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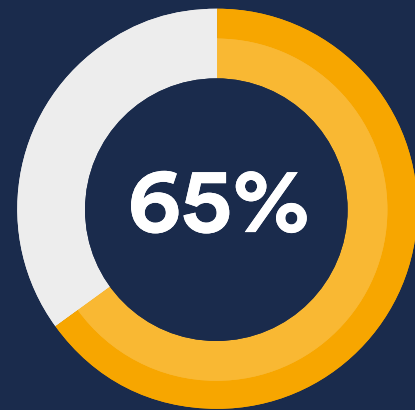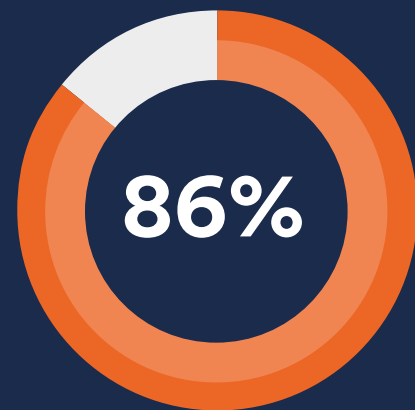# The #EndGhosting Report

An analytical deep-dive into the damage done by failing to give feedback and closure to your candidates.
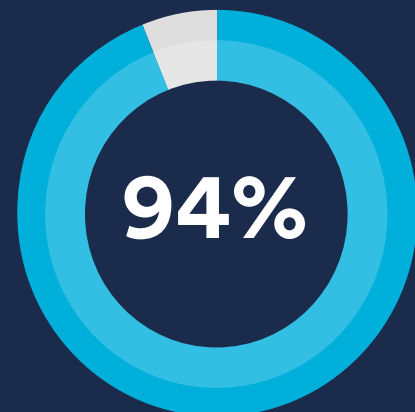
www.tribepad.com

Key findings

65% of UK adults ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer

86% of ghosted applicants are left feeling down or depressed

94% of ghosted applicants left with negative thoughts towards the employer brand

Tribepad

An industry-wide call to pledge to end ghosting in recruitment

When we founded Tribepad we were guided by a simple philosophy; focus on people first, product second and profits third. And this philosophy has seen us right. Tribepad was born of a desire to better serve both the recruitment industry and job seekers and we genuinely care about the people at the heart of that. And that's why we won't rest on our laurels when issues like ghosting arise.

The whole planet has been upended in the past 18 months and it's inevitable that the impact of that is far reaching. Our industry continues to be put under huge pressure as the job market contracts and expands at an incredible pace. Nonetheless, it's disheartening that, as a result, the ghosting of talent applying for jobs, people at potentially one of the most stressful times of their lives, seems to be on the rise.

This whitepaper takes a deep dive into the impact of ghosting on both job candidates and brands, and poses questions around why this is happening. What can we, as an industry, do to prevent it from happening in the future? How can we help ease the strain on HR professionals while taking care of high volume candidates at the same time?

We know it's possible and, in these pages, you can read about how companies have handled a huge spike in job applications. In one example retail giant Tesco saw an unimaginable surge of applicants as the pandemic really took hold. At the height of the outbreak, after issuing an appeal for more staff to help cope with the demands on their services, they were receiving 300 job applications every minute. How did they do that without ignoring the one million job seekers that reached out to them?

While Tesco did a stellar job, many businesses simply aren't set up to handle this influx. An influx that doesn't look set to go away - with disruption expected in the job market long into the foreseeable. Covid, and its implications on the job market, has thrown up huge challenges and it's evident that our industry is struggling. It's no surprise that many of us don't have the time and resources to nurture each individual that applies to work with us. But it's a vicious cycle. As our report shows, the ghosting of candidates has far reaching implications. It damages our reputations, is detrimental to the mental health of our talent pool and it puts more pressure on an industry that's already struggling to cope.

We know that AI and automation can be a part of the solution and, in an increasingly digital world, finding effective, automated processes is important to help ease the demands on recruiters and hiring managers. That's why we've included a best practice guide to tech tools in this whitepaper. It's not the whole story though. We also need to find ways to continue nurturing our talent, to find and develop the next generation of leaders, all while managing and maintaining the reputations of the companies we work for.

> "Tech is undoubtedly part of the solution, and yet it's also more crucial now than ever to put people first."

Dean Sadler, Tribepad CEO

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Contents

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Most ghosted cities in the UK

Percentage of people who have been ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer part way through the recruitment process

Glasgow
56%

Edinburgh
56%

Manchester
64%

Newcastle
60%

Belfast
73%

Leeds
64%

Liverpool
63%

Sheffield
61%

Birmingham
61%

Nottingham
58%

Cardiff
57%

Norwich
61%

Bristol
65%

London
74%

Southampton
59%

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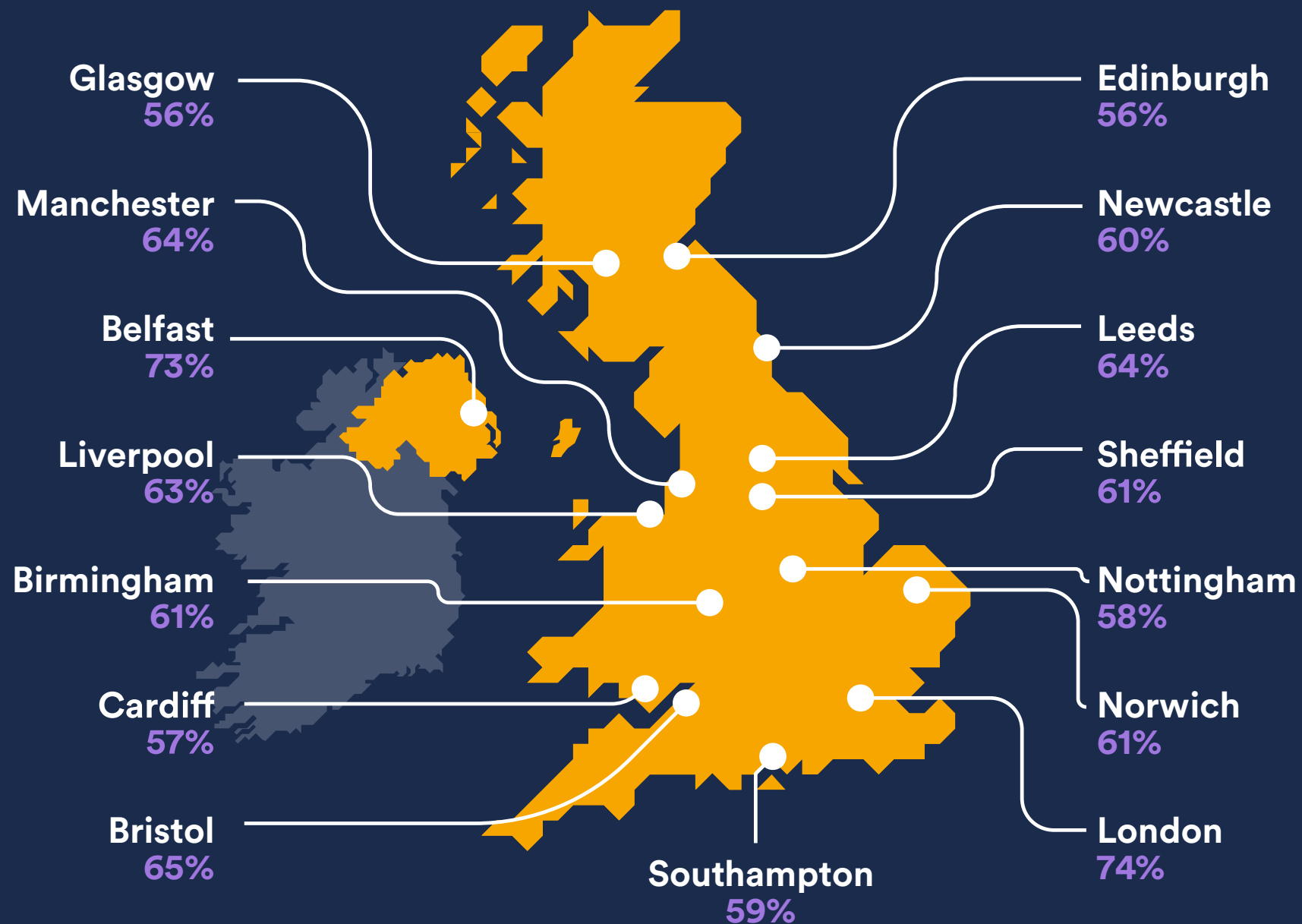
Ghosted by a global leader in online retail

Lise, Events and Project Manager

In 2020, I applied for a role at a global leader in online retail. First, a senior employee at the company headhunted me on LinkedIn and asked me to have a call. He said I was ideal for the role and he linked me to HR, who sent me an itinerary of a full 2-day interview process. During the 2-week gap, I studied every day, as they recommended that.

In these two days, I interviewed across a shared set of competencies: the company's 14 leadership principles. On the first day, I had five back-to-back interviews. Starting at 10am and finished at 5pm, each person asked 10-15 questions based on one of the values. I studied for days in advance to create examples in my working life for these answers.

After the long process, they said they'd be back in touch by the end of the week – I never heard back from them, despite following up four times. The senior employee who had headhunted me and gave me all the encouraging noises disappeared and is no longer a connection on my Linkedin. I also contacted him by email and I got ignored.

I got in such a state with it all. What is wrong with me? Did I say something incredibly thick? Will I ever work again? It triggers a trail of thought that makes you question everything. I nearly gave up, I didn't want to go outside.

I am 50 now, and I feel I am on the wrong side of trying to get an employed role. When you get ghosted by somebody it makes you introspective and everything has been magnified in the last 18 months.

What would I say to this employer? After meeting seven employees for interviews, there was no acknowledgment of the emotional or physical time I spent. It's understandable you can't contact everyone but when you get to a certain point in the process, honesty and transparency have to be given. It gives recruiters a bad name. It's just plain rude.

How dare somebody make someone feel like this? It's not good for people. Courtesy and respect: always be kind. You don't know what somebody is going through. The only positive is now I am researching how to set up my own ethical recruitment company, where this would never happen.

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A look at the research findings

Commentary on the research findings
by Neil Armstrong, CCO, Tribepad

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It's not necessarily news that a bad candidate experience can have a detrimental effect on both brands and those applying to work with them.

With anecdotal evidence suggesting that ghosting is on the rise as the effects of covid on the job market become ever clearer, we wanted to take a closer look at the extent of the problem. Why is this happening? And what can be done? We commissioned independent research to survey 2000 UK adults to discover what's really going on.

Research summary

A whopping two thirds of job applicants in the UK have been ghosted in the course of their job search and perhaps it'll come as no surprise that almost all of them (94%) said it left them with a negative perception of the company they applied to.

Have you ever been ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer part way through the recruitment process?

Yes

65%

No

35%
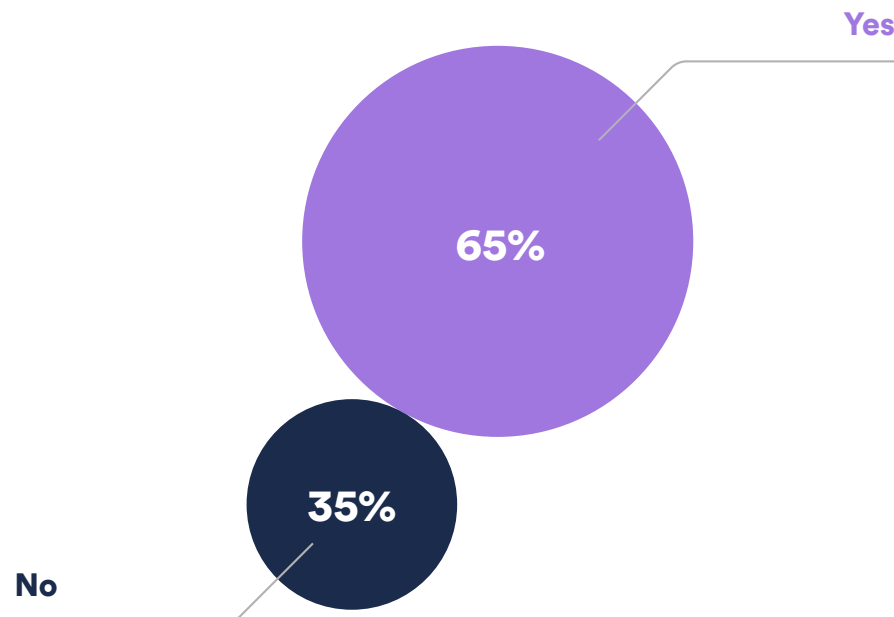
More startlingly, 86% said their experience left them feeling down. 17% of people were left feeling severely depressed.

Did being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer leave you feeling down or depressed?

No, it didn't really bother me

14.4%

Yes, moderately

39.6%

Yes, a little

28.7%

Yes, severely

17.3%

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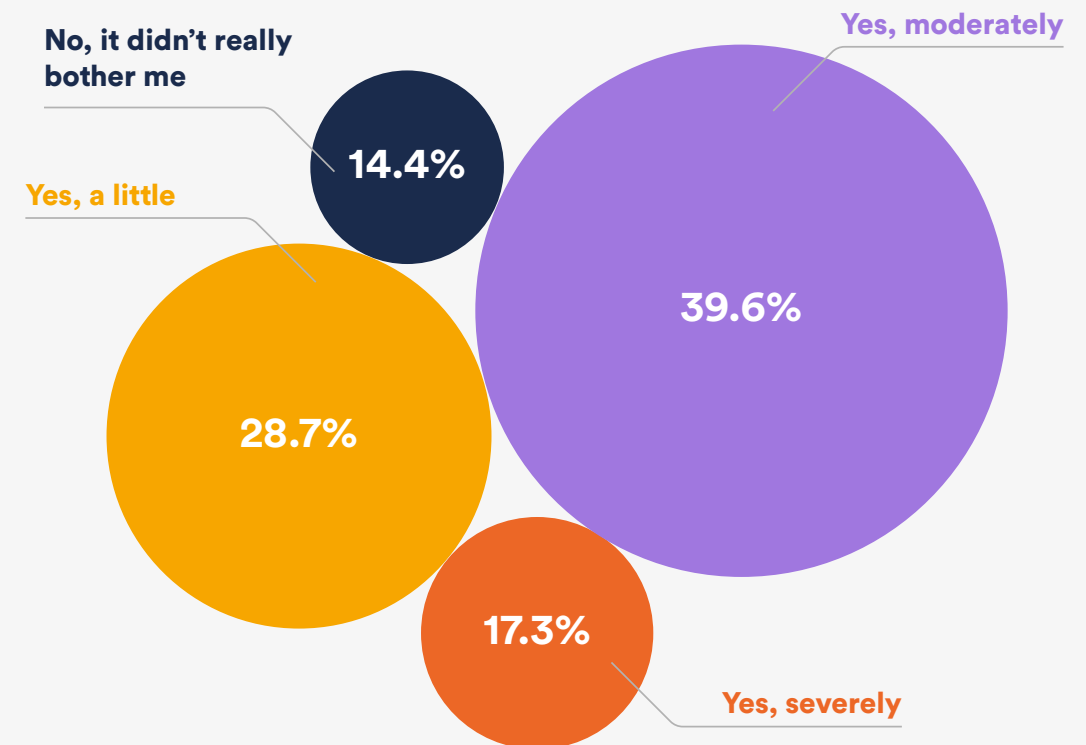
As HR professionals we know how disheartening looking for work can be - especially at a time where people may have lost their job for reasons out of their control - **and 43% of ghosted applicants said it took weeks, or even months, to recover from being ignored**. We know that the pandemic had a huge impact on the industry - with the market being flooded by applicants at a time when budgets and new appointments were frozen. We know this unpredictability places incredible pressure and demand on recruiters and hiring managers.

