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Canada

Police Sector Council
Focus on Career in Policing

June 2009

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Methodology

- Ipsos Reid conducted an online study among n=1,521 youth, ages 16 to 27 years, across Canada. Fieldwork was conducted online, using the Ipsos Reid Online Panel, between January 22, and February 9, 2009This included an over sample of n=250 in Alberta. The breakdown of respondents by region is as follows:

  - British Columbia, n=158
  - Alberta, n= 383
  - Saskatchewan/Manitoba, n= 90
  - Ontario, n= 482
  - Quebec, n= 308
  - Atlantic Provinces, n=100

- In terms of the survey data preparation, the data are examined against the population in question's characteristics and adjusted by region, age and gender to ensure representativeness by these key variables. Data for this study was weighted and is representative of Canada's regional, age and gender composition for 16 to 27 year olds in accordance with Census data.
- Note to the reader: In several instances you will notice that there are a number of respondents who are not accounted for on a slide (where agree and disagree total less than 100%). Respondents were provided with both 'don't know' and 'refused' options. In some cases there were a higher number of youth who selected these options. These numbers are available in the detailed tables.

Overview- Career Area

- When asked to select from a list, four percent of youth say they would be most interested in pursuing a career in policing, while three percent say this area offers them the most career opportunities.

- A majority say their friends and family would support them if they chose to pursue a career in policing. Fewer than half would encourage others to pursue career in policing. Three in ten would consider a career in policing.

- Those most likely to say they would consider a career in policing include:
  - Those who say a career in policing offers someone like them the most career opportunities;
  - Those who are most interested in a career in policing;
  - Those who say a family member is, or has within the past 20 years, been employed as a police officer;
  - Males; and,
  - Those who identify themselves as visible minorities.

Overview- Benefits and Negative Aspects of the Job

- Generally, youth in Canada are aware of the benefits of a career in policing in terms of **long term stability**, **pensions**, and **pay and benefits.** This is especially true for those who say they would consider a career in this field.

- Canadian youth consider policing a career which offer a **variety of career options** and recognize that **opportunities for advancement** exist.

- While Canadian youth recognize the more positive aspects a career in policing can offer, they are also aware of some of the potentially negative facets that can be associated with this type of work. It is interesting to note that those who would consider a career in this line of work express higher levels of agreement with these statements.

Overview- Recruitment Factors

- **Fitness level/health**, **criminal record, education**, and **mental health/stability** are seen to be among the most important factors considered by police recruiters

- Youth were asked what they believe should be the *most* important factor recruiters consider. The level of importance youth place on these characteristics varies, and some factors they feel are considered most often, do not appear as high on the list when asked which should be *most* important. **Character/ethics/integrity, mental health/stability** and **fitness level/health** receive highest mentions.

Youth deem Conditioning level (physical conditioning), Past behaviour and, eyesight as important when it comes to getting hired with the police- say hiring process should take one to three months

- Youth were presented with ten factors and were asked the extent to which each are important when it comes to obtaining a job as a police officer. Those considered most important include:
  - **Conditioning level** (physical conditioning).
  - **Past behaviour**; and,
  - **Eyesight**.

- Most youth expect the hiring process to take between one and three months.

Youth don't think drugs, race, sexual orientation, religious convictions and provenance would have an impact on one's chances of being hired

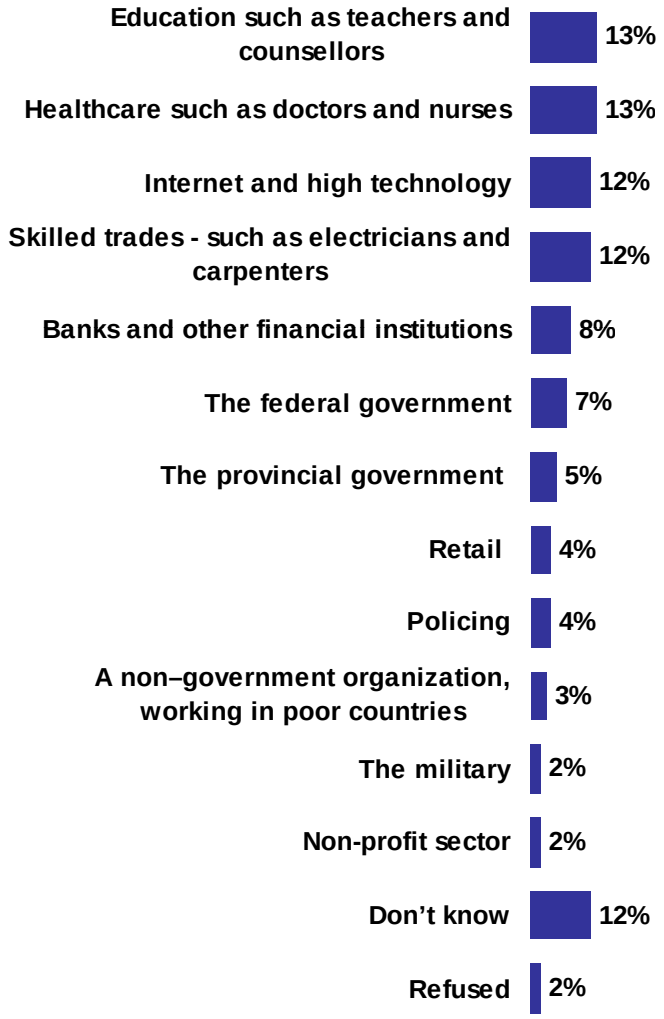
- Overall there is fairly low agreement that drugs, race, sexual orientation, religious convictions and provenance would have an impact on one's chances of being hired.

- **Drugs** - Just more than one in three believe that if you have experimented with drugs than you have no chance of being hired as a police officer.
- **Race** - A similar proportion agree that a person's race can affect their chances of getting hired.
- **Heterosexual** - Three in ten say that being heterosexual improves your chances of getting hired.
- **Religious Convictions** – The same proportion agree that a person's religious convictions can affect their likelihood of obtaining employment as a police officer.
- **Less Affluent Neighbourhood** - About one in five say that if you are from a less affluent neighbourhood you are less likely to be hired as a police officer.

Detailed Findings

Among List of Career Choices Provided, Four Percent are Most Interested in Policing

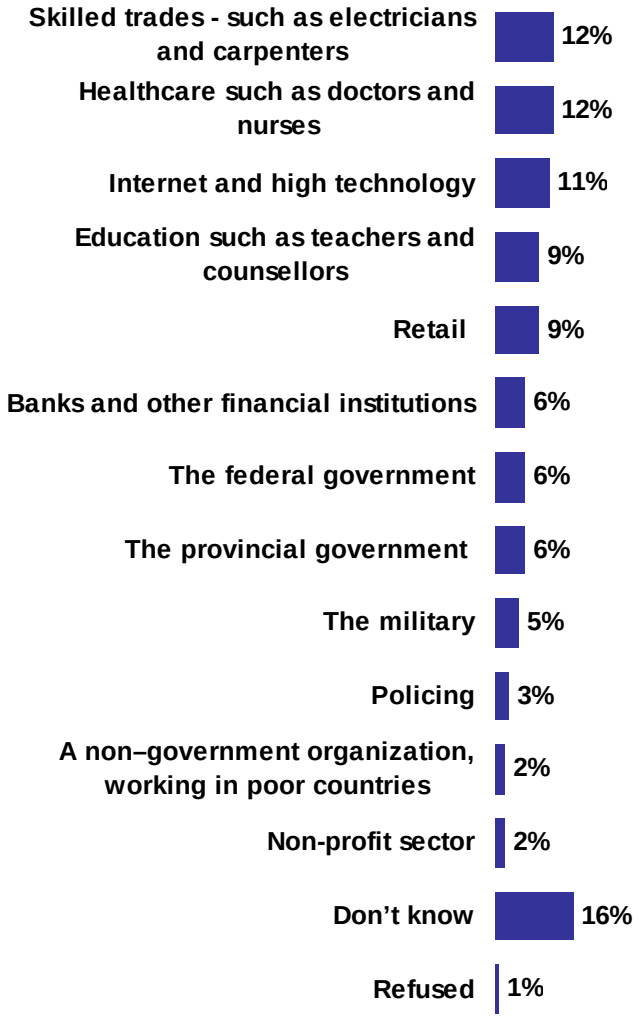
- When asked, from a list of several different career areas, which one respondents would be most interested in pursuing a career four percent select policing. Youth say they are most interested in a career in education, such as teachers and counsellors (13%), healthcare, such as doctors and nurses (13%), Internet and high technology (12%), and skilled trades, such as electricians and carpenters (12%).
- Those most likely to say they would be most interested in a career in policing include:
  - Those who say a career in policing offers someone like them the most career opportunities (75%) compared to those who say other career areas offer them the most opportunities (2%);
  - Those who would consider a career in policing (12%) compared to those who would not (0);
  - Residents of the Atlantic provinces (8%) compared to those in Alberta (2%) and Ontario (2%);
  - Males (6%) compared to females (2%); and,
  - Those who say a family member is, or has within the past 20 years, been employed as a police officer (7%) compared to those who do not (3%).



Three Percent say Policing Offers the Most Opportunities for Someone Like Themselves

- When we look at the career areas in which youth feel there are the most opportunities for someone like themselves, three percent select policing. We see the same four areas are also in the top tier (albeit in a slightly different order) as when we asked in which area they would be most interested in pursuing a career.
- **Skilled trades** (12%) and **healthcare** (12%) are selected most often, followed by **Internet and high technology** (11%). Slightly fewer select **education** (9%, which, along with healthcare was the top area selected when it comes to area of interest).
- Those most likely to say policing offers them the most employment opportunities include:

  - ✓ Those who are most interested in a career in policing (53%) compared to those most interested in a career in another area (1%);
  - ✓ Those who would consider a career in policing (9%) compared to those who would not (0);
  - ✓ Those who say a family member is, or has within the past 20 years, been employed as a police officer (6%) compared to those who do not (2%); and,
  - ✓ Residents of the Atlantic provinces (5%) compared to those in Ontario (1%)



Majority say Friends and Family Would Support Them if they Chose to Pursue Policing. Two in Five Would Encourage Others to Pursue Career in Policing. About Three in Ten Would Consider a Career in Policing

- Overall, youth say their friends and family would encourage them to become a police officer if it was of interest to them, with nearly two in three agreeing with the statement (63% strongly/somewhat agree), including three in ten (30%) who strongly agree. About three in ten (30%) disagree, including 15 percent who strongly disagree.

- More than two in five (45% strongly/somewhat agree) say they would encourage people they know to consider a career in policing, with one in ten (11%) saying they strongly agree. Two in five (39%) disagree, 14 percent strongly disagreeing.

- Three in ten (29%) say they would consider a career in policing, with one in ten (10%) who strongly agree. Three in five (62%) disagree, including two in five (39%) who strongly disagree.

