



General Osteopathic Council: Public Perceptions Study



General
Osteopathic
Council



Background and Method

Aims and objectives

- The aim of this study was to provide the General Osteopathic Council with insight into public and patient perceptions of osteopathic care and regulation.

Method

- A nationally representative survey of 1,004 members of the UK public was carried out between the 13/04/2018 and the 26/04/2018. In addition to this a boosted sample of 500 people in the UK who have visited an osteopath in the last 12 months were surveyed during the same time period.
- All the research was undertaken online by YouGov using the YouGov research panel.
- This analysis presents a summary of the main findings from this study.
- Throughout the report, ‘osteopathic patients’ can be defined as people who have visited an osteopath in the past 12 months, unless otherwise stated.
- The report also compares findings against a survey conducted by the GOsC in November 2014.
- A statistically significant difference between 2014 and 2018 - which refers to a difference that is outside of the ‘margin of error’ and can therefore be considered statistically relevant - is represented by ↑ or ↓. This is considered statistically significant and identified a true difference in opinion - this may or may not be considered significant in terms of future policy and/or strategy.

— Key findings

Key Findings

Confidence in healthcare professionals

- The public are most confident in familiar healthcare professionals such as pharmacists, dentists and GPs. They place less confidence in less 'mainstream' healthcare professionals, like acupuncturists and herbalists, which is illustrative of a lack of awareness.
- 95% of osteopathic patients have say they have confidence in osteopaths, implying patients have had good experiences of treatment.
- One in two (50%) members of the general public have confidence in osteopaths, roughly consistent with the 2014 study.
- The most important factors in giving confidence in healthcare professionals are a recognised level of education and training, good quality advice and treatment and up-to-date knowledge and skills. Links to the NHS are more important to the general public than to osteopathic patients.

Deciding to visit an osteopath: information needs

- When thinking about what would affect their decision to see an osteopath and information people want before their first visit, both the public and osteopathic patients prioritise information about the benefits of treatment.
- Those who haven't seen an osteopath also say that evidence the treatment works and recommendations from people they know (GP / friends / family) would be useful information to have.
- If wanting to find out about the risks, the public would turn to people they know and trust or the internet.
- Women are more likely than men to want to know what they need to wear (80%) and whether they can bring a chaperone/friend (50%).

Key Findings (continued)

Experience of visiting an osteopath

- Patients appear to be happy with their most recent osteopathic visit, with 9 in 10 saying their osteopath was ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ at making them feel at ease.
- Feeling confident in the osteopath’s knowledge and skills is most likely to lead to a positive experience for the patient.
- There has been an increase since 2014 in the proportion of patients who say being treated with dignity is very important in affecting their confidence in an osteopath.

Providing feedback and reporting concerns

- When thinking about leaving feedback, osteopathic patients would ideally do this via an online survey at home, with 3 in 4 patients saying this is one of their preferred methods. Following this, they would like to give it face-to-face or via a hard copy questionnaire at home.

The GOsC and professional standards

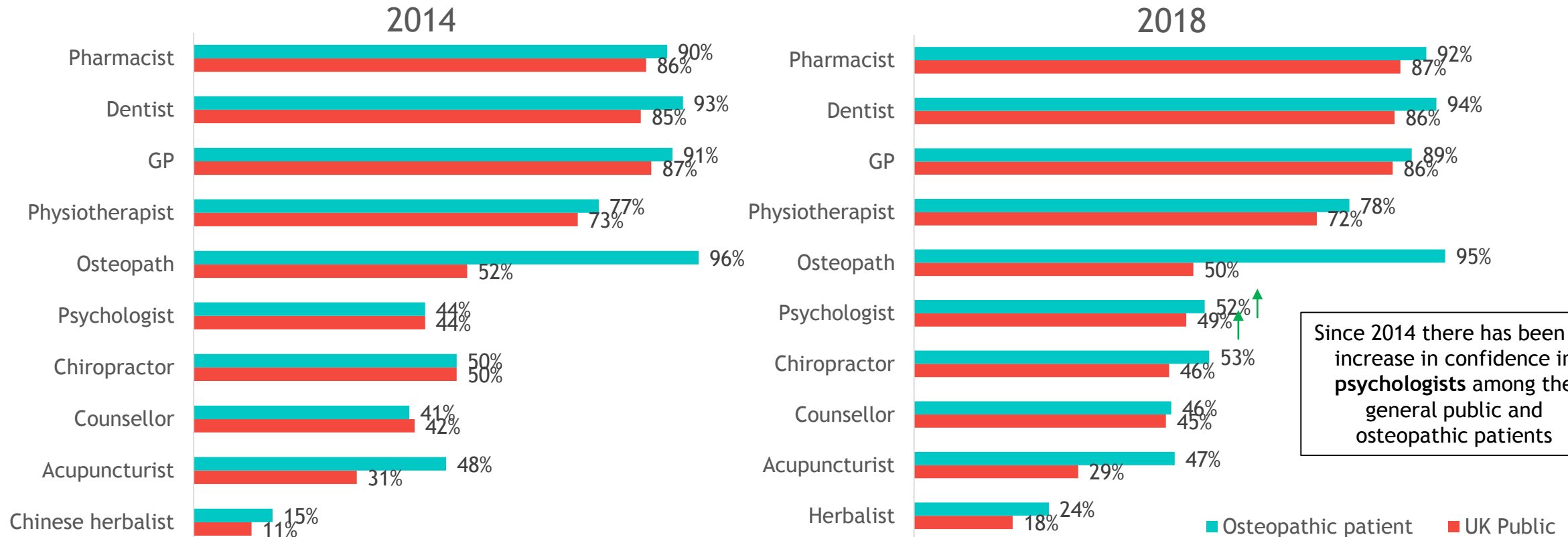
- The professions most widely recognised as being regulated are GPs, dentists and pharmacists. Osteopathic patients are more likely than the general public to know that osteopaths are regulated.
- If looking for information about standards of osteopathic practise, the public would most likely search via internet, NHS Choices website and their GP practice. Osteopathic patients (63%) are significantly more likely than the UK public (34%) to say they would seek information via the General Osteopathic Council.
- Osteopathic patients are more likely than the UK public to be aware of the rules that osteopaths need to follow, and are more confident that if they raised a concern with a regulator, it would be properly investigated and addressed.
- There has been an increase in awareness since 2014 among the public and patients that osteopaths are required to renew their registration annually and complete at least 30 hours of CPD per year

