



# Homelessness and post

MPs Report

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October 2018

# Contents

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**03**

Objectives and  
Methodology

**04**

Summary and  
Recommendations

**06**

Findings

# Objectives and Methodology

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## Objectives

This research was conducted, on behalf of Citizens Advice, by ComRes in order to provide insight into MPs' thoughts on homeless people and their access to post. This shows MPs' opinions across the House.

## Methodology







## Section 1

# Summary and recommendations



## Summary and recommendations

**1** MPs support the need for homeless people to have access to postal service, but need more information.

Nine in ten MPs agree that not having a fixed postal address makes it harder for homeless people to get the help they need (86%), with three quarters of MPs agreeing that action should be taken (74%). Three quarters of MPs agree that homeless people should be provided with either a PO box (72%) or Poste Restante service (75%).

However, one in five MPs don't know whether homeless people in their constituency currently have adequate access to post (21%), suggesting that some MPs need to be made more aware of the current situation in their own constituency.

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**2** Funding proposals should include Central and Local Government, Royal Mail and charities

More than half of MPs support the idea of Central Government funding the service to provide postal access (58%). However, Conservative MPs are less likely to say that Central Government should fund the service than their Labour counterparts (36% vs 77%). Conservative MPs also appear to prefer a mixed selection of funding sources, with one third saying that Central Government, Royal Mail and Local Government should pay (36%, 33% and 31%).

The background of the slide is a collage of various envelopes and tags. There are several white envelopes, some with their flaps folded, and a few yellow envelopes. Two small, light brown paper tags with a hole at the top are also visible. The items are arranged in a somewhat overlapping, layered fashion.

Section 2

# Findings



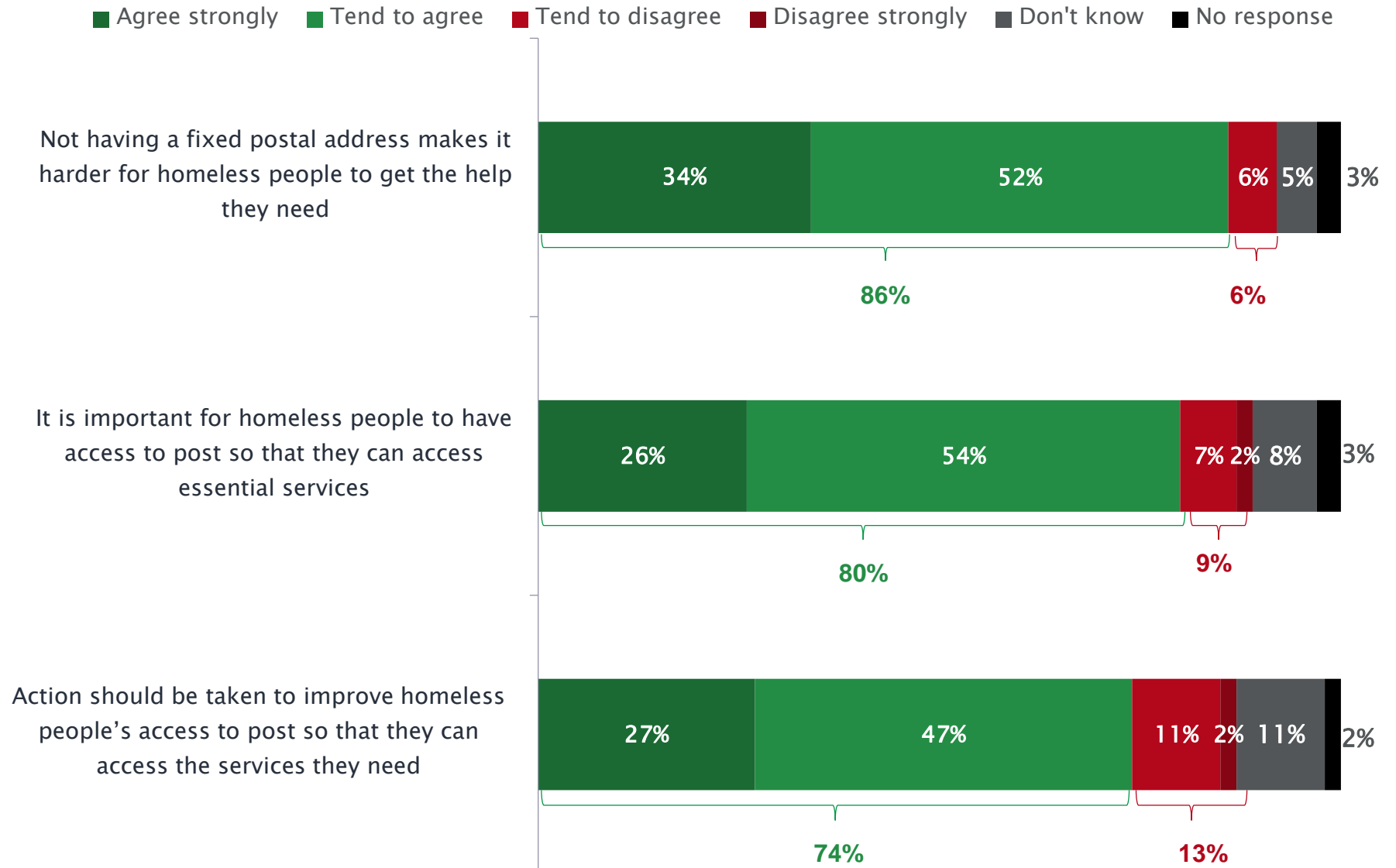
## MPs are united in the need for homeless people to have a fixed postal address

