

Perception of the risk of COVID-19 and governments' responses to it

Report for Ireland

Quick summary points:

- Irish people's view of their government's response over the past few weeks is generally that the response has been about right in terms of restrictions (slightly skewed towards wanting more). In most countries participants had been stronger in their feelings of wanting more restrictive action, but this may reflect the timing of the survey as the Irish is later into the response than many of the other European surveys and people may be seeing the effects of restrictions more clearly now.
- People in Ireland rate their experience of financial difficulties mid-level. Considering the timing of the survey it would seem that the financial impacts are in line with those seen in many other countries for the point in the pandemic (but lower than those experienced in Japan, S Korea and Mexico given the timing of their surveys). Reported difficulties with mental health (such as anxiety) are also relatively low in Europe compared with the Asian countries, with Ireland in line with other European countries.
- Participants in Ireland rated their understanding of the government strategy, and feeling of having enough information from the government to take action themselves, as relatively high compared with those in most other European countries (again this may to some extent reflect increasing understanding over time as UK participants show increases over March and April).
- Irish participants expressed higher views than those in other European countries about the effectiveness of the official response in Ireland, and about the effectiveness of their own actions. They also reported hearing similar amounts of messaging from different sources as those in other European countries, except higher levels of having seen official posters. Trust in official information and journalistic information is relatively high.
- Actions that people have taken are broadly similar to those in other European countries (with face mask use higher than in the UK or Germany at the times of their surveys).

The survey in Ireland was funded by Science Foundation Ireland and carried out between 24th-30th April 2020.

The survey was carried out in each country on a population representative of the country on gender and age (but not socio-economic status, politics or education).

In France, the survey was of 3,000 people and run by the University of Bordeaux.

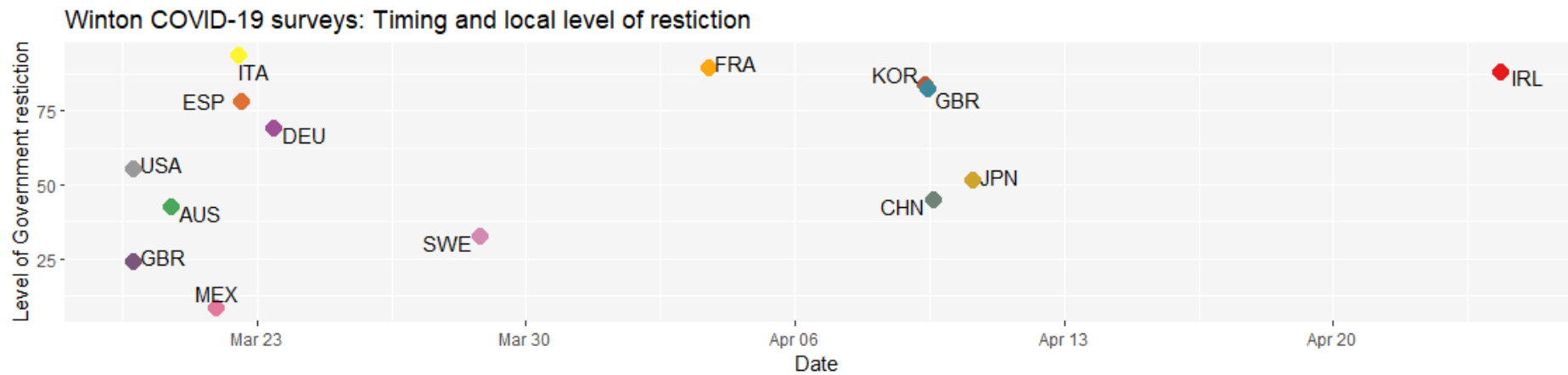
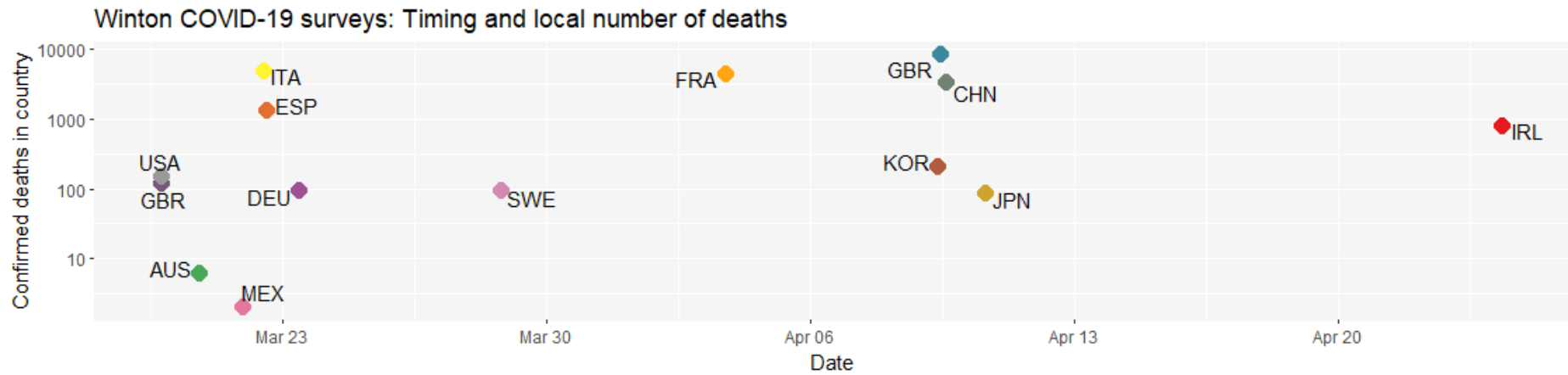
In the UK the first survey in March was of 700 but this was followed in April with two surveys of 1050 people each through two different polling companies (Prolific and Respondi). In all other countries the sample was of 700 people.

Survey run in Japan in collaboration with the University of Tokyo, in Sweden with Lund University

All others run by the Winton Centre for Risk & Evidence Communication, University of Cambridge, UK.

Dates surveys run:

Country	Dates of survey	Reported deaths in country at that time
UK	19 th March	103
	9 th -11 th April	8,958
US	19 th -21 st March (mostly on 19 th)	260
Australia	20 th & 23 rd March	7
Germany	23-24 th March	126
Italy	22 nd -24 th March	6,077
Mexico	21 st -27 th March	8
Spain	22 nd -25 th March	2,696
Sweden	28 th -30 th March	110
France	3 rd -8 th April	10,328
China	9 th -10 th April	3,340
Korea	9 th -11 th April	208
Japan	10 th -12 th April	98
Ireland	24 th -30 th April	1,190



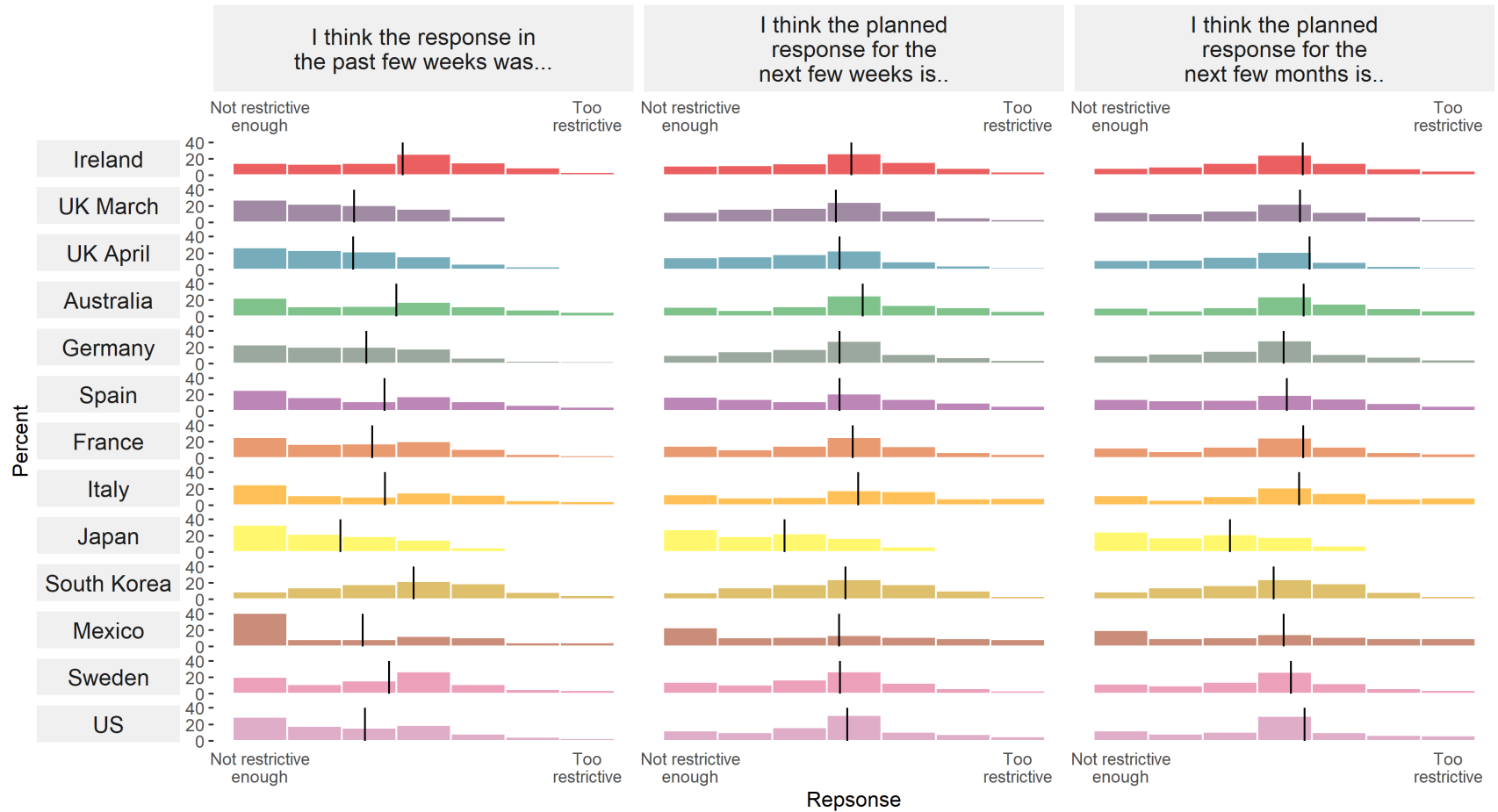
Data from Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT)

The charts above show a) The countries relative to each other in terms of the number of deaths from coronavirus they had suffered at the time of the surveys, b) The relative levels of governmental restriction in place at the time of the surveys (data from University of Oxford).

Perceptions of the government's response

Irish people's view of their government's response over the past few weeks is generally that the restrictions have been about right. The positioning of their feelings about the future as around the centre point could indicate a lack of knowledge about future plans/effects.

What do you think of the planned response from the government in the country you are living in?



