



# Funder plus

What we've found so far

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January 2026

John Ellerman  
Foundation

the  
Tudortrust

ef Esmée  
Fairbairn  
FOUNDATION

W  
Garfield Weston  
FOUNDATION

THE  
ROAD  
SAFETY  
TRUST  
Making Roads Safer

CUMBRIA  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Wolfson  
Foundation

The  
Henry Smith  
Charity  
founded in 1628

PEOPLE'S  
POSTCODE  
LOTTERY

Pilgrim  
Trust

BBC  
Children  
in Need

AB CHARITABLE  
TRUST

THE  
MERCERS'  
COMPANY

Community  
Foundation

THE CLOTHWORKERS'  
FOUNDATION

LLOYDS BANK  
FOUNDATION  
England & Wales






## Benchmarking and tracking applicant perceptions

We track grantee and  
applicant experiences with 16  
grant-makers and have over a  
decade of data.



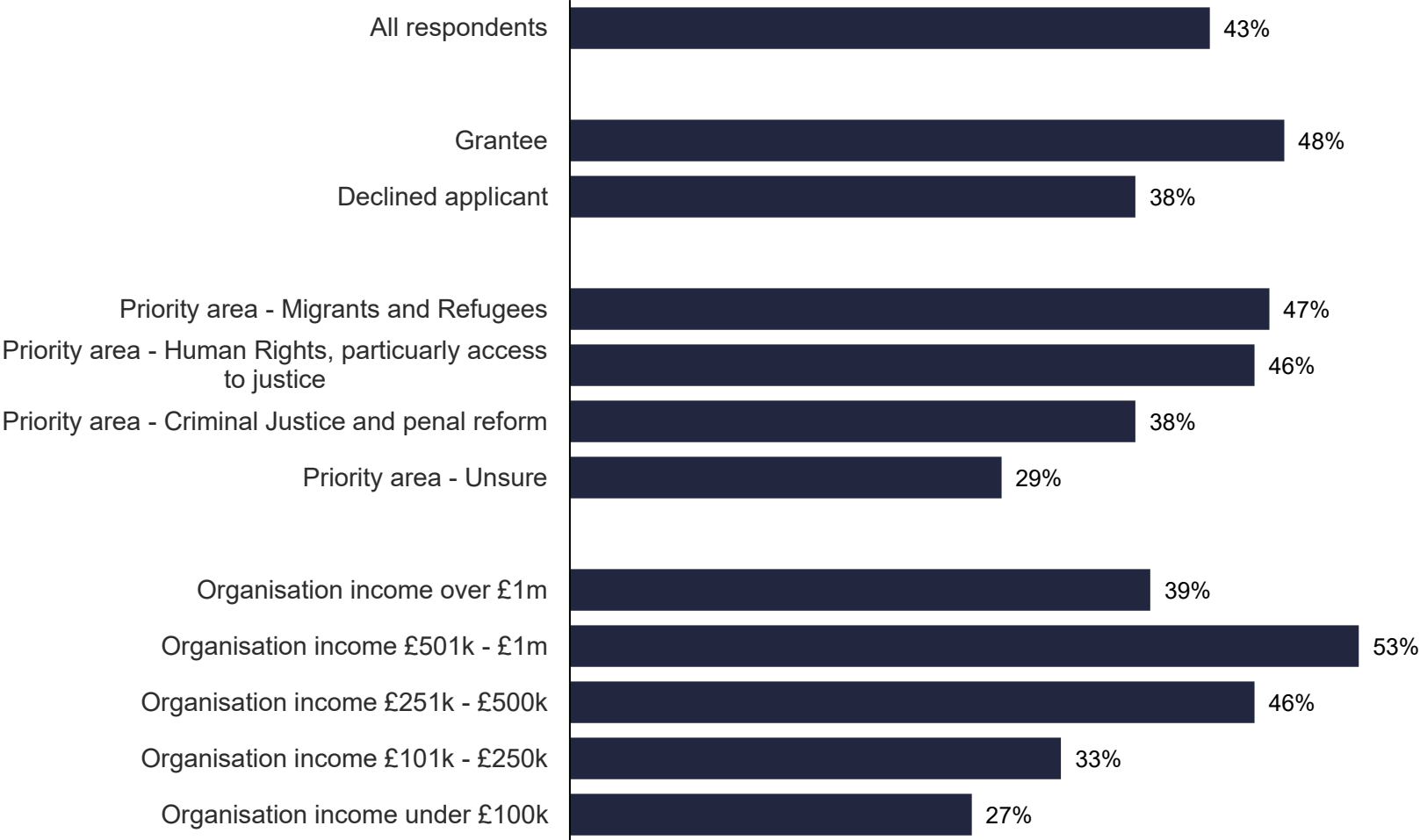
## Survey respondents

	Grantees	Declined applicants
 AB CHARITABLE TRUST	<b>83</b>	<b>89</b>
 The Henry Smith Charity	<b>295</b>	<b>465</b>
 John Ellerman Foundation	<b>87</b>	<b>146</b>

