

What UK households
think about:

PAY T



Background

The States of Guernsey have announced plans to introduce a pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) system for residual household waste from 2019.

Under the system, parishes in Guernsey will charge for collections of general 'black bag' waste. The States will then recover the costs of any subsequent processing, treatment and disposal.

PAYT is a controversial topic and has not yet been introduced by any UK local authorities, although some councils do make a charge for disposal of items brought to household recycling centres.

Recycling rates in the UK rose faster in the first decade of the millennium than any other country in Europe.

Although the UK started from a low base in 2001, when recycling rates were just 12% for all municipal waste, by 2010, it had reached 39%, on a par with the average for the EU.

Since then, the rate of increase has slowed and recycling rates for household waste across the UK have stagnated around the 45% mark, apart from Wales, which reported a rate of 64% in the 12 months to March 2017.

The cost of domestic waste disposal is currently funded through Council Tax and many householders feel getting their bins emptied is one of the key services their local authority provides.

To find out if PAYT offers a route to increase recycling, waste management and environmental PR and communications consultancy Pelican Communications commissioned online research with 1,000 UK households to understand their attitudes to recycling and paying for residual waste collections.



What is PAYT?

Pay as you throw

(PAYT) is a system for charging householders for disposing of any rubbish they don't recycle.

What do you get charged for?

Local authorities usually provide containers for recyclable materials such as glass, paper, metal packaging some plastics and compostable material and food waste, free of charge.

The 'residual' bin is for what the householder can't or won't recycle and they are charged for disposing of this material.

How does it work?

A variety of models exist depending on the country. Waste is measured by weight, containers filled, or number of bags left out. In some countries bins are fitted with electronic RFID chips that measure the weight of material that hasn't been recycled.

•How do councils charge?

There are three main types of PAYT.

•**Full-unit pricing:** users pay for all the garbage they want collected in advance by purchasing a tag, custom bag, or selected size container.

•**Partial-unit pricing:** the local authority decides on a maximum number of bags or containers of rubbish, with collection paid for by taxes. Additional bags or containers are available for purchase.

•**Variable-rate pricing:** users can choose to rent containers of varying sizes (some programs offer up to five), with the price corresponding to the amount of waste generated.

What's the rationale?

PAYT is based on two guiding principles of environmental policy: the polluter pays principle and the shared responsibility concept. The rationale for PAYT can be divided into three broad categories:

•**Economic:** Under a PAYT scheme, some or all the costs of waste management can be removed from Council Tax bills. Waste management services are then treated just like other utilities such as electricity or water that are charged by unit of consumption.

•**Environmental:** It increases waste separation and recycling and encourages waste minimisation. PAYT programs also indirectly encourage producers to develop more efficient designs and environmentally friendly product life cycles.

•**Social:** Waste collection costs are distributed more fairly among the population, and in proportion to the amount of waste each user generates. PAYT is also said to promote community sustainability. Lower-income families tend to produce less waste and thus pay lower waste collection fees.

What does it cost?

It depends. Research by the Local Government Association in 2007, suggested Council Tax would need to be reduced by £20 per month to justify a PAYT model, but didn't indicate if this would be the level of charging councils would need to impose.

In Guernsey, which is in the process of implementing a PAYT bag scheme in 2019, households would pay between £3.50 and £4.50 for each bag they put out.



Executive summary

The introduction of pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) has the support of one in three people. The survey of 1,000 UK householders, undertaken for waste management and environmental PR and marketing consultancy Pelican Communications, also reveals that when the potential environmental benefits are explained in more detail, support jumps to over 65% of those questioned.

According to the research findings, UK householders are overwhelmingly in favour of recycling, with 89% of the survey respondents saying recycling was 'important' or 'very important' to them and 86% saying that they are trying to recycle more.

What's more, one in three say they have changed their shopping habits to reduce waste, 51% say they repair and reuse items and almost 60% say they donate or swap items. However, this positive sentiment towards recycling doesn't automatically translate into support for PAYT.

"Unsurprisingly 86% of respondents hadn't heard of PAYT, but once the system was explained to them 34% indicated they were in favour, with a further 37% saying that they might be in favour," said Pelican Communications managing director Michael Bennett.

When asked to consider which potential benefits of PAYT appealed to them, 79% said that the possibility it would encourage more recycling was the key factor, as well as being seen by 60% as a significant incentive to reduce waste production.

The perceived fairness of PAYT also appealed to many respondents, with 40% saying that it would be fairer on small households and one in three saying it was fairer than introducing a flat fee for waste collection.

However, increased expense, fly tipping and people dumping rubbish in neighbours' bins were cited as key objections by the 29% not in favour of the idea. Concern that it would not be affordable for people on lower incomes was also a concern given by 62% of those against PAYT.

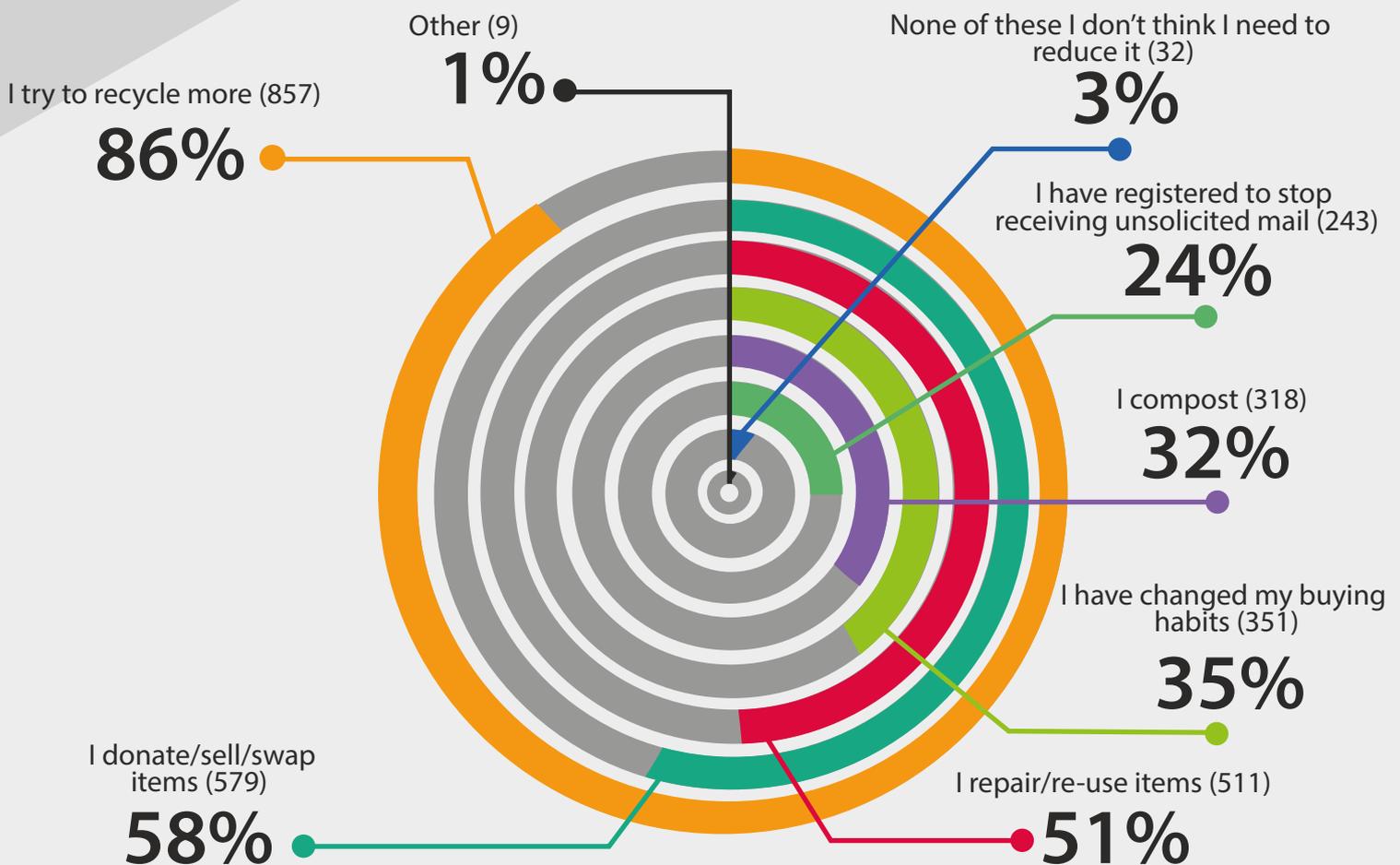
When asked, 76% of all respondents were 'concerned' or 'very concerned' that any scheme would lead to increased fly tipping and 75% were concerned or very concerned that PAYT could lead to 'bin dumping'.

