



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

Leave No Trace Ireland Dog Fouling Survey

August 2023

J.234622

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B&A



Project Background

- **Leave No Trace Ireland** is Ireland's only outdoor ethics programme, which promotes the responsible use of the outdoors through education, research and partnerships. Leave No Trace Ireland enables and supports individuals, communities, organisations and companies in reducing the environmental impact of outdoor activities.
- Leave No Trace Ireland, in cooperation with **Dublin City Council**, wanted to establish behaviour and attitudes of **dog walkers** in Dublin City across three different types of "sites":
 - ❖ Sites with audio system in place (5 sites)
 - ❖ Sites with dog fouling complaints (4 sites)
 - ❖ Random sites (4 sites)



Research Objectives

Research was required to understand the attitudes and behaviour among dog walkers:

- Responsible dog walker behaviours, including barriers for responsible behaviour
- Attitudes of dog walkers in relation to dog fouling
- Recall of communication in relation to picking up dog poo
- Potential messaging that can encourage dog walkers to behave more responsible
- Incidence of bringing dog poo bag for dog walk



Methodology

A face-to-face, in-situ survey of n=150 dog walkers across 13 selected sites in Dublin



Sample Size
n=150 dog walkers 16+ years



F2F (CAPI) Methodology
Interviewing was completed using B&A F2F interviewers, across 13 selected sites in Dublin

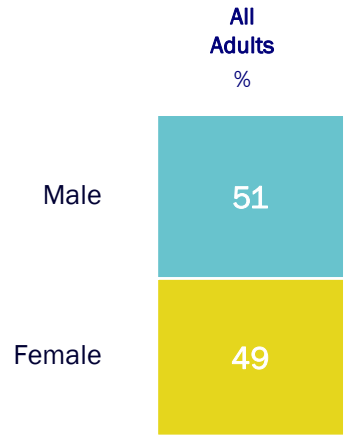


Fieldwork Dates
Completed between the 6th-14th April 2023.

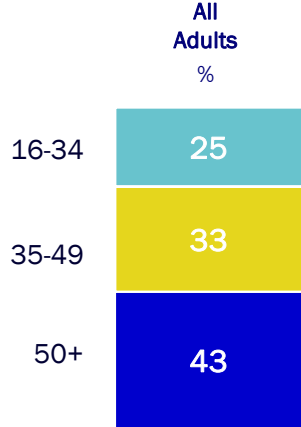
Analysis of Sample

Base: All respondents 150

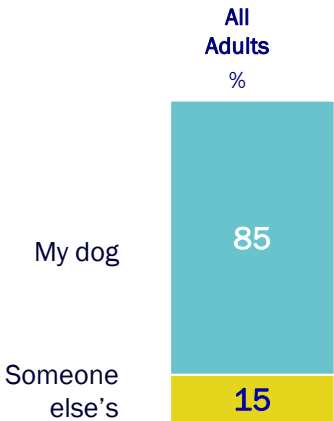
GENDER



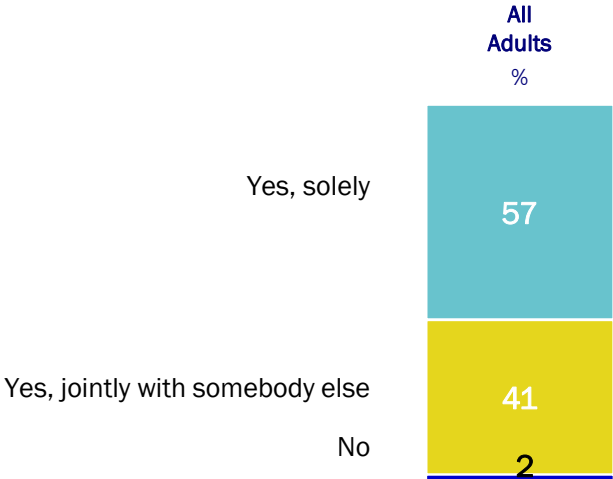
AGE



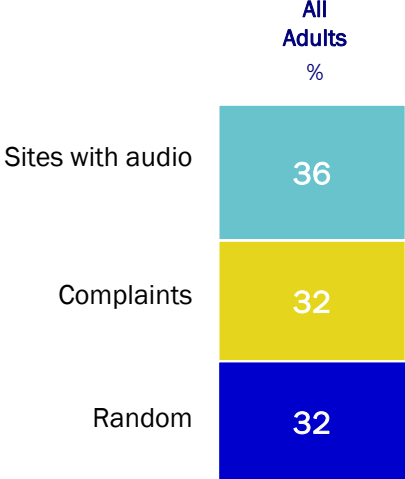
DOG OWNERSHIP



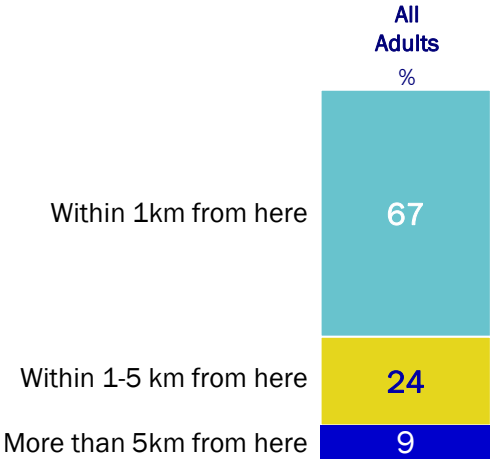
MOST OFTEN DOG WALKERS



LOCATIONS



WHERE YOU LIVE?