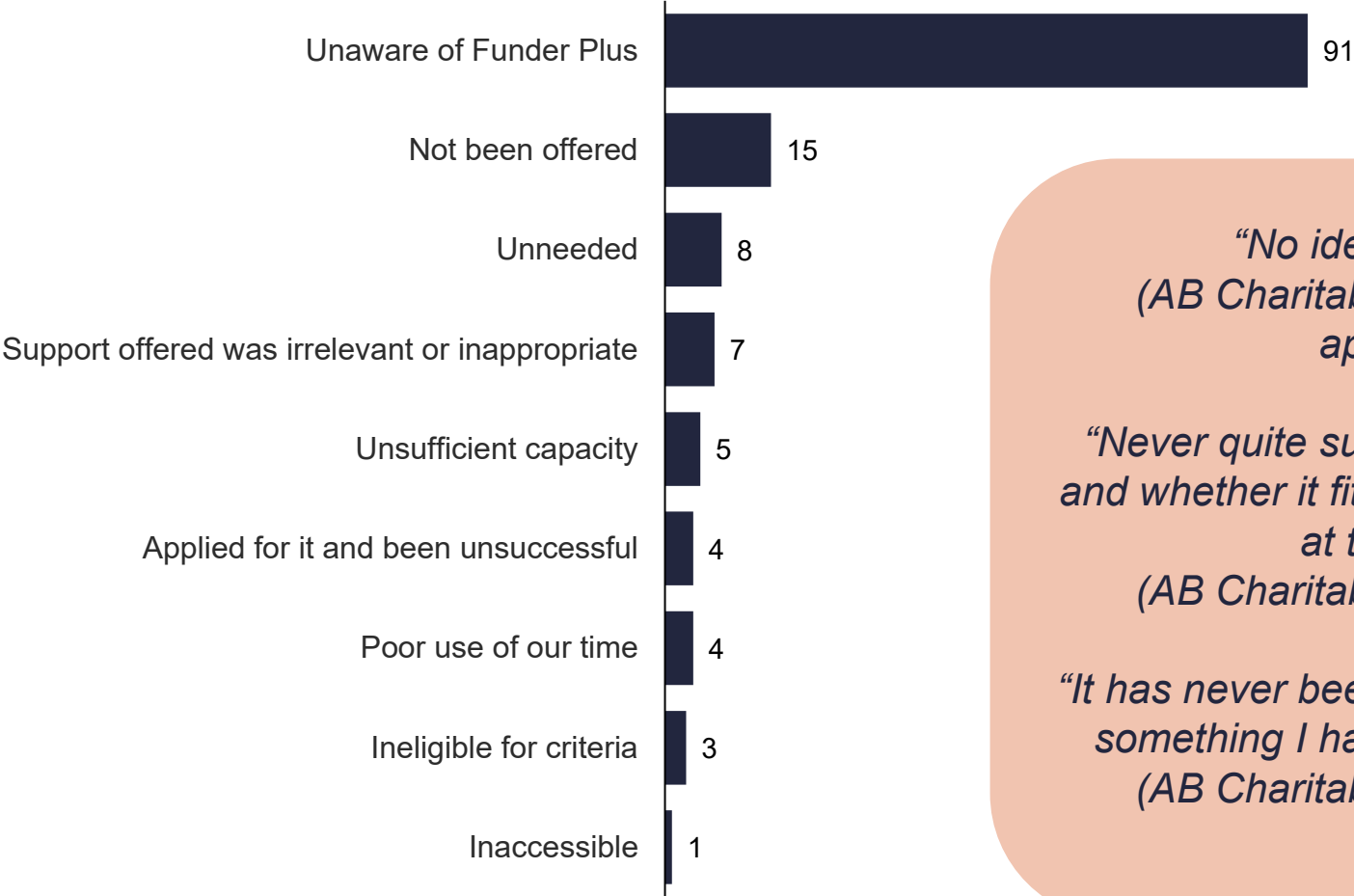
# Percentage of respondents who have ever accessed a Funder Plus offer from another funder, by different sub samples

“Has your organisation ever accessed a Funder Plus offer from another funder?”

\*Funder Plus is an approach taken by grant-givers to go ‘beyond the money’ – offering additional support to build capacity, leadership, and resilience within organisations.



# Many people have not heard of the term ‘funder plus’ – and the smaller the charity, the less likely they are to have heard of it