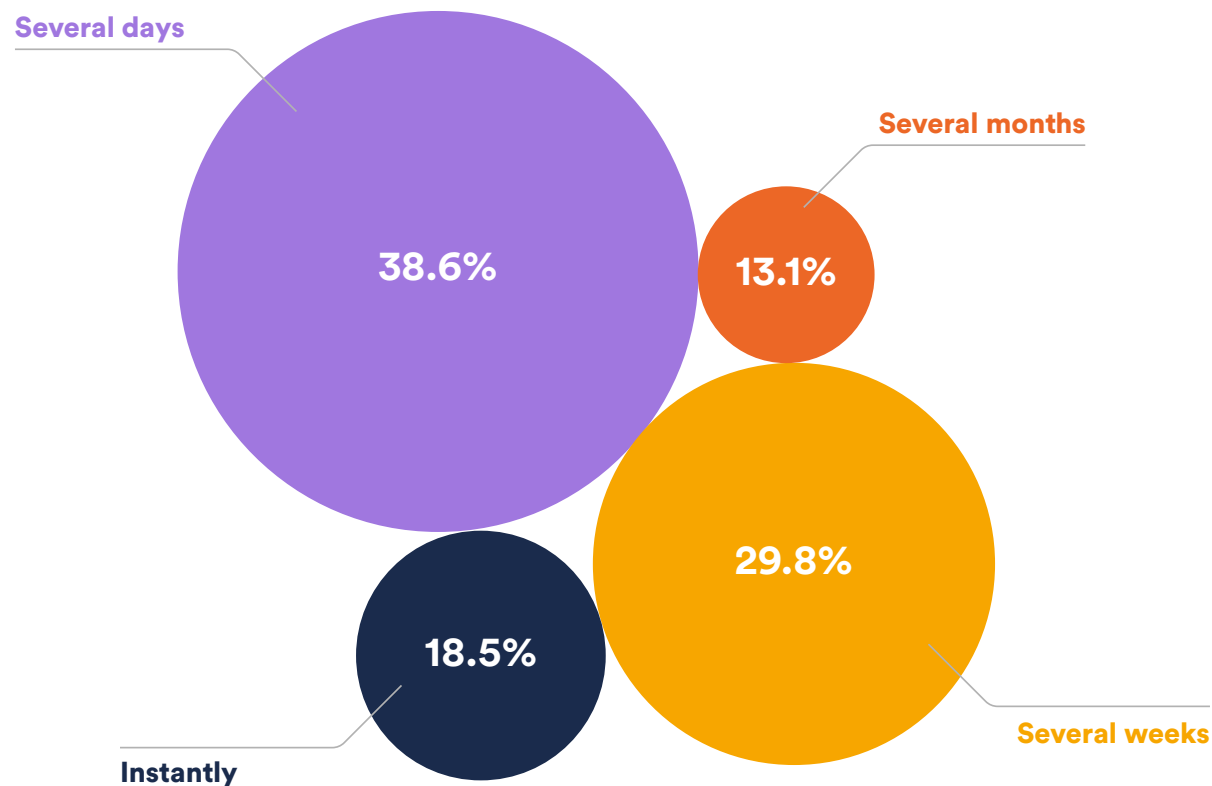**How long did it take you to get over being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer and move on from the experience?**

Several days

Several months

38.6%

13.1%

29.8%

18.5%

Instantly

Several weeks

But does that really justify the trend for ignoring those who take the time and care to apply to work with our teams? We don't think so. At a time where the planet has been left reeling from what became a globally significant disaster, shouldn't the emphasis be on having more empathy, not less?

Add this to the fact that we're expecting another wave of candidates to enter the market in the autumn - as furlough ends and people look for a change of pace as the country begins to open back up - and it's crucial that the industry takes stock. What will we do to take care of a new wave of job seekers? How will we inject a much needed dose of empathy into a process that often isn't fit for purpose? How can HR professionals be supported while the job market goes bonkers and the pressures pile up? How will we end ghosting once and for all?

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Does how old you are affect how likely you are to be ghosted?

Unfortunately, yes it does. Our data suggests that young people are being disproportionately affected, with more than three quarters (77.6%) of 18-24 years old being ghosted compared with just over a third of those aged 65+ (37.3%).

Is this impacting the mental health of our future leaders and talent? It certainly looks like it. On top of being more commonly given the cold-shoulder, younger age groups are more likely to report being severely depressed as a result of being ghosted.
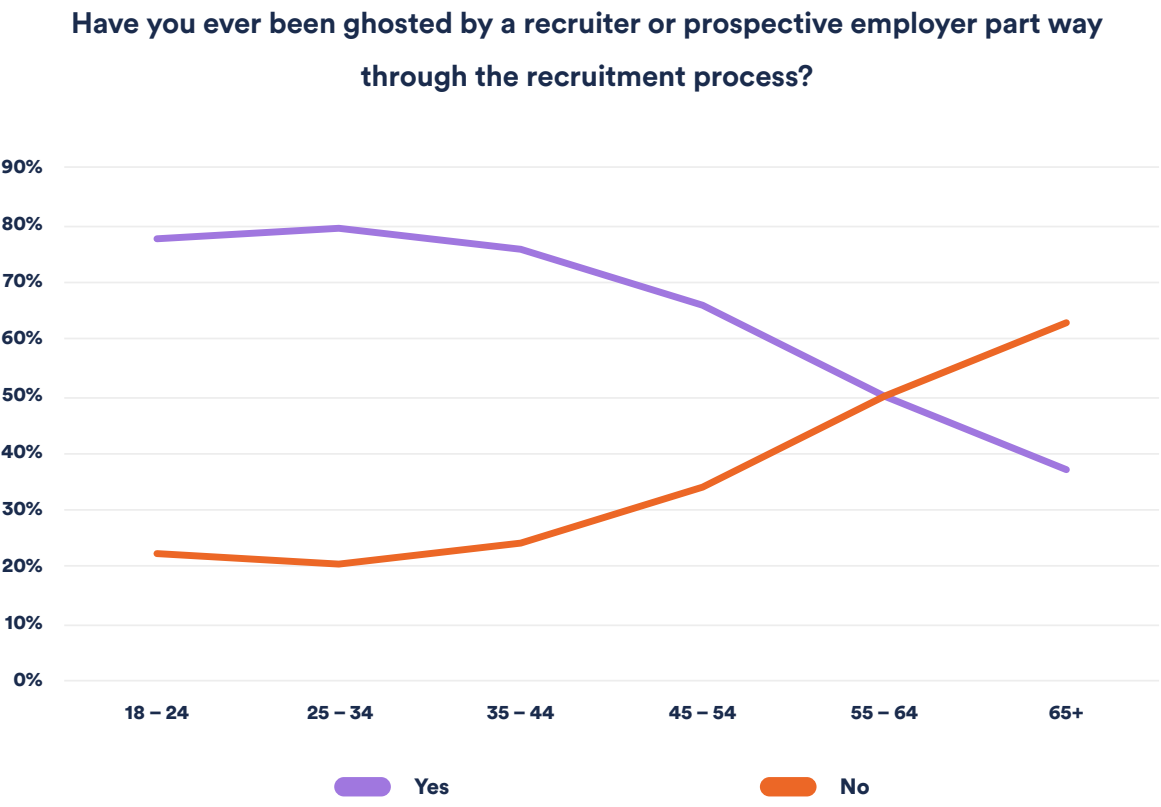
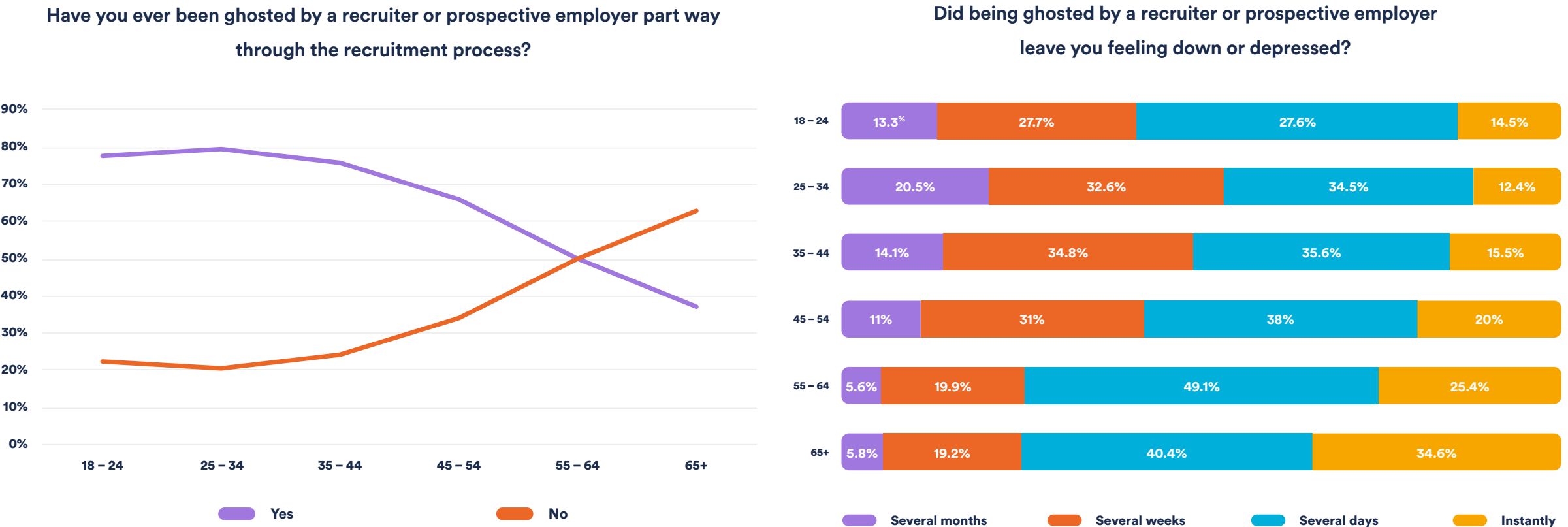Over a third (35%) of 55-64 year olds say they got over their experience of being ghosted instantly, with more than half of 25-34 year olds saying it took them several weeks or months to get back to the same mental space. What does this tell us? Are job seekers in their later years more resilient? Or perhaps they feel more secure in their lives more generally, with savings and assets to fall back on? Or perhaps these are older, more experienced candidates who tend to apply for more senior roles, and therefore are at a lower risk of ghosting?

Have you ever been ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer part way through the recruitment process?

Yes
No

Did being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer leave you feeling down or depressed?

Age	Several months	Several weeks	Several days	Instantly
18 – 24	13.3%	27.7%	27.6%	14.5%
25 – 34	20.5%	32.6%	34.5%	12.4%
35 – 44	14.1%	34.8%	35.6%	15.5%
45 – 54	11%	31%	38%	20%
55 – 64	5.6%	19.9%	49.1%	25.4%
65+	5.8%	19.2%	40.4%	34.6%

Several months
Several weeks
Several days
Instantly

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It also seems likely that there are more young people in the job market, with a new wave of graduates entering the market during the pandemic. Have their lives been shaken more by the fallout of covid? Certainly they've begun their career in one of the most unpredictable job markets in recent history. Is it any wonder they're suffering? Either way, it's clear that each age group faces it's own set of unique challenges and this only points to the greater need for care from recruiters and hiring managers.

Again, almost everyone who's experienced ghosting in the course of their job search (93.6%) say being ghosted has left them with a negative perception of the company they applied to. The potential impact here is huge. Many of us have heard the cautionary tale about a disgruntled customer complaining to 10 people for every one person they shout about good customer service to. And that could absolutely apply here too. An ignored applicant has the potential to spread damaging messages about your brand - not only risking reputational damage but also potentially alienating potential customers too.

More pertinently, this comes with the risk of losing future talent. We know that just because they're not right for the job they applied for at the moment, it doesn't necessarily mean they're not an attractive candidate down the line. Finding the time to communicate that could make all the difference.

Aside from the potential damage to an organisation's reputation, **86% of those surveyed** said being ghosted left them feeling down or depressed. Here we're not just talking about annoyed customers sounding off, we're talking about the difference between either setting someone up for success, or seriously damaging their confidence and, in the worst cases, their prospects for the future. We have a great deal of responsibility to the future of the workforce here. How we interact with applicants can make all the difference. Are we equipped to coach those we chose not to employ, no matter what stage of life they're in? Can we make the time to treat applicants as individuals and help them with the closure, and feedback they need to move forward in their job search? What support do we need to make this happen? These are crucial questions that we, as an industry, need to address if we want to ensure the best outcomes for both the companies we work for, and the talent we work with, whether we hire them or not!

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Does your gender get you ghosted?

The evidence seems to suggest it does. Ghosting affects more men than women with almost three quarters of men (72%) being ghosted compared with 58% of women. The emotional impact, however, isn't too different - 88.9% of women say it makes them feel down or depressed, compared with 82.6% of men.

Have you ever been ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer part way through the recruitment process?

Female 58% Yes / 42% No

Male 72% Yes / 28% No

🟣 Yes   ⚫ No
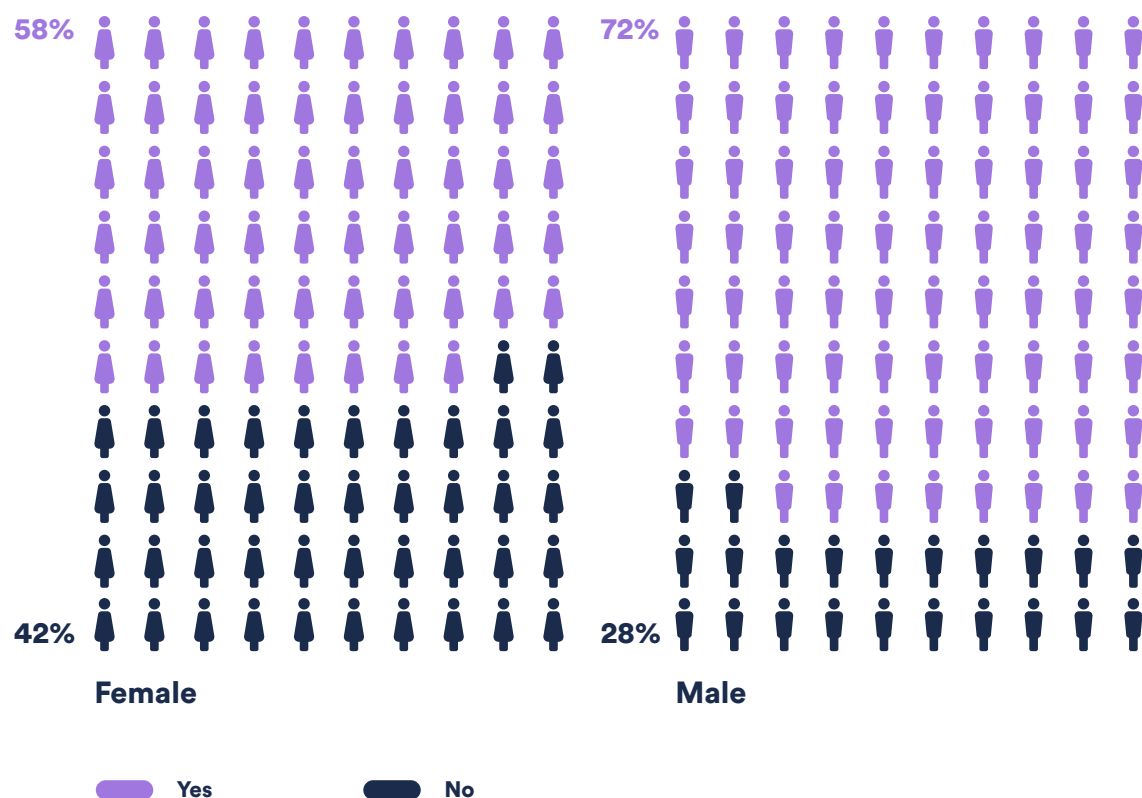
So why the disparity? Are we making assumptions, as hiring managers, about the emotional impact on men vs women? Do brands care less about men? Or could women be more likely to chase for a response?

