

2023 PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

New Westminster Police Department

Final Report

October 18, 2023

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INTRODUCTION 01

Background and Objectives

This report presents the findings of the New Westminster Police Department's 2023 Public Opinion Survey.

The main purpose of this survey is to understand residents' opinions of the New Westminster Police Department and the services it provides.

This is the first Public Opinion Survey conducted by the New Westminster Police Department. It establishes a baseline of public perception which can be used to monitor changes in public opinion over time.

The survey questionnaire was developed based on Public Safety Canada's common data standard for measuring attitudes towards the police in Canada. It includes both the core indicators and the additional recommended survey items. The common data standard was developed to provide a consistent and valid measure that police services can use to provide a clear picture of the Canadian public's attitudes toward police at the national, provincial, or local level. The New Westminster Police Department is one of the first to use these core indicators and will be comparing its results to other departments as they become available.

Results from the survey will be used by the New Westminster Police Department to evaluate and improve the services it provides and inform strategic decision making.



Methodology

Invitations to an online survey were mailed to a random sample of 10,000 New Westminster households.

Each invitation included a link to the online survey and a unique password that residents could use to answer the survey securely and anonymously online. To ensure the integrity of the data, each ID could only be used to complete the survey a single time.

As an incentive for completing the survey, residents were offered the opportunity to be entered into a prize draw for a \$100 gift certificate to a local business of their choice.

A total of 865 residents completed the survey, for an overall response rate of 8.65%. All respondents were screened to confirm they live in the City of New Westminster and are 18 years of age or older.

Fieldwork for the survey was completed between August 8 and 31, 2023.

The final data has been weighted to ensure that the gender/age distribution reflects that of the actual population in New Westminster according to 2021 Census data.

Overall results based on a sample size of 865 are accurate to within $\pm 3.3\%$, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error will be larger for sample subgroups.

Notes to Reader

Some totals in the report may not add to 100%. Some summary statistics (e.g., total agree) may not match their component parts. The numbers are correct, and the apparent errors are due to rounding.

Analysis of some of the statistically significant demographic results is included where applicable. While a number of significant differences may appear in the cross-tabulation output, not all differences warrant discussion.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

02

Executive Summary

Core Survey Questions

Overall perceptions of the New Westminster Police Department are generally positive.

However, the relatively high number of 'don't know' responses suggests a lack of familiarity with day-to-day police operations.

Perceptions of local police are notably higher than police as a whole.

Agreement with Statements about New Westminster Police Department

- 71% agree I would help the police if asked (21% don't know).
- 67% agree the police treat people with respect (19% don't know).
- 64% agree I feel a moral duty to follow police orders (20% don't know).
- 62% agree I generally support how the police usually act (21% don't know).
- 62% agree the police make decisions based on facts (15% don't know).
- 48% agree the police are dealing with the things that matter to people in this community (26% don't know).
- 41% agree the police provide the same quality of service to all citizens (32% don't know).

Frequency of Police in Neighbourhood Exceeding their Authority

- Many (43%) are unsure how often the police in their neighbourhood exceed their authority.
- Among those providing a response, most (46%) say 'never/almost never' or 'rarely'. Another 7% say 'sometimes'. Only 4% think this happens 'always/almost always' or 'most of the time'.

Effectiveness of New Westminster Police Department

- 57% agree the New Westminster Police Department are effective at resolving crimes where violence is involved (21% don't know).
- 52% agree the New Westminster Police Department are effective at responding quickly to calls for assistance (28% don't know).

Overall Police Performance

- 64% say the police in this area are doing an 'excellent' or 'good' job overall.
- 44% say the police in this country are doing an 'excellent' or 'good' job overall.

Executive Summary

Additional Recommended Questions

Most of those who have interacted with the police are satisfied with the treatment they received.

Satisfaction is higher among those who experienced police-initiated contact as compared to those who initiated the contact themselves.

Nearly two-in-ten say they have been a victim of crime in the past two years.

A majority of residents are satisfied with their personal safety from crime.

People using or dealing drugs is residents' biggest neighbourhood problem.

Contact with New Westminster Police Department (Police-Initiated)

- 31% say they were approached, stopped or contacted by the police in the past two years.
- Among these residents, 76% are satisfied with the way they were treated by the police.

Contact with New Westminster Police Department (Self-Initiated)

- 37% say they approached or contacted the police in the past two years.
- Among these residents, 69% are satisfied with the way they were treated by the police.

Victim of Crime

- 19% say they have been a victim of a crime in the past two years.

Satisfaction with Personal Safety from Crime

- 62% are satisfied with their personal safety from crime and another 19% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Less than two-in-ten (18%) are dissatisfied.

Perceptions of Neighbourhood Problems

- Residents say their biggest neighbourhood problem is people using or dealing drugs (47% say this is a 'big' or a 'moderate' problem).
- This is followed by garbage or litter lying around (33%), people hanging around on the streets (32%), vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles (31%) and people being drunk or rowdy in public places (28%).
- Only 12% say people being attacked or harassed because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion is a problem in their neighbourhood. However, 31% admit to not knowing if this is a problem.
- Few (11%) say noisy neighbours or loud parties are a problem where they live.