Attitudes to PAYT changed when all householders surveyed were asked about increased product consumption, reduced waste and increased recycling. Sixty per cent, of those surveyed, said they would be more supportive of PAYT if it was guaranteed to tackle increasing waste production and product consumption. This went up to 65% being more supportive if PAYT schemes were guaranteed to increase recycling and have a beneficial environmental impact.



The results

Which of the following, if any, do you do to reduce your household waste? (Select all that apply).



What else do you do to aim to reduce your household waste?

“ We try, where we can, to buy unpacked produce at the supermarket. What is the point of wrapping broccoli in plastic? ”

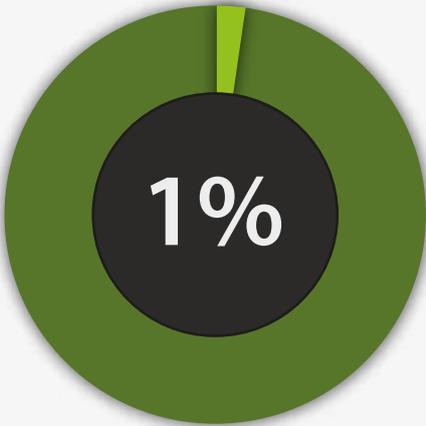
“ Teach my grandchildren to recycle. ”

“ Not buy so much packaged food. ”

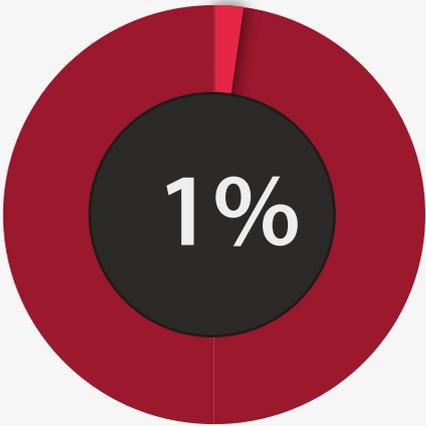
The results

How important is recycling to you?

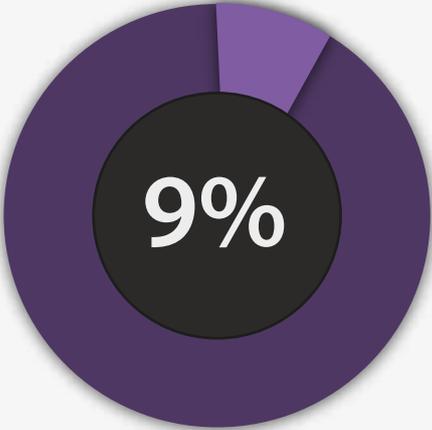
Not at all important (13)



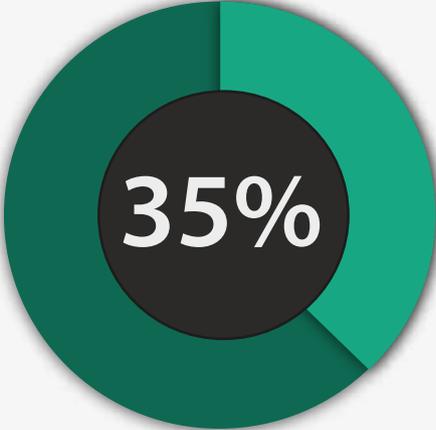
Not important (10)



I'm neutral (93)



Important (346)

