



# Energy Switching Behaviour & Attitudes

A report by:



**harris  
interactive**

In conjunction with:

**Utility  
Week**

Survey powered by: **HARRIS 24**

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# INTRODUCTION

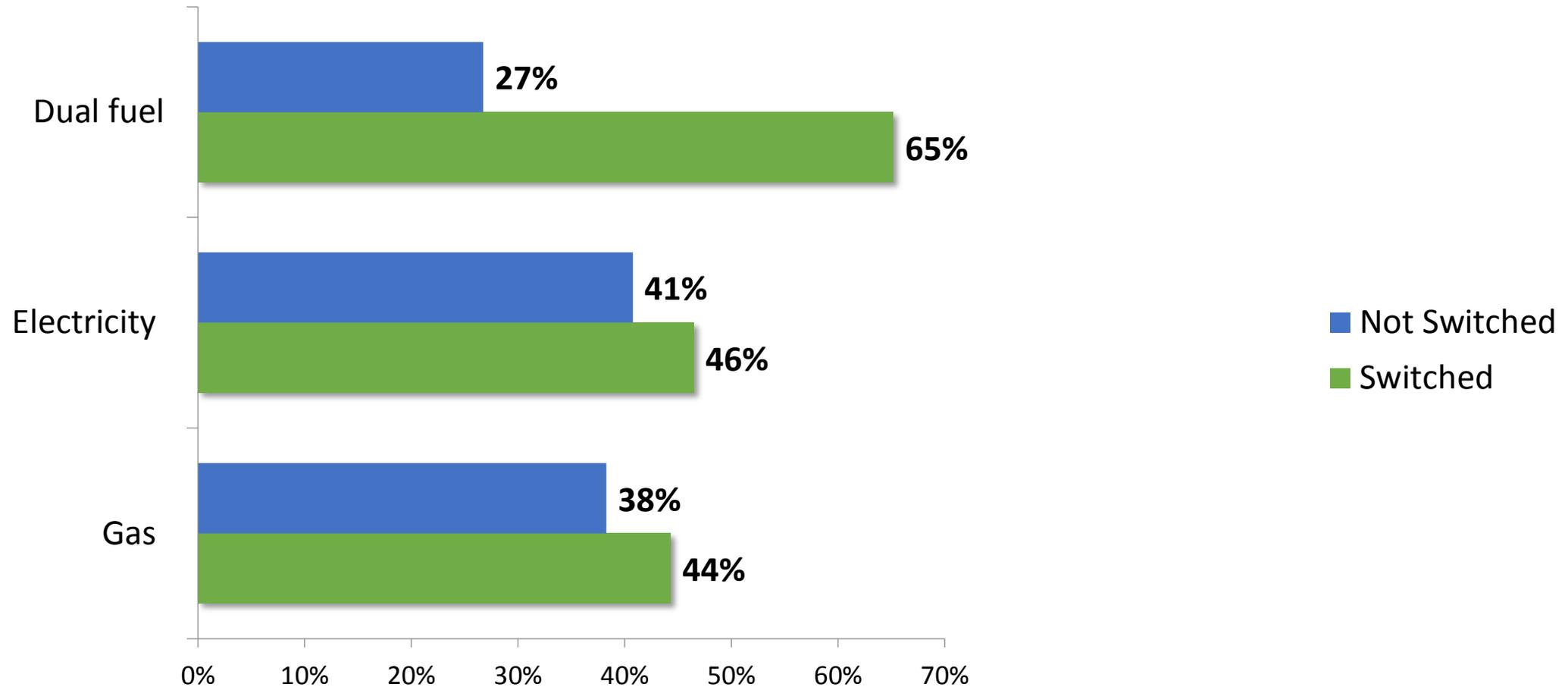
- Over the last few years efforts from Government and regulators have increased to try and encourage UK consumers to engage more with their energy supply. There has also been much more widespread coverage in the news and other media
- Recently published figures suggest that 2016 was a record year for energy switching. Energy UK said almost one million more people changed supplier last year, an increase of 26 per cent on 2015.
- In conjunction with Utility Week magazine, Harris Interactive launched a survey to a nationally representative audience of just over 1,000 consumers to measure switching behaviour and attitudes.
- This report summarises the key findings from the research which will be the first of a regular iteration conducted by Utility Week and Harris Interactive.