Those Who Are Interested in Policing, Feel it Offers them Most Opportunities, and Those who Would Consider a Career in this Area Significantly More Likely to Agree

% Who strongly/somewhat agree

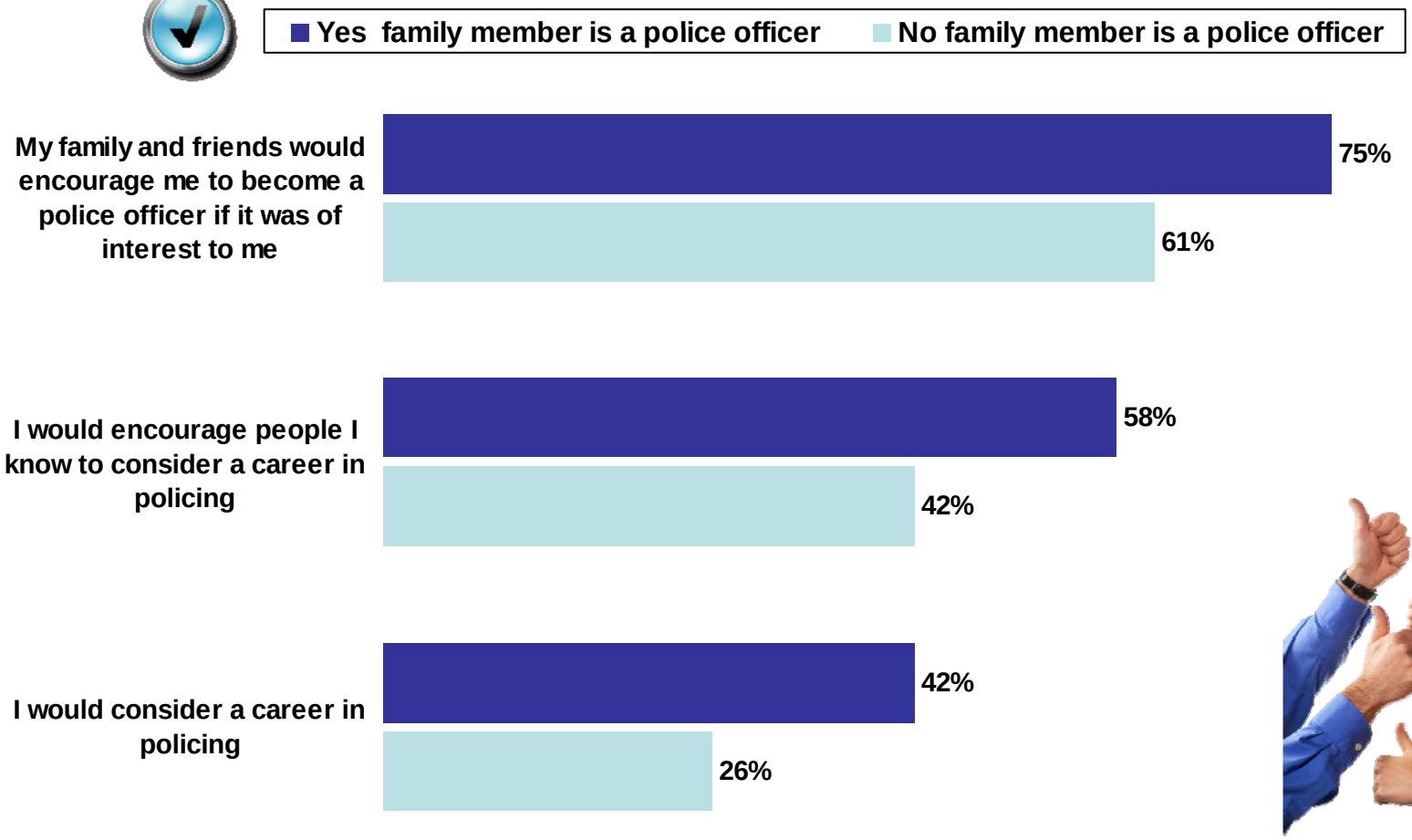
	Most Interested In Pursuing A Career In Policing Vs. Other Jobs		Say Policing Offers Most Job Opportunity For Someone Like Them Vs. Other Areas		Would Consider A Career In Policing	
	Policing	Other Career Areas	Policing	Other Career Areas	☑ Agree	☒ Disagree
I would consider a career in policing	92%	28%	94%	28%	100%	
My family and friends would encourage me to become a police officer if it was of interest to me	85%	63%	92%	62%	82%	56%
I would encourage people I know to consider a career in policing	69%	45%	71%	45%	76%	33%

Q6. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following.

Base: All respondents n=1,521

Those with Family Member who was Police Officer Within Past 20 Years More Likely to Agree

% Who strongly/somewhat agree

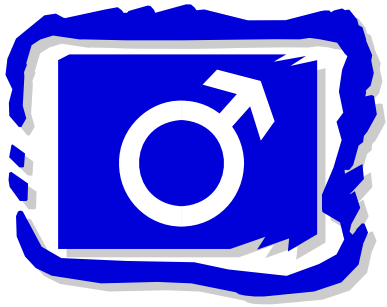


Q6. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following.

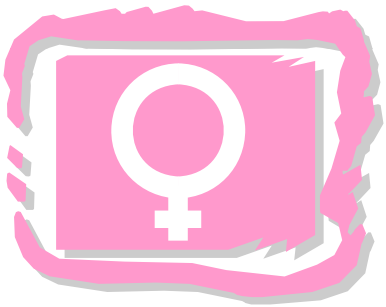
Base: All respondents n=1,521

Majority say Friends and Family Would Support them if they Chose to Pursue Policing Fewer Would Encourage others to Pursue Career in Policing. About One in Three Would Consider a Career in Policing

- Those most likely to say they would consider a career in policing include:
  - Males (37%) compared to females (21%); and,
  - Those who identify themselves as visible minorities (35%) compared to those who do not (28%).



Males (37%)
Most Likely to Consider a Career in Policing

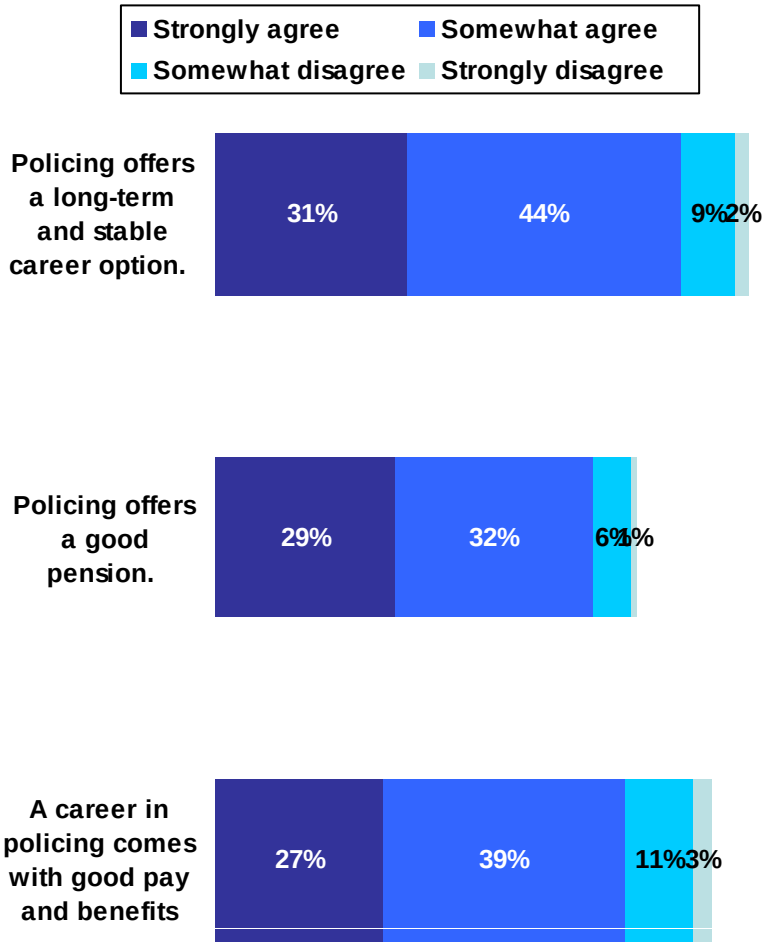


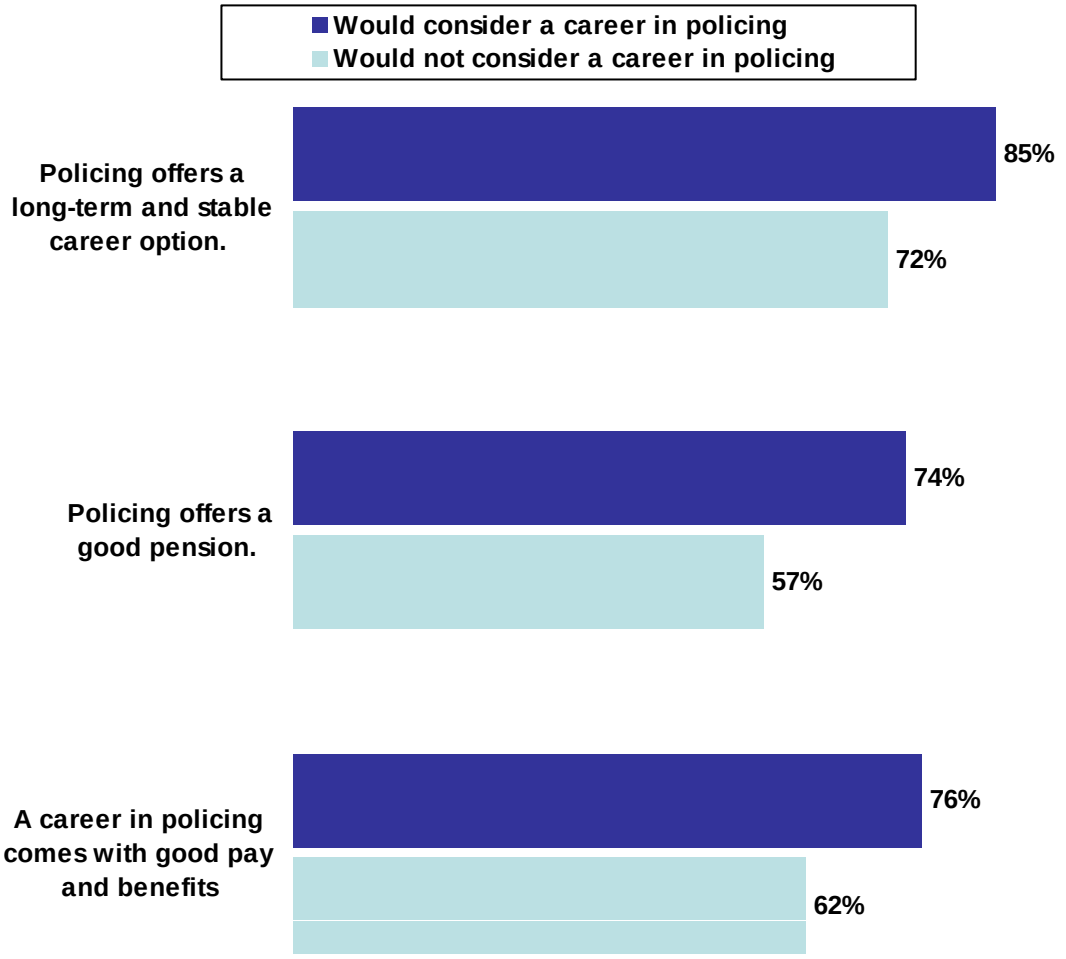
Females (21%) Most Likely to Consider a Career in Policing

Visible Minorities (35%)
Most Likely to Consider a Career in Policing

- Residents of Quebec (20%) are less likely than those in other parts of Canada to say they would consider a career in policing. Residents of the Atlantic Provinces express highest interest (41% agreement).