DETAILED RESULTS

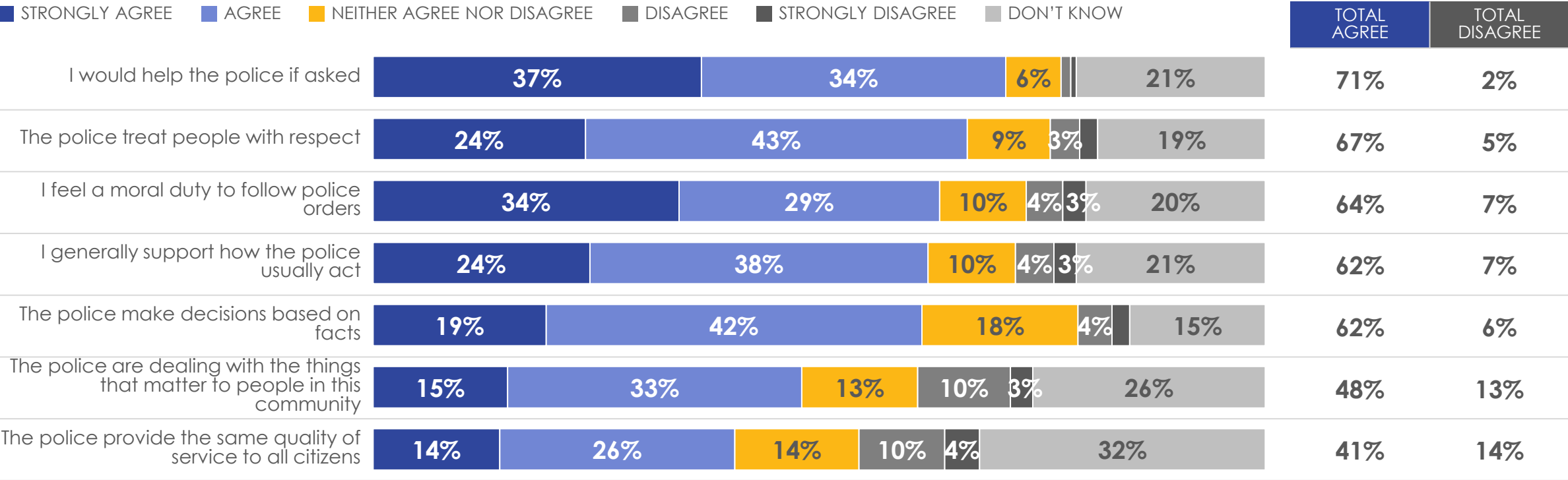
03

CORE SURVEY QUESTIONS

3.1

Agreement with Statements about New Westminster Police Department

- Overall perceptions of the New Westminster Police Department are generally positive, with very few residents disagreeing with any of the evaluated statements.
- The statement garnering the overall highest level of agreement is *I would help the police if asked* (71%).
- Conversely, less than half agree *the police are dealing with the things that matter to people in this community* (48%) and *the police provide the same quality of service to all citizens* (41%). However, between one-quarter and one-third admit they 'don't know' how the police are doing in these areas.



Labels 2% or less not shown.
Base: All respondents (n=865)
Q1. When you think about the New Westminster Police Department, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Agreement with Statements about New Westminster Police Department

(by Gender, Age, HH Income, Past Police Contact and Victim of Crime)

TOTAL AGREE															
	TOTAL (n=865)	GENDER		AGE			HH INCOME			APPROACHED BY POLICE PAST 2 YEARS		APPROACH POLICE PAST 2 YEARS		VICTIM OF CRIME PAST 2 YEARS	
		MALE	FEMALE	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$40K	\$40K- <\$100K	\$100K+	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
		(n=439)	(n=401)	(n=142)	(n=323)	(n=400)	(n=126)	(n=310)	(n=303)	(n=266)	(n=592)	(n=323)	(n=536)	(n=167)	(n=682)
I would help the police if asked	71%	75%	69%	72%	73%	68%	71%	68%	74%	75%	69%	74%	69%	70%	71%
The police treat people with respect	67%	68%	68%	66%	66%	67%	63%	62%	71%	74%	63%	72%	64%	68%	67%
I feel a moral duty to follow police orders	64%	64%	66%	65%	64%	62%	61%	62%	68%	68%	61%	68%	61%	64%	63%
I generally support how the police usually act	62%	64%	62%	57%	64%	65%	60%	57%	68%	68%	60%	65%	61%	63%	62%
The police make decisions based on facts	62%	63%	62%	58%	59%	67%	73%	60%	62%	63%	60%	62%	61%	62%	62%
The police are dealing with the things that matter to people in this community	48%	48%	50%	45%	44%	56%	53%	47%	48%	51%	47%	47%	49%	45%	49%
The police provide the same quality of service to all citizens	41%	44%	39%	40%	41%	40%	43%	42%	40%	45%	38%	42%	40%	38%	42%