— Confidence in healthcare professionals

The vast majority of osteopathic patients have confidence in the advice and treatment osteopaths can provide

- The public have most confidence in more familiar health professionals such as pharmacists, dentists and GPs. Echoing the 2014 study, this suggests there is a relationship between familiarity and confidence
- Among the general public, young people aged 18-24 have the least confidence in osteopaths (33% have a lot/fair amount), and are more likely to say they don't know
- People are generally more likely not to know how much confidence they have in less 'mainstream' types of health professional – illustrative of a lack of awareness
- Levels of confidence in osteopaths are consistent with 2014 among both the general public and patients

% with a lot / fair amount of confidence in receiving healthcare advice/treatment from...

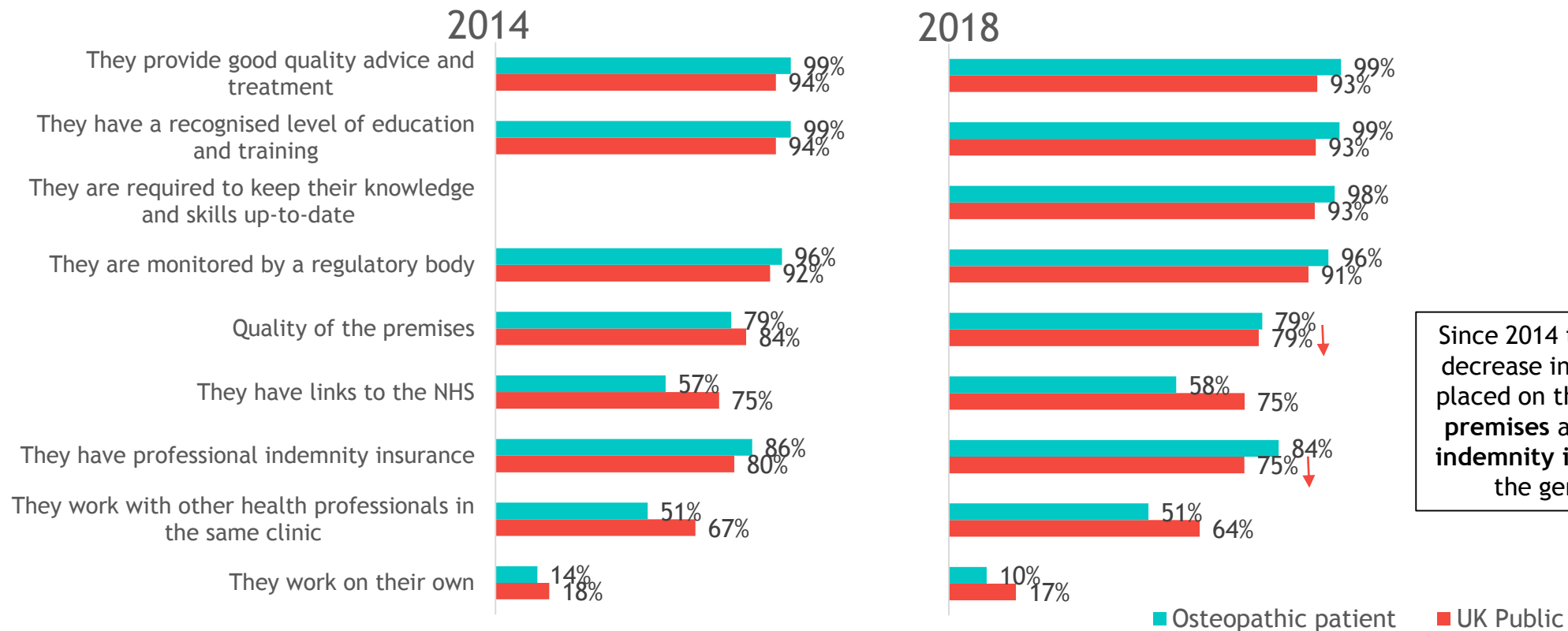


Since 2014 there has been an increase in confidence in **psychologists** among the general public and osteopathic patients

Confidence is determined by up-to-date knowledge and skills, good quality advice and treatment, and a recognised level of education and training

- The top factors giving people confidence in healthcare professionals have remained consistent with the 2014 study
- Among the general public, older people place greater importance than younger people in almost all of the factors, and women put significantly more importance in education/training and up-to-date knowledge/skills than men
- Links to the NHS are more important to the public than osteopathic patients, especially for people aged 65+ among whom 84% say links to the NHS give them confidence

Level of importance of factors in giving confidence (% very / somewhat important)