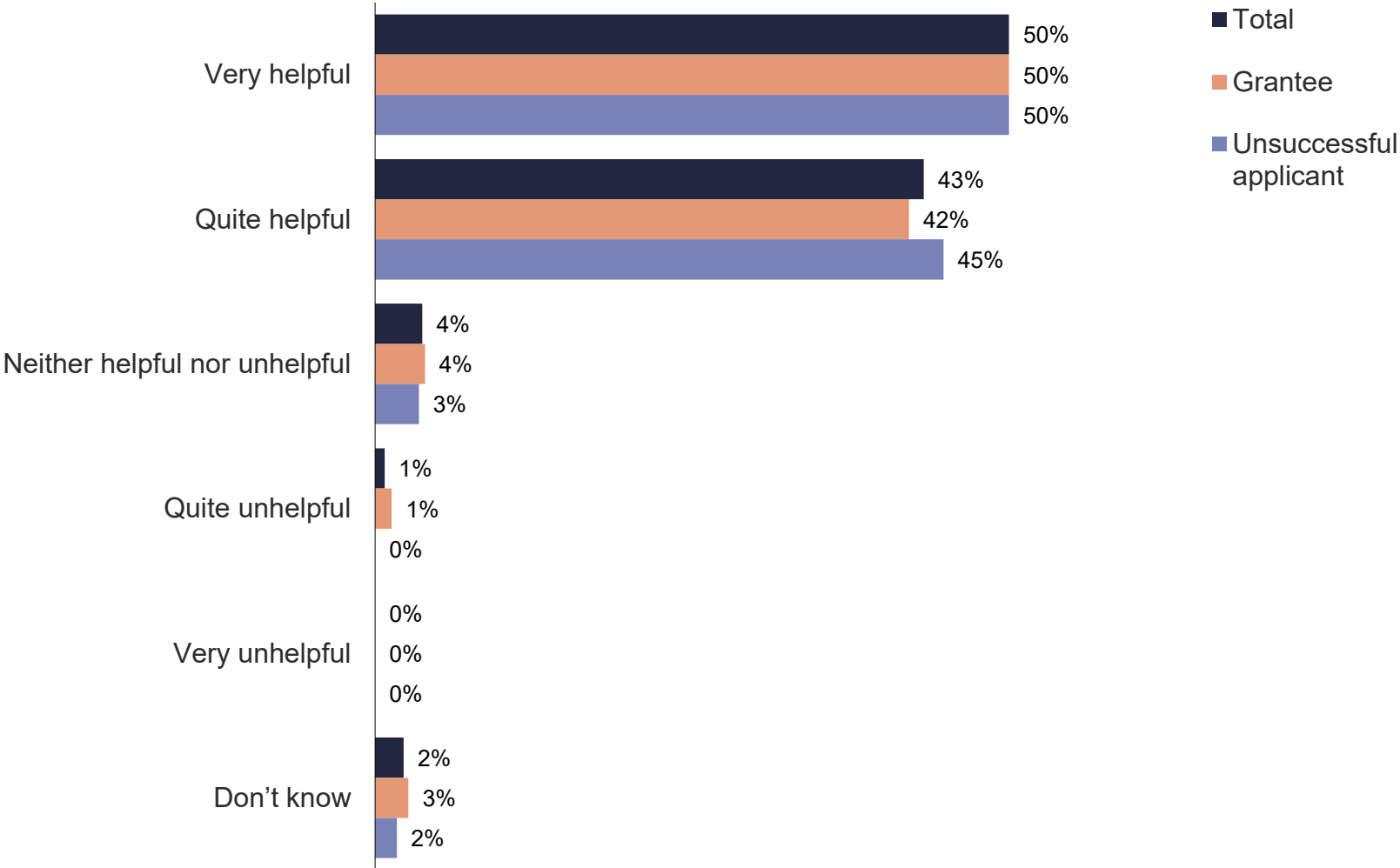
*“No idea what it is!”  
(AB Charitable Trust, declined applicant)*

*“Never quite sure what was on offer and whether it fit with what we needed at the time.”  
(AB Charitable Trust, grantee)*

*“It has never been an option and is not something I have heard of before.”  
(AB Charitable Trust, grantee)*

# Majority found this Funder Plus offer ‘very’ or ‘quite’ helpful

“How helpful was this Funder Plus offer?”





**“The support given alongside the funding is almost as helpful if not more helpful than the money itself.”**

**(AB Charitable Trust, declined applicant)**

**“We have found that we build stronger and closer connections with our funders who offer support beyond the direct financial support.”**

