



# NSA Sheep worrying by dogs survey 2022: Main Results





# NSA 2022 sheep worrying by dogs survey

- 2022 is the 7<sup>th</sup> survey we have conducted since 2013
- Frustratingly the problems being caused by out of control dogs are still common, and the stress, anxiety, and cost, is still a blight on our industry.
- There are one or two encouraging signs but its still not clear how we are going to stop or significantly reduce incidents.





# NSA urges public to take responsibility

<5% respondents were alerted by the offending dog owner, with the majority left to discover the evidence

The majority of respondents had multiple incidences per year, between 1-10

In almost 75% of cases it's a single dog injuring or killing multiple sheep

Concerns remain over cases increasing due to higher levels of dog ownership

## Dog walk checklist



National Sheep Association  
www.sheepworrying.org.uk

#LeadOn

### Lead

Keep your dog on a lead near livestock.  
Let go if chased by cattle.

### Control

Keep your dog in sight at all times, and place on a lead as soon as you are near livestock.

### Signs

Stick to dedicated, marked footpaths and look out for signs indicating where livestock graze.

### Bags

Take poo bags with you and pick up your dog's poo. Worms in dog faeces causes devastating disease in livestock.



Any dog can chase or attack sheep. It's not worth the risk.





# Proactive response of farmers and the police

More farmers are reporting incidents - 81% of survey respondents said they now report some, most or all of the incidents they experience. An increase since 2021.

**REPORT DOG WORRYING INCIDENTS TO POLICE, and request a crime reference number.**

Accurate statistics reveal the true extent of the problem.



National Sheep Association  
[www.sheepworrying.org.uk](http://www.sheepworrying.org.uk)



Over the past 2 years, twice as many people are reporting positive responses from police forces dealing with sheep worrying incidents

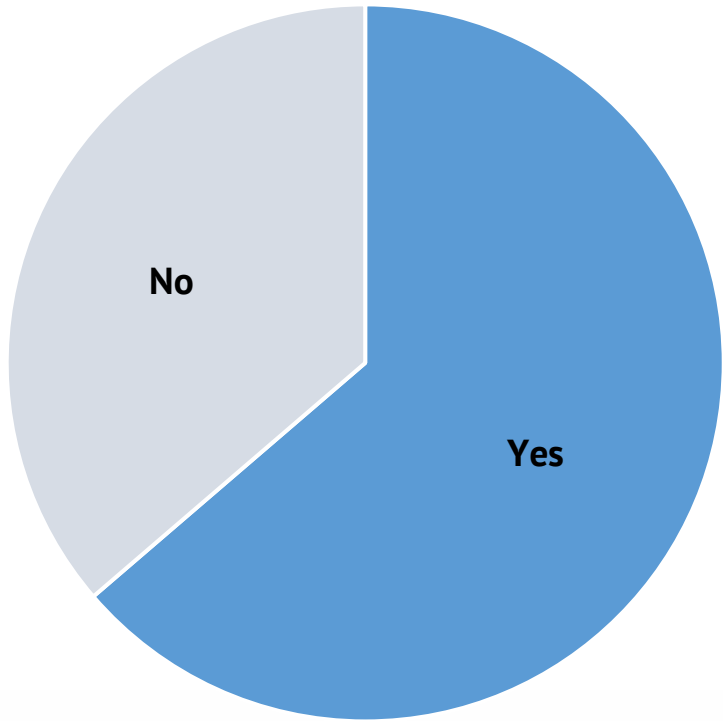




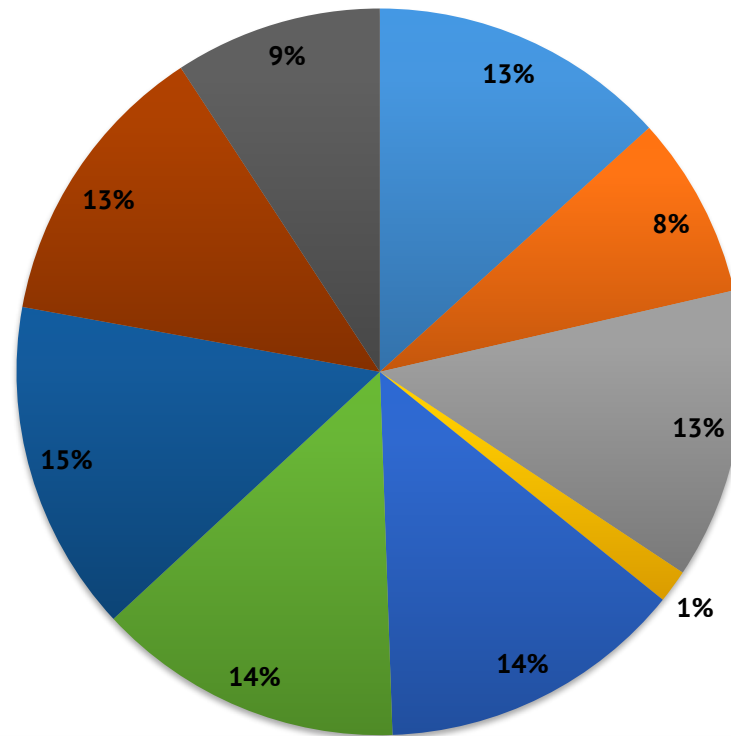
# Contributor Profile

271 respondents, 63% NSA members

## NSA Member



## Regional Split



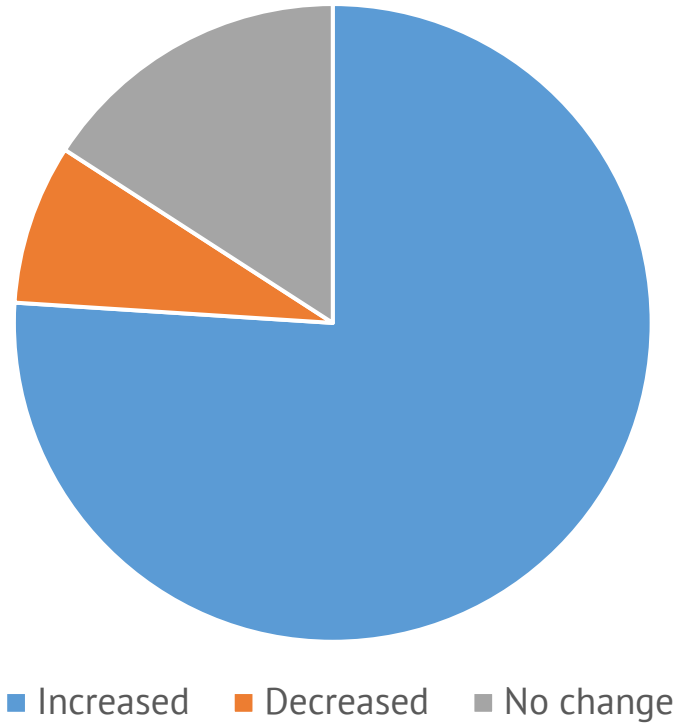
- Central
- Eastern
- Marches
- N. Ireland
- Northern
- Scotland
- South East
- South West
- Wales





