



# PUBLIC ATTITUDES TRACKER

September 2021

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# 1. BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY



# BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

**UK Sport’s mission is to inspire the nation through Olympic and Paralympic success, and as part of this remit it is important that UK Sport understand public engagement with and participation in sport and sport culture more generally.**

The overall aim of this research is to increase UK Sport’s understanding of the relationship between engagement with elite sport.



## Survey

Online self-completion survey with UK (including NI) adults aged 16 and over



## Fieldwork

6<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021



## Sample size: n= 2,007 Previous waves:

Aug 2021	(n=2,000)
Jun 2021	(n=2,000)
Feb 2021	(n=2,000)
Nov 2020	(n=2,001)
Mar 2020	(n=2,005)
Dec 2019	(n=2,004)
Oct 2019	(n=2,002)
Jun 2019	(n=2,074)
Feb 2019	(n=2,011)
Nov 2018	(n=2,039)
Jun 2018	(n=2,142)
Feb 2018	(n=2,094)
Nov 2017	(n=2,098)



## Quotas

DJS Research set quotas on age, gender, region and social grade. The data was subsequently weighted to reflect a nationally representative sample of the UK population in terms of age, gender, region and social grade.



## Significance testing

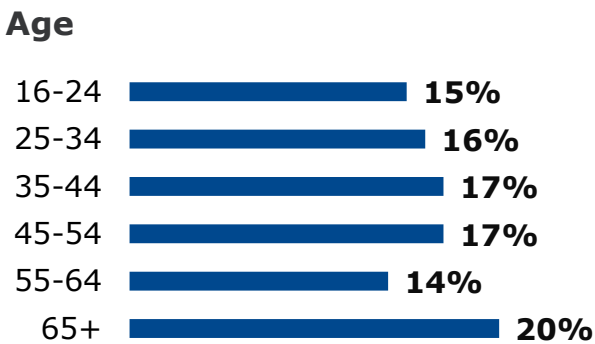
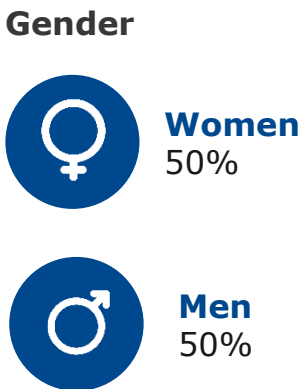
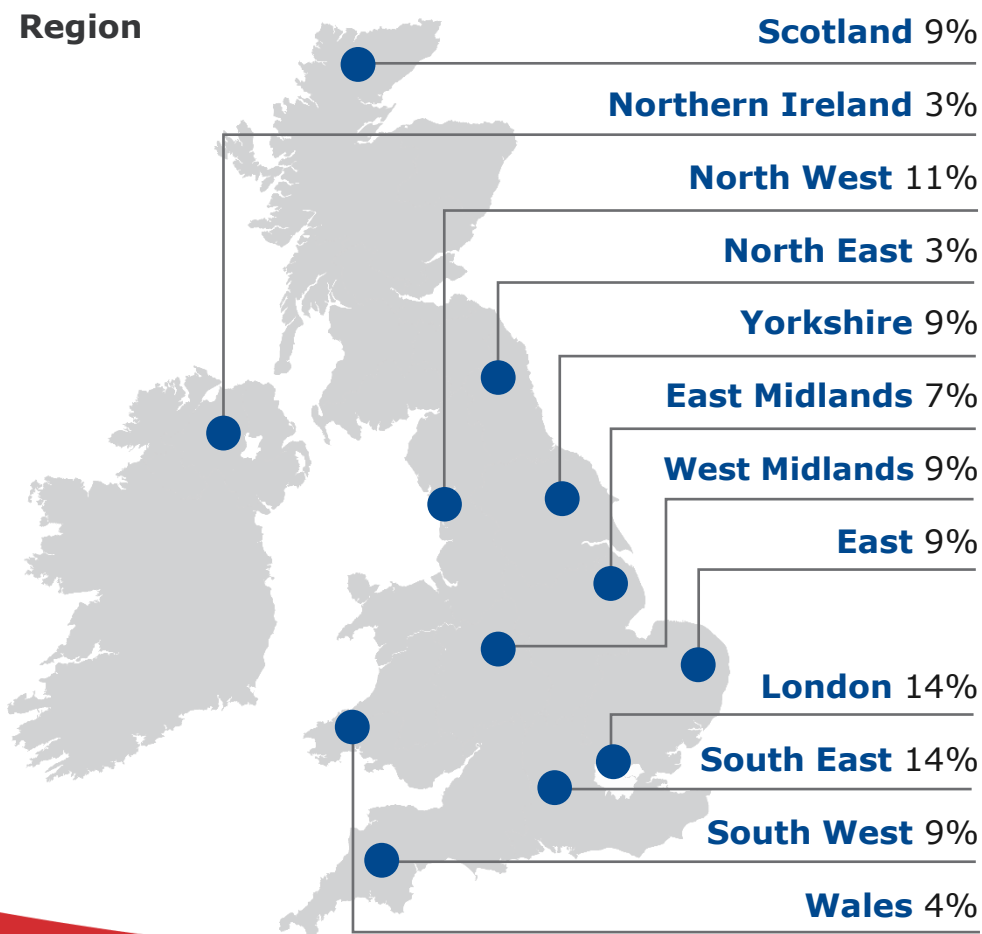
Throughout the report, arrows show where results have increased or decreased significantly from the previous wave.

## 2. SAMPLE PROFILE





# SAMPLE PROFILE



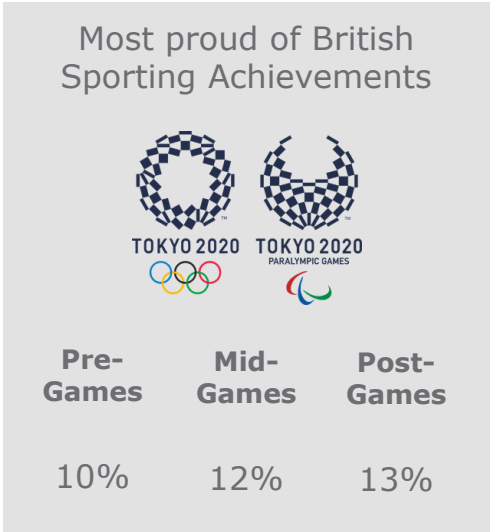
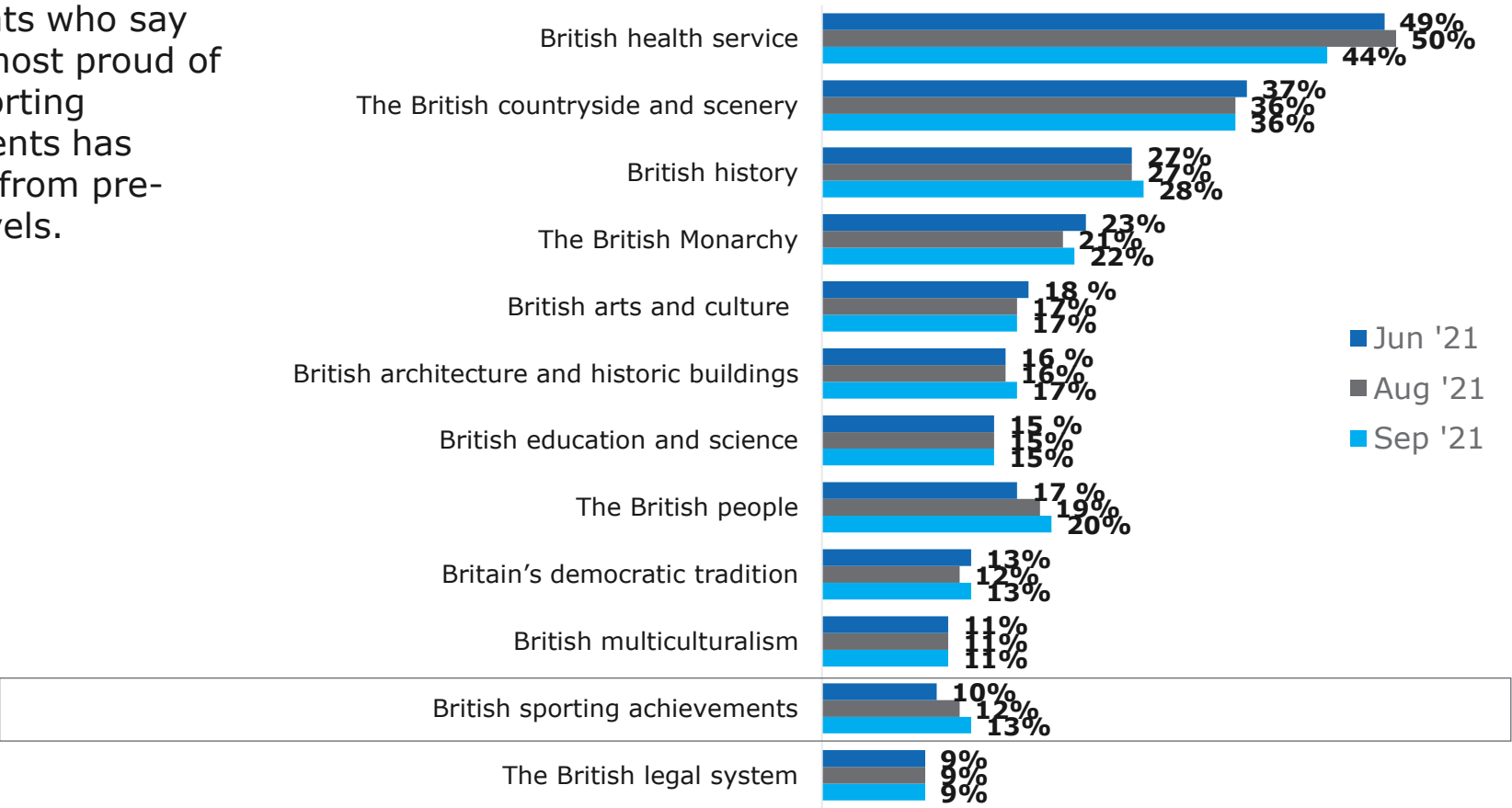
**Base:** All respondents (n=2,007).

### **3. IS THE GENERAL PUBLIC ENGAGED WITH SPORT IN THE UK?**



# BRITISH ATTRIBUTES MOST PROUD OF

The share of respondents who say they are most proud of British sporting achievements has increased from pre-Games levels.