# Key Findings



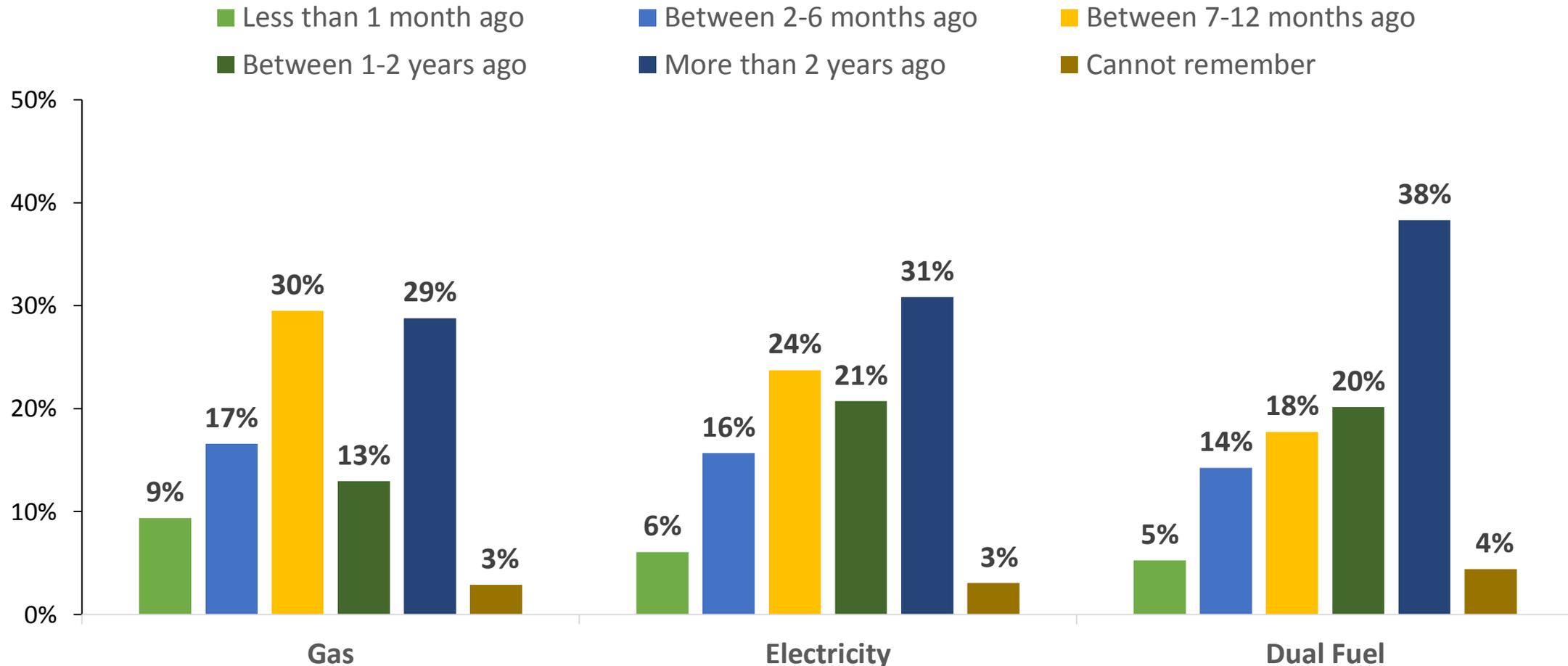
# SWITCHING BEHAVIOUR

Switching amongst dual fuel customers is fairly strong, although there is still around a third of consumers that have never switched their energy supply.



# REGENCY OF SWITCHING

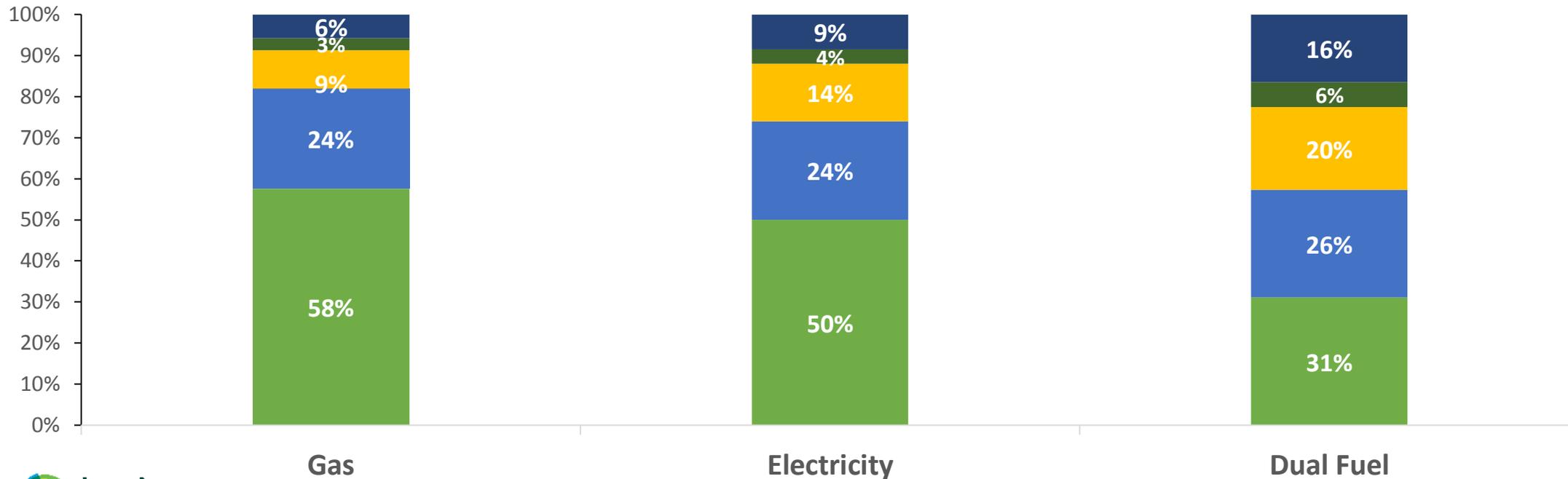
For many, particularly those with dual fuel, the last switch was more than 2 years ago but there is a good proportion of gas and electricity switches within the last 12 months