83% of men felt down as a result of their experiences of being ghosted, with 17% saying they felt very depressed as a result. 38% say they take weeks or even months to get over it, with just a fifth (22%) claiming they were over it instantly. These numbers are slightly higher for women, with almost half (48%) taking weeks or months to feel better and only 1 in 6 (15%) saying they were over it instantly. Perhaps toxic gender stereotypes at play here? Do men feel more pressure to 'suck it up'?

Did being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer leave you feeling down or depressed?

Yes, severely	Yes, moderately	Yes, a little	No, it didn't bother me at all
17.5% 17.1%	42.2% 37.3%	29.1% 28.2%	11.1% 17.4%
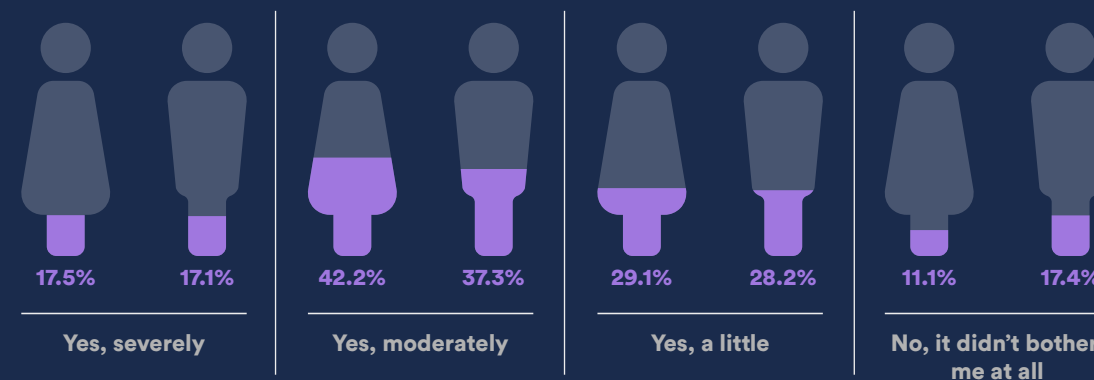
While these numbers give us some interesting food for thought, ultimately the conclusion is the same. In an ideal world, gender shouldn't bear any difference at all on outcomes. The differences do, however, once again point to a need for a more tailored process that treats each job applicant as an individual and offers feedback based on their own unique set of circumstances.

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Where you live - does it make a difference?

Once again the data suggests yes, with disparity both across regions and cities in the UK. Coming out on top as the most ghosted city is... wait for it... that's right, London. While many of us have suffered the effects of being shunned by a potential employer, three quarters (74%) of potential staff have been ignored in The Big Smoke compared to our counterparts in the least ghosted cities - Glasgow (56%), Edinburgh (56%) and Cardiff (57%).

What's going on here? Are Celts kinder? Perhaps, and yet despite Scots being one of the least affected regions, with 58% of job hunters being ghosted, they're also the most miffed. Well over half (57%) said it changed their perception of the organisation they'd applied to for the worse and one in five (21%) said they felt severely down or depressed after being snubbed. And despite Cardiffians keeping their easy-going reputation, with 29% saying they bounce back instantly after ghosting, overall Welsh job seekers reported being the most down in the dumps after being ignored. Almost a quarter were (23.1%) left feeling severely depressed.
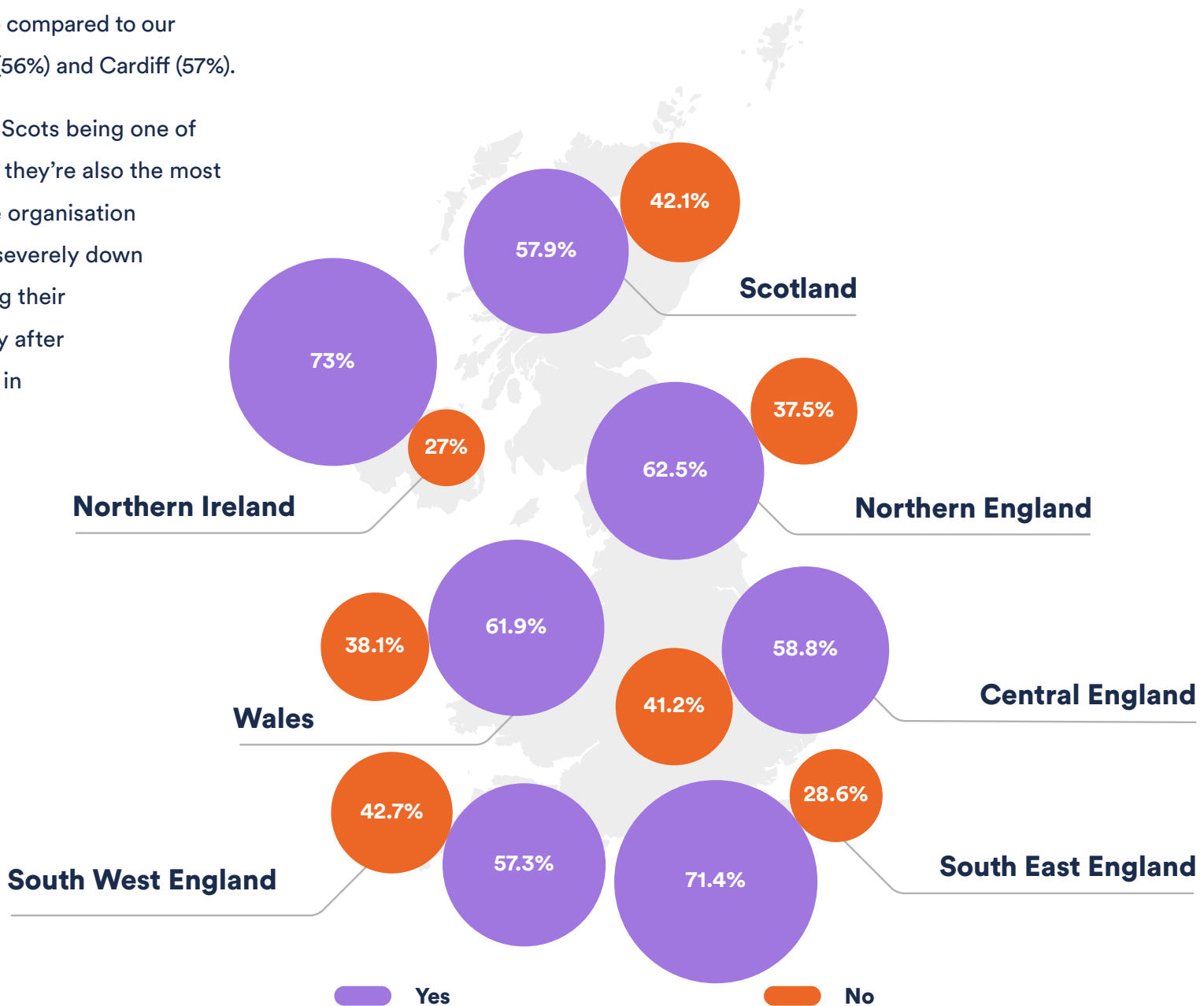
Have you ever been ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer part way through the recruitment process?

Scotland — 57.9% / 42.1%
Northern Ireland — 73% / 27%
Northern England — 62.5% / 37.5%
Wales — 61.9% / 38.1%
Central England — 58.8% / 41.2%
South West England — 57.3% / 42.7%
South East England — 71.4% / 28.6%

Yes / No

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Did being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer leave you feeling down or depressed?

Londoners were pretty high on the list for holding a grudge, with 96% saying their experience warped their perception of the brand they'd been bypassed by. And is it any wonder? It doesn't take a psychologist to know that being ignored after we've committed free time and energy leaves us feeling peeved.

Scotland
21%
32.3%
12.9%
33.9%

Northern England
13.5%
28.5%
44.4%
13.5%

Northern Ireland
14.8%
37%
29.6%
18.5%

Central England
25.9%
19.4%
40%
14.7%

Wales
30.8%
30.8%
15.4%
23.1%

South West England
34.1%
29.3%
25.6%
11%

South East England
28.3%
39.5%
19.1%
13.2%

Yes, severely   Yes, moderately   Yes, a little   No, it didn't bother me at all

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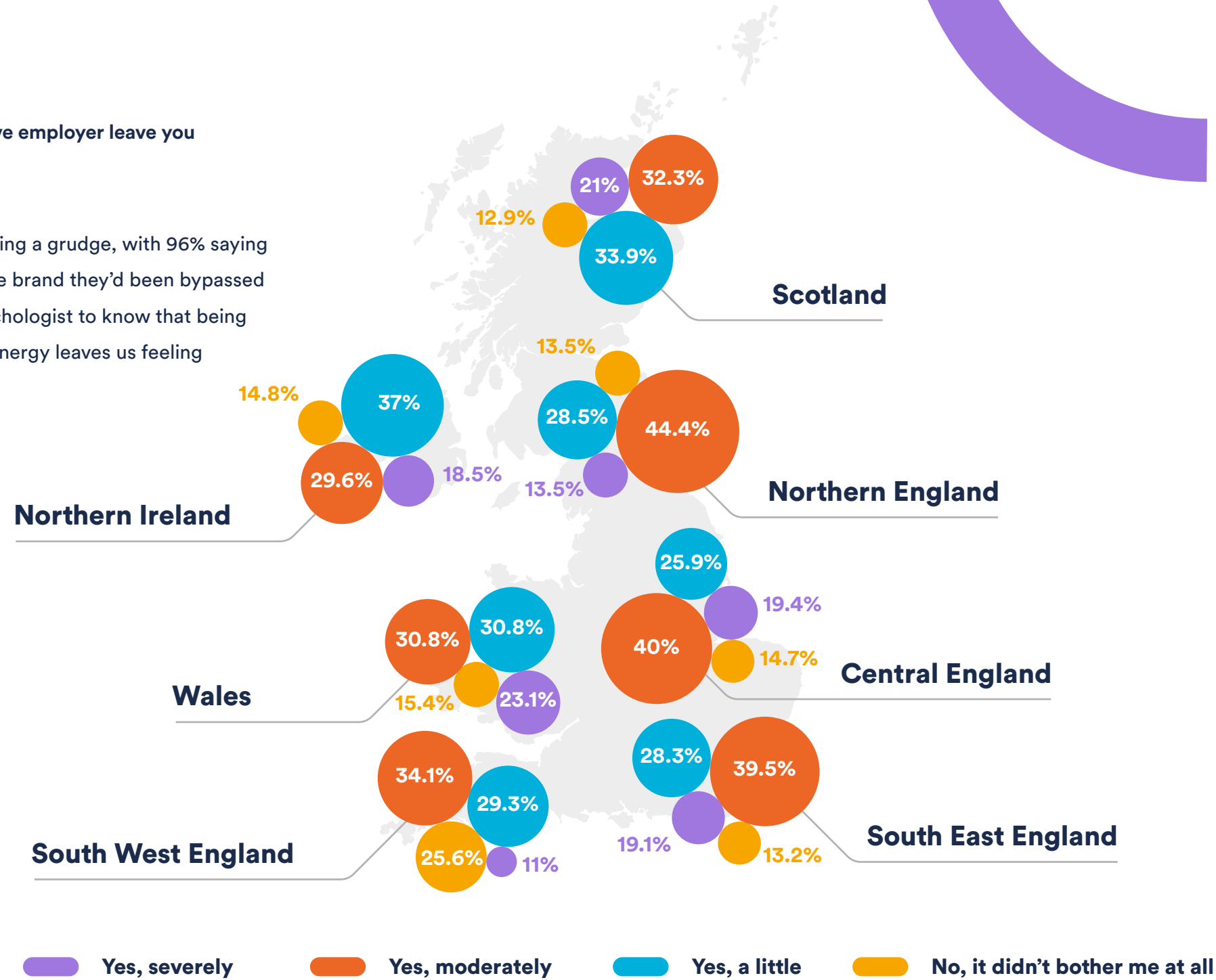
Research conclusion

There's no doubt that we're living in unprecedented times, a cliche because it's still true. Our lives have been turned upside down - both in and outside of work. And the pandemic has meant that there's less separation between our identities at home and in the (virtual) workplace. As the lines between work and life become ever more blurred, so too does the divide between professional and personal. And as the wellbeing industry, rightfully, takes centre stage, it's more crucial now then ever to treat people like, well, people. Yes we want to continue doing all we can to nurture talent, to find and develop the next generation of leaders, to manage and maintain the reputations of the companies we work for, to use the best tech to help us design the best possible candidate experiences, but we need to do so with an increasingly huge dollop of empathy for our fellow humans thrown in too.

To end ghosting for good is a huge task but, we think, a crucial one. Who's with us?

Read on for hints and tips on how to overhaul your talent pool's experience and to learn how some of the UK's biggest companies are looking after their prospective candidates during these unpredictable times.

Join the campaign

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Closing the candidate experience gap

Graeme Johnson, Talent Director, Entain

Graeme Johnson is head of talent at media giant Entain. He is a respected leader in talent acquisition. While at Virgin Media, Johnson put a value on the cost of a bad candidate experience based on data analysis indicating 6% of rejected candidates would go on to cancel their subscription within a month. He reasoned that based on 123,000 rejected candidates each year, and 6% cancelling their £50 monthly subscription, Virgin Media was losing over £4.4 million in revenue per year.

Talent-nomics

Ghosting. Why is the job shopping experience so painful? Why would any company that cares about their brand, deliberately ignore someone who has spent time (6.4 hours ave.) researching, applying, preparing?

To try to understand what's been going on, and why ghosting has become worse, let's consider the economics of recruitment over the past 18 months.

Firstly, since March 2020, when most of the world went into lockdown and the economic handbrake was pulled, the market was flooded overnight with too many people chasing too few jobs.

For example, application numbers at Entain shot up between April-Dec'20, with big spikes in May and June. More than double the number of job applicants in 2020 (470k) vs. 2019 (232k) for 1000 fewer roles, even though we had cut the marketing budget in half.

Imagine you own a retail store, and double the amount of people turn up on a Saturday, how prepared are you to give the same level of service when you open the doors? A surge in applications puts pressure on Talent Acquisition teams to up their game.

> **"To be clear, there is no excuse for ghosting a job applicant – not even economics".**

The quality of the team you have to cope with a surge in applications, the strategies you have to communicate efficiently and effectively to maintain standards (like reviewing and replying to job applicants, and providing feedback to everyone that is interviewed) needs to be in place. If they're not, things can go wrong pretty quickly. In my view, the boom and bust recruitment market activity where recruiters have gone from furlough to full speed, has led to one of the side-effects of an inability to cope. This has led to a drop in standards, and in extreme (inexcusable) cases, ghosting.

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Ghosting

The worst type of ghosting is having put someone through rounds of interviews and leaving them hanging on an outcome for days, weeks. Promising they'll have news, and then breaking those promises. On the emotional curve, coined by Ph. Creative, it's the gap between anxiety and disappointment which leads to resentment and anger. Or worse, people stay in a state of anxiety, and self-confidence is damaged.