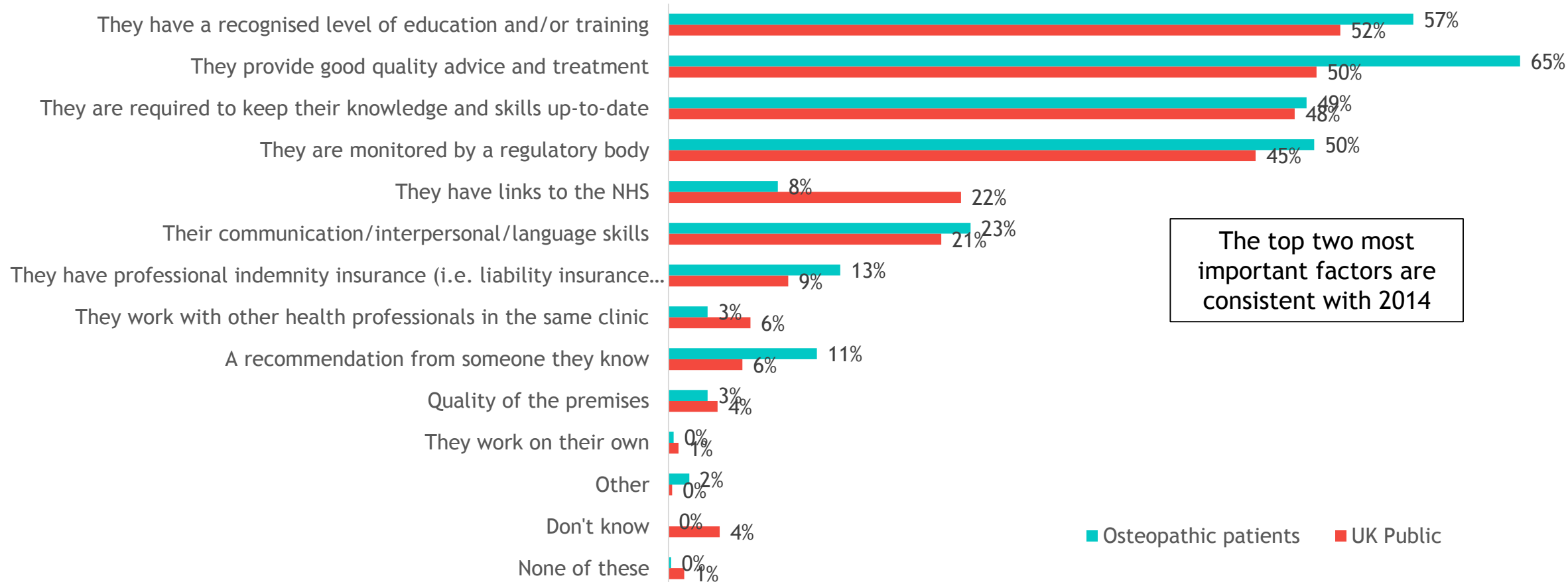


Since 2014 there has been a decrease in the importance placed on the **quality of the premises and professional indemnity insurance** among the general public

A recognised level of education, good quality advice/treatment, and up-to-date knowledge and skills are rated by the general public as the most important factors in having confidence in healthcare professionals

- Good quality advice and treatment is more important for osteopathic patients than the general public in giving confidence in healthcare professionals, whilst links to the NHS are more important to the general public

Three most important factors in giving confidence (% very / somewhat important)

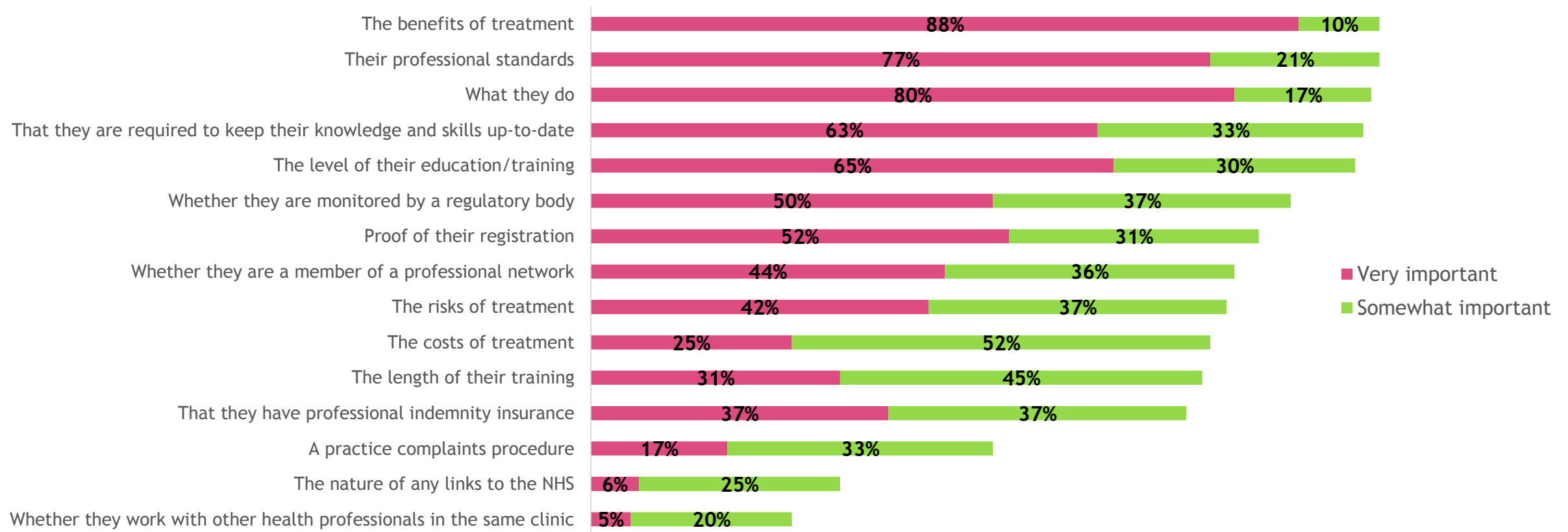


Deciding to visit an osteopath: information needs

For osteopathic patients, information about the benefits of treatment and professional standards would be the most important deciding factors

- Information about work with other health professionals in the same clinic and links to the NHS is less important to osteopathic patients when making the decision to see an osteopath for treatment
- Information about the risks of treatment is significantly more important for women (83%) than men (73%)
- Information about the monitoring of a regulatory body is most important for people aged 65+, with 92% if this age group saying this is very / somewhat important