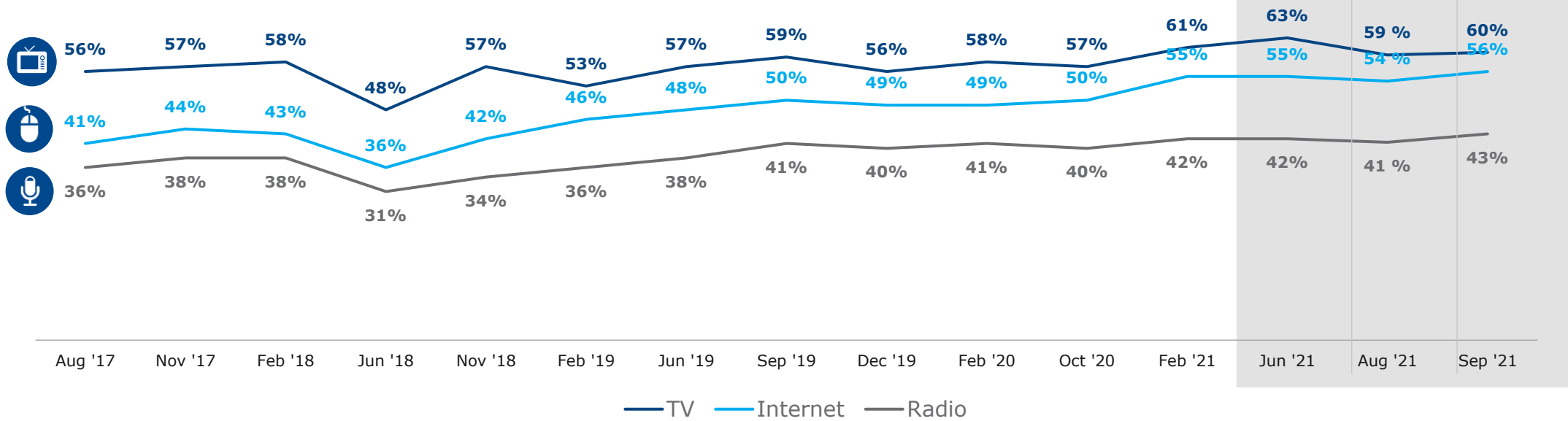
**Base:** All respondents (n=2,007).  
**Source:** Q01 – Looking at this list what, if anything, makes you most proud of Britain? Select up to three only



# WATCHING AND LISTENING TO SPORT

A wave-on-wave comparison shows a steady increase since 2018 in share of respondents using the TV, radio and the Internet to watch and/or listen to sport.

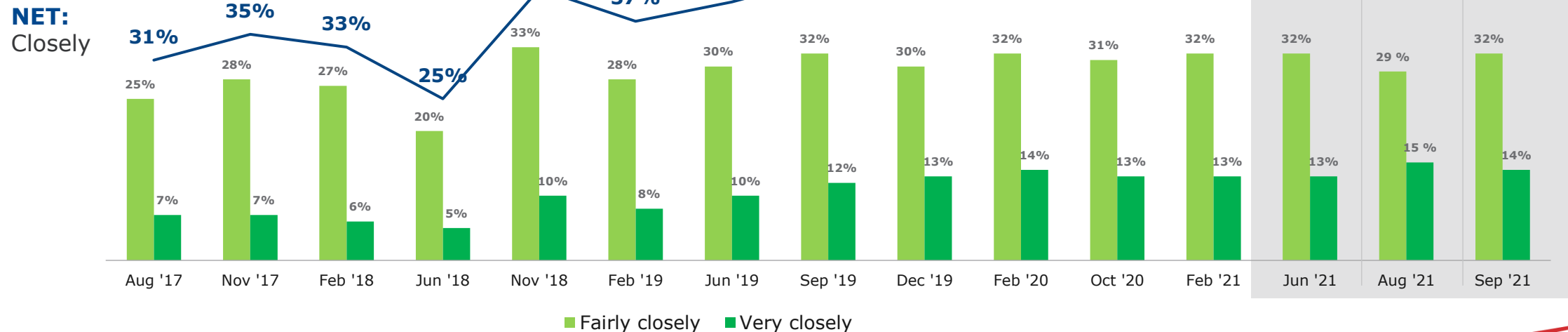
% watching or listening to sport at least once a week



**Base:** All respondents (n=2,007)  
**Source:** Q02 – How often, if at all, do you watch or listen to any sport on TV, the radio or the internet?

# FOLLOWING PROGRESS OF BRITISH ATHLETES (LAST 4 YRS)

Respondents following the progress of British athletes in the four years between the Olympic and Paralympic games is broadly consistent over the last two years.



**Base:** All respondents (n=2,007)

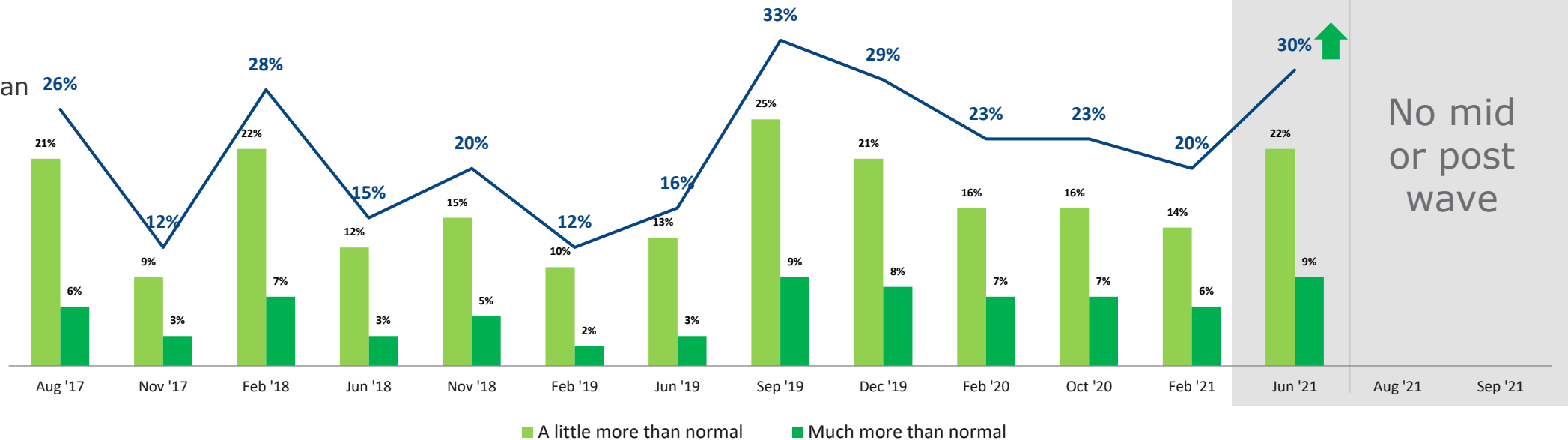
**Source:** Q03 - Thinking about the four years between the Olympic and Paralympic Games taking place, how closely would you say you usually follow the progress of British athletes?

# FOLLOWING PROGRESS OF BRITISH ATHLETES (LAST 3 MTHS)

The share of respondents following the progress of British athletes 'in the last three months' jumped significantly pre-Games.

## NET:

More than normal



**Base:** All respondents (n=2,000) **NOTE:** June '19 base size smaller than previous waves due to split sample.

**Source:** Q04 – Thinking back over the last three months, would you say you have followed the progress of British sportsmen and women more or less than you normally do?

## 4. OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES



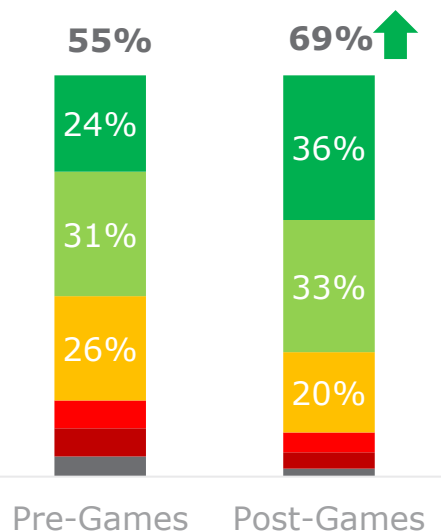


# SUPPORT FOR THE GAMES

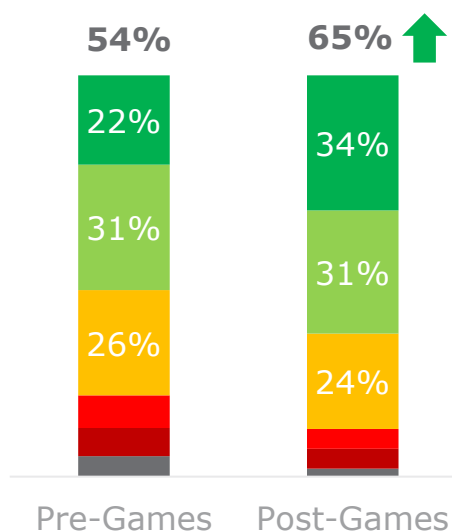
Pre-Games support for the Olympics and Paralympics was relatively high and following the Games there was a significant uplift in all metrics, with the UK public feeling the Games were an important opportunity for people to come together and inspire.