Nine in ten MPs (86%) agree that not having a fixed postal address makes it harder for homeless people to get the help they need, with one third agreeing strongly (34%).

Eight in ten MPs (80%) agree that it is important for homeless people to have access to post so that they can access essential services, with one quarter agreeing strongly (26 %).

Whilst three quarters of MPs (74%) agree that action should be taken to improve homeless people's access to post so that they can access the services they need, the remaining quarter either disagree (13%) or don't know (11%).

## Proportion of MPs who agree/disagree with the following statements



However, MPs are more polarised in their understanding of what homeless people experience with post in their constituency

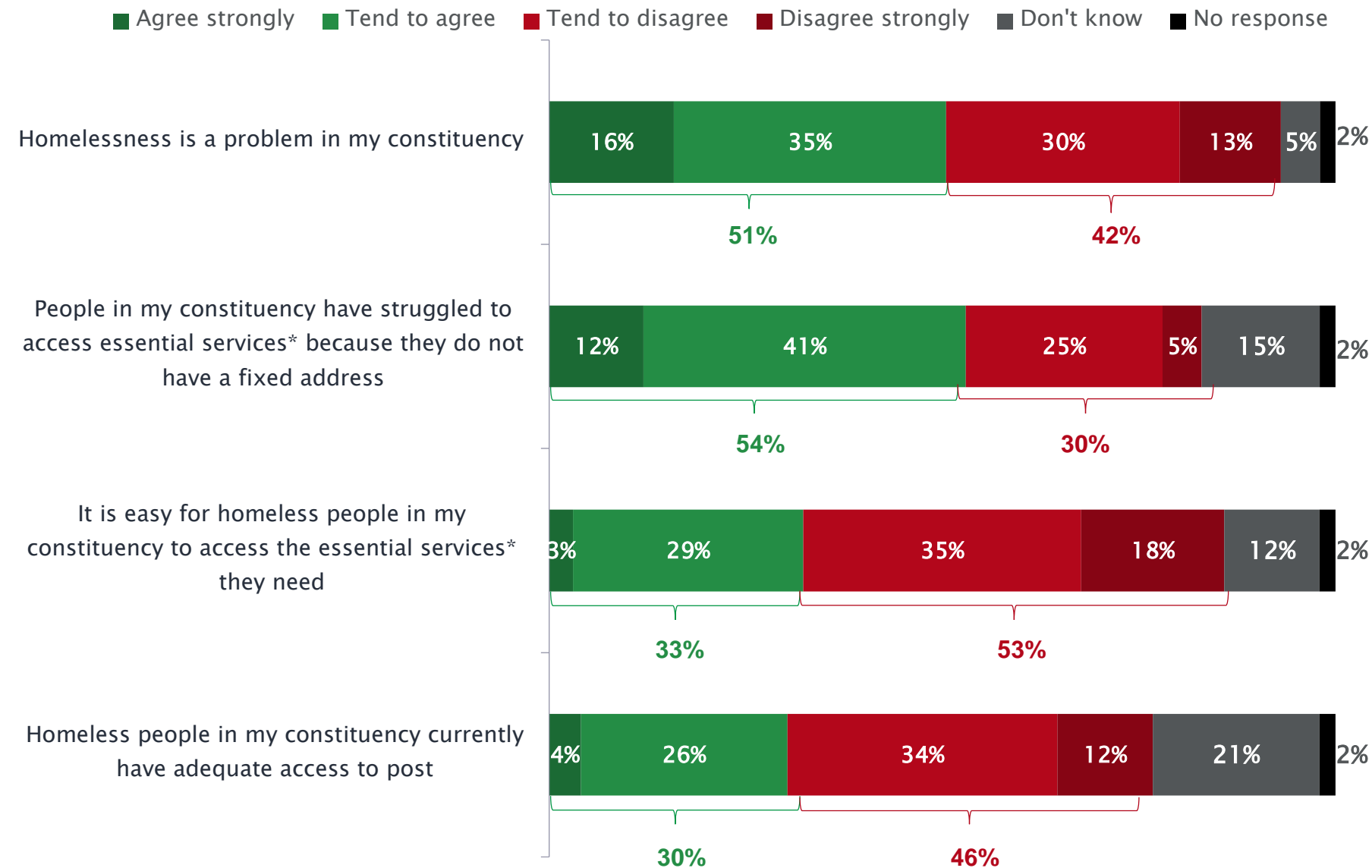
Contextually, half of MPs (51%) agree that homelessness is a problem in their constituency, with 42% disagreeing – highlighting varying levels of homelessness across the UK, along with the extent to which MPs prioritise it.

Half of MPs (54%) agree that people in their constituency have struggled to access essential services because they do not have a fixed address.