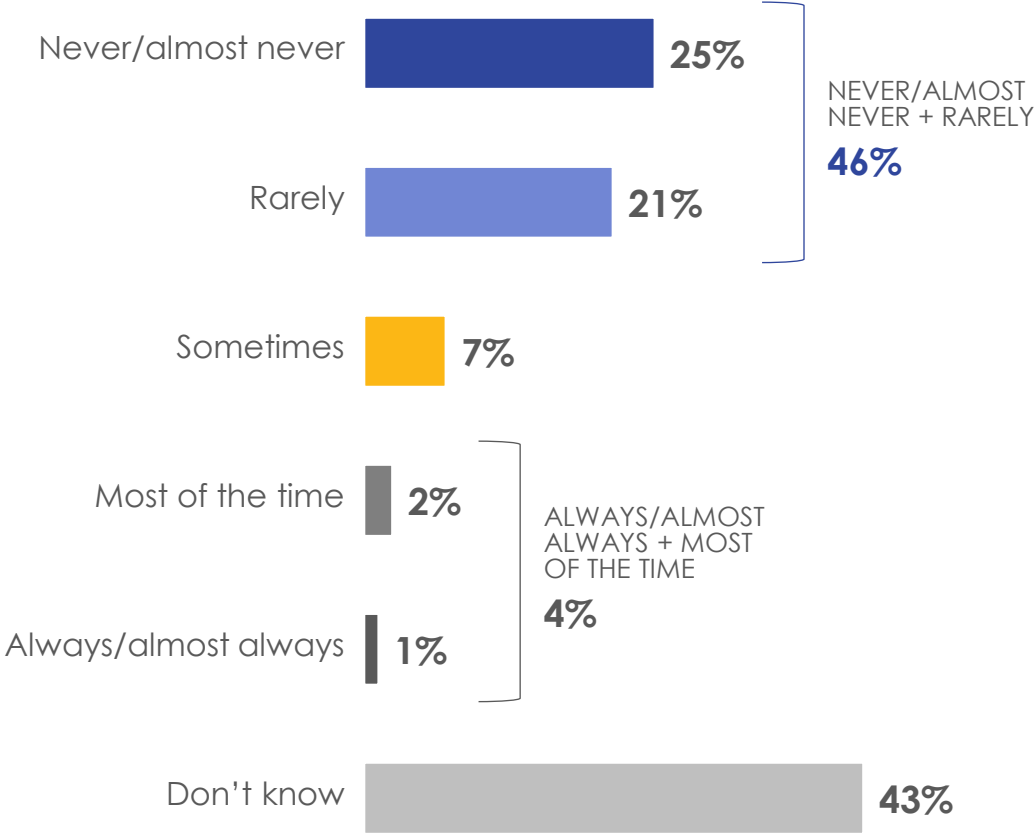
Base: All respondents (n=865)

Q1. When you think about the New Westminster Police Department, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Frequency of Police in Neighbourhood Exceeding their Authority

- More than four-in-ten (43%) say they 'don't know' how often the police in their neighbourhood exceed their authority.
- Among those providing a response, most (46%) say the police 'never/almost never' or 'rarely' exceed their authority.
- Another 7% say 'sometimes'.
- Only a few (4%) believe the police regularly exceed their authority, either 'always/almost always' or 'most of the time'.

FREQUENCY OF EXCEEDING AUTHORITY



Residents who are more likely to say **never/almost never or rarely** include:

- Men (51% versus 43% of women)
- Those with HH incomes of \$100K+ (54% versus 42% of <\$40K, 45% of \$40K-<\$100K)
- Those who have been approached by the police within the past two years (52% versus 44% of those who have not)
- Those who have approached the police within the past two years (52% versus 43% of those who have not)

Base: All respondents (n=865)
Q2. About how often would you say that the police in your neighbourhood exceed their authority?

Effectiveness of New Westminster Police Department

- Nearly six-in-ten (57%) agree the New Westminster Police Department are effective at *resolving crimes where violence is involved*.
- Just over half (52%) agree the New Westminster Police Department are effective at *responding quickly to calls for assistance*.
- In both cases, more than two-in-ten are unable to say how effective the police are in these situations.

AGREEMENT ABOUT EFFECTIVENESS OF NEW WESTMINSTER POLICE DEPARTMENT



Older residents are more likely to **agree** with both of these statements.

- 67% of 55+ years agree the police are effective at *resolving crimes where violence is involved* (versus 51% of 35-54 years, 53% of 18-34 years).
- 59% of 55+ years agree the police are effective at *responding quickly to calls for assistance* (versus 44% of 18-34 years, 53% of 35-54 years).

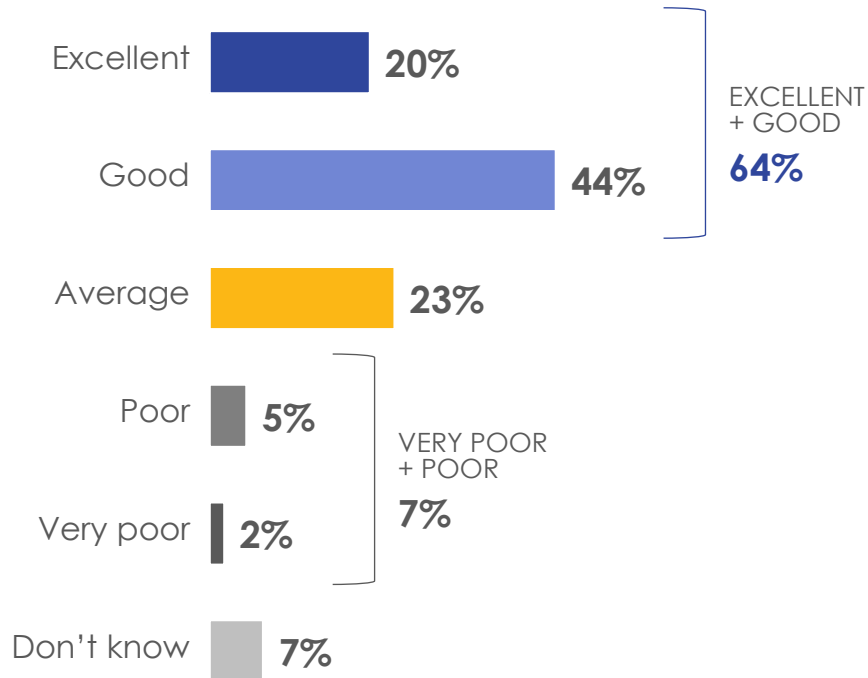
Base: All respondents (n=865)
Q3. In general, to what extent do you agree that the New Westminster Police Department are effective at ...?