**(AB Charitable Trust, declined applicant)**

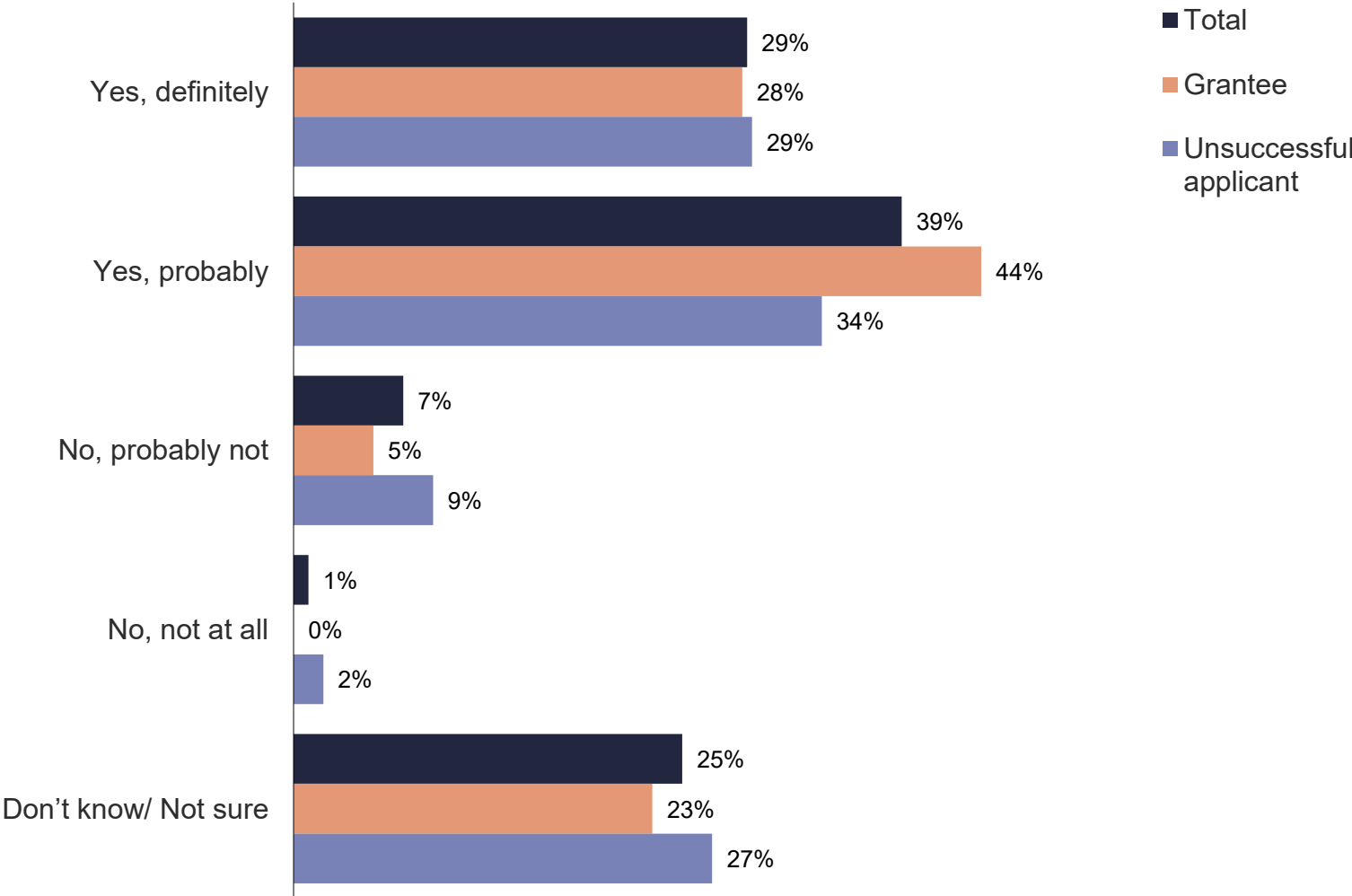
**“It would perhaps help you to understand organisations better and subsequently make decisions on your fundraising programmes and goals in a more informed, and possibly more "bottom-up" way.”**

**(AB Charitable Trust, grantee)**



# 68% would find it helpful if A B Charitable Trust were to develop this kind of support

“Do you think it would be helpful if The A B Charitable Trust were to develop this kind of support?”



