



# Counterfeit Cigarettes Post Campaign Research 2008



COI Research on behalf of HMRC

**Customer Understanding Team**



# Background

- HMRC ran a campaign in March 2007 in the 20 most deprived wards in Birmingham to communicate the dangers of counterfeit cigarettes
- This campaign was repeated in April 2008, but extended to areas in Sandwell & Dudley, Stoke on Trent and Coventry
- The primary aims of the campaign were:
  - To raise awareness of the risks of Counterfeit cigarettes
  - To raise awareness of toxic ingredients of cigarettes
- Target in 2007 was C2DE smokers aged 40+, and in 2008 was extended to all smokers aged 18 or more and some C1 occupations were also included in the sample
- Campaign media included leaflets, radio, bus advertising and PR
- Campaign budget was approximately £61,232 (in 2007 was £50-60k)

# Campaign objectives

## Primary campaign Objectives

- To raise awareness of the risks of Counterfeit cigarettes
- To raise awareness of toxic ingredients of cigarettes

## Secondary campaign Objective

- To encourage individuals to report the selling of counterfeit cigarettes (in the street or workplace) by telephoning the Customs Confidential telephone line and/or emailing [customs.confidential@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:customs.confidential@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk).
- To stimulate awareness of smoking and the risk to health
- To raise awareness of the “Free Smoking Helpline”

# Research objectives

- Research required to measure the effectiveness of the campaign:-
  - Advertising awareness;
  - Advertising attribution and communication;
  - Awareness of the risk of counterfeit cigarettes;
  - Awareness and Attitudes to counterfeit cigarettes;
  - Campaign recognition and attitudes;
  - Propensity to call Customs Confidential;
  - Propensity to quit smoking;
  - Propensity to call free smoking helpline

# Research method

- In-street face to face interviews with C2DE (some social grades C1 were also included in selected routine occupations) aged 18+ smokers
- Post campaign evaluation
  - Field dates: 29<sup>th</sup> April to 16<sup>th</sup> May
- In total, 1026 interviews were achieved which breaks down as:
  - 210 in Birmingham
  - 207 in Stoke
  - 203 in Coventry
  - 97 in Dudley and 96 in Sandwell
  - 213 in Manchester
- Gender, age and ethnicity quotas set to match test and control samples (in line with the target respondent group)
- Data weighted by quota variables to correct minor inconsistencies between test and control

# The creative - leaflets



**All cigarettes contain highly toxic ingredients – Arsenic, Formaldehyde, Benzene, Cadmium – but counterfeit cigarettes often contain far higher quantities.**

Someone selling cheap cigarettes in your street or workplace?  
Call Customs Hotline on 0800 59 5000  
or email [customs.confidential@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:customs.confidential@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk)

Whatever you smoke, you are risking your health.  
Need help to quit smoking?  
Call the Free NHS Smoking Helpline on **0800 169 0 169**



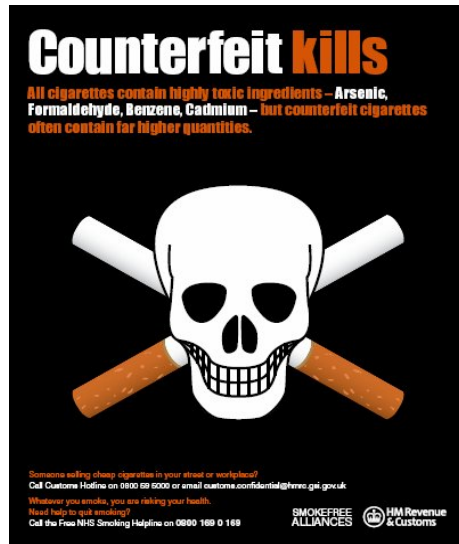
SMOKEFREE ALLIANCES  HM Revenue & Customs



Leaflet – distributed to 360,000

Spend - £3,528

# The creative – poster and radio



Radio ad – BRMB,  
Mercia, Signal 1  
and Beacon.  
*Spend - £44,000*



*Bus posters – on 80 buses. Spend - £2,400*



# PR coverage – local and national

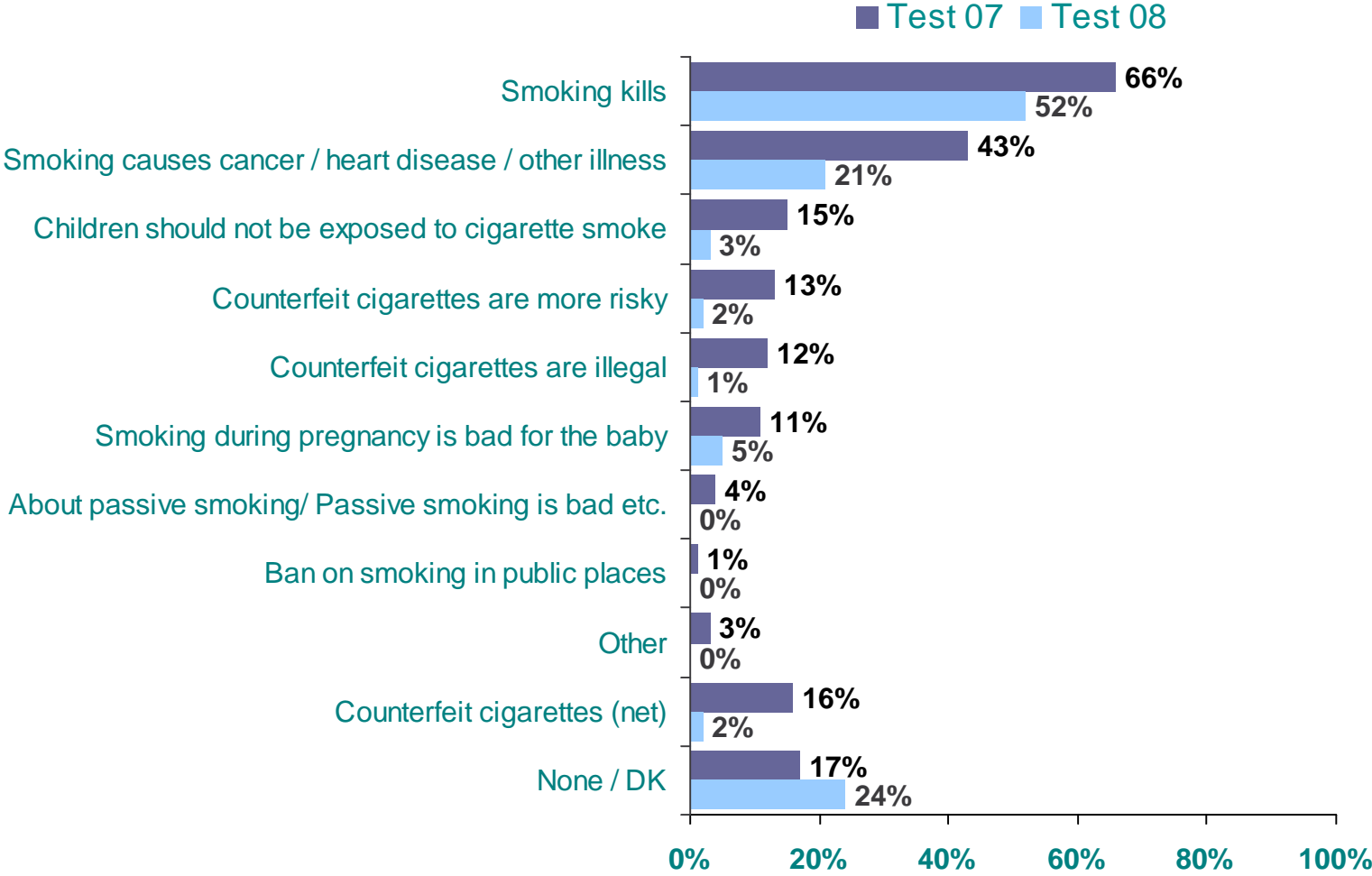
Daily Mail	World News	Lichfield Mercury
The Sun	BBC online	Solihull Times
BBC TV Midlands Today	Birmingham Post	Yorkshire Post - Leeds
Central TV	Express and Star - Wolverhampton	Yorkshire Post - Sheffield
BBC Radio Coventry	Express and Star - Walsall	Huddesfield Daily Examiner
BBC Radio West Midlands	Express and Star -Sandwell	Selby Times
Wolf fm	Coventry Evening Telegraph	The Journal Newcastle
BRMB Radio	Warwickshire Evening Telegraph	Liverpool Daily Post
Beacon Radio	Shropshire star	Midweek Herald - Stratford-upon-Avon
Smooth fm	Shropshire star - Mid Wales edition	Press and Journal - Aberdeen
Kerrang Radio	Sutton Coldfield Observer,	Press and Journal - Highlands and Islands
Rugby fm	Walsall Advertiser,	PA x 2
Touch fm Rugby, Coventry, Tamworth, Warwick, Stratford	Tamworth Herald	Caters news
		Intranet

## Key findings

- Advertising awareness was raised in campaign areas, indicating that the campaign did cut through
- There were good levels of advertising attribution to campaign media – radio, bus and leaflet - and this was higher in campaign areas
- Messages about the dangers did cut through – with higher awareness in the campaign areas
- Around two in five recognised at least one campaign element, and this was similar to 2007. The campaign was effective at reaching out in each of the areas
- Attitudes towards the campaign were strong
- There was a higher propensity than in 2007 for calling Customs Confidential, however, only a minority would be happy to do so
- Although results are positive, compared to 2007 on top of mind awareness and message take out, results are less strong. This is probably a function of spend

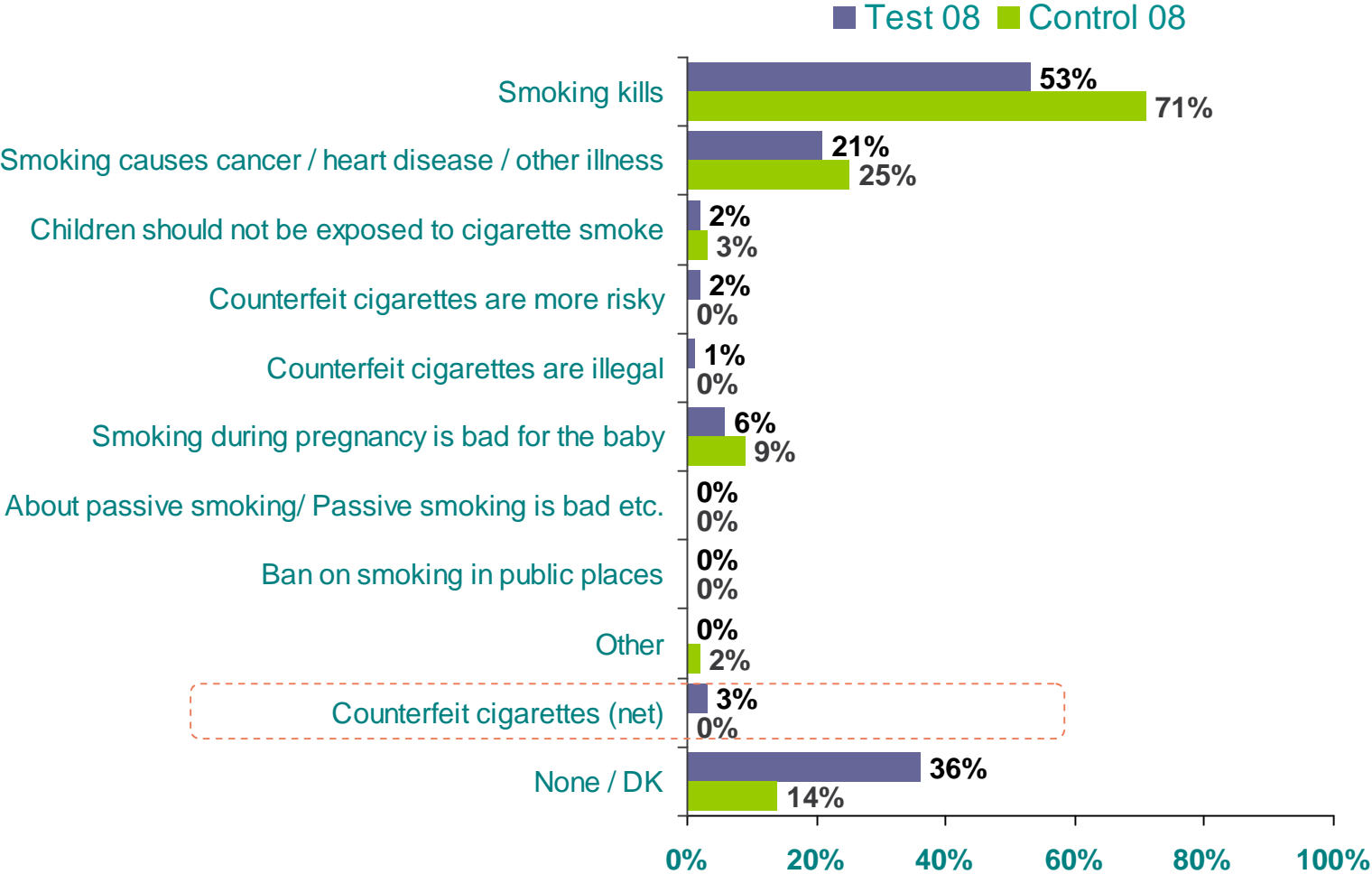
Advertising awareness of  
government messages/  
warnings about cigarettes

