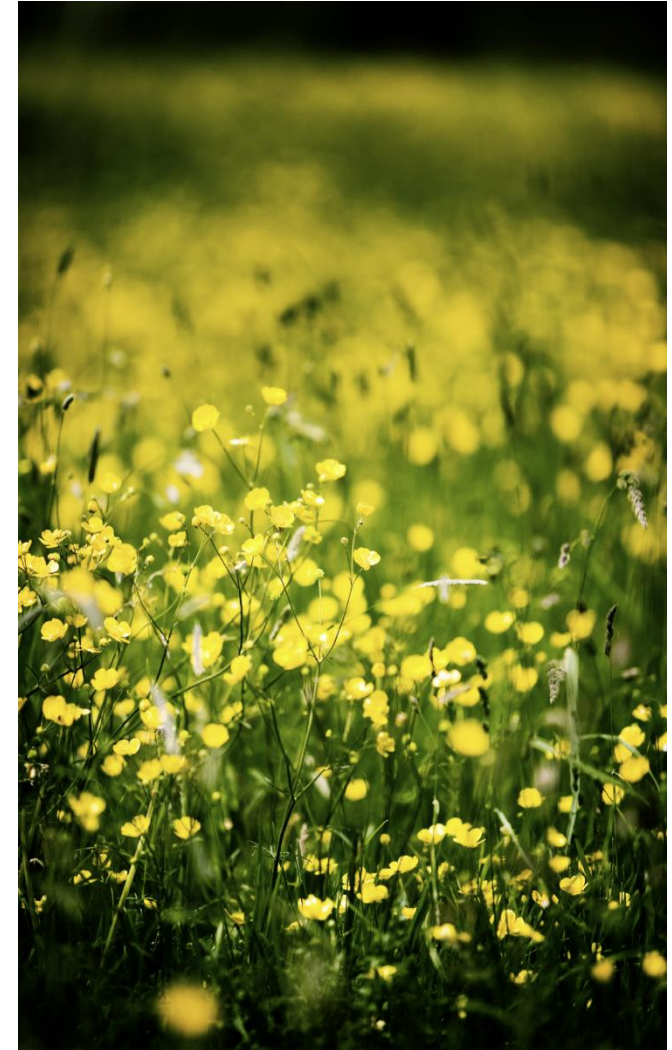
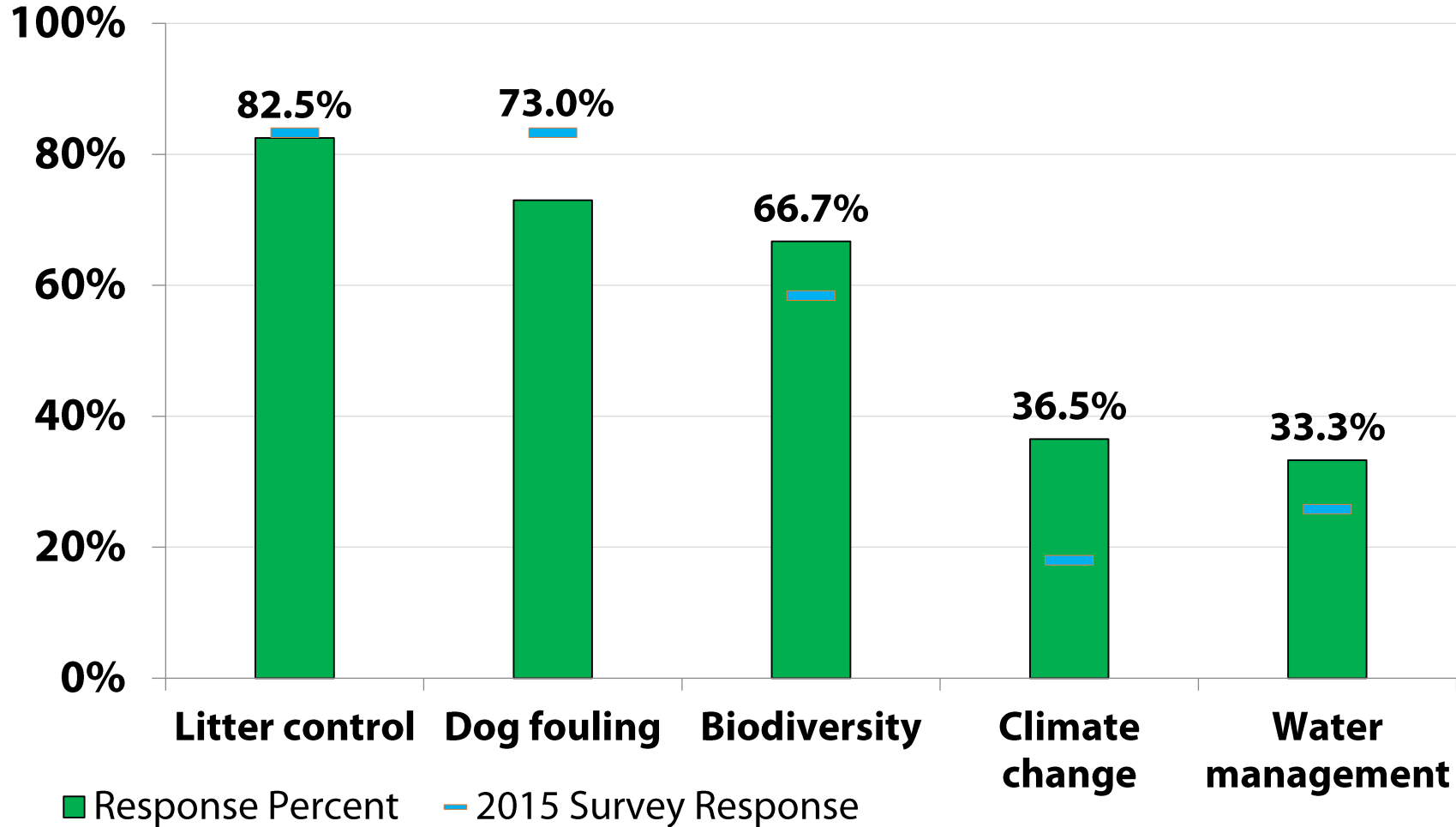
# Overall how do you expect the total number of formal parks (including playgrounds) to change over the next year?