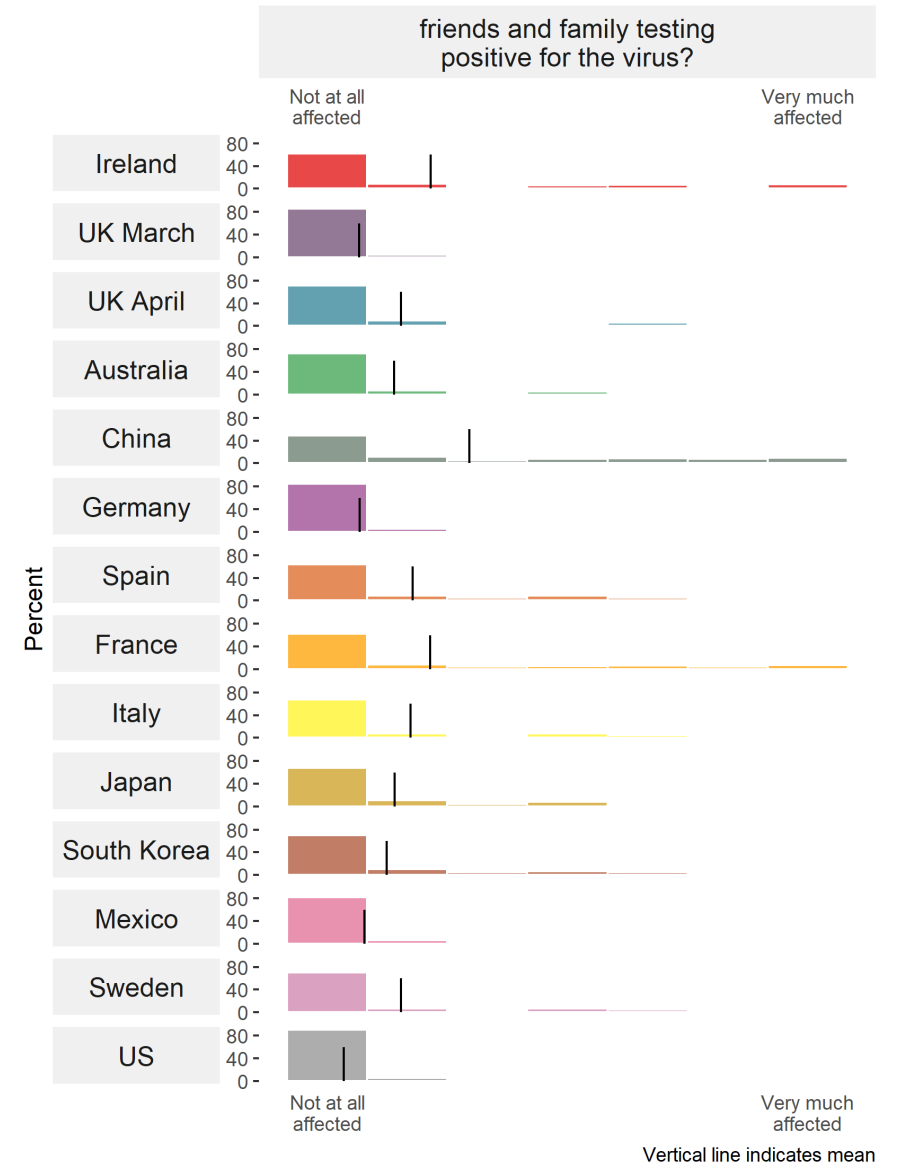
'Don't knows' not shown; vertical line indicates mean

Experience in relation to the virus

People's personal experience of the virus in terms of friends and family testing positive was reflects numbers per country at the time (e.g. growing between the two UK surveys). Participants in China reported the highest experience. The intensity of testing regimes will also affect this number.

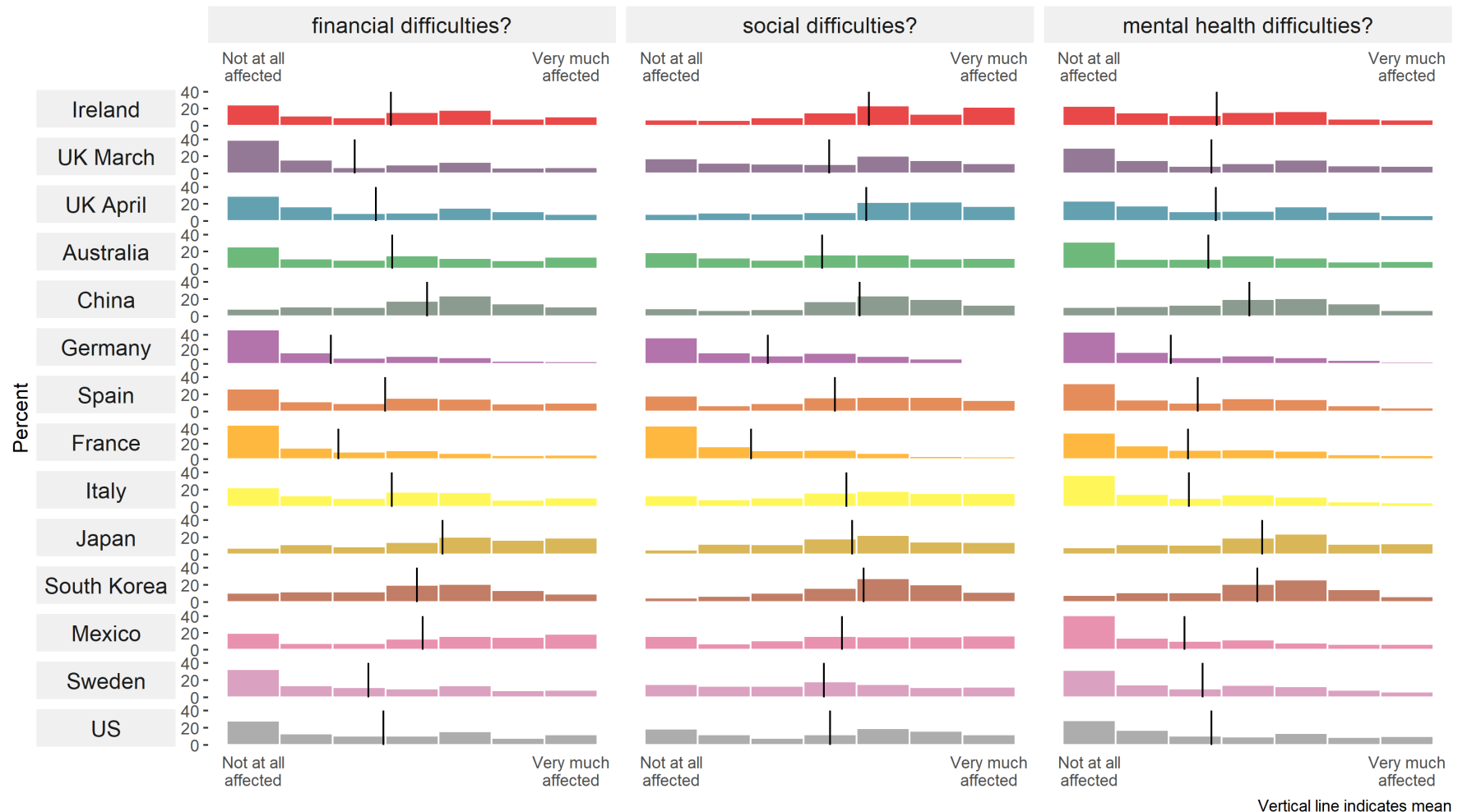
Experiences of financial, social and mental health consequences are shown on the next page.

To what extent have you experienced...



Ireland is approximately in line with the UK on the difficulties people have experienced as a result of the pandemic – we see these effects increasing over the time since the pandemic measures were taken in each country. However, it is still noticeable how low people in France and Germany rate their experience of financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic compared with Spain, Australia, Asian countries and Mexico. Reported difficulties with mental health (such as anxiety) are also relatively low in Europe compared with the Asian countries and we see less of an increase in these over time in the UK.

To what extent have you experienced...

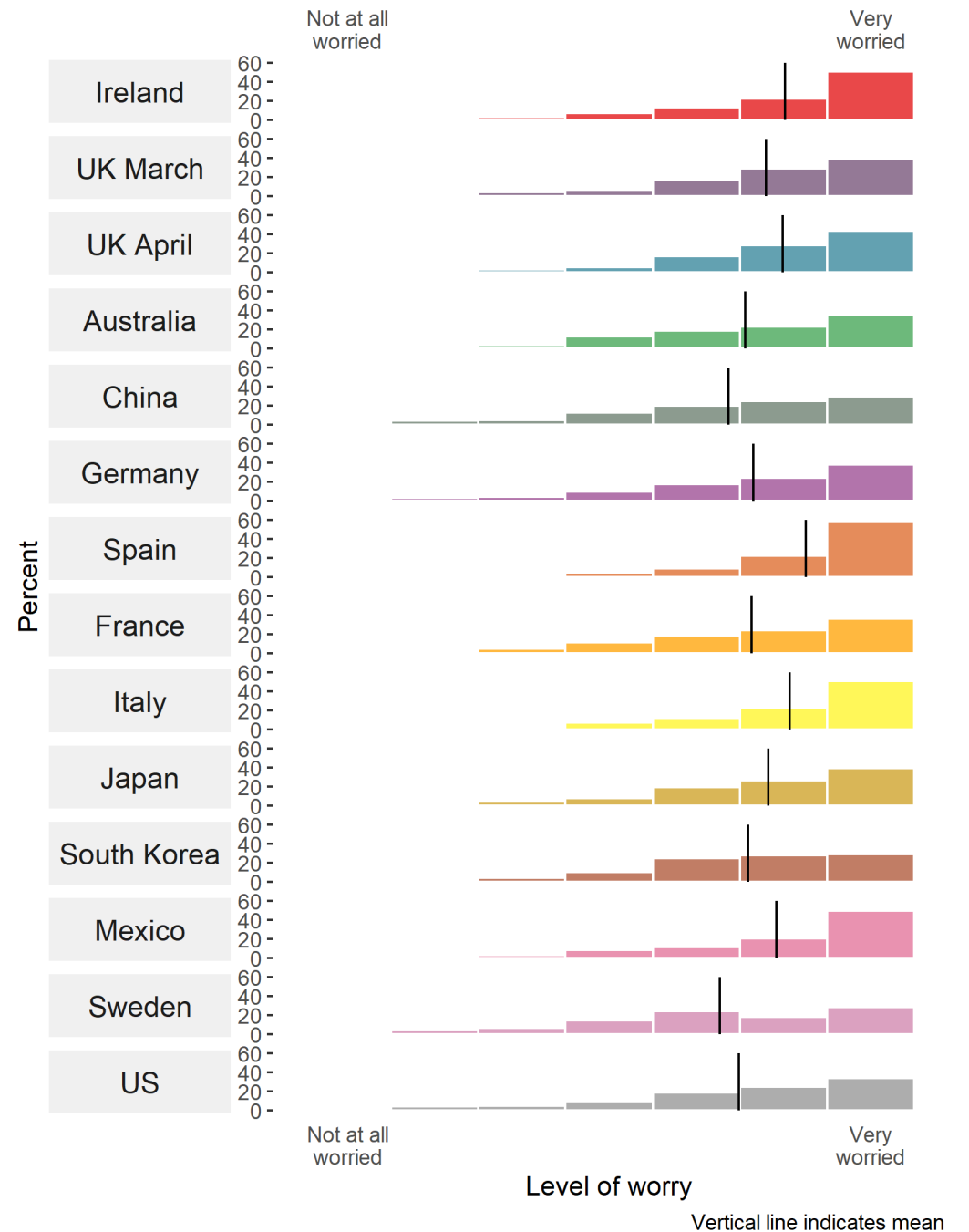


Levels of worry

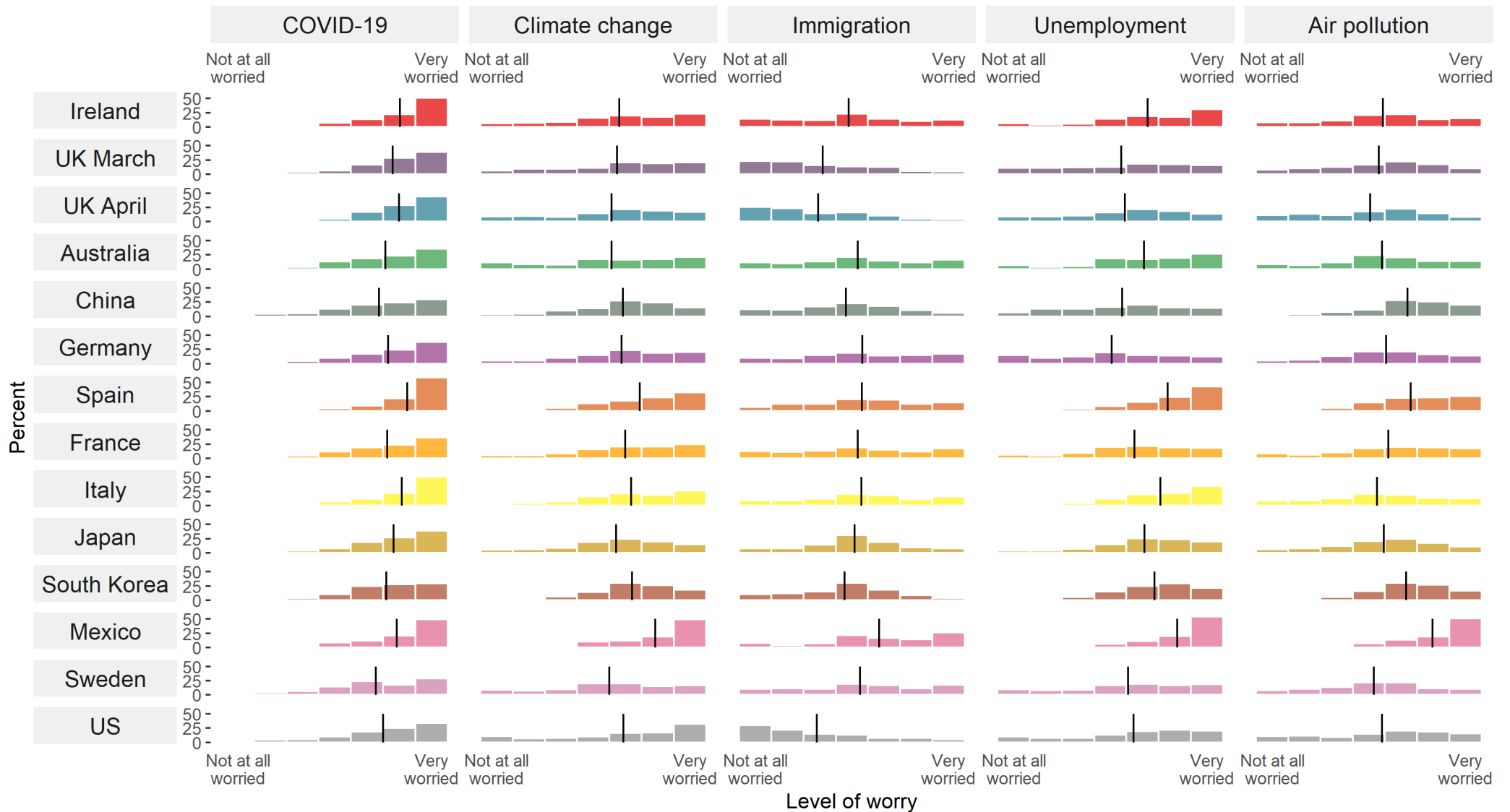
When asked how worried they were about the coronavirus, the level of concern in Ireland was similar to that seen in the UK during the April survey – a level that is relatively high.