# Spontaneous awareness of government messages or warnings about cigarettes



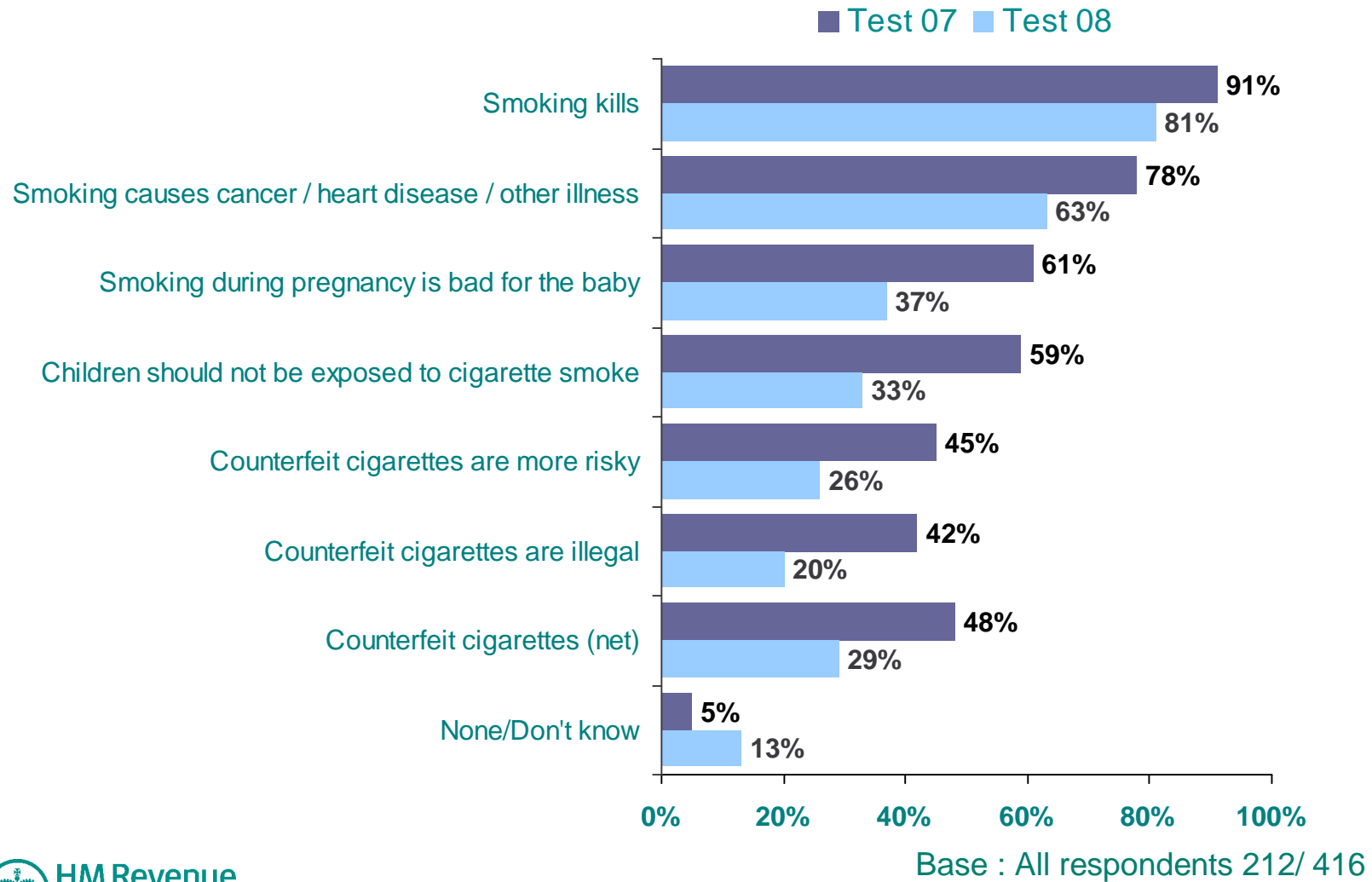
Base : Test respondents 212/ 416

# Spontaneous awareness of government messages or warnings about cigarettes

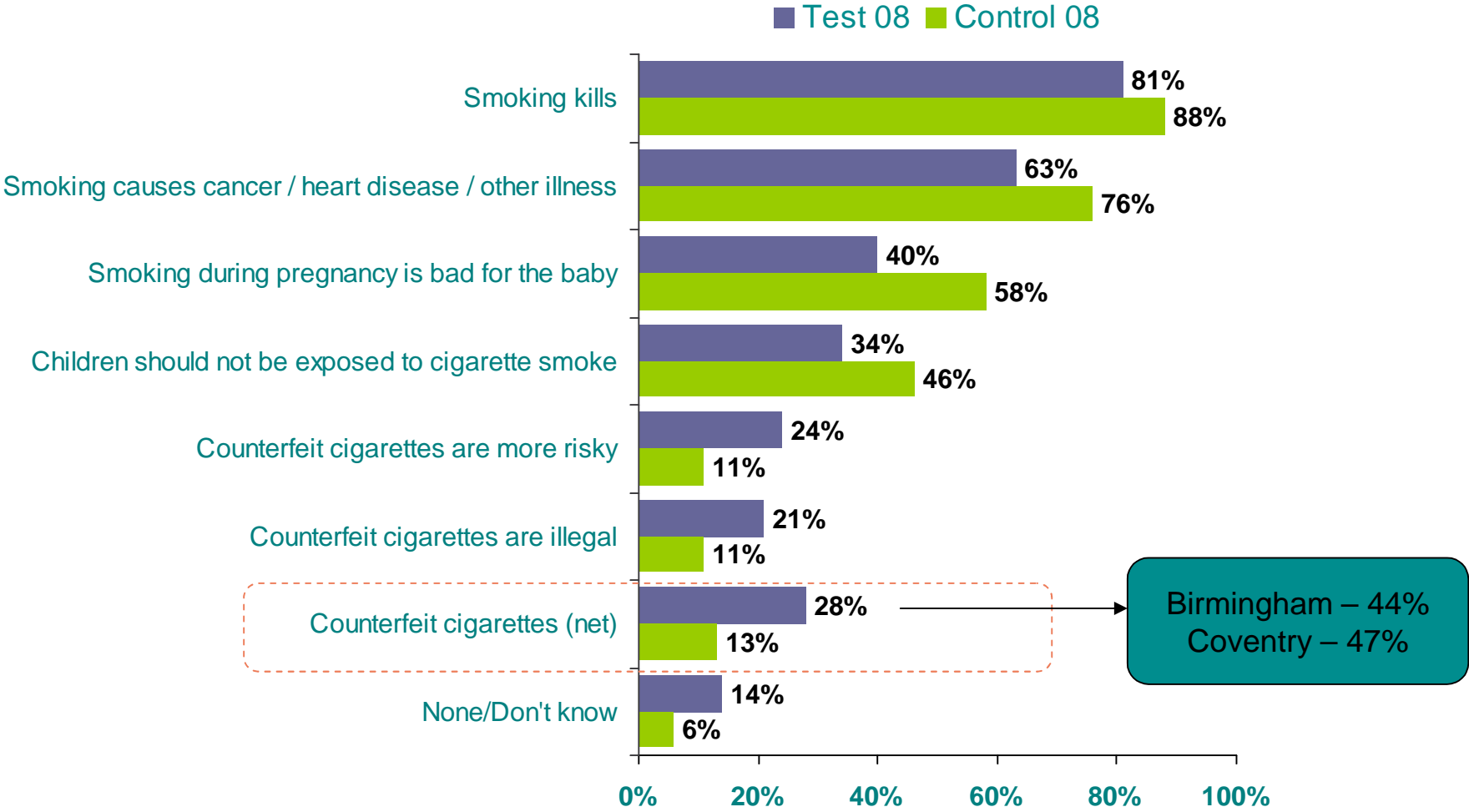


Base : All respondents 813 / 213

# Total awareness of government messages or warnings about cigarettes (spontaneous and prompted)

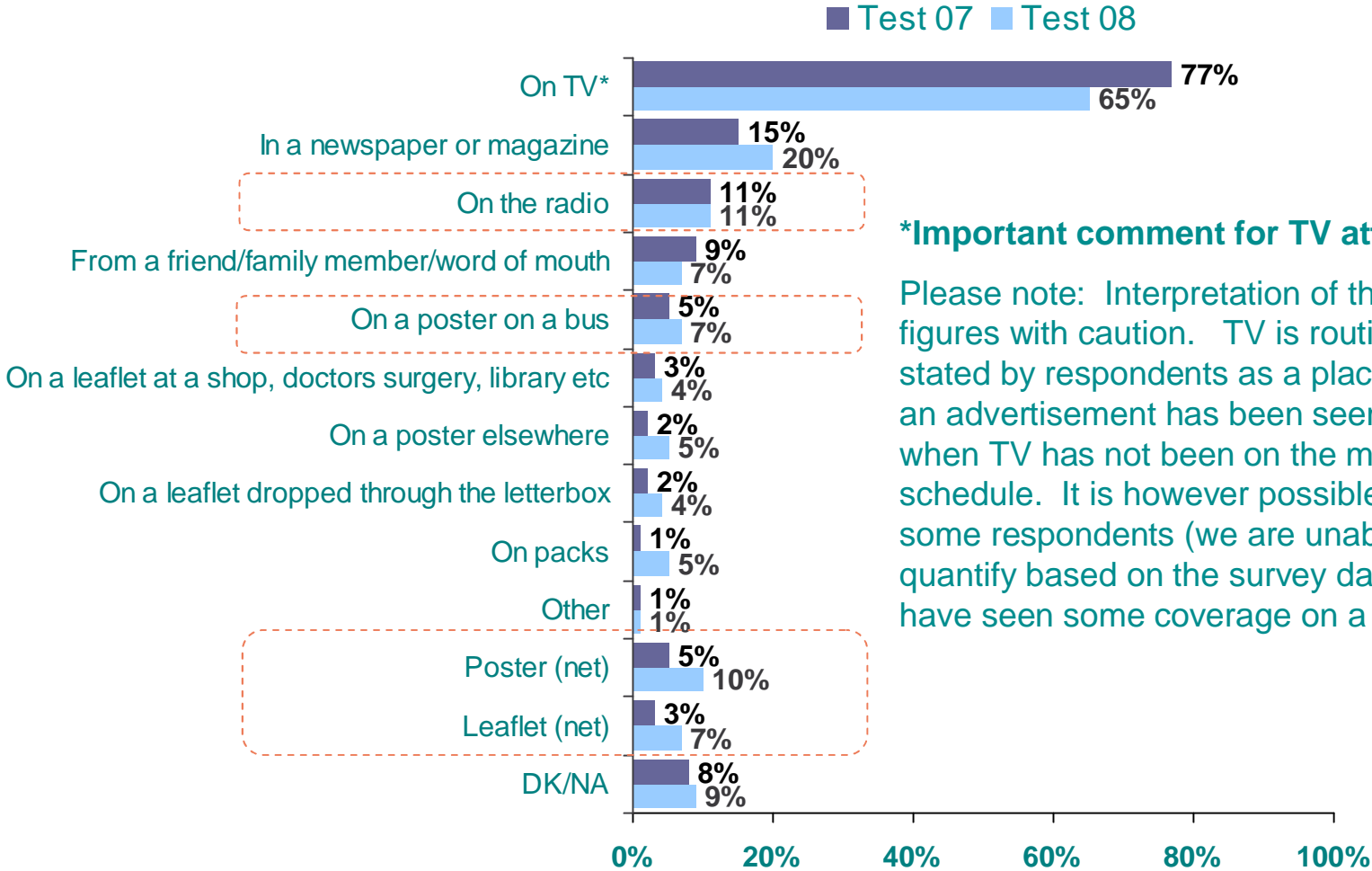


# Total awareness of government messages or warnings about cigarettes (spontaneous and prompted)



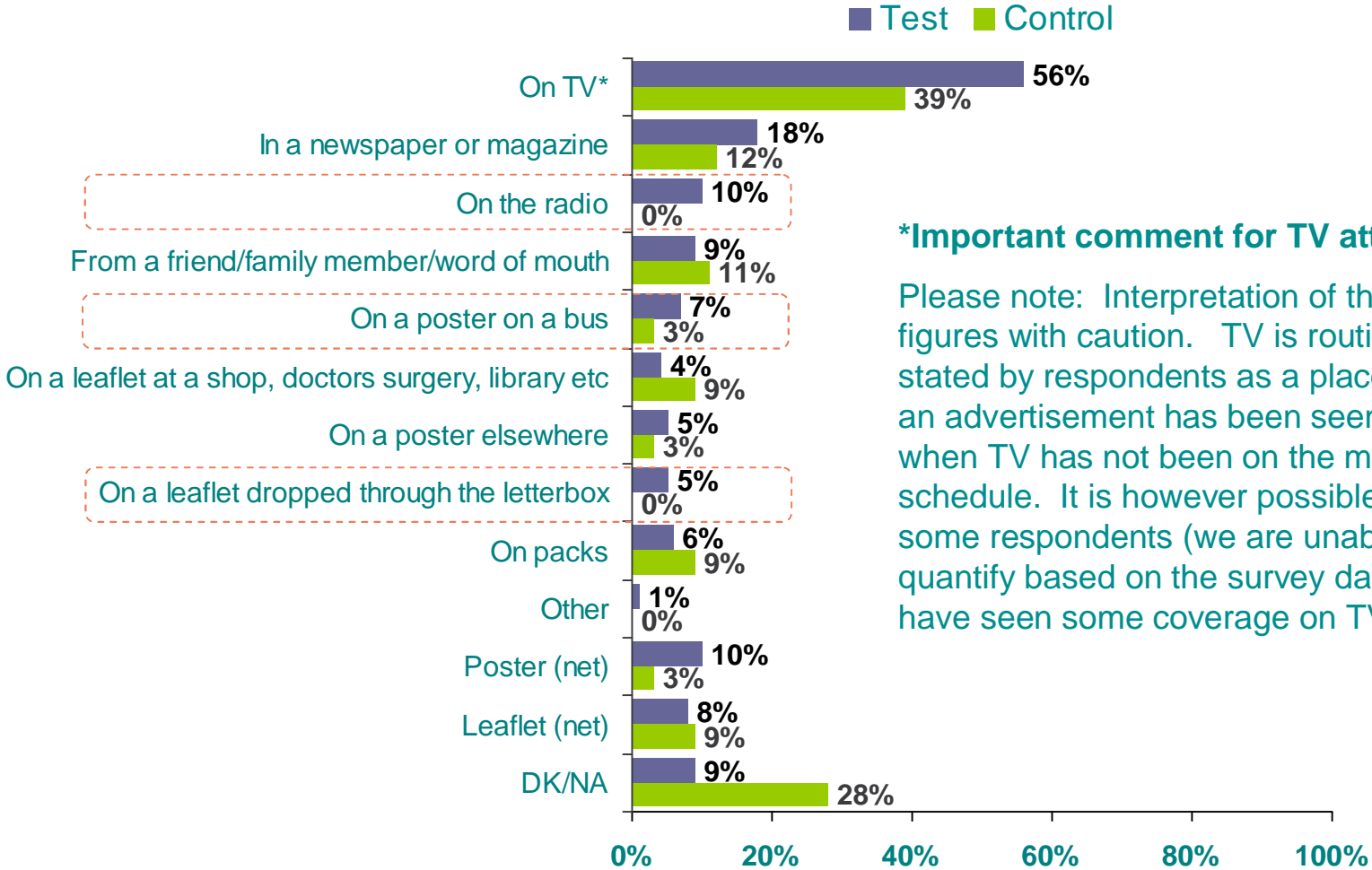
Base : All respondents 813 / 213

# Advertising attribution



**\*Important comment for TV attribution**  
 Please note: Interpretation of the TV figures with caution. TV is routinely stated by respondents as a place where an advertisement has been seen – even when TV has not been on the media schedule. It is however possible that some respondents (we are unable to quantify based on the survey data) may have seen some coverage on a TV