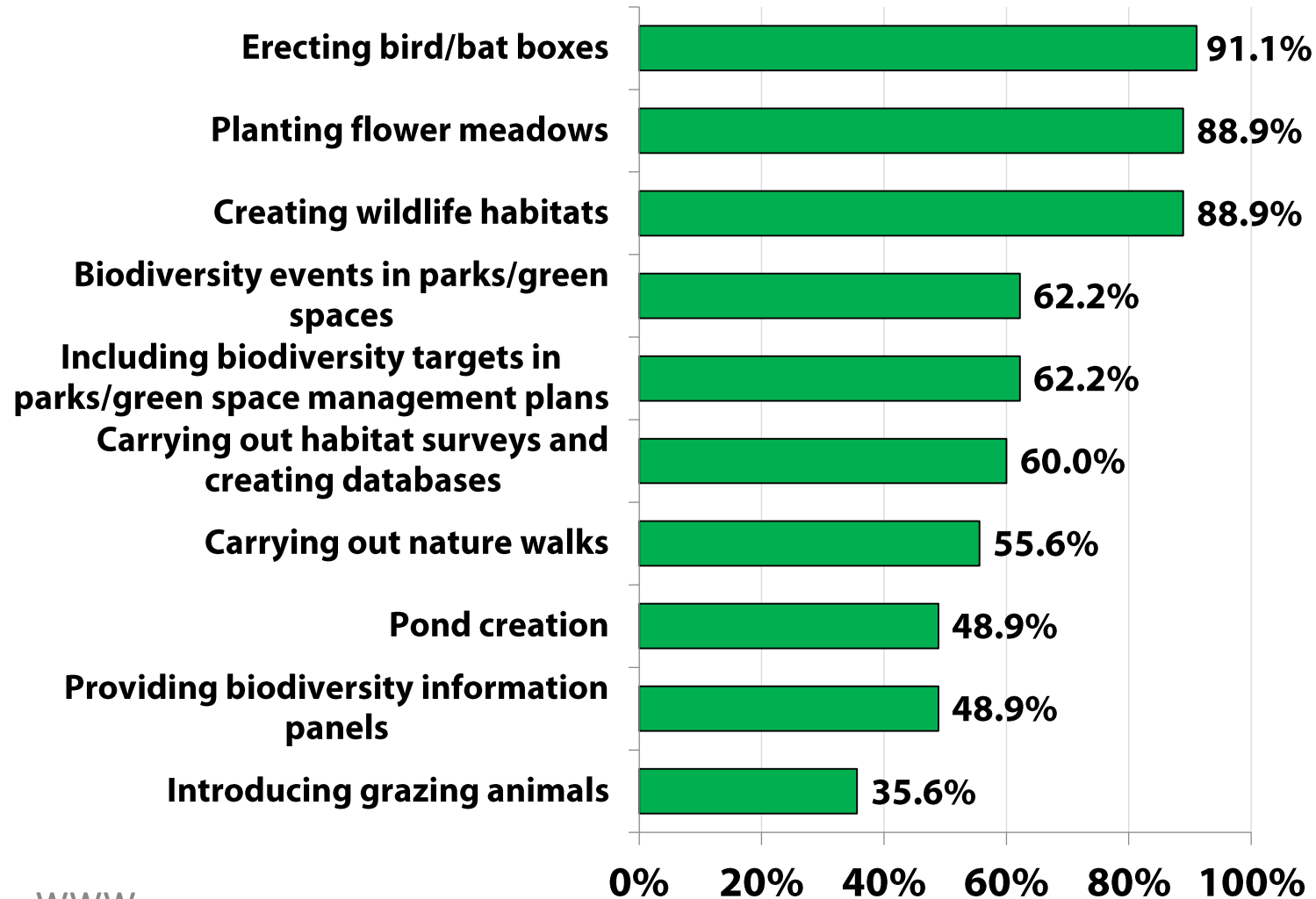
# What social issues are a priority for your parks and green space service?