Youth See Policing as Stable Career with Good Pension and Good Pay and Benefits

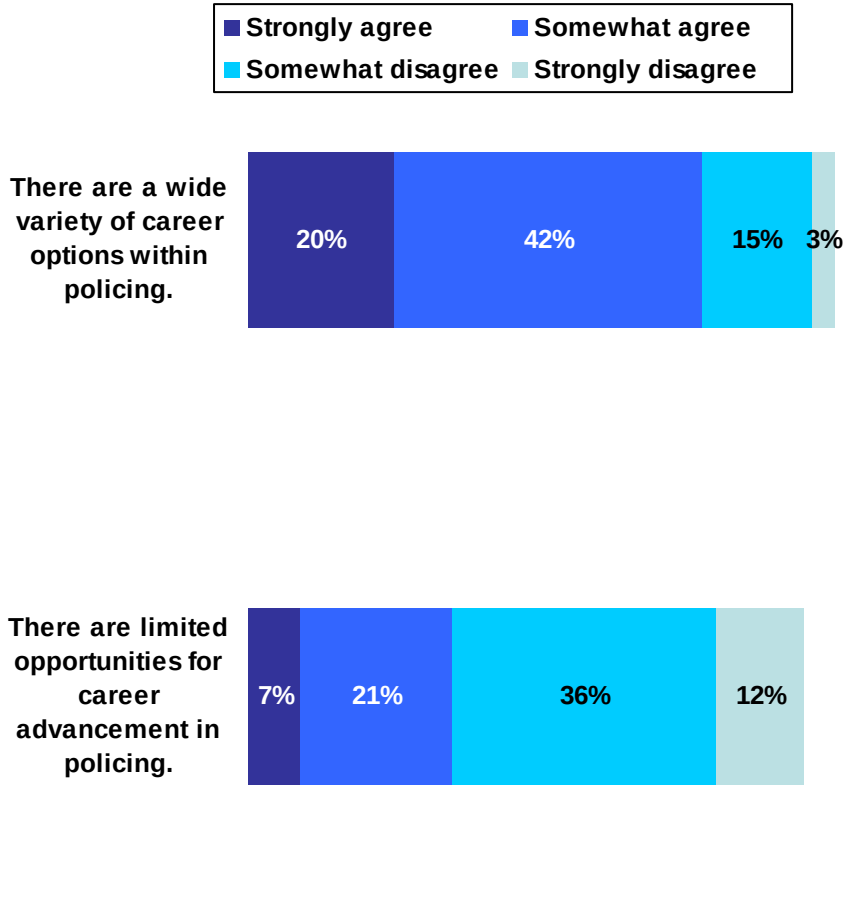


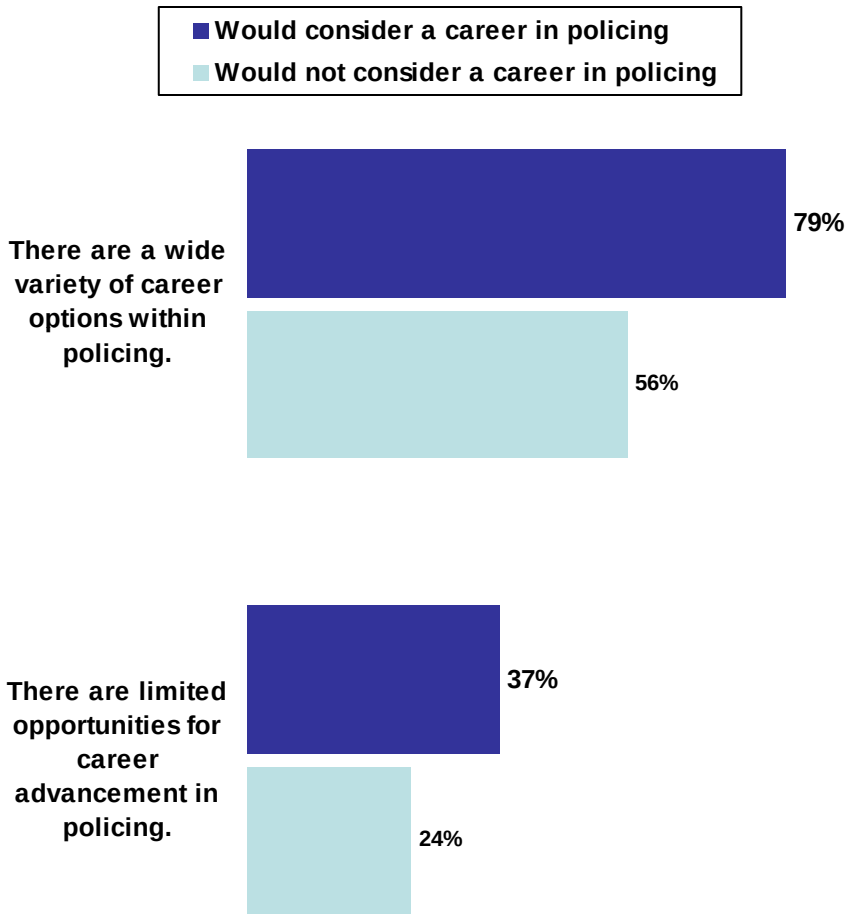


Q11. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following broad statements as they relate to policing in general

Base: All respondents n=1,521

Youth Say Policing Offers Variety of Career Options, but Offers Little Opportunities for Advancement





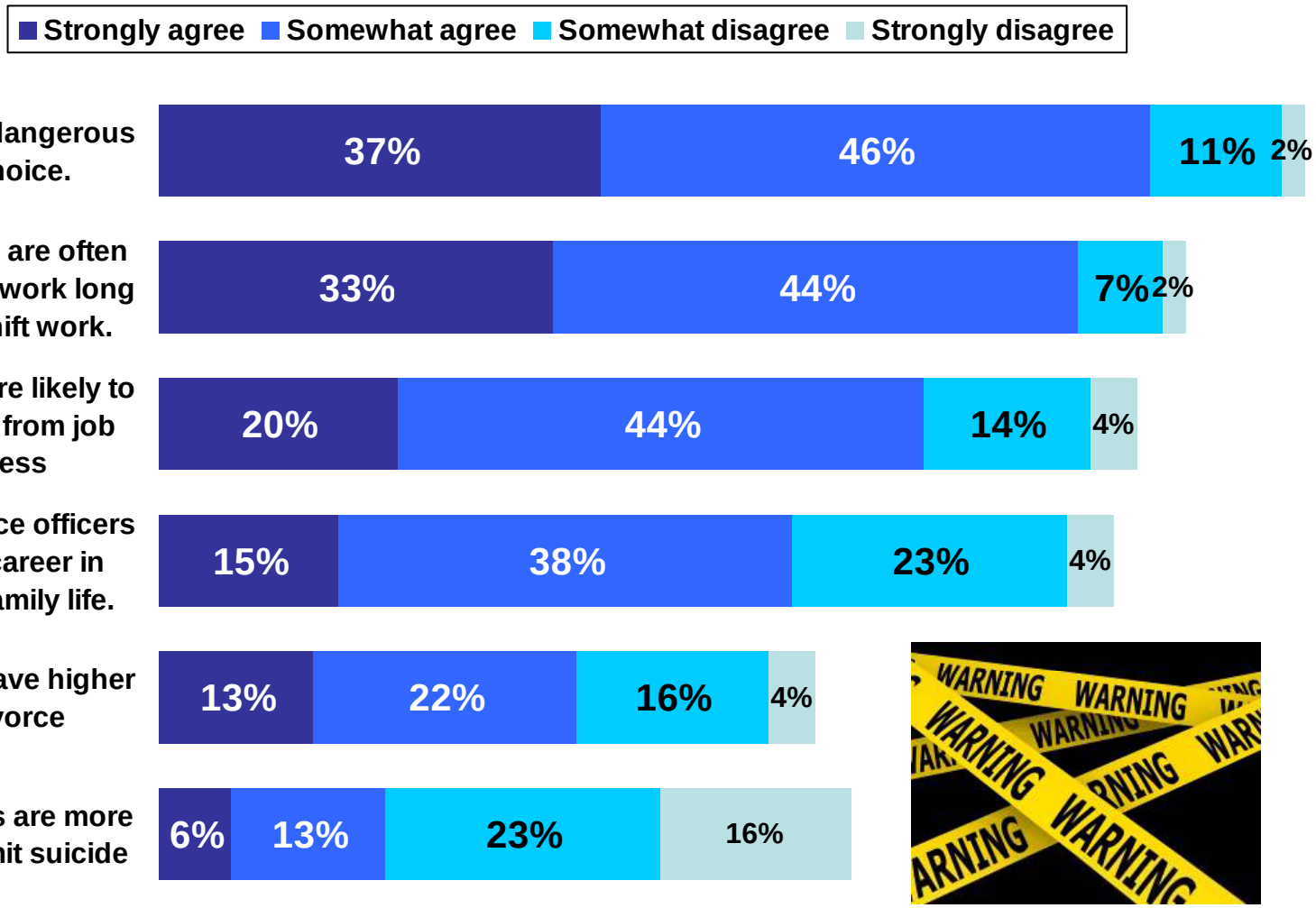
Q11. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following broad statements as they relate to policing in general

Base: All respondents n=1,521

Youth Recognize Some of the More Negative Aspects of the Job- Especially Dangerous Nature and Long Hours/Shift Work

- While Canadian youth recognize the more positive aspects a career in policing can offer, they are also aware of some of the potentially negative facets that can be associated with this type of work. It is interesting to note that those who would consider a career in this line of work express higher levels of agreement with these statements. This tells us that their awareness has not changed the fact that they are interested in policing.