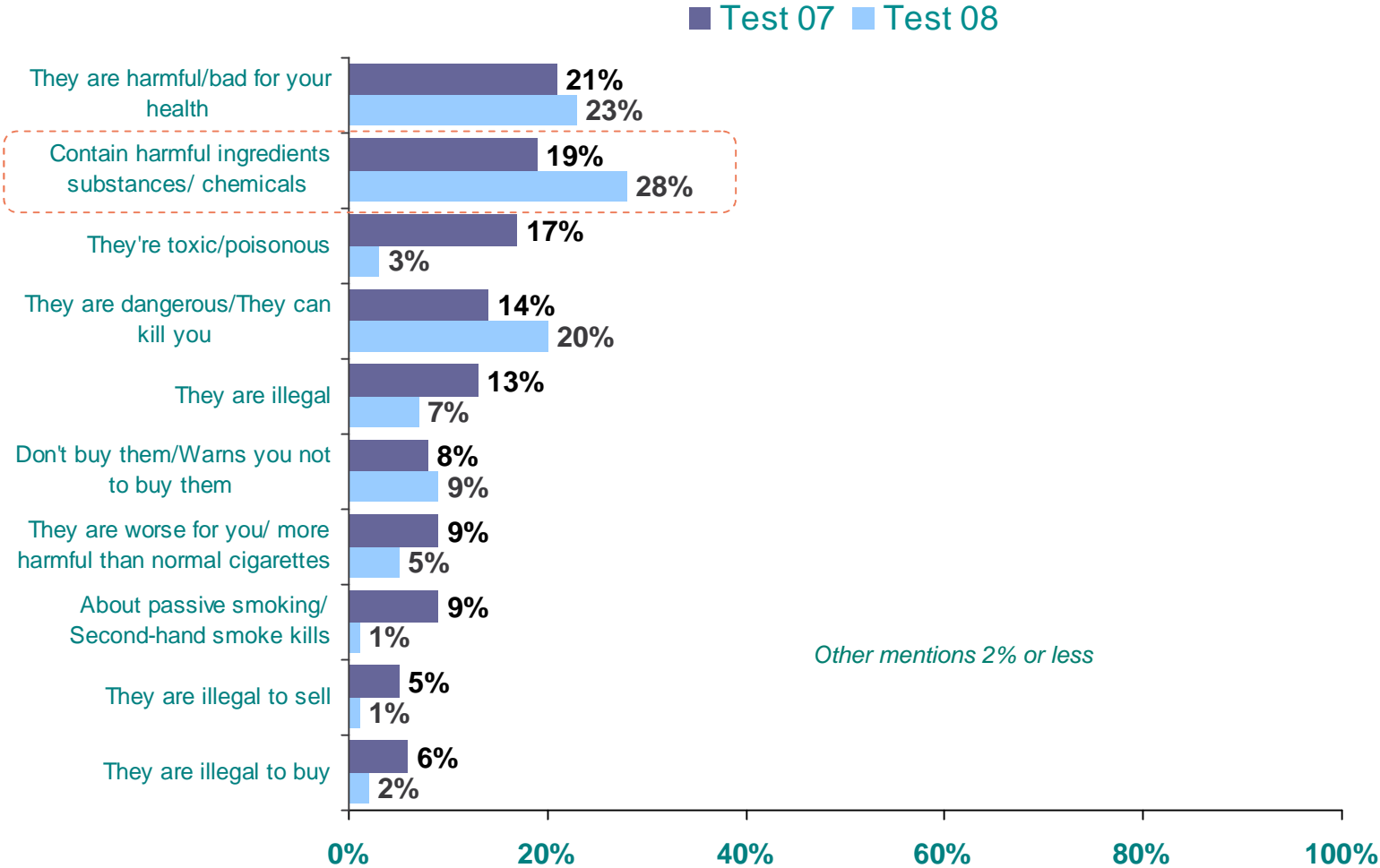
# Advertising attribution



**\*Important comment for TV attribution**

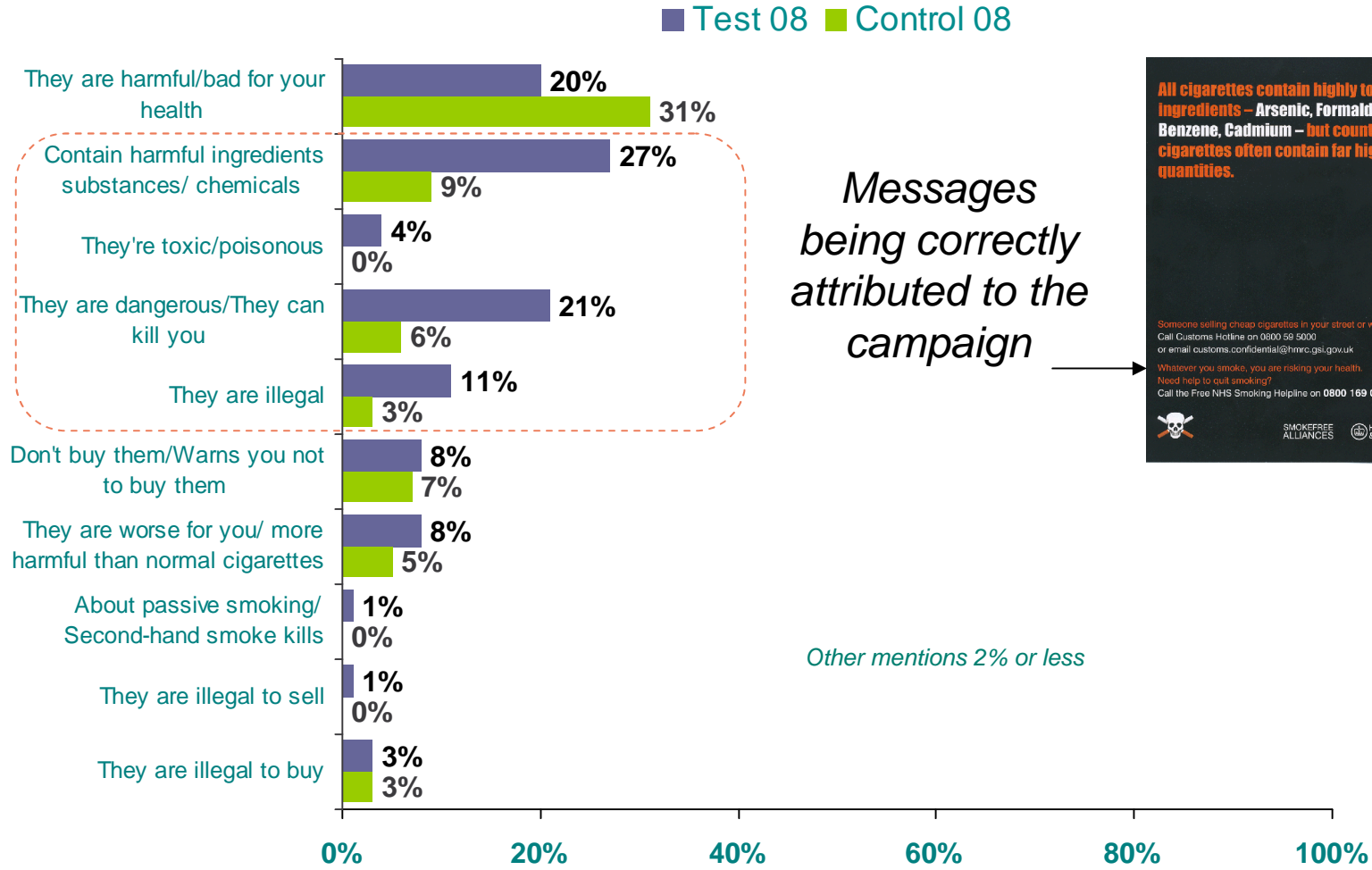
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# Spontaneous recall of advertising message about counterfeit cigarettes

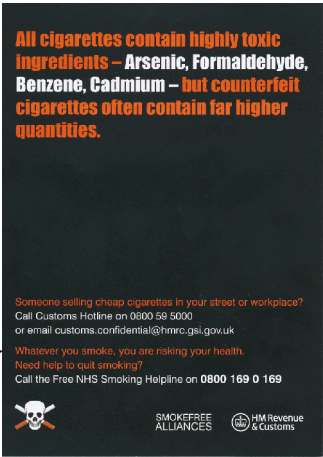


Base : All aware of advertising about counterfeit cigarettes 135 / 131

# Spontaneous recall of advertising message about counterfeit cigarettes



Messages being correctly attributed to the campaign



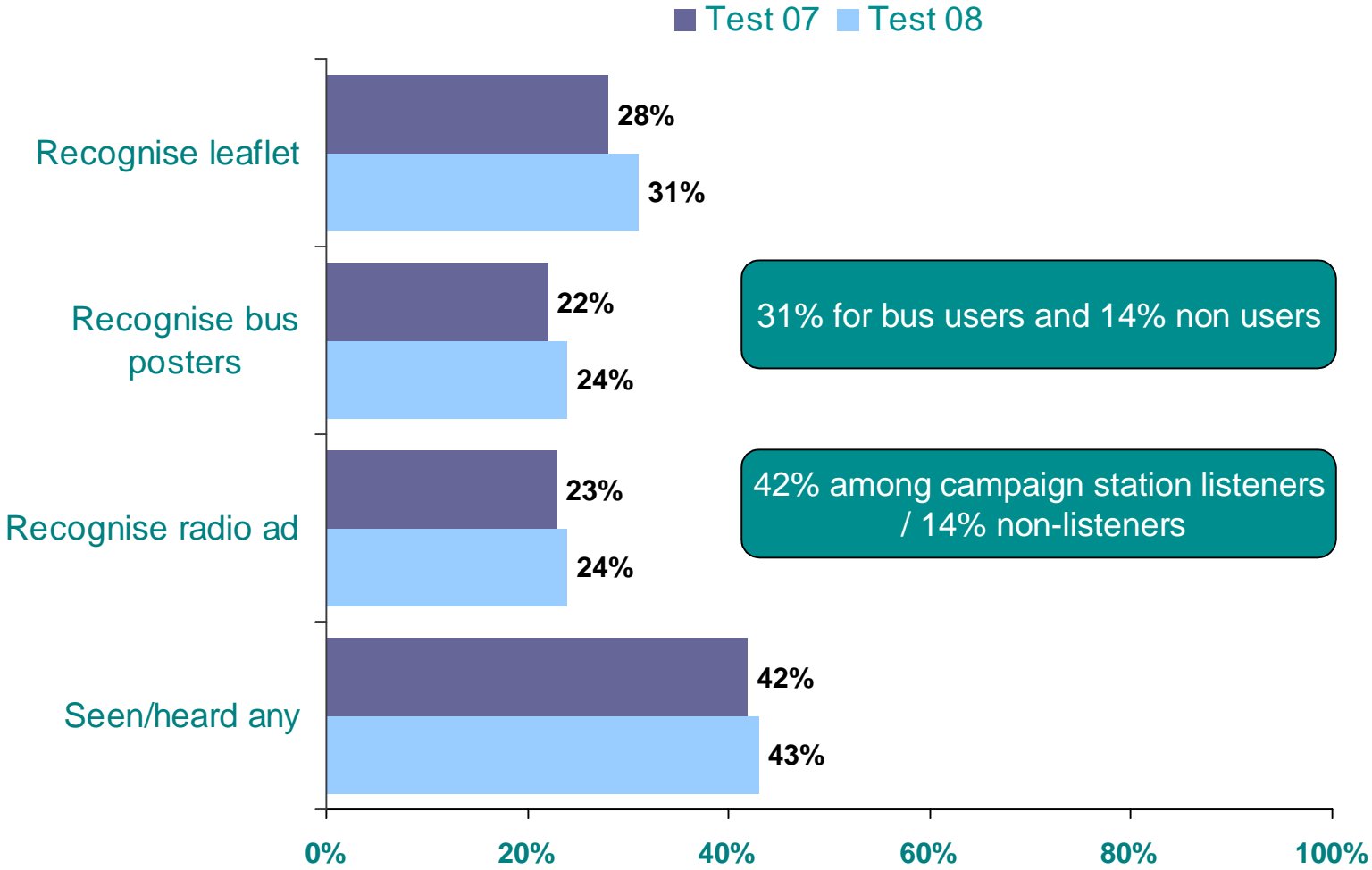
# Summary

## Advertising awareness

- The proportion spontaneously mentioning that they had seen or heard something about counterfeit cigarettes was lower than in 2007, however, as no respondents mentioned this in the control area, it would appear that the campaign was having some effect at a top of mind level
- When prompted, awareness was also not as high as 2007, however, some test areas were stronger than others and all were stronger than the control area
  - Again indicating the campaign was effective in raising awareness levels
- Although awareness was attributed to non-campaign media, such as TV, radio, leaflet and poster had higher awareness in the test areas
- A higher proportion to 2007 mentioned the advertising message as being that counterfeit cigarettes contained harmful substances and awareness of all messages was higher in the test areas