Notably, one in five MPs (21%) don't know whether homeless people in their constituency currently have adequate access to post, suggesting that some MPs need to be made more aware of the current situation in their own constituency.



Proportion of MPs who agree/disagree with the following statements



*\* (such as banking, benefits and healthcare)*  
Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: All MPs (n=151)



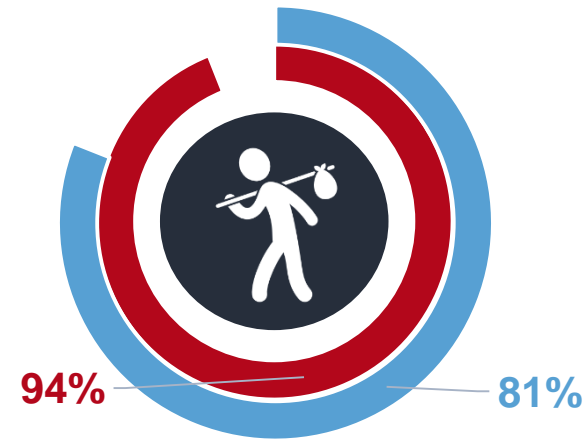
## MPs from both parties show support for the cause, but to a greater extent amongst Labour

Both the Conservative and Labour MPs agree that it is harder for homeless people to get the help they need if they do not have a postal address (81% and 94%).

Three quarters of Conservative MPs say that it is important for homeless people to have access to post in order to access essential services (73%). However, Conservative MPs are less likely to think that action should be taken to improve homeless people's access to post (59% compared to 88% of Labour MPs). Whilst this is substantial, the remaining MPs will need to be convinced by what action should be taken and that it is the right thing to do, with 17% of Conservative MPs not knowing whether action should be taken.