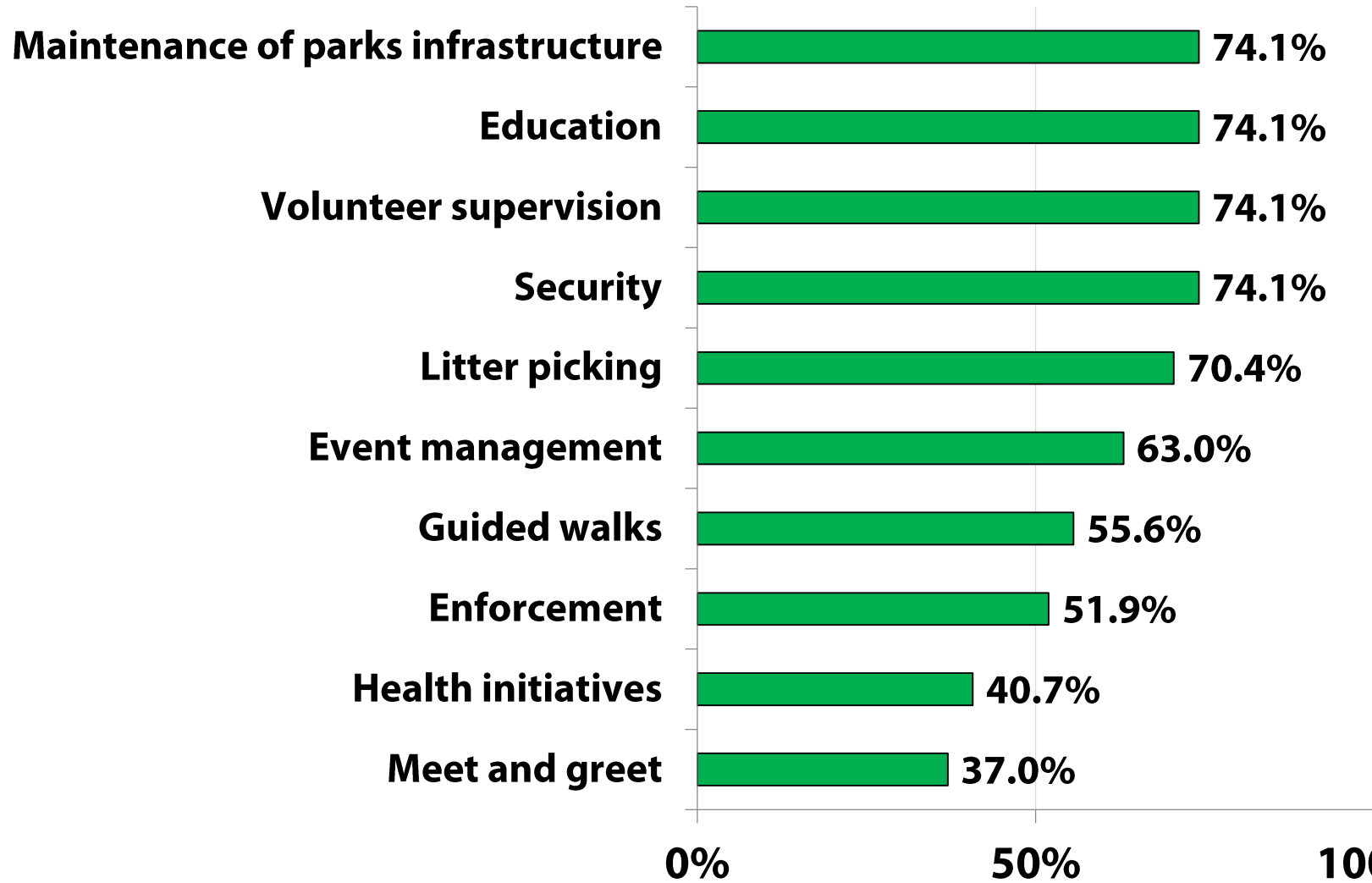
# What environmental issues are a priority for your parks and green space service?