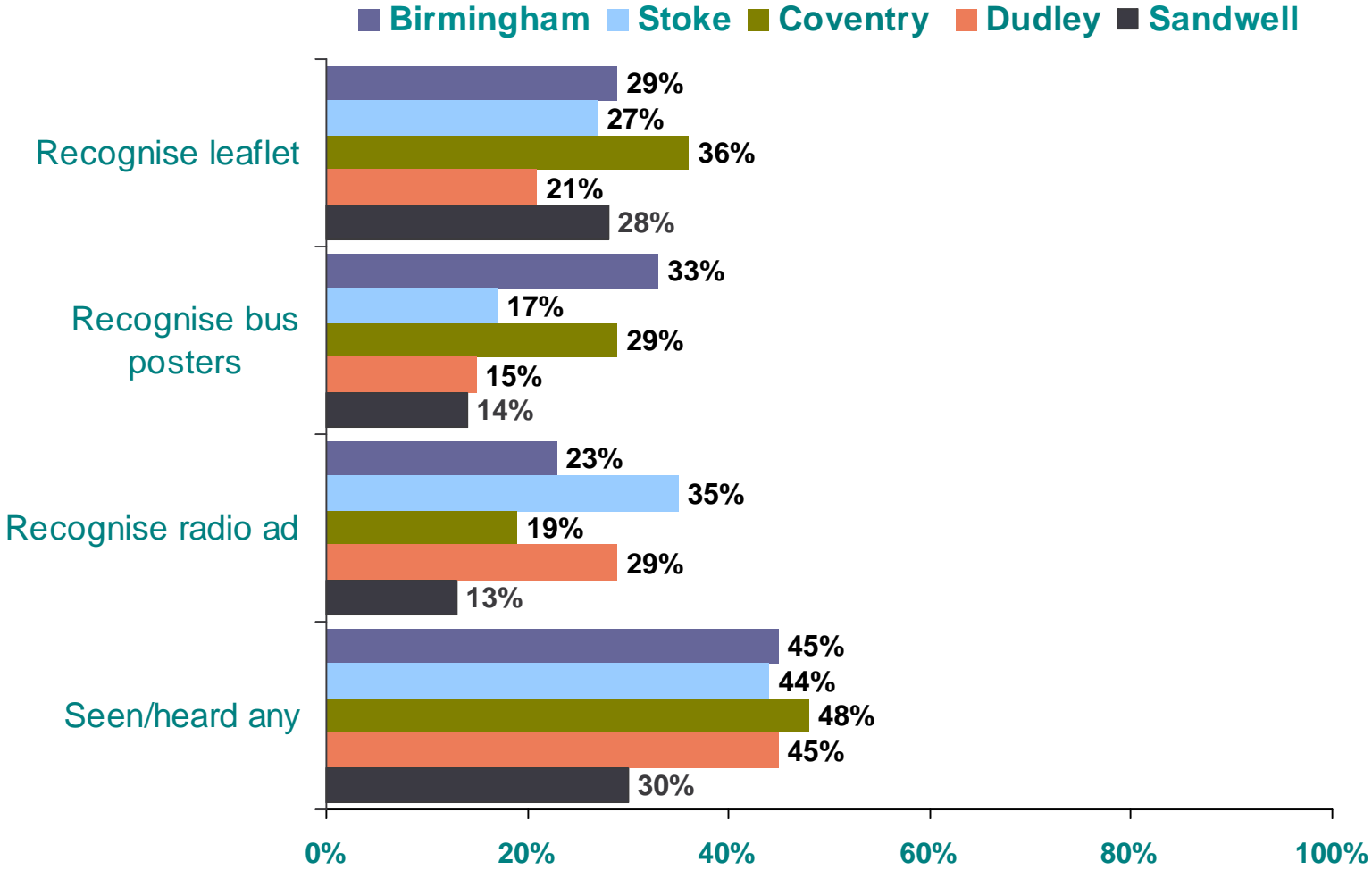
# Campaign recognition and attitudes

# Campaign recognition – test areas



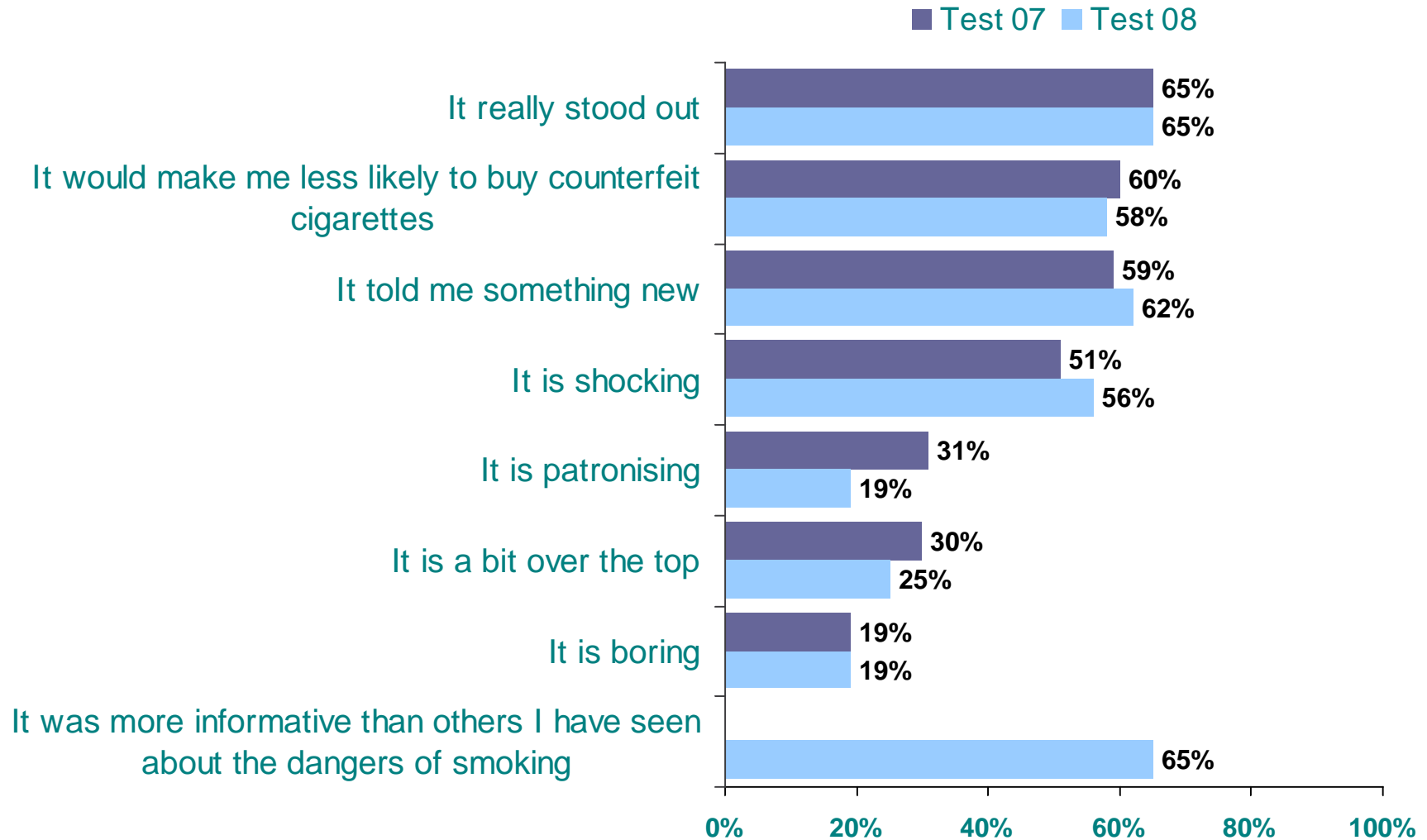
Base : 212/ 416

# Campaign recognition – test areas



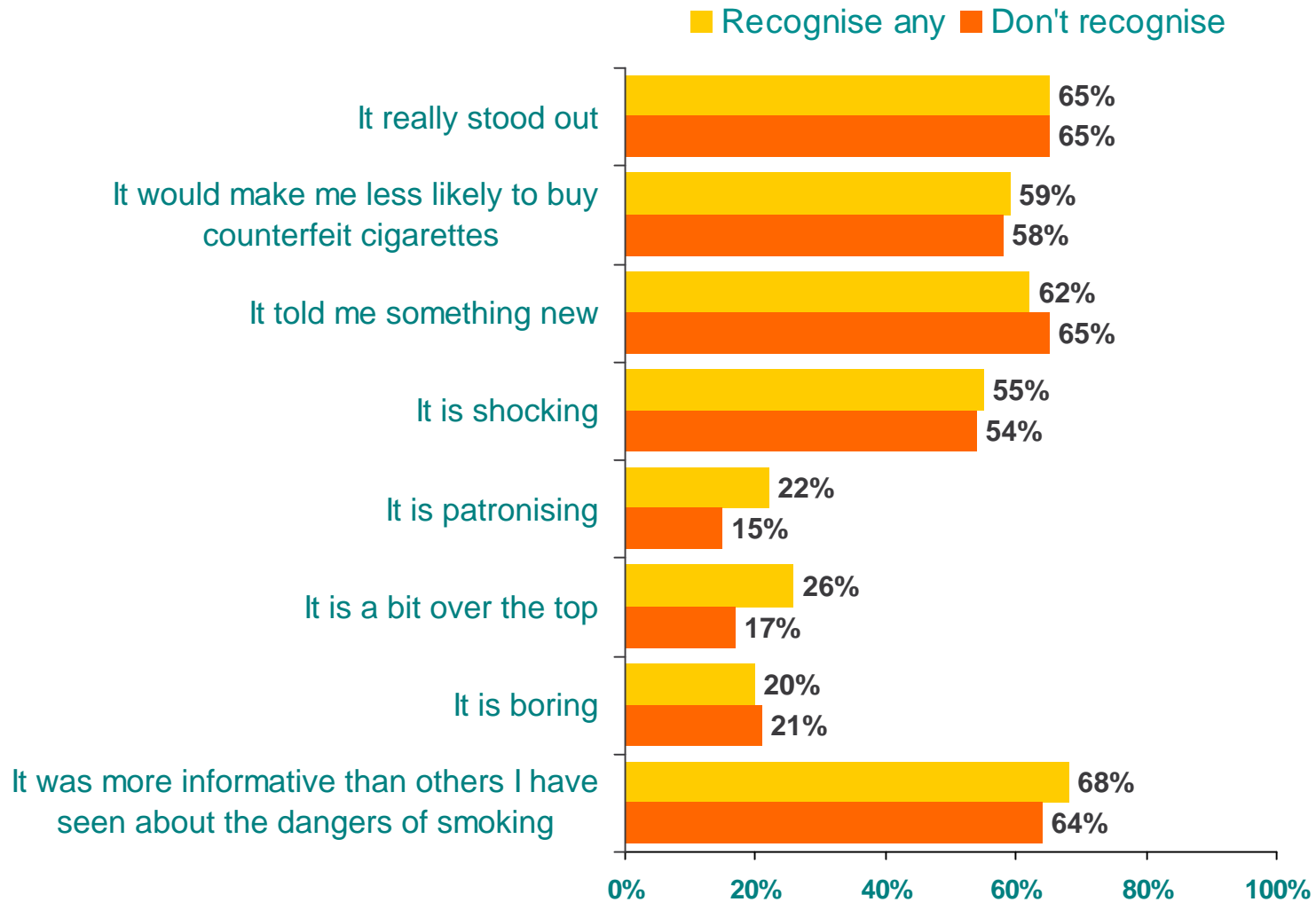
Base : 210/ 207/ 203/ 97/ 96

# Reaction to the advertising (% agree strongly or slightly)



Base : 212/ 416

# Reaction to the advertising (% agree strongly or slightly)



Base : All who recognised or not the counterfeit ads 355/ 455

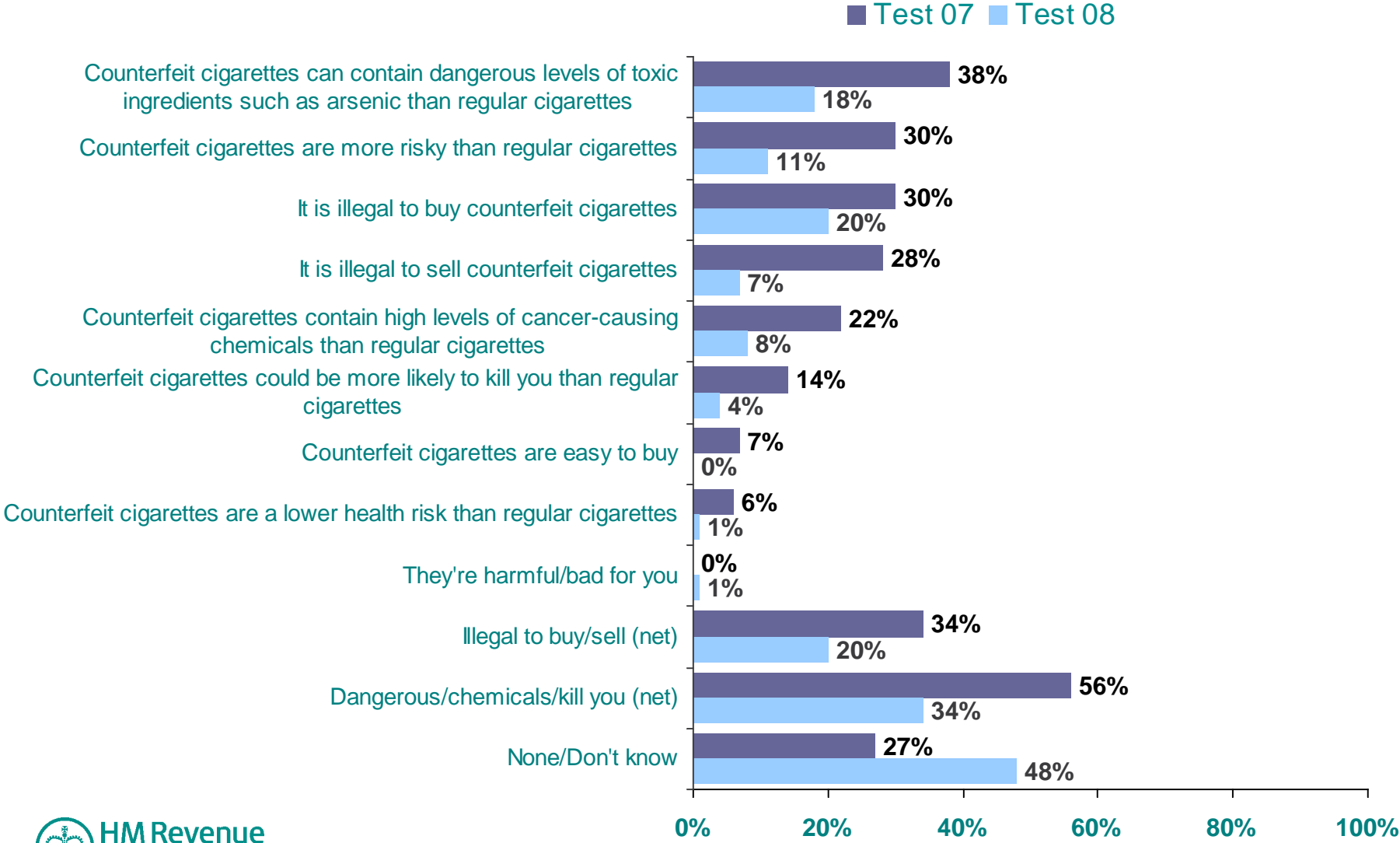
# Summary

## Campaign recognition and attitudes

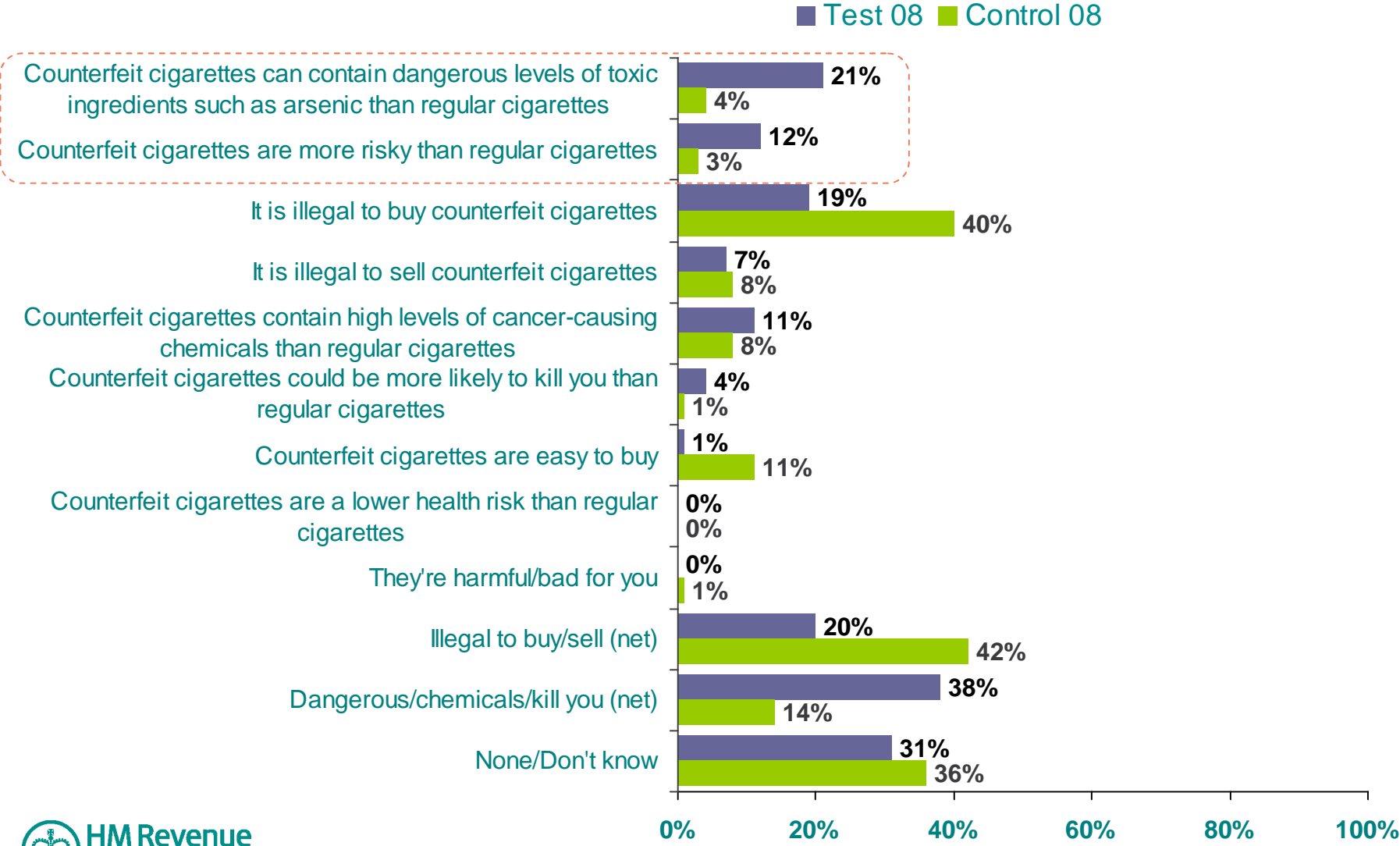
- Campaign recognition levels were good and similar to 2007, particularly amongst those who had an opportunity to see or hear the campaign materials. Almost two in five recognised at least one campaign element