Youth Recognize Some of the More Negative Aspects of the Job- Especially Dangerous Nature and Long Hours/Shift Work

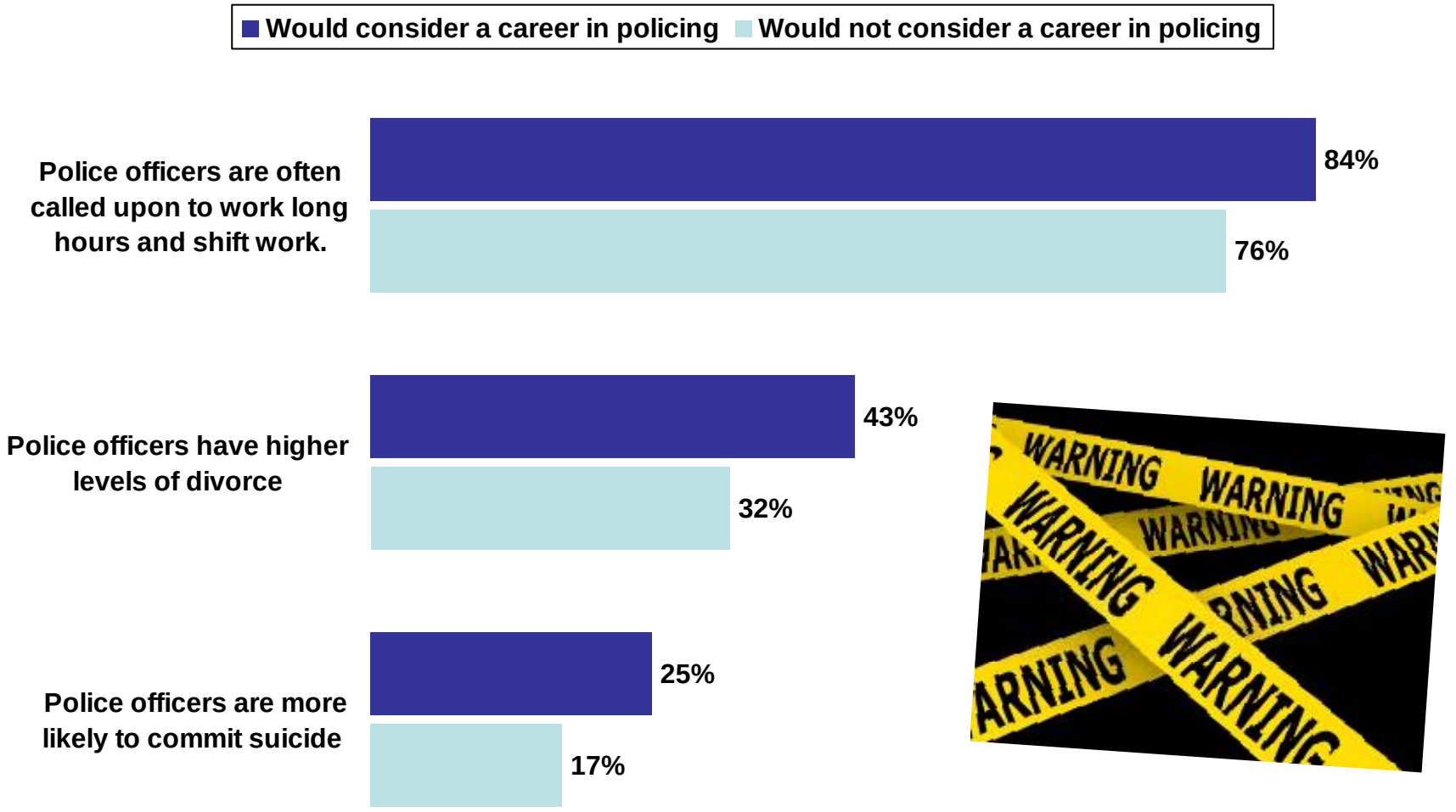


Q11. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following broad statements as they relate to policing in general

Base: All respondents n=1,521

Youth Who Would Consider Career in Policing More Likely to Recognize Some of the More Negative Aspects of the Job- Especially Dangerous Nature and Long Hours/Shift Work

% Who strongly/somewhat agree



Q11. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following broad statements as they relate to policing in general

Base: All respondents n=1,521

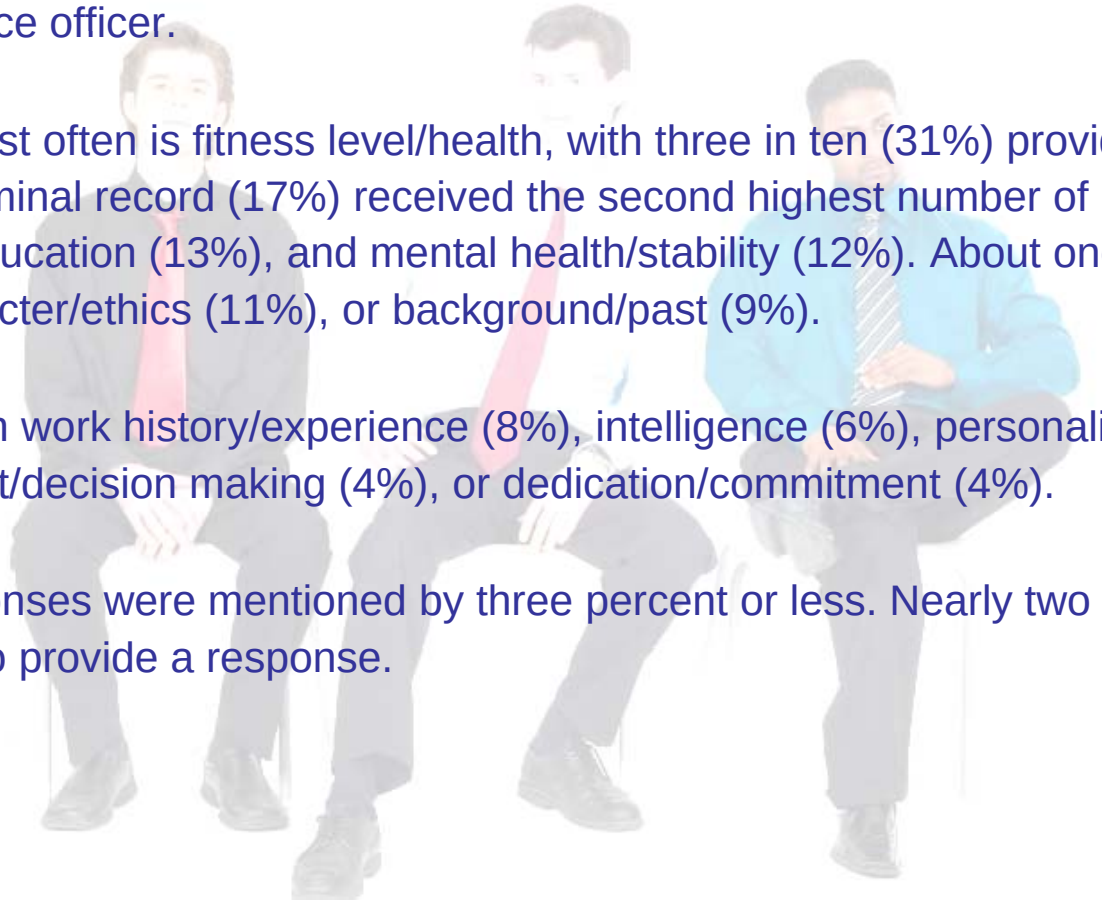
When Asked about Factors Recruiters Consider, Fitness Level / Health, and Criminal Record Mentioned Most Often

- Youth were asked, on an open-ended basis, what they believe are some of the factors that police recruiters consider when reviewing an individual's application to become a police officer.

- Mentioned most often is fitness level/health, with three in ten (31%) providing this response. Criminal record (17%) received the second highest number of mentions, followed by education (13%), and mental health/stability (12%). About one in ten mention character/ethics (11%), or background/past (9%).

- Fewer mention work history/experience (8%), intelligence (6%), personality (6%), good judgment/decision making (4%), or dedication/commitment (4%).

- All other responses were mentioned by three percent or less. Nearly two in five (37%) were unable to provide a response.



Youth Say Character and Mental Health *Should* be Considered Most Important by Recruiters

- After being asked some of the factors recruiters consider when interviewing a potential candidate, youth were asked what they believe should be the *most* important factor recruiters consider. What we see is that the level of importance youth place on these characteristics varies, and that some they feel are considered most often, do not appear as high on the list when asked which should be *most* important.

- **Character/ethics/integrity** receives the most mentions (14%), whereas it occupies the fifth spot on the previous chart.

- About one in ten say **mental health/stability** (9%) should be most important, followed by **fitness level/health** (8%), which occupies the top response on the previous chart.

- Six percent say **criminal record or personality**, while **intelligence** is mentioned by five percent. Four percent say **ability to perform job/enforce law/protect community**, **good judgment/decision making skills, or dedication/commitment.**

- All other responses were mentioned by three percent or less. One in three (34%) were unable to provide a response.

Youth Say Character and Mental Health *Should* be Considered Most Important by Recruiters

Q13. What do you believe should be the **most** important factor recruiters consider when interviewing a potential police officer?

Base: All respondents n=1521

Conditioning Level, Past Behaviour, and Eye Sight Considered Most Important When it Comes to Obtaining Job as Police Officer

- Youth were presented with ten factors and were asked the extent to which each are important when it comes to obtaining a job as a police officer.

- Receiving the highest importance rating, with nine in ten (92%) saying it is important, is **conditioning level (physical conditioning).** Three in five (60%) say this is very important. Just four percent say it is not important, with one percent saying not at all important.

- Nine in ten (89%) say **past behaviour** is important when it comes to obtaining a job as a police officer, including three in five (60%) who say very important. Eight percent say it is not important, with two percent saying not at all.

- Nine in ten (89%) also say **eyesight** is important, including more than half (53%) who say very important. Seven percent do not think eyesight is important, including two percent who say not at all important.

Conditioning Level, Past Behaviour, and Eye Sight Considered Most Important When it Comes to Obtaining Job as Police Officer

- Seven in ten (70%) consider **mobility, or willingness to move**, to be important when it comes to obtaining a job as a police officer, with one in three (32%) considering this very important. One in four (24%) say this is not an important factor, including four percent who say not at all important.

- Three in four (75%) consider **physical attributes (height, weight)** important factors, including about three in ten (28%) who say this is very important. One in five (21%) say this is not important, five percent not at all important. A similar proportion (76%) say academic achievement is important, including one in five (21%) who say this is very important. One in five (20%) do not consider this important, with three percent saying not at all important.

- **Related experience** is seen as important by seven in ten (69%) youth, one in five (21%) saying very important. One in four (26%) do not consider this important, with five percent saying not at all important.