Coronavirus appears to be a leading concern at the moment in Ireland, though, as it is in most countries (see next page):

How worried are you personally about Coronavirus?



How worried are you personally about the following issues at present?

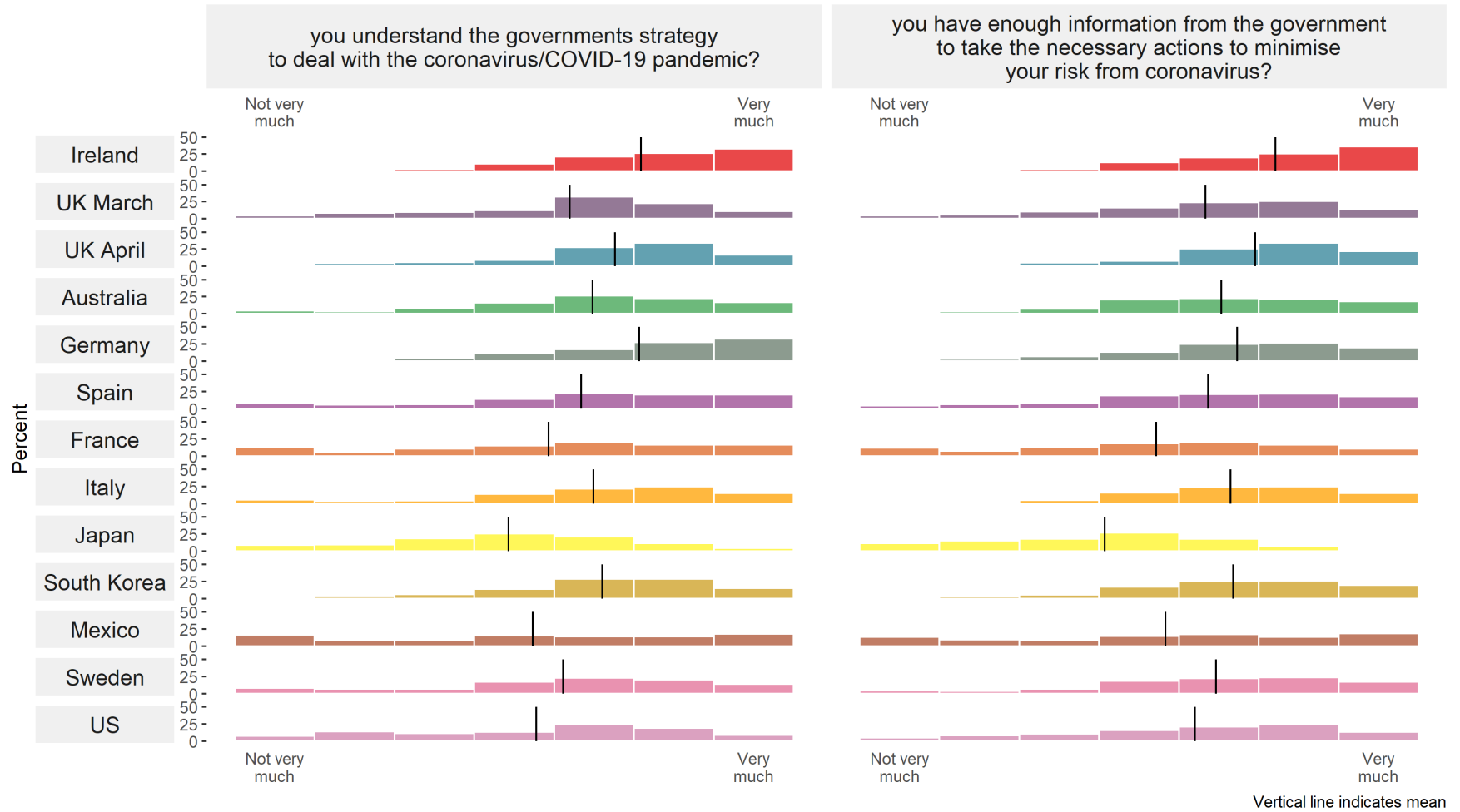


Vertical line indicates mean

Feeling of being informed and understanding of coronavirus

Participants in Ireland rated their understanding of the government strategy as relatively high compared with those in other countries, and their feeling of having enough information from the government to take action themselves appears to be the highest.

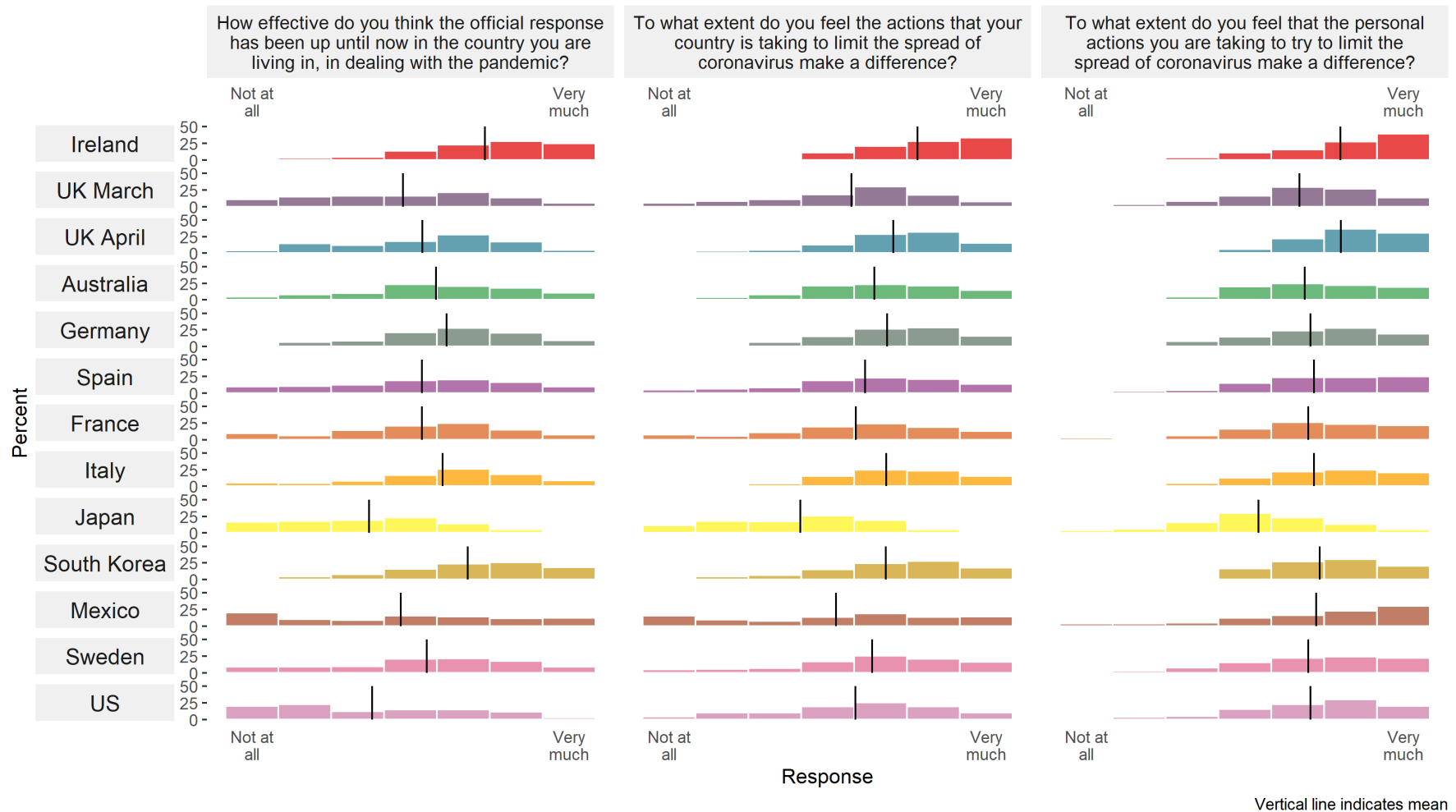
How much do you feel...



Feelings about the effectiveness of the government's and their own actions against the pandemic

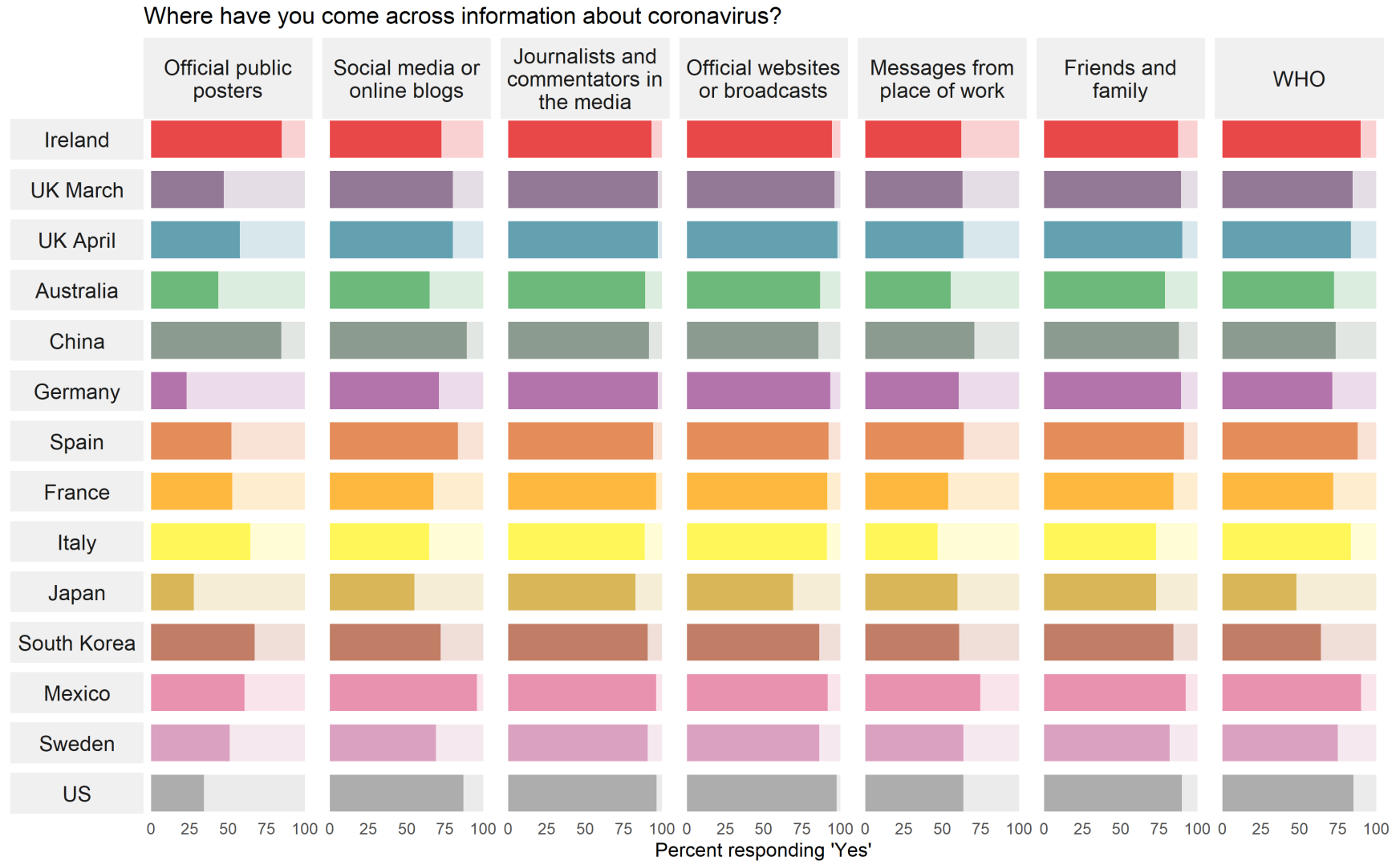
Irish participants expressed a high opinion of the effectiveness of the official response in Ireland, and had high feelings of the efficacy of both the country's actions and about the effectiveness of their own actions. This again may reflect the timing of the survey compared with the epidemic as people are beginning to see effects.