  - 3/10 recognised the leaflet
  - A quarter claimed to have seen the poster
  - A quarter claimed to have heard the radio ad
- Respondents in Sandwell were the least likely to have seen/ heard any element
- As in 2007, reactions to the campaign were positive, with two thirds agreeing that it was more informative than other adverts about the dangers of smoking
  - For most, the ads were not boring or patronising and good levels said that they stand out and that it told them something new

Awareness of, and  
attitudes to, dangers of  
counterfeit cigarettes

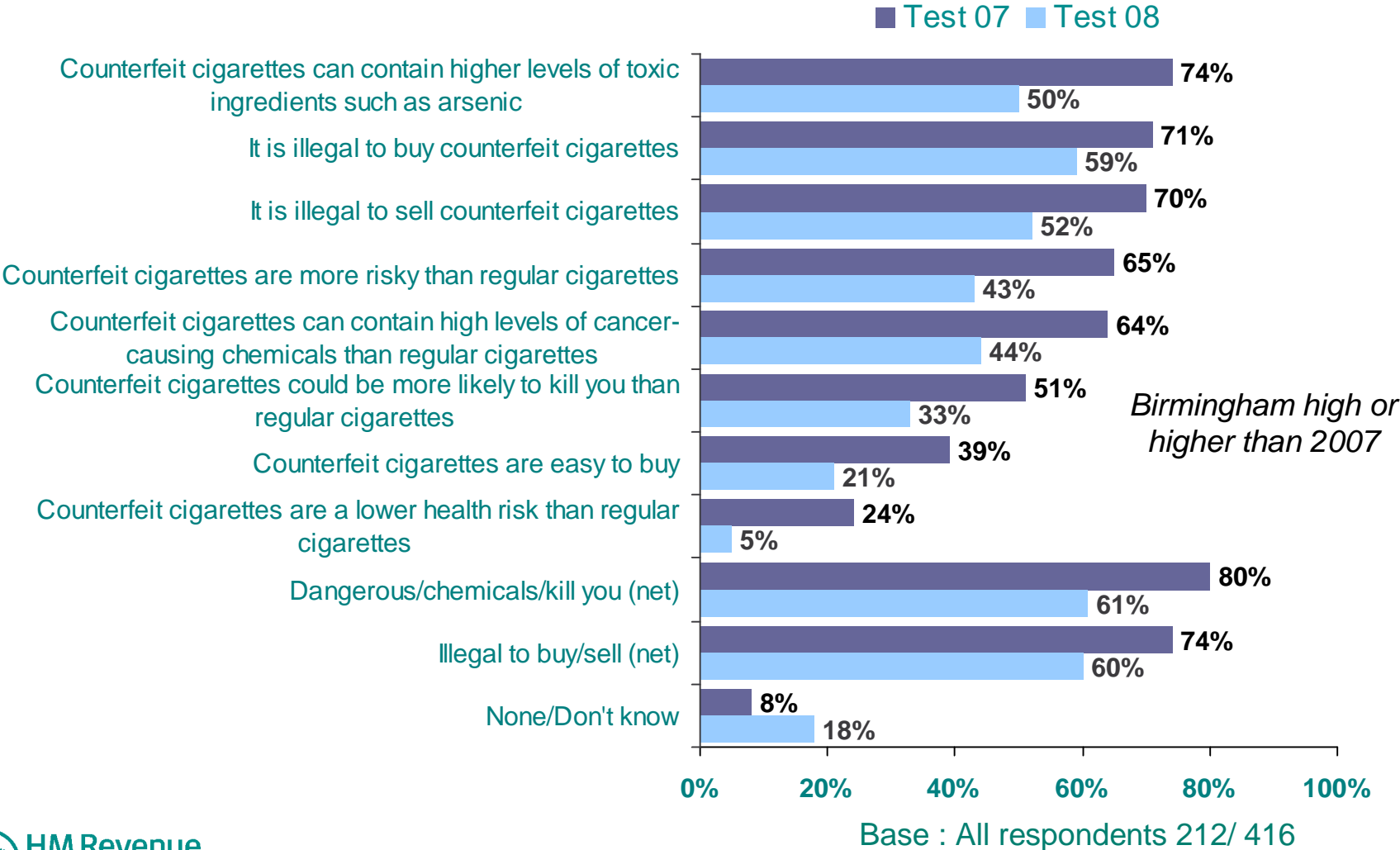
# Spontaneous awareness of the dangers of counterfeit cigarettes



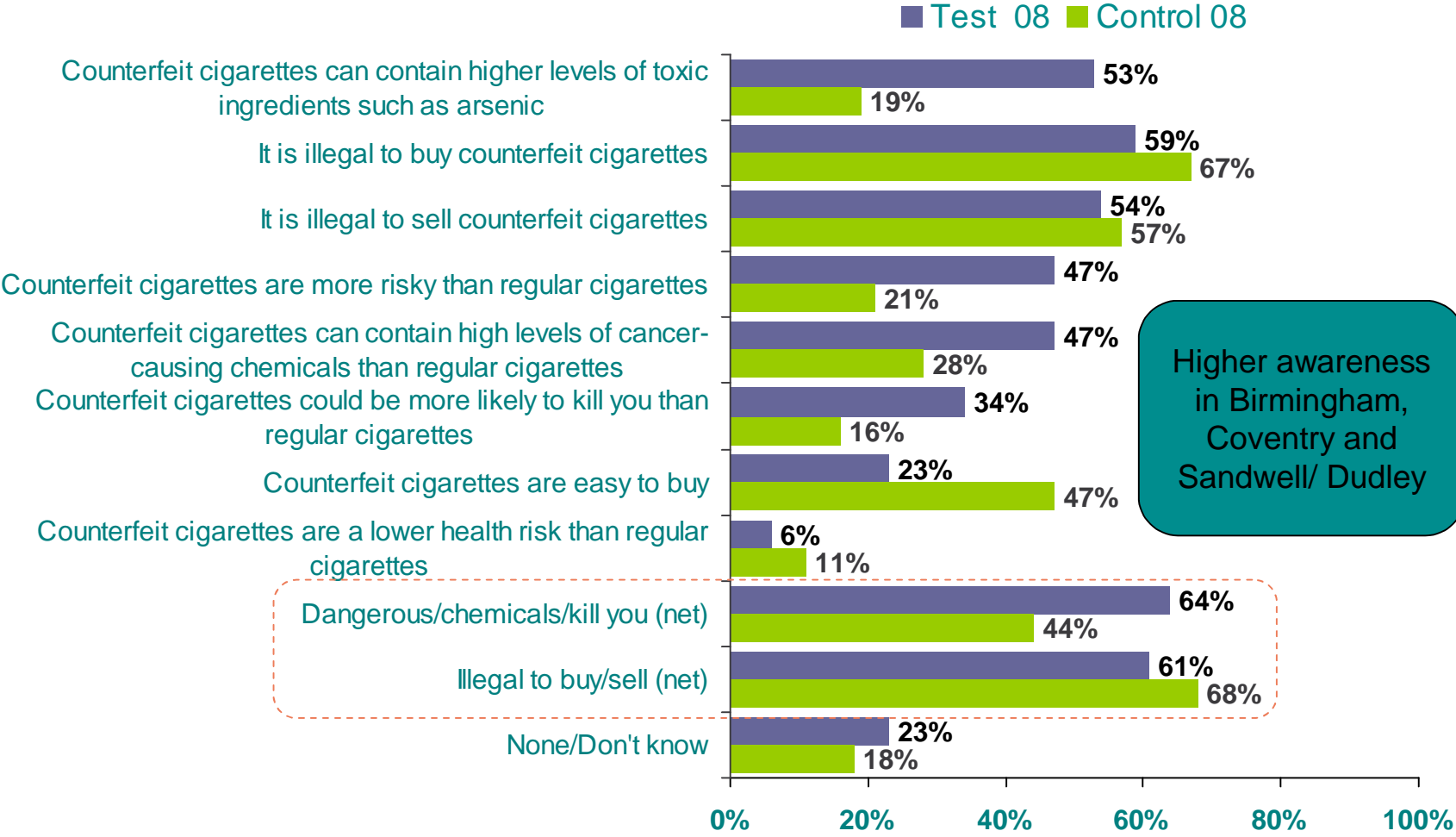
# Spontaneous awareness of the dangers of counterfeit cigarettes