# FREQUENCY OF SWITCHING

A large proportion of switchers of gas and electricity are first time switchers, with serial switching more common amongst dual fuel customers

- Yes - it was the first time
- No - I had switched once before
- No - I have switched twice before
- No - I have switched three times before



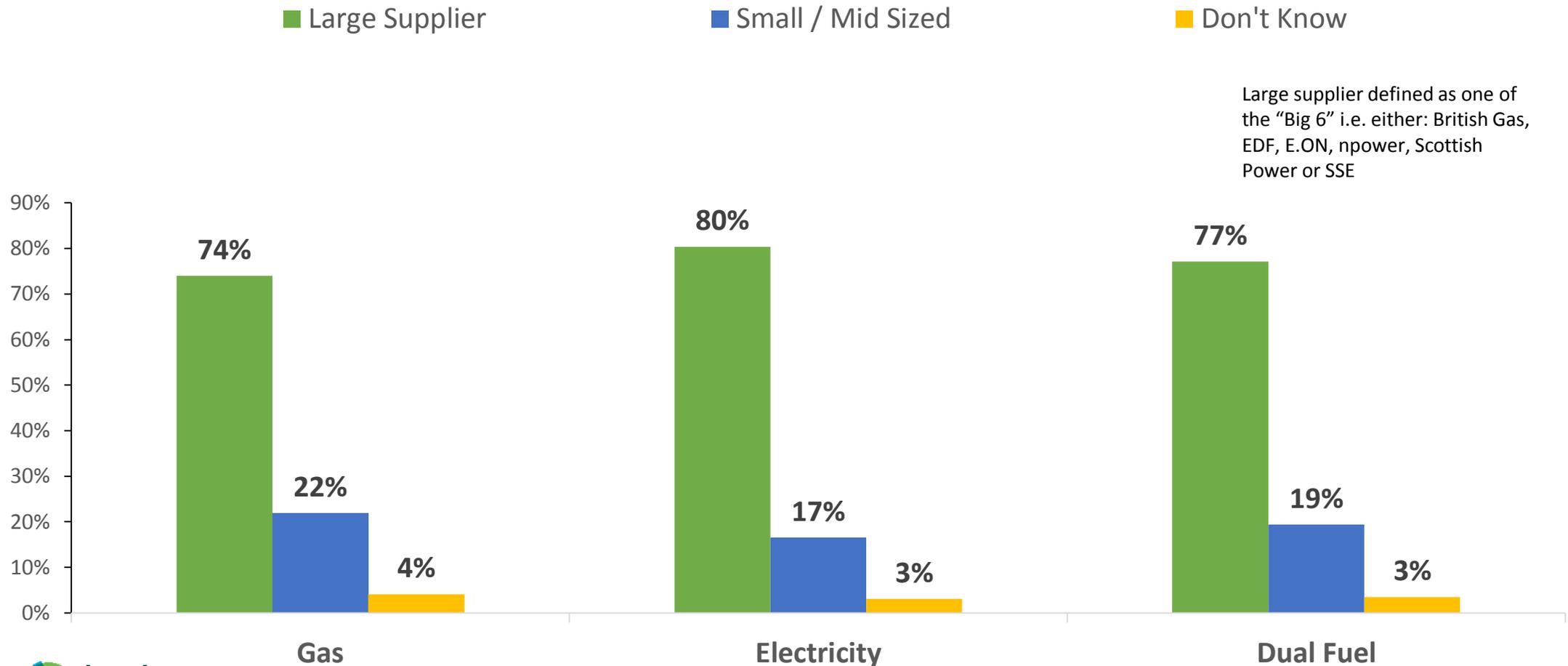
## REGENCY OF SWITCHING

Of those that have switched within the last year, more than a third of all energy users stated that it was their first switch. Levels of recent first time switching are lower amongst dual fuel consumers.