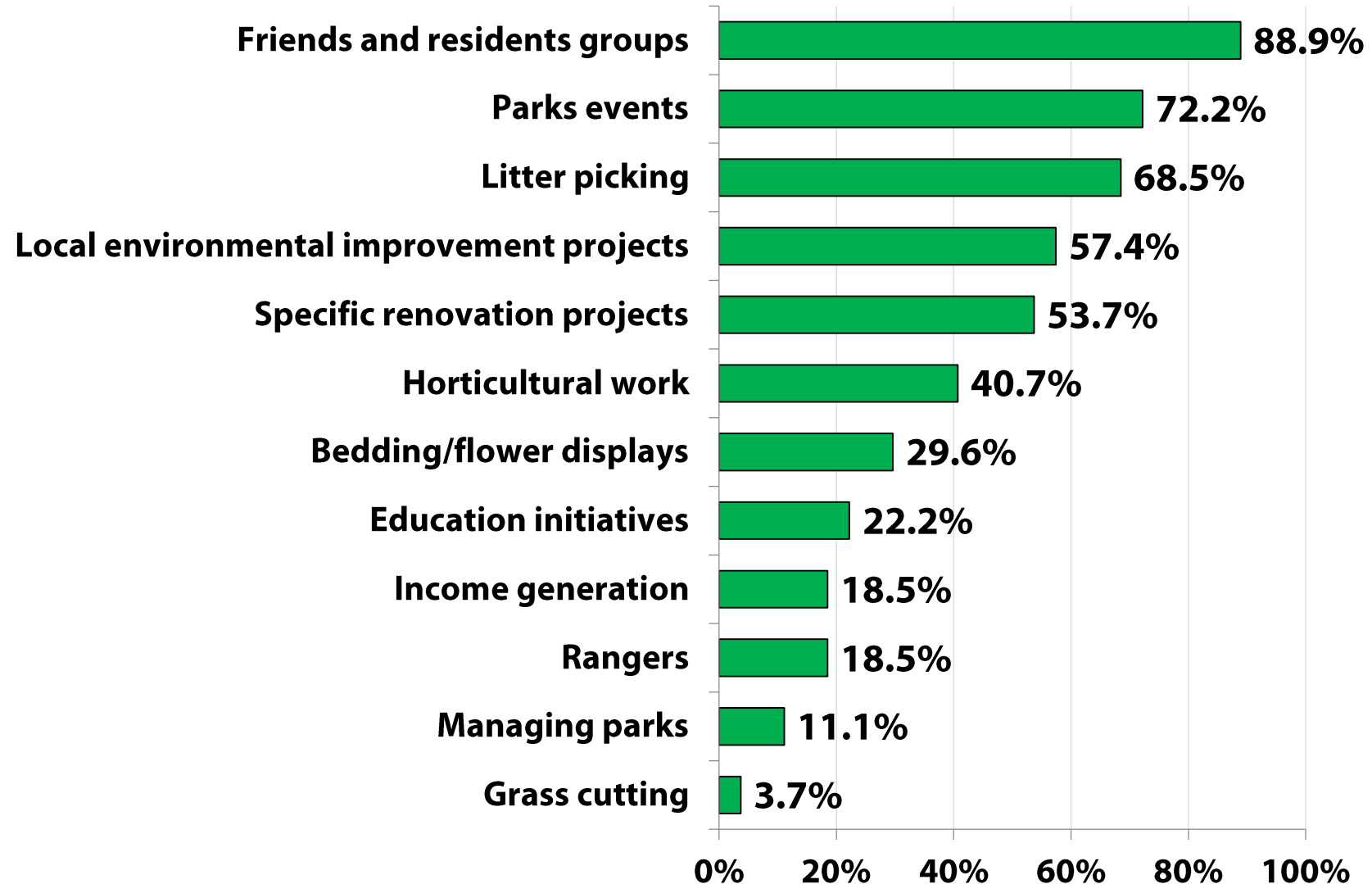
# If you make a specific provision for the promotion of biodiversity, which of the following have you carried out?