# Total awareness of dangers of counterfeit cigarettes (spontaneous and prompted)

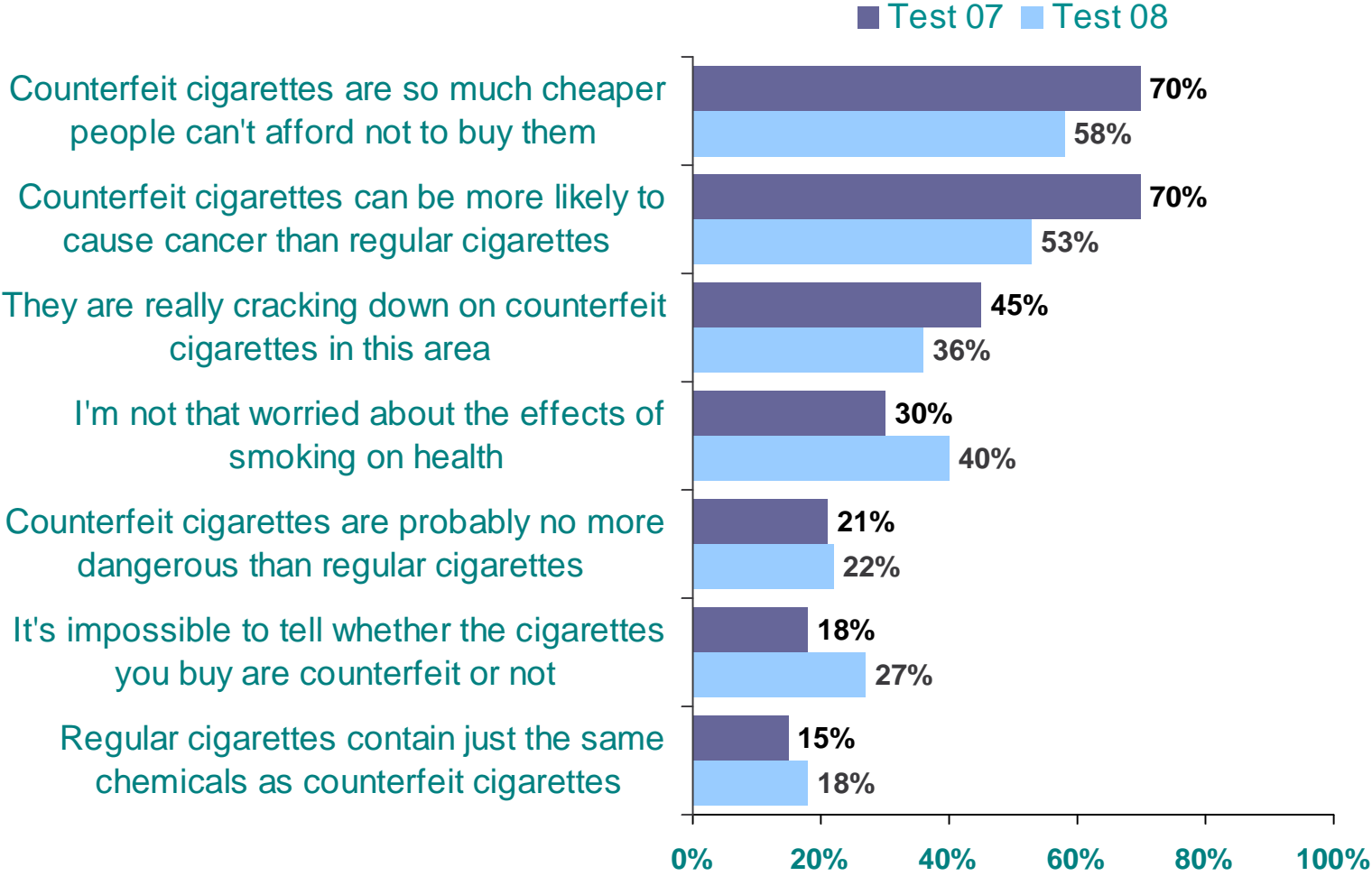


# Total awareness of dangers of counterfeit cigarettes (spontaneous and prompted)



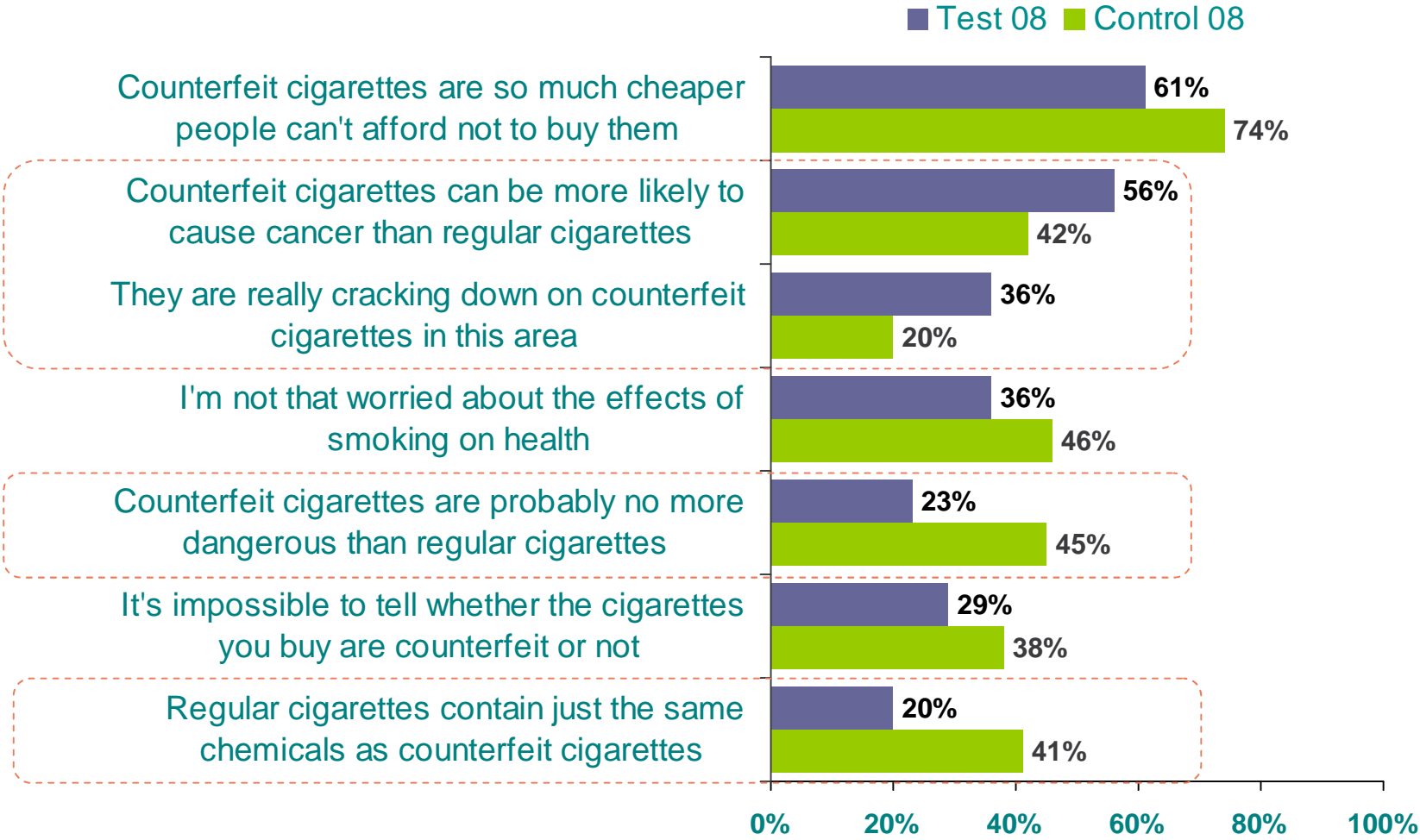
Base : All respondents 813 / 213

# Attitudes to counterfeit cigarettes (% agreeing strongly or slightly with each statement)



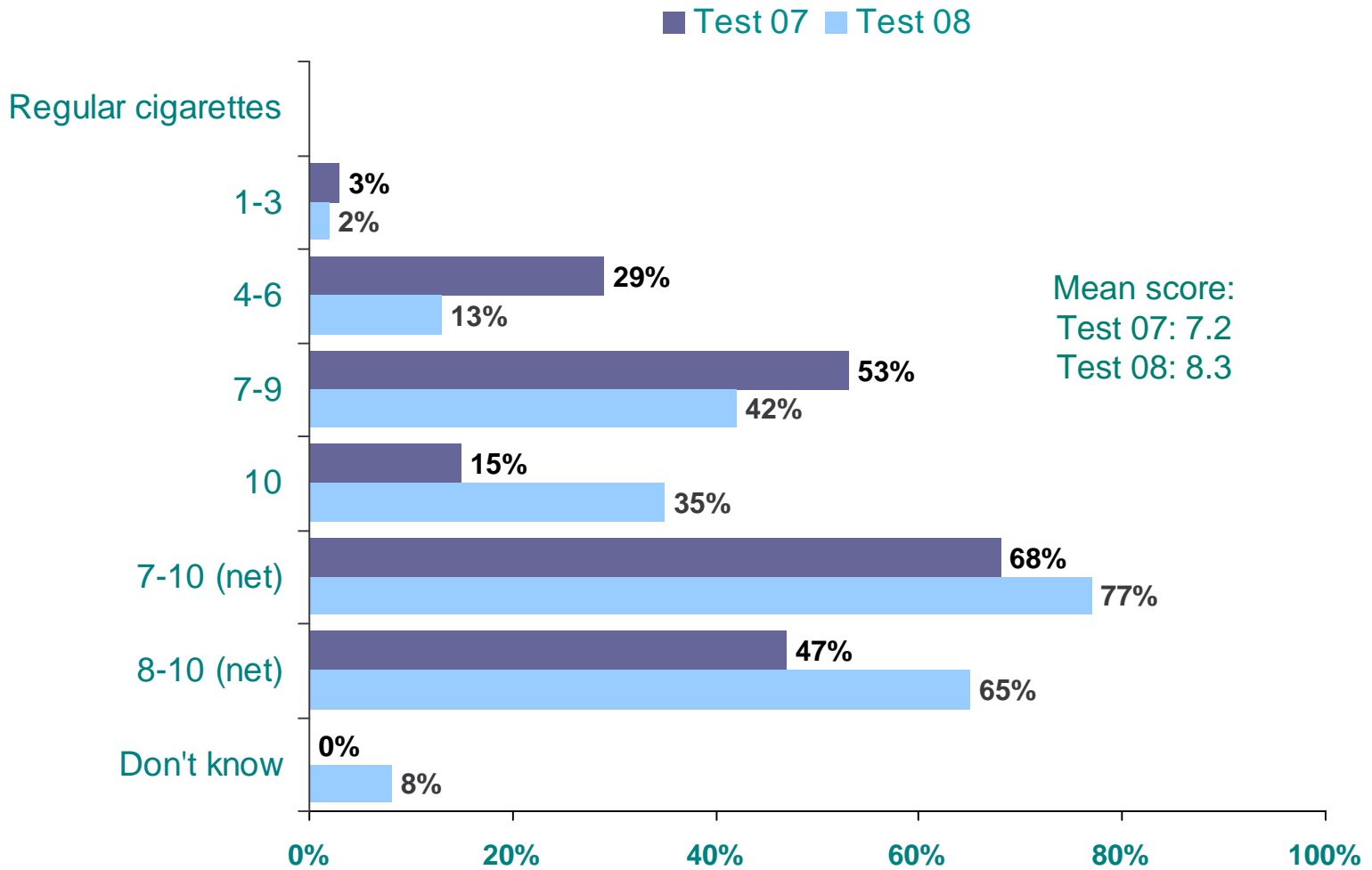
Base : All exposed respondents 212/ 416

# Attitudes to counterfeit cigarettes (% agreeing strongly or slightly with each statement)



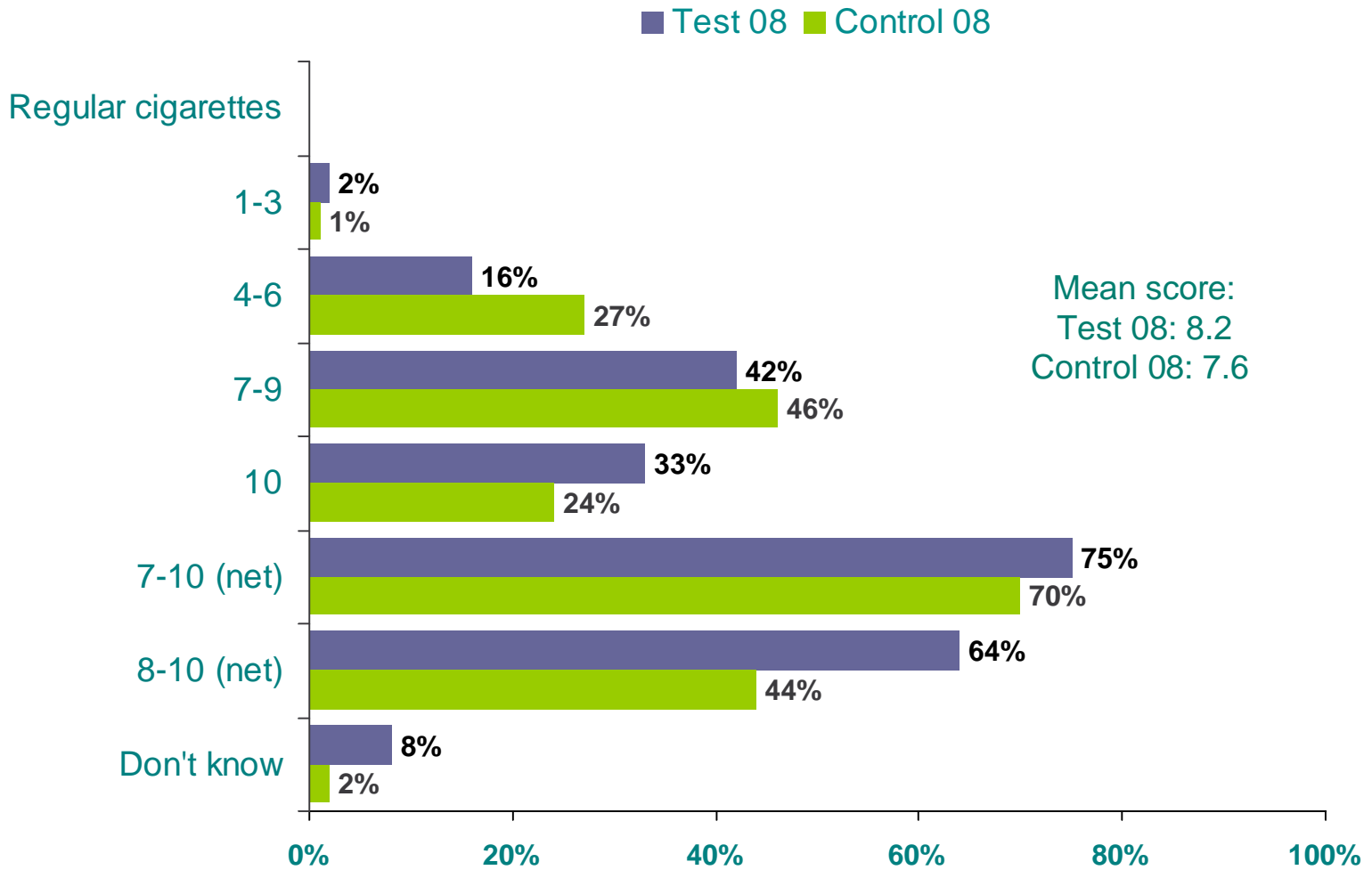
Base : All respondents 813/ 213

# Rating for how dangerous for health regular cigarettes are



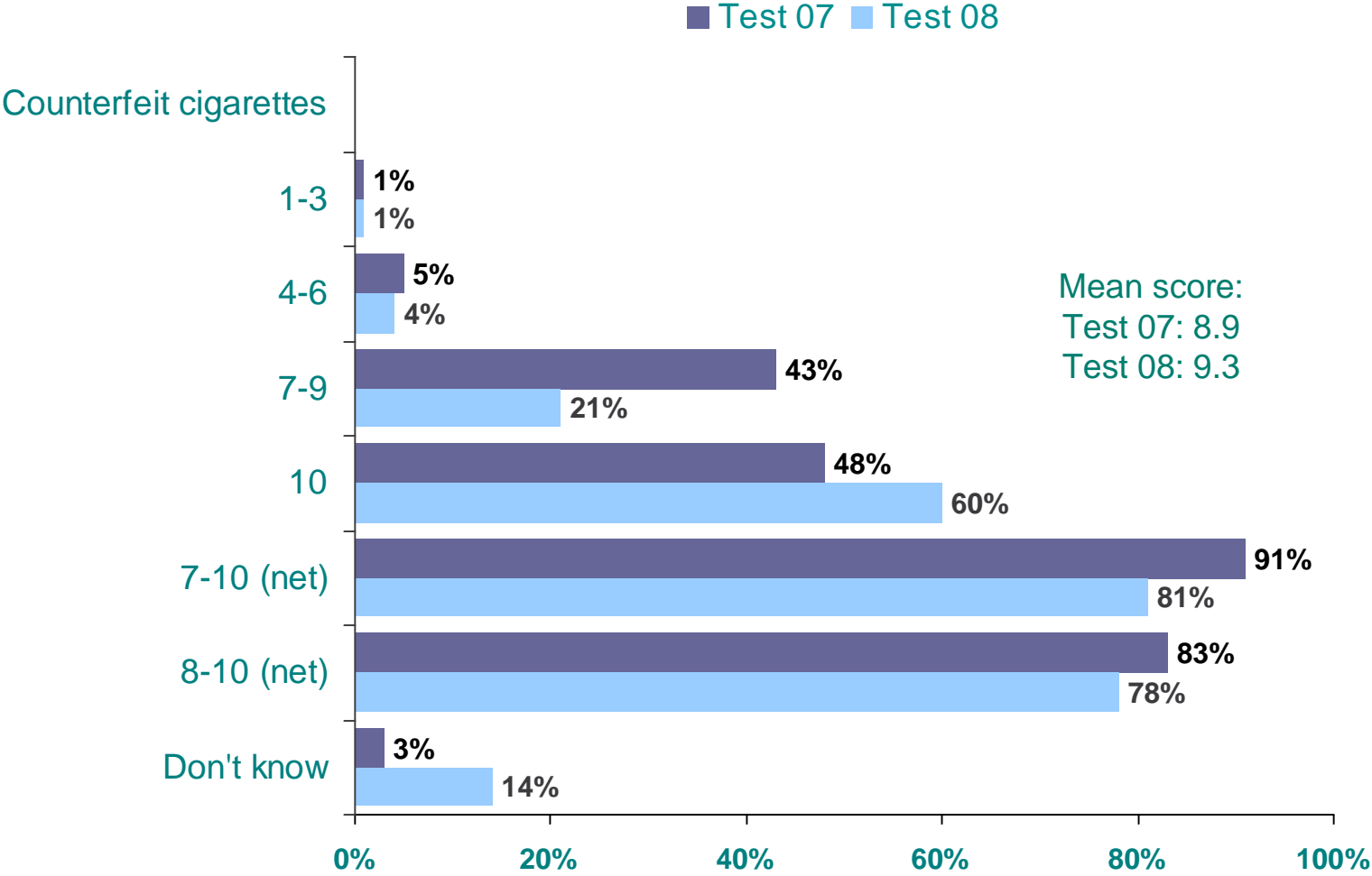
Base : All respondents 212/ 416

# Rating for how dangerous for health regular cigarettes are



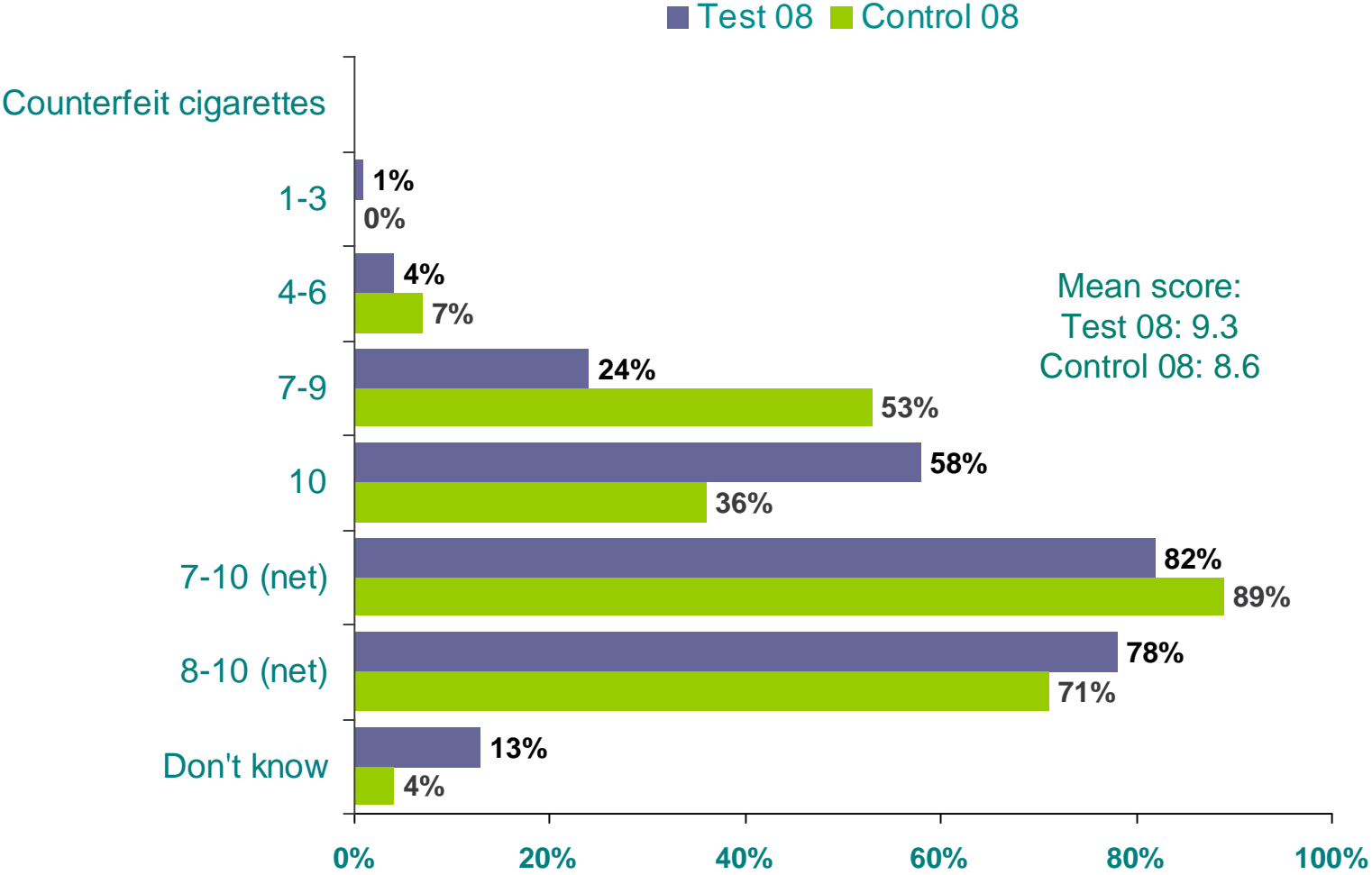
Base : All respondents 813 / 213

# Rating for how dangerous for health counterfeit cigarettes are



Base : All respondents 212/ 416

# Rating for how dangerous for health counterfeit cigarettes are



Base : All respondents 813 / 213

# Summary

## Awareness of and attitudes to dangers of counterfeit cigarettes

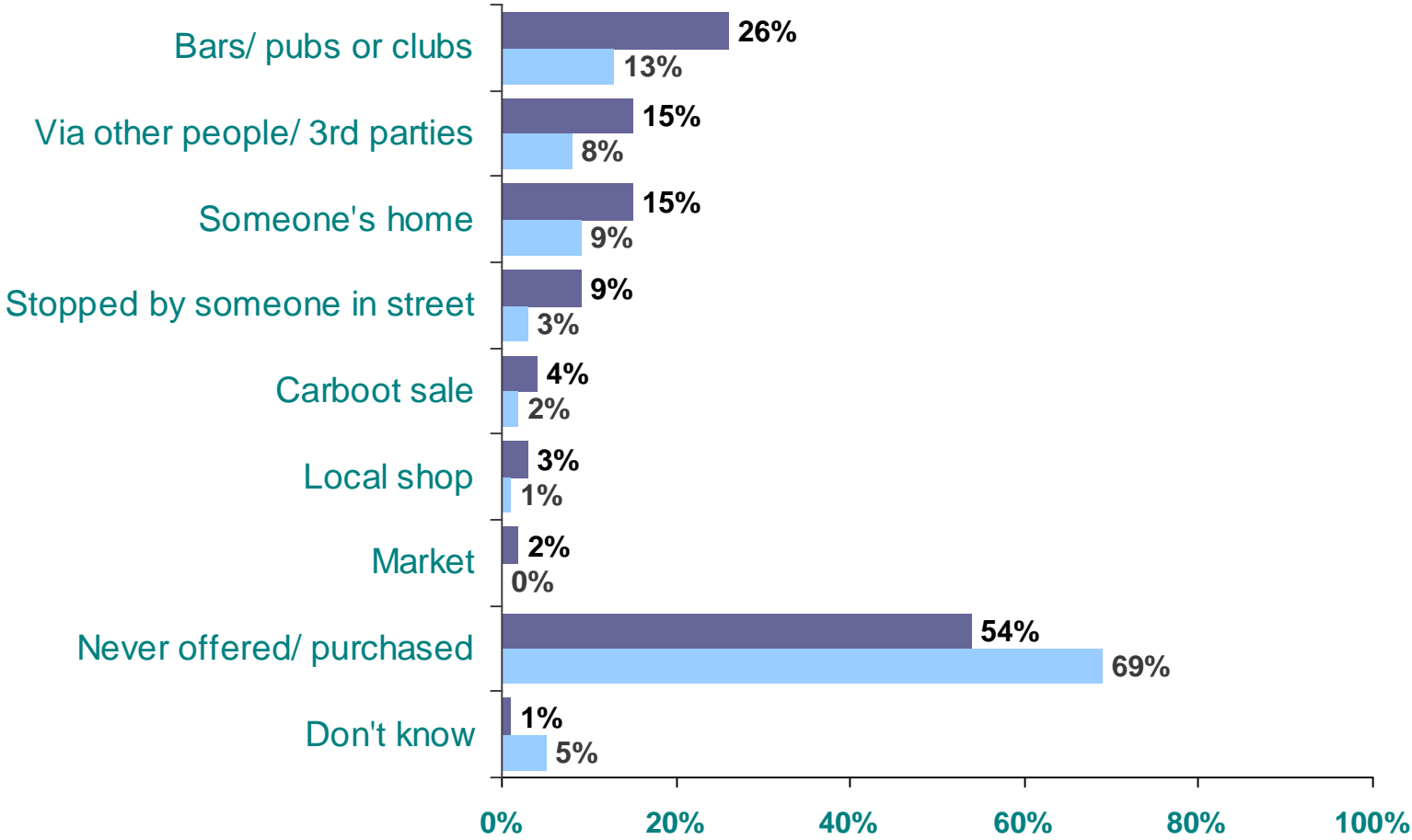
- Analysis of spontaneous and total awareness of the dangers of counterfeit cigarettes and attitudes to counterfeit cigarettes would indicate that the campaign has had some success in filtering through messages
- However, compared to 2007, respondents were less likely to spontaneously mention the dangers of counterfeit cigarettes, or be aware of them at a total level
  - A lower campaign spend level compared to the target may be responsible for this
  - Respondents were seeing/ hearing ads, but perhaps not as frequently, resulting in a lower message recall
- Levels in Birmingham were as high or higher than in 2007 indicating that there may have been some campaign 'hotspots', and radio spend was higher in Birmingham
- Over half said that counterfeit cigarettes are so much cheaper people can't afford not to buy them, but this was lower than in 2007. However, agreement was also lower at around half that counterfeit cigarettes can be more likely to cause cancer than regular cigarettes
- Respondents in test areas were slightly more likely to rate both regular and counterfeit cigarettes as more dangerous than respondents in the control area