The longer the time lapse between finding out, or not finding out anything at all, the harder it is emotionally for someone to understand and get closure, and to move on positively. Closing the excitement to anxiety gap is critical to a positive experience.

If the outcome is no, that's okay! It's a coaching opportunity – to turn disappointment into learning, self-improvement, and renewed hope. The questions to consider… are recruiters skilled and able to step up to the plate and take this coaching opportunity? Do they have the time? Do they challenge inertia in decision making to get to an outcome from a hiring manager?

Candidate Experience
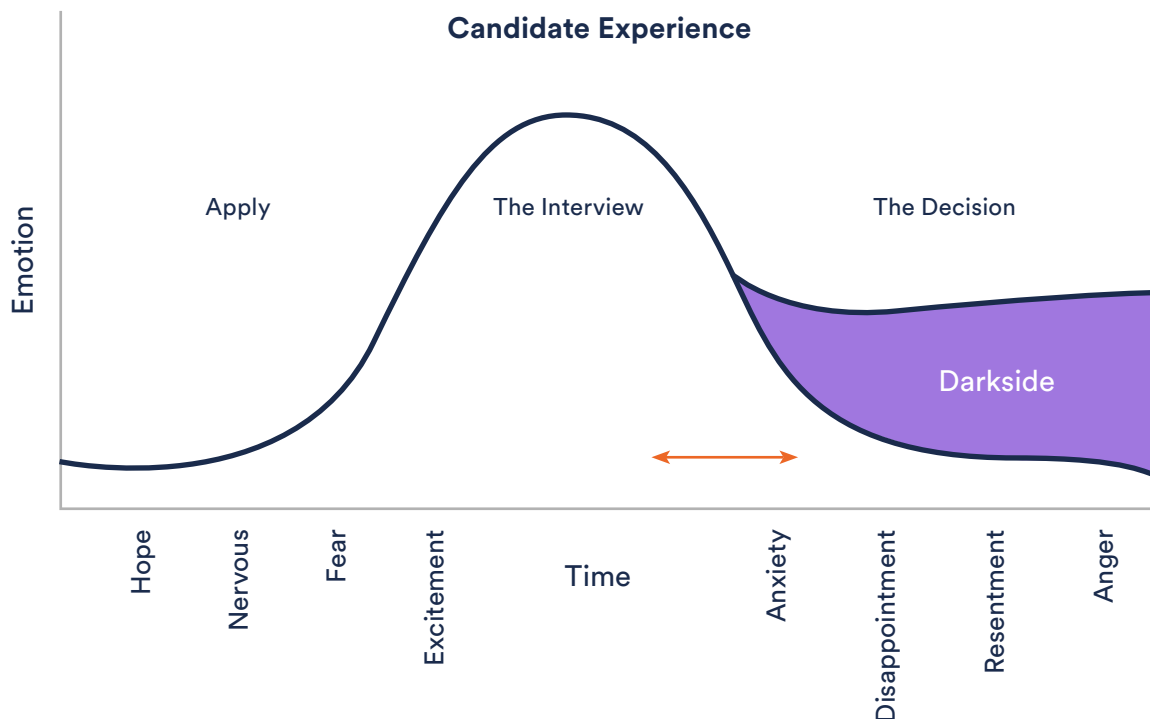
Focusing on what's important

The thing is… whilst people shop for jobs, it's not an online automated retail experience they need, or want. Yet the hype around candidate experience design in the past 5 years at least, has been all about process automation, CRM tools, chat features, robots, and the dehumanising of an experience that is way deeper emotionally than a product purchase. I've lost track of the number of technology solutions being sold to 'solve candidate experience'.

I spoke on a panel with Career Moves recently, and the topic of innovation came up. We heard about some great advancements in automation, voice search and chatbots with one of the most customer-centric brands in the world. All good things. But no focus on what's really important to the job applicant.

The three moments of truth are the job application, the interview, and the outcome. If organisations focused time, effort, resource, skill, and put serious work into these three stages alone, it would pay off way more than any tech bells and whistles. One brand I admire has three simple rules in a 'candidate charter' that they focus on above anything else;

1 Call back when you say you will.

2 Feedback when you say you will.

3 Give people an outcome with empathy.

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The most important moment of truth

Outcomes are the most important stage in hiring. Getting to an outcome and handling it with empathy is the difference between setting someone up for success, or seriously damaging confidence. And from an organisation's point of view, great advocacy or reputational disaster.

For more senior positions, the current trend seems to be more interviews than usual. It used to be an urban legend that Google would put you through 10-15 interviews. It's become more commonplace in the past 6 months. As one commentator put it, if you need more than 10 people to make a decision, it's nothing to do with the candidate – it's a leadership problem.

> **Andrew MacAskill** @MacAskillful · Jul 13 ···
>
> If NELSON MANDELA and MOTHER THERESA met 12 of your colleagues someone would find a problem with them.
>
> So pretty please can we quit this silly trend we are seeing of 10+ INTERVIEWS for a single job?
>
> #hiring #careercoach

Track-my-application

I apply for 2-3 jobs per month, it's occupational research – sometimes quite painful, and sometimes reassuring. I look for simplicity, speed, empathy and to see whether the application steps and what happens next is clearly laid out. It's a real mixed bag.

In the past 12 months, out of 25 companies (over half in FTSE 100) all companies by design require you to create an account to track your application. It took on average just under 13 mins to apply, and all companies apart from one provided an automated acknowledgement email. Not one provided regular updates as your application moves from one stage to the next.

"If there is one thing recruitment could learn from online retail, that we're all familiar with from parcel tracking, it's track-my-application".

It's also very rare that any part of the application is designed with empathy. Here's one exception from Adidas in their acknowledgement email.

"We know a career search takes effort, reflection and resolve. We like that stuff. We like qualified candidates who are ready to work hard for a future that doesn't exist yet… We promise to connect with you via email within two weeks…"

Hope

There is hope that experiences can be designed with empathy. That, in combination with a skilled team of expert recruiters, ready to focus on creating positive outcomes regardless of pass/fail, is where the brave, innovative work in talent acquisition lies.

As an absolute minimum, brands should assess right now if there are any examples of inertia or ghosting in their hiring processes, and end it. To obtain true market leadership in hiring, differentiation through positive candidate experience is a competitive advantage, for the brands who choose to focus efforts and resources on it. Those who don't can expect damage to their brand and a poor reputation.

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TESCO

Coping with surges in job applications

Tribepad

Ghosting seems inevitable when there are unpredictable surges in job applications.

With the right settings in software tools and tried and tested processes in place, it is possible to ensure it doesn't happen. When the pandemic first hit some organisations stopped advertising new roles. But certain sectors went crazy. In a single week, Tribepad processed one million job applications for Tesco which resulted in 45,000 new hires.

Tesco saw its normal rate of job applications skyrocket, from Thursday 19th March the team received more than half a million . The daily rate increased from the usual 5,000 per day to more than 200,000 on Friday 20th March. On one Saturday evening, more than 300 people were applying for roles every single minute, compared with nine per minute in the previous week. This came as supermarkets issued an urgent appeal for more staff to help cope with the surge in demand following the COVID-19 outbreak.

Tesco is the third-largest retailer in the world. The company integrated its recruitment process with Tribepad in 2014 when it recognised a need for a powerful talent acquisition platform to better support head office and retail roles. Before using Tribepad, Tesco used different systems to manage, process and track applicants, which was a constant challenge for the recruitment team. Tesco needed a simpler, self-service system for candidates which would make it easy to apply for roles and stay informed.

The company was fully prepared for high volume applicants long before the pandemic hit, but no-one could have predicted the extreme variation in applicant numbers before it happened. Despite the 3900% increase in applicants over two days in March 2020, Tesco did an exemplary job at providing candidates with a good experience.

This tweet captures the positive sentiment towards Tesco's employer brand as it met its applicant surge with admirable competence.

This graph shows the huge increase in job applications to Tesco during lockdown from 19th March 2020 compared to job applications to the retail giant in the same period the previous year.

Michelle
@xMich_LBx

Mate applied for a temporary job at @Tesco this morning at 7am, got a call at 12pm to go for an interview at 3pm and has got the job! Anyone who is currently looking for any work, try all of the supermarkets as they are desperate for staff to keep the shelves stocked for us.

9:03 PM · Mar 19, 2020 from Walkden, England · Twitter for Android

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The Booker Prize boobie prize

Jessica, Marketing Manager, Brighton

In 2017 I applied for a communications executive role at a publishers. Firstly, the company's recruitment manager headhunted me on LinkedIn and said the role was perfect for me.

They were looking for someone to support them on the Booker Prize. I was really excited about the role.

We had a phone call and then I met them twice. The first time was just with the hiring manager, and the second time also included a person from its communications department. The conversations had been very positive and it was going really well.

The final stage was due after my holidays as I had planned to go away. The hiring manager emailed me to say they were just waiting to see when the third relevant person would be free and then we'd schedule it. It wasn't a 'maybe', it was we 'will' be in contact. While I was away I contacted them three times to arrange that third interview – and I never heard from them ever again. They just completely ghosted me.

It really affected my mental health – had I done something wrong? It knocked my confidence and also made me think poorly of the company. I just didn't understand, wasn't it the hiring manager's job to get back to me? Maybe they were overwhelmed with applicants. They could have said anything: 'you weren't quite right, we changed our mind'; even have sent a standard email template response.

It really tarnished the brand for me, everyone knows this company and the work they do. It's such a prestigious company and I was flattered when they got in touch with me. It really knocked my confidence for future interviews as well – what if it happens again?

Everytime I go into Waterstones and see the Booker Prize, it reminds me of what I went through.

Tribepad

My bad experience led to a new mission to end ghosting

Paul Hayler, Resourcing Manager, London & Southeastern Railway

"I got into recruitment as a result of a bad experience. I worked in sales and account management previously but wanted a more rewarding career. Applying for roles and being ghosted inspired me to move into recruitment so I knew how disengaging ghosting can be. I knew from personal experience what it does to a person's view of a brand, and of themselves. As a department, we take candidate experience seriously and do everything we can to eliminate ghosting.

"Our job applicants are often our customers too, so we know a bad candidate experience damages our brand reputation. When I joined Southeastern 8 years ago we had a paper application process in place. We moved that to an online system, and then to Tribepad's Applicant Tracking System. Automation means that every person gets a response as soon as they apply, which gives us time to personally review each application and respond with an outcome. The system is easy to use and, alongside automation, allows us to provide regular updates as the candidate progresses through the recruitment stages.

"We receive over 1000 applications per month and some of the adverts are for future opportunities, which means the recruitment process can take a long time. We have put measures in place to prevent a slow response and keep candidates informed. With Tribepad, candidates can log in themselves and see that their application is still live. We publish phone numbers and email addresses for candidates who are keen to follow up on their own terms. It's a lot of work for us but these are people who want to join our company to spend part of their working lives with us. They could be our next train driver or our next season ticket holder.

"Each applicant is a person, a future employee and a customer. Every single one is important to us."

"For our future opportunity adverts, if applicants are successful in qualifying for a role, we want to engage with them until we have a position available. We've started regular email updates and a newsletter for people on a waiting list to share company news and reinforce our brand. We've just started monthly webinar updates to waiting lists for key roles, to create a community before they've even joined us. We hire train drivers each month and have a big list of people wanting that role.

Tribepad

They could be waiting several months in our talent pool so we need to engage with them. We update them with where they are, the next steps, company news and vacancies coming up. We want them to have a positive experience.

"It has become more than simply not ghosting. Candidates will always hear an outcome from us. It's not in question that our candidates might be ghosted, if it has happened then we want to know so action can be taken to ensure it doesn't happen again. An email to multiple candidates updating them on their application takes minutes, so there's no excuse. It's a recruiters responsibility to make candidates feel valued and to make that effort. If they have the right technology in place it's up to them to ensure everyone is communicated with.

"The bare minimum is that every applicant deserves is a response. I don't think it's right that some roles are advertised with caveats saying that if they haven't heard back after a month they haven't been successful. No closure is negative. It leaves people wondering why? What's wrong with them?

"The experience of the recruitment process is the brand experience itself. It takes time to implement a system to prevent ghosting but once you have it in place, to end ghosting becomes the baseline. You can then enhance the experience and strive for better.

"My personal negative experience as a candidate got me to dedicate my career to avoiding it happening to others. I support this campaign because every applicant deserves a response. It's that simple."

Tribepad

Bad candidate experience is expensive

Jan Tegze, is an experienced recruiter with extensive talent acquisition expertise and demonstrated success in start-ups and fast-growth environments. In his book, [Full Stack Recruitment](#), he shares methods, tips, and strategies that he has learned, tested and implemented throughout his career, with the hope of providing the inspiration and guidance readers need to develop into a top-performing recruiter and sourcer.

Jan shares his equation for evaluating the financial cost of a bad candidate experience with us.

[Blog](#)

Candidate experience influences your business

When searching for new talent, some will fit the job description better than others. But what will happen to those who are not right for the job or don't have the relevant experience? Well, believe it or not, these candidates, in particular, can impact the development of your business. It is all connected to the way this person sees your company based on the experiences he or she had during the recruiting process. If a candidate has been disappointed by the way he or she was treated, they will be less likely to purchase products or services provided by your company. An unhappy candidate could also make negative remarks about your company, chasing away potential talent and clients.

What leads to a bad candidate experience?

Communication is a highly valuable aspect for candidates. Even if a candidate is not ultimately recruited, he or she will most certainly appreciate your communication efforts. Providing follow-up at the end of the recruitment process counts a great deal when it comes to candidate experience.

How expensive is it to not follow-up?

$$(G \times C) + (G \times M \times P \times R) = \text{Potential loss per year}$$

All the costs and numbers are an example based on surveys and public data.

Case study: You have 10,000 candidates per year, reviewed 7,000, and hire 70 candidates. And you ghosted 3,000 candidates.

Legend:

G = Number of ghosted candidates (3,000 candidates with no follow up)

C = Cost per applicant (£15 per application)

M% = Target market — How many candidates that applied could also be your potential customers that could buy your product or service? If you are Coca-Cola, your TA will be almost 100% because most of your candidates are prospective customers of your soft drinks. But if you are selling "Industrial Machinery" your target audience of potential customers from all candidates that applied to your roles will be much lower, perhaps 1% or less.

P = Purchasing power (Percentage of people that will choose your competitor instead of you)

(46% said, "I will take my purchasing power somewhere else." Data from North American CandE Awards research)

R = Average revenue per customer

The average annual revenue per customer is information that you can find from your sales team. For this example, I am going to use: £2,000 per customer.

Example

(**G** x **C**) = How much money your invest to get these 3000 candidates

(**G** x **M** x **P** x **R**) = Effect on your brand because of the bad experience

(**G**   x   **C**) + (**G**   x   **M**   x   **P**   x   **R**   ) = **£Loss per year**

(**3000** x **£15**) + (**3000** x **10%** x **46%** x **£2000**) = **£321,000 per year**

The "10%" is there only for an example of the number of candidates that are also potential customers (check the M above). If it is likely that all of the applicants are target customers, use 100%.

As you can see from the equation, not giving feedback and not informing candidates of the outcome of an interview could directly cost your company **£321,000 per year**.

Next time you think you don't have time to give feedback to all of your candidates, consider how many resources you will need to invest for your next search and how much it will cost you not to give feedback to them.

The impact on employer brand can be difficult to measure, but give candidates a bad experience, and word can spread.

How you treat your candidates matters!

Tribepad

Six phone calls and I heard nothing

Dinesh Chawla, Service Improvement Lead

I love cars and have been following a local car company in Bradford for years. When I saw an advert for a project management role with the company, I applied with excitement.