	Dual Fuel less than 1 year since switch (n=170)	Electricity less than 1 year since switch (n=90)	Gas less than 1 year since switch (n=77)	Energy total less than 1 year since switch (n=301)
Yes - it was the first time	22%	53%	65%	37%
No – I have switched once before	25%	24%	22%	25%

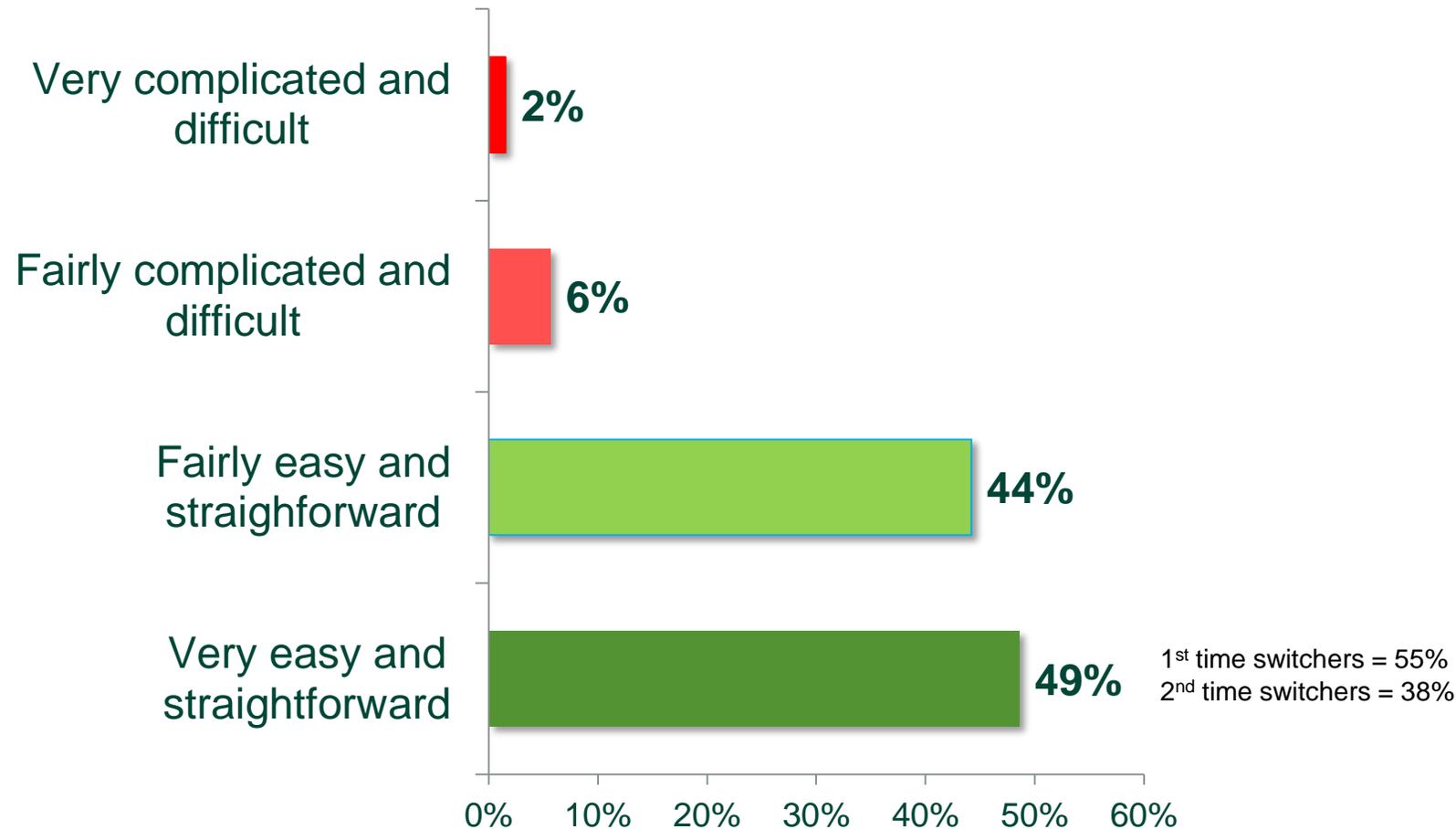
# WHO ARE THEY SWITCHING TO?