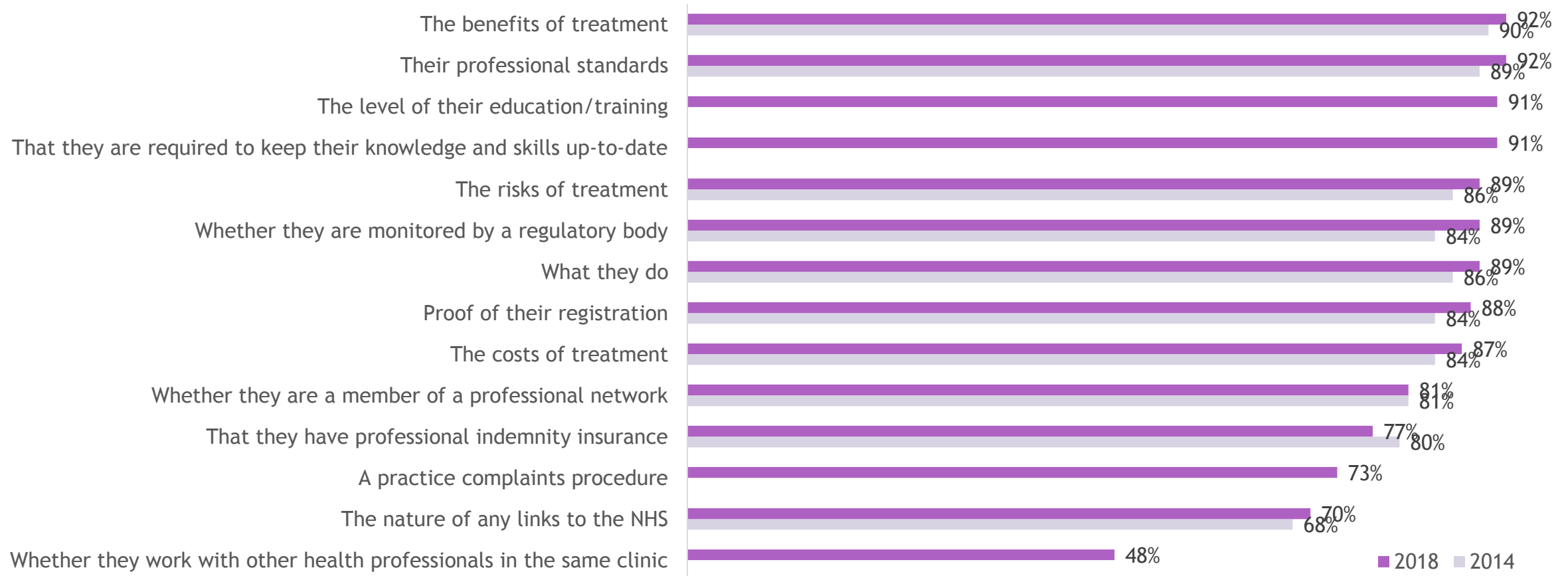
Osteopathic patients: importance of information when deciding whether or not to see an osteopath (% very / somewhat important)



Information about the benefits of treatment and professional standards would also be most important for people who have never seen an osteopath

- Older people and women place more importance on each type of information than younger people and men. For example, 86% of people aged 65+ say information about professional indemnity insurance would be important to their decision to see an osteopath, compared with 57% of 18-24 year olds
- Nearly one in two non-patients say information about working with other health professionals in the same clinic would be important, while only a quarter of patients recall this being important to their decision

Non-patients: importance of information when deciding whether or not to see an osteopath (% very / somewhat important)



The public would require more information when scheduling an appointment than those who have seen an osteopath recently

- Among the general public, information about the complaints process is most important to older people, with 74% of people aged 65+ saying it would be very/ somewhat important to them
- 80% of women want to know what they would need to wear and the clothing they may need to remove – yet only 58% of men do. Women are also more concerned about whether they can bring a chaperone or friend – 50% say this is important compared to 31% of men

Important information in advance of visiting an osteopath (% very/ somewhat important)



If seeking information about the benefits/risks of osteopathy, the public would often turn to the internet or people they know and trust

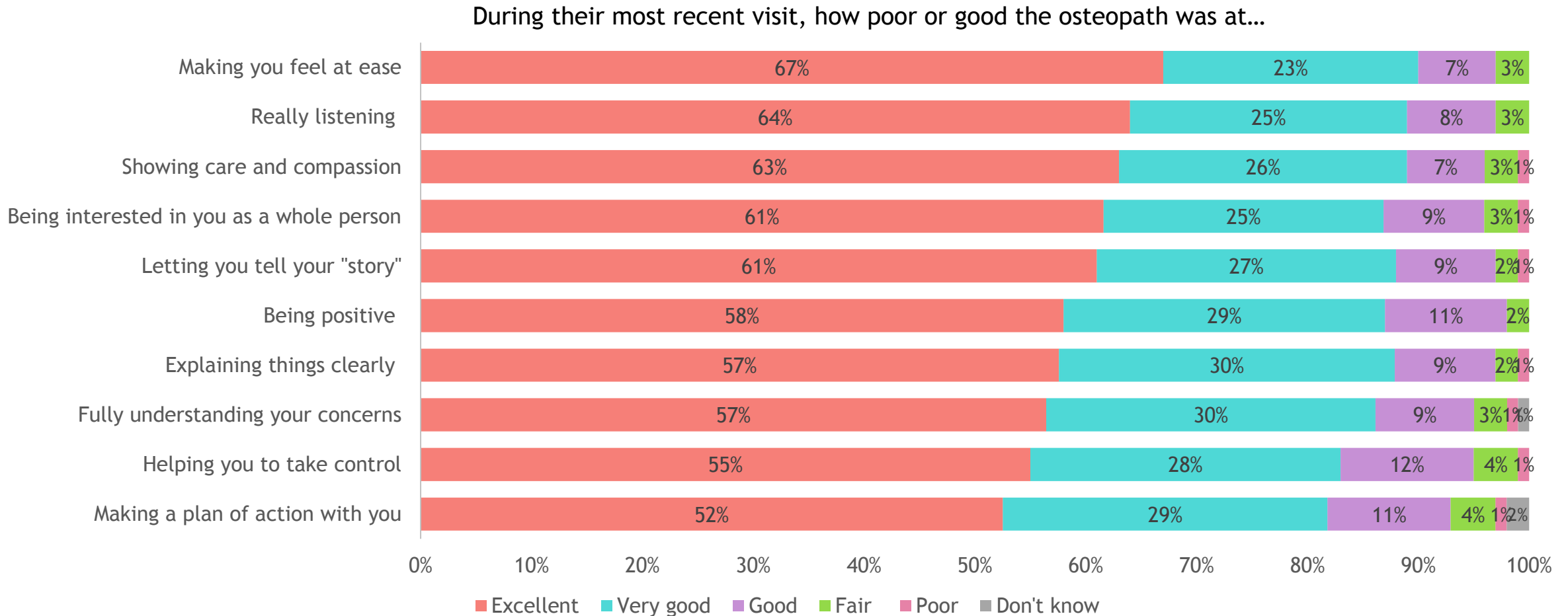
- “Internet” “Online” “Google”
- “Online to find an accreditation body for osteopaths, reviews etc. My GP practice. Friends & family”
- “My GP, or local hospital who would point me in the right direction”
- “Health websites including NHS Direct, friends, colleagues”
- “I would ask the osteopath and look on the national regulatory osteopaths website”
- “GP recommendation” “I would ask family or friends for recommendations”
- “The professional bodies for Osteopaths and check the practice website for information as well as look for recommendations from people who have used an osteopath before too”