Overall Police Performance

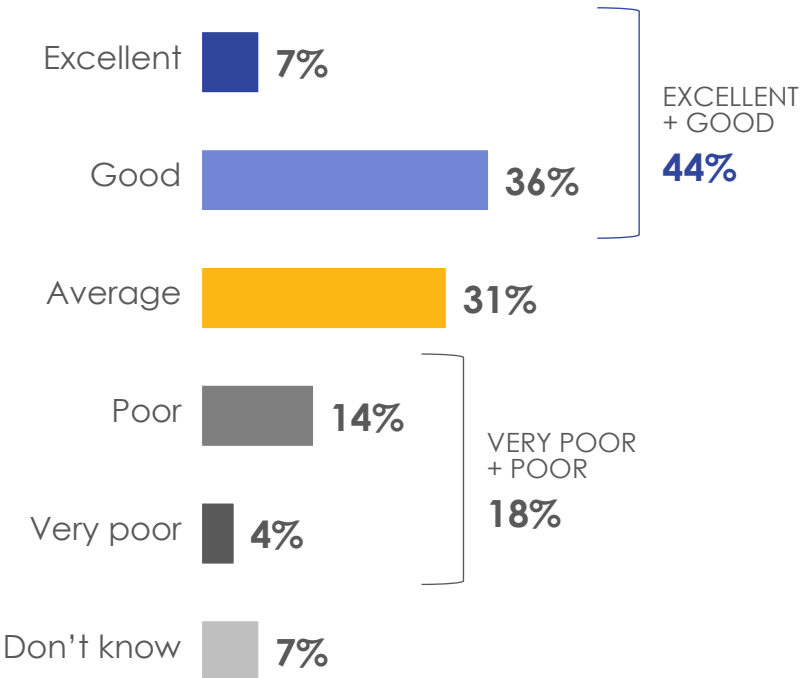
- Nearly two-thirds (64%) think the police in this area are doing an 'excellent' or 'good' job overall.
- In comparison, less than half (44%) think the police in this country are doing an 'excellent' or 'good' job overall.

RATING OF POLICE IN THIS AREA



Base: All respondents (n=865)
Q4. Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in this area are doing?

RATING OF POLICE IN THIS COUNTRY



Base: All respondents (n=865)
Q5. Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in this country are doing?

Overall Police Performance

(by Gender, Age, HH Income, Past Police Contact and Victim of Crime)

EXCELLENT + GOOD															
	TOTAL (n=865)	GENDER		AGE			HH INCOME			APPROACHED BY POLICE PAST 2 YEARS		APPROACH POLICE PAST 2 YEARS		VICTIM OF CRIME PAST 2 YEARS	
		MALE	FEMALE	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$40K	\$40K- <\$100K	\$100K+	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
		(n=439)	(n=401)	(n=142)	(n=323)	(n=400)	(n=126)	(n=310)	(n=303)	(n=266)	(n=592)	(n=323)	(n=536)	(n=167)	(n=682)
Police in this area	64%	63%	66%	59%	58%	74%	71%	61%	65%	66%	63%	62%	65%	53%	67%
Police in this country	44%	43%	46%	45%	38%	48%	55%	40%	47%	48%	41%	43%	44%	42%	44%

Base: All respondents (n=865)
 Q4. Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in this area are doing?
 Base: All respondents (n=865)
 Q5. Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in this country are doing?

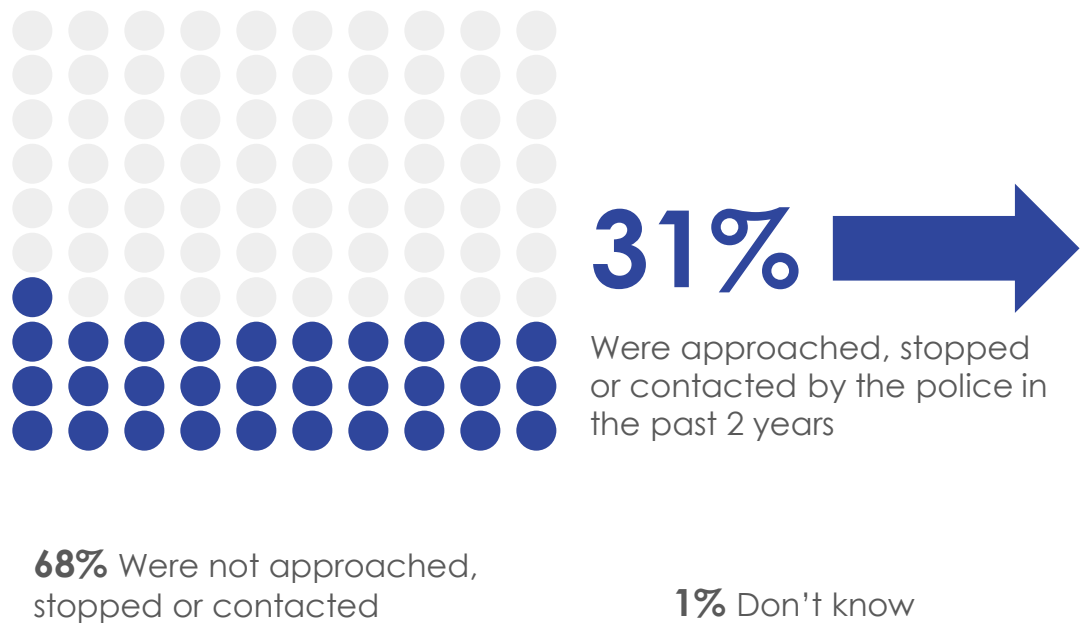
ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED QUESTIONS