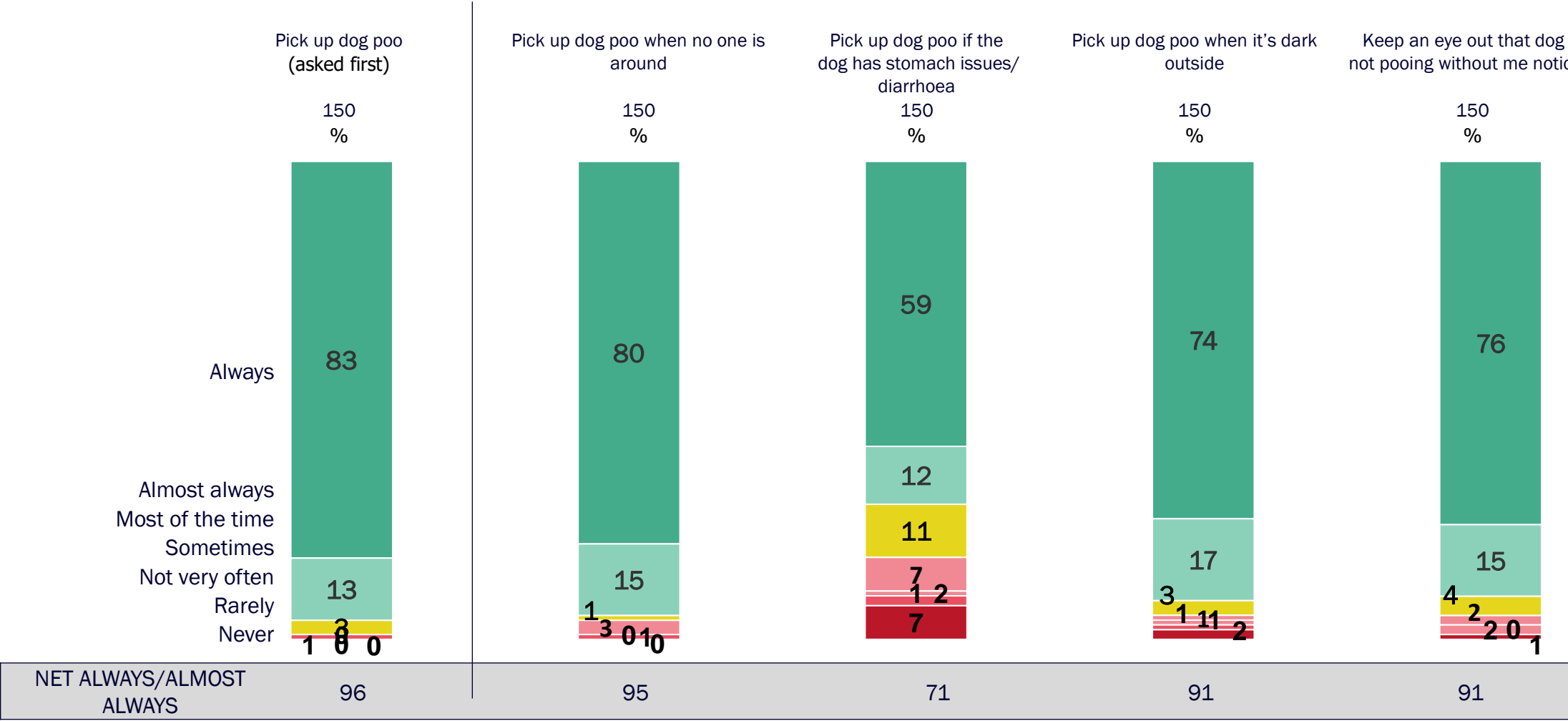


Responsible dog walking behaviour

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Frequency of picking up dog poo

Base: All respondents 150



More than 4 in 5 (83%) claim to pick up dog poo always (in general), with 13% claiming to pick up dog “almost always”. However, this percentage drops slightly when nobody is around and more notably when it is dark outside or dog has stomach issues.