# What type of activities does the ranger service carry out?



# How are volunteers involved in the parks service?





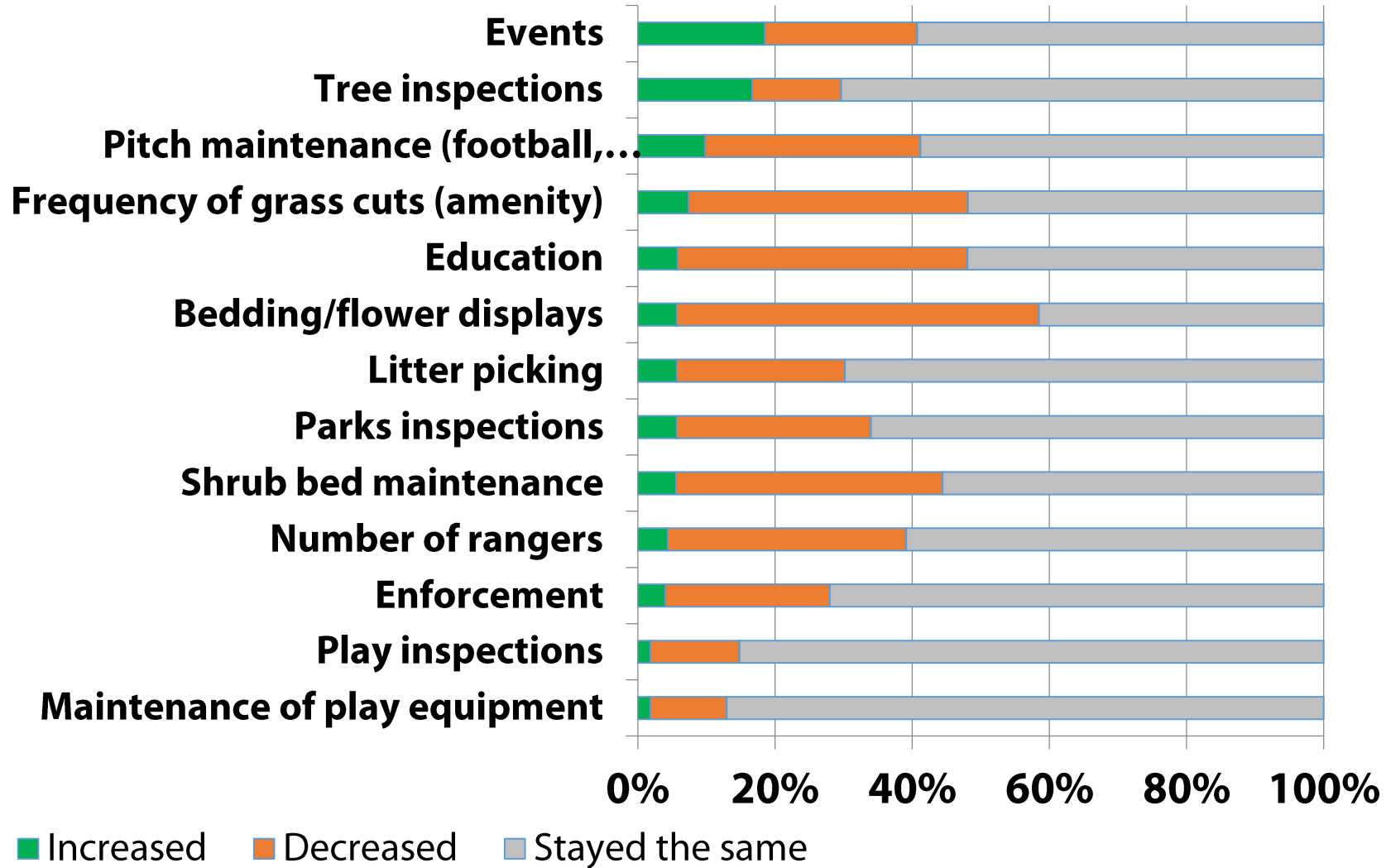
## During the past 2 years, has your Council transferred any of