**The Tokyo Games [will be/were] an important opportunity for the world to come together following the pandemic**

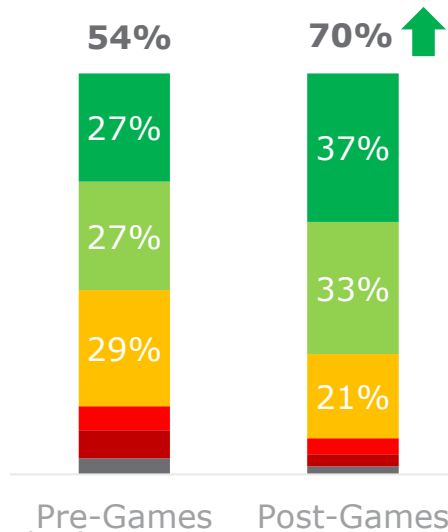
**NET:**  
Agree



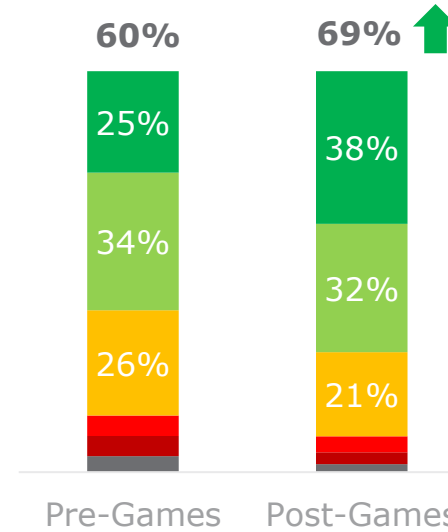
**The Tokyo Games [will be/were] an important opportunity for the United Kingdom to come together as a nation following the pandemic**



**I am looking forward to British athletes winning medals at the Tokyo Games / The Tokyo Games were an important opportunity for British athletes to inspire the nation by winning medals**



**The Tokyo Games [will be/were] an important opportunity for British athletes to inspire the nation following the pandemic, whether they [win/won] medals or not**



**Base:** All respondents (2007)

**Source:** Q11- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements

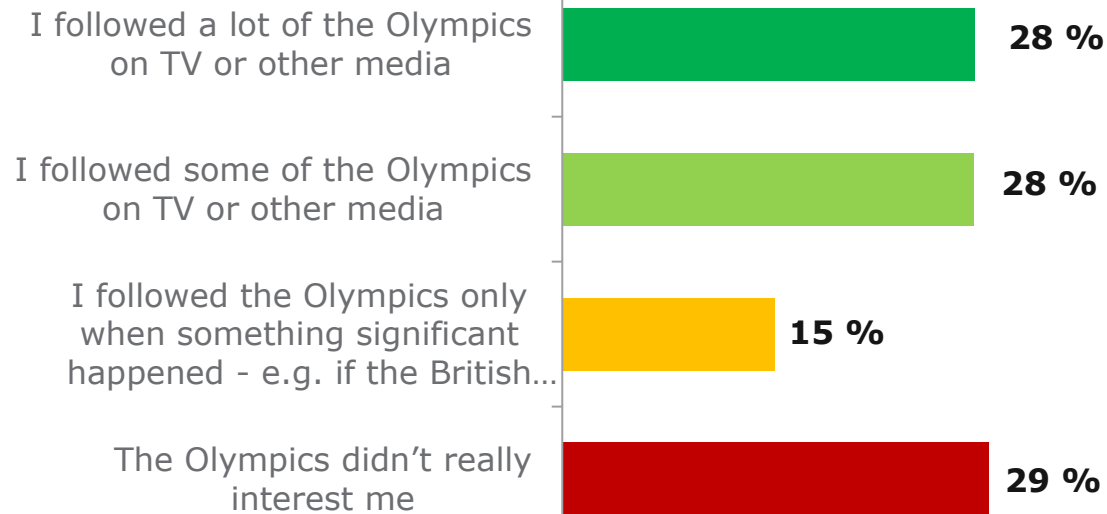


# FOLLOWING OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

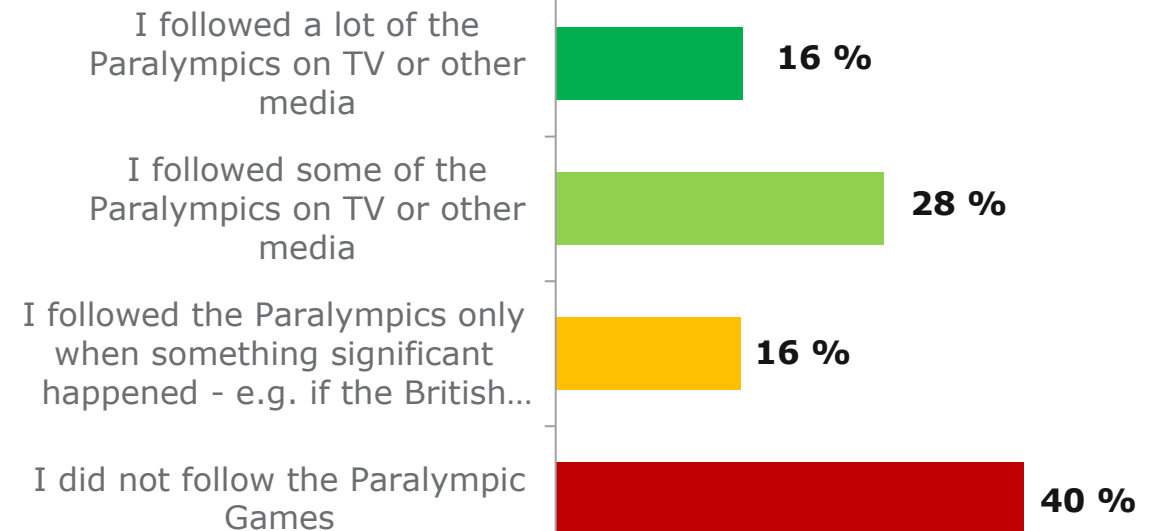
The majority of the UK public watched at least some of the Olympics and Paralympics.



## Olympics



## Paralympics



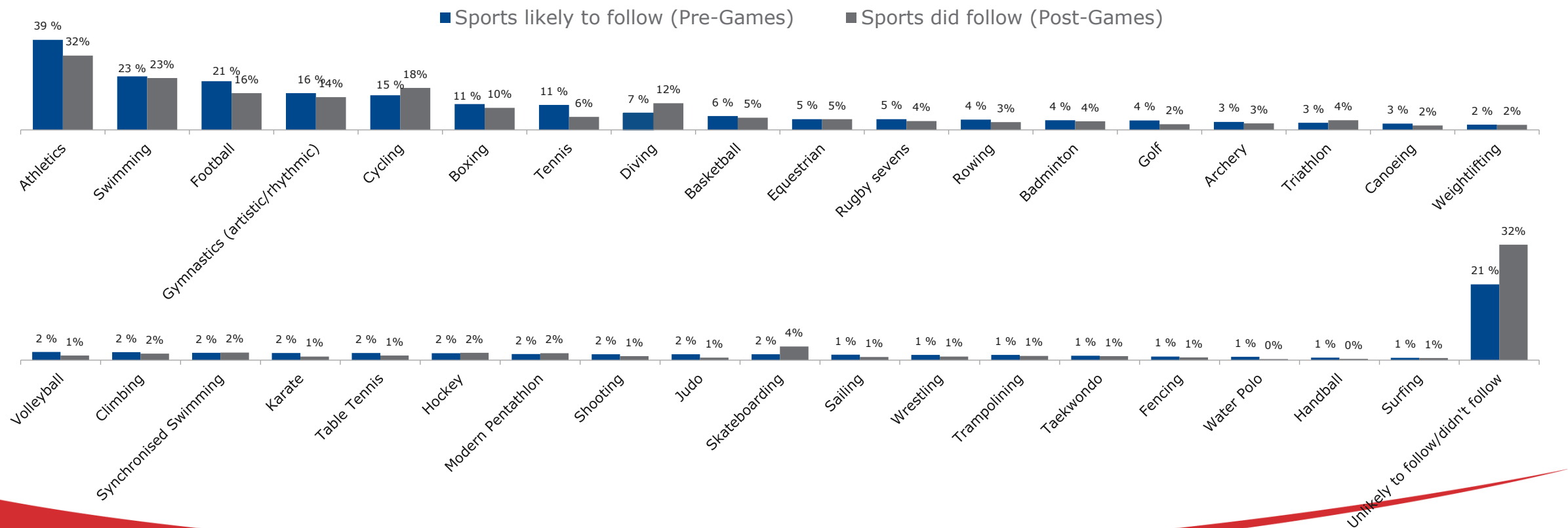
Base: All respondents (n=2,007)

Source: Q04a The Tokyo Olympic Games finished on Sunday 8 August, having started on Friday 23 July. Which of the following statements best describes your attitude to the Tokyo Olympics?

# OLYMPICS: SPORTS LIKELY TO WATCH/DID WATCH

The sports most followed are broadly in line with pre-Games expectations. Cycling, diving, skateboarding and triathlon are four sports where more followed the events than were expecting to in advance.

Three sports most likely to watch or follow

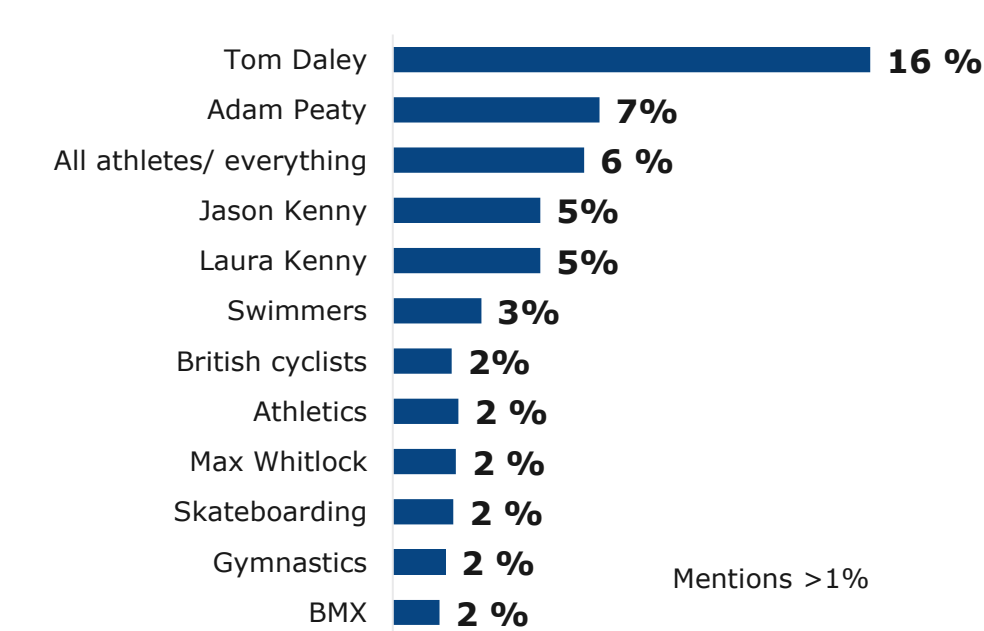


**Base:** All respondents (n=2,007) **Source:** Q012 – Again, assuming that the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games do go ahead, whether next summer as planned or at a later date, which three Olympic sports and which three Paralympic sports are you most likely to watch or follow when the Games are on? Which three Olympic sports were you most likely to watch or follow when the Games were on?