— Experience of visiting an osteopath

9 in 10 osteopathic patients think their osteopath was excellent or very good at making them feel at ease during their most recent visit

- Women are more likely than men to say their osteopath was 'excellent' in most categories
- Relatively, only very small proportions rate their osteopath as being fair or poor



Feeling confident in the osteopath's knowledge and skills is most likely to lead to a positive experience for the patient

- The osteopath wanting to know more about someone as a person is more important for women (40%) than men (27%)
- Having a long enough appointment and being given time to make a decision is more likely to lead to a positive experience for men than women

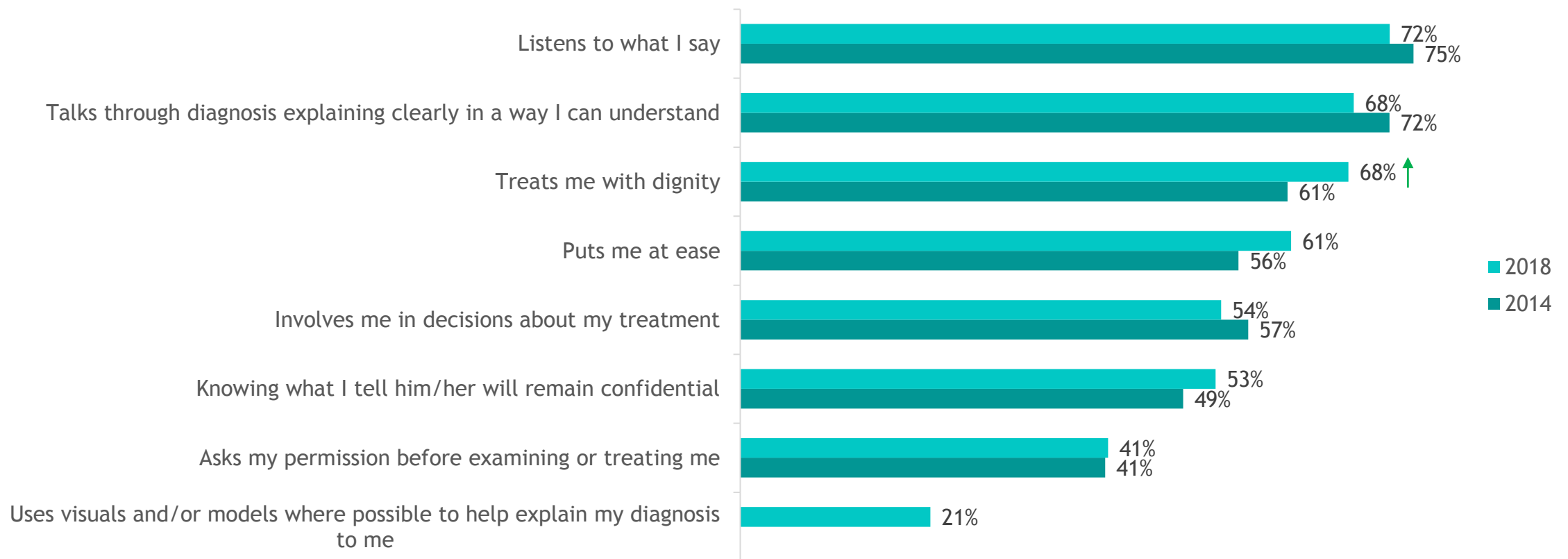
The most important factors in giving a positive experience of osteopathy (top 10)



Listening to what the patient says and talking through the diagnosis clearly are important factors leading to confidence in an osteopath

- Using visuals/ models is the factor that would have the least impact on confidence
- In comparison with the 2014 study, there has been an increase in the proportion of patients who say being treated with dignity is very important in affecting their confidence in an osteopath

Level of importance of factors in giving confidence in an osteopath (% very important)



— Providing feedback and reporting concerns

An online survey at home is by far the most preferred way of leaving feedback by osteopathic patients

- There has been a notable shift since 2014, when patients indicated they would prefer to give feedback face-to-face than through an online survey at home
- Following an online survey at home, patients would prefer to give feedback face-to-face with the osteopath, as a hardcopy questionnaire or to an independent third party
- Men (37%) are significantly more likely than women (21%) to say they would give it face to face, as are people aged 65+ (41%)