The vast majority of those who have switched away from a large supplier have still switched to another large supplier



# EASE OF SWITCHING

Those who have switched have overwhelmingly found the process easy and straightforward and, interestingly, 1<sup>st</sup> time switchers are significantly more likely to have found it very easy than those switching for a 2<sup>nd</sup> time



Q. Which of the following best describes how you found the process of switching energy supplier the last time that you switched? (Base: 704)

# THOUGHTS ON EASE

Comments on ease show how important the old and new supplier's roles are in the process

*"New supplier took care of everything, I didn't have to get involved"*  
**1<sup>st</sup> time switcher**

*"It was a seamless change which only involved meter readings and a few phone calls and documents to sign. I was surprised how easy it was"*  
**1<sup>st</sup> time switcher**

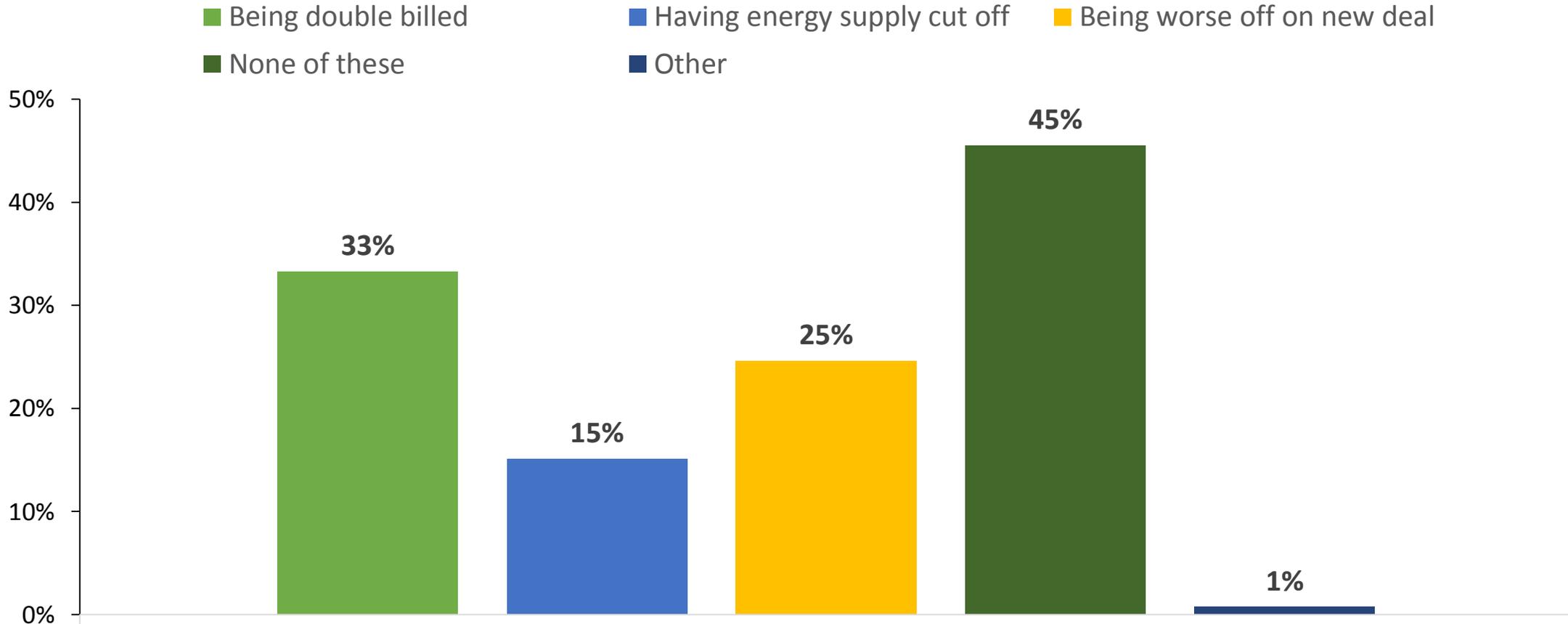


*"Previous supplier kept blocking move"*  
**1<sup>st</sup> time switcher**

*"The supplier I was moving from would not communicate with my new supplier and was obstructive"*  
**1<sup>st</sup> time switcher**