Personal and collective efficacy



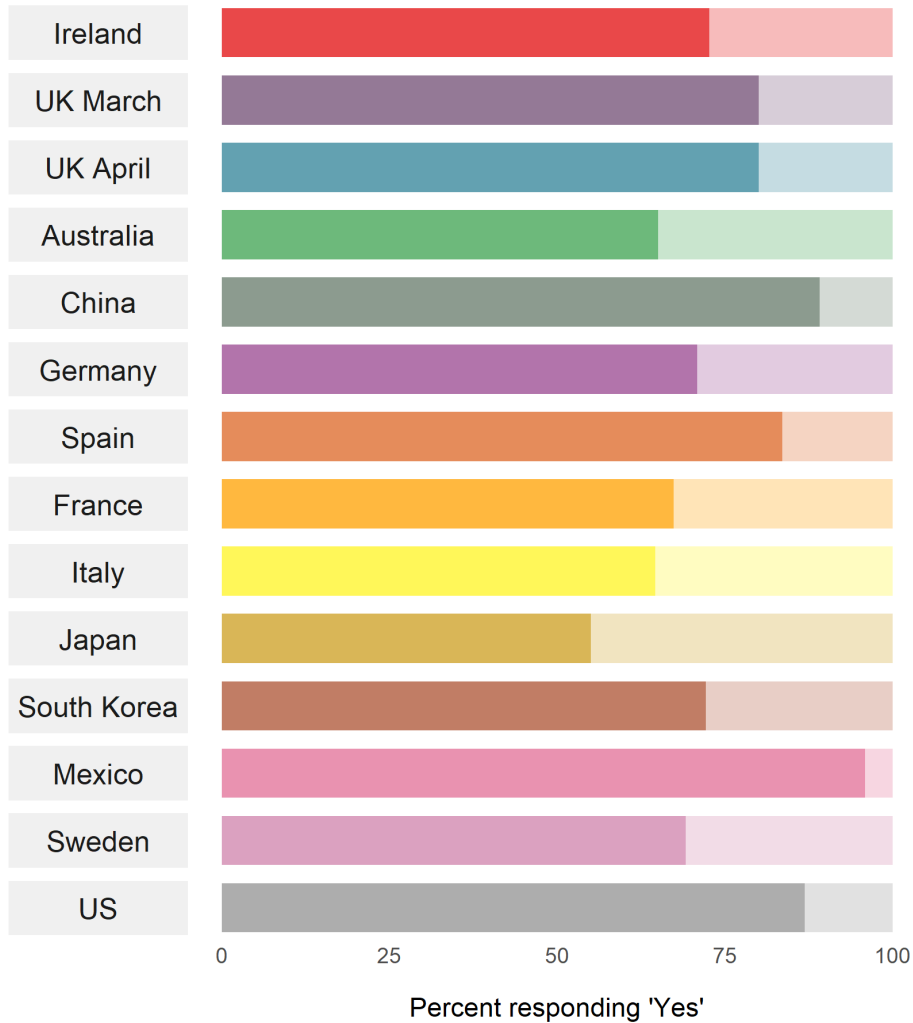
Where are people getting their information from?

Irish respondents reported similar amounts of messaging from different sources as those in other European countries except in having seen more official public posters.

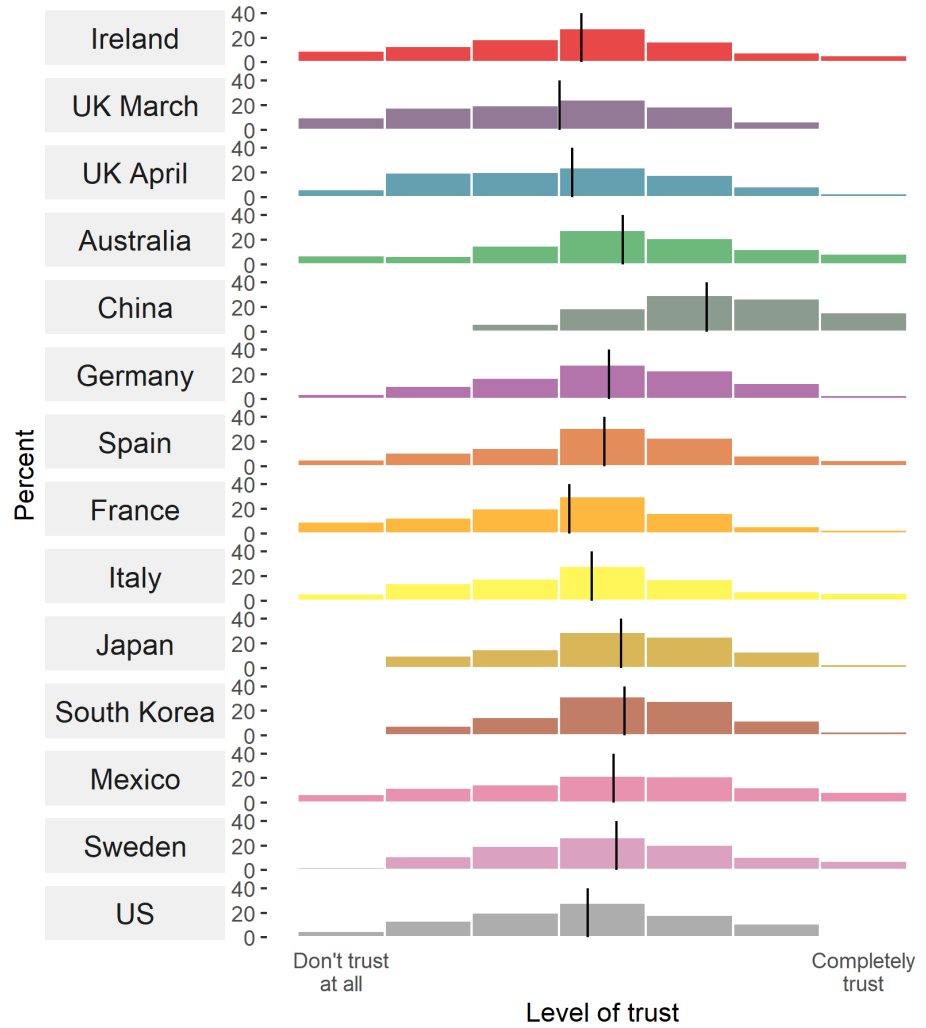


Out of those who see information about the virus on social media, trust in that information is middling:

Have you come across information about coronavirus from social media or online blogs from individuals?



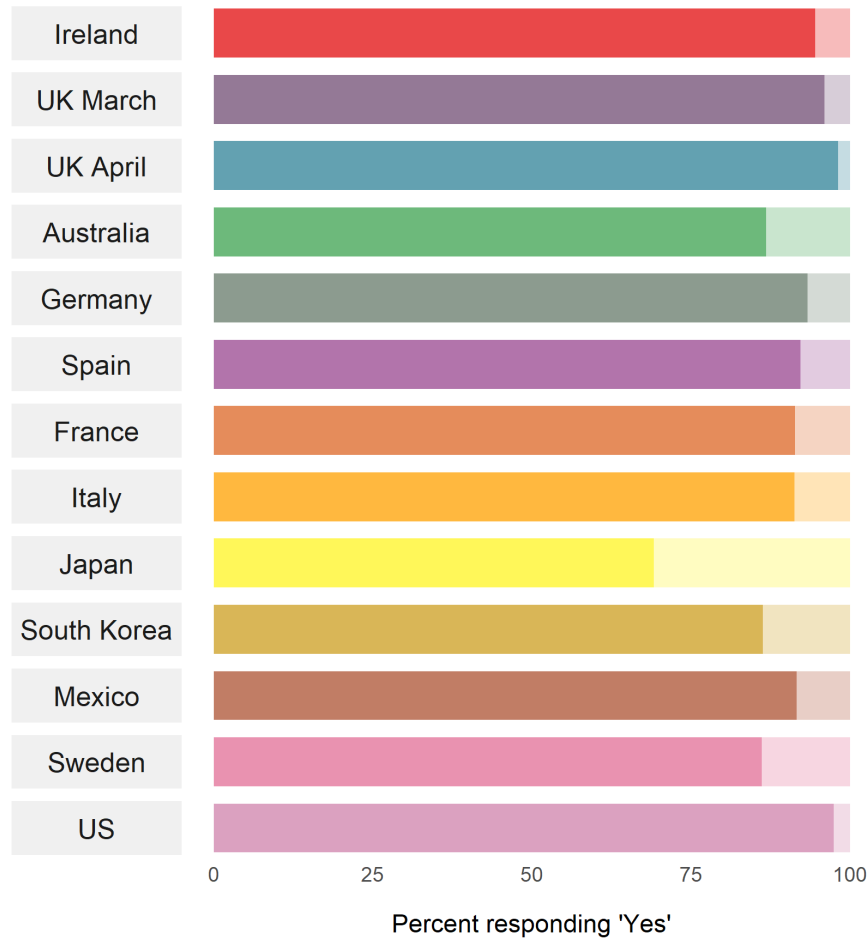
How much do you trust the information you see about coronavirus on social media?



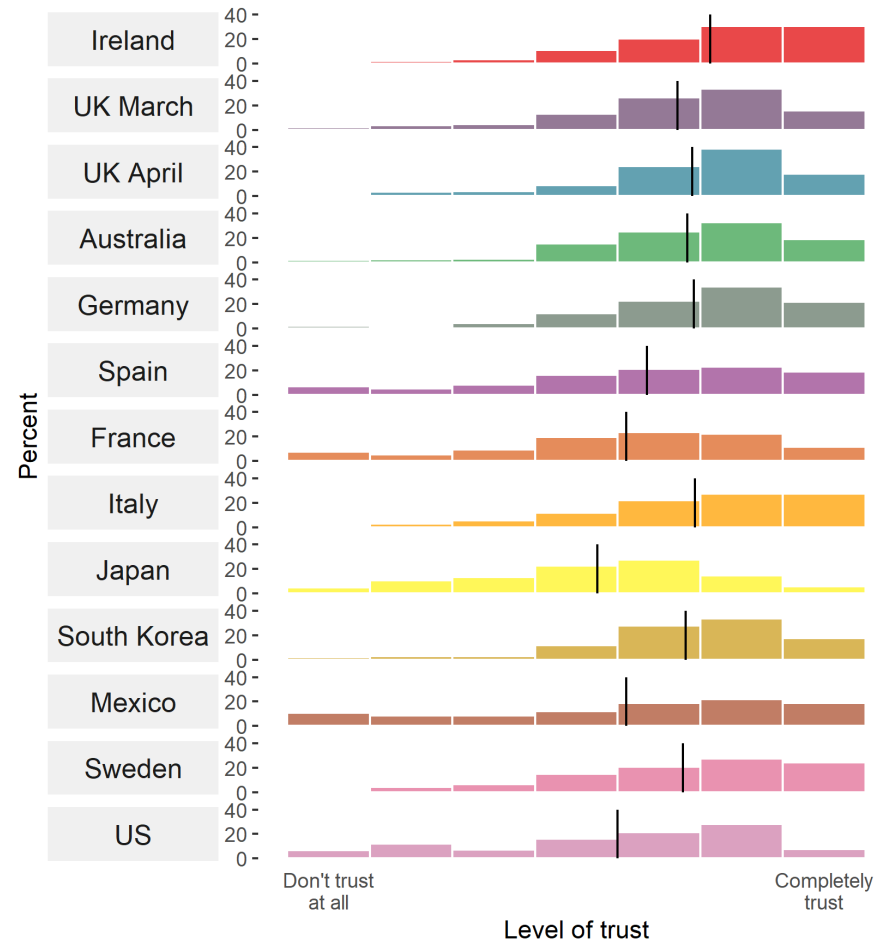
Among those who have seen information on social media; vertical line indicates mean

The government is perhaps trusted a little more in Ireland as a source of information than in many other European countries:

Have you come across information about coronavirus from Government or official sources such as websites or public speeches/broadcasts?