Conditioning Level, Past Behaviour, and Eye Sight Considered Most Important When it Comes to Obtaining Job as Police Officer

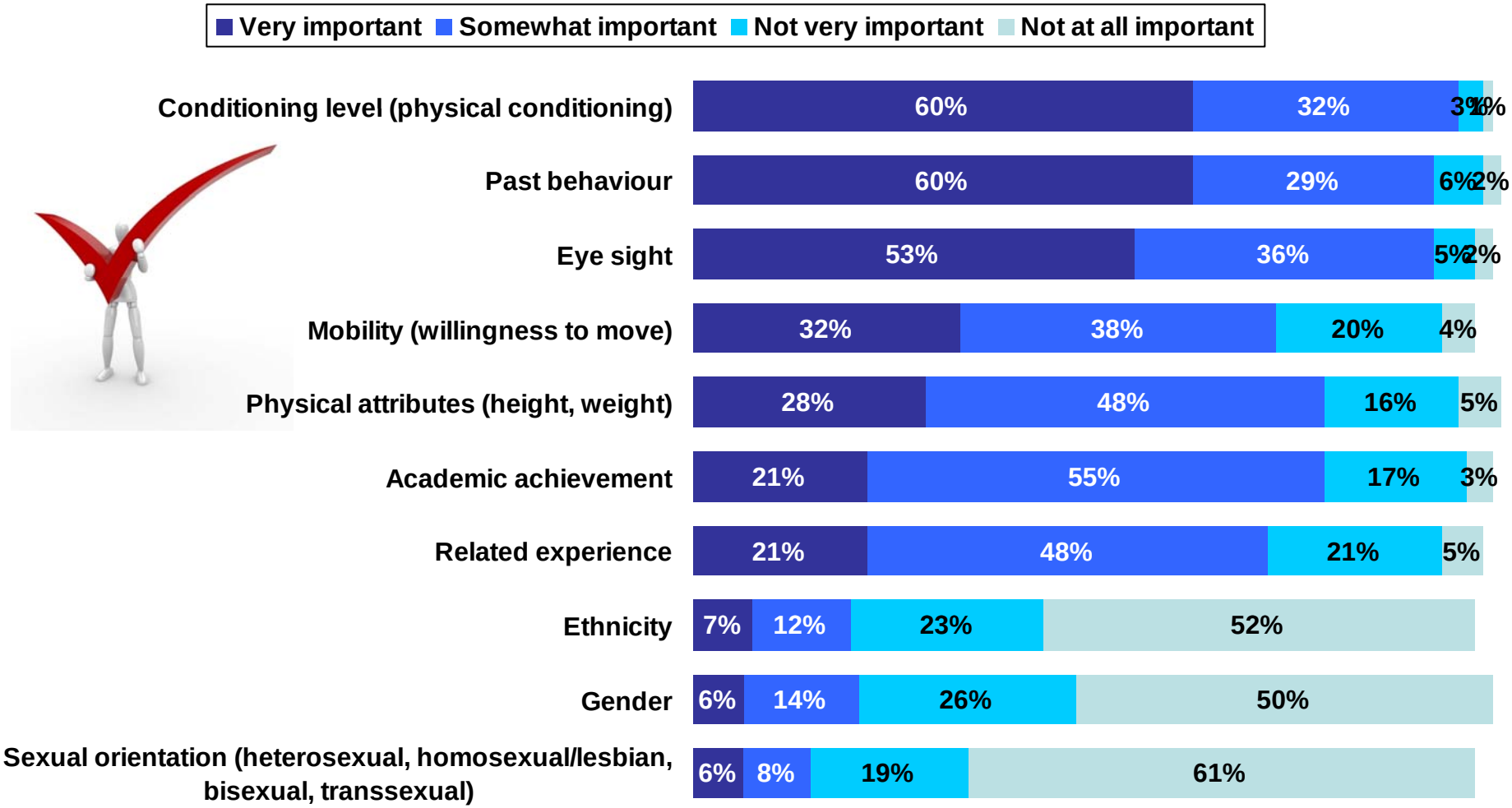
- A few of the factors received higher levels of youth who say they are not important, rather than important.

- **Ethnicity** is seen as important when obtaining a job as a police officer by one in five (19%), with fewer than one in ten (7%) saying very important. Three in four (75%) say this is not important, including half (52%) who say not at all important.

- Responses are similar when it comes to **gender**. One in five (20%) say this is important, six percent very important, while three in four (76%) say not at all important. Again, half (50%) say not at all important.

- Fewer than one in five (14%) consider **sexual orientation** important when obtaining a job as a police officer, with six percent who consider this very important. Four in five (80%) say this is not at all important, including three in five (61%) who say not at all important.

Conditioning Level, Past Behaviour, and Eye Sight Considered Most Important When it Comes to Obtaining Job as Police Officer

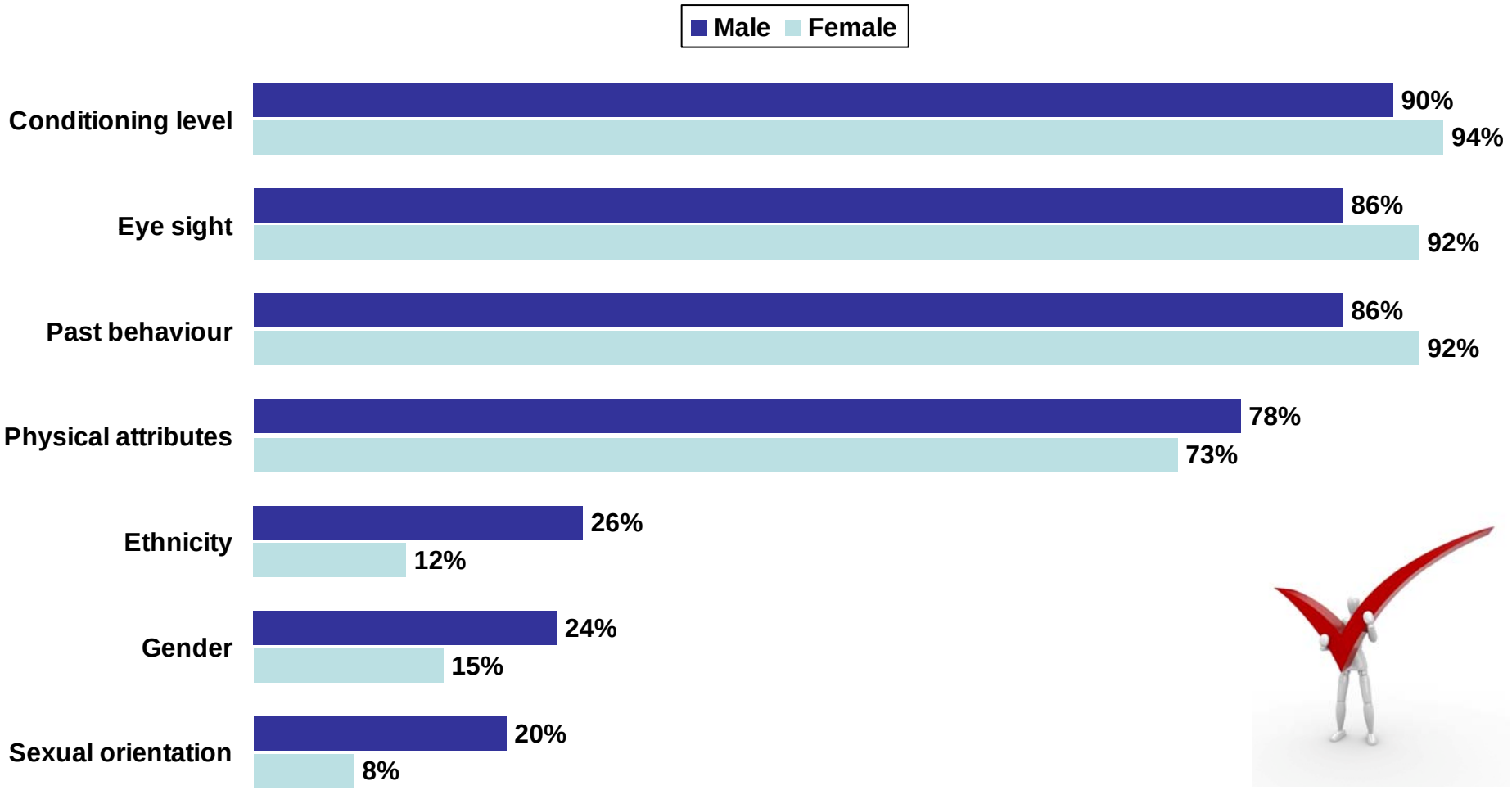


Q14. Please indicate to what extent you believe each of the following are important when it comes to obtaining a job as a police officer

Base: All respondents n=1,521

Females Significantly More Likely to Say Conditioning Level, Eye Sight, and Past Behaviour Have Impact. Males More Likely to Say Physical Attributes, Ethnicity, Gender and Sexual Orientation

% Who say very/somewhat important

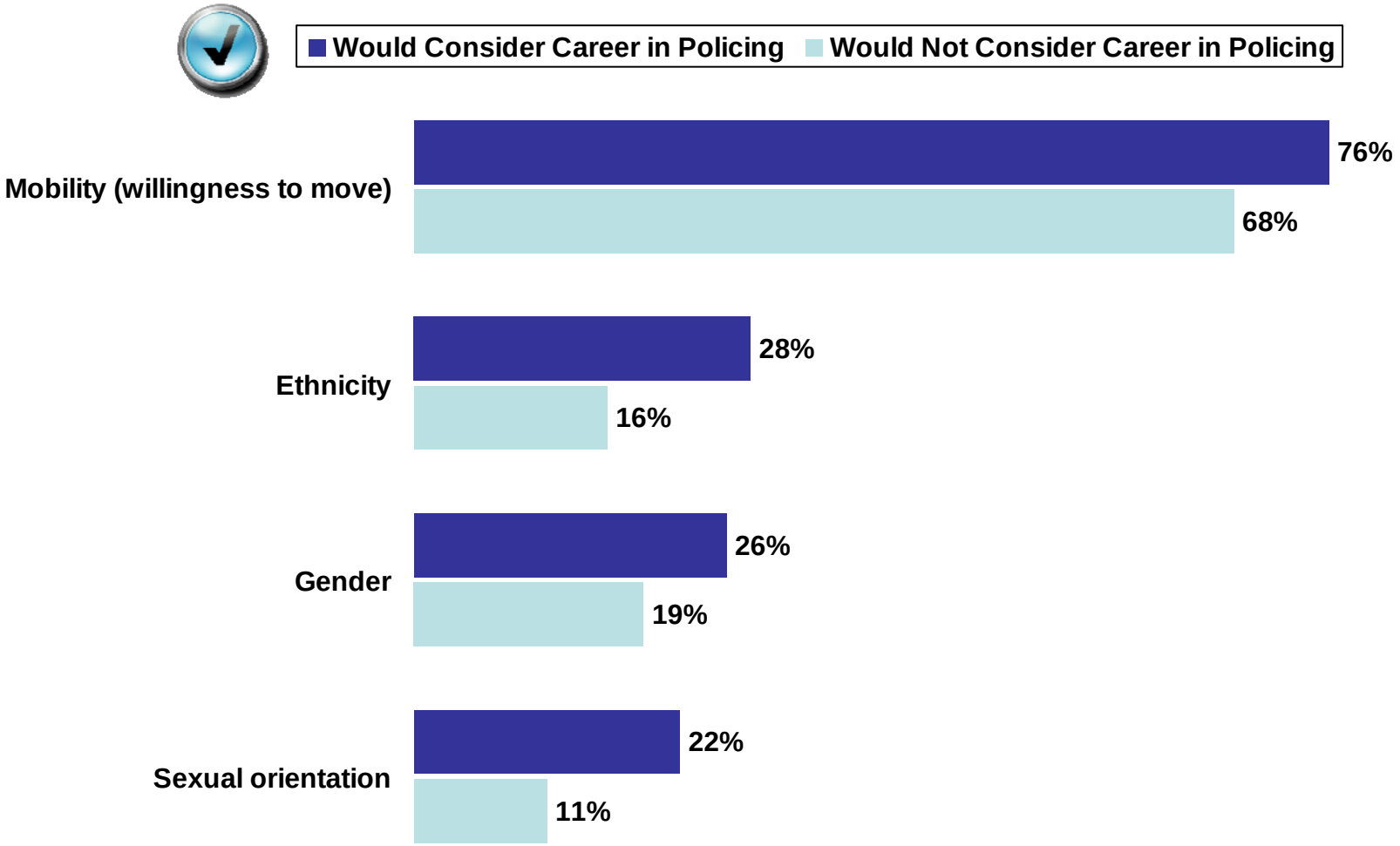


Q14. Please indicate to what extent you believe each of the following are important when it comes to obtaining a job as a police officer