3.2

Contact with New Westminster Police Department (Police-Initiated)

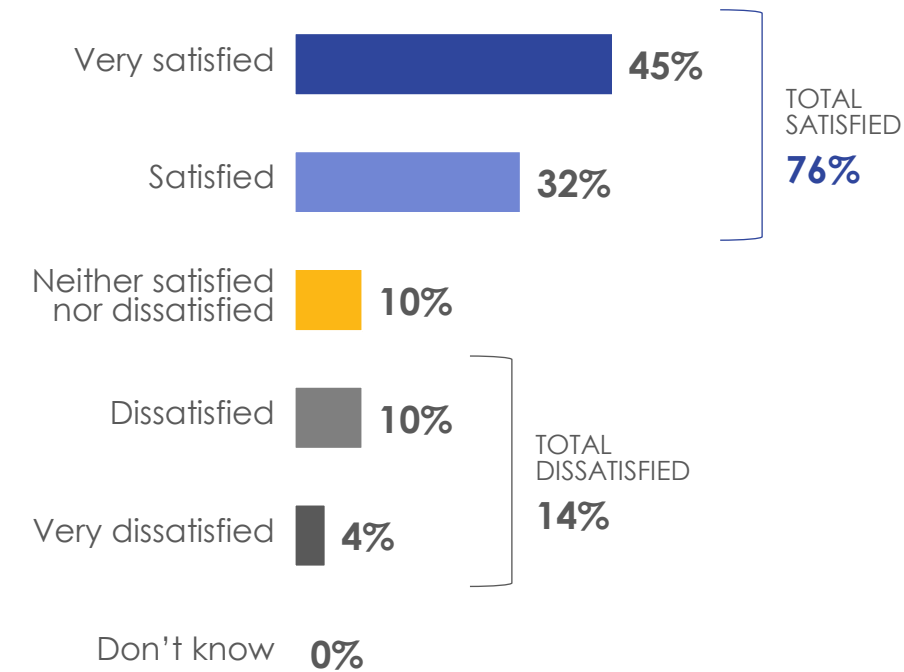
- Just over three-in-ten (31%) say they were approached, stopped or contacted by the police in the past two years.
- Among these residents, 76% are satisfied with the way they were treated by the police.

POLICE-INITIATED CONTACT PAST 2 YEARS



Base: All respondents (n=865)
Q6. In the past two years, did the police approach you, stop you or make contact with you for any reason?

SATISFIED WITH POLICE TREATMENT

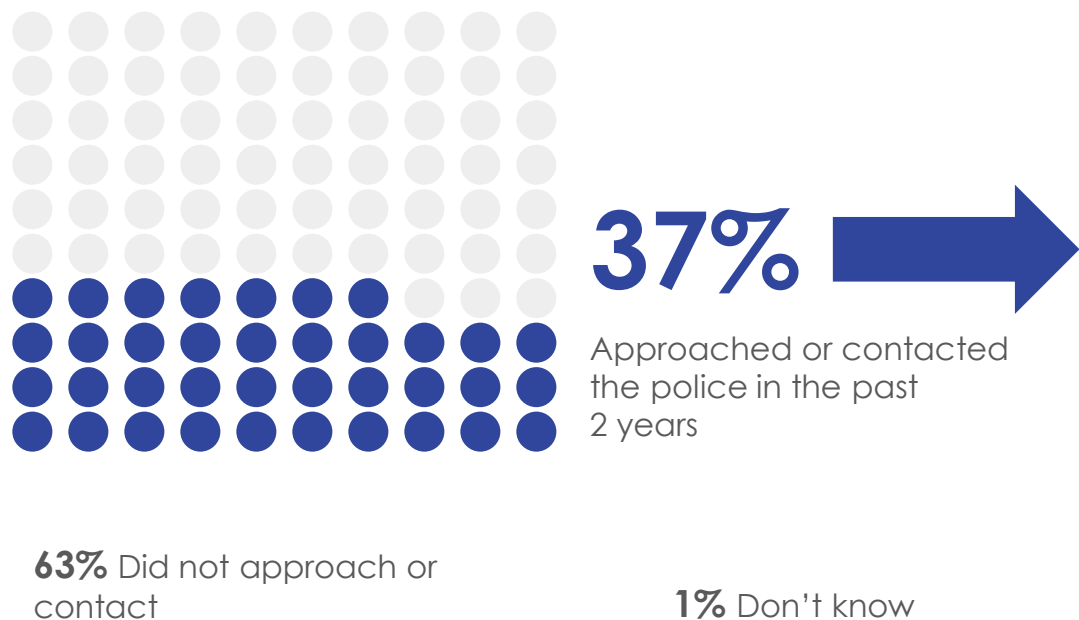


Base: Had police-initiated contact in past two years (n=266)
Q7. How dissatisfied or satisfied were you with the way the police treated you the last time this happened?