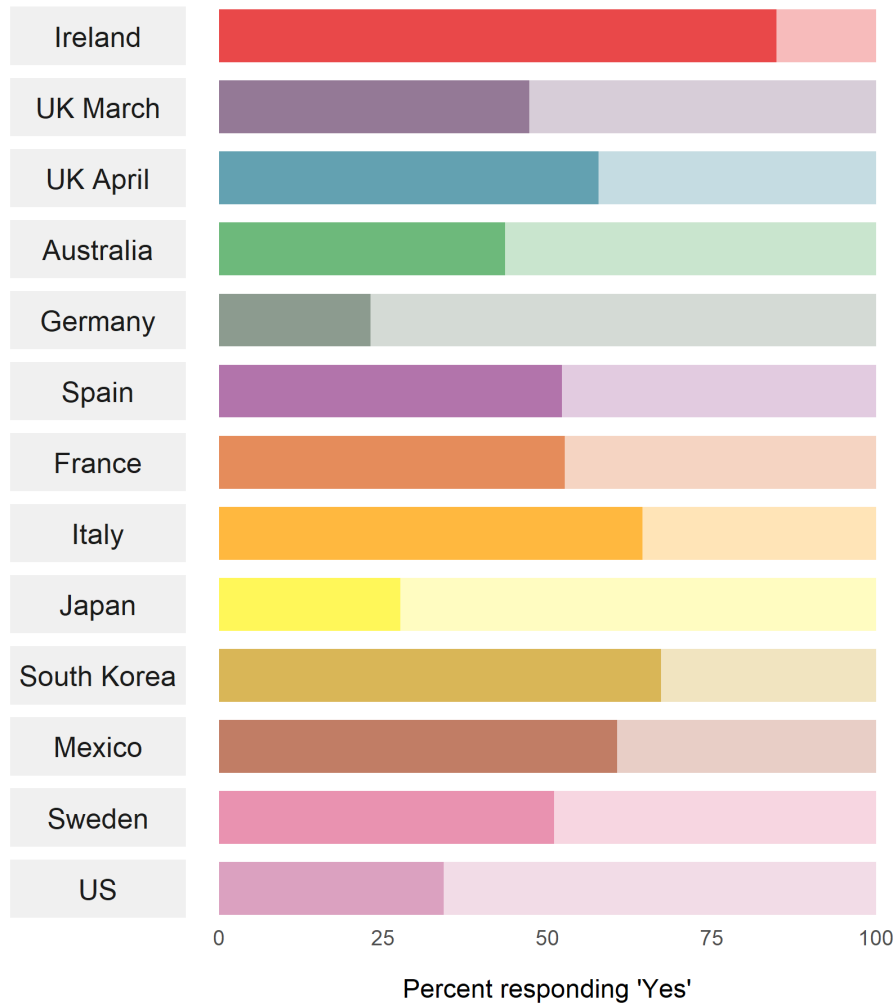


How much do you trust the information you see about coronavirus from Government or official sources?

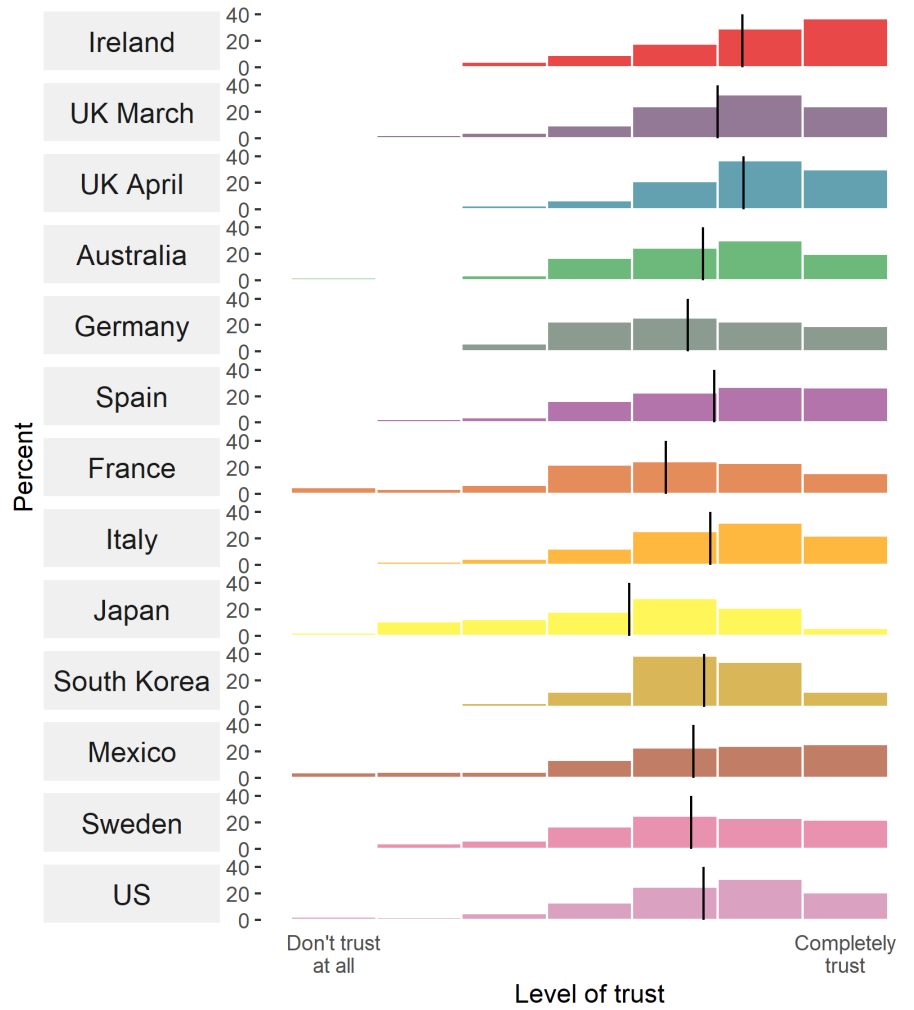


Among those who have seen information from Government; vertical line indicates mean

Have you come across information about coronavirus from official public posters?



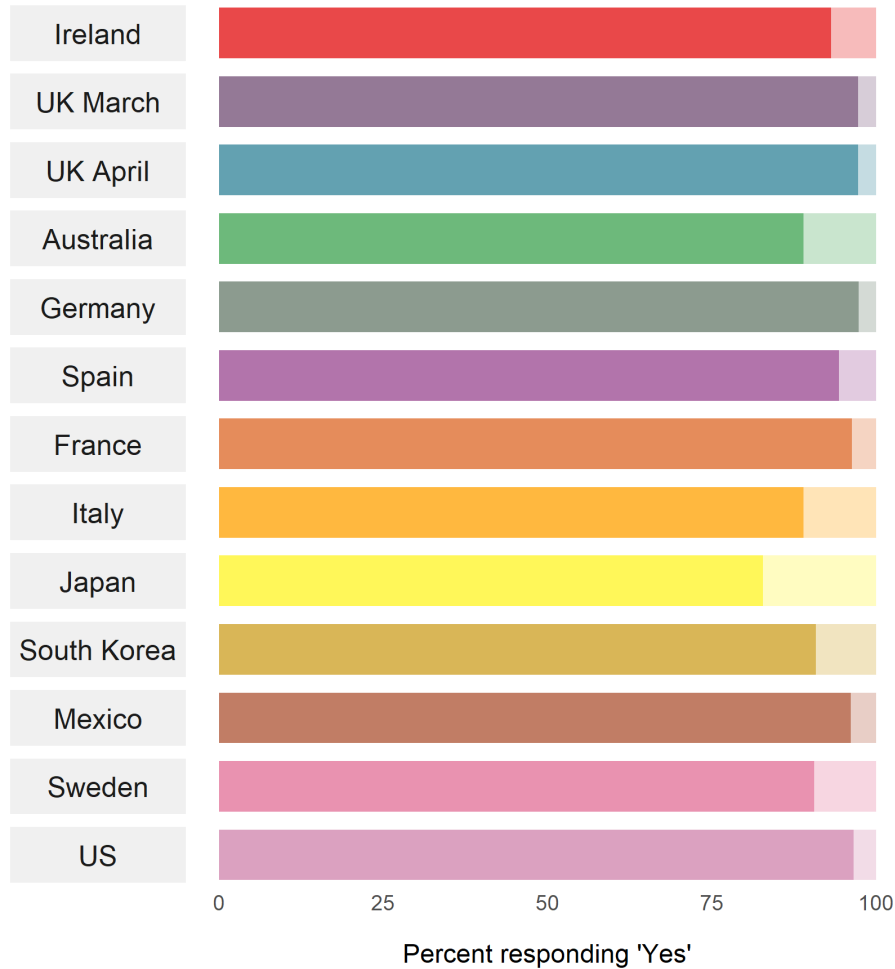
How much do you trust the information you see about coronavirus on public posters?



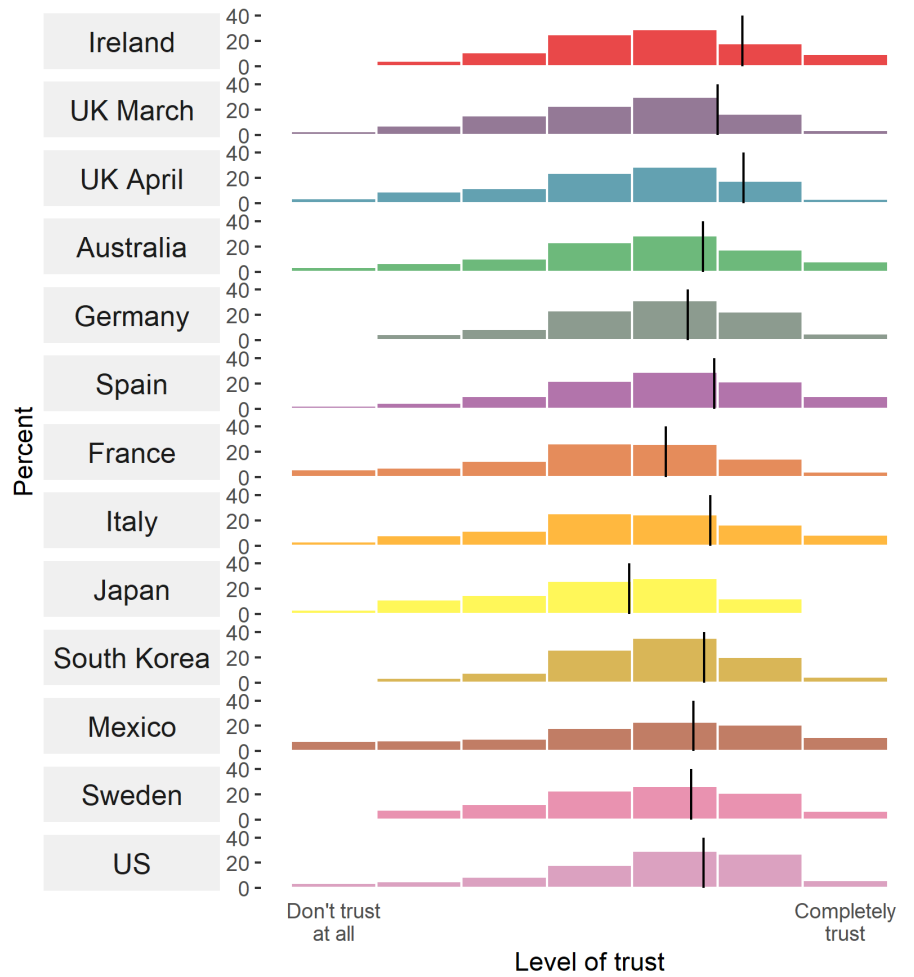
Among those who have seen information on posters; vertical line indicates mean

Journalists' reports on the virus are well trusted:

Have you come across information about coronavirus from journalists and commentators in the media?