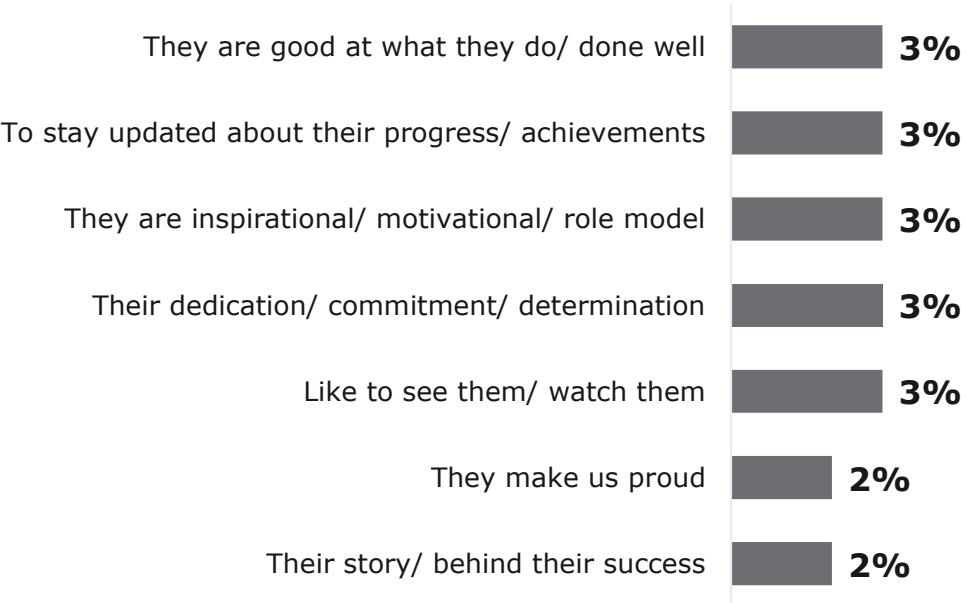
# OLYMPICS: BRITISH SPORTSMEN & WOMEN FOLLOWED

The most followed individual British sportsperson at the Olympic Games was Tom Daley.

## British sportsmen & women followed



## Reasons for following



**Base:** All respondents following the Olympic Games (n=1409)  
**Source:** Q05 – Were there any particular British sportsmen and women you followed during the Tokyo Olympics? OPEN RESPONSE

# OLYMPICS: BRITISH SPORTSMEN & WOMEN FOLLOWED

"Adam Peaty because of his sheer will to win. Any of the gymnasts as they are so talented. Jason and Laura Kenny, inspiring."

"I loved following Laura and Jason kenny in the cycling. It's great that they are also husband and wife. I also enjoy watching Tom Daley progress in every Olympic Games."

"I loved watching the young girl on skateboard and BMX as never really watched before. Pleased for Tom Daley and the Kenny cyclists."

"Tom Daley, I wanted him to win a gold medal and he did Jason and Laura Kenny, inspirational couple who have achieved so much between them, but still seem so down to earth."

"Bethany Shriever. Absolutely fascinating to see how brilliant she was and for her to win a gold. What an inspiration for girls everywhere as this is historically a male dominated sport. Kye Whyte. Loved his Olympian spirit and support for his fellow Olympian Shriever. Amazing to watch Sky Brown Amazing and inspirational."

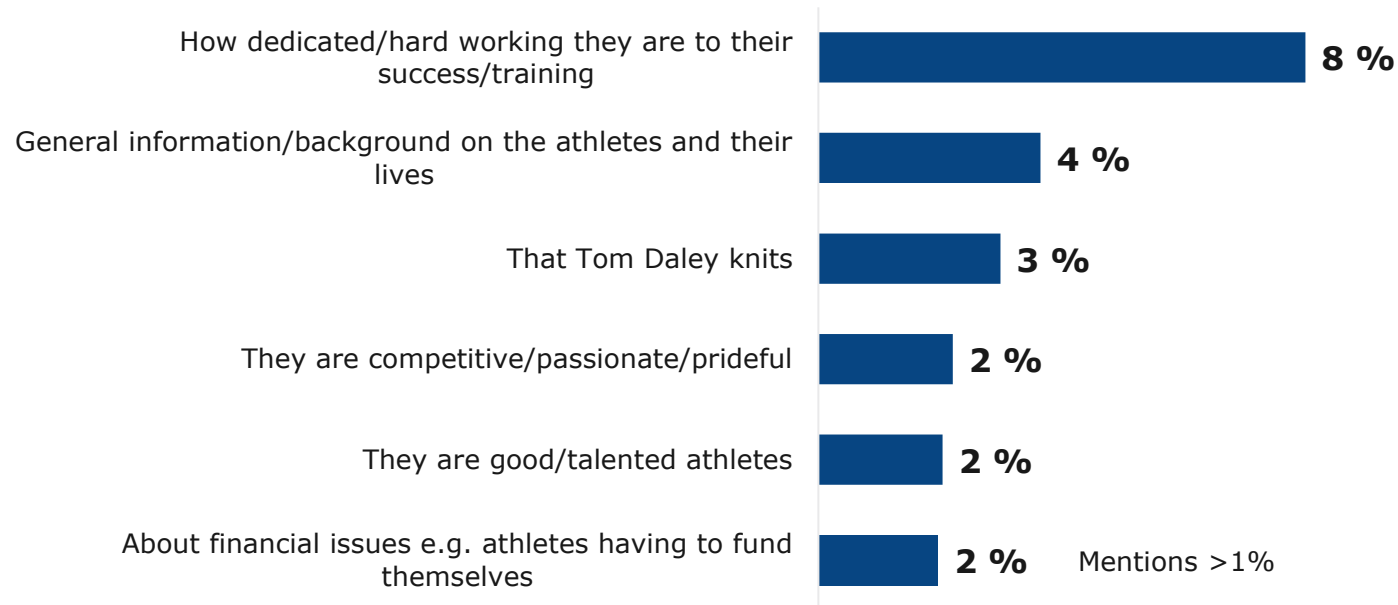
"Kept up with Tom Daley as he has been a significant presence in the Olympics for years and his personality shown in interviews and off screen is why I like him Also the female British weightlifter with red and blue hair, can't remember her name but she seemed so sweet and I kept up with her after watching her get a new PB."

**Base:** All respondents following the games (n=1409)

**Source:** Q05 – Were there any particular British sportsmen and women you followed during the Tokyo Olympics? OPEN RESPONSE

# OLYMPICS: NEW LEARNINGS

The top new learning from following the Olympic Games was how dedicated the athletes are to succeed.



**Base:** All respondents following the Olympic Games (n=1409)

**Source:** Q05ab – And is there anything you learned about British sportsmen and women when following them during the Tokyo Olympics that you did not know before? OPEN RESPONSE



# OLYMPICS: NEW LEARNINGS

"How many weren't actually given money via lottery, or other funding route, to support their training and help them achieve what they did. That's a bit shameful."

"Charlotte Dujardin - her ill mother and mental health struggles having lost her fiancé. Tom Daley is good at knitting."

"How dedicated and committed they have to be to be successful."

"I think we learned a little more about the struggle to become an Olympian and the determination our sportsmen and women have."

"Not specifically but through watching the coverage, I became aware of more athletes and new sports that I wouldn't usually follow such as BMX."

"That all of them love what they do and aren't afraid to step back when they need to."

"How dedicated and hardworking the British Olympians worked really hard to participate and possibly win a medal in the Olympics."

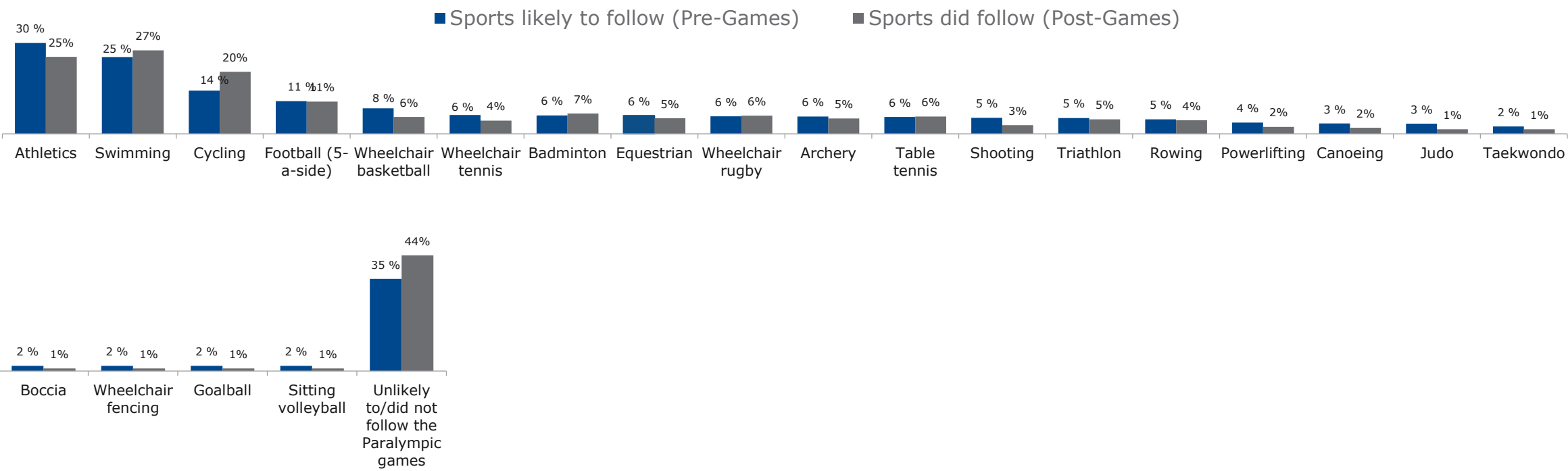
**Base:** All respondents following the games (n=1409)

**Source:** Q05ab – And is there anything you learned about British sportsmen and women when following them during the Tokyo Olympics that you did not know before? OPEN RESPONSE

# PARALYMPICS: SPORTS LIKELY TO WATCH/DID WATCH

The sports most followed are broadly in line with pre-Games expectations. Cycling and swimming are two sports where more followed the events than were expecting to in advance.