Frequency of picking up dog poo – by demographics/sites

Base: All respondents 150

Significantly higher
Significantly lower



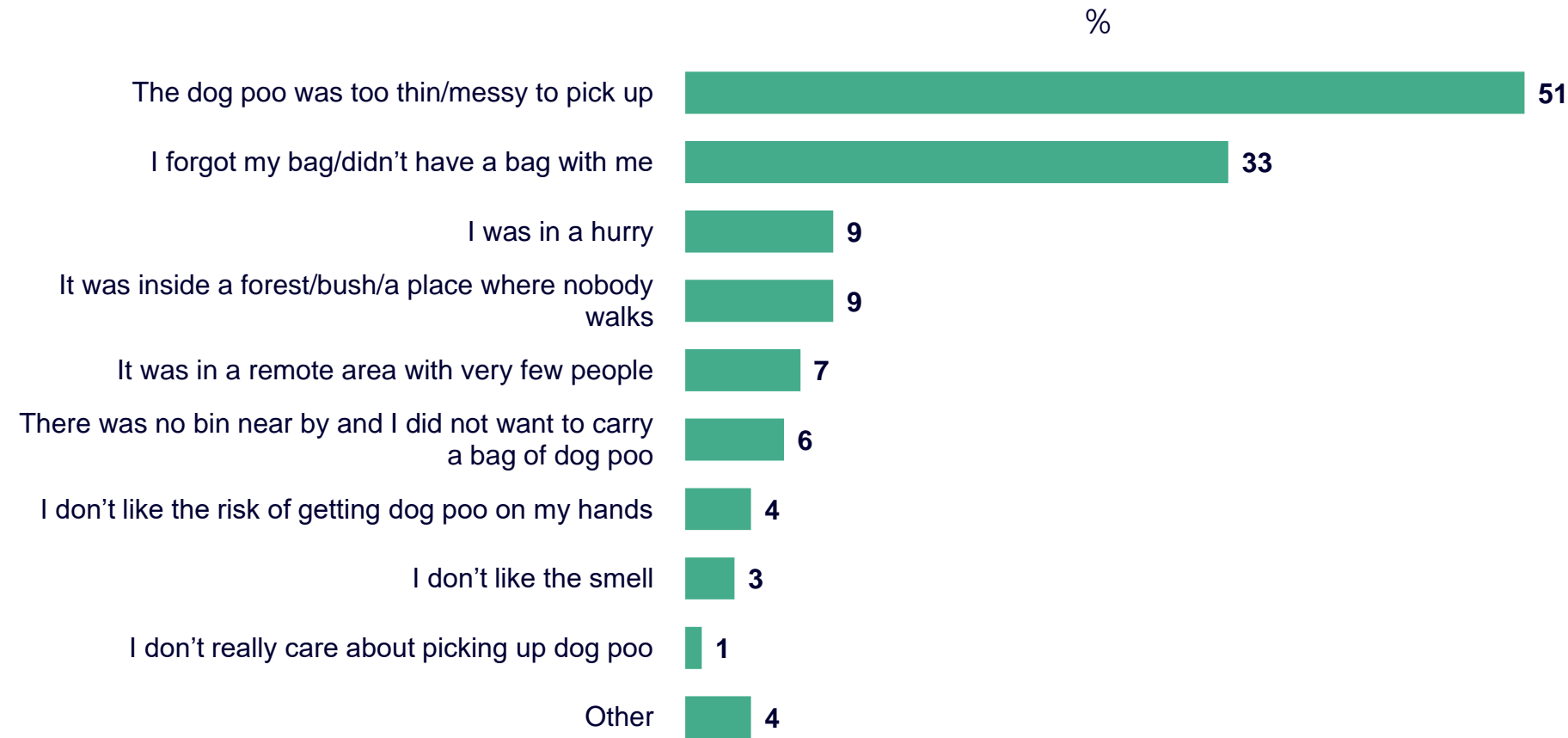
	Total	Gender		Age			Dog ownership		Locations		
		Male	Female	16-34	35-49	50+	Yes	No	Sites with audio	Complaints	Random
UNWTD	150	77	73	37	49	64	128	22*	54	48	48
NET ALWAYS/ALMOST ALWAYS	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Pick up dog poo	96	96	96	89	96	100	96	95	96	98	94
Pick up dog poo when no one is around	95	94	96	86	96	98	95	95	93	98	94
Pick up dog poo when it's dark outside	91	94	89	78	94	97	91	91	83	96	96
Keep an eye out that dog is not pooing without me noticing	91	92	90	81	98	92	91	95	85	92	98
Pick up dog poo if the dog has stomach issues/diarrhoea	71	71	71	54	76	78	73	64	56	77	83
None	1	-	1	3	-	-	1	-	-	2	-

*Caution low base size

Responsible dog walking behaviour improves with age. Limited significant difference by site type.



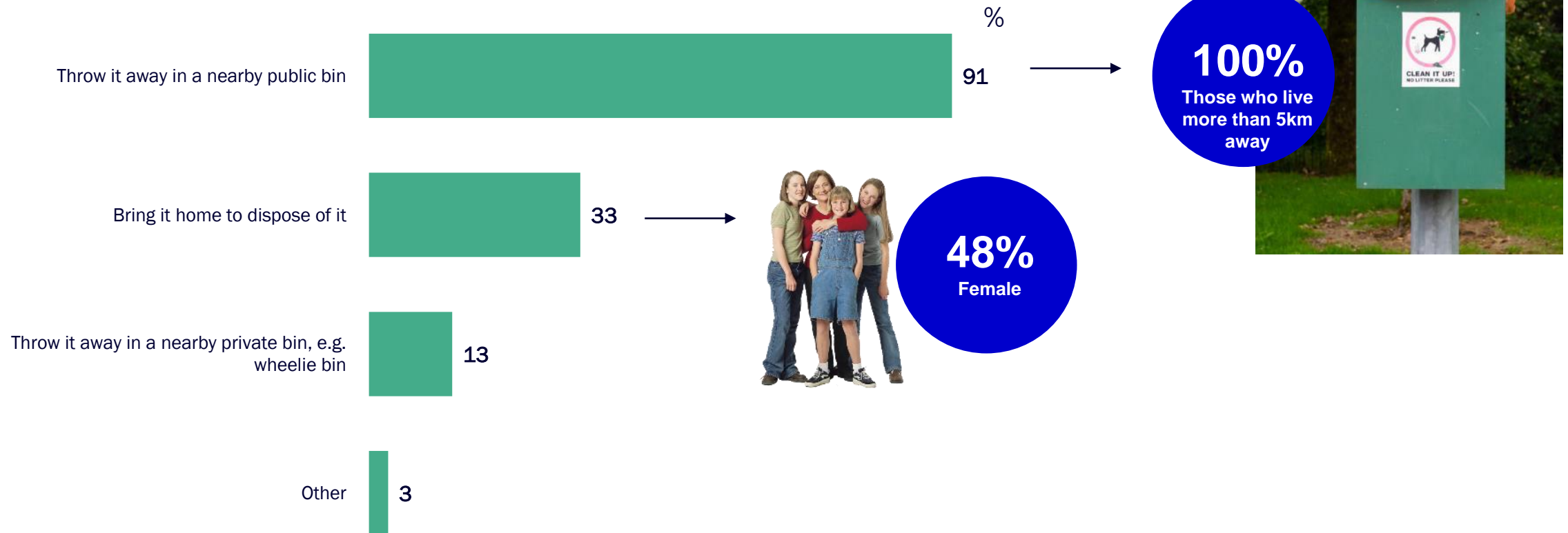
Base: All respondents who do not always pick up after their dog - 69