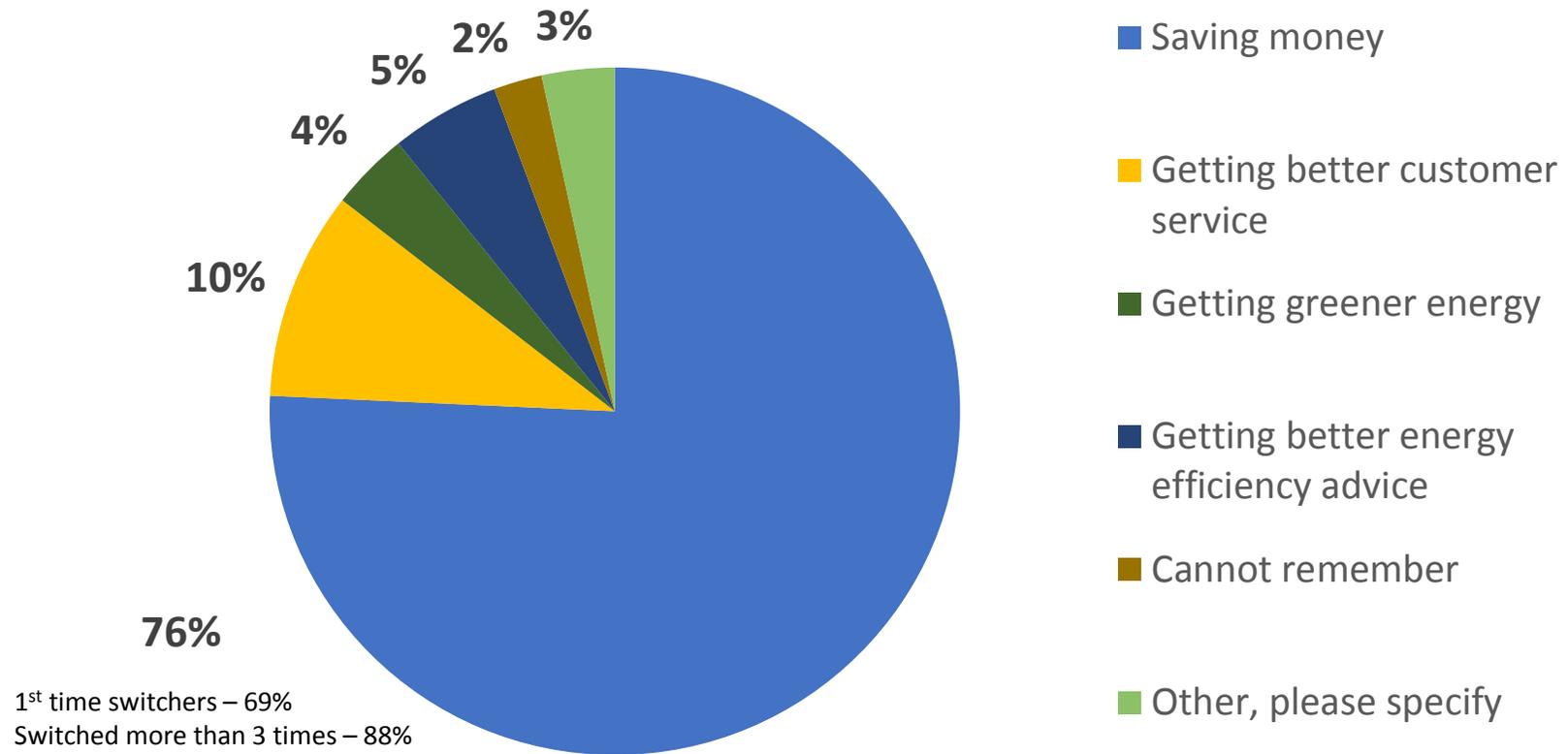
# SWITCHING WORRIES

A large proportion of switchers had no worries when they last switched but being double-billed and finding themselves worse off was a concern for some