Three sports most likely to watch or follow

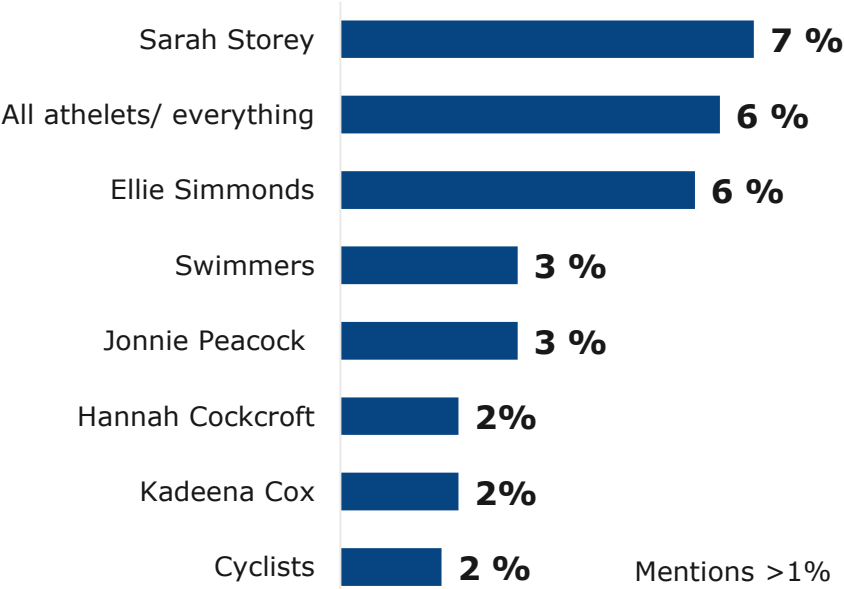


**Base:** All respondents (n=2,007) **Source:** Q012 – Again, assuming that the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games do go ahead, whether next summer as planned or at a later date, which three Olympic sports and which three Paralympic sports are you most likely to watch or follow when the Games are on? Which three Olympic sports were you most likely to watch or follow when the Games were on ?

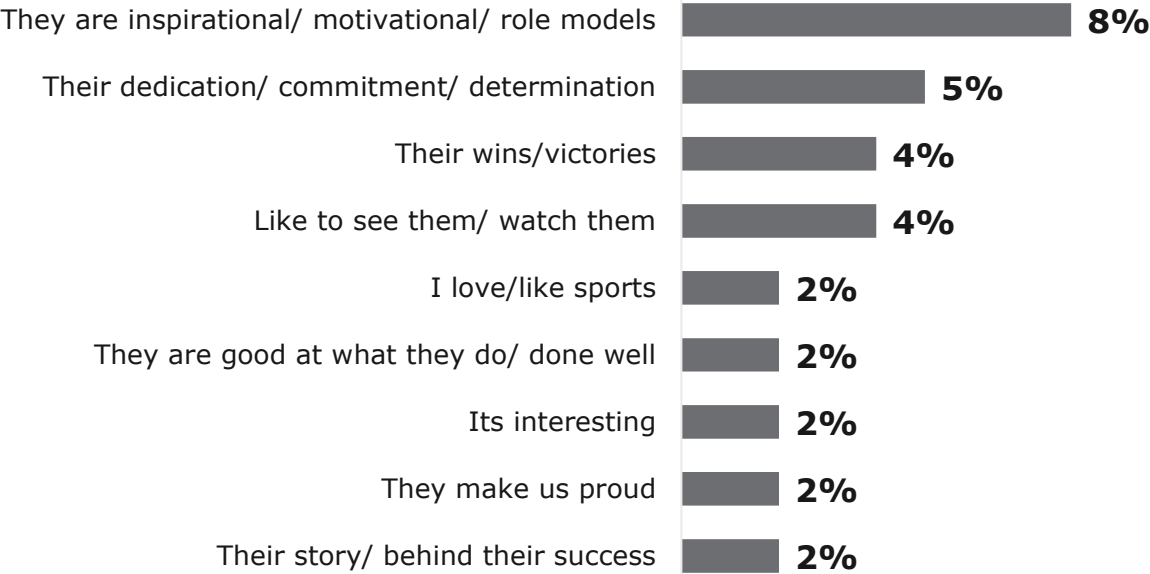
# PARALYMPICS: BRITISH SPORTSMEN & WOMEN FOLLOWED

The most followed individual British sportsperson at the Paralympic Games was Sarah Storey.

British sportsmen & women followed



Reasons for following



**Base:** All respondents following the Paralympic Games (n=1188)  
**Source:** Q05 – Were there any particular British sportsmen and women you followed during the Tokyo Paralympics? OPEN RESPONSE

# PARALYMPICS: BRITISH SPORTSMEN & WOMEN FOLLOWED

"all of them, I watched every minute of coverage for every sport from athletics to swimming and everything in-between, the equestrian, wheelchair rugby, tennis, triathlon, those that are know Lee Pearson, Ellie Simmonds, David Weir, Richard Whitehead, Hannah Cockcroft, Jonnie Peacock, Alfie Hewitt, Kadeena Cox, to the newbies, Reece Dunn, Maisie Summers-Newton, Jaco van Gass, Tully Kearney, Fin Graham, George Peasgood, the rowers, canoeists, taekwondo."

"Dame Sarah Storey what a performance coming back after a lay off Kadeena Cox after difficult preparation to take part in 2 different events."

"Dame Sarah Storey...her achievements over 4 Paralympics is phenomenal...what dedication & true British spirit she has shown...absolutely inspiring in the cycling world."

"Ellie Simmonds - she is very inspiring and can teach us that anything is possible."

"Have always been a fan of Ellie Simmonds and Ellie Robinson. Find their attitude to training and life in general very impressive."

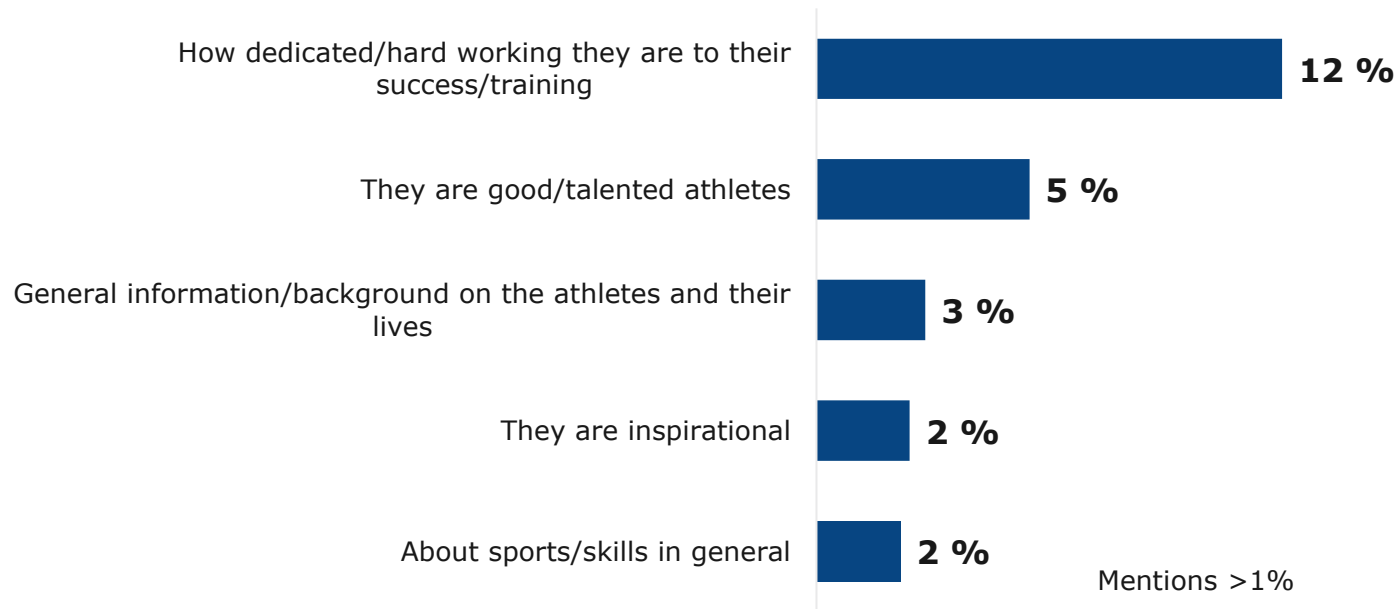
"i enjoy watching Phoebe Paterson Pine because she has a real passion and always shows she is willing to put 100% to every arrow she shoots."

**Base:** All respondents following the games (n=1188)

**Source:** Q05 – Were there any particular British sportsmen and women you followed during the Tokyo Paralympics? OPEN RESPONSE

# PARALYMPICS: NEW LEARNINGS

The top new learning from following the Paralympic Games was how dedicated the athletes are to succeed.



**Base:** All respondents following the Paralympic Games (n=1188)

**Source:** Q05ab – And is there anything you learned about British sportsmen and women when following them during the Tokyo Paralympics that you did not know before? OPEN RESPONSE



# PARALYMPICS: NEW LEARNINGS

"Dedicated to achieve the best possible results. some over coming adversity to compete let alone win a medal."

"I didn't learn too much about individual athletes but I learned more about the different classifications they run and why."

"Just how unlimited their talents are even with disabilities."

"I did not know before that there were quite so many events and sports in the Paralympic calender. I was surprised to learn there are so many now and I am glad for the participants."

"I learnt that working hard does pay off in the aspect and it just encourages me to work harder at the things I do and love mostly."

"Mostly their back stories and how they have managed training during Covid."

**Base:** All respondents following the games (n=1188)

**Source:** Q05ab – And is there anything you learned about British sportsmen and women when following them during the Tokyo Paralympics that you did not know before? OPEN RESPONSE

## **4. ARE BRITISH ELITE ATHLETES IN THE UK HAVING A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE GENERAL PUBLIC?**



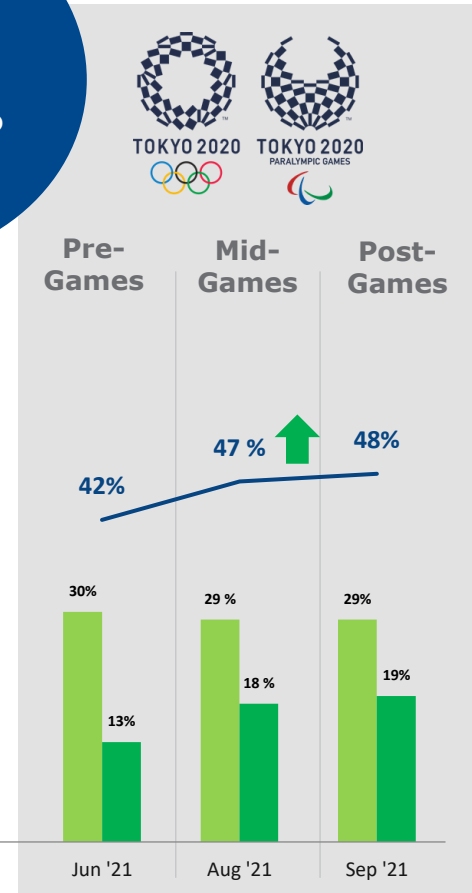
# CONNECTION AND UNITY

There was a significant increase in the sense of connection and unity following the Olympic Games, and this has been maintained post-Paralympic Games

New  
question

IN FOLLOWING  
OLYMPIC AND  
PARALYMPIC  
SPORT, I FEEL A  
SENSE OF  
CONNECTION AND  
UNITY WITH  
OTHER PEOPLE

NET:  
Agree



■ Slightly agree ■ Strongly agree

Base: All respondents (n=2007)

Source: Q05aa – To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'In following Olympic and Paralympic sport, I feel a sense of connection and unity with other people?'