Preferred ways of giving feedback (% very/ somewhat important)



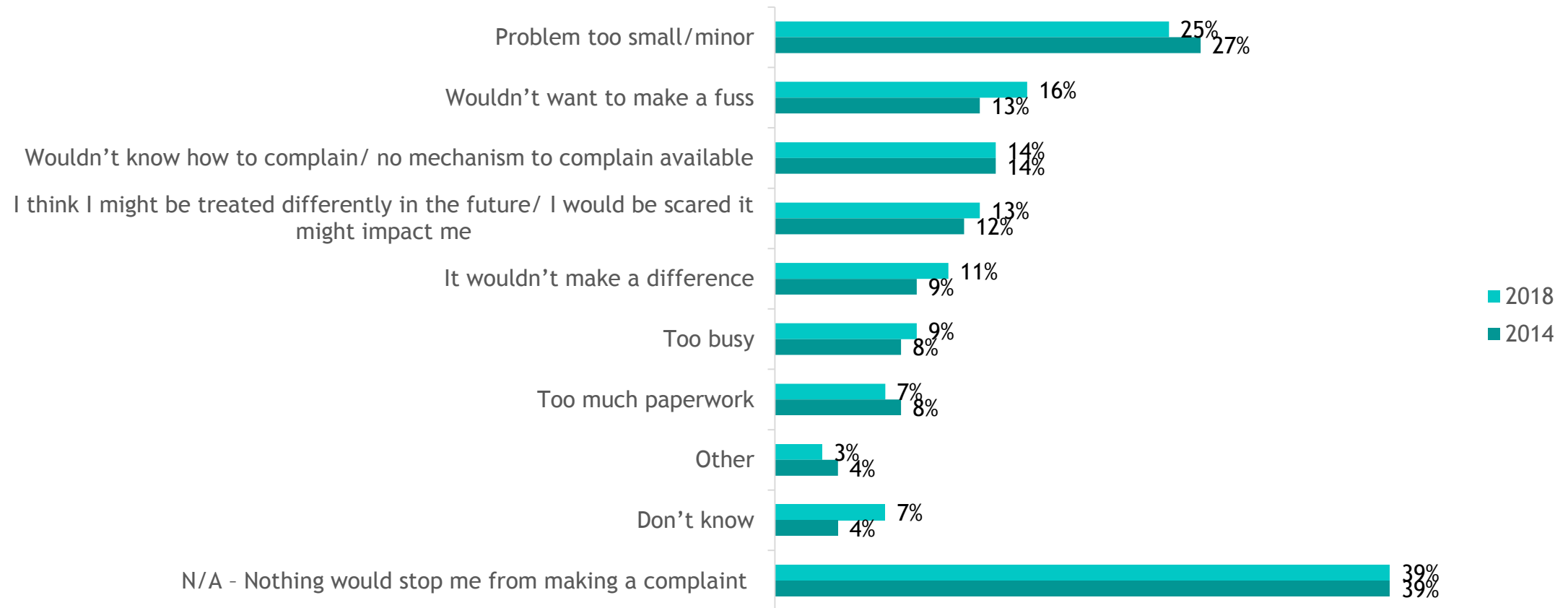
The most important factors for a positive experience in 2014 were:

- 1) Face-to-face with the osteopath
- 2) Online survey at home
- 3) Anonymous feedback form in the practice

Osteopathic patients often feel nothing would hold them back from complaining if they were to be dissatisfied with the quality of care

- If one factor were to hold them back, it would be the problem being too small or minor
- There has not been any change in these opinions since the 2014 study

Factors that would stop patients from making a complaint if dissatisfied with the quality of care received