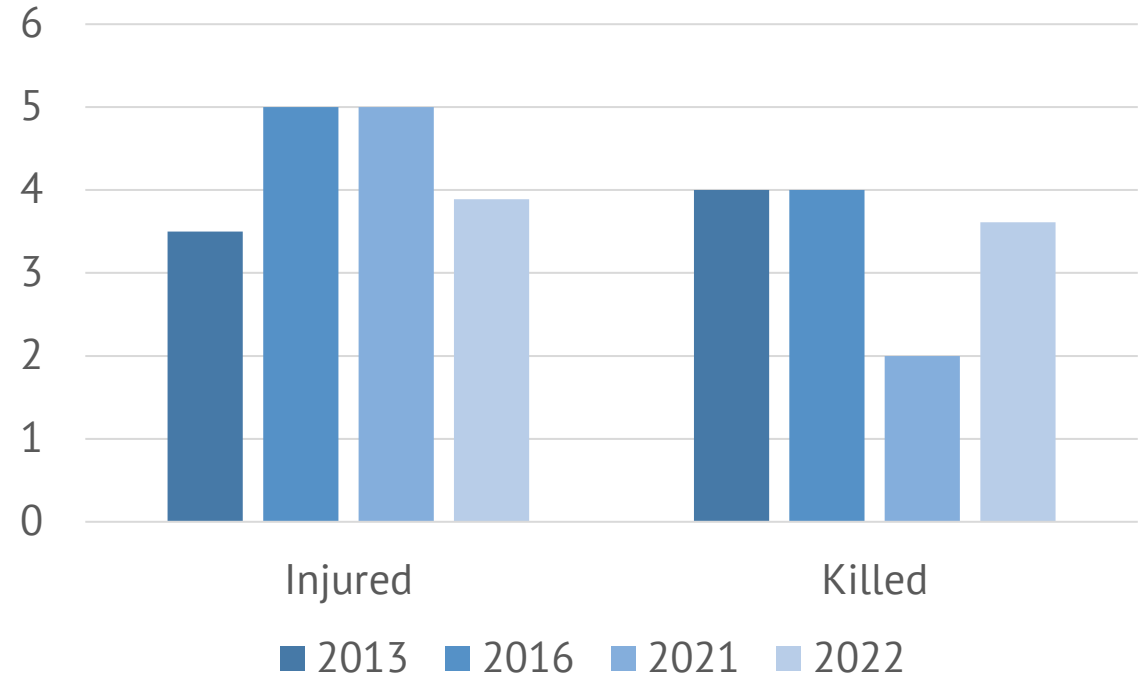
# Incidents and Severity

In your opinion, have the number of incidents increased or decreased over the last 3 years



On average how many of your sheep have been injured or killed as a result of worrying incident in the last 12 months?

Average No. per year

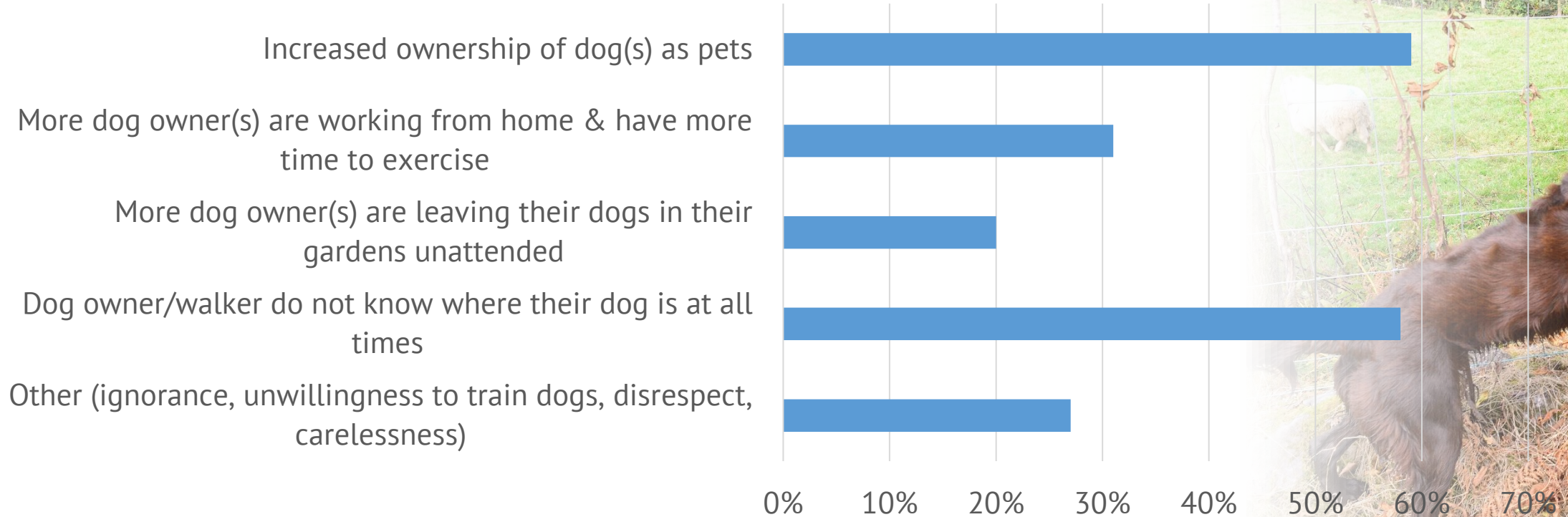


Average incidents have decreased since 2021, but we are seeing more animals killed due to sheep worrying. This doesn't take into account that 67% of respondents reported production losses in sheep and/or miscarriage in ewes as a result of sheep worrying. This may be the reason for a lower amount of injuries reported as there is a time lag between the sheep worrying event and losses or injuries observed.



# What factors increase the risk

In your opinion, what factors contribute to an increase in the incidence of sheep worrying by dog(s)?

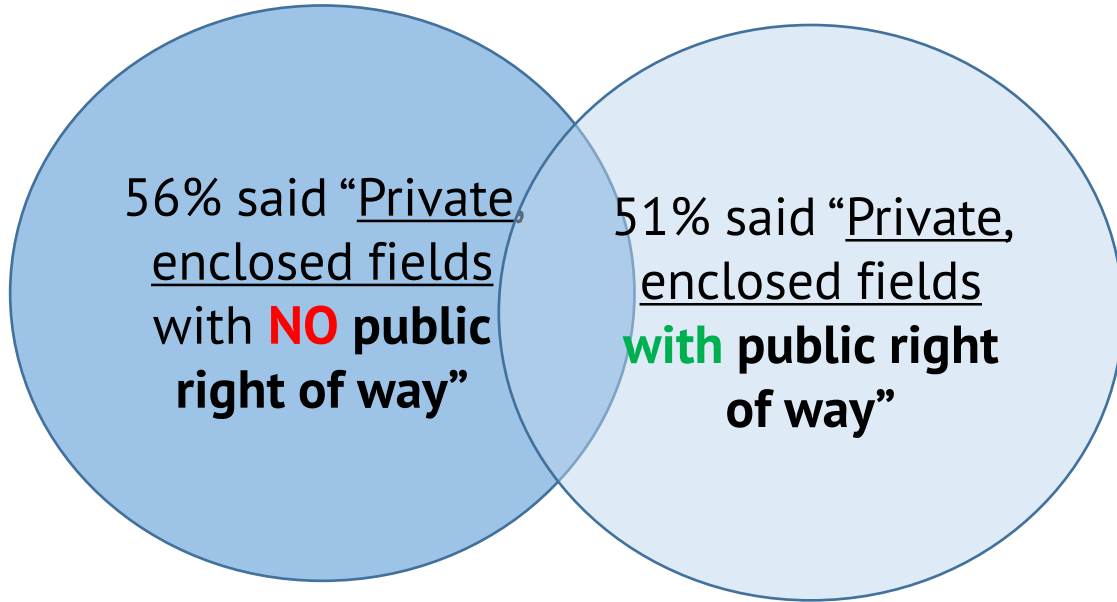


Farmers observing more incidences of sheep worrying, presumably due to legacy effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