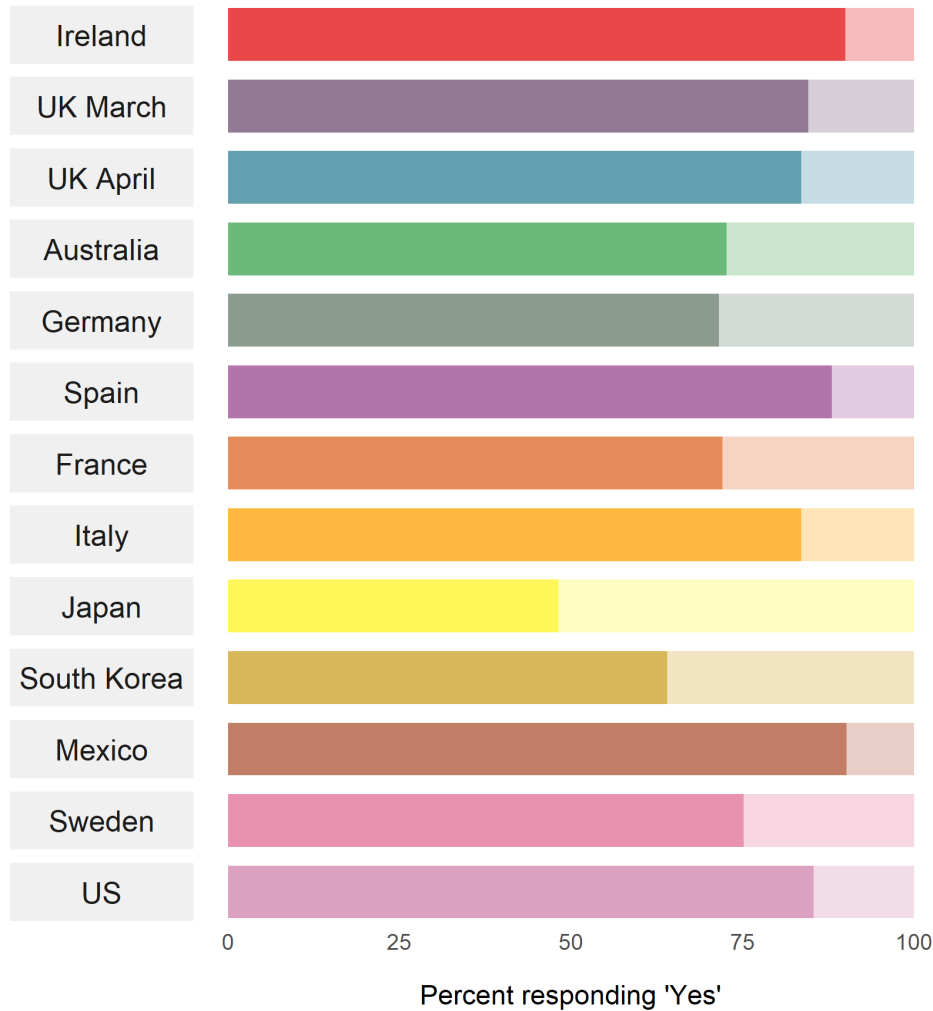
How much do you trust the information you see about coronavirus from journalists and commentators?



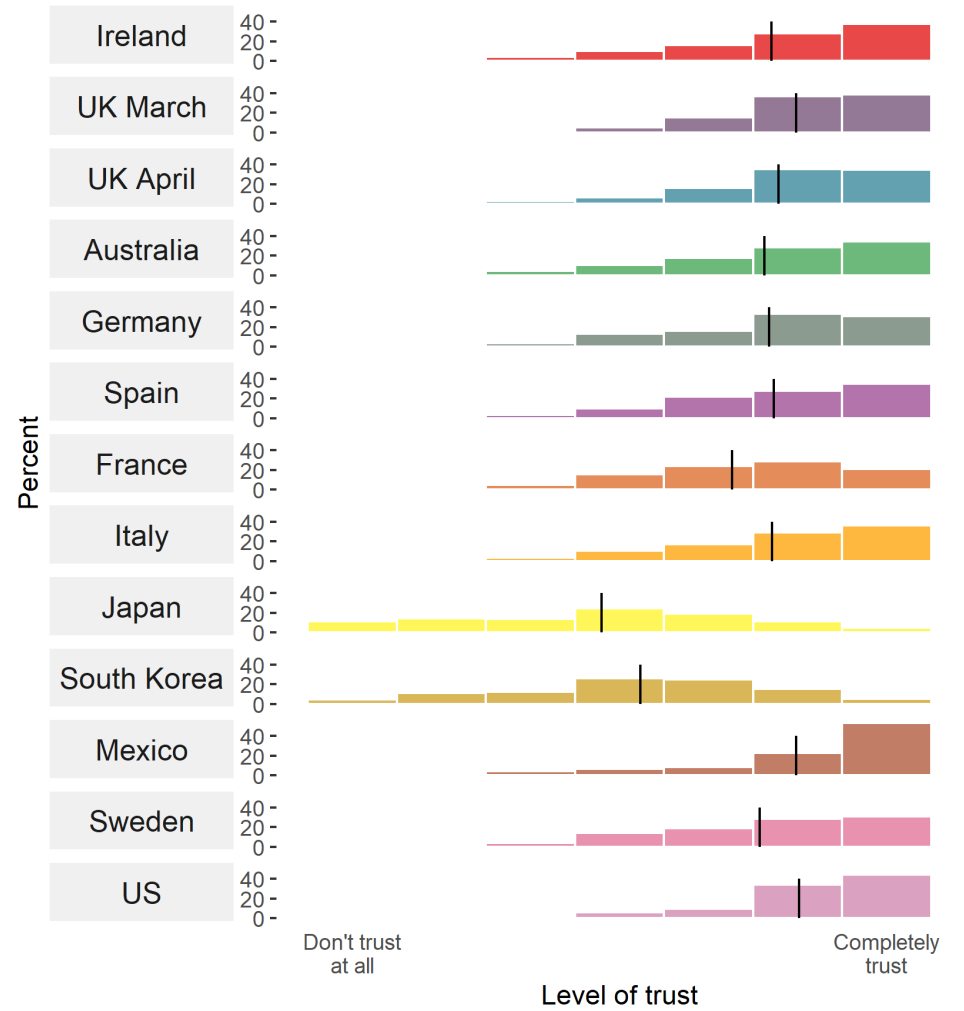
Among those who have seen information from journalists; vertical line indicates mean

The WHO is fairly well trusted as a source of information about the virus in Ireland:

Have you come across information about coronavirus from the World Health Organisation?

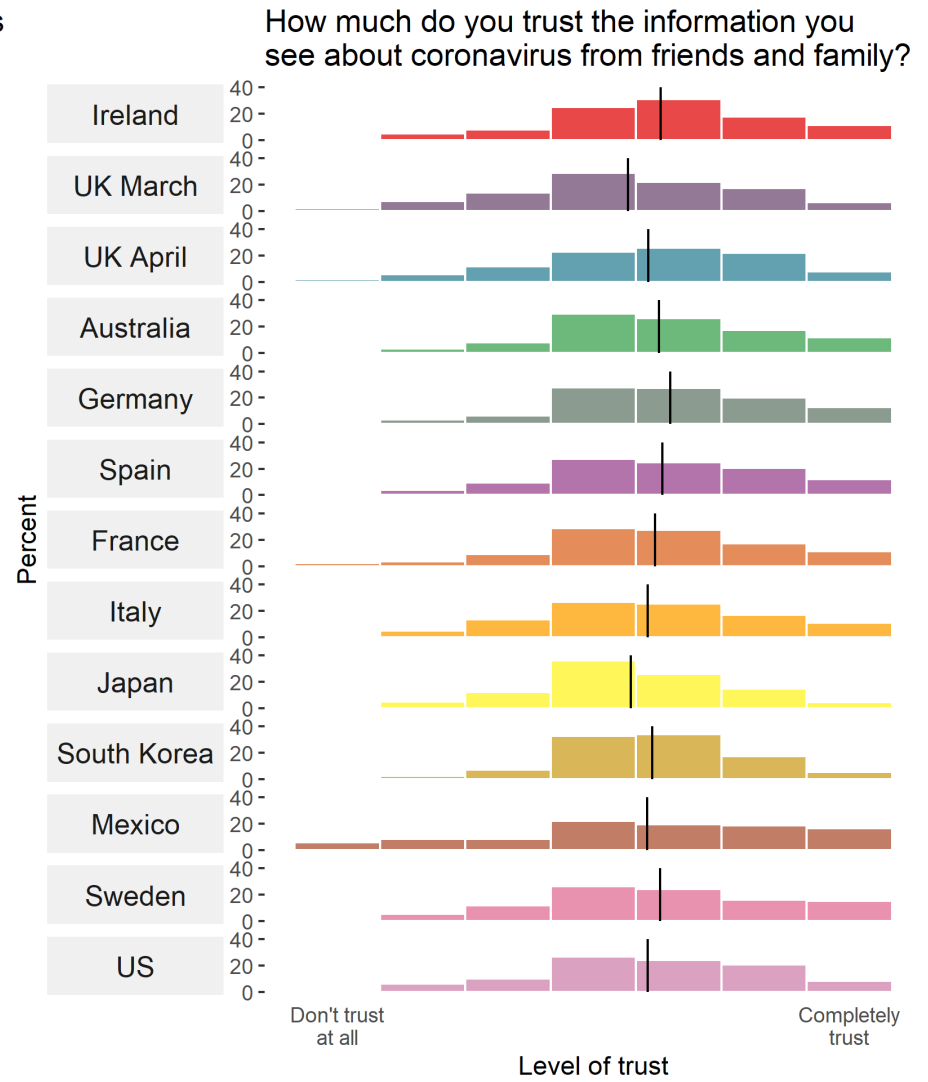
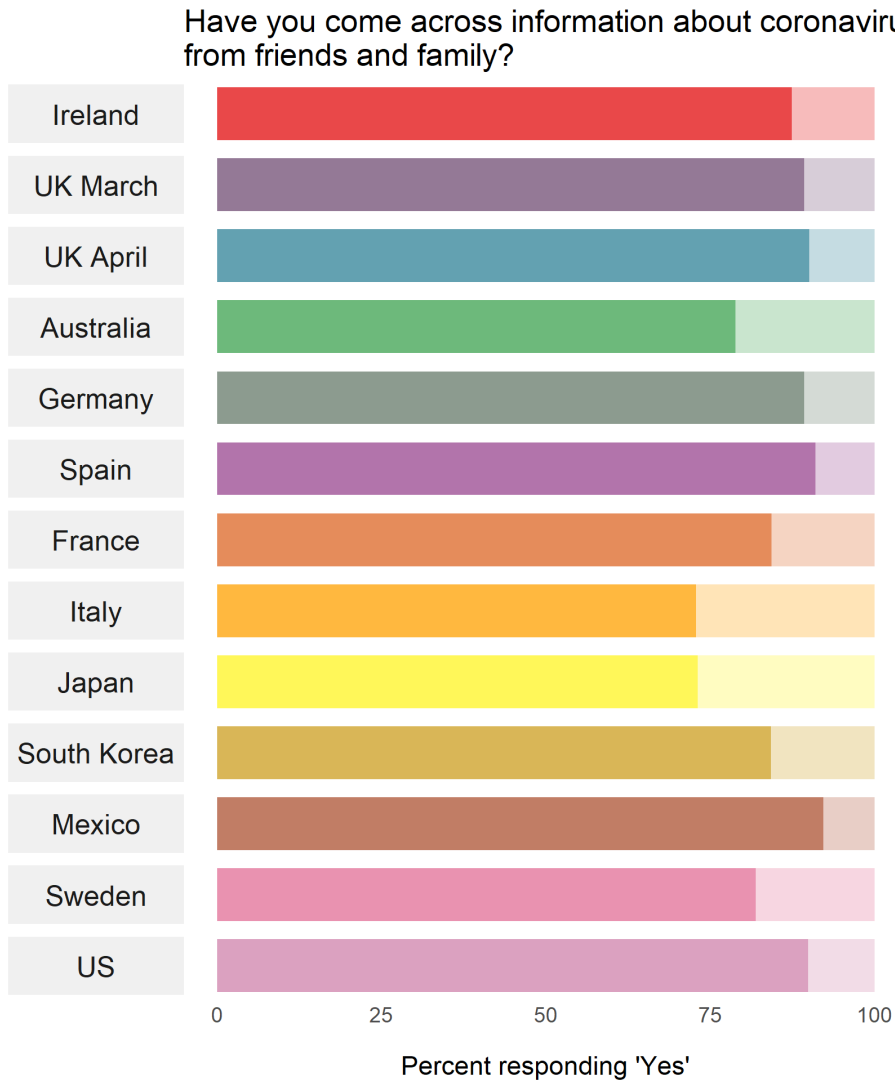


How much do you trust the information you see about coronavirus from the World Health Organisation?