Contact with New Westminster Police Department (Self-Initiated)

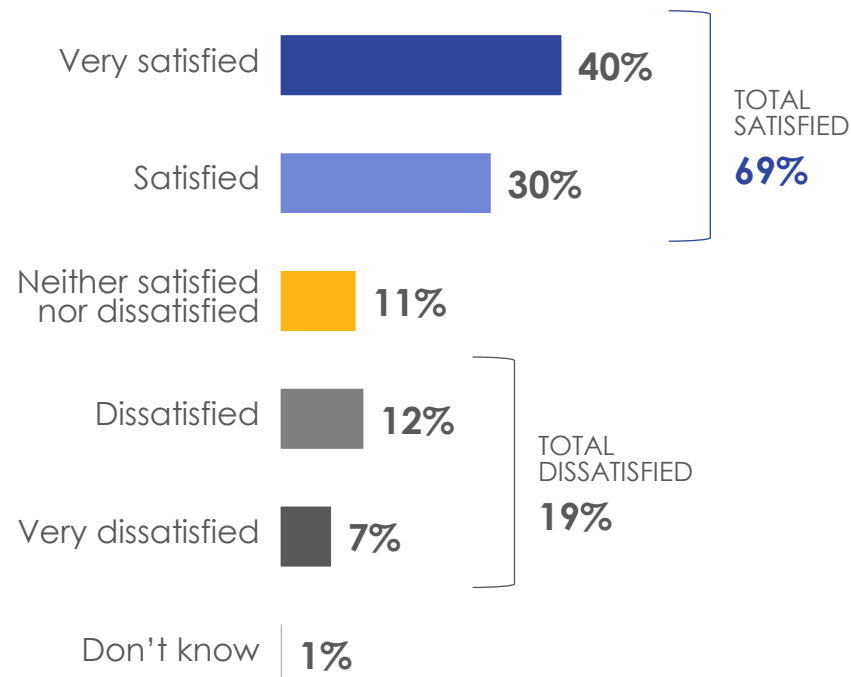
- Close to four-in-ten (37%) say they approached or contacted the police in the past two years.
- Among these residents, 69% are satisfied with the way they were treated by the police.

SELF-INITIATED CONTACT PAST 2 YEARS



Base: All respondents (n=865)
Q8. In the past two years, have you approached or contacted the police for any reason?

SATISFIED WITH POLICE TREATMENT

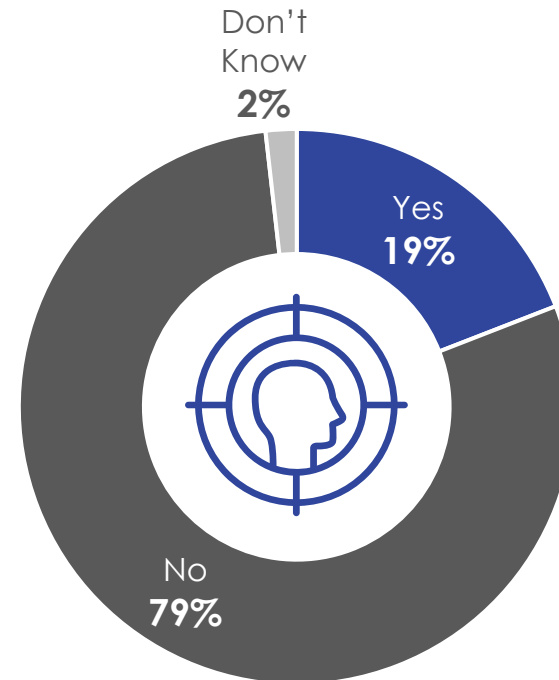


Base: Had self-initiated contact in past two years (n=323)
Q9. How dissatisfied or satisfied were you with the way the police treated you the last time this happened?

Victim of Crime

- Just under two-in-ten (19%) say they have been a victim of a crime in the past two years.

VICTIM OF CRIME PAST 2 YEARS



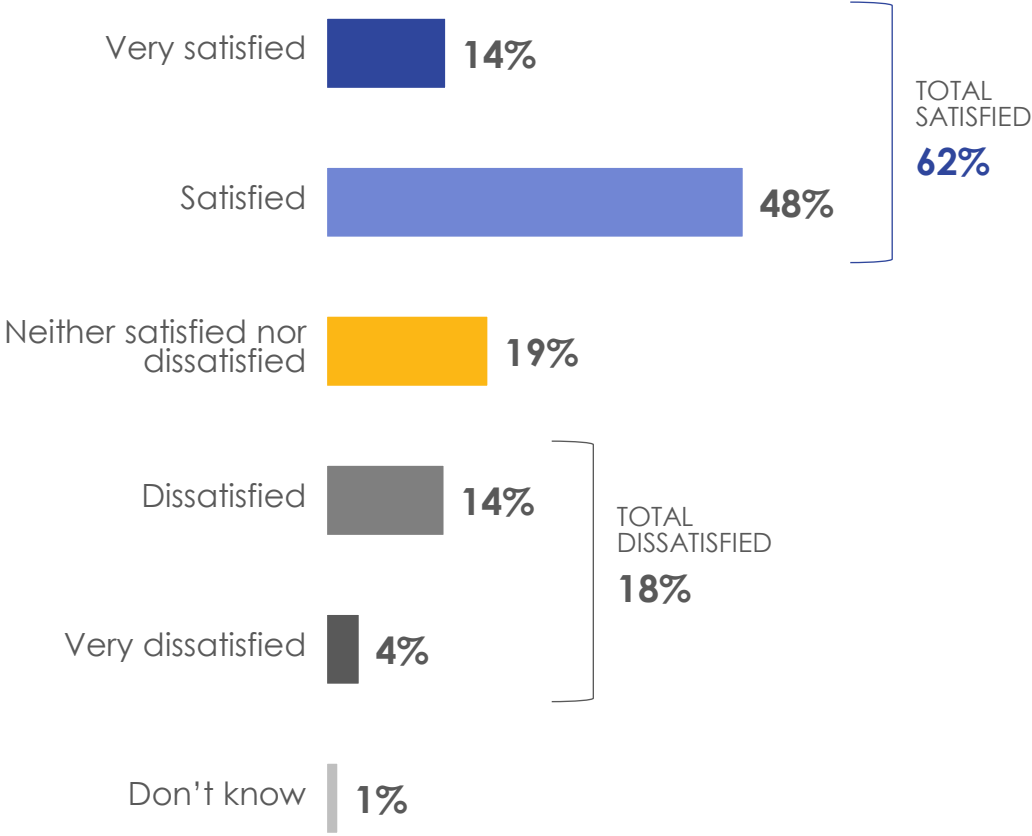
Those with HH incomes of \$100K+ are more likely to say they have been a **victim of a crime** (24% versus 16% of \$40K-<\$100K, 18% of <\$40K).