The main reason given for not always picking up dog poo is dog stomach issues (51%), with 1 in 3 mentioning that they forgot the bag. Being in a hurry or in an isolated place were mentioned by almost 1 in 10.

Typical ways of disposing of dog poo

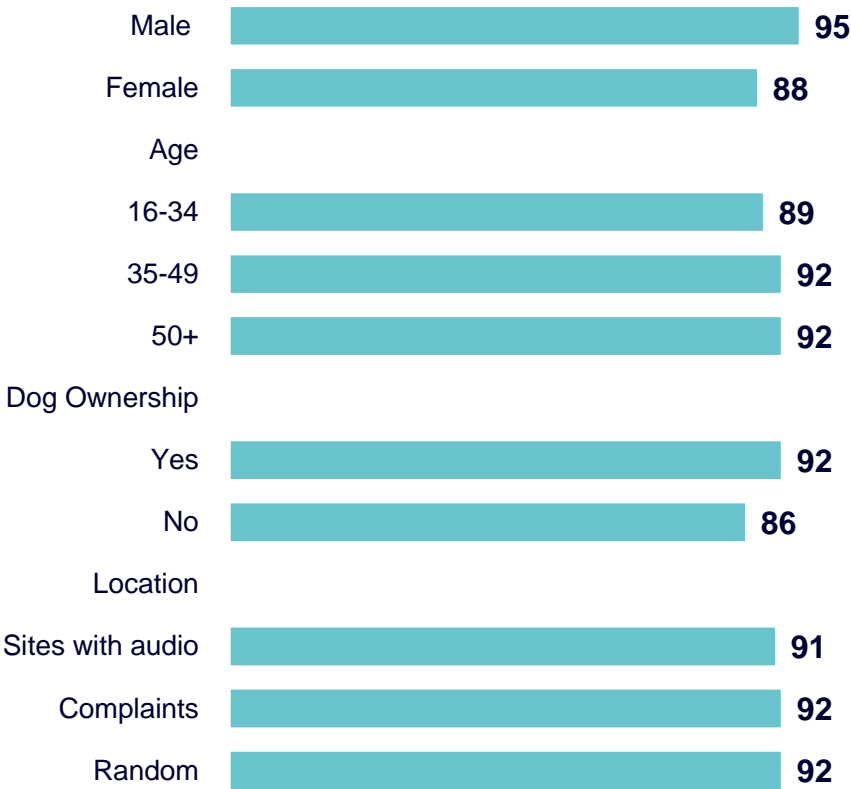
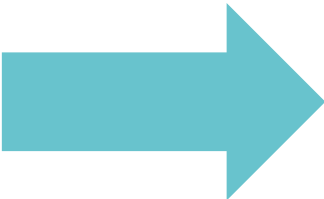
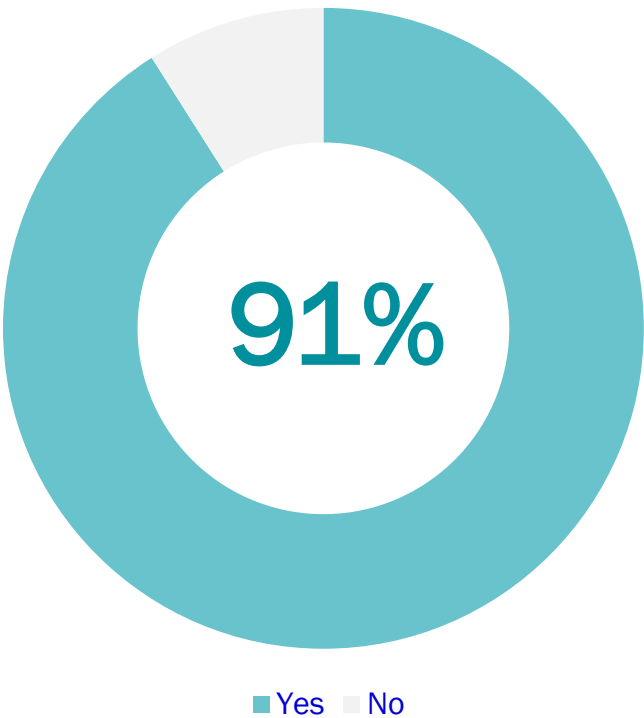
Base: All respondents 150



9 in 10 dispose of dog poo through a public bin, with 1 in 3 bringing it home for disposal. 13% use a private bin (not their own).