Base: All respondents n=1,521

Those who Would Consider Career in Policing are More Likely to Say Mobility, Ethnicity, Gender, and Sexual Orientation Important

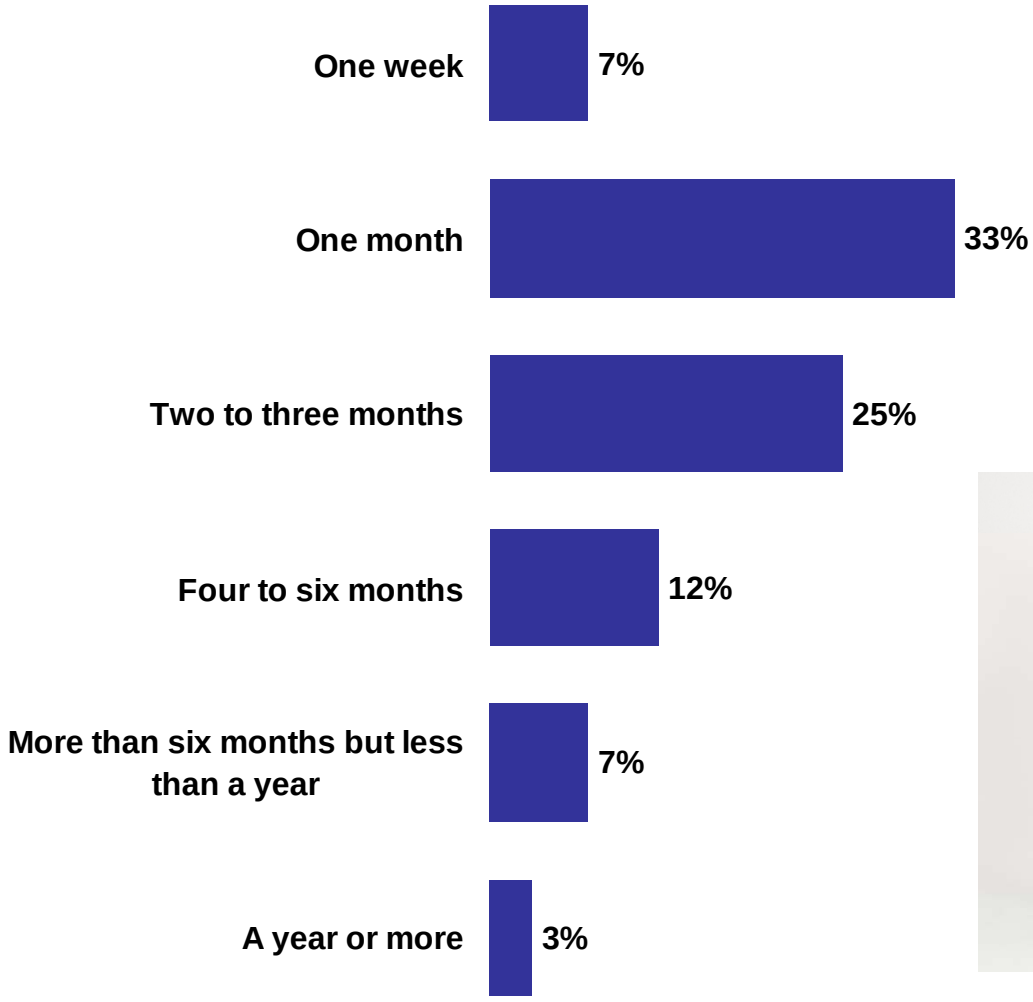
% Who say very/somewhat important



Q14. Please indicate to what extent you believe each of the following are important when it comes to obtaining a job as a police officer

Base: All respondents n=1,521

Youth Have Varying Expectations Around Amount of Time it Should Take to Get Hired as an Officer. Majority say Sometime Between One and Three Months, Others Expect it Would Take Less Time, Some Expect Process to Take Longer.



Q15. And thinking about applying for a job as a police officer, what would be a reasonable amount of time for the hiring process to take?

Base: All respondents n=1,521

Youth Not Convinced Past Drug Use, Race, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Coming from Less Affluent Neighbourhood Would Have Impact on Likelihood of Being Hired

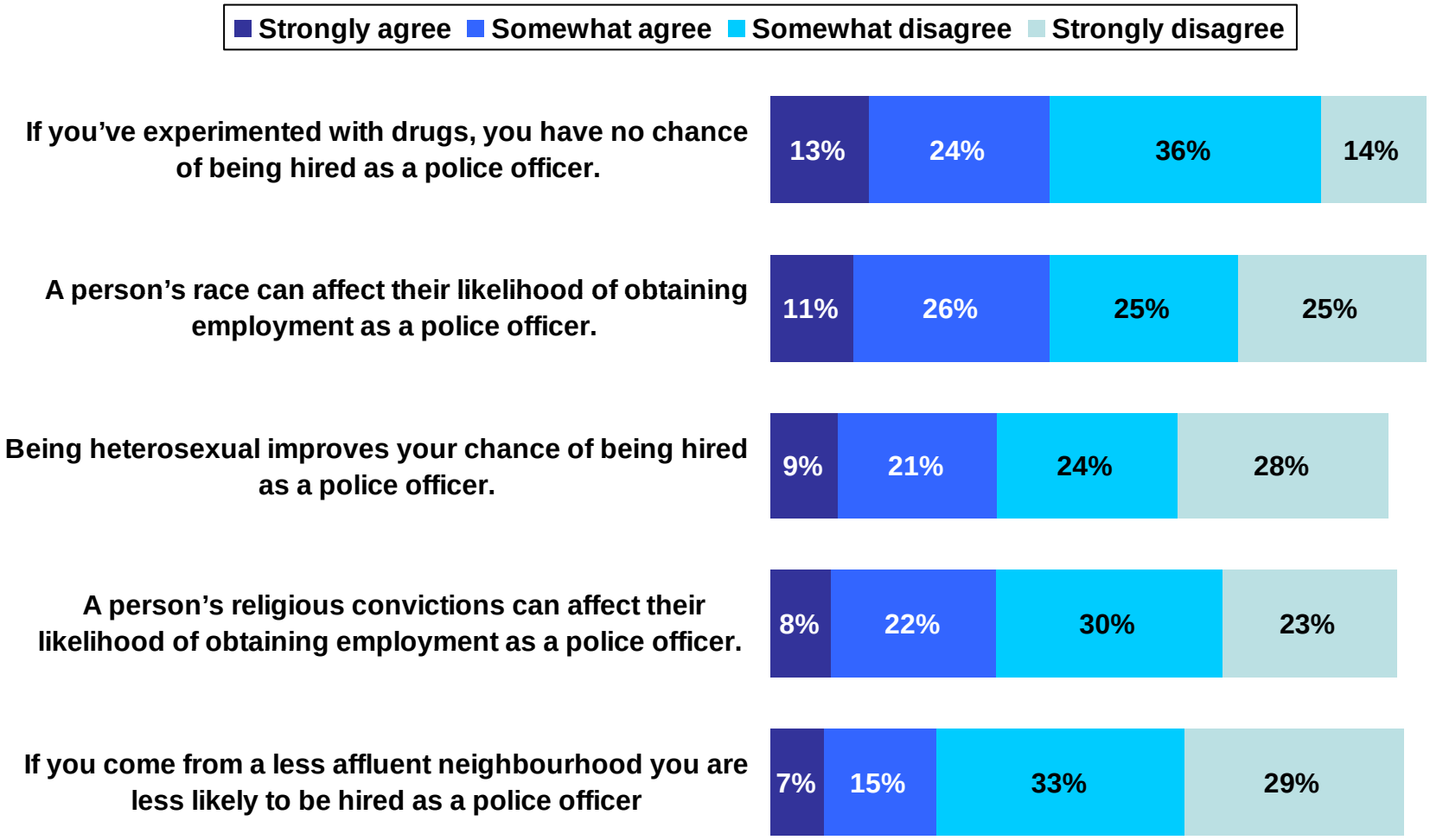
- Youth were asked about some attributes that could potentially impact one's chances of being hired as a police officer. Overall, there is fairly low agreement that any of these would have an impact on one's chances of getting hired. Those who would consider a career in policing are more likely to agree than those who would not.
  - Those who consider themselves visible minorities are more likely to agree that religion, race, and not coming from an affluent neighbourhood impact one's chances of getting hired. Gender also impacts responses, with males more likely to agree than females.
- Just more than one in three (36%) believe that if you have **experimented with drugs** than you have no chance of being hired as a police officer, while just more than one in ten (13%) strongly agree with the statement. Half (50%) disagree, including fourteen percent who strongly disagree.
- A similar proportion (37%) agree that a person's **race** can affect their chances of getting hired, including one in ten (11%) who strongly agree. Again, half (50%) disagree with the statement, however half of these youth (25%) strongly disagree.
- Three in ten (30%) say that being **heterosexual** improves your chances of getting hired, with nine percent in strong agreement. Half (52%) disagree, nearly three in ten (28%) strongly.

Youth Not Convinced Past Drug Use, Race, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Coming from Less Affluent Neighbourhood Would Have Impact on Likelihood of Being Hired

- Three in ten (30%) also agree that a person's **religious convictions** can affect their likelihood of obtaining employment as a police officer, with eight percent saying they strongly agree. Half (53%) disagree, one in four (23%) strongly.

- About one in five (22%) say that if you are **from a less affluent neighbourhood** you are less likely to be hired as a police officer. Just seven percent strongly agree. Three in five (62%) disagree, half of these (29%) strongly.