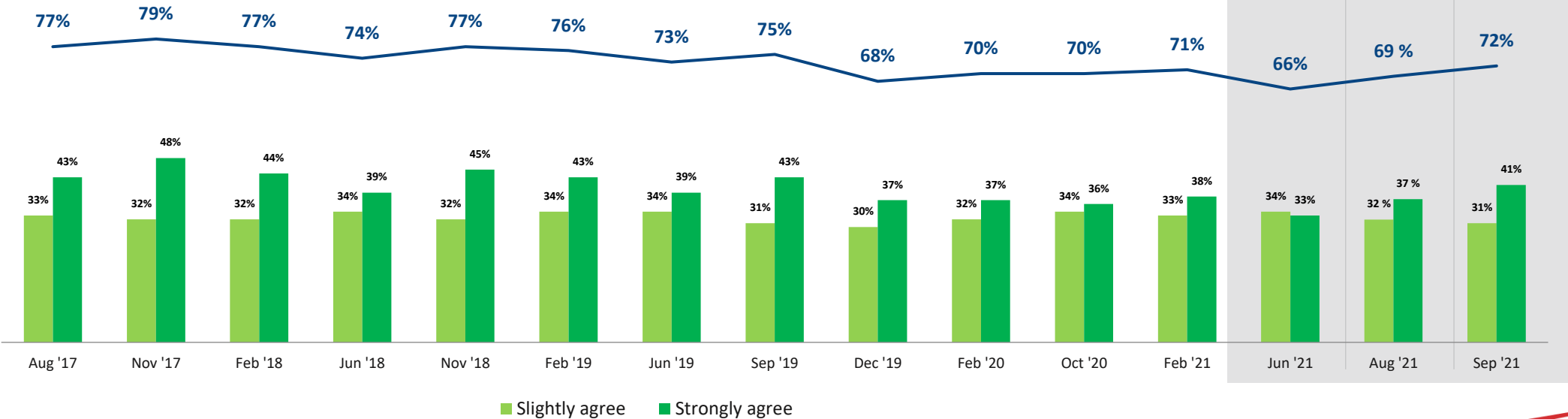
# PRIDE

Seven in ten respondents report feeling proud when British Olympic or Paralympic athletes achieve success in international competition, broadly consistent with previous waves.

I FEEL PROUD  
WHEN BRITISH  
OLYMPIC OR  
PARALYMPIC  
ATHLETES  
ACHIEVE SUCCESS  
IN  
INTERNATIONAL  
COMPETITION



NET:  
Agree



Base: All respondents (n=2,007)  
Source: Q06 – To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statement?

# INSPIRATION: MEDAL WINNING

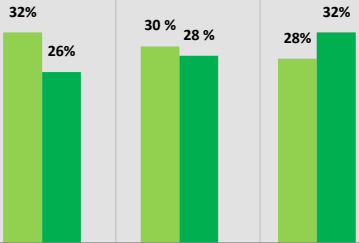
Six in ten respondents feel inspired when British Olympic and Paralympic athletes win medals in international competition.

I FEEL INSPIRED  
WHEN BRITISH  
OLYMPIC AND  
PARALYMPIC  
ATHLETES WIN  
MEDALS IN  
INTERNATIONAL  
COMPETITION



Pre-Games      Mid-Games      Post-Games

58%      58 %      60%



NET:  
Agree

New  
question

Aug '17    Nov '17    Feb '18    Jun '18    Nov '18    Feb '19    Jun '19    Sep '19    Dec '19    Feb '20    Oct '20    Feb '21

■ Slightly agree    ■ Strongly agree

**Base:** All respondents (n=2,007)  
**Source:** Q06 – To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statement?

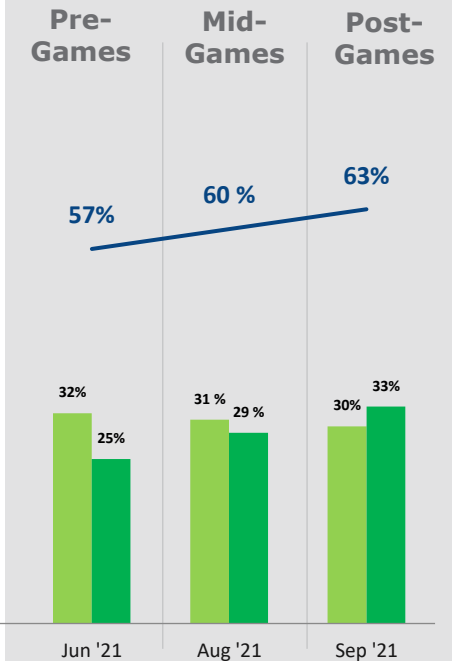


# INSPIRATION: AS PEOPLE

Inspiration from British Olympic and Paralympic athletes as people (whether they win medals or not) has increased significantly throughout the Games.

New  
question

I FEEL INSPIRED  
BY BRITISH  
OLYMPIC AND  
PARALYMPIC  
ATHLETES AS  
PEOPLE, WHETHER  
THEY WIN  
MEDALS OR NOT



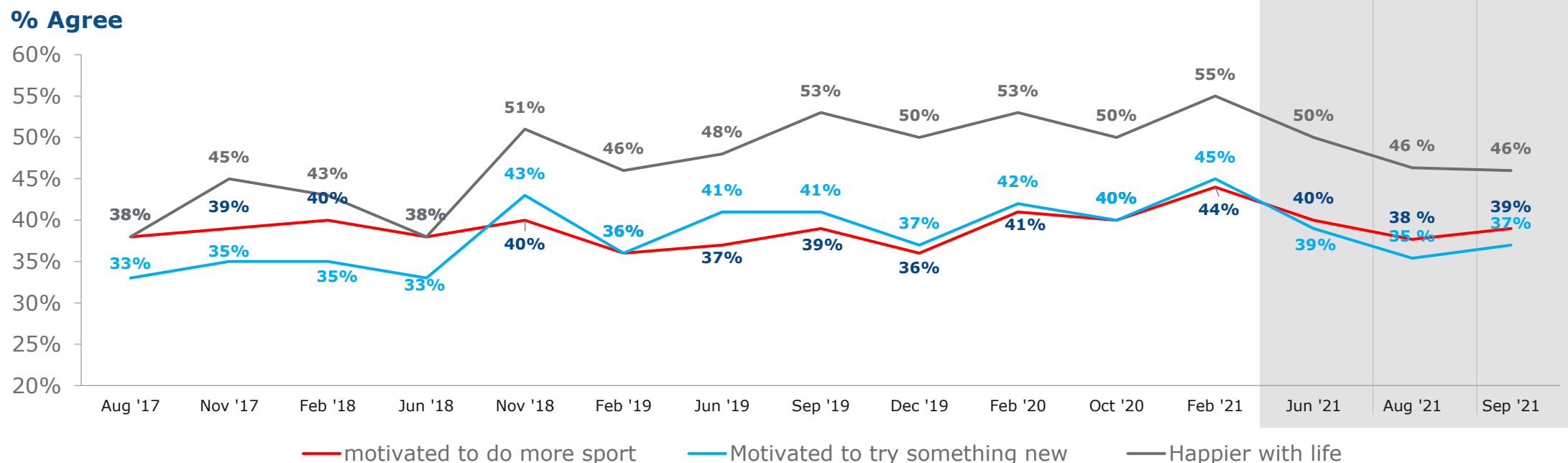
■ Slightly agree ■ Strongly agree

Base: All respondents (n=2007)

Source: Q06 – To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

# IMPACT FROM PERFORMANCE

The share of respondents who were inspired by athletes' success stories to do more sport or recreation, to do something new or different and who claim to be happier and more satisfied with life are broadly in line with previous waves.



**Base:** All respondents proud/inspired by British athletes' success/stories (n=1,387)  
**Source:** Q07 – Please indicate which, if any, of the following statements apply to you.

# IMPACT

The quotes below illustrate the positive impact the success of, or stories about, British Olympic or Paralympic athletes can have on the UK public.

"I have started long distance cycling as a result of feeling more inspired. As with tennis and football I feel more inclined to play those sports when I see watch them in competition."

"The Olympics happening during the Covid crisis has made me realise that time passes very quickly and you have to make the most of each fleeting moment."

"It made me feel that I really need to achieve something in life. It gave me motivation to become a better person."

"It has helped to motivate me to shift the 'lock down pounds'. I have started jogging more frequently and finally re-joined the gym."

"Makes me feel that if they can achieve what they have done then I can do a lot more with my life."