Base: All respondents 150

Incidence of bringing dog poo bag for dog walk



Almost 1 in 10 dog walkers did not have a dog poo bag with them when interviewed.

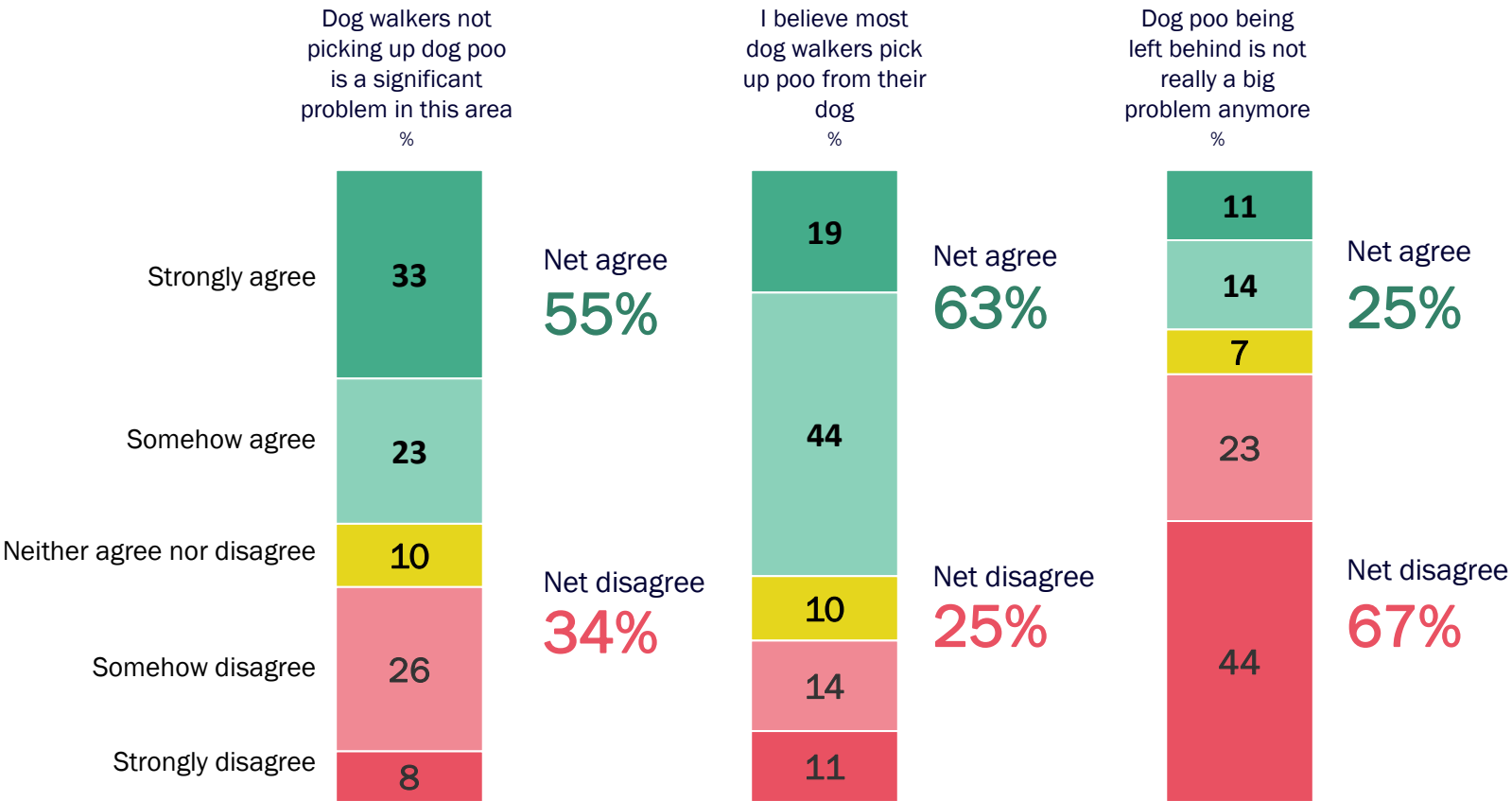


Dog fouling attitudes

B&A

Dog fouling attitudes

Base: All respondents 150



55%

of dog walkers feel that dog fouling is a significant problem in the area where they walk their dog.

1 in 4

disagree that most dog walkers pick up poo from their dog, while

67%

feel that dog fouling is a big problem.