Among those who have seen information from the WHO; vertical line indicates mean

And every country seems to have about the same amount of trust in information from friends & family!



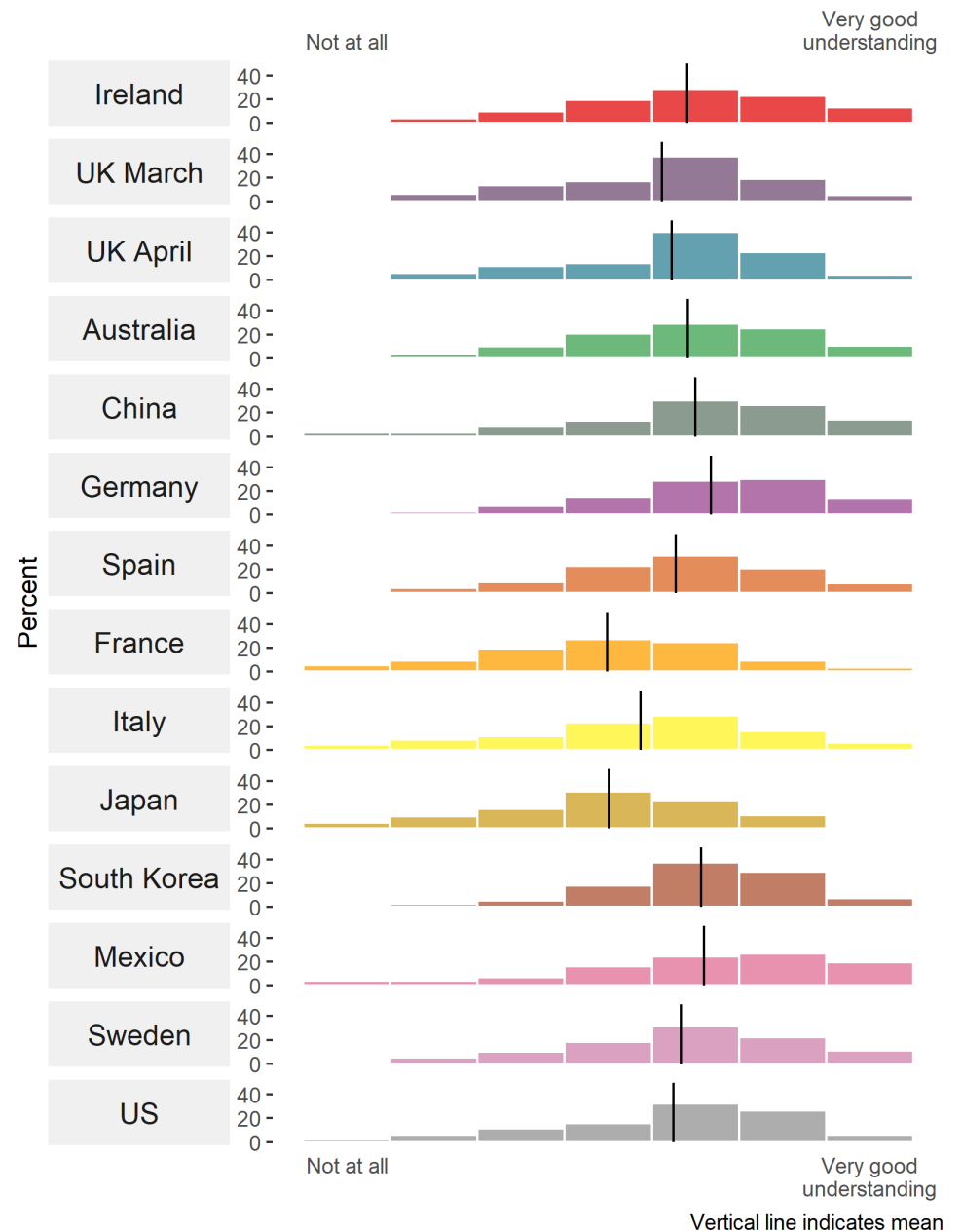
Among those who have seen information from friends and family; vertical line indicates mean

What do people feel about the scientific understanding of the virus?

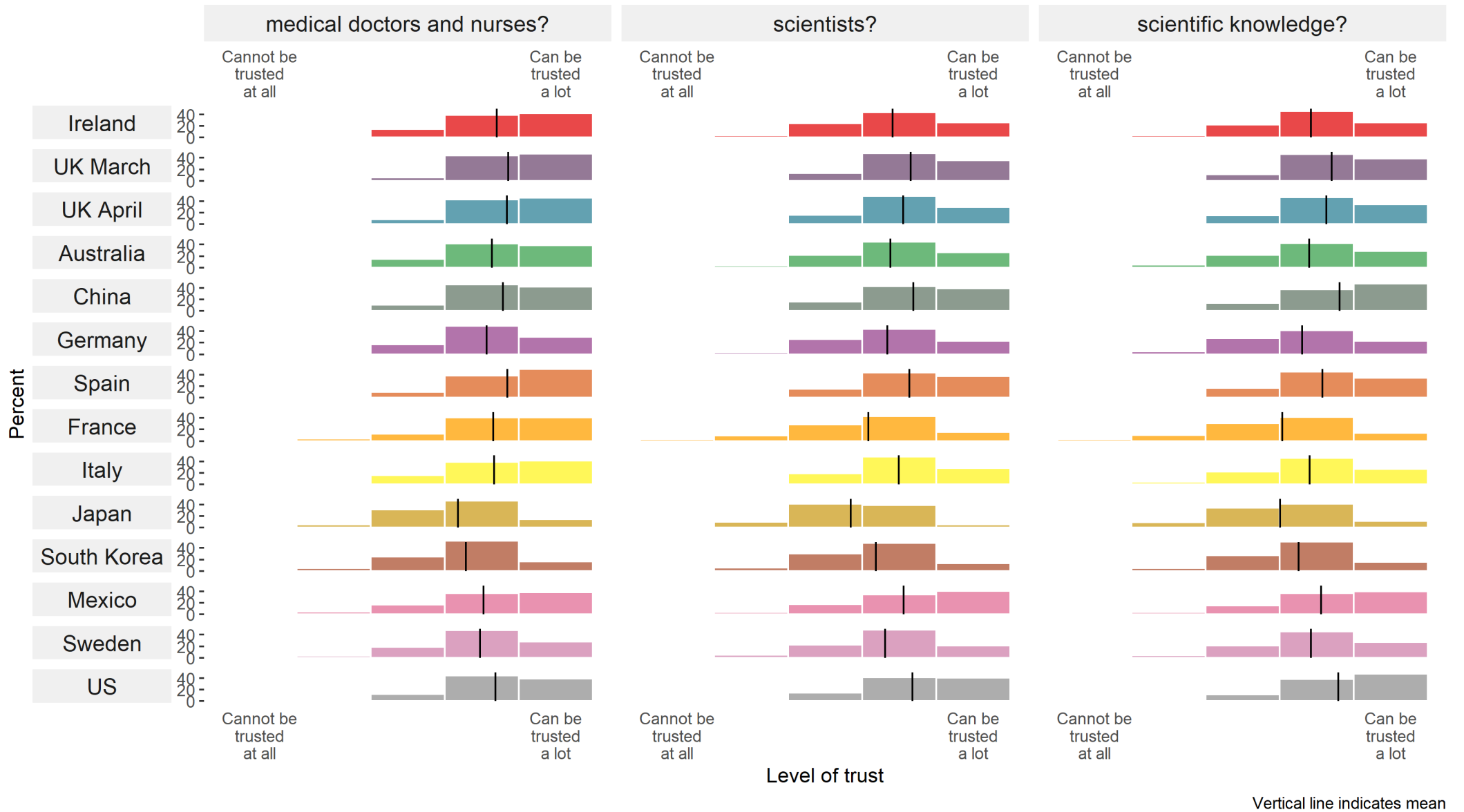
Irish participants had a similar feeling about the scientific understanding of the virus than those in most other European countries (except those in France, who have a low opinion on this).

This reflects their trust in scientists and scientific knowledge (next page):

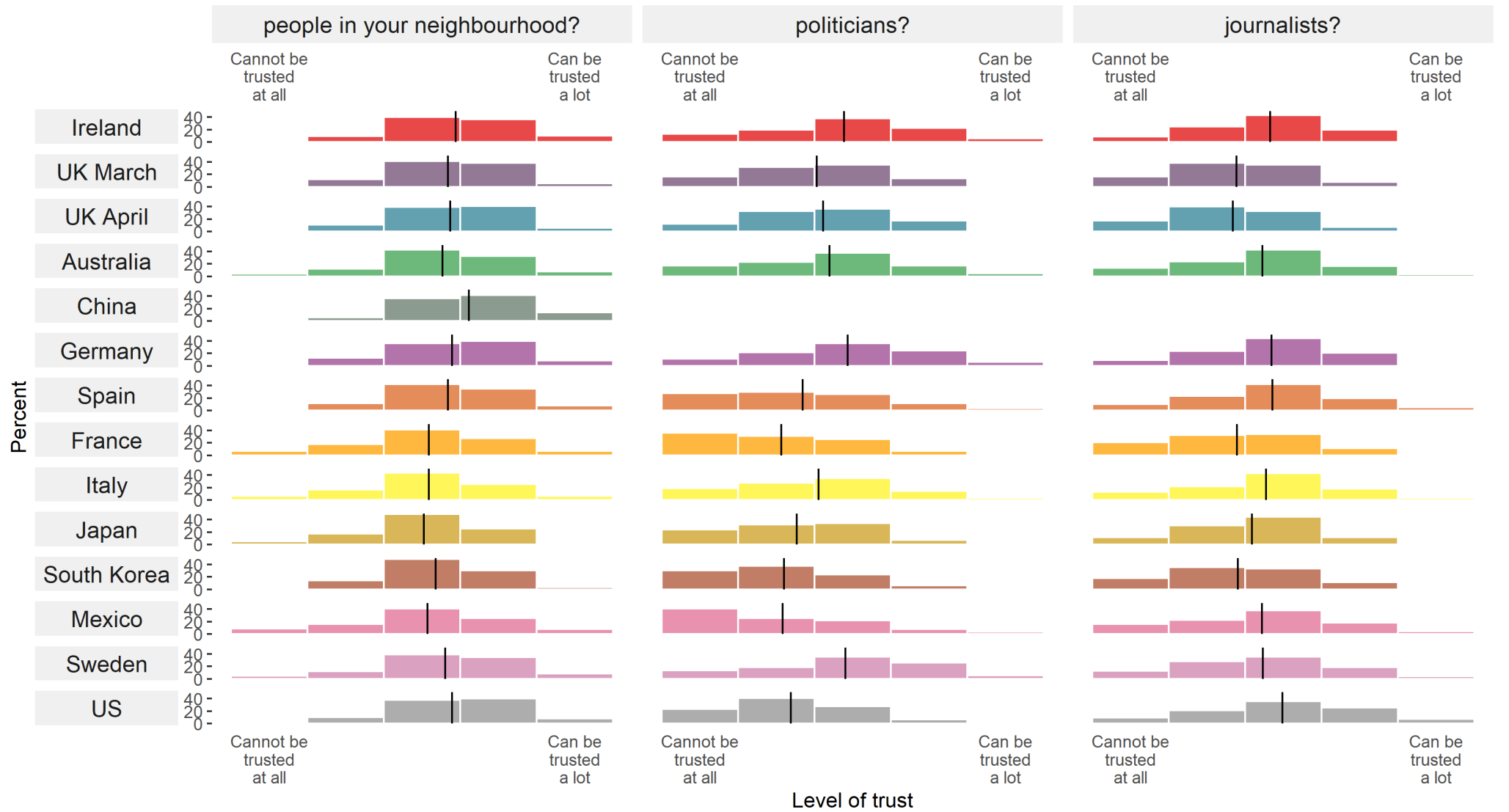
To what extent do you think scientists have a good understanding of the coronavirus?