its parks assets to Community management/ownership?

Yes	27.8%
No, but the Council is looking at this	29.6%

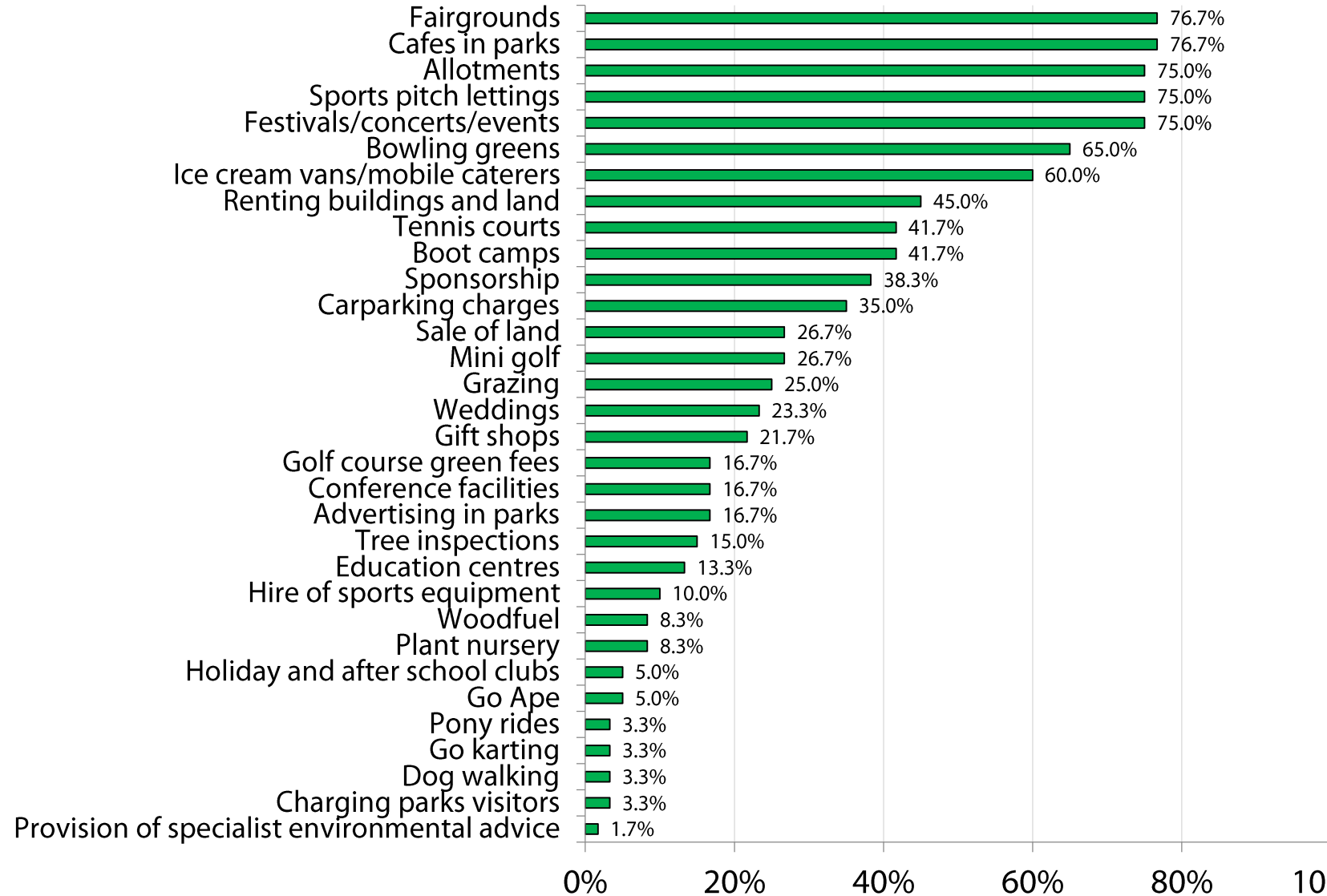
## What elements have been transferred to community management/ownership?