Dog fouling attitudes by demographics/sites

Base: All respondents 150

Significantly higher
Significantly lower

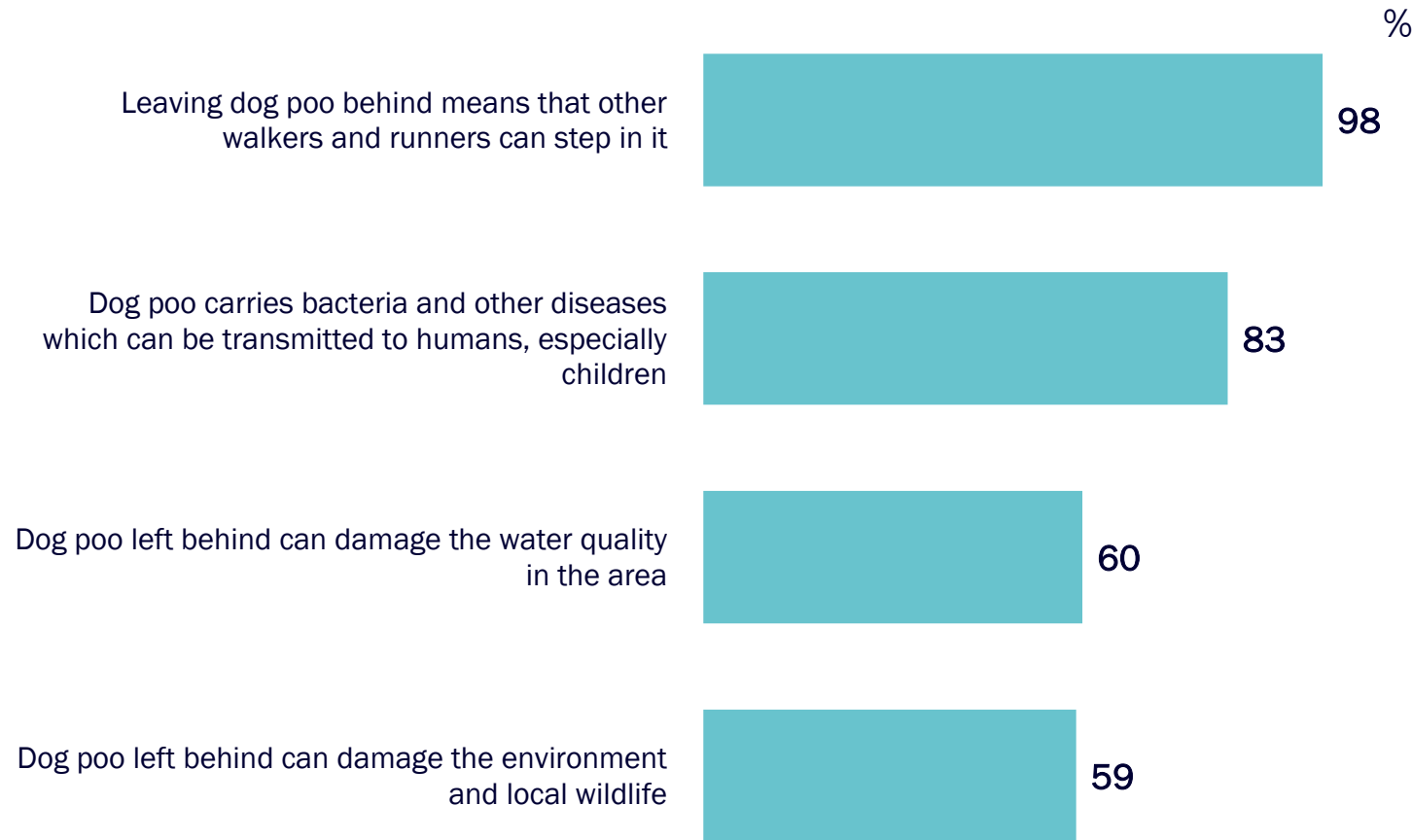
	Total	Gender		Age			Dog ownership		Locations		
		Male	Female	16-34	35-49	50+	Yes	No	Sites with audio	Com-plaints	Random
UNWTD	150	77	73	37	49	64	128	22*	54	48	48
NET ALWAYS	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
I believe most dog walkers pick up poo from their dog	63	65	62	59	65	64	63	68	63	67	60
Dog walkers not picking up dog poo is a significant problem in this area	55	53	58	49	57	58	56	50	56	63	48
Dog poo being left behind is not really a big problem anymore	25	25	25	32	24	20	23	32	15	33	27

*Caution low base size

Those aged 16-24 years are less likely to perceived dog fouling as a problem.

Awareness of impact of dog poo

Base: All respondents 150



Almost universal awareness that dog poo causes problems for walkers/runners, with more than 4 in 5 being aware that dog poo carries bacteria/diseases that can be transmitted to humans.

Lower awareness is seen for the impact on water quality and the general environment/local wildlife.

Awareness of impact of dog poo by demographics/sites

Base: All respondents 150

Significantly higher
Significantly lower

	Total	Gender		Age			Dog ownership		Locations			Having dog poo bag	
		Male	Female	16-34	35-49	50+	Yes	No	Sites with audio	Complaints	Random	Yes	No
UNWTD	150	77	73	37	49	64	128	22*	54	48	48	137	13*
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Leaving dog poo behind means that other walkers and runners can step in it	98	97	99	97	96	100	98	100	96	100	98	99	92
Dog poo carries bacteria and other diseases which can be transmitted to humans, especially children	83	79	88	78	78	91	85	73	83	85	81	87	46
Dog poo left behind can damage the water quality in the area	60	61	59	46	61	67	60	59	59	56	65	61	46
Dog poo left behind can damage the environment and local wildlife	59	52	66	46	57	67	62	41	54	69	54	60	46

*Caution low base size

Men and younger groups are less likely to be aware of the negative impacts from dog fouling.