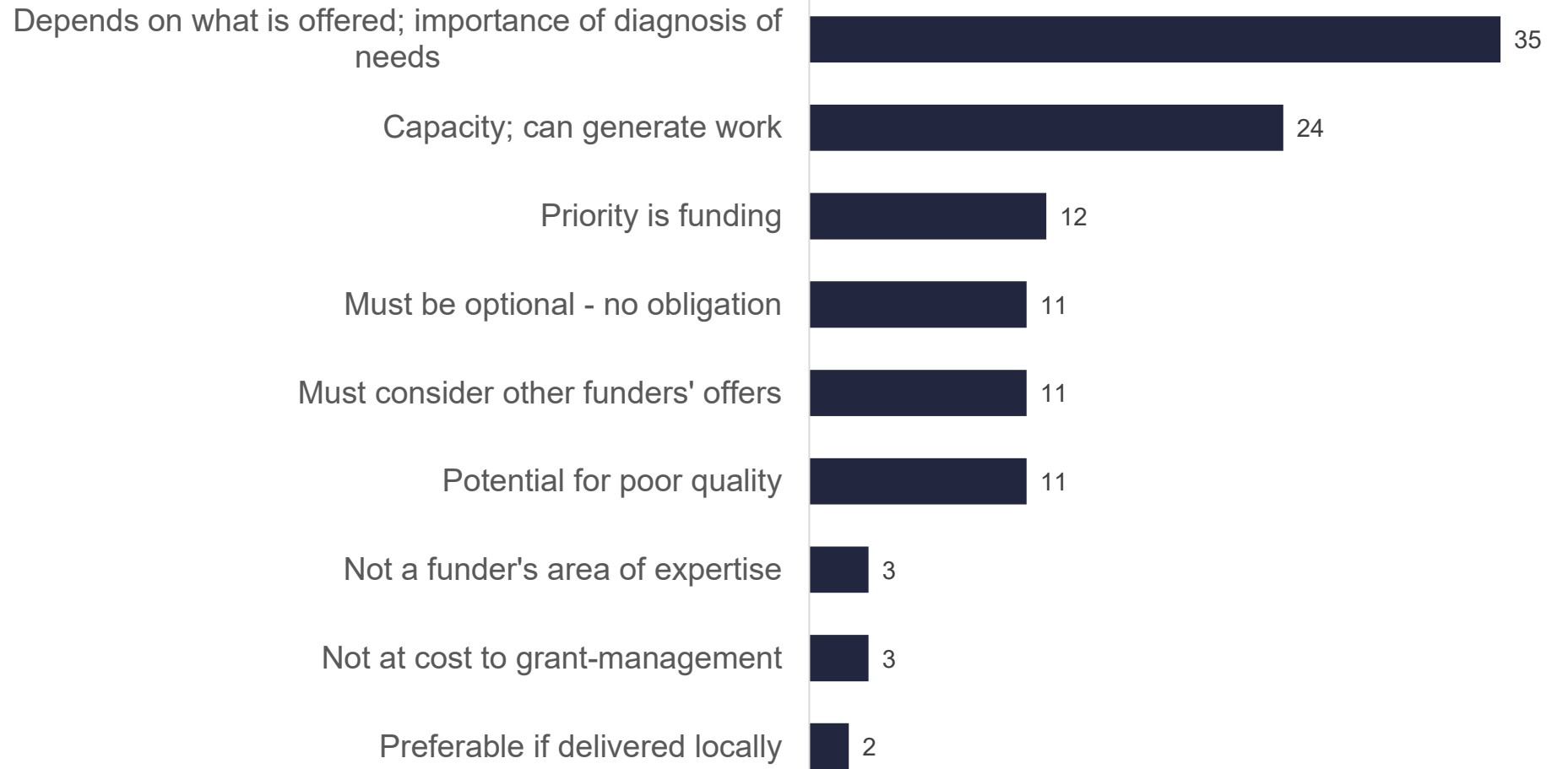


A group of diverse people are protesting in front of a building with barbed wire. They are holding various signs that read: "FIGHT! PEACEFULLY", "We need is", "EQUAL RIGHTS", "World Peace", "Justice for ALL", "FREEDOM IS A RIGHT", and "I WANT TO BE HEARD".

# It has to be bespoke

# Potential issues with offering Funder Plus

Base: all AB Charitable Trust respondents; number of mentions; the same respondent may make multiple mentions)



# Issues with funder plus

- Consider grantees' needs
- Consider the grantee's capacity
- Must be truly optional
- Importance of funding
- Coordinated with other funders
- Quality of support



**“We often feel these initiatives work well but only if you have the time and dedication to commit to them. The past few years we have been hugely stretched and unable to pick these opportunities up.”**

**(AB Charitable Trust, grantee)**

**“Funder Plus offers are typically an offer of expertise or training. For a hard-pressed charity short of both financial and time resources, an offer of an expert to tell you what to do (better) without the financial or time resource to do it may just be helping the funder feel good about itself. (I have been a funder too).”**

**(AB Charitable Trust, declined applicant)**

# Useful types of support

- Capacity building
- Peer networking / learning



**“The support Funder Plus initiatives provide organisations valuable information and support to develop skills which otherwise there are limited budgets for. Such initiatives not only provide the financial costs towards development and capacity building but also the support and buy in from Board and organisation level.”**

**(AB Charitable Trust, grantee)**

**“As a charity that’s grown from small to medium-sized relatively quickly, there are definitely skills we need to build on our team, but we don’t always have extra funding to devote toward operational capacity-building. This type of support would be very useful.”**

**(AB Charitable Trust, grantee)**



“

**“I think that the other thing that's been really helpful is when a funder has got together a group of charities that they're funding - having that list of action learning sets and sort of reflective time where we learn together. Because most charities work pretty much in silos and facilitating that sort of level of shared learning, I think is really, really helpful. I've often been to those things, and I've gone at the beginning of the day thinking this is going to be such a waste of a day because it's not going to help at all. And at the end of the day, I thought, oh my goodness me, we've got to do more of this because it's that kind of collective wisdom that can help.”**

**Grantee**



# What do people want to see from a Funder Plus offering?

Potential areas where applicants would appreciate some additional support:

- IT support
- Networking
- Media and communications i.e., social media strategies
- HR support i.e., recruitment policies
- Advocacy and policy work
- Marketing and sales
- Industry/sector insights
- Strategy and business planning
- Volunteer engagement and management
- Staff training and development
- Trustee support
- Leadership support and management