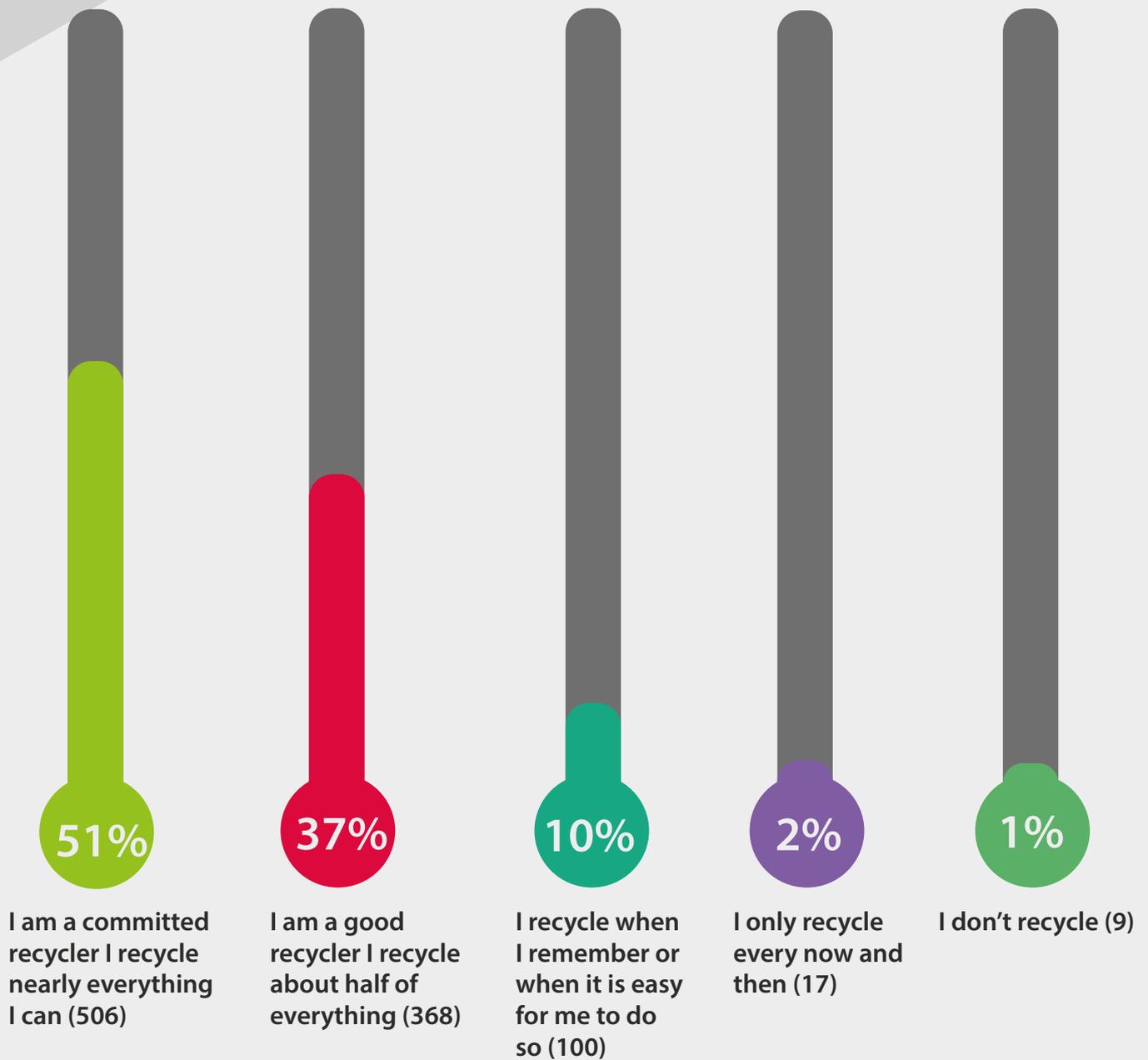


Very important (538)



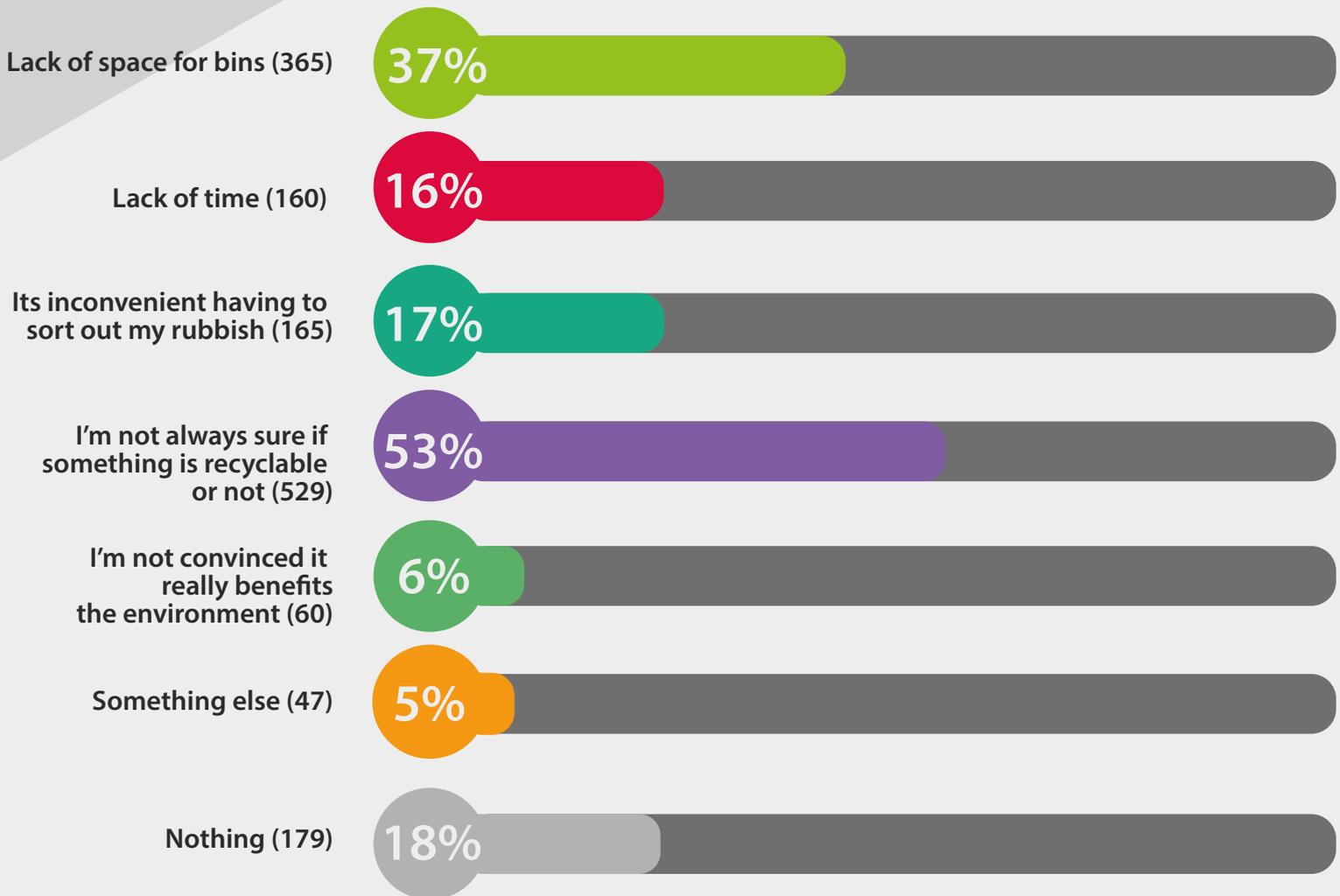
The results

Which one of the following best describes your attitude to recycling?



The results

What would you say prevents you from recycling or from recycling more? (Select all that apply).



What else prevents you from recycling?

“Not enough room in bins because they are emptied every two weeks.”

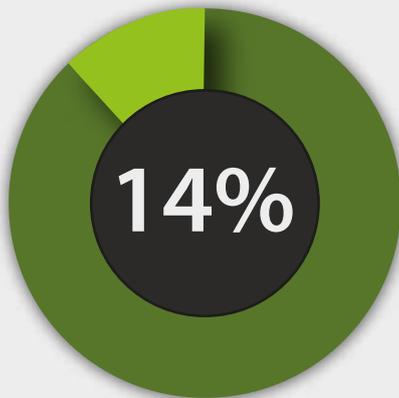
“The council only recycle certain items so I have to put others which could be recycled, but aren't in the non recycling bin instead.”

“Not having a way to dispose of compostable products in my area. . . perhaps community gardens or parks should take this for their use if people want to compost and not throw in general rubbish.”

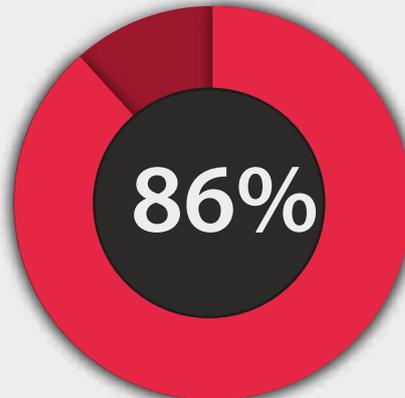
The results

Have you heard of Pay As You Throw (PAYT) household waste schemes?