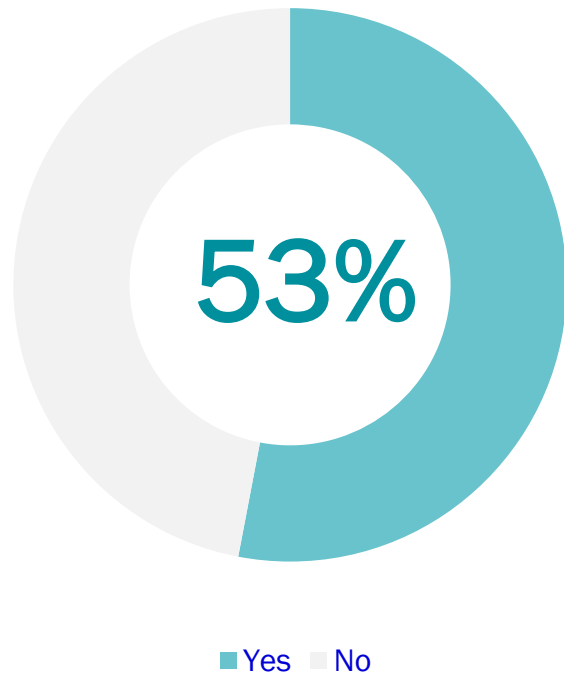
Communication recall and messaging

B&A

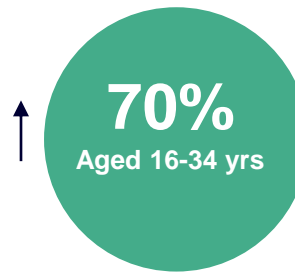
Recall of any communication to pick up dog waste

Base: All respondents 150

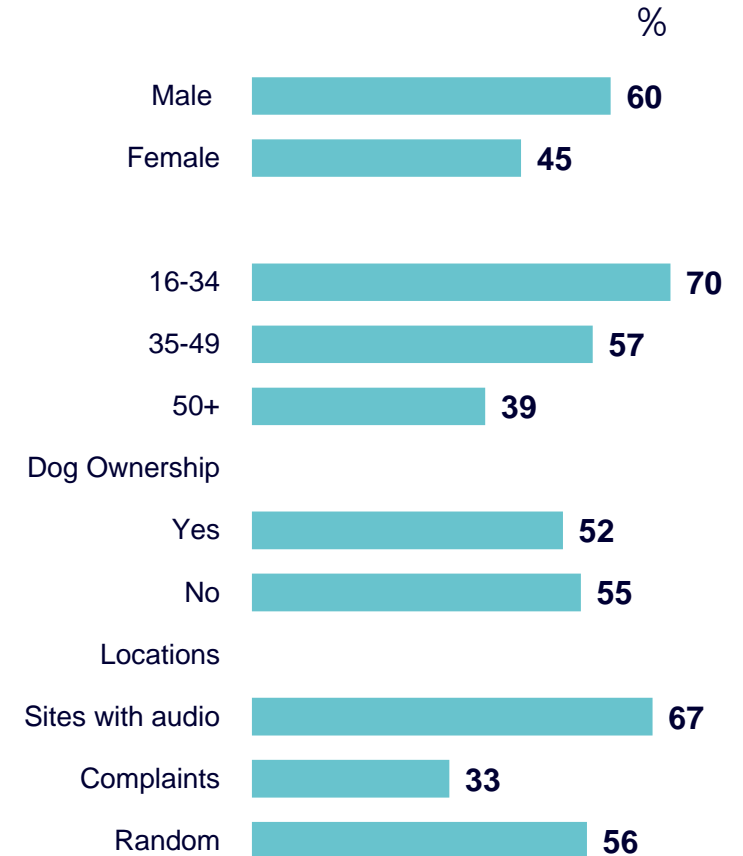
Awareness of Any Communication



Higher for:



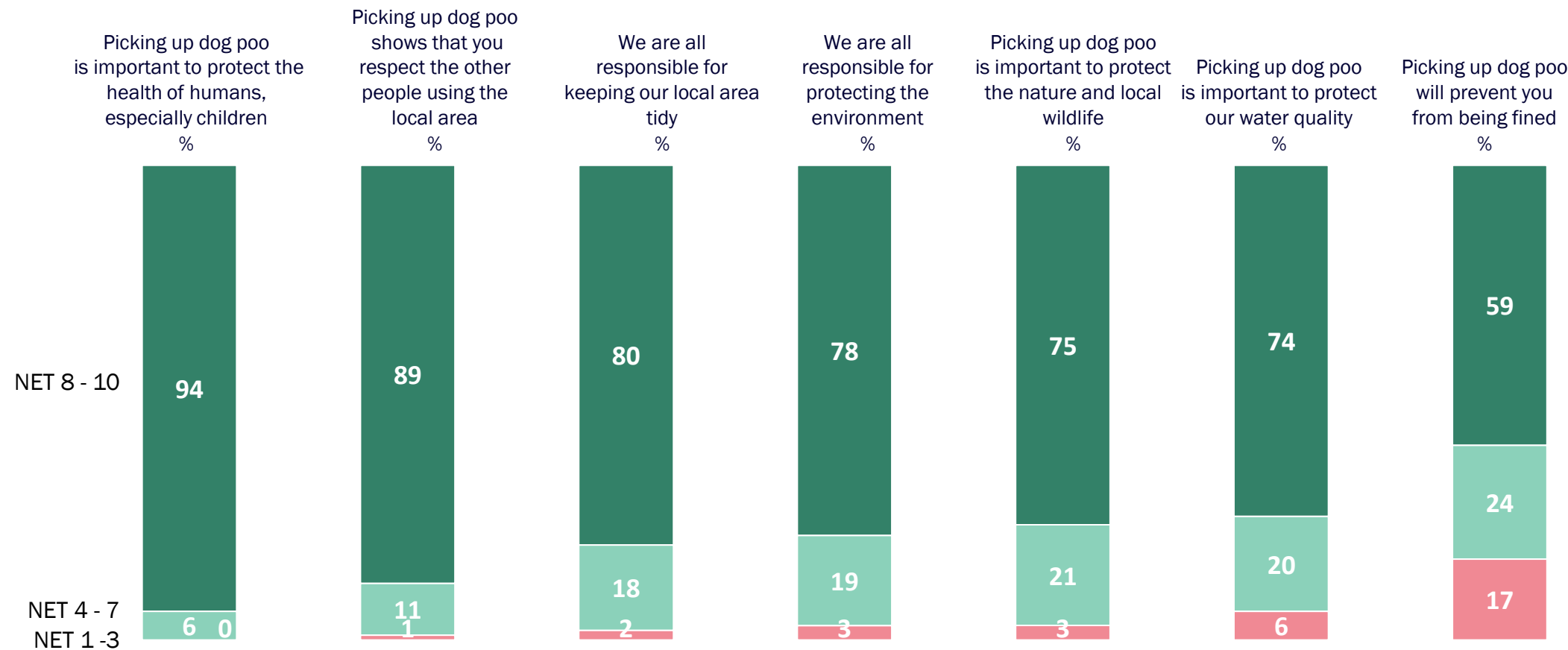
Lower for:



More than half recall communication to pick up dog poo. Communication recall is higher within sites with audio communication!

Messages that can encourage responsible dog walker behaviour

Base: All respondents 150



The potential messages with highest traction is the need to protect the health of humans, especially children, and respecting other users of the area. Fines come out the lowest.

Messages that can encourage responsible dog walker behaviour

Base: All respondents 326

Significantly higher
Significantly lower

Filter: All interviews Weight: No weighting	Total	Gender		Age			Dog ownership		Locations		
		Male	Female	16-34	35-49	50+	Yes	No	Sites with audio	Com-plaints	Random
UNWTD	150	77	73	37	49	64	128	22*	54	48	48
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Picking up dog poo is important to protect the health of humans, especially children	94	90	99	95	92	95	93	100	91	96	96
Picking up dog poo shows that you respect the other people using the local area	89	86	92	81	88	94	88	91	81	92	94
We are all responsible for keeping our local area tidy	80	75	85	70	84	83	80	77	76	79	85
We are all responsible for protecting the environment	78	75	81	76	76	81	77	82	70	81	83
Picking up dog poo is important to protect the nature and local wildlife	75	73	78	70	73	80	74	82	65	79	83
Picking up dog poo is important to protect our water quality	74	70	78	59	76	81	75	68	74	69	79
Picking up dog poo will prevent you from being fined	59	60	59	57	59	61	59	59	50	63	67

* Caution low base size

The various messages tested have higher impact among older age cohorts and females. Fines are relatively more likely to have an impact among males and within the younger age cohort.



Summary

B&A

Responsible dog walking behaviour

More than 4 in 5 (83%) of dog walkers (in general) claim to always pick up their dog poo, but there is room for improvements, with 13% claiming to “almost always” picking up dog poo, 3% only picking up dog poo “most of the time”, and 1% claiming to rarely pick up the poo. However, the proportion who always pick up dog poo drops for when dog has stomach issues (59%), and for when it is dark outside (74%). 3 in 4 (76%) always keep an eye out that dog is not pooing without them noticing. The younger age cohorts are less likely to always pick up dog poo.

The main barriers for picking up dog poo are dog stomach issues (51% of those not always picking up) and having forgotten the bag (33%). 9% of our sample did not have a dog poo bag with them when approached for the interview.

Dog fouling attitudes

More than half (55%) of dog walkers feel that dog fouling is a serious problem in their area, with 1 in 4 disagreeing that most dog walkers pick up the poo from their dog. 2 in 3 (67%) feel that dog fouling is a big problem.

Most dog walkers are aware that dog poo can be an annoyance for other people (98%) and that dog poo carries bacteria and other diseases that can be harmful to humans (83%). But just 60% are aware of the negative impact of dog poo on water quality, with 59% being aware that dog poo can damage the environment and local wildlife.

Communication recall and messaging

More than half (53%) recall communication on the day of the interview to pick up dog poo. This is higher in sites with audio and for the younger age cohorts.

While fines resonate relatively stronger among men and younger age cohorts, education is likely to be more impactful, e.g. in terms of dog poo’s impact on human health, the environment and water quality, and respecting other people.



Thank You



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Delve Deeper