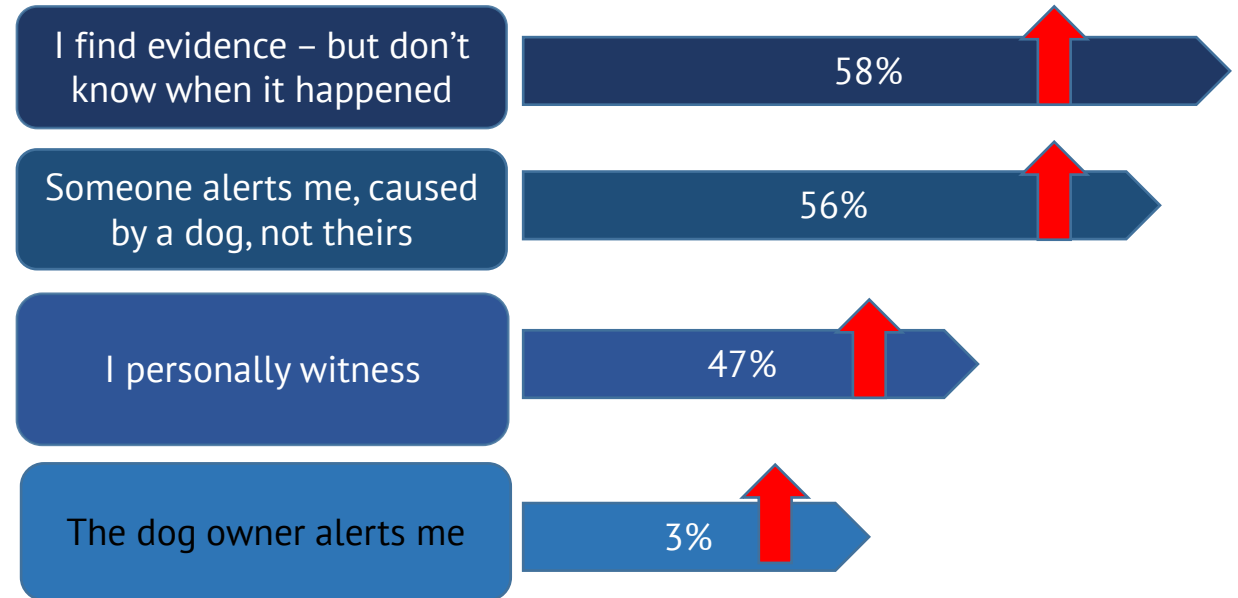




# Nature of the incident



How do you commonly find out about sheep worrying by dog(s) incidents in your flock?



Where have you found sheep worrying by dog(s) incidents on your sheep occur?

More incidences of sheep worrying occur on private land with NO public access. Highlights the need for change to strengthen the protection of animal welfare and livelihoods. Improved legislation is desperately required to ensure dog owners act responsibly and are fully accountable for their dogs.

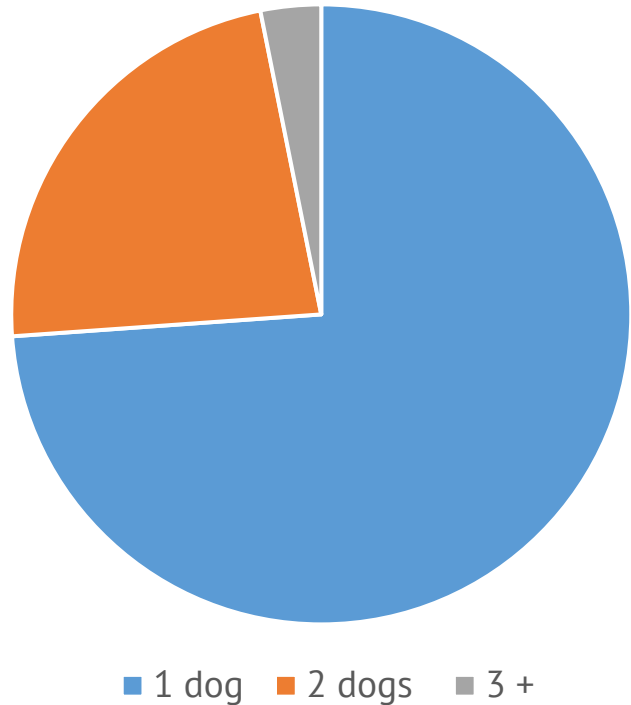
Except for farmers personally witnessing sheep worrying, all other methods for discovering sheep worrying are on the rise since 2021. The majority of farmers find the evidence of sheep worrying rather than being alerted by the owner or another witness. Results suggest animals are often likely to be left suffering and injured for a period of time causing extreme distress to the sheep and also the farmer on discovering the upsetting scenes.



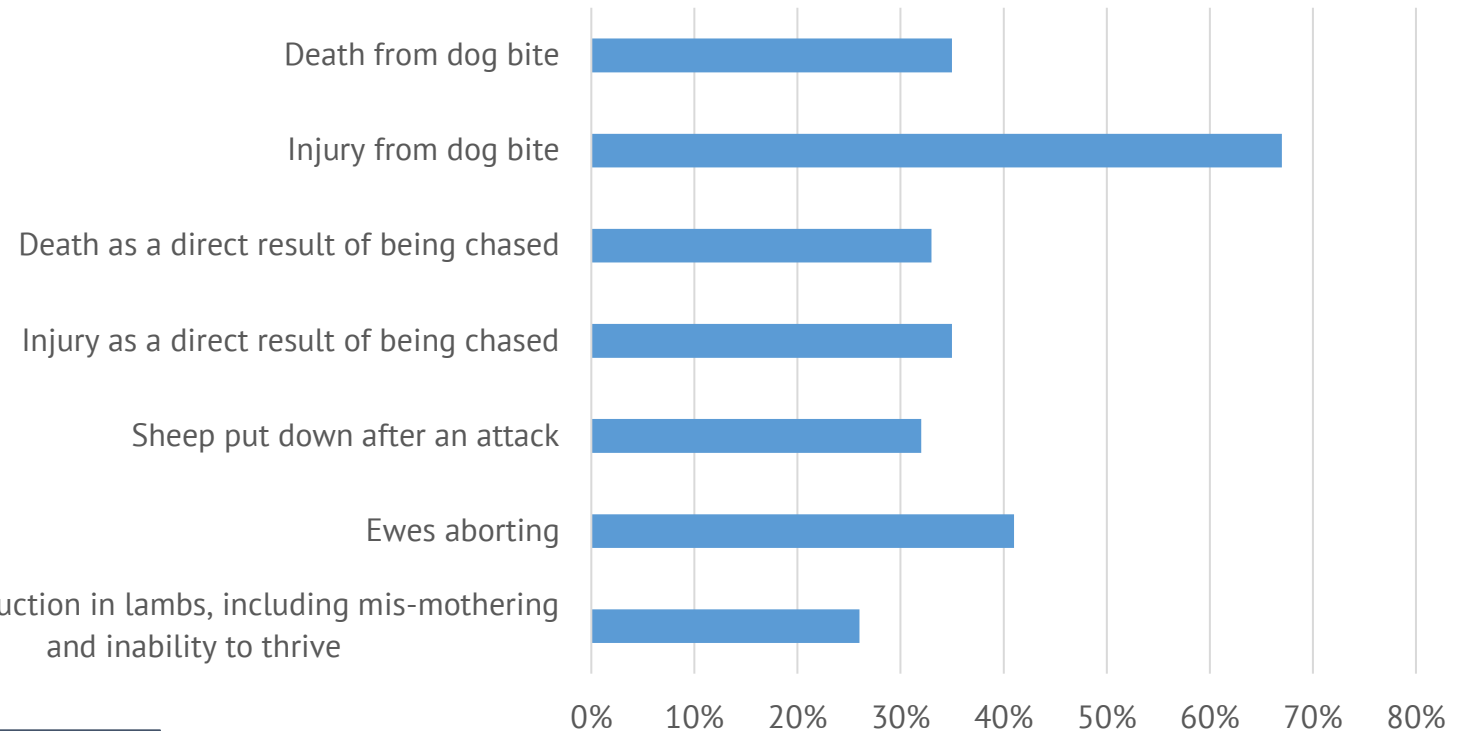


# Nature of the incident

How many dog(s) are usually involved in a sheep worrying incident?



What type of impacts/injuries do you find most commonly occur as a result of sheep worrying by dog(s)?



In almost 75% of cases it's a single dog injuring or killing multiple sheep. Alarmingly the majority of respondents had multiple incidences per year, between 1-10.