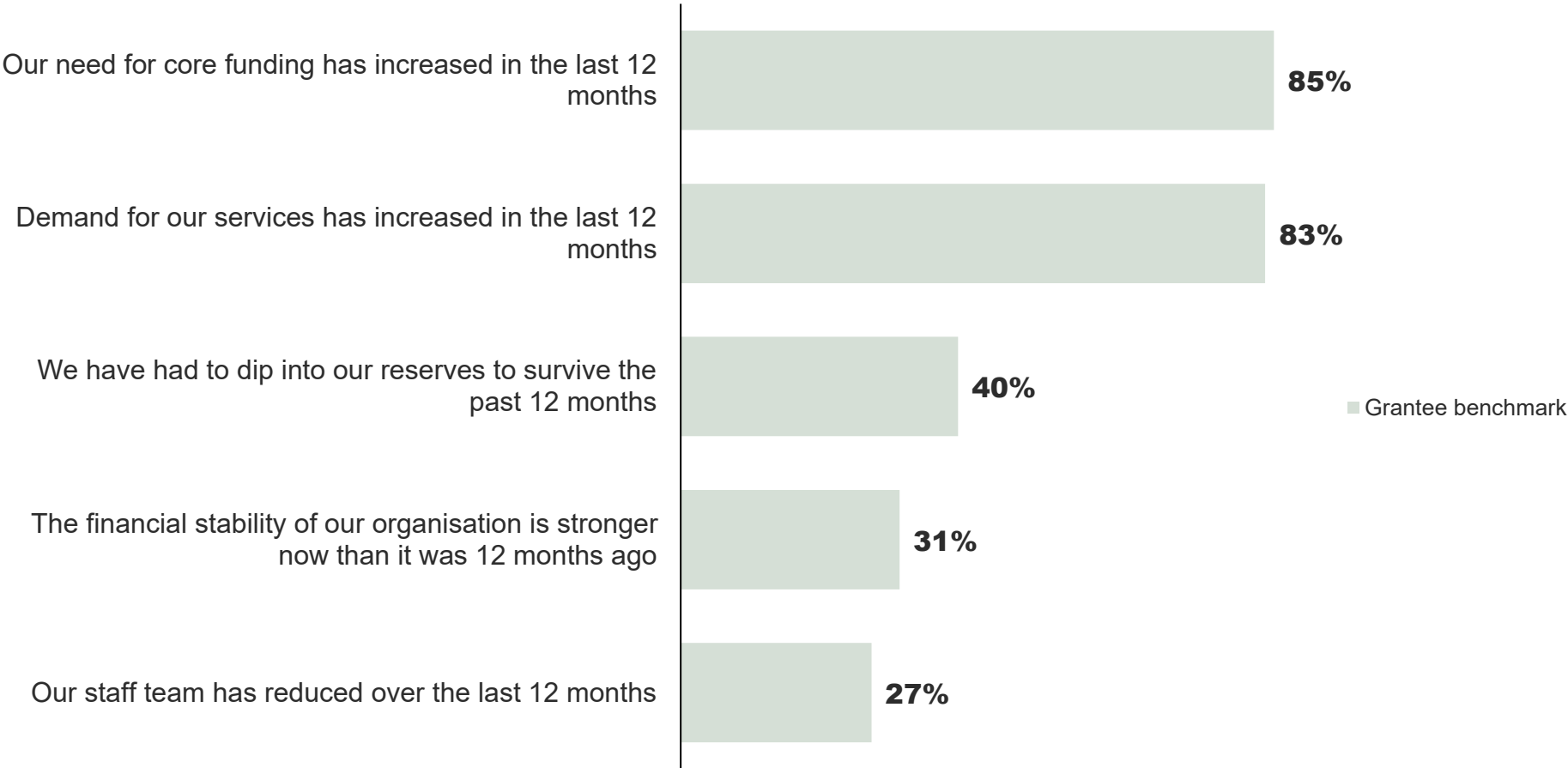
# The broader context for grantees and unsuccessful applicants



# Organisations are experiencing increases in demand for their services and have a greater need for funding

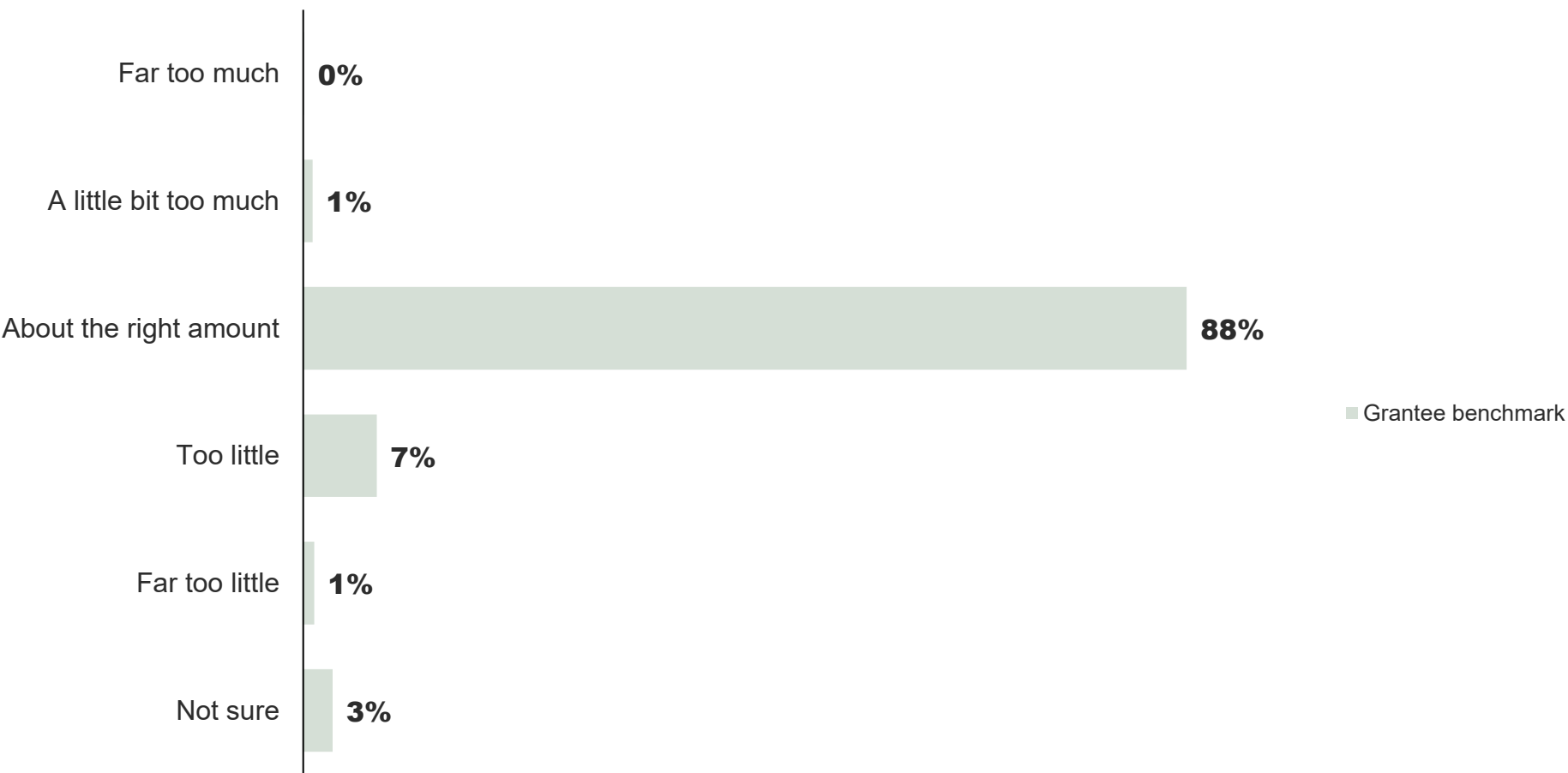
“Funder wants to understand more about the context within which you are operating – what are your priorities and challenges. The next questions ask about your organisation’s experiences during the past 12 months. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?”