Base: All respondents (n=865)
Q10. In the past two years, have you been a victim of any crime?

Satisfaction with Personal Safety from Crime

- Overall, 62% of residents are satisfied with their personal safety from crime.
- Another 19% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- Less than two-in-ten (18%) are dissatisfied with their personal safety from crime.

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

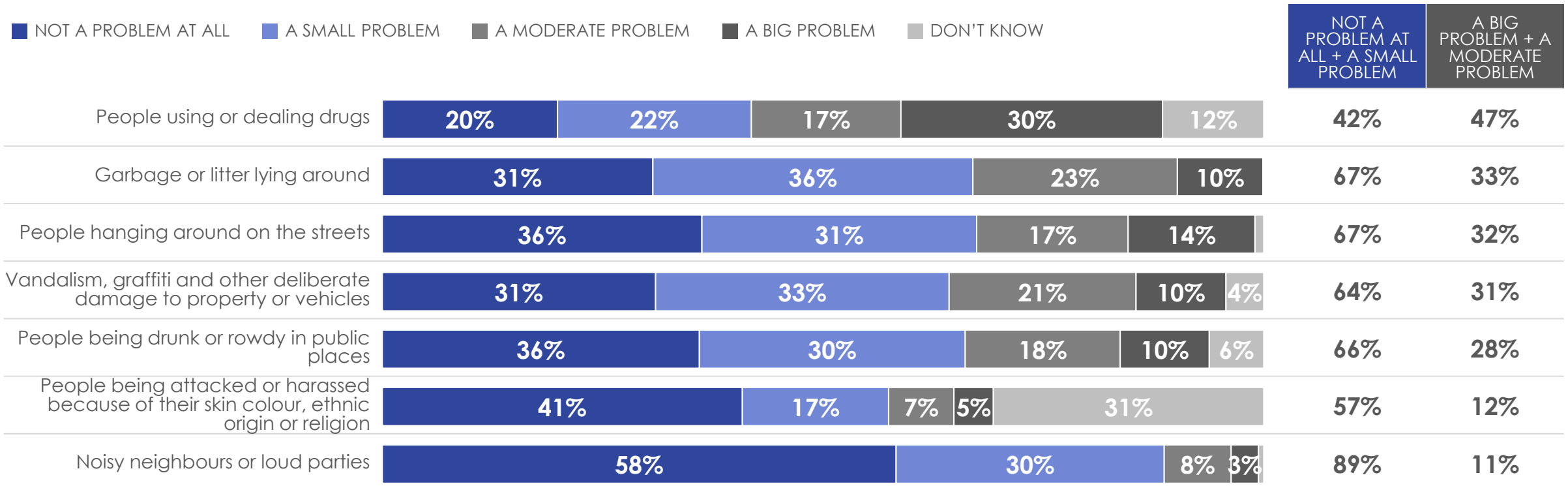


- Total satisfied** is higher among:
- Men (67% versus 60% of women)
 - Older residents (66% of 55+ years versus 59% of 35-54 years, 62% of 18-34 years)
 - Those who have not approached the police in the past two years (68% versus 53% of those who have)
 - Those who have not been a victim of crime in the past two years (68% versus 40% of those who have)

Base: All respondents (n=865)
Q11. In general, how satisfied are you with your personal safety from crime?

Perceptions of Neighbourhood Problems

- Residents say their biggest neighbourhood problem is *people using or dealing drugs* (47% say this is a 'big' or a 'moderate' problem).
- This is followed by *garbage or litter lying around* (33%), *people hanging around on the streets* (32%), *vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles* (31%) and *people being drunk or rowdy in public places* (28%).
- Only 12% say *people being attacked or harassed because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion* is a problem in their neighbourhood. However, 31% admit to not knowing if this is a problem.
- Few (11%) say *noisy neighbours or loud parties* are a problem where they live.



Labels 2% or less not shown.
 Base: All respondents (n=865)
 Q12. In your neighbourhood, how much of a problem are ...?