Yes (140)

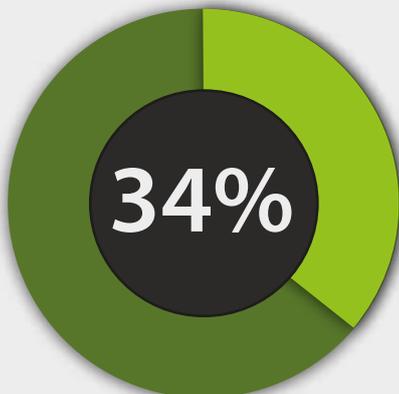


No (860)

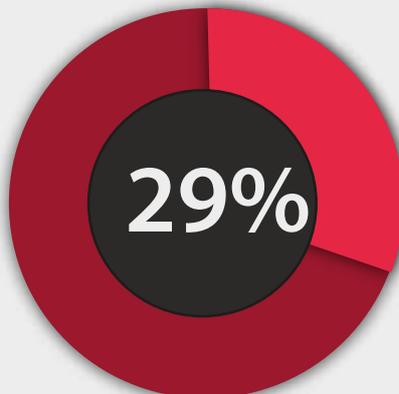


In principle would you be supportive of PAYT schemes?

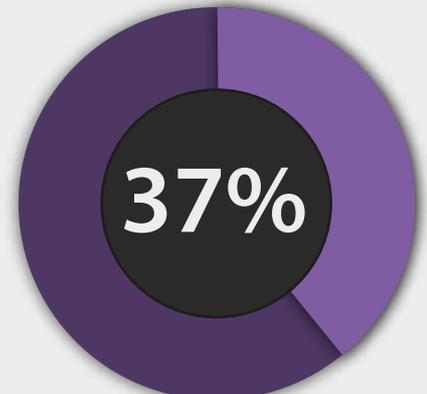
Yes (341)



No (292)

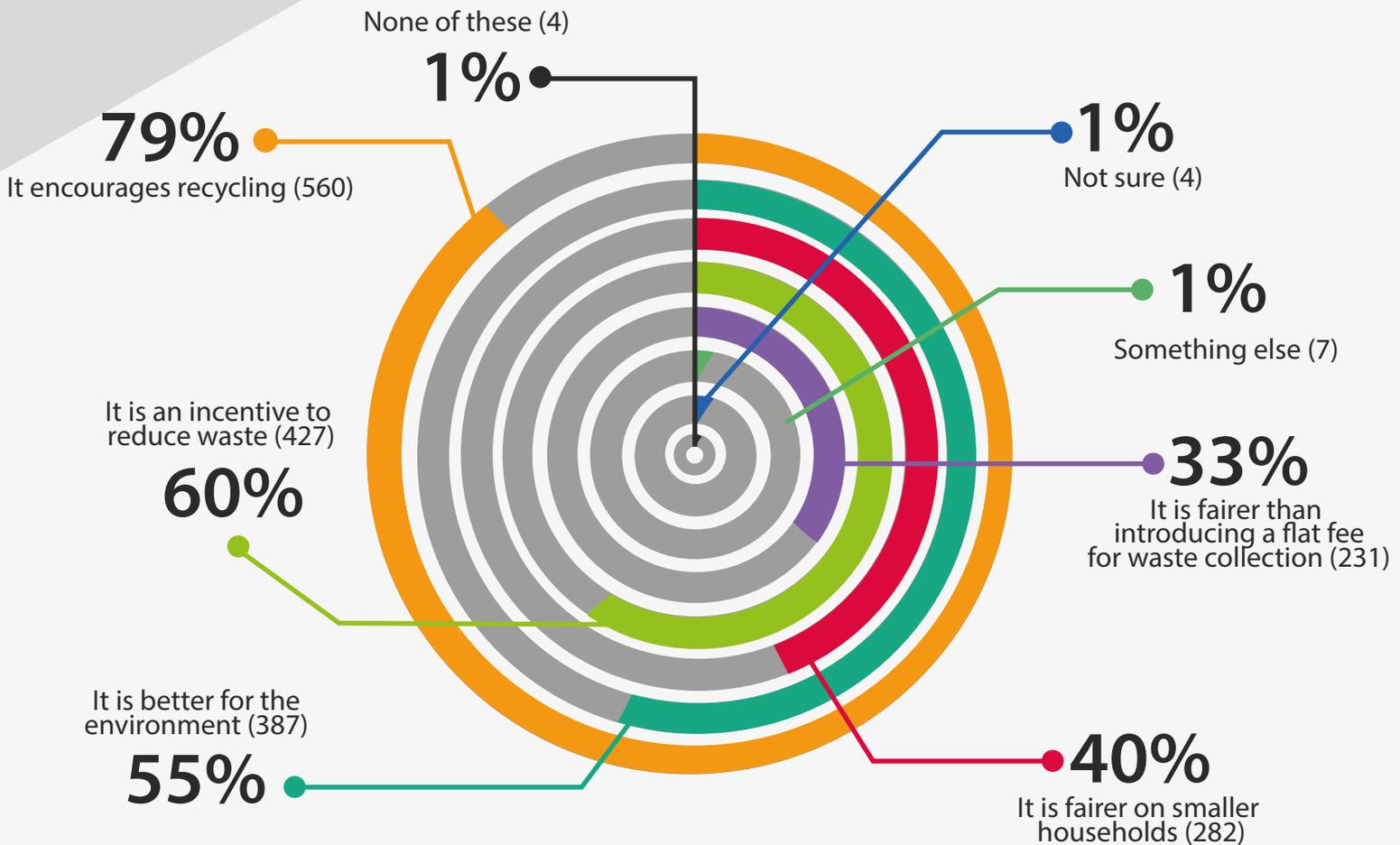


Maybe (367)