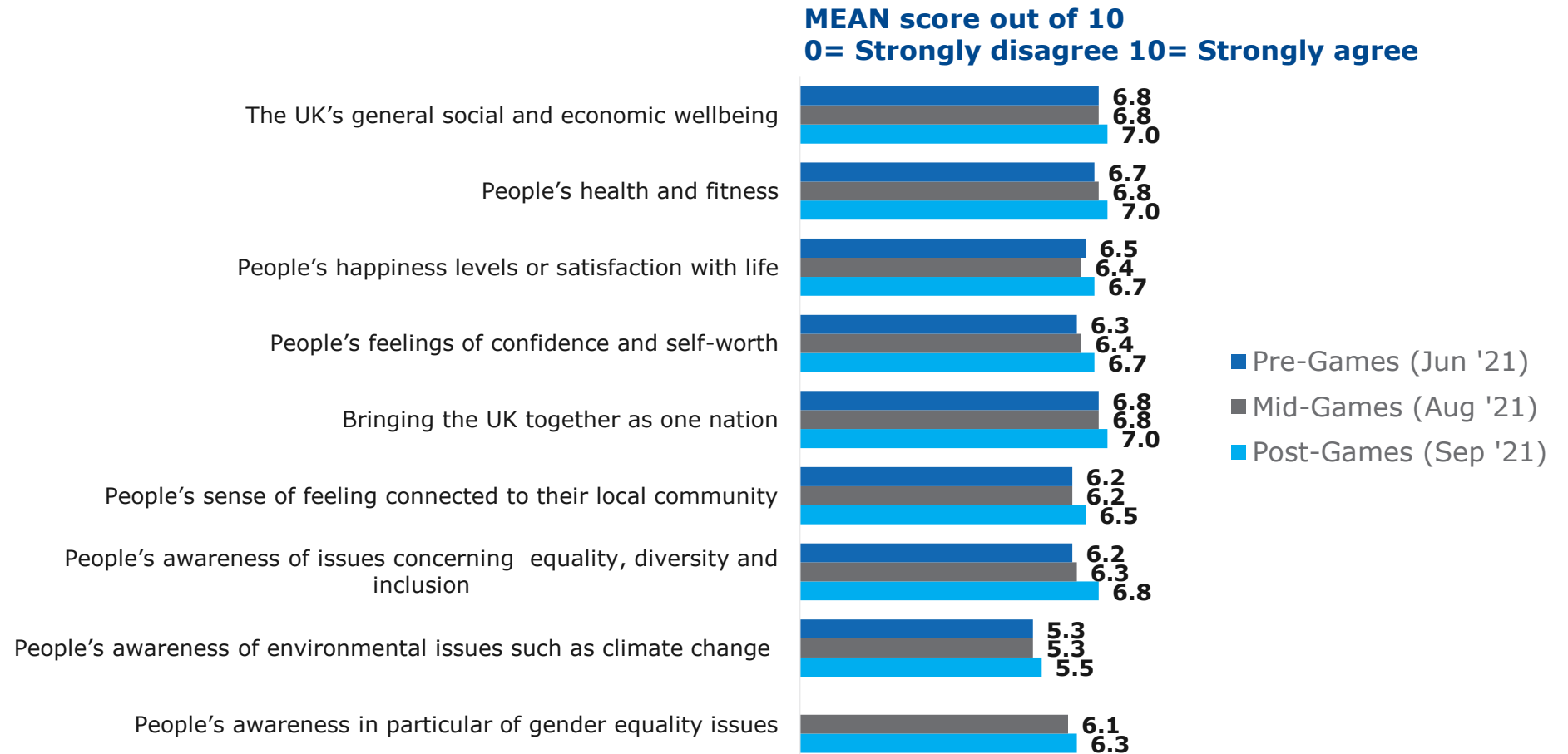
"I have been motivated to get more fit so my partner and I have been doing a lot more walking and enjoying the outdoors as we do it. My husband is disabled and these athletes are amazing in what they are achieving and he is pushing himself to walk more because of them."

**Base:** All respondents who have been motivated or inspired by British athletes' success stories (n=1,218)

**Source:** Q08. We would like to hear about the new things you have done. Please use the text box below to tell us about the new things you have done. OPEN RESPONSE

# IMPACT FROM PERFORMANCE

The perceived impact of British athletes' performances and success has increased across all metrics from pre-Games levels.



**Base:** All respondents (n=2,000)

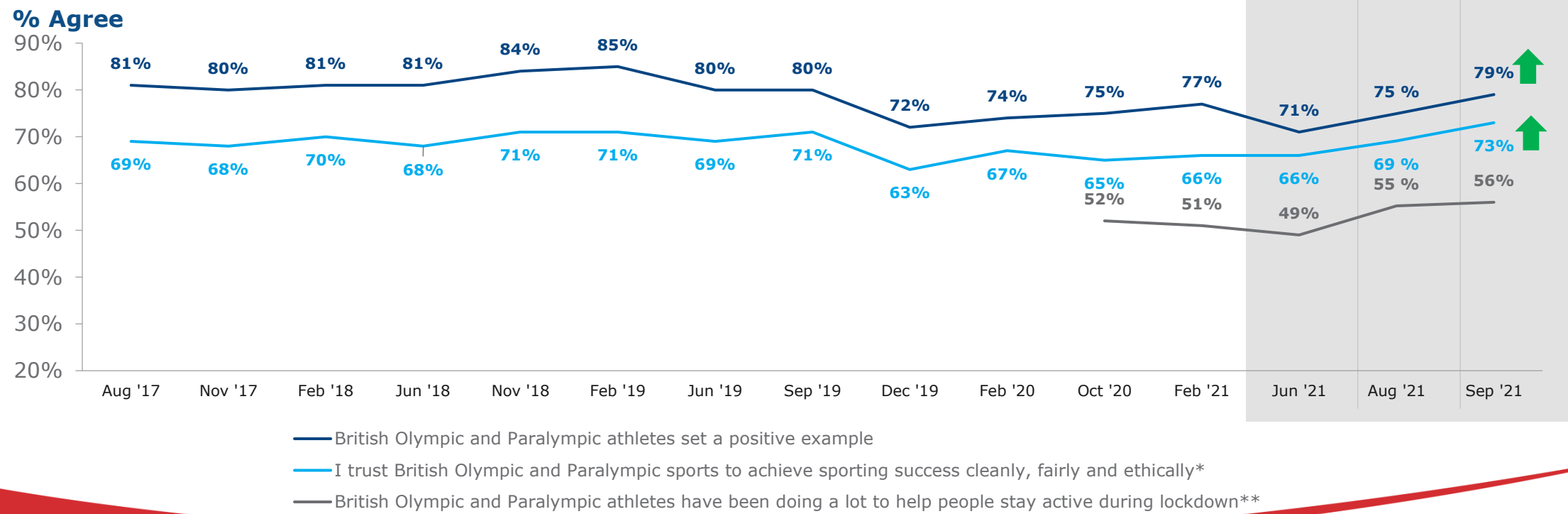
**Source:** Q05a – To what extent do you agree or disagree with the idea that things like British success in Olympic and Paralympic sports and the hosting of major sports events in the UK can have a positive impact on the UK's general social and economic wellbeing? Q05b – To what extent do you agree or disagree with the idea that British Olympic and Paralympic athletes, through the performances they produce or the example they set, can have a positive impact on each of the following? Please use the following scale where '0' means 'strongly disagree' and '10' means 'strongly agree'

## 5. INTEGRITY, REPRESENTATIVENESS AND FUNDING



# INTEGRITY

The share of respondents who feel that British athletes set a positive example and the share of respondents who trust British athletes have both increased significantly from pre-Games levels.



**Base:** All respondents (n=2,007) **Source:** Q09 – Thinking generally about both British athletes and British sports organisations associated with Olympic and Paralympic sports, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? \*\*Pre-June 21 this statement was "I trust British sports organisations to adhere to appropriate standards of sporting conduct, including a drug-free competing environment." \* This wave marks the first time this statement has appeared in the survey.

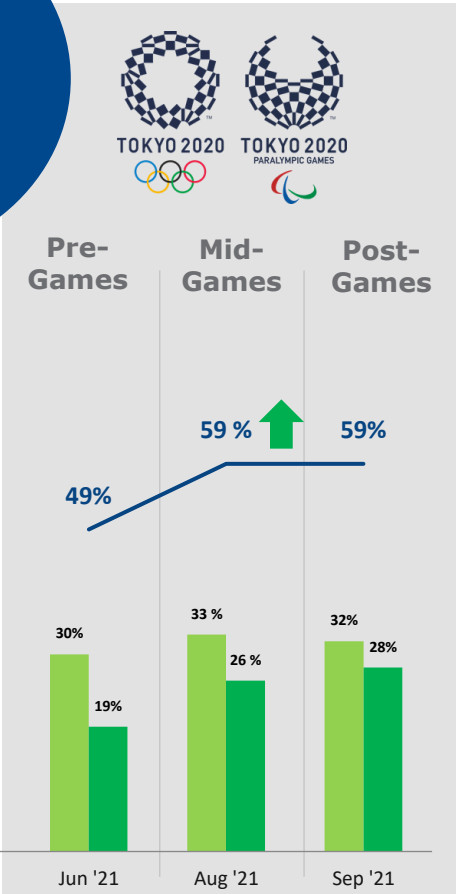
# REPRESENTATIVENESS

Six in ten agree that the composition of the team at the Games broadly reflected British society, significantly up from pre-Games levels. Very few (5% in the latest wave) disagree with this sentiment, with the others unsure.

New question

NET: Agree

THE COMPOSITION OF THE TEAM BROADLY REFLECTS/ REFLECTED BRITISH SOCIETY



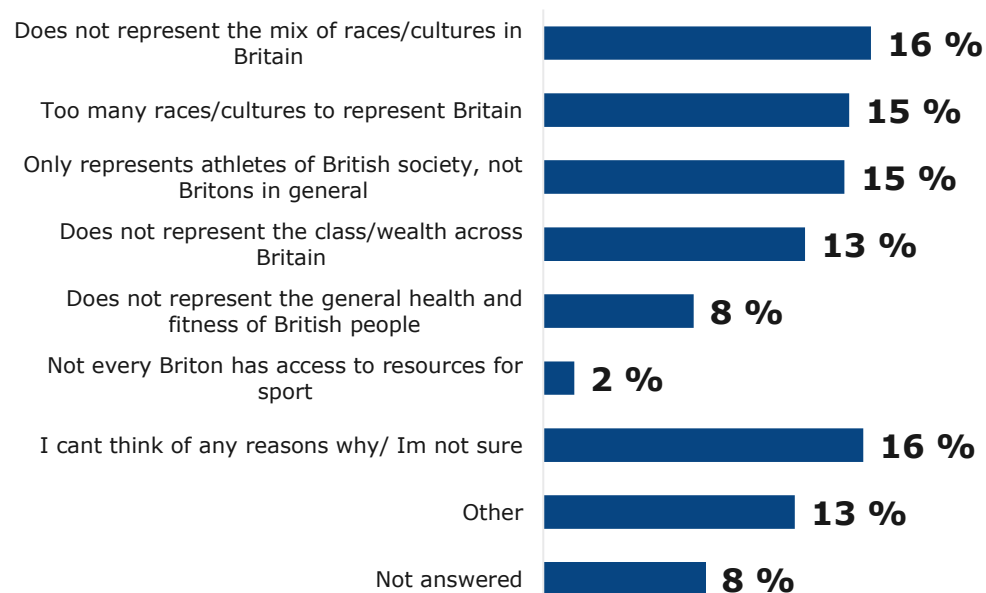
**Base:** All respondents (n=2,007) **Source:** Q015. From what you know about, or saw of, Team GB at the Tokyo Olympics/ Olympics and Paralympics, to what extent do you agree/ disagree that the composition of the team broadly reflected British society?