Conservative MPs that agree

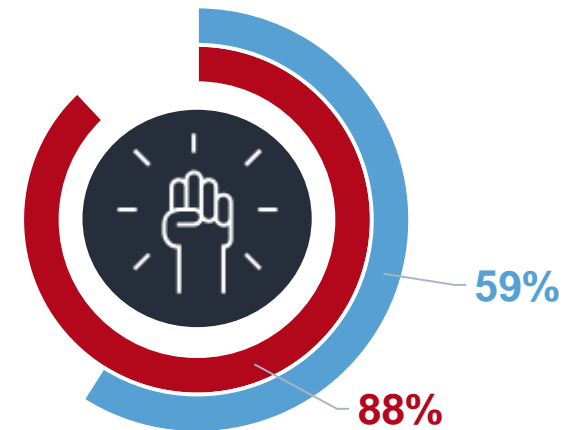
Labour MPs that agree



Not having a fixed postal address makes it harder for homeless people to get the help they need



It is important for homeless people to have access to post so that they can access essential services



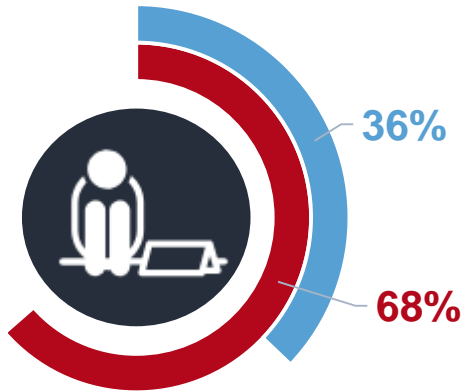
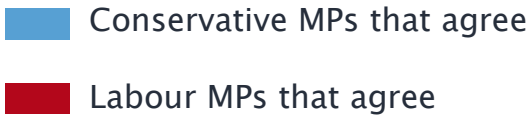
Action should be taken to improve homeless people's access to post so that they can access the services they need

# Conservative MPs are less concerned about the current postal situation for homeless people than Labour MPs

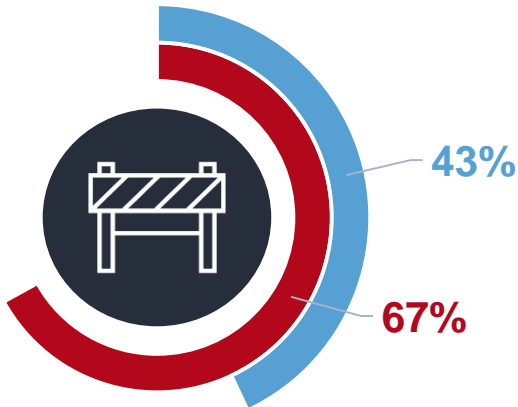
Perhaps unsurprisingly, fewer Conservative MPs consider homelessness to be a problem in their constituencies than their Labour counterparts (36% vs. 68%).

Conservative MPs are more likely to think that homeless people have easy access to essential services than Labour MPs (39% vs. 21%) as well as adequate access to post in their constituency (39% vs. 18%), and as the party of the government this may be expected.

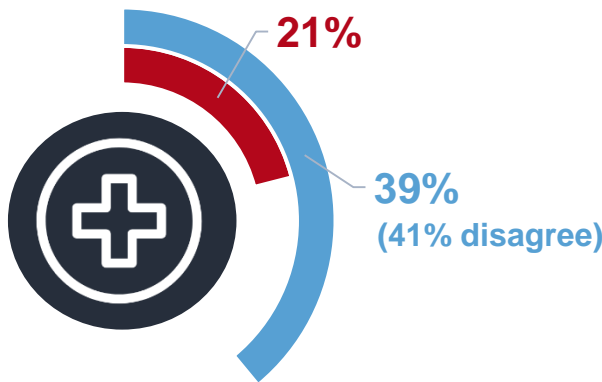
However, a similar proportion (43%) of Conservative MPs believe that people in their constituency have struggled to access essential services because they do not have a fixed address.