The results

**What aspects of PAYT appeal to you?
(Select all that apply).**



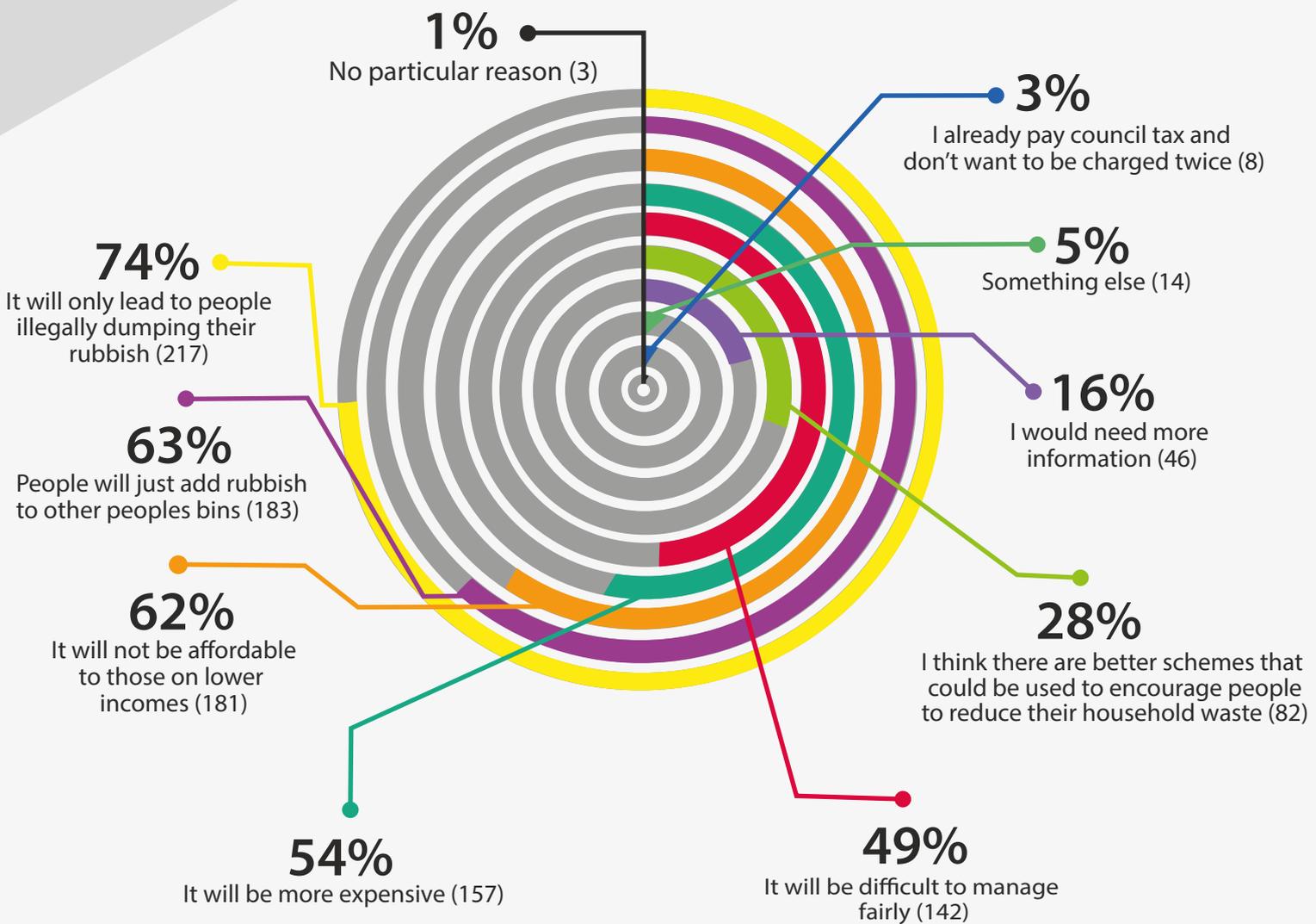
What other aspects of PAYT appeals to you?

“It would appeal providing its introduction was combined with a refund or reduction in the cost of council tax as this currently pays for the waste collection services. In other words, I would not support the introduction of PAYT as yet another supplementary source of income for local councils.”

“I’d be happier to join this but being in a block of flats with eight other families, it’s difficult to be able to charge, but maybe giving people incentives to recycle would be better.”

The results

**Why are you not supportive of PAYT?
(Select all that apply).**



What else? (Prefer to be able to pay online)

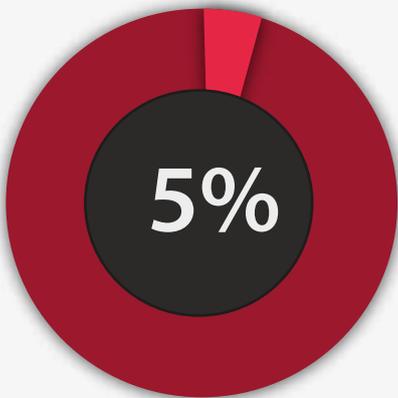
“People already pay council tax for rubbish removal this scheme means paying twice, a sneaky tax in my opinion.”

“It is not my fault if so many things I buy for myself or my children come with so much non-recyclable packaging. More should be done to encourage manufacturers to use recyclable or just less packing.”

The results

Would you be more or less supportive if the PAYT scheme was guaranteed to tackle increasing waste production and product consumption?

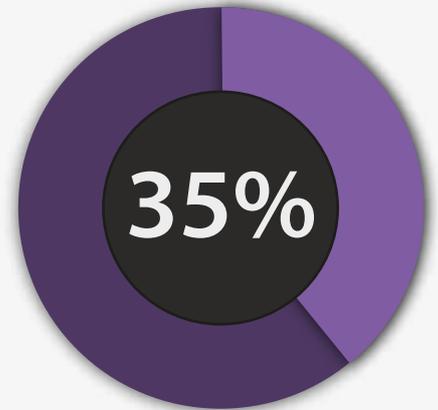
Less supportive (53)



More supportive (595)

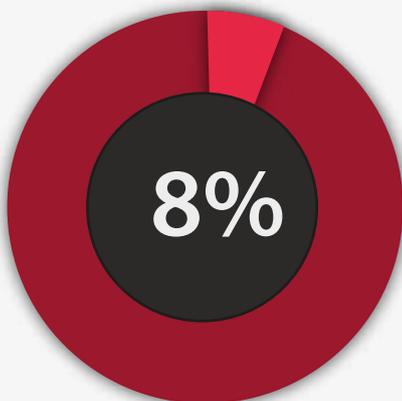


Would make no difference (352)

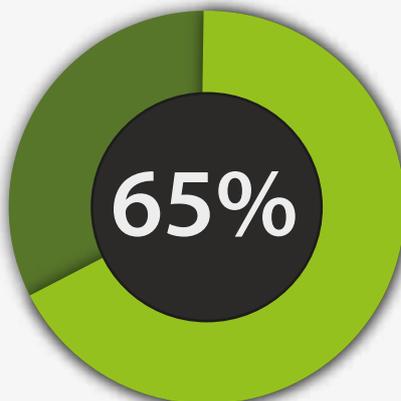


Would you be more or less supportive if the PAYT scheme was guaranteed to increase recycling?

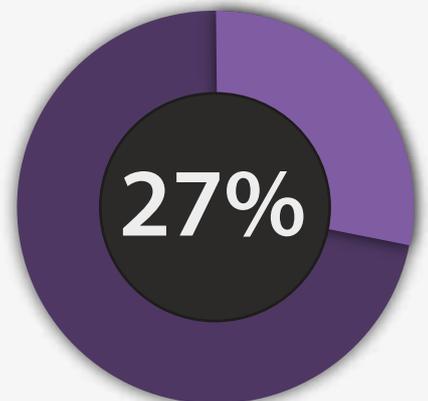
Less supportive (77)



More supportive (652)



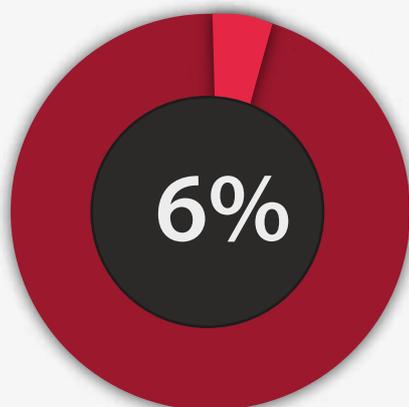
Would make no difference (271)



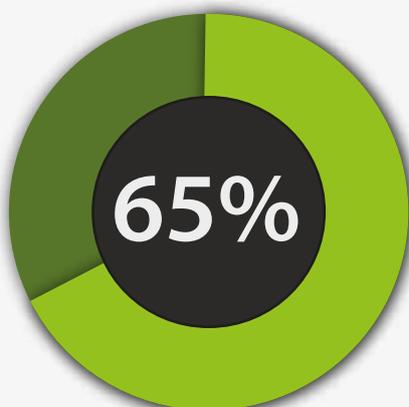
The results

Would you be more or less supportive if the PAYT scheme was guaranteed to have a beneficial environmental impact?