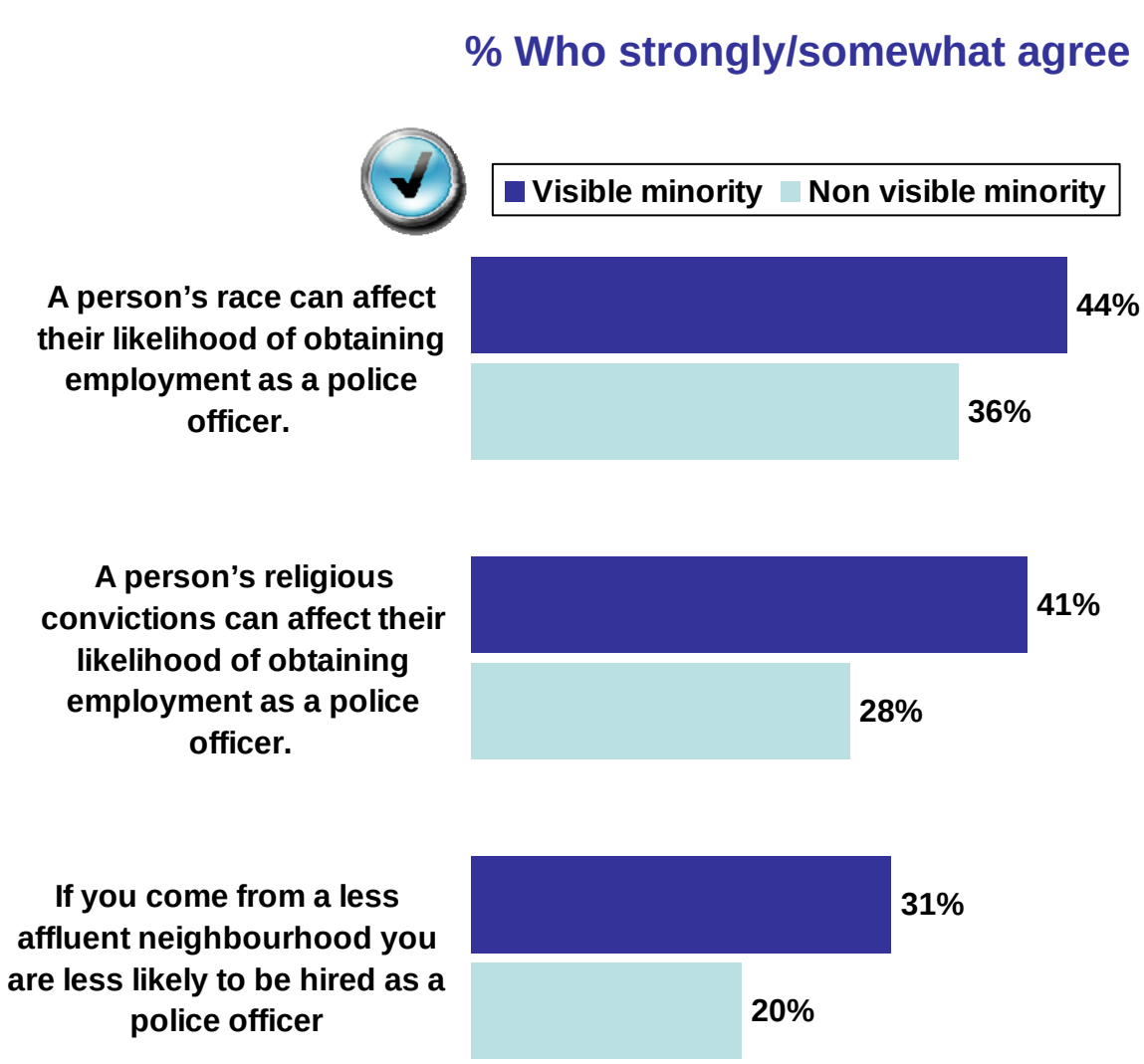
Youth Not Convinced Past Drug Use, Race, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Coming from Less Affluent Neighbourhood Would Have Impact on Likelihood of Being Hired



Q16. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following broad statements as they relate to policing in general

Base: All respondents n=1,521

Visible Minorities More Likely than Non-Visible Minorities to Agree with Each of the Statements

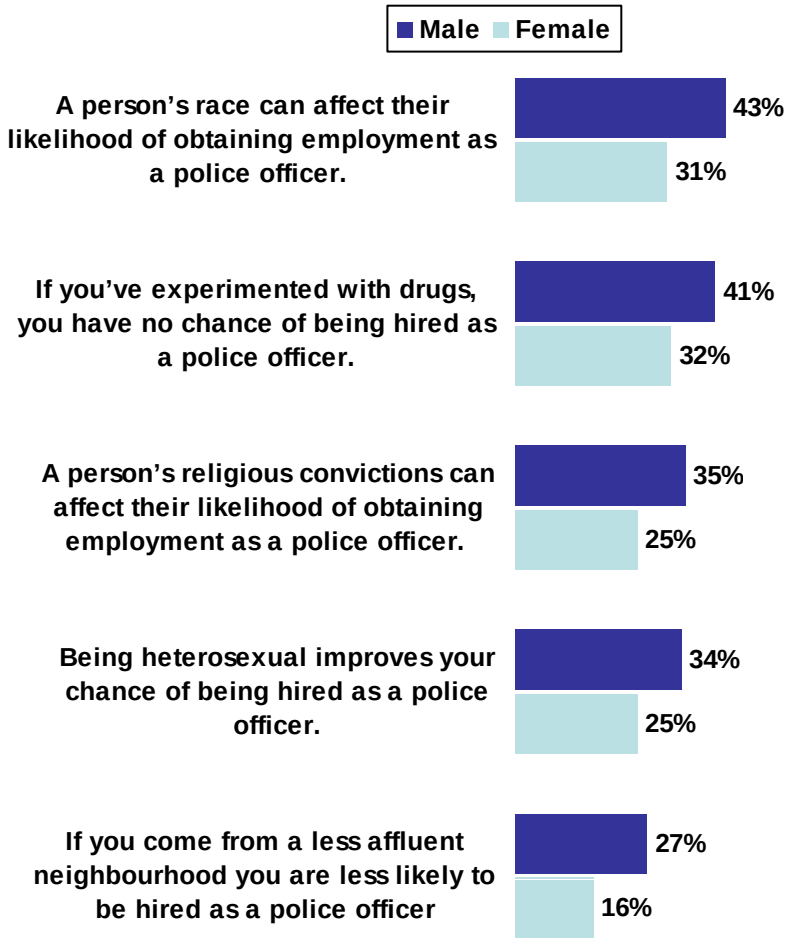


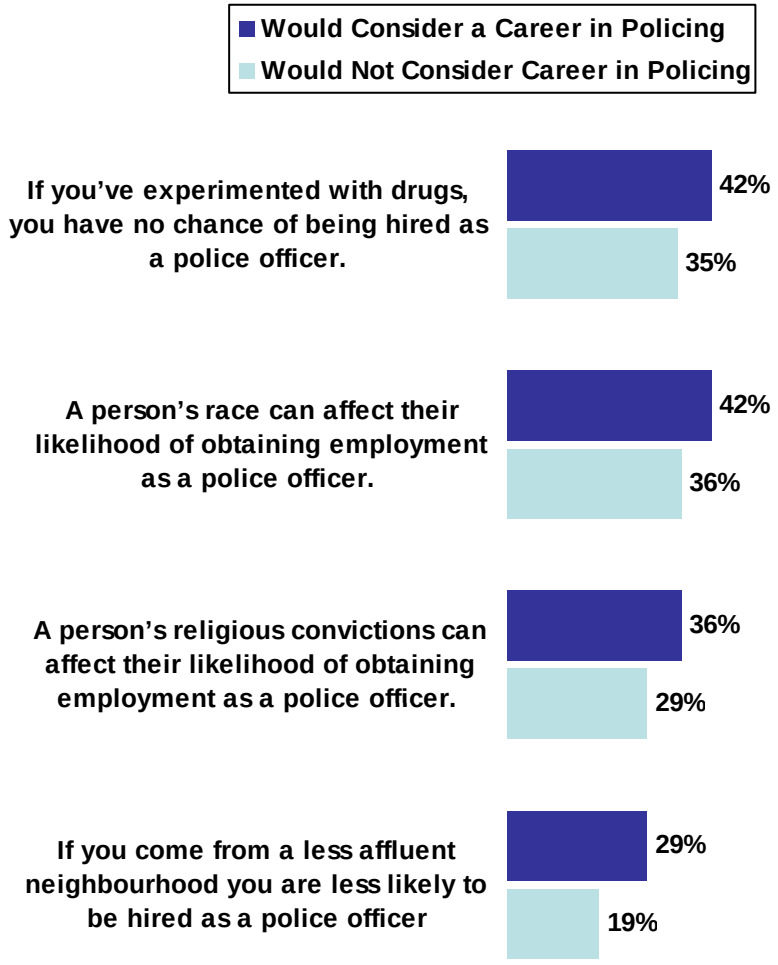
Q16. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following broad statements as they relate to policing in general