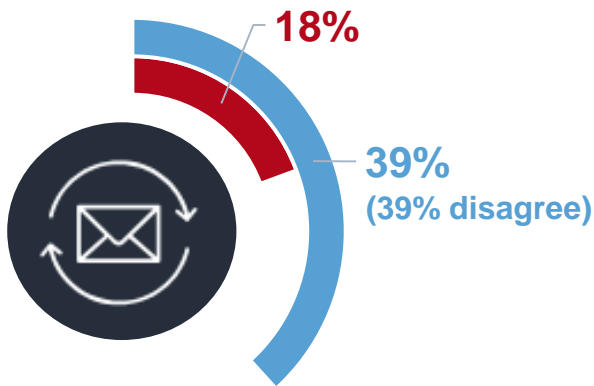
Homelessness is a problem in my constituency



People in my constituency have struggled to access essential services (such as banking, benefits and healthcare) because they do not have a fixed address



It is easy for homeless people in my constituency to access the essential services (such as banking, benefits and healthcare) they need



Homeless people in my constituency currently have adequate access to post



## MPs show strong support for providing homeless people with either a PO box or Poste Restante

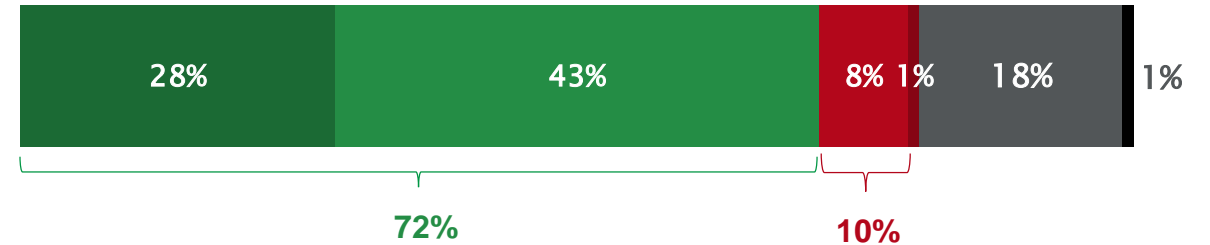
Nearly three quarters of MPs agree that homeless people should be provided with either form of postal service tested (72% and 75%).

Notably, 18% of MPs did not know whether homeless people should be provided with the option of a free PO box and 10% did not know whether they should be provided with a Poste Restante.

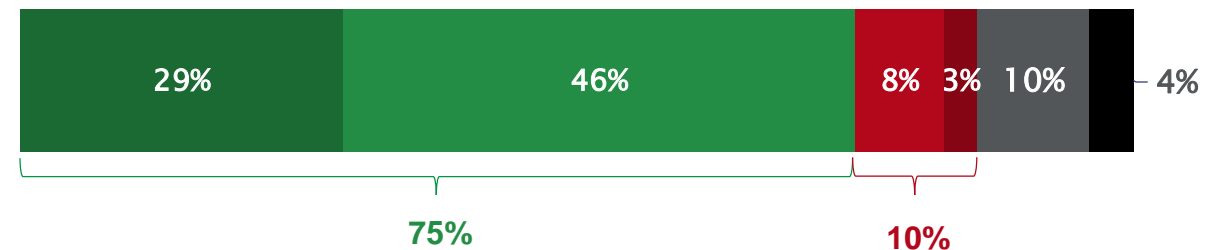
This suggests that more could be done to better educate MPs about homelessness and post, the possible solutions and their impact.

### Proportion of MPs who agree/disagree with the following statements

Homeless people should be provided with the option of a free PO box to use as an address and a way to access post



Homeless people should be provided with a form of Poste Restante service (a system where you can get your post addressed to a designated post office and pick it up from there) to use as an address and a way to access post



■ Agree strongly ■ Tend to agree ■ Tend to disagree ■ Disagree strongly ■ Don't know ■ No response