Strongly agree + agree



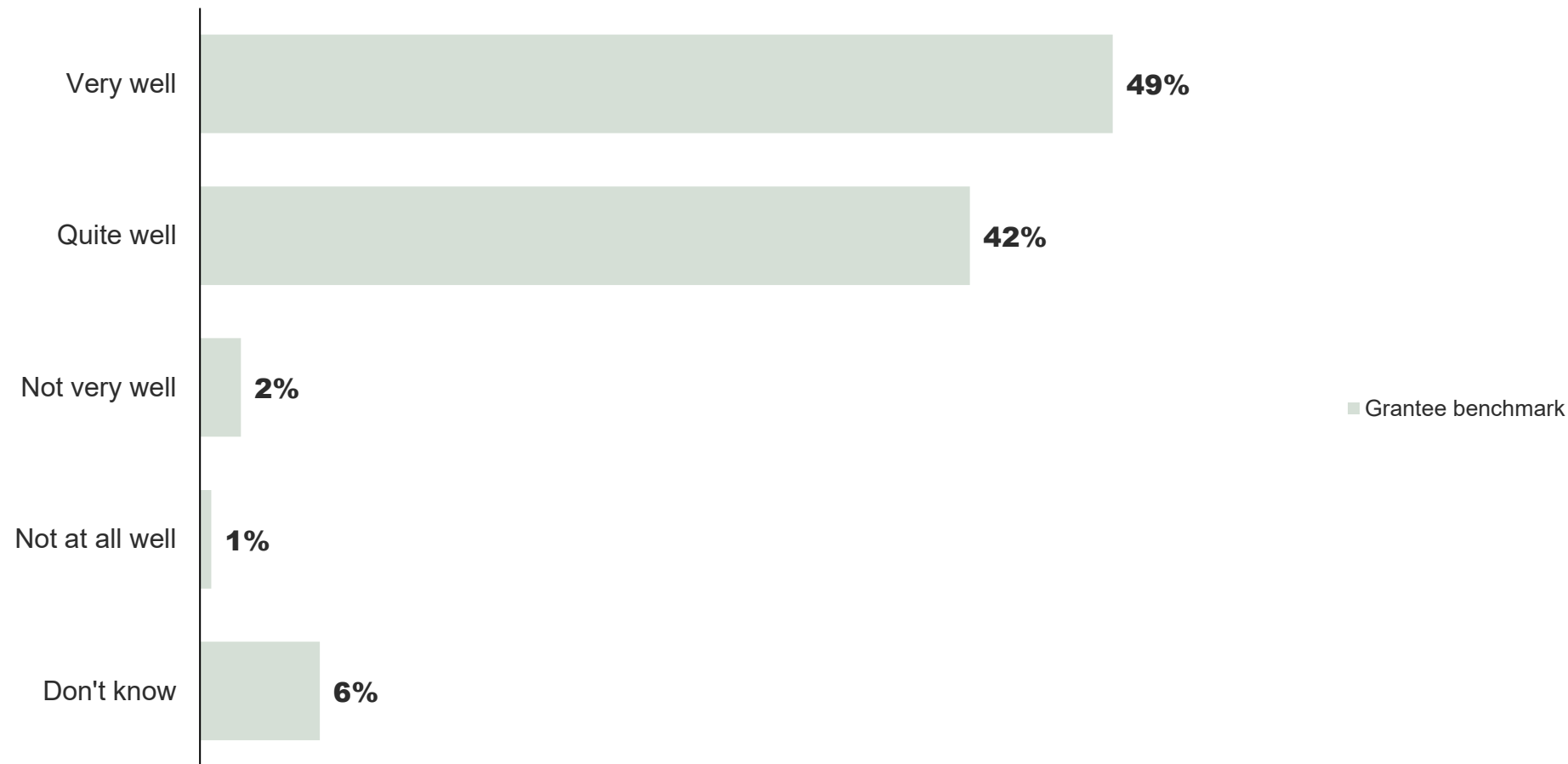
# Most grant holders feel they have the right amount of contact with their funders