Exposure/ purchase and attitudes  
towards 'cheap' cigarettes

# Where been offered/ purchased cheap cigarettes

All test 2008

Offered Purchased

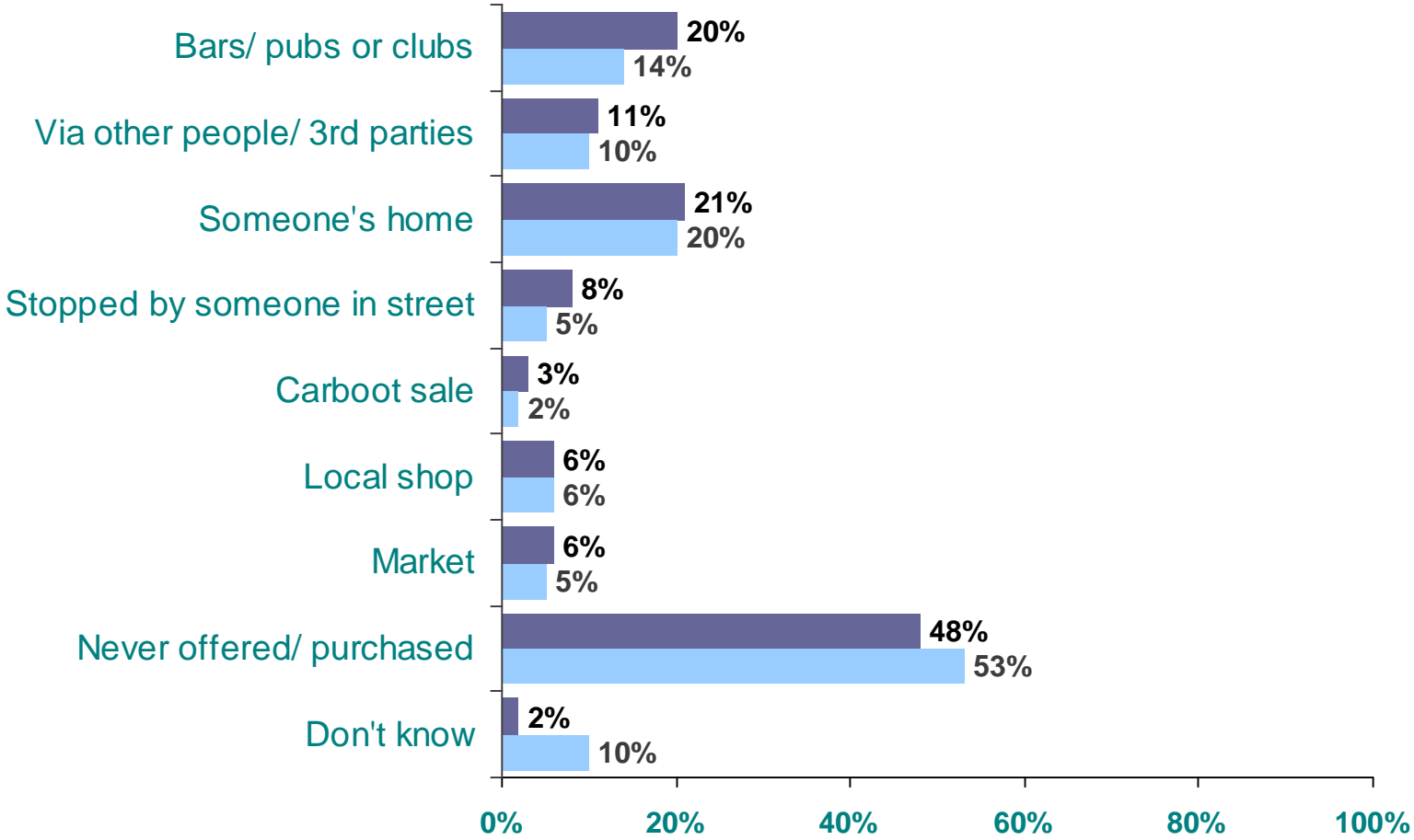


Base : All respondents / 813

# Where been offered/ purchased cheap cigarettes

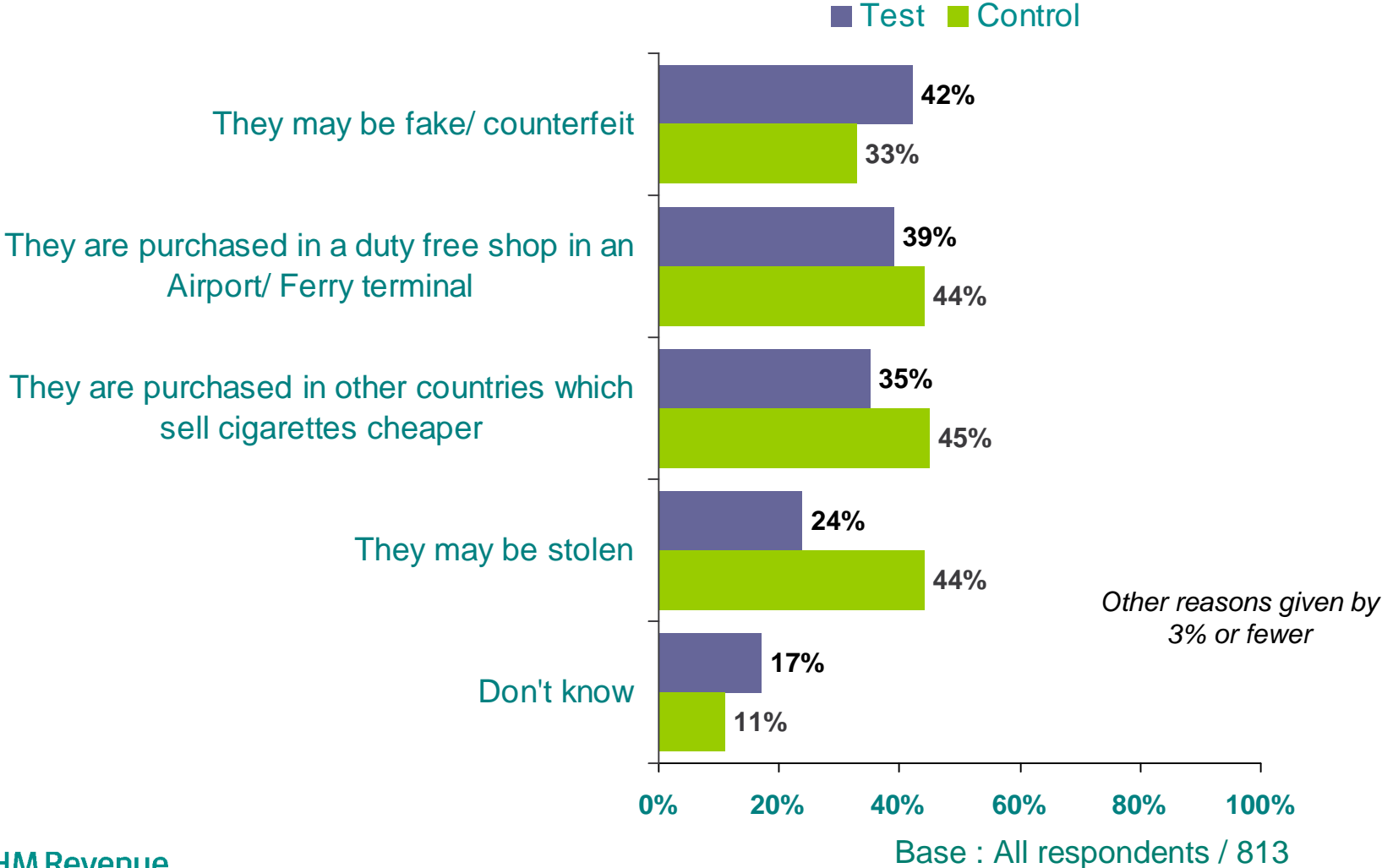
All control 2008

■ Offered ■ Purchased



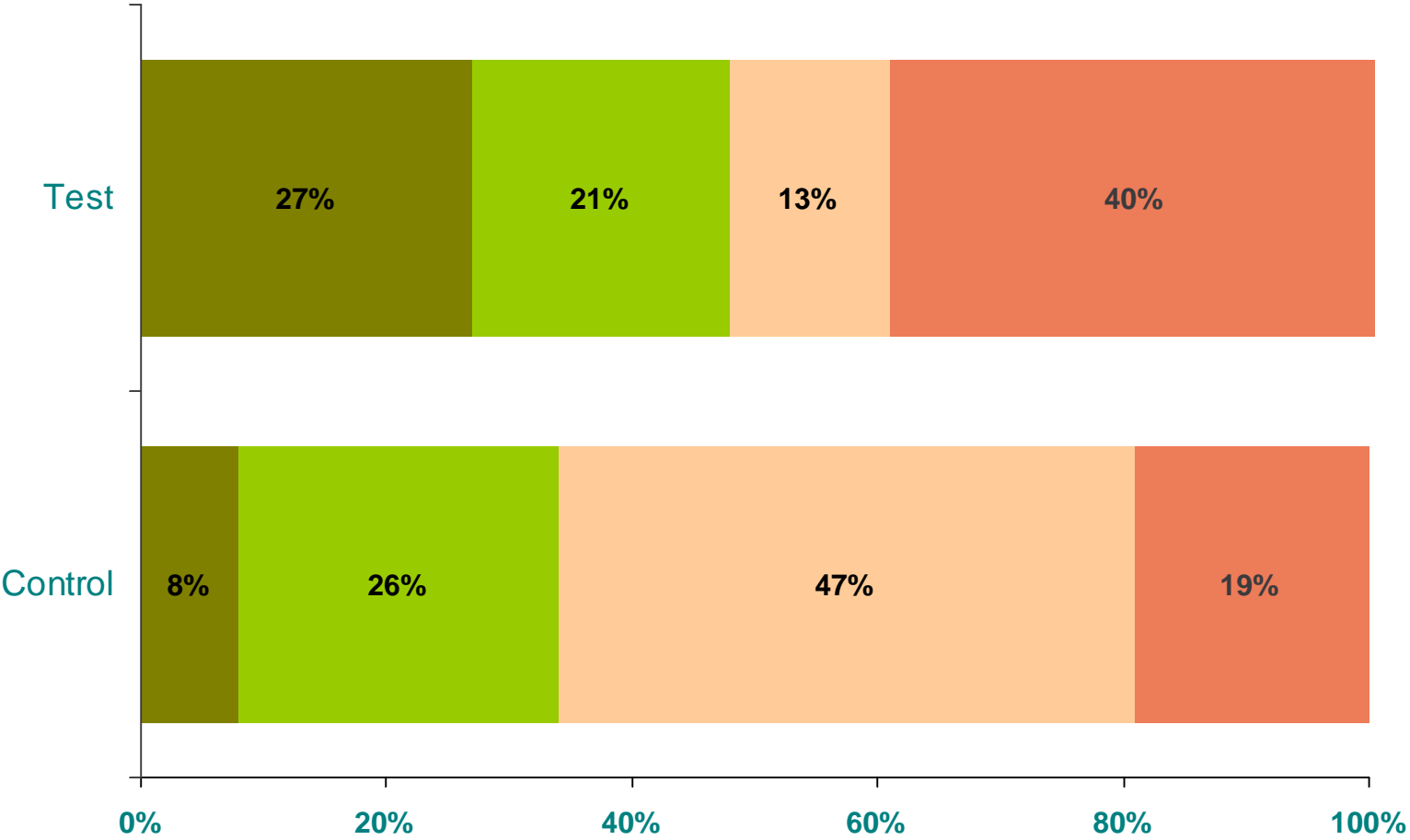
Base : All respondents / 213

# Why cigarettes can be cheaper to buy



# Whether difference between duty free and counterfeit cigarettes

■ Great deal of difference ■ Some difference ■ No difference ■ Don't know



*NB: test respondents had been exposed to campaign materials*

# Differences between duty free and counterfeit

## Test

Duty free are proper/ normal cigarettes/ same as those sold in shops/ same as normal just no tax to be paid – 22%  
Legality/ counterfeit aren't legal – 11%

Counterfeit are harmful/  
more harmful (net) – 57%

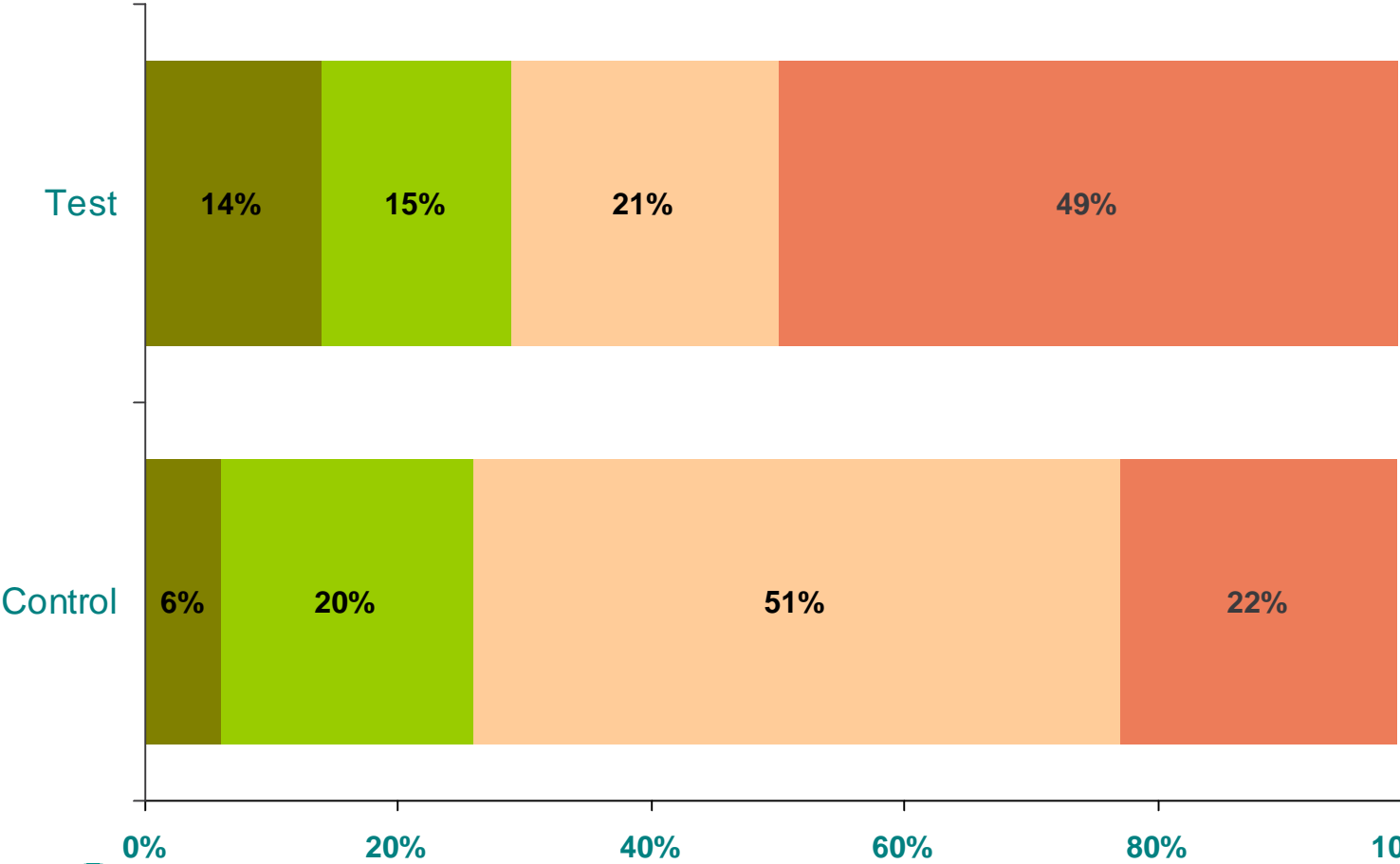
Counterfeit more harmful/ worse for you (12%)  
Counterfeit are harsh/ not a smooth smoke/  
extra coughing (11%)  
Toxicity/ counterfeit contain more toxic/  
harmful substances (9%)  
More chemicals in counterfeit (6%)  
Counterfeit are full of rubbish (6%)  
Counterfeit taste nasty/ nasty taste (6%)  
More dangerous/ counterfeit are more  
dangerous (5%)  
The smell (2%)

Other differences (net)  
– 31%

Counterfeit are stronger/ stronger tasting  
(10%)  
Contents/ what's in them (8%)  
Counterfeit are fake (6%)  
They taste different (6%)  
Counterfeit are made abroad/ come from  
different countries (2%)  
The price (6%)

# Whether difference between smuggled cigarettes (from countries where they can be cheaper to buy) and counterfeit cigarettes

■ Great deal of difference ■ Some difference ■ No difference ■ Don't know



*NB: test respondents had been exposed to campaign materials*

# Differences between smuggled and counterfeit

## Test

Smuggled are proper/ normal cigarettes/ same as those sold in shops/ same as normal just no tax to be paid – 9%  
Legality/ counterfeit aren't legal – 4%

Counterfeit are harmful/  
not as good (net) – 54%

Counterfeit more harmful/ worse for you (9%)  
(Counterfeit are harsh/ not a smooth smoke/  
extra coughing (10%)  
Toxicity/ counterfeit contain more toxic/  
harmful substances (13%)  
More chemicals in counterfeit (8%)  
Counterfeit are full of rubbish (8%)  
Counterfeit taste nasty/ nasty taste (4%)  
More dangerous/ counterfeit are more  
dangerous (3%)  
Quality/ counterfeit aren't as good (4%)  
The smell (1%)

Other differences (net)  
– 36%

Counterfeit are stronger/ stronger tasting  
(13%)  
Contents/ what's in them (6%)  
Counterfeit are fake (5%)  
They taste different (6%)  
The price (7%)  
Counterfeit contain cheap tobacco (1%)  
Contents/ whats in them (6%)

# Summary

## Exposure, purchase and attitudes towards 'cheap' cigarettes

- As expected exposure to 'cheap' cigarettes was widespread. Half of respondents in the test areas claimed to have been offered 'cheap' cigarettes to purchase, and one third said that they had bought them
- Bars, pubs and clubs and via a third party or at someone's home were the places where respondents were most likely either to be offered or to purchase
- The campaign has been somewhat effective in improving the understanding of what 'cheap cigarettes' may be. A greater proportion in the test areas (who had an opportunity to see the campaign and had been shown the materials) said that they may be cheap because they are counterfeit. However, this was a minority of respondents
- In addition, those in test areas (who had an opportunity to see the campaign and had been shown the materials), were less likely to say that there was 'no difference' between counterfeit cigarettes and either duty free or smuggled cigarettes
- Around half of respondents in the control area thought this was the case

# Overall summaries and conclusions

# Success in meeting research objectives

- Raising advertising awareness
  - Advertising awareness was raised in campaign areas, indicating that the campaign did cut through. However, levels were not as strong as in 2007, which may be due to lower spend
- Advertising attribution
  - There were good levels of advertising attribution to campaign media – radio, bus and leaflet, and this was higher in campaign areas. TV was also mentioned strongly, but this is likely to be misattribution rather than recall of PR. However, there will be some element correctly recalling a story on TV
- Awareness of dangers of counterfeit cigarettes
  - Messages about the dangers cut through – with higher awareness in the campaign areas. However, as with advertising awareness, this was not as strong as in 2007, and a majority say that counterfeit cigarettes are so cheap they can't afford not to buy them

# Success in meeting research objectives

- Campaign recognition and attitudes
  - Around two in five recognised at least one campaign element, and this was similar to 2007. The campaign has been effective at reaching out in each of the areas
  - Attitudes towards the campaign were strong
- Propensity to call Customs Confidential
  - There was a higher propensity than in 2007 for calling Customs Confidential, however, only a minority would be happy to do so
- Around a third in test areas said that they would give up smoking in the long term, and around a quarter said that they would contact the NHS smoking line

## Conclusions and recommendations

- As in 2007, the campaign has been effective in generating awareness about counterfeit cigarettes and has improved understanding about their potential dangers
- However, a lower spend over the area has meant that although recognition levels are comparable with 2007, because respondents may have had less of a chance to see/ hear the campaign more than once, top of mind awareness and impact on attitudes have not been shifted to the same extent
- As in 2007, respondents claimed that the campaign would influence their behaviour, however, a majority said that counterfeit cigarettes were so cheap they couldn't afford to not buy them, indicating that, ultimately, behaviours may be difficult to shift. There was also a substantial minority who claimed that they were not concerned about the effect of smoking on their health
- A high proportion of respondents would have been exposed to or have purchased counterfeit cigarettes as 'cheap cigarettes', and there was a lack of knowledge, even when having seen the campaign materials about what the difference may be between duty free or smuggled cigarettes and counterfeit
  - Perhaps a future campaign could focus on these messages