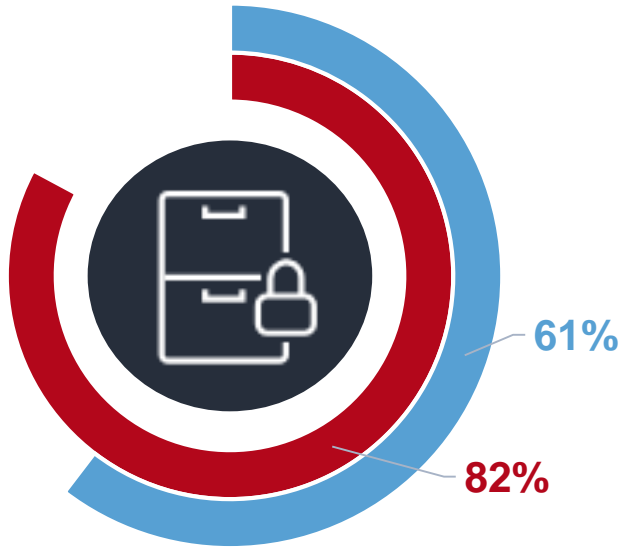
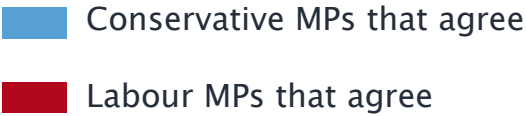


# Three in five Conservative MPs support either postal service for homeless people tested

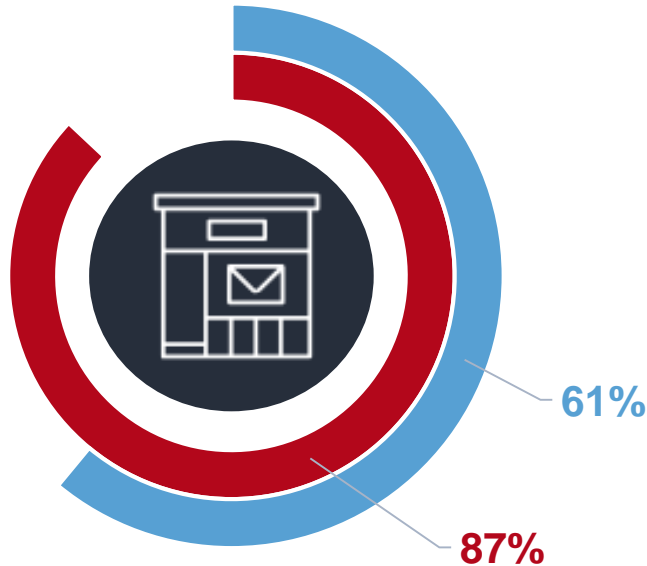
Three in five Conservative MPs support the provision of a free PO box service (61%) and/or the Poste Restante service (61%) for homeless people.

However, Labour MPs are more likely to agree with the proposal for a free PO box service (82%) and with the Poste Restante service (87%).

Neither Labour or Conservative MPs appear to have a preference between the two solutions tested.



Homeless people should be provided with the option of a free PO box to use as an address and a way to access post



Homeless people should be provided with a form of Poste Restante service (a system where you can get your post addressed to a designated post office and pick it up from there) to use as an address and a way to access post

Q. Citizens Advice research has shown that homeless people can struggle to access essential services including bank accounts, benefits and healthcare without a fixed address to put on application forms and from which to receive mail. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: All Labour MPs (n=79); All Conservative MPs (n=51)