How much do you trust ...



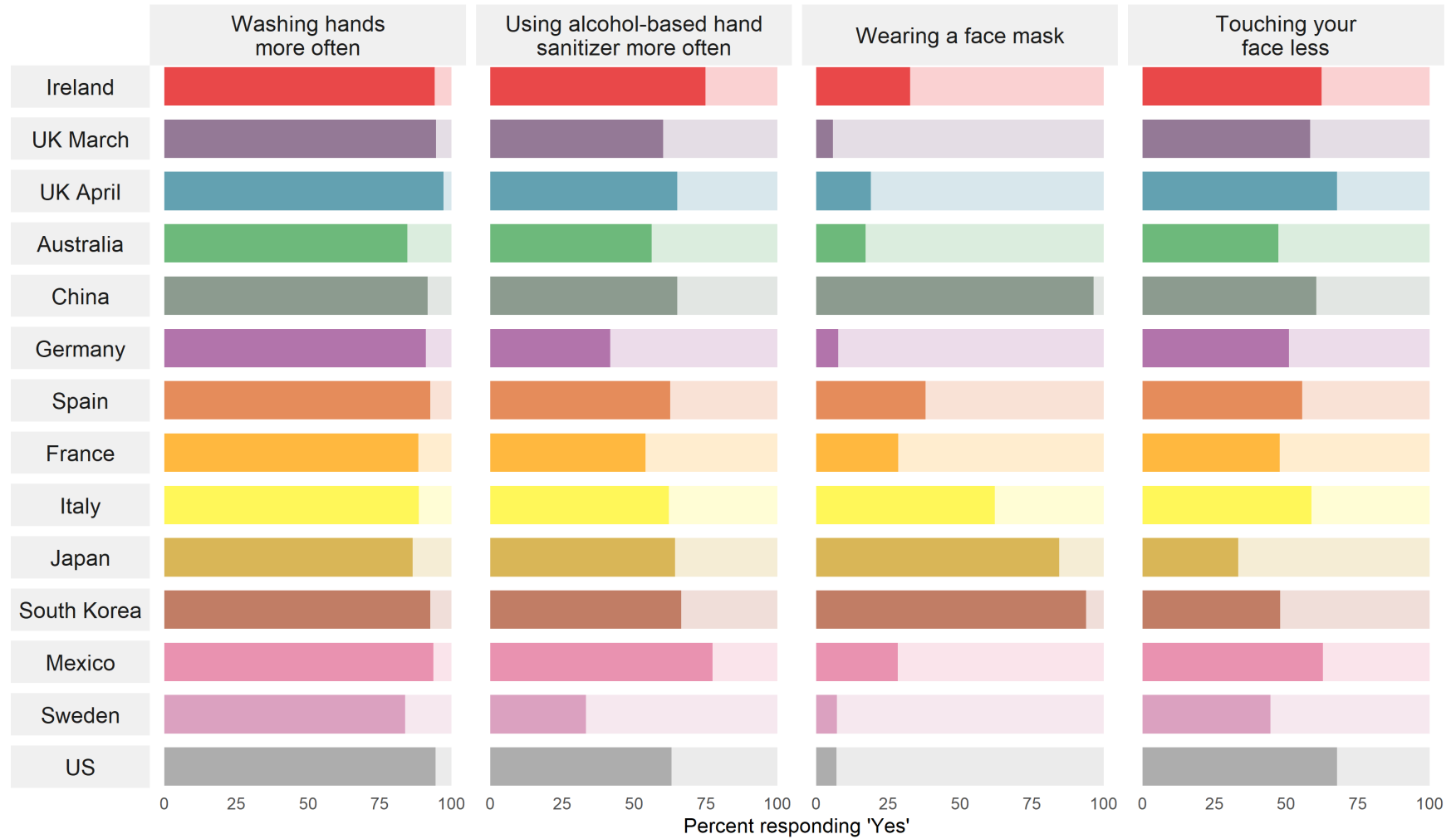
How much do you trust ...



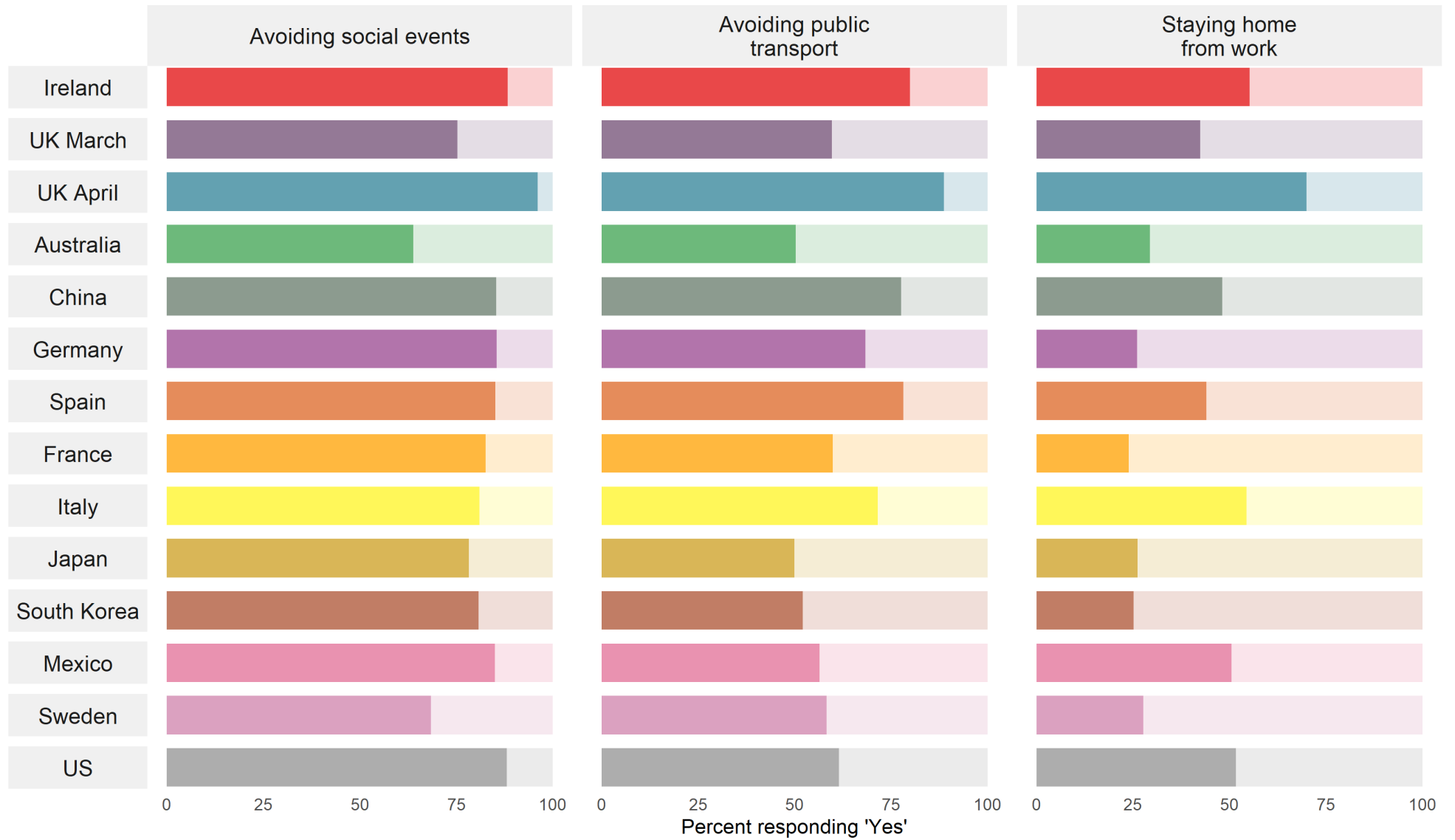
Vertical line indicates mean

What are people doing, personally, about the pandemic?

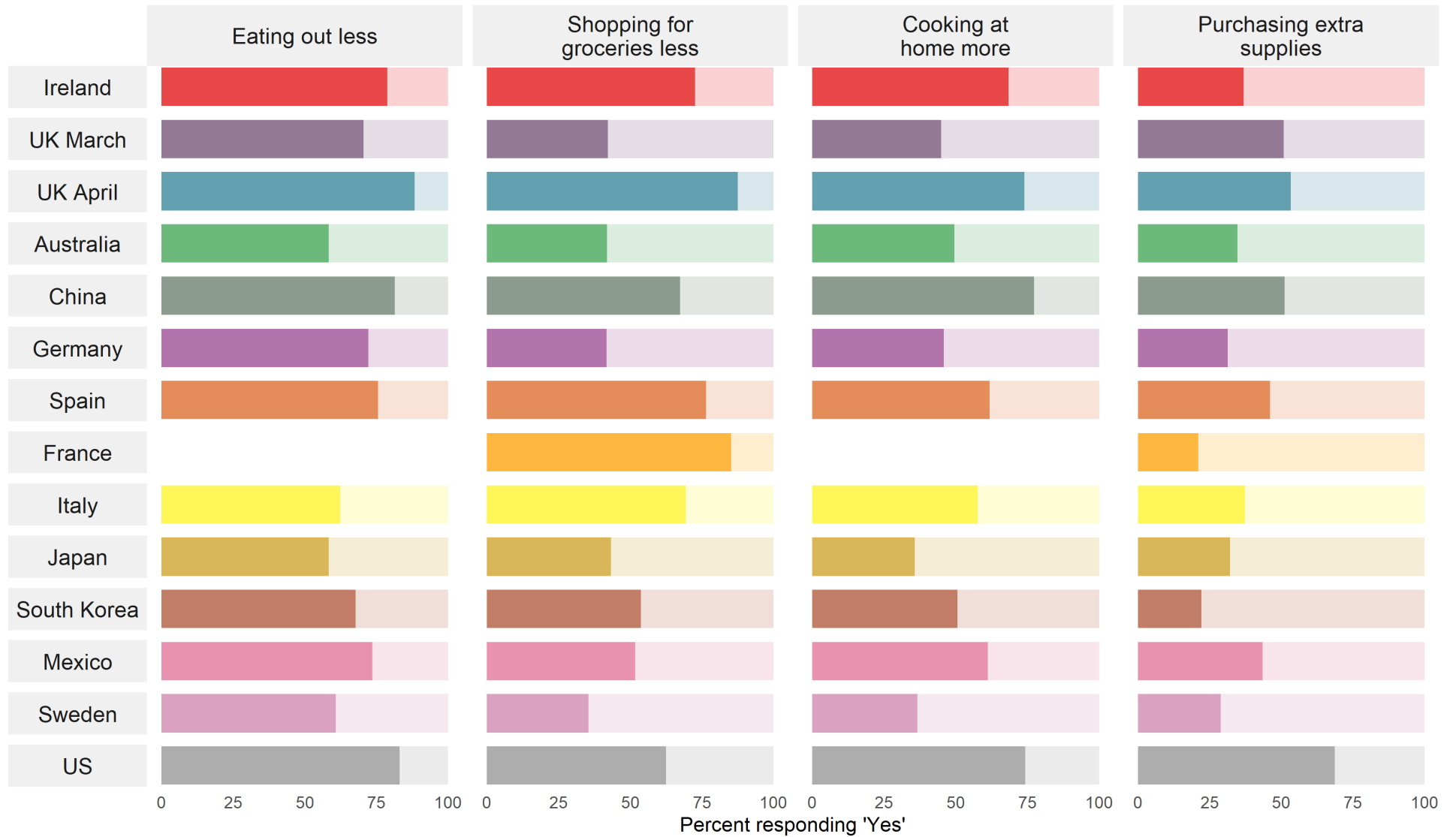
Which of the following steps have you taken in the past month?



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How willing are people to take action for the collective good?

In Ireland, people are similarly motivated to take action that has costs to themselves but benefits for others and society than those in most other European countries (but higher than, say, Germany or Sweden).

In the UK, the proportion willing to do this has increased over time, so it's possible that exposure to the virus, or prosocial messaging around it, increases people's willingness to agree to this statement.

To what extent do you think it's important to do things for the benefit of others and society, even if they have some costs to you personally?