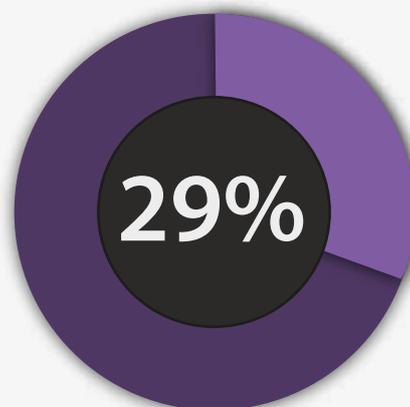
Less supportive (59)



More supportive (648)

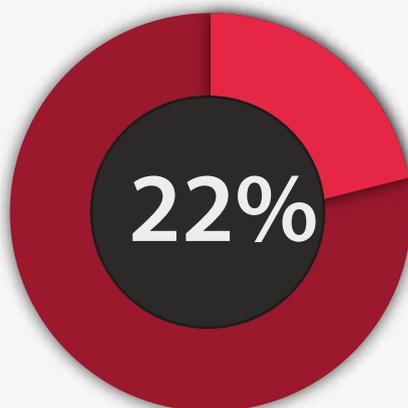


Would make no difference (293)

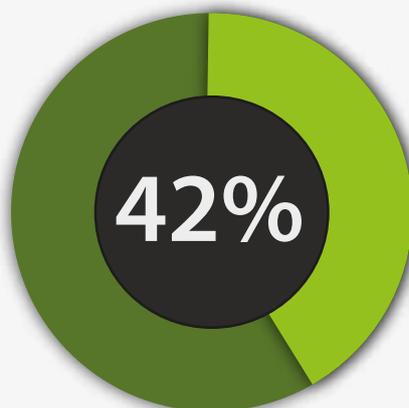


Would you be more or less supportive if the alternative was the introduction of a fixed fee scheme?

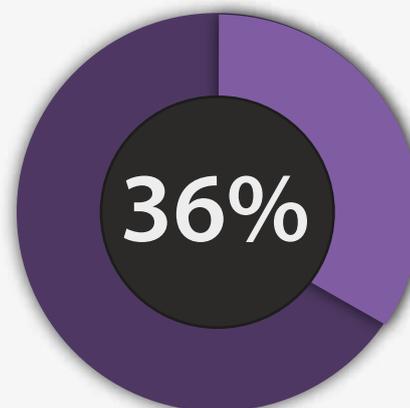
Less supportive (217)



More supportive (424)

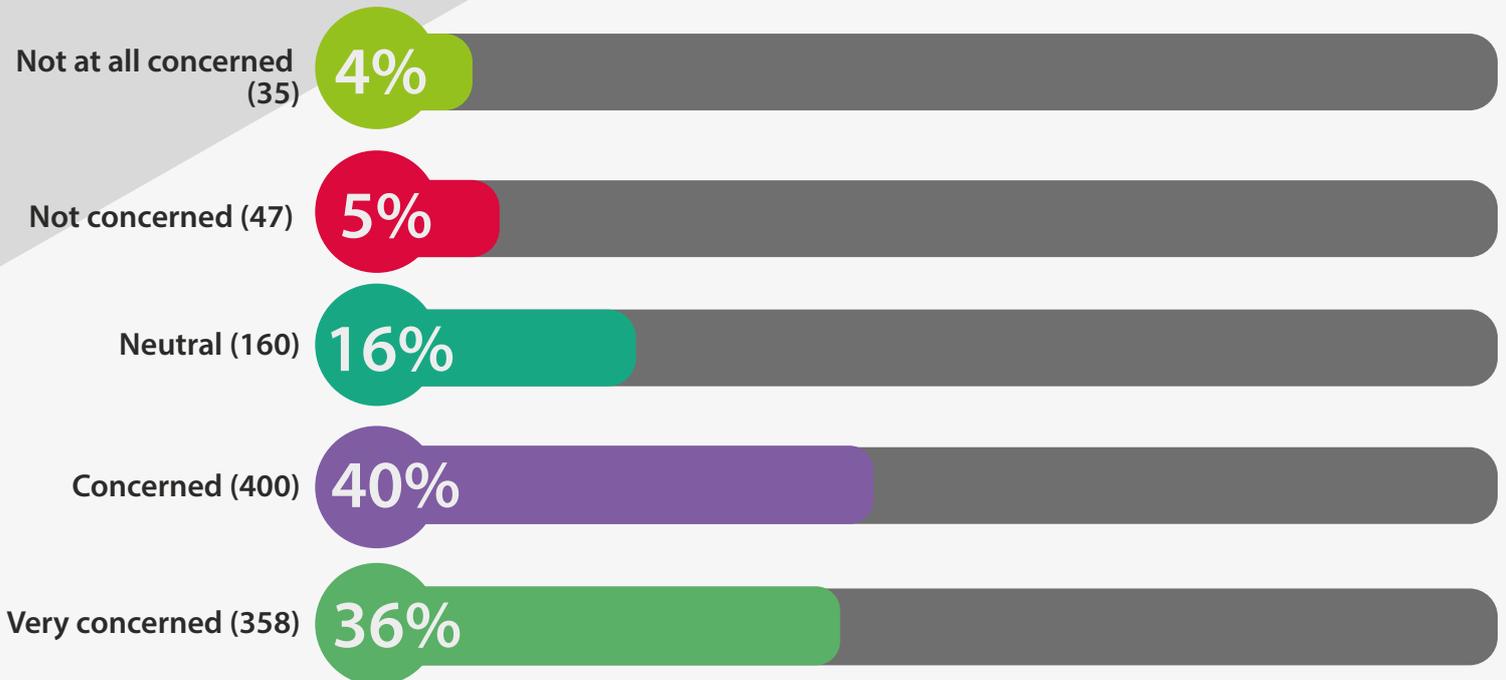


Would make no difference (359)