I sent in my CV and the HR department asked me to come in for the first interview with them, and it went really well. For the second interview, I went to meet the owner of the company who asked if I could set up a project management function at the company. He said he didn't know how to do this at all, nor had the resources.

Excitingly, I agreed and negotiated a higher salary as this task was over and above the original scope of the role. He even said he'd throw in a company car, and offered me the job on the spot. He followed up with an email and asked about my availability for starting. It was very positive.

When I followed up asking about the contract the owner stopped replying to my emails. The HR team got back to me asking for one more call and they also said the legal team was sorting out the contract. They asked me to give them a brief on how I'd set up a project management function for the company. I put about a half day into producing this and showcased slides to them – then, I never heard from them again.

In the first week, I rang once to follow up. The week after that, I rang twice, and in the third week, I rang three times – and then I gave up.

I took something positive from it and I've applied it to my life ever since: don't ever put anybody in that situation. I began to run my own business so anytime I put a tender out I always take the time to make sure I respond to people – even if not accepting a proposal. I'll contact everyone I interview for a job and tell them why they didn't get the job and offer feedback. It's not hard to be an ar**hole, that's what I always say.

Don't put yourself down like I did. Know your skills and be wary. If something doesn't feel right, it's probably not going to be right when you're employed there. I've grown since then. I reckon they just took my ideas and that was it. I am a very trusting person, and the irksome thing is this – they could have just rang me and said we've had a change of heart!

When somebody comes in and they've taken time to research your company, taken time out of their day to come and speak with you, companies should, as part of resourcing and planning, just give 5 minutes feedback to each person interviewed.

Am I still a fan of them? No, even though I now can afford their cars!

Tribepad

10 top tips to avoid ghosting your candidates

Discover Tribepad

Tribepad

If you've ever been ghosted then you know how upsetting and confidence sapping it can be. We know it's often unintentional, has a negative impact on the employer brand and is something we'd all like to reduce. For one reason or another, our research shows it happens a lot.

1 Get everyone onboard.

Make sure you've fully highlighted the impacts of ghosting internally (brand damage, reducing your talent pool, you know the drill). Once you have the support of your stakeholders then it's time to make a plan on how you're going to tackle ghosting head on.

2 Put yourself in the candidate's shoes.

What sort of communication would you want at each stage? A quick email takes seconds and can really help a candidate.

3 Set up automated emails.

If your ATS allows you to (it really should) then set up automation to send emails to your candidates at each stage of the application process. This means they will always be kept informed of the stage of their application.

4 Send updates promptly.

No news is good news, except for when you're waiting to hear about an application. As soon as you've made a decision, positive or negative, then let the candidate know.

5 Make notes straight after a call or interview.

'Don't put off to tomorrow what you can do today' as the old adage goes. Take thorough notes each time you speak to a candidate, this will make it easier to make a decision and also give you plenty of information to use when you go back to them.

6 Use bulk email or SMS.

Communicating with multiple candidates quickly and simply, a standardised message is better than no contact at all.

Tribepad

7

Use your ATS's reporting feature or keep a log.

This helps to ensure that no candidate gets forgotten, know how many candidates have applied to each role, what stage they're at and when you last contacted them, save all that inbox searching time.

8

Close down the role.

When you hire someone make sure to go back and check you have processed and responded to all of the other applicants.

9

Get feedback from your applicants.

They're the ones that have been through your process so can offer some valuable insight. Make sure you speak to both successful and unsuccessful candidates for a well rounded view.

10

Review and improve your process.

There's always room for improvement, ensure you revisit your plan and the tactics you're using every few months to make sure they're still impactful and to implement any new ideas.

Telling candidates they haven't been selected is a tough call to make, especially when you've been positive up until that point. But doing so quickly and kindly provides closure and allows them to move on with their career elsewhere.

Tribepad

#EndGhosting

Join the campaign

By registering your brand, you can acknowledge that people may have been unintentionally ghosted by your company in the past. Pledge that you plan to take steps to address any unintentional ghosting in your recruitment process. Show people that you care. Let's tackle this problem together.

Register your brand

www.end-ghosting.com

About Tribepad

Tribepad is a specialist talent acquisition software provider, serving some of the UK's best-known organisations such as the BBC, Tesco, Sodexo, Serco, G4S and The Church of England. Its award-winning software, which includes its Applicant Tracking System, Video Interviewing, Onboarding, Freelancer Management and Job Board solutions, help organisations save time and money in the recruitment process, while delivering a great user experience. Its software is used by more than 25 million people and is available in 16 languages worldwide.

The research findings in full

Tribepad

Overall Results

Have you ever been ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer part way through the recruitment process?

Yes

65%

No

35%

Tribepad

Did being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer leave you with negative thoughts or feelings about that company or brand?

Yes, a little

Yes, a lot

53.2%

40.4%

6.4%

No, not at all

Tribepad

Did being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer leave you feeling down or depressed?

No, it didn't really bother me

14.4%

Yes, moderately

39.6%

Yes, a little

28.7%

17.3%

Yes, severely

Tribepad

How long did it take you to get over being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer and move on from the experience?

Several days

38.6%

Several months

13.1%

29.8%

18.5%

Several weeks

Instantly

Tribepad
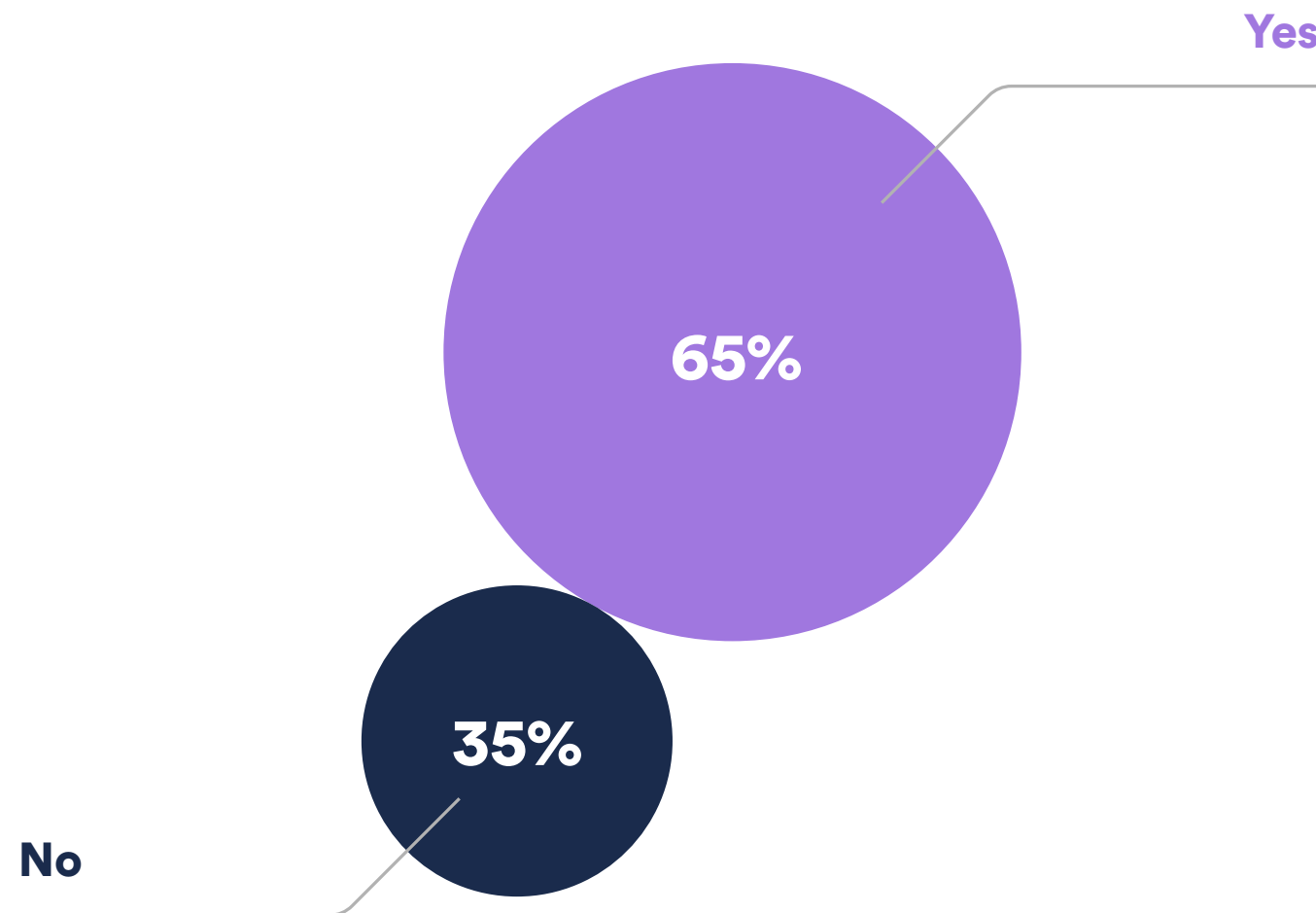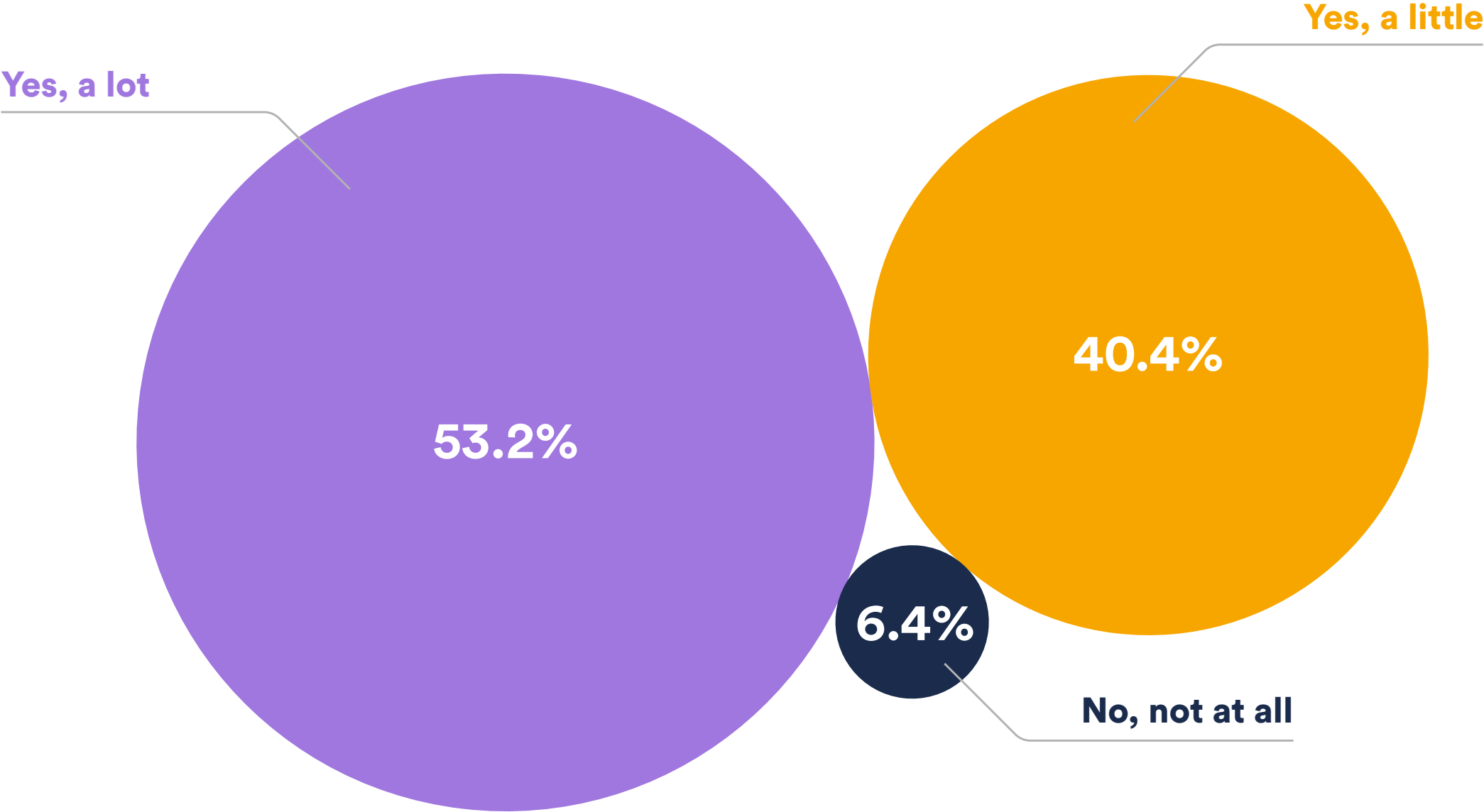
Results by age

Have you ever been ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer part way through the recruitment process?

Legend: Yes (purple), No (orange)

Tribepad

Did being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer leave you with negative thoughts or feelings about that company or brand?

Age	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No, not at all
18 – 24	49.4%	45.8%	4.4%
25 – 34	51.7%	40.9%	7.4%
35 – 44	54.6%	39.1%	6.3%
45 – 54	51%	44.3%	4.7%
55 – 64	60.2%	34.2%	5.6%
65+	51%	38.5%	10.6%

Legend: Yes, a lot | Yes, a little | No, not at all

Tribepad

Did being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer leave you feeling down or depressed?

Age	Yes, severely	Yes, moderately	Yes, a little	No, it didn't bother me
18 – 24	19.3%	44.6%	27.7%	8.4%
25 – 34	24.8%	43.6%	19.8%	11.7%
35 – 44	18.1%	41.4%	28.4%	12.1%
45 – 54	12.5%	38.8%	34.1%	14.5%
55 – 64	14.9%	27.3%	37.9%	19.9%
65+	6.7%	39.4%	27.9%	26%

Yes, severely   Yes, moderately   Yes, a little   No, it didn't bother me

Tribepad

How long did it take you to get over being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer and move on from the experience?