"As a grantee, how much contact do you have with this funder?"



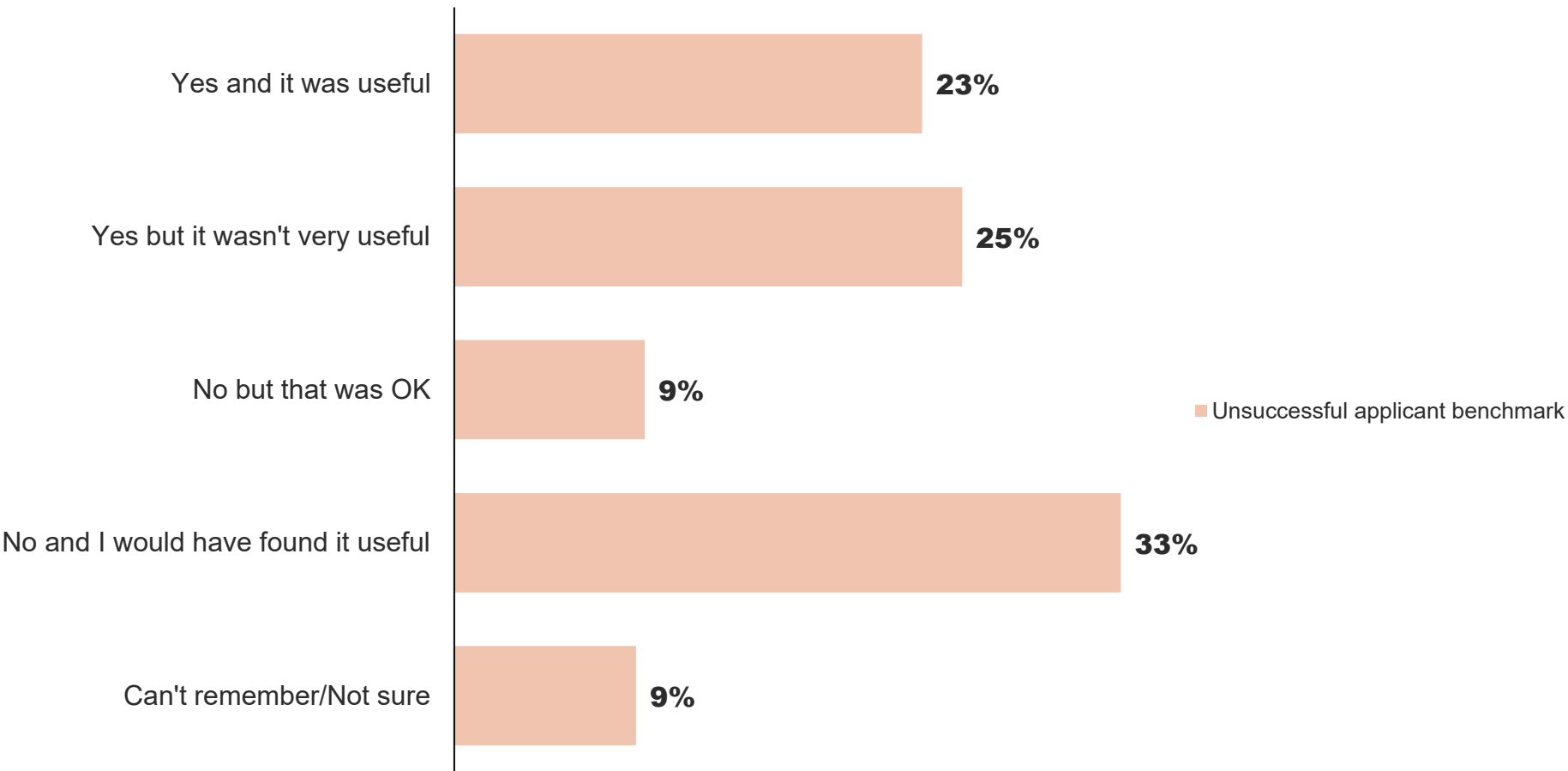
# 91% of grantees in nfpFunders benchmark feel well understood by their funder

"How well do you feel xxx understands your organisation and its aims?"



# 42% of unsuccessful applicants have not received any feedback about their application

"Did you receive any feedback on why your proposal was unsuccessful?"





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# QUESTIONS?



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