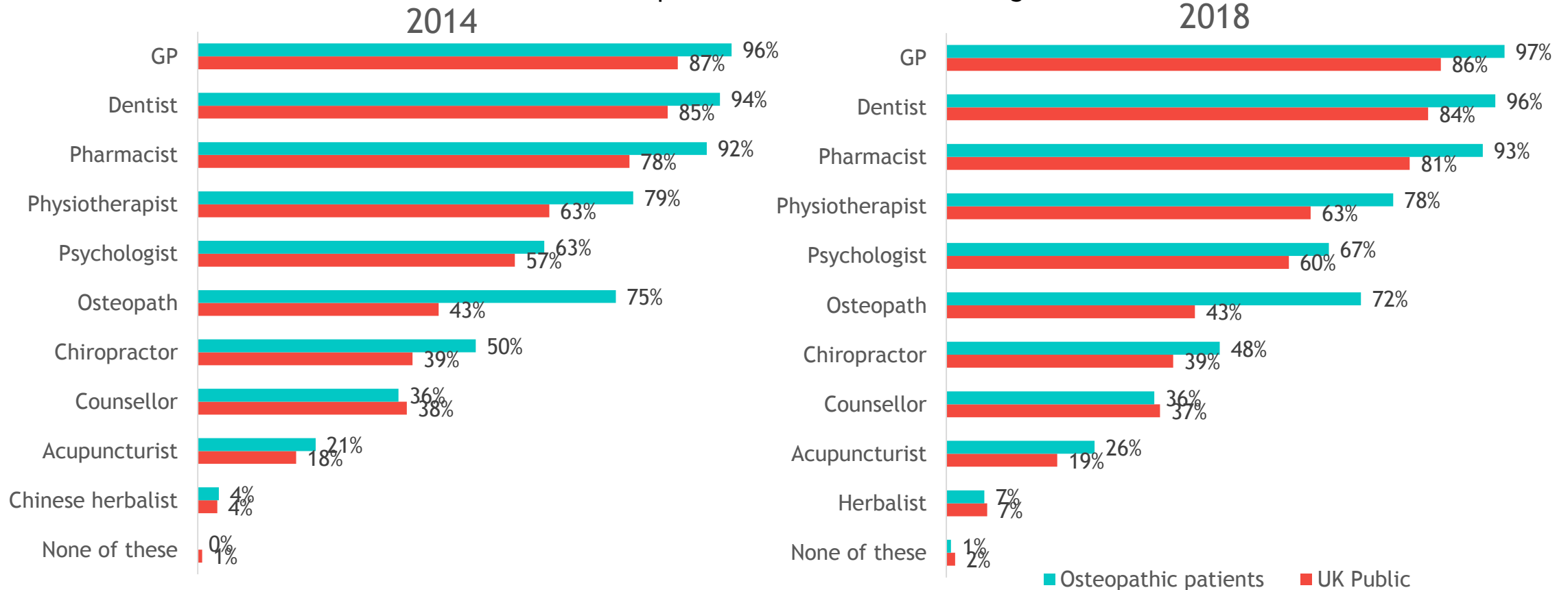


Professional standards and the General Osteopathic Council

Osteopathic patients are more likely than the general public to know that osteopaths are regulated

- GPs, dentists and pharmacists are most widely recognised as regulated health professionals
- 7 in 10 osteopathic patients are aware that osteopaths are regulated, which means 3 in 10 do not know that their osteopath is regulated
- There has not been any change since 2014 in awareness of the regulation of osteopaths

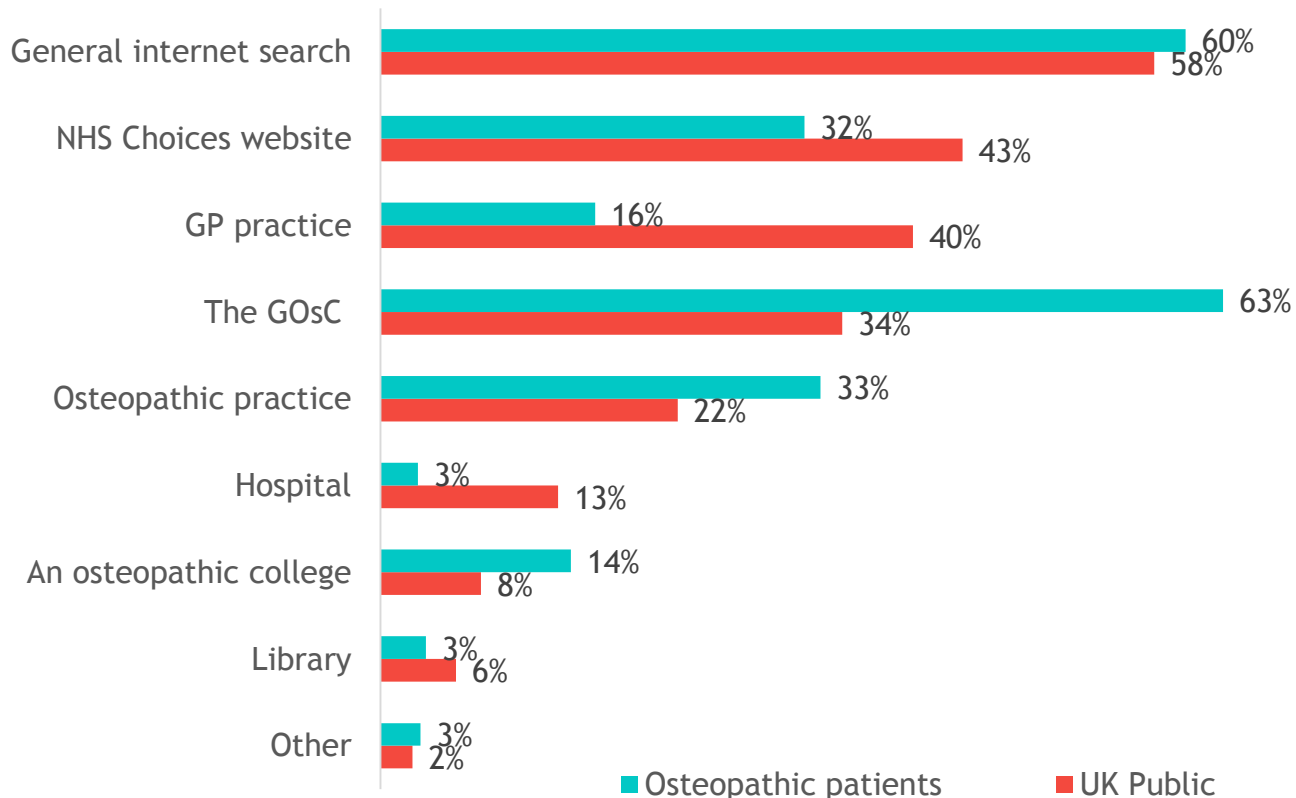
Healthcare professionals believed to be regulated



If looking for information about standards of osteopathic practise, osteopathic patients would most often go to the GOsC

- The public's preferred sources for finding information about standards of osteopathic practise are the internet, NHS Choices website and their GP practice
- Osteopathic patients (63%) are significantly more likely than the UK public (34%) to seek information via the General Osteopathic Council

Sources to find information about standards of osteopathic practise



The top three sources in 2014 are consistent with this year:

General public:

- 1) General internet search
- 2) NHS Choices website
- 3) GP practice

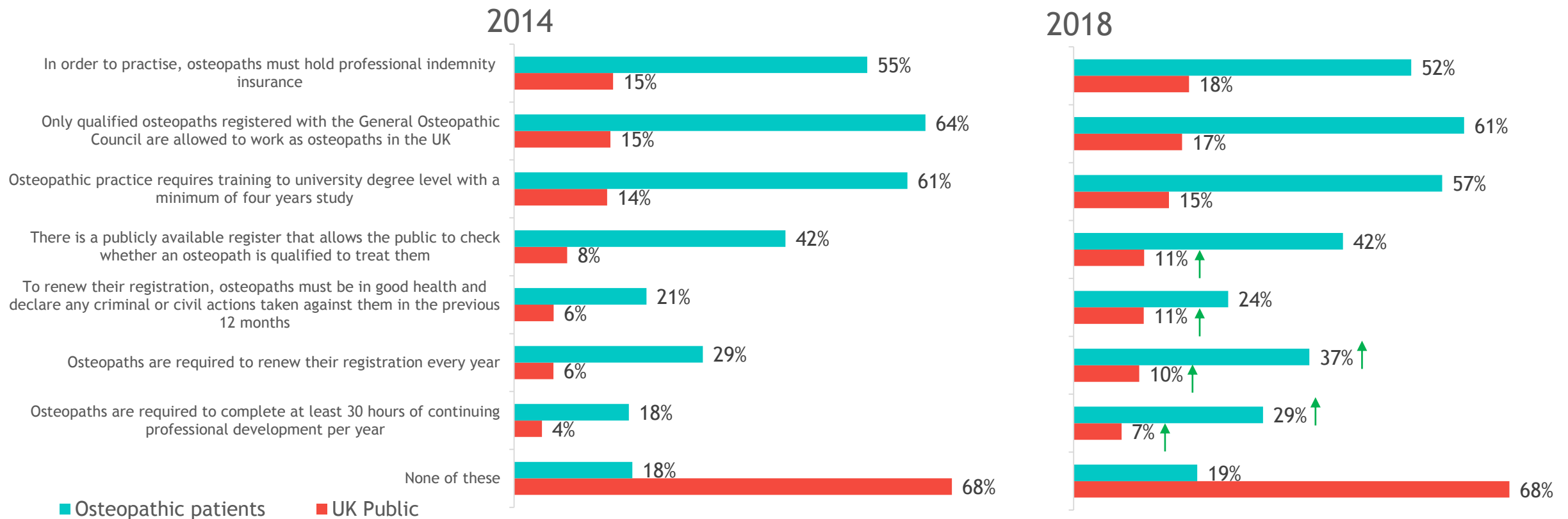
Osteopathic patients:

- 1) General Osteopathic Council
- 2) General internet search
- 3) Osteopathic practice

Osteopathic patients are significantly more likely than the UK public to be aware of the rules that osteopaths need to follow

- 18-24 year olds show high levels of unawareness, with 82% not aware of any of the rules listed
- Since 2014, there has been an increase in awareness among the public and patients that osteopaths are required to renew their registration annually and complete at least 30 hours of CPD per year

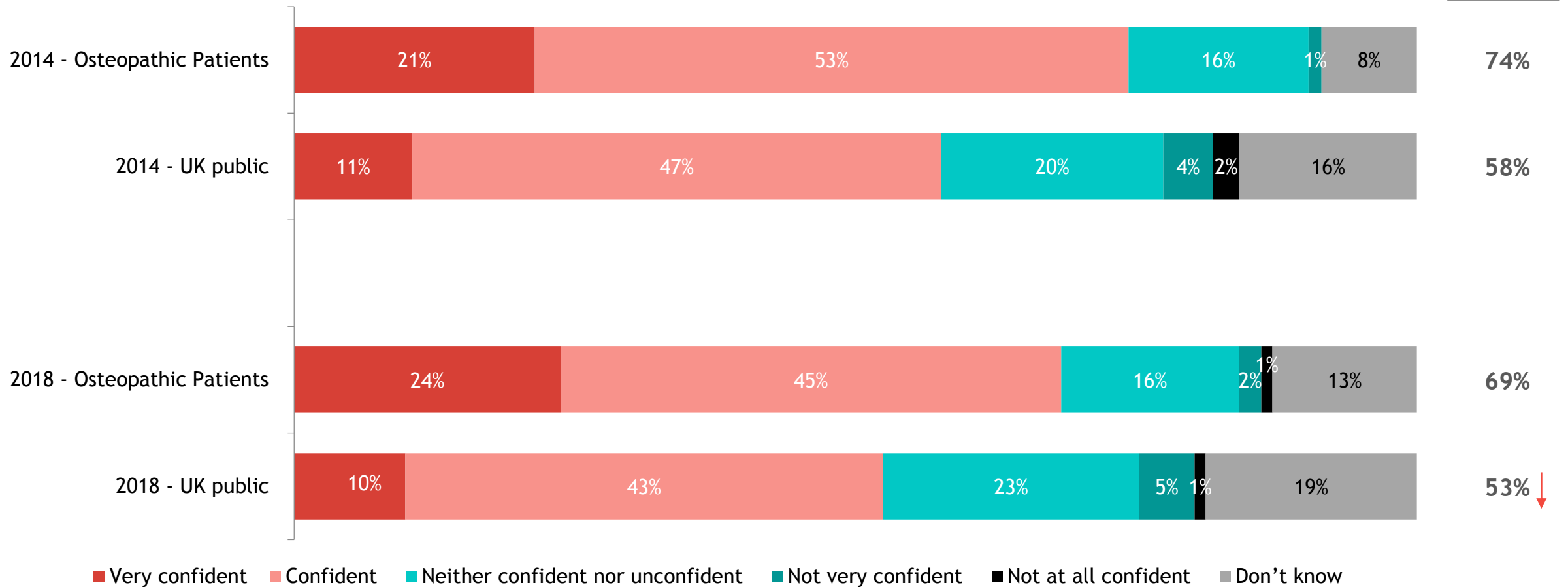
Awareness of rules to be followed by osteopaths



Osteopathic patients are also more likely to be confident that if they raised a concern with a regulator, it would be properly investigated and addressed

- Since 2014, there has been decrease in confidence among the public that, if raised, their concerns about an osteopath would be properly investigated/addressed by the profession's regulator

Level of confidence that concerns about an osteopath would be properly investigated/addressed by the profession's regulator **Confident**



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