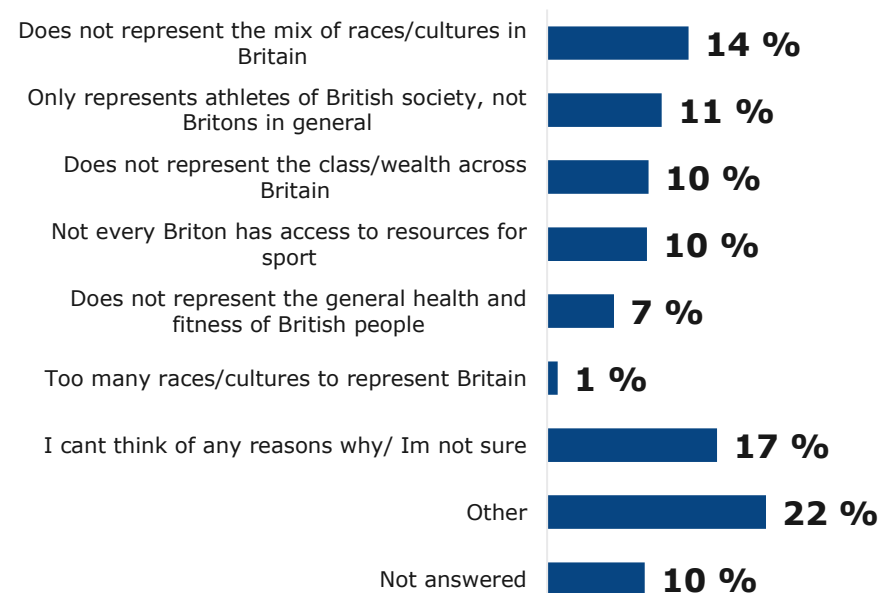
# REPRESENTATIVENESS

Amongst the small minority who feel that Team GB or Paralympics GB are not representative of British society a range of reasons were given.

## Post-Olympics



## Post-Paralympics



**Base:** All respondents who disagree the team is representative (n=126 post-Olympics and n=101 post-Paralympics)

**Source:** Q16. In what respect(s) do you feel that Team GB/Paralympics GB was NOT representative of British society? OPEN RESPONSE



# REPRESENTATIVENESS

The quotes below illustrate some of the reasons given

"Most sports at the Olympics require your family to have a reasonable income to allow you to compete from a young age, not open in general to the poor and underprivileged."

"It's competitive athletics – no average person can do the pole vault and go to work the next day."

"A bunch moaning people telling the public how hard their lives are, utterly pathetic."

"Minorities are over-represented. It's not an issue for me, but it's not representative."

"There are too many sports - e.g. sailing and horse-riding - in which people of different ethnicities don't seem to be fairly represented."

"Some sports appear to require a lot of equipment which is expensive in order to learn let alone compete so certain sports are not inclusive enough."

"The ethnic range is not representative, or not visibly so (didn't see anyone clearly Muslim or Sikh for example). Most athletes are not from deprived backgrounds."

**Base:** All respondents who disagree the team is representative (n=101/n=106)

**Source:** Q16. In what respect(s) do you feel that Team GB was NOT representative of British society? OPEN RESPONSE

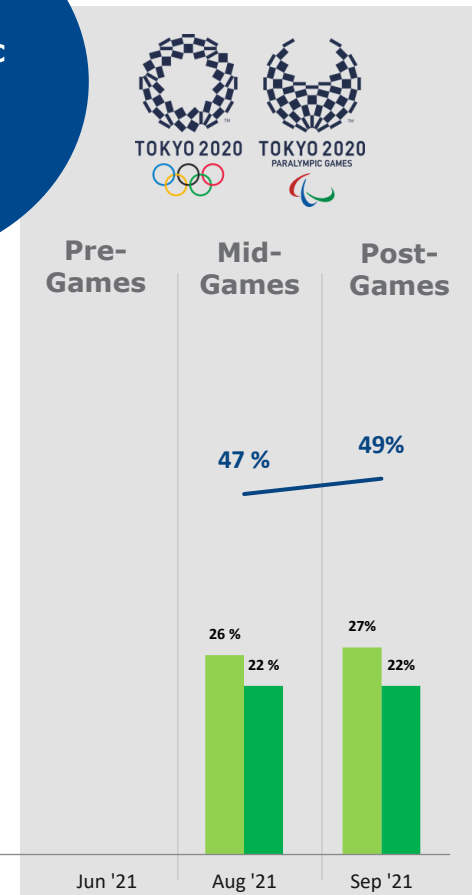
# IDENTIFIABILITY

Just under half say that they can identify with the British athletes who took part in the Olympic and Paralympic Games, with 13% in the latest wave disagreeing with this sentiment.

New  
question

I FOUND IT EASY  
TO IDENTIFY  
WITH THE  
BRITISH OLYMPIC  
ATHLETES WHO  
TOOK PART IN  
THE TOKYO  
OLYMPICS/  
PARALYMPICS

NET:  
Agree

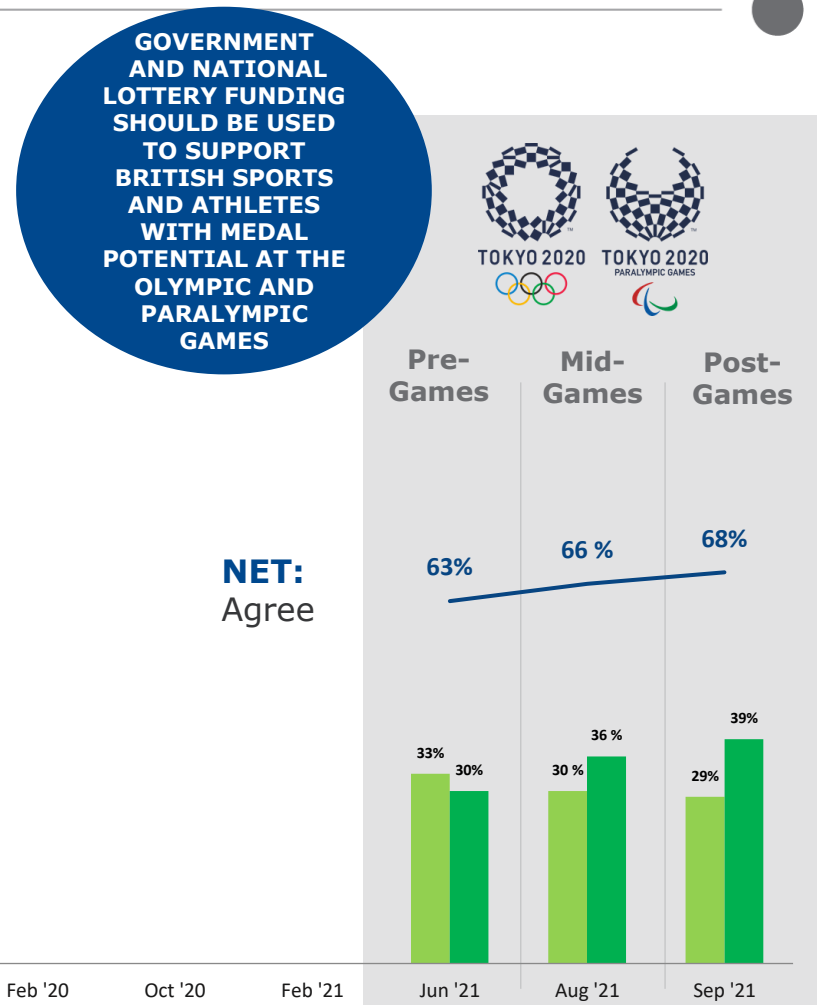


# FUNDING

The proportion who agree that Government and National Lottery funding should be used to support British sports and athletes with medal potential at the Olympic and Paralympic Games has increased significantly from pre-Games levels. Very few (6% in the latest wave) disagree with this sentiment, with the others unsure.

New question

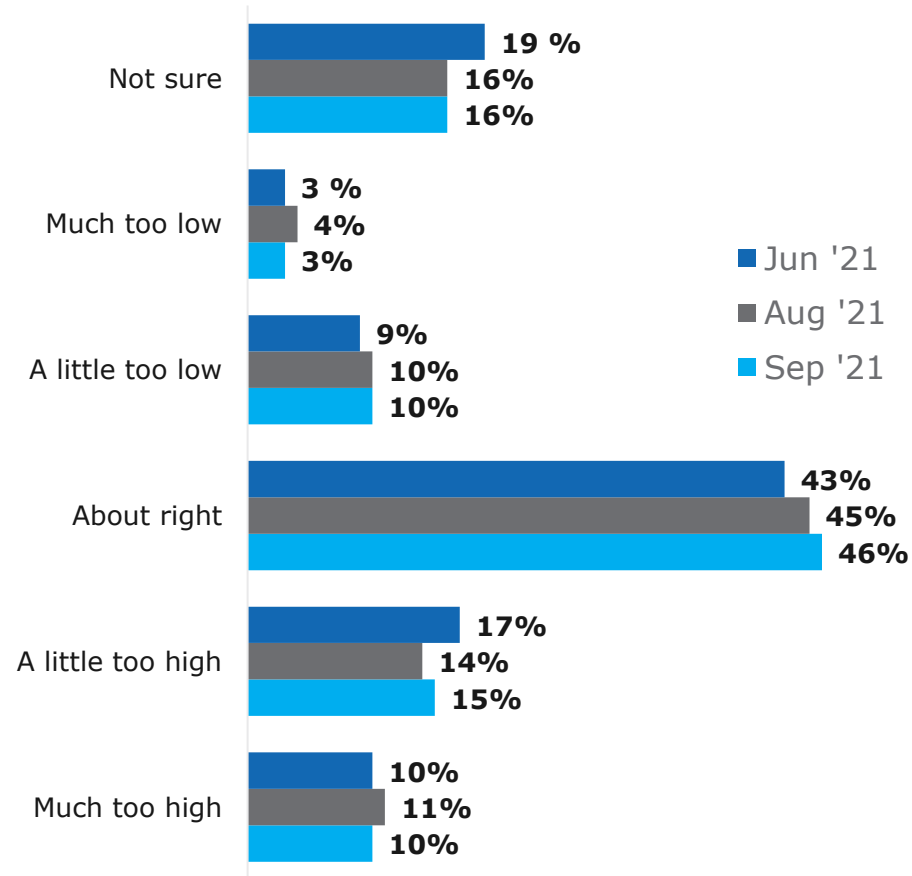
NET:  
Agree



■ Slightly agree ■ Strongly agree

# FUNDING

The proportion who feel that the level of funding is too low/about right has increased significantly from pre-Games levels (54% to 60%).



**Base:** All respondents (n=2,007)

**Source:** Q18. Government and National Lottery investment in British medal potential at the Olympic and Paralympic Games and major sporting events held in the UK currently totals around £135m per year. Do you think that this level of investment is...

# If you have any questions, contact...

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