Age	Several months	Several weeks	Several days	Instantly
18 – 24	13.3%	27.7%	27.6%	14.5%
25 – 34	20.5%	32.6%	34.5%	12.4%
35 – 44	14.1%	34.8%	35.6%	15.5%
45 – 54	11%	31%	38%	20%
55 – 64	5.6%	19.9%	49.1%	25.4%
65+	5.8%	19.2%	40.4%	34.6%

Several months   Several weeks   Several days   Instantly

Tribepad
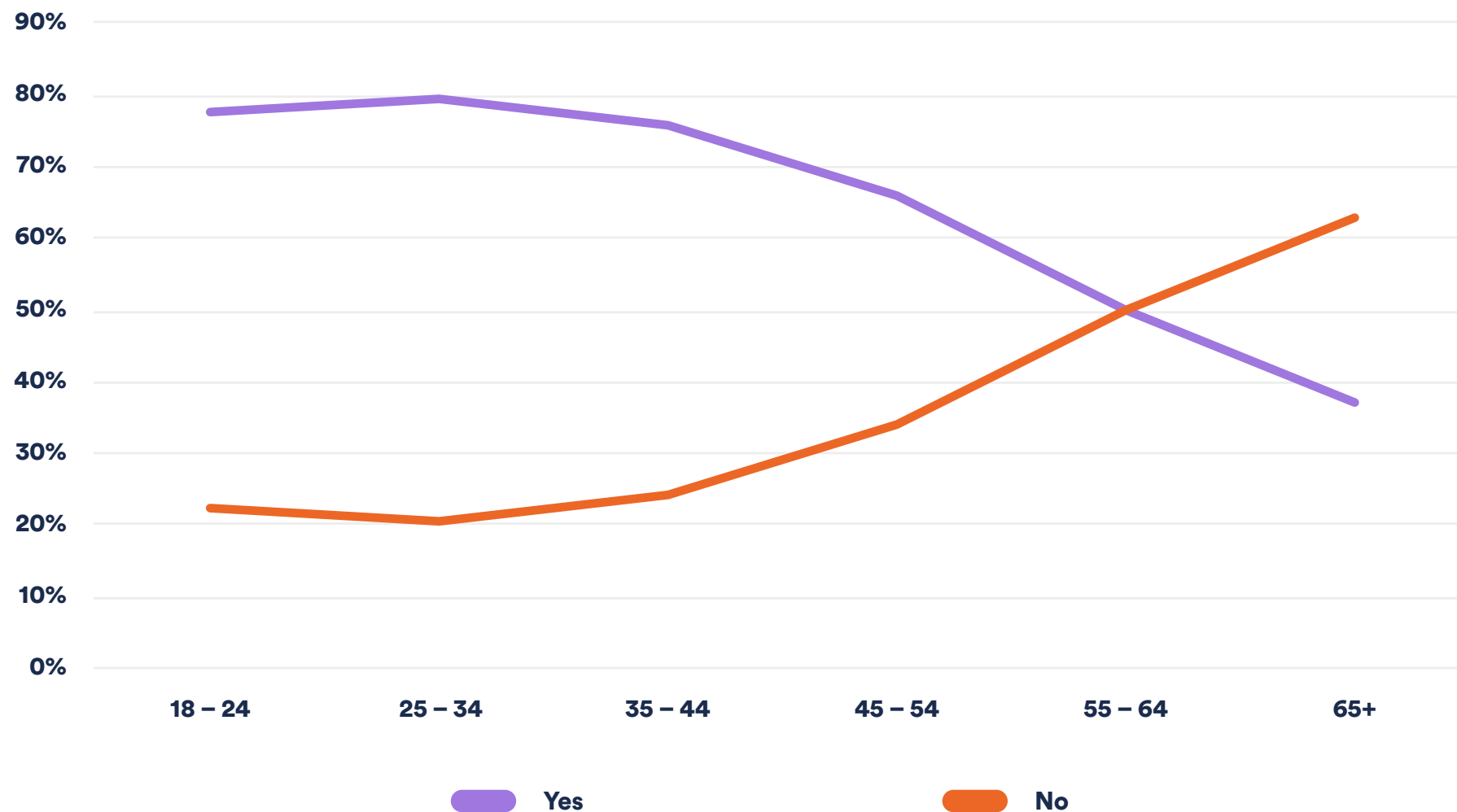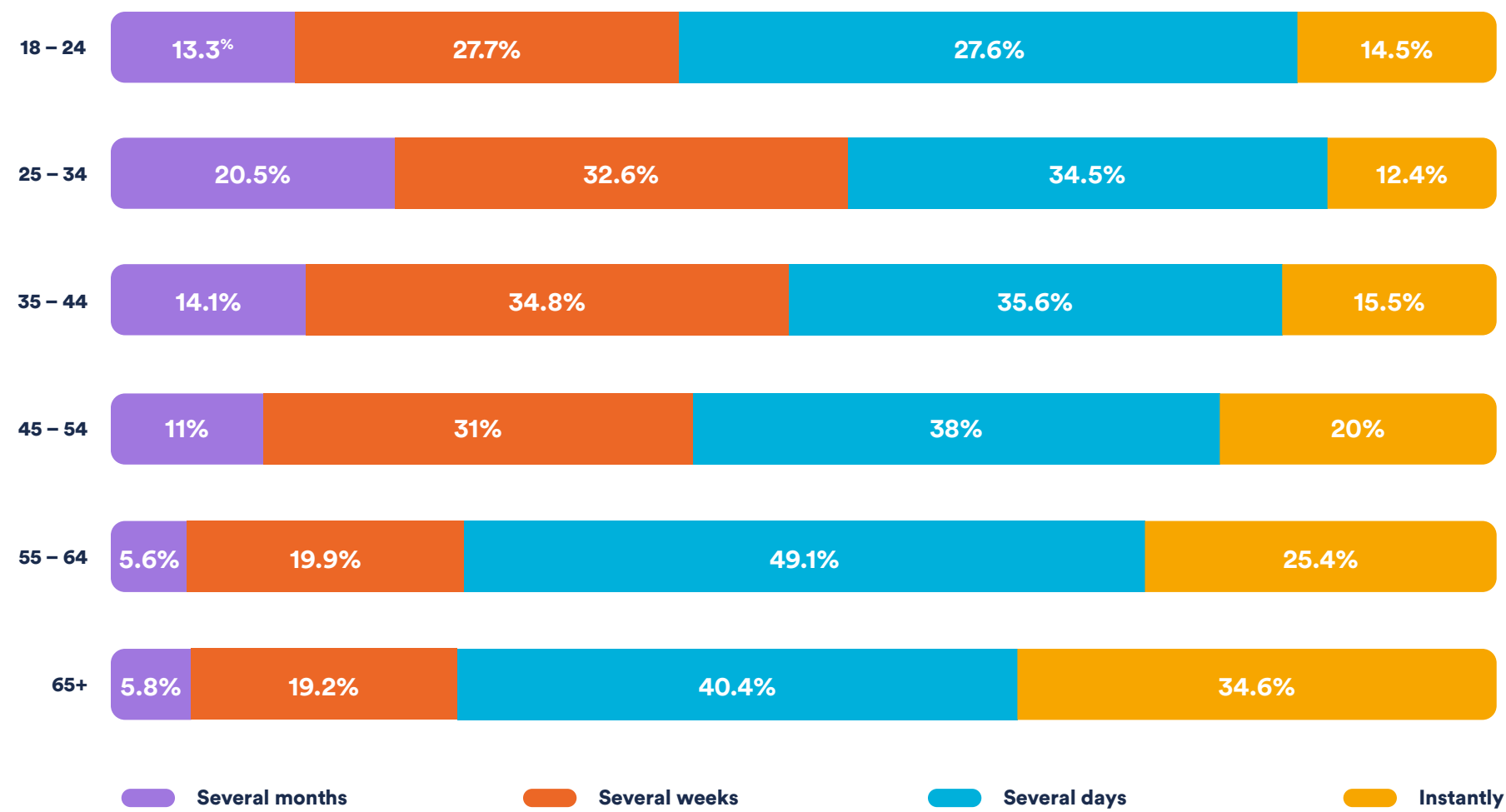
Results by gender

Have you ever been ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer part way through the recruitment process?

58% Female · **42%**

72% Male · **28%**

Yes — No

Tribepad

Did being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer leave you with negative thoughts or feelings about that company or brand?

55.2%   **51.5%**

Yes, a lot

39.2%   **41.4%**

Yes, a little

5.6%   **7.1%**

No, not at all

Tribepad

Did being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer leave you feeling down or depressed?

17.5%　**17.1%**

Yes, severely

42.2%　**37.3%**

Yes, moderately

29.1%　**28.2%**

Yes, a little

11.1%　**17.4%**

No, it didn't bother me at all

Tribepad

How long did it take you to get over being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer and move on from the experience?

14%   **12.4%**

Several months

34.4%   **25.7%**

Several weeks

36.1%   **40.8%**
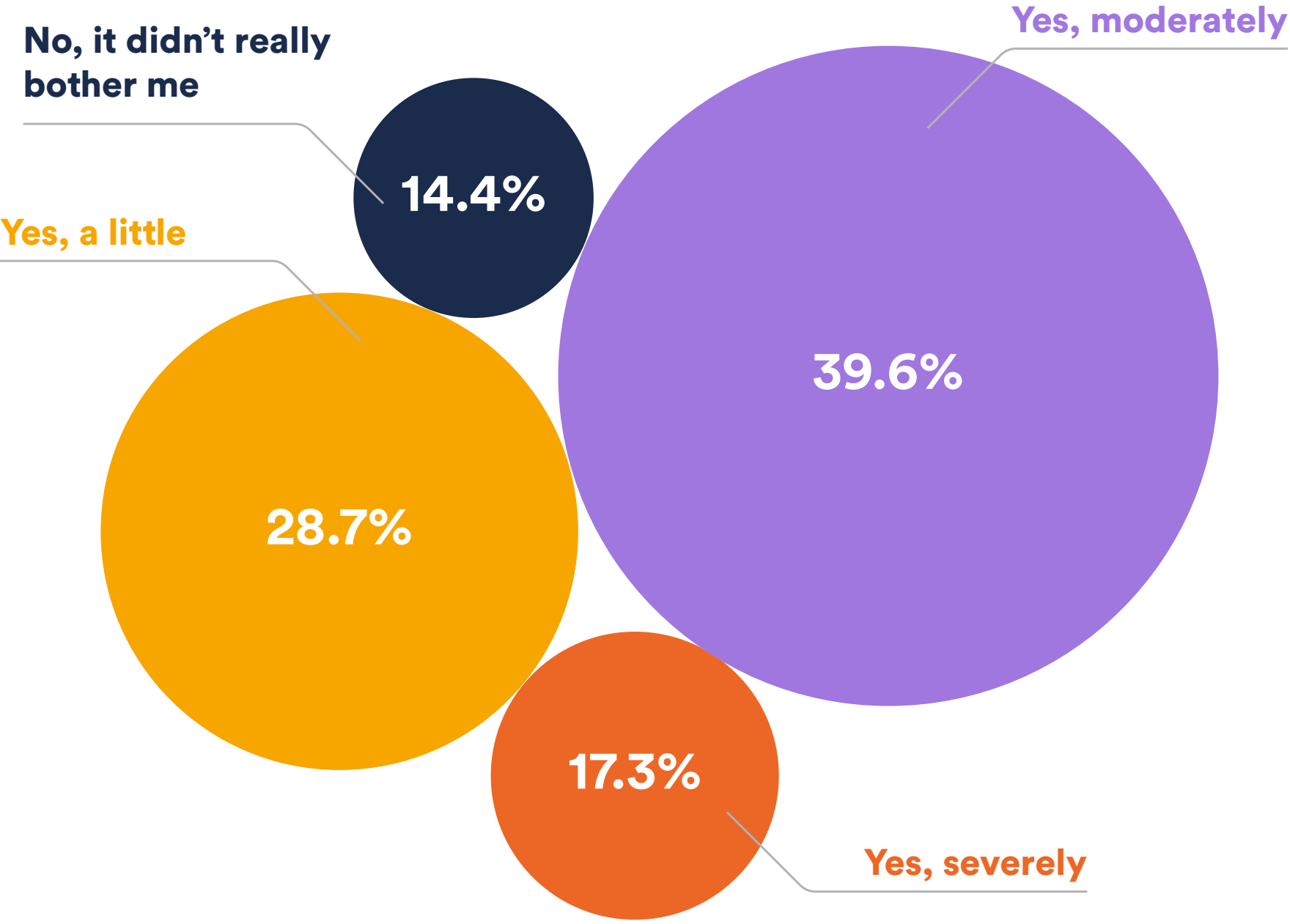
Several days

15.5%   **21.1%**

Instantly

Tribepad

Results by region

Have you ever been ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer part way through the recruitment process?

Scotland — 57.9% Yes, 42.1% No

Northern Ireland — 73% Yes, 27% No

Northern England — 62.5% Yes, 37.5% No

Wales — 61.9% Yes, 38.1% No

Central England — 58.8% Yes, 41.2% No

South West England — 57.3% Yes, 42.7% No

South East England — 71.4% Yes, 28.6% No

Yes   No

Tribepad

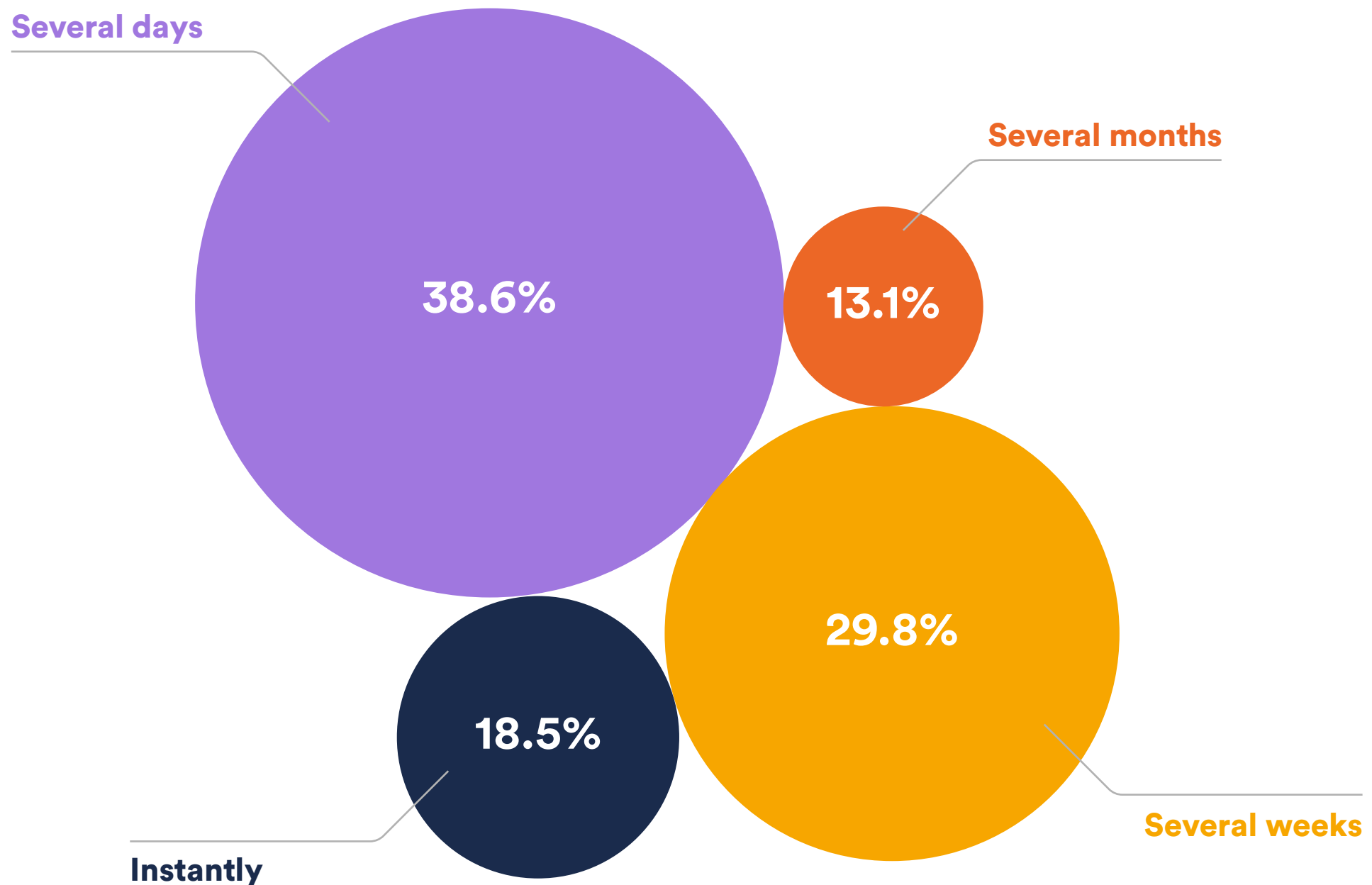# Did being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer leave you with negative thoughts or feelings about that company or brand?