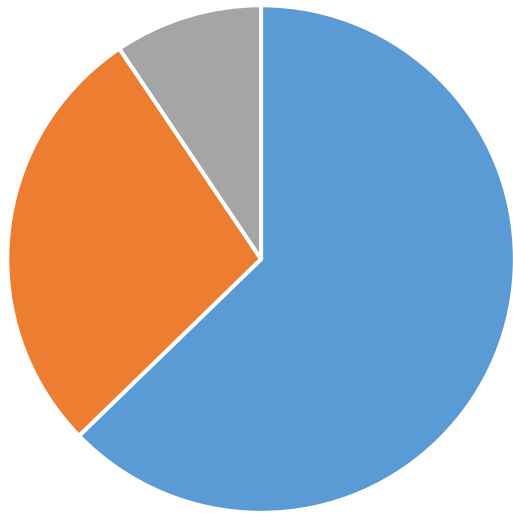




# Farmer / Dog Owner communication



Response of dog owner



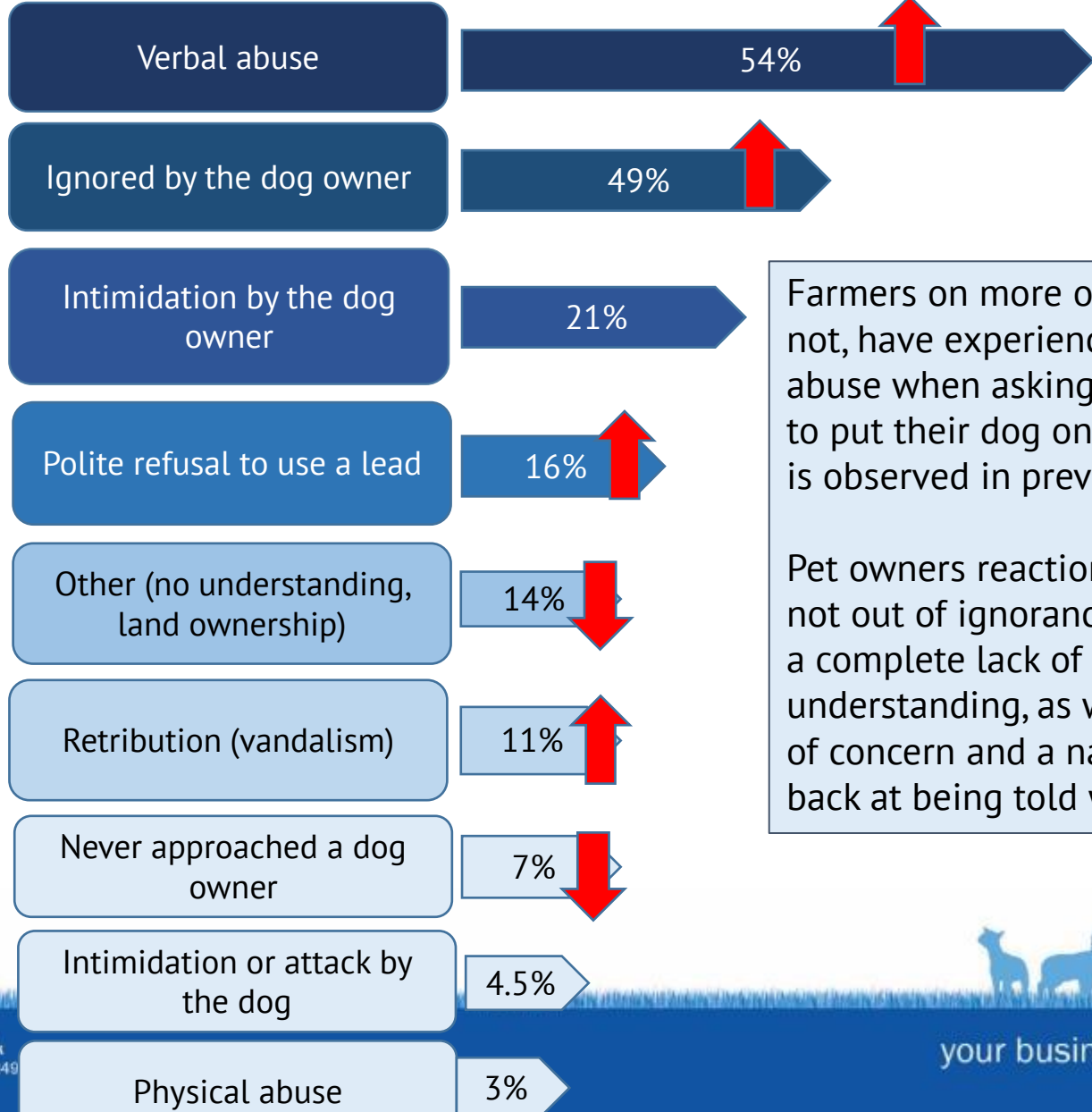
■ Negative ■ Neutral ■ Positive

If you approach a dog owner/walker to put their dog on a lead are you met with a positive or negative response?

Sheep worrying by dogs survey 2022 n=271

Education is a key element in changing attitudes and behaviours to the benefit of all – applicable also to some farmers as the manner in which they approach or talk to a dog owner can be indicative of the response received.

What was the outcome of approaching a dog owner to put their dog on a lead?



Farmers on more occasions than not, have experienced verbal abuse when asking a dog owner to put their dog on the lead. This is observed in previous surveys.

Pet owners reactions are usually not out of ignorance, but can be a complete lack of understanding, as well as a lack of concern and a natural push back at being told what to do.



your business your future



# Farmers left to pick up the pieces...

Estimates of up to **£10,000** were reported

Average cost of **£1,232** per year



Not about the financial loss... It's about hard work wasted, increasing stress, anger and anxiety

At least a weeks worth of time and effort dealing with animal welfare, rehabilitation of animals, police reporting... not to mention the mental stress

Occurred 4 weeks after the incident, so no idea of financial cost

**TOO MUCH**

**Unsure., hard to quantify**

Can you provide an estimated annual figure of financial loss as a result of sheep worrying by dog(s) on your flock?

How much is your estimated financial loss on an annual basis, as a result of sheep worrying by dog(s) on your flock?



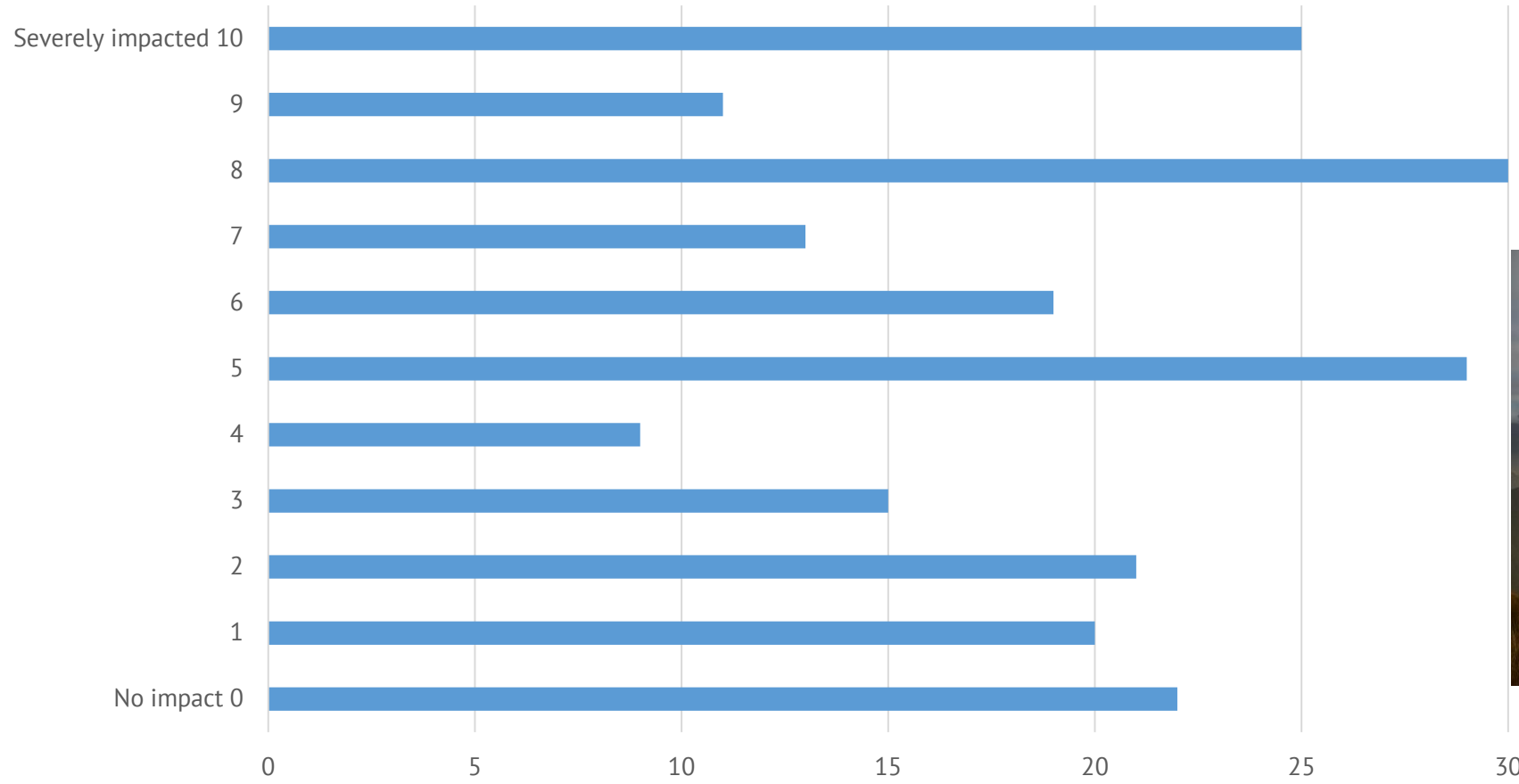
alarm  
disgusting  
shocking  
stress  
cruelty  
fear  
senseless  
lack of respect  
upset  
traumatized  
anxiety  
sickening  
dismay  
angry  
worry  
devastating  
annoyance  
unnecessary  
sadness  
shock  
irresponsibility  
sick  
distress  
sheep  
scary  
disappointed  
horror  
heart breaking