## MPs would prefer funding to be primarily sourced from Central Government

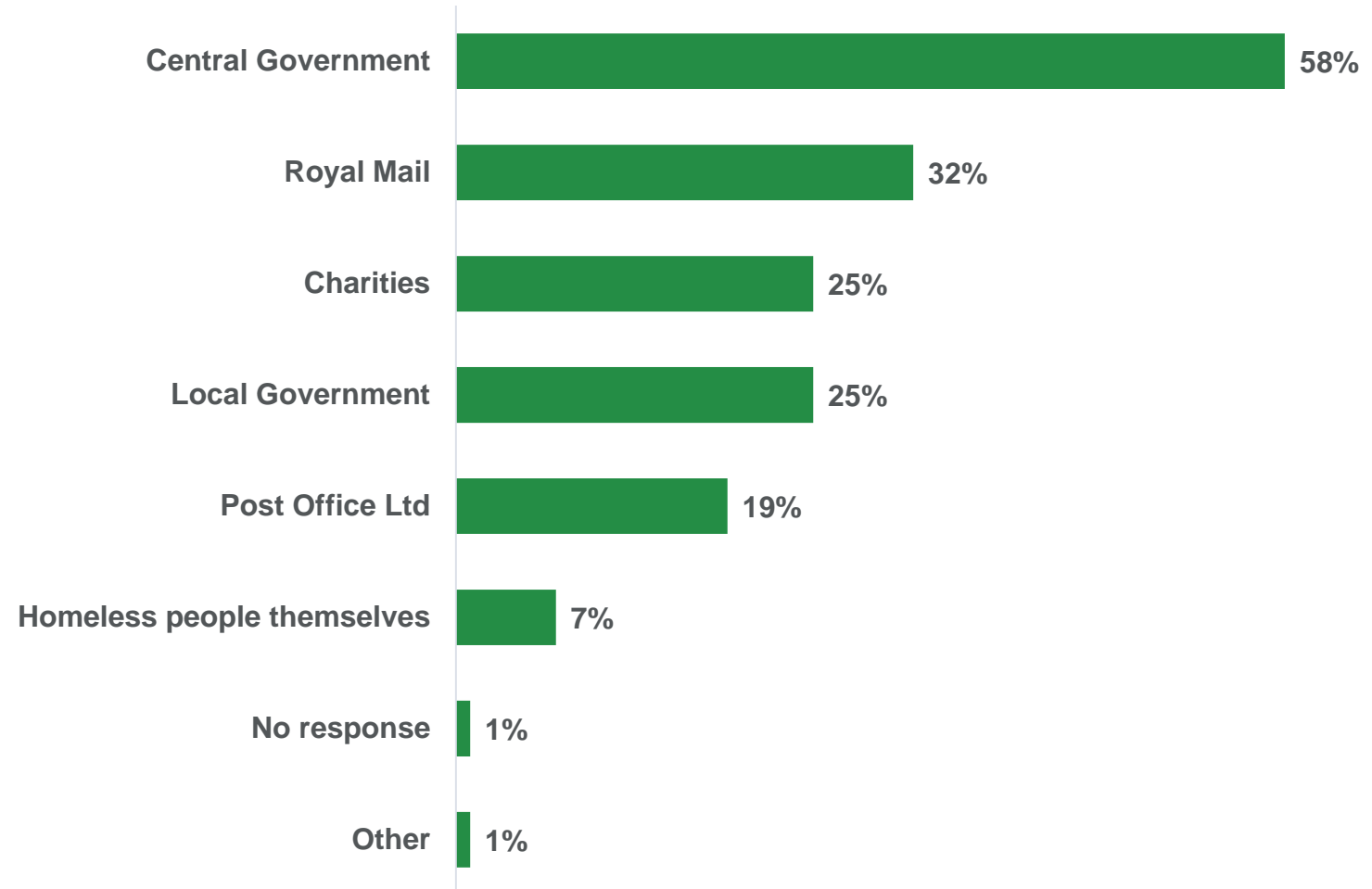
Over half of MPs (58%) support the idea of Central Government funding the service to provide postal access.

Alongside Central Government funding:

- One third of MPs support the idea of Royal Mail contributing (32%).
- One quarter of MPs say that charities and/or Local Government should fund this (25%)
- One fifth of MPs say the Post Office Ltd should pay (19%)
- 7% of MPs say homeless people should pay for their access.

This suggests that the best approach to funding might involve multiple sources in partnership with Central Government.