Scotland
- 56.4%
- 35.5%
- 8.1%

Northern England
- 48.7%
- 43.5%
- 7.8%

Northern Ireland
- 51.9%
- 44.4%
- 3.7%

Wales
- 57.7%
- 40.4%
- 1.9%

Central England
- 47%
- 46.5%
- 6.5%

South West England
- 50%
- 39%
- 11%

South East England
- 58.4%
- 36.5%
- 5.1%

Legend:
- Yes, a lot
- Yes, a little
- No, not at all

Tribepad

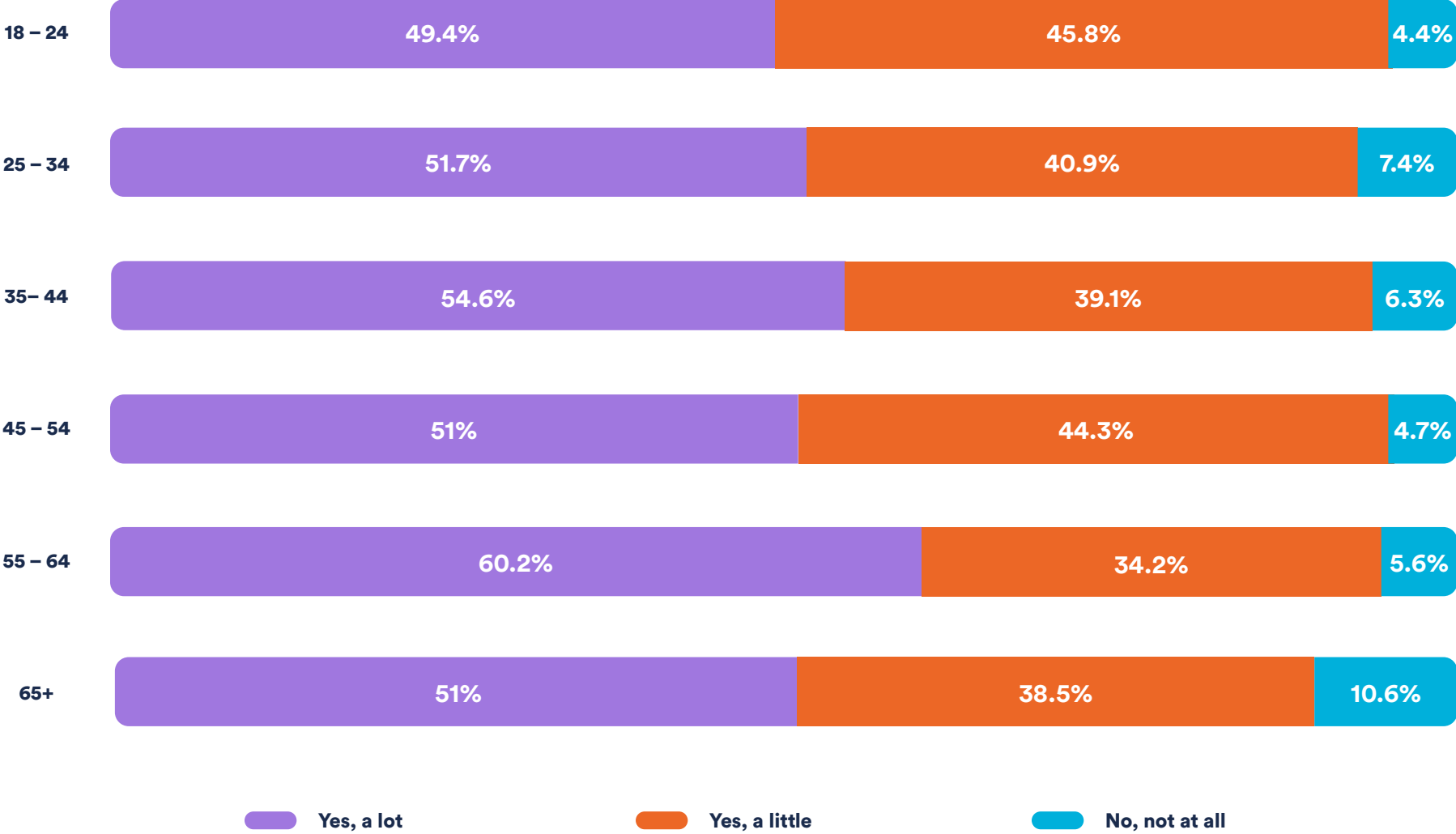# Did being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer leave you feeling down or depressed?

Scotland
- 21%
- 32.3%
- 12.9%
- 33.9%

Northern England
- 13.5%
- 14.8%
- 37%
- 28.5%
- 44.4%
- 29.6%
- 18.5%
- 13.5%

Northern Ireland

Central England
- 25.9%
- 19.4%
- 40%
- 14.7%

Wales
- 30.8%
- 30.8%
- 15.4%
- 23.1%

South West England
- 34.1%
- 29.3%
- 25.6%
- 11%

South East England
- 28.3%
- 39.5%
- 19.1%
- 13.2%

Legend:
- Yes, severely
- Yes, moderately
- Yes, a little
- No, it didn't bother me at all

Tribepad

How long did it take you to get over being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer and move on from the experience?
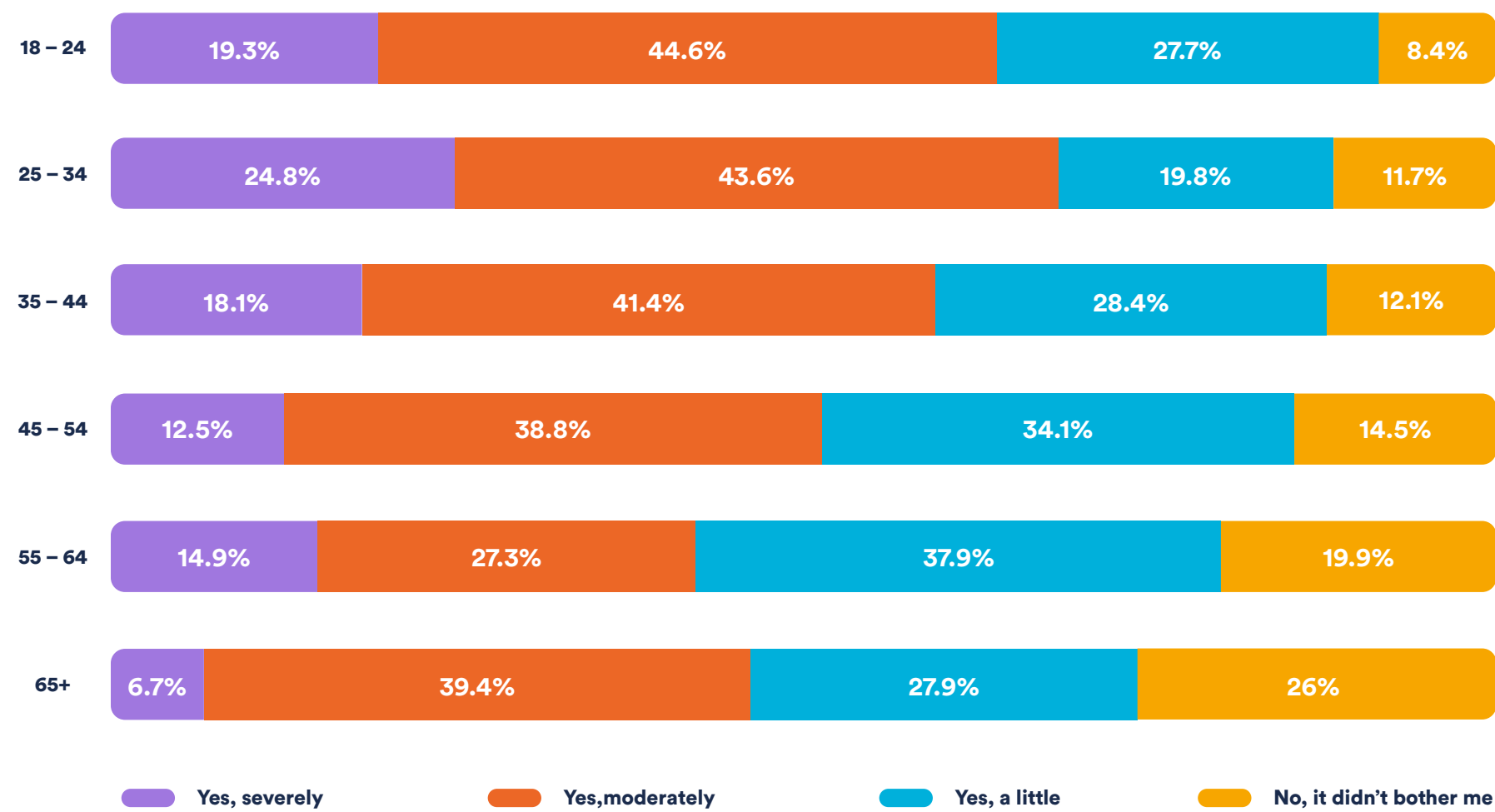
Scotland
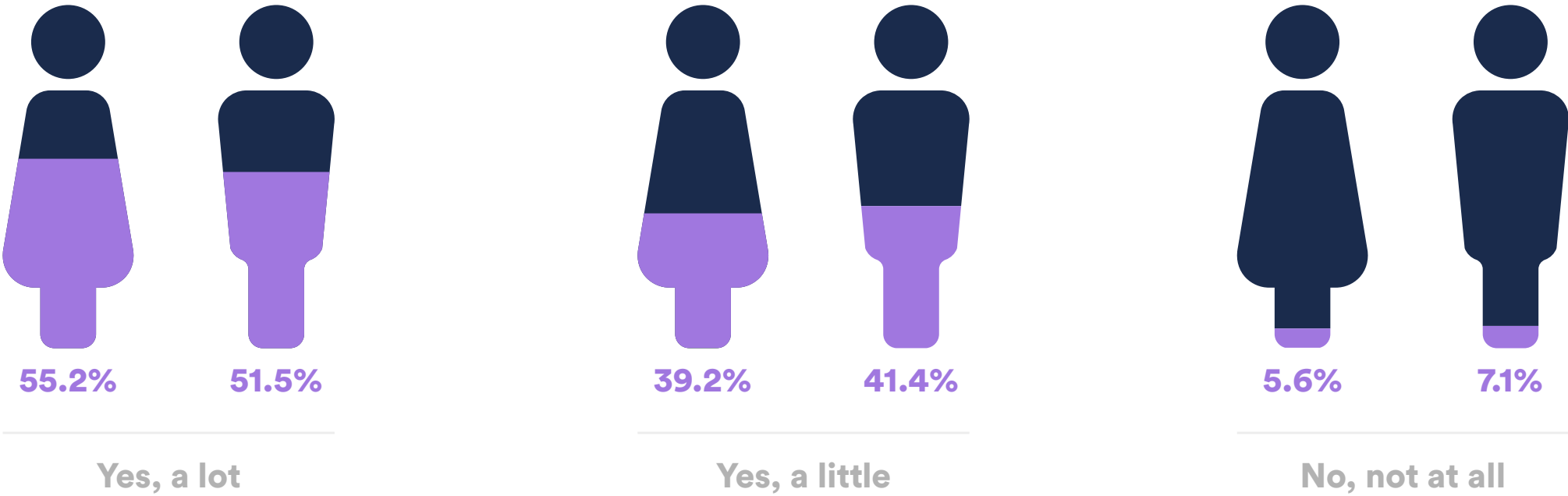12.9%
22.6%
14.5%
50%

Northern Ireland
18.5%
37%
3.7%
40.7%

Northern England
19.9%
40.6%
30%
9.5%

Wales
15.4%
46.2%
23.1%
15.4%

Central England
25.9%
19.4%
40%
14.7%

South West England
28%
35.4%
26.8%
9.8%

South East England
31.4%
37.5%
15.5%
15.5%

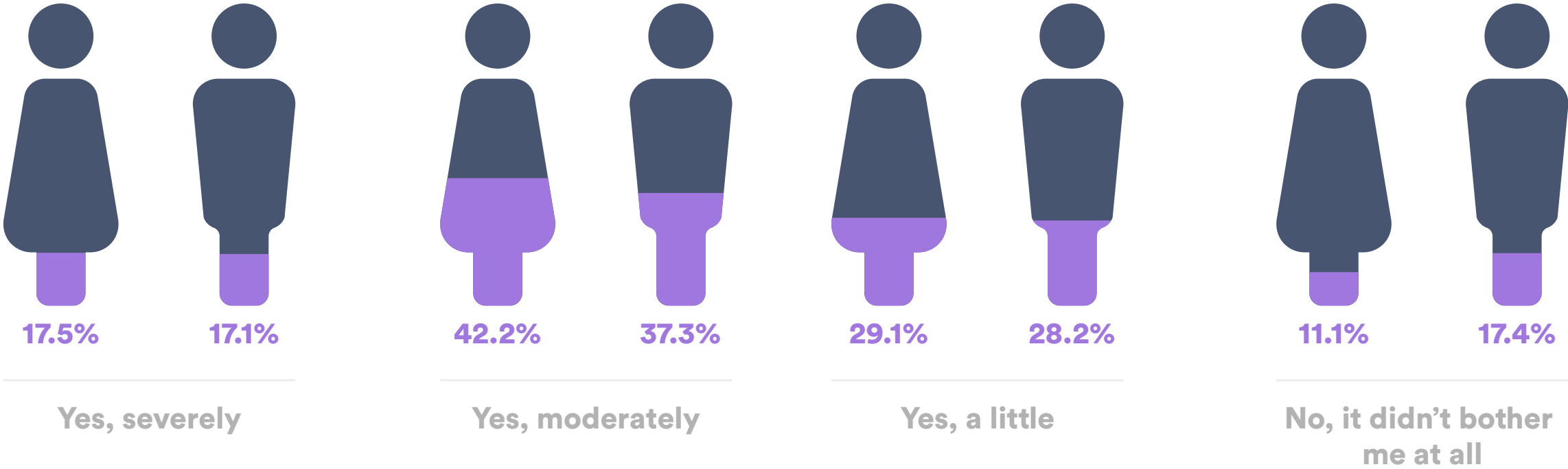Several months · Several weeks · Several days · Instantly

47

Tribepad

Results by city

Have you ever been ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer part way through the recruitment process?

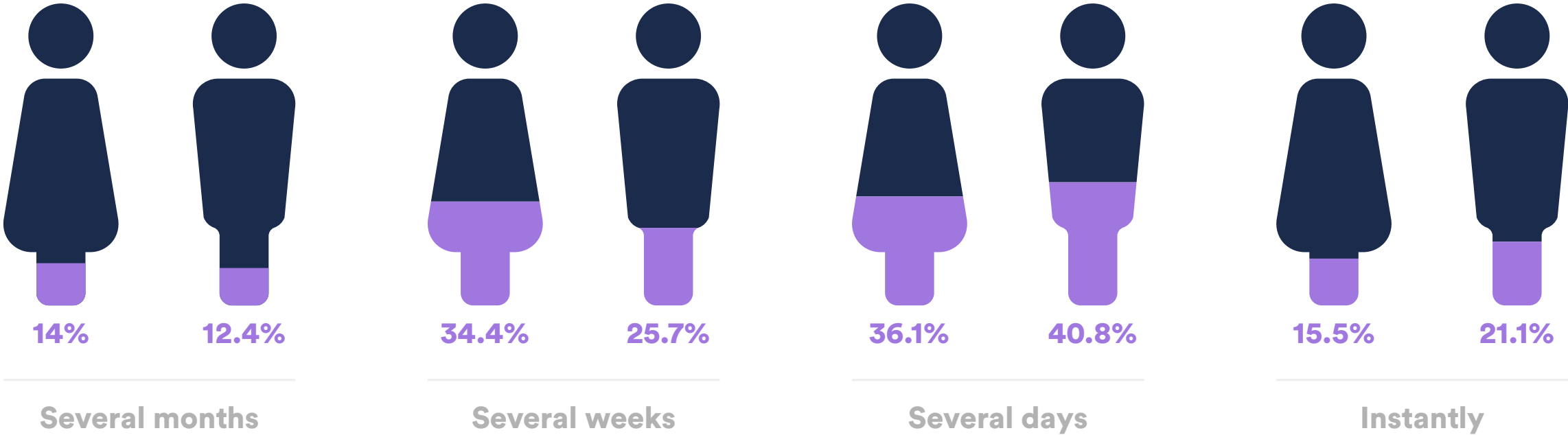| City	Yes	No
Southampton	59%	41%
Sheffield	61%	39%
Nottingham	58%	42%
Norwich	61%	39%
Newcastle	60%	40%
Manchester	64%	36%
London	74%	26%
Liverpool	63%	37%
Leeds	64%	46%
Glasgow	56%	44%
Edinburgh	56%	44%
Cardiff	57%	43%
Bristol	65%	35%
Birmingham	61%	39%
Belfast	73%	27%

Yes   No

Tribepad

Did being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer leave you with negative thoughts or feelings about that company or brand?