Perceptions of Neighbourhood Problems

(by Gender, Age, HH Income, Past Police Contact and Victim of Crime)

A BIG + A MODERATE PROBLEM															
	TOTAL (n=865)	GENDER		AGE			HH INCOME			APPROACHED BY POLICE PAST 2 YEARS		APPROACH POLICE PAST 2 YEARS		VICTIM OF CRIME PAST 2 YEARS	
		MALE	FEMALE	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$40K	\$40K- <\$100K	\$100K+	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
		(n=439)	(n=401)	(n=142)	(n=323)	(n=400)	(n=126)	(n=310)	(n=303)	(n=266)	(n=592)	(n=323)	(n=536)	(n=167)	(n=682)
People using or dealing drugs	47%	49%	45%	59%	48%	35%	42%	49%	49%	50%	45%	53%	43%	54%	45%
Garbage or litter lying around	33%	30%	34%	39%	35%	26%	26%	35%	34%	38%	31%	39%	29%	41%	31%
People hanging around on the streets	32%	31%	32%	35%	33%	27%	33%	34%	31%	31%	32%	36%	29%	33%	31%
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	31%	30%	33%	36%	33%	26%	28%	34%	31%	32%	31%	39%	27%	42%	28%
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	28%	29%	26%	39%	26%	19%	30%	32%	25%	30%	27%	33%	24%	34%	27%
People being attacked or harassed because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion	12%	13%	11%	20%	11%	6%	13%	15%	8%	12%	12%	15%	10%	14%	11%
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	11%	10%	11%	10%	12%	11%	13%	14%	7%	13%	10%	14%	9%	12%	11%

Base: All respondents (n=865)

Q12. In your neighbourhood, how much of a problem are ...?

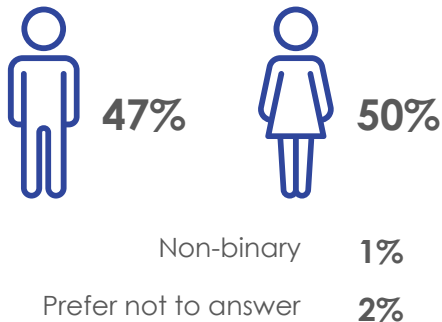
WEIGHTED SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

04

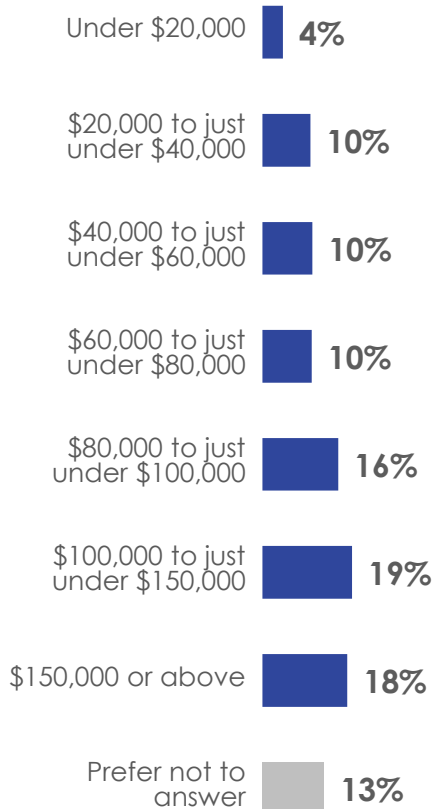
Weighted Sample Characteristics



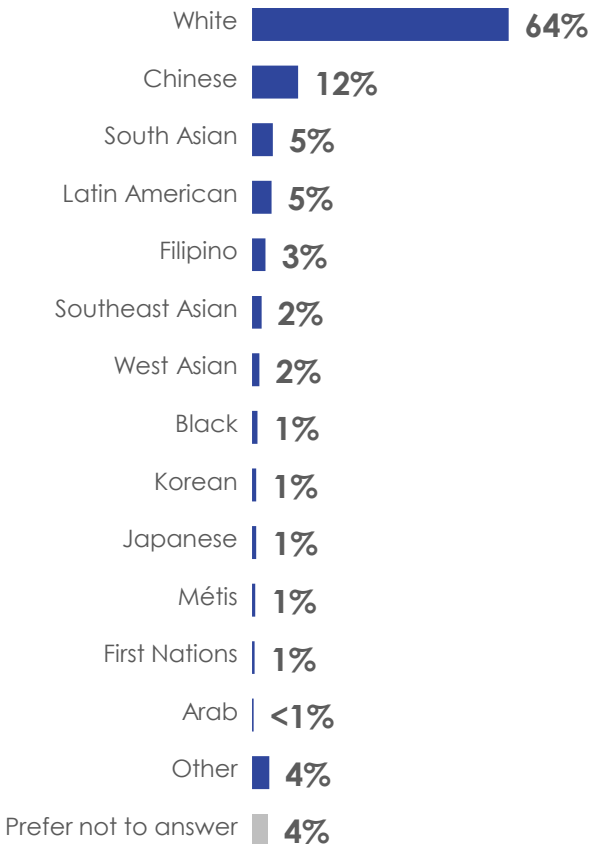
GENDER IDENTITY



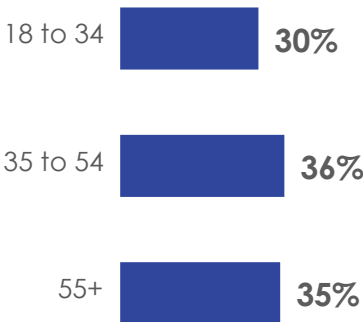
HOUSEHOLD INCOME



RACIAL/CULTURAL IDENTITY



AGE



Base: All respondents (n=865)

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Game Changers

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You act better when you are sure.