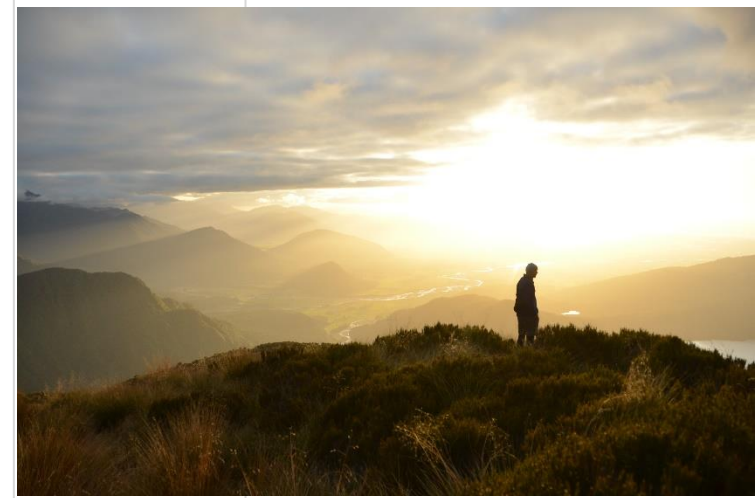
#LeadOn



# Impact on farmers mental health



Average = 5.65



How severely impacted has your mental health been as a direct result of sheep worrying by dog(s) on your flock?

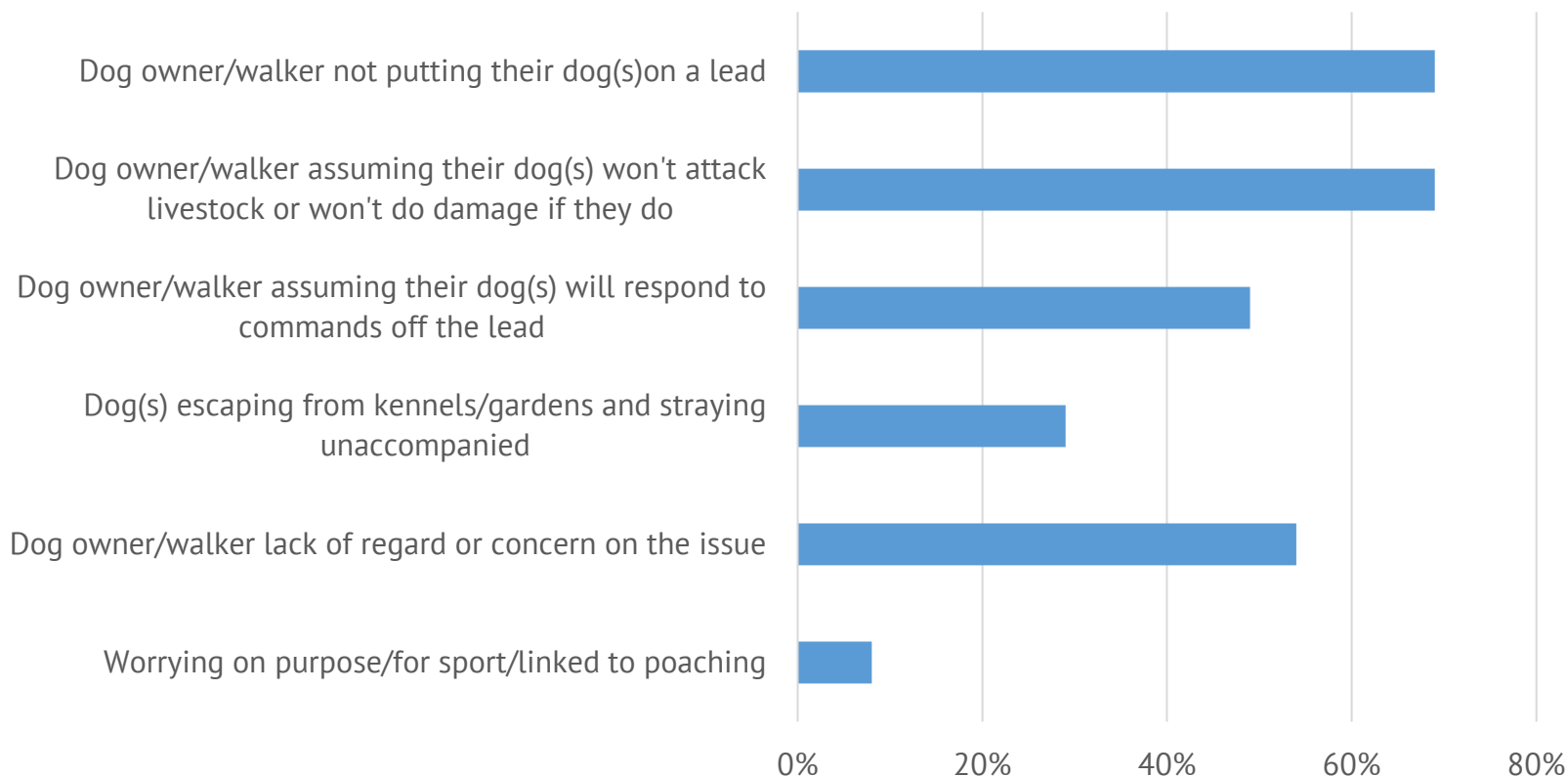




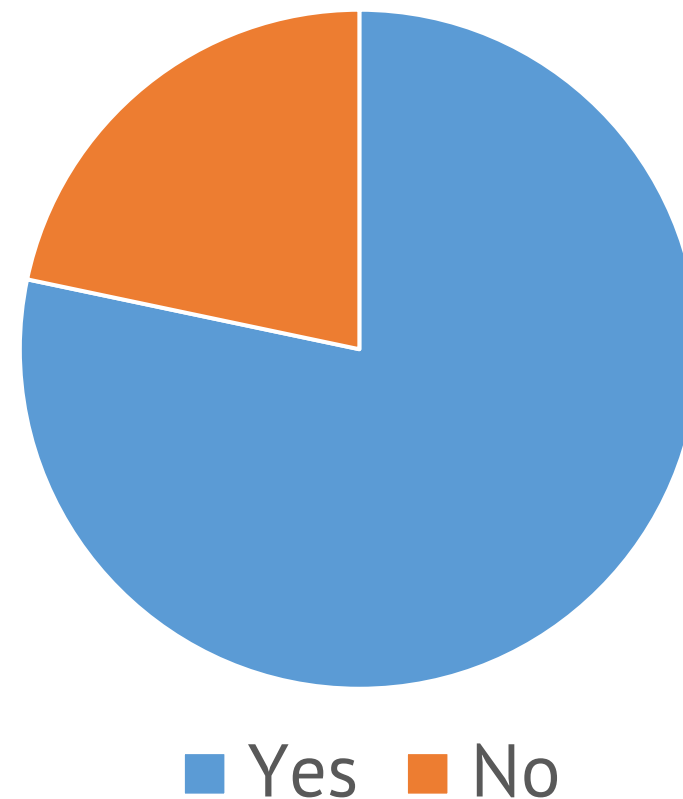
# Causes and deterrents

More farmers using signs are reminders to the public than 2021 (72%), 2017 (71%), 2016 (64%)

What do you consider to be the main causes on your farm of sheep worrying by dog(s)?