City	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No, not at all
Southampton	58.3%	33.4%	8.3%
Sheffield	58.8%	38.3%	2.9%
Nottingham	43.5%	53.9%	2.6%
Norwich	48.9%	46.7%	4.4%
Newcastle	48.1%	44.2%	7.7%
Manchester	34.7%	50.8%	14.5%
London	58.7%	36.9%	4.4%
Liverpool	60%	36%	4%
Leeds	52.8%	42.7%	4.5%
Glasgow	56.6%	36.7%	6.7%
Edinburgh	60.6%	30.3%	9.1%
Cardiff	50%	44.3%	5.7%
Bristol	58.3%	30.6%	11.1%
Birmingham	52.6%	37.1%	10.3%
Belfast	51.9%	44.4%	3.7%

Legend: ■ Yes, a lot ■ Yes, a little ■ No, not at all

Tribepad

Did being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer leave you feeling down or depressed?

City	Yes, severely	Yes, moderately	Yes, a little	No, it didn't bother me at all
Southampton	11.7%	41.7%	18.3%	28.3%
Sheffield	17.6%	29.4%	41.1%	8.8%
Nottingham	17.1%	34.2%	34.2%	14.5%
Norwich	6.7%	44.4%	33.3%	15.6%
Newcastle	9.6%	51.9%	25%	13.5%
Manchester	13.6%	50%	22.9%	13.5%
London	20.9%	39.5%	29%	10.6%
Liverpool	14.7%	40%	25.3%	20%
Leeds	12.4%	42.7%	33.7%	11.2%
Glasgow	20%	40%	30%	10%
Edinburgh	24.2%	24.2%	36.4%	15.2%
Cardiff	20%	25.7%	34.3%	20%
Bristol	13.9%	36.1%	30.6%	19.4%
Birmingham	21.6%	41.2%	18.6%	18.6%
Belfast	18.5%	29.7%	37%	14.8%

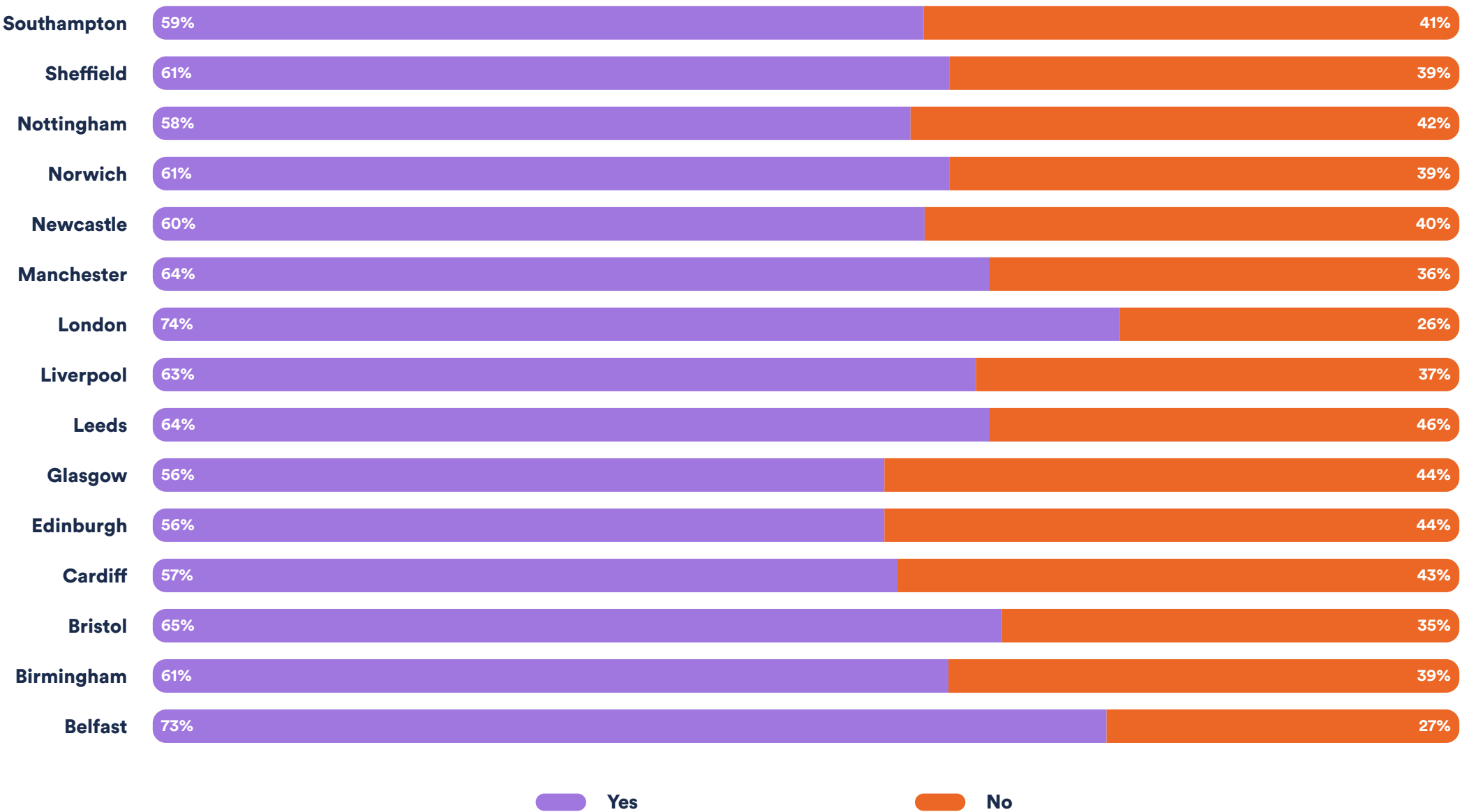Legend: ● Yes, severely ● Yes, moderately ● Yes, a little ● No, it didn't bother me at all

Tribepad

How long did it take you to get over being ghosted by a recruiter or prospective employer and move on from the experience?

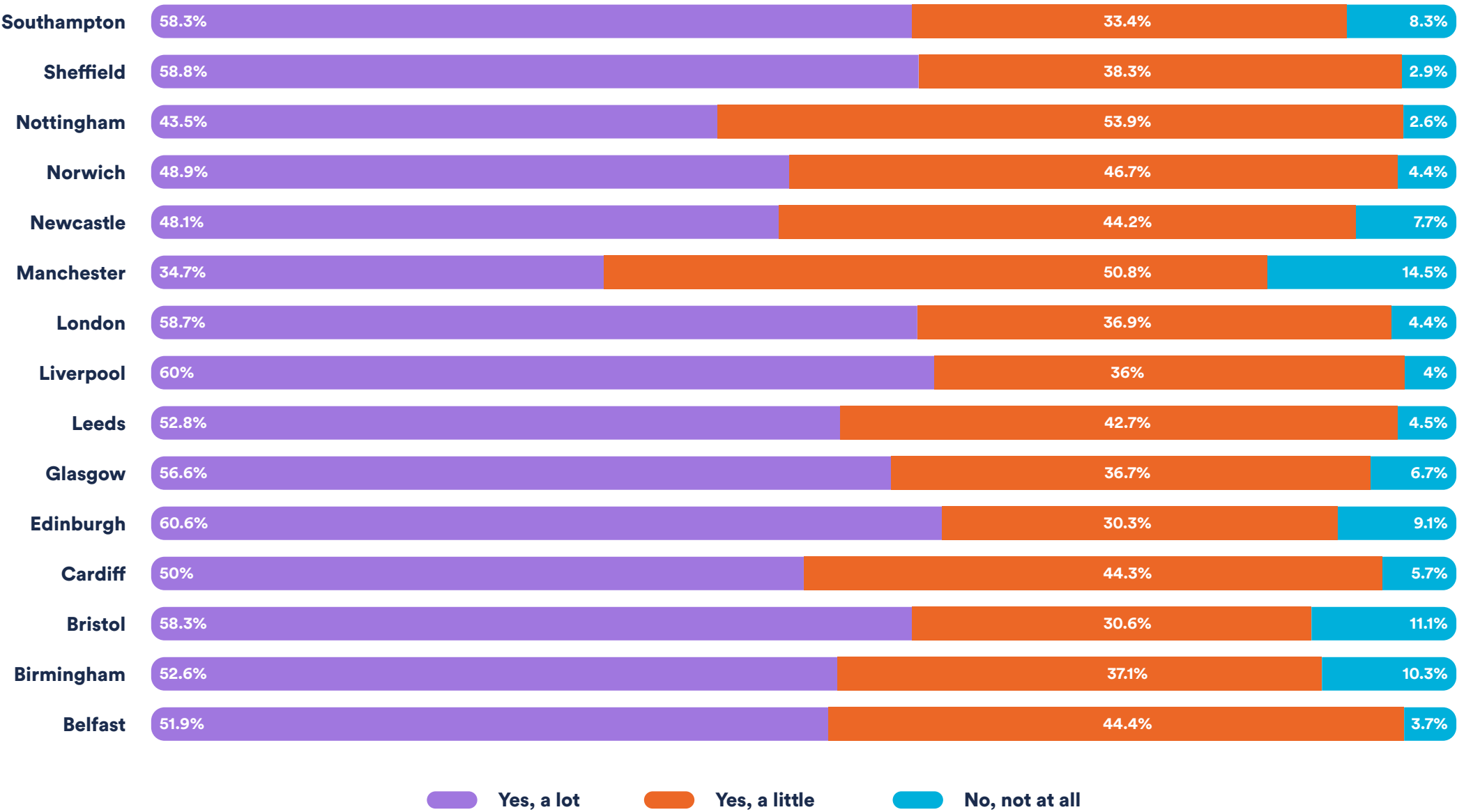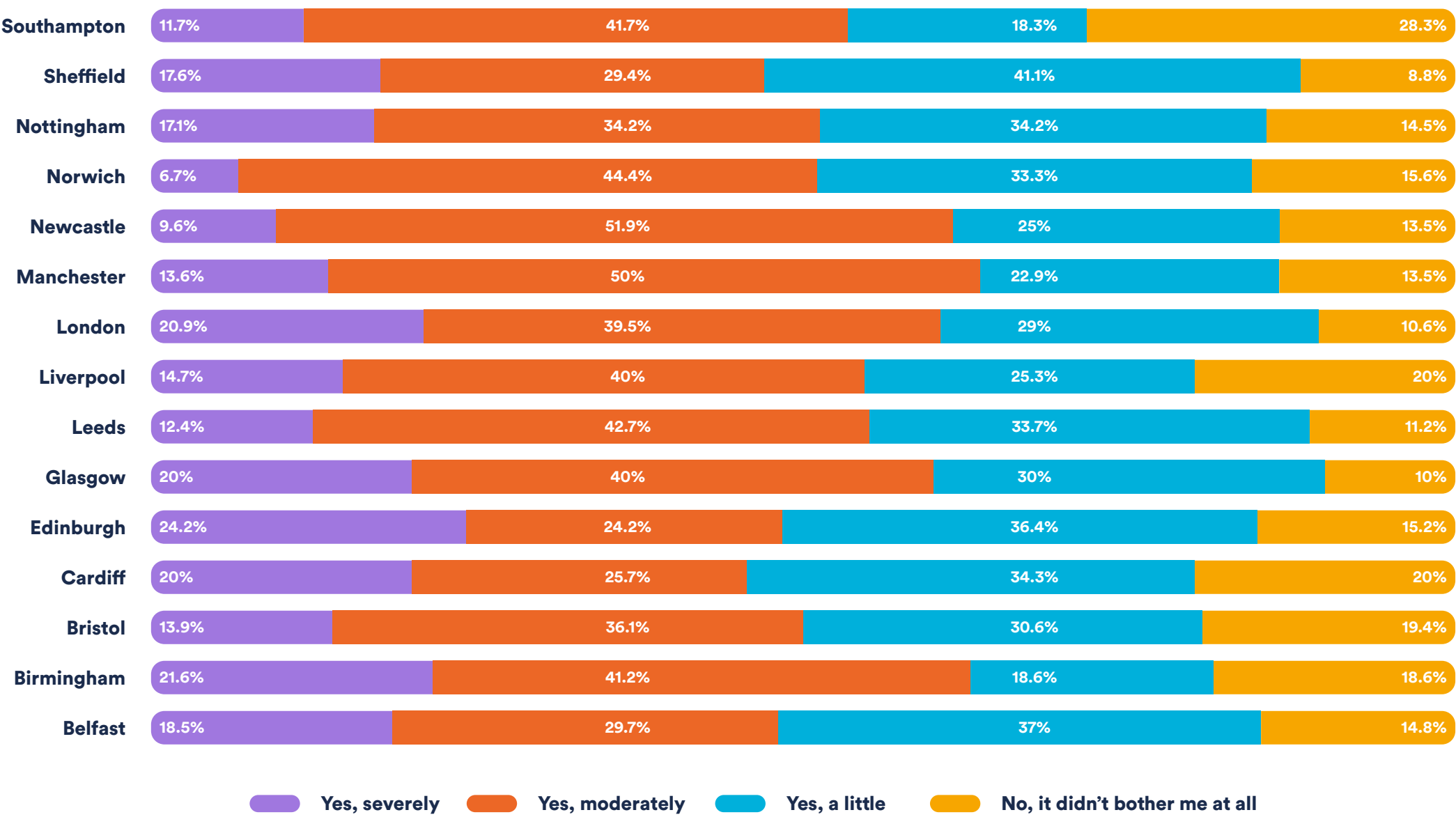| City	Several months	Several weeks	Several days	Instantly
Southampton	11.7%	35%	30%	23.3%
Sheffield	8.8%	29.4%	47.1%	14.7%
Nottingham	14.5%	28.9%	38.2%	18.4%
Norwich	2.2%	31.1%	48.9%	17.8%
Newcastle	3.8%	34.6%	34.7%	26.9%
Manchester	9.3%	30.5%	41.6%	18.6%
London	16.7%	31.4%	37.6%	14.3%
Liverpool	8%	29.3%	37.4%	25.3%
Leeds	12.4%	23.5%	47.2%	16.9%
Glasgow	20%	30%	40%	10%
Edinburgh	9.1%	15.2%	57.5%	18.2%
Cardiff	11.4%	24.3%	35.7%	28.6%
Bristol	16.7%	27.8%	44.4%	11.1%
Birmingham	20.6%	28.9%	25.8%	24.7%
Belfast	3.7%	40.7%	37%	18.6%

Legend: **Several months** | **Several weeks** | **Several days** | **Instantly**

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