Base: All respondents n=1,521

Males More Likely Than Females to Agree with Each of the Statements

% Who strongly/somewhat agree

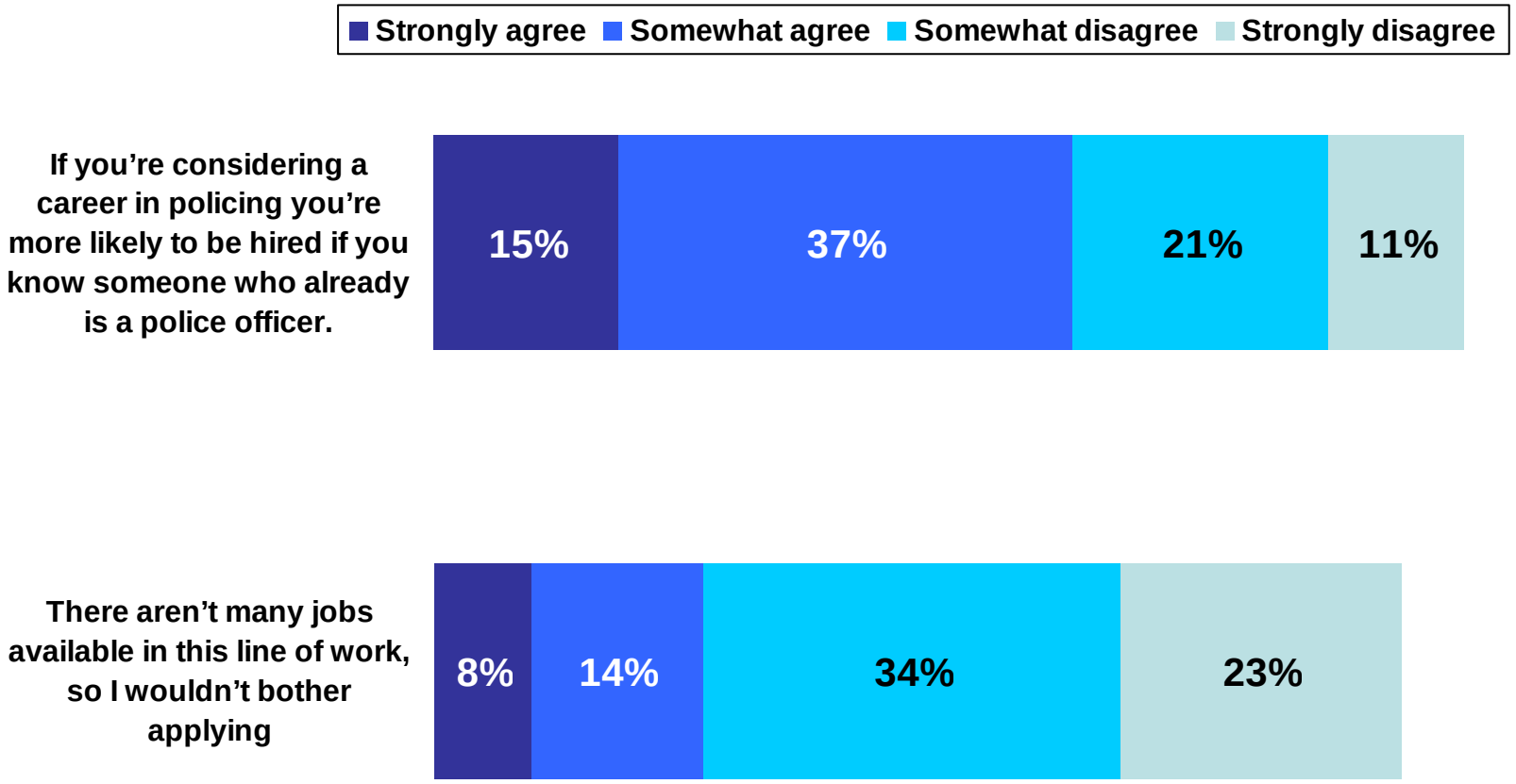




Q16. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following broad statements as they relate to policing in general

Base: All respondents n=1,521

Youth Say Knowing Someone on the Job Would Help One Get Hired, and They Don't Think that Jobs in this Field are Scarce



Q16. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following broad statements as they relate to policing in general

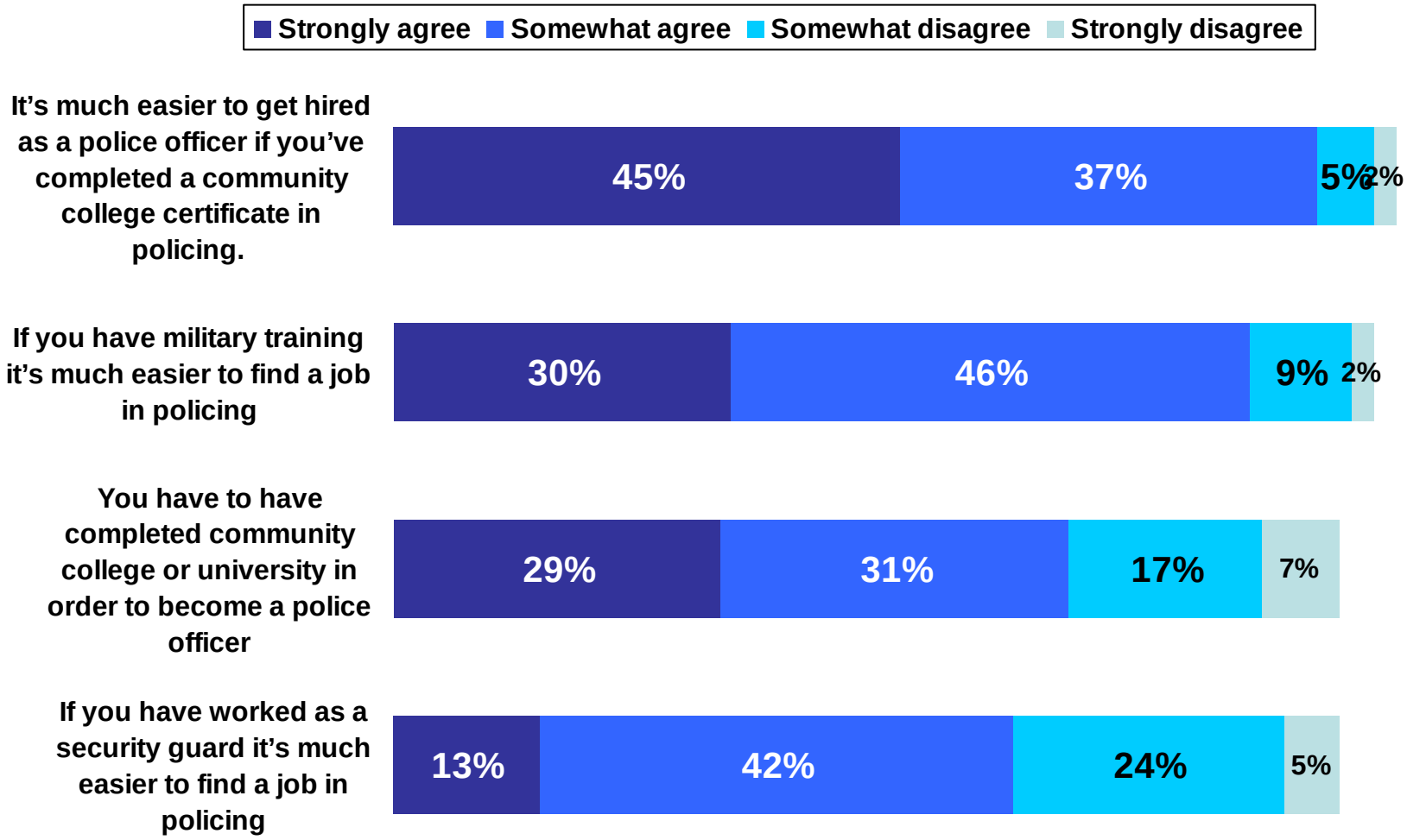
Base: All respondents n=1,521

Youth Say Knowing Someone on the Job Would Help One Get Hired, and They Don't Think that Jobs in this Field are Scarce

- Those most likely to agree that if you are considering a career in policing you are more likely to get hired if you already know someone who is a police officer include:
  - Residents of Ontario (57%) compared to those in Alberta (49%), Sask/Man (42%) and the Atlantic provinces (42%); and,
  - Males (55%) compared to females (49%).

- Those most likely to agree that there aren't too many jobs available in this line of work, so they wouldn't bother applying include:
  - Residents of Quebec (27%) compared to those in Alberta (18%) and Ontario (20%);
  - Males (27%) compared to females (15%);
  - Those who would consider a career in policing (27%) compared to those who would not (19%); and,
  - Those who consider themselves to be a visible minority (26%) compared to those who do not (20%).

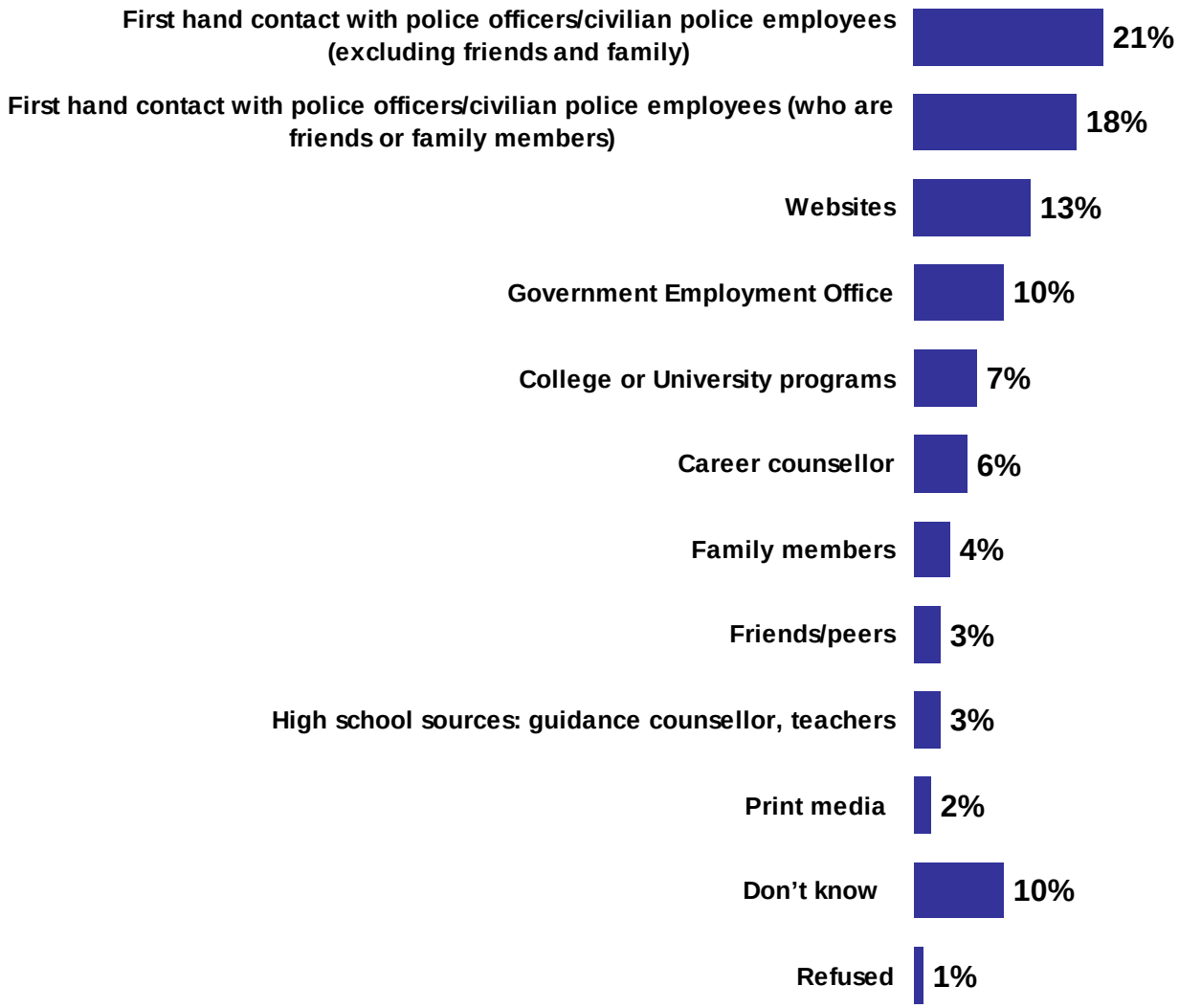
Youth say its easier to get hired as police officer if you have college certificate, but agreement is lower when asked if you need post secondary. In terms of past work experience, military training is seen as helpful, and, although majority say having worked as a security guard can help, agreement is lower.



Q17. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following broad statements as they relate to policing in general.

Base: All respondents n=1,521

First Hand Contact with Officers/Civilians Source Youth Would Rely on Most for Info Related to Hiring Process



Q20. Which of the following sources would you **rely on most** when it comes to obtaining information about the hiring process as it relates to a career in policing?

Base: All respondents n=1,521