Do you currently display warning signs asking the public to keep their dog on a lead around livestock?

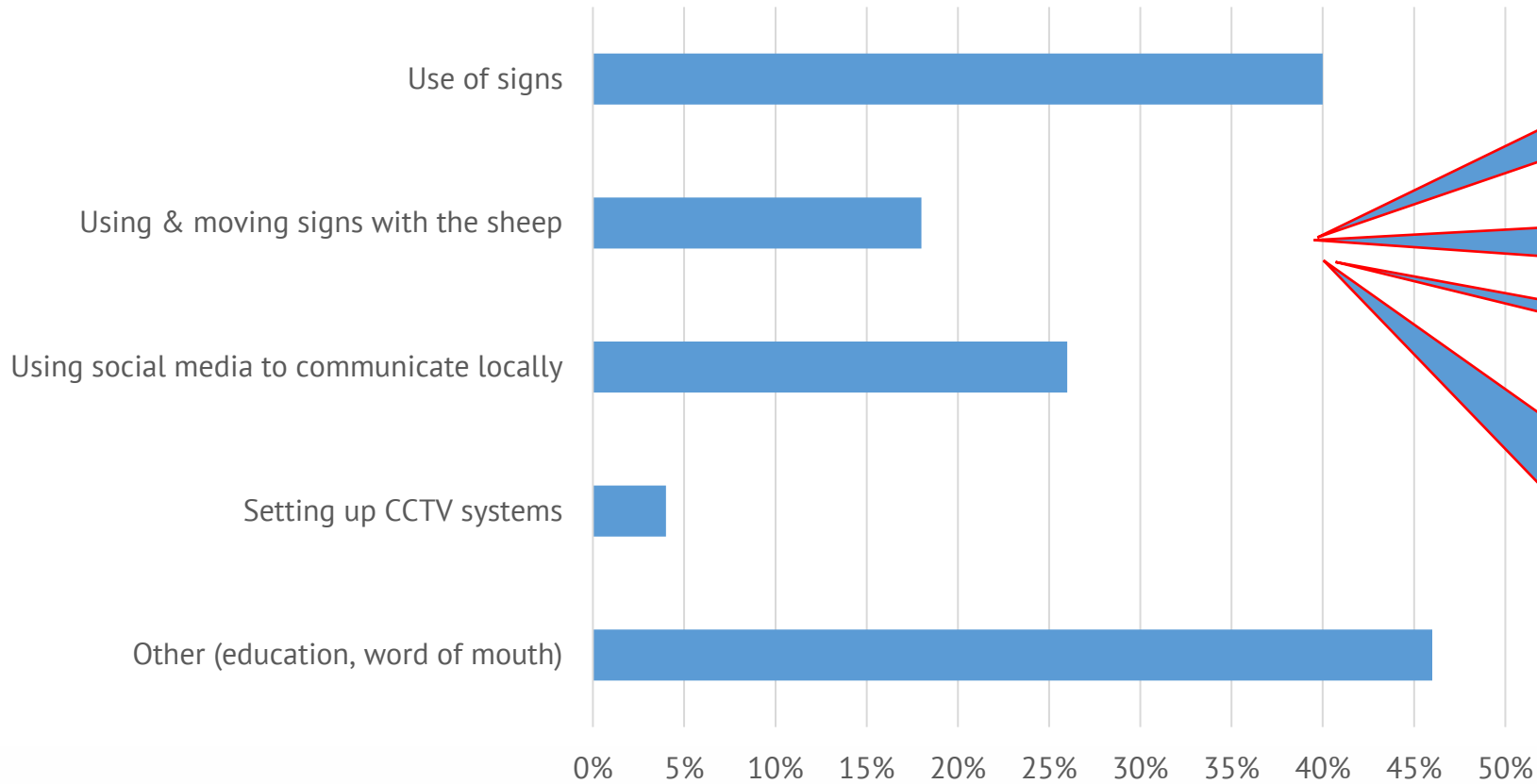




# Are signs the solution?

What further activity/activities do you think may help reduce sheep worrying by dog(s) incidents?

Has taking any of these actions made a difference and reduced the number of incidents you experienced?