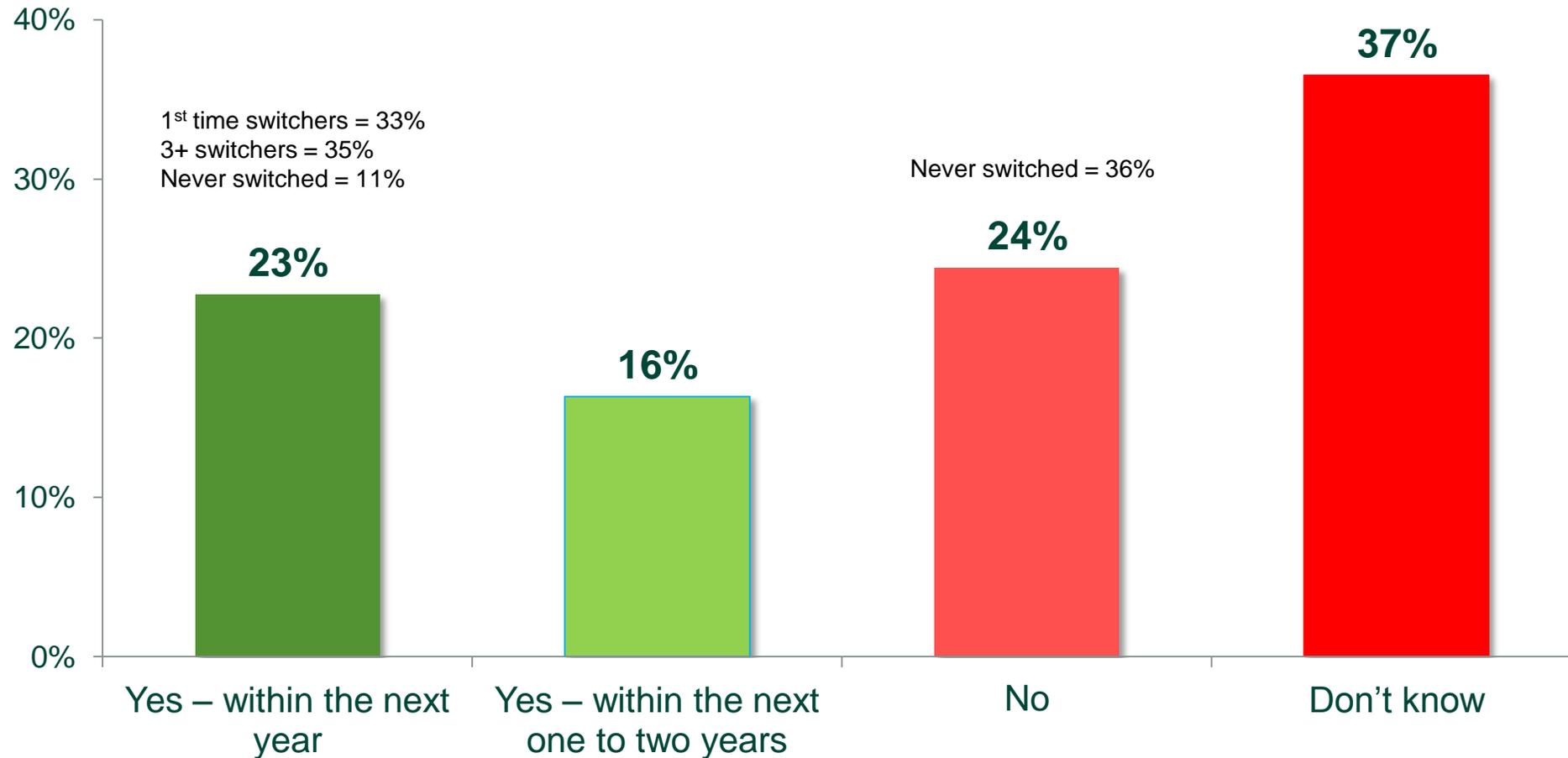
# SWITCHING MOTIVATIONS

Saving money is overwhelmingly the main motivation for switching and probably as you would expect is even more the case for serial switchers