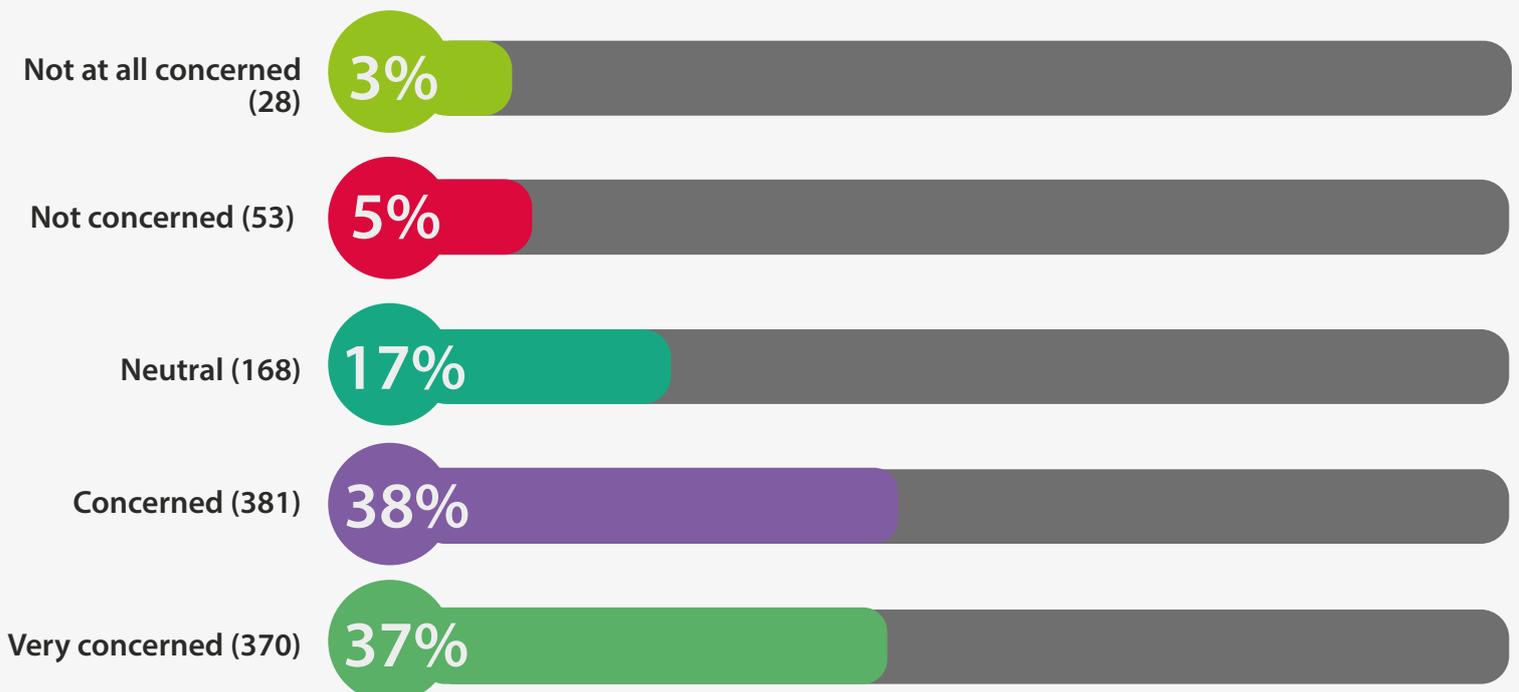


The results

How concerned are you that PAYT would lead to Increase fly tipping?

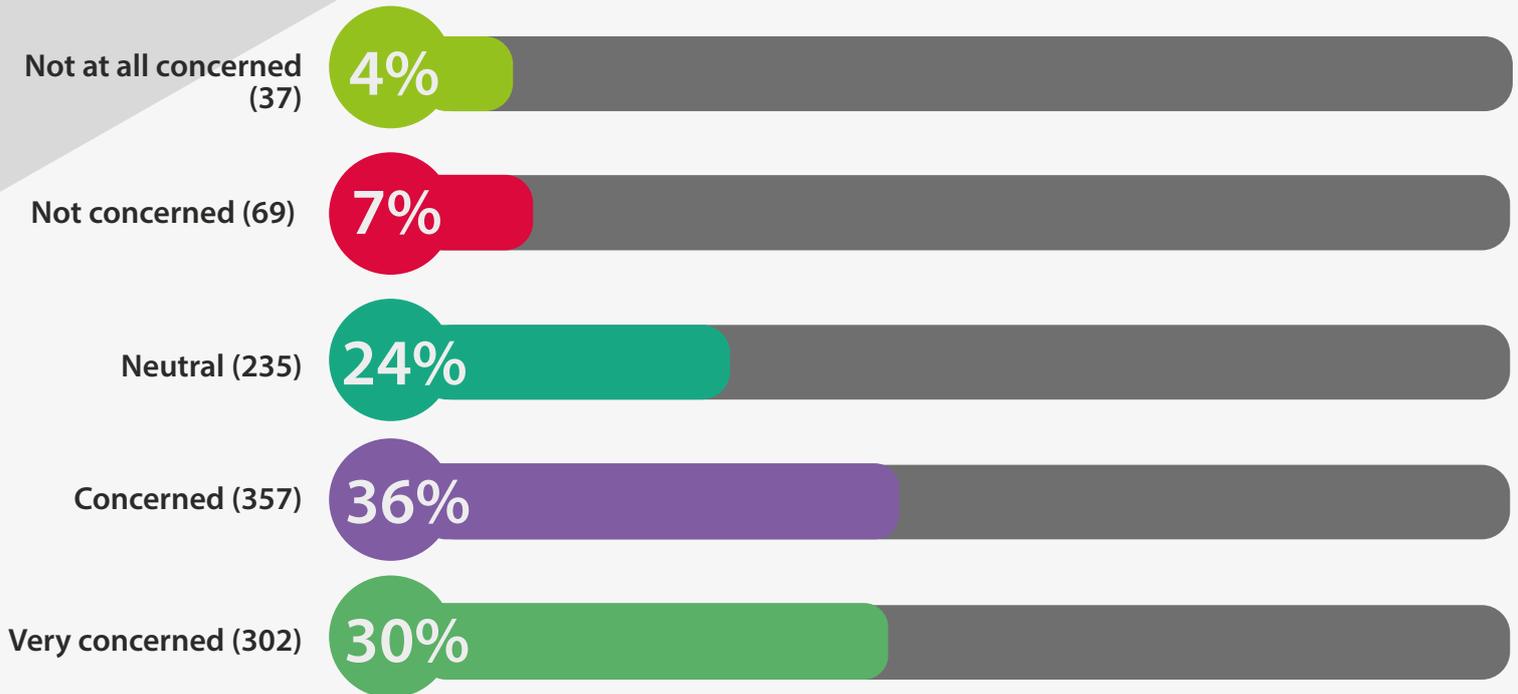


How concerned are you that PAYT would lead to people dumping rubbish in other peoples bins?