**People don't read signs  
...Signs just get vandalised**

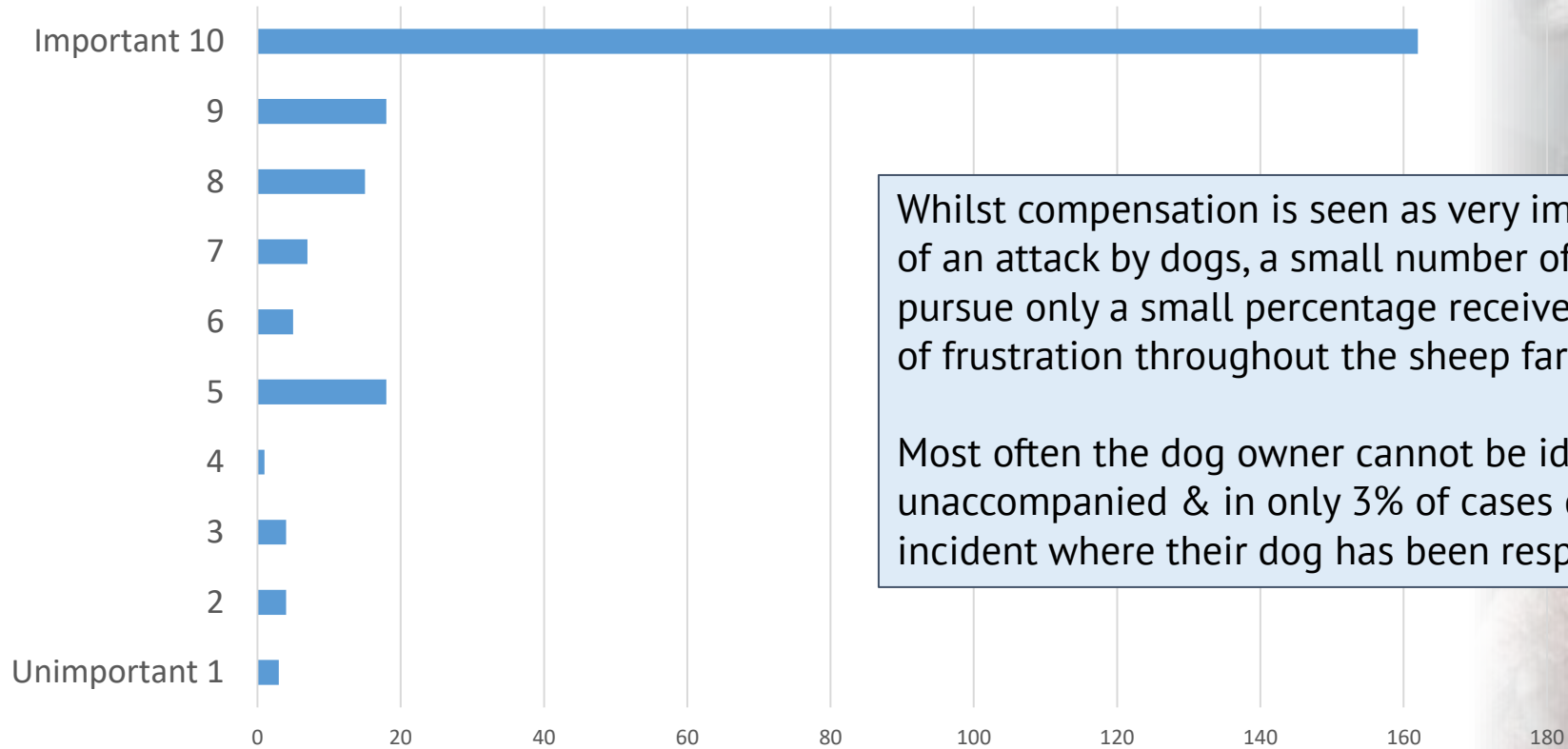
**Need a change in the law**

**High fences are the only solution**

**Local authorities and National Parks have a role to educate public**



# How important is compensation?



Whilst compensation is seen as very important to cover the costs & impact of an attack by dogs, a small number of cases are pursued & those that do pursue only a small percentage receive any form of recompense – a sense of frustration throughout the sheep farming community.

Most often the dog owner cannot be identified, i.e. dogs are unaccompanied & in only 3% of cases does the dog owner report an incident where their dog has been responsible.

How important do you feel compensation is in any sheep worrying







# Compensation did you get it? Was it right?

Did you receive compensation for the financial losses of sheep worrying by dog(s) incidents?

| Level of compensation                                      |     |
|--|-----|
| I did not pursue compensation                              | 38% |
| I received insurance compensation                          | 12% |
| I pursued insurance compensation but it was not granted    | 1%  |
| I received court compensation                              | 3%  |
| I pursued court compensation but it was not granted        | 1%  |
| I received compensation from the dog owner/walker directly | 18% |
| I would prefer not to say                                  | 4%  |
| Not had an incident to report                              | 22% |
| Other (owner not known)                                    | 23% |

After insurance excess is applied to each separate incident, the compensation is insufficient

Covered the vet bills, Never is enough, but not time and stress

No amount of money covers the loss, stress or worry which comes with dog attacks

Yes, but only from the honest dog owners

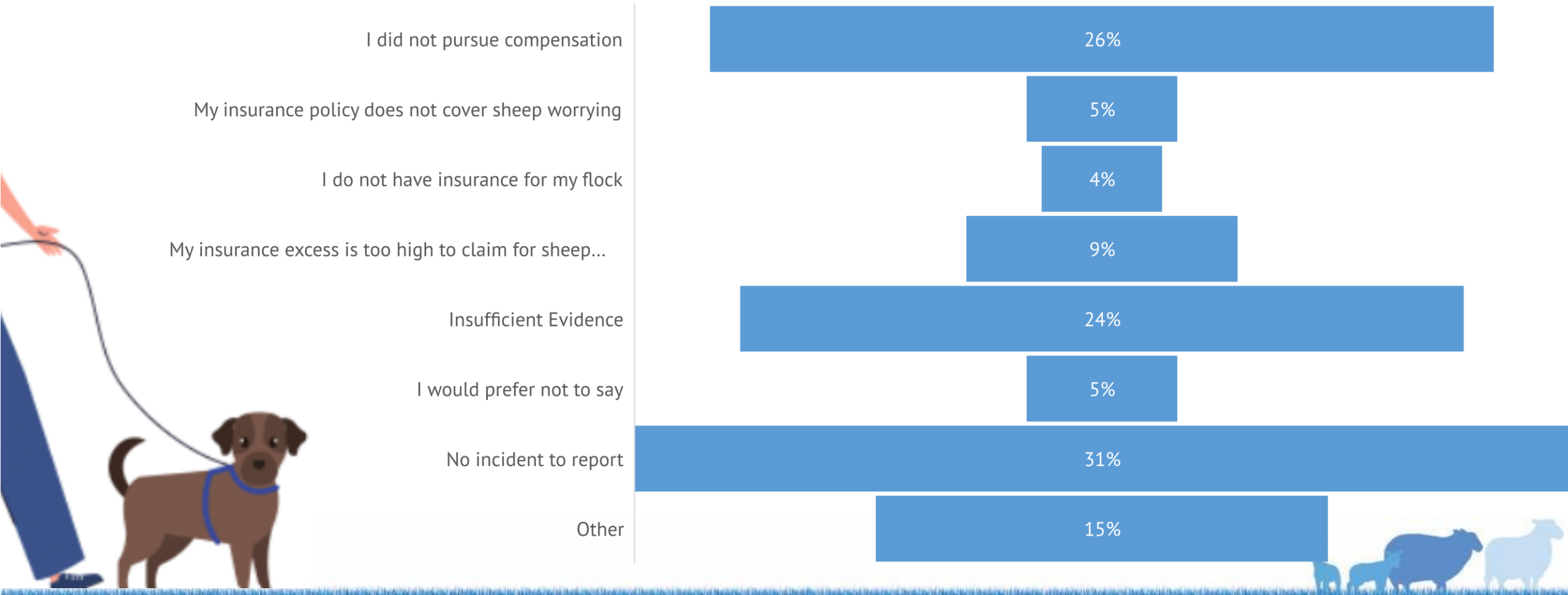
Do you feel the compensation amount received fully covered the actual financial loss to your business?





# Why didn't you receive compensation?

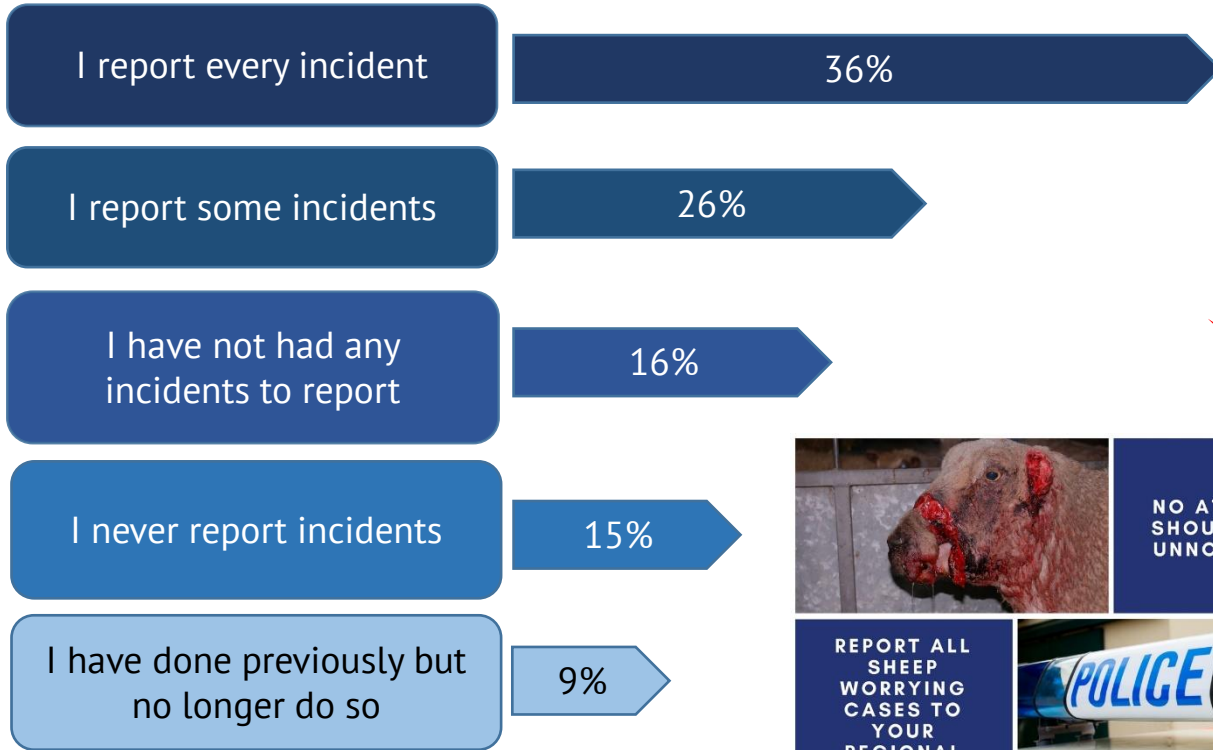
If you did not receive compensation for the financial losses of sheep worrying by dog(s) incidents, why was this the case?