Playing fields	64.3%
Buildings	57.1%
Allotments	28.6%
Play areas	14.3%
Parks	0.0%

# Over the past year, have the following increased, decreased or stayed the same?



# What areas do you currently generate income in through fees and charges?



## Where do you see growth for the service over the next 12 months?

<b>Community involvement/engagement</b>	<b>71.2%</b>
<b>Partnership working with other public bodies</b>	<b>65.4%</b>
Sharing services with other local authorities	40.4%
Events in parks	34.6%
Offering a maintenance service to external organisations/private work	30.8%
Additional open space from housing developments	28.8%
Allotments/community gardens	25.0%
Capital projects (e.g. section 106)	21.2%
Offering a maintenance service to other local authorities	19.2%
Children's play	15.4%
Conservation and management of climate change	13.5%
Training	9.6%
Nursery production	1.9%

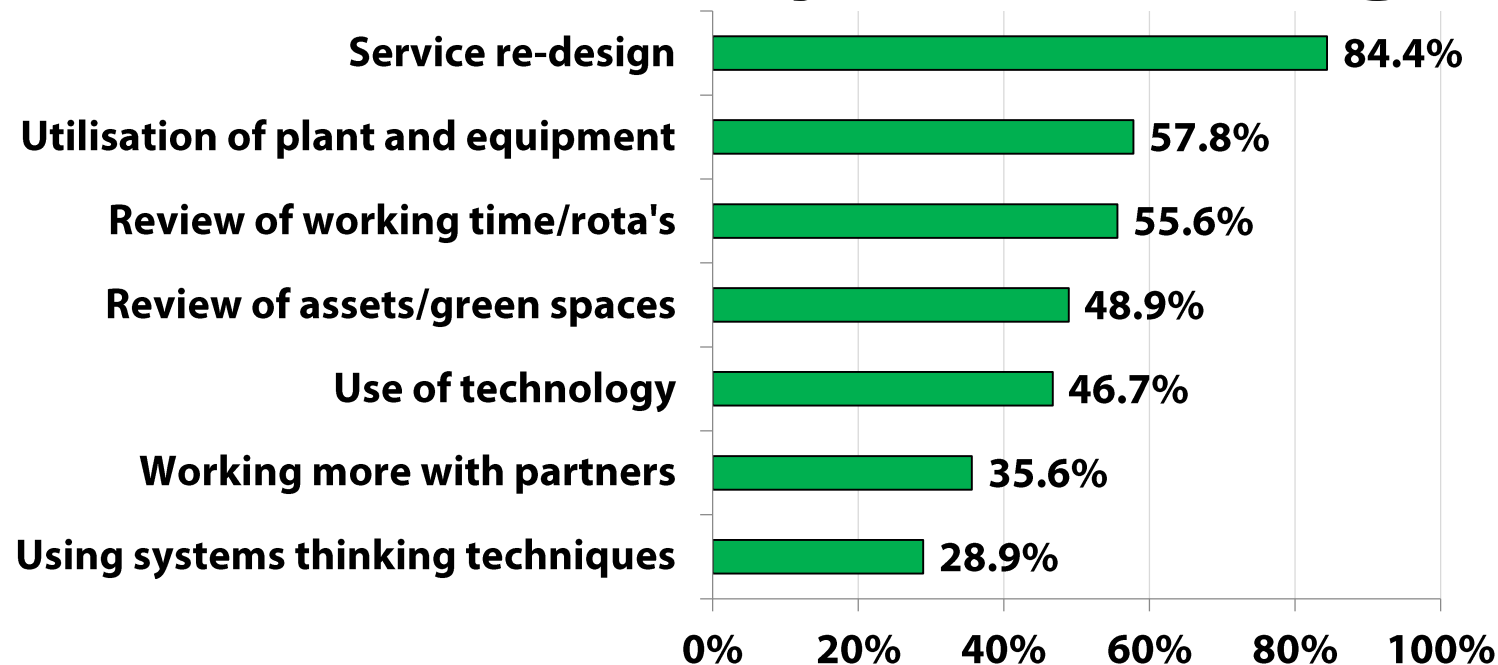
# Where do you see future decreases in work for the service?

<b>Reduced maintenance or frequency of maintenance of grounds</b>	<b>76.0%</b>
<b>Bedding, floral displays, regional shows, ornamental grass cutting, bowling greens, high amenity areas</b>	<b>74.0%</b>
<b>Reduction in service or standards</b>	<b>70.0%</b>
Transfer of assets	40.0%
Sports provision	36.0%
Parks development activity	36.0%
Fewer parks and facilities	34.0%
Litter picking	32.0%
New development projects/capital investment schemes e.g. play area refurbishment	28.0%
Ranger service	28.0%
Landscaping and country parks	26.0%
Achievement in awards	26.0%
Housing grass cutting contracts	18.0%
Other council department service level agreements e.g. education, housing and leisure	16.0%
Cemeteries and closed churchyards	14.0%
Parks-specific community engagement	14.0%
Schools grounds maintenance	12.0%

## Have you undertaken a review of your service recently?

Yes - completed	41.5%
Yes – still underway	34.0%
No – but will be doing so in next 1-2 years	17.0%

## Will this review involve any of the following:



# Closing Comments

- The future for the UK's parks is unclear – more self funding, partnerships and transfer of assets are some of the options.
- Initiatives such as, '*Re-thinking Parks*' is providing innovative ideas on future management models and income generation opportunities.
- Real concern that there is a point at which income from efficiencies and income generation will not be enough to meet critical funding levels.
- Local authorities have over 170 years of experience in managing and maintaining parks.
- Public parks, public benefits, **public funding.**

**LOCAL SERVICES**

**LOCAL SOLUTIONS**



# Contact details

**Wayne Priestley**

**Principal Advisor**

**Email: [wpriestley@apse.org.uk](mailto:wpriestley@apse.org.uk)**

**Association for Public Service Excellence**

2nd floor Washbrook House, Lancastrian Office Centre, Talbot Road,  
Old Trafford, Manchester M32 0FP.

**telephone:** 0161 772 1810

**fax:** 0161 772 1811

**web:** [www.apse.org.uk](http://www.apse.org.uk)

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