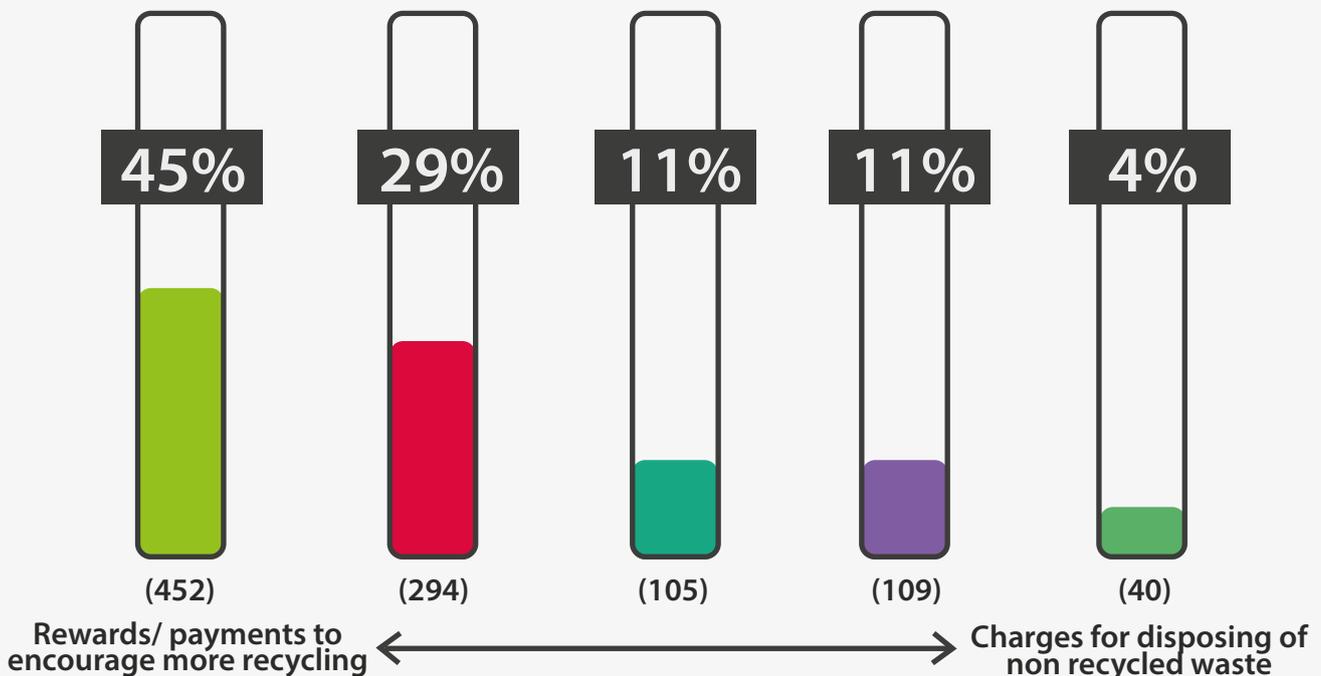


The results

How concerned are you that PAYT would lead to the ability of larger/lower income families to pay?

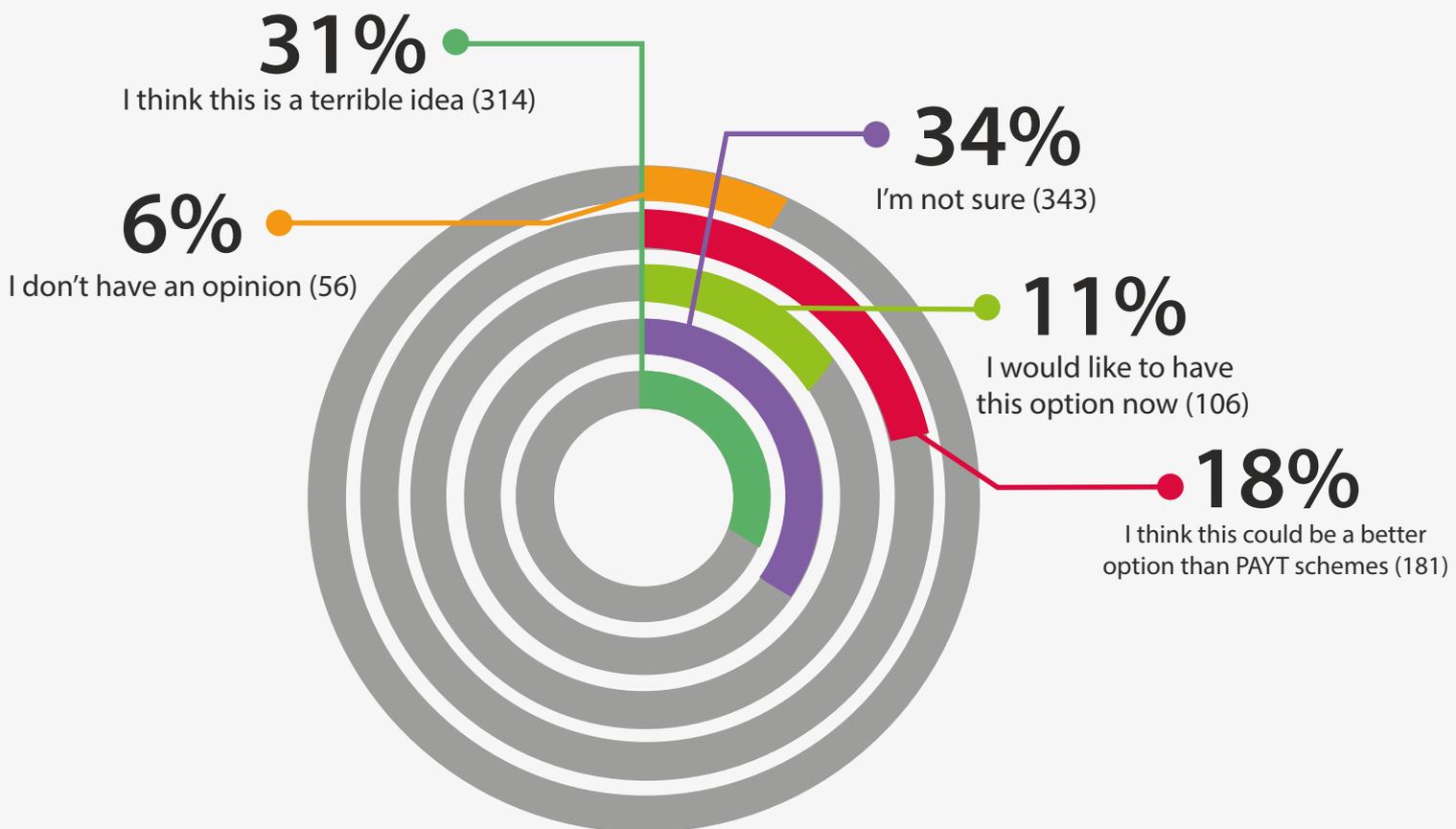


Would you prefer



The results

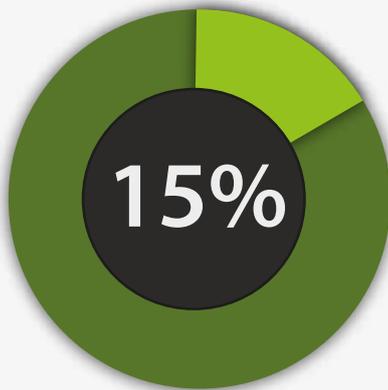
How would you feel about waste collection being treated as a utility, where you would have the option to find cheaper options and change suppliers? This would be similar to how you are able to change your electricity and gas suppliers now.



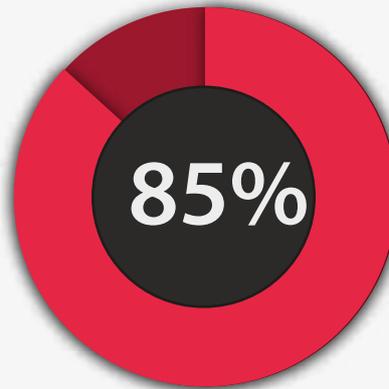
The results

Do you have any comments you would like to make about PAYT, recycling or household waste?

Yes (154)



No (846)



Please let us know your comments about PAYT, recycling or household waste

“ Before this scheme could be implemented, councils will have to recycle more items. At present a lot of plastics are not recycled in my area, so the recycling guys just leave them behind so they go in general waste. This needs to be addressed first. ”

“ Would council tax be reduced as we are charged for rubbish collections already in this bill? If everyone could choose their own collection company the roads would be chaos if all collected on same day or would have dust carts out on the road every day. ”

“ Plastics is a big problem area. We need more plants that can recycle more types of plastics before introducing PAYT. ”

“ I think unless this is handled properly by the council there is a chance that private companies will take charge and this will lead to people being charged too much and ultimately fly tipping. ”

“ It would be nice if there are more flexible options and prices are reasonable. ”

About Pelican Communications



Pelican Communications is an award-winning PR and marketing communications consultancy with a nationally recognised specialism in recycling and waste management. We have advised WRAP, Biffa, British Glass, The British Metals Recycling Association, Viridor, FCC Environment, Recycling Action Yorkshire and Alupro, amongst others.

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