# Reporting sheep worrying

Do you report sheep worrying by dog(s) incidents to the police?



Difficult to report when owner of dog doesn't come and tell you.

Not seen incident just observed sheep huddled in corner when walkers with dogs pass through

Nothing seems to happen if owner is not approached by myself

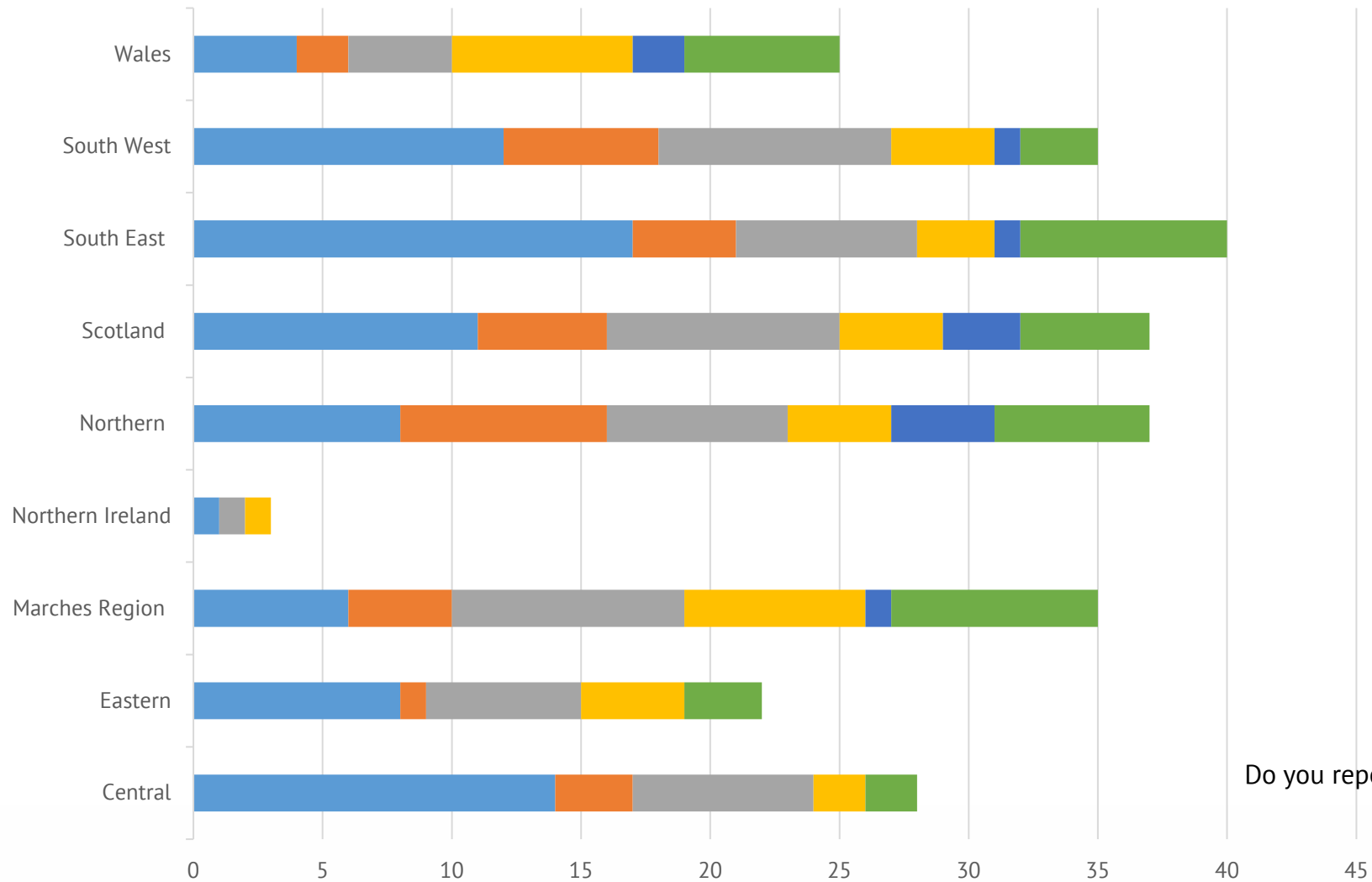
Reporting must be made easier

If you have reported an incident of sheep worrying by dog(s) to the police, what was the outcome or what is the most common outcome?





# Reporting on regional basis



- Report every incident
- Never report incidents
- Report some incidents
- Not had any incidents to report
- Other
- No response

Do you report sheep worrying by dog(s) incidents to the police?





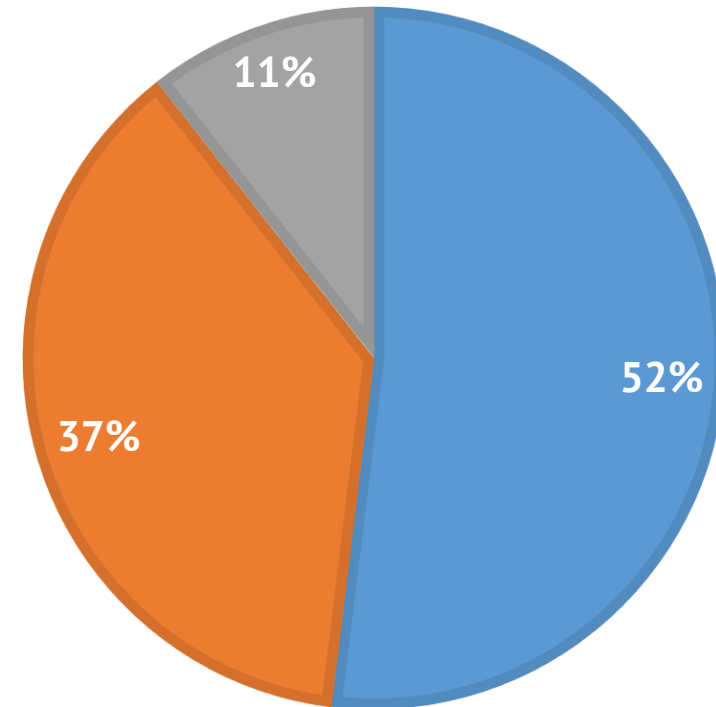
# Police rating and local action

0 = no response 10 = very helpful

| Region     | Rating |      |
|------------|--------|------|
|            | 2021   | 2022 |
| Central    | 3.68   | 3.91 |
| Eastern    | 4.17   | 6.07 |
| Marches    | 4.0    | 6.19 |
| N. Ireland | 2.0    | N/A  |
| Northern   | 3.35   | 3.33 |
| Scotland   | 2.92   | 5.18 |
| S. East    | 4.26   | 4.46 |
| S. West    | 5.01   | 5.00 |
| Wales      | 4.43   | 7.29 |

What positive activity on sheep worrying by dog(s) is being conducted by your local authorities?

■ Taking Action ■ No action ■ Don't know



If you have reported an incident of sheep worrying by dog(s) to the police, how would you rate their response?





# Police reporting and outcome

If you have reported an incident of sheep worrying by dog(s) to the police, what was the outcome or what is the most common outcome?

| Outcome of reporting to police                             |     |
|--|-----|
| Given a crime reference number                             | 31% |
| Given an incident number                                   | 27% |
| Dog owner received court summons                           | 4%  |
| Dog owner received restraining/resettling order for dog(s) | 4%  |
| Agreed out of court settlement with dog owner              | 8%  |
| Dog(s) destroyed   | 4%  |
| No outcome   | 27% |
| Have not reported to the police                            | 26% |