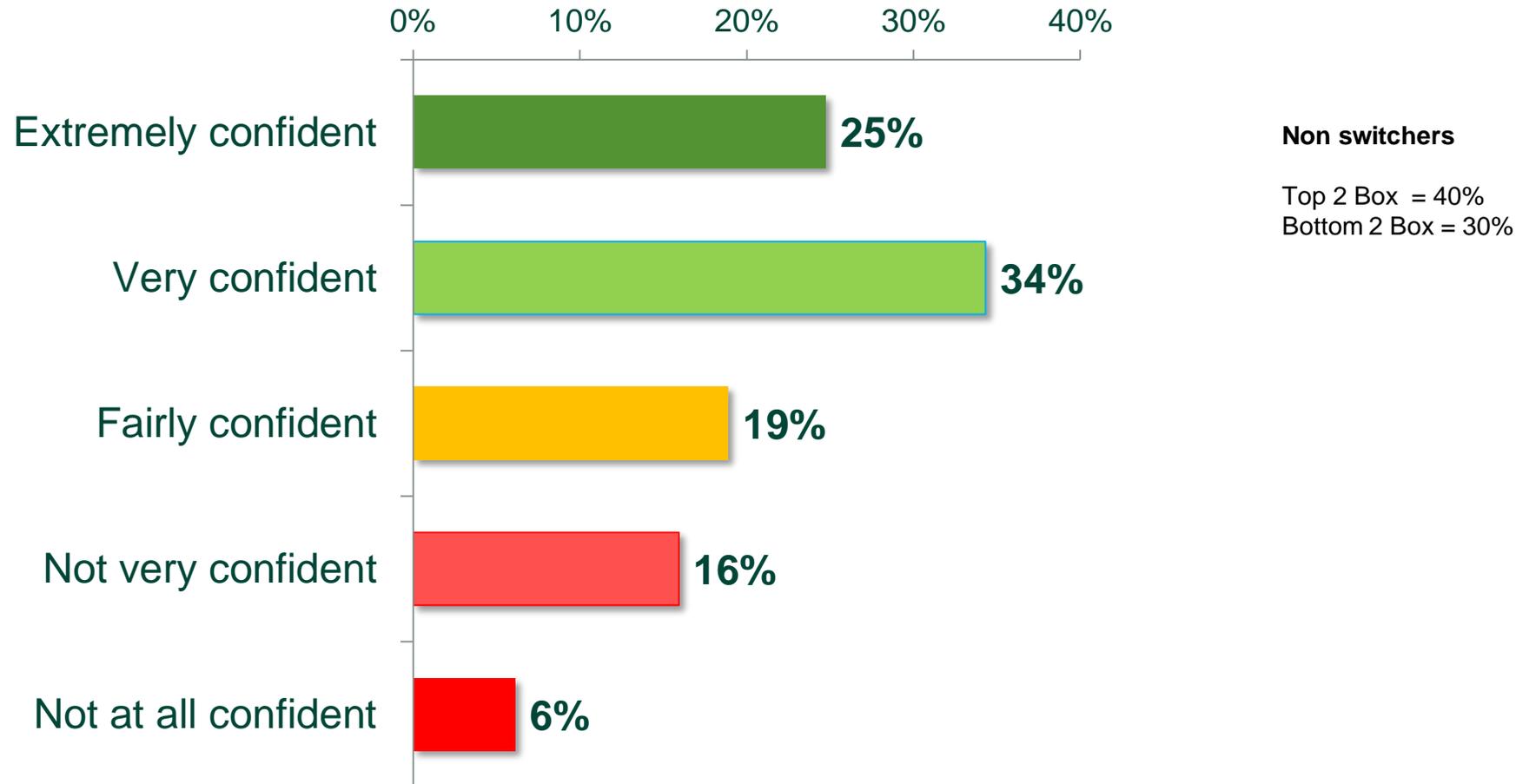
# FUTURE SWITCHING PLANS

The majority of consumers are undecided about whether they will switch energy supplier in the future but 1<sup>st</sup> time switchers are significantly more likely to do so within the next year. As you would expect, those who have never switched are less likely to do so in the future.



# SWITCHING CONFIDENCE

The vast majority of switchers are confident that they would know what to do when (next) switching supplier, although it is much lower for those who have never switched



# THOUGHTS ON LOW CONFIDENCE

Comments from those with low confidence point to not having switched being a barrier as well as issues with existing suppliers and doubts over savings

*"I haven't changed my supplier so don't know how to proceed exactly"*

*"I do not understand what is involved. The tariffs are not explained in language that is easily understood. The whole process is shrouded in supplier mystery meant to confuse."*

*"I have many choices and don't know what is the best supplier"*



*"Given I have had billing problems with my supplier I am not convinced that there would be a simple, hassle-free process to move to a new supplier."*

*"They all promise the earth, but we read far too many stories about people who have changed and then found that the deal turned out to be not so good"*

# Summary & Conclusions



## SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- Although there is still a good proportion of consumers that have never switched their energy supply, it would appear that the measures to encourage greater engagement amongst the general public with their energy supply is paying off with over a third of energy switches in the last year (37%) being from first time switchers
- There has also been quite a bit of disruption in the market over the last few years with the emergence of new energy suppliers but the research indicates that consumers are currently reluctant to fully commit to these brands with over 75% of people stating that they switched to a large supplier rather than a small or mid-sized supplier
- It is no surprise that saving money is clearly the main motivation for those that have switched (76%) but, although double-billing is a worry for a third (33%), the vast majority of the switchers found the process relatively straightforward so continued promotion of how easy it is now to switch supplier will hopefully overcome any concerns that consumers still have.

# Methodology



## METHODOLOGY & CONTACT DETAILS

- For this study, we surveyed a carefully managed nationally representative sample of over 1,000 UK respondents between 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January
- **Harris Interactive** is the agency to use when you need answers fast from the general population. Using our **Harris 24** solution, 1000 –2000 interviews can be completed and reported in less than 24 hours in the UK, US, France, Germany, Spain and Italy.
- For further information about **Harris24** please contact the author of this report:

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