## Most preferred funding sources to ensure homeless people have access to post





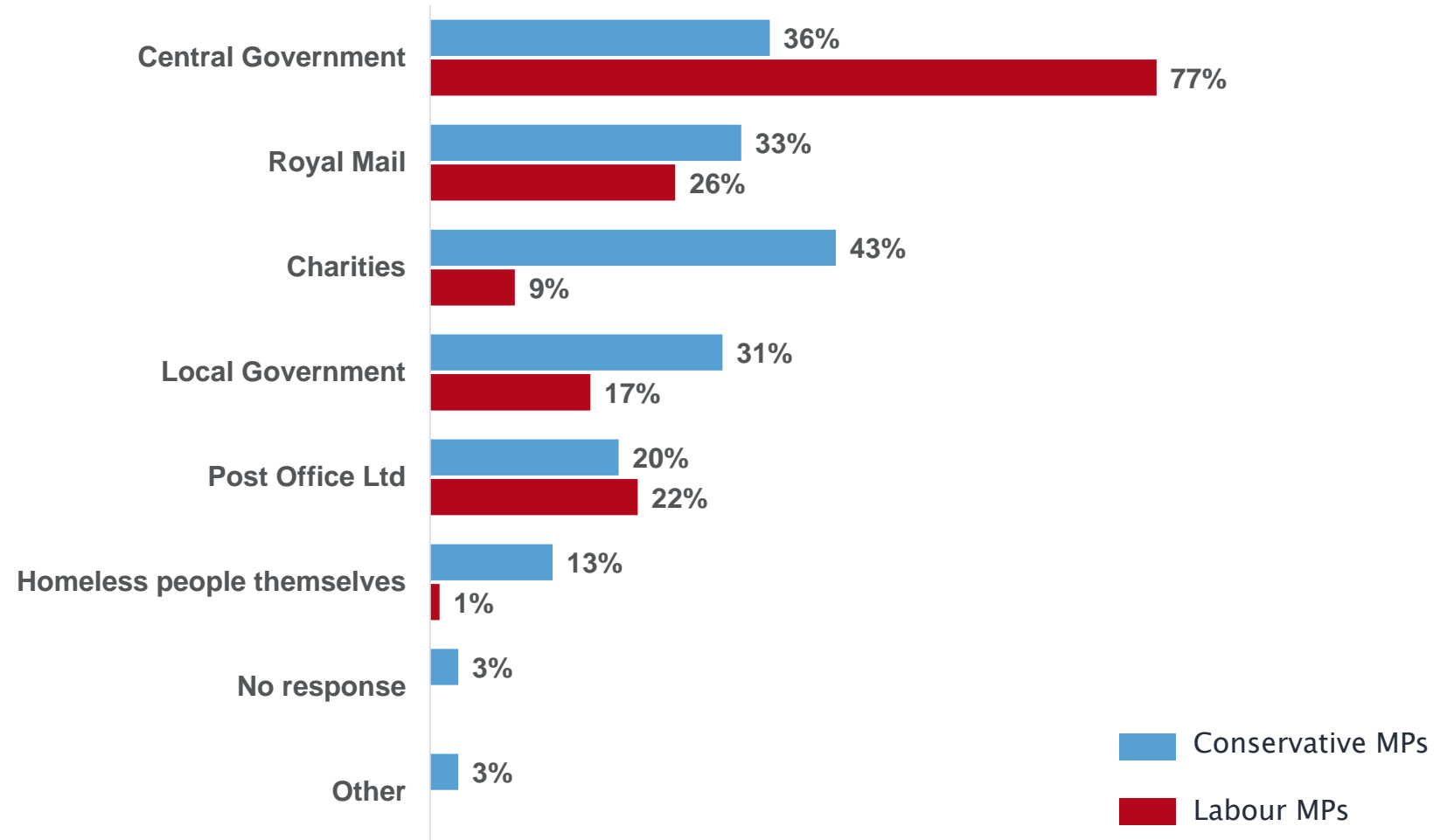
## Charity funding is supported most by Conservative MPs

The most preferred option for Conservative MPs is for charities to fund the service, with two in five supporting this method (43%), compared to 9% amongst Labour MPs.

Conservative MPs are less likely to say that Central Government should fund the service than their Labour counterparts (36% vs 77%) and are more likely to think that homeless people should pay themselves (13% vs 1%).

Conservative MPs appear to prefer a mixed selection of funding sources, with one third saying that Central Government, Royal Mail and Local Government should pay (36%, 33% and 31%).

## Most preferred funding sources to ensure homeless people have access to post



Q. And, in your opinion, who should fund this – or a similar service – to ensure homeless people have access to post? Please select your 3 most preferred options. Base: All Labour MPs (n=79); All Conservative MPs (n=51) 14



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